

Lombardy's Local Labour Systems and Foreign Immigrants.

Presenza Straniera e Sistemi Locali del Lavoro in Lombardia

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Riassunto: L'analisi evidenzia le relazioni fra la distribuzione territoriale degli stranieri in Lombardia e lo spazio economico in cui essi si muovono, territorialmente definito dai Sistemi Locali del Lavoro. In particolare, utilizzando queste unità lo studio identifica nella forza delle reti informali e nelle condizioni del mercato del lavoro locale le principali ragioni della diversa concentrazione delle nazionalità presenti sul territorio.

Keywords: Foreigners, Local Labour System, Labour Market.

1. Introduction

Among Italian regions the case of Lombardy can be considered as a prototype of a territorial system where the migration process seems to have already reached a stage of maturity. Foreigners coming from the LDC's (Less Developed Countries) largely outnumber those arriving from the MDC's (More Developed Countries) with a more traditional frame of reference, with values and trends that are nevertheless almost the same as those registered in other Italian regions as a whole. Among male immigrants, 85 per cent apply for a work permit (vs. 75 per cent at national level, not including Lombardy). Among female immigrants, reasons given for wanting to stay are either for work (45 per cent vs. 40 per cent at national level, not including Lombardy) or family (42 per cent both in Lombardy and in the other regions taken as a whole).

When we consider the places of origin as a proxy variable of the basic economic nature of push factors, the high incidence of work permits as a reason for seeking residence among men, together with women, with the double role of worker and/or wife-mother with young children, seems to be correlated, in token of the strengthening of the number of people with a medium-long term stand-in migratory project.

The idea that people have put down roots sounds quite plausible also on the grounds of residence data trend. During the second half of the 90's, the annual average increase of foreigners in municipal population registers was around 17 per cent (vs. 15 per cent at national level not including Lombardy). At the end of 2000, foreigners coming from LDC's amount to 292,000. About 77 per cent of these immigrants pertain to fifteen nations, located in northern and eastern Africa, (Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Senegal and Ghana: 33 per cent of the LDC total), eastern Europe (Albania, ex Yugoslavia, Romania: 22%), southern and eastern Asia (Philippines, China, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan: 16%) and southern America (Peru and Brazil: 6%). We choose these nationalities keeping in mind the probable overlap between the decision to acquire residence and the decision to stay for a medium-long period, that is to say, the settled portion of migrant flows as well as the most numerous communities in the region under

consideration. Our analysis aims to check the possible correspondence between specific variations in the geographical distribution of foreign communities and peculiarities inside the economic space. In order to carry out this study, the Local Labour Systems (identified on the grounds of daily journey to work data, from the 1991 population census) are considered the reference unit for the research, for they might represent «the place where the relationships between community of people (society) and systems of firms (economy) are locally bounded» (Sforzi, 1999). The use of some recent socio-economic data should give us a suitable picture of territorial differences so as to match the geography of foreign presence to the map of the structure of regional production.

2. Territorial Analysis Indicators

Keeping in mind that the Local Labour Systems (LLS) are the reference unit of our analysis, the territorial analysis indicators have been initially determined on the basis of elaboration of the most recent foreign residents data (31.12.2000), and on the totality of residential population for each municipality in the region. In each foreign community under consideration, the territorial concentration/dispersion degree has been determined by using the Gini's index. For this reason, the residential population has been taken into account as a dimensional reference parameter. Using location quotients has identified areas where the relative density of each community, out of the total population, is significantly higher than the average regional one.

With the need of providing an updated reference framework of the production structure in Lombardy (in the light of the well known limitations in information at single municipality level, required to calculate data for the description of each LLS) the following 14 indicators – classified into 4 main areas of interest – have been created.

A. Welfare level: 1) Average income per capita (SIST-Ancitel, 1995); 2) Deposits per household (Bankitalia, 1999);

B. Agricultural production structures (General Census of Agriculture 2000): 3) Agricultural land as percentage out of total land;

C. Non Agricultural production structures (Intermediate Census of Industries and Services, 1996):

Dimensions: 4) Local unit employees per local units; 5) Average workforce in dimensional group “Local unit up to 9 employees”; 6) Average workforce in dimensional group “Local unit 10-49 employees”; 7) “Local units up to 9 employees” as percentage out of total local units; 8) “Local units 10-49 employees” as percentage out of total local units; 9) “Local units more or equal to 200 employees” as percentage out of total local units;

Activity sectors: 10) Local units – Manufacturing as percentage out of total local units of local labour system; 11) Local units – Hotels & restaurants as percentage out of total local units; 12) Local units – Buildings as percentage out of total local units; 13) Persons employed in public, social and other services position as percentage out of total workforce;

D. Geographic dimension framework: 14) LLS Local units as percentage out of total local units of the region (as above, 1996).

A synthesis of all indicators, adequately standardised, has been obtained through a principal components analysis (Varimax Rotation Method). Four following factors have been extracted from this synthesis, for a cumulated explained variance of 73%:

- 1) small-medium industry, strongly linked to the manufacturing sector (17,5% of total variance);
- 2) multifunctional metropolitan pole (17,6% of total variance)
- 3) agricultural enterprises (14,2% of total variance)
- 4) traditional manufacturing sector (13,8% of total variance)

3. Local Labour Systems and concentration of foreigners in Lombardy

The number in Lombardy could be qualified looking at dispersion within the territory and the tendency of foreign residents to concentrate in specific areas. For this reason the use of the location quotients and Gini's index suggest three different models of settlement according to nationalities of origin. a) The first model regroups three Asian countries – Philippines, India, Pakistan – and one African country – Ghana – marked by the lowest dispersion. The highest degree of concentration occurs both in metropolitan and rural areas. b) Populations originating from Peru, Egypt, Senegal, China are more dispersed, with apparently no meaningful links to economic condition of LLS. c) The third group of foreign residents – Moroccans, Albanians, Rumanians and Tunisians – is instead marked by the lowest concentration within the territory.

The greater or smaller spatial dispersion of the various communities finds connections through migratory channels. The flow directions in our country are in fact also more conditioned by family ties or by acquaintance. These elements characterize the map of foreign settlement, making communities coagulate in delimited areas. In particular, the case of Indians, who almost all settled in the Cremona and Mantua's areas, and of the Filipinos, who are linked to the metropolitan area of Milan. Albanian and Moroccan populations seem to display similar movement patterns, but the spatial dispersion turns out to be less meaningful. The most recent research on internal mobility of foreigners puts forward the strength of family ties or community network acting as reception, as important in the first stage of the migration process. The power of immigrant flow also depends on the economic conditions of the area and particularly on labour market conditions. If economic conditions are favourable, the foreigners already living in the areas are more likely to become ambassadors for the newcomers. These elements suggest, therefore, relevant interlacing between economy and area of destination, nationalities and number of foreigners attracted by work opportunity. They clarify also the inconsistency of "innate productive abilities" attributed to a nationality, e.g. the Philippine women – 'good domestic servants' – or the Indian men – 'good livestock breeders', etc.

If the interlaces between settlement, nationalities and the labour market are complex, it is less difficult to characterize the presence of the immigrants in Lombardy according to the productive specialization of the Local Labour Systems. The procedure of classification of the LLS through the four factors previously characterized has led to the location of 5 distinguished clusters according to the main productive sector.

In particular, one cluster includes only Milan for its multifunctional role. As already underlined, the metropolitan area of Milan is characterized by the elevated concentration of the Filipinos, wholly absorbed in domestic service industry. Egyptian immigrants live in this area too, but they are more frequently engaged in commercial activities.

Table 1 *Final cluster centres and case frequencies*

Factors	Cluster				
	1 (13 LLS)	2 (26 LLS)	3 (25 LLS)	4 (1 LLS)	5 (7 LLS)
1	-1,050	-0,368	0,849	-0,858	0,364
2	-0,647	-0,051	0,214	6,444	-0,181
3	-0,801	0,965	-0,050	-0,504	-1,843
4	-0,212	-0,064	0,147	0,243	-0,765

A considerable group of LLS (26) is mainly linked by the agricultural specialization, even if some of these local systems represent a mixture of agriculture and industrial activities. This cluster substantially covers the southern area of Lombardy, related to the provinces of Pavia, Lodi, Cremona and Mantua. In these areas Indians are particularly evident in the provinces of Mantua and Cremona, and Albanians in the LLS included in the provinces of Pavia and Lodi, and who are more often employed in agricultural activities. In Mantua and Pavia's LLS the foreign manpower in industrial activities – foodstuff or mechanics – consists of Moroccans and Albanians for whom localization quotients are higher than in other places. This pattern of division of labour – the Moroccans and Albanians in the industrial sector, while the agricultural works pertain to the Asians – Indians and Pakistanis in particular –, is not determined by the “special ability” of each community in some particular economic sector, but by the power of the network, which is able to act as an employment agency.

Besides this cluster, the analysis shows another two groups according to their industrial specialization – in medium sized, manufacturing industry. These areas are more frequently concentrated with African populations from Ghana and Senegal as well as Moroccans – most of them employed in the industrial areas of Lombardy, such as Bergamo, Brescia, Lecco and Varese. The last cluster does not have a definite profile, at most it seems to pick up the tourism of the northern part of Lombardy. It would seem that this territory does not select the foreign presence on the basis of nationality.

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