

DYNAMIC HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF MIGRATION IN ITALY¹

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ABSTRACT: *In recent decades Italy has been affected significantly by multiple, complex and varied migratory flows as a consequence of demographic and socio-economic changes in Italian society. The processes, driven by the country's social conditions, have more or less over 20 years seen Italy change from a country of emigration into a destination country characterised by significant inflows. As a result of the economic crisis, recent years appear to show a resurgence of emigration, with numbers and conditions differing from the past. Immigration continues to be an integral part of the country's social and demographic structure; indeed, it is the predominant factor in population growth today. To understand these dynamics, this article analyses historical official statistics taking a medium- to long-term perspective that also considers changes in migratory systems, especially in South Eastern Europe. For a better understanding of the phenomenon, we describe the Italian situation within the framework of the main theories of migration change.*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Since mid-1970s Italy has increasingly played the role of destination country. Without a doubt, this fact has been due to internal factors partly analogous to those of other, more traditional, migrant settlement countries in Europe: the period of economic growth which began in the 1950s and 1960s, which improved health, environmental and socio-economic conditions in the country (with the most significant progress recorded by the fall in infant mortality rate), demographic change characterised by a marked increase in life expectancy and a fall in fertility with consequential ageing of the population, increase in the female labour market activity rate.

Considering the aspects most linked to the international and geopolitical situation, the labour demand generated by economic development was for a certain period met by internal migration (especially from “Mezzogiorno”). Lately, in the 1970s, Italy like other Euro-Mediterranean countries began to recruit workers from abroad. Inflows in the early 1970s already exceeded outflows. However, a marked growth of inflows was recorded in the past decade: the migration balance in the period 2002–2011 was equal to 2,665,000 people, a huge figure that highlights the extent to which Italy’s demographic growth has primarily been due to migratory dynamics.⁵ The flows have reduced with the advent of the economic crisis, falling well below the peaks seen in the second half of the first decade of the new century (less than 568,000 between 2012 and 2014), even though immigration is still the factor that prevents the demographic decline.

In Italy, governance of migration, in particular migration and integration policies, must form a significant part in analysis of the phenomenon. The Italian state has pursued an array of these. The overview provided here highlights the changes that have taken place over recent decades, but it also emphasises some important continuities, mainly identifiable as the political rejection of an active immigration policy, high administrative discretion in the treatment of foreigners, and legal obstacles raised against integration of the regularised foreign population. It is also worth considering constraints imposed by the Italian constitutional order and by international conventions signed by Italy.

Governance of immigration has had an important role in defining not only the composition of the foreign population in Italy but also the characteristics of its socio-economic integration. The results of this are the high number of irregular (or illegal) entries into Italy, and the structural quota of irregular immigrants employed in the informal economy.

⁵ In this paper we consider the figures for years 2002–2011 as deriving from the population balances reconstructed on the basis of the 2011 Population and housing census.

This paper analyses the migratory phenomena that have affected Italy over the last sixty years. It considers various dimensions of migrations by focusing on the impact of both endogenous and exogenous factors. A historical perspective (in terms of political and socio-economic changes) is required to better understand and explain the migration dynamics that have occurred more recently. The main theories on migration provide a framework to analyse and contextualise the Italian situation.

2 THEORETICAL APPROACH

The relationship between demographic phenomena, cultural identity and a multi-ethnic society in a period of increasing migration flows characterised by dynamic and continuous growth, is an important theme to consider. There is no a unique theory for explaining migration; instead, a multi-disciplinary approach is required. In this context, the concept of the “migration system” is essential to describe the situation. It can be said that

“calls for a systems approach tend to follow from a recognition that to capture the changing trends and patterns of contemporary international migration requires a dynamic perspective. Consideration of the causes or consequences of international migration from either a sending - or a receiving - country perspective often fails to take into account the dynamics associated with the evolution of the flow, from its origins, through the shifts in its composition and volume as it matures, return migration and remittances. We also have to note that policies and structural conditions not only at the destination but also at countries of origin also shape migration.” (Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992)

Zelinsky (1971) conceptualised and analysed the systematic changes of different forms of migration along the lines of the demographic transition, splitting it into five stages: the pre-modern traditional society, the early transitional society, the late transitional society, the advanced society and the future super-advanced society. In ‘a future “super-advanced” society’, in which both fertility and mortality are very low, spatial mobility is very high and its tendency increases gradually due to circular forms of migration (Fassmann and Musil, 2013).

The model of migration transition, as an extension of the demographic transition model, describes the empirical observation that countries change (for example) from an emigration to an immigration country when it is difficult to guarantee demographic dynamism. Countries that face this crucial turning point are ‘learning’ to manage immigration, which is for them a new situation after a

long period of emigration (Fassmann and Reeger, 2012). This adaptation process can be described as a migration cycle.

The migration cycle theory, which follows a macro approach, focuses less on migrants and more on the migration process itself. According to this theory, the main question to answer is: “How do migration flows change over time?” (Fassmann and Musil, 2013).

Table 1
The concept of migration cycle

Domain	Starting stage	Transition stage	Adaptation stage
Demographic and labour market	Young population; surplus of labour supply and unemployment; Emigration exceeds immigration	Decrease in labour supply as time lag to decrease in birth; economic increase enhances demand; net migration turns positive	Decrease in labour supply and economic growth require continued immigration; net migration constantly positive
Public intervention	Regulation of emigration; immigration is not a topic of the public discourse	Conflicting public opinion; migration policy oriented on labour market	Increase consensus building; differentiated management of migration; focus also on integration

Source: Fassmann, Musil and Gruber (2014).

The starting position can be described by a situation in which emigration is more important than immigration because the population is young and there is a surplus of labour supply. Then, during an intermediate or transition stage, during which a decrease in labour market supply consequent to a decrease in birth is experienced, a former emigration country gradually becomes a new immigration country. The steps have different durations and characteristics but immigration already generally tends to outweigh emigration during the second stage. The third stage, called the adaptation stage or post-transformation stage, is characterised by a decrease in labour market supply, economic growth and a constantly positive net migration. Immigration plays the role of replacing the shortage observed in working population in the situation of a growing economy.

To investigate the causes of migration, one of the most popular theoretical models is the so-called “push-pull” model. It is the combination of a set of negative factors (or “push” factors) registered at the place of origin that drive people to migrate, and a set of positive factors (or “pull” factors) that attract migrants to the place of destination. The “push” factors are mainly represented by economic, social and political problems faced in the poorest countries, while the “pull” factors include comparative advantages found in the richest countries. This combination determines the size and direction of migration flows (Massey, 1999).

Economic and political factors are prevalent in initiating a migratory event, but only once the migration process takes place we can see the emergence of new factors such as personal choices and ties. The neoclassical theory considers macro-economic development of the labour market. Neoclassical micro-economic models instead turn their attention to the labour market, but focusing on cost-benefit calculations made by potential migrants, not only pertaining to the decision to establish a migratory event but also to the choice of destination. In this calculation individual and psychological reasons produce results that differ from individual to individual, depending on, for instance, the willingness to look for work and the level of education possessed (Schoorl, 1994).

Currently, and in contrast with traditional theoretical approaches to migration, the perspective of rational individual strategies in the labour market is losing its central position compared to other determinants of migration processes. In fact, non-individual factors are gradually gaining considerable attention in new studies as a part of the “new economics of migration”, which focus on families rather than on individuals (Bonifazi and Gesano, 2002). The micro-economic theories do focus, therefore, alternately on the individual (cost-benefit model) or on the family (new economics of migration).

Economic development, at least in its early stages, does not reduce but rather promotes the growth of migration flows. Migration continues to increase with income until an income threshold is reached. It is only over the longer-term, and when the development differentials are reduced significantly, when flows decrease. This is the model defined as the “migration hump”, which describes the relationship between outward migration and level of a country’s development (Martin and Taylor, 1996). When a country registers an increase in the level of economic wealth, the number of emigrants increases because they are able to finance and organise their emigration; as wealth increases emigration declines (Melegh, 2013).

According to Castles and Miller (1993; 2009) the ‘Age of Migration’ is a period during which international migration underwent acceleration. It is a globalised and diversified process becoming increasingly politicised and characterised by a progressive feminisation. The conceptual framework in which these changes took place is represented by the growth of ‘transnational societies’, in which a crucial role is played by newly arrived ethnic minorities. Castles and Miller’s study adopts a broader perspective, defining a four-stage model useful for different situations. The stages can synthetically be described as: 1) temporary labour migration; 2) prolongation of stay and development of social networks; 3) increasing orientation towards the receiving countries; 4) permanent settlement.

This model recalls the four different stages of migration identified by the Böhning model (1984). In phase 1 come a small number of immigrants, generally male, young, unmarried, and coming from the most developed areas of the country of origin, i.e. the big cities; they find employment in marginal positions and tend to stay abroad for short periods. In phase 2 come other waves of immigrants: they are mainly men and their average age is slightly higher; they are encouraged and motivated by the stories and the social ties of migrants who migrated first. In phase 3 the immigrants begins to stabilise, family reunions are held and female and minor presence increases. Meanwhile, a new immigrant waves from less developed countries begins, starting again with young unmarried men, but with lower levels of human and social capital. In step 4 the immigration process reaches maturity. This phase is associated with the development of ethnic institutions, such as associations, schools, shops, religious centres, etc.

Migration dynamics can be studied at different levels, generally following a macro or a micro analytical perspective. Additional attention, however, is deserved at the so-called meso level, which represents a crucial perspective linking these more conventional levels of analysis. The meso level of analysis has emerged more recently compared to the other two (Faist, 2000), and posits that it is not only families and households, but also other important social ‘clusters’ (besides economic, political and cultural institutions) that influence migrants’ decisions to move, stay or return (IOM, 2001).

Migration dynamics seem to be determined by the presence and functioning of a variety of networks at different levels of aggregation. Migration networks can be defined as

“groups of social ties formed on the basis of kinship, friendship and common origin. They link migrants and non-migrants together in a system of reciprocal obligations and mutual expectations. They develop rapidly because the act of migration itself generates network connections; every new migrant creates a group of friends and relatives with a social tie to someone with valuable migrant experience. Networks bring about the cumulative causation of migration because every new migrant reduces the costs of migration for a group of non-migrants, thereby inducing some of them to migrate, creating new network ties to the destination area for another group of people, some of whom are also induced to migrate, creating more network ties, and so on” (Massey, 1990).

As such, migration seems to be a process that simultaneously depends upon and creates social networks, assuming the characteristics of a self-feeding process. *“It is not people who migrate but networks.”* (Tilly, 1990, cited in Faist, 2000)

It is difficult to consider migration as a unified and separate ‘whole’ because it is a dynamic phenomenon. As integration proceeds, it is not necessarily the

case that there is a concomitant loosening of ties with the country of origin. Progressive inclusion in the host country seems to be a crucial step in the overall process of integration. But, and at the same time, in many cases ties with family and friends in the country of origin remain important. The migrant can play the role of an ‘agent of development’, by creating and maintaining ties with two different social realities.

“Terms such as transnational social spaces, transnational social fields or transnational social formations usually refer to sustained ties of geographically mobile persons, networks and organisations across the borders across multiple nation-states.” (Faist, 2006)

There are three main prerequisites for a migrant to become an “agent of change and development”: financial capital, human capital and social capital (Cassarino, 2004). Migrants can count on social capital in both the country of origin and the destination country. Both of these forms of social capital play an essential role because the resource is used to transfer and retransfer the other forms of capital (financial and human) (Faist, 1997).

If emigration is seen as a definitive project,⁶ return migration can signify a failure. By contrast, if the migration was temporary from the outset then the moment of return represents success and the accomplishment of a project. Between these two extremes lie intermediate positions, not least because intentions are susceptible to change.

3 A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

3.1 *Political and socio-economic long-term changes in Italy*

In order to better understand changes in the history of migration in Italy, it is necessary to provide a preliminary analysis of the evolution of the economic and social environment of the country over the last 60 years. According to well-known theories (e. g. ‘push and pull’), the economic and social situation of a country affects the direction and intensity of migration flows. As a result of profound economic change and development after the end of the Second World War, Italy became one of the largest economies in the world. It boomed be-

⁶ Even if migration can never be defined as ‘definitive’, it is the migration project that can be defined as temporary or otherwise.

tween 1950 and 1970, and continued growing during the 1980s and through to the late 1990s. Indeed, after the Second World War Italy underwent a period of major reconstruction, but for the south of the country it actually meant construction, because the area was quite poorly developed before the war. These were the years of great internal flows from the south to the big cities of the north. This migration accelerated the process of urbanisation.

Macro-economic developments are crucial to explaining the changes that occurred in the demographic and social structure of the Italian population in the period under review. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the Italian ‘economic miracle’ took place with particularly high growth rates. This rapid and sustained growth was due to the emergence of new industries, to the modernisation of most Italian cities, such as Milan, Rome and Turin, and to the aid given to the country after the Second World War (notably the Marshall Plan). The 1970s and 1980s were characterised by investments in the south of the country (through the funds of the “Cassa per il Mezzogiorno”). At the beginning of the 1990s, Italy became the fourth largest global economic power, overtaking France. In more recent years Italy’s strength has moved from its big enterprises or corporations to small or medium-sized family-owned businesses, mainly located in the north-western ‘economic/industrial triangle’ (Milan-Turin-Genoa). Until 2007, GDP per capita continued to grow; thereafter, the ‘global’ economic recession affected the country severely. In recent decades, Italy’s economic growth has been stagnant. The application of measures to reduce internal and external debt, to liberalise the economy, and to stop tax evasion, allowed Italy to enter the Eurozone, but led the country to fall into an economic recession some years later.

Economic growth since 1970 has involved the services sector in particular and, at a lesser extent, the industry. In fact, the level of GDP recorded in the agriculture sector was low at the beginning of the 1970s, and subsequent growth was slower than in the other two sectors.⁷ It is useful to recall that in March 1957 Italy was one of the six founding members of the European Economic Community (EEC), alongside Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany.⁸ Upon entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the EEC was renamed the European Community (EC), in order to reflect its coverage of a wider range of policies. This was also when the three European

⁷ These trends are confirmed by looking at the time series of employed persons by economic sector. The share of employed persons in services was 46% in 1977, not much higher than the share in industry (38%); the gap has gradually increased to 68% for services and 28% for industry. Of less importance is the share of employment in agriculture, which was 16% in 1977 and which had decreased to 4% in 2011.

⁸ Italy was the driving force behind the right of free movement of labour in the EEC established in 1958 (Romero, 1993).

Communities (EURATOM, ECSC, EEC) were merged to constitute the first of the three pillars of the European Union (EU), which the treaty also founded. The European integration process has moved through important stages and enlarged to the extent that it now comprises (28 countries). Italy was also among the countries that adopted the euro as its official currency from the outset. This gradually created a large open space for migration, though it did not reduce inequalities between countries and macro-regions.

Despite the considerable outflows registered in the first part of the period considered, the population resident in Italy grew constantly, increasing from 47,539,000 in 1952 to 60,796,000 as of 1 January 2015. At the beginning the increase was mainly due to strong natural growth, whereas in recent decades it has been due to immigration and the subsequent growth of the foreign population due to its higher fertility rate than in the non-migrant population. In recent years, however, population growth has slowed (only +13,000 people in 2014): even a positive migration balance is no longer able to offset the fall in fertility and the high number of deaths due to the relatively old age structure of the Italian population.

The slow and inexorable decline in fertility in some developed countries, including Italy, has reached critical levels and has led some influential demographers, notably Ron Lestaege and Dirk van de Kaa, to speak of a “Second Demographic Transition”.⁹ This is a theory that associates the decline in fertility to family and value changes that have taken place since the Second World War, but it does not present a model with phases, as occurred in the First Transition. Such changes consider the more prolonged stay of young people in the family of origin, often for more than 30 years, the net delay in marriage and even the renunciation of marriage for consensual unions. Concerning childbearing, marital fertility decreases more than the fertility outside marriage.

The infant mortality rate is a key indicator of a country’s evolution in terms of health development, especially for women during pregnancy and for mothers and newborns at the moment of delivery. From a strictly demographic point of view, the rate also helps to identify the different phases of the demographic transition process. Progressive decrease of infant mortality – from 63.8 per

⁹ The pattern of the (first) demographic transition is a model that allows us to describe the transition from a population with high levels of fertility and mortality to a population with low birth and mortality rates. In the transitional phase, the gap between the birth rate and the mortality rate increases and a phase of expansion occurs. In the post-transitional phase, the gap between birth and mortality rates is the same as during the pre-transitional phase, but the levels are low with a tendency towards zero population growth.

1000 live births recorded at the beginning of the 1950s to the rather low 3.2 observed in 2012; the mid-1970s value (just over 20 per 1000) testifies to the conclusion of the demographic transition process and marks the start of the second demographic transition. This decrease generated a clear increase life expectancy: it was 67.2 for men and 63.7 for women at the beginning of the 1950s, whereas by 2014 it had risen to 80.2 for men and 84.9 for women.

3.2 *The history of Italian migration and its changing role*

Italy has had a long history of emigration since the unification of the country in 1861. After the Second World War, European countries became major new destinations (especially Switzerland, Germany and France) in addition to the traditional destination countries on the other side of the Atlantic (Argentina, the United States and Brazil).¹⁰ Emigration from southern Italy was mainly transatlantic (the United States, Canada, Latin America and Australia) whereas northern Italians generally emigrated to Europe due to the shorter distance – and consequent lower travel costs. This was particularly the case for migration flows to Germany because of application of the *Gastarbeiter* ('guest worker') model from the 1960s, according to which the so-called *Gastarbeiter* were recruited as low-skilled workers in the industrial sector. Children born to *Gastarbeiter* received the right to reside in Germany, but they were not granted citizenship. The Netherlands and Belgium had similar though smaller-scale schemes.

As a matter of fact, the number of Italian emigrants who chose Germany as the destination country grew progressively: in 1911 emigrants to Germany stood at 65,000 (more than 190,000 to the United States), whereas in 1961 they reached a peak of 114,000 (16,000 to the United States). As such, we witness a definite change in preference of destination country, presumably also as a result of the restrictive policies of the United States. During this period remittances were crucial for revitalising the Italian current account balance of payments. In the north and east return migration was encouraged, but in the south it encountered a more difficult environment, mostly in terms of re-entry into the local labour market and possibility of investments in new enterprises and trade activities.

As stated, the destination of mass internal migration from the south of Italy, especially in the 1950s and early 1960s, was the industrial north. Italian emigration reached its peak in the mid-1960s. Then, after the 1973 oil crisis, when the traditional countries of destination applied stricter immigration policies, Ita-

¹⁰ Large numbers of Italian emigrants also went to Venezuela and Canada, and Italian diasporas were also established in Chile, Peru, Mexico, Paraguay, Cuba and Costa Rica. Mass emigration to America ended in the most part in the 1960s, even if it continued to a lesser extent until the 1980s to Canada and United States.

ly changed its role in the international migratory context. Indeed, Italy, like the other countries on the northern shore of the Mediterranean, began to be an attractive destination country itself. Thereafter, the theoretical approach of the Mediterranean immigration model was created. Italy began evolving into an immigration country most clearly in the 1970s. However, then migration flows into Italy were more moderate in size yet well integrated in local realities which were fairly well organised (Sciortino and Colombo, 2004). In the early 1970s it was quite easy to enter Italy because border controls were not rigorous, as in all the other European countries of the Mediterranean area at that time. In fact, only identity documents were checked at the border, and it was assumed that the foreigner had sufficient economic resources to be able to stay in the country for the period stated. There were no specific rules for foreigners intending to work in Italy because this situation was not legally considered. For over a decade Italy was marked by a legislative vacuum in this regard, and it used regularisations to legalise the positions of foreign citizens who had been settled in Italy for years. In particular, when analysing Italian immigration policy and the recruitment of foreign workers, a paradox should be highlighted:

“the same political system that has always stressed the importance of an active management of (defined-as-needed) labour flows... has never paid a consistent effort to the design and implementation of programmes targeted to reach such a goal” (Sciortino, 2009, p.3).

In the 1970s and early 1980s the first wave of immigrants consisted mainly of Tunisian workers employed in Sicilian agriculture and the fishing industry, and of immigrant women from Latin America, Asia and the former Italian colonies in Africa who found employment in domestic work. The number of immigrants grew progressively, as did the number of nationalities concerned. Citizens from Maghreb countries became more common, but other nationalities also increased in number, including citizens from Philippines (mostly women) hired as domestic workers in the well-off families of the big cities (such as Rome and Milan) and citizens from China who worked in retail, restaurants, and textile manufacturing particularly in central Italy. At the same time, eastern European citizens became increasingly important. In particular, immigration from the Balkans was one of the new features of migration to Italy in the 1990s, and it involved three main countries of origin: Albania, Romania and the former Yugoslavia. Italy had to manage population flows with different characteristics because large numbers came to Italy, in many cases women and children fleeing war in the first half of the 1990s and in need of assistance, care and protection.

After the conflicts, two significant increases (in 1996 and 1999) were observed in the foreign population (both in terms of permits required to stay and in resident population registers); they occurred as a result of two regularisation laws that legalised the residence in Italy of illegal immigrants from the Balkans.

It was Albanians and Romanians who took the greatest advantage of the opportunity to regularise their immigration status (Bonifazi, Conti and Mamolo, 2006). The subsequent waves created a kaleidoscope of citizenships that evolved also considering the other characteristics of migrants. The progressive feminisation of flows was apparent, as well as a stabilisation process whereby it is often more appropriate to speak of families rather than individuals (marriages in Italy, children born in Italy, family reunifications). The increase in the number of acquisition of the Italian citizenship and the emergence of the “second generation” are just two examples of this process.

The number and composition of the foreign resident population in Italy has also been linked to the migration policies adopted in Italy and with various EU enlargements. In this general framework, it is important to note that employees are the main beneficiaries of programmes of regularisation (in particular blue collar workers and women employed in domestic service to families). A further crucial factor has been the entry into the EU of Romania in 2007, and the subsequent growth of immigrants from that country able to stay in Italy by directly enrolling on the municipal resident population registers.

It should be underlined that in recent years the foreign resident population in Italy seems to have slowed down. This is probably a result of a reduction in inflows and a parallel increase in outflows, in turn due to the economic crisis, and to the number of foreign people that became Italian (especially by naturalisation, automatic transmission and claim).¹¹

4 CHANGES SINCE 2000

The first 15 years of the new millennium was a crucial period for Italy. In the 2000s the Italian economy entered a phase of stagnation characterised by extremely low growth. Later, and as a result of the global economic crisis, the country has fallen into a period of outright recession from which it is still struggling to recover. It is worth separately analysing the latest major changes in the political and socio-economic situation of the country in this more recent period because they have conditioned the evolution of migration patterns and models described thereafter, together with the changes in the international framework.

¹¹ The claim system refers to foreigners born in Italy who obtain the Italian citizenship upon request with the condition of continuous residence in Italy until the legal age of 18.

4.1 *Socio-demographic and political development*

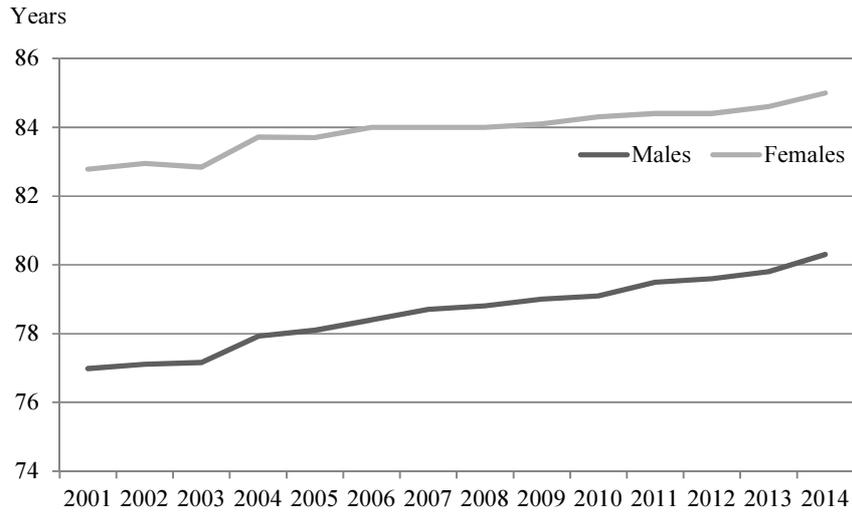
4.1.1 Demographic and social development

The population balance in Italy has been constantly positive over the past 15 years, mainly due to the positive migration balance. At the beginning of 2015 the total population residing in Italy amounted to 60,795,612. The trends in population dynamics have been constant and rapid since 2001, almost entirely due to considerable immigration from abroad during this period, especially because of the inclusion of new member states in the European Union. The average variation rate calculated between 2002 and 2015 was 0.5 per cent, a value that accounts for a growth of approximately 3,800,000 residents, starting from 57 million at the beginning of the period. The age dependency ratio on the same date was 55.1: for every 100 residents aged 15–64 there were 55 aged 0–14 or 65 years and over. The mean age as of 1 January 2015 was 44.4 and the age structure was typical of an ‘old’ population. The ageing index (the ratio between the elderly and the young) has been heavily influenced by all these factors and reaching 157.7 percent. Demographic processes have also determined the rise in the elderly population, the fall in the young population, the rise in survival rates, and the fertility rate well below the level of generational turnover (2.1 children per woman).

The mortality trend has been quite constant in recent years. As discussed above, the completed process of demographic transition started with the drop in mortality, in particular infant mortality. A crucial dimension of a population’s well-being – besides strictly economic indicators such as GDP – is life expectancy at birth. The trend of life expectancy at birth (*Figure 1*) is constantly upwards; it is higher for women, but the gap is narrowing because men and women’s lifestyles are increasingly similar. This indicator shows high values also compared with European and other countries around the world. The connection with the ageing of the population cannot be overlooked.

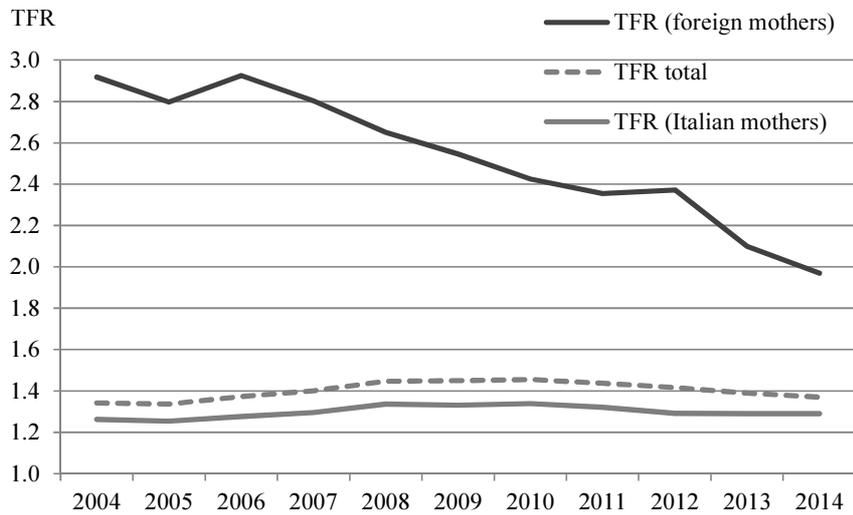
In this overall framework of ageing, the other component to consider is fertility. In 1995 Italian total fertility rate (TFR) fell to its lowest level (1.19 children per woman); thereafter the general fertility trend recovered to reach a peak in 2010 (*Figure 2*). This new peak can be described as part of the general pattern of the end of ‘lowest-low fertility’, but how can the subsequent renewed decrease be explained? The economic recession could be a valid answer, if we take the ‘period fertility’ point of view. However, fertility decline during a re-

cession is temporary, and it is usually followed by a compensatory rise (Sobotka, Skirbekk and Philipov, 2011).



Source: Istat – Italian National Institute of Statistics.

Figure 1
Life expectancy at birth, 2001–2014



Source: Istat – Italian National Institute of Statistics.

Figure 2
Total fertility rate (TFR) by citizenship of mothers, 2004–2014

Within this general framework of fertility in Italy, it is interesting to focus on the growing number of births with at least one foreign parent. Their increasing proportion is mainly due to the decreasing number of Italian births. Despite the increase in births with at least one foreign parent, the TFR has slowly declined in recent years. As is well known, after a certain amount of time immigrant women start to exhibit the fertility and family behaviour of the native population. However, this time-based perspective is not totally appropriate because the foreign-born population is particularly dynamic both in terms of its composition by nationality and of different reproductive behaviours. In fact, each nationality has different demographic characteristics (e.g. composition by gender and age), migratory and familiar models, and all these specificities influence the TFR.

4.2. *Changes in international migration and the characteristics of migrants*

4.2.1. The Italian legal system and the evolution of migration policies

The first legislative provision on immigration in 1986 introduced equal rights between foreign and local workers, together with family reunification procedures. However, this first provision did not provide any measure for the integration of the resident foreign population, which continued to rely on short-term residence permits. The entry policies were too complex to be implemented, and responsibility lay with employers. The various failures in this regard would also be apparent in subsequent immigration legislation. In addition, regularisation, a term which was officially used for the first time, soon became a political instrument and, according to the legislators, an inevitable one. In short, as Sciortino (2009, p. 4) writes, “*unsurprisingly, the real kernel of immigration policy for most of the ‘90s was the tolerance of entries through the back door, thus constantly producing a sizeable segment of irregular workers that, at nearly regular intervals, was absorbed into the official labour market through an amnesty*”.

The growing number of irregular migrants eventually led to approval of Law 39/90 in 1990. This law, usually referred to as the Martelli Law, had the aim of remedying the deficiencies of the previous legislation. It focused on three fundamental issues: 1) disciplining entries and stays, 2) abolishing the geographical limitation for refugees, and 3) launching a new regularisation procedure for self-employed workers. This law was notable for the large number it concerned (around 350,000). However, the legislation is known for the establishment of extremely rigid entry conditions. This is because immigration had attracted public attention – for the first time it was perceived as a threat, and fear became attached to the collective image of the ‘foreigner’. However, the pressure of pub-

lic opinion was not the only factor pushing for restrictive entry policies. Rules and procedures on border controls, with which Italy had to comply after subscribing to the Schengen Agreement in June 1990, also had a role in this development.

The most ambitious attempt to systematically restructure migration legislation was the Turco-Napolitano Law (40/1998). Its main aim was to adjust the fragmented framework by acknowledging the fundamental role of the local authorities in receiving foreigners and dealing with their social integration. Moreover, this law reformed control systems and regularised migration flows. It provided for the issuance of a governmental planning paper (every three years or longer) which would establish the general criteria for acceptance of non-Community workers in order to render the number of immigrants compatible with the so-called 'carrying capacity' (compatibility with the availability of working positions, housing and services). The entire procedure was based on the notion that demand had to match supply prior to the entry of foreign workers. Law 40/1998 also introduced a residence card (a long-term permit which can be requested after five years of uninterrupted residence in Italy in the absence of a criminal record and with an adequate income), the sponsor, and much criticised detention centres (CPT). The law envisaged the possibility of involving the states of origin and transit in regularisation, and establishing preferential quotas of citizens from those countries which had accepted the agreement. On 25 July 1998, Law 40/98 became a Consolidation Act on the provisions concerning the disciplining of immigration and the standards on the condition of foreigners, including old and new provisions.

Finally, Italian policies of the last decade were based on the idea of immigration as a cause of social conflicts, which led to measures intended to restrict entry but also the rights of legally resident immigrants. The issue was then partially changed by Law no. 189 of 2002 (the so-called Bossi-Fini Law), which came into full force in 2005, and by the so called 'security package' (Law 94/2009) amending the *Testo unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero* (Legislative Decree No 286/1998 of 25 July 1998) consolidating the provisions regulating immigration and the rules relating to the status of foreign nationals. It contains measures which aim to control immigration more tightly and regulate it more rigorously. Three significant differences ensued with respect to the 1998 Consolidation Act: the residence period necessary to obtain a residence card became six years (instead of five); the conditions for issuing the residence card were tightened; and the deadline for the residence permit's renewal at the police headquarters was prolonged to 90 days before expiry. Furthermore, the so-called 'residence contract' was introduced. This explicitly bound entry into Italy for work purposes to the existence of a job offer prior to entry, so that renewal of the permit depended on uninterrupted status as an employed worker. To some extent it hardened the measures designed to contain the flow of immigrants from foreign

countries and at the same time paved the way for the above-mentioned possibility of regularisation. In fact, a regularisation took place following the entry into force of the “Bossi-Fini Law”.

In 2009 further restrictive legislation on public safety was approved, and mainly addressed the issue of irregular immigration (already mentioned in the ‘security package’). Law 94/2009 thus introduced the controversial offence of ‘illegal entry and/or stay’, which was punished with a fine of 5,000 to 10,000 euros imposed on foreigners who entered and stayed in Italy illegally. In 2011 the European Court of Justice did not approve the offence of illegal entry and/or stay introduced in Italy because it appeared to conflict with the European directive on the repatriation of citizens from third countries.

Within the so-called “*Pacchetto di stimolo all’economia*” – economic stimulus package – (Law 3 August 2009, n. 102, conversion into law with amendments of the Decree-Law of 1 July 2009, n. 78), the Government included an amendment (art. 1-c) to establish a procedure for the emergence of irregular employment relationships. Employers who on 30 June 2009 had employed Italian or foreign workers on an irregular basis for at least three months could make use of this new procedure to regularise the workers. Non-EU nationals without a permit for work purposes, those employed with families as domestic workers, or those assisting persons suffering from illness or disability, could thus regularise their positions.

In 2010 the Italian government introduced an ‘Integration agreement on foreigners applying for a residence permit’, which came into force in March 2012. With this agreement made between the Italian state and citizens from third countries entering Italy for the first time and requesting a residence permit of at least one year, the foreigner pledged to learn the Italian language, acquire a sufficient knowledge of civic culture and civil life in Italy, fulfil the obligation of education for minor children, and respect tax liabilities and social insurance obligations. This agreement was structured as a credits system, so that the foreign citizen could gain or lose credits depending on his or her activities.

Migration policies today are increasingly complex. The two main areas of interest are: “immigration policies” and “immigrant policies”. In the former, in addition to political asylum they include entry, residence and expulsion, the police and border control. The second area of interest, however, is related to integration of immigrants.¹² These two areas differ not only thematically, but also

¹² When it comes to integration there are multiple areas of interest: the labour market; housing; health; education; political participation and representation; protection of the com-

provide quite dissimilar guidelines. In the former case, a continuous consultation and ongoing co-ordination between different countries (at least among neighbouring countries) is not only desirable but necessary for working effectively against the illegal entry of illegal immigrants and the odious phenomenon of trafficking. On the other hand, integration is an issue that every country “should” be able to deal with in a more autonomous way, along the common lines outlined by the EU but adapted to needs and traditions.

Furthermore, the so-called “comprehensive approach” essentially consists of managing international migration by working on its different dimensions and its various stages of development (Pastore, 2000). The three levels to which a political legislation should address to are: 1) the causes of migration (by controlling the push factors), 2) migration in progress (planning regular migration and limiting irregular migration), and 3) the integration of immigrants into society arrival.

4.2.2 The evolution of net migration

The migration trend shown by official statistics has always been strongly influenced in Italy by changes in national immigration legislation. The inflows have historically been particularly influenced by the various regularisation programmes introduced by governments. The regularisations have led to the emergence in the official figures of immigration.

In addition to national legislation, international and European law also influenced immigration into Italy during the first decade of this century. In particular, during the period examined, the national transposition into law (April 2007) of EU legislation¹³ establishing the right of EU citizens to move and reside freely in other EU countries has affected the number of immigrants in Italy. In addition, the more or less simultaneous entry into the European Union of two new countries (Romania and Bulgaria) in 2007, following on from the previous entry of ten other countries (Cyprus, Malta, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Slovenia)¹⁴ in May 2004, also affected immigration trends. The official data reflect all these changes in the legal and policy context. The number of Italian nationals residing abroad entered the country, between 2002 and 2014, was very low compared to the num-

munity and crime; discrimination and racism. The main areas on which the concept of integration unfolds are: legal, social, cultural and economic.

¹³ European Parliament and Council Directive 2004/38/EC of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the member states.

¹⁴ On 1 July 2013 Croatia joined the EU.

ber of foreigners. This does not hold for emigration, especially for recent years. It must be said that de-registrations have probably been underestimated.¹⁵

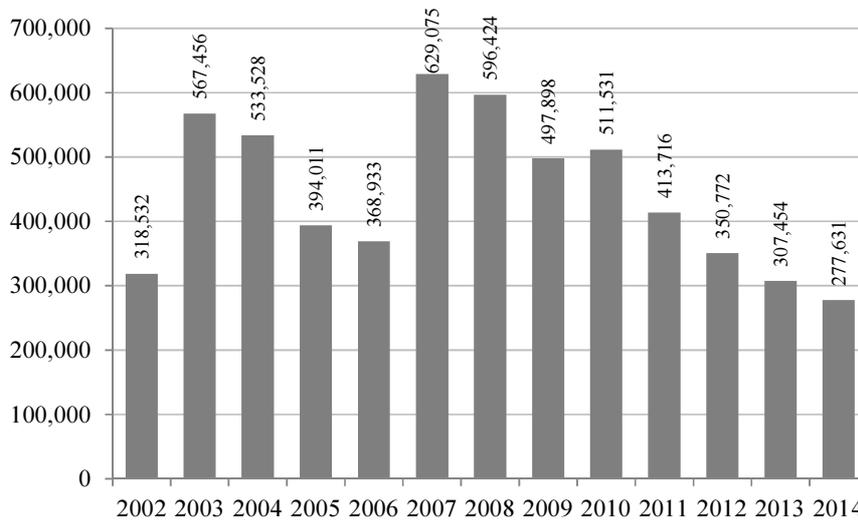
The total population (Italian plus foreign) net migration balance was constantly positive between 2002 and 2015, ranging from about 157,000 in 2006 to about 436,000 in 2007. These figures are the result of strongly positive immigration flows (*Figure 3*) and low negative emigration flows when considering all foreign (EU and non-EU) countries. In fact, while immigration varied between 277,631 in 2014 and 629,075 in 2007, with an average of more or less 444,000 per year, emigration remained at an average of 195,000 per year. As stated, the total net migration balance has always been positive, but it varied widely during the period considered. Substantial annual values were recorded first in 2003-2004 (+407,799 and +362,912 respectively) as a result of the regularisation programme of 2002–2003 for domestic workers, caregivers and other relevant employees. The regularisation involved non-EU nationals without residence permits and who were employed in enterprises, or by families as caregivers or domestic helpers. This regularisation led to the increase in official statistics of immigrants with nationalities that were previously numerically not well represented in Italy, particularly Ukrainians. At the end of 2002, Ukrainian nationals had fewer than 13,000 residents in Italy.

A year later, at the end of 2003, with about 58,000 residents, it was one of the top ten most represented nationalities in Italy. After another 12 months, at the end of 2004, having moved three places higher in the ranking, it reached fifth place, the position it has maintained until today. Other peaks were recorded in 2007–2008 (+435,999 and +356,178). These are particularly large numbers, especially when one considers that they were recorded in the absence of regularisation measures. Nonetheless, they were the consequence of two major events in 2007: the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the European Union, and the subsequent entry into force in Italy in April of the same year of the aforementioned legislation on the free movement and residence of EU citizens in the countries of the Union, which had an immediate impact on immigration statistics in Italy.¹⁶ Romania became in the immediately following years the

¹⁵ In order to estimate the number of de-registrations of foreign residents who actually leave Italy the de-registrations “for other reasons” are added to the ones abroad. The first ones are mainly de-registrations of untraceable people made on the initiative of municipal offices or due to the expiration of the residence permit. Data reconstructed on the basis of the census take into account this estimation.

¹⁶ Essentially, with the entry into force on 11 April 2007 of Legislative Decree no.30 of 6 February 2007, for foreign citizens of a country of the Union and their family members in-

first country for number of foreign nationals legally resident in Italy. In fact, as said above, in the two years mentioned about one million immigrants, mostly those coming from Romania, registered themselves. These registrations rapidly moved Romanian citizens to the top of the list of foreign communities resident in Italy. On 1st January 2007, Romania, with about 342,000 residents, occupied third place in the ranking of the top ten most numerous foreign communities in Italy. At the beginning of 2008, the Romanian community had almost doubled its numbers in the country (about 625,000), overtaking nationals from Morocco and Albania with longer histories of immigration into Italy; Romanian citizens remained in first place for the rest of the decade with further significant increases, although decreasing from year to year.



Source: Istat – Italian National Institute of Statistics.

*Data for years 2002–2011 were rebuilt on the basis of XV Population and housing census (2011).

Figure 3
*Immigration to Italy, 2002–2014**

tending to stay more than three months in Italy, it was no longer necessary to have a regular residence permit issued by the competent authority (police headquarters). Instead, it was sufficient to register in one of the Italian municipalities upon proof of fulfilling certain requirements: in particular paid employment or, more generally, financial resources adequate to ensuring financial independence for the foreign citizen and his/her family so that they would not be a burden on the social and health system of the host country.

Finally, towards the end of the decade, large positive net migration balances were also recorded in 2009–2010 (212,363 and 200,091 respectively). The new regularisation for domestic workers and caregivers at the end of 2009 certainly contributed to the high number of registrations. At the beginning of the procedure (launched in September 2009) and in the next year, there was a total of over a million of new registrations of foreign nationals, and the new regularisation contributed to maintaining high inflows in 2011 as well. Registrations mostly referred to citizens of countries such as Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and some countries of south-east Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines).

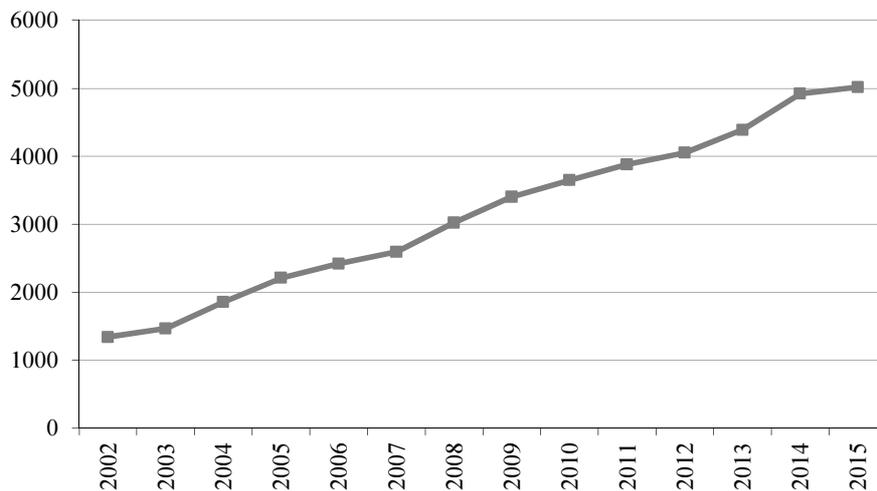
The slowdown in immigration recorded in 2009 (498,000) was followed by a slight recovery the next year (512,000) and decreased again in 2011 (414,000). Since 2012 the decline of immigration has continued alongside an increase in emigration; while the net balance has remained positive, it has decreased every year (245,000 in 2012, 182,000 in 2013 and 141,000 in 2014).

Finally, the data on inflows of foreigners taken from the registers of Italian municipalities confirm that the attempts to manage immigration into Italy during the 2000s were often strongly characterised by the usual contradictory policy aims whereby the adoption of restrictive measures to re-assure public opinion on its “fear of foreigners” was regularly followed by amnesties once it became clear that immigration was ‘necessary’ not only for the migrant but also for Italian families or companies – both of which need a labour force willing to perform certain types of tasks no longer ‘attractive’ to the native population.

On the other hand, in recent years a new wave of outflows to foreign countries can be observed. The Italians going abroad, especially researchers and highly qualified young people, are looking for better work opportunities. This new recent trend seems to assume the characteristics of a ‘brain drain’: that is, a problem which traditionally affects only developing countries.

4.2.3. Characteristics of the foreign population

On 1 January 2015 the foreign resident population amounted to 5,014,437 individuals. There has been constant growth over the last decade, with peaks coinciding with the earlier-described amnesties. This growth has declined in recent years (*Figure 4*).



Source: Istat – Italian National Institute of Statistics.

*Data for years 2002–2010 were rebuilt on the basis of the 15th Population Census (2011). Data for years 2011–2015 were calculated adding to the 2011 census population the natural and migratory balances recorded year-by-year by municipalities.

Figure 4

Foreign resident population in Italy on 1st January, 2002–2015 (1000s)*

The foreign population's sex structure is quite balanced (females represent 52.7% of the total), but figures are influenced by nationality. Foreigners resident in Italy are nationals of a wide range of countries. The citizens of the top ten countries account for slightly less than 65% of the total. The first five countries (Romania, Albania, Morocco, Republic of China and Ukraine) in Table 2 represent more than 50% (2,563,000) (*Figure 5*). The largest foreign community is from Romania, which on 1 January 2015 reached almost 1,132,000 residents: 22.6% of the total number of foreigners residing in Italy. After the huge growth due to EU enlargement and the new regulations on the free movement and residence of citizens of EU countries in other countries of EU recorded in 2007 and, to a lesser extent, also in 2008 and 2009, the 2010 increase, though lower, was nonetheless significant: 9.1 per cent. In 2014 the increase was +4.7%. Another community historically well represented in Italy is the Albanian one. This is second in order of numerical importance, with nearly 490,000 residents on 1 January 2015 and a decrease of 1.1% in 2014. The following communities are those of citizens of Morocco, which in 2014 also decreased by 1.3%, totalling 449,000 resident citizens at the end of the year, Chinese nationals (nearly 266,000, +3.5%) and Ukrainian nationals (about 226,000, +4.5%).

The reduction observed in the number of Albanian and Moroccan residents can be explained not only by increasing outflows due to the economic crisis but also by the high number of acquisition of Italian citizenship by the members of these communities who resided long-term in Italy.

Table 2
*Foreign population by top ten countries of citizenship,
Italy – 2001 and 2015*

Country of citizenship	2015			Variation over 2014 (%)	Country of citizenship	2001		
	Foreign residents	% of total	Women %			Foreign residents	% of total	Women %
Romania	1,131,839	22.6	57.0	4.7	Morocco	180,103	13.5	39.8
Albania	490,483	9.8	48.1	-1.1	Albania	173,064	13.0	43.7
Morocco	449,058	9.0	45.9	-1.3	Romania	74,885	5.6	53.5
China	265,820	5.3	49.0	3.5	Philippine Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	53,994	4.0	61.1
Ukraine	226,060	4.5	79.0	3.2	Tunisia	47,656	3.6	35.1
Philippine	168,238	3.4	56.4	3.4	China	46,887	3.5	48.5
India	147,815	2.9	39.9	3.8	Germany	35,091	2.6	64.7
Moldova	147,388	2.9	66.1	-1.4	Senegal	31,174	2.3	15.5
Bangladesh	115,301	2.3	29.6	3.7	Peru	29,452	2.2	62.7
Peru	109,668	2.2	58.4	-0.2	<i>Total first ten countries</i>	<i>721,630</i>	<i>54.1</i>	<i>45.6</i>
<i>Total first ten countries</i>	<i>3,251,670</i>	<i>64.8</i>	<i>53.7</i>	<i>2.1</i>	Other countries	613,259	45.9	56.3
Other countries	1,762,767	35.2	50.9	1.4	Total	1,334,889	100.0	50.5
Total	5,014,437	100.0	52.7	1.9				

Source: Istat – Italian National Institute of Statistics.

*Data for 2001 refers to 21 October 2001, for 2015 it refers to 1 January 2015.

Finally, we should note that if the countries of the former Yugoslavia were considered as a whole, they would constitute sixth country in ranking by numerical importance, with 220,356 residents.

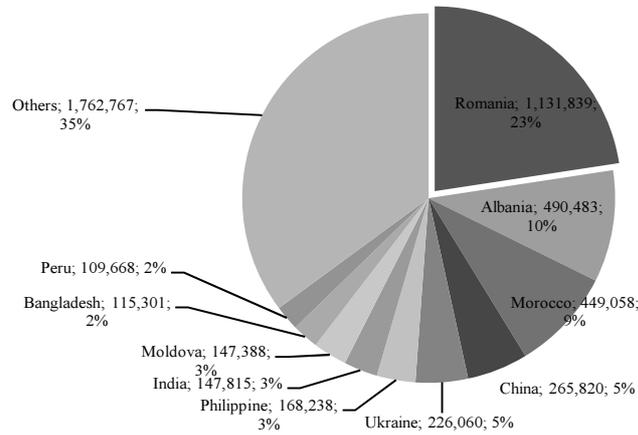
With reference to geo-political areas, if the Central-Eastern European countries¹⁷ were considered as a whole (regardless of whether or not they form part of the EU), their residents in Italy as of 1 January 2015 would amount to

¹⁷ The most representative countries are: Romania, Albania, Ukraine, Moldova and Poland.

2,483,000: nearly half (49.5%) of all foreigners residing in Italy. About 1,338,000 (26.7% of all foreigners) were citizens of the EU countries of Central and Eastern Europe. However, more than a fifth of residents (22.8%) were citizens of non-EU countries of Central and Eastern Europe (mainly Albania, Ukraine, Moldova and the Republic of Macedonia). As of 1 January 2015 these amounted to a total of about 1,145,000 residents. With regard to non-European countries, over 1,027,000 people, more than one-fifth (20.5%) of all foreign residents, were citizens of an African country, mainly in North Africa, and principally Morocco. Asian citizens, with nearly 970,000, represented 19.3% of the total; slightly less than half (47.4%: 460,000 individuals) were citizens of countries in the Indian subcontinent (India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan). The remaining 510,000 were mainly migrants from China and the Philippines. Finally, 7.4% of foreigners (369,000) were citizens of countries in central-southern America, especially Peru and Ecuador (*Figure 6*).

As stated above, the ratio between the number of men and women in the foreign population resident in Italy is overall quite balanced, but it is often very unbalanced within individual communities. Among the main female-dominated communities (from Ukraine, Poland, Moldova, Peru, Ecuador, the Philippines, Romania), the ratio varies from between 26 males per 100 females in the Ukrainian community to 77 males per 100 females in the Filipino one. A male prevalence is observed among the citizens of Senegal, Bangladesh, Egypt, Pakistan, Tunisia, India, Sri Lanka, Morocco, FYROM, Albania and China.

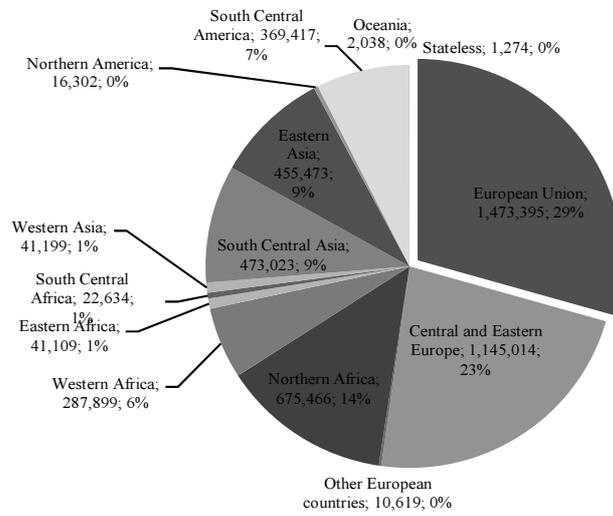
In these communities the ratio between men and women varies between the level of the community coming from Senegal, traditionally very unbalanced towards high ratio of men (about 265 men for every 100 women), and the level of the immigrants from China (about 103 men for every 100 women). Due to country of origin-specific differences, family reunification and creation, the ratio has changed over past years (see *Table 2*). For some communities (notably those who have been long resident in Italy) the ratio has become more balanced. By 2001, a much more balanced ratio was achieved, e.g. by immigrants from Morocco – there were only 40 women for every 100 residents in 2001, while there are 46 in 2015 – and by people from Albania (from 44 to 48 women per 100 residents). For others, such as Ukrainians, the balance remains markedly uneven, due to the migratory project and/or late arrival.



Source: Istat – Italian National Institute of Statistics.

Figure 5

Foreign population by top ten countries of citizenship, Italy – 1st January 2015



Source: Istat – Italian National Institute of Statistics.

Figure 6

Foreign population by geo-political area of citizenship, Italy – 1st January 2015

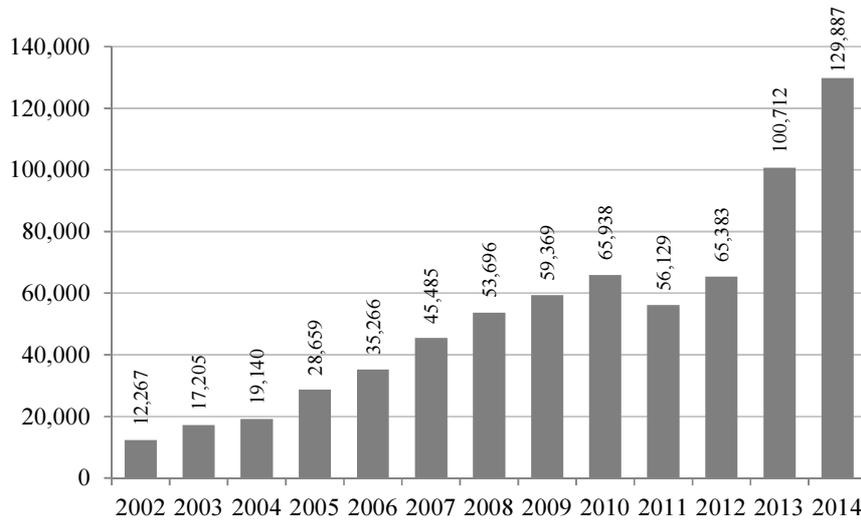
The foreign resident population in Italy is young. As of 1 January 2014 the average age of the foreign population was 32.6 years old (the average age of the Italian population one year later was 44.4). There is a clear middle age concentration, for both for men and women, especially those aged between 30 and 39 years old. In fact, the age structure of the foreign resident population is totally different from the Italian population. Because the main factor influencing immigration is undoubtedly employment, with corresponding hope for better living standards, and due to the fact that Italy is a relatively recent immigration country, the oldest age groups are still highly under-represented in the foreign resident population. The same cannot be said of younger age groups. Family reunifications and the high birth rate of the foreign population (in 2014 there were about 75,000 children born to foreign parents living in Italy, which accounted for 14.9 per cent of total births) result in a high proportion of minors (22.1 per cent at the beginning of the year).

As is the case for sex, the age distribution differs between nationalities. Considering only some of the main nationalities, the age structure is more imbalanced towards the first age group and a more balanced structure by gender for the Albanian community (historically long resident in Italy). An age structure much more oriented towards the mature age classes (45–55 years), and strongly biased towards the female component, characterizes the community coming from Ukraine (of more recent immigration). The latter – mostly middle aged women – are usually employed domestically.

Another important phenomenon that relates to the stock of foreign population is the acquisition of Italian citizenship (*Figure 7*).

This is especially relevant for third-country nationals because of the advantages that EU citizenship provides, most of all regarding freedom of movement and the vote in administrative elections. Italy's current legislation on naturalisation is particularly restrictive. It is mostly based on so called *ius sanguinis* and it does not contemplate *ius soli*. There are five main channels for foreign nationals to acquire Italian citizenship: marriage, residence (ten years for non-EU and four for EU citizens), birth (obtained upon request with the condition of continuous residence in Italy until the legal age of 18 (the so-called 'choice' or 'claim' system), children living with parents who acquire Italian citizenship (in short, 'automatic'), and specific application of *ius sanguinis*. During the past 15 years, the trend has constantly been upwards, except for 2011. In 2014 almost 130,000 acquisitions were recorded, a significant increase (+29 per cent) compared to 2013 (100,000) which already shown a big rise (+54 per cent).¹⁸

¹⁸ The process of naturalisation of foreign nationals that arrived in Italy a long time ago (as happens for Moroccans or Albanians) is currently resulting in the direct transmission of Italian citizenship to minor children living with them.



Source: Istat – Italian National Institute of Statistics.

Figure 7
Acquisitions of Italian citizenship, 2002–2014

While marriage predominated as the channel for acquisition of Italian nationality at the beginning of the decade, the proportion of acquisitions by residence, “claim”¹⁹ and automatic transmission increased during the decade. In particular, as immigration to Italy is becoming more established the method of direct transmission is gaining in prevalence: in 2014 almost 40% of total acquisitions concerned people under the age of 18. A peak is observed at the age of 18: the larger part of these acquisitions (over 75%) concerns people who were born in Italy (second generation). Women are prevalent in the age group 25-39 (58.8%), for whom acquisition via marriage is common. Acquisitions of citizenship are more frequent among nationalities that immigrated to Italy a long

¹⁹ People born on Italian soil, even those not of Italian descent, can claim Italian citizenship after continuous legal residence in Italy up to the legal age (18), and upon declaration of their desire to do so (http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/italiani_nel_mondo/serviziconsolari/cittadinanza.html).

time ago, because they mainly involve cases of naturalisation. In 2014, 22.3% of those who acquired Italian citizenship were former Moroccan citizens, 16.4% were Albanese (two of the oldest immigrant communities in Italy) and only 4.7% were from Romania. By contrast, Romanian citizens made up about 22% of total foreign residents in Italy at the beginning of 2015.²⁰

Data on the immigrant stock issued by the official sources refer only to the regular component of the immigrant population.²¹ It is not easy to estimate the irregular component. Natale and Strozza (1997) used the results of specific questions on irregular stays contained in field surveys to estimate the number of foreigners (including more developed countries) at 1,194,000, with the share of irregular immigrants at around 36 per cent of the total. In more recent years, the results of estimates of the immigrant stock (regular plus irregular) in Italy have yielded extraordinarily high numbers. Using quotients for irregular immigration calculated on the basis of field survey results, ISMU quantified the number of immigrants from countries with strong migration pressure as 3.4 million on 1 July 2005 and almost 4 million on 1 January 2007 (Blangiardo 2006 and 2008; Bonifazi, Heins, Strozza and Vitiello, 2009). These assessments reflect the radical change in the magnitude of migration, which has clearly increased considerably in this period. However, for the reasons explained above (most notably repeated amnesties), it is likely that this growth has concerned more the regular component than the irregular one, even if the number of irregular immigrants has remained high.

5 FROM DATA TO MIGRATION MODELS: THE ITALIAN CASE

As already commented, the model defined as the “migration hump” describes the relationship between outward migration and the level of a country’s development (Martin. and Taylor, 1996). Italy followed a similar path when its migration role changed after the economic boom of the 1950s.

The pattern observed in the transformation of Italy from emigration country to immigration country is similar to the one that characterised most European Mediterranean countries. Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain show similar trajectories in terms of migration history, forming the so-called “Mediterranean mod-

²⁰ Istat delivers aggregate data on citizenship acquisitions indirectly drawn from population registers yearly. Information about the different reasons for acquisition can be drawn out from the lists of individual records about resident citizens (LAC=*liste anagrafiche comunali*) elaborated by Istat, considering sex and age of people who become Italian. Another source is the Ministry of the Interior, which provides data only on naturalisations by marriage and residence.

²¹ The main sources for official data on regular migration are the Italian National Institute of Statistics (for data about residents) and the Ministry of the Interior (for data on permits to stay).

el of immigration". This is the result of a combination of factors that contributed to the transformation of the countries of the northern shore of the Mediterranean from an area of emigration to an area of growing immigration, shifting to the south the line between these two situations. In general, when referring to the Mediterranean model of immigration, we consider all the Mediterranean countries of the European Union (EU) with the exception of France, which as a traditional host country has migration characteristics more similar to northern European countries (Pugliese, 2002). Another feature of these new immigrant destinations is the coexistence of large presence of immigrants and high levels of unemployment (two characteristics that generally do not appear simultaneously). This situation is due, on the one hand, to the general trends of the labour market and, on the other, to the strong changes in the labour supply. Precisely because of this, the immigrant labour force has in many cases settled in temporary (sometimes also irregular) positions, mostly concentrated in the informal economy. In the service sector they are expected to fill the shortcomings of the welfare system (e.g. as providers of care). It has generated a kind of paradox: on the one hand, the lack of specific laws, especially during the 1980s, initially represented an incentive to entry; on the other it has left immigrants, especially in the beginning, living in conditions of illegality. In fact, it is precisely in the field of migration policies (or more accurately "no migration policies") that one can refer to the "Mediterranean model". Another characteristic feature is the extensive use (especially in Italy and Spain) of regularisation procedures that in countries with a long history of immigration are usually not considered a solution.

In this context, the role of the migratory system in Italy seems to be particularly important due to its geopolitical position in the Mediterranean but also as a member of the EU. During recent years, after the great regularisations, Italian policies have constantly been marked by the management of new arrivals (in particular asylum applicants). On the other hand, the advanced integration reached by some migrants who arrived a long time ago draws attention to new aspects such as acquisitions of citizenship and successful inclusion in the labour market, especially for second generation migrants.

In the Italian case the pioneer migration inflows to Italy, like those from China, took advantage of their network ties and concentrated themselves in particular areas where they became entrepreneurs (e.g. Prato in Tuscany). With the arrival of families the demand for health services, housing, education, etc. increased, as did the impact of the immigrant community on the native society. The third and the fourth steps described by Böhning (1984) and by Castles and Miller (1993; 2009) seem to be the most suitable to describe the current stage

of immigration in Italy, with further distinctions linked to the distribution of the immigrant population in different parts of the country.

Again the model of “migration hump” could be used to describe some recent development in terms of the composition by citizenship of foreign resident population. Considering that notable migration trends usually follow in the wake of trade reforms or liberalisations (de Haas, 2010), the effects of the migration hump are witnessed also considering new countries joining EU. For them in a relatively short-term migration outflows continue or even increase rather than decrease the case of Romanian citizens in Italy is symptomatic. EU enlargements and the possibility to register directly in a population register for new EU members represent another important turning point.

6 CONCLUSION

Immigration to Italy can be described as a highly complex process which is deep-rooted in the country’s socio-economic conditions and demographic changes of recent decades. After the economic boom of the post-war period and the socio-demographic transformation of the Italian population, entry into Italy by foreign citizens significantly increased in number. From the 1970s onwards, Italy progressively changed from being a country characterised by emigration to one characterised by immigration (although outflows of Italians – often well-qualified young people moving to highly-developed countries – continue to be substantial today).

The data described in this paper illustrate these changes in the medium-long period. We interpreted the data in light of changes in the Italian legislative and political context, while at the same time salience has been given to the impact of international and European regulation. We also took into account the main theories of migration, to see if and which models could eventually be adapted to the Italian case, at each different stage of its migration history.

We should emphasise that immigration to Italy is a relatively recent phenomenon which is difficult to quantify and measure in all its dimensions. Scientific knowledge about the foreign population in Italy is still lacking and statistics are not always available promptly. These shortcomings are most evident in the case of the irregular component of immigration, but they also arise when the focus is extended from the foreign population to encompass the population with foreign origin. Nevertheless, a body of research and studies is now available in Italy that is sufficient for the features of the population of foreign origin to be determined with a degree of precision. Official statistics in recent years have contributed considerably to the description of migratory processes in Italy, in regard to both their contents and geography. More important developments

in the exploitation of administrative sources of migration data are planned for the future and further changes are on the study.

We should stress that the most recent data exhibit the effects of the economic downturn, which began in 2008. This applies to both inflows and outflows. After years of sustained growth of entries by foreigners, levels of immigration are diminishing, while those of emigration are increasing. At the same time, the occupational situation of immigrants settled in Italy has deteriorated – and it has done so to a much greater extent than among natives (which is also explained by the high concentration of foreign labour in the construction industry, which is particularly vulnerable to economic recession).

This analysis indicates the future prospects of immigration policies. In this regard, the study has highlighted that policy makers should take careful account of economic and demographic factors in the short, medium and long period. Demographic trends currently foresee a substantial decrease in labour supply by Italian citizens, which will only partly be off-set by the available foreign supply. Secondly, this analysis of the history of government immigration policies highlights the persistent inadequacy of immigrant entry procedures, which results in an unsatisfactory match between labour demand and supply. For instance, consider the demand for care and assistance expressed by Italian families. Italian immigration policies should become more efficient at modulating entry according to the needs of the labour market and its capacity to absorb additional supply (also considering the recent increase in unemployment among immigrants already present in Italy). This would facilitate access of foreign labour to the jobs market and it would discourage illegality – which remains a particularly difficult issue in Italy today.

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