



## MULTILING Project

### Italy

Maurizio Ambrosini, University of Milan

#### 1. The social context

For around a century (1870-1970) Italy was a country of large-scale emigration. Political and trade-union debate, like social initiatives, were mainly concerned with the protection of Italian emigrants abroad and maintaining their bonds with the mother country, including the conservation and transmission of the Italian language. The trade unions, for example, opened offices abroad (which still exist today) to assist emigrants and ensure their entitlement to social benefits at home, thereby fostering ties with Italy. Only in the last quarter of the last century did Italy become a country of immigration, and then with some delay became aware of it in the early 1990s. Trade unions were among the first social actors to organize counselling and protection services, while entrepreneurs quietly began to hire immigrants to meet labour shortfalls not fulfilled by domestic supply. This first section analyses this change, with particular reference to migration policies and the public discourse on the matter.

##### 1.1. Immigrants and the labour market in Italy

When analysing migratory processes in regard to Italy, the first aspect to emphasise is its rapid change, in the space of a few decades, from a country of emigration to one (mainly) of immigration (Pugliese, 2002). Today, around 5 million immigrants live in Italy, and between 300,000 and 400,000 of them are in an irregular condition. The crisis

has slowed the growth of immigration, produced a number of departures to other destinations or returns to the motherland, and spurred new emigration by Italians abroad. But it has not fundamentally changed the scenario.

Secondly, this has been a largely spontaneous change both unexpected and little regulated. It originated 'from below' in the labour market and local social contexts; only later, amid delays and resistances of various kinds, was it recognized by the public authorities and legally regulated (Calavita, 2005).

In the early 1990s, when the public became aware that Italy was changing into a country of immigration, the phenomenon was viewed mainly in pathological terms: a new social problem had hit a country already beset with difficulties. In the meantime, in silence and in a barely visible and fragmented manner, the labour market (firms but also households), as well as representatives of civil society (associations, trade unions, churches) instead took action for economic integration. Initially, such action was mainly informal, but then became increasingly formalized in the richer and more developed regions, where the gap between labour supply and demand was wider and more obvious.

Thirdly, political regulation of this situation only came later, and a similar discrepancy between the spheres of the market and of migration policy has recurred over time. Not surprisingly, the main device of migration policy has been the repeated enactment of regularization laws (Barbagli, Colombo and Sciortino, 2004): seven in twenty-five years, the most recent of them in 2012, plus a number of undeclared regularizations, such as those implemented through immigration quota decrees (*decreti flussi*). On this crucial issue, one discerns a surprising continuity in immigration policies, regardless of the party in government.

However, it should be stressed that Italy, with its 'quota' system for the admission of foreign workers, not only seasonal or highly-skilled, has on the whole been more open to immigration than most EU countries in the past two decades. But the workforce needs of the labour market (firms and households), until the crisis of 2008 and in some niches thereafter, have constantly exceeded the cautious forecasts concerning the need to hire foreign workers, and obliged policy-makers to realign legislation with the actual dynamics of the market. Whence derives a fourth aspect: in the 'career' of an immigrant in Italy, transition through 'irregular' status is considered normal. It is sometimes long,

and often difficult process; but it is surmountable, and perhaps inevitable: a kind of toll paid in order to fulfil the ambition to emigrate to an advanced country. In the experience of an immigrant, a first phase of irregularity and generally of exploitation is followed sooner or later, in one way or another, by an opportunity to obtain regularization and then seek a job in the regular market (Ambrosini, 2014a; A. Colombo, 2012). An aspect connected with this “migration regime” (Faist, 1995) is the institutional unpreparedness in terms of adapting workplaces to a multilingual workforce and the provision of Italian language courses.

To be noted is that concern for linguistic minorities used to be scant in Italian society and the labour market: the issue was confined to certain local realities, particularly the Val d’Aosta – and especially to Alto Adige-South Tyrol, where after World War II the German-speaking minority forcefully asserted its distinctive cultural and linguistic features. In the rest of the country, instead, for several decades the main issue was the integration of internal migrants, mostly from the South and often barely literate. A major problem was equipping them with an adequate knowledge of standard Italian, spoken and written, and at least a basic formal qualification. During the 1970s, the trade unions consequently introduced into collective bargaining the institute known as “150 hours”: paid leave to attend literacy courses, which the unions themselves helped to organize.

Today the problem takes a different form. Immigrant workers come from very diverse backgrounds, have very few links with Italy’s modest colonial history, and almost always possess very little knowledge of the Italian language at the time of their arrival and their entry into the labour market, with the partial exception of Albanians. Once again, as we shall see, the trade unions of the sectors most affected have addressed the problem of literacy in Italian.

To conclude, therefore, as with other aspects of the functioning of Italy’s economy and society, a sort of microsocial ‘bricolage’ has filled the gap left by the weakness or malfunctioning of the institutional devices. Immigrants in Italy have always come to be recognized as furnishing the manpower necessary in certain sectors, as being beneficial to the economy (as well as to the state’s finances), and as a providential resource for families. Still lacking, as we shall see in what follows, is their recognition as a legitimate component of society, as demonstrated by the rigidity of the law on access to

citizenship. The labour of immigrants has been welcomed, but immigrants as persons are still marginalized.

## **1.2. The geographical variants of immigrant employment in Italy**

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of statistical sources, in this section we analyse the geography of the inclusion of the immigrant labour force in a country with wide economic differences among its regions. As a general fact, to be noted is that immigration is more numerous, more integrated into the labour market, and more stable in the richest and most developed regions of the country: six regions of the Centre-North account for 80% of immigrant employment: Lombardy, Veneto, Piedmont, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, and Lazio. If we add smaller but dynamic central and northern regions (Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Marche, Umbria), the pattern is complete: there is a much closer relationship between economic development and employment of immigrant labour than between delays in developing and using immigration to undertake fragile and uncompetitive economic activities. Moreover, the protagonists of immigrant employment are not only large cities; they are also the provinces of eastern Lombardy, Triveneto, Emilia-Romagna, and Tuscany, which have mixed economies, a rich system of small and medium-sized enterprises, vigorous medium-sized towns, and high average incomes. These are the provinces that have driven the Italian economy in the past twenty years. They have done so thanks to a mixture of tradition and innovation even in the most dynamic components of the local systems.

On the basis of the statistical data and the results of local surveys, we can then distinguish four territorial models of immigrant employment (Ambrosini, 2011):

- The first is that of the industrialized provinces of the Centre-North (especially the north-eastern quadrant), where for years the typical image of the immigrant worker was that of a labourer employed in a small or medium-sized enterprise along the sub-contracting chain, or in services related to industrial production (cargo handling, warehouse management, cleaning, etc.). In those provinces,

moreover, increasing numbers of immigrant women also found work in domestic and care services.

- The second model is that of the metropolises and the urban economies, primarily Rome and Milan, where the employment of immigrants is more varied but is mostly in construction, catering, cleaning and transport. The most common and familiar image is that of the domestic worker (fixed but mostly paid by the hour) or the live-in carer of an elderly person (the so-called '*badante*'). It is flanked by all the other service workers that enable cities to function and medium-upper class urban residents to balance work, family commitments, and leisure.
- The third model is that of temporary employment in the *Mezzogiorno*, which at the beginning of the process of immigration in the 1980s was the gateway to Italy for many immigrants. Until 2008, the South of Italy was often the area of first entry and transit to the more developed regions with abundant job opportunities. With the crisis, however, a growing number of immigrants have settled in the South. There has also been a migration in reverse from the factories of the North to the underground economy of the South. The jobs available are mostly precarious or irregular: the most notorious sector is the harvesting of Mediterranean crops, where the typical figure is the day labourer hired 'off the books' through the mediation of *caporali* (gangmasters). But the tourism and construction sectors increasingly resort to the use of immigrant labour, mostly irregular. Irregular domestic work, moreover, has grown significantly in the South, and it has partially emerged with the recent regularization measures.
- Finally, there is the fourth model typical of the central and northern provinces that attract significant flows of seasonal workers employed during the summer in the tourism industry and in the autumn for the fruit harvest (grapes, apples, etc.). The most emblematic case is that of Trentino-Alto Adige, the only region with an efficient system to import seasonal labour for agriculture (especially in Trentino) and hotels (especially in South Tyrol). Similar, though less transparent, processes occur in other provinces with tourism industries in the Centre-North. Overall, in these areas irregular employment is less frequent than in the South, although the growth of live-in care increases the submerged component of immigrant labour.

### **1.3. Migration policies**

Overall, the Italian economy, like those of Spain and Greece, until 2008 found itself in a contradictory position with respect to European migration policies and the demands prevalent in public opinion and for long periods in domestic politics as well. A highly segmented labour market, including families, had to seek manpower in markets larger than the national one because the traditional internal migrations were no longer sufficient: while the more developed regions had to satisfy their needs for low-skilled labour, especially educated young people moved from the South to work in the public administration, the national health service, and the professions. With the Schengen Agreement, the European partners enjoined Italy to control its borders more rigorously and to clamp down on illegal immigration. Public opinion proved receptive to stances hostile to immigration, especially in the more developed regions of greater attraction to immigrants. Founded during the early 1990s in the northern regions was the Lega Nord party, which made hostility to immigrants a core component of its political platform. Unlike similar parties that enjoyed ephemeral success or never attained important governmental posts, for more than twenty years the Lega Nord has garnered between 7% and 12% of votes in general elections, and many more in regional and local ones. It has obtained key positions in centre-right coalitions and national and regional governments, also heading key ministries like Internal Affairs under the last Berlusconi government (2008-2011), and it currently has the presidency of such important regions as Lombardy and Veneto.

In this situation, the periodic regularizations implemented under governments of all political stripes, but especially centre-right, have been the most sensible solutions found by governments for contradictions between policy and market. The form that regularization takes in Italy is the faculty granted to employers to legalize the status of foreign workers without residence permits, but whom they employ without a formal contract, if they pay a sum to offset the social security contributions evaded.

Despite discontinuities due to inaccurate interpretation of labour market trends, almost every year Italian governments have enacted legislation allowing the entry of third-

country workers in response to employers' requirements. The numbers have diminished in recent years and mainly concern seasonal workers for the agricultural sector.

To be noted are two regulatory changes repeatedly requested by the trade unions. The first is the transposition of EU legislation which allows the granting of protection and special stay permits to irregular immigrants subject to severe forms of exploitation (however, the directive has been transposed with strict limits on the issue of permits 'for severe exploitation'). The second is repeal of the law, dating back to the Fascist period, which allowed only Italian citizens to take public-sector jobs. In this regard, a reform law of September 2013 granted access to public-sector employment (provided that no official powers were exercised) to all holders of long-term EC stay permits (representing more than 50% of foreigners legally present in Italy), as well as political refugees and family members of EU citizens.

Unlike those of other developed countries, the Italian economy has no specific need of high-skilled immigrant labour, with the partial exception of nurses. Transposed in 2012 was the so-called 'Blue Card' directive in regard to high-skilled foreign nationals. The norm on the matter is the only one that allows the entry of foreigners in excess of the quotas and at any time of the year (hence without waiting for determination of the inflows). It therefore represents a highly flexible and simplified channel of entry. However, only few foreigners have entered Italy via this channel. The Italian economy does not generally have any great need for highly-skilled labour and can usually find the 'brains' that it requires on the internal market. Employers have often complained about the difficulty of hiring high-skilled foreign workers, but they have never taken important initiatives on the matter.

Conversely, there is an outflow of educated workers to other countries. Hence, Italy can be called an exporter of 'brains' and an importer of 'arms'.

The gap between policy and the market is reflected in the legal provisions on citizenship. The Italian law was reformed in 1992, eighty years after its first enactment, by almost unanimous vote in Parliament. As Italians began to realize that their country was becoming multiethnic, the new norms went in the opposite direction: they doubled (from 5 to 10 years) the length of stay required of third-country nationals before they could apply for naturalization; instead, the norms reduced the time required for citizens of EU member countries (from 5 to 4 years). The applications for naturalization were

then examined in discretionary manner by ministry officials, who evaluated the level of integration achieved by the applicant in various ways. Since Greece amended its legislation, these regulations are the most restrictive in Western Europe, together with those of Luxembourg. Only marriage to an Italian citizen grants preferential treatment (only two years to obtain citizenship); and for several years it has been the main means to acquire citizenship in Italy (Zincone 2006). Moreover, the descendants of former Italian emigrants can easily reacquire citizenship, without having to possess particular language skills or clean criminal records. Zincone (2006) spoke in this regard of a “familistic conception” of citizenship.

The same difference is apparent in voting rights: Italians abroad can elect their own representatives in parliament, whereas long-resident immigrants cannot vote even for the administration of the municipalities in which they have resided and worked for years. The economic citizenship acquired *de facto* by immigrants has not yet been translated into political citizenship, which on the one hand weakens their claims in the market of electoral consensus, and on the other, fosters the exploitation of xenophobic sentiments.

#### **1.4. The discourse on immigration**

As we have seen, the political dimension of Italy’s assumption of a new identity as a multiethnic country receiving migratory flows of diverse provenance and whose demographic composition is changing has lagged behind market trends and the amount of immigrant settlements. The citizenship law and the denial of local political rights to long-resident immigrants are the most obvious manifestations of this laggardliness.

The public discourse on immigration began to take shape in 1989-90, with the debate on the immigration bill bearing the name of the then minister, Martelli. For the first time, voices opposed to immigration were raised at official level. In the following years, the success achieved by the Lega Nord, with its positions markedly hostile to immigrants, characterized the political debate on the subject. For twenty years, immigration was an issue that defined the identity of the political parties and enabled them to mobilize supporters. Three main arguments were adopted by the centre-right parties. Following the Northern League, they expressed positions of substantial closure to immigrants,



refugees, and cultural and religious diversity: immigrants as a threat to the security of citizens and public order; immigrants as competitors for the diminishing resources of the public welfare system; immigrants as a danger to the nation's cultural and religious identity.

Especially during the elections of 2008 the 'immigration/security' binomial impacted strongly on voters and facilitated the success of the centre-right. In the three years that followed, with a series of measures comprised under the label of "security package", the Berlusconi-led government issued various provisions against immigrants. For example, the package defined irregular immigration as a criminal offence; it introduced an aggravating circumstance for illegal immigrants prosecuted for other offences; it prohibited irregular immigrants from performing civil status acts, including marriage it ordered the turnback to Libya of boatloads of asylum seekers; and it allowed private citizens to establish neighbourhood watch patrols. The measures on immigration included a compulsory Italian language test to obtain a long-term EC stay permit and the so-called 'points permit': a mechanism which deducted credits, up to withdrawal of the stay permit, from immigrants who did not fulfil certain conditions.

Several provisions were subsequently deleted or mitigated by rulings of the Constitutional Court, the European Court of Strasbourg, or other European institutions. The next three governments, although short-lived, certainly changed the language, and they implemented measures such as the above-mentioned regulatory innovations. Of particular importance in the public debate was the commitment to the rescue at sea of refugees on boats from the Libyan coast, especially with the Mare Nostrum operation.

However, there still persisted a cultural climate in which xenophobic expressions and proposals found political legitimacy. Proposals concerning citizenship and the rights of immigrants were not implemented. Landings of boatloads of immigrants and the humanitarian obligation to welcome them fuelled new campaigns for closure and populist slogans, which, for example, contrasted the cost of rescuing and protecting asylum seekers with the neglect of unemployed Italians.

In this scenario, especially in the areas of northern Italy with the largest inflows of foreigners, local policy measures were enacted to counter the settlement, integration, or expression of specific demands by immigrants. These interventions were favoured by

the new rules included in the security package of 2008, and they were urged by local authorities, which gave mayors greater powers on matters concerning urban security. The result was a large-scale campaign for the introduction of local regulations based on a very broad notion of urban security, in which the fight against crime was extended to include protection of urban decorum and the repression of behaviour that might disturb or annoy citizens. Urban security thus became the “right of Italian citizens (preferably affluent and fully integrated into local society (...)) not to be ‘disturbed’ by the presence in their small homelands of people considered ‘diverse’” (Manconi and Resta, 2010, p. 330). Numerous ordinances were thus targeted, directly or indirectly, on the poorest and most marginalized immigrants: those who sought shelter in abandoned buildings, slept on park benches, consumed alcohol in public, or begged for money. Other ordinances prohibited gatherings of immigrants in public places; yet others hit shops opened by immigrants, especially when they became meeting places for groups of people and had long opening hours. There was no lack of interventions that undermined freedom of worship for Muslims, prohibited the use of languages other than Italian, or sanctioned the use of face-covering veils.

A specific analysis has examined local policy measures in Lombardy, the richest and most populous Italian region (Ambrosini 2013a). It considered not only the ordinances issued by mayors but also other measures democratically adopted by local institutions at various levels, from the regional government to municipal councils, aimed at limiting the rights, or restricting the opportunities, or repressing certain behaviours of immigrant residents. These measures can be termed ‘local exclusion policies’: that is, measures taken by local authorities in order to separate immigrants from the native population by imposing specific prohibitions on them (even if implicit, indirect or disguised), by introducing special control procedures, or restricting their access to benefits and resources of local social policies. These are therefore policies intended to mark out the boundaries of legitimate membership of the local community, and to reinforce a dualism between the full members (the insiders who belong to the native population or at least have Italian nationality) and the outsiders, whose right of residence tends to be redefined in limited and conditional forms. Thus exclusion policies aim to reassure native citizens – who alone have the right to vote – concerning the priority of their status with respect to outsiders, and to inform them that they are being actively

defended against the ‘invasion’ of the urban space that frighten them. At the same time, by identifying certain groups, urban districts, or behaviours as dangerous, local authorities stimulate the demand for protection by citizens-voters and purport to safeguard security, decorum, and social order.

More specifically, research has identified five categories of local exclusion policies:

- *civil exclusion*, relating to aspects such as the possibility to enrol at the registry office or to beg for money;
- *social exclusion*, relating to access to certain benefits such as child allowances, rent subsidies, or contributions to medical or educational expenses;
- *cultural exclusion*, exemplified by prohibitions on the opening of places of worship for Muslims, or the use of face-covering veils, or the compulsory use of Italian in public places;
- *security exclusion*, including local measures against illegal immigration (such as invitations to report the presence of suspected irregular immigrants, or bonuses for police officers who capture them), or against the settlement of Roma and Sinti groups and families;
- *economic exclusion*, intended to restrict the opening of businesses by immigrants (phone centres, kebab stalls) or the removal of signs in languages other than Italian.

Although for a certain period exclusion policies received the approval and support of voters, their implementation proved difficult. The most blatant discriminatory measures were contested by the UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale contro le Discriminazioni Razziali) and by the prefects, who have the power to demand the withdrawal of provisions, and in the most severe cases to repeal them.

More often they were challenged ‘from below’ by social forces engaged in the defence of immigrants, which mounted protest actions and fought legal battles, often successfully. The trade unions distinguished themselves by their commitment. Various measures impugned by lawyers close to the trade unions and pro-immigrant associations were quashed by the courts: for example, the ordinances against veil-wearing or those excluding the families of foreign citizens from benefits for newborn children. Others remained on paper, such as the numerous ordinances against begging. Exclusion policies are therefore the terrain of political and media conflict, controversial and fluid,

in which there are actions and reactions, announcements and denials, sorties, retreats, and new attacks.

Also frequently stressed was the purely political purpose of such initiatives: to send a message to voters showing that their concerns and demands for protection were shared by local governments, but without paying particular attention to implementation of the measures and then to their outcomes. For the same reasons, the cultural influence of these campaigns was not negligible, and their effects have yet to be fully evaluated.

Political tensions related to immigration do not receive robust confirmation from analyses of public attitudes. A national survey on the attitudes of Italian families to immigrants and immigrant families (CISF 2014), besides confirming the correlation of hostility to immigrants with low education, older age, and low socio-economic status, also showed some interesting links with territories. Hostility increases in medium-small towns, while both the positions termed ‘problematic’ by the researchers – i.e. caution and concern about issues such as mixed marriages or the large number of immigrant pupils in school classrooms – and that termed ‘open’ were more likely to be associated with residence in central-northern Italy. The two findings suggest that hostility to immigrants correlates less with actual contact or forced co-living in areas with large foreign populations than with other factors: inclusion in more traditional life-contexts; the fear that the established social order is being disrupted; knowledge about the phenomenon obtained more from the media than from direct experience.

## **2. Data and sources on immigration and work in Italy**

This section considers the main statistical aspects of the phenomenon in light of the available data.

### **2.1. The growth of the resident foreign population**

The growth of the resident foreign population in Italy was very rapid for around two decades. In recent years, it has been slowed by the economic crisis, which has also caused a resumption of Italian emigration abroad. Table 1 provides an overview of the country’s shift to becoming a multiethnic and multilingual society.

Table 1 – Foreigners resident in Italy

1961 Census	62,780
1971 Census	121,116
1981 Census	210,937
2001 Census	1,334,889
1 January 2013	4,387,721

Source: ISTAT 2013

The ISTAT has recently updated the figures: the foreign population resident in Italy on 31 December 2013 amounted to 4.92 million persons, equivalent to 8.1% of the resident population. The increase was due not so much to a greater flow of new entries (+182,000, which was less than in previous years) as to revision of registry office data by municipalities (Ministero del Lavoro, 2014). As said, immigrants in Italy are characterized by their diversity of origins and scant knowledge of Italian on their arrival. Over time, however, European and female immigrants have increased – in both cases exceeding 50% of the entire foreign population in Italy.

Table 2 (Ministero del Lavoro, 2014, p.35) presents the distribution of immigrants by nationality, comparing 2001 with 2013. In 2001, the first nationality was Moroccan, and six of the first ten groups were non-European. Six out of ten were predominantly male. It was also necessary to sum nine national groups to obtain 50% of the foreign population. In 2013, the largest group was Romanian. Five of the top ten groups were European, and six were predominantly female. Also recorded was a greater concentration of origins: five nationalities accounted for 50%.

Table 2 – Number of residents, % of total of foreign citizens, and % of women by citizenship for the first 25 nationalities in 2013 and 2001

<b>2013</b>			
Country	Residents on 1 Jan. (thousands)	% on total foreigners	% women
1 Romania	951.1	21.7	56.8
2 Albania	437.5	10.0	48.1
3 Morocco	412.7	9.4	45.4
4 China	213.6	4.9	49.7

5	Ukraine	192.3	4.4	79.7
6	Philippines	139.8	3.2	58.3
7	Moldova	130.8	3.0	67.2
8	India	123.7	2.8	39.8
9	Peru	97.6	2.2	60.4
10	Poland	95.9	2.2	72.4
11	Tunisia	93.2	2.1	37.9
12	Egypt	91.9	2.1	30.6

**2001**

Country	Residents on 21 October (thousands)	% on total foreigners	% women
1 Morocco	180.1	13.5	39.8
2 Albania	173.1	13.0	43.7
3. Romania	74.9	5.6	53.5
4. Philippines	54.0	4.0	61.1
5 Fed. Rep. Yugoslavia	49.3	3.7	46.8
6 Tunisia	47.7	3.6	35.1
7 China	46.9	3.5	48.6
8 Germany	35.1	2.6	64.7
9 Senegal	31.2	2.3	15.5
10 Peru	29.5	2.2	62.7
11 France	29.3	2.2	66.9
12 Macedonia (FYROM)	28.1	2.1	39.3

Source: calculations by Staff SSRMdl of Italia Lavoro on EUROSTAT (Population) and ISTAT (2001 census of the population) data

## 2. 2. Immigrants in the Italian labour market

At the end of 2013, 2,355,923 immigrants were employed in Italy, and represented 10.5% of total regular employment. This average figure, however, conceals marked concentrations of employment matched by exclusion from other sectors – public, clerical, and skilled. With respect to the average, their presence was double in construction (in which 19.7% of immigrant workers were employed), reaches 13.6% in agriculture, is slightly lower in industry in the strict sense (9.6%), and aligned with the average in services (10.7%), but with a different composition whereby immigrants were

almost absent in the most remunerative sectors and far more numerous in domestic services, where more than 50% of workers were foreigners.

During the economic crisis, from 2007 to 2013, whereas employment of Italians fell by around 1.6 million units, the employment of foreigners increased by 853,000 units, according to the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica and the Ministero del Lavoro (Forlani, 2014: 32; Ministero del Lavoro, 2014). Employment among immigrants grew in all sectors, contrary to significant declines in the Italian component (Table 3: Ministero del Lavoro, 2014, p. 74). Overall, the employment rate of female immigrants seems to have suffered the effects of the crisis less than that of men, given that the main sector of reference – domestic-care work – was less exposed to the economic cycle than those in which men had found work: especially construction and manufacturing.

Table 3 – Variation in the number of employed persons aged 15 or over by sector of economic activity and citizenship (a.v.) Years 2013/2007

<b>Sector of economic activity</b>	<b>Citizenship</b>	<b>Var. 2013/2007</b>
Agriculture	Italian	-168,088
	Foreign	+58,202
Industry in the strict sense	Italian	-612,741
	Foreign	+83,513
Construction	Italian	-421,155
	Foreign	+57,418
Commerce	Italian	-283,607
	Foreign	+64,749
Other service activities	Italian	-169,493
	Foreign	+589,622
Overall total	Italian	-1,655,084
	Foreign	+853,504

Source: calculations by Staff SSRMdL of Italia Lavoro on RCFL-ISTAT microdata

In recent years, the media have frequently carried stories of Italians queuing up to take jobs as farm labourers or carers of the elderly, dismissed immigrants returning to their countries of origin or sending their families back home. But these reports receive scant confirmation from the statistics. The explanation has to do with the segmentation of the labour market: Italians and immigrants work in different sectors, and immigrants, although hard hit by the recession, are driven by the constant need to find new jobs, even if they are often more precarious and less remunerative than the previous ones.

Unemployed foreigners, however, have grown substantially in numbers, reaching 1,275,000 in 2013, equal to 17.3% (in 2007 the proportion was less than half – 8.3%), compared with 11.5% of Italian workers (Ministero del Lavoro, 2014).

As in other countries of the Mediterranean, so in Italy the employment rate among immigrants is higher than that of the national population, with more pronounced differences in the Centre and especially in the South, although the economic crisis of the past seven years has brought the values closer, with a decrease of 5 percentage points since 2008: overall, the figure is now 58.1% for all foreign workers (55.9% for immigrants from outside the EU, 63% for EU citizens) compared with 55.3% for Italians (Ministero del Lavoro, 2014, p.62). Important in this regard is the fact that Italy still has mainly first-generation immigration consisting of young adults active in the labour market. For foreign women, the employment rates are 57.2% for citizens of EU countries and 45.2% for non-EU nationals. The values, however, differ greatly according to whether one considers components in which women are first-migrants, who have come to Italy to work and provide for the needs of their families in the home country, or components in which the women have entered Italy for family reunification, often accompanied by children: in fact, the values range from 78.3% for Filipino female immigrants to 2.2% for Pakistanis, 8.9% for Egyptians, and 10.0% for Bangladeshis.

On a regional basis, the economic inclusion of immigrants is not just an urban phenomenon; as noted above, it is widespread in numerous provincial areas, especially so-called ‘industrial districts’ (i.e. areas with strong production specializations, such as biomedical equipment in Emilia, packaging technologies in the province of Bologna, valves in Lumezzane in the province of Brescia, ceramics in Sassuolo, agro-food in Parma), and more generally in the local economies of the Centre-North based on small and medium-sized enterprises. The territorial distribution sees the North-West in first place with 811,677 employees (34.5%), followed by the Centre (624,846, 26.5%), and then by the North-East (606,625, 25.7 %), while in all the regions of the South only 312,778 immigrants (13.3%) are officially employed.

Important employers of immigrants, regular and irregular, are families, especially in domestic work and home care for the elderly (Carchedi, Mottura, Pugliese, 2003; Ambrosini, 2013b). In 2013 more than half of domestic workers were immigrants: ISTAT counted 485,480 out of a total of 944,634 (51.4%). According to the records of



the INPS (Istituto Nazionale di Previdenza Sociale), however, eight out of ten domestic workers are immigrants (Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2014). Research commissioned by the Ministero del Lavoro raised the number of domestic workers to 1.6 million.

Families have always played an important role in the periodic (explicit or implicit) regularization campaigns. To be stressed in this regard is that the emancipation of Italian women and their entry into the non-domestic labour market has been encouraged and accompanied by their replacement, in domestic tasks and care work, by foreign women (Andall, 2000).

### 2.3. Discrimination against immigrants in the Italian labour market

The great majority of immigrant workers (almost 80%) are employed as blue-collar workers (for Italians the value is slightly above 30%). By contrast, very few (0.8%) have a managerial position, compared with 7.7% of Italians (Ministry of Labour, 2014: 66).

The careers of immigrants in production organizations are still difficult, although ISTAT and local surveys have noted some signs of improvement (Ortolani and Luatti, 2007; Perotti, 2008; Colasanto and Marcaletti, 2009), especially in terms of blue-collar careers. According to ISTAT, only around 10% of foreign workers belong in the medium-high categories (executives, entrepreneurs, technicians, office-workers): these are mainly self-employed workers; careers within companies are still rare.

Immigrants struggle to have their educational credentials recognized and valued (Reyneri, 2006): the data highlight a widespread phenomenon of over-education. 22.6% of foreign workers with degrees (ISCED 5-6) perform unskilled manual work, and 12.1% skilled manual work. Among upper-secondary diploma holders (ISCED 3-4) 33.6% perform unskilled manual work and 34.3% skilled manual work (ML 2014, p.71). Even with the caution necessary when comparing different educational systems and considering the transferability of knowledge and skills acquired in other contexts, the contrast with the jobs held is striking, and indicates a widespread phenomenon of 'brain waste'. For immigrant women, the phenomenon is particularly evident: nearly half of those surveyed by ISTAT were domestic workers or carers for the elderly.

The two sectors in which the majority of immigrants have skilled jobs are hospitals – which, in the North, have a significant shortage of nurses – and the particular and

largely unregulated sector of so-called ‘cultural mediation’ (in schools, courts, hospitals, local public services, and the state administration).

The disadvantage of immigrant workers is confirmed by the data on pay. Almost 60% receive wages of up to 1,000 euros (while for Italians the relative value is 27.5%), while only 2.1% earn more than 2000 euros, although many work by shifts or have awkward working hours (ML 2014 , p.73).

Self-employment, by contrast, has rapidly become the most important alternative to subordinate integration: a solution, it should be emphasised, consistent with Italy’s economic and social history, in which the transition to self-employment has been, and probably still is, the most accessible channel of upward social mobility for the lower classes. According to the statistical sources, at the end of 2013 the phenomenon concerned 497,080 immigrants who had set up businesses, with regional and local differences that replicated the geography of immigrant employment: 78% were located in the central and northern regions. They represented 8.2% of all firms active in Italy, and in eight cases out of ten they were single-proprietor firms, largely concentrated in two sectors: commerce (35.2%) and building (25.4%) (IDOS- UNAR, 2014, pp.291-2).

Thus far, the crisis seems to have accentuated the segmentation of the labour market, with immigrants increasingly confined to the sectors and occupations – mostly low-skilled and often inferior to their abilities – in which they have already worked for some time. Some years later, still relevant and even aggravated is the expression ‘3D jobs’: dirty, dangerous and demanding. On the other hand, however, although the crisis has increased levels of unemployment among immigrants, it has heightened the incidence of their employment, in a labour market where unskilled work has lost less ground than skilled work.

### **3. The social actors and bargaining**

#### **3.1. The architecture of the Italian system of industrial relations**

In Italy as in several other countries, collective bargaining is the core of labour relations (Cella and Treu, 1998). In Italy the role of bargaining is more extensive than in other countries, where there are often laws which fix the minimum wage. It is bargaining that

determines pay levels, linked to the level of qualification, increments for night work or weekend work, working hours and the duration of leave, and other benefits such as the right to take time off from work for study purposes.

In Italy as in other countries, collective bargaining is organized on three levels (Cella and Treu, 1998):

- a) *Interconfederal bargaining*, which deals with matters that concern the entire workforce.
- b) *National industry bargaining*: this is the most important level of bargaining because it determines, sector by sector, wages, working hours, duration and organization of holidays, overtime pay, and job classifications. In principle, all employees are covered by a collective agreement: in its absence, reference is made to agreements in similar sectors.
- c) *Local bargaining*: this takes place mainly at firm level. It is not compulsory, and is usually undertaken in medium-large firms. In Italy it is supplementary to industry bargaining. It establishes conditions and treatments specific to the firm: in recent years, for example, atypical working hours, bonuses related to the firm's economic performance, pension schemes and supplementary health insurance, services such as in-company crèches. In some sectors fragmented into small and very small firms (construction, agriculture, retail trade) and in some local areas, especially those with high concentrations of small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the same industry, another form of local bargaining takes place – *territorial* – which replaces company-level bargaining and refers to agreements that apply to all firms in the branch operating in that area. It can also involve the local public institutions on matters of common interest: training, environmental protection, accident prevention, management of redundancies.

In principle, therefore, immigrants are covered by the same employment contracts as Italian workers; they receive the same pay for the same job; and they are entitled to allowances, company bonuses, and social benefits to the same extent. In fact, however, the situation is different. As we have seen, immigrants have lower-skilled jobs; they are more exposed to unhealthy or dangerous working conditions; their qualifications and previous work experience are rarely recognized; and they find it difficult to obtain advancements and promotions.

The economic and regulatory changes of the past three decades have taken place in an economic environment in which production decentralization, subcontracting (particularly in construction), outsourcing, and also the informal economy were already very widespread. Some sectors, such as agriculture, construction and tourism, are structurally characterized by the extensive use of seasonal labour. The wide availability of highly flexible immigrant labour willing to work in conditions no longer accepted by Italian workers has encountered these processes. On the one hand, this has contributed to increasing the adaptability of Italian firms, on the other, it has segmented the labour market further. In some sectors, such as industrial cleaning or logistics, downward bidding for contracts has reduced pay rates and increased job insecurity. Overall, however, immigrants have not supplanted Italian workers but instead assumed complementary functions: the hiring of immigrants for lower-level jobs has enabled many Italian workers to keep their jobs by moving to supervisory roles or to other sectors. In fact, the provinces with the highest rates of immigrant employment are, in general, those with the lowest unemployment rates, highest Italian employment rates, and the highest incomes.

### 3.2. The action of the trade unions

The trade unions have been among the main protagonists of the inclusion and integration of immigrants in Italy. They have acted at the political level by pressing for the regularization of workers with irregular status, for the extension of social rights, and for change of the law on citizenship. They have developed information and counselling services on administrative procedures (the issue and renewal of stay permits, family reunification, naturalization), and they have defended workers against employers in the case of individual disputes.

Consequently, in a period difficult for the trade unions and their capacity to gather and represent new demands for protection and representation, the case of foreign immigrants runs counter to the trend: more than a million are enrolled with a confederal or autonomous trade union (Idos-Unar, 2014).

This organizational success has several components. At a time when immigration policies are predominantly restrictive, immigrants' rights are defended mainly by civil

society actors. This trend is more marked in southern Europe, where the acceptance and integration of immigrants have been promoted mostly by non-governmental organizations. These have anticipated the action of governments and organized various social services for new residents, primarily encouraging regularization. As regards the trade unions, internationalist and solidarist appeals, egalitarian concerns, the need to combat the underground economy and undeclared labour, and the endeavour to assume political roles, have fuelled a commitment to immigrants that involves a range of social issues, and not work alone (Marino, 2012; Mottura et al., 2010).

Secondly, the ubiquitous presence of trade unions has enabled them to intercept requests for protection which extend beyond employment conditions: as in the case of regularization campaigns or the numerous administrative procedures to which immigrants are subject. The assistance provided by the trade unions' services are of crucial importance. Their dispute offices handle immigrants' claims of unlawful treatment by employers and assist them in asserting their rights as workers.

Third, A peculiarity of Italy is the presence alongside the trade unions of the *patronati*. These are offices specialized in assisting workers to access particular social benefits: pensions, compensation for injuries, unemployment allowances. Today, the *patronati* also help immigrants in their dealings with the public administration. In recent years a better division of tasks between trade-union organizations and the *patronati* has more clearly distinguished trade union activity from advice on bureaucratic procedures: overall, the package of services that unions are able to offer immigrants has grown, and this has bolstered their memberships.

Still rather weak aspects are active participation by immigrants in trade unions and career opportunities for the militants of immigrant origin in trade union structures

### 3.3. Other social actors: NGOs and employers

Similar considerations apply to other civil society actors, primarily those connected with the Catholic Church: they have acted on behalf of immigrants at the political level, protested against xenophobic discourses and exclusion policies, and developed a range of services addressed especially to the most vulnerable members of the immigrant population (clinics for those unable to access the national health service, Italian

language courses, educational support for immigrant children, canteens, and other basic services). Overall, however, there is more protection than participation: immigrants are helped, but they rarely assume active roles or become leaders (Ambrosini, 2014b). Table 4 summarizes the main forms of action by Italian civil society in support of immigrants.

*Table 4. Four forms of action by Italian civil society organizations in support of immigrants*

<i>Forms of action</i>	<i>Promoters</i>	<i>Areas of application</i>	<i>Expressions</i>
Promotion of networks	Various actors involved in the protection of immigrants	a) political level b) operational level c) interpersonal level	Creation of panels and work groups; exchange of information and opinions; operational services
Political protest	Politically competent actors of the pro-immigrant lobby	Protest against discriminatory national and local regulations	Public demonstrations, appeals, petitions
Legal protection	Lawyers	Protection against local discriminatory measures in individual cases	Lawsuits against local administrations
Production of services	Organizations that differ in kind and complexity depending on the type of service	Needs that are not adequately addressed by the public services	Creation and management of dedicated services (e.g. free health care, Italian courses)

Source: Ambrosini 2014b

Associationism by immigrants is still weak in Italy, being penalized by the lack of the right to vote, which in its turn hampers the possibility to obtain support and funding. Partial exceptions are the associations and networks (also virtual) created by the second generation of educated immigrants.

Employers and their associations are a different matter. Despite playing a key role in the country's acceptance of a multiethnic and multilingual society – as the promoters and beneficiaries of the inclusion of foreign immigrants in the economic system – they have rarely entered the debate on immigration and expressed opinions on government policies. They took a stance in the early 2000s, at the time of the Bossi-Fini Law, when they appreciated the close link between stay permits and regular employment contracts,

and investment in training in the countries of origin (of which some educational institutes run by the business system were involved). On the other hand, they have voiced some mild protests about the oppressive bureaucratic procedures imposed on firms and workers, which are also costly in terms of working days lost.

In the mid-2000s the Gruppo Giovani Imprenditori put forward a proposal inspired by Canada's selective immigration criteria (a points system for the evaluation of applications, with the emphasis on skilled immigration), but it was dropped by Confindustria when the centre-right government in office adopted a restrictive political agenda on immigration.

Local business associations have sometimes been more active, but in a highly uneven geographic pattern: a number of pilot projects have seen them as protagonists in terms of training, job placement, and finding accommodation in partnership networks with NGOs, training institutes, and local authorities. The crisis of 2008 and the severe cuts in public funding have almost nullified these schemes, even when they had obtained encouraging results.

### **3.4. Linguistic and cultural diversity in collective bargaining<sup>1</sup>**

The collective protection of the rights of immigrant workers and the management of cultural and linguistic diversity are extremely important for the trade unions; but it is a challenge that they have rarely, and only in certain branches, been able to meet effectively.

The difficulty of recognizing the particular needs of immigrant workers is particularly evident in the national collective agreements (*contratti collettivi nazionali di lavoro*, CCNL).

Firstly, given the marked occupational segregation of immigrant workers, only few sectors are concerned to protect the specific interests of this category of workers. Secondly, there is a general delay in considering certain specific needs of immigrants: longer holidays, spaces for prayer, specific foods in canteens, Italian language courses,

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<sup>1</sup> This section draws on the results of the research project "Lavoratori immigrati e sistema della rappresentanza: inclusione organizzativa, forme di partecipazione, accesso ai benefici sociali" co-financed by PRIN (Programmi di ricerca d'interesse nazionale"), call 2009, and concluded in .

instructions in foreign languages, or other measures to manage linguistic differences. Added to these are the need to prevent workplace accidents and to combat discrimination.

The language issue, in fact, is strongly felt by trade unionists (Ambrosini, De Luca, Pozzi 2014), especially in sectors where competence in written and spoken Italian is closely bound up with workplace safety. Knowledge of Italian is also considered important to prevent immigrant workers from being cheated by employers on contracts, wages, etc.. To overcome this problem, some categories have produced brochures in various languages: the contract for domestic workers, for example, is written in nine different languages.

Another important aspect is training. Outstanding in this regard is the construction industry, which has bilateral training institutes (co-financed and co-managed by employers' associations and trade unions). An extensive memorandum of understanding is annexed to the 2008 CCNL of building cooperatives and similar (renewed and merged with the CCNL for the employees of construction companies on 1 July 2014). In this memorandum, which covers foreign labour recruited for the construction of large-scale public works, the parties acknowledge the growing need to find skilled workers in short supply on the domestic labour market. The topics addressed by training courses are the Italian language, elements of civic education, contracts, labour law, prevention and safety, and technical skills. The 2008 agreement for construction firms states that they must notify the *enti scuola* (i.e. the sector's bilateral training institutes) of the presence of foreign workers, while the Formedil (Ente nazionale per la formazione e l'addestramento professionale nell'edilizia) is responsible for formulating the training programmes to be delivered through the *enti scuola* (art. 82).

The 2010-2013 CCNL for the wood industry specifies that specific training, with language comprehension tests, must be provided for immigrant workers (art. 8)

With regard to the accumulation of holidays, 2010-2013 CCNL of the stone industry includes a joint declaration that allows the accumulation of holidays, paid leave, and overtime set aside in the hours' bank in order to return to the homeland, barring the technical-organizational requirements of firms ( art. 83). An article in the 2010-2012 CCNL wood and stone industry dedicated to immigrant workers, besides permitting their accumulation of holidays and paid leave, affirms "the opportuneness of fostering a



fruitful corporate climate oriented to respect for cultural specificities and reciprocal courtesy” (art. 75). Besides this generic declaration of intent, the article also establishes the right of foreign workers to retain their jobs when called for military service in the homeland. Finally, in the same article, the parties agree to monitor annually the regional employment trend of immigrants and to pursue the development of legislation and initiatives to achieve the full integration of immigrant workers. Article 75 was reiterated in the same form when the renewal of the agreement was signed by the parties on 25 March 2014.

The metalworkers’ agreement (2008, renewed in 2013 maintaining the same provision) envisages the establishment of a national commission for the integration of immigrant workers “with the purpose of identifying initiatives to promote the integration and cultural understanding of immigrant workers in firms. In particular, the commission is tasked with:

- a) proposing, in light of previous experience, measures to promote the organization of canteens which respect religious differences;
- b) promoting application of the provision stated in the Joint Declaration beneath the contractual regulation of holidays in order that individual workers can accumulate periods of absence from work through the use of both holidays and paid leave, as provided by the agreement, so that they can join their families in their countries of origin;
- c) report corporate schemes to foster the integration of immigrant workers and indicate the results achieved.
- d) assess the feasibility, with the assistance of the national bilateral body, of the foreign-language translation of safety standards with reference to enterprises characterized by a significant presence of foreign workers.” (section I article 6).

Included in the 2013 agreement to supplement the above-quoted provisions was the following joint declaration: “The parties assign to the national bilateral body the task of preparing, within six months of its installation, information materials in English and French that companies may furnish to foreign workers at the moment of their hiring. The material prepared will be based on the teaching modules “Regulation of the Employment Relationship and Workplace Safety” already endorsed by the parties

within the national commission for vocational training and apprenticeship and used for the *Progetto Apprendo*.”

At company level, especially when the majority of workers are immigrants, it is usually easier to accumulate holidays, even though shifts are sometimes more difficult to organize. Moreover, closer attention is paid to particular dietary needs. In some cases, account is also taken of religious requirements: for example, work schedules are altered during Ramadan for Muslims (they start work early in the morning and stop in the early afternoon so that they do not become debilitated), and they are given time off to pray (instead of a coffee break).

Other studies have shown that second-level bargaining is differentiated according to the specific needs of national groups. In fact, in situations where North African or, more generally, Muslim workers predominate, agreements are more closely concerned with cultural or religious issues (prayer, canteen), whilst in local areas or companies where workers from Eastern Europe concentrate, greater attention is paid to the issues of language and training (Rinaldini, 2007).

However, it is difficult to gain an overall picture of the second-level agreements concerning foreign workers. The general impression is that they are increasing. But there is still a great deal to be done. Given this awareness, the immigration policies department of the Camera del Lavoro Metropolitana of Milan, in collaboration with the social and economic research institute of the CGIL, has conducted research on measures in second-level bargaining in favour of immigrant workers. The department's research on agreements nationwide induced it to prepare a small handbook entitled “Una nuova frontiera per la contrattazione. La contrattazione di secondo livello e i lavoratori immigrati”, which identified the thematic areas and the specific content on which the trade union must commit itself to working in years to come. As regards aspects to do with multilingualism, the handbook recommended the organization of Italian language courses and vocational training courses, and the promotion of workplace safety.

Instead, the issue of discrimination against immigrants in the workplace is still little addressed by unions and collective bargaining. The unions are active and vigilant on forms of discrimination by public institutions, especially at local level, but less incisive against private employers, as is the case of Southern Europe as a whole (Pajares 2008). There are various factors that explain this delay. First, it is more difficult to take action

against employers, who are often the owners of small businesses, and especially at a time of economic crisis. Discrimination has to do with freedom of choice by the entrepreneur in hirings and promotions, and it is difficult to prove where freedom ends and discrimination begins. The burden of proof is on the workers and then on the trade unions that protect them, while entrepreneurial freedom is a generally accepted principle. Second, almost all immigrant workers in Italy still belong to the first generation. Recognition of their qualifications requires costly and wearisome procedures, and it may not give the right to occupy higher-skilled jobs. Public-sector employment should be the driver, but until the recent reform this outlet was precluded to immigrants. An often rudimentary knowledge of Italian is another obstacle. It hampers the representation of immigrants and reinforces the idea that they have few skills to offer. The trade-union culture has probably been infiltrated by a notion of subordinate integration, as if having a job is already a satisfactory achievement for an immigrant. Finally, it should be borne in mind that restricting promotion opportunities for immigrants increases those of Italian workers who compete for the same jobs. To be mentioned in this regard are the protests by Italian workers against the trade unions, when they supported the proposal to remove the block on access to public employment by foreign nationals.

#### **4. Conclusions: immigration and diversity management in Italy**

This report has shown how Italy, a country of emigration and characterized by endemic unemployment, has become an importer of foreign labour. This change has come about in largely spontaneous manner through the action of economic actors (including families), ethnic networks, and social forces inspired by principles of solidarity (including the trade unions). The Italian version of the “reluctant importation” of foreign labour (Cornelius, Martin and Hollifield, 1994) is therefore based on a pattern of strong formal restrictions offset by forms of tolerance which result in the retrospective recognition of the entry and integration of immigrants into the labour market. Hence the importation of workers has mainly served the purpose of filling low-skilled jobs, for which the recruitment of Italian workers had become difficult, and internal inter-

regional mobility insufficient. On the contrary, an openness to skilled immigration is still almost non-existent.

As far as Italy is concerned, moreover, the country's immigrant labour market exhibits marked regional and occupational concentrations. Unlike in most developed economies, immigrant employment is not principally a metropolitan phenomenon; rather, it is widespread in the provinces of the Centre-North. It is not tied solely to agriculture and low-skilled services because it comprises an important industrial component (albeit with the considerable weight of construction). It certainly involves 'off-the-books' and irregular labour; but this represents only a part, large but in the minority, mainly concentrated in regions and provinces where unemployment is lower and earnings are higher.

On the one hand, immigrants are subject to demands for employment flexibility, and for seasonal, part-time, fixed-term, and temporary labour; on the other, for relatively stable, but subordinate, forms of employment located at the lower levels of the hierarchy.

It can be said that today a conspicuous and growing amount of 'made in Italy' industrial products are not manufactured in Italy, or are not manufactured by Italians. In some cases, the use of immigrants also helps to keep in Italy production that would disappear or be relocated abroad; in other cases, it delays outsourcing (Luciano, di Monaco and Allasino, 2007).

One can then identify jobs that have been created following the arrival of a large immigrant population in search of employment: an example is live-in private home care, which was practically non-existent before immigration. This is a very interesting case of a labour supply that has created the demand for it. From the social point of view, one can speak of a post-industrial society that has recovered and revitalized pre-industrial labour relations to enable Italian women to pursue their professional careers while retaining their traditional roles as managers of the family, offsetting the weaknesses of public services, and also the failure of men to share household tasks. In other words, the family is still at the core of organization of personal care, but it must resort to the market – that is, to the paid labour of foreign female workers – in order to fulfil the mission culturally expected of it.

Also in their quest for emancipation, immigrants seem to follow the traditional pathways. As for the Italian lower class, self-employment is the gateway to upward

social mobility. Certain sectors, such as construction and the retail trade, have begun to see the replacement of Italian owners with operators from the ranks of the immigrant population. In other cases, immigration opens new markets and creates employers to serve them: this is the case of products and services intended to meet specific demand by immigrants. Moreover, economic initiatives by immigrants cater to the interest of the most innovative and curious Italian consumers in new products, goods, services, and forms of entertainment.

This blend of the old and new, traditional and modern, is today at the core of the functioning of Italy's economy and society. The crisis does not seem to have altered this state of affairs. To date, there is no significant evidence of a return by Italians to jobs left to immigrants to fill. There are few educated young men who apply for jobs as unskilled labourers on construction sites, or young women who seek employment as around-the-clock carers to the elderly. Nor, except in a few cases, do immigrants who have lost their jobs sadly return to their home countries.

The issue of management of language differences has so far been addressed in four main ways. The first is the establishment of observatories, commissions, and study groups for the analysis of multiethnic changes in workplaces and the identification of problems due to cultural diversity.

The second concern is the acquisition of literacy in Italian. Here the attention of social actors focuses on the essential requirement of adequate mastery of the national language. Whilst in elite occupations, the internationalization of professions entails the increasing use of English, collective bargaining still insists that Italian is the language of work.

The third matter is understanding of the basic rules of working conditions : rules on safety and accident prevention, especially in the building industry, or the employment contract, as in the domestic sector. Here the main concern is to reach workers in a language familiar or at least understandable to them. Social actors, notably the trade unions, have provided for the translation of contracts, rules and regulations into the main languages spoken by immigrants.

The fourth theme concerns the management of cultural diversity. This has received greater attention in bargaining, with the result of a wider range of innovative solutions. It is mainly cultural differences connected with the Islamic religion that produce a

search for new contractual provisions: culturally appropriate menus in cafeterias, pauses for prayer and the availability of suitable premises, modified work schedules during Ramadan.

Still lacking, however, is real investment in diversity management by companies. Diversity is still seen primarily as a problem, not as an opportunity and a resource for firms. There is no lack of seminars and university courses on the subject, but the economic system does not seem to feel the need to invest significantly in diversity management.

Another issue is how to combat racial discrimination in the workplace. The rules exist, and there is a national office for the fight against racial discrimination. But effective commitment in workplaces is scant. In fact, subordinate integration is still the main approach adopted to include immigrants in Italy's economy and society.

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