



ITALIAN REPORT:

MAIN THEMES AND CHALLENGES IN A HIGHLY DYNAMIC, MULTIFACETED AND EVOLVING SITUATION

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Introduction

This report aims to provide a glance of the main trends that characterize counseling for migrants and refugees in Italy. We referred to scientific literature and main documents published by national organizations/Institutions.

A first element to consider is the lack of research in this field. As an example of the current situation, when searching in PsychInfo, using the word 'migrant*' and 'work*' and 'Italy or Italian', only 45 research articles were found starting from 2010. Among them, ten focus on migrant domestic and care workers who work in Italian families, and issues discussed in these works concern with gender and masculinity identity in migrant male who are domestic workers; the lack of training and needs of migrant women who take care of older people or the irregular work and the risky conditions that characterize this sector. Additionally, seven papers focus on psychopathological issues showing that migrants have a higher incidence of psychosis compared to natives; two studies focus on professional social workers and on their role in addressing migrants' needs, starting from a first level of street-level initiative; two analyze the role of migrant networks in the labour market and their impact in developing a system of problem-solving and sense-making that often interrupt the interactions with host institutions and promote non regular and precarious works. Single papers were found related to other issues on the impact race and religion play on labour outcomes or on the role of trade union procedures, on the development of a measure to test psychometric properties of the Functional Social Support Questionnaire of a specific ethnic group (see Peruvian migrants); on the management of risk and safety communication in intercultural work contexts; on cultural mediators who work in a public service. Other issues concern health (3), attitudes toward migrants school acculturation issues (3), family reunification and social protection (3), asylum seekers and disability (1). Finally 10 papers focus on issues which are not central in our analysis namely, the history of migration of Italians, the history of Italian school inclusion and attitudes toward foreign foods.

The second element to keep in mind is that in considering 'authorities' we referred mainly to the national System of Protection for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR) that in its website published numerous documents ([www. http://www.sprar.it/](http://www.sprar.it/)).

2. Italy profile

2.1. Recent migration to the country

In Italy, when analyzing the phenomenon of immigration, data from various sources (Caritas, NAGA, United Nations Refugee Agency) confirm three main categories of situations to be considered: foreign nationals regularly residing in the Italian territory; refugees and applicants for international protection; irregular/illegal immigrants.

Foreign nationals regularly residing in the Italian territory. Since 2007 a significant increase of the percentage of foreign residents in Italy has been observed, ranging from 2.592.950 people in 2007 (4.5% of the total Italian population) to 5.029.000 in 2017 (8.3% of total Italian population) (Institute for the Study of Multi-ethnicity-ISMU based on ISTAT data, 2017). However, over the last three years (2014-2017) a small increase has been shown, with a percentage of foreign residents in Italy that has grown only from 8.1% to 8.3% of the total Italian population. This slowdown in growth of the foreign population in Italy is due, in particular, to an increase in the acquisition of Italian citizenship, that is more foreign individuals have been granted Italian citizenship compared to the past.

According to the National Institute for Statistics (ISTAT, 2016) foreigners holding a *residence permit* in Italy on 1st January 2016 come mainly from Eastern European countries. More specifically, migrants resident in Italy come from Romania (22.9%), Albania (9.3%), Morocco (8.7%), People's Republic of China (5.4%), Ukraine (4.6%), the Philippines (3.3%), India (3.0%), Moldova (2.8%), Bangladesh (2.4%), Egypt (2.2%), Peru (2.1%), Sri Lanka (2.0%), Pakistan (2.0%), Senegal (2.0%), and Poland (1.9%).

As far as the reasons for migration are concerned, statistics provided by the Ministry of National Affairs (Ministero dell'Interno, 2014) show that in 2013 a residence permit for work reasons was the most released (48% of residence permits). Family ties was the second common reason (37%). Then, approximately 7% of all applicants, applied for a residence permit on independent/trade work and 1.7% for study purposes.

Refugees and applicants for international protection. In 2016, the number of asylum applications or first time asylum applicants was 123.482, with a large increase compared to 2010 (12.121 asylum applications or first time asylum applicants; Institute for the Study of Multiethnicity-ISMU based on Ministry of Interior data, 2016). In 2016, applicants came mainly from Nigeria (21.8%), Pakistan (11%), Gambia (7.2%), Senegal (6.2%), and Bangladesh (6.1%). Among them, 4.027 (5%) applicants obtained refugee status; 10.771 (14%), though not recognized as refugees, were granted for subsidiary protection status and 15.462 (20%) for humanitarian protection. Lastly, 44.608 (57%) applications were not accepted. As it clearly comes out, countries of origin of individuals potentially included in this group are quite different from those of representing foreigners holding a residence in Italy, thus suggesting an ongoing potential change in the type of issues to be addressed by services, hence by professionals we refer to in our analysis.

Irregular/illegal immigrants. Descriptive data about individuals fitting within this category are provided mainly by NAGA (2014) suggesting that nearly 300.000 individuals (6% of the regular foreign population) are irregular immigrants. Only 15% of these immigrants comes from the Mediterranean routes. More recent data provided in 2015 by *Caritas* (the national catholic organization devoted to support human development, social justice, with a particular attention vulnerable individuals) and *UNHCR* (The United Nations Refugee Agency) support a trend toward a large increase in the number of irregular immigrants.

2.2. The reception of migrants – the legal framework

Upon arrival in Italy, refugees have the legal status of asylum seeker. The asylum application is evaluated by the Territorial Commission for the Recognition of International Protection which can (a) recognize refugee status, if a person has a well-founded fear of persecution in his/her country of origin; (b) refuse to recognize refugee status and concede subsidiary protection, if it considers that there exists an effective risk of serious danger if the individual returns to his/her country of origin; (c) refuse to recognize refugee status, but consider that there exist serious reasons of humanitarian nature and may request the Police Department to give a permit of stay for humanitarian reasons; (d) reject the request.

During the evaluation period of the asylum application, if the individual has no means of subsistence is housed in a government asylum center for international protection seekers, in which the right to medical assistance and medical first aid is guaranteed. Additionally, during this period work activities have not been permitted (unless the decision on the request for asylum is not adopted by the competent Commission within six months presentation of the petition and the delay is not imputable to the individual). Instead, unaccompanied minor asylum seekers or asylum applicants' children have the right to attend Italian public schools, and adult asylum applicants have the right to access to vocational training.

When refugee status is recognized, the *permit of stay* in Italy has duration of 5 years and can be renewed upon expiration. It guarantees access to work, right to social assistance, public education, and application for Italian citizenship after 5 years of residence in Italy. If the applicant has been granted subsidiary protection status, the permit of stay in Italy has duration of 3 years and is renewable at every expiration date, after the territorial Commission reevaluation. It allows access to work (for a duration no longer than the duration of the permit of stay itself), rights to health, sanitary and social assistance. Lastly, the permit of stay in Italy for humanitarian reasons has duration of 1 year and guarantees rights to work and health assistance.

2.3. The reception of migrants – the institutional framework for education and career counselling

Educational and employment needs of refugee both children, youth and adults are guaranteed by the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR) established by 2002 by Law no. 189/2002. On February 2nd, 2017 this system housed 25.838 people with 640 projects and more than 1000 municipality involved across the country (http://www.sprar.it/progetti-territoriali?sort_order=id+asc). It involves public and private levels of government and local stakeholders. The network of local institutions implements reception projects for forced migrants by accessing, within the available resources, the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services, managed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and provided under the Government Finance Law. More specifically, local institutions (i.e. municipality) in cooperation with voluntary organizations, undertake interventions to promote socioeconomic, educational and work inclusion. These include applications for permit renewal, family reunification and citizenship. Among the advice centres *patronati* refer to intermediary institutions attached to trade unions in which workers can receive free advice, assistance, protection, and representation (Agnoletto 2012). Their role is to protect and advocate for welfare users and ensure that the welfare system is functioning correctly. Although they are not part of the state infrastructure, they are state-funded since the state pays the *patronato* for each assistance file opened. Staff members at the centre were generally individuals who had previously been employed elsewhere within the trade union and had subsequently been employed at the migrant advice centre. Volunteers tend to be either Italian students completing work experience or migrants.

Policies and practices are however designed and decided at governmental level. The entire system is in fact coordinated by the 'Central Service for Information, Promotion, Advice, Monitoring and Support to Local Bodies' office. It aims to monitor the presence of asylum seekers and refugees, provide assistance to local services and supervise continuing education opportunities for service operators.

3. Identifying knowledge relevant for the provision and development of career guidance and counselling for refugees

3.1. Knowledge gaps

Due to significant changes in the country of origin of migrants arriving in Italy, currently the pattern is scattered first of all with respect to the culture (African, Asiatic, Eastern Europe and Middle and Eastern Asia) but also in the distribution of individuals across first and second generation immigrants, thus highlighting the complex picture which can influence level of knowledge in professionals: area/ country of origin, family status in the country of origin, immigrant generation. Recent specific studies addressing these issues are not available in the country especially related to recent dynamic situation. However, some studies provide information and constrain the analysis.

3.1.1

Education in the country of origin and the type of work performed in Italy. This is a matter of fact, and large numbers of labor migrants are disproportionately concentrated in unskilled jobs with low salaries, although some—especially those from Eastern Europe—hold high educational qualifications (Bernardi, Garrido & Miyar, 2011; Fullin & Reyneri, 2011). A strong devaluation of foreign educational credentials is reported which is even stronger than parental education in explaining educational outcomes for students from immigrant families (Azzolini, Schnell & Palmer, 2012).

Generation of migration. Azzolini and Barone (2013), relying on data provided by Italian Labour Force Survey collected from 2005 through 2011, analysed data referring to migrants of different nationalities which they grouped as Eastern Europe (including former Yugoslavia, Albania and Romania, Poland, Moldova and Ukraine); East Asia (mostly China and India); Arab countries (a large majority is from Morocco); Sub-Saharan Africa (mostly Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria); Latin America (the largest groups are Argentina, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela); and Western countries (mainly Germany, Switzerland and France) suggesting the relevance of return migration. First-generation youths were by far the most severely disadvantaged group, both with regard to dropout risks and segregation into the vocational track, which is associated with much lower chances of accessing university education as well as with poorer labour market outcomes. The second generation seemed to close the gap with natives. However, authors pointed to differentiated paces of educational attainment and different underlying mechanisms across country-of origin groups. For instance, a specific mechanism seems at work for youths from Sub-Saharan Africa and Arab countries who are largely disadvantaged in the first generation and experience a less pronounced generational progress.

Social class of origin. It has been extensively documented that class of origin affects educational attainment and because different immigrant generations and nationalities are in a more or less advantaged labour market position a significant portion of the observed differences between generations and between country-of-origin groups may be attributable to compositional differences in social class (Kao & Rutherford, 2007; Heath & Brinbaum, 2007). According to Azzolini and Barone (2013) social class explains nearly half of the observed gap for first-generation youths and, similarly, it seems to play a weaker role for the most disadvantaged groups. The role of cultural and linguistic barriers seems higher than the social class of origin. These results are interpreted as providing additional confirmation of the difficulties encountered by these immigrants in adapting to the Italian education system if they were born and raised abroad and that some groups (East Asians, Arabs and Sub-Saharan Africans) face more difficulties than others when approaching the Italian education system as newcomers should not be disregarded.

3.1.2

Activities aimed at increasing professionals' knowledge have been oriented more specifically toward these groups and with a particular attention to those professionals more directly involved

in activities with first generation immigrants. As an example, consider master courses on migrants and refugees which are proposed to Italian and foreign students from different area of expertise (hence also counselors) after at least first level university degree, such as The Master on Migrants and refugees at the University La Sapienza in Roma; the Master on Intercultural Competence and Management provided by the University of Verona; or the Master on Intercultural Studies, at the University of Padova. A specific space is given in these courses to cultures of different countries of migrants, especially for first generation migrants besides knowledge about the socio-economic and religious situation in Europe and, more particularly in Italy. Practical activities are organized to ensure the development of experience in real life context and with real people. Additionally, a 120 hours post graduate annual course on 'Coaching for career development, school and work inclusion' has been recently offered by the Larios Laboratory at the University of Padova. Theoretical foundations and qualitative assessment strategies based on Life Design (Savickas et al., 2009; Nota & Rossier, 2015) and on coaching approaches, were provided with the aim of developing counselors' knowledge and competences to promote inclusive learning at school, career planning and strategies for inclusion in work contexts (for more details see http://larios.psy.unipd.it/en/?page_id=505).

As far as the second generation is concerned, the real communicative difficulties that occurs at school between parents and teachers supports the idea that it is a problem not only of language but it has its origin in the different life experiences and cultures of education to which foreign parents refer to it (Giusti, 2015). Following Azzolini, Schnell and Palmer (2012), there is the need to provide professionals with more direct measures and instruments useful in analyzing family background to better capture the actual differences in the socioeconomic and cultural resources available in immigrants.

3.2. Language and intercultural communication

As Italy adapts to its relatively new role as immigrant destination, it must come to terms with different languages and dialects and multiculturalism, as experienced through a number of demographic factors.

3.2.1.

Immigrants bring a variety of native languages with them, adding to the various languages spoken already in Italy such as standard Italian and regional dialects as well as global languages such as English. As an example take the ethnographic study Smith (2015) conducted in Roma involving 25 immigrants arrived from Senegal, a multilingual environment with over 25 indigenous languages. The analysis of linguistic histories gleaned from interviews are used to contextualize individual narratives in a larger historical, political, and social framework. The various types of code-switching, the use of linguistic and discursive features in specific instances revealed how immigrants perceive their identities and the sites in which these identities are constructed, the multifaceted perspective used when engaging in debates about immigration, inclusion, and identity.

Since 2001, for instance, many Italian universities propose degrees in linguistic and cultural mediation in their Humanities or Social Sciences faculties with the aim to form mediators, either Italian or foreign citizens, with relevant skills. The institution of these courses constituted a qualitative leap, either to reduce mistrust towards cultural mediators, or to promote not only the professional purposes of the mediation but also its scientific and theoretical features. In spite of all, cultural mediation continues to confirm itself as a temporary activity with voluntary characteristics that is often called just in case of emergencies.

These professionals have a specific role and their actions are tailored to specific objectives in some specific contexts, social and/or professional, namely in the process of acquiring a specific linguistic glossary pertinent to the needs, the interpreting modes (Salzano, 2011). They learn specific words and expressions and use them in the right place with the right interpretation thus becoming capable of coping with any circumstance in any place just learning about a particular problem in few time gathering information and understand the moods of the interlocutors and, with the help of different devices. In the working and legal sector, for example, their role of mediator consists in advising foreign nationals in facilitating bureaucratic practices, in fostering contacts with potential employers and obtaining job contracts, carrying out sworn translations.

This on one side supports the importance of learning language of the host country and on the other stimulates some consideration on the need to communicative and linguistic skills of operators. Across the country special agreements have been promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy on the issue of Italian language learning. Language and civic integration courses have been undertaken by all the regions on the basis of funding provided to this end, while since 2009 special calls have been launched by the Home Office in the context of the implementation of the European Integration Fund.

3.2.2

Many non-for-profit organizations and the Italian educational system offer language courses free of charge and are financed through the European Integration Fund (Caneva, 2014). Additionally, several examples of multimedia courses on Italian as a second language are available (see, DIRE, FARE, NAVIGARE; transl.: Saying, Doing and Sailing by Graziella Favaro and Maria Frigo, as a product of a project co-financed by European Funds for Integration, EFI, in 2010) providing not only structured activities but also experiences and suggestions from professionals dealing with the task of teaching Italian to first generation migrant adults.

As far as more specifically counselling is concerned, professionals may use pictorial materials constructed by Larios laboratory at the University of Padova (ASTRID portfolios; Soresi & Nota, 2007) to address career and vocational issues with individuals who are vulnerable on language, among other vulnerabilities.

Recently, Del Percio (2016) conducted an ethnographic study and documented the intercultural communication training provided to a group of young social workers and conducted in a social cooperative located in one of the main urban centers in Central Italy and provides services to both migrants (in form of language instruction, cultural mediation, access to housing, vocational training, and legal counseling) and to the city's social workers who work for migrants (in the form of professional trainings for the young social workers of the city). The training was conducted by an experienced coach working for the social cooperative with a degree in psychology and in intercultural mediation and a long experience with migrants in Italian humanitarian organizations and as a social worker in various reception centers. This training consisted of six modules taking place on six consecutive Saturdays. It was attended voluntarily by thirteen social workers, eleven women and two men, all aged between 25 and 35.

The themes of the training are focused on 'communication and on misunderstandings and the obstacle to effective communication due to the many stressor migrants are experiencing as the permanent mess at the centers, the different languages spoken and cultural backgrounds, the migrants' situation of uncertainty, the fatigue after a long shift, the low salaries and short contracts, and the anxieties, frustration, or anger caused by the unstable work conditions, or by an impatient migrant or a bothersome colleague". Emphasis is given to active listening, speech events decoding while appropriate answers as well as to nonverbal communication are provided. Practical activities are also conducted, such as simulation of a conflict situation. Although the

training fosters aspirations to professional change, the activities prevent the social workers from resisting and challenging the long shifts, the high demands on their flexibility, and the short work contracts that characterize the everyday work of these young professionals.

3.3. Recognition and access to labor market

Immigrants trying to access the labour market have faced several challenges in recent years (Allasino et al, 2004).

3.3.1.

Education and access to labour market. Although in Italy the level of educational attainment is positively related to the probability of avoiding unemployment such a relation does not seem to exist for immigrants, for whom higher education does not protect them against the risk of unemployment (Fullin & Reyneri, 2011). The poor performance of highly-educated immigrants in comparison to poorly educated ones is usually explained by the fact that, for first-generation immigrants, a higher education cannot involve a greater endowment of human capital (Heath & Cheung, 2007) because skills acquired in a different educational system may be useless because human capital is often country-specific or because foreign qualifications may not be recognised by the receiving country. Educated immigrants may not have a good autonomy on using the receiving country's language, which is necessary to gain access to qualified occupations. These hypotheses seem to be well-suited to explain either the professional downgrading of highly educated immigrants in Italy or the behaviour of well settled highly educated immigrants, who can afford to wait for a long time for a good job (Allievi & Dalla Zuanna, 2016). For recent immigrants who do not have sufficient economic and social resources that would enable them to wait for a long time for work, Fullin and Reyneri (2011) in a study based on data from the Italian Labour Force Survey show that in Italy employment opportunities for immigrants are mainly for unskilled positions.

The segregation of immigrants in manual jobs, as well as their relatively low probability of being unemployed, do not depend on their personal characteristics but rather on the mismatch between labour demand and native labour supply, as well as on a sharp labour-market segmentation by age, gender, region and educational attainment. The trade-off between the risk of unemployment and a poor job is accentuated by a serious lack of qualified labor demand, a not very generous welfare state. The leading role of labour demand in shaping immigrants' integration into the Italian labour market is confirmed by the fact that they have fairly easy access to skilled blue-collar jobs, which have a low social status in Italy, whereas they are almost entirely excluded from the least qualified non manual jobs, which enjoy quite a good social standing.

Variables on the ground. According to Allievi and Dalla Zuanna (2016) the probability of avoiding unemployment grows with the length of stay for two reasons. On the one hand, the process of assimilation enables immigrants to acquire language skills, improve their qualifications, and gain better understanding of labour-market institutions; on the other, economic needs force immigrants to downgrade their professional expectations.

There is also a gender effect insofar, immigrant women seem generally more penalised than men in relation to the risk of unemployment, but it is even greater for occupational status, because the overwhelming majority of them work in housekeeping and elderly care. A breakdown by country of origin shows that especially for women and men from Asia there is a trade-off between a fairly good performance in the probability of avoiding unemployment and a very high risk of obtaining bad jobs. Albanian men seem close to that situation, whereas for the other immigrant groups the two ethnic penalisations go together, with immigrants from Northern and Central Africa being in the worst position.

For poorly qualified jobs there are large labour shortages because native job-seekers have higher social expectations and are able to wait before accepting a job. But in the medium term the situation is expected to change because immigrants, especially second generation immigrants, will be over-educated too for jobs they are currently forced to accept, and their expectations about occupations are likely to become higher (Allievi & Dalla Zuanna, 2016).

3.3.2

As regard actions aimed to support work inclusion, under the SPRAR projects activities linked to assessment of competencies, definition of a personalized action plan (PAI – Piano di Azione Individualizzato), together with coaching, and work search, practical trainings together with interviews on their attitudes are implemented.

Active actions are undertaken in order to facilitate recognition of qualifications obtained or continuation of study courses already started; actions for development of the image that both refugees and the people of the working environment have on immigrants in the labor market. SPRAR proposes also activities linked to analysis of works available in the area, through psychological testing, questionnaires and observation grids, and promotion of counseling and coaching for career guidance, entrepreneurship orientation to provide useful skills and tools when starting economic activities, support for future entrepreneurs with training-course guidance and consultancy aimed at providing employment and economic autonomy.

Additionally, various types of vocational training for immigrant workers have been organized in the recent years, from traditional full time course financed from European Social funds or, in some cases, pre-training of immigrants in their country of origin. Research studies collecting all these data and trying to analyzed them in order to obtain a description of procedures used and their effectiveness in reaching the goal set are not at the moment available. When available they are limited to small groups and frequently refer to 10 to 15 years ago, hence of limited use given the challenging current situation of migration in Italy.

3.4. Discrimination and traumatization.

Immigrants feel more discriminated against than natives do. As shown in a study based on 19 months' fieldwork conducted in a Northern Italian city, most migrants who remain in Italy, report a lingering sense of failure and disappointment (Tuckett, 2016). They try less than the latter to improve their educational job matches, with the consequence that the occupational segregation of immigrants will persist (Dell'Aringa & Pagani, 2010).

3.4.1.

Several different forms and sources of discrimination, which sometimes lead to traumatization, emerge from studies and recent reports.

Migrant identity. The country is characterized by the emergence of a new Italian, “the youth of foreign origins”, referring to anyone who is not considered to be Italian (or a tourist) is demarcated as “extracomunitario” – non-EU migrant. According to Flavia Stanely (2008) this is because in Italy ethnicity and nationality are conflated. This understanding of citizenship and nationality based on ethnicity means that being identified as an immigrant foreigner (rather than a tourist foreigner) is to be identified as an inferior other. The assignation of such a status is closely tied to exterior appearance and the assumption that *Italianness* can be detected through a certain kind of racialized body. Such discrimination against presumed “extracomunitari” also affected access to work and housing. These assumptions hold particular challenges for the second generation in Italy. But recently, the increasing presence of young ethnically diverse people speaking with strong regional Italian accents, who dress, move and gesticulate identically to their “native” peers, undermine these seemingly restricted categories of identity (Riccio & Russo, 2011). As asserted by Tuckett (2016) the racialized discrimination they suffer together with the low-status and low-paid work to which migrants are restricted accentuates their unequal incorporation into the global labor market from which they scarcely benefit.

Migrant health. The pathway to mental health care for migrants is complex and is influenced by many social and demographic, in addition to clinical factors. A sizeable number of migrants follows

a non-medical route to care (Tarricone, Stivanello, Ferrari, Colombini, Bolla, Braca, ... & Tedesco, 2012). Social exclusion and reduced access to community health services lead to urgent health problems among immigrants, as shown for instance by the increasing rate of admittance to psychiatric inpatient units of immigrant patients. However, as shown by Baglio et al. (2010) the immigrants using hospital services are younger than the Italians, more than half are female and single. The rates for foreigners in acute care is higher among young people; the admission rates for both acute and day care settings with women's age, the pattern of hospital use being strongly influenced by reproductive events. Injuries for males, sometimes due to traumatic accidents dealing with the work setting, and induced abortions for females have been identified as critical areas for migrants' health. Significant information can be gathered from the Italian study on first-episode psychosis and migration (PEP-Ita), a prospective observational study over a two-year period (2012–2013) carried out in 11 Italian mental health centres (Tarricone et al., 2015). Data were collected about all new cases of migrants with first-episode psychosis with the purpose to explore the socio-demographic and clinical characteristics, and the pathways to care for a population of first-episode psychosis migrants in Italy. Risk and protective factors for the development of psychotic disorders in migrants emerged and the correlations between psychopathology of psychotic disorders in migrants and socio-demographic characteristics, migration history and life experiences were shown.

Decent work and immigrants. Three main aspects of decent work practices, as proposed by ILO (International Labour Organization, 1995) have been analyzed by Islam, Cojocar, Rahman, Hajar and Arnakim (2016) in a cross-national study involving migrant domestic workers in Italy and Singapore. The study was based on a content analysis which documented a large difference between the written provisions and the real practice in both countries. As a result, in many cases highly demanding challenges are frequently faced by immigrants to get their expedient working conditions, proper working hours, annual leave, maternity protection and fair wage.

3.4.2

In an international study recently conducted by the Bologna Transcultural Psychiatric Team (Bo-TPT) to address mental health issues in migrants, a battery of psychological measures was developed and organized which, besides recording personal functioning and clinical data, addresses several domains such as personal history, experience of migration, living context and personal functioning. In particular, in the context of our analysis, it is interesting to note the use of the 'Schedules for the assessment of social contexts and experiences' and the 'Bologna Migration History and Social Integration Interview (Tarricone Atti, Braca, Pompei, & Berardi, 2011) together with other general clinical assessment tools on life events and actual functioning wellbeing of individuals with history of migration was analyzed. The tool includes three sections: 1) Pre-migration phase; 2) Migration phase; 3) Post-migration phase. Through the tool, information is gathered on socio-economic factors that precede and follow the migration, reasons and organization of the migration, relations and social support in the host country, detected changes and satisfaction achieved within different fields of experience, including social and work inclusion. The study shows its usefulness in highlighting an interaction between genetic factors and living environment on the emerging of disturbances, namely psychotic disturbances (Braca, Tarricone, Chierzi, Storbini, Marcacci, & Berardi, 2011) which result in barriers against both work and social inclusion.

Conditions of differential treatment of immigrants across territories emerge from recent studies which do not necessarily go in the direction of providing more opportunities for immigrants' integration and social mobility (Campomoria & Caponio, 2014). Immigrants' integration framing reflects their place in the regional economies, that is a crucial resource to serve very fragmented

and localized needs in the primary (see for instance, Basilicata and Calabria), secondary and low-qualified tertiary sectors in other regions. A partial exception is represented by the Veneto Region, in the North-East of Italy, which explicitly prioritizes the training of domestic and care workers as well as re-insertion programs in the countries of origin, leaving, and through other vocational training initiatives to provincial authorities. In any case, migrants are seen primarily as poor people, with their prevailing employment in the *shadow* labour market.

To contrast this extremely fragmented context, the national government has undertaken specific actions aimed at achieving a minimum of harmonization of regional approaches in accordance with EU priorities.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080%2F10383441.2013.10877020>

3.5. Empowerment and the analysis of potentials

A significant difficulty emerges in finding articles as well as documents that detail theoretical approaches and theories of career counseling services refer to, assessment measures with adequate theoretical background and prerequisites, efficacy verification of interventions carried out.

3.5.1.

The point of view of coordinators. The difficulties in defining a framework for assessing client's potential and empowerment was well documented by Catarci (2012) who interviewed 88 coordinators of SPRAR across Italy on numerous aspects. The picture he depicted, as shown in the data reported below, highlights the need of providing high level of training both for coordinators and operators in order to acquire both theoretical and practical skills. As regards knowledge operators should have, Catarci (2012) found that coordinators consider crucial: features of the territory in which operators work (31.3%), user needs (30.8%) and legislation related to refugee inclusion (15.9%). As regard the skills, operators should be able to promote networking (25.5%), pick out resources (19.4%), identify user needs (18.9%), and provide counseling (13.3).

About 75% of coordinators consider the short-term programme (up to 50 hours) offered by the 'Central Service' the most important continuum education programme. As coordinators, the most important topics for their daily work concern legal (93.9%) psychological (90.7%), socio-anthropological (87.8%) and administrative (86.2%) issues. Moreover they consider particularly relevant to learn more about conflict management and negotiation techniques (16.7%) as well as service planning and management (18.2%) and legislation (13.6%). As regard the most fruitful methodological-didactic aspects for themselves as coordinators, they include: reflection with colleagues (97%), communication techniques (91.4%), supervision (88.4%), theory (87.5%). As regard the most important methodological didactic aspects for operators, the interviewed coordinators include: how to plan a social intervention (96.6%), how to verify the efficacy of the intervention carried out (95.2%), team work (93.8%) and simulation (92.1%).

Services offered by SPRAR. In order to empower immigrants, SPRAR not only is active in facilitating access to labour market. It offers many activities that should be considered as an 'integrated' hospitality. This means that the basic material actions, such as provision of food and accommodation, shall commence simultaneously in services to foster the acquisition of tools for autonomy. Services provided in local SPRAR projects can be grouped into nine different areas, of equal dignity and importance: linguistic and intercultural mediation; material hosting; career counseling and access to local services; training and retraining; guidance and support at providing employment; guidance and support to the insertion housing; guidance and support social inclusion; guidance and legal support; psycho-social and health protection. Training activities are conducted at national level. Basic training lasts three days. The first day focuses on general presentation of the project; information and legal guidance, the local commission for the

recognition of international protection; the second day focuses on approaches, methodologies, measures for an integrated hospitality, the instruments for the socio-economic inclusion; the third day focuses on the helping relationship and health issues together with how to manage the SPRAR database; the fourth day focuses on administrative issues of the SPRAR project. Examples of successful activities reported into the project website include 'Urban requalification in Arnesano and Copertino asylum seekers and refugees are taking care of the city', 'in Caltanissetta the city police are studying English with Rahaman', 'Changing viewpoints about the city: in Bologna a laboratory for journalism was started by refugees'.

The SPRAR manual published in 2015 briefly introduces all these activities. As regards specifically career counseling, only some general guidelines are provided in the following areas: analysis of resources and weakness of the person; certification of competences; how to activate the procedure for recognizing the diplomas, training and vocational education; how to write a curriculum vitae; how to access vocational education and vocational training in Italy; how to conduct an interview; how to open a business. However, no specific theoretical or methodological guidelines are provided. The manual reports in fact that career counseling should be provided by expert psychologists or career counselors who can decide how to proceed.

3.5.2

Measures. As regard career counseling measures, the analyses of documents and websites highlights a high heterogeneity so that it is difficult to understand the theoretical principles and approaches as well as what has been done to verify the efficacy of what was implemented.

- a) **One example from research.** Recently, Terranova Cecchini, Toffle, and Vitale (2015) described a project that involved some of the first immigrants arrived from Libya in 2011 in an official migrant center in Milano. The aim of the project was to reach out to these immigrants and establishes a relationship that would assist them in defining a path towards integration (career is just one aspect). The immigrants' potential for integration was assessed with psychological procedures that helped the therapist to stimulate narratives and reflections of migrants on their career paths. Authors used: (a) The Cultural Identikit (Terranova-Cecchini, 2009), a transcultural tool based on the idea that the therapist cannot know everything about all cultures, and therefore it is necessary to become 'transcultural' (Terranova-Cecchini & Toffle, 2014), to understand how culture works, and how it actually forms the Ego. It assists the therapist in understanding the three axes of the Cultural Ego. (b) The "Test del Mondo" ("Test of the World"; Dalla Volta, 1951) that aids the therapist in grasping how the subject feels about life and his or her viewpoint in the moment of the interview. It is also a non-invasive way to encourage subjects to talk about their lives and experiences.
- b) **One example from the SPRAR.** In the newsletter of the Italian Society of Vocational Guidance (SIO) it is reported an example of career counseling with immigrants that shows how it is possible follow theoretical and methodological suggestion derived from literature on career counseling (Bonesso & Zanibon, 2014). It was conducted in the Municipality of Venice by a psychotherapist, expert career counselor. She in fact attended a university post-graduate master course in career counseling at the University of Padova. After an analysis of the literature on career counseling with migrants and refugees, a Job Analysis (JA) of the functions and tasks as well as useful knowledge, skills, competences and other psychological aspects carried out by operators that work into the centers for migrants and refugees. The JA allowed to identify the needs of migrants: helping them in finding and implement their more advantageous options; supporting them in the process of implementation of their career project; career assessment; developing specific career counseling activities for those more vulnerable. The Life design approach and the socio-

cognitive career model represented the theoretical framework of the inclusive actions that targeted both the clients and the context (service and job environment). The intervention aimed to: analyze expectation of the migrants as regard the career counseling, identify strengths, describe career goals, identify career options, define possible career paths to achieve previous identified goals, describe specific skills that need to be acquired to achieve the goals. The assessment activities was conducted using a semi-structured interview (Soresi & Nota, 2007) and a card sorter jobs that facilitated a highly personalized counseling. The counselors with an active listening, questioning, reformulations, positive feedback and reinforces focused on the emerging of the description of past experiences, education trainings, ideas about the future, career interests and preferences, career self-efficacy beliefs, knowledge about labour market with the aim of co-construct new career and life meanings and goals to be achieved. The success was so high that people started to ask for career counseling with this specific counselor. Results of the career counseling were shared with other operators in order to provide specific and personalized supports in order to help support migrants in achieving the goals discussed during career counseling.

3.6 Specific supports measures.

3.6.1

Two forms of vocational training. Magnani (2015) conducted a case study research to explore the forms and the effects of vocational training for migrants in the Veneto Region. This region is considered the 'motor of Italy' and has one of the largest numbers of immigrant workers.

In particular, with regard the labour immigration, two forms of governance can be identified (Zincone & Caponio, 2006): a multi-level governance where the region interacts with the national framework, defining the admission policy and regulating the labour market; an horizontal governance where local public and private agencies for employment and education interact with professional interests associations and civil society organisations.

Two main forms of vocational training are provided:

- a) Training courses financed by the European Social Fund (ESF).** In the North of Italy, for instance, immigrants represent the majority of participants on ESF courses in key sectors of the local economy (building sector, mechanical engineering, and electronics). According to the interviewees from training institutions in the Veneto Region the success rate of ESF training is particularly high: about 80 per cent of the participants find stable jobs in the local area within a year, and often with the same firm where they undertook their training experience. Some of the weakness of this opportunity, as reported by Magnani (2015), include:
 - The necessity to be resident in Italy and be formally unemployed (= enrolled on the unemployment register kept at the public labour office) vs. the fact that most has de facto a regular or an informal job;
 - The high time commitment required by the ESF courses (about 600 / 800 hours, including 100 / 160 hours of work experience) that prevents the possibility to work and study in the same time;
 - The financial support provided by the ESF during the course is limited (€3 per hour) and usually paid at the end of the course in order to reduce drop out;
 - The limited supply for migrant women in terms of both the number of training courses and the occupational categories targeted (domestic or care-work). This reproduces a segmentation of the labour market based on the gender not only on ethnic origin and doesn't include migrant women in the regular labour market.

- b) Short courses supported by public-private partnerships.** Most of these training courses are intended for people who already work, thus, compared with ESF training, the commitment in terms of time is limited (80–100 hours in the evening). The purpose of many of these short courses is to improve language skills, to provide immigrants with an understanding of the social and institutional organisation of the host country, the workings of the labour market, and the main principles of labour law and immigration law. An increasing number of short courses target migrant women and often have the broader aim of facilitating socialization with the local society where the women live.

The integration agreement. From a more legislative point of view, a research report by Caneva (2014) on the INTERACT project, maps the main policy tools and social actors in migrant integration in Italy. The *“Patto per l’integrazione”* (transl.: “Integration Agreement”) is the instrument adopted by the Italian government for dealing with integration accompanying permission to stay.

Once arrived in Italy and at the moment of receiving a resident permit, immigrants have to sign the agreement and commit themselves to specific integration goals within two years. Specifically, they are required to: 1) learn Italian (level A2); 2) develop a sufficient knowledge of the Italian constitution and institutions; 3) know Italian civic culture, particularly develop knowledge about the functioning of the health system, the educational system and social services, the labour market and taxes; and 4) respect the rule according to which their children have to attend school up to 16 years old (ten-years schooling).

The agreement is structured on credits: at the moment of signing, 16 credits are given to immigrants, but they have then to score 30 credits within two years. Credits can be obtained through participation in certified Italian language courses, Italian history and civic courses, professional and vocational training, etc. These courses are not compulsory, except for a session on Italian civic culture, which immigrants have to attend within three months of signing. The session lasts 5-10 hours and gives information about the Italian Constitution and institutions, information about the educational system, health care, work, social services, and immigrant rights and duties. Language courses are not compulsory, but immigrants have to pass an exam to prove their knowledge of Italian (corresponding to level A2).

3.6.2

The problem of work related injuries. There is an interest in the research for higher level of work related injuries among immigrants compared to native (Salvatore, Baglio, Cacciani, Spagnolo & Rosano, 2013; Marcacci et al., 2013). According to the Italian Workers’ Compensation Authority (INAIL), in 2004–2008 the number of work related injuries increased by 13 % among immigrants (from 127,281 to 143,561) [INAIL, 2016].

The majority of injuries occurs among immigrant men, and construction is the sector with the highest proportion of nonfatal and fatal injuries. However, it must be considered that these data refer to immigrants legally residing in Italy, who possess compulsory insurance against work related injuries and occupational diseases. No information is available on the occurrence of work-related injuries among undocumented immigrants but it is licit to think the situation is not better.

The higher occurrence of injuries among immigrants compared to Italians especially in the first year of employment is probably due to insufficient training and to exposure to at-risk activities without adequate experience, as well as to language and communication barriers, which could reduce access to prevention measures for the most recent immigrants. Efforts should be devoted to promote better communication in multicultural workplaces among managers, persons in charge

of security and employees. This suggests career counselors could play a relevant role in working with the context, creating a culture of prevention into and with work organizations and companies.

4. Summary: conclusions and discussion

4.1 Summary

Migration in Italy is currently characterized by some aspects which make it unique. First of all it is dynamic and continuously changing. This contributes to widening the lack of recent reliable studies. A second characteristic is the diverse countries of origin of migrants and refugees which is challenging for professionals because it asks for a development in cultural awareness together with the need of cultural and language appropriate materials for the assessment and intervention. A third aspect deals with the variety of level of education of first generation migrants that requires then diverse actions and more articulated projects.

An additional characteristic is the involvement of a large number of different “actors” besides the institutions supporting migrants inclusion. This implies a wide heterogeneity of professionals involved and interventions carried out in our countries that supports the growing effort of the university both in research and training also as regard career counseling.

4.2 Discussion

Our analyses allow us to point out that Italian career counselors who work with migrants and refugees have many challenges to face with in their practice that should be addressed in training and education. Among the challenges we consider particularly relevant in setting up a training course there are:

- **Offering training and educational activities** to develop a solid knowledge and extended practice on career counseling, vocational psychology and inter/multi-cultural counseling that should focus on inclusion. Recent approaches and theories as Life Design, assessment measures and interventions techniques together with cultural competence training aimed at developing awareness, sensitivity, and effective behaviors should be proposed for enhancing culturally competent care and increase social and work inclusion of migrants.
- **Addressing increasingly diverse clients and overcoming profiling.** The multicultural composition of service users in Italy can be seen as an opportunity to recognize clients' subjectivity and measures tailored to their particular life course, with approaches and measures that emphasize narratability, qualitative procedures and high personalization versus profiling thus empowering migrants and giving them voice in a co-constructing process.
- **Fostering networking of professionals** by stimulating international exchange, diversity- (and discrimination-) sensitive training thus support career counselors in the realization of an integrated and personalized project tailored to each migrant in realizing their working and life goals taking into account several perspectives.
- **Investing in inclusive contexts.** Inclusion of migrants requires professionals who have knowledge, skills and competencies not only to work with individuals for empowering migrants and refugees but also to work with the contexts. More efforts should be devoted to prepare professionals in assuming an active role as changing agents in promoting inclusive attitudes in schools, working and community contexts and make feasible the binomial diversity and inclusion with concrete actions involving people living in Italy, that is Italians and foreigners, either migrants and refugees or not.

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