

The School as Place of Integration: Second Generation in Apulia

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Aims

Apulia begins to transform itself from region of transit and passage, towards the regions of the Centre and the North of Italy and toward other destinations outside the national borders, to region of stabilization. Nowadays, this region is having a double role, in fact, it is :

- a door of admittance and “zip” region for the immigrants coming from the close Balkan countries or from the countries of the East Europe (in fact, the “zip” space facilitates the exchanges, it assures the continuity of the relationships among neighbouring territories, and it allows the movements of the individuals when they wish to immigrate)
- a territory of definitive settlement, especially for some populations as people from Maghreb (Moroccans and Tunisians), Mauritians and Eritreans, that, once arrived in Apulia, try to settle together with their own family members believing to have found for themselves and for their family the best satisfying life conditions from the economic point of view and from their social integration (Di Comite L. - Pellicani M.C., 2001²).

Consequently, in the recent years our region shows a favourable attitude to the placement by non-Italian pupils in the school system, also taking into account the considerable increase of the school attendance by the foreigners' children. The aim our paper consists in detecting and analysing the integration degree of the non-Italian pupils (children of foreigners born in the country of origin or in that of destination, children of mixed couples with an Italian parent or with both foreign parents with different citizenships) in the school system, using data of the field survey (school year 2004/05) launched by us in collaboration with the Regional School Division³.

In fact, the survey done in the school year 2004/05 has not been, in chronological meaning, the first that we had launched but it has been the first one that has been able to achieve more organic results. After that, it has been realized the 2005/06 survey that, however, presents lack of data concerning the Taranto province, due to hard administrative problems that recently characterized this area. On the other hand, the results of the 2006/07 investigation are not yet completely available.

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² Di Comite L. – Pellicani M. C., (2001), Presenza straniera e diffusione dell'istruzione, *Rivista Italiana di Economia, Demografia e Statistica*, vol. LV, n. 1.

³ Besides, the investigation conducted by us, result of an interest consolidated in the years, has been developed within the project “Progetto Giovani”: “Interculturalità e *seconda generazione*: evoluzione della presenza straniera nel sistema socio-educativo italiano”, financed by the CNR (National Research Council) in 2004.

Data and methodology

The survey (realized at the end of the school year to take into account the territorial mobility, that characterize the foreigners, and the school dispersion) involves all the school orders from the infant, to the primary, to the secondary up to the high schools covering the whole region with an answer incidence of the 97,5% in the public schools. The questionnaire has been presented to 1.570 institutes (928 public schools and 642 private schools officially recognized by the state) and it has been filled in from both the didactic administrative offices (for the information concerning the more proper biographical characteristics) and the teaching staff (for what related to the integration and performance). Besides, the prospect to let answer directly the children has been discarded, due to the presence of some not really able to give precise and correct information. Especially regarding the qualitative variables, it has been intentional wanted to gather the teachers' opinion instead of the subjective perceptions of the individuals.

Thanks to the information collected from the questionnaire, it has been possible to find out, beyond quantitative aspects, qualitative features very useful for a more complete phenomenon interpretation. Among the various characters both quantitative and qualitative we underline, for instance, the territorial distribution, the school order, the country of birth, the sex structure (these are the only variables in common with the national Annual Investigation of the MIUR – Ministry of the Education, University and Research), age structure, the pupil and parents' citizenship, the knowledge degree of Italian, the learning results degree, the socialization degree with the other members of the classroom, the school performance, the relationship with the school rules, the first place of arrival, the amount of school years attended in Italy and/or in other countries, the socio-professional condition of the parents, etc. .

It has been a survey on the presence of the second generation *lato sensu* in the Apulian school system and it has been decided to include the mixed couples children because of their omission by the vaster survey launched annually by the MIUR and, in addition, due to the role they play as bridge between the cultures of the country of origin and the destination country.

Indirectly the mixed couples children can be estimated inaccurately through mixed marriages (considered and used as an indicator of integration of the foreign populations, in particularly with the purpose of measuring and valuing the relationships with the community of acceptance). In fact, if the marriage-rate represents another indicator of the demographic behaviour of the immigrants, at the same time, the mixed marriages are an index of integration and a factor of greater mixing of the resident populations in the country (Coleman D., 1992⁴). In such meaning, this phenomenon constitutes an important aspect both of the relationships building and of the union among autochthonous and foreigners (Natale M. – Strozza S., 1997⁵). It seems logic, in

⁴ COLEMAN D., (1992), *Ethnic intermarriage*, in BITTLES A.H. - ROBERTS D.F. (edited by), *Minority populations: genetics, demography and health*, Macmillan, London.

⁵ NATALE M. - STROZZA S., (1997), *Gli immigrati stranieri in Italia. Quanti sono, chi sono, come vivono*, Cacucci, Bari.

fact, implying that the mixed couples clearly appear more inclined to the coexistence of heterogeneous cultures (Golini A. – Strozza S. – Amato F., 2001⁶).

Our survey, unlike the national investigation besides the mixed couples children, also analyses the CTPs (territorial permanent centre), which are developed through the integration of public school, vocational training and territorial services offering training, orientation and cultural activities to Italian and non-Italian citizens that wish to be involved in a study path and in a personal and vocational growth.

⁶ GOLINI A. - STROZZA S. – AMATO F., (2001), *Un sistema di indicatori di integrazione: primo tentativo di costruzione*, in Zincone G. (edited by), *Secondo rapporto sull'integrazione degli immigrati in Italia*, il Mulino, Bologna.