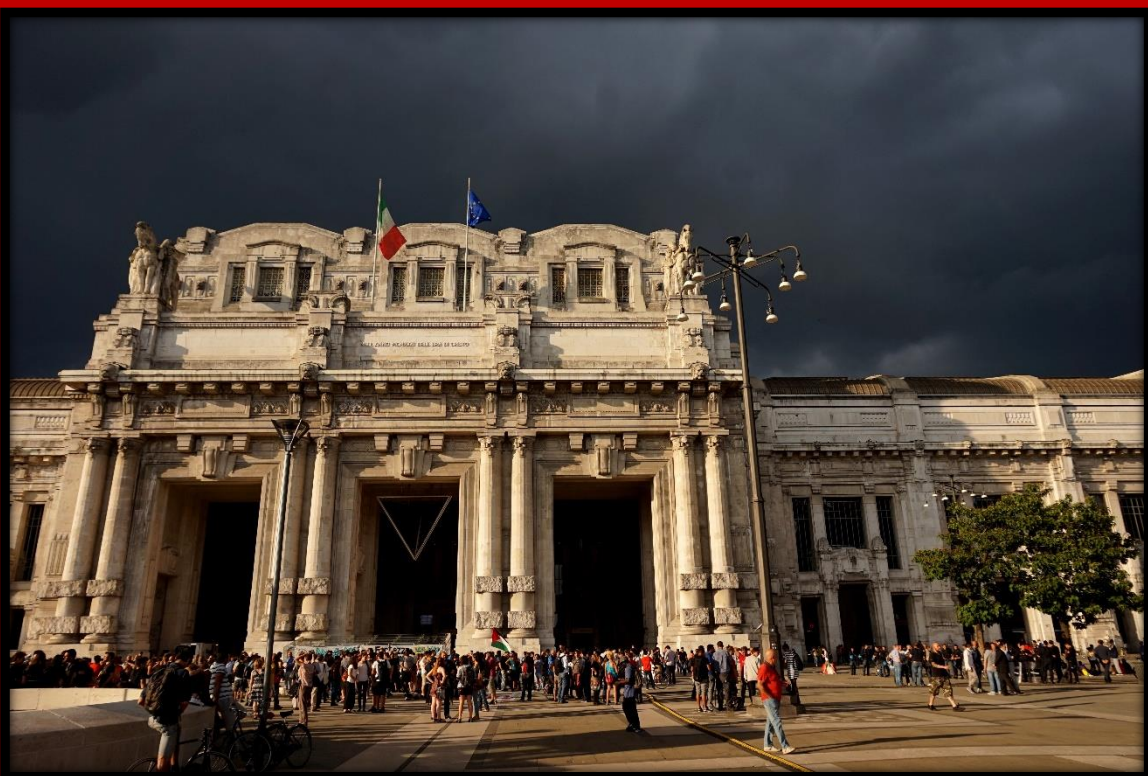


The Outsiders

WEST AFRICAN MIGRANTS AND XENO-RACISM
IN NORTHERN ITALY



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Cover photo: Seconds before the storm breaks during a 'Refugees Welcome' manifestation in Milan. 15 June 2015. Taken by the author, Lisa Kuijpers.

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Alexa, and the other guests, and perhaps even Georgina, all understood the fleeing from war, from the kind of poverty that crushed human souls, but they would not understand the need to escape from the oppressive lethargy of choicelessness. They would not understand why people like him, who were raised well-fed and watered but mired in dissatisfaction, conditioned from birth to look towards somewhere else, were now resolved to do dangerous things, illegal things, so as to leave, none of them starving, or raped, or from burned villages, but merely hungry for choice and certainty.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2013), *Americanah*, London: Fourth Estate, p. 276

ABSTRACT

Migrants have always been present in the Italian society, but their numbers were small until the late 1970s. After that, Italy changed from a mostly emigration country into an immigration country. Italy was reluctant to embrace this change and held on the old image for a long time. This also meant that policy-making on the topic of migration started relatively late in Italy. Nowadays, there are many policies that restrict migration. These have, however, not stopped migrants from coming to Italy. In a world that is changing and in which record-breaking numbers of people are fleeing their homes, migration has become a more relevant topic than even before.

Prejudice towards migrants has probably existed since the first migrants arrived in Italy. This study explores how West African migrants in Italy experience xeno-racism and if these experiences influence their desire to either stay in Italy or migrate elsewhere. It builds on existing literature on the topics of migration and mobility on the one hand, and xenophobia and racism on the other. It also draws on interviews with West African migrants in and around Milan. The findings from this study show that xeno-racism does not look like an important factor in migrants' decision-making at first glance. Looking deeper, though, we see that xeno-racism influences migrants' lives in many – sometimes indirect or hidden – ways. Because of xeno-racism, migrants do not get the same (economic) opportunities as the native population. For many, that could be a reason to want to leave Italy and search for a place with better opportunities. Xeno-racism prevents migrants from developing to their full potential. The paradox is that Italian society needs migrants on the labour market, but that they are unwanted and unwelcome at the same time. Looking closely and critically at xeno-racism is therefore not only important for the lives of migrants, but for Italy as well.

Key words: *West African migrants – mobility – xeno-racism – Italy – Milan*

PREFACE

I am grateful to many people for their help and support during my thesis writing process. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Haley Swedlund. Thank you for all your support and feedback, and for the interesting conversations we had.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Italy has had many issues with migrants over the years. Data show that many Italians think their country is being flooded by migrants, but in reality this is not the case. This imaginary invasion of migrants is only present in the minds of the Italians (De Haas, 2008), and this issue is relatively large in Italy compared to other European countries. Ipsos MORI holds yearly questionnaires on ignorance in different countries and on different topics. In 2014, they found that the average Italian believes that 30 percent of the population is made out of migrants, while it is actually 7 percent (Ipsos MORI, 2014). This means that there is a gap of 23 percent between fact and fiction, and because of this Italy ranks as the most ignorant country of all fourteen countries participating in the Ipsos MORI survey. Italy scored a little better in the recently published 2015 questionnaire (Ipsos MORI, 2015). The average Italian in 2015 thought 26 percent of the population was an immigrant. In reality it was 9 percent. This puts Italy somewhere in the middle bracket of this study.

This fictive image of a country flooded by migrants has led to a lot of turmoil in the Italian society. Castles, De Haas and Miller (2014) explain how international migration and conflict can be related to each other:

... international migration is sometimes directly or indirectly linked to conflict. Events like 9/11 (the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC), and the attacks by Islamic radicals on trains buses and airports in Spain in 2004 and in the UK in 2005 and 2007 involved immigrants and their offspring. Such events have given rise to perceptions that threats to security of states are somehow linked to international migration and to the problems of living together in one society for culturally and socially diverse ethnic groups. (Castles, De Haas & Miller, 2014, p. 6)

This quote from Castles, De Haas and Miller describes the context of this research. Migration in Europe may not be a violent conflict in itself, but it is often linked to serious issues in our society. Today, many parties would classify migration as a political and socio-cultural conflict. Castles et al. (2014) state that “the political salience of migration has increased, which is reflected in the rise of extreme right-wing, anti-immigrant and anti-Islam parties and a subsequent move to the right of entire political spectrum on migration and diversity issues” (p. 1). In the last decade or so, we have seen the enormous growth of the PVV in the Netherlands, the Front National in France, the BNP in the United Kingdom, the Lega Nord in Italy, and many other far-right political parties in Europe (Betz, 2001; Castles et al., 2014; Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014; Pettigrew, 1998; Zaslove, 2004).

The topic of migrants is booming in Europe. We hear it in politics or see it in the media. Almost daily, we can find articles in the papers and see news programs on the television discussing the ‘flood of migrants’ coming to Europe (De Haas, 2008). At the end of 2015 many media outlets commented on the record breaking numbers of migrants coming to Europe. La Stampa, one of the largest Italian newspapers, for instance reported: “Una nazione che fugge. Donne, uomini, bambini costretti a mettersi in viaggio per salvarsi da guerre, persecuzioni e violazioni dei diritti umani” (Corporal, 2015). Which translates to: ‘A nation that flees. Women, men, children forced to travel to escape from war, persecution and human rights violations.’ It was a prominent theme in recent years.

For many African migrants it is not an easy feat to reach Europe. So-called ‘Fortress Europe’ has borders that are hard to cross. Europe does not grant many migrants access to its territories. Often we hear stories about migrants dying on their way to Europe, about clashes between migrants and (border) police, and about undocumented migrants living in dire conditions. But once migrants have entered the so-called ‘Fortress Europe’, it is relatively easy to cross the borders between different European countries and move within the European Union. Recently though, it has become more difficult to move freely through the European Union because some European countries have reinstated border controls during these last few months of increasing migration inflow. It is, however, still much easier to move within the EU than to enter the EU.

The EU’s border policies are discriminatory in nature, because put people in different categories based on their religion, where they were born, et cetera (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014; Van

Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001). The discriminatory nature of these policies becomes especially clear when looking at the 'positive' and 'negative' Schengen list. The countries on the negative list are mostly poor and have a population that is predominantly Muslim and/or black. People from countries on the positive list can easily get a visa, people from countries on the negative list cannot. These border policies lead to a vicious circle: migrants who cannot enter legally will seek for illegal ways, this leads to more criminalization which leads to even more extreme border policies, et cetera (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014).

The labelling of these migrants as illegal can lead to xenophobia and fear (Van Houtum, 2010), which may then lead to acts of racism. For this thesis I have studied if and how African migrants in northern Italy experience xenophobia and racism. Once migrants have gained access to the EU, either regularly or irregularly, they can move relatively freely within the EU. However, we know little about why, how or where they move to. In this thesis I will explore if migrants' experiences with xenophobia and racism influence their desire to migrate else in the European Union.

1.1 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

In this section I will briefly introduce the most important parts of this thesis, starting with the main research question and the objective and this study. Then I will point out the most important concepts and theories in this thesis, followed by the methodology and methods I used. I will also introduce the case study and my own period of fieldwork in Italy.

1.1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND QUESTION

The aim of this research is to gain insight in the link between African migrants' experiences of xeno-racism and their mobility. My main research question therefore is:

➔ *How do African migrants in Lombardy, Italy experience xeno-racism, and how do such experiences affect their desire to migrate elsewhere in the European Union?*

This research question focuses on the experience migrants have with xeno-racism, and not so much on the factual acts of xenophobic and racist violence against migrants that are documented by the media, the authorities and scholars. This information is, however, also important to understand the scale of the problem. The intra-European mobility of migrants is not only influenced by their desire to move. Other issues, like their economic capacity and their social network, also play an important role. In this research, however, the desire is the central factor.

To be able to answer this question I will look at other issues first. In this thesis we will discuss the main characteristics of xeno-racism against African migrants in northern Italy and the main characteristics of their intra-European mobility. We will also look at other aspects that could influence the relation between their experiences with xeno-racism and their intra-European mobility.

1.1.2 CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

In this research, I link two concepts: migration and racism. These concepts have not been brought together often in the literature, but their relationship is very interesting nonetheless. A lot has been written on racism and different manifestations of racism. When I write about racism in this thesis, I usually refer to xeno-racism (Fekete, 2001; Sivanandan, 2001). This is a type of racism that is not focused on skin colour alone, but also encompasses cultural and economic aspects. It is directed towards a 'new' group of people who are set apart because of their socio-economic status. Racism is not only practiced by individuals, but also on a political, state and institutional level.

In this study, migration is not seen as a simple move from A to B, but it is observed from a mobility perspective in which what happens in between is equally important (Schapendonk, 2011). For some migrants Italy may be the end-station, for others it is not. The question is why some decide to move further (or back) and why others do not, and if experiences with racism play a role in these processes. Racism can make migrants feel unwelcome. It can make them feel like they are excluded from society. On a state and institutional level it can make it much harder for them to obtain a visa, to find housing or to get a job. This could influence their decision to either stay in Italy or move to another European country.

1.1.3 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This study is a theory-led empirical research with a qualitative approach. The research is designed as an in-depth case study in which the case is analysed with the help of existing theories. The research topic is approached from a mostly humanist and poststructuralist point of view. Humanism, on the one hand, because it focuses on personal experiences migrants have with racism, and poststructuralism, on the other hand, because it is an anti-essentialist approach that sees an important role for ethics. The poststructuralist approach helps in destructing essentialist categories such as 'us' and 'them' and 'white' and 'black'. It helps us understand how these discourses of otherness have become the norm in society, but it also shows us that these discourses are unethical.

I have studied theory and literature on migration and mobility on the one hand and on racism and xenophobia on the other hand to get a good overview of these themes. For the case study I explored books, academic articles, reports, news articles and data sets on racism and migration in Italy.

The empirical data was collected between March and July 2015 during my fieldwork period in Milan. There I looked for strategic places to find respondents. Once I found some first respondents, I used snowballing techniques to find more respondents. The data was collected through small talk and semi-structured interviews. In reality, most interviews were more loosely structured than I had planned. They always took place in informal settings such as cafes or shops. Small talk was an important way of finding respondents, but it also had an important role in the interviews. I did thirteen interviews, twelve of them were unrecorded because of sensitivity reasons. I took limited notes during the interviews and drew up – as detailed as possible – interview transcripts at home. The interviews were manually coded and analysed on paper. The theory and literature on the subject were a part of this analysis, making it an interdisciplinary way of analysing the data.

1.1.4 THE CASE STUDY

Italy is an interesting case for this research. It has changed from a typical emigration country into an immigration country quite recently, namely in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Campani, 1993; Colombo & Sciortino, 2004; Della Porta, 2000; Pettigrew, 1998; Triandafyllidou, 1999). Nowadays, it is the country where many migrants – especially those from Africa – first enter the European Union. Italy is relatively close to the African continent. The small Italian island Lampedusa is even technically on the African continent. Italy is therefore one of the most reachable European countries for African migrants. This geographical closeness has, however, not brought a cultural and social feeling of closeness.

In the 1970s, Italy was unprepared for the change from emigration to immigration country and did not have any migration policies. Many Italians expressed negative attitudes towards new immigrants and frictions arose in the Italian society (Campani, 1993; Triandafyllidou, 1999). A European commission on racism and fascism said in 1984 that Italy was one of the countries with the fewest racial incidents in Europe, whereas the list of racial incidents in the late 1980s and the 1990s quickly became longer and longer (Campani, 1993; Della Porta, 2000).

Anti-immigrant and racial sentiments are not only expressed by civilians, but are also prominently present in Italian politics. They can be found especially in the right-wing spectrum, with parties like

Alleanza Nazionale, Forza Italia and most notably the Lega Nord. The political field in Italy is quite clearly divided in an anti-immigrant and a pro-immigrant field, which makes it an interesting study subject.

The fact that Italy quickly and quite recently changed from an emigration country into the country where many (African) migrants enter the EU, and that anti-immigrant and racist sentiments increased just as quickly, makes it an interesting case study for this research.

1.1.5 FIELDWORK IN ITALY

I spent four months in the north of Italy to undertake fieldwork for this research. From March until July 2015 I lived in Milan. There I interviewed migrants, came in contact with migrant organisations, frequently went to services at an African Pentecostal church and visited African shops. I also observed demonstrations and manifestations, which were organised almost weekly in Milan.

In June I went to an interesting congress 'From Mare Nostrum to Triton: protection, control and reception systems' where I met other scholars who study migration and people who work with migrants in the field. The congress was organised by the group Escapes for the critical study of forced migration at the Università degli studi di Milano.

I have used all of these experiences, conversations and observations to write this thesis.

1.2 RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH

In the previous section I have introduced what this thesis is about. This naturally leads to the following question: why is it important to study these subjects? In this section I will firstly explain the relevance of this research in the academic context and secondly in the societal context.

1.2.1 SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

A lot has been written about both racism and xenophobia (e.g. Fekete, 2001; Lopez, 2000; Merriam et al. 2001; Sivanandan, 2001; 2006; Wimmer, 1997), and there are many case studies of racism and xenophobia in the Italian society (e.g. Angel-Anjani, 2000; 2003; Basso, 2010; Cole, 1997; Grillo & Pratt, 2002; Krause, 2001; Merrill, 2004; Sniderman et al, 2000; Zanotti, 1993). Migration is also a topic that has gotten plenty of attention from many scholars. Lately, the mobility dimension in particular has been getting more interest (e.g. Cresswell, 2010; Schapendonk, 2011; 2012; Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). Like this thesis, many of these studies have focused on African migration to Europe (e.g. Carling, 2007; Cross, 2009; De Haas, 2008; 2011; Kohnert, 2007; Schapendonk, 2011; 2012; Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). Furthermore, there is no lack of general studies on (im)migrants in Italy (e.g. Adler Hellman, 1997; Caponio, 2005; 2008; Colombo & Sciortino, 2004; Foot, 1999; Marotta, 2004; Pires, 2010; Zincone & Caponio, 2005).

There are, however, not many studies that bring these different concepts, namely the experiences of African migrants in Italy with racism and the way this influences their mobility, together. Of course, it is too extreme to say no studies have been done on similar topics. There are some specific studies on the topic of migrants and their access to the labour market in Italy (e.g. Iosifides & King, 1996; Merrill, 2011) and other studies have focussed on the exclusionary politics and policies (e.g. Ambrosini, 2013; Cetin, 2015; Mudu, 2006; Saitta, 2001; Totah, 2002; Watts, 1998; Zaslove, 2004; Zincone, 1993; 1998). Another rather 'popular' but not undisputed topic is the relation between migration and criminalisation (e.g. Cantarella, 2014; Colombo, 1997; Ipsen, 1999; Quassoli, 2004; Riccio, 1999). In addition to this, there are studies on the public discourse regarding migration in Italy (e.g. Della Porta, 2000; Riccio, 1999; Sciortino & Colombo, 2004; Triandafyllidou, 1999).

Most of these studies have a different perspective than this thesis. In this study the focus is on the perspectives of the migrants, on their experiences of racism and on how this plays a role in their decision to move to or to stay in certain places. The aim of this study is to gain insight in how these migrants'

experiences of xeno-racism affect their mobility. As shown in the previous paragraph, experiences of xeno-racism could be part of the motivations to migrate or not to migrate. Quite a lot of research has been done on the motivations of migrants; mostly on economic reasons, but more recently also on social and cultural motivations (e.g. Halfacree, 2004). It seems, however, that xeno-racism is usually not considered as a factor in these motivations. It is nonetheless an important factor to include, because can tell us something about how welcome or unwelcome migrants feel in society. It can also help to explain if these feelings play a part in migratory flows and last but not least, it can give us further insight in how and why migrants choose their path.

1.2.2 SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), approximately eight percent of the Italian population consists of (regular) migrants. The increase percentage of migrants in Italy, together with Spain, is the highest in the entire European Union. This means that it is one of the largest European destinations for migrants (International Organization for Migration, 2014). Unfortunately, the Italian society does not always easily accept these migrants. Racism and other types of violence against migrants are recurring issues. Racism against migrants can take many forms. Some types of racism can be concealed and indirect, whereas other types are very direct and hard to miss (Zizek, 2008). In Italy, both types of racism can be found (Campani, 1993; Della Porta, 2000; Pettigrew, 1998; Totah, 2002; Triandafyllidou; 1999).

Over the last few years, we have seen multiple outbursts of extremely violent, direct racism in Italy. One of the most famous – and most disturbing – incidents was the Rosarno riot in 2010. In Rosarno, a relatively small town in the southern province Calabria, tensions over irregular migrants came to a head in early 2010 when a migrant was wounded by pellets (Donadio, 2010). The authorities were unsure if it was a direct attack or if the migrant got caught in the crossfire of a mafia shooting. The migrants, who were already living in dire conditions and were being underpaid, blamed the attack on racism. Migrant workers are often discriminated against “on the grounds of their actual or perceived nationality, colour, religion, “race”, or ethnic origin” (Allasino, Reyneri, Venturini & Zincone, 2004, p. V). Economic exploitation based on the idea of a hierarchy of races can be found in society since the emergence of colonialism and slavery (Castles, 2000). The migrants in Rosarno no longer accepted this and the subsequent riots got quickly out of hand (Donadio, 2010). These riots were not an isolated incident, but rather reflected much larger social tensions in the Italian society:

“This event pulled the lid off something that we who work in the sector know well but no one talks about: That many Italian economic realities are based on the exploitation of low-cost foreign labor, living in subhuman conditions, without human rights,” said Flavio Di Giacomo, the spokesman for the International Organization for Migration in Italy.

The workers live in “semi-slavery,” added Mr. Di Giacomo, who said, “It’s shameful that this is happening in the heart of Italy.” (Donadio, 2010)

At the end of 2014, violence against migrants exploded again in Italy. When strikes and demonstrations in November 2014 turned violent, many Italians turned their anger over issues related to the economic crisis against migrants and refugees (Squires, 2014). There were protests in Milan, Padua and Rome. In Rome, a refugee centre was attacked repeatedly and 36 refugees, all unaccompanied minors, had to be evacuated. The Telegraph describes the events as follows:

Locals had hurled stones, flares and other missiles at the migrant centre, smashing windows, setting fire to dumpster rubbish bins and fighting running battles with riot police during several nights of violence. They demanded that the facility be closed down and claimed that the refugees from Africa and Asia were dirty, anti-social and violent.

Some protesters, with suspected links to the extreme Right, yelled “Viva Il Duce” or Long Live Mussolini, calling the migrants “b*****”, “animals” and “filthy Arabs”. (Squires, 2014)

Many of the protesters were said to be from extreme right groups. Senator Maurizio Gasparri, a member of the conservative party 'Lega Nord', blamed the government policies for the issues. According to Gasparri, migrants are dumped in the poor, working class neighbourhoods where the government provides no facilities (Deira, 2014). Some of the migrants reacted to the violent attacks in an open letter to the Italians:

"In these last few days we have heard many bad things said about us – that we steal, that we rape women, that we are uncivilised.

"These words are very hurtful – we did not come to Italy to create problems, least of all to fight with Italians. We are truly grateful to them – we were saved in the middle of the sea by the Italian authorities. We are here to build new lives." (Squires, 2014)

The UNHCR asked for the protection of these migrants, saying that vulnerable refugees, especially minors, who have fled from war should be protected instead of attacked (Novum, 2014).

As a part of this research, I have explored both Italian and European policies on migration and asylum. Gaining more insight in the why and how of racism against migrants and in how it affects their mobility can have a positive effect on these policies. This study exposes the sometimes concealed and other times very direct acts of racism against migrants. Becoming more aware of issues of racism against migrants could contribute to public debates about migration to Italy specifically and the European Union in general.

1.3 THESIS STRUCTURE

Overall, this thesis consists of six chapters, including this introduction. In this introduction I started off with a brief presentation of the theme of this research. Then I introduced my research objective and questions, the concepts and theories, the case study and my fieldwork period. In the last section of this chapter I explained the scientific and societal relevance of this study.

In the next chapter, Chapter 2, I will outline the theoretical framework. In the first section of this chapter, I explain the concepts that are related to migration. Concepts such as borders, bordering and othering, and the mobility perspective will be discussed here. In the second section, we will look at concepts that are related to racism and xenophobia. Here, different perspectives on and manifestations of racism are discussed. We will look at racism from a popular, institutional, state and political perspective, and we will discuss how racism is related to prejudice and stereotypes. In the last paragraph, I introduce the concept of xeno-racism, which is a relatively new perspective on racism in which socio-economic status is more important than skin colour. I finish this chapter with some concluding remarks in which all the concepts are linked together.

The methodological framework of this research is outlined in Chapter 3. I explain the broader methodological approach in the first section of this chapter. The second section will give extensive consideration to the methods I used for literature research and for the collection and analysis of empirical data.

Chapter 4 shows the relation between racism and migration by presenting a case study of Italy. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the history of migration and the current migration trends in Italy. In this section, I will explain how Italy changed from an emigration to an immigration country. The most recent numbers and statistics on migration in Italy are also discussed in this section. The second section focuses on the policies and politics concerning migrant in Italy. This section is divided into three parts. The first part delves deeper into anti-immigrant politics, in which the Lega Nord is the most prominent party. The second part discusses xeno-racist violence in Italy. The third and last part explores the connection that is often made between immigrants and issues of crime and security.

Then, in Chapter 5 I will show the empirical findings of my fieldwork in Milan, Italy. In the first section of this chapter, I present the experiences my interviewees had with firstly mobility and migration and

secondly xeno-racism. In the second part, we will discuss to what extent xeno-racism should be considered a factor in mobility and migration.

Chapters 4 and 5 will examine the sub-questions of this research, because the main question is too broad and difficult to answer at once. The three sub-questions are:

1. *What are the main characteristics of xeno-racism against African migrants in the Lombardy region?*

This question explores what xeno-racism against African migrants in (northern) Italy looks like. We will for instance look at the types of xenophobic and racist acts African migrants experience themselves and the types that are documented by the media, the authorities and scholars.

2. *What are the main characteristics of the (intra-European) mobility of African migrants in the Lombardy region?*

This question explores the most important characteristics of West African migrants in and around Milan. We will look at this from a macro, meso and micro point of view: from national statistics to in-depth interviews. We will also study why, how, when and where migrants decide to move. This goes further than just looking at where they came from and where they are going, the time in between is just as important.

3. *What other aspects influence the relation between the experiences of xeno-racism and the (intra-European) mobility of African migrants?*

This question explores what other motivations, possibly connected to xeno-racism, can influence the intra-European mobility of African migrants. Here, we will also look at the influence of European and Italian politics and policies – for instance migration and asylum policies – on these dynamics.

Some concluding remarks are presented in the sixth and final chapter. In the first section of Chapter 6, I will present the conclusions of this study and I will place these conclusions in the larger academic and societal discussions. In this section, I will go back to the main question of this research:

- ➔ *How do African migrants in Lombardy, Italy experience xeno-racism, and how do such experiences affect their desire to migrate elsewhere in the European Union?*

The last section of Chapter 6 shows the limitations of this study and introduces some suggestions for further research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Migration will, in all likelihood, remain an intrinsic feature of our world. (De Haas, 2007, p. 838)

The two main concepts of this study are 'migration and mobility' on the one hand and 'racism and xenophobia' on the other hand. There is plenty of literature on both concepts, but they are rarely linked together in that literature.

Some migrants move to Italy and stay there, while others move further. The question is: why? Do experiences with racism influence these processes? In the introduction, I already mentioned that racism can create a society in which migrants feel unwelcome and excluded, and that sometimes they even fear being physically attacked. Racism on the level of the state and institutions can make life difficult for migrants because of restrictive rules and regulations. Exclusionary migration and asylum policies often make it hard for migrants to obtain a visa, and even harder to obtain a residence permit or passport. Racism can also make it difficult to find housing, to get a job and to receive good education. Because of this racism can affect migrants' lives and the choices they make. The question is: are they willing to stay in a society that does not make them feel welcome and that does not offer them the same opportunities as natives?

The first section of this chapter will focus on migration and mobility, and related concepts such as migration policies and borders. The second section explores the concepts of racism and xenophobia. In the last section, I give some concluding remarks in which I will bring these concepts together.

2.1 MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Migration and mobility are complicated concepts. Processes of bordering and othering are an important influence on migration and mobility, and will therefore be discussed in the first two paragraphs. In the third paragraph, migration will be discussed in a rather traditional sense, whereas the fourth paragraph will focus more on the concept of mobility, which has recently become more important in migration research.

2.1.1 BORDERS AND BORDERING

International migration implies there are borders that are being crossed. For many, borders may seem like a natural and given thing, but in reality borders are made by people and also often changed by people. There are many different definitions of borders, boundaries and frontiers. In the classical sense, borders are 'lines in the sand' that separate sovereign territories (Newman & Paasi, 1998). That is not the only way of looking at borders, though. A new research school in borders and boundaries studies arose in the 1990s. In this postmodern era, scholars from different disciplines had very different perspectives on borders and boundaries than in previous times. These changing ideas about borders go hand in hand with the emergence of globalisation. For international relations scholars, borders shaped the international political organisation of the world. They therefore saw borders as states' expression of the sovereignty or territoriality (Newman & Paasi, 1998).

Geography scholars, however, had a very different interpretation of borders and boundaries. According to Newman and Paasi (1998), these scholars saw borders as an 'instrument' that communicates power. The importance of power is the main characteristic of this postmodern perspective on borders and boundaries. Since the postmodern era, borders, boundaries and frontiers have been seen as constructs (Newman & Paasi, 1998). Borders are constructed historically, socially, politically and discursively. In this way of thinking not only the borders of sovereign states are important, but also, for example, the boundaries between different cultures or different languages.

In these new movements in borders studies, Newman and Paasi (1998) identify four main currents:

1. Changing or disappearing borders

Scholars in this movement see borders as a changing and possibly disappearing phenomenon. Borders influence the way our identities are created. Identities are no longer created based on fixed 'places' but based on dynamic 'flows'. Globalisation has changed our world: our identities are no longer based only on the single identity of a sovereign nation state. Nowadays, we have multiple identities that are created in shared spaces.

2. Sociospatial identities

Borders are socially constructed boundaries between different socio-cultural groups. Borders do not only separate sovereign states from each other, they also separate different people and different cultures from each other. Newman and Paasi (1998) say that "identity and boundaries thus seem to be different sides of the same coin" (p. 194), because they are inextricably bound together.

3. Inclusion and exclusion

People use borders and identities to order and to understand their world. Borders create a distinction between 'us' and 'them', and between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Therefore borders are closely related to other social processes, such as social power, governance, and also racism.

4. Spatial scale

Borders play a role on different levels and in different ways: on a macro-level they may be important in international politics, and on a micro-level they matter in the everyday lives of everyone. Borders can be seen as a narrative that has a different meaning in different contexts.

These postmodern theories do not always correspond with reality. In most of the world, borders are not disappearing. In the European Union, the internal borders have disappeared in the last few decades, but at the same time the external borders have been strengthened (Newman & Paasi, 1998). Stricter visa policies, higher fences, more military forces, or other ways of strengthening the borders have not been able to stop irregular migrants from coming to Europe, but they do form an obstacle and they hinder their mobility. More recently, the internal borders of the European Union have not been as open as they used to be. Hungary, for example, is building a fence along its borders, and Germany has reinstated border controls because of an increased influx of migrants.

Time has proven again and again that migrants adapt: they find new routes to Europe or they find ways to hide their identity (De Haas, 2007; Van Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001). However, these border policies make it much harder for migrants to come to Europe. They are not 'just' obstacles that hinder their mobility and that try to deter migrants from coming to Europe, they are actually quite dangerous to these migrants. These extreme border policies lead to many casualties, and they force many of the migrants who have been able to reach Europe into a life of illegality. These policies "lessen the life chances of globalism's victims still further, by denying them freedom of movement, confining them to camps in their own countries, and removing the hope of obtaining sanctuary from the persecution of authoritarian regimes" (Fekete, 2001, p. 28).

2.1.2 OTHERNESS AND OTHERING

The gap between postmodern theory and the reality of borders can be explained by the concepts of bordering, ordering and othering. Theories of bordering, ordering and othering were created by scholars in the discipline of critical geopolitics. In this discipline, borders are not seen as physical lines. They are not a fixed point in space or in time (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001). Borders are not visible in our landscape, they are imaginary. They are constantly produced and reproduced by different social processes. Because of this, we should not think of it in terms of borders (a noun) but in terms of bordering (a verb). Bordering is "an ongoing strategic effort to make a difference in space among the movements of people, money or products" (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001, p. 126). This means that processes

of bordering, ordering and othering have an impact on migration, because these processes influence how and where to people can migrate.

In the EU, for instance, borders are not a natural creation. They are not fixed in time or space, but dynamic and ever changing. People create borders and people change borders, which is why we can see 'bordering' as a social practice. In the post-modern world, many borders and boundaries have become blurred. In this changing world, borders have become "key strategies to objectify space" (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001, p. 128). This means that differences between countries, cultures and people are highlighted by processes of bordering. We need borders to distinguish between 'us' and 'them', to create our social identities and to bring order into the often confusing world around us (Newman & Paasi, 1998). We also use borders to protect our culture and our economic welfare. It has never been easier to move money around the world than it is today, but at the same time the EU is obstructing the movement of migrants from less wealthy countries towards their own territory. Money can go wherever we want it to go, but people cannot move as freely around the globe (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001).

We could say that the EU is not only 'bordering' by creating and changing borders and border policies, but that it is also 'othering' (Van Houtum, 2010). The European border policies create a clear distinction between insiders and outsiders, and between those who are welcome and those who are unwelcome. By giving aid and humanitarian assistance to developing countries the EU hopes to strengthen their democratic and economic stability. This can be seen as a strategy to protect the EU from unwanted migrants and terrorism. One of the policies that the EU uses for this goal is the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP):

Through its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU works with its southern and eastern neighbours to achieve the closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration. This goal builds on common interests and on values - democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and social cohesion. (European Union External Action, n.d.)

By defining its 'neighbours' the EU also defines who is an insider and who is an outsider. Van Houtum (2010) points out the double meaning of the ENP and related policies: the EU is trying to protect itself by helping other countries. By promoting values in other countries that the EU thinks are important, and by asking these countries to control their borders in return for aid, the EU hopes to keep unwanted migrants from coming to Europe. This way, the EU is pushing its border outward and making these countries their new frontier (Fekete, 2001; Van Houtum, 2010).

There are other EU policies that are used for bordering, ordering and othering. The EU, for example, uses a positive and negative list that determines if foreigners need a visa to enter the Schengen area or if they can enter visa-free (Van Houtum, 2010). By making distinctions between wanted and unwanted migrants, the EU is bordering, ordering and othering. People who are viewed as adding value to EU are allowed to enter, and people who are seen as a security risk are kept out. These policies force people into immobility or illegality.

This analysis of bordering, ordering and othering may be uncomfortable because it usually leads to the conclusion that strengthening of the EU's borders is futile and that the current border policies discriminate people based on where they are born, what religion they have, or how wealthy they are (Van Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001). These policies cause a vicious circle, as is shown in Figure 1. When migrants who cannot enter legally, they will seek for illegal ways. Entering illegally leads to more criminalisation. Criminalisation then leads to even more extreme border policies, and so the vicious circle goes on and on (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014). These strict border policies do not prevent the influx of migrants, which is their goal, but they do lead to the criminalisation of migration. These policies are thus counteractive.

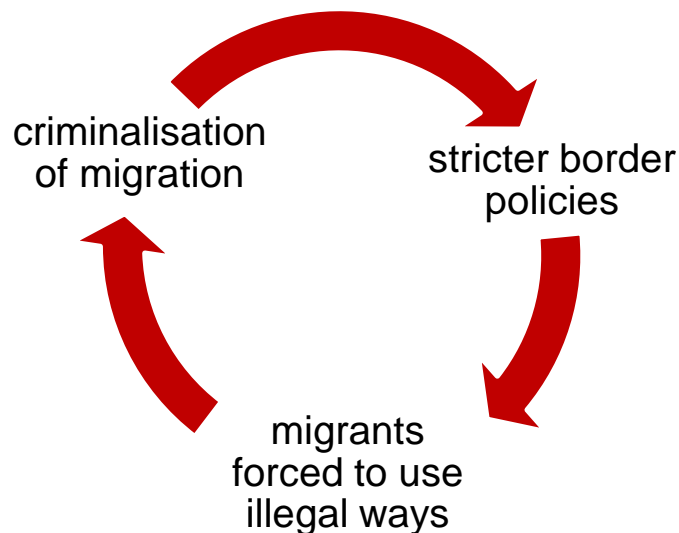


Figure 2. The vicious circle of migration and criminalisation

This vicious circle leads to frictions in European societies that should not be ignored. An example is the rise of extreme right anti-immigrant parties in many European countries (Betz, 2001; Castles et al., 2014; Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014; Pettigrew, 1998; Zaslove, 2004). The changing world – which includes globalisation and migration – leads to a lot of turmoil in many European societies. There are voices calling for stricter border policies or for completely closing the borders. We can argue that these measures are counteractive, but that does not stop these sentiments. We should not ignore these sentiments, because they will not simply disappear. They can lead to more acts of racism and that could have very negative effects on migrants' lives. The political side in the Italian case will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

2.1.3 MIGRANTS AND MIGRANT RECEPTION

There are many different types of migrants. Migration policies are usually created around these different categories. Overall we can define four main groups of migrants (Van Es, 2000):

- Migrants from former colonies and repatriated migrants
- Labour migrants
- Involuntary migrants, such as refugees
- Irregular migrants

These four categories may seem clearly defined, but in reality it is not always easy to put a migrant in a single category. Migrants who may come into the country as asylum seekers applying for a refugee status, may choose to stay in the country illegally when their asylum application is declined. In other cases, migrants may come from former colonies but apply for refugee status, as is the case with, for instance, Eritreans in Italy.

Most West African migrants who enter Italy do have some characteristics in common. They are, for instance, often young and male (Solé, 2004). They are never from former Italian colonies, since Italy never had colonies in the west of Africa. If they find a job, then it is often in the industrial or service sector, where little to no competition from the native population exists. These are the jobs that are often unpopular with the native population. If they cannot find a job on the regular job market, they will often work in the informal economy, as street vendors for instance (Melossi, 2003; Solé, 2004).

Colombo and Sciortino (2004) identify different types of migrants who have migrated to Italy in the post-World War II period:

- *Post-colonial*: In the decolonisation period, many Italians returned to Italy; an estimated number of 550 000 to 850 000 between 1940s and 1950s (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). There were not only Italians though, but also foreign service personnel and citizens of the former colonies, for instance Eritrea, who left their liberated countries and migrated to Italy.
- *Work migration*: The Italian government never actively recruited foreign workers, but there was definitely a demand for those workers in Italy. There were, for instance, seasonal workers in agriculture, and later also in phishing on the islands (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). In the beginning, the early 1960s, most of these labour migrants were from Tunisia, but later the number of labour migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and Campania increased, especially in relation to the tomato harvest. After 1989, eastern Europeans were recruited in Trentino for the apple harvest. A different group of labour migrants are the domestic workers. They were recruited from the 1960s onwards by agencies linked to the Catholic Church and came mostly from East Africa, the Philippines and former Portuguese colonies. A third group of labour migrants came later. From the late 1970s onwards migrants from Senegal and Ghana were recruited to work in industries in the north of Italy, mostly Bergamo, Brescia and Veneto. Besides these groups of migrants, there are the skilled migrants who obtain important positions in business, management, cultural institutions or the fashion industry. Most of them settle in Milan, which is often seen as “the economic capital of the country and the Italian city most closely resembling the paradigm of the ‘global city’” (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004, p. 57).
- *Students*: Italy has attracted many students from foreign countries because of several reasons: it played a role in the oil-countries in the 1960s and 1970s, its universities were affordable and often, scholarships were given to students from developing countries (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004).
- *Refugees*: Italy traditionally had a low number of asylum seekers compared to other European countries. Only after 1990 Italy began to recognise asylum seekers other than those from the (former) Soviet Union (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). Since then their numbers have increased.
- *Self-employment*: Self-employed immigrants in Italy are an interesting phenomenon that we know little about. It is a phenomenon that we often see in Milan, especially migrants from China, Egypt and Tunisia were known as entrepreneurs there (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004).
- *Youth*: Middle-class youth from Mediterranean cities that would prefer to migrate to other European countries, mostly France, but cannot often chose Italy as a fall-back destination (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). They want to explore the West, to have access to goods they do not have access to in their country of origin, and they want to seize the opportunities the West may offer them.

Both the EU and the Italian government use these different categories as a basis for their migration policies. Where labour migrants can apply for a work visa, asylum seekers have to use a different route to apply for asylum. This makes it much easier for some migrants to enter the country than for others. For example, it is easier for high-skilled migrants than for low-skilled migrants to receive a work visa, even though there may be a demand for low-skilled workers in the country. Most European governments are not eager to welcome West African migrants, especially those with a low level of education and little wealth.

There are different facets and causes to the negative reception of these migrants. Solé (2004) explains that this negative reception is formed by a combination of “government policies, the job market and public opinion” (p. 1212). Migrants from West Africa and other non-European regions are often associated with crime, the ‘stealing’ of jobs from the native population, housing problems, et cetera (Solé, 2004). Solé explains how these issues influence local population’s opinion:

In concrete terms, all these factors have an impact on the local population which then develops a logic whereby immigrants are excluded on three grounds: public security; cultural identity (their cultures are understood as an attack on ‘our’ customs and reflect a

fear that the cultural difference is 'overwhelming'); and economic grounds or competition for resources, especially jobs (Bergalli 2001). (p. 1212)

These three grounds are used as a reason for exclusion and racism. It is, for instance, normalised for the police to stop migrants on the street because they could be a threat to public security.

Italy actually needs migrants to do the work that the Italians themselves do not want to do, as do other countries in southern Europe (De Haas, 2007; Solé, 2004). However, because of government policies many of these migrants can only enter illegally, and because of job market regulation they can only work in the informal economy (Cantarella, 2014; De Haas, 2007; Melossi, 2003; Solé, 2004). They are criminalised through rules and regulations. Due to this, the public associates them with negative effects on crime and on the job market. Solé (2004) reveals an interesting paradox here; on the one hand Italy need these migrants, but on the other hand their reception is mainly negative:

Despite the possible negative or perverse effects that highly rigid labour markets and the welfare state produce in European countries, attempts are made to relieve the tension between the requirement for immigrant workers to cover the demands of the job market and the need for them to be integrated into society. On the one hand, many small- and medium-sized firms in sectors where native workers do not wish to work survive due to the presence of immigrants. In this sense, immigration contributes to making the labour market more flexible. On the other hand, the presence of immigrants in schools and neighbourhoods leads to xenophobic attitudes and problems of integration, as can be seen in the case of various European countries. (p. 1290-1220)

So, migrants who are unwanted may be needed at the same time. It is a paradox that is hard to resolve (Cantarella, 2014; Solé, 2004). Government policies affect the job market, the job market influences the public opinion and that public opinion has an effect on the formation of government policies. Because it is all related, it is hard to stop this downward spiral of negative sentiments. Time and time again, studies have shown that restrictive immigration policies do not stop migrants from coming to Europe. They do, however, put migrants in a marginalised position and increase feelings of xenophobia and racism within the population (Cantarella, 2014; De Haas, 2007). Therefore, these restrictive policies have a negative influence on the social cohesion in many European societies and should be looked at from a critical perspective.

2.1.4 MOBILITY AND MIGRATION

The concept of mobility is often seen as a simple move from place A to place B, but in reality it is a lot more dynamic and complicated than that (Cresswell, 2006, 2010; Schapendonk, 2011; Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). Many migrants do not travel in a straight line from place A to place B or do not simply leave place A to settle in place B. Their journeys are often much more complicated. The importance of the phase in between place A and B is often overlooked (Schapendonk, 2011). This research is about West African migrants in northern Italy, but it is not my aim to see West Africa as place A and northern Italy as place B. The starting point in this research project is not 'settlement' but 'mobility'. This goes further than just studying racism as a possible 'push and pull' or 'keep and repel' factor. It is about the journey these migrants have followed and about their wishes and possibilities for the future. In the last two decades, we have seen that scholars focus less on migration as a move from A to B, and more on mobility, movement and their complicated dynamics (Cresswell, 2006, 2010; Halfacree, 2004; Schapendonk, 2011).

Migration is always a major life changing event (Halfacree, 2004). It is easier to choose stability than to uproot your entire life. Migrants can have different types of motivations. There are, for instance, social, economic, cultural and political motivations. Many migration studies have viewed the decision to migrate as a rational, economic decision. Halfacree, however, pleads for a more cultural perspective:

- Recognising the *multiple currents* that feed into the decision-making process, many of which may be poorly acknowledged at the discursive level of consciousness;
- Regarding migrants as being likely to provide *multiple reasons*, even if entangled and often partial, for their action, especially when attempts are made to explain *all* the aspects of the migration;
- Situating migration inextricably within *culture*. (Halfacree, 2004, p. 241)

Racism is a motivation that could fit into different categories. It can be political, but it can be seen as a social motivation when migrants have to deal with racism in their direct environment. This will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

The mobility of people is influenced by a 'politics of mobility', which means the "social relations that involve the production and distribution of power" (Cresswell, 2010, p. 21). This means that mobility, like most things, is not equally accessible for all human beings (Cresswell, 2010; Schapendonk, 2011).

Mobility is a resource that is differentially accessed. One person's speed is another person's slowness. Some move in such a way that others get fixed in place. [...] Consider the opening up of borders in the European Union to enable the enactment of the EU mantra of free mobility. This in turn depends on the closing down of mobilities at the borders (often airports) of the new Europe (Balibar, 2004; Verstraete, 2001). Speeds, slownesses, and immobilities are all related in ways that are thoroughly infused with power and its distribution. (Cresswell, 2010, p. 21)

This example is very relevant for this thesis. The EU opened up its internal borders, and by doing so increased and simplified the mobility of EU citizens within the EU. At the same time, the EU fortified its external borders and intensified its border and migration policies. This made it harder for non-EU citizens to enter the EU. However, once they have entered the EU, they can travel rather easily to other EU countries. During the last few months some European countries have reinstated border controls, because of this travelling through Europe has become more difficult than in the years before. It is, however, still easier to travel through the EU than to enter the EU. All in all, the EU's border policies have a positive effect on some people's mobility and a negative effect on other's.

There are different types of mobility and immobility. Some people stay in the same place for their whole lives, other people move every few years, and many people fall somewhere in between those two categories. To be able to work with the concept of mobility it is operationalised by dividing migrants into three categories:

1. *Probable settler/stayer*:
 - a. *Voluntarily*: someone who has settled somewhere (job, family, friends) and is planning to stay there in the foreseeable future.
 - b. *Involuntarily*: someone who does not have the economic capacity to migrate (this can, however, change quickly).
2. *Probably mover*: someone who has the desire and capacity to move to another place within or beyond the national borders.
3. *Frequent mover*: someone who does not settle anywhere but keeps moving to other places.

Both the desire to move or to stay in a certain place, the (economic) capacity and the asylum and migration policies play a role in possibly migrating elsewhere. The desire is the factor that is most relevant to my research question, but in reality the (economic) capacity and the asylum and migration policies can be obstacles that makes it impossible for migrants to follow their desired journey.

For some migrants Italy may be the end point of their journey. They may choose to settle and spend the rest of their lives there. Others may go back to West Africa, either because they want to or because they have to due to migration and asylum policies. For others Italy may be a transit point on their journey

to another place. Most migrants cannot yet know what their future will look like, but they do have certain experiences, desires and possibilities.

2.2 RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

Racism is arguably the most deeply entrenched – certainly the most readily evoked – form of intolerance in our time. (Sniderman et al., 2000, p. 15)

This section will explore the concepts of racism, xenophobia and xeno-racism. Racism can be expressed in many forms and by many actors. Sometimes it will be very visible, but it can also be difficult to see. It can be seen in everyday life, but also in more official contexts. This makes it a concept that can be hard to grasp. Racism is a very sensitive issue, especially in a post-World War II European context. It is nonetheless an important issue in today's public debates.

The first paragraph of this section will show different explanations of racism, xenophobia and related anti-immigrant sentiments. The second paragraph will focus on a more specific manifestation of racism: institutional, state and political racism. In the third paragraph we will explore how prejudice and stereotypes are related to racism. In the fourth and last paragraph I will discuss the notion of 'xeno-racism', which will play an important role in the rest of this thesis.

2.2.1 RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENTS

In this thesis, racism and xenophobia are constantly explored in relation to migration. Racism and xenophobia are, however, not a result of migratory movements (Wimmer, 1997). Racism and xenophobia would still exist in a society without migration, but that does not mean that they are unrelated. Sniderman et al. (2000) explain that "[a]s pioneering studies have shown, a surge in the inflow of immigrants, for example, can cause spikes in the aggregate levels of hostility toward immigrants; so, too, can a slump in the economy" (p. 9). Wimmer (1997), however, disagrees with this statement, saying that "xenophobic fears of foreign domination are not particularly virulent if wages drop or unemployment rises" (p. 19). He argues that there are other explanations. Pichler (2010) and Semyonov et al. (2006) argue, based on statistical analysis, that anti-immigrant sentiments do rise when the number of immigrants increases and when economic conditions deteriorate.

All in all, it is clear that racism and migration are related, but it is difficult to grasp how exactly they influence each other. Pichler (2010) therefore argues for a more dynamic research approach. Xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments can be explained by a combination of factors: "economic conditions (GDP), political climate (right-wing party vote) and immigrant group size" (Pichler, 2010, p. 458). Which factor weighs more depends on the specific economic and cultural conditions in a certain country. This explains the different levels of anti-immigrant sentiment in different European countries. Economic factors play an important role in anti-immigrant sentiments in times of recession, but during periods of economic prosperity the cultural factors become increasingly important. The economic crisis in Europe has strengthened the economic foundations of xenophobia. However, even in 2006, when the economy was doing better in many European countries, anti-immigrant sentiments did not decrease. The foundations of these sentiments changed from economic to cultural. Pichler thinks that xenophobia may even be the most explicit in these times: "Since the economic argument does not carry so much weight in times of low unemployment, increasing wages and so forth, emphasizing cultural or symbolic reasons clearly makes sense from the perspective of social identity and boundary-making theories" (p. 460). Cultural racism is the belief that cultural differences between groups are insurmountable and that therefore everyone should live within his own separate group (Rydgren, 2003). This type of cultural racism blurs the lines with the concept of xenophobia.

While it is interesting and important to know how migration and racism affect each other, it is also key to explore where discourses of racism and xenophobia stem from. It will give us better insight in the development of discussions on racism and xenophobia. To best understand this phenomenon we should look at as many sides as possible. All of these approaches present interesting insight in racism and xenophobia. Wimmer (1997) presents four popular approaches to xenophobia and racism:

1. *Rational choice theory*: This model explains that racism and xenophobia arise because the native population sees migrants as competition on the job market, the housing market, et cetera. Pichler (2010) describes the same theoretical perspective, but names it 'realistic group conflict theory'. Even though there are many scholars supporting this theory and there is a lot of empirical data supporting these ideas (Pichler, 2010), Wimmer argues that it is not a suitable explanation because, for instance, the actual unemployment numbers cannot explain an increase or decrease in racist discourse. Therefore, this model does not explain racism and xenophobia very well, but Wimmer agrees that it would be interesting to further explore where the sentiment that migrants steal jobs comes from.
2. *Functionalism*: This model says that the different cultures that migrants bring with them explain the origins of racism and xenophobia. The culture of the 'West' is seen as incompatible with the culture of the 'rest'. This, together with a low level of education and work experience, makes it hard, if not impossible, for migrants to integrate in western cultures. Xenophobic and racist reactions only arise because of this. Pichler (2010) describes similar theoretical approaches as the 'social identity theory'. In the previous theoretical framework, rational choice theory, the group threat was mainly economic, but here the group threat is social and cultural. Pichler explains that "[f]rom this angle, anti-immigrant sentiment is related to perceived distance between majority and minority based on expressions of individual and collective value orientation, culture and national identity" (p. 447). There are some aspects that worsen the perception of immigrants as a threat: "larger [...] cultural, ethnic and racial distances and [...] more 'exclusive' national identities in terms of protectionism, nativism and chauvinism" (Pichler, 2010, p. 447). Wimmer (1997) argues against this theory, he thinks that cultures are not static. History has shown us many times that people can adjust and learn. He does not, however, want to say that cultural differences never cause problems. He says that "cultural differences and [...] the presence of immigrants of foreign cultures can cause confusion, fear and defensive reactions on the part of long-time residents" (p. 25). But while cultural differences can cause problems, they are never solely responsible for racism and xenophobia.
3. *Discourse theory*: Scholars in this field of studies emphasise the importance of power relations. The people who hold the power are also the ones who create a "discourse of exclusion and self-empowerment, and institutionalize it in multicultural social work or in immigration policies" (Wimmer, 1997, p. 25). The people in power blame the consequences of this discourse and these policies not on their own politics, but on migrants' "cultural distinctiveness, inability to assimilate and unbridgeable cultural difference" (Wimmer, 1997, p. 25). They use this discourse as a critique against the multicultural society and as a call for protection of the indigenous culture. This migration 'issue' takes the blame for other problems in society, from political to economic problems. Racism and xenophobia are therefore seen as mere expressions of cultural conflicts. Pichler (2010) describes two levels in this theory. Firstly, the individual level, where scholars study xenophobia "in nationalistic mindsets often expressed in political orientation toward the extreme right" (p. 447) and "in lack of personal contact" (p. 447). Secondly, at a macro-level, where scholars focus on "the proportion of votes for the extreme right, the size of the immigrant population and their origins nurture anti-immigrant sentiment" (Pichler, 2010, p. 447). Pichler, however, notes that empirical support for this theory is ambiguous and Wimmer (1997) argues politics and policies often react to public discussions. The people in power cannot easily force their views onto the public. Therefore, we should explore the conditions that make it possible for these discourses to spread within the public.
4. *Phenomenology*: This approach argues that racism and xenophobia have little to do with the political discourse or the migration influx, but have a lot to do with a general societal crisis.

Modernisation has changed the state and has affected all social positions. According to Wimmer (1997) “[t]his leads to a crisis of collective identity so that the calm self-certainty which might enable unproblematic relations with the minorities gets lost” (p. 27). This new uncertain ‘self’ can also be blamed on the presence of an ‘other’. The ‘others’, the migrants, are “excluded from the national ‘we’” (Wimmer, 1997, p. 27). This approach therefore defines xenophobia and racism as attempts to make sense of a changed society and to reinvent the national self, a new feeling of ‘we’. This approach cannot explain, however, why racist and xenophobic tendencies are unequally divided under the population. It also fails to explain why this characteristic is chosen to mark the difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’, when there are so many other possible characteristics.

According to Wimmer (1997), one very important point is missing in all these approaches to racism and xenophobia: the struggle over collective goods. The modern age brought with it a new ‘imagined community’, which Winner explains as “the conception of a political community of destiny, based on common origin and historical experience” (p. 28). This imagined community was larger than it was in the ages before: it changed from a local community into a national community, and it had clear territorial borders. Within this community there were certain ‘communal interests’: national goods and social rights that were guarded by the state. This developed into the modern welfare-state and created the way we nowadays think about citizenship. Only those who were citizens of the nation state could gain access to the power of that state. The modern nation state can be seen as “a successful compromise of interests between different social groups: an exchange of the guarantee of political loyalty for the promise of participation and security” (Wimmer, 1997, p. 29).

Racism and xenophobia thus stems from the way we have designed the social contract of our community. When social conflict occurs or intensifies, the population may become confused and disorientated. It may affect some more than others. Especially the, what Wimmer calls, ‘downwardly mobile groups’ are affected by these crises (Pichler, 2010; Semyonov et al., 2006; Wimmer, 1997). Wimmer explains:

In the Weberian view [...], xenophobia and racism are interpreted as expressions of ultra-nationalist ideology; downwardly mobile groups appeal to the institutionalized and hegemonial image of a national group of solidarity in order to reassure their place in the core of the social fabric. They thus perceive people outside this imagined community of destiny as competitors for state-organized promises of solidarity and security. (p. 19)

The division of these social goods is often seen as a ‘zero-sum’ game by the population. Everyone who does not belong to the national ‘we’, migrants for example, can be seen as a threat to the national community. Extremists may even take the law in their own hands and remove that threat from their ‘territory’ (Wimmer, 1997).

It is important to know that the ‘object’ of racism and xenophobia nowadays is very different from the object in earlier ages. Wimmer (1997) explains that

[i]t is significant that racist constructions were initially used as ideological tools to legitimate the marginalization of peasant and proletarian sections of society, and only later in the process of the institutionalization of the nation-state were directed against non-national ‘others’ (p. 29)

This in particular explains that racism and xenophobia as we see it nowadays are not something ‘natural’ or something that has always been this way. Our perspective of racism and xenophobia has been formed through the way we have organised our modern-day welfare state and the social contract that precedes this.

2.2.2 INSTITUTIONAL, STATE AND POLITICAL RACISM

In the previous paragraphs, I have explained processes of bordering, ordering and othering. These processes play an important role in racism and discrimination against migrants. Racism can have different types of actors and in this paragraph I will look at racism by institutions and the state.

Racism cannot always be seen easily. Many acts of violence are so normal in our society that we do not even notice them (Zizek, 2008). Everyday racism is part of our 'common sense'. Castles (2000) explains that "in ostensibly non-racist societies, the influence of past ideologies and practices makes itself felt indirectly through discourses in the media, politics and popular culture" (p. 173). This type of violence is called objective or structural violence (Zizek, 2008). It is legitimised by dominant discourse, but when looked at from a critical perspective, it is definitely unfair. However, the examples of the riots in Rosarno in 2010 and in Rome in early 2015 have showed us that racism can take very direct and visible forms as well. This is what Zizek calls subjective violence. Racism that is expressed by the state and by other official institutions often falls in the category of 'invisible' violence. It is normalised and therefore often unseen, but its effects are still felt. Zizek's definition of objective and subjective violence can be linked to Rydgren's (2003) ideas on xenophobia:

Latent xenophobia mainly consists of more or less unarticulated negatively prejudiced stereotypes and beliefs, which normally are 'taken for granted', while manifest xenophobia in addition consists of more elaborated beliefs and attitudes, which implies a higher level of consciousness. (p. 48)

Latent xenophobia is a form of objective or structural violence. It has become part of the dominant discourse, so most people do not even notice it. Manifest xenophobia, on the other hand, is a much more obvious and subjective form of violence.

In the second half of the twentieth century, discriminatory migration policies were introduced in many European countries (Fekete, 2001). Today's state racism is different from the racism in the previous century, because most racist policies are not carried out by national states but by supranational bodies, of which the European Union is the most important in this study. In the previous section, I have briefly introduced the EU's positive/negative Schengen list, which decides if foreigners can enter the Schengen area without a visa. This policy is a good example of institutional racism in the EU. This list was previously called the black/white list. The new name has less racial connotations, but the content is still the same: people from countries on the positive list can enter the EU without a visa, while people from countries on the negative list need a visa to enter (Van Houtum, 2010). The countries on the negative list are usually developing countries with a population that is very often non-Caucasian and/or Muslim.

Which criteria are used to place some countries on the negative list and others on the positive list? According to EUR-lex, the official website on EU law, the positive and negative lists are based on these criteria:

[C]riteria such as, for example, illegal immigration, public policy and security, economic benefit (tourism and foreign trade), external relations including considerations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as regional coherence and reciprocity. These decisions are sometimes taken as the consequence of successful visa liberalisation dialogues with the third countries concerned. (EUR-Lex, 2014)

Here, illegal migration, security and economy are mentioned in the same sentence. In article 5 of the regulation the criteria mentioned are specifically illegal immigration, public policy and security, and the EU's relations with other countries:

The determination of those third countries whose nationals are subject to the visa requirement, and those exempt from it, is governed by a considered, case-by-case assessment of a variety of criteria relating inter alia to illegal immigration, public policy and

security, and to the European Union's external relations with third countries, consideration also being given to the implications of regional coherence and reciprocity. (EU, 2001)

In this article, illegal immigration, public policy and security are once again mentioned in the same breath. It seems that illegal immigration is seen as a serious threat to public policy and security. Before, we have discussed that borders are constructed by people. The same goes for the borders of the European Union. This means that these visa policies are based on the same social constructs and imaginary borders, and not on facts. Why, for example, is the Italian island Lampedusa part of the European Union while Turkey is not? Why are the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla part of the EU while Morocco is not? Hansen (2004) quotes Peter Millar, who at the time was a columnist for the newspaper *The European*:

It is on the eastern front that the problem becomes acute. First and foremost, there is the matter of Russia. In purely geophysical terms the only valid continent is Eurasia. The problem is that it is simply too big. Also, ethnically, there is a distinct difference between Europeans and Asians. (p. 50)

These differences are, of course, not as factual as Millar presents them. The ethnical difference he refers to is a social construct. There may very well be just as many internal differences amongst Europeans or amongst Asians as there are differences between Europeans and Asians.

Hansen also quotes Duroselle from his – by the European Commission sponsored and promoted – book *Europe: a history of its peoples*:

'All we know is that the original inhabitants of western Europe were white-skinned, barely touched by the Mongol invasions – or by Asian and African immigration until after the end of World War II.' (Hansen, 2004, p. 50)

Here, a racial description of the historically typical 'European' is given. A description that many people who are living in Europe nowadays will not be able to relate to. Defining the European citizen as white or Caucasian excludes many citizens based on their race. The fact that this is done by an important EU institution like the European Commission shows us the scale of this problem. Hansen delves deeper into this issue:

What is at stake is a definition of current and future citizens of the EU, of 'Europeans', that is premised on ties to a European ancestral state, Christianity and other ethno-cultural markers. To put it differently, such a definition promotes, by default, an understanding of EU citizenship and identity that pertains exclusively to a transnational white ethnicity and hence ostracises the millions of EU inhabitants who cannot lay claim to the ethno-cultural heritage in question. (Hansen, 2004, p. 50)

Europeans who are non-white, non-Christian or have a non-European heritage, are not only excluded, but also stigmatised (Hansen, 2004). This group of people, often consisting of migrants, is seen as a problem or a threat to security, as is shown by regulation on the positive/negative visa list.

By excluding some countries from the European territory and by excluding certain Europeans from European citizenship, the EU is not only making distinctions based on race, ethnicity and culture, it is also forgetting its own past. Many crimes that were committed by Europeans in the times of colonialism and imperialism have been done on the basis of a feeling of superiority. These feelings have not disappeared. On the 2001 UN 'World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance' it was expressed that: "Theories of superiority of certain races and cultures over others promoted and practised during the colonial era continue to be propounded in one form or another, even today" (Hansen, 2004, p. 59). Some EU governments were quite unhappy with this declaration, which Hansen (2004) finds "hardly surprising, given how powerfully entrenched and dominant the EU's concept of Europe as a civilised, democratic entity is" (p. 59).

Institutional and political racism is not only found on the macro-scale of the European Union, but also on smaller scales. In this study, the national scale of Italy, the regional scale of Lombardy, and the city-scale of Milan are especially important. In Chapter 4, we will discuss more examples of institutional and political racism on these smaller scales.

2.2.3 RACISM, PREJUDICE AND STEREOTYPES

Racism is based on prejudice and stereotypes (Sniderman et al., 2000). Prejudice is something that all immigrants encounter. There is a difference, though, and that difference can be found in the colour of their skin. As Sniderman et al. explain in their book *The outsider. Prejudice and politics in Italy*: “All, because they are immigrants, will bear a burden of intolerance, but those who are black, by virtue of being black, must bear a heavier burden still” (Sniderman et al., 2000, p. 15). There can be many characteristics that make someone different from the majority of the population in a country, for instance nationality, religion or ethnicity. Some things, however, are more visible than others, and skin colour may be the most visible of all.

Sniderman et al. (2000) held a public survey under the Italian population. In this survey they asked Italians if they would contribute certain positive and negative characteristics to immigrants. Overall, the results did not seem so bad. A large majority of Italians classified immigrants as ‘honest’ and ‘law-abiding’. The majority, however, also classified them as ‘complainers’. A minority, 15.6 percent, of the Italians in this survey said that immigrants were inferior to Italians by nature. Even though this is a minority, it is still quite worrying to see that one out of six Italians thinks all immigrants are inferior. The researchers also asked these questions about different groups of immigrants: eastern Europeans, North Africans and Central Africans. Of these immigrants only the last group is considered black. The outcome of this survey was different than the researchers expected. The Italians contributed more negative characteristics to eastern Europeans than to Central Africans. This shows that racism plays a less important role in stigmatisation than they thought it would. There was, however, one exception: Africans were more often than eastern Europeans seen as inferior to Italians.

In another public survey, Sniderman et al. (2000) asked Italians to what extent they hold migrants responsible for (the aggravation of) certain social problems: crime, unemployment, housing, health and taxes. Here, between about third and half of the population answered that they held African migrants responsible for these issues, but overall the views of eastern Europeans were even more negative.

Because these results did not meet their hypothesis, Sniderman et al. (2000) came up with an experiment they called the ‘switch-experiment’. Their question was:

Could you tell the difference between a conversation in which Italians were talking about the same group of immigrants throughout and another in which, midway through, they switched and began to talk about an entirely different group of immigrants? (Sniderman et al., 2000, p. 52)

In short, their answer is ‘no’. Sniderman et al. (2000) say that although this outcome was unexpected for them, it does show us something important. It shows us that outgroups are interchangeable and that means that prejudice is not based on the specific characteristics that are attributed to specific groups, but on difference in general. Sniderman et al. therefore conclude that being an outsider is a more important factor in prejudice than race. Building on these results, I would like to introduce a new and broader concept in the next paragraph: xeno-racism.

2.2.4 XENO-RACISM

Those seeking asylum are demonised as bogus, as illegal immigrants and economic migrants scrounging at capital's gate and threatening capital's culture. And it is this demonisation of the people that the capitalist western world seeks to exclude in the name

of the preservation of economic prosperity and national identity that signals the emergence of a new racism. (Fekete, 2001, p. 23)

There are many types of racism and just as many definitions of these types. In the previous paragraph, we have seen that issues such as ethnicity, nationality and racism are often blurred together. Racism has both economic and cultural aspects (Sivanandan, 2001). It is used to discriminate, and discrimination is used to exploit. As explained before, Italy needs migrants to do certain low-skilled jobs, but these migrants cannot enter the country and work legally (Cantarella, 2014; Solé, 2004). That explains the economic aspect. However, the aspects of racism that we see most often, are the cultural aspects. Racism is expressed and negotiated by cultural expressions such as religion, art and the media (Sivanandan, 2001).

A concept that fits this study quite well and that encompasses both the economic and cultural aspects is the concept of 'xeno-racism' (Fekete, 2001; Sivanandan, 2001). This type of racism is not focused on skin colour per se. It is directed towards a new category of people. Sivanandan (2001) explains this in his short essay *Poverty is the new Black*:

But the other side of the coin of 'the fear or hatred of strangers' is the defence and preservation of 'our people', our way of life, our standard of living, our 'race'. If it is xenophobia, it is – in the way it denigrates and reifies people before segregating and/or expelling them – a xenophobia that bears all the marks of the old racism, except that it is not colour-coded. It is a racism that is not just directed at those with darker skins, from the former colonial countries, but at the newer categories of the displaced and dispossessed whites, who are beating at western Europe's doors, the Europe that displaced them in the first place. It is racism in substance but xeno in form – a racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white. It is xeno-racism. (p. 2)

Xeno-racism is not just based on skin colour alone, but also on socio-economic status (Fekete, 2001; Sivanandan, 2001). Xeno-racism is found on the state level, the institutional level and the popular level, but it is predominantly practiced by the state, which influences the institutions and the people (Sivanandan, 2001). Sivanandan explains that state demonises certain groups of people to justify their exclusion from the economy. By doing this, the state creates "a peripatetic underclass, international Untermenschen" (Sivanandan, 2001, p. 2). In our history black people and other people of colour have been demonised to justify slavery and other crimes of colonialism and imperialism. Today, in the age of globalisation, people are not demonised based on (just) the colour of their skin. Many asylum seekers, refugees and (irregular) migrants, even those with white skin, are demonised to justify globalisation. Sivanandan explains that:

[...] the racist tradition of demonisation and exclusion has become a tool in the hands of the state to keep out the refugees and asylum seekers so displaced – even if they are white – on the grounds that they are scroungers and aliens come to prey on the wealth of the West and confound its national identities. (Sivanandan, 2001, p. 2)

Sivanandan sees xenophobia as an excuse for racism. Because xenophobia, a fear of strangers, is seen as something that comes natural to human kind, it is judged as innocent. It suggests people cannot help being afraid of everything and everyone that is strange. Using xenophobia instead of racism only tries to include white 'foreigners'. "Xenophobia [...] is innocent, racism is culpable" (Sivanandan, 2001, p. 2), he says.

Xeno-racism is incorporated in the asylum policies of many European countries that are trying to 'scare off' economic migrants (Fekete, 2001; Sivanandan, 2001), but it is also practised by the European Union. We have already seen that the EU puts rich countries on a 'positive' and poor countries on a 'negative' Schengen list (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014; Van Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001). These lists decide whether or not a person can receive a visa for the EU. In this policy,

we see a possible way in which xeno-racism affects migrants' mobility. The EU has another policy that fits in this category, the philosophy of 'global migration management' (Fekete, 2001). In many (western) European countries the population is ageing rapidly. Because this is not compensated by a high enough birth rate, immigration is needed to keep the workforce on a stable level. Following the philosophy of 'global migration management', many European governments have started recruiting workers with certain skills abroad. This philosophy results in a world where the states with the largest economies create "a new global structure of immigration controls to decide which people can move freely around the world, and which people will have their movements restricted" (Fekete, 2001, p. 25). This philosophy also leads to a European 'refugee reduction' policy. We have discussed earlier that the EU is pushing its borders outward. The EU does not want refugees, asylum seekers or other (irregular) migrants to come to Europe. They would prefer to stop them before they enter the EU. This means that the EU asks third countries, either migrants' countries of origin or countries they pass through, to stop these migrants from coming to Europe. Europe pays for this 'refugee reduction' by giving development aid to these third countries. On the other hand, the EU wants to encourage certain groups of skilled migrants to come to Europe. This way, a system that makes sure Europe keeps its economic power is created:

To put it another way, whereas European nation states are prepared to pool sovereignty on immigration and asylum issues in order to stop asylum seekers from getting in to the EU, the poorer nations of the world lose their sovereignty over immigration controls in order to stop their citizens getting out. Unless, that is, these citizens are part of the chosen few: highly-skilled computer wizards, doctors and nurses trained at Third World expense and sought after by the West. Global migration management strategy saps the countries of the Third World and the former Soviet bloc of their economic lifeblood, by creaming off their most skilled and educated workforces. (Fekete, 2001, p. 28-29)

The EU's migration and asylum policies make sure the EU benefits, while other countries suffer. These policies make the world in which wealth is unequally distributed even more unequal.

2.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter we have seen different approaches to migration and racism. I explained how border policies discriminate based on level of education, religion, wealth, skin colour, et cetera. These policies make it harder for some migrants to enter Italy – or the EU in general – than for others. A similar problem can be found in job market regulation. The Italian job market needs low-skilled migrants to do the labour that Italians themselves do not want to do. Discriminating border policies, however, make it next to impossible for them to enter legally. They therefore enter the country illegally and work on the informal labour market. They are needed, but criminalised at the same time.

What do these examples of discrimination have to do with racism, one might wonder. We have explored different approaches to racism and xenophobia in this chapter. From this analysis we can conclude that the traditional approach to racism is be outdated. I have introduced the concept of xeno-racism, which explains that there is a new category of migrants. They are excluded, based on not just their skin-colour, but also their socio-economic status. They are portrayed as scroungers who steal jobs, live of the wealth of western countries and threaten their national identities, and they are denigrated and excluded because of that.

It is important to keep in mind that migration and racism are dynamic concepts. Migrants do not just decide to move from place A to B. There may be several stops and rambles on the way. They may not know what their final destinations will be. Their migratory movements will be influenced by many, many factors of which racism could be one. The relation between these factors will be explored further in the upcoming chapters.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section explains the methodology of my research, which means that in this section I will sketch the overall approach to this research. In the second section, I discuss the research methods I have used. In this section I will firstly explain how I obtained the empirical data for this thesis and secondly how I analysed the data.

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a theory-led, empirical research that has a qualitative approach. It is exploratory of nature, which fits this qualitative approach of my study. My research is designed as a case study in which I describe the case – racism towards West African migrants in the north of Italy – as detailed as possible. I analyse this case based on existing theories, which have been introduced in the previous chapter. This explains why this research is a theory-led study.

In this thesis, I approach the research topic from a mostly humanist and poststructuralist point of view. The humanist perspective in geography came into existence in the 1970s (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006). It argued that geography was too reductionist and that it focused too much on economic aspects and material wellbeing, while forgetting the cultural and social contexts. The humanist geographer put “an emphasis on the human subject as the creator and interpreter of meaning” (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006, p. 31). Objects or concepts do not have any meaning without subjects. The same goes for migration and racism in this thesis. We can study these themes from an abstract, conceptual point of view, but they will only have any real meaning in relation to the subject, in this case the migrants. Therefore, the humanist approach will be most visible in the focus on the migrants’ personal experiences of racism. Entrikin and Tepple explain humanistic geography as: “the study of meaning and experience and the move beyond the traditional concern with linking concepts to their referents toward an interest in relating meaning to subjects” (p. 33). Human agency plays a central role in this research project, because the experiences of the migrants were the focal point of the interviews I did.

Poststructuralism, on the other side, is a good methodological approach for this research topic because of three unique markers of poststructuralism: (1) it brought ontological questions back in fashion, (2) it is radically anti-essentialism, and (3) ethics play an important role in this approach (Harrison, 2006). Derrida, one of the great French poststructuralists, focused on the notion of deconstruction. Derrida says that in a democracy all persons should be treated equal. In reality, this is not the case because our democracies are based on masculine norms. Through a deconstructive analysis, Derrida tries to open up the concept of democracy so it can be turned around. The ethical aspect is very important in Derrida’s work. This, we see in his ideas about otherness and difference: “[f]or Derrida and for poststructuralism per se there ‘can be no future as such without radical otherness, and respect for this radical otherness’ (Derrida in Derrida and Ferraris, 2001:21)” (Harrison, 2006, p. 129). The concepts of otherness and difference will play a central role in my thesis. Xenophobia and racism are often ‘hidden’ in society. Like Castles (2000) says: “[l]ess visible, but no less important, are the countless expressions of everyday racism, which reduce the life-chances to ethnic minorities in many countries” (p. 163). To understand where the xenophobic and racist expressions come from, one has to deconstruct essentialist categories of ‘us’ versus ‘them’. Poststructuralism is an approach that can help to understand essentialist discourses of otherness, but also to deconstruct by showing that these discourses – that have often become the norm in society – are unethical.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

I obtained data in two ways. The first way is through the study of relevant literature and other texts. The second way is by interviewing migrants from West African countries in and around Milan, Italy. I will discuss both methods in this section.

3.2.1 THEORY AND LITERATURE STUDY

The theory and literature study was the basis for the second and fourth chapter of this thesis. For the second chapter, I studied mostly general theories about migration and mobility on the one hand, and about racism and xenophobia on the other hand. By studying different books, academic articles and reports, I tried to obtain a good overview on the existing theories on these topics. Part of this theory study was done as a preparation before leaving for fieldwork. However, part of it was also added after the fieldwork period

The fourth chapter of this thesis focuses on Italy as a case study. For this chapter, I studied literature and theories that were specifically focused on Italy, but I also tried to compare the national context to international – mostly European – and local contexts – mostly Lombardy and Milan. For this chapter I did not only use academic books and articles, but also reports by NGOs and other organisations, and news reports from online papers and other online media outlets. These additions were sometimes necessary, because the topic discussed here is a very current topic. With the ever changing migration movements towards and from Italy, the public debate about this can also change quickly and frequently. Academic articles cannot always keep up with the latest developments, whereas media outlets are more often on top of things.

3.2.2 COLLECTION OF EMPIRICAL DATA

From March until July 2015 I undertook fieldwork for this research in Milan, Italy. The fieldwork was part of an internship for Joris Schapendonk's VENI-project titled 'Fortress Europe as a mobile space? Intra-EU mobility of African migrants'. African migrants that want to enter the European Union are usually blocked. Those who manage to cross the external borders of 'Fortress Europe' can move freely within the EU – or they could until very recently – because in the last few decades, the internal European borders have mostly disappeared. African migrants are often seen as unwanted. But even though there is a lot of political and public debate about their intra-EU mobility, not much is known about how, why and where these migrants move. With this project, Joris Schapendonk wants to delve deeply into the dynamics of European cross-border mobility. For this project, we created a research group with several students. We have shared all our fieldwork data within our research team. Having access to their findings from Spain, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, adds an extra dimension to my master thesis, but it also means that the scientific relevance of this study is broader than just my own research.

The focus is on West African migrants, for instance Senegalese, Nigerians and Ghanaian. This group of migrants is strongly represented in the irregular migration statistics of the European Union (Adepoju & Van der Wiel, 2010; Carling, 2007). It is a group of migrants that is often associated with irregular and unwanted migration to the EU (Kohnert, 2007).

The empirical data for this research has been collected in and around Milan between March and July 2015. When I arrived in Milan, I did not know anyone and I did not speak the language. Because of this, it took me a while to get in contact with migrants and to find interesting places for research. I looked for respondents in 'strategic places', such as migrant organisations, churches, shops and asylum centres. Milan is a big city, so without knowing the right people it was difficult to find the right places. I got in contact with migrant organisations, most importantly the Nigerian Union Milan. They helped me to find interesting research locations and respondents. From there on I used snowballing techniques to find more respondents.

I have collected my data through small talk and semi-structured interviews. In reality, though, the interviews were a lot less structured than in the original plan. It took a lot of effort and time to gain some trust under migrants and migrant communities in Milan. Many migrants were afraid that I was working for the police or for immigration services. They did not really understand why I was interested in their stories, why I was asking these questions, and why I was taking notes. Therefore, most interviews were done in a very informal setting, for instance in a cafe, a park or a shop, usually chosen by them. Many interviewees did not just want to answer questions; they were also very interested in my own

background and in my reasons for doing this research, so I gave them the chance to ask me every question they wanted to.

The topics I discussed can be very sensitive. Sometimes they can bring back difficult memories for the interviewees. Because of this, I took my time getting to know them and gaining their trust. To gain in-depth insight and in order to build a relationship of trust, I usually had multiple conversations with the same migrants and I tried to stay in touch with them for a longer period of time. For example, I regularly went back to the same church or the same shops. Next to these conversations in real life, we often talked on the phone or communicated through Facebook or WhatsApp. This part of my study was more about informal, ethnographic research than about formal interviews.

This means that many interviews took the form of long, informal talks in informal settings like cafes or restaurants. During these meetings, the respondents often wanted to talk about many topics that were not on my topic list, therefore 'small talk' was an important part of the contact with respondents (Driessen & Jansen, 2013). As I mentioned, racism and (irregular) migration can be sensitive topics. It is not always easy to discuss issues of xeno-racism as a white person that was born and raised in western Europe. I tried to be very careful about my possible bias and about the way in which migrants perceive me. By using small talk, I tried to make clear that I was interested in their experiences and their stories. By focusing on their agency, I hoped to overcome part of this bias and related difficulties.

I planned to do fifteen interviews, but I only succeeded in doing thirteen. I did not reach my desired number of interviews because of several reasons. First of all, it took me a long time to gain trust within the migrant communities. In the beginning, people were not very willing to let me interview them. Secondly, respondents often did not show up for meetings. I had two more interviews planned in my last two weeks in Milan, but unfortunately they did not show up and there was no time to reschedule.

The number of interviews is high enough to have different migrants with different experiences of xeno-racism and different desires to move or not move. It is, however, not possible to generalise my findings based on this small number of interviews. More research is needed to be able to do that. The results may also be limited because all respondents are male. Gender could influence the experiences with migration and racism. Women, for instance, are often viewed as less threatening than men. Therefore, they may be seen as a lesser threat to public security than men. Traditionally, women are supposed to work indoors while men work outdoors. Women, therefore, may have different experiences on the job market. To the native population the threat of them stealing jobs may be less. Another limitation is that all respondents are from in or around Milan. The city dynamic could affect their experiences. There are also migrants working in the more rural areas of Italy and their experiences are probably different.

Seven of the thirteen respondents come from Nigeria, three come from Gambia, one from Senegal, one from Ghana and one from Guinea-Bissau. All respondents are male. I was in touch with several women in the Nigerian community, mostly via the church, and I tried to arrange interviews with them, but unfortunately they were not interested. A complete overview of the interviews and interviewees can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2.3 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Because of the sensitivity of the interview topics and because of the trust issues I encountered, I decided not to focus too much on recording interviews. Many of the interviewees had a hard time understanding my research and my reasons for asking questions and taking notes. It was very important to me that the respondents understood what I was doing and that they gave their consent for this. Adding a recording device would have been too complicated and distracting in most cases. The actual conversation was more important to me than having recorded interviews, even though this may go against many academic standards.

In the end only one interview was recorded and transcribed word for word. I did not use any specialised programs for this. The other twelve interviews were not recorded, instead I took basic notes during the interviews. Immediately after the interviews I would go home and I would type out the entire

interview to make sure I would not forget too many details. When necessary, parts of these interviews were anonymised to protect the identity of the interviewees.

I manually coded the interviews on paper and then analysed them in the same way. Because twelve out of thirteen interviews were not recorded, it is not possible to use literal quotes from the interviews. All interview notes are my interpretation and cannot be seen as a literal overview of everything the interviewee said. In a way, this suits the topic of my research. Migration is not a simple rational decision to move from place A to place B. Migration can be seen as a story. The stories that these migrants have told me are open-ended stories. In Chapter 5, which is the chapter in which I will show my empirical data, I will therefore use a form 'story-telling' as a method of showing the data. I think that this method will do justice to the stories of these migrants. It is important to me that they are seen as people and not as anonymised research objects. I also hope that using this method will contribute to the reader-friendliness of this part of my thesis.

This method can also be seen as a biographical method: "the biographical approach perceives migration as an inherent part of an individual's past, present and predicted or projected future" (Schapendonk, 2011, p. 53). I have chosen this approach because it gives the personal experiences of migrants a prominent role. It is a broad approach that sees migration as more than simply the outcome of decision-making (Halfacree & Boyle, 1993; Schapendonk, 2011). This means that migration is based on more than one or a few reasons; it is based on a complicated set of multiple reasons. It is also embedded in culture (Halfacree & Boyle, 1993), or as Schapendonk (2011) phrases: it is a 'social event'. In this thesis, I will explore if racism could be a factor in that complicated and dynamic process.

The data was also analysed in relation to the theories and literature that is presented in chapters 2 and 4. This means that the data was analysed in an interdisciplinary manner. Different perspectives that were used in the theory and literature chapters, such as the historical, political and sociological perspectives, are also used to look at the empirical data. Because of this, this study can be classified as a theory-led empirical research.

4. RACISM AND MIGRATION: THE ITALIAN CASE

'We've always had a healthy inferiority complex here about tall, blond people', said Luigi Spaventa, a former Budget Minister [of Italy]. 'For us, it's the euro or Africa.' (Hansen, 2004, p. 49)

Italy used to be an emigration country, but this changed in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Adler Hellman, 1997; Campani, 1993; Colombo & Sciortino, 2004; Della Porta, 2000; Grillo & Pratt, 2002; Pettigrew, 1998; Triandafyllidou, 1999). This change happened in the same time period as the changing EU border and visa policies. Italy did not even have any immigration laws until 1986 (Triandafyllidou, 1999; Zaslove, 2011). The increase in immigration numbers led to frictions in Italian society. Many Italians feared that the immigration would have a negative effect on the job market and that it would erode the Italian identity. This fuelled an 'us' versus 'them' discourse. These xenophobic and sometimes racist ideas led to violent acts against immigrants and (other) people of colour (Campani, 1993; Triandafyllidou, 1999). Campani (1993) describes this quite rapid shift:

In 1984 the Commission of Enquiry of the European Parliament on fascism and racism concluded that 'Italy is one of the European countries where there is a very low number of racial accidents' (1985, p. 47). A few years later, the murder in a Roman square of a Somali, sleeping on the street, by some youngsters initiated a long chain of violent acts against immigrants all over the country. Today the list is very long. (p. 517)

These incidents had a negative effect on Italy's image as an immigration country (Triandafyllidou, 1999). Anti-immigration sentiments and hostile attitudes towards migrants were strengthened by right-wing politics, with the Lega Nord taking the lead (Della Porta, 2000; Totah, 2002). Della Porta (2000) distinguishes three main categories in the mobilisation of anti-immigrant opinions: (1) traditional right-wing nationalists (like the Lega Nord), (2) xenophobic violence, and (3) issues of crime and security. We can find xenophobic and racist ideas in all three categories.

Italy's quite recent change from emigration to immigration country is very relevant for understanding xeno-racist reactions towards new migrants. The historical context of that change will be explained in the first section of this chapter. The first paragraph explains how, when and under which circumstances this change happened. The second paragraph focuses on more recent times, and shows the numbers and statistics of migration to, from and within Italy. In this paragraph, I will discuss for instance the reasons migrants have for coming to Italy and migrants' most common countries of origin. The second section outlines the issue of xeno-racism in Italy. This section follows Della Porta's (2000) three-way division of anti-immigrant sentiments. The first paragraph of that section will describe the political anti-immigrant movement, focusing on Italy's right-wing parties of which the Lega Nord is the most notable one. The second paragraph delves deeper into xeno-racist violence. The last part of this section explores how anti-immigrant sentiments arise when migration is linked to crime and security issues.

4.1 A HISTORY OF MIGRATION IN ITALY

Migration to, from, and within Italy is not just a present-day issue. It has a long history in which Italy was an emigration country for centuries and unexpectedly changed into an immigration country in the late twentieth century. I will explain more about this turn in the following paragraph, because it is important to understand this historical context. Today's xeno-racism in Italy did not come into being in isolation. There is a stream of historical events that have led to the present-day situation. It is impossible to go into all of these events, but the next paragraph will give a general overview from the 1980s until now.

The second paragraph outlines the recent situation of migration in Italy. It contains a lot of numbers and statistics, which are shown in tables and graphs. This is important for understanding the scale of migration in Italy. Here, we will see how many migrants come to Italy, what their reasons for coming are and where they originally come from.

4.1.1 ITALY: FROM EMIGRATION TO IMMIGRATION COUNTRY

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Italy slowly changed from a typical emigration country into an immigration country in the late twentieth century (Adler Hellman, 1997; Campani, 1993; Colombo & Sciortino, 2004; Della Porta, 2000; Grillo & Pratt, 2002; Pettigrew, 1998; Triandafyllidou, 1999). The net migration balance was positive for the first time in the mid-1970s (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004), but especially from 1989 onwards, large numbers of migrants from eastern Europe, Asia, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa entered Italy (Triandafyllidou, 1999). At the time, the Italians did not have an immigration policy and were unprepared for this new phenomenon. The migrants entering Italy before the 1980s were small in numbers and used to find work in the informal sector (Della Porta, 2000; Triandafyllidou, 1999). At that time, a policy was unnecessary, but this changed once the numbers increased. The numbers of migrants coming to Italy increased at the same time as other European countries adopted restrictive migration policies (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). Therefore, it is often said that Italy is a 'second choice' for migrants who would rather go to another European country, but that is a simplification of a reality that is much more complicated.

Economic progress in the 1970s and 1980s, which the Italians themselves call the 'sorpasso' led to an increasing demand for labour, especially in the rich areas in the north of Italy (Grillo & Pratt, 2002). Many of these labourers were found abroad. After this period, in the 1980s and 1990s, not only the net migration balance changed but also the type of migrants who came to Italy. Often, a distinction is made between the 'old' and the 'new' type of migration. Colombo and Sciortino (2004) explain:

Classical migrations, first among them that of Italians, are assumed to be of workers who move in response to the demand of the countries importing labor. The immigrations of today are considered to be quite different. They are viewed primarily as migrations of the poor and destitute, governed by push factors such as war, famine and poverty within the countries of emigration and relatively independent or at least partially autonomous from the pull factors (Macioti and Pugliese 1991). (p. 49)

These ideas about migration have a negative effect on the integration of migrants. The 'old' migration is qualified as positive, as something that resulted in economic benefits. The 'new' migration is given a negative qualification, because it brings problems and insecurities to the Italian society.

In reality, present-day migration in Italy has many similarities with the 'old' migration (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). There have always been foreigners in Italy, both before and after the unification. These early migration flows have influenced Italy's present day migration policies but are often overlooked. In fact, it may not be the reality but the image of immigration to Italy that changed the most (Adler Hellman, 1997). For a long time the Italians kept telling themselves that they were an emigrant and not an immigrant country, even though reality was already different. It took a long time for Italy to admit this new reality. Adler Hellman (1997) explains this situation:

However, in terms of their propensity for pure and absolute denial of a new reality, Italians, confronting a relatively recent immigrant influx, have also displayed a persistent reluctance to come to grips with a new situation. In Italy one hears a constant reiteration of the 'fact' that Italy is not a society of immigrants, while all the while it is becoming – if only slowly - a society receiving large numbers of them. (p. 37)

Refugees could already be found in Italy in the period between Italy's unification in the mid-nineteenth century and the start of World War I (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). At that time, migration policies were quite liberal in Europe. Right after World War I, between 1919 and 1933, many Soviets migrated to Italy and settled in Milan. There are still many Russian businesses, clubs and churches in Milan. In the same period, refugees from Armenia and Albania also came to Italy. Albania was a source for students and workers too. From 1933 to 1938 all Jews that had migrated to Italy after 1919 were forced to leave Italy, but at the same time Jews from Germany were accepted into the country "on the condition that they did not carry out anti-fascist political activity" (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004, p. 51). Many migrants that came

to Italy in the period between the unification and World War II were not refugees, they were for instance “affluent individuals, professionals, landowners, industrialists and members of the ecclesiastical orders. But so too did [come] farm hands, sailors and domestic workers employed by families in Milan or other northern cities” (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004, p. 52). Most of them came from Italy’s neighbours or allies, such as Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, Yugoslavia, Germany and France, but also – smaller in number – from further away, such as the US, Russia, Brazil, Turkey, and later also China. The Chinese first settled in Milan, but later also moved to the industries in the south. A third, and even smaller, category of migrants was neither refugee nor worker, but was “attracted by Italy’s image as a Mediterranean land rich in history and natural beauty” (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004, p. 52). These migrants were upper middle class or lesser nobility and were attracted to Italy because sexual rules and regulations were less repressive in Italy than in some other countries where for instance homosexuality was still punishable. The first Italian migration policies – which have influenced today’s policies – addressed this group of migrants.

This short history of migration to Italy shows that immigrants were not new in the Italian society (Adler Hellman, 1997; Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). What is interesting, though, is that the nationality of incoming migrants and their reasons for migrating to Italy did not only change because what was happening in their countries of origin, wars for instance, but also because of changes within Italy itself. Industrialisation started quite bit later in Italy than in the north-west of Europe. Before 1951, most people in Italy were employed in agriculture, but the country industrialised between 1951 and 1971 (Grillo & Pratt, 2002). In that period, most citizens worked in the industrial sector, which was concentrated in the north of the country. Since 1971, Italy is considered to be a post-industrial country. Most people are now employed in the service sector. Immigration to Italy grew at the same time as the country shifted to a post-industrial society.

Census research from the period between the unification and World War II shows that two to three percent of the Italian population was foreign born, although according to Colombo and Sciortino (2004) these numbers are too ‘modest’. Figure 2 page gives an overview of foreign residents in Italy between 1871 and 2001. Note that the information is not complete for all years. Still, this diagram gives a good overview of the growth of foreigners in Italy despite the missing census information.

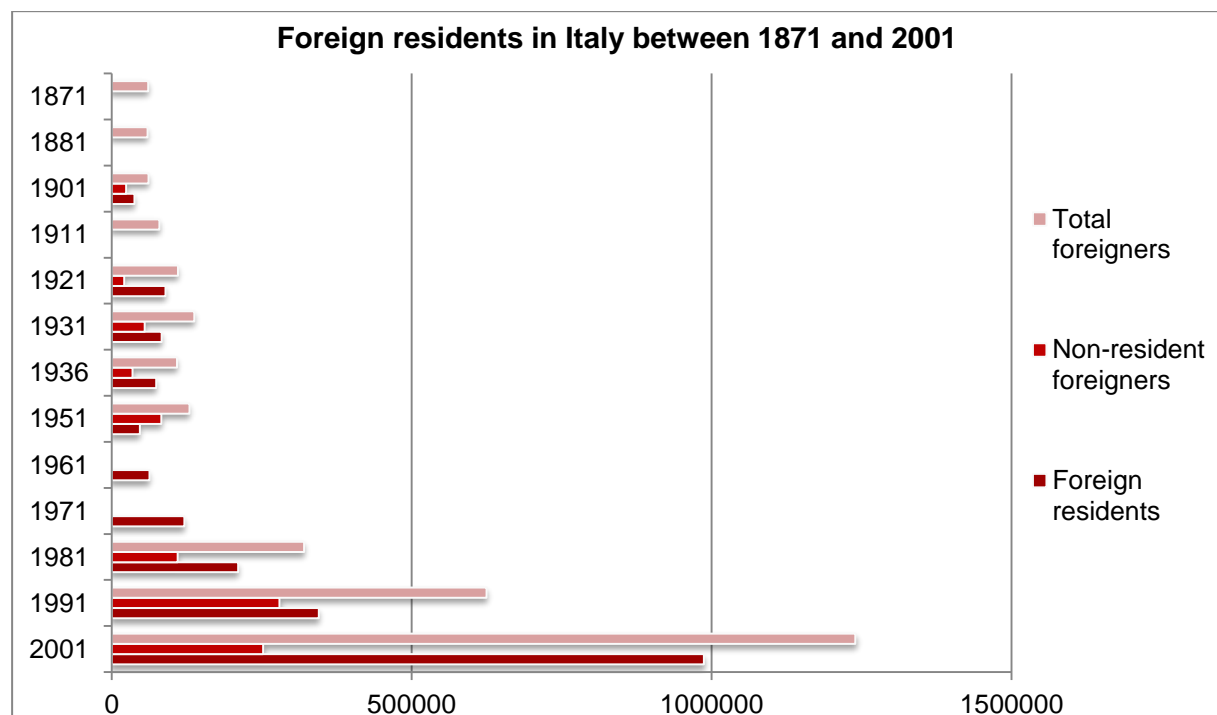


Figure 2. Foreign residents in Italy between 1871 and 2001

Note: Source: Italian censuses, various years; *provisory data published at www.istat.it. Adapted from “Italian immigration: the origins, nature and evolution of Italy’s migratory systems,” by A. Colombo and G. Sciortino, 2004, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9 (1), p. 52. Copyright 2004 by Taylor & Francis Ltd.

The data from Figure 2 show that the number of foreigners in Italy did not change much until the 1980s. After that is when the number of foreigners clearly started increasing. This marked an important turn for Italy.

Figure 3, which shows the total foreigners per 1000 residents in Italy, presents a similar image. Here, we can also see a sharp rise between 1981 and 2001. However, it is difficult to pinpoint when this increase started exactly because of missing census information. There are no numbers for non-resident foreigners in 1961 and 1971, which also means that we do not know the total number of foreigners in these years. We can, however, see the number of foreign residents in those years in Figure 2 on the previous page. This diagram tells us that the number of foreigners in Italy started increasing around that time.

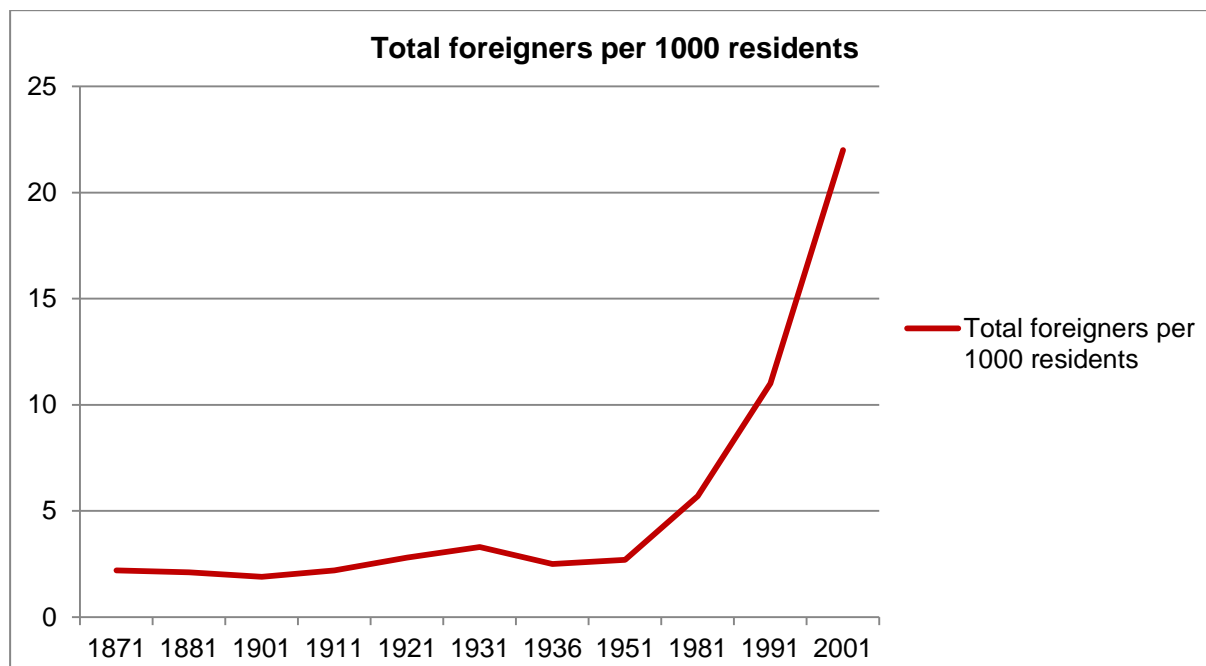


Figure 3. Total foreigners per 1000 residents in Italy between 1871 and 2001

Note: Source: Italian censuses, various years; *provisory data published at www.istat.it. Adapted from "Italian immigration: the origins, nature and evolution of Italy's migratory systems," by A. Colombo and G. Sciortino, 2004, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9 (1), p. 52. Copyright 2004 by Taylor & Francis Ltd.

In 1890 the number of regular immigrants in Italy for the first time was one per cent of the total population (Della Porta, 2000). This number was still relatively small compared to countries in the north of Europe, such as the Netherlands (five percent), Germany (eight percent) and Belgium (nine percent). Even though the percentage was still relatively small, the growth rate was not: in the first half of the 1980s it was 7.2 percent, in the second half of the 1980s it doubled to 16.7 percent, and from 1990 to 1998 the number of regular immigrants grew by over 150 percent. Next to this, there was an unknown number of irregular immigrants.

What was the reason for the increase in immigration numbers in Italy? There are some common myths on this issue. Many scholars see the oil crisis of 1973 as a turning point (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). Before 1973, many European countries actively recruited foreign workers, but from 1973 onwards there was less work due to the oil crisis and therefore less foreign workers were needed. Many of those European countries adopted restrictive immigration policies to hold off new migrants. Italy did not have the same restrictive policies and was a 'second choice', a fall-back option, according to these scholars. A deeper look at the empirical data shows that this explanation is not completely correct (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). These commonly used numbers are based on residence permits and therefore only explain regular migration, which increased from 147 000 to 450 000 between 1970 and 1986. These numbers are, however, incorrect. Many expired permits are included in these numbers which leads to

an overestimation of the growth of regular immigrants. To figure out the extent of the problem, Colombo and Sciortino asked the Italian Interior Ministry to revise the data from 1980 to 1991. Table 1 (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004, p. 54) shows the results of that revision.

Table 1
Residence permits at December 31st 1970 until 1999

Year	Permits (both valid and invalid)	Year	Valid permits	Year	Valid permits
1970	143 838	1980	198 483	1990	548 193
1971	156 179	1981	207 660	1991	648 935
1972	167 961	1982	209 548	1992	589 457
1973	175 746	1983	207 373	1993	649 102
1974	186 423	1984	194 562	1994	677 791
1975	186 415	1985	194 559	1995	729 159
1976	186 713	1986	207 201	1996	986 020
1977	191 503	1987	282 783	1997	1 022 896
1978	194 062	1988	297 315	1998	1 090 820
1979	205 449	1989	320 104	1999	1 340 655

*Note: Source: Elaboration of data from the Ministero degli Interni. The data for 1970–1979, which include expired permits, refer to permits with a validity of more than three months. The data for 1980–1999, which exclude expired permits, refer to residency permits with a validity of more than one month. The years in which there was an amnesty are indicated in italics. Reprinted from “Italian immigration: the origins, nature and evolution of Italy’s migratory systems,” by. A. Colombo and G. Sciortino, 2004, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9 (1), p. 54. Copyright 2004 by Taylor & Francis Ltd.*

This revision drastically changes the story. The data from the 1970s are not revised, but even with the invalid permits included we can see the most significant increase took place between 1970 and 1974, and thus not after the oil crisis and subsequent stricter immigration policies (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). In the 1980s the number of valid permits does not significantly increase until 1987. This can be explained by an amnesty that was granted in 1986. This pardon granted irregular migrants who already were on Italian soil a residence permit (Adler Hellman, 1997; Tambini, 2001). Even the increase of permits after the amnesty is smaller than many scholars estimated (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). Colombo and Sciortino draw two conclusions from this revised data:

1. *Regular immigration* to Italy did not begin after the 1973 oil crisis but earlier and is thus not caused by this crisis and the following stricter immigration policies in other European countries, but by internal causes. The fall-back effect can only have intensified the already existing causes in Italy.
2. The extent of *irregular immigration* should also be taken in consideration. The increasing number of residence permits in the 1970s and 1980s occurred in a time of stricter immigration policies. Legal points of entry were closed and it became close to impossible for foreigners to acquire a residence permit. There was, however, still a high demand for foreign workers on the labour market. Many workers entered irregularly and were only shown in the official numbers after the pardons of 1986 and 1990.

This means that the number of regular immigrants did not increase in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but the number of irregular immigrants did. This was not the result of external causes but of Italy’s own policies. Colombo and Sciortino explain:

Italy, therefore, was not merely a second choice for immigrants who could not enter other countries. Although it occurred in Italy later than in other countries, Italy was already an autonomous destination in the immigration systems that affected all of post-war Europe (Massey 2002: 25). (p. 54)

This is important to keep in mind, because nowadays many people still assume that migrants only come to Italy because it is the easiest point of entry and their goal is to move onwards to northern Europe. These assumptions may be false. We should always consider Italy to be an autonomous destination.

Another explanation for the increase of irregular instead of regular migrants can be found in the change from industrial to post-industrial society (Grillo & Pratt, 2002). In an industrial society migrants mostly work in “permanent wages employment in industry” (Grillo & Pratt, 2002, p. xix). This type of official employment usually means that migrants can obtain a work visa. However, most migrants arrived when Italy was turning into a post-industrial society. In that society, most work could be found in the tertiary or service sector. The ‘good’ and stable jobs in that sector, for instance in the state or professional sector, usually require an Italian diploma. Competition is high in that sector, so most migrants do not stand a chance against Italians. This means that those migrants had to find work in the informal or the service sector. This makes it much more complicated to get a legal job and thus to obtain a work visa. It also frustrates the integration of migrants.

The result of Italy not accepting its changing society and refusing to think about the implications, was that policy making was a slow process (Adler Hellman, 1997). Until the late 1990s political debates focused mostly on the issue of migrants illegally crossing the Italian borders. Politicians’ main goal was to find an effective way to close the borders for irregular migrants. Those ideas had nothing to do with the reality of a changing society with a growing number of migrants. Only in 1997 did the political debates take a turn towards the discussion of citizen or resident rights for migrants. Integration was frustrated by the fact that many migrants could not find a legal, permanent waged job and thus relied on work that was poorly paid and poorly organised (Grillo & Pratt, 2002), but also because of other reasons. For example, an important difference between Italy and other European countries is the colonial history (Adler Hellman, 1997). Italy does not have as many colonial ties as European countries like France and the UK. For a relatively short period, Italy occupied Libya and what is now known as Ethiopia and Somalia. Many migrants from former French or British colonies speak the language of the coloniser, but this is not the case with the large majority of migrants arriving in Italy. This also means that migrant communities in Italy are much more heterogeneous than in other European countries (Grillo & Pratt, 2002). This makes it all the more difficult for migrants in Italy to get good representation in political and other institutions.

Migration is a dynamic phenomenon and the migration fluxes to and from Italy are ever-changing. There are many studies on migrants who move to Italy, but few on migrants who leave Italy (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). From studies on international migration in other countries we know that the departure rate of migrants is quite high. There are several indicators that show us exit rates may be quite high in Italy as well. In 1994, for instance, only 76 percent of migrants with expiring residence permits renewed them. Another indicator is the naturalisation rate, which is low in Italy.

The exit rates are just as important as the entrance rate for determining the scope of migration in Italy and of the composition of different migrants’ nationalities (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). The history of Italy’s migration has shown that the nationality group that may be the largest in one year can be one of the smallest only a few years later. Migrants from different nationalities may have very different experiences with xeno-racism. This makes it important to know the composition of migrants’ nationalities in Italy. Solé (2004) explains that:

The make-up of migratory flows is another factor to consider while attempting to explain the impact of immigration. The fact that immigrants in Italy come from a large number of countries many of which do not have political or cultural ties with the receiving country may explain why feelings of rejection are stronger, particularly in term of public insecurity. (p. 1213)

Migrants often move to a place that already has a large concentration of migrants with the same nationality: Tunisians came to Sicily for agricultural work; Philippine migrants settles in Milan, Rome and Naples for domestic work; the Senegalese moved to Bergamo and Brescia for industrial labour; Chinese

came to Milan, Rome and Florence, in the first two cities they founded restaurants and the third city they started industry businesses (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). Some migrants may choose to move to a certain place because of work opportunities, others because it is close to the border. Asylum seekers often do not have a choice and get placed in a centre somewhere in the country.

Destinations are found through informal migrant networks and interpersonal ties between migrants. The networks and relations can help migrants to settle in their new place of residence. Table 2 (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004, p. 62-63) shows the three most popular provinces for Senegalese migrants between 1980 and 1999.

Table 2
Percentage of Senegalese permit holders in Italy and the three most popular provinces

Year	Percentage of permits in Italy	Percentage of permits in three most popular provinces	First province	Second province	Third province
1980	0.1	53.2	Rome	Perugia	Bologna
1985	0.1	59.8	Perugia	Rome	Brescia
1991	3.3	22.9	Milan	Bergamo	Cagliari
1995	2.8	26.4	Bergamo	Milan	Brescia
1999	3.0	29.6	Brescia	Milan	Bergamo

Note: **Source:** Elaboration of data from Ministero degli Interni. 1980–1990: permits valid for more than one month, excluding permit expired more than two months earlier; 1991–1999: permits valid for more than one month, excluding those expired. Adapted from “Italian immigration: the origins, nature and evolution of Italy’s migratory systems,” by A. Colombo and G. Sciortino, 2004, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9 (1), p. 62-63. Copyright 2004 by Taylor & Francis Ltd.

Here we can see that the Senegalese community has moved more towards the northern cities since the 1990s, but that their concentration has become weaker. We can also see that Milan did not enter the top 3 until 1991. This is a normal pattern, the concentration of most migrant communities diminishes over time, as we can also see in Table 3 (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004, p. 62-63), which shows the most popular provinces for all migrants in Italy.

Table 3
Percentage of all permit holders in Italy and the three most popular provinces

Year	Percentage of permits in three most popular provinces	First province	Second province	Third province
1980	46.8	Rome	Milan	Perugia
1985	47.7	Rome	Perugia	Milan
1991	38.5	Rome	Milan	Naples
1995	35.0	Rome	Milan	Florence
1999	32.7	Rome	Milan	Turin

Note: **Source:** Elaboration of data from Ministero degli Interni. 1980–1990: permits valid for more than one month, excluding permit expired more than two months earlier; 1991–1999: permits valid for more than one month, excluding those expired. Adapted from “Italian immigration: the origins, nature and evolution of Italy’s migratory systems,” by A. Colombo and G. Sciortino, 2004, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9 (1), p. 62-63. Copyright 2004 by Taylor & Francis Ltd.

Milan has the second highest number of migrants nowadays, but it is not the city where the oldest communities can be found (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). Milan became popular with migrants later. These tables show us that migrants tend to concentrate in certain places, but that migrant communities

are not static. These communities can change, move or fragment over time. This information is especially important when doing fieldwork in these communities, because it gives insight in the origins and history of these migrant communities. The size of a migrant community and the amount of time it has existed in a city can influence the way this community is perceived by the native population, and that could play a role in the development of pro- or anti-immigrant sentiments.

4.1.2 TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MIGRATION IN ITALY

In this paragraph, I will present these numbers and statistics in tables and graphs to give an overview of migration to (and from) Italy. The previous paragraph outlined Italy's historical, but this paragraph will focus more on recent developments and will show numbers and statistics from the twenty-first century.

Figure 4 shows that the migration inflow had been decreasing since 2011. In 2014, 89.5 percent of immigrants had foreign citizenship, the rest had Italian citizenship (Istat, 2015). In that year the largest group of immigrants had Romanian citizenship (51 000), the second largest Moroccan (18 000) and the third largest Chinese (16 000). This means that West African migrants are not in the top three of largest national migrant groups. From the West African group, the number of immigrants with Ghanaian citizenship decreased by 33 percent.

Emigration numbers have been increasing in recent years (Istat, 2015). About a third of recent emigrants had foreign citizenship, the rest was Italian. In the period shown in Figure 4 (Istat, 2015), the net migration numbers decreased but were still positive. This figure shows that, contrary to popular Italian belief (De Haas, 2008; Ipsos MORI 2014; 2015), the country was not being flooded by migrants in these years.

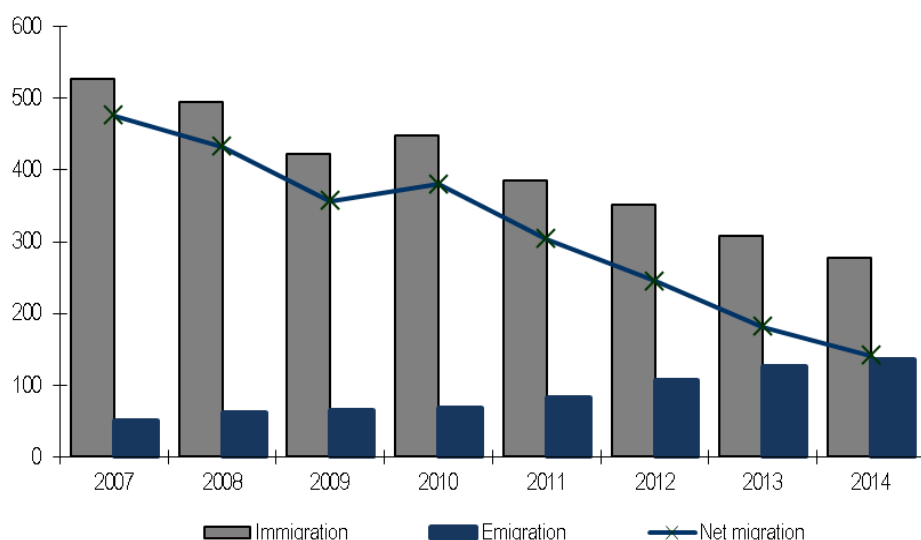


Figure 4. Immigration, emigration and net migration. Years 2007 to 2014, in thousand. Reprinted from *International and internal migration. Year 2014* (p. 2), by Istat, 2014. Copyright 2015 by Istat.

Figures 5 and 6 (Istat, 2015) show the immigration and emigration rate in 2014 per province. We can see that the emigration rates are the highest in the most northern provinces – the ones closest to Italy's land borders – and on the island of Sicily. It is probably not surprising that emigration rates are high in the border areas, as it is relatively easy for the people in those areas to move to a neighbouring country.

Immigration rates are the highest in the regions Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria and Abruzzo, but also around the large cities: Milan and Rome. The economic prosperity of those regions and thus the possibility of finding work is probably what attracts most immigrants. In a nutshell, these figures shows us that emigration is mostly an issue in the border regions, while immigration is concentrated in the regions of economic opportunity.

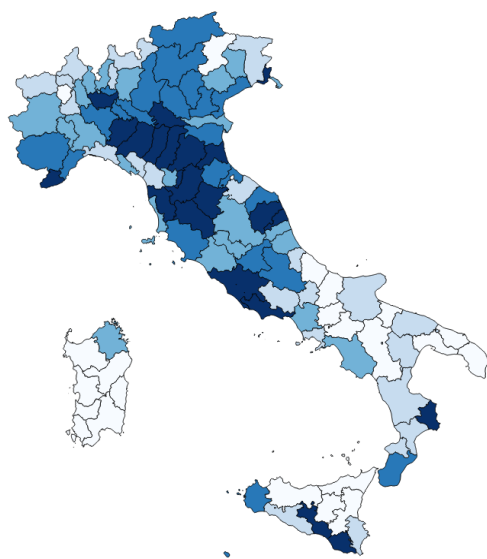


Figure 5. Immigration rate of foreign citizens by province. Year 2014, per 1,000 residents. Reprinted from *International and internal migration. Year 2014* (p. 2), by Istat, 2014. Copyright 2014 by Istat.

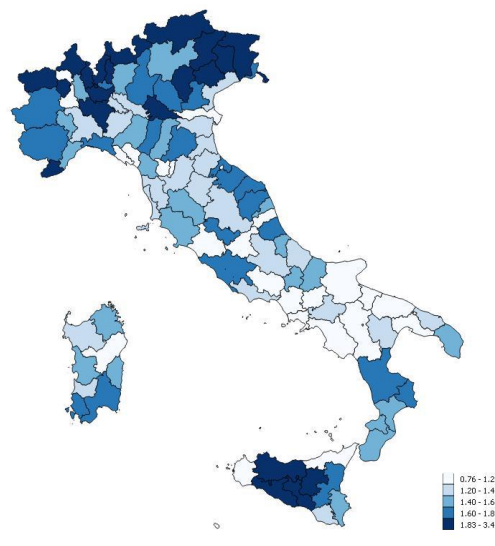


Figure 6. Emigration rate of Italian citizens by province. Year 2014, per 1,000 residents. Reprinted from *International and internal migration. Year 2014* (p. 3), by Istat, 2014. Copyright 2014 by Istat.

If we look only at the inflow of non-EU citizens, then the numbers look understandably different. It is much easier for EU citizens to migrate within the EU than it is for non-EU citizens to enter the EU. Figure 7 shows the inflow of non-EU citizens based on permit of stays, so these statistics include only legal residents. Keep in mind that expired permits may be included in these numbers, as we have discussed in the previous paragraph. This figure shows us what kind of permit of stay these foreigners have, and thus what official reason they have for migrating to Italy.

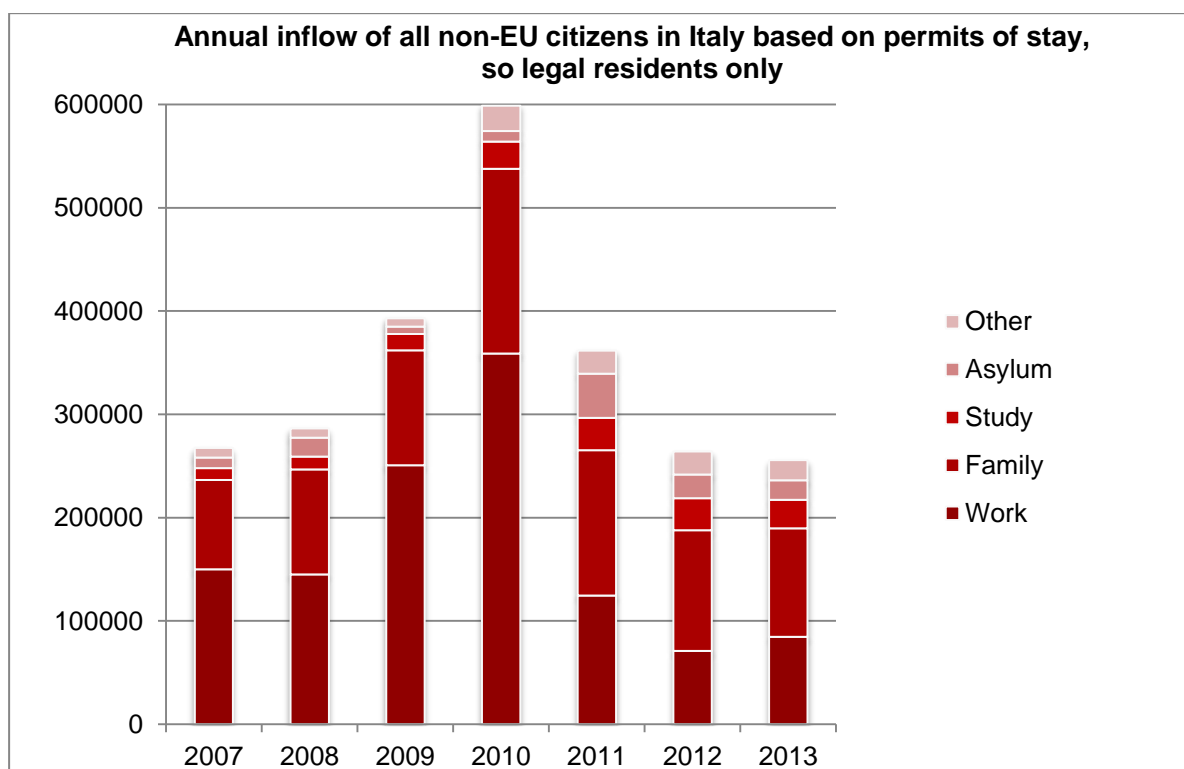


Figure 7. Annual inflow of all non-EU citizens in Italy based on permits of stay, so legal residents only. Provisory data retrieved from stra-dati.istat.it

The three largest national groups of West African migrants in Italy are from Nigeria, Senegal and Ghana. Figures 8, 9 and 10 on the next page show the inflow numbers of migrants with these nationalities. In 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2013 the Senegalese formed the largest influx of West African immigrants, in the other years the Nigerian group was the largest.

In Figure 8 we see that the inflow of Nigerians was at its highest point in 2011, when approximately 11 600 Nigerians migrated to Italy. In 2011 and 2012 more than half of the Nigerians coming to Italy applied for asylum, but the number of Nigerian asylum seekers decreased again in 2013. It is, however, still the main reason for Nigerians to come to Italy.

The influx of migrants with the Senegalese nationality was highest in 2010, as we can see in Figure 9. Compared to the group of Nigerian migrants very few of the Senegalese migrants apply for asylum. 2012 is a year that sticks out when looking at the asylum numbers. The majority of Senegalese migrants came to Italy for work reasons and for family reasons.

The group of Ghanaian migrants entering Italy is noticeably smaller than the groups of Nigerians and Senegalese. Their highest inflow was in 2010, the same as the Senegalese group. Between 2010 and 2011 work was their main reason for coming to Italy, but in 2012 and 2013 it was family. The number of asylum request amongst Ghanaians peaked in 2011.

Overall, we can see that in recent times 2010-2011 was the year in which more West African migrants than usual came to Italy. 2011 and 2012 are years in which a relatively large number of West African migrants came for asylum reasons. In 2011, for instance, more than half of the Nigerians and a little less than half of the Ghanaians entering Italy applied for asylum.

Many of the migrants I interviewed in Italy were asylum seekers. In Figures 7, 8, 9 and 10 we have seen how many of the total number of non-EU immigrants came to Italy to apply for asylum or for a permit of stay based on humanitarian grounds. If we look only at the migrants that come to Italy for these reasons, then the most important countries of citizenship of immigrants look very different. An overview is given in Table 4, West African countries are in bold. This table is based on data from Eurostat, because unfortunately the official Italian statistics by Istat have not yet been updated past 2013. We can see that West African countries have become more prominent in this list in recent years. Nigeria was already at the top of the list between 2008 and 2011, but the number of asylum seekers from West African countries such as Mali, Gambia, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana has also increased in the last couple of years, as we can see in Table 4.

Looking at the news one would expect migrants from for instance Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Eritrea to be high on this list. However, the UNHCR's statistics on 2014 show that asylum seekers from Syria and Eritrea are the top nationalities amongst those arriving in Italy over sea, but very few of them have applied for asylum in Italy in 2014, respectively only 500 and 480 (Eurostat, 2016; UNHCR, 2015c). Furthermore, immigrants from Middle Eastern countries may be more likely to enter the EU through other countries that are easier to reach, most notably Greece and the Balkans. When they apply for asylum, they often choose countries in the north of Europe over Italy, such as Germany and Sweden (UNHCR, 2015c).

Nigerian migrants made up the second largest group of all asylum applicants with 9 700 applications in 2014 (Eurostat, 2016; UNHCR, 2015c). Only the Malian group was slightly larger with a total of 9 800 applications. The third largest group was from Gambia with 8 500 applications. In 2014 the total number of first time applications was 63 700 in 2014 (Eurostat, 2016; UNHCR, 2015c) as compared to 25 700 in 2013 (Eurostat, 2016; UNHCR, 2014b). With an increase of 148 percent, the number of asylum requests in 2014 was record breaking. Because of this, Italy also moved from the ninth to seventh place on the list of largest asylum applications receiving countries (UNHCR, 2014b; UNHCR, 2015c). The increasing number of asylum requests came primarily from West African migrants who arrived by boat (UNHCR, 2014a). Asylum applications from Malian, Gambian and Senegalese migrants increased sevenfold, whereas Nigerian asylum seekers increase fourfold.

The record breaking number of 2014 was surpassed again in 2015 when 83 200 first time applications were reported (Eurostat, 2016). The largest group of asylum seekers, based on country of citizenship, also changed in 2015. The number of Nigerian asylum seekers was by far the largest with 17 800 applications, followed by Pakistan (10 300), Gambia (8 000) and Senegal (6 400).

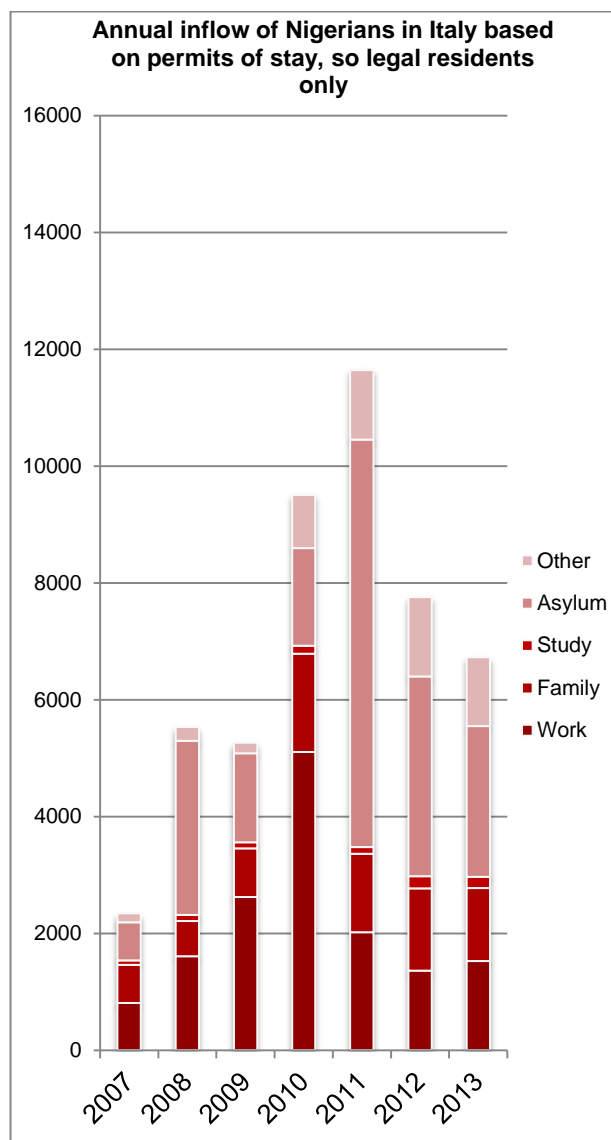


Figure 8. Annual inflow of Nigerians in Italy based on permits of stay, so legal residents only.
 Provisory data retrieved from stra-dati.istat.it

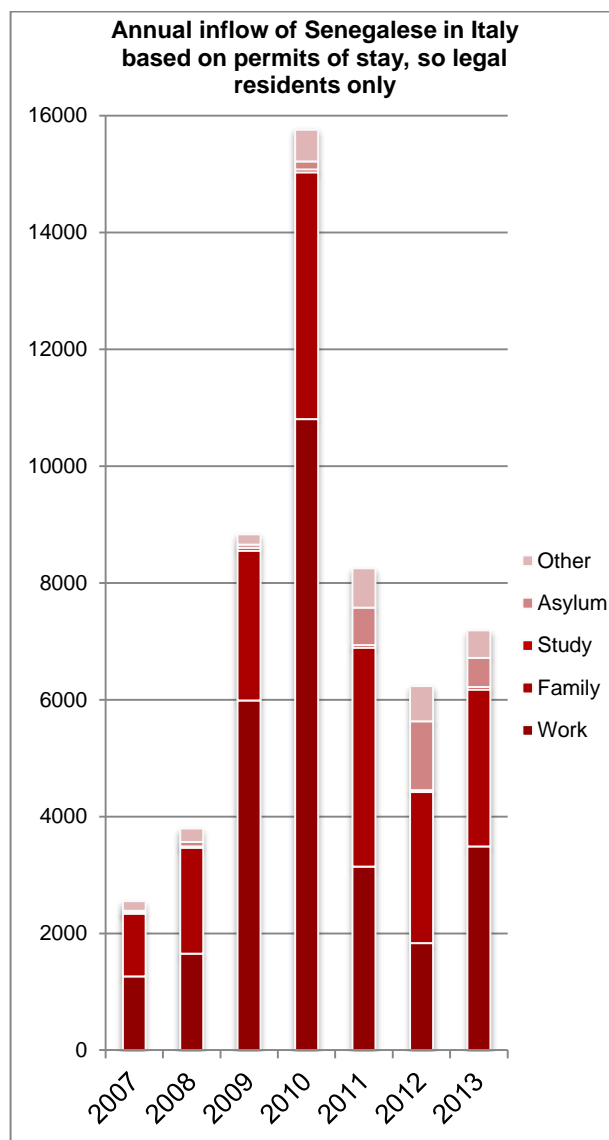


Figure 9. Annual inflow of Senegalese in Italy based on permits of stay, so legal residents only.
 Provisory data retrieved from stra-dati.istat.it

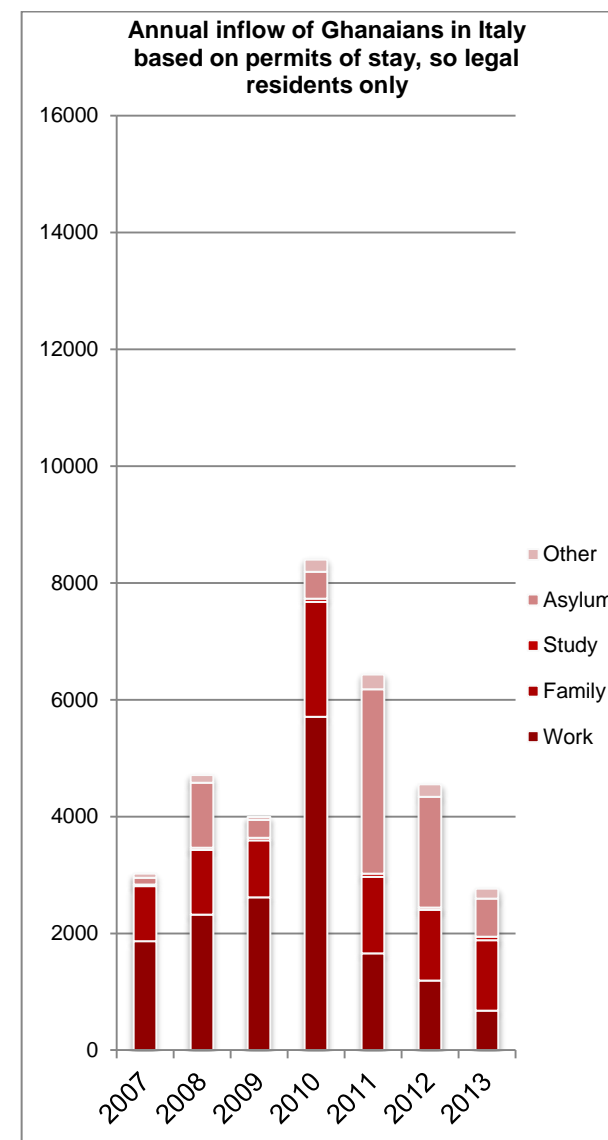


Figure 10. Annual inflow of Ghanaians in Italy based on permits of stay, so legal residents only.
 Provisory data retrieved from stra-dati.istat.it

Table 4

Top 10 countries of origin of first time asylum applicants in Italy between 2005 and 2015

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	Nigeria	Nigeria	Nigeria	Nigeria	Pakistan	Pakistan	Mali	Nigeria
2	Somalia	'unknown'	Pakistan	Tunisia	Nigeria	Nigeria	Nigeria	Pakistan
3	Eritrea	Somalia	Afghanistan	Ghana	Afghanistan	Somalia	Gambia	Gambia
4	Ghana	Pakistan	Turkey	Mali	Senegal	Eritrea	Pakistan	Senegal
5	Afghanistan	Bangladesh	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Pakistan	Tunisia	Afghanistan	Senegal	Bangladesh
6	Bangladesh	Eritrea	Serbia	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Mali	Bangladesh	Mali
7	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Iraq	Bangladesh	Somalia	Gambia	Afghanistan	Ukraine
8	Pakistan	Afghanistan	Kosovo	Afghanistan	Mali	Senegal	Ghana	Afghanistan
9	Iraq	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Somalia	Eritrea	Egypt	Ukraine	Ghana
10	Burkina Faso	Turkey	Iran	Senegal	Côte d'Ivoire	Syria	Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire

Provisory data retrieved from appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu

Over the years, the number of asylum requests in Italy and Italy's rank on the list of asylum receiving countries have fluctuated greatly. This is mostly due to a changing number of boat arrivals (UNHCR, 2015a). 2014 and 2015 were record breaking, but there have been other, although lower, peaks in recent history. Figure 11 shows the number of asylum applications between 1998 and 2015. Here, the fluctuation and the large increase in the last couple of years becomes very clear.

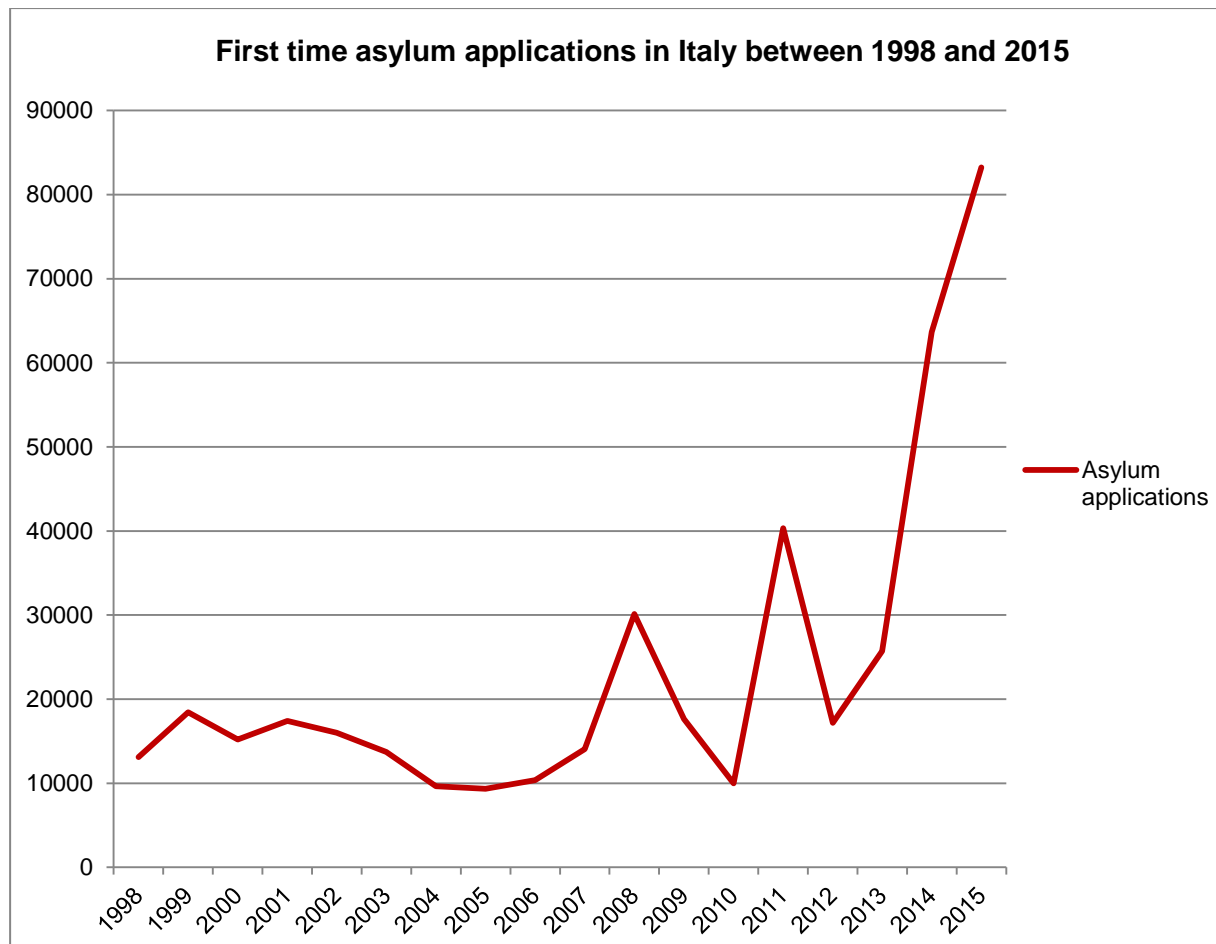


Figure 11. First time asylum applications in Italy between 1998 and 2015.
 Provisory data retrieved from appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu

We now know the nationalities and reasons of migrants who come to Italy, but we do not yet know where in Italy they settle. This is an important factor, because this research focuses mostly on the north, specifically the Lombardy region with Milan, as the central point for fieldwork. Figure 12 shows the inflow of non-EU citizens per region in Italy. Here, Italy is divided into five regions: the north-west, the north-east, the centre, the south and the islands. Each region encompasses several provinces, the division is as follows:

- **North-west regions:** Aosta Valley, Piedmont, Liguria and Lombardy
- **North-east regions:** Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto and Emilia-Romagna
- **Centre regions:** Tuscany, Marche, Umbria and Lazio
- **South regions:** Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicata and Calabria
- **Islands:** Sicily and Sardinia

The city of Milan lies in Lombardy and thus in the north-west. As we can see in Figure 12, the north-west is the region that receives the most migrants. Between 2007 and 2010 the north-east was in second place, but from 2011 onwards that place was taken over by the central regions, where large cities such as Rome and Florence can be found. Overall a large majority of foreign residents lives in the north of Italy, approximately two out of three (Istat, n.d.).

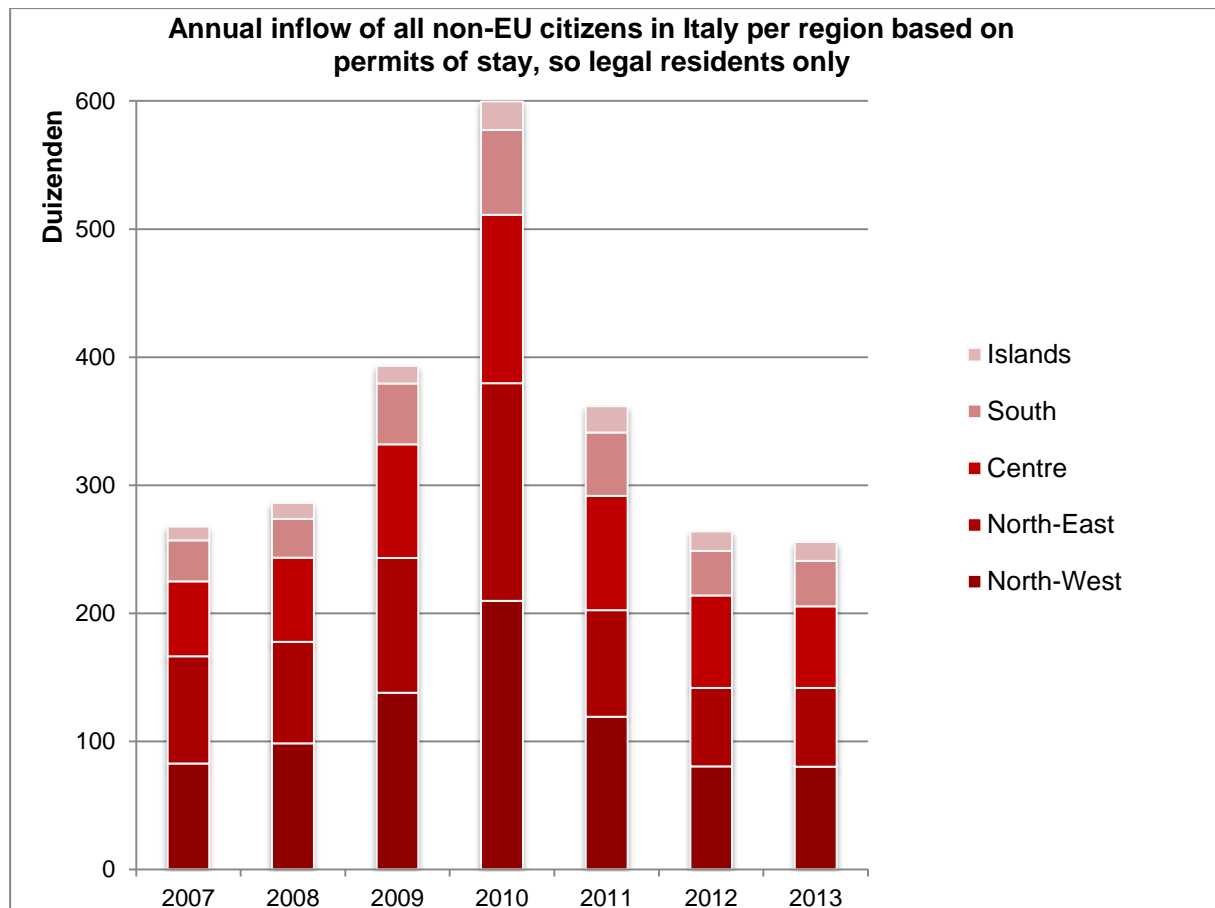


Figure 12. Annual inflow of all non-EU citizens in Italy per region based on permits of stay, so legal residents only.
 Provisory data retrieved from stra-dati.istat.it

In the north, Lombardy is the region that receives the largest number on non-EU migrants. Approximately one out of five migrants newly arriving in Italy settles in Lombardy (Istat, n.d.). Within Lombardy there are eleven municipalities. Some municipalities are more popular with migrants than others.

Milan is the municipality that receives the largest number of non-EU migrants (Istat, n.d.). Its popularity has increased a lot in the last couple of years. The inflow of non-EU migrants in Italy was almost the same in 2007 and in 2013, but Milan received almost double the number of migrants in 2013 as compared to 2007. Milan did not only receive more migrants in absolute numbers, relatively speaking Milan also gained popularity as a receiving municipality in the Lombardy region. On the other hand, Brescia, a city famous for its large Senegalese community, seems to have lost most of its attraction to new migrants. This can be seen in Figures 13 and 14, which show how many of the total inflow of non-EU migrants each Lombardy each municipality received in 2007 and 2013. Milan's popularity with migrants makes it an interesting destination for fieldwork.

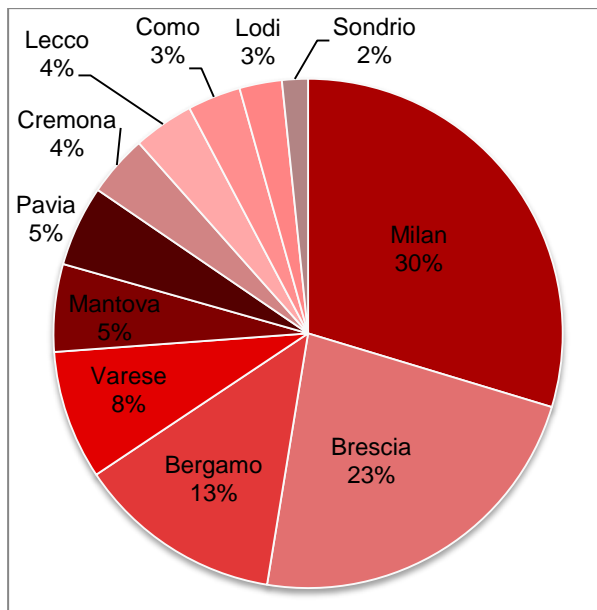


Figure 13. Inflow of non-EU citizens in Lombardian municipalities based on permits of stay, so legal residents only, in 2007.
Provisory data retrieved from stra-dati.istat.it

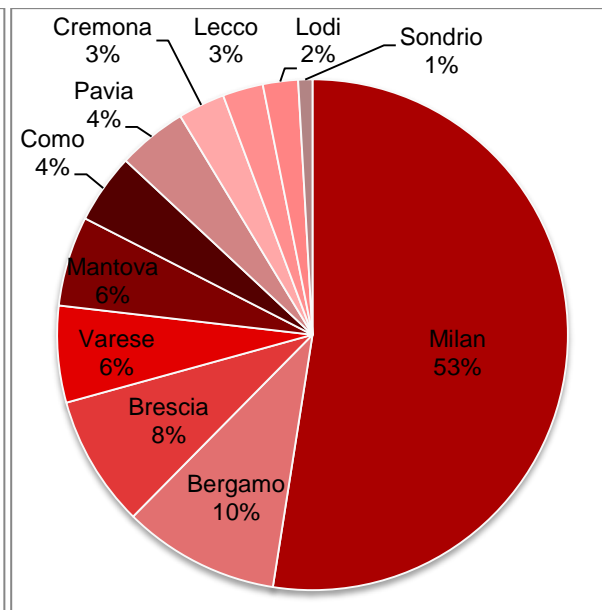


Figure 14. Inflow of non-EU citizens in Lombardian municipalities based on permits of stay, so legal residents only, in 2013.
Provisory data retrieved from stra-dati.istat.it

4.2 RACISM IN ITALY

"The Northern League has absorbed a great part of the fascist thinking, especially the racism," said Pugliese. (Woodward, 2008)

This section is divided into three paragraphs that follow Della Porta's (2000) categories on the mobilisation of anti-immigrant opinions: (1) traditional right-wing nationalists, (2) xenophobic violence, and (3) issues of crime and security. We can find xenophobic and racist ideas in all three categories.

I have stressed that 'popular' racism is not the only important type of racism. Racism can manifest itself in many ways and racist acts can be performed by many different actors. Racism that is performed by the state and official institutions is an especially difficult type of racism. The Italian Republic protects the equality of all people in article 3 of the constitution:

All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions. It is the duty of the Republic to remove the economic and social obstacles which by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organisation of the country.

It is problematic when members of the government, politicians or official institutions act racist, because it does not only harm the social dignity of people but also the foundations of the republic. In this chapter we will nonetheless see that racist acts occur frequently in Italian politics.

The first paragraph of this section explains the right-wing Italian politics, mostly focusing on the Lega Nord, a political party that is rather 'famous' for its anti-immigrant sentiments. The second paragraph goes deeper into direct and indirect xenophobic violence. Some examples from the media will be given to illustrate this argument. The third paragraph explains the connection that is often made between immigration and crime and security.

4.2.1 ANTI-IMMIGRANT POLITICS

The growing number of immigrants made the Italians question their own identity (Grillo, 2002). Italian politics were completely 'shook up' in the 1990s and the discussions about immigration and racism played a large part in that unrest (Grillo & Pratt, 2002). The traditional political alliances on both the right and the left side of the spectrum were reshaped.

The way immigrants are seen in a society has a lot to do with identity politics (Mudde, 2007). Identity politics always distinguish an ingroup and an outgroup, in other words: they separate 'us' from 'them'. We create borders between ourselves and others to be able to mark off our own identity (Mudde, 2007; Newman and Paasi, 1998; Tambini, 2001; Triandafyllidou, 1999). Ingroups and outgroups are social constructs. The collective characteristics attributed to a certain group are not objective, but imagined and stereotypical. Cas Mudde (2007) gives a typical example of this:

Almost everyone who has had a conversation with people who openly espouse anti-immigrant sentiments will have noticed these inconsistencies. For example, someone will argue that all Turks have to leave the country because they are too lazy to work, but will exclude his colleague Ali. When confronted with the question why Ali, who is clearly (and objectively) Turkish, does not have to leave the country, he will argue that Ali is not a real Turk, as he is not lazy and he works. (p. 65)

Stereotypes are used in everyday conversations, but also in political narratives. We can find many different examples of identity politics in Italy, but an obvious example is a term Italians frequently use for immigrants: '*extracomunitari*', which means 'from outside the community' (Della Porta, 2000). This creates a clear border between the ingroup – the Italians – and the outgroup – the immigrants.

The political party that best demonstrates the Italian right wing anti-immigrant thought is the Lega Nord, also known as the Northern League in English. The Lega Nord is often categorised as 'populist' and 'xenophobic' (Fekete, 2008). There are many examples of xenophobic behaviour by party members, for instance their calls "for deportation of foreigners and the formation of self-defence groups to fight 'immigrant' crime" (Fekete, 2008).

The Lega Nord is not the largest party in national politics. However, because of their large support in the northern regions of Italy, they also have considerable power in the rest of Italy. From 1992 till 1994, the period between their first election participation and their first participation in the national government, they won up to forty percent of the votes in some northern regions (Tambini, 2001). In 1996 they brought down the Berlusconi administration and since then the leading political party has often had to rely on their support (Fekete, 2008).

The Lega Nord was the first party in Italy to politicise immigration (Zaslove, 2011). Its history and its influence on the past and present immigration laws and policies are therefore very relevant for this thesis.

The Lega Nord started as a small separatist movement in the north of Italy in the 1980s (Tambini, 2001). It grew from a coalition of several regional movements into an official national political party in a decade (Mudde, 2007; Tambini, 2001; Zaslove, 2011). It became a political party with ideas that were new to Italy. Tambini (2001) describes the party as "a protest movement that based itself so clearly on ideas of nation and ethnicity, the new Italian regionalism posed questions about the very nature of the nation" (p. iix).

After the party's official foundation in 1991 it started growing at an astounding rate (Tambini, 2001; Zaslove, 2011). The question is how this was possible and why this movement attracted so many people. The Lega Nord first took part in national elections in 1992 under the leadership of Umberto Bossi. They won so many seats in parliament that Silvio Berlusconi asked them to form a coalition together with his 'Forza Italia' and Gianfranco Fini's 'Alleanza Nazionale'. Together they formed a new centre-right coalition. This meant that the Lega Nord became an important player in Italian politics (Tambini, 2001; Zaslove, 2011; Zaslove, 2012).

The Lega Nord's demands of increased (fiscal) autonomy for the north made them very unpopular with the other political parties, but because of their quickly growing grassroots support, they could not be ignored and they were able to prioritise their ideas on the political agenda (Tambini, 2001). During the 1994 government formation, the Lega Nord was given five out of 25 seats in the cabinet. With MP's on important positions, such as the Ministry of the Budget and the Ministry of Institutional Reform, they gained a lot of power in national politics.

Corruption was a big problem in Italian politics at that time (Tambini, 2001; Zaslove, 2011). The fall of the First Italian Republic in 1992 had had a positive effect on the position of the Lega Nord (Zaslove, 2011, 2012). The Lega Nord, but also Forza Italia, was a relatively new player in Italian politics. Alleanza Nazionale had recently transformed and had instated a new leader who was young and modern (Tambini, 2001; Zaslove, 2011). Working together was an attempt to wash clean of the old politics of corruption. The problem for the Lega Nord was the leader of Forza Italia: Silvio Berlusconi, a Milanese media magnate (Tambini, 2001). Many Italians thought it was impossible to run a successful business without engaging in corrupt activities, which made Berlusconi suspicious. The centre-right government of 2001-2006 did, however, rely on Berlusconi's persona and charisma (Zaslove, 2012). The Lega Nord had a special kind of relationship with Berlusconi and the rest of the government coalition. They created a sort of 'inside-outside' position by maintaining their opposition party image. Bossi emphasised that the Lega Nord remained a people's party that was Padanian and not Italian (Zaslove, 2011, 2012). The grassroots support remained important to the Lega Nord, and therefore party rallies and festivals were still organised frequently. Bossi declared that the local supporters on the streets were the heart of the Lega Nord by saying that "the Lega has a fist in government and two feet outside" (La Repubblica, 2003b)" (Zaslove, 2012, p. 434).

During the periods in government, the Lega Nord was the junior partner in the coalition. Nonetheless, they have had an impact on policy, particularly on restricting policies on immigration (Mudde, 2007; Zaslove, 2004; Colombo & Sciortino, 2003). The Lega Nord did not only have an impact on policymaking, but also on the Italian society.

The question, however, is if they also cause racist and xenophobic violence. This is a question that is difficult to answer. Empirical evidence for a direct causal relation between xenophobic propaganda and violence is limited (Mudde, 2007). Some authors actually argue that populist radical right parties prevent direct violence, because they offer another way to vent frustration. However, Mudde also notes that a good comprehensive study on this issue is impossible because of the differences in data collection in the different European countries.

It is important to keep in mind that these studies mostly look at direct violence. Indirect violence is even harder to measure, but its impact can be just as high. Unfortunately, there are no data or studies that can tell us if populist radical right parties such as the Lega Nord cause indirect xenophobic violence. However, the Lega Nord has definitely scapegoated immigrants, and, like many other populist radical right parties, they have blamed immigrants for issues such as crime and unemployment (Zaslove, 2011). Mudde (2007) says: "It has also become widely accepted that electoral and political successes of populist radical right parties increase the tolerance for intolerance" (p. 287). That, of course, would have a big impact on societies and on the lives of migrants in those societies. Intolerance does not always lead to direct violence but it does lead to issues as exclusion (Zaslove, 2011). The difficulty is that a statement like Mudde's (2007) is hard to prove. Mudde, however, thinks that "it might be more logical to assume that populist radical right electoral success not so much changes the attitudes of people as increases the salience of the thought" (p. 287). This means that the Lega Nord and similar parties do not make people xenophobic, but that people who already are xenophobic may feel more secure in their thinking when they hear the same narrative from a political party with a lot of support. This eventually creates a vicious circle. Mudde (2007) uses Jens Rydgren's (2003) study on meso-level explanations for racism and xenophobia also to further explore this idea. Rydgren states:

The presence of a xenophobic Radical Right Populist (RRP) party may cause increases in racism and xenophobia because (a) it has an influence on other political actors; and (b) because it has an influence on people's frame of thought. (p. 45)

It is clear that the relation between xenophobic politics and acts of racism and xenophobia in society is still extremely complicated.

The Lega Nord has been a confusing party for both theorists and civilians. Tambini (2001) explains that this was “partly because as a movement it was very difficult to categorise, and partly because its campaign tactics were rough and racist” (p. xiii). The quote at the beginning of this paragraph is from an interview Reuters had with Enrico Pugliese, head of the state-funded Institute of Social Politics. He explains that the Lega Nord sees itself as an anti-fascist party, but that many Italians think that their range of ideas stems directly from fascism (Woordward, 2008). It was hard to define the Lega Nord in the 1990s and it has not become much easier today. It has often changed face for strategic reasons, and according to Tambini (2001) it has “presented itself as an ethno-nationalist movement, an anti-immigration party, a left-wing alternative, a centre party and more recently as part of a right-wing coalition for government” (p. xiii). What is the real face of the Lega Nord? The party has been categorised as protest movement, an anti-immigrant movement, a regionalist movement and a nationalist movement (Tambini, 2001). For this study, their anti-immigrant politics are most relevant.

Origin, ethnicity and race are important concepts in the rhetoric of the Lega Nord (Mudde, 2007; Tambini, 2001; Zaslove, 2011). The Lega Nord used the rhetoric of racial differences when it worked for mobilisation purposes, but they just as easily dropped it when it did not, for instance when they were preparing for the national elections and wanted to be more ‘mainstream’ (Tambini, 2001).

The Lega Nord can be seen as a nativist party (Mudde, 2007; Zaslove, 2011). Nativists believe that the state is only for the natives of the state; everything and everyone that is non-native forms a threat to the nation-state (Zaslove, 2011). The subject matter of the Lega Nord’s nativist ideas changed over time (Mudde, 2007; Zaslove, 2011). In the beginning, the Lega Nord’s nativist ideas were mostly aimed towards people from the south of Italy. It was not until the mid-1990s that the Lega Nord began to aim their nativist ideas towards foreign immigrants. In their early years, the Lega Nord expressed their anti-immigrant sentiments by saying “[c]apital should move, [...] but not labour” (Tambini, 2001, p. 5). This means that poor people, either from southern Italy or abroad, should not move to northern Italy (Tambini, 2001). They should stay where they are and be helped there. Apart from the nativist argument, Mudde (2007) distinguishes two other arguments against asylum seekers and refugees: “(1) they are not real political refugees, but “bogus” economic migrants; and (2) there is no place for them” (p. 70).

The anti-immigrant rhetoric of the Lega Nord was further shaped in the discussions surrounding the ‘Martelli Law’ in 1990. This law was a direct reaction to the increasing inflow of migrants in the 1980s and it was supposed to make the Italian immigration laws similar to the rest of the Schengen zone. A side effect of this new law was a pardon for irregular immigrants who were already in Italy (Adler Hellman, 1997; Tambini, 2001). The Lega Nord opposed this amnesty regulation, but in their propaganda they focused on the issue of illegality and not so much on the issue of racial differences. Later, the Lega Nord played an important role in the passing of more immigration laws, such as the Bossi-Fini law that was mentioned before (Colombo & Sciortino, 2003).

According to Tambini (2001), the leaders of the Lega Nord did not express ‘open’ racism in their official statements, but he does see a racist undertone of them. Many of the followers of the Lega Nord, however, did not hide their racist ideas: they “were racist in a straightforward, phenotype/reductionist way” (Tambini, 2001, p. 5). Racism and anti-immigrant sentiments were the most prominent issues under the Lega Nord grassroots support, were the terms of abuse “‘terroni’ for southerners, and ‘vu’ cumpra’ for Africans” (Tambini, 2001, p. 6) can be heard often.

Fekete (2008) disagrees on Tambini’s (2001) idea that the leaders of the Lega Nord are restraint in their official statements. She quotes Umberto Bossi from a 2003 interview with Italian paper *Corriere della Sera*:

‘There are two ways to apply the law [to combat illegal immigration] approved a year ago. Either our ships will tackle the illegal migrants’ vessels and take on board only the women and children, or else we write down in black and white that force will be used, and that is the way I want it. After the second or third warning, boom ... the cannon roars. The cannon that blows everyone out of the water.’ (Fekete, 2008)

Fekete (2008) criticises this statement as an incitement of violence against African migrants, saying “Bossi does not believe that their treatment should be governed by international law or the basic standards of a civilised country.” In a 2008 interview with the same paper, Roberto Maroni, Lega Nord MP, “applauded the idea of citizens’ defence groups to help prevent crime while brushing off concerns about them taking the law into their own hands. ‘These are details which are secondary to people’s lives’, he told *Corriere della Sera*” (Fekete, 2008).

There are unfortunately no statistics on actual attacks against migrants from the south of Italy or from abroad, but Tambini finds it “hard to imagine that a political party can somehow use, or exploit prejudice, as the League undeniably does, without feeding and legitimising it” (Tambini, 2001, p. 5). However, as I have mentioned before it is hard to find comprehensive data on this issue (Mudde, 2007).

The Lega Nord was the first political party to politicise immigration in Italy (Zaslove, 2011). They began protesting immigration more and more vocally in the 1990s, but during this period Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale remained silent on the issue. Only in 2000, when the Lega Nord rejoined the coalition with those parties, did they make immigration an issue in their political campaigns and their policymaking. The Lega Nord may not just be an anti-immigrant party, but it was certainly the first party with an anti-immigrant campaign in Italy.

Anti-immigrant ideas play an important role in the Lega Nord’s campaigns and policymaking, but the party should not be reduced to this single issue (Mudde, 2007; Tambini, 2001; Zaslove, 2011). Their anti-immigrant narrative, however, did play a central role in their rise to stardom. As Zaslove (2011) says: “there is no question that opposition to immigration had become central to their political platforms and to their continued electoral success” (p. 29).

The Lega Nord sees itself as a nationalist party and has used to claims for mobilisation purposes (Tambini, 2001). As mentioned before, the unification of Italy came relatively late, in the mid-nineteenth century. The Italians have not yet forgotten their differences in culture and language. Many Italians feel like Italy and the common Italian culture are ‘inventions’. “Italy was invented, so if Italy is not working, then why not invent something else to replace it?” Tambini (2001, p. 21) explains. Tambini thinks that the late Italian unification is one of the main reasons for Italians’ not having a clear unified identity. There certainly is a need for such a unified identity, and the Lega Nord cleverly responded to that need (Tambini, 2001; Zaslove, 2011). They were not alone in this, promoting collective identities is a particular characteristic of the large ideological parties of the 1990s (Della Porta, 2000).

In its early days, the Lega Nord was very disjointed. In its backing there were owners of business, entrepreneurs, farmers, shopkeepers, industrial workers (Tambini, 2001). Nationalism made it possible to bring them all together in a unified movement. They mobilised people by focusing on self-determination and ethnic identity. Creating a “sense of identity and a common enemy” (Tambini, 2001, p. 17) was a key point in their mobilisation strategy. Tambini even argues “that identity is the key resource in any attempt to create a political movement” (p. 17).

This collective identity does not come into being naturally. It is created by the making of ‘symbolic boundaries’, which Tambini (2001) explains this as follows:

Boundary theory claims that pre-existing cultural differences alone do not constitute collective identity. Actors select and use criteria of inclusion and exclusion to create/reinforce a ‘symbolic’ group boundary (a border that exists in the minds of actors but not necessarily in political or administrative frontiers). Actors thus define their identities by ‘heating into significance’ cultural differences. (p. 22)

Symbolic boundaries mark the lines between ‘us and them’ and between ‘insiders and outsiders’ (Tambini, 2001; Triandafyllidou, 1999; Mudde, 2007). They define the boundaries of the ingroup by making explicit what is not part of this group. Positive traits are associated with the ingroup, whereas negative ones are affixed to the outgroup.

In this case the insiders are the northern Italians and the outsiders are the migrants from southern Italy, eastern Europe or Africa. Symbolic boundaries are stronger when the difference between groups

is more recognisable, this means that it is harder for someone from the outgroup to move into the ingroup (Tambini, 2001). These boundaries also become stronger the harder it is to lose the characteristics on which the difference is based, the more people believe in these differences, and the tougher the sanctions that are used to defend the boundaries are. The difference between someone from the north and the south of Italy is less visible than the difference between someone from Italy and someone from sub-Saharan Africa. The difference in skin colour always stands out and is impossible to shed.

We can conclude that it is not easy to define the Lega Nord, but that its protectiveness of the northern Italian culture and its anti-immigrant rhetoric play a central role in their narrative. Populist radical right parties such as the Lega Nord in Italy base their narrative on different kind of stereotypical enemies, or different kind of 'outgroups'. There is a distinction between internal and external enemies (Mudde, 2007). The 'elite' is the internal enemy of all radical right parties; it is an enemy that is both within the state and within the nation. Populist radical right parties in Europe are often xenophobic towards immigrants, but they blame the – in their eyes left and progressive – elite for mass immigration and the problems related to immigration. Mudde (2007) explains:

They see mass immigration as a conspiracy of the left-wing parties, trade unions, and big business in which the first two want to (artificially) increase their support base, and the latter their pool of cheap labor (e.g. Zaslove 2004a; Mudde 2000a). Hence they came together to push through their egocentric agendas at the expense of the nation (and the "little man"). (p. 66).

Bossi, the leader of the Lega Nord, often uses this rhetoric (Mudde, 2007; Zaslove, 2011). Other common enemies are immigrants and ethnic minorities. This type of enemy is within the state and outside the nation (Mudde, 2007). As non-native groups they are a threat to the nation-state (Zaslove, 2011).

The Lega Nord is not a single issue party and therefore it cannot be defined as just an anti-immigrant and racist party, but it has definitely had an impact on racism and xenophobia in the Italian society. Its success at least shows us that "there is a potential pool of voters receptive to anti-immigrant and populist-authoritarian appeal" (Ignazi, 2005, p. 333). That is a worrisome situation for many immigrants living in Italy.

4.2.2 XENO-RACIST VIOLENCE

Xenophobic, or xeno-racist as I would rather call it, violence exists in many different forms. There are direct and indirect types of violence. Direct violence is what Zizek (2008) calls subjective violence, examples are attacks, riots, et cetera. Indirect or objective violence is more subtle. It has become so normal in our society that we may not even notice it. Examples of this are exclusion and discrimination.

Some xeno-racist violence is related to right wing parties such as the Lega Nord, but many outbursts of violence are not related to any political party. In fact, only a minority of perpetrators are members of a political party or another kind of nativist organisation, but many organised perpetrators are part of small neo-Nazi groups (Mudde, 2007). Others are skinheads, football hooligans or youth from deprived areas (Della Porta, 2000). When members of parties such as the Lega Nord are involved, then it are often passive members (Mudde, 2007), or members of youth groups (Della Porta, 2000), but not the leaders or other prominent members (Mudde, 2007).

In 1984, the Commission of Enquiry on Fascism and Racism in the European Parliament praised the low number of racial incidents in Italy (Campani, 1993; Della Porta, 2000). That changed later in the 1980s (Della Porta, 2000). Campani (1993) explained:

A few years later, the murder in a Roman square of a Somali, sleeping on the street, by some youngsters initiated a long chain of violent acts against immigrants all over the country. Today the list is very long. (p. 517)

In the years after that infamous incident, racially motivated attacks on immigrants occurred more and more often and attracted a lot of media attention. This also led to counteractions such as anti-racism demonstrations. Della Porta (2000) explains the chain of events in the late 1980s and early 1990s

After the murder of Jerry Masslo in Rome in 1989, another dramatic event of racist violence took place in Florence at the beginning of 1990. On 20 February, about 4,000 people took part in the 'March of the Defenceless Citizen', organized by the shopkeepers of the city centre to protest against street crime. A week later, during the last day of Carnival, a group of about 50 masked people attacked immigrants on the street. Anti-immigrant riots also took place in Milan in 1993, in Genoa in 1992 and 1995, and in Turin in 1996. (p. 120)

Xeno-racist violence is still a problem in Italy today. In 2009 the Institute for Race Relations published the results of a research project about European deaths related to racism or migration and asylum policies. The IRR found three immigration and asylum related deaths in Italy in 2007-2008. The first two cases are suicides in detention centres:

15 January 2007

An unnamed 23-year-old Nigerian migrant hanged himself in the detention centre at Modena. (IRR, 2009, p. 26)

17 January 2007

An inmate at a detention centre for migrants in Modena hanged himself in the garden of the detention centre. His name is unknown but it is known that he originated from the Maghreb. (IRR, 2009, p. 26)

These are clearly not examples of direct violence against migrants, because they were cases of suicide. Keep in mind though that the situation is difficult for many asylum seekers because of strict immigration and asylum laws nowadays. The IRR (2009) reports many suicides of asylum seekers, for instance after their asylum application was rejected and they were told to return to their country of origin.

In a third example the migrant died because of suspected medical neglect in an identification and expulsion centre:

24 May 2008

Hassan Fathji (also referred to in some newspaper articles as Hassan Nejl), a Tunisian migrant suffering from acute pneumonia and allegedly being treated for drug addiction, died in a cell in the Brunelleschi CPT (identification and expulsion centre) in Turin run by the Red Cross, in circumstances that remain unclear. (IRR, 2009, p. 26)

This incident led to a great unrest at the centre. The migrant's fellow detainees believed he was denied proper medical care. They claimed that they had asked the centre to provide him with medical assistance but that it was denied. In protest to his treatment and death they started a hunger strike. The authorities denied the allegations.

The IRR (2009) also found eight racism, fascism and intolerance related deaths in 2007-2008, which is – together with Germany – the highest number of cases found in Europe. There are, of course, many more examples of direct and indirect xeno-racist violence. A large number of those are unreported and thus undocumented, but are still an unpleasant experience for many migrants.

4.2.3 CRIME AND SECURITY

Italy is a country that is famous for the mafia, many corruption scandals, and other issues that do not exactly scream 'law and order' (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Melossi, 2003). Still, migrants are often blamed for issues related to crime and violence, unemployment, the stress on social welfare, et cetera (Zaslove, 2011). This happens in the media, in politics but also in everyday conversations. Asale Angel-Ajani (2003) explains this discourse:

The climate of anti-immigrant rhetoric relies on the dual discourses of criminalization and cultural difference. In Italy, immigrants of color are very visible and their numbers are few (roughly 2.2% of the population), thus making them easy targets of criminalization. (p. 48)

The criminalisation of migration in Italy started in the 1990s (Della Porta, 2000). The economic decline in the 1990s caused unrest in Italy, as it did in many other European countries. The political instability in Italy, caused by several corruption scandals, made the crisis even larger and the call for law and order even louder (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Della Porta, 2000). Increasingly, the growing number of immigrants added to the feeling of insecurity and decline, and thus was seen as unwanted and unwelcome. The media started calling migration an invasion and increasingly, migrants were referred to as 'clandestine' or 'illegal'. In the public debate, migration became strongly linked to crime (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Cantarella, 2014; Della Porta, 2000). This situation created a 'panic' in the Italian society (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Melossi, 2003): "one fed by the mass media and driven by anti-immigrant policies" (Angel-Ajani, 2003, p. 50). A survey in 1999 showed that 54% of the Italian citizens saw immigrants as a risk for increasing petty and organised crime, and a year later another survey found that 75% of the Italian population thought migrants were to blame for the, in their eyes, increasing number of criminal activities (Angel-Ajani, 2003).

Between 1991 and 1992 the number of prisoners from outside the EEC rose from five to over twenty percent in Italian prisons (Angel-Ajani, 2003). This is strange because there is no evidence that migrants are more likely to commit crimes than the native population (Cantarella, 2014). Still, the criminalisation of migrants has become less and less controversial over the years: it has become part of our dominant discourse (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Melossi, 2003). It is therefore a form of objective or structural violence (Žižek, 2008).

The overrepresentation of migrants in police reports and in the news led to a mobilisation of citizens in many large cities, especially those in the north of Italy. They formed committees that did a range of things: they organised mass demonstrations, created pamphlets and fliers, held petitions, acted as a neighbourhood watch, et cetera (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Della Porta, 2000; Melossi, 2003). Usually, these local committees are not linked to a political party (Della Porta, 2000). These groups link migrants to 'new crime', such as prostitution and drugs, and want to defend their local identity against this (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Della Porta, 2000; Melossi, 2003). In particular Nigerian women are linked to prostitution, which in fact not illegal in Italy (Angel-Ajani, 2003). While it is true that Nigerian migrants are overrepresented in the sex industry, it is obviously not true that all Nigerian – or even worse all African – women work in prostitution. In fact, more eastern European than African female migrants work as sex workers, but the African women are more "noticeable" (Angel-Ajani, 2003, p. 52). The notion of African women as sexual objects has led to attacks on them by Italian men.

Not only locals criminalise migrants; the state, the police and other official institutions play an even more important role in this discourse of criminalisation (Angel-Ajani, 2003). Italy imprisons a relatively high number of migrants (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Della Porta, 2000). Their overrepresentation in crime statistics is usually related to their social weakness on the one hand and processes of 'othering' and criminalising on the other hand (Angel-Ajani, 2003).

From 2008 onwards, several 'security packages' have been introduced by the Italian government (Cantarella, 2014). These packages are all related to immigration. The first package increased penalties for crime by one third when that crime was performed by an undocumented migrant. Later, the expulsion

of migrants as a penalty and security measure was simplified. In a second package, illegal entry and stay in Italy were made crimes.

Migrants who receive an official notice to leave the country, usually do not leave because they cannot afford to go back to their country of origin. Francesca Cantarella (2014), who works as a lawyer, explains the situation of a Nigerian client:

He was surviving in Italy selling socks in front of a supermarket (always the same one; immigrants often 'occupy' the same spaces over long periods of time). He had no license to sell, but he was never pursued for this reason – this is not something that the Italian police would normally question; it happens in the open, and everyone knows it. He had already been notified in the past with an expulsion decree and had never been able to afford to go back to Nigeria. The Police knew him and once in a while (when they had nothing else to do?) they would arrest him. He had been arrested five times. Every time he was brought to jail for one night, and the day after he would be brought to attend a hearing, accused of the crime of 'not obeying [an order] to leave the country'. When defending him, I argued each time that he had a justified reason for not leaving the country: he did not have enough money to go home. Indeed, he was living in the street and selling socks to earn enough for food. Nevertheless, he was acquitted only once for this reason; the other times he was condemned. It is worth remarking that every time, before being set free, he was notified again with another decree of expulsion. What would happen to him today? He cannot ask for a term of stay because he does not have housing available, and he would not be able to go home, because he has no money. So, he would be expelled and the penalty, as the law rules, would be carried out immediately. He will be probably detained in a centre until the State is capable/willing to bring him back home, to Nigeria. (p. 537)

Many migrants in Italy are in the same kind of limbo. Officially, only a migrant who has entered Italy legally can receive a residence permit (Cantarella, 2014). Italy, however, is known for its regular 'sanatoria' laws. These 'sanatoria' laws are used for all kinds of occasions, but they have one thing in common: they pardon illegal acts and make them legal. Since the 1980s a 'sanatoria' for irregular migrants has been issued every few years. This gives irregular migrants the opportunity to become regular migrants under certain conditions:

When a sanatoria is approved, illegal immigrants are asked to pay a sum of money to the State, and to give the name of a person that is willing to give them a job – there is room enough for fraud – and thus they obtain a permit to stay. They normally need to demonstrate that they were present in Italy, not for a certain length of time, but on a specific day (e.g. on 31 December 2011); and they have to demonstrate that an Italian or a regular foreigner may guarantee for them. (Cantarella, 2014, p. 534)

Because of these laws people believe that illegal acts can always be pardoned (Cantarella, 2014). This helps to maintain the difficult situation in Italy: the country needs migrants for labour, but it does not want them at the same time (Cantarella, 2014; Solé, 2004). This leaves many migrants in a peculiar situation: they have to work to survive, but legally, they are not allowed to work. They can only work illegally. They often stay in the country, hoping for a 'sanatoria', but because of their 'illegal' status they are often associated with crime and violence.

They are, however, not just victims of the system. Many migrants use their entrepreneurship to develop their niche on the labour market (Melossi, 2003). They are the new Italian underclass, working on the lower end of the regular labour market or in the informal sector (Cantarella, 2014; De Haas, 2007; Melossi, 2003; Solé, 2004) and overrepresented in crime statistics and in the prisons (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Melossi, 2003). In 1998, two to three percent of the Italian population was a foreign migrant, but this group made up over 49 percent of all people who were imprisoned in that year (including pre-trial detention), and approximately ninety percent of that group was undocumented (Melossi, 2003).

As explained before: there is no evidence that migrants are more likely to commit crimes than the native population (Cantarella, 2014). Melossi (2003) thinks the overrepresentation of migrants – and then mostly undocumented migrants – in these statistics is because of a combination of two factors. On the one hand these migrants have very few legal options to obtain an income and thus often find illegal ways to earn money. On the other hand Italian law enforcement seems biased: “Italian offenders tend to get more and more non-detentive custody and punishment terms, whereas foreigners are instead locked in prison more often, before and after trial” (Melossi, 2003, p. 381). Or as Pavarini (1994) phrased it: “For every mafia criminal sent to gaol, a hundred criminal drug addicts are imprisoned; for every corrupt politician lawfully detained, a hundred black immigrants are interned” (p. 59).

Migrants are relatively often stopped on the streets by the police for identity checks or because they are suspected of a crime: a survey in the Emilia-Romagna region showed that male migrants were ten times more likely to be stopped on the street than Italian men, respectively 14 and 1.4 percent of the men in the survey were stopped by the police (Melossi, 2003). There is also a higher rate of police violence towards migrants (Amnesty International, 1995). In a report on the ill treatment by the Italian police, Amnesty International (1995) describes different kinds of violence they found:

The most common forms of ill-treatment alleged are repeated slaps, kicks and punches, and beatings with truncheons, frequently accompanied by general verbal abuse and, in the case of immigrants and Roma, racial abuse. (p. 2)

Many migrants do not dare to report violence by the police or by civilians, because they risk being deported if they do (Amnesty International, 2012; Cantarella, 2014). Migrants who are the victim of violence are often blamed for it themselves, because they are seen as criminals and thus ‘deserving’ of violence. The Institute of Race Relations gives two examples of this:

September 2008

Six labourers of African origin, aged between 24 and 34, were killed in a hail of bullets in a suspected mafia attack in Castelvoturno, Caserta 35km northwest of Naples. Police treated the murders as part of a turf war over drugs. (IRR, 2009, p. 31)

14 September 2008

Abdul Guibrea (also known by his nickname Abba) a 19-year-old Italian teenager originally from Burkino Faso, died after being beaten with iron bars by a shop owner and his son who shouted ‘dirty Negro, we’ll kill you’. Police and prime minister Silvio Berlusconi deny the killing was racially motivated. (IRR, 2009, p. 31)

The fact that authorities denied that racial motivations were a factor in these incidents can be seen as an example of ‘blaming the victim’ (IRR, 2009). According to IRR, these seven deaths were ‘excused’ by putting the label of criminalisation on these migrants. They were blamed for their own deaths because they were involved in criminal activities, even if those were as small as shoplifting.

4.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the 1970s and 1980s Italy changed from an emigration to an immigration country (Adler Hellman, 1997; Campani, 1993; Colombo & Sciortino, 2004; Della Porta, 2000; Grillo & Pratt, 2002; Pettigrew, 1998; Triandafyllidou, 1999). This was a change that both the state and the citizens were unprepared for (Adler Hellman, 1997; Triandafyllidou, 1999; Zaslove, 2011). As Italy developed into a post-industrial country in that period, the economy grew. This led to an increasing need for workers, especially to do cheap labour, and that development attracted many migrants to Italy (Grillo & Pratt, 2002).

In more recent years, asylum seekers have made up a large portion of the West African migrants arriving in Italy (see Figure 11 on page 41). In 2015, the number of asylum applications was at an all-

time high with over 83 000 applications. In this year, Nigerians were the largest national group of asylum seekers (see Table 4 on page 40). Looking at other West African asylum seekers, they are followed by Gambians in third place, Senegalese in fourth and Malian in sixth. Asylum seekers from Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire close the list in ninth and tenth place. The north of Italy receives a relatively large number of migrants (see Figure 12 on page 42). Especially Milan, as the economic capital of the north, is popular with migrants (see Figure 13 and 14 on page 43).

Migrants may be needed on the labour market, but they are often unwelcome and unwanted (Cantarella, 2014; Solé, 2004). In this chapter, I have discussed three types of anti-immigrant mobilisation based on Della Porta's (2000) study on immigration and protest in Italy. The first type is right-wing politics. In Italy, and especially in the north, populist radical right party the Lega Nord has played the lead in anti-immigrant politics. In the 1990s, they were the first political party to actively protest immigration (Zaslove, 2011). Even though the Lega Nord is not a single-issue party, since the 1990s their anti-immigrant rhetoric has become the centre of their campaigns and has been important in gaining electoral success (Mudde, 2007; Tambini, 2001; Zaslove, 2011). As a coalition member, they have also had an important influence on immigrant restricting policymaking (Mudde, 2007; Zaslove, 2004; Colombo & Sciortino, 2003).

The second type of anti-immigrant mobilisation is xenophobic, or rather xeno-racist, violence. There are many types of violence – both direct and indirect, objective and subjective (Zizek, 2008). Many acts of xeno-racist violence are unreported, but the examples that exist are striking. When incidents like this occur in the media, they usually cause a great turmoil, but they can also often lead to anti-racism and pro-immigrants' rights demonstrations.

The third and last type of anti-immigrant mobilisation that was discussed in this chapter is linked to crime and security. In public discourse, migrants are often associated with crime, especially crimes such as prostitution and drug dealing (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Cantarella, 2004; Della Porta, 2000; Melossi, 2003). This is a form of structural violence (Zizek, 2008). There is no evidence that migrants are more prone to criminal behaviour than the native population (Cantarella, 2004). The fact that they are overrepresented in criminal statistics and in Italian prisons can be explained by two factors (Melossi, 2003). On the one hand, migrants – and particularly irregular migrants – often have to work in the informal economy because they do not have the documents to do legal work. On the other hand, they are already seen as criminals, which means they are more likely to be singled out by law enforcement. They are criminalised by the system (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Melossi, 2003).

With a growing number of migrants, xeno-racism is becoming an increasingly big problem for Italy. Migrants do not have a fair chance of succeeding in the Italian society because they are criminalised and excluded by the system. This type of structural violence is not always visible, but it does affect migrants' lives. Sometimes, though, it shows itself very clearly.

5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: THE INTERSECTION OF RACISM AND MIGRATION

This chapter presents the empirical findings from fieldwork done in and around Milan from March until July 2015. To recap: I have done thirteen interviews with migrants from West Africa. All of them were male. Their ages varied from early twenties until approximately late forties. One was from Ghana, one from Senegal, one from Guinea-Bissau, three were from Gambia and seven were from Nigeria. A table with this general information can be found in Appendix 1.

In this chapter, I will build up on the theoretical framework from Chapter 2. I will use the literature on migration and mobility on the one hand and racism and xenophobia on the other hand to place my empirical findings in this larger debate. I will also relate the findings in this chapters to the case study on migration and racism in Italy, which I have explored in Chapter 4.

My interviewees' countries of origin correspond with the countries of origin where the largest number of asylum applicants came from between January and December 2015. Table 4 on page 40 shows the top ten countries of origin of first time asylum applicants in Italy. The country in first place was Nigeria, where the largest number of my interviewees came from. Gambia was in fourth place and Senegal in fifth. The list was closed by two other West African countries: Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire in places nine and ten.

Pichler (2010), Semyonov et al. (2006) and Sniderman et al. (2000) argued that a spiking inflow of migrants can lead to a spike in hostility towards those and other migrants. 2015 was a record breaking year with over 83 000 asylum applications, as is shown by Figure 11 on page 41. This effect is often strengthened by a deterioration of economic conditions (Pichler, 2010; Semyonov et al., 2006). In 2015, though, the Italian GDP was growing (see <http://www.istat.it>). Even though the economic conditions were positive, the spike in immigration numbers is something to take into account. It tells us that the fieldwork period may have been a period in which hostility towards migrants increased. In his study of anti-immigrant sentiments, Pichler (2010) argues that while economic conditions play a role in anti-immigrant sentiments, it is not said that anti-immigrant sentiments decrease once economic conditions increase. He did not find a decrease in anti-immigrant sentiments in 2006, when the economy in Europe was doing better. Instead, he found that the focus shifted from economic to cultural arguments. Instead of blaming migrants for stealing jobs, for example, they were 'otherised' (see also Van Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001) based on cultural and symbolic arguments (Pichler, 2010). This, according to Pichler, is an even more explicit form of xenophobia.

Not all of the interviewees are asylum seekers: four of the total of thirteen interviewees did not come to Italy as an asylum seeker. They received a visa from the Italian government for work, study, family or religious reasons. They could, however, still be influenced by these processes. A spiking hostility because of a growing number of asylum seekers is often not only directed at those asylum seekers but also at those who look similar.

5.1 MIGRANTS' EXPERIENCES

Central in this thesis are the experiences of migrants, as I have explained in Chapter 3. I will describe some of these experiences in a biographic way. In the first part, I will describe their experience with migrating from West Africa to Italy and some of their other experiences with mobility and migration. In the second part, I will describe some of their experiences with xeno-racism in Italy. This thesis is limited in size, so it is impossible to discuss all the interviewee's experiences in detail. I have therefore chosen examples that show different experiences from different angles. Naturally, this does not mean that every interviewee or every migrant has the same experience.

As I have explained, I will look at the stories of these migrants in a biographic way. This means I will approach their experiences about migration and xeno-racism "as an inherent part of an individual's past, present and predicted or projected future" (Schapendonk, 2011, p. 53). Only one of the interviews I did, was recorded. This is because it was difficult to gain the trust of migrants in Milan. Many did not understand why I wanted to ask all these questions and why I was taking notes. Asking them to record

our conversations would have made it even more difficult. Their understanding of and consenting with the process was what was most important, and I therefore chose to not focus too much on recordings. Because most interviews are not recorded, I will not work with quotes but I will present their experiences in a kind of 'story-telling' manner. In each paragraph, I will present part of the interviewees' stories in text boxes and I will then try to relate these different experiences to each other and to my findings from the literature I have discussed in Chapter 2 and 4.

5.1.1 EXPERIENCES WITH MOBILITY AND MIGRATION

The journey from one country to another is often very different for every migrant, even if they travel from the same country to the same country. The most characteristic difference I observed in the conversations with my respondents is the difference between migrants who could travel to Italy via the regular way and migrants who had to resort to irregular ways.

One has to obtain a visa before travelling to Italy legally from a non-Schengen country. For a visa you have to apply online, travel to a consulate or embassy, present official documents and pay a sum of money. This is not feasible for many West African migrants. There are many possible reasons for stay on the official visa request forms, but asylum is not one of them (see: <http://vistoperitalia.esteri.it>). These migrants are all from countries that are on the 'negative' Schengen list, making it even more difficult for them to obtain a visa (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014; Van Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001). Therefore, many seek illegal ways. Anyone who does not enter on a visa crosses the border illegally.

I have used this distinction to structure this paragraph. Nine out of thirteen interviewees travelled irregularly, three migrated via regular ways and the last interviewee did not want to provide any details about his experience. In this section, I will first present some results from interviews, observations and informal conversations with migrants who took the irregular route. In the second part, I will do the same for migrants who travelled via the regular way.

I would like to place a short side note here: being an 'illegal' or 'irregular' migrant sounds quite serious. I myself lived in Milan for a little over four months. Everyone staying in Italy for more than ninety days should get a residence permit (Polizia di Stato, 2010). I never applied for a residence permit. It was difficult to figure out the rules and regulations, and many people told me registering for a residence permit was a long and complicated process, even for an EU citizen. I never registered myself and no one ever asked me about this. Officially, I could therefore be considered an 'irregular migrant' myself, even though I did not even know of these rules until much later and therefore did not even know I was 'irregular' at the time.

I hope that this personal example explains that the distinction between regular and irregular migrant is not always quite clear. The boundaries are often blurred, for instance when a migrant enters the country legally but overstays his or her visa, or when a migrant stays in the country illegally and a 'sanatoria' law is issued that legalises the migrant's status (Cantarella, 2014). There are many more examples of when the boundaries between regular and irregular migrants become blurred, but I will use this distinction for the sake of structure. I have also chosen this distinction because it shows us that not every migrant faces the same kind of obstacles on his or her way. It is easier for migrants with money, a higher education and wanted skills to by-pass the difficult visa and border policies than for migrants who do not have any of those things.

5.1.1.1 IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Nine out of thirteen interviewees travelled to Italy via irregular ways: Thomas, Matthew, Vincent, Gerard and Keith from Nigeria; Laurens, Daniel and from Gambia; and Adam from Guinea-Bissau.¹ They have similar experiences: they all came to Italy via a similar dangerous route and ended up in the asylum

¹ These names – and the names of the other interviewees – are pseudonyms.

procedure. First, they had to cross a large part of Africa to get to Libya. From Libya they all took a boat towards Italy, and then they were picked up by an Italian rescue boat or a different ship on the way. Because of that, their presence was immediately known by the Italian authorities and they were brought into the asylum procedure right away.

An example of this is Gerard, who told me about his long and dangerous journey to get to Italy:

Gerard is from a small village that is close to Benin City in Edo State, in the south of Nigeria. He arrived in Italy on October 4th 2014, but his journey started nine months before that date. He was having problems in his community that he did not want to specify. He left his village in the night of January 4th to 5th and started his journey towards Europe. He travelled to Agadez in Niger, then moved through Algiers and finally ended up in Libya; first in Sabha and then in Tripoli. That part of his journey took him six months. He had very little money, so he often had to stop and work on the way. He stayed in Libya for three months and worked to earn enough money to cross the sea. He spent four days on a boat before he was picked up by an Italian rescue boat. They brought him to Lampedusa, where he only stayed one night before he was flown to another place in Italy, probably Verona but he does not know for sure, and then brought to Milan by bus. There he has been waiting on his asylum procedure for nine months. In that period he has been living in four different asylum seeker centres.

The stories of these migrants are similar: they all travelled to Libya from their home country and then took a boat to Italy. Their individual experiences, however, are very different. Keith, for instance, did not plan on going to Italy at first. He initially left for Libya and lived there for a few months. When he learnt he could take a boat to Italy from there, he took that opportunity:

Keith was living in Jos, Nigeria. After his parents split up, he and his twin brother stayed with their father while the other children went with their mother. Their father was killed when they were young. After that their uncle took them in. When he was also killed, they had no family left. When Keith's twin brother was attacked, they decided it was no longer safe for them in Nigeria. A friend of their uncle brought them to Libya. They did not have any money, so they had to sleep on the streets and tried to work when they could. When someone told them they could take a boat to Italy, they did. They went to Lampedusa and from there they were brought to Milan.

Keith's story also shows us that the choices migrants make are not always intentional (see also Schapendonk, 2011). Keith ended up in Italy because a chain of events. He did not intentionally leave his home to migrate to Italy. Many migrants take the opportunities they find on their way instead of carefully planning a move. This corresponds with Schapendonk's (2011) argument that the decisions migrants make cannot always define the outcome of their migration.

From all of the irregular migrants I have interviewed, Vincent is the interviewee who has been living in Italy the longest:

Vincent lived in Benin-City, a large city in Edo State, Nigeria. He decided to go to Europe because he felt that Nigeria is a corrupt country. There is money in a Nigeria, but there are only a few people in Nigeria who own that money, he told me. In Nigeria his life was difficult. He could not go to school because his family could not afford it. He wanted to go to Europe to find a better life. He left Nigeria in 2008 and arrived on the island Lampedusa somewhere in 2009. He does not remember the exact dates.

He told me many people on his boat died. He lived in Bari, in the south of Italy, for a few months before moving to Lodi, a town next to Milan.

Vincent does not have travel documents, but he told me he visited France and spent a little time in Switzerland to work. He is not the only interviewee who has travelled to other European countries without official travel documents. Milan is about 50 kilometres from the Swiss border, a distance that is easy to cover. Another example of this is Zack:

Zack lived in Serrekunda, Gambia. From there he travelled to Libya, by bus all the way through Mali. There he got on a boat to Lampedusa. He stayed in Lampedusa for a week before he was flown to Naples. He lived in Naples for about six months. Then he was moved to Milan, to another 'asylum project', where he stayed for another six months. He then decided to go to Switzerland, where he stayed irregularly for about 7 months before being sent back to Italy. He stayed in Naples and Milan for another couple of weeks and then moved to Germany.

Zack has moved frequently, both within Italy and within Europe. He explained that he would use a 'black car', meaning a car with tinted windows, to bring him across the border. He would have to go to Verona, find a driver who would be willing to take him without seeing a passport, and pay a small sum of money. He had friends who used the same method and from them he learned which route to take.

All the interviewees in this paragraph are low-skilled and are therefore seen as unwanted migrants in Italy. The paradox is that they are needed on the labour market at the same time (Cantarella, 2014; Solé, 2004). Italy's policies make it difficult for them to enter the country, but as we have seen from both the empirical findings and the literature: migrants will always find a way (De Haas, 2007; Van Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001; Newman & Paasi, 1998). They adapt, even if it's dangerous.

5.1.1.2 REGULAR MIGRATION

Three out of thirteen interviewees could travel to Italy via a legal and much safer route: Edgar and Finn from Nigeria, and Mark from Ghana. The first example is Edgar's story:

Edgar is from Enugu, a state in the south of Nigeria. He came to Italy in 1999. He moved to Rome to study there. He wanted to travel and see other cultures. He had lived in Nigeria all of his life and wanted to see more of the world. Edgar received a student visa and had the money to travel to Italy directly by plane. He studied in Rome for two years and then moved to Milan for work. There he married a Nigerian woman and together they had a daughter.

It was easy for Edgar to migrate to Italy: he had money and the right papers. He had studied and has had a stable job in Milan since graduation. He is a migrant with economic potential. This is different for the migrants from the previous paragraph. Gerard, for example, was a relatively poor mechanic in Nigeria. His skills are not wanted by the Italian government – even though they may be needed at the same time (see Cantarella, 2014; Solé, 2004) – making it impossible for him to travel to Italy legally. Therefore he had to undertake a long and dangerous journey to migrate to Italy.

These stories show us that migration and mobility are not equally accessible to all, as Cresswell (2010) and Schapendonk (2011) have also argued in their studies on mobility. I quoted Cresswell (2010) in Chapter 2, an argument that is very relevant in the context of these stories: "Mobility is a resource that is differentially accessed. One person's speed is another person's slowness. Some move in such a way that others get fixed in place" (p. 21).

In the previous paragraph, I mentioned that migrants do not always intentionally plan a move to a certain destination (Schapendonk, 2011). Through my interviews I found that this is often different for regular migrants. They usually do plan ahead, for instance by requesting a visa and buying a plane ticket. Edgar is one of those migrants who planned his migration and intentionally chose Italy as a destination. He travelled from Nigeria to Italy via the legal and relatively easy way.

Mark and Finn have very different backgrounds and very different reasons for coming to Italy than Edgar, but there are similarities as well. They, like Edgar, had a visa and they also had the money to buy a plane ticket. They chose Italy as their destination – all because of different reasons that I will present in this section – and planned ahead. Mark is an exceptional case, who cannot really be considered an immigrant because he was actually born in Italy:

Mark is Ghanaian, but he was born on the Italian island Sicily and he spent most of his childhood in Italy. He moved back to Ghana in 1998 or 1999, he was 11 or 12 years old then. He went to school and later to university there, but moved back to Italy in 2010. In 2014 he went to Vietnam to teach English. He stayed there for 1.5 years before moving back to Italy. Michael does not have an Italian passport, but it is easy for him to obtain a visa and a residence permit because of his family and his job as an English teacher at a Milanese university.

Even though Mark was born in Italy, he is most definitely a migrant. He has moved between Ghana, Italy and Vietnam several times and can therefore be considered a ‘frequent mover’. Mark is looking for a place where he feels at home, but he has yet to find that place. He expects to keep moving until he does. He has this option mostly because of his family ties, and because of his higher education and occupation: he works as a freelance web designer and teaches English as a second language. He can do this work almost anywhere in the world.

Another ‘regular’ migrant who I interviewed is Finn. His story is once again very different than the previous ones, because he came to Italy as a priest:

Finn is from Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State in the south-west of Nigeria. He works as a priest and was sent to Milan by his bishop to study there, to work in the Catholic Church and to learn about the Catholic tradition in Italy. He did not choose to go to Milan, but accepted this mission when the bishop asked him to go. It was very easy for him to go to Italy. There was a scholarship available, so money was not a problem, and it was easy for him to obtain a visa because of the church’s contacts.

Italy has special visa for people who travel for religious reasons (see: <http://vistoperitalia.esteri.it>). This made it relatively easy for Finn to migrate to Italy. He quickly and easily obtained a visa because of his work for the Catholic Church.

These interviewees have one important thing in common: they are highly skilled. Therefore, they are part of what Fekete (2001) calls “the chosen few” (p. 28). They are well-educated and found a job that is valued by the Italian society. Because of that, they allowed to migrate, whereas others are stopped. These policies help keep a system in place wherein Europe, and Italy as well, have a position of power, as Fekete argued in her research on xeno-racism.

5.1.2 EXPERIENCES WITH XENO-RACISM

In this paragraph, I will use the same distinction between different types of anti-immigrant mobilisation as I have done in the previous chapter (see Della Porta, 2000). In the first part, I will present examples

of the interviewees' experiences with anti-immigrant politics, the second part will focus on their experiences with xeno-racist violence, and the final part shows experiences related to crime and security issues.

In reality, these experiences may not be as separated as they are presented here. In fact, it is logical that these experiences are connected. An explanation for this connection can be found in the literature: strict border policies lead to migrants looking for illegal ways to enter the country, but labelling migrants as illegal often leads to xenophobia and fear (Van Houtum, 2010). This then leads to even stricter policies, and so we end up in a vicious circle (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014). All in all, xenophobia and racism can also lead to violence against migrants.

5.1.2.1 ANTI-IMMIGRANT POLITICS

Discriminatory migration policies were first introduced in the mid-twentieth century (Fekete, 2001), but they are still active today. As we have seen in Chapter 4, the political party engaged in anti-immigrant politics is primarily – but not just – the Lega Nord (Mudde, 2007; Zaslove, 2004; Colombo & Sciortino, 2003). The Lega Nord has a narrative based on excluding outsiders (Tambini, 2001). This idea has had an important influence on policymaking in Italy. In this paragraph, I will show how these policies affect the lives of the migrants I have interviewed.

In the previous section, we have seen that migration and mobility are not equally accessible to all people (Cresswell, 2010; Schapendonk, 2011), partly because of these policies. The distribution of power determines who can move quickly and easily, and who cannot (Cresswell, 2010). In the previous section, we have also seen that these policies can make the difference between being able to migrate legally and having to resort to illegal ways. It is much more difficult for low-skilled and poor West African migrants to migrate to Italy than it is for high-skilled migrants with plenty of financial resources. That does not mean that these migration policies do not affect high-skilled, regular migrants at all. An example of this was given by Edgar in one of our conversations:

Edgar thinks that the Italian culture and politics are very closed off. He has been living in Italy for a long time, but he still had not obtained the Italian nationality. Every couple of years he has to renew his residence permit, which is expensive and costs a lot of time. He says that political parties do not want to make it easier for immigrants to get the Italian nationality out of fear of losing voters.

Everyone who lives in Italy – without the Italian nationality or a permanent resident card for EU citizens – has to renew their residence permit every 6 to 24 months, depending on their occupation (Polizia di Stato, 2010). Making it both difficult and expensive to renew a residence permit, and making it even more difficult to obtain the Italian nationality, are policies created by anti-immigrant politics. Edgar experiences this as anti-immigrant sentiments by political parties that are afraid to lose votes. Edgar is not the only interviewee who has experienced difficulty with residence permits, another example is Vincent:

Vincent had been living in Italy for about six years when I met him. Even though he had been in Italy for that long, he only had a temporary permit of stay for either six months or a year. He was still waiting on the procedure to obtain his official documents.

These frustrations over official procedures in Italy were also shared by those interviewees waiting on their asylum procedure. It came up in conversations with Thomas, Matthew, Keith, Gerard, Adam, Daniel, Laurens, Zack and Vincent. All of them complained about long waiting times, about even longer

appeals, about hearings being postponed, et cetera. Until they are either granted or denied asylum, they receive a residence permit that has to be renewed every six months.

Quassoli and Chiodo have done a study on “the operations of the police and the judiciary towards immigrants in Emilia-Romagna, with specific reference to administration of migration amnesties” (Melossi, 2003, p. 382). Melossi (2003) has translated their conclusion, which sketches how frustrating it often is to obtain official documents in Italy:

A problem that has become worse with time and that extends much beyond the current procedures of regularisation is the very high level of discretionality, variability and unpredictability in law enforcement (from the exceedingly long lines and waiting times to the difficulties in relating to individual functionaries) [. . .] It should be emphasised that a widespread perception among the immigrants is that on the one hand laws are not at all clear and on the other that rules of execution able to give effective orientation to the offices are sorely missing. The immigrants’ attempts at abiding by the rules are often doomed to failure when such rules are hard to perceive. In the same way, the immigrants clearly perceive instead the organisational and coordination problems of the offices, which make an already difficult relationship between the foreigners and the institutions even worse. Generally speaking, information is not available and often contradictory. Each office seems to answer to its own organisational procedures, by interpreting and enforcing the existing rules in a way, which is at the very least, fragmentary [. . .] This situation is having an impact on the migrants’ social identity. Among them, one is witnessing feelings of disorientation, uncertainty about rights and available resources, and the conviction that, faced with unending problems to become ‘regular’, ‘informal’ accommodations can be found in order to safeguard the chances to live and reside legally in Italy. (Quassoli and Chiodi, 2000: 278–9) (Melossi, 2003, p. 382–383)

Quassoli and Chiodi conclude that the fact that both the laws and the information about rules and regulations are unclear – especially to foreigners who are not used to the system and who do not understand the language – causes migrants – like Vincent and Edgar - to feel frustrated and uncertain.

The interviewees’ migration stories in the previous section have confirmed that many migrants do indeed find other routes or find ways to hide their identity if the legal ways are blocked because of anti-immigrant politics, as De Haas (2007), Van Houtum (2010) and Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (2001) have previously argued in their studies. Two examples of hiding or changing an identity came up in conversations I had with migrants. Both Zack and Laurens told me they had lied about their age up arrival in Italy. They told the authorities they were minors in the hopes of an easier asylum procedure. As Laurens put it nicely: ‘everything is mafia here, so I’m doing mafia as well’. Italy is well-known for its problems with the mafia and corruption (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Melossi, 2003), and migrants know this too. They hear things from other migrants and they adapt to their environment.

5.1.2.2 XENO-RACIST VIOLENCE

Xeno-racist violence comes in different forms. Most examples of xeno-racist violence that came up in conversations with migrants were examples of what Zizek (2008) would call structural or objective violence. This is a form of violence that is often invisible. It is hard to notice, because it has become part of the dominant discourse. It is related to what Rydgren (2003) calls ‘latent xenophobia’: a set of negative stereotypes and prejudices that are normalised. An example of this can be discrimination on the job market, as Edgar explained in one of our conversations:

Edgar sees a lot of exclusion in the Italian society. He very rarely sees a West African in a public job, such as a police officer, a bank employee, or even a taxi driver. There are, however, a lot of West Africans working as security guard in shops. He thinks

that this is because the Italians find them intimidating. Edgar says that the Italian culture is very closed off. The Italians have a lot of 'fences', he thinks. They want to protect their own culture from outsiders. Few Italians speak more than one language. Edgar sees a difference with the Italians who are well-travelled. They are often more interested in migrants and are not afraid to live close to them.

Edgar's example shows both economic and cultural factors of xeno-racism (see also Fekete, 2001 and Sivanandan, 2001). Pichler (2010) and Rydgren (2003) identify economic as the 'old' and 'cultural' as the new type of racism, but Edgar's story shows that both can be experienced at the same time. Edgar explains how he notices that black migrants are excluded from certain public jobs. This could be because of economic reasons: limiting the competition on the job market, for instance (Solé, 2004). Edgar, however, also mentions that he often sees West Africans working as a security guard, which is the only times he sees West African migrants in a public job. His explanation for this is that Italians find them intimidating. He also notes that Italians close off their culture for newcomers. These arguments are more cultural, because they refer to what Rydgren (2003) calls "the insurmountable difference between culturally defined *ethnies* (Wieviorka, 1998: 32)" (p. 48). It is also a form of identity construction: these 'fences' Edgar names distinguish the ingroup from the outgroup. It creates a boundary between 'us' and 'them', as Mudde (2007), Newman and Paasi (1998), Tambini (2001) and Triandafyllidou (1999) have also argued in their studies.

Edgar emphasises that there is a noticeable difference between Italians who have travelled and those who have not. A similar idea came up in a conversation with Adam. Adam told me he liked Milan, even though he sometimes experiences racism. In his experience, many people in Milan have travelled to other countries, know other people and therefore have a respect for humanity.

Few interviewees could give examples of direct violence, or as Zizek (2008) would say: subjective violence. This type of violence is related to what Rydgren (2003) calls 'manifest xenophobia', which is a set of negative stereotypes and prejudices that is more often than the latent type of xenophobia an elaborate and articulated set of beliefs. It is less 'normal' and therefore more noticeable. An exception here was Mark, who was born and raised in Italy:

Mark does not want to obtain the Italian nationality. He does not identify much with the Italian people. Racism is a very big issue for him. He often feels that the Italians do not respect him because he is a black man. His experiences with racism are worse in the south of Italy – where he was born and where many of his family members are still living – than in the north – where he is living now. He often pretends to not speak Italian to prevent racist treatment. When he speaks English while he is out shopping, for instance, the shop employees approach him as a rich tourist who might buy something. When he speaks Italian, he feels like they see him as a poor migrant. They do not approach him as a possible customer and do not treat him with respect.

Mark's everyday experiences with xeno-racism mark his life in Italy. Shop employees automatically approaching him as a poor migrant instead of as possible customer can be considered a type of latent xenophobia or structural violence. These shop employees probably do not even notice that they approach an Italian speaking black customer differently than an English speaking black customer.

That is not Mark's only example, though. I only met Mark a handful of times and one of those times was during a party at club:

Mark and I were talking during a club night when a stranger yelled something in our direction. From his reaction I could see that it bothered him. I asked him what she had said. I had not understood it because it was in Italian. He did not want to repeat

it but explained that it was a racial slur. He said that he had wanted to yell something back, but that he refrained because he did not want to start a fight. So instead he pretended to not speak Italian and to not understand the slur.

This girl yelling a racial slur at Mark can be considered an even more direct form of violence or a more manifest type of xenophobia. It was definitely not the first time something like this happened to Mark. However, in examples like this factors such as the understanding of the language and culture play an important role in the way migrants experience xeno-racism. It does not make the acts of xenophobia or racism any different, but it certainly changes the experience. Mark and Edgar are examples of migrants who have been living in Italy for a long time. They speak the language fluently and understand the culture, especially Mark who was born there. He understands the nuances of the Italian culture better than any of the other interviewees and was raised bilingually. That means that he also understands racial slurs that are yelled to him, whereas other migrants that have only been living in Italy for a few months will probably not understand. They could therefore have a difficult experience in the same environment.

5.1.2.3 CRIME AND SECURITY

Italy is not a country that is known for its good relationship with law and order. It is often seen as a society that is ruled by the mafia and by corruption (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Melossi, 2003). Nevertheless it are often the migrants who are blamed for crime and violence. In reality, there is no evidence that proves migrants are more prone to criminal behaviour than the native population (Cantarella, 2014). Or, as Laurens said: 'everything is mafia here, so I'm doing mafia as well'.

Chapter 4 explained that migrants, especially those who are visibly different, are more likely to be stopped on the street than native Italians (Melossi, 2003; Solé, 2004). One of my interviewees, Thomas, experienced the same thing when we were supposed to meet each other at a metro station.

I often went to a Nigerian church on Sundays. One Sunday I called one of my respondents, Thomas, to ask if he was going to the church, because I wanted him to introduce me to some other people. He said he was planning on going and that he and some of his friends could pick me up at the metro station. When I arrived at the metro station, I did not see them. I tried calling him but he did not answer the phone, so I decided to walk to the church by myself. Later, I saw them at the church and asked what happened. He told me he and his friends were stopped by the police at the metro station. The 'carabinieri', a paramilitary police unit, was at metro station to send some vendors away. When they saw Thomas and his friends, they asked for their documents. They also asked him if he worked, why he was wearing such nice clothes, and how he got those clothes. Thomas was very angry about this. He said they cannot just stop him and ask him those questions when is doing nothing but walking on the streets. He also told me that it has happened quite often in the few months he has been living in Italy.

As I explained in the introduction of this section: I could also be considered to be living 'irregularly' in Italy, but I was never stopped on the streets in the four months I lived there, nor did someone ever ask to see my documents. However, another interviewee, Zack, disagreed that black people are stopped more often:

Zack arrived in Italy in 2013. He has spent some months in Switzerland before coming back to Italy. In Switzerland he lived in Montreux. He told me that the people are very strict there and that the police control everything: if they see a black person,

they will ask to see a passport. Zack is convinced that they don't like black people in Switzerland. He says life is better in Italy, that you can 'live free' there. He has only been stopped and asked to show his passport once since arriving in Italy.

These two different stories show that experiences with racism can vary from person to person. Thomas told me he had been stopped very often in only a few months' time, but Zack, on the other hand, told me he had only been stopped once in a period of over two years. Their experiences are clearly different. This could also suggest that the police do not just stop migrants because they are identified with crime, but that they look for specific signs they identify with crime, for instance Thomas' expensive looking clothes. That, of course, does not change the fact that innocent people are linked to crime because of the way they look and not because they are actually guilty of committing a crime. Therefore, I do think this is something that we can label as a xeno-racist attitude related to issues of crime and security.

There are more subtle examples as well, for instance an experience Gerard shared with me. He had only been living in Italy for a couple of months when we met and he understood little of the Italian language. That does not mean that he has not had any experiences with racism and xenophobia in Italy, though:

Gerard thinks the Italians are not very open minded and he often experiences racism, even in his short period of living in Italy. While he may not understand what people say to him, he feels that nonverbal actions can make their racist and xenophobic fears just as clear. For instance on public transportation: he feels rejected when he sits down next to someone and they would rather stand up than stay seated next to him.

Gerard thinks that the Italians are afraid to get close to him, but he is not sure why. Similar examples came up in various conversations I had with migrants. In a conversation with Keith and some of his friends, for instance, they expressed feeling that Italians are racist. They mostly gave examples of being avoided on the streets and of people not wanting to sit close to them on public transportation. It is hard to pinpoint the exact reason for that behaviour. It is possible that those people are afraid, like Gerard suggested, because they associate migrants with crime (see Angel-Ajani, 2003; Melossi, 2003; Della Porta, 2000). It is also possible that this is unconscious behaviour. It could be a form of latent xenophobia (see Rydgren, 2003) or structural violence (see Zizek, 2008). Their avoidance could be unconscious, normalised behaviour instead of a conscious and elaborate decision.

These two examples show us that there are different actors who can express xeno-racism that is related to crime and security: the authorities in the first example, and regular civilians in the second example. Interesting in this discussion, though, is a conversation I had with Zack.

Zack was born in Gambia, but he knows many different migrants from different countries living in Italy and Switzerland. However, when I told him I had interviewed a few Nigerian migrants for my research project, he disapproved. He told me that Nigerians are bad people and that they give other black people a bad name. He said he knew many Nigerians who were involved in drug trafficking.

This story shows that sometimes it is not just the native population that associates migrants with crime. Zack, a West African migrant himself, was also inclined to associate all Nigerian migrants with crime, especially drug dealing. I found it interesting to see that these discourses do not only circulate amongst the native population, but can also be found within the migrant population.

A last example in this category is once again related to the labour market. This example could fit in both the crime and security and the anti-immigrants politics categories:

Vincent works on a 'vigna', a wine farm, in Lodi, a town close to Milan. He goes there whenever they have work for him, usually three or four days a week, depending on the season. He told me he works 'black'.

Vincent's story is an example that shows Italy needs migrants to do cheap labour. Vincent is the 'victim' of a paradoxical system: Italy does not want low-skilled and poor migrants to enter the country, but at the same time they need them to keep the economy running (Cantarella, 2014; Solé, 2004).

5.2 XENO-RACISM AS A FACTOR IN MIGRATION

In the two previous sections, I have described some of the experiences my interviewees had with migration on the one hand, and xeno-racism on the other hand. In this section, I will delve deeper into the link between these two factors. Do their experiences with xeno-racism in Italy have an effect on their mobility? Do these experiences influence their desire to stay in Italy or to move elsewhere? To explore the relation between mobility and xeno-racism, I asked my interviewees about their ideas for their future. I will present some of their stories in the same way as in the previous sections.

Edgar is one of the interviewees who has been living in Italy the longest, over fifteen years now:

Edgar says that almost every migrant he knows who has received an Italian passport, has left Italy. On the one hand he thinks that this is caused by the poor economic situation and issues with unemployment, but on the other hand the closed-off Italian culture and the feeling of being excluded also play a role. Edgar has also visited the Netherlands and Britain, and he thinks that those countries are much more open minded towards migrants. However, he has a family and a stable job in Milan, which is why he is not planning on leaving Italy anytime soon, even though the exclusion and xenophobia often bother him.

After over fifteen years in Italy, Edgar still feels excluded and unwelcome on a regular basis. Nonetheless, he plans to stay in Italy. He has a family and job there, two things that weigh heavier for him than the xeno-racism he experiences. He is settled in Italy and will probably stay for the foreseeable future.

Another example from a migrant who has been living in Italy for a long time is Martin's story:

Martin has also been living in Italy for fifteen years. He has a family in Italy and he has a more or less stable job. He has a market stall at different markets in and around Milan. Before that he worked in a factory.

Martin, like Edgar, has family and work tying him to Italy. He did not want to talk much about experiences with xeno-racism, but he stays in Italy because of his family and work, so I expect that these things are at the top of his priority list.

Gerard's situation is different. He is not yet settled in Italy, he does not have a family or a job that binds him to the country. How does he feel about his future?

Gerard is still waiting on his asylum procedure, but he has been thinking about his future in the meantime. He would prefer to move to another European country once he has his documents. Finding a job is his main concern. He has heard there is a lot of work in Switzerland, so he would consider moving there. He has a sister in the

Czech Republic, though. From her he learned that Czech people speak better English than the Italians, and that there is more work. He would therefore like to move there. He does like Italy, but he has problems with learning the language and he is afraid he will not find a job. The racism and xenophobia he experiences bother him, but his priority is finding a job. He will live anywhere if he can work there.

Gerard had only been living in Italy for approximately nine months when I met him. He had just began to build a network there, so he does not have as much tying him to Italy as Edgar does. He has family in the Czech Republic, so that would make it easier for him to move there.

Edgar and Gerard both have experiences with racism and they both think that the Italian society is closed-off and unwelcoming to migrants. Racism, however, does not play a very important role when thinking about their mobility in the future. They have other priorities, particularly work and family. In the interviews, most migrants named work – and related to that financial stability – as their number one priority. Some, like Gerard, have family in other European countries. Matthew is another example of this:

Matthew wants to go Germany. Some of his older brothers live there. People have told him it is a better place for migrants than Italy, because there are more jobs and there is a better possibility of a good income. He does not think he can find a job in Italy.

Matthew names the same factors as Edgar and Gerard: family, work and a stable income. Keith also puts his financial situation at the top of his priorities, but he seemed less worried about finding a job:

Keith wants to move to Sweden. He says he know some people there who told him it is a good country where they give migrants a house and money.

Even though Keith is less worried about finding work, he has his longing for financial security in common with the previous stories. This is something Melossi (2003) also found in his empirical study on migration and crime in Europe:

And again and again, in the course of the interview, Xhemal refers to his lost bike and how he wanted to come to Italy because this is a place where he can be 'tranquillo', where he can live in peace. Migrants too long for a 'stationary' situation, for an end to their nomadic existence, their mobility, their largely unwanted 'crime' of mobility and modernity. (p. 390)

The longing for a peaceful life was expressed by several of my interviewees, for example by Adam:

Adam told me why he came to Italy: 'In Africa there is no peace, so you leave. Here, there is peace.' Adam wants to stay in Italy because he is learning the language. He does not want to go to another country and have to learn a new language. He told me he had to obtain the right documents and learn the language to be able to work.

Adam was looking for a place where he can live in peace and he found that place in Milan. He is preparing to build a life there and for him, too, a job is the most important factor. He knows he needs to obtain the right documents and to learn the language to be able to find a job, so he is working on that as well as he can. He does not want to migrate to another country, because he does not want to start over again. He just wants to live in peace, 'tranquillo'.

This longing for a peaceful life can even be found in Zack's story. This may seem unexpected, because Zack is an example of a migrant who has moved frequently.

Zack, who spent some time in Naples, Milan and Montreux (in Switzerland), told me Italy is a better place for migrants than Switzerland. He thinks people in Switzerland do not like black people. In Italy you can 'live free', he repeatedly told me, but there are no jobs in Italy. He found it much easier to find work in Switzerland, but since he stayed there irregularly he is not allowed to go back until 2018. Eventually, he decided to go to Germany instead.

Zack experienced more xeno-racism in Switzerland than in Italy. He repeatedly told me that Italy, and especially Naples, was a place where he could live in a peace, where he could 'live free'. He did not stay in Italy, though, because he felt like all he could there was wait on his asylum procedure. He wanted to work. His friends told him there were more jobs in Germany than in Italy, so he thought his chances in Germany were better and he moved there.

Zack's story has one thing in common with the stories of Edgar, Martin, Gerard, Matthew and Keith that I shared at the beginning of this section: the social element plays a crucial part in their stories. All of these migrants made their plans for the future based on what they heard from their social networks. This corresponds with Schapendonk's (2011) argument that migration is a social event. Migrants do not usually make these decisions by themselves, their social environment plays an important part in these processes. And, as Halfacree and Boyle (1993) argue. Their ideas about migration are influenced by how their environment sees migration and migrants.

Sometimes, I, as a researcher, seemed to become part of this social network as well. This happened in a conversation with Thomas:

I asked Thomas if he was planning on staying in Italy in the future. He told me he did not want to stay there and that he would like to move to the Netherlands. He asked me about the asylum procedure and the possibilities of obtaining documents there, something that I did not expect. I asked him why he wanted to go to the Netherlands. He said that he did not really know, just that he liked the country and that he knew some people there. He had never visited the Netherlands himself. When I asked him about other European countries he told me that he considered going to Germany a couple of months earlier, but that he changed his mind. He said that Germany was too strict and that it was too difficult to obtain documents there.

I was surprised when he mentioned the Netherlands and began asking me about the possibilities in the Netherlands. He could not articulate very well why the Netherlands was number one on his list, so I wondered if I, as a researcher, had influenced his plans. Unfortunately, I expect that I will never know for sure.

The social process was not clear in every interview I had. When speaking to Vincent about his plans for the future, he did not mention his social network as a part of his plans:

Vincent also mentioned there is no work in Italy for him. He works on the irregular labour market whenever he can, but he longs for a stable job. He does not yet know where he will go, though. He told me that he will go where God takes him.

Vincent, unlike the other interviewees I have mentioned in this paragraph, did not seem to have made any future plans based on his social network. That is not because he does not have a social network. I met Vincent at meeting of the Nigerian Union Milan where he invited me to a party for several Nigerian unions in the region. I assume one needs to have a large social network to be able to organise an event like that. In our conversations, though, he referred to his belief in a God as a leading factor. He had not

made any plans for the future, even though he – like many others – was afraid he would not find a stable job in Italy. He simply believed that God would take him where he was supposed to go.

Another migrant who has not made any plans for his future is Laurens:

Laurens does not know if he will stay in Milan, because he does not yet know what will happen. He plans to wait for his documents and to look for a job in the meantime. He wants to stay if he gets his documents, finds a job and if 'life is good'. If 'life is not good', he plans to leave.

Laurens chose to wait for the outcome of his asylum procedure and his search for a job instead of already making plans for the future. Daniel, one of Laurens' friends, told me the same thing in one of our conversations:

Daniel does not know if he wants to stay in Milan or not. He does not think about this yet, because he does not know what the future would bring. He hopes to find work, but knows that will not be easy in Italy. He told me most Gambians go to Germany and Sweden because it is easier there. Sometimes he thinks Italy is worse than Gambia. He often sees migrants sleeping on the streets in Milan, and he would rather go back to Gambia than sleep on the streets.

We have seen that most migrants prioritise family and financial security over xeno-racist experiences. Mark from Ghana is the only exception amongst my interviewees:

Mark does not feel at home in Italy. He feels excluded and often experiences racism. He does not want an Italian passport because he does not identify with the Italian people. He likes to discover new places, cultures and people. Mark also has the money and the skills to do so.

Mark expected to move away from Italy after his contract was finished, in June 2015. Unfortunately I lost contact with him before that, so I do not know where he went. Mark is a high-skilled migrant with two degrees: web design and English as a second language. His occupation makes him flexible: his work as a web designer is freelance and teaching English is something he can do almost anywhere. He does not feel the need to live close to his family. Still, he – like the previous interviewees – seems to be longing for a stable place (see also Melossi, 2003). He told me his dream for the future: he wants to find a place where he feels at home and there he wants to open a bed and breakfast that also offers courses in web design and English.

All of these migrants have plans for their future, but that does not mean that they are in full control of what happens. Not all migration is voluntary. It is, for instance, not unthinkable that some of the asylum applications of my interviewees will be rejected. They will then be ordered to leave the country. If they cannot leave because they do not have the money to go back to West Africa (see also Cantarella, 2014) or if they do not want to leave, they will be forced to stay in Italy illegally or they will be deported by the state.

Finn falls somewhere in between the categories of voluntary and forced migration. His plans for the future are especially unusual:

Finn will move back to Nigeria after his four year mission is over. He knows that he will go back to the diocese he works for in Nigeria, but he does not yet know where exactly he will go. The bishop will make that decision for him.

Finn chose to accept this mission, but he could not decide where he would go for himself, and he will have to follow the bishop's plan in the future too. He is not forced to migrate, but he is also not the one who decides when and where he goes. It is therefore difficult to place him in a category.

5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, I have presented some of my interviewees' experiences with migration and xeno-racism. I have looked at their experiences with a biographic approach, which means that I consider their experiences to be a part of their past, present and future (Halfacree & Boyle, 1993; Schapendonk, 2011). This approach also means that I look at migration as a complicated dynamic of multiple reasons and as a phenomenon that is embedded in a social and cultural context.

Out of thirteen interviewees, three migrants came to Italy via the regular way: they obtained a visa and arrived by plane. Nine migrants came to Italy via irregular ways: they travelled from West Africa to Libya and from Libya they took a boat towards Italy, where they were put in the asylum procedure. The last interviewee did not want to give any details on his migration history.

Stories like Zack's and Finn's show us that migration is usually not a simple move from place A to place B (see also Cresswell, 2006, 2010; Schapendonk, 2011; Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). Italy was not a final destination for them, and many other interviewees expect that it will not be their final destination either. It is, however, still a significant time in their biography. In Chapter 2, I mentioned that migration should always be considered a life changing event, because it is easier to choose stability than to uproot your life (Halfacree, 2004). My interviewees have chosen to uproot their lives, for very different reasons, and they may do so again in the future.

I have also presented my interviewees' experiences with xeno-racism. Ten out of thirteen migrants gave examples of their experiences with xeno-racism. One said he never had any experiences with xeno-racism in Italy. The last two interviewees did not tell me anything about their ideas of xeno-racism. These experiences can be placed in different categories, I have distinguished three categories based on Della Porta's (2000) study on immigration and protest in Italy: anti-immigrant politics, xeno-racist violence, and crime and security. While I have put different experiences in different categories, it is important to understand that reality is never this black and white. All of these experiences are related to each other, because they are all part of these migrants' biographies, but also because they are a part of the same process of anti-immigrant mobilisation. Anti-immigrant politics, for instance, are partly based on a rhetoric that criminalises migration. Both xeno-racist acts and experiences with xeno-racism should therefore always be observed in their context.

In the last section of this chapter, I have explored if xeno-racism should be considered to be a factor in migration. Out of thirteen interviewees, only one explicitly said his experiences with xeno-racism were an important reason for him to want to move out of Italy. The other interviewees had other issues that were higher on their priority list, most notably a job, a secure income and family. Reading this, one would assume experiences with xeno-racism are not important in the decision-making processes regarding migration, but I think that would be jumping to conclusions. Seven interviewees, all of them asylum seekers, did not see a future for themselves in Italy because they did not expect to find a job in Italy. Objectively, though, the unemployment rate in Italy is not so bad at the moment. In April 2016 11.7 percent of the Italian population was unemployed (Istat, 2016). This means that approximately every nine out of ten people did have a job. It thus seems curious that so many of my interviewees think they will not be able to find work. This could have something to do with discrimination on the labour market, which is, of course, related to processes of xeno-racism.

All in all, the biographic approach has taught us migrants never have clearly contained reasons for migration (Halfacree & Boyle, 1993). Xeno-racism will therefore never be the sole reason that makes migrants decide whether to stay or to go. It is important to keep in mind that there is always more at play and that migration is a complicated and dynamic process. My empirical findings have nonetheless shown that xeno-racism should be considered to be a part of this process.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

For citizens, criminality and the control of illegal immigrants are not just problems for the security forces. The reality is that citizens don't want a multiracial society. — Umberto Bossi (Angel-Ajani, 2003 p. 53)

In this final chapter, I will present some concluding remarks. In the first section, I will conclude and discuss the findings of this study. The research questions I have presented in the Chapter 1 will be leading in the presentation of my conclusion here.

In the second section of this chapter, I will discuss the limitations of this study. In that section, I will also discuss some suggestions for further research on the topic of xeno-racism and migration.

6.1 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this thesis, I have explored the following question:

- ➔ *How do African migrants in Lombardy, Italy experience xeno-racism, and how do such experiences affect their desire to migrate elsewhere in the European Union?*

To be able to answer that question, we have firstly looked at the characteristics of the mobility of West African migrants in the Lombardy region. Secondly, we have explored the characteristics of xeno-racism against these migrants. Thirdly, we have looked for other factors that could influence the relation between xeno-racism and mobility. In this section, I will discuss my findings related to these questions.

Migrants have been present in the Italian society for centuries, but for a long time, Italy was predominantly an emigration country. This changed in the period around the 1970s and 1980s (Adler Hellman, 1997; Campani, 1993; Colombo & Sciortino, 2004; Della Porta, 2000; Grillo & Pratt, 2002; Pettigrew, 1998; Triandafyllidou, 1999). Italy developed into a post-industrial country in the same period and this development led to economic growth. Italy did not have enough people to do the work that was created by this economic development. This created new opportunities and that attracted many migrants to Italy (Grillo & Pratt, 2002).

For many, this change came as a surprise. Both the Italian government and the citizens were unprepared for this influx of migrants (Adler Hellman, 1997; Triandafyllidou, 1999; Zaslove, 2011). Italy was reluctant to see this change and for a long time held on to the old image, despite a new reality (Adler Hellman, 1997). Policymaking on the subject of migration was therefore also slow. The first political debates revolved around the idea of restrictive border policies, instead of the change in society. Citizen or resident rights for migrants were not even discussed until the late 1990s.

The introduction of restrictive border policies did not stop the inflow of migrants. Many authors (e.g. De Haas, 2007; Van Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001; Newman & Paasi, 1998) have argued that migrants will always find another way into the country or a way to hide their identity. My interviewees with nine irregular migrants corresponded with this argument. All thirteen migrants, both regular and irregular, that I have interviewed are from countries in West Africa. All of those countries are on the 'negative' Schengen list. This means that citizens from those countries need to go through a difficult procedure to obtain a visa (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014; Van Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001). The restrictive border and migration policies discriminate based on the level of education, religion, wealth, skin colour, et cetera. This makes it easier for, for example, high-skilled migrants than for low-migrants to migrate to Italy. This difference was also observed in my empirical findings: it was much easier for the three high-skilled migrants I interviewed to obtain a visa and migrate to Italy than for the nine low-skilled interviewees.

The paradox is that Italy still needs low-skilled migrants on the labour market, but that it has become difficult for them to migrate to Italy (Cantarella, 2014; Solé, 2004). The migration policies that were introduced by both Italy and the European Union make it difficult for migrants to enter legally, so they

often resort to illegal ways. And because they cannot obtain a work permit, they look for work on the informal labour market.

All these developments are a part of what can be seen as a new form of racism. For this type of racism, I have used the term xeno-racism, which was previously introduced by Sivanandan (2001). Xeno-racism is a form of racism that is not only based on skin colour, but also on socio-economic status (Fekete, 2001; Sivanandan, 2001). Migrants are portrayed as scroungers who steal jobs, live of the wealth of western countries and threaten their cultural and national identities, and they are denigrated and excluded because of that. Restrictive migration policies are inspired by this rhetoric: they try to 'scare off' unwanted economic migrants.

West African migrants are not the only ones affected by these migration policies. They, like others, are set apart through identity politics, which separate the ingroup from the outgroup and 'us' from 'them'. Symbolic borders are created between 'us' and 'them' to mark off our own identity (Mudde, 2007; Newman and Paasi, 1998; Tambini, 2001; Triandafyllidou, 1999). In this case, the insiders are the northern Italians and the outsiders are not only the migrants from Africa, but also those from southern Italy and eastern Europe. However, symbolic boundaries are stronger when the difference between groups is more recognisable. A more recognisable difference makes it harder for someone from the outgroup to move into the ingroup (Tambini, 2001). The difference between West African migrants and Italians is the most recognisable of all, and skin colour is an important part of that.

This narrative I have presented is the basis for anti-immigrant mobilisation in Italy. I have discussed three types on anti-immigrant mobilisation based on Della Porta's (2000) study on immigration and protest in Italy. Right-wing anti-immigrant politics is the first type. The Lega Nord was the first party to politicise migration (Zaslove, 2011) and they are still the most active anti-immigrant party. They have a large grassroots support, especially in the north. The Lega Nord is surely not a single-issue party, but their anti-immigrant narrative has become the centre piece of their campaigns and it has been leading in their electoral success (Mudde, 2007; Tambini, 2001; Zaslove, 2011). Being a coalition member for many years has also given them the opportunity to influence anti-immigrant policymaking (Mudde, 2007; Zaslove, 2004; Colombo & Sciortino, 2003). The empirical findings showed several experiences with these anti-immigrant policies. It was, as mentioned before, difficult for the low-skilled interviewees to migrate to Italy legally because of these policies. The influence of anti-migrant policies does not stop once migrants arrive in Italy, though. Once in Italy, migrants have to obtain a residence permit and renew it every 6 to 24 months, depending on their occupation (Polizia di Stato, 2010). This is often experienced as a long, difficult and expensive procedure.

The second type of anti-immigrant mobilisation I have discussed, is xeno-racist violence. There are different types of xeno-racist violence. Firstly, there are acts of violence that are part of the dominant discourse. They are so common that we often do not even notice them. This is what Zizek (2008) calls objective or structural violence, or what Rydgren (2003) identifies as latent xenophobia. An example of this is discrimination on the labour market. One of my interviewees told me he rarely sees a West African migrant in a public job, with the exception of security guards. His explanation was that Italians are afraid of these migrants. The second type of xeno-racist violence is very visible and clearly articulated. Rydgren (2003) names this manifest xenophobia and Zizek (2008) calls this subjective violence. I have, for instance, given the example of racial slurs.

The third type of anti-immigrant mobilisation is linked to issues of crime and security. Often, in the media, in politics and in public debates, migrants are associated with crime, particularly 'new crimes' such as drug dealing and prostitution (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Cantarella, 2004; Della Porta, 2000; Melossi, 2003). There is, however, no evidence that proves that migrants are more prone to criminal behaviour than the native population (Cantarella, 2004). They are nonetheless overrepresented in criminal statistics. Melossi (2003) explained this: migrants – and particularly irregular migrants – often have to work on the informal labour market because they do not have the documents to do legal work. At the same time, they are already seen as criminals, which means they are more likely to be singled out by law enforcement. They are criminalised by the system (Angel-Ajani, 2003; Melossi, 2003). An example from my empirical findings comes from my interviewee Thomas, who told me he is regularly stopped on the streets. It happened one time when we were supposed to meet at a metro station. The police stopped

him, asked him for his documents and wanted him to explain where he got his expensive clothes. He was not committing a crime at that time, so there was no real reason to stop him.

I have looked at my interviewees' experiences with a biographic approach. This means that I consider all the experiences they shared with me to be a part of their past, present and future (Halfacree & Boyle, 1993; Schapendonk, 2011). This is not the only characteristic of the biographic approach. It also explains that migration is never based on a few clearly distinguishable reasons, but on a complicated dynamic of multiple reasons. Lastly, it suggests to look at migration as a phenomenon that is embedded in a social and cultural context. I would like to underline that this means that it is never possible to say that experiences with xeno-racism were a migrants' one and only motivation. That was not the purpose of this study. Migration is always a dynamic and complicated process. It is easier to choose a stable life than to uproot your life and migration should therefore always be considered a major life changing event (Halfacree, 2004).

Migration is also never a simple move from A to B (Cresswell, 2006, 2010; Schapendonk, 2011; Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). Many of my interviewees do not think Italy will be their final destination. The question is if experiences with xeno-racism are a factor in their decision to move further. Only one out of thirteen interviewees explicitly mentioned that his experiences with xeno-racism were an important reason for him to want to move away from Italy. Nine of the other interviewees also shared experiences with xeno-racism, but all of them had issues that were higher on their priority list: a job, a secure income and family.

These results seem to point in the direction of xeno-racism not being an important factor in migration and mobility, but as I have explained in previous chapter: that would be jumping to conclusions. Finding a job that leads to a secure income is of course related to the labour market. Seven interviewees, all of them having arrived in Italy irregularly and waiting on their asylum procedure, did not see a future for themselves in Italy because they did not expect to find a job there. At a current 11.7 percent the unemployment rate in Italy is improving, though (Istat, 2016). This makes it seem unlikely that none of these migrants will be able to find a job, except if discrimination on the job market is a possible factor. That, of course, is related to a rhetoric of xeno-racism. Migrants prioritise financial security over experiences with racism, but these two aspects are often connected. The prospect of finding a job that provides financial security can be endangered by institutionalised xeno-racism. The Italian labour market does not always provide equal opportunities to migrants and the native population, either because of restrictive migration policies or because of prejudice towards migrants. This is a form of structural violence and latent xenophobia. It may not be recognisable as xeno-racism at first sight, but we can see that it is there when we deconstruct this normalised system. Through this system, xeno-racism affects migrants' lives and can thus – directly or indirectly – affect their desire to migrate elsewhere.

This conclusion leads to new questions. Many migrants seem to accept the situation as it is because they do not want to endanger their financial security. Does this mean that we should still try to combat xeno-racism? I believe that we should, because society today is one of inequality. Migration is not a phenomenon that is likely to disappear (De Haas, 2007). Migration numbers in 2015 were even record-breaking (Eurostat, 2016). Migrants are here to stay, but at the moment they are demonised and excluded. This system of inequality creates a new 'underclass' (Sivanandan, 2001). This unequal society has become normalised in our everyday discourses, so it is unlikely that it will change by itself.

The result of this is that migrants do not get a fair chance in society and that society misses out on (economic) potential. We have seen the paradox in this before: migrants are needed on the labour market but they were unwanted and unwelcome at the same time (Cantarella, 2014; Solé, 2004). This means that inequality harms both migrants and society.

I think that it is time to change this. To do that, we need to take a deeper look at Italian society, and to be able to do that we need to listen to migrants' experiences. The things that seem normal to us in our society may suddenly get a different meaning when seen from another point of view. This applies to the labour market, but to other aspects of society as well. We need to deconstruct society as we know it and look critically at it from a different angle. We may not see that something is an expression of xeno-

racism until we see it through a migrant's eyes. To understand xeno-racism and its consequences, we need to try to understand the people who experience it.

I have quoted article 3 of the Italian constitution before, but I would like to cite it again in the light of this conclusion:

All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions. It is the duty of the Republic to remove the economic and social obstacles which by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organisation of the country.

My findings from the literature and the empirical data have shown that today's society does not correspond with the society the constitution presents. To achieve this equal society, in which every person truly has equal social dignity and equal opportunity to develop and participate fully without obstacles on the way, we need to keep deconstructing the concepts, ideas and expressions that are normalised in today's society, but that are xeno-racist in nature. Only then can we truly understand and change it.

6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this thesis, I have argued that xeno-racism is a profound problem in the Italian society. All in all, it is clear that most West African migrants have experiences with xeno-racism and that these experiences have an effect on their lives. How large the effect on their migration decisions is, is still unclear. Migration as phenomenon is too complicated and this study is too limited to give a clear and final answer to that question. There are always a number of factors that influence migration and mobility. My findings have nonetheless shown that xeno-racism should be considered to be a part of this process. In the following section, I will discuss the limitations of this study and present some suggestions for further research.

This study has several limitations. The first one I would like to discuss is my limited grasp of the Italian language. In this thesis, I have argued that language is an important factor in the understanding of xeno-racist experiences. I myself speak very little Italian. That is a limitation, because I could often not understand everything that was going on in my environment. Milan is a city where demonstrations, protests and rallies occur weekly, and while I usually understood some of their key issues, I was never able to fully understand their narrative.

Sometimes not understanding the language and being an outsider in Italy also worked to my advantage. It made it easier to connect with migrants who had just arrived in Italy and understood as a little as I did. We could commiserate about the difficulties of the Italian language and the culture. This created an instant connection.

I find it important to show the Italian perspective on the issue of immigration and racism, but this is not always easy. Many Italian scholars still only publish in Italian. Sometimes, I was therefore limited in my choice of literature. When that happened, I tried to find authors who published in English but also built on the Italian literature.

Another limitation was working solo in the field. For future research in this area, I would recommend working in couples. I make that recommendation firstly because of safety reasons. Often, migrants made personal requests or comments that made me uncomfortable. Eventually, I had to break contact with one of my long-term respondents because of this. The second reason for this recommendation is that it makes interviewing easier, especially when it is not possible to record an interview. I found it difficult to talk and write at the same time, mostly because this makes it impossible to maintain eye contact. Therefore, I often chose to wait until after the interview to write down my notes. Obviously, some data will be lost in this process. I think more information can be gathered when interviews are done in pairs.

Working in an environment that is often hostile to migrants makes it harder to gain their trust (see also Schapendonk, 2011). I experienced this very much in the beginning of my fieldwork period. Migrants did not understand why I wanted to know all these things about them and they were afraid that I might be working for the authorities. Frustrating as this was, I did not give up. I tried to connect to people, I showed my face regularly at churches, shops, et cetera, and finally I gained some trust. From there on the snowballing effect made it easier to meet new people.

It took some time to get there, which also means that my fieldwork period only produced a small pool of interviewees: thirteen in total. This study can therefore give some insights in the relation between xeno-racism and migration, but it cannot give a clear and final explanation of this relationship. More research and a larger data pool is needed for this. I do think that this study has shown that the relation between these concepts is interesting and that it has been largely overlooked by academic literature so far. Many scholars have studied racism and xenophobia in relation to migrants, and Italy seems to be a quite popular case in these debates, but these studies did not include xeno-racism as a factor in the desire to migrate. In further studies, I would also suggest a larger role for migrants' experiences.

An author who is a good example of focusing on migrants' experiences is Melossi (2003). He has given migrants' experiences a prominent role in his study of migration and crime. For further research, I would recommend following his approach to migrants' experiences. Another approach that I found to be valuable in this context, is the biographical method (e.g. Halfacree & Boyle, 1993; Schapendonk, 2011). This approach focuses on migrants' personal experiences and stories, but besides that, it also stresses that migration is a dynamic process in which many factors play a role. This is an important focus when studying a complicated concept like xeno-racism, especially because its expressions are often concealed.

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APPENDICES

1. TABLE OF RESPONDENTS

Table 5

Interviewees' information: pseudonym, country of origin, age and gender

Number	Pseudonym	Country of origin	Age	Gender
RP1	Mark	Ghana	28	Male
RP2	Edgar	Nigeria	40s	Male
RP3	Thomas	Nigeria	24	Male
RP4	Matthew	Nigeria	28	Male
RP5	Zack	Gambia	25	Male
RP6	Finn	Nigeria	38	Male
RP7	Adam	Guinee-Bissau	23	Male
RP8	Vincent	Nigeria	32	Male
RP9	Daniel	Gambia	27	Male
RP10	Laurens	Gambia	28	Male
RP11	Martin	Senegal	40s	Male
RP12	Keith	Nigeria	20	Male
RP13	Gerard	Nigeria	23	Male