

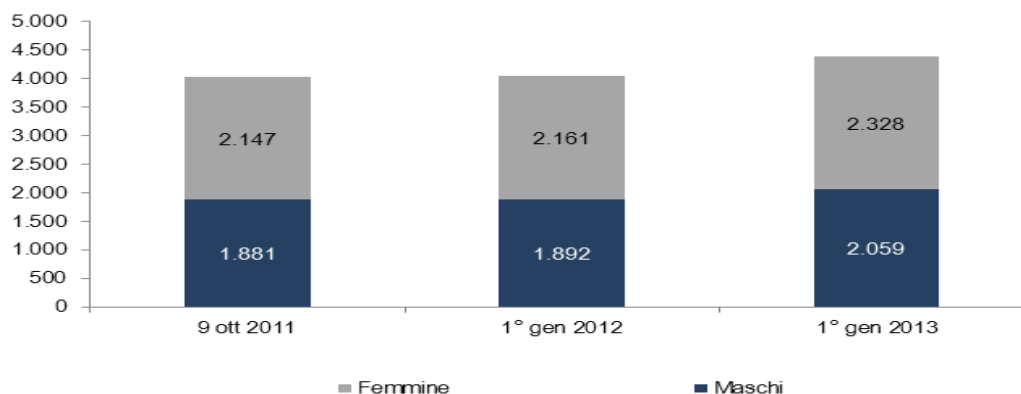
Counting immigrants: the combined use of administrative and Census data in Italy

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1. Counting immigrants through Census

In 2011 the XV General Population and Housing Census enumerated 4,027,627 foreigners resident in Italy. Among the different technical innovations and methods introduced by the Census there is one that particularly stands out, as for Italy represents a major change of approach in relation to the past. The 2011 Census was based largely on the use of registers. Unlike what happened in the previous censuses, the questionnaires were mostly delivered by mail, using the addresses recorded in the registers of the resident population handled by each of the 8,092 Italian municipalities. The choice of starting from administrative sources was addressed both to exploit the information contained in the registers and to pursue the greatest coherence between administrative and census data. Historically in Italy one of the consequences of all censuses is in fact the emerging of misalignment between the data observed on the ground by the census and the data contained in the Population registers. Especially for foreign residents, these are sensible issues.

Figure 1 – Foreigner citizens resident in Italy. 2011-2013



Source: Istat data

2. Counting immigrants through administrative data

Official administrative surveys represent precious sources for monitoring the largest part of the phenomenon of immigration in Italy. The surveys on the immigration and emigration flows and on the consistency of foreign resident population by sex, age and citizenship are census type survey. The information is collected via electronic or paper form, or directly via files drawn from the local administrative archives. The strength of this kind of statistics is

most of all the availability and the reliability of data at the deepest territorial level of disaggregation. The limits may be identified in the difficulty of getting deep in detail for the single aspects of the phenomenon. It is important to underline that these aspects are investigated via different surveys. Linking the information obtained from them is a crucial task to obtain a much more complete and affordable picture of immigration in Italy. In this respect, rules related to privacy and data confidentiality must be taken into account (for example collecting and using identification data of individuals to join the information coming from different surveys). It's the case of the exploitation of stock data of the lists of resident individuals (LAC, "Liste Anagrafiche Comunali") drawn from the municipal population registers used as the reference base for last Census and regularly updated since then. It is also the case of the individual data coming from the so called SIREA ("Sistema di REvisione delle Anagrafi"), the informative system for the documentation of municipal Population registers revision (as required by the Italian law - DPR 30 may 1989, n. 223). These sources are of great use both to check the quality of Census data and Population registers, and to contribute to the correct calculation of the foreign resident population in the years following the Census.

3. The main problems of the different sources

It is well known that administrative data suffer of oversize counting as it is very difficult to register emigration of foreigners, leaving the Country without communicating their departure to the municipality. In Italy the administrative laws ordering the population registers place restrictions to the cancellation of these foreigners from the archives, especially for the EU citizens.

On the other hand, particularly in the case of foreigners Census data suffer of undersize counting for different reasons: high internal mobility, precarious housing conditions, cultural problems, long term absence from home due to work, etc.

Census results, combined with the revision of population registers show that the attainments to Census response is different according to the nationality but also to other demographic characters (sex, age, etc.). For the first time at the individual level, after the XV Census it has become possible to understand the different weight of these variables through the SIREA.

4. Aims, methods and work hypothesis

The aim of this study is to describe the changes in foreign population stock and in migration dynamics at the municipal level, through the analysis of the data coming from the different Istat surveys based on Population registers; the study tries also to verify which are the more representative sources to better evaluate the foreign population presence on the Italian territory.

In order to synthesize the phenomenon of foreign migration dynamics, we tried to describe the different characteristics according to the type of outcomes of the population register revision. To highlight these differences, we classified foreign population according to the main demographic characteristics (sex, citizenship, duration of the presence in Italy, type of household) and the main reasons for the different outcomes (residence confirmation or cancellation).

In particular, we analyse the territorial distribution to study the different attitudes to the mobility of the foreign population and its and its characterization in the various Italian

regional contexts, with a peculiar contraposition between, on one hand, the north-centre and the rest of the country and, on the other hand, the areas with different demographic sizes. For a quicker understanding, we showed the main results of the analysis in several cartograms.

References

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