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**THE MEASUREMENT OF IMMIGRANT STOCKS AND MIGRATORY FLOWS IN
ITALY’S POPULATION CENSUS: CURRENT SITUATION AND PROPOSALS FOR
THE 2010 ROUND OF POPULATION CENSUSES**

Submitted by Italian National Statistical Institute *

**1. Definitions and measurement of international migration in the Italian Population
Census: the experience of the 1991 and the 2001 enumeration**

1.1. The experience of the 1991 Census

1. The enumeration of foreign nationals within the Population Census has been given particular attention since 1991, due to the increased need for statistical information about Italy’s immigrant population, following its newly acquired status as an immigration country.

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2. Despite its being the only source able to guarantee exhaustiveness, the 1991 census seemed to under-enumerate foreign citizens living in Italy at that time (according to the estimates made on the basis of administrative sources). From another point of view, it is also possible to say that the census classified in a different way the same amount of foreign population recorded by population registers (the sum of foreigners enumerated as usually resident and as “non-rooted” – see below - approximately coincided with the amount recorded by registers, that counted 537,000 persons). In fact, on the basis of 1991 census results, the Italian foreign population was subdivided into three main categories: 1) the most settled part of the foreign population that is foreign citizens enumerated as “usually resident” (about 356,000 persons); 2) the so-called “non-rooted” (*non radicati*) i.e. foreigners non-occasionally present in the country who nonetheless because of their highly unstable living and working conditions didn’t qualify as usual residents (about 180,000 persons); 3) the “occasionally present foreigners” i.e. foreign citizens who had been in Italian hotels for less than 1 month at the date of the census (about 110,000).

3. Usually resident foreigners were enumerated by means of the standard Household Form (which hadn’t been translated on the basis of the far too optimistic hypothesis that usually residents would be able to fill in the Italian form) while foreigners usually resident abroad but present in Italy at the time of the census were enumerated by a specially designed form. This last form was translated into six languages and made up of two parts, the first one, containing the basic demographic questions, to be filled in by everyone (including tourists), and the second, with questions on knowledge of Italian, education, work and family situation, to be filled in by all non-occasionally present foreigners.

4. With regard to under-coverage, even if it wasn’t only census “fault” (probably there was also overestimation on the population registers side), census enumeration surely encountered some problems. Most likely, these were essentially of two kinds. First of all, and especially with regard to “irregular” foreigners, a big part was probably caused by distrust towards census operations. On the other hand, the problem of the language shouldn’t be undervalued even for usually resident foreigners (who, in most cases, hadn’t been living in Italy for much time nor were much more integrated than their “irregular” companions). Moreover, many foreign workers living in a municipality and working in a different one and thus absent from home most of the time, were very difficult to reach for enumerators.

1.2. The 2001 Census enumeration of Italy’s population with a migrant background

5. The enumeration of foreigners within the 2001 population census has been planned on the basis of the 1991 experience but also on the basis of the changes which had occurred in Italy’s complex migration reality. If in 1991, because of the supposed large number of “non rooted” foreigners, due to the recent transformation of Italy into an immigration country, particular attention was paid to the enumeration of non usually resident foreigners, the 2001 much more varied world of immigration had called for a different strategy. In fact, in 2001 the Census had to account for the growing number of families that progressively had joined the male or, in many cases, female workers who originally came alone in search for work or for the growing number of children born in Italy from foreign parents. In short, the ongoing integration process and the related need of a better understanding of it, had put in evidence the importance of producing “qualitative” data on the usually resident foreign population. The completeness of the count still remained one of the main aims of the census enumeration, but the above mentioned limitations had to be taken into account with regard to the enumeration of non usually resident foreigners, especially “irregular” ones.

6. Two Pilot Surveys were implemented in order to improve census enumeration of *population with migration background*. The introduction of new questions (on reason for migration, on citizenship acquisition, on knowledge of Italian language) was tested as well as alternative formulations of questions on citizenship and on previous place of residence. The 2001 Census was then planned with the aim of producing “qualitative” data on usually resident foreigners, enhancing contents by means of new questions, whilst continuing to provide the theoretical space for enumerating both usually resident and non usually resident foreigners.

7. In order to improve enumeration, particular attention was given to the organizational aspect and to the advertising campaign targeting foreign nationals. The whole form (including the part devoted to usually resident) was translated into the eleven languages most spoken by Italy’s foreign population according to data on permits of stay by countries of citizenship. Moreover, municipalities (on which lies the onus of organizing the field enumeration) were suggested to involve immigrants’ associations and non governmental organizations in order to make the population concerned aware of the census aims and were encouraged to support enumerators with cultural mediators.

8. As for contents, for foreigners enumerated as usually resident, besides all the information collected for the all population, data were gathered also on the year of establishing residence in Italy and on the main reason of moving their usual residence to Italy (for foreign citizens and stateless persons born outside Italy). Furthermore, the significant number of adult foreigners who have acquired Italian citizenship from 1991 to 2000 (about 75,000), has called for the introduction of a question on citizenship acquisition (and on the country of previous citizenship for those declaring not being Italians since birth).

9. A question on knowledge of Italian language (included in the 1991 Census Form for non usually resident foreigners) was tested by the Pilot Surveys with regard to usually resident foreigners. In the end the question was not included in the 2001 Census Form because it was judged incompatible with the self-enumeration methodology.

10. The collection of information on ethnic group, and related topics as race and religion, is forbidden by the recently approved law on treatment of personal data. For the same reason, it was not possible to include “asylum”, as well as “health”, as a separate answer to the question on the main reason for migration (Both categories had been included in the questions that had been tested through the Pilot Surveys, together with others that instead were taken off because they didn’t prove effective).

11. As for foreigners usually resident abroad, information was collected on sex, age, marital status, citizenship, place of usual residence, duration and reason of their stay in Italy and (for those who had been staying in the dwelling where they were enumerated for more than 90 days and for reasons other than vacation) on activity status. The distinction between “short-term migrants” and simple visitors (or between “non rooted” and occasionally present foreign nationals, according to 1991 terminology) was made only after the enumeration, during the processing phase, on the basis of the answers to the questions regarding the duration and the reason of their stay in Italy.

12. For the 2010 round, the same enumeration structure as 2001 will be kept, as well as identification criteria of population sub-groups relevant to immigration and choices concerning their inclusion/exclusion in the usually resident population. Long-term immigrants will be enumerated among usually resident persons and included in usually resident population whereas foreigners usually resident abroad will be counted among non-usually resident persons (and

presumably included in present population – see paragraph 2.1.). With regard to topics investigated, the same topics as 2001 will be kept while data collected on citizenship acquisition show that an additional question on whether the person has more than one citizenship might be useful.

13. The introduction of new questions will be tested by means of the Pilot Surveys together with alternative formulations of questions already used on citizenship (which has proven to be of quite difficult understanding). In the following paragraph enumeration structure and the contents of the 2001 Census will be analysed in detail, together with proposals for the next round, taking into account adherence to International Recommendations.

2. The measurement of immigrants stocks and migratory flows in the 2001 Census and issues for the 2010 round

2.1. Identification and counting of population groups relevant to immigration

14. One of the main objectives of Italian Census is, besides the determination of the legally resident population of each municipality (= the Census usually resident population), to provide information for the updating of municipalities Population Registers. Due to this, the definition of usually resident population adopted for the Census is Population Register Law one, which states that *usually resident* in a municipality are those who have their usual abode in it. Though, it does not specify what has to be intended for usual abode.

15. Obviously, the choice on the inclusion in the usually resident population of some specific subgroups does have quantitative and qualitative implications on the stock of migrants. Generally, it can be said that, for what concerns emigrants (temporarily absent persons), Italy adheres to the 2000 Census Recommendations (people absent for one year or more should not be considered as temporarily absent) whereas, for what concerns groups referring to the immigrant population, they are treated consistently with the criteria on usual residence (i.e. people belonging to these groups are included in resident population if qualifying as usual residents, with the exception of foreigners without legal status). The same criteria will be applied for the 2010 round enumeration, given existing legal constraints (link between Census and Population Registers and Law on treatment of personal data currently in force).

16. With particular reference to the treatment of the 5 population sub-groups that are directly linked to the migrant stock, it can be noted that:

- foreigners temporarily living in the country (whether legally or not) are treated consistently with the criteria on usual residence. Therefore, since they are generally not qualifying as usual residents, they are enumerated among non usually resident persons and they may, or may not, be included in the present population¹ (persons who don't have their usual residence in a dwelling but use it as weekly commuters or for secondary use, including foreigners usually resident abroad, are enumerated as non usually resident persons even if they are not present on census day. In this case, they won't be included in the present population count);
- foreigners without legal status have to be enumerated among non usually resident persons (even if usually resident). The census questionnaire does not enquire about foreigners legal status but foreigners without legal status have to be enumerated among

¹ The present population of each municipality is made up of the *persons usually resident in the municipality and present at the time of the Census*, plus the *persons temporarily present in the municipality and present at the time of the Census* (usually resident in another municipality or abroad).

non usually resident persons (therefore, they may, or may not, be included in the present population), even if qualifying as usual residents according to criteria on usual residence. This is due to the fact that, to adhere to Italian legislation, 1) population registers have to be updated on the basis of census results and 2) in order to be registered in a municipality population register foreign citizens not only have to qualify as usual residents but also have to possess a valid permit of stay. However, even if the Census enumeration structure does provide the theoretical space for enumerating foreigners without legal status (among non usually resident persons), they are, in fact, quite difficult to reach for obvious distrust towards census operations, to which could easily be ascribed control purposes. On the other hand, it can be assumed that foreigners enumerated as usually resident do have a valid permit of stay. In fact, questionnaire instructions clearly state that foreign citizens, in order to be enumerated as usually resident, besides having their usual residence in the dwelling/institutional household where they are enumerated, have to be registered in the population register or have to be eligible – i.e. to be legally present in Italy – for registration in population register;

- refugees recognized under the Geneva Convention, given the fact that their permit of stay is a long-term one, are presumably (if qualifying as usual residents according to criteria on usual residence) enumerated among usually resident foreigners. The same is for other persons granted a refugee-like status on the ground of humanitarian reasons (i.e. in Italy this was the case for Somali or Ex-Yugoslavia refugees; most of them have, in time, whenever possible, changed their temporary permit of stay for humanitarian reasons to a work or study permit). Both categories are not counted separately since, according to the law on protection of personal data, the asylum area is a sensitive one;
- asylum seekers, given the fact that their permit of stay is a short-term one, are enumerated among non-usually resident foreigners (and included in the present population if present on census day). As for refugees, they cannot be counted separately by the census and, for what concerns the reason of migration, they are probably merged into the category “other”;
- temporarily absent persons for less than a year are included in usually resident population. The figure for the usually resident population of each municipality is compiled by adding the *persons usually resident in the municipality and present at the time of the census* to the *persons usually resident in the municipality but temporarily absent at the time of the census*. Some of the possible reasons of temporary absence - which allow the inclusion in the usually resident population - are provided for specifically in the Population Register Law; the others are derived from the general rule: “Persons who are temporarily staying in another municipality or abroad to exercise seasonal occupations or for reasons of limited duration do not cease to belong to the usually resident population (of the municipality)”. Furthermore, the explanatory notes to the Population Register Law specify that within the general category of persons who are temporarily staying in another municipality or abroad should be included, for example, those who go abroad for less than a year or even every year for the only period related to the exercise of seasonal occupations.

2.2. Definition of the stock of immigrants

Foreign citizens, foreign-born citizens

17. In the Italian Population Census two main questions are used to identify the immigrant stocks: country of citizenship and place of birth.

18. By the question on country of citizenship, we are able to enumerate foreign population usually resident in Italy i.e. to estimate the stock of persons not having Italian citizenship who live (who are usually resident) in Italy. In 2001 Census foreign citizens were asked for the country of citizenship while stateless persons were counted separately but, differently from what stated in the 2000 round Recommendations (81), they were enumerated together with persons whose citizenship had not yet been clarified, following dissolution, separation or unification of States. This choice was mainly made because of the low number of persons comprised in these categories and also because Pilot Surveys had shown the need to simplify the questionnaire area on citizenship. For the same reasons a similar choice will be made for 2010 round.

19. One last, but critical point, concerns persons with dual or multiple citizenship who, according to Recommendations (81), should declare them all. In this case too, in order to reduce burden on respondents (especially concerning a question that had proven to be of quite difficult understanding), the choice was made of collecting information only on one country of citizenship. Persons having both Italian citizenship and a foreign one were asked to declare themselves as Italians (being in fact Italians), while persons with dual or multiple foreign citizenship were asked to declare the one they preferred. Though, the data collected on citizenship acquisition show that an additional question on whether the person has more than one citizenship might be useful in order to avoid wrong answering by respondents (see paragraph on naturalized citizens).

20. The information on place of birth was collected for all persons usually resident in the country but was defined as the place of birth of the person and not as the country of residence of the mother at the time of birth (point 76 of 2000 Recommendations). For persons born outside Italy, information on country of birth was collected on the basis of international boundaries existing at the time of the census. The definition of place of birth as the country of residence of the mother at the time of birth was judged inappropriate because of difficult application and also as the data obtained would then have not been comparable with the past. The same definition of place of birth will be used for the 2010 round enumeration.

21. Through the question on place/country of birth we are able to enumerate the stock of foreign-born persons and, by combination with the question on citizenship, the stock of non-nationals born abroad. Furthermore, by combination with the question on citizenship acquisition, we are able to estimate the immigrant population, obtained by adding foreign-born people without Italian citizenship to foreign-born people with Italian citizenship by acquisition². The chosen definition (proposed by Insee³) of immigrant population does not include the so-called second generation immigrants i.e. persons born in Italy from non-Italian parents (who,

² See figure 1 in Ferruzza G., Gallo G. e Zindato D., *The measurement of immigrants stock: immigrants, foreign citizens and naturalized citizens according to Italy's 2001 Population Census*, Joint UNECE/Eurostat Seminar on Migration Statistics (Geneva, 21-23 March 2005), Topic 1.

³ Boeldieu J., Borrel C. (November 2000). *La proportion d'immigrés est stable depuis 25 ans*, Recensement de la population 1999, Insee Première, n. 748.

nevertheless, are counted among foreign citizens – until, of course, they become Italians by naturalization).

22. In order to take into account second generation, an alternative definition of immigrant population might be used, including all foreigners (wherever born) and all naturalized Italian citizens (wherever born). In this way, all foreign-born persons would be counted as immigrant, whether still foreigners or citizens by naturalization, as well as direct descendants of first-generation immigrants, that would be counted whether foreigners born in Italy or citizens by naturalization. This definition would work given the fact that Italian legislation on citizenship is based on the *jus sanguinis* principle (children born in Italy from non-Italian parents are foreigners while persons born abroad from Italian parents are Italians).

23. The combined use of questions on place of birth, citizenship and citizenship acquisition makes then unnecessary the inclusion of a new question on parents' origin (place of birth of parents or citizenship at birth of the respondent) in order to explicitly take into account the second generation among the broad category of persons having a foreign background. In fact, the information on naturalized Italian citizens in most cases replaces the one on citizenship at birth (except for foreign citizens having a different foreign citizenship at birth) and it is not of difficult application as would be the question on place of birth of parents.

Naturalized citizens

24. Following the significant number of foreigners who have acquired Italian citizenship in the period between the past two censuses, the issue of citizenship acquisition was first addressed in the 2001 Census. Italian respondents were asked whether they were Italians by birth or through naturalization. For those who declared not being Italians by birth, a further question on the country of former citizenship was included.

25. On the basis of the answers to the new question and to the “traditional” ones on place of birth and citizenship, it was thus possible to estimate not only the stock of naturalized citizens but also to enumerate more precisely the immigrant population, if intended as based on the place of birth (as already said, according to this definition, children born in Italy from non-Italian parents – i.e. foreigners according to Italian law - don't belong to immigrant population while a person born foreigner outside of Italy continues to belong to immigrant population, even if its citizenship changes).

26. Throughout the questionnaire pre-testing and the two Pilot Surveys, different ways of formulating the question on citizenship acquisition were tested. In the end, the decision was taken to split in two the original question: a simple question on citizenship – Italian, foreigner, stateless – and a subsequent one for Italians, asking whether Italian citizenship had been acquired by birth or naturalization. Finally, naturalized citizens were asked for the country of former citizenship. For the 2010 round, given the importance of information on citizenship acquisition, similar questions will be included in the questionnaire. Furthermore, 2001 experience suggested that an additional question on double citizenship might be useful in order to better estimate both foreign citizens stock and naturalized one. In fact, it seems likely that many persons having both Italian and foreign citizenship might have declared themselves foreigners instead of Italians or, on the contrary, might have declared themselves Italians by naturalization despite being Italians by birth. The new question will be tested by means of the Pilot Surveys.

2.3. Migration flows

27. Two questions relating to migration flows were included in the 2001 Census questionnaire:

- place of residence one year prior to the census (referring to the dwelling where the person is enumerated)
- year of establishing residence in Italy (for foreigners and stateless persons born abroad).

28. The reference date for the first question was five years before until the 1991 Census. Afterwards it was changed in compliance with the 2000 round Recommendations.

The combined use of the two questions (previous residence at a fixed date in the past and how long has a foreign resident been resident in Italy) seems to be the best option in order to provide data for the study of both internal and international migrations. Therefore, the same questions will be included in the 2010 round questionnaire.

29. A further question on the main reason of migration was included for foreigners and stateless persons born abroad. Though useful in view of assessing immigration policies and analysing migration chains, it seems affected by the risk of obtaining just broad results, because of the small number of answering categories allowed by Italian law on protection of personal data (since a wider range of categories would touch sensitive areas). For what concerns Italian situation it appears less important the risk of obtaining answers influenced by the documented motivation, which anyway could be assessed by cross-analysis of reason of migration and current activity status.

30. Further testing to achieve a better formulation of the question is needed in order to make it more effective but it is likely that a question on reason of migration will be included in 2010 round questionnaire.
