

# ***CHANGES OF STATUS OF IMMIGRANTS IN ITALY: RESULTS OF A RECORD-LINKAGE ON ADMINISTRATIVE SOURCES***

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## **PROVISIONAL VERSION**

### **1. Introduction**

Italy, once a country of emigration, has become in the last two decades one of the most important European country in terms of immigration flows (Bonifazi, 1998; 2007; Farina, Ortensi, 2006; Gabrielli, Paterno, Strozza, 2007; Rossi, Strozza, 2007). The legal component of the foreign population is around 3.5 million people at the beginning of the year 2008. The country is also destination of flows of illegal or irregular migrations, whose dimension is difficult to measure exactly but whose existence appears clearly in occasion of regularization campaigns, occasionally launched by the government.

As the relevance of migration is increasing, it has become more and more pressing to have reliable and detailed data, in order to answer information needs raised by academics, politicians and public opinion. Requests in this direction have been expressed since the eighties, asking for an enforcement of the national statistical system in view of a growing need of information on immigration and foreign population living in Italy (Federici, 1983; Natale, 1983; 1986; Marozza, 1986; 1988; Natale e Strozza, 1997; Bonifazi, 1998). The more relevant improvements have been carried out only in the last 10 years, aiming to an information system which can better answer to users needs in terms of reliability, width and depth of topics included, easiness of access (Bonifazi, Strozza, 2005; Terra Abrami, 2005). Together with specific surveys and data collections, the use of administrative records as sources of statistical information is growing, allowing new insights in socio-demographic characteristics of foreigners without new burdens on respondents nor onerous investments for the statistical system.

This paper describes in fact an exercise of exploitation of administrative data sources. First of all, some features of irregular immigration in Italy are shown, analysing in particular the number and characteristics of applications presented during 2002 regularization programme and finally accepted for the issue of permit of stay. In the second part, main results of a record linkage of permits data bases for subsequent years are presented. Due to the characteristics of data bases, this is the only way to trace possible changes in the document issued to the same person, gaining the possibility to study migration paths of regularized immigrants in Italy, with special attention to changes in the reason of stay and to territorial mobility of foreign workers. The reference period is the three years following the completion of regularization procedures (2004-2006).

### **2. The irregular foreign presence in Italy: a 20 years long story**

#### *2.1 First regularization programmes*

In Italy, the presence of immigrants increased at a rather sustained pace during the 1990s and even more in the following years. Just like other countries, Italy too has a regular component and a significant irregular, at times even illegal, one. Despite the lack of official data, various studies have tried to quantify the number of irregular foreigners through different methods (for a review, see Strozza, 2004). Though the results can vary in wide enough intervals, the estimates based on the same method show that the phenomenon has changed over time, registering recurring increases during the acts of amnesties. The most recent estimates proposed by the ISMU<sup>1</sup> for the last decade vary from a minimum of 200 thousand irregulars in 2000 to a maximum of almost 750 thousand in 2006 (Blangiardo, Tanturri, 2006).

Irregular immigration in Italy is an important phenomenon due to various reasons: the conformation of the country with an extraordinary extension of its coasts towards North Africa and land borders with countries that register important transit migratory flows; the diffusion of informal economic activities that

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<sup>1</sup> This foundation, which studies migrations, is located in Milan, one of the Italian areas most interested by the migrations.

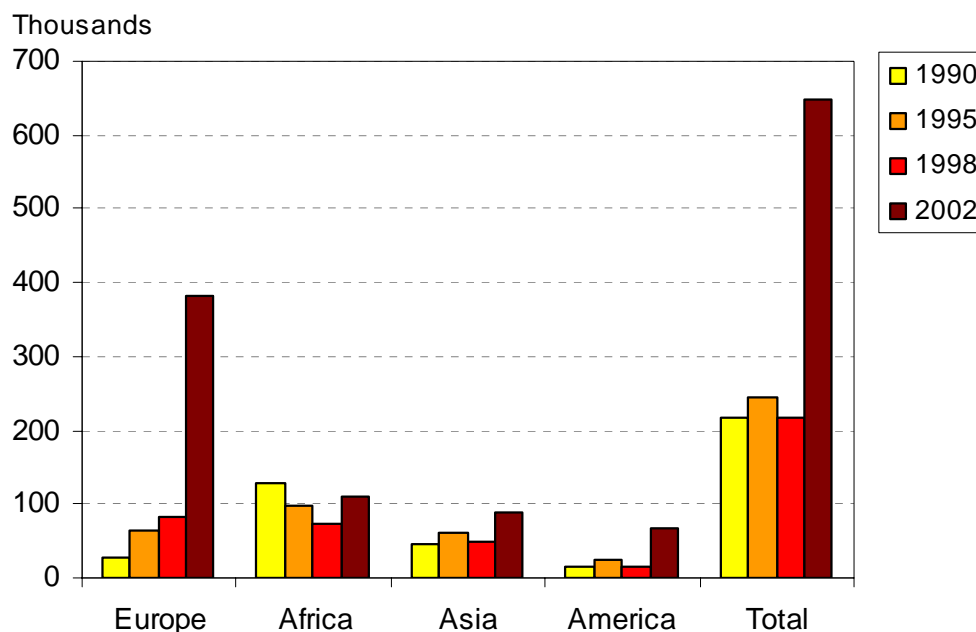
offer irregular jobs to illegal foreigners (Allasino et al., 2004). Moreover, the recurring application of the regularisation laws has somehow encouraged new incoming flows of irregular foreigners. Some scholars (Barbagli et al., 2004) believe that the continuous issuing of such laws by the various governments since 1986 (at intervals that have never exceeded 5 years) could be an incentive for the arrival of irregular workers, because they enter the country hoping to be able to benefit from one of these laws.

Regularization results enable to evaluate, though not precisely, the number and characteristics of the irregular foreigners or at least of the subset that meets the requisites for applying a regularisation.

The first regularisation law for foreign workers was issued in 1986 (Law 943), when the immigration in Italy was still at its beginning (the 1981 census indeed surveyed only 211 thousand foreign residents, 0.4% of the total population). It allowed a little more than 100 thousand extra-EU foreigners obtain their permit of stay. It was followed by Law 39/1990 (Martelli Law), which aimed at making visible as much as possible the hidden part of the immigration, and regulate the entries based on annual decrees that would determine the number of new workers allowed to enter Italy. About 218 thousand persons benefitted of that law (with a very high regularisation rate, equal to 121% for citizens from the so-called countries with strong migratory pressure<sup>2</sup>). However, contrarily to its objectives, it was not sufficient to contain the further flows of irregular immigrants, as the planning of the flows did not become fully operational. Hence, following the regularisation law of 1995 (LD 489/95, called the Dini Decree), which also set strict requisites, over 244 thousand requests were accepted and three years later, 217 thousand requests (with DPCM of 16 October 1998).

If in 1990, foreigners who became regular mainly came from North-Africa, Senegal and the Philippines - nationalities that have traditionally characterised the first immigration phase in Italy -, the subsequent laws benefitted an ever higher share of citizens from central-eastern Europe, thus proving that as the authorised flows increased, mainly from Albania and Romania, also a consistent number of illegal foreigners entered the country. Overall, women always represent a minor component of the regularised foreigners, as in the traditional scheme, where the man who works arrives first in the country and then his family. However, in the nationalities that do not follow such scheme, the women, specialised in services to the households, are often the key players of the first migratory wave. Such nationalities include women from Poland, Ukraine, the Philippines and from some countries of South America, and make up the majority of the regularised foreigners of those countries (figure 1 and table 1).

**Figure 1 – Recent regularisations by continent of citizenship (1990-2002).**



Source: Istat elaborations based on data of Ministry of Interior.

<sup>2</sup> That is to say, the Less Developed Countries and Central and Eastern Europe, excluding the UE member states before 2004.

**Table 1 – Recent regularisations (1990-2002)**

Main countries of citizenship	% by country of citizenship				Regularization rate (per 100 legal foreigners)				% women
	1990	1995	1998	2002	1990	1995	1998	2002	2002
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	..	..	..	..	<b>46.2</b>
<b>MDCs</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.1</b>	..	..	..	..	46.2
<b>LDCs and CEE</b>	<b>96.0</b>	<b>99.2</b>	<b>99.3</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>120.9</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>46.2</b>
of which:									
- Romania	0.3	4.5	11.1	20.9	37.5	78.1	71.3	123.2	45.2
- Ukraine	-	0.1	0.9	15.7	-	..	86.5	655.4	85.3
- Albania	1.1	12.2	18.0	7.4	534.8	98.5	44.5	24.8	19.3
- Morocco	22.4	14.0	11.0	7.4	259.4	42.2	18.6	26.3	13.5
- Ecuador	0.2	0.8	2.4	5.3	56.0	121.2	105.5	244.8	64.7
- China	3.9	5.9	7.7	5.2	156.9	89.2	40.7	47.8	37.8
- Poland	2.5	3.2	2.3	4.6	18.5	56.8	21.8	86.0	78.0
- Moldova	-	-	0.4	4.6	-	-	55.6	335.0	71.7
- Peru	0.9	5.2	2.3	2.5	122.7	159.4	21.0	49.7	65.5
- India	1.3	2.3	2.2	2.1	107.0	46.9	21.4	37.5	2.9
- Senegal	7.3	4.0	4.9	1.9	276.6	47.5	37.5	33.1	9.3
- Bangladesh	1.8	2.5	3.1	1.7	941.7	126.3	55.5	45.3	0.7
- Philippines	6.3	8.8	3.1	1.5	127.6	59.4	11.3	14.8	60.1
- Pakistan	2.1	1.8	3.0	1.5	602.9	87.4	61.0	43.9	0.7
- Tunisia	12.1	4.2	2.6	1.4	294.0	33.8	13.5	16.4	4.6

Source: Istat elaborations based on data of Ministry of Interior.

### 2.2 The most recent programme: 2002 regularization

The most recent regularisation was sanctioned by laws 189 (known as the Bossi-Fini Law) and 222 of 2002. It was reserved exclusively to employed workers and was the largest operation of its kind ever carried out in Italy. More than 700,000 applications were received and almost 650,000 granted permits of stay, only slightly fewer than all those granted (680,000) during the three similar provisions carried out in the 1990s.

On the occasion of this latest regularisation the change in the geography of migrations towards Italy was defined more clearly. The arrival of irregular foreigners from central Eastern Europe, which corresponds to mainly short-medium range migration, became predominant and accounted for 59 percent of all regularisations. At the same time, the flows of irregular immigrants from Africa and Asian countries became less relevant (17 and 14 percent respectively, about half the quota in the previous regularisations). The longest standing citizenships, like those of North Africa, are characterised by a very low irregularity risk (the ratio between regularised and regular is about 30 per 100), while it is still very high for foreigners coming from the Ukraine (655 per 100), Moldavia (335 per 100), and Ecuador (244 per 100). The vast majority of these are women that are mainly employed in the domestic service sector.

Generally the characteristics of citizens authorised to work for companies or families vary greatly. Of those employed by companies - 87% of which are males with an average age of almost 31 – Rumanians are the most numerous, followed distantly by Moroccans, Albanians, and Chinese. Of the 316,000 immigrants employed for domestic duties, most are women (81 percent) with an average age of 37.3 years, higher than that for their regularised compatriots working for companies. Of those regularised most are Ukrainians and Rumanians followed at a much lower number by Ecuadorians, Poles, and Moldavians. These are also women who, having initially less professional standing and thus being open to accepting unofficial working situations with lower pay, have gradually found their place alongside the Philippine women who were traditionally employed in domestic services.

### 2.3 The outcome of regularisation applications

The previous short examination of last regularisations shows the extent and characteristics of irregular immigrants in Italy, but only for those that met the requirements to take advantage of the benefits of the programme. More information can be gleaned by analysing all the regularisation applications submitted, which makes it possible to give some indication as to the success of the applications presented in terms of issued permits. The overall number of applications presented (about 700,000) is even closer to the total number of irregular immigrants, given that the estimated total number of these for 2002 was a little more than 750,000 people (Blangiardo, 2006).

People with 181 different nationalities submitted applications for regularisation, confirming heterogeneity of immigration to Italy as for countries of origin, a feature that tends to decrease, but is still a prominent characteristic and is also shared by irregular migrants. Naturally, for many countries the numbers are modest and not very significant; however, almost 40 citizenships accounted for at least 1,000 applications and the top ten countries include those from different continents (Europe, Asia, and Africa, with the former prevailing) indicating also the globalization of migration. There is therefore no origin or single nationality that shows sharply and with greater intensity the feature of irregular presence.

Looking only at the top 20 citizenships and thus about 90 percent of the total number of applications presented (table 2) one notes that, in general, the rate of success was rather high, especially for women (93.2%) who were more frequently able to submit applications in line with the legal requirements, which therefore resulted in a permit of stay being granted. No clear geographic pattern emerges. First place in terms of level of success, with more than 95% of applications accepted, was Egypt along with the Ukraine and China, while the countries that performed worst (under 88%) were the Philippines, Nigeria, and Poland. The top spots on the dais were therefore taken by countries both of long-standing and recent immigration, as was the case at the lower end of the scale, which suggests that the presence of an old, extensive nucleus of compatriots is not always a determining factor in the transition to regularity. In this sense the degree of cohesion in communities could be a stronger explanatory factor, as the high rate of success of applicants with Chinese citizenship would seem to indicate, compared to those of foreigners belonging to less cohesive communities or those more spread around Italy, such as the Poles and Albanians.

Thus the geographic region of origin, a consolidated migratory tradition in Italy, gender prevalence, or any other type of prevalence do not seem to significantly affect the probability of success encountered on the occasion of the last regularization. Even the work engaged in, which in this case can only be classified as household or enterprise employment, does not seem to be a strongly discriminating factor, since within the citizenships that had the greatest success in terms of regularisation, there are groups that are practically the opposite of one another. This is the case for immigrants from the Ukraine, mainly women employed to care for and assist families (75% of permits were obtained for this reason), and the Egyptians, which were almost exclusively men employed at companies (in 96% of cases).

**Table 2 - The 2002 regularisation: submitted applications and issued permits**

Main countries of citizenship	Applications		Permits issued				
	Total	% women	Total	per 100 applications			% in household services
				Total	Men	Women	
<b>Total</b>	<b>700,033</b>	45.8	<b>646,829</b>	<b>92.4</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>48.9</b>
- Romania	142,963	45.0	134,909	94.4	94.1	94.7	45.6
- Ukraine	106,633	85.3	101,651	95.3	94.9	95.4	84.0
- Albania	54,075	18.5	47,763	88.3	87.5	92.2	22.3
- Morocco	53,746	12.8	48,174	89.6	88.9	94.4	19.3
- Ecuador	36,591	64.8	34,292	93.7	93.8	93.7	69.6
- China	35,647	37.7	33,950	95.2	95.2	95.4	16.6
- Poland	34,270	78.4	30,021	87.6	89.0	87.2	75.8
- Moldova	31,102	71.6	29,471	94.8	94.5	94.8	73.6
- Peru	17,390	65.0	16,213	93.2	92.0	93.9	79.1
- Egypt	15,946	1.0	15,470	97.0	97.0	97.0	3.5
- India	14,235	2.9	13,399	94.1	94.2	92.3	15.9
- Senegal	14,061	8.6	12,372	88.0	87.3	95.1	31.5
- Philippines	11,759	58.3	9,821	83.5	80.0	86.0	88.9
- Bangladesh	11,520	0.6	10,687	92.8	92.7	100.0	30.7
- Pakistan	10,894	0.7	9,649	88.6	88.6	90.5	11.2
- Tunisia	9,585	4.7	8,843	92.3	92.3	92.2	13.5
- Bulgaria	9,122	52.8	8,305	91.0	92.3	89.9	47.4
- Sri Lanka	7,559	19.5	7,030	93.0	92.4	95.4	73.5
- Nigeria	6,810	56.6	5,884	86.4	88.3	85.0	57.2
- Serbia and Montenegro	6,750	15.3	6,188	91.7	92.4	87.5	14.1
% over total	90.1		90.3				

Source: Istat elaborations based on data of Ministry of Interior.

The only general observation that can be drawn from this analysis is that the extreme heterogeneous nature of foreigners in Italy is confirmed, as are the migratory routes that characterise the phenomenon. In fact, there seem to be more exceptions than rules, even to the general comment made above, which refers to the higher probability of success of women. For some nationalities, the opposite is in fact true (this is the case for India, Serbia and Montenegro, Bulgaria, Poland, and Nigeria).

Clearly, the macro analysis carried out here, which is the only possible analysis since no details on individual applications are available, is not sufficient to identify possible relevant factors that explain the different degrees of success recorded by the various citizenships. An extension of the work presented here may specifically look at a more detailed analysis of these aspects, based on micro data, which should go hand in hand with a more detailed breakdown of the social and economic characteristics of the groups to which they belong and of the employers.

### **3. Trajectories of regularised migrant during the period 2004 – 2006**

#### *3.1. Remaining regular*

At an individual level it is impossible to follow the contingent of those regularised in 2002 (647,000 immigrants) over the 2004-2006 three-year period, identifying the continuity and changes that have occurred, unless applying a record-linkage procedure in permits files (see annex).

In practice, using information taken from permits of stay, regularised immigrants that still have a valid permit three years after the first was issued were identified and attention was focussed on their socio-demographic changes and their movement within the country. Before proceeding with an analysis of the results it is useful to point out that there are three principal reasons for a foreigner no longer being included in the permits of stay files: a) the person acquires Italian citizenship (mainly after marrying an Italian); b) the migrant leaves Italy; c) the person returns to an “irregular status”. Given the shortness of the period considered one can suppose that the first case is entirely negligible, the second is certainly more probable than the previous but not particularly relevant, and the third is clearly prevalent. Basically, one supposes that most of the non-renewed permits of stay are due to the person no longer fulfilling the requirements and therefore slipping back into an irregular status. Unfortunately, this hypothesis cannot be verified as things stand at the moment.

Over the time span considered, the number of regularised immigrants has decreased by 21.9%, going from about 647,000 permit holders at the start of 2004 to 505,000 still in possession of a valid document at the start of 2007. This difference is very similar for the two genders and has affected those employed by families slightly more (-22.9%) compared to those employed by companies (-20.8%) (Table 3).

The “drop” was concentrated over 2004 (-96,000 fewer permits on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, equal to 15% of the initial permits), the year the permits of stay had to be renewed for the first time by most of the regularised foreigners. Many immigrants were therefore unable to have their permits extended, as they were presumably unable to hold down a regular employment position.

At a countrywide level, the greatest fluctuation in the regularisation permits over the two extreme years in question was found in the South (-50,000 equal to -46.2%) and the Centre (-60,000 equal to -32.4%). In addition to a greater number of permits not renewed, this drop is also due to movement within the country that is prevalently South to North, which helped limit the losses in the North-West (-29,000 equal to -13.3%); the North-East even saw an increase of more than 2,400 people (+ 2%) compared to the situation on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004, which more than compensated for the number of permits that expired and confirmed the attraction capacity of this area (see paragraph 4).

For the citizens of Albania, the ex-Yugoslav Republic, Macedonia, Moldavia, the Ukraine, Morocco, Egypt, China, and Pakistan on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 there was a significant degree of stability - compared to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004 they showed losses of not more than 18%, which was more than 3 percent lower than the average value recorded for all those regularised (-21.9 %). The opposite was true for Ecuador and Peru that showed significant drops at the end of the three-year period (-26.4 % and -27.3% respectively compared to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004); Bulgaria, Russia, Nigeria, and Tunisia despite recording lesser numerical drops, showed changes of more than 30 % and even more than 40 % for Russians and Tunisians. Rumanians (135,000 in 2004 and 109,000 in 2007), which are the most numerous when it comes to regularised immigrants, are located in the middle of the pack with a reduction of 19.3 % compared to the initial number of those regularised. Only access to further information on an individual level, via connections to the application and

granting files, would make it possible to identify the determining factors in the permanence or lack thereof when it comes to a regularised status.

**Table 3 - The 2002 regularised migrants by activity sector and main countries on 1st January - Years 2004-2007**

Sector of employment / Main countries	N. of permits of stay at the beginning of				% variations				% females	
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2005- 2004	2006- 2005	2007- 2006	2007- 2004	2004	2007
<b>Sector of employment</b>										
Household services	316,489	268,411	248,511	243,971	-15.2	-7.4	-1.8	-22.9	81.2	82.5
Enterprises	330,340	282,143	265,159	261,487	-14.6	-6.0	-1.4	-20.8	12.7	12.3
<b>Main Countries</b>										
Romania	134,909	114,041	109,509	108,915	-15.5	-4.0	-0.5	-19.3	45.2	44.5
Ukraine	101,651	90,542	86,951	86,104	-10.9	-4.0	-1.0	-15.3	85.3	87.4
Morocco	48,174	41,549	39,936	39,915	-13.8	-3.9	-0.1	-17.1	13.5	12.9
Albania	47,763	42,139	39,862	39,826	-11.8	-5.4	-0.1	-16.6	19.3	17.8
Ecuador	34,292	28,949	25,848	25,233	-15.6	-10.7	-2.4	-26.4	64.7	66.3
China	33,950	30,372	28,548	28,409	-10.5	-6.0	-0.5	-16.3	37.8	37.1
Poland	30,021	23,522	21,756	21,460	-21.6	-7.5	-1.4	-28.5	78.0	79.2
Moldova	29,471	26,808	25,036	24,352	-9.0	-6.6	-2.7	-17.4	71.7	73.8
Peru	16,213	13,909	12,151	11,793	-14.2	-12.6	-2.9	-27.3	65.5	67.3
Egypt	15,470	13,554	13,010	12,885	-12.4	-4.0	-1.0	-16.7	1.0	0.7
India	13,399	11,553	10,824	10,746	-13.8	-6.3	-0.7	-19.8	2.9	2.4
Senegal	12,372	10,763	9,777	9,650	-13.0	-9.2	-1.3	-22.0	9.3	8.0
Bangladesh	10,687	9,349	8,803	8,720	-12.5	-5.8	-0.9	-18.4	0.7	0.4
Philippines	9,821	8,432	7,415	7,302	-14.1	-12.1	-1.5	-25.6	60.1	60.5
Pakistan	9,649	8,594	8,010	7,906	-10.9	-6.8	-1.3	-18.1	0.7	0.4
Tunisia	8,843	5,686	5,073	5,006	-35.7	-10.8	-1.3	-43.4	4.6	3.9
Bulgaria	8,305	6,753	5,784	5,168	-18.7	-14.3	-10.7	-37.8	52.1	52.2
Sri Lanka	7,030	6,107	5,247	5,078	-13.1	-14.1	-3.2	-27.8	20.0	19.1
Serbia and Montenegro	6,188	5,082	4,542	4,465	-17.9	-10.6	-1.7	-27.8	14.6	12.9
Nigeria	5,884	4,799	4,124	3,965	-18.4	-14.1	-3.9	-32.6	55.7	55.1
<b>Main Countries total</b>	<b>584,092</b>	<b>502,503</b>	<b>472,206</b>	<b>466,898</b>	<b>-14.0</b>	<b>-6.0</b>	<b>-1.1</b>	<b>-20.1</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>46.8</b>
% over total	90,3	91,3	91,9	92,4						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>646,829</b>	<b>550,554</b>	<b>513,670</b>	<b>505,458</b>	<b>-14.9</b>	<b>-6.7</b>	<b>-1.6</b>	<b>-21.9</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>46.2</b>

Source: Istat elaborations based on data of Ministry of Interior.

### 3.2. Changes on the labour market

Before analysing the changes recorded between the beginning of 2004 and 2007 in the reasons of the permit, it must be remembered that the 2002 regularisation programme was only designed for those foreign workers, employed by a family or a enterprise, whose application for regularisation was submitted by their employers. Other irregular immigrants living on the territory, like self-employed or unemployed or those who are not included in the category of active population (e.g. any adult family members) were not given the chance to benefit of the amnesty. Hence at the beginning of 2004 a permit could only be issued for employees. However, a certain number of fictitious employment relationships set up in order to benefit from the regularisation opportunity could be expected. In addition to that, a number of employment relationships was broken or changed in the lapse of time between the application and the issue of the permit (on average, one year later; in most cases between June and December 2003). Of the 650,000 permits granted, more than 60,000 were issued conditionally for a short period (almost all for six months). These were the situations which required a more precise definition of the employment position, since the employer had died (over 10% of cases), the foreigner had resigned (about 14%) or had been dismissed (almost 40%), or the employment relationship was in the course of being defined (slightly less than 36%). Only 35.3 thousand of the foreigners who received a short-term permit still had a valid permit in 2007, with a drop greater than 40%, over the double than the remaining 590 thousand foreigners who obtained a permit of stay with the regularisation. It may be assumed that the former subgroup includes the greatest

number of people who, despite not being really employees, tried to benefit from the opportunity offered to this category.

The analysis of transitions towards other types of permit seems to support this thesis. Generally speaking, almost 85.5% of the 505 thousand regularised foreigners who were still in a regular position at the beginning of 2007 still have a permit for dependent work. However, there have been remarkable transitions to other categories, with 7.4% having a permit for self-employed work, 5.2% having a permit for family reasons, 1.4% for unemployment and the remaining 0.4% for other reasons (Table 4). In the subgroup of 35 thousand foreigners who, at the beginning of 2004 had a short-term permit, the great majority found employed work, although it must be noted that the share of employed workers is less than 83%. Compared with the other regularized workers, transitions to self-employed work and to family reasons are more frequent (respectively over 9% and almost 6%). And this small group of foreigners with a short-term permit seems to include the largest number of those who would have been excluded from the regularisation programme as lacking required conditions but, at least in part, have managed to present themselves as eligible candidates by establishing temporary or fictitious employment relationships.

This expedient should be taken into account below, in the more detailed analysis of the processes observed in the period under study, considering gender and nationality. The main focus will be on the two changes that are numerically more remarkable: the transition towards a permit for family reasons and the one towards self-employed work.

There are remarkable gender differences in the transition from employed work to permits for family reasons. Overall, it concerns slightly more than 5% of regularised workers who still have a valid permit, but this change is markedly greater among women (10%) than among men (only 1.2%). Considering the administrative nature of this information, women who have changed their permit might not necessarily have left the labour market after getting married or after becoming dependent on their husbands with a regular position in Italy. This situation concerns only a part of the foreign women who have experimented this type of transition. For another part it might have been easier for them to renew their permit of stay for family reasons thanks to the presence of relatives with a regular position, while keeping their occupation – be it regular or irregular. It should also be considered that in some other cases this administrative change may correspond to a transition from a fictitious situation – set up to benefit from the regularisation – to one closer to the person's actual position, that is following their spouse or other close family members. In fact, among regularised women holding a short-term permit in 2004, renewals for family reasons accounted for an even greater share, amounting to 13%. A breakdown by nationality highlights very different situations corresponding to different migration models. Permits for family reasons are specially frequent among immigrant women from Morocco (20%) and above all among Albanian women (34%) – two male-dominated communities in which the role of women in the migration process often appeared to be subordinated to the male component. In contrast with this, family reasons account for less than 7% among Polish, Ukrainian, Ecuadorian, Peruvian and above all Filipino women (3%), who are also characterised by a major presence on the labour market and by a more active role in migration, as they often act as 'forerunners' and breadwinners.

The transition from employed to self-employed work and, even more relevant, to an entrepreneurial activity appears as one of the most important signs of upward professional mobility, although this interpretation is not always true. The 2002 regularisation was limited to employed workers and, as some authors have highlighted (Cesareo, 2006), the transition to self-employed work (a possible way to move up the professional ladder) took place in a difficult situation because of the obligation, at least for the first year, to keep an employed work relationship in order to renew the permit of stay. Actually this constraint was later removed, considering that almost 38 thousand regularised immigrants – that is 7.5% of those who were still in a regular position at the beginning of 2007 – became self-employed workers. In this case, too, there are major gender-based differences. The shift concerned mostly males (over 11.5%) and much less women (3%), thus confirming a weaker inclination towards self-employed work among women, as observed in the group of foreigners as a whole.

It is hard to say to what extent such a change of professional position is effectively a sign of success at work and professional advancement. On the one hand, obtaining a permit of stay for self-employed work entails rather strict requirements, on the other hand this type of work could be used as an instrument to obtain the permit by those employed workers who work occasionally or on short-term contracts for several

employers<sup>3</sup> (Pugliese, Vitiello, 2005). It must also be taken into account that some of the regularised immigrants who experimented that transition obtained a formal recognition of their working situation, going on well before the amnesty. The greater incidence of permits for self-employed work among regularised immigrants with short-term permit in 2004 could be due to a prevalence, within this subgroup, of changes due to the two latter hypotheses and, in particular, to the acknowledgement *a posteriori* of an existing situation of self-employment which had not been contemplated among the possible ways to regularisation.

Generally speaking, it is not possible to answer the question through the available data, but it is possible to understand for which nationalities such change of position has been more important, that is to say in which immigrant communities self-employment and entrepreneurial activities play a more important role within such a particular group as that of regularised immigrants. The transition towards self-employed work has mainly concerned regularised immigrants belonging to those communities recording a larger share of self-employed workers: not only the Chinese, but also Senegalese and Moroccans (among whom self-employed workers account for 22% to 31%, versus an average of 13% for all permit of stay's holders). On the contrary, very few such transitions have been recorded in the communities characterised by prevailing employment in the sector of domestic services (less than 5% for Ukrainian, Ecuadorian and Moldavian women), which makes changes of activity and socio-professional mobility more difficult. It is notable that China and Senegalese migrants moved towards self-employment without difference between men and women. For the former, it is a characteristic that can be found among the overall group of permit holders. For the latter, it is a new feature that, read in connection with the low number of women, could mean a selected presence or the use of this expedient to obtain the renewal of the permit.

**Table 4 - 2002 regularised migrants by reason of the permit. Years 2004-2007**

Reason for the permit in 2004	%	Reason for the permit in 2007					Total (=100)
		Employees	Self-employed	Unemployed	Family	Others	
	in 2004	% in 2007					
<b>MEN</b>							
Employees	92.2	85.6	11.5	1.6	1.2	0.2	250,846
Provisional (b)	7.8	83.6	12.9	1.9	1.3	0.3	21,187
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>85.4</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>272,033</b>
<b>WOMEN</b>							
Employees	94.0	85.7	2.7	1.2	9.8	0.5	219,334
Provisional (b)	6.0	81.1	3.5	1.6	12.8	1.0	14,091
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>85.4</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>233,425</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>							
Employees	93.0	85.6	7.4	1.4	5.2	0.4	470,180
Provisional (b)	7.0	82.6	9.1	1.8	5.9	0.6	35,278
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>85.4</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>505,458</b>

Notes: (a) Data are referred to permits still valid in 2007. (b) Short term permits issued when lacking a part of requisites or documentation.

Source: Istat elaborations based on data of Ministry of Interior.

## 4. Differences and mobility on the territory

### 4.1. Territorial aspects

Some important aspects were observed as regards the territory: the regularisation indeed is quite different in terms of number of regularised foreigners (especially when compared with the regular foreigners who already lived in Italy). As regards the most important communities (such as the Romanian one), the distribution of the regularised foreigners substantially reflects that of the settled regular ones, thereby confirming for the regularisations too the attraction of the “migratory chain”. Vice versa communities that mainly increased following the last regularisation (such as the women from Ukraine) emerged in well-defined areas.

We will here provide some examples to illustrate the previous point. In the central and southern regions, the regularised foreigners (306 thousand) are less numerous than in the North (341 thousand).

<sup>3</sup> In some cases, the enrolment in the category of craftsman or the setting up of a one-man company becomes an essential condition to maintain a regular permit and a job for those workers who work occasionally or on short term contracts, even for several employers at a time (e.g. in the building sector).



However, the regularisation rate is higher and thus, the increase in the regular foreign population is higher too in relative terms: in the South, foreigners from countries with strong migratory pressure have almost doubled following the regularisation.

The Northwest is home to a strong concentration of regularised Ecuadorians (almost three fourth of the total Italy), which make up the second nationality (11.6%), after the Romanians (20.3%). The Romanians represent the first foreign community in the Northeast (16.5%), where the Moldavians too are particularly numerous and concentrated (10.5% in the area, 45% of regularised Moldavians on the whole National territory).

In the Centre of Italy, where regular Romanians were already numerous, the regularised ones represent 34% of the total regularised people. As a matter of fact, almost half of the Romanians (more than 63 thousand persons) were regularised in this area.

The Ukrainian community is, among those that substantially were formed through the last regularisation, by far the most numerous one: more than 100,000 persons, most of whom women (85.3%). They regularised in all Italian regions, but 39% were regularised in the Southern regions, especially in Campania (mainly in the province of Naples). It is the most numerous community of regularised persons in the South (39.3%).

#### 4.2. The territorial mobility

Three years after the regularisation laws, more than 60% of the more than 500 thousand foreigners regularly settled in Italy are located in the northern regions (186 thousand in the Northwest, 129 thousand in the Northeast), one fourth in the Centre of Italy and the remaining 13% in the South (table 5).

**Table 5 – The 2002 regularised migrants by geographical area on 1<sup>st</sup> January – Years 2004 e 2007<sup>(a)</sup>**

Geographical area in 2004	%	Geographical area in 2007				
		North-west	North-east	Centre	South	Islands
	in 2004 (Italy=100)					
North-west	33.8	116,526	23,288	22,498	7,338	1,346
North-east	20.4	19,139	63,530	13,427	5,990	951
Centre	27.8	30,434	23,647	76,370	8,695	1,376
South	15.3	16,366	15,935	11,885	32,221	1,021
Islands	2.7	3,289	2,689	1,902	868	4,727
<b>Italy</b>	<b>505,458</b>	<b>185,754</b>	<b>129,089</b>	<b>126,082</b>	<b>55,112</b>	<b>9,421</b>
% in 2007		36.7	25.5	24.9	10.9	1.9
<b>Balance</b>						
absolute numbers		14,758	26,052	-14,440	-22,316	-4,054
percentages		8.6	25.3	-10.3	-28.8	-30.1

Note: (a) Data are referred to permits still valid in 2007.

Source: Istat elaborations based on data of Ministry of Interior.

Their territorial distribution has changed compared to 2004 because of a very high internal mobility: more than 60% of the regularised foreigners still in Italy on 1 January 2007 moved to another province.

69 thousand foreigners moved to the Northwest while 54 thousand moved out: the number of regularised persons has increased by 8.6%, with evident increases for the Ukrainians (+24%) and Albanians (+15%). The north-eastern area has registered an active balance of 26 thousand immigrants (+25%), with particularly high increases registered for the Romanians and the Albanians (39% and 41% respectively).

The other territorial areas have registered a negative balance: -14 thousand in the Central regions (-10%) mainly due to the negative balance of Romanians and Chinese. With 45 thousand regularised persons moving out of the South, slightly more than half of the persons present on 1st January 2004, the arrivals did not succeed in changing the Southern area's clearly negative migratory balance: -22 thousand regularised compared to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004, equal to -29%, with 40% decreases in the case of the Albanians and Moroccans.

When analysing the geographical areas to which the regularised persons moved to, 92 thousand persons moved to the Northern regions from the Central regions (59%) and from the South (41%), while 52 thousand regularised persons left the north (69% of which to Central Italy).

A higher balance was registered between Centre and South of Italy: on 1st January 2007, a little less than 14 thousand regularised persons had moved to the Centre from the South, while 10 thousand immigrants moved from the central regions to the South compared to 1 January 2004.

More than half of the regularised persons moved within two years from becoming legal. Some areas have maintained their high attraction capacity; in particular, the northeast has attracted 21% of the total arrivals who moved there within the first year of the last three-year period. However, other areas have shown some difficulties of work insertion since the beginning: in the South, the outgoing flows equalled 27% of the regularised persons who moved out during that same period.

The two most numerous communities among the regularised foreigners are the Romanian and the Ukrainian ones (22% and 17% respectively of the 505 thousand regularised in Italy on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007). They also move the most over the territory.

As regards the distance of such moves, at the end of the three-year period, 212 thousand persons (42% of the total) had moved outside their initial geographical area. Almost 92 thousand (18%) changed the province in which they lived though remaining in the same area, while 202 thousand immigrants (40% of the total) still live in the province in which they first obtained their regularisation permit.

Different behaviours were surveyed among the nationalities: Filipinos, Peruvians, Serbs, Bulgarians, Russian, Singhalese and Polish, who most work for families, showed a lower tendency to move on the territory (60% still live in the province in which they first arrived). On the other hand, Albanians, Romanians, Ukrainians, Moroccans, Chinese, Indians and people from Bangladesh, in about 70% of the cases, moved to another province from the one in which they lived on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004, most of the times outside their initial area.

## **5. In conclusion: first answers and open questions**

To conclude, let us recall the main results and the observations we can make based on the longitudinal information drawn from the record linkage between the subsequent archives on the permits of stay of foreigners who regularised their position in 2002.

First, almost 80% of the regularised foreigners are still regular three years after being granted their first permit. Hence, they have succeeded in obtaining one or more renewals of their authorisation to stay in Italy. Clearly many irregular immigrants who have benefitted from the last amnesty show to have at least a medium-term migratory project they could fulfil by responding a potentially regular labour demand of an Italian family or enterprise.

During the period 2004-06, important new elements took place. When being regular, many foreigners were able to get married and thus. These variations have clearly affected the type of stay and maybe also the actual professional status of a contained part of who benefitted from the regularisation laws. The passage from dependant work reason to family reason appears considerable especially among women. However, it could also indicate some difficulty in keeping a regular job and/or a significant propensity, even among women immigrated for work reasons, to leave the market after forming their own family. Moreover, it mainly concerns women from some countries in the South and East of the Mediterranean coast, whose migratory model remains characterised by the main role assumed by men.

Working as an employee was the only condition that allowed being regularised; in the years following the regularisation the passage from dependent to autonomous job, that in some cases even assume character of entrepreneurship, was mainly significant among men. Nonetheless, it is difficult to indicate how much of such variation is due to an upward professional mobility and how much to administrative circumstances. Practically, we refer to two circumstances: a) some regularised foreigners who actually succeeded in obtaining a permit for self-employed work, were already so when the amnesty was issued but had to find a fictitious employer to benefit from it; b) others became at least in writing self-employed workers after the amnesty to keep a regular position even if carrying out occasional activities or short-term activities with a work relationship with one or more employers. Therefore, it is even more necessary to explore carefully and in detail these transitions, on the basis of further information, currently not available, on the characteristics of the regularised persons, the employers and the activity declared when presenting the regularisation request.

When analysing the place where the permit was issued and the place of residence, or at least of effective presence, it is clear the exceptional territorial mobility of the regularised persons. More than 60% indeed moved to another province and more than 40% to another territorial area (average-long distance internal mobility) during the three-year period. Hence, this group shows a mobility rate higher than not only the Italian residents but also the regular foreign residents. In addition, the last regularisation also confirms the thesis that who becomes regular mainly moves from South to North since the possibilities of finding a

stable and regular job are higher in the central regions and especially in the northern ones. But the record-linkage among archives has enabled to clearly highlight the exceptional territorial mobility in all directions, with a strong positive migratory balance in the two northern areas, a slightly negative in the central area and a considerably negative one in the South and on the islands.

Differences by nationality, gender and territorial level were also registered. However, the results do not allow answering some of the questions that emerged when analysing the data obtained through the record-linkage procedure already carried out. Is it possible to identify the factors that are important for the success of the regularisation request and for staying in Italy as a legal foreigner? What are the most important reasons for changing one's professional status and moving across the territory? These questions are rather interesting given the importance of such transitions. The administrative sources can provide only partial answers to behaviours that are connected to personal strategies, opinions and perceptions. Nonetheless, it is possible to find precise answers when integrating the sources through an articulated strategy of record-linkage with other administrative archives able to give a specific informative contribution. The favourable result of the experimentations conducted encourages a deeper use of the linking techniques between registers from different sources.

These subsequent developments however are not to be taken for granted which have to take into account methodological problems, resources availability, willingness of different administrations to cooperate in this field. This paper shows the importance to use more than in the past the record-linkage between archives to enrich the informative context on the foreign population and answer questions that the administrative sources can only partially answer.

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## Appendix

### Note on the sources and methods

#### *Data used*

The data used for the record linkage whose results are here presented were drawn from the archive on permits of stay of the Ministry of the Interior. Up until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007, all foreigners – EU and extra EU – residing in Italy for more than 3 months had to request a permit of stay at the police headquarters. The Ministry of the Interior collects in a central archive all local archives of the police headquarters containing the renewals of permits and first permits of stay issued during the year.

To carry out its institutional tasks, every year the National Institute of Statistics receives a complete copy of this archive from the Ministry of the Interior, excluding though the fields relative to the name and surname of the foreigner. The Institute then controls and verifies each record, eliminating the double and non-valid records and including all those for which, though the procedure is still in progress, their probable positive outcome makes them liable for being counted as valid permits. Hence, this statistical archive is the one we used here.

This work is based on the analysis conducted on the permits of stay valid on 1<sup>st</sup> January for the years 2004 to 2007. The year 2004 was chosen because the archive contained all permits granted after the regularisation law issued in 2002 with a validity of one year, or in fewer cases with a validity of six months. Because some time was needed to implement and perfect the bureaucratic procedures, almost all of them were first granted in the second half of 2003 and therefore valid on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004. Overall, over 2 millions permits were analysed for each year (the number of permits increased from 2,228 thousand to 2,415 thousand during the years 2004-2006).

Each personal record holds information on the person (date of birth, sex, nationality, civil status, municipality of usual residence) and on the permit (reasons for permit granting, date of issue, expiry

date). The first two archives considered also contained an individual code drawn from the name of the person and coded according to rules established by the data elaboration centre of the Ministry. Subsequently, after the Ministry's procedures were internally reorganised, this field was no longer available and that caused a considerable loss of information for individual analysis, and in particular in view of a record linkage.

### *Empirical aspects of record-linkage*

The record-linkage process was necessary to follow the foreigners who obtained their permit of stay following the 2002 regularisation. A flag was placed in case of first permit (S5 or S6 according to whether it is a permit of stay for work in a family or in an enterprise) but in the renewals, this information wasn't maintained on the individual record.

This flag allowed identifying 647 thousand immigrants regularised through laws 189/02 and 222/02, out of the total permits valid on 1/1/2004. To record-link the permits valid on 1.1.2005 and analyse the path of foreigners who were regularised in the first year after the completion of the procedure, a "long key" was used made up of: encrypted name, sex, date of birth, citizenship and date of entry in Italy. The many variables available, among which the encrypted name was to represent a unique identification, allowed using the exact matching method and identifying 551 thousand regularised foreigners still present on 1.1.2005.

The procedure identified about 5,000 double matched records in 2005 DB. They are likely to be caused by a change in at least one variable in the permit (for example a change in the province of residence) producing a second record for the same person. The matching has been done with the more recent of the two records found in 2005 DB, as it represented the last condition. It is not possible, at the moment, to test the correctness of this hypothesis, and theoretically speaking it is not possible to exclude that different persons could present the same "long key" in 2005. Even if this was the case for all double records, the maximum error in final results would be less than 8 per thousand, at least as far as changes of status are concerned.

For the next years, as already said, the coded name was no longer available. Hence, the record linkage procedure was done using the "short key", that is, a key holding only the other personal data available. Records with the same key amounted to 514 thousand in 2006 and 505 thousand in 2007. Here too, we used the exact matching. However, the lack of a single identification certainly reduces the precision of the matching.

To indicate the entity of the distortion, we did a simulation, applying the record linkage with the "short key" to the 2004 and 2005 databases. Compared to the results obtained with the "long key", the "short key", in 2004 and 2005, allows coupling 13 thousand permits more (2.1% of the 646,829 initial regularised persons).

This is due not only to the lack of a very discriminating variable, such as the encrypted name, but also to the overall quality of some of the variables included in the key. In particular, the birth date for foreigners is not always precise: the year is mostly well reported, but the month and the day are often missing, as they are not considered crucial in some cultures and in some administrative systems. In this case, it is possible that Italian clerks attribute them a fictitious value. The same could apply, even if less frequently, to the date of first entry in the country. In principle, some problems could arise with the encrypted name as well, due to some misunderstanding in the spelling of foreign names and to possible difficulties in transliteration.

An exact evaluation of the share of false matching (due to the lack of the coded name in the "reduced key") compared to missed matching (due to the errors in transcribing the name of the foreigner in the extended key when renewing the permit) is not yet feasible.

Since 2007, anyway, all public security offices have been requested to include, in addition to other individual information, the personal identification number, which is a unique code given to every person living in Italy, whether native or foreign ones, by tax authority. Therefore, in the next future it will be easier to use the database of permits of stay for statistical purposes, to carry on record linkage with other archives and to evaluate the performance of matching keys not containing the personal identification number.