The Italian way to integration: using census data for measuring integration of *population with foreign background*

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Diverse interpretations of the meaning of integration have been given throughout the history of immigration. Though, a common agreement in the debate on the possible approaches to the analysis of immigrants' integration can be found as to the dynamic, complex and relational character of integration: integration could in fact be defined (or, better, *non-defined*) as a process, multidimensional (given that it requires the full participation of the immigrant to the social life of the receiving society) and which implies a relationship between the immigrant and the host society (a more or less strongly asymmetric relationship).

Some authors have been talking about the *Mediterranean immigration model* with reference to the possibilities offered to undocumented migrants within countries where informal economy plays a significant role. Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal have in fact become the destination of heterogeneous flows, which are not the consequence of labour recruiting policies (and usually without direct connection to their colonial history). More specifically, the Italian model has been qualified as 'implicit', in opposition to the main integration models, with particular reference to the spontaneous character of incoming flows, not determined by active recruitment policies nor by a systematic planning of admissions into the country, barely regulated at the institutional level (with a legislation which has run after rather that ruling the phenomenon by recurrent regularisation programmes) and within which a major role as to reception policies has been played by local actors (local government bodies, NGOs, churches, trade unions, etc.). As to the legislation, only in 1998, with the approval of the 'Testo unico sull'immigrazione'

Census data allow to investigate only some of the dimensions relevant to the measure of integration, providing detailed data on the socio-economic dimensions of it, those pertaining to the so-called structural assimilation if the language of the classic assimilation model were to be used. In order to investigate other aspects of integration (e.g. the political and cultural dimensions) other data would be needed which cannot be collected through the census. Indeed, on the family, housing, education and work areas of immigrants' lives, census data represent a precious source, allowing to analyse in details the differences between the numerous foreign communities which make up Italy's heterogeneous population with foreign background, and often such data are the only one available at the national level.

In the paper, after a brief summary on the Italian debate concerning the measure and monitoring of integration, a description will be provided of indicators defined for each dimensions and of criteria followed for selecting them. Besides indicators concerning the already mentioned socio-economic dimensions of integration, other indicators have been chosen, traditionally considered as pertaining to the cultural identification step (as the percentage of naturalized Italian citizens or the percentage of 'mixed couples') but which in the Italian context is not possible to interpret univocally, given a legislation which, being still based on blood as the main channel for citizenship transmission (*jus sanguinis*), indirectly favours the abuse of the only other accessible channel i.e. marriage.

These indicators have been used for both a descriptive and a multidimensional analysis conducted (by the technique of the principal components analysis) on the two major dimensions of the family and housing conditions and of the working life. In order to take into account the dynamic character of integration i.e. the temporal dimension, two main groups have been compared, the foreign

citizens and the naturalized citizens, while the first one has been further subdivided into 4 sub-groups identified on the basis of the duration of residence in the country (foreigners arrived from less than 5 years; foreigners arrived from 5 to 9 years; foreigners arrived from 10 years or more; foreigners born in Italy) [see table 1]. A brief analysis of family history has been also conducted, in order to investigate the impact of migration on two crucial events such as the constitution of a couple and the birth of a child.

Table 1 – Foreign citizens by duration of residence in Italy and country of citizenship and naturalized Italian citizens by country of previous citizenship

Country of citizenship / previous citizenship	Foreigners in Italy from 0-4 years	Foreigners in Italy from 5-9 years	Foreigners in Italy from 10 years or more	Foreigners born in Italy	Naturalized citizens	Total	Duration of residence in Italy (foreigners)	
							Mediana	Media
Marocco	32,0	19,9	29,3	16,7	2,0	183.818	6	7,4
Albania	49,8	26,9	10,4	10,9	2,0	176.674	4	4,6
Romania	51,6	22,5	6,9	5,3	13,6	86.692	3	4,4
Jugoslavia	29,0	26,8	17,5	13,3	13,4	56.946	6	8,0
Filippine	20,4	23,1	37,6	15,1	3,7	56.073	9	9,3
Germania	15,2	9,6	35,2	4,4	35,6	54.496	12	15,6
Francia	13,4	7,4	30,7	3,4	45,1	53.419	13	17,6
Tunisia	22,1	15,1	37,7	19,1	6,0	50.677	10	10,1
Cina	32,9	26,2	21,0	18,0	2,0	47.823	6	6,8
Polonia	28,7	27,2	19,3	5,6	19,2	33.698	6	7,4
Perù	28,4	35,1	16,8	8,2	11,5	33.282	6	6,6
Brasile	22,3	16,0	17,4	1,6	42,7	31.797	6	8,5
India	38,1	22,2	14,8	10,8	14,0	31.623	4	5,9
Senegal	27,8	24,5	39,4	7,3	1,0	31.490	8	8,4
Egitto	24,7	18,3	28,3	19,1	9,5	30.210	7	9,6
Argentina	12,1	5,9	23,3	2,1	56,6	29.421	11	13,5
Regno Unito	15,9	9,8	39,3	4,4	30,6	28.749	12	15,2
Macedonia	41,2	34,2	12,9	11,0	0,7	28.273	5	5,5
Svizzera	8,3	6,7	27,0	8,5	49,5	27.645	15	18,6
Sri Lanka	30,8	28,2	23,3	15,1	2,7	27.199	6	7,2
Stati Uniti	18,5	7,1	30,5	5,9	38,0	27.199	11	16,9
Croazia	16,5	27,9	23,5	6,3	25,9	24.776	8	11,8
Ghana	25,8	21,3	31,0	21,1	0,8	21.858	8	7,8
Bosnia-Erzegovina	22,3	44,6	13,0	16,2	3,8	17.601	7	7,1
Nigeria	30,4	31,4	18,9	15,9	3,5	17.495	6	6,9
Spagna	23,2	14,9	31,3	1,7	28,9	17.337	8	11,9
Russia	33,5	14,2	7,9	1,2	43,3	16.483	3	5,4
Pakistan	47,1	24,5	16,4	10,2	1,8	15.901	4	5,2
Ecuador	54,1	23,7	7,9	6,6	7,6	14.847	4	4,6
Bangladesh	44,6	25,9	17,0	11,8	0,7	14.801	4	5,4
Colombia	32,3	15,5	13,8	2,5	35,9	14.753	4	6,3
Repubblica Dominicana	31,7	24,2	17,6	4,2	22,3	14.439	6	6,4
Austria	11,6	8,9	31,0	4,7	43,8	11.331	13	19,1
Ucraina	57,7	12,3	5,2	1,8	23,1	11.243	2	3,8
Algeria	28,2	33,8	21,5	9,9	6,6	10.670	7	7,9
Grecia	14,6	14,9	32,3	2,5	35,8	9.857	10	17,2
Bulgaria	32,4	21,8	13,9	2,9	29,0	9.239	5	6,4
Cuba	64,5	14,0	4,5	0,8	16,3	8.782	2	3,4
Costa d'Avorio	32,2	31,6	17,4	15,8	3,0	8.027	6	6,5
Maurizio	10,3	19,1	46,6	19,5	4,5	6.960	11	10,7
Other PSA	17,2	9,9	31,3	6,5	35,1	61.678	11	14,3
Other PFPM	23,8	14,0	26,2	6,4	29,6	150.475	7	10,8
Total	**482.379**	**321.771**	**371.679**	**159.060**	**270.868**	**1.605.757**	**6**	**8,4**

Source: Istat, Population and Housing Census 2001

The results of these analysis show a strong advantage of naturalized citizens in terms of integration (see table 2). In order to understand whether this is a result of a successful integration process or an

effect of the possible Italian origin of many naturalized citizens (whose condition of descendants would make integration easier) or of being a partner of an Italian citizen (in the case of naturalization by marriage), further data would be necessary (i.e. data on ordinary naturalizations).

Table 2 – Foreigners and naturalized by area of origin and indicators of integration. Comparison with italians by birth

Indicators of integration	Direction	PSA*		PFPM**		TOTAL		Italians by birth
		foreigners	naturalized	foreigners	naturalized	foreigners	naturalized	
HOUSING								
% of owners of the dwelling	positivo	55,5	71,6	20,2	63,9	24,9	67,2	72,2
Average surface pro-capite of the dwelling	positivo	38,5	35,2	21,0	30,5	22,8	32,4	36,8
% of residents in buildings in bad conditions	negativo	14,4	14,7	29,7	15,3	27,6	15,0	16,5
‰ of residents in other housing units	negativo	1,4	0,9	10,9	1,2	9,6	1,0	0,8
FAMILY								
% of members of cohabiting households	negativo	1,4	0,8	5,1	1,2	4,6	1,0	0,8
% of married not living with their partners	negativo	6,9	4,2	21,6	5,5	19,4	4,9	3,4
% of partners of italians by birth (mixed couplet)	positivo	74,6	96,5	23,4	84,4	32,6	90,2	-
WORK								
Unemployment ratio (15-64 years)	negativo	9,5	12,7	12,5	15,0	12,1	14,0	11,7
Index of dissimilarity in the structure by industry (employed 15-64 years)	negativo	20,8	12,7	30,7	15,3	26,7	13,4	-
% of employed with a higher education than required (employed 15-64 years)	negativo	16,5	17,1	44,3	20,6	39,3	19,1	18,3
% of stable employed on total employed (employed 15-64 years)	positivo	78,0	82,2	78,5	80,1	78,4	81,0	84,2
Self-employment rate (15-64 years)	positivo	7,9	4,5	1,2	4,3	2,1	4,4	3,9

Source: Istat, Population and Housing Census 2001

This is even more important, since the other main result emerging from the analysis is that not necessarily a higher integration goes together with an increasing stability. Actually, the Italian way to integration could be defined, at least at the time of 2001 Population Census, as 'stabilization in subordination'. Thus, in most cases, both in the work and in the housing dimensions, quality and stability are in opposition. Finally, the positioning of each foreign group along the different dimensions is not homogeneous: often, a group which results as 'favoured' on one dimension, is instead disadvantaged on another. For this reason, the more ambitious initial aim of finding a unique synthetic measure of integration has been abandoned in order to avoid producing what would turn to be a reductive picture.

A contribution to the clarification of this rather complex picture will be provided by carrying on further analysis on individual data and by measuring integration of the different groups of the *population with foreign background* in the various local contexts.