

## **Drawing foreign resident population in Italy according to a “local labour market areas” approach**

*Mauro Albani\*, Antonella Guarneri\**

### **Framework**

Italy radically changed its role in the European migratory system. Becoming very quickly a post-industrial society, it went from being an emigration country to an immigration country with all the related changes in prospects and problems. The number of foreigners considerably increased in the last decade and the range of countries of origin noticeably widened. In fact, one of the most amazing characteristics of immigration in Italy is its multi-ethnicity as consequence also of its weak colonial ties. Foreign nationality configuration on the Italian territory seems to be deeply determined also by the presence and the working of a variety of networks at different levels of aggregation.

On 1 January 2008, the total number of resident foreigners is estimated to almost 3.5 million people (5.8% of the total resident population). Geographically speaking, they are concentrated in the North and Centre of Italy, which offer high possibilities to find a regular job. The ageing of the Italian population is a socio-demographic aspect that involves re-organising the welfare system, which is still in progress. Because there is no proper sustain for family care assistance, it is necessary to recruit people willing to do this kind of job. Due to the high degree of segmentation that characterises the Italian labour market, migrant workers are hired to do the 3D (dirty, dangerous and difficult) jobs that most local workers are unwilling to do. Repeated regularization programmes represent an attractive factor too.

### **Aims, data and methodology**

This study intends analysing the main characteristics of the foreign population living in Italy and its development over the last few years. The strong relationship between labour market and foreign people distribution suggested us to use “local labour market areas” (LLMAs) to draw the geography of this population across Italy.

This study deals with a stable foreign population that is living an advanced step of the integration process. In this case, their relationship with the territory and with the native population seems to be particularly strong. Nevertheless, labour market opportunities are an essential element that can orient the choices of foreigners and their families to settle down in some areas instead of others.

---

\* Researchers at the National Institute of Statistics (Istat) – Italy.

To map the different aspects of immigration in Italy, we decided to use the data from the Istat survey on foreign resident population, which provides annual data on resident foreign population disaggregated at a sufficient territorial level. They are collected from the administrative population registers (“anagrafi comunali”), one of the most important official sources on this topic. This survey provides stock data, such as number of resident foreign population at the beginning and end of the year, resident foreigners aged less than 18, and resident foreign people born in Italy. Moreover, it supplies flows data on live births, deaths, immigration and emigration flows, and acquisitions of citizenship. Another advantage in using this kind of data is the availability of information on citizenship of resident foreign people classified by sex.

The 686 “Local labour market areas” were created on the basis of daily work transfers deducted from the last census data. This is the third time that Istat has identified such areas, in occasion of the last three censuses. The number of local labour market areas has dropped by 28.2% between 1981 (when they amounted to 955) and 2001.

They correspond to aggregations of local administrative units (“comuni”) contiguous one to the other and constitute areas geographically and statistically comparable. The “local labour market areas” are defined as areas of self-containment, considering the entrance flows and exit flows.

Their borders cross provinces and regions while only municipal borders are respected since they represent the basic unit for surveying the data on daily work transfers. A good 24.3% of the Local Labour Market Areas are made up of municipalities that belong to more than one province and 7.1% of these are made up of municipalities that belong to two regions.

The LLMAs can be classified by main productive activity or demographic size. They are often used to develop regional socio-economic and geographic analysis and also for policy planning and implementation.

As regards the classification per main productive specialisation, the *Areas without specialisation* includes all local *areas without specific specialisations*, which are generally very small and mainly located in the south of the country.

The second class (*Non-manufacturing areas*) includes LLMAs mainly specialised in tertiary activities located in Central-northern Italy. Its demographic dimension is more consistent due to the large cities as Milan and Rome included in the *high specialisation urban areas* group.

The third class (*Made in Italy areas*), which counts the highest number of LLMAs, includes *manufacturing areas*, in particular the made in Italy productions. Its *textile, leather and clothing areas* are mainly located in the centre and south while the other *made in Italy areas* in the North.

The fourth and last class (*Heavy manufacture areas*) is made up of 56 LLMAs, characterised by large productive units.

## **Provisional results and conclusions**

“Local labour market areas” represent a privileged framework to show the migrants’ behaviours.

The plot of foreign population on the Italian territory shows some important aspects such as the larger presence of foreign population in the north-central part of Italy, the important role of the big cities, the internal flows from south to north and from great urban centres towards the smaller towns around the cities. Referring to the inflows from abroad it is interesting to notice that many foreign citizens are supposed to arrive in the south of the country and then decide to reach the North and the Centre of Italy where it is easier to find a regular job. All these aspects contribute to highlight the dichotomy between the North-central part and the southern part of the country. In these framework the “local labour market areas” approach helps to analyze differentiated behaviours in particular concerning the main productive specializations.

Considering the productive specialisation, foreigners are mainly concentrated in the *non-manufacturing areas* (48.2% of the total) and in the *made in Italy areas* (37.5% of the total), which enclose in total about 86% of the whole foreign population residing in Italy.

Furthermore, the *made in Italy areas* and the *heavy manufacture areas* seem to be particularly dynamic because of their high values both of natural growth and of net migration rate. The *areas without specialization* – located especially in the South – are characterised by the highest annual average net migration rate with abroad (+172.7) but the annual average net internal migration rate is negative.

If we take into consideration the nationality approach, the growth and size of each community seem to define different models. In fact, whereas some communities show a scattered distribution, others are concentrated in particular areas. As for the main productive specialization, it is important to remind that the presence of foreign population in the LLMA with different productive specialisations does not automatically imply that the same labour force was used inside the specific sector of production. Nevertheless it seems to come out a remarkably different distribution per nationality according to the classification of LLMA main productive specialisation groups. Resident foreign population seems to generally prefer *urban areas* and the *made in Italy areas*. *Areas without specialization* attract especially Ukrainian community whereas the *heavy manufacture areas* play a significant role for Romanians and Moroccans.

## **Bibliography**

Ballacci F., Natale M., Strozza S. e Todisco E. (2002), La rilevazione delle migrazioni internazionali e la predisposizione di un sistema informativo sugli stranieri, Rapporto di Ricerca

02.11, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Commissione per la Garanzia dell'Informazione Statistica, Novembre 2002;

Bonifazi C. (2007), *L'immigrazione straniera in Italia*, Il Mulino;

Istat (2006), *Natalità e fecondità della popolazione residente: caratteristiche e tendenze recenti*, Note informative, 1° agosto 2006;

Istat (2007), *Rapporto annuale. La situazione del paese nel 2006*;

Istat (2007), *La popolazione straniera residente in Italia al 1° gennaio 2007*, Statistiche in breve, 2 ottobre 2007;

Natale M., Strozza S. (1997), *Gli immigrati stranieri in Italia. Quanti sono, chi sono, come vivono?*, Cacucci ed., Bari.