

Geographic Distribution of Foreign Communities in Italy: preliminary analyses*

*La distribuzione geografica delle comunità straniere in Italia:
analisi preliminari*

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Riassunto: Obiettivo del lavoro è valutare la congruenza tra i dati sugli iscritti nelle anagrafi comunali all'inizio del 2005 e quelli sui permessi di soggiorno validi all'inizio del 2004 per tracciare un quadro di sintesi sui principali modelli insediativi delle comunità straniere presenti in Italia.

Keywords: Geographic distribution, Foreign communities

1. Introduction

From the late seventies Italy has increasingly turned into a receiving country from Less Developed Countries (LDCs). In particular, in the last 10 years, due to extraordinary regularization programmes, the number of foreigners has recorded a remarkable growth: at the beginning of 2004, there were more than 2,7 million regular foreigners in our country (2,320,000 holding a regular permit to stay plus over 400,000 accompanying children), accounting for 4,7% of resident population (Istat, 2005).

This group, that has remarkably increased in number over the years, cannot be considered as an homogeneous population, because it has grown after several migration waves from different geographic areas. In the analyses of the aspects differentiating the behaviour of foreign immigrant communities, in the most recent years, special attention was paid to their geographic distribution in the country. The analyses have been performed at different geographic levels: some scholars have focused on the distribution of foreigners (total or by macro areas or countries of citizenship) in Italian regions and provinces (Blangiardo and Farina, 1999; Casacchia, Diana and Strozza, 1999); others have focused their attention on the distribution by municipalities (Montanari and Cortese, 1993) or into specific Italian regions, provinces or sub-provincial areas (Davico and Mela, 1999); while others have concentrated their efforts on the geographic settlement of newcomers within specific urban areas (for instance, Natale, 2002).

The aim of this paper is to evaluate the congruence of results obtained from two different official sources and to assess the possibility to use them to identify the various geographic distribution patterns of foreign communities in Italy.

* The present paper is financially supported by Dipartimento di Scienze Statistiche, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, and by funds of Campania Regional Law n. 5/2002 (year 2003).

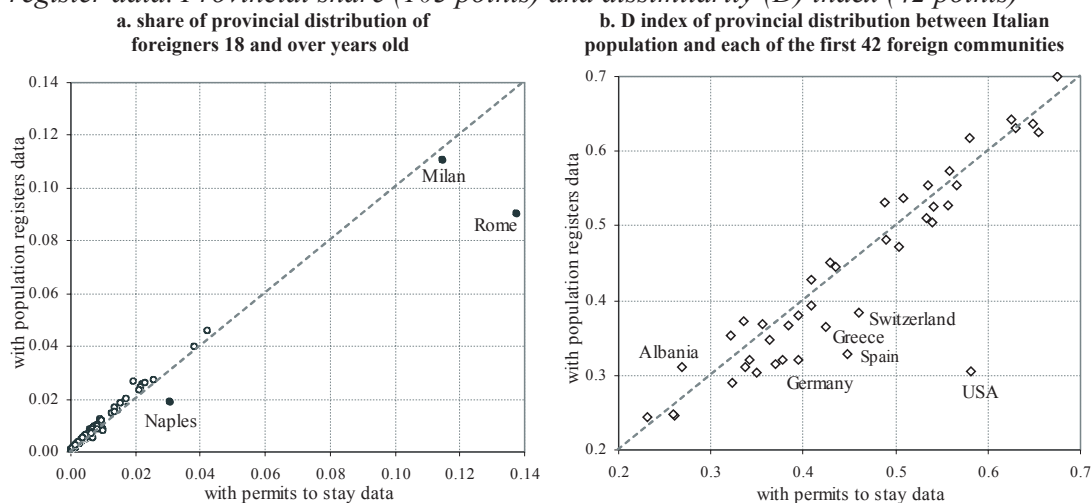
2. Data sources and measures of geographic distribution

The most updated information on geographic distribution of foreigners can be drawn both from municipal population registers (*anagrafi comunali*) and permits to stay although both sources have advantages and drawbacks. The former allows to obtain data on foreigners by citizenship, municipality of residence and sex; but for those municipalities which did not performed the census-population register comparison, composition by sex and citizenship is estimated on the base of total number of foreigners, which can be obtained by updating the 2001 census data. The latter shows the drawbacks peculiar to any administrative source, i.e. the geographic area refers to the province where the permit to stay was issued and available data do not record a great part of minors. However, this source shows a rather faithful picture of foreign adult population who is legally present in the country.

Thus it has been deemed useful to evaluate the correspondence of data from the two sources although these refer to partially different reference population. Significant differences for the provinces of Rome and Naples (figure 1a) emerge from the comparison between the provincial distribution of foreigners 18 and over years old enrolled in the population registers at the beginning of 2005 and the provincial distribution of valid permits to stay at the beginning of 2004.

A notable gap is highlighted in the province of Rome, due to the difficulties encountered in the census survey to record usual resident foreigners in the municipality of Rome. As a consequence, it should be taken into account that the population register data underestimate the number of usual resident foreigners in some areas where, on the contrary, their number is certainly sizable.

Figure 1: Comparison between results obtained using permits to stay or population register data. Provincial share (103 points) and dissimilarity (D) index (42 points)



It has thus been decided to assess the differences in the values of a synthetic index on the provincial distribution depending on whether considering population register or permit to stay data on adult foreign population¹. The values of the dissimilarity index in the provincial distribution of Italian resident population and of each of the 42 most numerous foreign communities², show notable differences (figure 1b) as to communities in More Developed Countries (MDCs). Such a phenomenon is due to the remarkable differences in figures and

¹ Only permits to stay issued to foreigners living in Italy since at least one year are considered.

² They are selected on the basis of the population register data.

in the characteristics of these communities recorded by the two sources, which is particularly emphasized in the case of the United States community. As a consequence, in the following analyses only the 34 communities of the LDCs were taken into account.

3. Results of multidimensional analyses with two different datasets

An equivalent basic set of elementary indicators on geographic distribution (dissimilarity index, percentages in 4 of the 5 Italian geographic areas, percentage in the metropolitan provinces and percentage in the two global provinces) has been built using both data sources, population registers and permits to stay. The same strategy has been adopted for each of these two datasets (7 indicators for 34 foreign communities): factorial analysis with a principal component method and cluster analysis on the factor score with Ward's method are used.

The comparison of the results is an empirical evaluation on the information congruence provided by the two datasets. By merely examining the two correlation matrices, a clear correspondence emerges between the two sources data, i.e. same sign, similar values in the correlation coefficients between the elementary indicators (table 1). The analysis of the correlation between above indicators and the extracted factors (table 2) as well as the projection of the statistical units on the first factorial plane (figure 2) merely confirm the congruity among the two datasets.

Table 1: *Correlation among elementary indicators on geographic distribution of 34 foreign communities. Separate analysis with population register data and with permit to stay data^(a)*

	D index ^(b)	% North-West	% North-East	% Centre	% South	% metropolitan provinces ^(c)	% global provinces ^(d)
Dissimilarity (D) Index ^(b)	1.000	0.350	0.201	-0.367	-0.436	0.152	0.091
% North-West	0.437	1.000	-0.524	-0.228	-0.431	0.460	0.419
% North-East	0.238	-0.591	1.000	-0.511	-0.197	-0.707	-0.676
% Centre	-0.542	-0.255	-0.486	1.000	0.072	0.477	0.598
% South	-0.665	-0.467	-0.201	0.332	1.000	-0.180	-0.186
% metropolitan provinces ^(c)	0.085	0.517	-0.676	0.370	-0.210	1.000	0.679
% global provinces ^(d)	0.109	0.510	-0.667	0.406	-0.106	0.668	1.000

Notes: (a) Values above the diagonal refer to the indicators computed using permit to stay data, the ones below the diagonal refer to the indicators computed using population register data. In bold values more than 0.6 in absolute terms. (b) Distribution by province. (c) Percentage in the 13 metropolitan provinces: Bari, Bologna, Cagliari, Catania, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Naples, Palermo, Rome, Turin, Venice and Verona. (d) Percentage in the provinces of Rome and Milan with respect to the total of metropolitan provinces.

In both cases, the first and the second factor indicate respectively the *pull of metropolitan and global areas* and the *geographical concentration*³. Even though some foreign communities (more precisely 5 out of 34) change cluster depending on the data sources used⁴, this is not the result of a significative change in their position on the factorial plane. The overall picture is rather articulated as shown by the number of clusters identified. More evident differences are shown between the communities mostly gathered in metropolitan areas (e.g. Philippines, Peruvians, Egyptians and Ecuadorians) and those which have mostly settled in specific geographic areas (e.g. Ukrainians and Polishes in the central-southern area and, of course, people from former Yugoslavia in the northern-eastern area). On the other hand, communities more homogeneously scattered on the national territory (e.g. Moroccans, Albanians and Indians) are placed in close proximity to the barycentre.

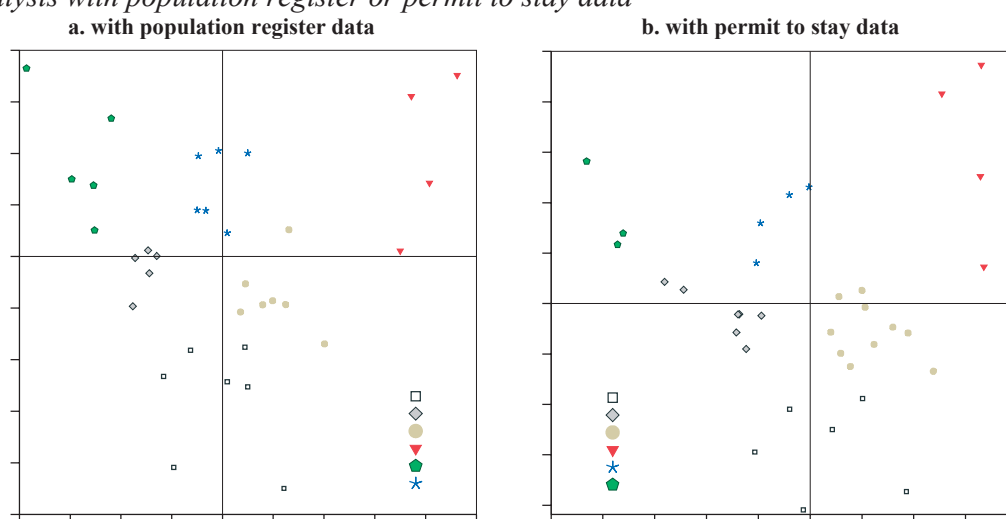
³ This factor is directly proportional to the level of dissimilarity with the provincial distribution of Italians. It is also negatively correlated with the percentage in Southern Italy.

⁴ Furthermore, population register data show a less external position of some communities that have mostly settled in the area of Rome (for instance, Philippines) or Naples (for instance, Ukrainians).

Table 2: Factor loadings of indicators on geographic distribution of 34 foreign communities. Separated analysis with population register data and permit to stay data

Elementary indicators	Population register data		Permit to stay data	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
% North-East	-0.894	0.243	-0.903	0.067
% global provinces	0.867	0.033	0.873	0.167
% metropolitan provinces	0.868	0.077	0.849	0.245
% Centre	0.467	-0.714	0.710	-0.464
Dissimilarity index	0.014	0.894	-0.118	0.806
% South	-0.112	-0.828	-0.032	-0.746
% North-West	0.670	0.594	0.440	0.729
Variance (%)	42.6	34.5	43.0	29.2
Cumulate variance (%)	42.6	77.1	43.0	72.2

Figure 2: Projection of units (34 foreign communities) on the first factorial plane. Analysis with population register or permit to stay data



The high correspondence of the results deriving from the use of the two different datasets makes it possible to combine the information gathered from both sources. For instance, it will be possible to integrate the indicators calculated on the basis of permits to stay at provincial level with further indicators which will be calculated on the basis of population register data, if a sub-provincial reference is needed.

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