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Introduction: The Italian Migratory Context

- 1 Over the past few decades Italy has experienced a steep growth in immigration inflows, rapidly turning into a net immigration country. According to national statistics, in 2011 foreign-national regular residents numbered 4.57 million and stood at 7.5% of the total population, which is more than three times the 2001 figures (Istat 2012). In addition, estimates show that there are almost 900 thousand as yet unregistered or undocumented immigrants, so that the total number of foreign-nationals is 5.4 million, 95% of whom come from less developed or developing countries (Fondazione Ismu 2011). Recent data reveal that in Italy, like everywhere else in Europe, inflows have become highly differentiated, with more arrivals from Eastern Europe (mainly Romania), South Asia and South America (OECD 2011a). They are still largely driven by labor migration, but entries for family reasons have been growing rapidly. The demand for immigrant workers, even though declining, has remained high, even during the recent economic crisis: immigrant labor is cheap and tends to be concentrated on specific jobs and sectors where there is low competition with locals and where the current economic downturn has not brought about a steep decrease in demand for low-skilled labor. This is particularly true in Lombardy, the region which has received the largest number of immigrants so far and now hosts about a quarter of the foreign population resident in the country.
- 2 Immigrant labor has been a structural component of the Italian labor market since the second half of the 1990s. Italy has turned to migration to satisfy its labor needs against concerns about the impact of ageing population and, above all, in light of growing shortages of low-skilled labor in some sectors such as manufacturing, cleaning, hotels,

social and domestic services, health and long-term care. Households and small and medium enterprises have actually struggled to meet increasing demand for some jobs with poor working conditions and such a mismatch has sustained the idea that immigrants would ultimately always be available for jobs that the locals refused to do. The argument that immigrants are complementary to local workers, rather than substitutes, as they do jobs that locals reject, has been central to the political, as well as academic debate (for a review see: Zanfrini 2004a), since the beginning of the Italian migratory transition, which dates back to the 1970s. In this respect, scholars stressed the relative “autonomy” of the domestic labor supply, that is to say its propensity to select and choose among the available job opportunities. Women, in particular, proved to be unavailable to work in domestic services. The young, especially if skilled, have increasingly refused manual work and/or jobs with low prestige (Reyneri 1996). As a result of these trends, which paved the way for the recruitment of immigrant labor, the Italian labor market has undergone a massive process of ethnicization in specific occupations and sectors. This is the other side of the complementarity between locals and immigrant workers.

- 3 The “complementarity paradigm”, which soon became an indisputable axiom (Zanfrini 2009), has apparently produced a positive balance. Yet, it has several implications, given the current labor migration policy framework. In fact, the Italian integration model seems to exacerbate what may be called the “unresolved paradox of European history” (Zanfrini 2010b). It is the paradox of a population of “guest workers” (admitted with a temporary permit conditional on employment) then upgraded to the rank of denizens (entitled with a rich set of rights), without a significant shift in the predominant expectations towards immigration (Standing 2011). These expectations – which can be summarized by the statement “whoever has a job may enter the country; more precisely, a job that we do not want to do” – generate an unsolvable contradiction with the principle of “equal opportunities” affirmed by the European Union as the main route for the construction of a cohesive society and a competitive economy. Hence, it is noteworthy to review the framework legislation.
- 4 The first regulations explicitly aimed at managing the entry and stay of extra-UE immigrants into the domestic labor market, on the basis of the principles of equal treatment and equal access to rights with nationals, date back to the 1980s. It was only in 1998, though, with the approval of Law no. 40 – the so-called “Legge Napolitano-Turco” – that Italy introduced general and unitary legislation to regulate immigration. The law included specific provisions on labor migration and established a quota for annual admissions of non-EU citizens to be issued by the government in cooperation with the local authorities. The system of quotas for labor migrations fixed numerical limits and set a sort of shortage list for the sectors where labor demand was considered to be relevant. Yet it did not indicate any skill requirement. Subsequently, because of prevailing labor needs, it has been largely a recruitment channel for low-skilled workers. Law no. 40 was fully enacted for the first time only in 2000, in a context of growing concern for the role played by immigrant workers in the domestic labor market. Two years later, in 2002, it was reformed by Law no. 189 – also known as “Legge Bossi-Fini”. This legislation aimed at reducing controlled migration inflows and reinforcing measures to combat illegal entry and employment of immigrants. Entries, as well as renewal of residence permits, became conditional on having a job, a job for which, as provisions stated, the unavailability of

either local workers or migrants already resident in the country has been previously ascertained.

- 5 Despite the common perception, the new policy framework did not manage to restrict inflows and labor migration. In recent years, up to the beginning of the international crisis, the quota system authorized a considerable number of both seasonal and non-seasonal immigrant non-EU workers (OECD 2009). New entries to the labor market remained consistent, too. As a matter of fact, the immigrant labor force increased significantly. On one hand, large-scale free movement migration, mainly work-related, have developed over the last ten years following EU enlargement. On the other hand, most entries under family reunion eventually entered the labor force. In any case, empirical evidence shows that annual quotas are usually employed to regularize illegal/undocumented immigrants already living in Italy. The provisions make it quite hard for an eligible candidate worker to apply from abroad, as well as for an employer to legally recruit a non-EU worker living abroad. In this way, the quota system is the functional equivalent of amnesties and regularization initiatives which governments have periodically launched (Zanfrini 2008).
- 6 On the whole, the national policy framework, in the way it has been implemented, may be considered an attempt to regulate inflows *ex-post*, i.e. without any planning, on the basis of the above mentioned complementarity axiom. Policy seems just to take note of the situation. Labor migration is indeed supply-driven. Under the current system, immigrants tend to formulate, on their own, strategies in order to be employed by private companies and household, improve their human capital, become self-employed and so on. Otherwise, they have to rely on ethnic networks and that explains why workers from different origins tend to concentrate in certain occupations and sectors. In this regard, empirical findings show that this combined strategy, which draws on individual and ethnic resources, may lead immigrants to overcome obstacles and eventually to integrate into the labor market, but mainly in its secondary sector (Zanfrini 2010a).
- 7 In the light of such migratory context, the purpose of this article is to move towards a better understanding of the labor market outcomes of immigrants in Italy, specifically in Lombardy. We intend to contribute to the existing literature in two ways. First, we provide an overview of the labor market condition of immigrants at regional level, so widening the research perspective. Immigrants tend to be quite responsive to local differences in the opportunity structure (for the Italian case, Zanfrini 2004a), thus calling for new analytical models able to disclose the peculiarity of local labor markets. Second, unlike most of the literature, we do not take local workers as our point of reference, but rather study the differences according to nationality/country of origin and thus identify significant ethnic variations in the patterns of economic incorporation. The structure of the article is as follows. Section I proposes a brief overview of the most prominent literature and sets the theoretical framework for the analysis. Section II reviews data and methods. Section III examines the labor market condition of immigrants and its main predictors. The article ends with a summary and some concluding remarks.

The Labor Market Condition of Immigrants: Theoretical and Empirical Literature

- 8 Participation in the labor market, specifically employment, is one of the most important factors for the successful integration of immigrants. As such, it has been widely recognized on the international political agenda and established in both the legal and policy framework of international institutions. To date, in many developed countries, the labor market performance of immigrants is still noticeably poorer than that of native-born workers. In “old” receiving countries, immigrants have lower activity and employment rates, and they are more exposed to unemployment. Besides, also in “new” receiving south-European countries – where they record positive differentials in activity and employment rates relative to those of locals – immigrants experience lower levels of job security, earn lower wages and tend to be strongly concentrated in seasonal industries (agriculture, hotels and restaurants, construction sector, etc.) or in the private household sector, or in low-skilled, low-paid elementary occupations for which they are often overqualified (European Commission 2008; OECD 2012; Zimmermann 2005; for the Italian case, Zanfrini 2011).
- 9 In migration literature, immigrants’ labor market attainment has been interpreted through a broad range of potential explanations. Many influential studies highlighted the relevance of individual characteristics and resources in affecting immigrant economic outcomes and their evolution over time and generations. Others explored the impact that the institutional context may have on immigrant integration and the embeddedness of immigrant opportunities and resources (for a theoretical as well as empirical overview see: Borjas 1999a; Portes 1995; Reitz 2002; Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990). Let us briefly review the main approaches more in detail.
- 10 Human capital theory, originally formulated by neoclassical economists (Becker 1962), understands differentials in employment outcomes on the basis of individual abilities and qualifications, among them, educational achievement, professional skills, language proficiency, but also specific knowledge and awareness of the host society and the functioning of its labor market. Accordingly, because of low transnational transferability of the skills and capabilities acquired in the country of origin, immigrants suffer a structural disadvantage in the early stage of their migration. Nonetheless, as time passes, they are expected to improve their labor market condition through the enhancement of their human capital, and eventually achieve similar outcomes compared to those of their native-born counterparts (Adsera and Chiswick 2007; Chiswick 1978). This conceptual framework, which has been shaping the so-called “point system” migration policies – whose rationale is in fact to privilege the admission of better educated and more highly skilled immigrants – is certainly coherent with the optimistic predictions of the assimilation theory. To be more precise, traditional assimilation theory (Gordon 1964) proposes that immigrants, as they attain country-specific human and social capital, become more and more homogeneous with the native-born population and, therefore, tend to successfully integrate. Similarity, with respect to a broad range of indicators, might be helpful indeed (Riva and Zanfrini 2012). Although a consistent body of research suggests that both human capital and assimilation patterns are important predictors of immigrants’ integration into the labor market (Borjas 1999b; Bisin *et al.* 2011; Chiswick

and Miller 2008; Wanner 1998), other variables need to be considered. In fact, such literature is far from conclusive.

- 11 Beyond explanations centered on education and skills, as well as on immigrants' commitment to invest in country-specific human capital and thus to blend into the mainstream, the latest sociological approach has called attention to the way in which both social networks and the institutional context may affect immigrant economic behavior and performance. Following Granovetter (1983), much emphasis has been placed on the social and institutional embeddedness of immigrants' employment trajectories and no longer merely on human capital variables. Such theoretical shift has allowed to assess the variety of the socio-economic trajectories immigrants follow and to account for their eventual unevenness among different ethnic groups, while questioning, at the same time, the prescriptive assumptions underlying the assimilation theory. There are, indeed, several factors which mediate the effect of human capital and then channel the labor market outcomes of immigrants.
- 12 Some scholars have investigated social capital, which is governed by solidarity and trust and may grant mutual assistance within ethnic communities (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Li 2004). Social capital may provide access to specific resources, such as job referrals and connections, and then foster positive employment outcomes, also in terms of entrepreneurship possibilities (Aldrich and Zimmer 1986; Granovetter, 1995; La Rosa and Zanfrini 2003 for the Italian case). Yet depending on its nature and structure, social capital may be disadvantageous in the long run and lead to a segmented assimilation (Portes 1995). Indeed, evidence indicates that "bonding" ethnic ties grant access mainly to low-skilled manual jobs in ethnic niches or enclaves, hamper job mobility, and sanction socially disapproved behaviors (Waldinger 1995; Portes and Zhou 1993). In contrast, bridging ties tend to be weaker, but seem to be more useful for economic and occupational upgrade, as they provide a different kind of information (Lancee 2010).
- 13 Parallel to social capital, the institutional framework has been considered (Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990; Kloosterman and Rath 2001). The so-called dual labor market approach, in particular, has interpreted the economic achievements of immigrants in accordance with their concentration, due to quite limited chances of upward mobility, in a secondary labor market, where they play a crucial role in meeting complementary low-skill shortages. The secondary labor market is defined by the relevance of ethnic capital (Borjas 1992) and characterized by jobs of lower quality, in terms of employment security and working conditions, as well as meager returns on human capital (Doeringer and Piore 1971).
- 14 In general, a more comprehensive framework has been developed for understanding the importance of "contexts of reception" – structural and institutional characteristics of receiving societies – in shaping the ways in which immigrants and their children are incorporated into different segments of society (Calavita 2005; Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Rath 2000; Reitz 1998). Consequently, integration into the labor market, once conceived by the assimilation framework merely as an immigrants' task, has come to be interpreted as an interactive process combining the individual and his resources with the opportunity structure and institutional framework (Alba and Nee 1997; Kloosterman 2010; Kloosterman and Rath 2001; Zanfrini 2004b).

Data, Research Questions and Methodology

- 15 This article uses data from the Regional Observatory for Integration and Multi-ethnicity (ORIM) annual survey to investigate different aspects of immigrants' economic integration in Lombardy (Blangiardo 2011; data available at <http://www.orimregionelombardia.it>). ORIM has been carrying out a large-scale (8,000 respondents aged 15 and over), cross-sectional survey for more than ten years now. Based on center sampling technique (Baio et al. 2011; Blangiardo 2002), the survey produces a comprehensive, consistent and unique dataset for a representative sample of immigrants resident in Lombardy, either regular or unauthorized/undocumented, coming from the so-called "heavy migration pressure countries"¹⁷. It allows us to conduct statistical analyses on social, demographic and economic characteristics and related topics at both regional and local (province) level and to differentiate and compare immigrants by nationality/country of origin. Specific questions about legal status also permit us to keep track of the migratory background of those who have become naturalized. The data are not comparable with official labor market statistics and thus cannot be used to make a comparison between foreign-national and local workers.
- 16 In order to study the labor market status of immigrants (15 years +), we investigated the following indicators: activity, employment, unemployment, self-employment, temporary (fixed-term) employment, standard (full-time permanent) employment rates and the percentage of undeclared work. In addition, we considered occupation and net average earnings. For the purpose of this article, we have computed all the main labor market indicators, not only activity/inactivity rates, as a percentage of total population. Then, for instance, the employment rate is calculated as an employment-population ratio. Figures concerning professional status – specifically the distinction between the self-employed and entrepreneurs – were recorded on the basis of spontaneous answers given by respondents.
- 17 The analyses conducted are based on descriptive statistics calculated using ORIM data for the period between 2001 and 2011. Against the above reviewed theoretical background, we first investigated the relationship between the labor market conditions of immigrants with human capital variables. On the basis of human capital theory we would expect (Hypothesis 1) that education and the length of stay may significantly improve immigrant economic performance. We then focused on legal status and the acquisition of citizenship. In this regard, our assumption (Hypothesis 2), consistent with the institutional embeddedness perspective, is that labor market outcomes may increase over time, inasmuch as they settle down and benefit from long-term migration policies. The importance of nationality/country of origin was also investigated. Following the segmented assimilation approach, we expected (Hypothesis 3) to find a high degree of heterogeneity in the labor market attainment of immigrants according to their ethnic background. Finally, the influence of gender is investigated across the whole analysis. We expected (Hypothesis 4) to find relevant gender gaps, with women at a disadvantage, for indicators of labor market condition.
- 18 The technique of artificial cohorts (Borjas 1985), here defined by length of stay in Italy, has been used where possible and meaningful so as to deal with the well-known problems associated with the use of cross-sectional data to estimate the longitudinal advancement of immigrants. Nonetheless, it is necessary to acknowledge that this expedient does not

automatically prevent biased estimates of longitudinal effect, due to the changing composition of the sample over time and to the difficulty in disentangling time effects from period effects.

Descriptive Findings

- 19 Table 1 presents an overview of the key labor market indicators, by gender. It first shows that in 2011, among immigrants aged 15 and over, the total activity rate is 82.5%. There is a broad gender gap, as women score much lower participation rates than men (72.1% vs. 92.2%). This is also the case for the employment rate, which stands at 59.8%: current figures indicate that, for women, the employment rate gap relative to men is almost 15 percentage points (52.3% vs. 67.6%). Other relevant gender differences are found concerning self-employment – whose incidence in the male population (9.3%) is three times as much as among females (3.0%) – and standard employment, which is much more common among men (42.5% vs. 28.2%). Positive differentials in the women’s labor market status, relative to that of the men, are observed in undeclared/irregular employment and unemployment rates. According to ORIM estimates, there is a clear over-representation of men among the lawful paid activities not declared to public authorities, either as employees (9.8% vs. 8.4%) or self-employed (1.9% vs. 0.6%). Besides, the proportion of women seeking a job, over the total population, is 10.7%, two percentage points lower than that of men (12.7%).

Table 1. Immigrant population, by sex and labor status (%), 2011

	Male	Female	All
Activity rate (population in the labor market)	92.2	72.1	82.5
Population in standard (full-time permanent) employment	42.5	28.2	35.3
Population in temporary (fixed-term) employment	7.5	4.8	6.1
Self-employed persons without employees (own-account workers)	7.6	2.3	5.0
Self-employed persons with employees (employers)	1.7	0.7	1.0
Employment rate (population in regular employment)	67.6	52.3	59.8
Population in undeclared/irregular work	11.7	9.0	9.8
Unemployment rate (population unemployed)	12.7	10.7	11.7
Total	100	100	100

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Biangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

- 20 In the decade 2001-2011, the labor market condition of immigrants displayed relevant adjustments (Table 2). For analytical reasons, the span considered may be divided into two periods. In the first one, from 2001 to 2007, the labor market outcomes of immigrants dramatically improved. That is mainly due to the favorable economic context and to the large-scale process of regularization of unauthorized/undocumented immigrants that took place in 2002². Figures show, in particular, a sharp increase in employment rates (12 percentage points), an acute fall in unemployment (from 13.2% to 6.0%), together with a less substantial drop in irregular employment (from 19.0% to 16.5%). In the second period, which matches up with the current economic downturn, we have witnessed,

however, a significant drop (about 5 percentage points) in both activity and employment rates, a strong reduction (from 16.5% to 9.8%) in undeclared/irregular work and the doubling of unemployment rates (from 6.0% to 11.7%)³. That said, the 2010-2011 data point to a stabilization and possible recovery, as suggested by the recent reduction in the incidence of unemployment (more than 1 percentage point) and by the simultaneous rise in the share of regular employees (4 percentage points, from 56.0%).

Table 2. Immigrant population, by year and labor status (%), 2001-2011

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Activity rate (population in the labor market)	86.5	88.7	88.1	89.7	87.9	87.2	87.0	86.4	83.0	79.3	82.5
Population in standard (full-time permanent) employment	35.4	35.8	38.0	40.9	38.6	36.4	37.6	37.5	34.2	33.0	35.3
Population in temporary (fixed-term) employment	5.5	5.6	7.8	9.6	9.2	8.7	10.3	10.2	9.1	5.9	6.1
Self-employed persons without employees	5.4	4.9	6.4	5.9	6.0	6.9	6.8	5.7	5.1	4.6	5.0
Self-employed persons with employees	-	-	-	-	1.0	1.0	0.6	0.6	1.1	0.8	1.2
Employment rate (population in regular employment)	52.4	52.3	60.4	64.7	64.6	62.5	64.2	63.1	57.6	56.0	59.8
Population in undeclared/irregular work	19.0	23.0	15.6	15.3	15.6	17.8	16.5	15.7	13.4	9.6	9.8
Unemployment rate	13.2	13.4	12.1	8.9	7.4	6.3	6.0	6.9	11.3	12.9	11.7
N.A.	1.8	-	-	0.9	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ORIM annual data – 2001-2011 (see Biangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

- 21 There are no outstanding gender differences in overall trends, neither before nor after the beginning of the 2008 international crisis. Both men and women have been equally affected by falling employment. Men have suffered an earlier and steeper rise in unemployment rates, but in 2011, for the first time in three years, male unemployment significantly dropped (-4 percentage points). In contrast, the percentage of women seeking a job continued to rise and eventually doubled. Subsequently, apart from a recent increase in the activity rate gap, gender differentials in key labor market indicators have remained unchanged.

Human Capital

- 22 As stated before, we assumed, according to the human capital theory, that education may predict positive labor market outcomes. As expected, both activity and employment rates are likely to increase with the level of education, while the odds of being unemployed decrease in inverse relation to the reported educational attainment (Table 3). Yet evidence indicates that a higher level of education does not necessarily enhance professional status. The proportion of self-employed, with or without employees, tends to be high even among immigrants with less than an upper secondary education, in particular among men, thus implying that in the local labor market there are low barriers, in terms of specific requirements, to immigrants' transition to entrepreneurship. On the whole, the effects of education are more evident among

immigrant women, just as among local workers. Immigrant women with a tertiary education fare much lower inactivity (9.0% vs. 38.4%) and unemployment (9.1% vs. 18.5%) rates as well as higher employment (67.7% vs. 29.1%) and standard employment (36.8% vs. 15.9%) rates than their counterparts with no formal qualifications. These same differentials are smaller in the male population.

Table 3. Immigrant population, by sex, labor status, highest level of education attained (%), 2011

	None	Primary and lower secondary	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	
Male	Activity rate (population in the labor market)	95.5	93.8	94.2	95.4
	Population in standard (full-time permanent) employment	30.4	41.7	45.2	38.5
	Self-employed persons without employees	10.1	6.2	7.3	11.8
	Self-employed persons with employees	0.3	1.0	2.4	1.8
	Employment rate (population in regular employment)	55.3	65.7	69.5	68.1
	Population in undeclared/irregular work	22.2	12.6	9.9	9.7
	Unemployment rate (population unemployed)	16.4	13.5	11.7	12.2
Female	Activity rate (population in the labor market)	57.1	66.7	76.1	87.4
	Population in standard (full-time permanent) employment	15.9	21.9	29.9	36.8
	Self-employed persons without employees	1.1	2.4	1.5	4.6
	Self-employed persons with employees	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.5
	Employment rate (population in regular employment)	29.1	43.5	51.7	67.7
	Population in undeclared/irregular work	7.3	9.6	9.5	6.3
	Unemployment rate (population unemployed)	18.5	10.9	10.2	9.1

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Biangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

- 23 Education also has an impact on immigrants' economic performance, but it is rather weak. On average, highly qualified immigrants earn €1,095 a month, that is to say 5.6% more than their counterparts without any formal qualification and only 1,7% more than the ones with upper secondary education. This is essentially the result of a low-medium educational bias in the male component. Women earn lower salaries than men, with a negative differential of up to 26,6% among those with an upper secondary education. In any case, the gender pay gap is reduced among the most skilled. Women's earnings proportionally increase with the level of education, whereas male workers with tertiary education earn less than those who have an upper secondary level education and only slightly more than the low-qualified. The gender pay gap remains: highly qualified women earn less than men without any formal qualification (€1,008 vs. €1,112).

Table 4. Mean monthly net earnings (void salaries excluded), by sex and highest level of education attained, 2011

	None	Primary and lower secondary	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	Total
Male	1,112€	1,185€	1,225€	1,219€	1,206€
Female	842€	884€	899€	1,008€	918€
All	1,037€	1,083€	1,077€	1,095€	1,082€
Women's to men's earnings ratio	75.7%	74.6%	73.4%	82.7%	76.1%

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Blangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

- 24 Figures suggest that both men and women do not use many of their qualifications, as they tend to suffer from great mismatches between the occupation they hold and their education. Also, although educational attainment protects against the risk of unemployment, it does not shelter against over-qualification. About two-thirds of highly qualified immigrants work in low and medium skilled jobs, while only two out of ten work as professionals or associate professionals (Table 5). The mismatch between qualifications and occupations is more pronounced for men. More than 80% of them work in jobs which are below their level of educational attainment, whereas the incidence of over-qualification is ten percentage points lower among women. More in detail, and focusing on specific occupations, in the female labor force, 16% of domestic care workers and 11% of domestic cleaners and helpers attained university degrees. With regard to men, the incidence of those with tertiary education is 23% among cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments, 16% among laborers in the service sector and 14% among laborers in manufacturing.

Table 5. Immigrant population, occupation (ORIM classification), highest level of education attained (%), 2011

	None	Primary and lower secondary	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary
Laborers in manufacturing	16.1	19.0	12.8	5.7
Laborers in service sector	7.4	7.0	8.3	6.0
Skilled manufacturing workers	2.6	2.4	2.7	1.3
Laborers in construction	18.7	11.3	7.5	3.1
Agricultural, forestry and fishery laborers	8.4	3.2	1.5	1.5
Cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments	5.3	5.7	5.4	2.2
Clerical support workers	-	0.4	3.4	7.5
Other sales workers	2.8	2.8	4.5	3.6
Shop salespersons	8.9	5.8	5.0	4.7
Cooks, waiters and bartenders	6.1	11.9	11.4	8.4
Craft and related trades workers	3.1	5.8	4.8	2.0
Transport and storage laborers	2.8	3.0	3.6	1.0
Domestic cleaners and helpers (permanent)	3.3	3.2	4.8	5.9
Domestic cleaners and helpers (by the hour)	5.1	7.1	6.9	7.2
Domestic care workers	4.0	7.2	7.2	8.4
Baby sitters	0.4	0.9	1.9	0.7
Health professionals and associate health professionals	-	0.4	1.2	7.7
Social professionals – Artistic and cultural professional	0.3	0.5	2.0	14.6
Social associate professionals	0.3	1.1	3.4	2.6
Others	4.4	1.3	1.7	5.9
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Blangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

- 25 Another key factor shaping the labor market conditions of immigrants may be the length of stay in the host country. Following, once again, the human capital theory, as immigrants are expected to acquire host-country specific human capital over time, their employment outcomes should improve considerably.
- 26 Data in Table 6 show that recent arrivals score the worst labor market performance. For both men and women, activity and employment rates for recent immigrants are considerably lower than those for longer established migrants. Moreover, immigrants who have been longer in Italy have considerably lower unemployment rates and are much more likely to be employed with standard contracts or self-employed or entrepreneurs, either with or without employees. More in detail, compared to more recent arrivals, immigrants with more than ten years' residency are nearly four times less likely to be unemployed and ten times more likely to be self-employed. In addition, the chances that immigrants of less than two years' stay will hold an irregular/undeclared job are, in comparison with the longer established, five times higher among men and more than twice as high than among women.

Table 6. Immigrant population, by sex, labor status and length of stay in Italy (%), 2011

		<2 years	2-4 years	2-5 years	>10 years
Male	Activity rate (population in the labor market)	80.1	90.9	95.5	95.4
	Population in standard (full-time permanent) employment	6.8	22.5	43.2	49.8
	Self-employed persons without employees	-	2.4	5.1	11.8
	Self-employed persons with employees	0.3	0.8	0.9	2.9
	Employment rate (population in regular employment)	19.7	46.9	65.9	78.3
	Population in undeclared/irregular work	21.2	23.2	14.8	5.0
	Unemployment rate (population unemployed)	32.4	17.4	13.0	8.9
Female	Activity rate (population in the labor market)	58.7	71.2	75.3	76.4
	Population in standard (full-time permanent) employment	7.7	22.6	30.1	30.1
	Self-employed persons without employees	-	0.8	1.7	3.9
	Self-employed persons with employees	-	-	0.5	1.2
	Employment rate (population in regular employment)	17.2	41.4	53.3	56.6
	Population in undeclared/irregular work	17.6	12.9	8.3	7.0
	Unemployment rate (population unemployed)	20.5	13.0	10.7	8.3

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Blangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

- 27 Immigrants' incomes are also affected by duration of stay in the country. In particular, the monthly net wages of longer established immigrants are about 50% higher than those of more recent arrivals (1,208€ vs. 815€). Findings confirm a substantial gender pay gap, which worsens with increasing length of stay. The disadvantage tends to widen, rather than close, over time: women's to men's earnings ratio, that is 95.2% among immigrants in Italy for two years or less, broadens to 71.6% among longer established immigrants.

Table 7. Mean monthly net earnings (void salaries excluded) by sex, and length of stay in Italy, 2011

	<2 years	2-4 years	2-5 years	>10 years	Total
Male	833€	887€	1,128€	1,358€	1,206€
Female	793€	852€	896€	972€	918€
All	815€	869€	1,022€	1,208€	1,082€
Women's to men's earnings ratio	95.2%	96.1%	79.4%	71.6%	76.1%

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Blangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

- 28 Growth in earnings is faster and more marked among men. Whilst the cohort of long-term resident male immigrants earns 1,358€ (62.9% more than recent arrivals), the mean wages of their female counterparts are 971€, just 22.5% higher than those of the cohort of women who have been in Italy for less than two years.
- 29 One of the main determinants of such a slow pace of wage progression among women may be their segregation to certain sectors (accommodation and food service activities, human health and social work activities, household based activities) and occupations which offer less chances for improvement in working conditions and upward occupational mobility (Riva 2010). In fact, there are also clear gender differences in the occupational distribution of immigrants. According to Table 8, there is a high concentration of female immigrants in elementary occupations – such as domestic cleaners and helpers (19.9%) and domestic care workers (16.5%), cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments (8.2%) or laborers in manufacturing (7.0%) – and among cooks, waiters and bartenders (13.2%). By contrast, even if a third of the total is employed as laborers in manufacturing (17.1%) and in construction (18.7%), men are more likely to be in mid-skilled occupations such as craft and related trade workers (8.5% vs. 1.9%) and shop sales persons (7.3% vs. 2.4%).

Table 8. Immigrant population, by sex and occupation (ORIM classification) (%), 2011

	Male	Female	Total
Laborers in manufacturing	17.1	7.0	12.8
Laborers in service sector	9.5	2.3	6.4
Skilled manufacturing workers	2.9	0.3	1.8
Laborers in construction	18.7	0.3	10.9
Agricultural, forestry and fishery laborers	5.6	0.5	3.4
Cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments	3.7	8.2	5.6
Clerical support workers	1.6	4.8	2.9
Other sales workers	2.8	6.2	4.3
Shop salespersons	7.3	2.4	5.2
Cooks, waiters and bartenders	8.4	13.2	10.4
Craft and related trades workers	8.5	1.9	5.7
Transport and storage laborers	5.4	0.1	3.1
Domestic cleaners and helpers (permanent)	0.6	5.8	2.8
Domestic cleaners and helpers (by the hour)	1.3	14.1	6.8
Domestic care workers	0.9	16.5	7.5
Baby sitters	0.1	3.0	1.3
Social associate professionals	0.2	4.3	1.9
Health professionals and associate health professionals	0.7	3.3	1.8
Social professionals – Artistic and cultural professional	1.5	4.0	2.5
Others	3.2	1.8	2.9
Total	100	100	100

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Bianchiardi 2011, Statistical annex)

- 30 As soon as the length of stay increases, men tend to move away from domestic or agriculture work to manual work in manufacturing and the service sector (Table 9). Women, on the other hand, are more likely to experience a specific kind of upward occupational mobility, mainly from “gateway” occupations such as domestic cleaners and helpers and domestic care workers to similar niches that nevertheless ensure better working conditions. Among women, across cohorts, there is also a large increase in the incidence of clerical support workers and professionals or associate professionals. With regard to over-qualification, its extent decreases with the length of stay in Italy, but still remains significant.

Table 9. Immigrant population, by sex, occupation (ORIM classification), length of stay in Italy (%), 2011

	Male				Female			
	<2 years	2-4 years	2-5 years	>10 years	<2 years	2-4 years	2-5 years	>10 years
Laborers in manufacturing	2.2	8.9	14.8	21.9	1.4	9.0	7.1	6.9
Laborers in service sector	3.2	7.8	8.6	10.8	1.5	0.5	1.4	3.9
Skilled manufacturing workers	-	0.4	2.8	3.6	-	-	0.2	0.5
Laborers in construction	19.6	19.3	21.4	16.1	-	0.6	0.2	0.3
Agricultural, forestry and fishery laborers	8.7	10.9	6.0	3.9	-	1.0	0.8	0.1
Cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments	4.1	5.8	3.6	3.2	6.0	6.7	7.4	9.7
Clerical support workers	1.7	0.3	0.6	2.7	0.3	2.4	3.7	7.3
Other sales workers	0.8	5.3	3.2	2.1	5.5	4.8	7.1	5.6
Shop salespersons	7.3	6.0	5.9	8.9	--	0.7	1.6	4.1
Cooks, waiters and bartenders	11.9	9.9	9.8	6.5	5.5	14.0	14.3	12.3
Craft and related trades workers	7.7	7.6	9.8	7.5	12.2	2.5	1.6	1.3
Transport and storage laborers	2.0	4.6	5.6	5.6	-	-	0.1	0.1
Domestic cleaners and helpers (permanent)	1.2	0.9	0.6	0.6	12.7	4.1	7.4	3.6
Domestic cleaners and helpers (by the hour)	11.4	2.7	1.5	0.2	15.2	17.4	13.5	13.9
Domestic care workers	5.0	2.0	0.8	0.4	15.0	26.6	20.7	8.5
Social associate professionals	-	-	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.9	3.6	6.5
Health professionals and associate health professionals	3.6	0.3	0.5	0.9	1.1	1.5	3.5	3.8
Social professionals - Artistic and cultural professional	5.0	1.9	0.8	1.8	2.2	1.3	2.0	7.4

Source: ORIM annual data - 2011 (see Blangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

Legal Status and Naturalization

- 31 In order to test hypothesis 2, we then focused on the relationship between legal status and labor market condition (Table 10). Findings indicate that, although regular residents score better results, unauthorized/undocumented immigrants can easily have access to the informal economy. Almost three quarters of that group (71.2%) hold an undeclared/irregular job, so uncovering a considerable gap between the legal framework of migration policies and the actual functioning of the labor market. Naturalization is positively related to labor market outcomes. In particular, immigrants who acquired Italian citizenship record the lowest unemployment rates (7.2%) and the highest proportion of self-employment, especially with employees (2.7%), while long-term residents and immigrants with EU citizenship experience higher unemployment rates (9.7% and 12.5% respectively) and are far less likely to be either self-employed or entrepreneurs (1.8% and 0.9%).

Table 10. Immigrant population, by labor status and legal status (%), 2011

	Naturalized	Eu citizens	Long term resident	Undocumented / irregular
Activity rate (population in the labor market)	76.5	89.1	80.4	97.3
Population in standard (full-time permanent) employment	32.3	38.5	41.0	-
Population in temporary (fixed-term) employment	4.2	7.0	4.8	-
Self-employed persons without employees (own-account workers)	8.1	5.2	6.4	-
Self-employed persons with employees (employers)	2.7	0.9	1.8	-
Employment rate (population in regular employment)	66.1	65.4	65.0	-
Population in undeclared/irregular work	3.3	9.8	5.3	71.5
Unemployment rate (population unemployed)	7.2	12.5	9.7	25.1
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Blangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

- 32 Naturalized immigrants also have the highest net monthly incomes. Differences are much more noticeable in the male labor force. Naturalized men earn 1,564€, 15.9% more than the permanent resident permit holder counterpart (1,348€) and more than twice as much as undocumented/irregular workers (647€). Among women, with naturalized immigrants earning on average 1,027€ a month, the same gaps are 7.9% and 44.7% respectively. Finally, data shows that citizens of new EU Member States earn lower wages than long-term residents: 1,221€ for men and 896€ for women.
- 33 Naturalization has a further positive effect on immigrants' labor market outcomes: it significantly increases the chances of holding a high or medium-skilled occupation and, consequently, reduces the odds of being employed in elementary occupations. In detail (Table 11), two out of ten immigrants who have acquired Italian citizenship are employed as either clerical support workers (10.3%) or social professionals – artistic and cultural professionals (10.9%), while less than 7% are domestic cleaners and helpers (3.9%) or cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments (3.0%). By contrast, among permanent resident permit holders, as well as the EU citizens, the proportion of persons employed in the above-mentioned skilled occupations is about five times lower, whereas the percentage of people employed as helpers or cleaners is about twice as high. In the male labor force, the acquisition of host country citizenship mainly increases the proportion of skilled manufacturing workers and shop salespersons. In the female counterpart, naturalization triples the percentage of clerical support workers and increases the quota of social and cultural professionals five-fold.

Table 11. Immigrant population, by occupation (ORIM classification) and legal status (%), 2011

	Naturalized	Eu citizens	Long term resident	Undocumented / irregular
Laborers in manufacturing	12.2	8.2	17.5	3.5
Laborers in service sector	6.6	4.0	7.7	4.7
Skilled manufacturing workers	3.0	0.9	2.3	0.2
Laborers in construction	6.2	13.7	9.0	18.3
Agricultural, forestry and fishery laborers	1.5	2.3	3.0	6.5
Cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments	3.0	5.8	5.5	4.6
Clerical support workers	10.3	2.4	3.6	0.3
Other sales workers	5.7	2.8	4.5	3.2
Shop salespersons	6.6	1.4	6.5	10.2
Cooks, waiters and bartenders	12.5	12.8	9.5	7.5
Craft and related trades workers	2.5	9.6	5.0	9.5
Transport and storage laborers	1.5	3.0	3.8	1.7
Domestic cleaners and helpers (permanent)	0.3	4.3	2.2	3.8
Domestic cleaners and helpers (by the hour)	3.6	4.5	5.3	11.7
Domestic care workers	2.6	9.7	4.1	10.7
Baby sitters	0.9	2.5	1.0	-
Social associate professionals	3.7	1.1	3.0	0.2
Health professionals and associate health professionals	3.5	3.8	1.8	-
Social professionals – Artistic and cultural professional	10.9	1.9	2.5	0.1
Others	3.1	5.4	2.2	3.2
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: ORIM annual data (see Biangiaro 2011, Statistical annex)

Country of Origin/Nationality

- 34 Aggregate figures so far considered hide important differences among immigrants according to their nationality/country of origin. Coherent with hypothesis 3, the labor market outcomes differ significantly across country of origin/nationality groups. Immigrants from East Asia, the new EU Member States and East-European countries record the best outcomes, for both males and females. Conversely, immigrants from North and Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia tend to suffer a greater disadvantage in integrating into the local labor market (Table 12).
- 35 Filipinos show the best performances. They have one of the highest activity rates (90.4%) and, above all, the lowest unemployment rates (2.9%), together with a moderate share of irregular employment (9.0%). Yet the incidence of self-employment among them is fairly limited (2.3%). The Chinese follow, with comparably low unemployment (4.4%) and high activity (89.6%) rates. They have the greatest share of self-employment (26.0%), but also a high incidence of undeclared/irregular work (16.5%). As regards immigrants from countries around the eastern borders of the European Union – which, on average, record good labor market outcomes – two facts are worthy of note. First, Romanians have a slightly higher risk of being unemployed. In any case, as new EU citizens, they have been guaranteed almost unrestricted access to the labor market and this has made it easier for them to put up with a period of unemployment against the risk associated with the current national immigration law⁴. Second, Albanians are less likely to be economically active. Comparison with past years, not reported here for reasons of space, show that it is due to a larger proportion of persons in education or training and, mainly, of women being out of the labor market due to personal and family responsibilities.
- 36 The poorest performance is found among Africans and South and South-East Asians. More in detail, immigrants from Senegal and North African countries have large

unemployment rates and present a marked incidence of undeclared/irregular work. The Singhalese, among South-East Asians, are undoubtedly the most disadvantaged. Their unemployment rate (20.7%) is the highest, being twice as high as the average, and almost none of them is self-employed. South Americans stand between the groups at the ends of the spectrum. The labor market condition of both Ecuadorians and Peruvians is relatively good, especially in terms of employment rates, despite above average unemployment rates and share of undeclared/irregular work.

- 37 The poor labor market performance of certain groups is deeply influenced by specific gender attitudes that encourage, or rather discourage, the labor market participation of women. As discussed above, the worst outcomes are found among immigrants from South-East Asian and North African countries. In these groups women score the lowest activity and employment rates and gender gaps are the highest. Nonetheless, there is also a strong variation in men's labor market performance. Sizeable gaps in employment and unemployment rates in the male labor force are found, in particular, between the Chinese and Filipinos, on one hand, and Egyptians, Moroccans, the Senegalese and the South-Americans on the other (Table 13 and Table 14).

Table 12. Immigrant population, by labor status and nationality (%), Total, 2011

	Alb	Rom	Ukr	SL	China	Phil	Ind	Pak	Egypt	Mar	Sen	Ecu	Per	All
Activity rate (population in the labor market)	75.9	87.5	89.8	95.0	88.6	90.4	72.7	75.0	78.8	72.4	85.7	85.7	93.9	82.5
Population in standard (full-time permanent) employment	36.8	38.7	47.0	48.8	26.0	52.1	36.3	32.6	26.1	29.1	35.1	37.0	40.8	35.3
Population in temporary (fixed-term) employment	8.7	6.5	5.4	6.3	5.9	3.1	9.1	7.1	2.6	7.5	5.9	4.0	9.4	6.1
Self-employed persons without employees (own-account workers)	3.9	5.7	2.4	-	20.2	2.3	2.8	6.8	7.0	4.3	4.6	3.2	3.8	5.0
Self-employed persons with employees (employers)	1.6	1.0	-	-	5.8	-	1.8	1.3	3.6	0.2	0.1	-	0.4	1.0
Employment rate (population in regular employment)	59.7	66.1	69.6	66.5	67.9	78.6	56.6	53.6	47.1	51.6	56.1	64.2	71.8	59.8
Population in undeclared/irregular work	6.6	9.3	12.2	7.9	16.5	9.0	4.4	9.3	18.4	8.6	14.3	14.8	7.5	9.8
Unemployment rate (population unemployed)	9.5	12.0	7.9	20.5	4.4	2.9	11.7	11.8	13.2	12.3	15.5	6.6	14.8	11.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Bianchiardi 2011, Statistical annex)

Table 13. Immigrant population, by labor status, nationality (%), Male, 2011

	Alb	Rom	Ukr	SrL	China	Phil	Ind	Pak	Egypt	Mar	Sen	Ecu	Per	All
Activity rate (population in the labor market)	87.0	92.8	94.7	95.4	90.1	94.9	94.6	94.7	91.5	92.1	84.8	94.5	87.0	92.2
Population in standard (full-time permanent) employment	52.7	46.6	39.3	30.4	47.0	52.0	42.2	33.4	42.5	42.7	38.2	36.9	52.7	42.5
Population in temporary (fixed-term) employment	9.7	7.1	3.2	6.4	5.8	12.1	9.0	3.4	7.6	7.0	5.3	15.2	9.7	7.5
Self-employed persons without employees	4.8	9.4	10.6	29.1	3.5	3.4	9.6	9.2	6.9	6.2	6.6	5.6	4.8	7.6
Self-employed persons with employees	2.9	1.9	-	5.0	-	2.0	1.8	4.3	0.3	0.1	-	-	2.9	1.7
Employment rate (population in regular employment)	73.1	71.4	62.6	80.0	82.3	75.1	68.5	56.7	66.9	62.4	62.2	66.8	73.1	67.6
Population in undeclared/irregular work	5.4	8.1	15.1	12.7	6.0	5.7	13.0	22.5	10.2	16.1	20.3	10.9	5.4	11.7
Unemployment rate (population unemployed)	8.3	13.3	17.0	2.7	1.8	14.2	13.1	15.4	14.4	13.6	2.1	17.0	8.3	12.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 14. Immigrant population, by labor status, nationality (%), Female, 2011

	Alb	Rom	Ukr	SrL	China	Phil	Ind	Pak	Egypt	Mar	Sen	Ecu	Per	All
Activity rate (population in the labor market)	62.1	83.4	88.8	82.0	90.6	40.2	26.5	38.5	48.7	67.2	86.2	93.5	62.1	72.1
Population in standard (full-time permanent) employment	17.2	32.6	48.4	21.6	55.9	13.4	9.0	7.7	12.5	12.7	36.1	43.3	17.2	28.2
Population in temporary (fixed-term) employment	7.4	6.1	5.8	5.4	0.9	4.7	2.6	0.5	7.3	2.5	3.1	5.6	7.4	4.8
Self-employed persons without employees	2.7	2.9	0.9	11.5	1.5	1.8	-	1.3	1.0	-	0.7	2.6	2.7	2.3
Self-employed persons with employees	-	0.2	-	6.5	-	1.4	-	1.9	0.1	-	-	0.6	-	0.7
Employment rate (population in regular employment)	42.8	61.8	71.0	55.8	75.6	29.3	17.7	22.8	32.3	37.3	65.8	74.8	42.8	52.3
Population in undeclared/irregular work	8.3	10.4	11.6	20.1	11.3	2.6	0.0	8.4	6.5	8.8	10.6	5.2	8.3	9.0
Unemployment rate (population unemployed)	10.9	11.1	6.2	6.0	3.7	8.1	8.9	7.4	9.6	21.2	9.8	13.4	10.9	10.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

- 38 As reported in Table 15 and Table 16, country of origin/nationality also impacts on occupation. This is particularly true in the male labor force for: *i*) Albanians and Romanians, who are largely employed (48,1% and 34,1% respectively) as laborers in construction; *ii*) the Senegalese, 41,1% being laborers and skilled workers in manufacturing; *iii*) the Chinese, of whom one out of three are shop salespersons; *iv*) Filipinos, who are mainly employed as cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments

(25,8%) or domestic cleaners and helpers (21,9%). Among women, the process of occupational segregation is noticeable for: *i*) Filipinos, who are domestic cleaners and helpers in more than half of the cases (56,3%); *ii*) Ukrainians, for the most part (48,2%) domestic care workers; *iii*) the Chinese, 22,0% of whom are other sales workers.

Table 15. Immigrant population, by occupation and nationality (%), Male, 2011

	Alb	Rom	Ukr	China	Phil	Ind	Pak	Egypt	Mar	Sen	ECU	Per		
Laborers in manufacturing	9.5	6.9	24.2	2.5	18.6	27.3	29.3	7.7	21.6	31.8	19.1	10.7		
Laborers in service sector	5.7	3.7	4.8	1.8	10.7	8.2	13.4	8.6	9.5	10.8	16.8	13.1		
Skilled manufacturing workers	2.5	2.2	-	0.6	1.8	3.5	3.0	1.0	3.4	9.3	3.5	2.4		
Laborers in construction	48.1	34.1	9.7	9.2	-	1.6	2.3	27.8	25.7	1.5	6.5	10.7		
Agricultural, forestry and fishery laborers	1.9	5.7	1.3	-	3.4	38.5	10.5	3.0	4.8	2.4	1.4	1.2		
Cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments	1.1	1.2	-	0.8	25.8	1.3	3.3	5.7	2.9	0.1	7.9	7.1		
Clerical support workers	1.4	0.3	-	0.2	-	1.5	2.3	1.9	2.7	2.4	3.2	3.6		
Other sales workers	1.2	-	-	19.7	2.4	2.4	3.4	2.0	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.2		
Shop salespersons	0.7	2.9	-	29.5	-	4.8	7.8	8.9	8.7	20.3	1.6	1.2		
Cooks, waiters and bartenders	6.0	5.9	4.7	20.3	7.6	1.7	10.3	17.7	4.9	2.6	2.8	7.1		
Craft and related trades workers	11.4	17.7	20.5	9.7	-	2.2	2.9	10.4	5.7	7.0	11.2	8.3		
Transport and storage laborers	5.6	7.2	16.7	0.5	-	3.2	3.9	0.2	4.3	4.4	18.2	16.7		
Domestic cleaners and helpers (permanent)	0.4	1.2	-	-	4.5	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.5	-	2.4		
Domestic cleaners and helpers (by the hour)	-	-	-	-	-	-	17.4	1.0	-	0.2	0.5	0.2	-	3.6
Domestic care workers	-	0.4	8.4	-	3.7	-	-	-	-	0.5	0.8	2.7	3.6	
Baby sitters	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Health professionals and associate health professionals	2.1	1.6	-	0.7	0.4	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Social professionals – Artistic and cultural professional	-	0.9	-	3.5	-	1.5	1.3	1.3	0.7	1.4	2.3	4.8		
Social associate professionals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2	-	-	-		
Others	2.1	8.1	9.7	1.0	3.7	0.7	6.1	3.5	2.0	3.2	1.7	2.3		
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Blangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

Table 16. Immigrant population, by occupation and nationality (%), Female, 2011

	Alb	Rom	Ukr	China	Phil	Ind	Pak	Egypt	Mar	Sen	Ecu	Per						
Laborers in manufacturing	8.8	6.8	1.0	8.9	1.2	31.2	30.9	4.1	9.7	12.1	9.6	7.7						
Laborers in service sector	0.9	4.0	1.0	-	3.8	3.4	-	0.7	3.9	3.9	0.2	0.7						
Skilled manufacturing workers	-	-	-	0.3	1.7	-	-	-	0.3	-	-	-						
Laborers in construction	1.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.5	0.4	0.6	-	-						
Agricultural, forestry and fishery laborers	1.5	-	0.2	-	-	5.1	-	-	2.3	2.1	-	-						
Cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments	8.6	9.2	8.0	-	5.6	-	-	9.7	17.0	9.1	12.4	6.3						
Clerical support workers	7.2	5.0	2.6	2.5	0.8	4.6	10.2	10.3	5.6	5.5	1.9	6.3						
Other sales workers	12.3	4.5	1.4	22.0	-	6.0	1.2	11.2	2.9	14.9	3.8	5.6						
Shop salespersons	1.4	0.3	0.8	14.9	0.4	5.3	-	6.8	2.5	3.0	0.3	0.7						
Cooks, waiters and bartenders	12.3	21.1	2.8	19.4	4.3	18.2	21.8	22.7	18.6	29.5	14.2	4.2						
Craft and related trades workers	0.6	2.3	0.3	16.4	-	-	10.2	2.6	1.4	-	-	-						
Transport and storage laborers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.4	-	0.5	-						
Domestic cleaners and helpers (permanent)	1.8	6.4	11.7	3.9	13.1	1.3	-	-	3.1	3.8	5.9	4.2						
Domestic cleaners and helpers (by the hour)		16.7		8.1		14.2		2.5	43.2		7.3		-	6.4	10.1	9.2	18.0	14.7
Domestic care workers		4.5		15.3		48.2		0.6	14.5		4.2		-	1.1	11.5	4.4	19.6	24.5
Baby sitters		2.4		4.6		1.5		-	5.6		2.0		-	-	0.6	0.2	2.4	2.8
Health professionals and associate health professionals		6.4		6.1		0.8		-	3.8		-		-	-	1.1	-	4.6	5.6
Social professionals – Artistic and cultural professional		8.6		2.6		1.2		3.4	1.3		9.2		25.7	20.2	3.1	-	-	4.9
Social associate professionals		1.9		2.1		2.7		0.2	0.6		0.7		-	-	5.2	1.6	6.7	11.2
Others		2.9		1.6		1.9		4.9	0.0		1.5		0.0	1.7	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.7
Total		100		100		100		100	100		100		100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ORIM annual data – 2011 (see Blangiardo 2011, Statistical annex)

Conclusion

- 39 This article investigated the labor market condition of immigrants in Lombardy, a region that hosts about a quarter of the total foreign population living in Italy. Using descriptive tools of statistical analysis, standard labor market indicators, occupations and earnings have been studied.
- 40 In accordance with Hypothesis 1 (Human Capital Theory), findings suggest that the labor market outcomes of immigrants are influenced by their qualifications, but only to a

certain degree. Although there is a general improvement in the labor market status with levels of education, figures show that immigrants face severe problems in putting their qualifications to good use. Against a background of large mismatches between the level of jobs immigrants hold and their credentials, the highest levels of education appear to offer negligible chances of greater achievement⁵. The length of stay in the country also influences the labor market condition. Comparing recent arrivals with longer established immigrants brings to light the fact that, across cohorts, there is a noticeable upgrade in professional status, occupation and wages. This result may be explained by the way in which labor inflows develop autonomously from the migration policy framework, as already discussed in the introduction.

- 41 Following the institutional embeddedness perspective (Hypothesis 2), we found evidence that legal status impacts on labor market situation. Consistent with other surveys and studies (European Commission 2008; Kahanec and Zaiceva 2009; OECD 2011), we observed positive differentials related to the acquisition of citizenship, especially in terms of earnings payoffs and occupation. Far from assuming a causal effect of naturalization on employment conditions, such findings point to a selection process; it seems that immigrants who move away from ethnic paths also invest in their human capital and individual empowerment, eventually gain economic integration and then become citizens of the host country. In fact, the acquisition of citizenship may be driven not only by expectations of emancipation and a commitment to settle permanently, but also by successful labor market integration.
- 42 In response to hypothesis 3 (Segmented Assimilation Theory), findings corroborate the expectation of a systematic variation in the labor market status of immigrants according to their ethnic background, with people from South-East Asia and North Africa achieving the worst outcomes. In this regard, given the national migratory context, results suggest that immigrants may rely primarily on ethnic capital to enter the labor market. This could certainly help them to access employment relatively easily. However, it also tends to reproduce a stereotyped path of economic incorporation, whose main features are the complementarity to native-born workers as well as ethnic clustering and the concentration of immigrant workers in some specific niches, always in low quality and unskilled jobs.
- 43 Finally, we found evidence that Hypothesis 4 (Gender Approach) may also be confirmed. Results indicate that women tend to fare worse than men across a wide range of indicators and this disadvantage decreases only marginally over time. Specifically, their human capital is much less rewarding, especially as regards occupational status and earning payoffs, and trajectories of upward mobility are significantly less likely across cohorts. In this regard, previous studies (Zanfrini 2009b) showed that progress in the integration process is less remunerative for women than for men. In comparison with men, women are much more esteemed for their skills as well as for their overall behavior and achieve better performances as regards social and economic integration. Nonetheless, they are rarely able to invest their human capital and are less likely to attain those outcomes which would ensure a successful integration into the labor market.
- 44 While addressing the main factors affecting the labor market condition of immigrants, the article has focused on some issues which need to be addressed and investigated further, mainly concerning the interaction between individual variables and the institutional framework. In this respect, our analysis has provided, above all, valuable insights for policy-making at a national level. In particular, it has called for an

improvement in the national labor migration regime – especially regarding recruitment policy and support schemes at entry, recognition of qualifications and skills, and social and labor market policy coordination – in order to increase the potential of the overall integration of immigrants and combat discrimination in the labor market.

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NOTES

1. These are Eastern Europe, Asia, Centre and South America and Africa countries. Therefore immigrants from EU 15 countries, Switzerland, Israel, North America, Oceania and Japan are excluded from the analysis.
2. The regularization programme (Law no. 189 of 30 July 2002) allowed all irregular/undocumented immigrants with a valid contract of employment to apply for a regular stay permit. Employers applied for regularization on behalf of irregular/undocumented workers. The total number of applications exceeded 700,000 (half of them for domestic workers), while regularizations granted were about 650,000.
3. Official labor market statistics, which are not comparable with ORIM figures, indicate that regional unemployment rates remained stable at 3.4% from 2001 through 2007 and then increased to 5.8% in 2011. Moreover, during the current recession, there has been a slight reduction in both activity (- 1 percentage point, from 69.6%) and employment (- 2.3 percentage points, from 67.0%) rates.
4. The L. no. 189/2002 lays down the legal framework for migration and integration policy. It provides that the entry into the country, in case of immigration for work purposes, is conditional on a job offer and that stay permits are linked with work permits. Unemployment can therefore affect the legal status of labor migrants: in particular, non-EU citizens would have to leave Italy within six months of unemployment. Legislation virtually allows the deporting of foreigners in an irregular condition. Yet, as a matter of fact, the law is largely unenforced.
5. The ORIM survey records the level of education attained (self-declared), which is rarely formally recognized. In 2008, data were collected about the formal recognition of certificates and diplomas attained abroad. Results showed that formal recognition – especially the recognition of academic titles – significantly improves labor market outcomes (Zanfrini 2009a).

RÉSUMÉS

Cet article dresse un tableau de l'état du marché du travail des immigrés en Lombardie, l'une des régions italiennes les plus riches, qui accueille un quart du total de la population étrangère vivant dans le pays. En particulier, en utilisant des données représentatives d'un échantillon à grande échelle, fournies par l'Observatoire régional de l'intégration et de la multiethnicité (ORIM), l'article présente des analyses statistiques descriptives et étudie les modes d'emploi des immigrants, en termes d'activité, d'emploi, de travail autonome, de taux de chômage, part de l'emploi irrégulier, l'occupation et les revenus. L'ensemble des résultats, qui sont interprétés en

fonction des théories classiques en cette matière, celle du capital humain en particulier, montrent que le sexe, la nationalité / pays d'origine, la durée du séjour en Italie et le statut juridique contribuent à expliquer les différences que l'on observe dans la situation du marché du travail des immigrants.

This article intends to draw a comprehensive picture of the labor market condition of immigrants in Lombardy, one of the wealthiest Italian regions, which hosts a quarter of the total foreign population living in the country. In particular, by using data from a representative large-scale sample, provided by the Regional Observatory for Integration and Multi-ethnicity (ORIM), the article investigates, through descriptive analyses, immigrants' employment patterns, in terms of activity, employment, self-employment and unemployment rates, share of irregular employment, occupation and earnings. Overall findings, which are interpreted against the existing theoretical framework, show that gender, nationality/country of origin, length of stay and legal status all contribute to explain the large variation that is found in the labor market situation of immigrants.

INDEX

Mots-clés : capital humain, immigrants, inégalités entre les sexes, Italie, marché du travail, revenu net

Keywords : gender inequalities, human capital, Italy, labor market, net earnings

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