Istat experience in surveys on social integration: the first and second generation of migrants

Note by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat)*

Abstract

Istat (Italian National Institute of Statistics) launched for the first time in 2011-2012 the sample survey on “Social Condition and Integration of Foreign Citizens (SCIF)”. The SCIF survey aims at providing information on many features of socio-economic integration of migrants in Italy for a better understanding of resident foreign population. The SCIF survey has been carried out on a sample of 9,553 households resident in Italy including one foreign citizen at least. Moreover the survey makes it possible to study labour market participation, sociability, dynamics of household formation, participation in formal and informal institutions, lifestyles and health outcomes. The survey provides also a limited number of retrospective information, making it possible to explore in detail the major migration systems Italy is involved in and to analyse the social mobility paths of migrants.

In 2015 Istat carried out the survey on “Integration of the second generation (ISG)”, the project was co-financed by the Ministry of Interior and the European Union European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals (EFI).

The survey involved lower and upper secondary schools attended by at least 5 foreign students. The survey investigated many different dimensions of second generation social inclusion (school, relationships, language, and household conditions).

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The paper will discuss these two experiences considering both the methodological aspects and the most relevant results in terms of indicators of social inclusion.

I. Introduction

1. As early as the 1990s, Istat had already developed strategies to direct attention to the presence of foreigners and migration, introducing a variable on citizenship in most of the current data collections. Since the beginning of the 2000s also the most relevant social sample surveys take into account a sample of foreign population. Istat has also carried out, cooperating with Ministry of Interior, research projects on integration (Istat-Ministry of Interior, 2013) financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. In recent years, Istat’s working to expand the information available on migrants and their social integration. On one hand the attention has been focused on the full exploitation of administrative data, going towards a system of integrated registers; on the other hand Istat has carried out two surveys on the issue of integration starting from the indications suggested in the 2010 Zaragoza Declaration.

2. The first one is the sample survey on “Social Condition and Integration of Foreign Citizens” (SCIF) carried out by Istat in 2011-2012. This experience was co-funded in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior for a project funded by the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. The SCIF sample survey aims to provide a collection of information about many features of socio-economic integration of migrants in Italy in order to explore living condition of resident foreigners. The survey data provides a framework on characteristics, behaviours, attitudes and opinions of the foreign citizens in Italy. There is a focus on several aspects: family composition, education, migratory path, employment status, discrimination, health conditions and accessibility of health services, migrant integration, citizen’s security and victimization, housing conditions.

3. The second experience is the survey on “Integration of the second generation” (ISG) was carried out by Istat in 2015 co-financed by the Ministry of Interior and the European Union European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. The survey is based on a sample of secondary schools with at least 5 foreign pupils. The survey aims to study the second generation in the broader sense and therefore, more properly, the kids with a migratory background. The main target of the survey was therefore the children with a different citizenship than the Italian one. It should be emphasized that, in accordance with Italian law, foreign children are also considered foreigners born in Italy by foreign parents. However, although the main objective was the study of the integration of migrant background people, it was necessary to involve other types of respondents for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The survey had as a further target: control group of students with Italian citizenship; a sample of head teachers and teachers who teach in classes with foreigners. The main purpose of the paper is a comparative discussion of the methods and of some results of these two specific experiences. The contribution is also finalized to move a debate on the different pathways of the integration process for adults and young people, which have consequences on the relevant dimensions and on the most useful statistical indicators.
II. Technical and methodological features of surveys

4. Even though both the surveys carried out by Istat are focused on integration, they have been implemented by using different methods, techniques and measures. The process of integration for adults follows a different pathway compared to the one of young people: different dimensions of everyday life are interested, different places, different agencies. Taking into account these differences the two surveys used different definitions, sample’s strategies, and techniques.

A. Target populations

5. SCIF sample survey’s target population is foreign population resident in Italy. The sampling unit is the households resident in Italy with at least one component with foreign citizenship. The family is defined as a group of people living together and related by marriage, kinship, affinity, adoption, protection or affection. In addition to members of the family, people without family ties with residence in Italy have been also interviewed. In the SCIF survey, foreign citizens are identified by citizenship, not by the place of birth. The use of standardized and harmonized questions with other sample surveys conducted by ISTAT allows a comparison of living conditions between foreign and Italian citizens interviewed in other surveys.

6. The survey on integration of second generation was carried out in secondary schools on the whole national territory. The sample considered schools with at least 5 foreign students. Unlike the SCIF survey, the survey on ISG is based on individuals and not on families. The students born abroad who have acquired the Italian citizenship have been interviewed using the questionnaire addressed to Italian students. The survey aims to study the second generation in the broader sense and therefore, more properly, the kids with a migratory background, but in the secondary school age. As it is clear the survey has covered only young people enrolled in school. No information have been collected about young people that have left the school.

B. Sample

7. Sample design of the SCIF survey is a two-stage selection, carried out with direct interview and selection from the population register. First stage units are municipalities (833 unit) and second-stage units are household residents with at least one foreign citizen (9,553 units). In total 25,326 individuals have been interviewed. The municipalities are stratified by region and type and selected with probability proportional to the foreign resident population\(^1\). In order to ensure the statistical representatively of the 15 most important nationalities, in terms of their numerical consistency in Italy, a balanced sampling for each citizenship was selected. The sampling list is the archive of Italian municipalities, which contains, for each municipality, the number of foreigners resident by sex and citizenship.

8. In the case of the survey on second generation the sample survey is a two-stage selection. First stage units are schools with at least 5 foreign students and the

\(^1\) For more information, see the metadata: http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/191090.
second-stage units are students. The selection list was the archive of Ministry of Education, University and Research. The selected schools have been 1,448. Istat interviewed 38,054 foreign students and an equivalent number of Italians as control group. The sample allows detailed analysis at a territorial level and represent the first 10 nationalities at national level, 3 at regional level.

C. Techniques

9. For SCIF survey, the use of the Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) approach has proved to be appropriate in order to manage the different paths of the questionnaire for several population targets (age, condition, migration background, etc.). In addition, the interviewer's presence played an important role in first contact with respondents and improved collaboration and engagement, by limiting total lack of responses and protecting the consistency and completeness of the collected data. To facilitate communication during the interview and to ensure a greater understanding of the questions, the questionnaire was translated into the major foreign languages. Individuals under the age of 14 years in sample households were interviewed in proxy mode, that is, the answers were provided by a parent or an adult family member. The same mode of interview was used for persons temporarily absent.

10. In the case of the second generation, the CAWI system was used for the students. The students has been invited to self-fill in the electronic questionnaire at school, during the lesson time, in a computer lab, assisted by an expert and a mediator if necessary (sometimes the “mediator” was another student). The use of the CAWI allowed the management of different paths depending on the citizenship of the student and the attended school. The CAWI system has many advantages: it facilitates the registration, the check and the first elaboration of data, it allows to interview many people at the same time, reducing the duration of the survey; it is friendly for young people. At the same time, in this particular survey there weren’t problems of lack of technologies or skills. The questionnaire has been translated in 10 languages.

D. Analysis perspectives

11. The survey SCIF allows to conduct family, individual and event analysis. The possibility of retrospective analysis allows you to read the time evolution of the integration process (by migration generation, duration of stay, etc.). The acquisition of key information, such as place of birth, citizenship, birthplace citizenship, not only on family members, but also on non-family members and non-cohabiting made possible to reconstruct the composition and typology of families in the host country (e.g. households to one or more nuclei), etc. This survey collects, as many social surveys, subjective information, behaviours, opinions and attitudes. At the same time the possibility of analysing for individual citizenship satisfies the cognitive needs of the 15 most important nationalities in Italy.

12. The ISG survey allows to reconstruct the different generations of migrants (second generation, generation 1.5, generation 1.75, etc.). The ISG survey allows – through individual codes – the integration of survey data with the ones of the principal administrative archives about schools and education performances. It
allows also to follow during the time the history of interviewed students and to carry out panel studies.

### III. Comparing measures of integration: adults and young people

13. The demographic changes caused by international migration process require to enlarge the perspective of analysis in order to provide an adequate information framework about social integration process of migrant and their descendants. Both Istat surveys focus not only on objective aspects of inequalities and discriminations in the labour market and the education system, but they pay attention to the subjective aspects of sociocultural integration as well. Even if the dynamics of socioeconomic integration do not intrinsically produce sociocultural integration, there is a degree of independence between the integration aspects (Cesareo and Blangiardo 2009; Istat 2013). All these features are important to define a sets of indicators about social integration of migrant and their descendants.

14. Considering the multiplicity of dynamics and aspects that lead to an integration process that, in addition to being a policy objective, is also an empirical process to be observed, is now consolidated in the literature the breakdown of the concept of integration into three different and autonomous dimensions (Entzinger and Biezeveld 2003, European Commission 2013, Sciortino 2015). In detail, it is the socio-economic, legal and socio-cultural dimension.

15. In this paper, the socio-cultural dimension of integration of migrants is studied, such as knowledge and adaptation to the culture of the host country and participation in the social life of the country. Focus will be on sub-dimensions that affect linguistic knowledge, interpersonal relationships, and future prospects in terms of migratory intentions. The sub-dimensions operating measures used in this work have been determined from the Zaragoza indicators (Eurostat, 2017).

16. Exploring this dimension on different migrant targets, the first and second generations, highlights how the theory and practice of integration vary according to migratory history. Consequently, the measures used to detect the real situation of immigrants and identify the extent of integration progress in each sub-dimension differ and characterize the different targets while having the same purpose of providing useful information to those responsible for integration policies.

### IV. Main results about selected dimension of integration

17. According to European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (2011) acquiring language knowledge of receiving society is critical for integration. “Enhanced language skills lead to improved job opportunities, independence and migrant women participation in the labour market. Language training, as well as introduction programmes, must be accessible both financially and geographically. It is important to offer different levels of language courses based on participants’ knowledge and conditions for learning” (European Commission 2011).
18. In Italy the introduction of integration agreement requires a foreign citizen to achieve specific levels of integration during the validity of the residence permit also by reaching an adequate knowledge of the Italian language. Wherefore the measurement of linguistic behaviours has become central for official Italian statistics on foreign population and their descendants. Both the Istat sample surveys took into account the linguistic behaviour of migrants by considering their language heritage and the social life context in which they use Italian language (in family, among friends, at work).

19. However, the Istat sample surveys differ in the choice of linguistic indicators in order to take into account the complexity and the variety of migrant population.

20. The SCIF survey has measured the language of foreign citizens, aged 6 years old and over, as the native language, the language of one’s childhood. According to the evidence that the first generation of migrants had spent whole childhood, or part of it, in the country of origin. This definition allowed to distinguish the native language from the acquired language, the official language of the host country. This is particularly true in case of Italy, a country without a colonial past. Analysing the results of the sample survey it is essential to consider the complex the various mosaic of foreign presence in Italy. The data available from the SCIF survey describe a composite framework, with a different degree of overlap between the language of origin and citizenship (Istat 2014). The first ten most common languages are spoken by 74% of foreign people. Romanian is the most common native language, spoken by the 21.9% of the foreign citizens aged 6 and over. Other prevalent mother tongues are Arabic (spoken by the 13.1%), Albanian (10.5%) and Spanish (7%). In case of Albanians and Romanians there is a large correspondence between citizenship and native language. The most of Ukrainians declare as native language the Ukrainian (97.9%), but 4 out of ten of Russian native speakers are Ukrainians too (40.6%). Foreigners speaking Arabic as native language are mostly Moroccans (64.8%), Tunisians (15.4%) and Egyptians (12.1%). Spanish, instead, is the prevalent native language among Peruvians that represent 29.4% of Spanish speakers and Ecuadorians (28.2%). Foreign citizens who are speaking Italian by childhood are 4.5%, 16.8% of Italian native language persons are Albanians, 12.1% are Moroccans, and 11.1% are Romanians.

21. For students with a migration background, measuring language knowledge is a more complex challenge because they are partly immigrants and partly people born in Italy. In addition because they are student every day they are called to use Italian during the lessons. Attention has to be shifted to different indicators that could differentiate knowledge levels. In addition the CAWI has imposed to find questions immediately understandable by teenagers. One of the basic questions is “in which language do you think? Over the 63% of the foreign students think in Italian, the percentage of “Italian thinkers” is almost 75% among people born in Italy. Of course the complementary percentage of 25% think in a language other than Italian even if they are born in Italy (the Chinese and south American teenagers are the ones who think more in another language even though they are born in Italy).

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2 Italian Presidential Decree no. 179 of September 14, 2011 regarding the provisions of the integration agreement between foreigners and the state, in conformity with article 4-bis, paragraph 2, of the unified body of provisions governing immigration and regulations on the condition of foreigners, as specified in Italian Legislative Decree no. 286 of July 25, 1998 (Istat, Interior Ministry, 2013).
22. The language usually spoken with parents and the closest relatives or with friends is surely important in order to understand the language habits in private sphere, as well as the language usually spoken at work by adults referred to public sphere or with classmates for children and teen-agers.

23. The SCIF survey tells us that among foreigners aged 6 years and over the percentage of people speaking Italian at home is 38.5%. Among friends this percentage rises up to 61.5%. As expected, the use of Italian language at work is significantly higher (about to 91%) in comparison to the percentage recorded for the most spoken language at home or with friends. Comparing foreigners by citizenship, the Chinese are significantly different: they speak Italian in the three most important social contexts less than other foreign citizens do: 9.5% at home, 30.8% with friends and only the 51% of them use currently Italian language at work. Indians, Egyptian, Moroccans, Filipinos and Tunisian score lower than the average too. On the other hand, the Polish are used to speak Italian more than other foreigners (70.2% at home, 78.6% with friends and 97.7% at work), as well as Ukrainians, Peruvians and Moldovans too. Despite the time of stay in Italy, the prevalent family and domestic cohabitation patterns (e.g. mixed couple) common among member of each national group may have consequences on language habits in private sphere of daily life.

24. In order to explore the linguistic habits at home among young people, instead, it was used as indicator the most frequent language used with the mother: Italian language is the most prevalent language that is spoken by 48.4% of foreign students (59.8% among native born and 43.5% for foreign born). This language habit changes by considering different citizenships and the outcomes are quite similar to SCIF data. The Italian as preferred language with the mother is more common among Eastern European students than ones from Asia and Maghreb (Chinese, Indians and Moroccans). The propensity to speak Italian in case of young people is much more frequent at school with classmates (84%) and teachers (94%), such as for adults at workplace. This language habit is also confirmed with friends (59% of foreign), with differences by citizenships that reveal probably the variety of friendship networks. Even for the Chinese kids it is a less frequent practice to speak Italian with friends, such as Filipinos and Ecuadorians.

25. The language skills are crucial to keep on the legal status as well as to build social relationships in host country. The networks of interpersonal relationships are the infrastructure through which circulates social capital, that is, all the current or potential resources that result from belonging to a more or less institutionalized network of relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu 1980).

26. The SCIF survey explores foreigners’ personal relationships by considering the three most important people in Italy for asking and giving reciprocal social support, including family members at all. The important people are classified by the citizenship and the kind of relationship. The presence of only fellow citizens in the "strong ties" of foreigners interviewed is very common (61.9%), whereas the presence of only Italians is less frequent (15.5%). Finally, multi-ethnic strong ties (Italians and fellow citizen and other citizenship) play an important role for specific ethnic groups such as people from East Europe countries (Poland, Ukraine), much more than for foreigners from Asian Area (China, India, Philippines). A low degree of Italian skills declared is related to the presence of only fellow citizens in the network of the most important people (71.4% compared to the 63.2% in total). Therefore foreigners with a mixed network (Italians and fellow citizens) or Italians
at all face to less difficulties in Italian language (exactly 52.9% and 45.8%). So the language skills measured mainly in instrumental terms, as an aspect that can contribute to improving active participation in the education system and the labour market, have positive consequences on sociability and daily life of foreigners too.

27. In case of the first migrant generation, who personally experienced the migration, the choice of the three most important people as an indicator of strong social ties it was thought relevant. Whereas for the young foreigners already settled up in a family network, ISG survey has explored the friendship and classmates ties.

28. As a result of different pathways of integration of young and adults, by taking into account the ISG survey outcomes is possible to highlight that to meet with only Italians classmates is a more ordinary practice than to see both Italians and foreigners or only foreigners classmates at all (49% compared to 37.5% and 13.8%). The citizenship highlights different patterns of friendship ties, above all for Chinese and Ukrainians in an opposite trend. Chinese students more than others prefer encounter only foreigners classmates (38.8%). On the contrary, Ukrainians prevalently meet only with Italian pupils (58.3%). However, by considering the largest network, we can find similar attitudes. Filipinos and Chinese students have the lowest share of only Italian friends (19.8% and 23.4% compared to the 38% approximately of total). On the other hand, Ukrainians, Albanians and Romanians often encounter only Italians friends (with percentages ranges between 42% and 53%). The relationship between Italian language skills and the prevalent citizenship of strong ties is confirmed among young foreigners too. The more Italians are in individual social network the higher are language skills reported by students.

29. Exploring the migration propensity of foreign citizens living in Italy - understood as staying in Italy, returning to their country of origin or traveling to another country - could provide useful information to learn about the integration process in the host country. The picture emerging from the two surveys considered is articulated: there are strong differences between the two targets on intentions and some similarities in citizenship behaviours. Among foreign students (ISG survey), 46.5% express the desire to go abroad (excluding the country of origin), 31.6% continue to stay in Italy and 21.9% want to go in the country of origin of the parents. Among foreign adults (SCIF survey), however, there is a tendency to stay more in Italy (69.3% responded “to stay in Italy”), while 27.7% of respondents express their plans to return to their country of origin, only 3% claim to have future prospects linked to migration in a new state, other than Italy and its country of origin. The differences that emerged are partly explained by the different attitude of the two different targets over the future. The foreign adults (SCIF survey) expresses an intention to settle in the host country. The foreign students, however, designs a future abroad. The latter, like peers of Italian nationality (43% of whom would like to go abroad), expresses more than a weak attachment to the host country, a strong will to experience that is typical of young people in general.

30. The analysis of future projects allows once again to emphasize the existence of different integration models that differ not only between generations but also between different cultural patterns of each national group. Citizenship analysis shows that foreigners of Chinese origin, both first and second generations, have the highest shares of those who claim to remain in Italy (45% among boys, 71.4% among adults) despite the conservative patterns highlighted in the use of the Italian language and in building social relationships in Italy. These outcomes show that for some
citizenship, the plan to remain in the host country is not supported by the daily practice of the Italian language, nor by an intensive socio-cultural participation that includes Italians as members of own social network. These findings are supported by some studies (Marsden A. 2011, IOM 2009, Nyiri P. Savel'ev IR 2002, Laczko F. 2003), which describe a complex integration process for the Chinese community sustained and driven by the presence and development of the Chinese entrepreneurship in Italy. It is a more market-oriented integration model through which important dynamics of interaction between Chinese and Italian development. Beyond the Chinese community, among the kids (ISG), the Ukrainians stand out for those who would like to stay in Italy (41%), while among adults (SCIF) are Albanians (78.6%), Tunisians (76.9%), Moroccans (74.6%) and Indians (72.8%) were among the most interested in staying in Italy.

Table 1: Foreign students for some aspects of integration by citizenship, 2015 (percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizenship</th>
<th>I speak Italian with my mother</th>
<th>I only attend “Italian” schoolmates (a)</th>
<th>I only attend “Italian” friends</th>
<th>Place where I would like to live great</th>
<th>Where my father or mother was born (b)</th>
<th>Other Foreign Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>48.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>40.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>38.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>31.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>46.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) In order to take into account the incidence of foreign pupils in the school, the elaboration refers to boys in schools with at least 10% of foreign pupils on the total.
(b) For boys born abroad include “Where I was born”.
Source of data: Second Generation Integration Survey (ISG)
Graph 1: Foreigners aged 14 years old by citizenship of most important people to refer in Italy, 2011-2012 (percent).

Source of data: Condition and social integration of foreign citizens Survey (SCIF)

V. Conclusion

31. Integration as a two-way process is different from assimilation because it concerns both parties: the immigrants and their descendants and the receiving society. According to this definition, migrants and native have to build up a new common ground for living together, respecting the already formed identity. This implies that migrants must have the chance to make use of socio-cultural resources they bring with themselves and to expand their identity, acquiring new concepts and a new language. Therefore the receiving country might see migrants as people enriching its linguistic and cultural dimensions. This is a process, which takes a long time and focused social policies.

32. The population with migratory background in European countries is a complex mosaic. If administrative data can give a glance about integration conditions and paths, sample survey can give more detailed information on different and essential aspects of the various integration models.

33. At the same time the complexity of the foreign population is the same of the total population, consequently if one is interested in studying specific targets needs specific instruments and strategies.

34. The two experiences carried out with the sample surveys will be an important starting point towards a system that integrates administrative data with data coming from sample surveys in order to study the integration of migrants.
35. The comparison between the data collected by two different surveys show that the models followed by the adults of different citiizenships are replicated — *mutatis mutandis* — by the young generations. The comparison has been carried out using different measures for different targets. The social integration of the adults is quite different from the integration of young people and the study of the conditions of young people requires specific measures.

36. Despite the generational gap between migrants groups compared and different approach used in studying social integration, any similarities of habits are recorded among members of same ethnic group (emblematic the case of Chinese). According to the definition of integration as a two-way process, such outcomes are likely to say there is no a unique integration model, as well as there is no a single method or technique able to measure the social integration phenomenon. It is necessary, instead, to differentiate methods and tools, as well as statistical information to take into account cultural diversity and generational gap, as the level of settlement carried out in the receiving society.

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