

A scenic view of a Venetian canal with colorful buildings and a clear blue sky. The water in the canal is dark and reflects the surrounding architecture. The buildings are multi-story, with various colors like yellow, orange, and red. Some have black shutters and balconies. The sky is a vibrant blue with a few wispy white clouds. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny.

Expats in Venice

Exploring the lives of outsiders and the livability of Venice

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WPI

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Authorship

Each member of the group equally contributed to reviewing and editing the document while taking part in interviews. The coding process for these interviews was equally distributed throughout the group. This project would not have been successful without the hard work of each member and the collective work of the team. Each team member's individual contributions are described below.

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Lastly, we would like to thank our interviewees for participating in our research and helping us network for more interviewees.

Abstract

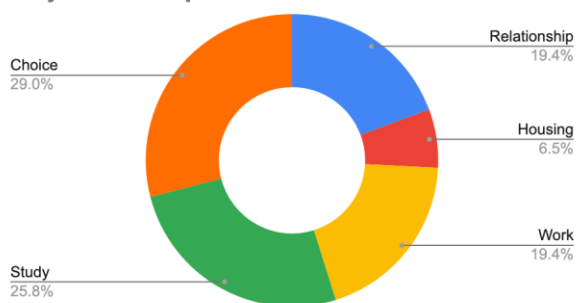
This project investigated the experiences of expatriates, or outsiders, who live in Venice, Italy. To explore their motivations for moving to the city as well as their lives, livelihoods, and their assessments of livability in Venice, we conducted interviews with nearly 40 expatriates during our project term. We analyzed the outcomes of our interviews to make recommendations to sponsors on how to support the repopulation of Venice by attracting more expats. Alongside these interviews, we collected and used cost-of-living data within the historic areas of the city to understand especially the housing market and employment opportunities that expats, prospective expats, and native residents of Venice confront. We also considered how both the cost and availability of housing and the job market in Venice are impacted by global phenomena like mass tourism and remote work. From this analysis, we determined that the main factors that negatively impact life in Venice for expats and residents alike is the lack of high-paying jobs juxtaposed with an expensive housing and limited long-term rental market. We believe that through targeted housing policies and job creation initiatives, more expats may be attracted to Venice, a city filled with cultural heritage, beauty, and a tightly-knit community that contributes to its livability.

Executive Summary

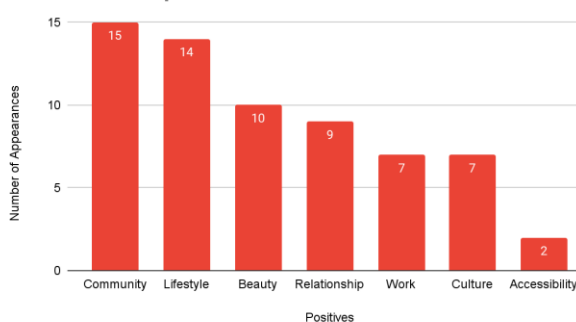
The historic city of Venice faces a major problem with depopulation. The lack of high-paying jobs makes it very difficult to afford the high cost of living—and expensive housing especially—in Venice. The main goal of SerenDPT, our project sponsor, is to help repopulate Venice through the creation of high-paying jobs. Our project contributes to this goal by investigating the lives of outsiders and the livability of Venice.

We conducted 38 interviews with expatriates, who we contacted with support from our project sponsors, Fabio Carrera and Diego Vianello. From the initial contact list, we were able to network to find more expat interviewees. Our method of analyzing these interviews included a coding process that analyzed the transcripts of the interviews. From these interviews, we found important information on what attracted expats to Venice, what they appreciate about the lifestyle in the Historic City, and what challenges they face by living there. Alongside these interviews, we developed a program to gather housing rental and sale listings from the real estate agency Immobiliare, to help analyze the high cost of housing and financial challenge residents and expats alike experience when moving into or staying in the city.

Why Did Our Expats Come?

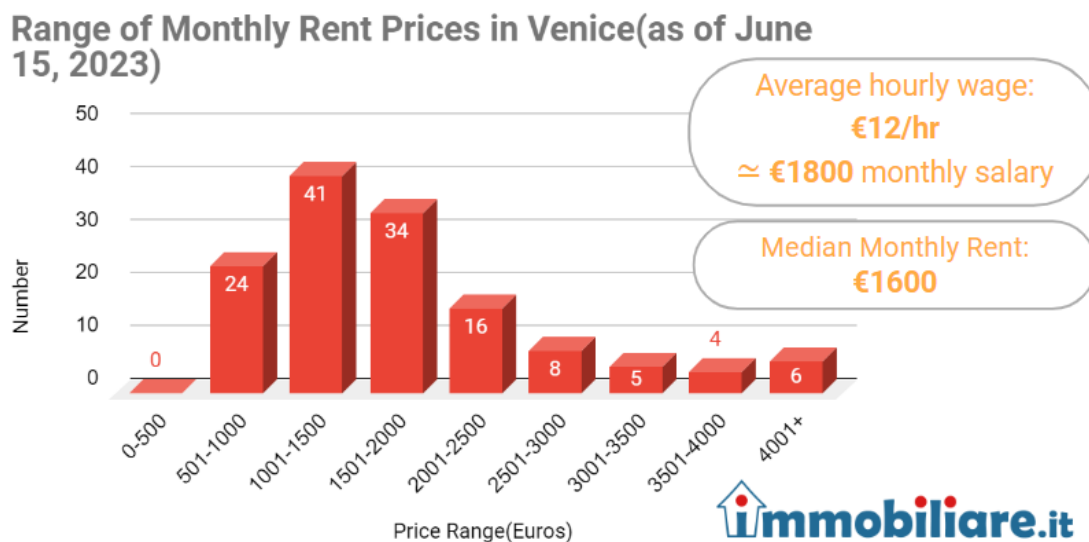


What Do Our Expats Like About Venice?



Expats were attracted to Venice for the city's beauty, relaxed lifestyle, rich sense of community, and historic arts and culture. However, residents and expats alike face the same

challenges with living in Venice: unavailable and expensive housing, a low-paying and service oriented job market, difficulties with accessibility, and overtourism. Despite these challenges, 89% of expats interviewed planned to stay in Venice for the foreseeable future. This metric suggests that attracting expats to Venice is a viable avenue for repopulation, as expats are likely to stay in Venice upon successful relocation.



To attract more expats and improve livability in Venice, we recommend the expansion of job creation programs. SerenDPT's startup development programs work to create more high-paying jobs in Venice, while other initiatives could promote remote working programs and the creation of co-working spaces. Venice already has a strong creative community which attracts many expats, and efforts to enable the creation of more permanent and high-paying jobs in this sector may prove particularly successful. Lastly, potential policies to disincentivize short-term Airbnb-style rentals could increase the number of long-term rentals available. Increasing the affordability and availability of rentals for prospective expats would diminish one of the largest barriers to livability in Venice.

This study serves to inform SerenDPT, SmartDest, and future VPC projects in their research on expats. We recommend that further work be done on the topic, especially by

diversifying and expanding the cohort of interviewees, including to a point where data analysis will be statistically significant. Following our work, we believe that it is very possible that continuing to study both relocated and prospective expats in Venice could yield new strategies on repopulating the historic city.

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1. Introduction

Venice is an extraordinary city to which millions of visitors travel each year. However, over the last 70 years, Venice's permanent resident population has steadily declined from 175,000 to less than 50,000 today.¹ The depopulation of the historic city (HC) of Venice is coupled with the consequences of global tourism; the job market primarily consists of relatively low-income service industries,² while the cost of living in the HC of Venice is very high. Housing alone can demand over half of a typical resident's monthly expenses. While global tourism has created a very profitable industry for the HC, it also impacts the region's livability in many ways.

Despite these issues, the Venice HC attracts many expatriates (expats) among its permanent residents, suggesting that some people find Venice to be a desirable and feasible place to live. We define expats as those who have moved to the HC relatively permanently from other countries, other places in Italy, or the mainland of the Municipality of Venice. Meanwhile, the HC (often referred to simply as 'Venice' in this report) is defined as the lagoon islands shown in the blue (zone 1) and red (2) areas shown in Figure 1 (shown below). This map shows the larger municipality that includes mainland areas which are not considered part of the Venice HC.

The project team conducted 38 interviews in June and July of 2023 to investigate the lives and livability of expats in the HC. The project also involved research and data analysis on affordability in Venice, with particular focus on income and cost of living, especially cost of housing, and other contextual factors that impact livability.

¹ Carrera, SmartDest

² Carrera, SmartDest



Figure 1: Map of the Municipality of Venice

The project sponsors, SerenDPT and SmartDest, institutions whose work focuses on the repopulation of Venice and providing support to major tourist areas of Europe respectively, have collaborated in many previous VPC projects. Those projects have mainly investigated the issues perpetuating emigration and the depopulation of Venice because of overtourism, housing shortages which cause rising property values, the impacts of an economy dependent on an extractive industry like tourism, and the limited purchasing power of Venetian residents. The review of previous VPC projects investigating catalysts for emigration have been important to contextualize our research on the state of Venice's livability for expats.

In turn, by investigating the lives and livability of expats, our study contributes to the SerenDPT and SmartDest research projects by analyzing the factors that encourage and

discourage people to move into Venice. As residents of the city, they appreciate the beauty, culture, history, and healthcare of Venice, but also grapple with many of the city's challenges with livability. The effects of global overtourism has placed pressure on many aspects of Venetian life. Through our conversations with expats, we hope to gain newfound perspectives on the city's issues with livability and facilitate the repopulation of Venice.

2. Background

Many factors impact expat decisions to move into Venice and lead emigres to move out. They include the ease of mobility within the city, employment and economic opportunities, housing and other costs of living, and the beautiful and comfortable lifestyle of the city. These factors are largely interconnected to global tourism, one of the largest factors affecting the livability of Venice. Most of these subjects are well-known to SerenDPT and SmartDest, and have even been the subject of previous projects at the Venice Project Center, which serve as a source of background for this study. We aim to build upon these previous works by investigating the yet-unexplored perspectives of expats.

2.1 SerenDPT and SmartDest

SerenDPT is a benefit corporation whose mission is to “help repopulate Venice by supporting the creation of startups that will produce high quality jobs in the Historic City.”³ Their goal is to slow the outflow of citizens and to attract young people to live and work in the city. The corporation is a group of inventors, social innovators, and researchers whose main areas of focus are research, culture, and startups. They have partnered with the Venice Project Center (VPC) to sponsor projects for WPI students to further their research, which has been helpful in the development of background research for this project. They have additionally partnered with MIT to promote and support the creation of start-ups in Venice, such as PesCo, E-Dock, Voga Yachts, and ReHub. SerenDPT has also developed a report on why Venetian

³ SerenDPT

residents are leaving the HC with aid from SmartDest, as previously mentioned in the introduction. This report was a part of a plethora of previous reports developed in hopes of repopulating the HC.

SmartDest is an EU-funded Horizon 2020 project, which is a program created by the EU dedicated to funding research and innovation projects under the topics of excellent science, industrial leadership, and societal challenges,⁴ whose main focus is introducing Smart Cities innovations across Europe to help combat the conflicts created by “tourism-related mobilities in cities.”⁵ SmartDest research and data collection involves 11 universities and an Innovation Center from European and Mediterranean countries. Their data and publications inform this study’s understanding of the framework of tourism mobilities and how they shape urban structure and social dynamics in areas like Venice. SerenDPT leads the Venice Case Study for SmartDest, in which their primary research question is: “What forces have contributed to the exclusion of residents from the Historic City of Venice and the lagoon islands?”⁶

2.2 Mobilities

The movement of people, goods and information from one location to another is referred to as mobility. It is an essential component of contemporary life since it makes it possible for people to access social, educational, economic, and healthcare opportunities. Mobilities, as per John Urry, can be divided into five topics - mobility of objects, corporeal mobility, imaginative mobility, virtual mobility and communicative mobility.⁷ Later, a few amendments were made,

⁴EU “Horizon 2020”

⁵Carerra, SmartDest

⁶SerenDPT, “SmartDest”

⁷Urry, J. 2000 *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*. London: Routledge

and a different perspective of mobilities was proposed by Leopoldina Fortunati and Sakari Taipale⁸. These were macro mobilities, micro mobilities, media mobility, and disembodied mobility.

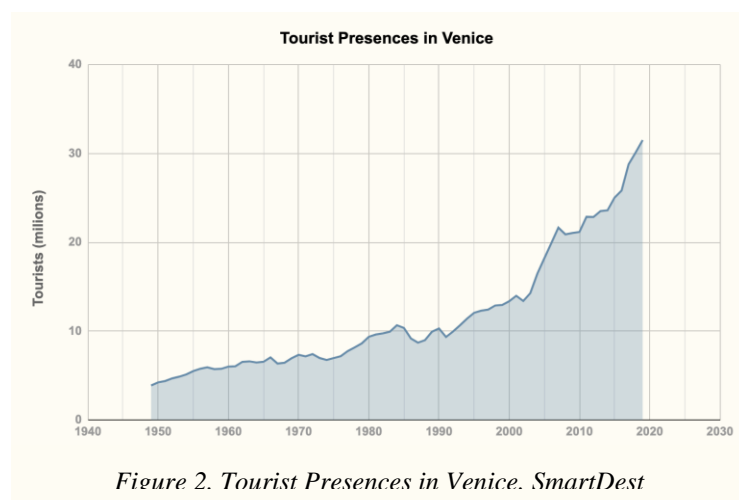
In the perspective of this project, mobility plays an important role, as it enables expats to move in and out of the historical center of Venice. But to understand how difficult it is to be mobile in the region, we have to look at how mobilities work in the European region. Citizens of European member states automatically qualify for citizenship in the European Union, which entitles them to work, own property, access welfare services, and retire in any member state. The entirety of the European Union can be thought of as one market economy, which makes moving throughout the region relatively simple. Italy is part of the European Economic Area, better known as EEA, which has agreed on a single currency, the Euro, which makes it even simpler for its citizens to trade for goods and services. Italy also happens to be part of the Schengen region, which has adopted a free-movement approach for member states' internal borders, and a single set of rules for their exterior borders. Physically moving around the European region also becomes easier thanks to its developed railway and road infrastructure. Additionally, the rise of digital nomads around the world has led many European countries to introduce the digital nomad visa. Italy also has plans to do so at the end of 2023, which will further enhance mobility in the region.

There is a single travel visa necessary to access the entirety of the EU and Schengen regions, simplifying the entry process for residents from outside said areas. Certain countries, such as the United States, also enjoy visa-free travel for up to 90 days. It is also worth mentioning that except for travel, most countries in the European Union are recently loosening

⁸Fortunati, L. & Taipale, S. 2017. Mobilities and the Network of Personal Technologies

their immigration process because of a labor shortage, with the hopes of more migrant workers settling in the EU region. Many countries of the EU have also started strengthening relations with the outside world, and freely allow ideas and information to move across its members. For example the EU is also part of the G20, a cooperation of the world's 20 biggest economies which hold annual meetings about ideas, security and information to strengthen the world economy.

2.3 Tourism in Venice



Venice is one of the most unique cities in the world and a premier tourist center. Tourism contributes an estimated 2.3 billion Euros in overall revenue per year to the Venetian economy.⁹ Tourism also contributes to almost 20% of jobs, and hospitality

contributes to 13.1% of the city's GDP.¹⁰ Venice has not always been this massive tourist city. Since the turn of the century, tourist presence has increased 141.5% with a peak of 8,604,826 in 2019. Daily tourists have drastically increased in recent years, with 36,606 day-trippers in 2000 and an increase of 135.7% to 86,285 daily tourists in 2019.¹¹ Recent numbers have also been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁹Blanco et al, p.35

¹⁰Carrera, F.. Smdst: T3.3 Quantitative Report (2022)

¹¹Carrera, F.. Smdst: T3.3 Qualitative Report (2022)

There are also many ways global tourism has affected the livability of Venice. Recent community efforts put limitations on short-term rentals¹² and a ban of yachts in the Venice lagoon¹³ in an effort

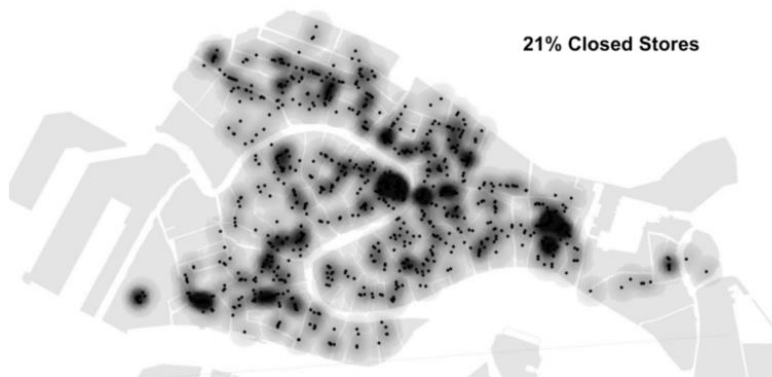


Figure 3. Closed shops in the Historic City

to resist certain types of tourism directly. It also affects the city in less direct ways. Figure 3, which was taken from a report published in 2014, shows the number of neighborhood shops that have closed in the city.¹⁴ The prevalence of tourism has also transformed the job market and limited the availability of housing. More and more available housing is transformed into short-term rentals and Airbnbs, and most jobs available within the HC are low-paying service industry jobs. The expansion of tourism has created a focus on selling goods to tourists. This is juxtaposed with Venice's depopulation, which leads many local businesses to close. Residents notice Venetian supermarkets closing, and more expensive, tourist-centered options taking their place.

2.4 The Livability of Venice

The concept of livability refers to the multiple factors that together work to determine the quality of life within a city. For this study, these factors are grouped into five guiding categories: 1) accessibility, 2) healthcare, 3) city services and utilities, 4) language, culture and community,

¹²Peña. "Venice Airbnb Rules: Airbtics: Airbnb Analytics."

¹³Pianigiani, Gaia, and Emma Bubola. "Italy's Government to Ban Cruise Ships from Venice."

¹⁴fig. source: LaRovere et al. 2015

and 5) political stability and government. Understanding livability is essential to assessing the potential benefits and challenges of life within the HC. In addition, the study of livability is also useful in acquiring an initial understanding of a city's level of development, characteristics, and way of life.

2.4.1 Accessibility

Venice faces unique challenges as a city without a road network. However, the public transportation system has successfully been adapted to serve the needs of the city. The public transportation services within the HC consist mainly of water taxis and vaporettos. The vaporettos work as a public water bus service, carrying large groups of people through the city's major canals and connecting lagoon islands. Tickets for a single ride cost €9.50 for visitors, while anyone who buys a five-year Venezia Unica card for €100 can purchase a monthly unlimited vaporetto pass for €37 that includes buses and trams on Lido and the mainland. Water taxi service within the city has a starting price of €70.¹⁵ Despite the challenges that can arise from living in a city that has no road network, the transportation infrastructure is adapted to these unique characteristics. The result is that getting around the city is fairly easy for permanent residents, although it can be expensive for temporary residents and visitors. In a way, the higher tourist fares on the vaporetto helps to subsidize the prices for residents. This pricing leverages the need to serve tourists with the need to help residents utilize Venice as a working city.

In addition to intra-city connections, the HC contains several options for travel outside the city. The Alilaguna water taxi service provides connections to Marco Polo airport, from which a traveler can reach international destinations. Other longer-distance public transportation options connect the HC with places like Jesolo and Chioggia. The Stazione di Venezia St. Lucia

¹⁵Venice Taxi. "Transfer Services"

offers service from both high-speed and commuter rail providers. The station usually sees about 82 thousand passengers per day using 23 platforms.¹⁶ Piazzale Roma also provides long-distance bus service from the HC to a variety of destinations throughout the mainland. In addition, a resident that chooses to own a car to reach destinations throughout the mainland can park it near Piazzale Roma. The location serves as a hub for road traffic into and out of the HC.

Aside from public transit, the primary form of travel throughout the city is walking. Most of the city is connected by paths and pedestrian bridges, with the exception of Giudecca, Murano, and other outlying islands. This creates problems for accessibility. Most of the pedestrian bridges are not easily usable for people with physical disabilities. Most of them have stairs on both sides, and those which have ramps generally exist solely along main routes such as the area around Piazzale Roma, and along the Giudecca Canal. This shortcoming reduces the areas that are readily accessible for people that struggle with mobility. However, the well-developed transport system throughout the city improves accessibility for the disabled. Despite the challenges presented by Venice's unique topography, the city has adapted to mostly meet the accessibility needs of its residents.

2.4.2 Healthcare

Another common service related to livability is healthcare. Healthcare in Italy is provided in a universal system. This system provides access to general practitioners, public hospitals, ambulances, lab services, some specialist care, and subsidized medication. The quality of medical care can vary depending on the hospital. For example, some residents prefer to receive emergency treatment in cities like Milan rather than the south of Italy.¹⁷

¹⁶Trenitalia. "Venice Santa Lucia Train Station Guide."

¹⁷Allianz. "Healthcare in Italy."

The cost for such healthcare is broken down into three main parts. The first being social insurance which makes up 40.8% of the funding. This social insurance system is sourced from dues requested by the government to the people. These dues are calculated at a rate of 40% of the person's gross income. Thirty percent of this is paid by the employer directly to the government while the remaining 10% comes from the person themselves.¹⁸ The system is relatively similar to the American social security number system. The second part of the funding comes from general taxation which makes up 37.5%. This part is just general taxes paid to the government. The final remaining portion is mainly through “private expenditure, mainly co-payments to SSN services.”¹⁹ Even with the breakdown of the funding primarily coming from government payments, the average Italian pays €108.10 on healthcare a month.

All residents of Venice are eligible for an Italian health insurance card. This card enables access to the services of the National Healthcare System. This national system keeps track of the services with which a patient has been provided including doctor’s appointments and prescriptions, and the card itself contains biographical and tax information.²⁰ This asset streamlines healthcare functions as it permits access to a central database of relevant information for residents, doctors, and pharmacists. In turn, the healthcare system is very easy for residents to use.

2.4.3 Services and Utilities

Services such as education, healthcare, recreational activities, communications, and transport make up 23% of monthly expenditure within Italy.²¹ These services are relatively

¹⁸PWC. “Italy Individual - Other Taxes.”

¹⁹“Healthcare in Italy: The 2020 Guide for Expats and Travelers.”

²⁰Italian Revenue Agency. “Italian Health Insurance Card.”

²¹Statista. “Household Expenditure in Italy.”

standardized across all of Italy. One of the benefits to becoming an official resident of Venice is lower utility rates, and it is a significant motivating factor for declaring one's residency.

In recent years, there has been an effort to digitize Venice city services through the DiMe platform, which includes over 100 services in categories that include living, money, business, education, culture and sport, notifications, security, social, transport, territory, and payments.²² Activity tracking within the platform allows for the municipal government to analyze which services have the highest demand, and make adjustments to what is provided. This means that the platform is regularly being adjusted and updated to meet the needs of residents. The platform is serving as a model for the development of a national-level public services app. By offering such a large number of public services in one centralized location, the public administration is able to operate more efficiently while improving people's access to necessary information and procedures.

2.4.4 Language, Culture and Community

Italian is spoken by native-born residents of Venice and used in official settings, but the local Venetian dialect is intrinsically important to the culture and community in the city. The Venetian language is spoken throughout Veneto, not just in the HC, with approximately 65% of Venetians being able to speak it.²³ While Italian and Venetian are both Romance languages, they generally are not mutually intelligible.²⁴ Since the majority of official businesses in the city are carried out in Italian, it is not necessary to speak Venetian in order to live in the HC. However, the Venetian language is an identifier of the region that sets it apart from other cities in the north

²²Dime. "Comune Di Venezia."

²³Visiting Venice. "Venice Culture."

²⁴Munaro et al. "The dialects of Veneto: towards a common spelling."

of Italy, and not being able to speak or understand it can create a feeling of exclusion from the rest of the city.

The HC is a hub for art in multiple forms. A prominent example of this is the Venice Biennale. The Biennale is a yearly celebration in the HC that alternates with each year between the themes of art and architecture. The event is estimated to attract half a million visitors to the HC on top of the many artists and artisans who temporarily reside in the city while showcasing their work. Aside from the Biennale, some of the best showcases of architecture in the city are St. Mark's Basilica, Doge's Palace, St. Mark's Campanile, and the Scuola Grande di San Rocco. The city also contains several art museums such as the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Ca' Pesaro, Scuola Internazionale di Grafica and the Gallerie dell'Accademia.

In addition to art and architecture, the HC has a rich history of music and literature. As a republic, Venice was known for its style of music composition (named the Venetian School) and was a central figure in the publishing of music, attracting composers from all over the world.²⁵ In terms of writing, Venice was home to the first printing centers in Italy, and has served as a muse to writers for centuries. Another well-known cultural pillar of Venetian art is Murano glass. Murano is an island in the north of the HC where glass blowing has existed as an artform for over 1000 years. The island has several factories and artisan stores where glass products can be purchased, and the blowing process observed. All of this history, art, architecture, and creativity contributes to the quality of life for residents.

2.4.5 Stability and Government

The Italian government has a reputation for instability. Since the year 2000 there have been 10 prime ministers and these governments have been characterized by aiming to achieve

²⁵Visiting Venice. "Venice Culture,"

short-term success rather than setting long-term goals.²⁶ This creates discord within the economic cohesion of the EU. On the contrary, governments that have stayed in power for longer periods of time have had greater financial struggles.²⁷ The effects of economic shortsightedness and instability extend from the federal government to the lives of Italian residents, causing increased stress and anxiety. This mental burden works against the livability of the entire country.

In Venice, the municipality is the lowest tier of government and it includes around 259,000 residents, of which only about 50,000 are from the HC and is continually declining. This means that people who live in the HC have little say in the policies that affect the entire metropolitan city. This underrepresentation means that some approved government policies are designed to benefit the rest of the metropolitan city of Venice and not the HC specifically. Moreover, some policies are designed to maximize revenue from the HC by further promoting tourism. An example was in 2021 when the municipality's mayor, Luigi Brugnaro, refused to open Venice's museums on the same day as museums reopened nationally following the Covid-19 pandemic. The reason provided was that since tourists could not access them, it did not make business sense to have them open only for residents.²⁸ The feeling that the local government does not consistently meet the needs of the city's residents serves as a barrier to livability.

2.5 Employment in Venice

The current job market in the historic center of Venice reflects the effects of global tourism on the city. It is dominated by the service industry, which lacks high-quality jobs.

²⁶Bastastin. "Even after Mattarella's reelection, Italy's political system remains unstable,"

²⁷Sapelli. "The Historical Reasons behind Italy's Instability: IEMed,"

²⁸Hughes. "A Cultural Betrayal By Venice's Mayor Leaves Residents Furious,"

Because the HC is part of a larger municipality, metropolitan area, and region of Veneto, there is a lack of specific data regarding the job market and wages of jobs in the HC of Venice. Our project operates on existing models of the job market constructed by SerenDPT and SmartDest. According to previous study on emigres from the HC, the job market is one of the biggest issues with livability in the HC.

2.5.1 Job Market in the Historic Center

The HC is the most popular destination in Venice for travelers, and its popularity has led to mass tourism while also creating many jobs. The overwhelming amount of tourism in the city, especially in the HC, is likely the main contributor to the size of the service sector in the Venetian job market. The service sector includes jobs in the transportation, hospitality, food, and customer service industries, all of which rely heavily on tourism. As seen in Figure 4, 71.6% of

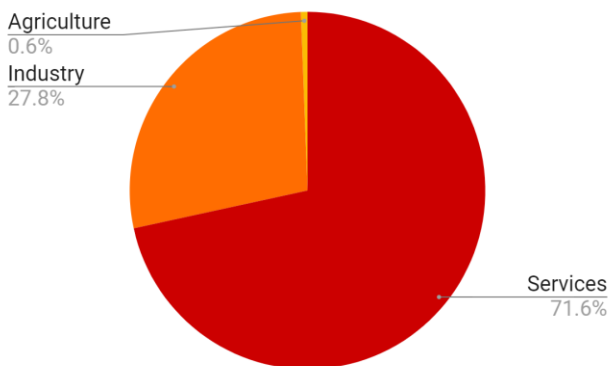


Figure 4: Job Sectors in Venice, SmartDest

jobs in Venice were considered to be part of the service sector in 2020.²⁹

One of the biggest industries in the service sector is the hospitality industry. Jobs in the hospitality industry often have low wages, poor working conditions, and a lack of opportunity to advance one's career long-term.³⁰ Despite some of the undesirable

aspects of the hospitality industry, jobs are still widely available. In the hospitality industry in Venice, 43% of the jobs are held by immigrants. These immigrants often come from Bangladesh,

²⁹Istat, "Venezia"

³⁰Iannuzzi, Francesco E, and Devi Sacchetto, "Outsourcing and Workers' Resistance Practices in Venice's Hotel Industry: The Role of Migrants Employed by Cooperatives."

Romania, Albania, Ukraine, the Philippines, Senegal, Tunisia and Nigeria.³¹ Due to the low wages of these jobs, it is very difficult for hospitality workers to afford housing and other necessities in the HC. Therefore, it is common for these workers to commute to work every day from the mainland.

There are some efforts to balance the effects of overtourism on the Venetian job market, and the predominance of low-skilled and low-paying jobs in hospitality. One of the main goals of our sponsor, SerenDPT, is to support the creation of startups in Venice, in order to create high-quality jobs with higher salaries. SerenDPT even has launched its own startup, called DaAaB, which is an application for trip planning on public transportation all over the world. DaAaB, a software company, has been located in Venice since 2016.³² With the help of SerenDPT, the creation of more startups in Venice can create more high-quality jobs and diversify the Venetian job market.

2.5.2 Remote Working

A new factor that has altered job markets and mobilities around the world is the ability to work remotely. Remote working has allowed for digital workers to be able to travel to, live in, and even establish permanent residence in different locations. Some of these traveling workers are known as digital nomads. Digital nomads, however, often travel and move around frequently, and seldom establish permanent residency. Similarly, remote workers are those who are able to work online and have the freedom of movement. However, remote workers are not necessarily travelers and often have permanent residency in locations near or far from their place of work.

³¹Iannuzzi, Francesco E, and Devi Sacchetto, “Outsourcing and Workers’ Resistance Practices in Venice’s Hotel Industry: The Role of Migrants Employed by Cooperatives.”

³²SerenDPT, DaAaB

Across the world, there are co-working opportunities for these digital nomads and remote workers, where they can work together in a shared office space.

In Venice, there are a few co-working spaces available for expats and digital workers to work. Venywhere is a project in Venice with the goal of “bringing in the energies of young and active remote workers and reducing the dependence of the city from mass tourism.”³³ SerenDPT is another coworking opportunity in Venice that provides workers with office space. The co-working spaces create a supportive and encouraging environment for remote workers who currently live in or are moving to the city.

Remote working was not a common practice before the year 2020. When the Covid pandemic began in 2020, 47% of people in Italy switched to remote working, versus 5% in late 2019, just prior to the pandemic.³⁴ In January 2021, some workers began going back to in-person work, yet 33% of workers were still working remotely. With the pandemic subsiding now in 2023, it can be predicted that this number has decreased further, but is likely still higher than the 5% before the pandemic. These jobs that have the option of remaining remote primarily include those in the technology, science, communications, education, and finance fields.³⁵ These professions can better support a life in Venice due to higher salaries and the flexibility of remote working.

An example of a popular and successful home for thousands of digital nomads is Lisbon, Portugal. Portugal sought to attract digital nomads and their wealth to their beautiful, affordable, and historic city of Lisbon. They offered tax breaks on foreign income and created a golden visa program in which digital nomads were given Portuguese residence and provided with a visa in

³³Venywhere, “Venywhere”

³⁴Istat, “Il Mercato Del Lavoro 2020”

³⁵Istat, “Il Mercato Del Lavoro 2020”

exchange for a purchase of property in the country.³⁶ Due to these attractions, Lisbon quickly became a top destination for digital nomads. These digital workers with high salaries supplied the Portuguese economy and brought companies and more jobs to Portugal. However, with the rise of digital nomads in Lisbon, there quickly came a rise in housing prices and gentrification. Short term rentals, such as Airbnb, became much more popular in the city and took over neighborhoods, leaving fewer permanent residencies available. The much higher incomes of the foreigners has also inflated the housing market in Lisbon, making it more difficult for local Portuguese to afford housing.³⁷ Lisbon is a great example of the success that digital nomads can bring to a city as well as the potential pitfalls they could cause to the economy.

2.6 Cost of Living in Venice

The cost of living can be broken down into three main categories. In Italy, the percentage of these monthly cost of living expenditures are housing, which makes up 52.54%, goods, which take up 29.27%, and services, which are the remaining 18.19%.³⁸ The price of services such as healthcare, transportation, and other miscellaneous services have already been covered in section 2.3, so this section focuses solely on housing costs and the costs of other goods.

2.6.1 Cost of Housing in Venice

In Italy, young adults tend to stay within the family home until they are able to purchase a home of their own. Renting a home or an apartment is a significantly less common practice, however it still does occur. In addition, a portion of the housing market in Italy consists of

³⁶Haeck and Volpicelli, “Portugal’s Digital Nomad Bubble Poised to Pop”

³⁷Callahan, “Where digital nomads come to die”

³⁸Statista. “Household Expenditure in Italy,”

housing in places with significant tourism, like Venice, where a lot of housing is used for short-term rentals.

Owning a Home

Owning homes within Italy is the preferred method for permanent residents, with the homeownership rate being 73.7%.³⁹ Within the Veneto region, there are approximately 604,000 homes where only one person resides. A majority of these homes, or 57.8%, have residents over the age of 60. Meanwhile, 709,000 households in the Veneto region are couples with children. Common practice within these households is for children to remain in their parents' house until they purchase their own home. Within the Veneto region, 68.6% of young unmarried adults aged from 18-34 still live with their parents,⁴⁰ and this age bracket made up 28.5% of home buyers in 2020 (as shown in Figure 5).⁴¹ As of 2018, 26% percent of the population said they bought their first property under the age of 26.⁴² Making use of living with their parents allows them to buy at a relatively young age, while in the United States, people buy their first property at the average age of 33.

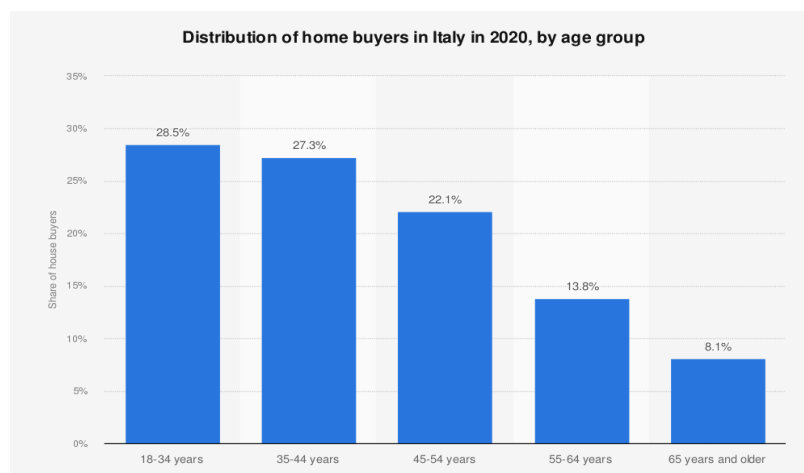


Figure 5: Distribution of home buyers in Italy in 2020; by age group

³⁹Eurostat. "Home ownership rate in Italy from 2008 to 2021."

⁴⁰Istat. Aspects of daily life - Household : Type of households - regions and type of municipality

⁴¹Tecnocasa Group. "Distribution of home buyers in Italy in 2020, by age group."

⁴²ING. "At what age did you buy your first property?."

Over the years, the pricing of housing in Venice has increased. The average house value in August of 2013 was €508,800.⁴³ Since then, it has increased by 69% to €860,429.81 as of June 2023.⁴⁴ With this drastic change in overall housing prices, mortgage interest rates have also increased in Italy by 0.88 percentage points from Q1 of 2020 to Q3 of 2022.⁴⁵ Further increases, as projected, will make home buying more difficult in all of Italy and in Venice.

Renting a House

Renting is significantly less common in Italy, as it only makes up 26.3% of housing. The average rent in Venice in 2022 was the third highest in all of Italy. Venice had an average rent of €16.70 per square meter compared to the average rent price of €15.45 per square meter in Italy, where a median price per square meter was €11.55. This discrepancy is because there are only 5 cities in Italy that have a higher average rent price than the national average, Venice included.⁴⁶ Moreover, rent has



Figure 6: Average Monthly Rent in Italy over the past 4 years (Statista October 2022)

gone up a massive 28.9% throughout the country over the past 5 years (represented in Figure 6).⁴⁷

⁴³Bolduc "Rent Sale Prices of Venice:

⁴⁴Immobiliare

⁴⁵European Mortgage Federation. "Mortgage interest rate in Italy from 1st quarter 2013 to 3rd quarter 2022."

⁴⁶Idealista. "Monthly rental price per square meter in selected cities in Italy as of October 2022, by city (in euros per square meter)."

⁴⁷Immobiliare.it. "Average monthly housing rent in Italy from January 2018 to September 2022 (in euros per square meter)."

Short-Term Rentals

The Venice Housing market is faced with a new challenge. With the introduction of short-term rentals like Airbnb, the available housing for future permanent residents is decreasing and conversely the cost of these listings is increasing. To combat these rentals, Venice has implemented various policies. The policies that were implemented were a 90-day annual limit for rentals, classifying rentals that were under 30 days as for tourism purposes, and imposing a limit of 2 rental properties per owner.⁴⁸ Each policy has its own functions and purpose that have helped curb the looming Airbnb confiscation of the housing market.

With the 30-day rental property classification, the tenants have to be presented with a rental contract which states they will be renting for 30 days or less.⁴⁹ This then classifies their stay as one for tourist purposes. The government is now allowed to levy a 21% rent tax on the tenants, and if they are removed for any reason, the real estate agency or the landlord now becomes responsible for this 21% tax.⁵⁰ Renters also have to register their information with the Police Headquarters through their host, which is unavoidable.

These limits are not just for visitors however, they are also applied to landlords. Landlords intending their property for short term rentals only are only allowed to have two properties.⁵¹ This prevents conglomerates of short term rental properties that prevent future buyers and long-term renters from moving within the historical city. Landlords who are willing to rent out these holiday homes are only allowed to rent them out for 90 days maximum. If they

⁴⁸Buckley. "Venice and Florence Demand a Curb on Airbnb"

⁴⁹Peña. "Venice Airbnb Rules: Airbtics: Airbnb Analytics."

⁵⁰Idealista. "Everything you need to know about short-term tourist lets in Italy"

⁵¹Peña. "Venice Airbnb Rules: Airbtics: Airbnb Analytics."

would like to rent these out for more than 90 days, the owner would have to register as a business which subjects them to a much heftier tax.⁵²

2.6.2 Cost of Goods

Goods consist of tangible items such as food, beverages, and tobacco. The average Italian spends around €467.56 monthly on food and beverages which makes up around 20.08% of their monthly expenditure (as shown in Figure 7).⁵³ These prices have trended upward in recent years with average food prices (in price per 100 units) in the EU overall increasing by 55.48% from €91.20 in January 2010 to €141.80 as of June 2023.⁵⁴ Even with the overall EU prices being so high, recently, Italy's prices are lower. Italy ranks 4th lowest in price per 100 units in the EU

Average monthly households' expenditure in Italy in 2020, by category (in euros)

Monthly households expenditure in Italy 2020, by category

	Monthly expenditure in euros
Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels	893.21
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	467.56
Transport	217.45
Miscellaneous goods and services	167.04
Health	108.1
Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance	103.66
Recreation and culture	93.49
Clothing and footwear	87.98
Restaurants and hotels	79.41
Communication	54.16
Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	42.54
Education	13.63

Figure 7: Average Monthly Household Expenditure in Italy in 2020, Istat data, graphic by Statista.

with only Greece, Finland, and Ireland having lower prices.⁵⁵ As of January 2010, it cost €91.80 to purchase 100 units of food which was more than the EU average at the time.⁵⁶ Since then the prices have increased by 40% to €129.10 to purchase the same amount of food.⁵⁷

⁵²Buckley. "Venice and Florence Demand a Curb on Airbnb"

⁵³Statista. "Household Expenditure in Italy,"

⁵⁴Eurostat. "Food Price Monitoring Tool."

⁵⁵Eurostat. "Food Price Monitoring Tool."

⁵⁶Eurostat. "Food Price Monitoring Tool."

⁵⁷Eurostat. "Food Price Monitoring Tool."

Even with Italy's prices being cheaper than the rest of the EU, Venice is a relatively expensive place to eat. In 2022, Venice ranked fourth highest among Italian cities in the price for a cup of espresso, which cost €1.20.⁵⁸ Keeping this in mind, we can use this as a scale to determine price increases between various areas of Venice. If we take the median value of espresso in Italy, which is 1.095, this value comes as an average between the two median values of Lucca and Ascoli Piceno, we can judge the pricing of Venice in contrast to other major population centers.⁵⁹ Comparing Venice to the median, Venice is 9.15% above the median. In contrast, Naples is 19.5% cheaper, Rome is 10.07% cheaper, Milan is 0.46% cheaper, and Florence is 2.26% more expensive.⁶⁰ Venice's espresso is 28.65% more expensive than Naples and 19.22% more expensive than Rome. Assuming this price correlates with food prices in the general area, Venice is the most

expensive major population center in all of Italy. Not only are food prices increasing, alcoholic drinks are becoming significantly more expensive as the years go on. Although the prices have not reached their pre-COVID numbers in 2023 with the price being €6.60 less than

the 2014 numbers of €54.48, the projected increase is more rapid than previous years. The 3-year increase from 2015 to 2018 is an increase of 14% compared to the 15% from 2022 to 2025. With this increase being larger from 2022-2025 than the 2015-2018 increase, the price is assumed to

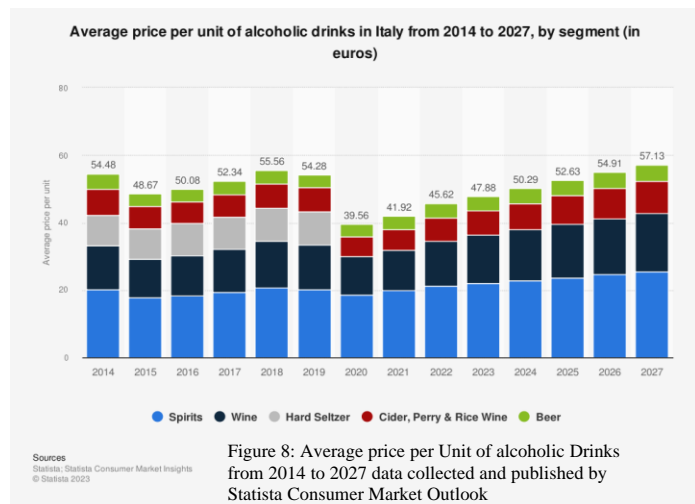


Figure 8: Average price per Unit of alcoholic Drinks from 2014 to 2027 data collected and published by Statista Consumer Market Outlook

⁵⁸Assoutenti. "Average price of an espresso coffee cup in a coffee bar in Italian selected cities in 2022 (in euros)."

⁵⁹Assoutenti. "Average price of an espresso coffee cup in a coffee bar in Italian selected cities in 2022 (in euros)."

⁶⁰Assoutenti. "Average price of an espresso coffee cup in a coffee bar in Italian selected cities in 2022 (in euros)."

be steadily increasing. The projected value in 2027 being larger than the previous peak shown in Figure 8 supports this ideal that these prices are only getting higher.

The transportation needed to import the goods does come into account with the prices, however these increases are more than just import prices. Prices of consumable goods and physical goods will always be higher in Venice than anywhere else because of this reason. Recently, these increases have become disjointed with the rest of Italy costing even more than just import prices thus making it significantly harder to live within the HC.

3. Methodology

The project contributes to the SmartDest research project by analyzing the factors that facilitate and allow expats to move into Venice. By investigating the lives and livability of expats in Venice, we aim to gain new perspectives on repopulating Venice. To organize and direct our work, we identified key objectives needed to complete the project successfully:

1. Estimating the cost of living and working in Venice
2. Arranging Expat Interviews
3. Analyzing the expat experience



Figure 9: Map of the Municipality of Venice

Our study focuses on the historic city and lagoon islands of Venice. On the map above, the blue and red regions, 1 and 2, represent the areas of both our financial research and interviews. We looked to interview expats who moved to Venice between 1950 and the present.

We define ‘**expats**’ as those who moved to these regions from outside and now have lived here for a significant period of time. This includes people from other countries, as well as people from other parts of Italy, even the mainland of Venice.

3.1 Estimating the Cost of Living and Working in Venice

To support our primary objective, we studied the finances and logistics of living in Venice. The research involved the collection, review, and analysis of quantitative data from existing sources. One of the challenges of this portion of the project was a lack of data pertaining specifically to the HC of Venice. As a result, we have collected mass amounts of data to generate the affordability ratio of the living within the HC.

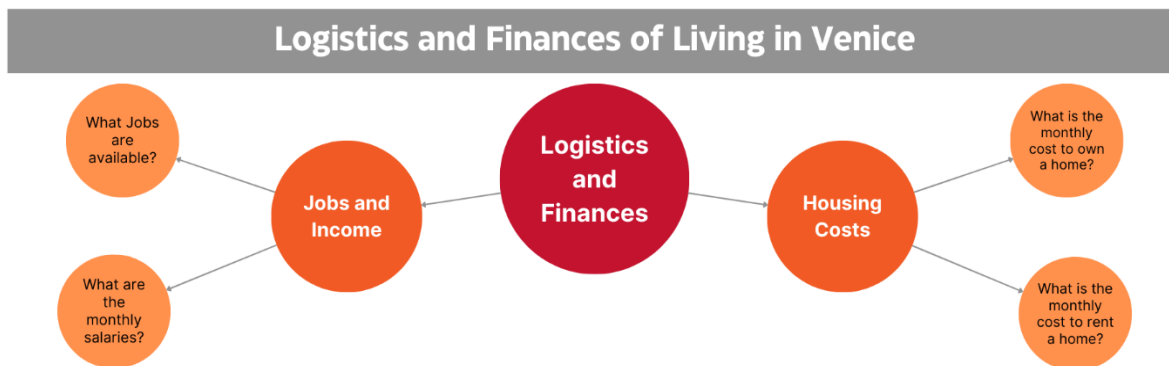


Figure 10: Research Categories for Logistics and Finances of Living in Venice

Employment, wage, and income data were of significant interest. We researched the types of jobs that are available within the HC, and the amount that these jobs pay. Istat, the online database of the Italian National Institute of Statistics, was the most valuable resource for this data. Unfortunately, most data, including that from Istat, was available only for the entire Metropolitan City of Venice.

In addition, by researching costs of housing and other necessities like food and utilities, we developed a cost-of-living analysis for a typical Venetian in the HC. Several databases provided information on these factors which contribute to cost of living. Another method used to collect data on apartments and houses for sale and rent in the HC was the creation of a data-collecting Java program. This program scanned the real estate website Immobiliare for housing data specifically for the HC of Venice and compiled the data into a text file. The text files were quickly converted into a spreadsheet for further statistical analysis. This scraper gathered each listing's location, price, square meterage, and number of rooms. The repository for the scraper program as well as a "ReadMe" file containing directions for use can be found in Appendix C.

3.2 Arranging Expat Interviews

Our primary topic of interest is to understand the lives and livability of expats in Venice. Previous studies by SerenDPT, SmartDest, and the VPC have not conducted research on expats specifically. Therefore we interviewed expatriates to learn about what led them to Venice and the reasons why they have stayed. Our group considered various ways to collect data from expatriates, like surveys, but decided to focus on conducting interviews to use their stories for analysis.

This process started with the creation of material for a structured interview. That material gave us valuable data for our project that can also be used by SerenDPT for future use. We identified specific goals for our interviews and used them as a basis to create our questions. Most of the questions were open-ended in nature to minimize issues with participant observation and researcher manipulation of answers. We let the interviewee guide the direction of the conversation, yet still addressed why they came to Venice, how they made the transition, how

much time they spend there, and so on. Information about our goals for expat interviews and interview questions are visible in Appendix A.

Additionally, we created an informed consent form for the interviewees to read and sign before participating in the interview. This form ensures the privacy of the participant, informs them of the purpose of our study, and outlines the procedural aspects of the interview, including note-taking and audio-recording. The second page of the form allowed them to specify which methods of record-keeping they were comfortable with, as well as indicate their comfortability with being quoted (either by name or anonymously). The Informed Consent Form can be found in Appendix D.

To find and set-up interviews with expatriates, we initially took advantage of personal contacts from our advisor, Fabio Carrera and our sponsor, Diego Vianello. As we conducted interviews in Venice and made other contacts among expats, we were able to find more expats to interview about their experiences. Additionally, we created a flier to advertise our project. The flier included an overview of our team and our project goals as well as information about the interview process, data collection, and our sponsors and advisors. The flier was shared with potential interviewees in emails sent by the project team, our sponsors, and contacts in the expat community to help recruit more interviewees.

The interviews with expatriates were done mostly in person in Venice, but remote interviews over Zoom were conducted depending on circumstances and preference of the interviewee. With the permission of interviewees, we recorded the audio of interviews to create a transcript for future analysis while also keeping notes of important information shared. If permission was not granted to record audio, we took only detailed notes and collected quotes over the course of the conversation. We completed the interviews in rotating teams of two. One

teammate acted as the main interviewee, asking our questions in Appendix A, and the other was a notetaker and helped ask follow up questions for clarification.

We used an AI-powered transcription tool called Notta.ai to transcribe all of our interviews autonomously. After completing and transcribing our interviews, we codified the data from the transcript and notes to develop our analysis. We created a spreadsheet to keep track of the occurrences of common themes throughout the interviews, as well of the demographics of the interviewees. Such categorization allowed us to quantify our qualitative data and frame our subsequent analysis.

3.3 Analyzing the Expat Experience

Using the above analysis, we then identified the most prominent factors that both positively and negatively impact the livability of Venice for expats. Based on the results, we created recommendations for improving the livability of Venice for expats and residents alike.

First, we focused on identifying the major attractive factors to expats. As discussed in the previous section, we talked to expats and generated qualitative coded data on why expats come to Venice. In section 3.1, we gained quantitative data on the financial and logistical situations of Venetians, including expats. We could also reference conclusions from previous studies by SerenDPT and SmartDest to identify contextual trends on Venetian livability. To draw conclusions about the livability for expats, we reviewed the data and ranked it by frequency of occurrence. If the frequency was too low, it was likely statistically insignificant; we only drew conclusions from identified factors of statistical significance. The remaining factors were treated as valid conclusions from the data.

Based on the findings in the previous sections, we drew final conclusions about how to better attract and retain expats in Venice. The data and analysis throughout the project helped us determine potential methods to retain current residents and attract permanent expats. These conclusions can hopefully be utilized to repopulate the HC.

4. Results and Analysis

The results of our project consist of two main portions: cost of living analysis and interviews. In this chapter, we review and analyze our results. To research the cost of living in Venice, we collected data on housing costs and income, two areas with limited existing data localized to the HC. Researching these two subjects allowed us to better contextualize how affordability and housing availability affect the overall livability for expats in Venice.

Second, the most significant portion of our project was the qualitative data collected from the 38 interviews we conducted with expats in Venice. We used several methods to quantify some of our data using transcripts of our interviews, which helped us create visualizations of demographics, motives, challenges, and other important factors that give perspective on the lives and livability of expats in Venice. We used this information to analyze the features of Venice that are attractive to expats and the challenges that they are able to overcome while living there.

4.1 Cost of Living and Salaries in Venice

During our interviews, the expats expressed that housing is the most significant expense of their cost of living. Other costs such as food, utilities, and transportation are relatively affordable in the city. Unfortunately, there is minimal existing data available that summarizes housing costs specifically for the HC of Venice. However, there are individual listings of available homes for sale or rent, found on Italy's top real estate website, Immobiliare. Immobiliare has a feature to select specific areas to find listings, which allowed us to focus on the listings for homes in both the HC and lagoon islands of Venice. Further data collection and

analysis of these listings allowed us to analyze and make conclusions about the housing prices in Venice.

Another factor related to our cost-of-living research was income, for which data can be limited and difficult to find. Most available income and job data is not particularly location-specific within Italy. However, income and employment are important topics for determining whether living in Venice is feasible and whether the wages in Venice can support the cost of housing and other costs of living in the city. Previous qualitative research found that unaffordability was one of the biggest problems affecting livability for native residents and emigres of the HC. Through generalized financial analysis, we investigated just how unaffordable Venice is for expats and residents alike.

4.1.1 Cost of Housing in Venice

As mentioned above, housing is available throughout the lagoon. As shown in Figure 10, those islands include the HC (main island), Lido (largest lagoon island), Murano, Le Vignole, Sant'Erasmus, Mazzorbo, Burano, and Torcello. The historic center of Venice is split up into 7 neighborhoods, known as *sestieri*: Cannaregio, Santa Croce, Dorsoduro, San Polo, San Marco, Castello, and Giudecca.

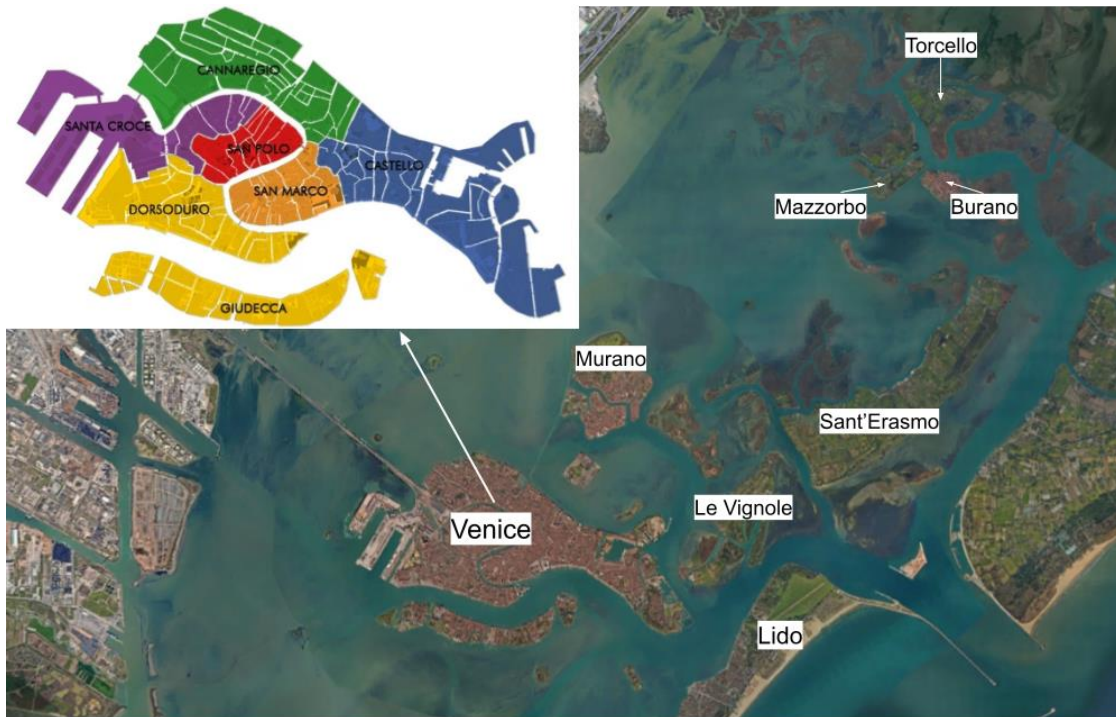


Figure 11: Map of the Lagoon of Venice

The majority of the available listings, both for rent and for sale, come from the seven *sestieri* of the historic center. On June 22, 2023, we collected 1,600 listings of homes for sale in Venice from the Immobiliare real estate agency. Of these listings, 1306 were in the HC, 210 on Lido, and 84 on all other lagoon islands. Initially, we came across some extreme outliers, which were revealed to be either hotels or other large buildings for sale rather than homes. Those listings were excluded from the data analysis.

Number of Homes in Venice Available for Sale and Rent

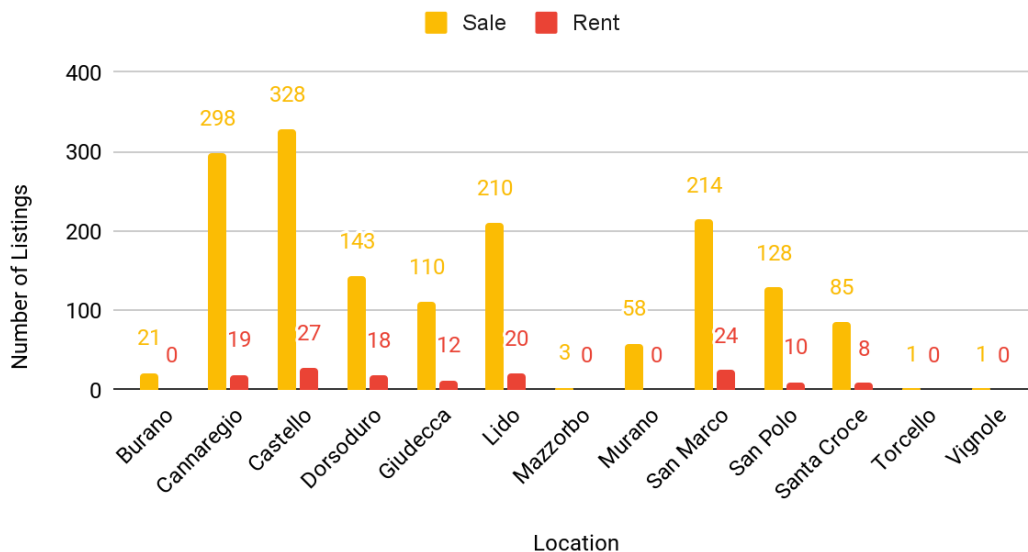


Figure 12: Number of Homes in Venice Available for Sale and Rent⁶¹

By comparison, as of June 15, 2023, there were only 137 listings for rent in total, 118 from the historic center and 19 from Lido. This information lines up with the comments of many expat interviewees who have experienced trouble finding long-term rentals. Additionally, they expressed frustration with landlords preferring to rent to short-term residents or tourists, as well as the growing number of Airbnb apartments in the city. Global overtourism has contributed to this tendency towards short-term rentals within the HC. Overall, this suggests a lack of long-term rentals for expats and residents alike, which is a key issue with livability in Venice.

Upon further research, we discovered that there exists an Italian law, known as the *Fair Rent Act*, that strongly favors tenants over landlords. Landlords do not have the right to evict a tenant, even a non-paying tenant, without paying compensation or going through a long legal process of up to two years.⁶² Because of the lack of landlord protection, they prefer to rent to

⁶¹Immobilier

⁶²Bolla, "Rental Contracts in Italy"

short-term residents. Most landlords in Venice rent their properties to a resident for no more than 4 years. The landlords can also make more money by increasing prices for short term tenants.

Home Prices in Venice

The distribution of sale prices for homes in Venice had a very wide range. We further split the data by grouping listings by their location. Figure 12 shows that the most common price range was between €301,000 and €400,000. The median price was €470,000 and the average was €670,000. This is much more expensive than the available housing on the mainland of the municipality of Venice, where the median price was €170,000 and the average was €200,000.

Range of Home Sale Prices in Venice(as of June 22, 2023)

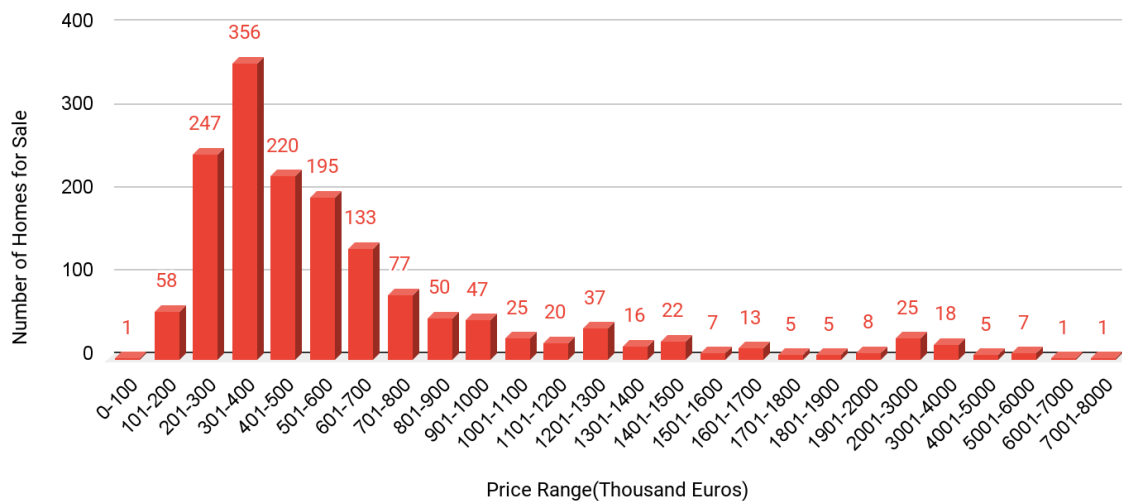


Figure 13: Distribution of Homes Sale Prices in Venice as of June 22, 2023⁶³

Among the listings within the historic center portrayed in Figure 13, the *sestiere* with the most expensive prices was San Marco, with a median (the line inside each box) price of €625,000 and an average price of €1.05 million. San Marco was also the location of the most expensive home price, at €7,500,000, along with many more homes priced well over €1 million (each dot on the chart is an outlier). Despite these outliers, San Marco still had some smaller,

⁶³Immobilier

more affordable homes, with the lowest priced listing at €130,000 for a 30 square meter apartment. Following San Marco are San Polo, San Croce, Dorsoduro, Cannaregio, and Castello with median prices of €560,000, €550,000, €480,000, €475,000 and €410,000, respectively. The *sestieri* for which we collected the most affordable prices was Dorsoduro, which had the lowest average price at €600,000 euros. Castello with the cheapest overall home price of €90,000 for a

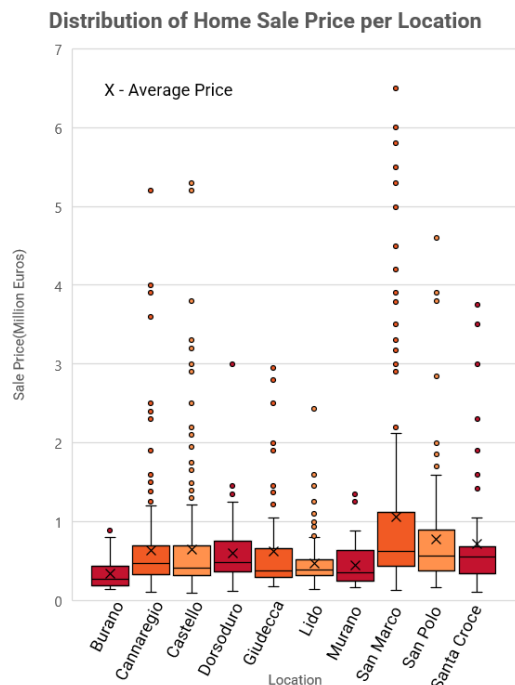


Figure 14: Box and Whisker Charts of Home Sale

prices of these areas, suggesting that these neighborhoods are more livable than San Marco and San Polo.

32 square meter apartment, and Giudecca with the lowest median home sale price of €370,000 and the lowest maximum price for a region at €2,950,000.

Based on comments from our interviewees, the areas in Venice with the highest congestion of tourism are San Marco and San Polo. The high congestion of tourism is reflected in the high prices of housing in these areas. Areas such as Giudecca, Dorsoduro, and Castello have been discussed by our interviewees as highly residential areas that are separated from tourism. This can also be seen in the more affordable

Median Home Sale Price per Location in Venice



Figure 15: Median Prices and Count of Homes for Sale in Locations Throughout Venice

The other lagoon islands have considerably fewer homes for sale. There were 294 listings in the lagoon islands of Venice, 210 in Lido and 84 in all other lagoon islands. Lido had a median home sale price of €390,000, which is cheaper than some of the areas of the main island, however more expensive than the other lagoon islands, which had a total median price of €350,000. The lagoon islands farthest to the north, Torcello and Mazzorbo, collectively had only 4 homes for sale but had the highest median home sale prices of €760,000 and €770,000, respectively. The prices on these islands were expensive because they were much bigger homes, each with a median square meterage of 290 and 230, respectively. Murano and Burano, however, had higher housing availability and lower prices than the other small lagoon islands, with median prices of €350,000 and €265,000, respectively.

Median Home Prices per Square Meter

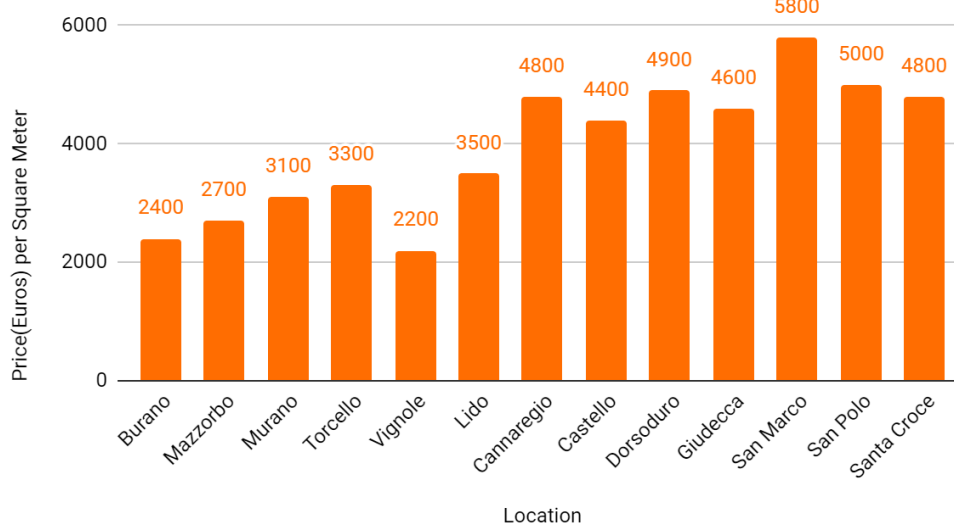


Figure 16: Median Home Prices Per Square Meter for Locations throughout Venice

The lagoon islands are physically separated and distanced from the main historic center of Venice. The homes on these lagoon islands (the first six bars in figure 15) had the lowest price per square meter of home. The price per square meter of homes on the main historic island were all greater than €4,000 and significantly more expensive than the prices on the lagoon islands. It can be inferred that the price of homes is related to tourism in Venice. Homes on the historic island that are closer to the congestion of tourism were more expensive than homes on the lagoon islands that are more separated from the tourism in Venice.

Rent Prices in Venice

It seems that long-term rentals were far less available in Venice, as we only collected 137 listings for rentals in Venice from Immobiliare (as of June 15, 2023) compared to 1,600 listings for sales. The median rent for a home in Venice listed on Immobiliare was €1,600/month, and the average was €1,900/month. The most common range was €1,001-1,500 per month, as seen in the distribution in Figure 16.

Range of Monthly Rent Prices in Venice(as of June 15, 2023)

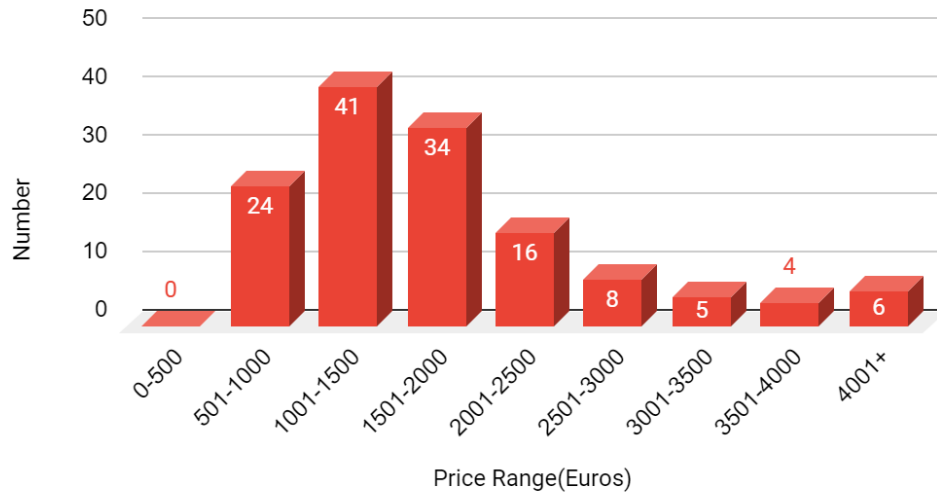


Figure 17: Range of Monthly Rent Prices in Locations Throughout Venice

In addition, as Figure 17 demonstrates, rental homes were not available in most of the lagoon islands. Outside of the HC, Lido was the only location with rental listings, with 19 available. The median monthly rent of the available rentals on Lido was €1,800 and the average

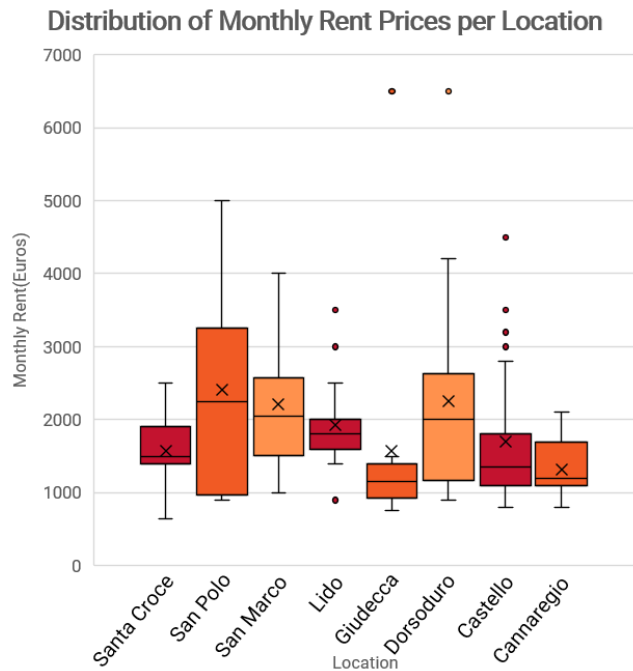


Figure 18: Box and Whiskers Plot of Monthly Rent Prices for Locations Throughout Venice

was €1,921. The remaining 137 available rentals in Venice are located in the HC. All seven *sestieri* of the HC had less than 30 available rentals listed on Immobiliare, ranging from a maximum of 27 listings in Castello and as few as 8 listings in San Croce. San Polo had the most expensive rentals, with an average monthly rent of €2,410 and a median of €2,250. However, the homes with the highest rent, €6,500/month, were found in both

Dorsoduro and Giudecca. Despite this expensive outlier, Giudecca surprisingly has the lowest median monthly rent, at €1150/month. The minimum monthly rent was €650/month for a 55 square meter apartment in San Croce. Giudecca, Cannaregio, and Castello have the lowest median monthly rent, likely due to their separation from the congestion of tourism, similar to the sale prices in those locations.

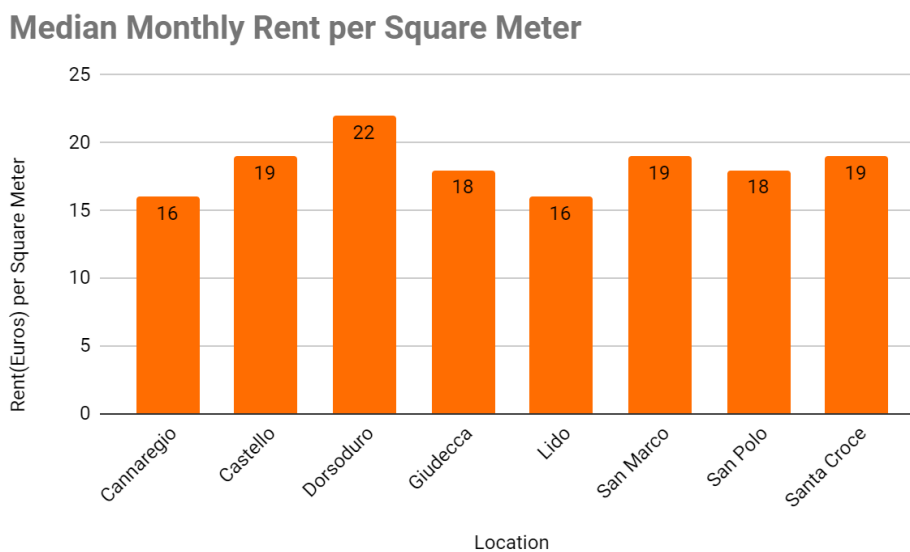


Figure 19: Median Monthly Rent Price per Square Meter for Locations throughout Venice

Relative to the size of the home, Dorsoduro had the most expensive rent. Dorsoduro is the location of multiple universities, including IUAV University of Venice and Università Ca' Foscari. These schools attract a younger group of people to this area who are in need of affordable, longer-term housing, hence the higher demand for rentals, which creates higher prices. Lido had one of the cheapest prices per square meter, likely because of its separation from the congestion of tourism, outside of the summer beach season.

Renting in Venice can be cheaper than owning a home in the short run, however rental properties were much less available. Whether a resident chooses to own or rent their home, both will have challenges. But in order to determine the true affordability of owning or renting a home in Venice, it is necessary to understand the wages earned by Venetians.

4.1.2 Salaries in Venice

To give a comprehensive perspective on the affordability of Venice, it is necessary to investigate the income available to residents in Venice. Within the Metropolitan City of Venice (referred to as Venezia on Istat), the median hourly wage is €11.83.⁶⁴ This hourly wage is lower than the median hourly wage for the Veneto Region and North-East Italy, however it is greater than the median hourly wage of Italy as a whole. This number may be lower compared to the rest of the region due to the concentration of low-paying service jobs in the HC. In Italy, the average worker worked 1,694 hours in the year of 2022.⁶⁵ According to these hours, the average wage, €11.83 per hour, translates to an annual salary of approximately €20,000.

Hourly Wage by Location

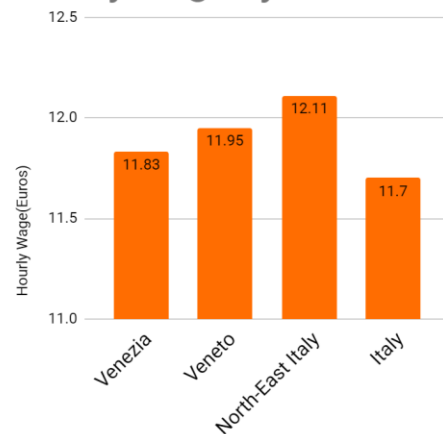


Figure 20: Median Hourly Wages in Italy

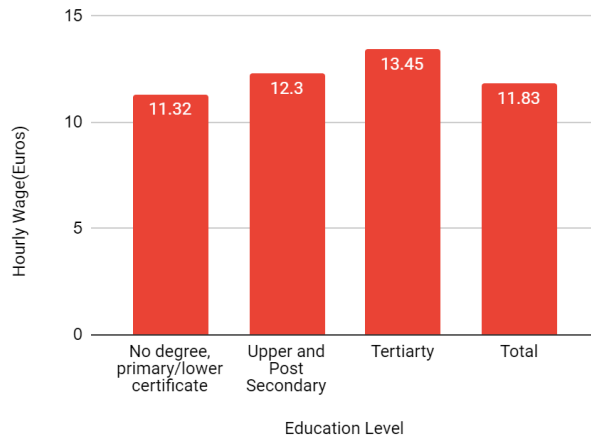
Given that the median monthly rent for a home in Venice is €1,600, the median annual rent for a home would be €19,200. This would not be feasible for an individual who is earning an average salary of €20,000. In order to rent a home in the HC, one must either earn a wage much higher than the average for Venezia, or come across one of the rare affordable rentals. Having roommates was a common solution to this problem. Owning a home in Venice would be even more difficult for those earning the average wage, considering the median price of €470,000, and most banks only offering 80% mortgages. With an annual salary of €20,000, it is much easier to live on the mainland of the Municipality of Venice, where the median home price is €170,000

⁶⁴Istat

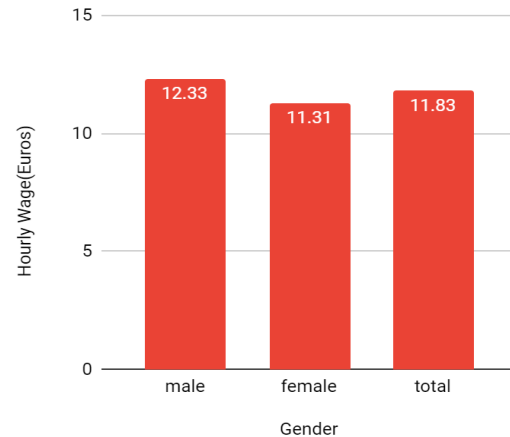
⁶⁵OECD, "Average usual weekly hours worked on the main job in Italy from 2002 to 2021."

and the median monthly rent is €900/month, or €10,800/year. The discrepancy between particularly low wages and particularly expensive housing in the region is a major driver of depopulation in Venice, as reflected by findings in previous studies. For those who stay in Venice, the discrepancy is perhaps the largest factor negatively impacting Venetian livability.

Hourly Wage in Venezia by Education Level



Hourly Wage in Venezia by Gender



Figures 21 & 22: Median Hourly Wages in Venezia by Education Level and Gender

Unsurprisingly, the median hourly wage increases as the education level increases in Venezia. Additionally, the median hourly wage for males is greater than the hourly wage for females. Women and those who have the lowest education levels earn wages even less than the

Hourly Wages by Job Sectors in North East Italy

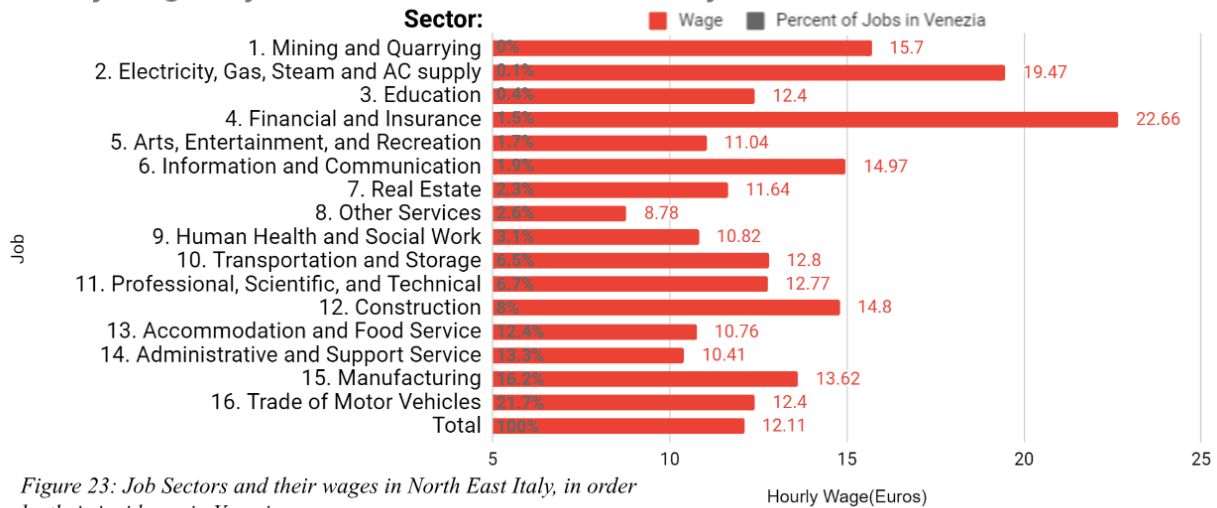


Figure 23: Job Sectors and their wages in North East Italy, in order by their incidence in Venezia

median hourly wage in Venezia. This suggests that women and those without higher-education face even steeper challenges affording a life in Venice.

Additionally, while only available for the entire North-East of Italy, data for hourly wages by sector from the year 2020, as seen in Figure 22, indicates that jobs with the highest wages include those in financial and insurance (sector 4), electricity, gas, steam and AC supply (sector 2), mining and quarrying (sector 1), and information and communication (sector 6). However, jobs in these sectors make up less than 3.5% of jobs in Venezia. The sectors with the 3 lowest wages make up approximately 28% of the jobs in Venezia as of 2020. These low wage jobs fall into the categories of other services (sector 8), accommodation and food services (sector 13), and administrative and support service (sector 14), all of which are in the services industry. This suggests that the most common jobs held by Venetians are those with low wages in the service industry. The jobs with high wages, however, are much harder to find in Venezia. In essence, the structure of the economy of Venezia makes affording to live in the HC close to impossible for most potential permanent residents.

4.2 Demographics of Expat Interviewees

We conducted 38 interviews with expats over the course of the study and analyzed the interviewee demographics by different metrics. While the representation of the study is by no means perfect, we can still draw conclusions about the expat experience, particularly of English-speaking expats from the western world. Despite some preconceptions of expats as wealthy retired folks who mostly view Venice as a vacation destination, the demographic information paints a different picture of working people who are integrated and invested in Venetian society.

Gender of Our Expats

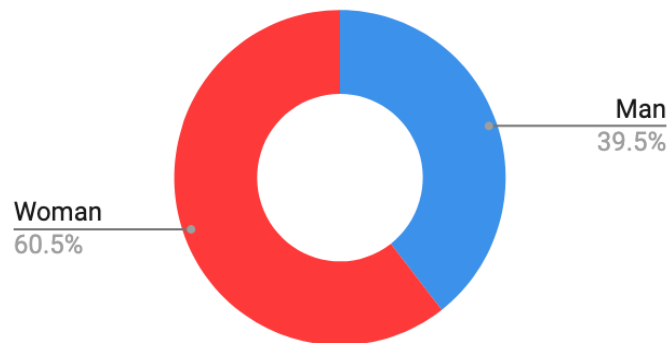


Figure 24: Gender of Our Expats

Considering gender representation, 60% of interviewees were female, and 40% of interviewees were male. The study did not include any gender minorities, which is an area of improvement in future work.

Where Did Our Expats Come From?

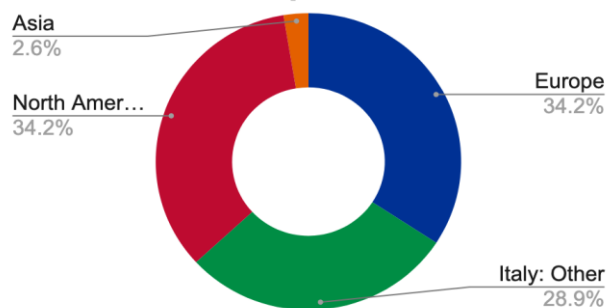
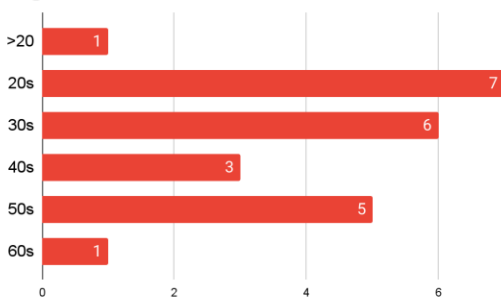


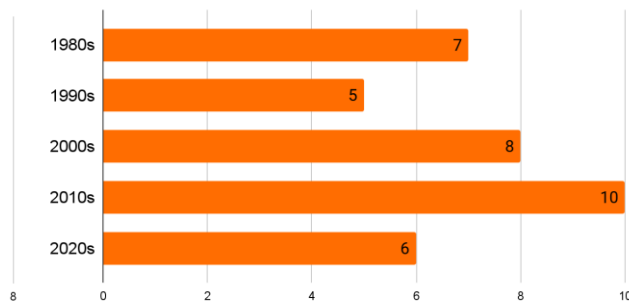
Figure 25: Where Did Our Expats Come From?

In terms of geographic origins, approximately a third (34%) of the expatriates moved from North America. The remaining portion were either from other places in Italy (29%), other European countries (34%), or Asia (3%). Of the interviewees from Europe, just under half (46%) were from England, with the rest being from Germany, France, Belgium, and Switzerland. While by no means perfectly representative, our interview pool gives us a fairly diverse perspective from the western world, specifically those who are English speakers.

Age Our Expats Moved



Decade Our Expats Moved



Figures 26 & 27: Age and Decade our Expats Moved

We also investigated when, and at what age, expats moved to Venice. Most of the expatriates we interviewed moved to Venice in their 20s and 30s, but people seemed to move to Venice at all ages up until their 60s. It is likely that older folks find it more difficult to move to Venice than young or middle-aged people do. Older folks are less likely to move generally due to the stress and exertion of the process. A lack of older expats may also be attributed to the undesirability of Venice from an accessibility perspective. While it may seem that an increasing number of expats have been moving to Venice in the 2010s and 2020s, this is likely a bias due to the proximity of these times to the present. It's difficult to contextualize immigration rates and expat retention due to the small sample size, and the lack of measurements distributed throughout time.

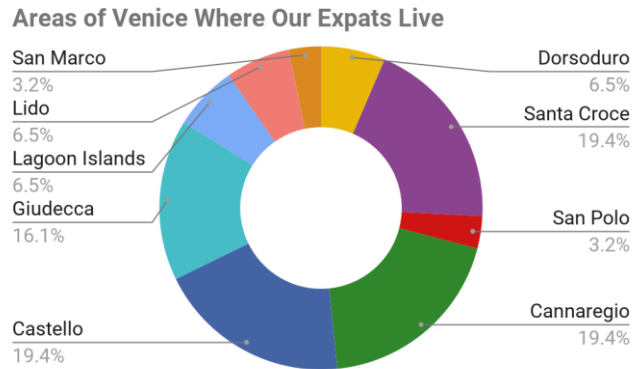
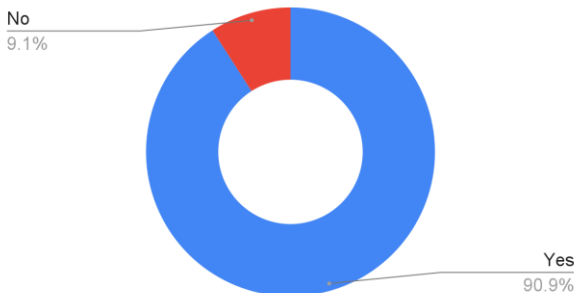


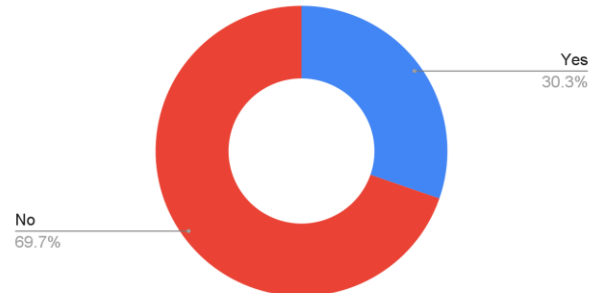
Figure 28: Areas of Venice Where Our Expats Live

The study also asked expats where in Venice they live. Our expats have settled fairly evenly throughout different *sestieri* and islands of the city. However, many chose to live away from the center of the HC, near Rialto Bridge and San Marco Square, to avoid the heavy tourist traffic in these areas. These areas are particularly scarce of housing for sale or long-term rentals and the most profitable areas for Airbnb-style short term rentals as shown by housing data that we collected.

Do Our Expats Speak Italian?



Do Our Expats Speak Venetian?



Figures 29 & 30: Do our Expats Speak Italian or Venetian?

While the language barrier is an obstacle for non-Italian expats, the vast majority (91%) of interviewees speak Italian comfortably. Speaking Italian helps expats feel more connected and accepted by the community. Far less common was the use of the local Venetian dialect, which only 30% of expats could speak.

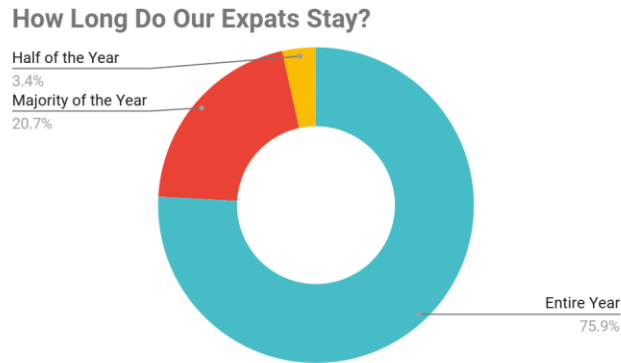


Figure 31: How Long do Our Expats Stay in Venice?

Prior to our interviews, there was some anticipation that expats may only spend part of their time in Venice, or that those who do own property in Venice treat it as a ‘vacation home’. However, 76% of expats said they lived in the historic center the entire year. In fact, it was most common for them to take vacation away from Venice during the busy and hot summer months.

There is certainly area for improvement in terms of representation and bias in building our interviewee pool, discussed in detail in section 5.3. However, contextualized by the similarity of the sentiments shared across interviews, we feel that our interviewee demographics still give us a relatively holistic perspective of the western expat experience.

4.3 Analysis of Expat Experience in Venice

Beyond the demographic information, through our 38 interviews with expatriates in Venice, we gathered valuable information on what brought them here, why they stayed, and some challenges they face while living within the city. This provides us with a perspective on Venetian livability through the experiences of expats.

4.3.1 Motivations of Expats for moving to Venice

A key focus of our study was investigating what brought expats to Venice. For almost all our interviewees, the answer was multifaceted. The attractions of life in Venice were mostly expected, but in order to move to Venice, prospective expats needed to overcome the challenges that usually keep people out. These include a lack of high-paying jobs, limited rental availability and expensive housing, and language and cultural barriers. For our interviewees, who successfully were able to move to Venice, pure personal choice to live in a desirable place played the largest role in leading them to move to and settle in the HC.

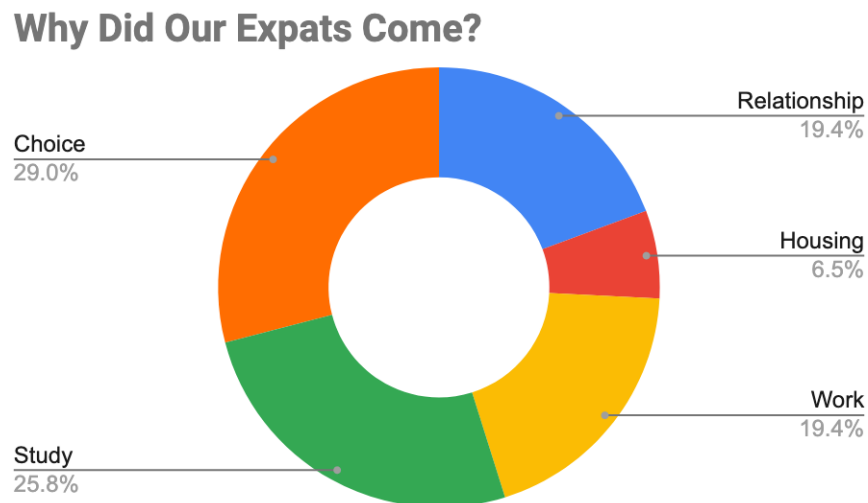
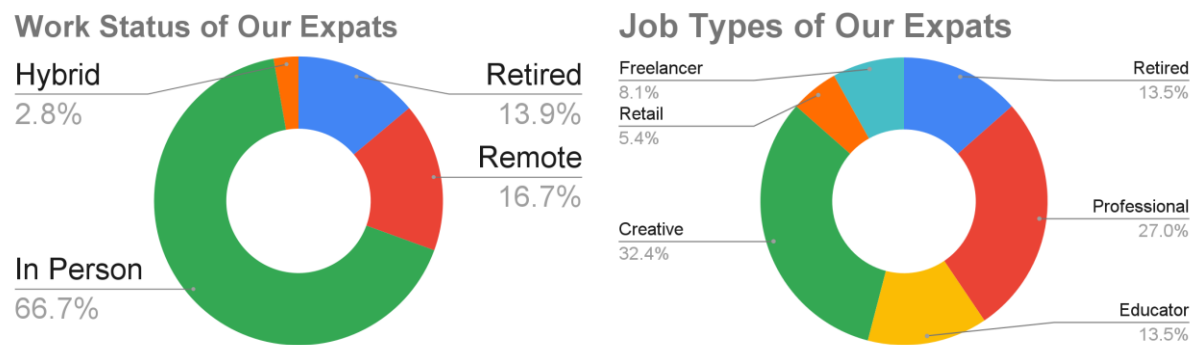


Figure 32: Reasons Our Expats Moved to Venice

Most expats were led to Venice by major life events that seemed to naturally lead them to the lagoon. Oftentimes our interviewees first traveled to Venice for study, work, or pleasure, making connections to the city's institutions, people, and culture. These connections developed into work opportunities, relationships, or further study in Venice, leading many to move their lives here permanently.

Despite the challenges of finding high-paying work in Venice, some expats came to Venice precisely because they had work opportunities. While not all of these jobs were high-paying, they were interesting in other ways that made expats happy to take them. Additionally, at least some expats benefit from supplemental income sources from investments, and can afford to work at a passion-driven, but lower paying job.



Figures 33 & 34: Work Status and Job Types of Our Expats

The figure to the left shows a break-down of work status for expats. We anticipated that many expats living in Venice would either be retired or working remotely to overcome the limited job market in Venice. While some certainly are in these categories, the share within our cohort was lower than expected, with roughly 15% of expats fitting into each. In fact, most expats work locally in-person in the HC. This may be a sign that expats are actually better-integrated into Venetian society than some would expect. The figure on the right shows the types of jobs that expats have. Twenty-five percent of expats are professionals. These are mostly business-oriented professions and are the most likely to allow them to be able to afford the cost of living in Venice. Fourteen percent of expats are educators. With multiple universities in Venice, one of which is known for its foreign language program, some expats work as professors or language teachers.

The creative community plays a large role among our expats. A good chunk of our expats, around a third, were either artists, curators and publishers. Many of these people are affiliated with one of Venice's many cultural institutions. Others simply draw inspiration from Venice's aesthetics, ambiance, and culture. As one inspired writer expressed, "I can dream here." The creative industry is notably the most popular amongst our expat interviewees, and may be the industry best positioned to compete with tourism for employment opportunities in the HC. Amongst the expat community, notably few of them work in the service or retail industries. Despite these being the dominating industries in the job market, these jobs are unlikely to allow someone to be able to afford the cost of living in Venice. Low pay combined with a perceived undesirability amongst interviewees are likely the reasons so few of them work in this field.

Nineteen percent of interviewed expats came to Venice for relationships. Some told us stories of falling in love with a Venetian while visiting, leading them to move to Venice. While it may seem like just a romantic story, a significant number of our expats married Venetians - roughly 32% as shown in the figure to the right. Apart from romantic relationships, some expats came to Venice to connect with friends and family who already lived here. Often these friends and family are also expats, who moved to Venice initially for other reasons outlined in this section.

Are Our Expats Married To Venetians?

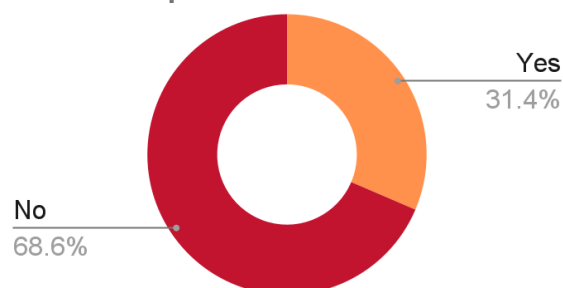


Figure 35: Are our Expats Married to Venetians?

Twenty-six percent of interviewees moved to Venice to study. Venice is well-known for its universities, and maintains a substantial student population. It is home to Ca' Foscari University of Venice, one of the largest foreign language universities in Italy. Expats too are

attracted to study in Venice, and while many of them leave afterwards, some are able to find jobs in the HC after graduation. Our interviewees mainly worked in architecture, arts, education, or social advocacy after completing their degrees in Venice.

Some expats also came to Venice without major connections to the city or an educational or professional purpose. Twenty-nine percent of these interviewees, labeled as ‘Choice’ above, simply came to Venice out of attraction to the city. Whether expats chose to come to Venice for ‘life events’, or by ‘choice’, they stayed for similar reasons that all expats enjoy life in Venice.

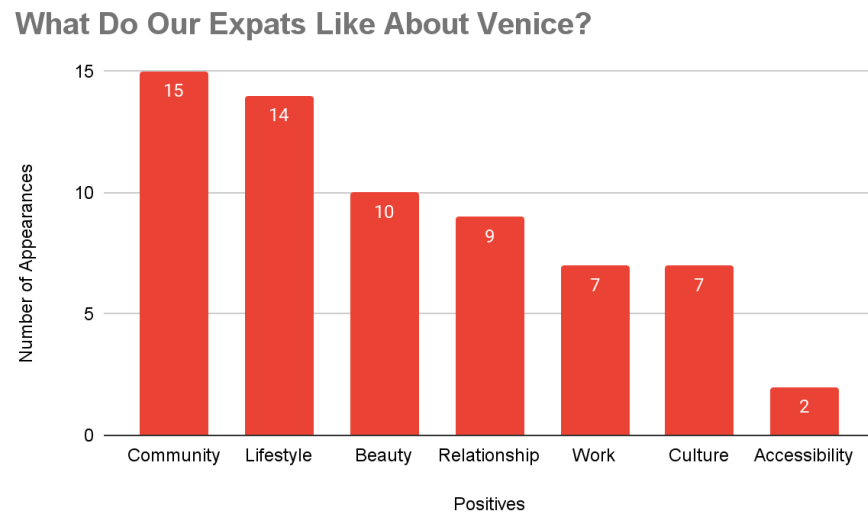


Figure 36: What Do Our Expats Like About Venice?

Many expats started out in Venice simply as tourists. While global tourism negativity impacts the livability of Venice in many ways, it also ironically promotes the livable elements of the city to all who visit. Many of the things that expats like about Venice are the same things that tourists appreciate about the city. Some of these reasons are expected. While the beauty of Venice is an obvious attraction, our interviewees also appreciated the unique culture, lifestyle, and community of the HC. For our interview subjects, the lifestyle of Venice, compared to many western countries that they come from, is considerably “slower-paced” and relaxed. Many of our interviewees described life in Venice as less stressful, despite the effects of global tourism. The

lack of cars was often cited as contributing to the quiet and peaceful atmosphere in the city. Expats also appreciated how the walkability and robust public transportation system made getting around easy. More time spent walking may also be the reason the community of Venice feels so unique. Interviewees told us about their experiences walking in the street, frequently encountering familiar faces to chat with. Since most commuting is done on foot, it removes a social barrier to meeting and interacting with people while out and about in the city. As a result, expats feel that they interact with a friendly, social community of regulars on their daily commutes. While many cities in the world are similarly known for their walkability, the lack of cars, bikes, and scooters allows residents of Venice to uniquely take advantage of this phenomenon. This is also one of the biggest strengths of Venice when evaluating its livability. Both in terms of the city's robust public transit, as discussed in section 2.4.1, and the resulting sense of community the city's walkability produces.

Lastly, the historic culture of Venice continues to attract many expats. Venice pridefully embraces its history as a globally connected city. Despite having a 'small-town feel', Venice remains very well connected to the world through its train station, international airport, and regular visitors from all over the world. Many museums for craftsmanship, art, and history continue to inspire creatives who take advantage of the city's world-class institutions and festivals. Others simply enjoy Venetian culture through its food and architecture. These many factors are what make expats and residents alike committed to living in Venice, despite the challenges.

4.3.2 Challenges of Living

The other element of the Venetian expat experience is the set of endemic challenges connected to the Venetian livability. When asked about these challenges of life in Venice, the

most common answer was tourism. Twenty-seven out of our 38 interviewees, or 71%, identified

Most Common Challenges for Our Expats

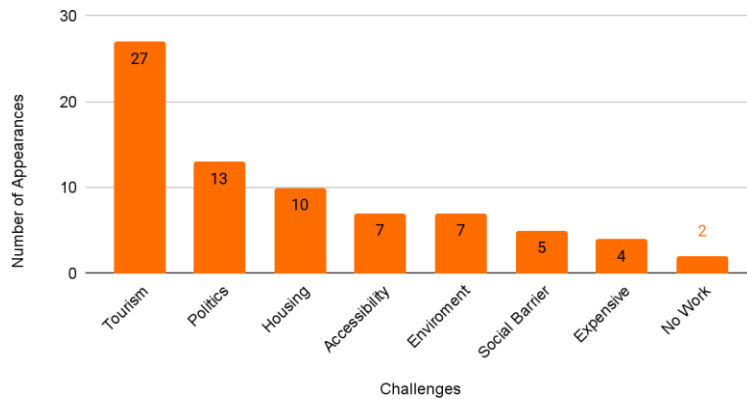


Figure 37: Most Common Challenges for Our Expats

this as one of the main aggregations of challenge in the HC. Specifically, global tourism’s domination of the economy in the HC affects many aspects of Venetian life. Multiple expatriates noted an increased difficulty of getting around due to the crowds. As one expat explained “...usually the city is full from eleven to six, and so if you have to do something important and urgently, you do it early in the morning.” While the residents tactically plan to avoid busy neighborhoods and times, the crowding does make getting around the city more difficult and unpleasurable. The rise of tourism also contributes to Venice’s high cost of living, as quantitatively reflected in section 4.1. Rising tourism incentivizes more and more Airbnb-style short term rentals in Venice, contributing to the rental shortage and high cost of housing. Housing availability is also a major challenge expats face while moving into the city, cited by 26.3% of interviewees.

In addition to housing, prices have increased at stores and restaurants as an attempt to ‘squeeze’ as much money from tourists as possible. Some non-Italian expats discussed their experiences being mistaken for tourists, which often led them to sense disdain toward them by Italian and Venetian residents. An American expat described a story of another American expat friend being asked “...how long are you going to be here?” And she said ‘always,’ and then they changed immediately and started welcoming her in a different way.” The disdain from locals

towards tourists has led even into a lack of distinction between permanent resident expats and tourists/ by the local community. A multifaceted problem, global tourism poses similar, but unique challenges for both residents and expats living in Venice.

As the Venetian economy is tourism-centric, the job market in Venice is also dominated by tourism. As shown in Figure 37, 71.6% of jobs within the HC fall within the service industry. This industry is predominantly restaurant workers, gondola drivers, and shopkeepers

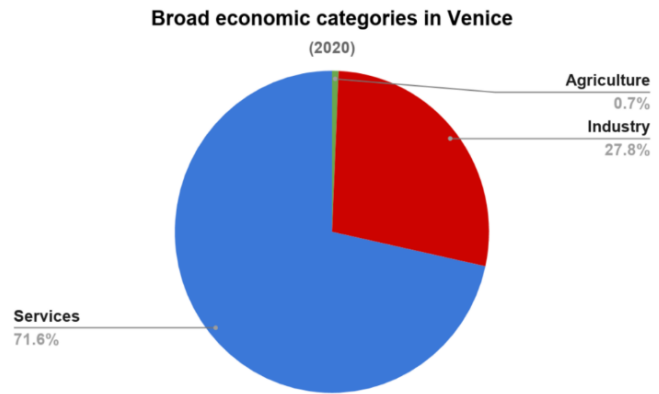


Figure 38: Main Divisions of the economy in 2020

focusing on working with tourists. These types of jobs are unlikely able to sustain a life within the HC as previously mentioned in sections 2.6.2 and 4.1.2. This was mentioned very briefly within our interviews, with only 2 out of 38 experiencing it as a problem. As reflected upon in section 4.1.2, expats typically do not work in these low-paying industries, and have found other ways to overcome the skewed job market of Venice. Yet for many, it is one of the largest problems with Venice's livability.

The second most commonly mentioned challenge in the interviews was politics, with 34.2% of our expatriates stating their discomfort with the political circumstances of the city. One of the main focal points of this challenge was the political disenfranchisement of expats. Even with a majority of our interviewees having registered as full-time residents in Venice, most are still unable to vote in elections and on referendums in the HC. Being unable to vote keeps expats from being fully integrated into the local community. This also poses a larger challenge for the HC. As more residents leave and expats come, the voting base of the HC continues to diminish

in comparison to the mainland of the Venice municipality, making some Venetians feel further disenfranchised. This disenfranchisement contributes to lack of retaining of the expats which then further contributes to the depopulation of Venice. A few of our expats even indicated that if the problem continues, they do not see a future for themselves in Venice.

Expats face multiple long-term challenges after moving to Venice. Compared to previous research on emigres and residents of Venice, the issues that long-term expats face are often the same as those of Venetian residents and emigres. These challenges, often connected to the effects of global tourism, deteriorate the livability of the HC. Nevertheless, like residents, our expats are able to make peace and work to overcome these challenges and choose to live in Venice.

5. Recommendations and Conclusions

Through both our qualitative and quantitative research on livability for expats in Venice, we gained insights into the many ways that global tourism both attracts and deters expats from coming to Venice. It is clear that Venice needs to engage with and respond to the dynamism of livability by: (1) addressing the affordability and availability of long-term housing in the HC through government policies; and (2) targeting the creation of work opportunities to provide higher long-term income sources for expats and other residents to maintain their lives in Venice. Addressing the shortcomings of Venetian livability promises to attract more permanent-resident expats to Venice, and improve retention of current expats and Venice-born residents alike. In this chapter, we also reflect on shortcomings, biases, and other issues with our study that should be addressed if similar research was to continue.

5.1 Addressing Housing Through Policy

When discussing challenges of life in Venice with our expats, the conversation often turned to discussing the relationship between global tourism and livability in Venice. Shared amongst both expats and residents is a feeling of anxiety about the future of the HC. Depopulation in conjunction with relentless tourism is drastically changing the culture and economy of the city. The most widely experienced symptoms are in the housing and job markets, but these changes also place pressure on local infrastructure and environment.

Most of our interviewees felt that the local government could do more to prioritize the problems affecting livability. Recent policies such as the tourist tax and limitations on docking cruise ships are moves in the right direction, but expats feel as though the Venice municipal government does not have a plan to meaningfully improve livability in the HC. One particular area of focus is in housing. As outlined in section 4.1, housing is the primary component of Venice's high cost of living. Additionally, there are very few rentals available for long-term lease. Prospective long-term renters (and permanent residents) compete with tourists for apartments, which are increasingly turned into Airbnb-style short-term rentals. The housing market is both a driver of Venice's depopulation and a major issue with the city's livability. Expats feel that the municipal government needs to shift financial incentives to better favor residents. As some interviewees explained, other cities and countries have limits on how many days per year a property can be rented as an Airbnb. Creating programs that give property owners a financial incentive to rent to long-term residents would facilitate the repopulation of Venice and improve livability in terms of housing.

With a small population compared to the mainland of the Venice municipality, residents of the HC are overwhelmed in their representative council by the low population compared to the mainland. In fact, there have been at least 5 referendums to politically detach the HC from the municipality of Venice to address this issue, though all have failed. The problem of disenfranchisement is compounded for expats, who do not have the ability to vote despite moving their residency to Venice. Providing a path for expats to participate in local politics would encourage expats to become more personally invested in current events of the community and give another attraction for prospective expats to move to Venice. As the HC looks to solve

its problem of depopulation, turning qualifying expats into voting, community-participating residents would be a positive change that could help reverse demographic decline.

5.2 Cultivating Work Opportunities

Another way global tourism negatively affects livability in Venice is the lack of high-paying jobs. As discussed in section 2.5, the job market in the HC is dominated by the service sector, which provides mainly low-paying jobs. This sector has continued to grow in proportion to the growth of global tourism. However, these jobs are unlikely able to support a life in the city of Venice. There is a glaring lack of professional employment opportunities available in Venice, so even people with higher education struggle to find high-paying jobs in Venice that match their skills.

Corporations like SerenDPT are working to circumvent tourism's crowding out of other economic sectors through incubating startups within their offices to help generate higher paying, non-service-sector jobs. They host 'innovation camps' and workshops to foster ideas and transform them into Venice-based start-ups. Start-ups like PesCo, E-Dock, Voga Yachts, and ReHub have all been incubated through the MIT Design X Venice program hosted through SerenDPT⁶⁶. SerenDPT also provides work space to its start ups, but the size of its facilities are limited, and there are few others in Venice. It is also located on Giudecca making it harder to reach than other places in the HC. We recommend increasing the number of coworking spaces. More coworking spaces could attract freelance workers and remote workers alike, allowing them to work remotely while still having the ability to collaborate and socialize with others.

⁶⁶ "Past Editions," MDXV

Introducing working spaces such as these enables remote work and encourages diversification of the economy.

Another way to increase the number of higher-paying and highly-skilled jobs would be focusing on leveraging the large arts and culture community within the HC. While there are clearly many ways global tourism has negatively affected livability for expats in Venice, the international connections that bring people and ideas to Venice has also created a unique artistic community. Creating more jobs in this sector specifically could attract creative-minded expats to Venice. Creating studio space, expanding hiring and sponsorship programs, and further subsidizing art and culture institutions from the profits of tourism is a very tangible way to grow one of Venice's most important industries. Places like Cosmos and Scuola Internazionale di Grafica already host artists and musicians to allow them to work on their craft. Targeted initiatives to bring artists to Venice presents an opportunity to expand one of Venice's only existing alternative industries to tourism. This is also one of few ways to leverage global tourism in favor of Venice's livability.

By expanding Venice's efforts to create better work opportunities, the city has a chance to really provide solutions for its biggest issues with livability. Global tourism has proven to be a force too powerful for the city to meaningfully resist. As one interviewee observed, "You can't make Venice less of a touristic city, but you can make it other things." As cities around the world struggle with similar problems in the global housing market, job market, and overtourism, Venice too must find ways to adapt to the modern challenges affecting the city's livability.

5.3 Continuing the Study

While the study did lead to some interesting conclusions, it failed to capture other information of interest in the study of expats in Venice. Specifically, financial information to ascertain how expats can afford life in Venice would be of great benefit to such an analysis. Most of our expats worked in person in the HC, but it is unlikely these Venetian jobs alone can sustain the cost of living in Venice. Some of our interviewees mentioned sources of secondary income from various investments, side businesses, or pensions. Additionally, whether people own or rent their homes, whether they have roommates or partners, and the size of their savings could paint a better picture about the affordability of Venice. Naturally, it is difficult to approach these sensitive topics in an interview. Perhaps anonymous surveys could be used to continue the research, collect data on sensitive topics, and protect the privacy of the interviewees.

Another issue of the study was the number of interviewees. From 38 persons interviewed, we were able to draw some general conclusions, but they lack strong statistical significance to confidently comment about experiences of expats as a whole. It was very difficult to determine exactly how many expats are in the HC, due to dynamic population changes, mixed residency status, and the potential social isolation of expat communities. For this reason, we recommend continuing the study to enlarge and diversify the sample size. In Appendix B, we created a recommended interview question sheet to support the continuation of the work.

There is likely also bias in the study due to how we obtained expat contacts. Starting from a personal connection list from our project sponsors in Venice, we networked through various expat communities. During our analysis, we realized a surprisingly large amount of expats were involved in art and history institutions of Venice. While it was clear Venice is attractive to people with these interests, it was difficult to say whether the overwhelming number

is representative of all expats in Venice, or an unintentional product of bias in our interview pool. We suspect that our interviewees connected us to their friends and contacts who had similar interests, which could explain the relative size of the creative community in our sample. There may very well be more business, retirement, or government expat communities that we failed to reach in our networking for interviewees.

Furthermore, our study was biased significantly by the fact that interviews were only conducted in English. While many people in Venice speak some English, they may not be confident in their ability to interview, leading them to decline an interview with us. Additionally, some communities of people do not speak English at all, and were therefore unreachable in our study. This almost certainly skewed our interview pool towards expats from western Europe and North America, who are more likely to speak English. Our interviewee pool included almost no representation of Asian, African, South American, or Middle Eastern expats. If the research on expats were to be continued, we recommend conducting interviews in more languages, especially Italian, to increase diversity in the sample. Using a human translator or some sort of technological translation tool would increase both the quality of and representation in the interviews.

Lastly, we only interviewed current expats in Venice. This likely created a survivorship bias in our data. Expats who are still in Venice are more likely to have successfully relocated and integrated themselves here, which is thoroughly reflected in our data. Expats who could not overcome the challenges of Venice life or ran into other issues are more likely to have left Venice, and therefore were not included amongst our interviewees. Finding and interviewing expats who lived in Venice for a time but then left would likely give unique insights and balance the interviewee pool. It would also be beneficial to target specific expat interviewees who have

lived in the HC for at least one year. This gives us a more holistic view of expatriate lifestyle since those who have lived in the HC for less time have not fully acclimated to the city and its ways.

While it is difficult to extrapolate our work to the expat population of Venice as a whole, there was enough similarity of sentiment amongst interviewees that we felt we accurately analyzed, reflected on, and built our analysis and recommendations on the experiences of western expats. Hopefully, the aforementioned suggestions can be introduced in continued study of expats.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Expatriate Interview Questions

1. Where are you from? Or, Where did you grow up?
2. What brought you to Venice?
 - Marriage, children?
3. What year did you move to Venice?
4. Where did you live just before Venice?
5. Where else did you consider moving?
6. What age were you when you moved to Venice?
7. Where in Venice do you live?
8. Where else have you lived?
9. Do you live here year-round?
 - (if not year round) How much time do you spend in Venice?
10. Are you an official resident of Venice?
11. Are you planning on staying in Venice?
12. What do you like about Venice that has made you want to stay?
13. What do you do for work?
 - If they work remotely: Do you work in a co-working space?
14. (What else has allowed you to stay in Venice?)
15. Do you think Venice is expensive?
 - so is it less expensive
16. What is your impression on the cost of living in Venice?
17. What was the adjustment to Venice like for you when you first moved here?
18. What has been challenging since moving to Venice?
19. What is your life like here? What is your daily routine like in Venice?
20. Has the growth of tourism in Venice made you consider leaving?
21. What did you do for work before you moved to Venice?
22. Do you consider yourself a Venetian?
23. Do you feel accepted here in Venice?
24. How is your Italian? Are you comfortable speaking Italian?
 - What language do you speak on a daily basis?
25. What social clubs or communities are you involved in?
 - Who are your closest friends in Venice?
26. Do you think your experience is typical?
27. Is there anything else you would like to share that you think would be relevant or helpful for our project?
28. Do you know any other expats that would be comfortable participating in an interview?

Expatriate Interview Goals:

- What brought them to Venice
- What has allowed them to stay in Venice
- How blended they are in Venetian society

Appendix B: Recommended Interview Questions for Future Study

1. Where are you from?
 - a. (if multiple places) where did you go to high school?
2. What brought you to Venice?
3. Are you married?
4. Do you have children?
5. What year did you move to Venice?
6. Where did you live just before Venice?
7. Where is your family from?
8. Aside from Venice, where else did you consider moving?
9. What age were you when you moved to Venice?
10. Where in Venice do you live?
11. What made you choose that spot in Venice?
12. Do you own or rent your home?
 - a. Do you have roommates?
13. Where else have you lived in Venice?
14. Do you live here year-round?
 - a. (if not year round) How much time do you spend in Venice?
15. Do you have residency in Venice?
16. Do you have Italian citizenship?
17. Are you planning on staying in Venice?
18. What do you like about Venice that has made you want to stay?
19. What do you do for work?
 - a. If they work remotely: Do you work in a co-working space?
20. Do you think Venice is expensive?
 - a. so is it less expensive
21. What is your impression on the cost of living in Venice?
22. What was the adjustment to Venice like for you when you first moved here?
23. What has been challenging since moving to Venice?
24. What is your life like here? What is your daily routine like in Venice?
25. Has the growth of tourism in Venice made you consider leaving?
26. Are you concerned about your ability to get around the city as you get older?
27. What could be done to ease some of the challenges you face?
28. What did you do for work before you moved to Venice?
29. Do you consider yourself a Venetian?
30. Do you feel accepted here in Venice?
31. How is your Italian? Are you comfortable speaking Italian?
 - a. What language do you speak on a daily basis?

32. What social clubs or communities are you involved in?
 - a. Who are your closest friends in Venice?
33. Do you think your experience is typical?
34. Is there anything else you would like to share that you think would be relevant or helpful for our project?
35. Do you know any other expats that would be comfortable participating in an interview?

Appendix C: GitHub Repository for Immobiliare Data Tool

To collect Immobiliare.it listings:

1. Determine the area you will be searching for listings (the name of the location that comes after the last comma on each listing), type this in line 1 of `scrapingLinks.txt`
2. Find your desired search results for a certain area
 - a. Paste the link for page one into line 2 of `scrapingLinks.txt`
 - b. Paste the link for page two into line 3 of `scrapingLinks.txt`
3. Type the page at which you would like to start scraping on line 4 of `scrapingLinks.txt`
4. Type the last page you would like to scrape into line 5 of `scrapingLinks.txt`
5. Type the name of the text file you would like to write your results into on line 6 of `scrapingLinks.txt`.

The program will write each listing on each line of the file in the following format: (the location will be whatever comes before the last comma, either a neighborhood or region of a city)

location,price,numberOfRooms,squareMeters,link

6. Run `mainScanner.java`

If an error occurs at any point, note the last page scanned (see the output terminal) and run the program again starting at the next page (by updating the page number on line 4). It will continue writing into the text file where you left off! Pages will run into errors if a certain listing is missing a certain number, such as number of rooms or square meters.

Find the code hosted on our repository here:

<https://github.com/WpiExpats/Immobiliare-Scraper>

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Agreement for Participation in a Research

Study Investigator: Nicholas Johannessen

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Title of Research Study: Expats in Venice: Exploring the lives of outsiders and the livability of Venice

Sponsor: SerenDPT, Smart Dest

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you agree, however, you must be fully informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and any benefits, risks, or discomfort that you may experience as a result of your participation. This form presents information about the study so that you may make a fully informed decision regarding your participation.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to understand the reasoning behind why expatriates moved into the historical center of Venice and other reasons that may have caused residents to leave from this area. We will also attempt to understand the reasoning of why people who have emigrated from Venice left and moved elsewhere.

Procedures to be followed: This study will contain a 30-45 minute interview that may be recorded. During this interview, the interviewer will be taking notes during the conversation.

Risks to study participants: Some potential risks of participating in this study are:

- discomfort from answering certain questions about job status
- discomfort from having a conversation being recorded

Benefits to research participants and others:

It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by allowing the SerenDPT and related projects to understand the desirable features of Venice. Understanding these features is integral to preventing the migration away from Venice and hopefully attract more people to increase the population of the city.

You are not expected to benefit directly from participating in this study.

Record keeping and confidentiality: Each interview will be recorded in a method indicated by the interviewee. The options for method of record keeping are as follows: video recording, audio recording, and note-taking.

Please indicate all methods of record-keeping you are comfortable with:

- Audio recording
- Note-taking

Please indicate if you are comfortable with having your exact words quoted:

- Yes, I am comfortable with being quoted
- No, I would not like to be quoted

If you responded yes to the previous question, please indicate the name under which you would prefer to be quoted:

- I would prefer to be quoted using my name as indicated on this document
- I would prefer to be quoted anonymously

Any recordings and notes will be kept privately in a Google Drive folder. The members of this group, Dana, Manas, Nathaniel, Nicholas, and Christian, as well as professors John Galante and Fabio Carrera will have access to this folder. This folder will be kept until a date no later than August 1, 2023. Along with this, the information will be posted in the form of an IQP where specific names, identifiers, and positions will be excluded. The information extracted will be used in a nondescript way to describe features of Venice that are attractive to potential expatriates and will be applied in programs to work to reduce the population deflux of the Historical Center of Venice. Our research is in compliance with GDPR regulations.

For more information about this research or about the rights of research participants, or in case of research-related injury, contact:

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IRB Manager (Ruth McKeogh, Tel. 508 831- 6699, Email: irb@wpi.edu) and the Human Protection Administrator (Gabriel Johnson, Tel. 508-831-4989, Email: gjohnson@wpi.edu).

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will not result in any penalty to you or any loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. You may decide to stop participating in the research at any time without penalty or loss of other benefits. The project investigators retain the right to cancel or postpone the experimental procedures at any time they see fit.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have been informed about and consent to be a participant in the study described above. Make sure that your questions are answered to your satisfaction before signing. You are entitled to retain a copy of this consent agreement.

_____ Date: _____ Study Participant
Signature

Study Participant Name (Please print)

_____ Date: _____ Signature of
Person who explained this study

Appendix E: WPI Expat Team Information Sheet



WORCESTER
POLYTECHNIC
INSTITUTE

VENICE PROJECT CENTER

EXPATS RESEARCH PROJECT



WHO ARE WE?

We are a group of 5 students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the United States who are working with the Venice-based nonprofit organization SerenDPT in their goal of studying the resident population in Venice. We are seeking to arrange interviews with expatriates in Venice during the month of June!

OUR MISSION

The goal of our project is to analyze the factors that have allowed and motivated expats to move into the historic city of Venice. We would like to apply these factors to a study of lives and livelihoods in Venice.

CONTACT US TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW



v23e.exp@gmail.com

OR FILL OUT THE INTEREST FORM ON OUR WEBSITE



<https://sites.google.com/view/venice-exp/home>



INTERVIEWS

We will be conducting 30-minute interviews with expatriates to learn more about what brought them to Venice and what has allowed them to stay.



DATA COLLECTION

Our project also involves research about the finances of living in Venice, including available jobs and their wages, housing prices, and other costs of living.

SMARTDEST



SPONSORS AND ADVISORS

Our team is working with SmartDest and SerenDPT to achieve our goal. This project is being advised by Professors Fabio Carrera and John Galante from WPI while working closely with Venice resident Diego Vianello.