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CARIM-INDIA – DEVELOPING A KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR POLICYMAKING ON INDIA-EU MIGRATION

Co-financed by the European Union

Indian Diversities in Italy: Italian Case Study

Kathryn Lum

CARIM-India Research Report 2012/02



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Research Report
Case Study
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Indian Diversities in Italy: Italian Case Study

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CARIM-India – Developing a knowledge base for policymaking on India-EU migration

This project is co-financed by the European Union and carried out by the EUI in partnership with the Indian Council of Overseas Employment, (ICOE), the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore Association, (IIMB), and Maastricht University (Faculty of Law).

The proposed action is aimed at consolidating a constructive dialogue between the EU and India on migration covering all migration-related aspects. The objectives of the proposed action are aimed at:

- Assembling high-level Indian-EU expertise in major disciplines that deal with migration (demography, economics, law, sociology and politics) with a view to building up migration studies in India. This is an inherently international exercise in which experts will use standardised concepts and instruments that allow for aggregation and comparison. These experts will belong to all major disciplines that deal with migration, ranging from demography to law and from economics to sociology and political science.
- Providing the Government of India as well as the European Union, its Member States, the academia and civil society, with:
 1. Reliable, updated and comparative information on migration
 2. In-depth analyses on India-EU highly-skilled and circular migration, but also on low-skilled and irregular migration.
- Making research serve action by connecting experts with both policy-makers and the wider public through respectively policy-oriented research, training courses, and outreach programmes.

These three objectives will be pursued with a view to developing a knowledge base addressed to policy-makers and migration stakeholders in both the EU and India.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: <http://www.india-eu-migration.eu/>

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Abstract

This paper presents an overview of the main characteristics of the Indian population in Italy, with a special focus on the two main regional groups from India present in Italy: the Punjabis and the Malayalis. It discusses their migration trajectories, demographic profile, occupational profile, the role of caste and gender within the Indian population, the importance of remittances to India, and the impact that Italian migration policy has had upon this group, as well as other non-EU nationals more generally. It also presents an overview of the legal framework governing residence permits and access to citizenship, describing the most frequent migration pathways employed by Indians in Italy. It concludes with a discussion of the sociocultural integration of the Indian population and their perception in the Italian media.

Introduction

In a very short of period of time, from the mid 1970's onwards Italy has transformed itself from a traditionally emigrant-sending country into an immigrant receiving country. Three key factors have influenced this shift and attracted a growing influx of immigrants, both regular and irregular: Italy's expanding economy, and in particular, the large size of its informal economy; the decision of Western European countries to tighten their immigration policies following the oil crisis of 1974; and the initial lack of immigration controls. Mass immigration began in the early 1980's, without however comprehensive national migration policies to manage it, nor integration programs in place on the part of local councils. The largest immigrant communities in Italy according to 2011 Istat data (the National Institute of Statistics in Italy), are Romanians, followed by Albanians, Moroccans, Chinese, Ukrainians, and Filipinos. Istat calculates that 7.54% of the resident population of Italy is composed of foreign nationals. Indian immigration, although a recent phenomenon, has been growing rapidly: the current registered Indian population in Italy is estimated at 121, 036 (January 2011 figures), which represents an increase of 14.3% with respect to 2010. Italy now counts the largest Indian population in continental Europe and the second largest in Europe as a whole after the UK. Indians have a long tradition of emigration, which was historically driven by opportunities for migration throughout the former British Empire. Involvement in the British Imperial Army ironically brought approximately 50 000 Indians (then British subjects) to Italy during World War II as part of the 8th Army, which included a number of Indian divisions. These divisions played a key role in defeating the Nazi German presence on Italian soil; in the process, 5, 782 Indian soldiers lost their lives, a little known fact of Italian history (Singh Bedi: 2011). In Independent India, Indians from a number of states have migrated to two key regions: low skilled migrants have principally emigrated to the oil-rich Gulf states; highly skilled migrants have emigrated to the US, Canada, the UK and Australia, which are considered the most desirable and prestigious destinations in the unofficial Indian migration hierarchy. Contemporary Indians are overwhelmingly economic migrants, but they are also motivated by prestige concerns, since those Indian families who have a family member abroad experience enhanced social status- regardless of whether the family member in question migrated abroad legally or irregularly. The profile of Indian migration to Italy is predominantly low-skilled, and comes mainly from two Indian states: the northern state of the Punjab, and the southern state of Kerala, two Indian states with among the highest number of residents who migrate abroad. According to estimates provided by the Indian Consul General in Milan, at least 80% of Indians in Italy are of Punjabi origin, the majority of whom profess the Sikh faith, although there is a growing Punjabi Hindu minority; the proportion of Sikhs to Hindus among the Punjabi population is estimated to be 80% Sikh, 20% Hindu. The remaining 20% are composed of Malayalees or Keralites, the vast majority of whom are Roman Catholic Christians from both the Syrian and Latin traditions (liturgies); Gujaratis from the Indian state of Gujarat (majority Hindu) and Goans (both Christian and Hindu). The majority Punjabi profile of Indian migrants living in Italy means that Italy is host to a new and increasingly visible ethnically based religion: Sikhism.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Regular and Irregular Migrants

The Indian community in Italy is one with a significant percentage of non-documented migrants. According to a report on irregular migration from the Indian states of Punjab and Haryana to Europe prepared for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, every year over 20,000 youths from the state of Punjab alone (principally young men) attempt to migrate irregularly, 47% of whom are bound for Europe (Saha 2009: i). Of these, an average of 27% aims directly for the UK, although data on the detection of irregular migrants at Delhi International Airport, reveals that Italy is the second the most important European destination (Saha: 2009:70). The majority of Indians arrive in Italy 'legally', although often with forged documents (including visas, passports, residence permits and work contracts), or have used falsified documents to obtain legitimate visas, but then overstay their visas, leading to legal irregularity. For example, in 2005 12 cases of forged Italian visas were detected, which of course represents just a tiny percentage of the true extent of this practice (Saha 2009: 92). In other cases, Indians travel legally to various transit countries before attempting to irregularly enter their chosen European destination. One migration route sees Indians travel to Georgia, from whom it is easy to obtain a multiple-entry, year long visa, proceed to Turkey (there is visa free travel between Georgia and Turkey), and from there to Greece, due to the porousness of the Turkish/Greek border and weak controls on the Greek side of the border. Another common migration route is to travel by air to Russia (Moscow) usually with a legitimate visa, and then travel by land to Italy via the Ukraine and Hungary or Slovakia. A third migration route consists of travelling to sub-Saharan Africa (Guinea, Nigeria, Mauritania) or North Africa (Algeria), staying in safe houses until proceeding to Morocco and from there into Spain or directly by boat in the case of Guinea (Saha 2009: 47-48). Indians pay astronomical sums of money to immigration agents known as *kabootarbaazi* in order to migrate to continental Europe irregularly. In some cases, Indians also pay a cut to a sub-agent in their village who then puts them in touch with an agent in Delhi (Saha 2009: 41). According to interviews with Indian sources in Italy, fees range from 10 000-25,000 Euros for Italy and other continental European countries, and are even higher for the UK, the US and Canada.¹ According to press sources, the 'Ndrangheta (part of the Italian mafia active in Calabria) charge from 15, 000 Euros for a six-month visa to continental Europe to 18-25 000 Euros for an 11 month visa (Fierro: 2010). Fees have been steadily rising due to a combination of factors: more stringent immigration controls mean that agents limit the number of clients they are prepared to send at any one time in order to avoid detection; this means demand exceeds supply (Saha 2009: 46). Many families sell off/mortgage their land or become severely indebted in order to be able pay these fees, which exceeds the average annual income in India of 319 Euros by over 78 times. The vast majority (84%) come from rural areas/ agricultural families, have a low educational level (about half only have basic secondary school education), are 90% male and in the age group 21-30 (over 50%) (Saha 2009: 80-81). Their low educational attainment and high unemployment in the Punjab effectively blocks their upward mobility in India, and makes migration an attractive option for earning a living. Being unskilled and not highly educated, irregular migration for them is the only option. According to Saha, irregular migration from the Punjab to Europe is in the rise, despite the risks and high costs involved, spreading to all districts, the neighbouring state of Haryana, and all caste groups (the caste groups who have migrated in large numbers are the Jats and Lubanas) (Saha 2009: 35-36).

The extent of the phenomenon of undocumented migration in Italy can be gleaned from the number of Indians who have been granted residency status following the four amnesties that the Italian government declared for all undocumented migrants. According to statistics provided by Istat, a total

¹ The higher figure of 25, 000 Euros comes from Mr. Verma, the Indian Consul General in Milan.

of 44,110 Indian nationals have regularised their status through one of the general amnesties that occurred in the years 1990, 1995, 1998, 2002 and 2009.² The largest number of Indians (17,572) were regularised during the 2009 amnesty, the latter being directed only to “care-givers”. In addition to these six amnesties, the Italian government also sets an annual quota of foreign workers who can apply for temporary work visas. Although these applications are supposed to take place overseas, in practice, according to many politicians and commentators (see Fasani 2009: 39), immigrants already present irregularly on Italian territory constitute the majority of those who apply for these annual ‘worker flows’ in an attempt to regularise their status. Data from the Clandestino report on undocumented migration in Italy (Fasani 2009: 95) shows that in 2007, 49,282 Indian nationals applied within the quota system to work in Italy (despite the quota being fixed at 170,000). Estimating the percentage of irregular to regular migrants is difficult since the legal status of Indian migrants can change over time with modifications in state policy, and they can also lose their legal status if they lose their jobs for whatever reason, since work permits are usually strictly linked to the duration of the work contract. The figure of 121, 036 registered Indian nationals in Italy cited in the introduction does therefore not include a sizable number of undocumented Indians whose number may make the real Indian population in Italy as high as 170, 000. Undocumented migrants therefore constitute roughly 30% of the total Indian population in Italy.

Male/Female Composition and Population Increase over Time

The Indian population in Italy is male dominated: according to the most recent statistics available from Istat (2011) 60.7% of the Indian community is male. This is a figure that has remained relatively constant: in 2002, 58.1% of the community was male. The preponderance of men, especially among Punjabis, the majority ethnic group among Indians living in Italy, can be explained by two factors. Firstly, for cultural reasons, usually it is only young men who are able to migrate abroad alone and receive family support for doing so. Although young women are equally motivated to pursue their migration dreams in the West, their families do not allow them to migrate alone due to negative social attitudes towards independent women, which constrains them to use marriage, family reunification or study as the only socially acceptable and respectable routes to settlement abroad. The exception to this cultural rule are young Christian women from Kerala who have trained as nurses, whose families often grant them permission to migrate alone to Italy, a Roman Catholic country that is perceived to be a relatively safe location for their daughters (this is not the case for young Hindu women from Kerala). For Punjabi women, whether Sikh or Hindu, this option is rarely available; their parents usually insist on marriage and in fact often encourage their daughters to marry NRI (Non Resident Indian) or PIO (Persons of Indian Origin) men settled abroad as part of the family’s broader migration strategy, cognisant of the fact that they will later be able to use their daughter and son-in-law to migrate via family reunification. Young women who migrate alone are automatically morally suspect, and face difficulties on the marriage market, since in Punjabi culture a woman should always be accompanied by her husband or a male family member; most families will therefore not risk social censure by supporting independent female migration projects. Some very highly educated families from the Punjab will approve of their daughters studying abroad in prestigious Western universities, but these families are part of a select minority. The second reason explaining the predominance of men in the Indian community is the procedure for applying for family reunification. A male Indian national who would like to apply to have his wife and children join him must be in the possession of either a permanent residence permit or a residence permit that is valid for at least one year, a suitable place of accommodation which must be certified by the local council (the certificate is valid only for six months and its cost varies depending on the comune: in Florence it is 14 Euros)³, and dispose of a

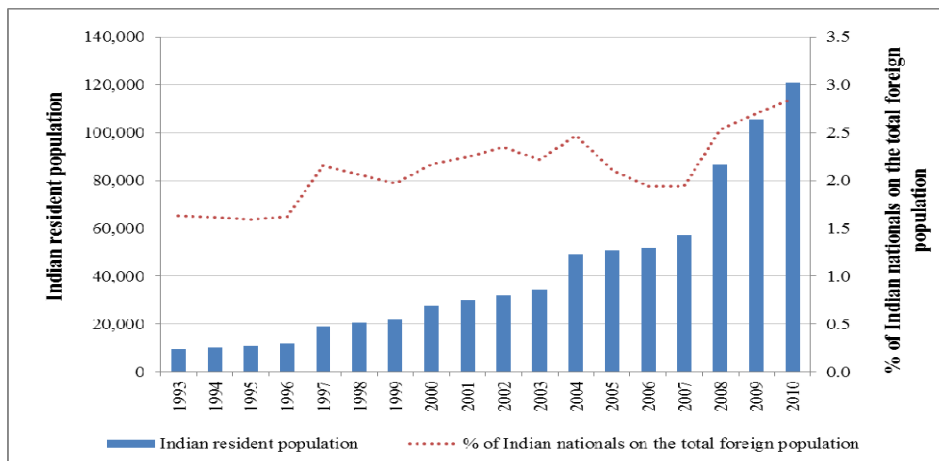
² A first amnesty took place in 1986 but figures are not available according to the nationality of the migrants.

³ Information supplied by an employee of the Sportello Immigrazione of the Comune di Firenze. The telephone interview was carried out on the 27th of October 2011.

minimum annual income, an amount which increases for each additional family member he wishes to sponsor (in 2009 the minimum annual income for sponsoring one family member was 5.317,65 Euros). In order to sponsor one’s parents, the requirements are even more restrictive: an Indian national must prove that his siblings in India are unable to care for them, and if they are over the age of 65, he must either take out private health insurance for them, or pay the Italian health service to have them covered. Given the high incidence of irregularity within the Indian community, it often takes several years before a young Indian migrant is able to obtain a residence permit and satisfy the other requirements for family reunification, which delays the family reunification process and hence the female presence in the Indian community.

The Indian population in Italy has been steadily increasing over time (figure 1). In the period 1993-2010, Indian nationals residing in Italy grew at an annual average growth rate of 66.3% compared with 35.5% registered by the total foreign resident population. It currently constitutes the eighth largest foreign community in Italy, measured according to those Indians who are considered resident and registered in the local *anagrafe* or registry offices. In 1994 and 2000 Indians were in nineteenth and sixteenth place, respectively. In 2002, after the 2002 amnesty, the Indian population was in twelfth place. The following graph, based on Istat data, shows how the resident Indian population has demonstrated an impressive growth rate exceeded only by Eastern European nations such as Romania, Bulgaria and Moldavia.

Figure 1. Indian nationals residing in Italy (absolute and relative values), 1993-2010 (Jan 1st)



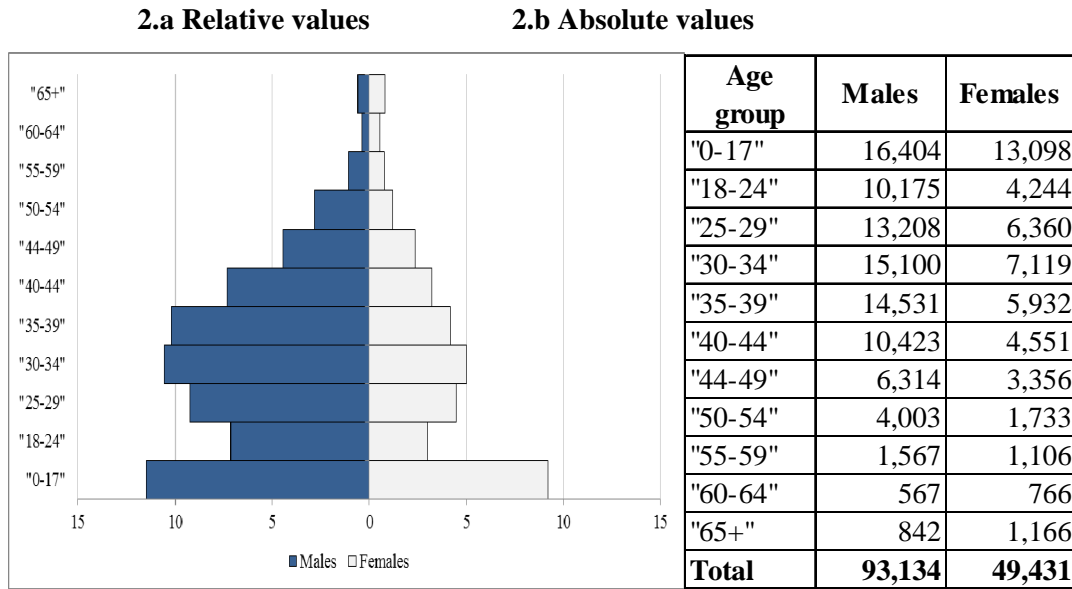
Source: Author’s elaboration on Istat data

Age Profile

The Indian population in Italy is predominantly young: slightly over 44% of both Indian men and women fall within the 18-29 age group (Istat 2009 data). The next most important category is the 30-39 age group, representing almost 26% of the total. When looking at the sex-specific age profile, men outnumber women in all age categories, reflecting this migration-induced demographic imbalance. However, women and men present the same trends in terms of their clustering within the 18-29 and 30-39 age groups. The only notable difference between the genders concerns the ‘up to age 17’ category, where one could expect a gender-equal number of minors being sponsored by their relatives. However, in this category girls are comparatively underrepresented, leading one to hypothesize a preference for sponsoring male children.

Thanks to residence permits records, the profile of Indian nationals by sex and age can be reconstructed (figure 2).

Figure 2. Indian nationals holding residence permits (*permessi di soggiorno*) by age group and sex (relative and absolute values), 2011 (Jan 1st), Italy

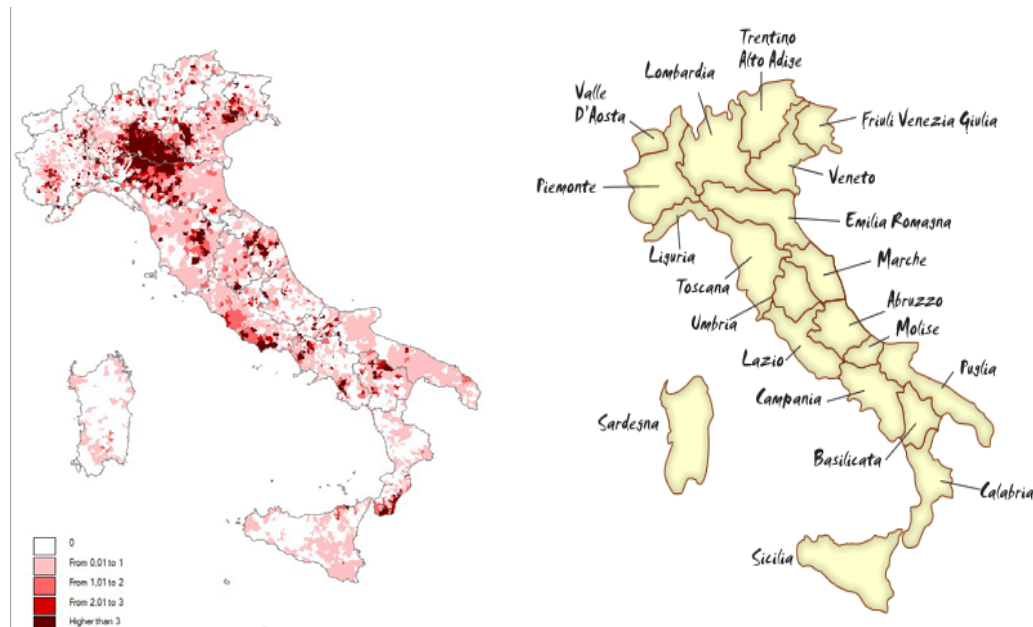


Source: Author's elaboration on Istat data

Spatial distribution within Italy

The Indian population in Italy is noted for its strong regional concentration. Most Indians have settled in the Northern and Central regions of Italy, whereas the Indian presence in the Southern regions is very slight (figure 3).

Figure 3. Coefficient of territorial concentration (*) of the Indian community residing in Italy, 2011 (Jan 1st) (on the left); map of Italian regions (on the right)



Notes: (*) The “coefficient of territorial concentration” is the ratio between the proportion of Indians in the total population in a given municipality and the proportion of Indians in the total population in Italy.

Source: Author's elaboration on Istat data

The largest concentration of Indians (2011) is found in the Northern region of Lombardia (the capital of which is Milan), where 46, 372 ‘regular’ Indian nationals live (the Istat statistics do not include irregular migrants), followed by 16, 123 individuals in Emilia-Romagna (central Italy), 14, 746 individuals in Veneto (North-East Italy), and 14, 586 individuals in Lazio (which includes the province of Rome). Within the region of Lombardia, the province of Cremona stands out for its particularly dense Indian population: in this province Indians of Punjabi origin constitute the single largest immigrant group (20% of the total immigrant population).

Figure 4. Map of Lombardy



After Lombardia, Emilia-Romagna, Veneto and Lazio, the next highest percentage of Indian individuals is registered in the central Italian region of Tuscany (5, 173). In contrast, due its weaker economy, very few Indians have made Southern Italy their home. In the region of Campania there are 2, 762 Indians, in Sicilia only 1, 168. The following table shows the regional distribution of Indians in Italy:

Table 1. Indian nationals residing in Italy (absolute and relative values) by region of residence, 2010 (Jan 1st)

Region of residence	Number	%
Piemonte	3,370	2.8
Valle d'Aosta	72	0.1
Liguria	1,300	1.1
Lombardia	46,372	38.3
Trentino Alto Adige	1,429	1.2
Veneto	14,746	12.2
Friuli Venezia Giulia	2,294	1.9
Emilia Romagna	16,123	13.3
Marche	3,744	3.1
Toscana	5,173	4.3
Umbria	1,526	1.3
Lazio	14,586	12.1
Campania	2,762	2.3
Abruzzo	570	0.5
Molise	345	0.3
Puglia	1,917	1.6
Basilicata	545	0.5
Calabria	2,683	2.2
Sicilia	1,168	1.0
Sardegna	311	0.3
Total	121,036	100.0

Source: Author's elaboration on Istat data

The more buoyant economy of Northern and Central Italy explains this regional concentration, but also chain migration. The presence of an established Indian community in the Northern regions encourages further migration, as Indians rely heavily on village, kin and caste networks in their migration projects. Indians who are already settled in Italy use their contacts at work in order to provide employment opportunities for fellow nationals, who are usually either fellow villagers or kin/*jati* (caste) members. Significant differences can be observed for the two main Indian ethnic groups present in Italy: Punjabis have large population clusters in almost all the main regions of Italy, whereas Malayalees are concentrated primarily in Rome.

Family size and structure

In India the traditional family structure is patrilocal and joint or extended: sons remain with their parents in the family home and are joined by their wives. In Italy, while this family structure remains common, it is no longer the dominant form of family organisation. The predominantly young profile of the Indian population in Italy means that many Punjabi male youth are still unmarried or have left their wives behind in India. When they do marry, they are often not able to sponsor their parents due to the new policy restrictions mentioned above of the Italian government's family reunification program (the ability to prove that one is the sole provider for dependent parents, as well as the requirement to acquire 'suitable accommodation' certificates from the local council that only are only

valid for six months, meaning that foreigners must repeat the procedure each time they sponsor a new family member, or apply for a visa renewal). The nuclear family is thus gaining currency among the Indian population in Italy. The growing tendency among educated middle-class and also working-class families in India to limit their family size to two or even fewer children is being replicated in Italy. Judging from the average family size of Punjabis who attend services at Sikh gurudwaras, a clear majority of Indian families living in Italy do not have more than two children. While family life continues to be highly valued, and indeed is the center of Indians' social lives, the ideal family size is now considered to be small, and an increasing number of Indian families only have one child. Interestingly, this is also the case for those couples who have given birth to daughters. Due to the high social importance attached to giving birth to sons in India, particularly in the Punjab, a couple will aim to have at least one son, with often fatal consequences for the birth of female children: the Punjab has the highest rate of female feticide in India. It is common for only a first-born daughter to survive—subsequent daughters are frequently aborted until a son can be produced. In Italy, however, it appears that the scourge of female feticide is greatly attenuated. Unfortunately, no gender specific data from the Italian statistics agency is available for the Indian population or for foreigners in general—the most recent nationality-specific statistics available (2009) reveal that 2,963 Indian births took place across Italy, without any distinction according to sex. However, qualitative evidence shows that advertisements for female feticide, for example, have not appeared in the Punjabi-language press in Italy as they have (highly controversially) in British Columbia, Canada. Those families who have given birth to daughters do not attempt to have sons to 'compensate', and although families with sons continue to enjoy greater social prestige, the social stigma associated with daughter-only families is not evident in Italy.

SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

Occupational Profile

The occupational profile of the Indian community must be divided along ethnic lines, since the Punjabi and Malayalee communities occupy different job market niches, and possess divergent migrant trajectories. The Punjabi Indian population in Italy is heavily employed in the agricultural sector. Data from Coldiretti, the leading agricultural organisation in Italy reveal that almost 10,000 Indians work in agriculture, particularly in the dairy industry. Such is their importance to this sector, that without them Coldiretti leaders have declared that the emblematic Italian cheese industry would be at risk (Stranieri in Italia: 2009). Among the 98,000 foreign nationals who work in the agricultural industry in Italy, Indians constitute the second most numerous group, exceeded in numbers only by the Albanians (Stranieri in Italia: 2009). In the North, most Punjabi Indians (particularly Sikhs) work as cow milkers, known as *bergamini* in Italian, leading to strong ethnic segmentation in this area. 90% of the workers in the dairy industry are Indian, which includes allied jobs such as transporting milk and other dairy products to their destinations (Deutsche Welle: 2008). Employment in the agricultural sector is also notable in central Italy: figures from the Employment Center in Emilia province state that almost 50% of Indians work in this sector (Bertolani 2005: 169). Since the vast majority of Punjabi Indians in Italy are low skilled, they gravitate towards a sector that is in need of cheap labour, where they can survive without extensive Italian language skills, and where it is also possible to work irregularly. The first Punjabi Indians to settle in Italy worked in the circus and amusement park industry, hired to carry out demanding jobs such as cleaning animals and preparing the circus ring (Bertolani 2005: 167). Now that this employment avenue has been closed, agriculture is the area in which low-skilled Indians can most easily find work. Beyond agriculture, Punjabi Indians are also found in industry, working in factories, and in the services sector, employed in catering. A small but growing number of Indians are entrepreneurs: data from local Chambers of Commerce across Italy reveals that in 2008, a total of 1607 Indians had registered businesses in Italy (Bratti, De Benedictis, Santoni 2011: 7). However, this number is quite slight when compared to the Bangladeshis and

Pakistanis, who in the same year had 8023 and 4979 businesses respectively (Bratti, De Benedictis, Santoni 2011: 8). This discrepancy could be due to less developed capital lending networks within the Indian communities present in Italy. A very small number of Indians from a variety of regional origins are highly-skilled. For example, 32 Indians are employed at the Ferrari automation plant in Maranello, supplied by Tata Consultancy Services (data supplied by Mr. Verma, the Indian Consul General in Milan)⁴. In total, approximately 90 Indians are employed in highly skilled positions in Italy provided by Tata Consultancy Services, all in the information technology field (personal communication with Haridas Menon, the regional manager for Tata Consultancy Services in Italy and Switzerland).⁵

Among Malayalees (Indians from the southern state of Kerala), a majority of both male and female Malayalees work in domestic service/elderly care, especially in the first few years of settlement. Data supplied by Kerala scholar Ester Gallo based on fieldwork conducted in the Lazio region of Italy (which includes the province of Rome), reveals that 80% of women and 70% of men worked in domestic service in the first few years following their arrival in Italy (Gallo 2008: 55). According to Gallo, many men then seek non qualified jobs in the services sector, but their involvement in domestic service remains high. For women, the next most important source of jobs following domestic service is the health care sector. Some Malayalee men also work as nurses however their participation in this sector is much lower. A labour survey conducted by Gallo in the Rome area found that 62% of women worked as domestics, 25% in the hospital sector (versus 13% for men), 12% were looking for work, and the remaining 1% worked as secretaries or in the restaurant sector (Gallo 2008: 55). The pay for *bandanti* (home-based care workers who attend to the elderly) are low, the average salary is 900 euros a month (Censis data), but compensated for by free accommodation, and is a job in high demand across Italy. A large number of particularly Christian female Keralites have come to Italy to work as nurses and other healthcare workers on account of the growing shortage of healthcare staff that Italy suffers from; they are employed especially in hospices or *case di riposo* as they are known in Italy. Data from the Italian Federation of Nurses show that 28.4% of all nurses working in Italy are foreigners, of which a significant percentage are Indians. A total of 1,511 of Indian nationals (1,329 women and 182 men) were registered as nurses in Italy as of 2011 (data supplied by the Italian Federation of Nurses). When naturalised Indians with Italian citizenship are included, this number rises to 1,740 individuals. While a small number of Punjabi nurses also exist, the vast majority of Indian nurses hail from Kerala, the Indian state that exports the highest number of nursing professionals. The nursing industry is second only to the IT industry in terms of its importance in offering well-paid jobs abroad to Kerala residents. In Italy, the base salary for a nurse is 1,200 to 1,300 Euros per month, which can rise considerably with overtime pay (data from the Italian Federation of Nurses). Such is the centrality of nursing to Keralite society that nurses working abroad are among the most sought-after brides on the Kerala 'marriage market' (Sebastian: 2009). In North India, nursing does not enjoy the same high social status for women that it does in South India, and these cultural attitudes are reflected in nursing graduate rates: the four South Indian states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh produce 80% of India's nurses (Kerala Nursing Council). Most Keralite nurses head for English-speaking destinations: data from the Kerala Nursing Council show that 38% of Kerala's nurses work in the US, 30% in the UK, 15% in Australia, and 12% in the Gulf. Continental Europe in general and Italy in particular must therefore be encouraged to exploit to a much greater extent the potential of the Keralite nursing job market, especially in light of increasingly acute nursing shortages across the continent. In this respect, free language training is essential upon arrival. All foreign nurses must pass an Italian language test in order to be able to register as a nurse in Italy. Some local nursing colleges offer a beginner's language course for foreigners, but there is no systematic national policy for integrating foreign nurses into the Italian nursing system that would help accelerate and ease their linguistic integration. A final occupational niche for the Malayalees, for both men and women, are Roman Catholic priests and nuns. Indeed, the first migration flows from Kerala

⁴ Mr. Verma was interviewed in a face-to-face meeting in Milan on the 22nd of July, 2011.

⁵ Email communication dated the 4th of November, 2011.

to Italy consisted of aspiring priests and nuns, many of whom were granted visas for religious study in Rome. Interviews with Malayalee nuns based in Florence reveal that a number of young Malayalee women who were granted such religious visas never took their vows and left the convent, leading the Italian government to eventually impose greater restrictions on this type of visa. Current policy stipulates that a visa for religious purposes can only be granted to nuns who have already completed all of their religious training in India (interview with Malayalee nuns). This information is confirmed by the Italian embassy in Delhi, whose religious visa guidelines state that a “letter from the congregation in India and the Bishop of the Archdiocese from the place of residence, confirming the religious status, *the completion of final vows* and clearly explaining the purpose of the visit” (emphasis added), must be supplied.

In addition to ethnicity, the occupational profile of Indians in Italy is further influenced by both caste and gender. According to Indian interviewees from Bergamo (northern Italy), it is predominantly Punjabi Jats (a high caste) who work as cow milkers in Lombardia and elsewhere, drawn by the relatively high salaries offered by this demanding work. According to Diana Mariotti, the representative of Coldiretti in Cremona province (the national agricultural organisation in Italy), contacted via a telephone interview⁶, the basic salary for a *bergamino* starts at 1, 500 Euros and can rise to as much as 3-4000 Euros a month with overtime, seniority on the job, an extra payment for night work, and a portion of the profits on each quintal of milk produced. Indians are also drawn by the free accommodation provided by employers, as well as the fact that Italian nationals are no longer prepared to work as *bergamini* in isolated rural locations with unsociable hours (*bergamini* work in two four hour shifts twelve hours apart). The provincial representative for Coldiretti in Cremona confirms that the vast majority of Indians choose to work on Sundays in order to receive overtime pay and hence enhance their monthly salaries. Further incentives in this field regard the stable nature of working in the *stalle* or cowsheds: in contrast to much agricultural work which is seasonal and highly precarious, working as a *bergamino* offers the benefit of a *contratto indeterminato*, or permanent contract that affords greater job security and benefits such as 34 days of paid holiday annually. The lower caste Ravidassia Punjabis, in contrast, are mostly employed in factories and in agricultural jobs such as greenhouse work. This internal Punjabi differentiation can be explained by the heavy reliance on caste networks in securing work: migrants recommend fellow kin and caste members to their employers, leading to both ethnic and caste occupational specialisations that have little to do with a ‘natural inclination’ to work with cows, as a number of Italian press reports have implied, but rather with the nature of Indian social organisation, which is structured along caste lines. Thus if a group of Jats first establishes itself in a particular occupational niche, it will be other Jats who will benefit from future job opportunities in that sector, making it difficult for other caste groups to enter and gain a foothold. The predominantly Christian Malayalee community is less affected by caste in the workplace, since nursing is a profession that Malayalees of all castes study before leaving Kerala, and domestic service will be carried out by women of both upper and lower caste origin. However, it is significant that economically prosperous upper caste Christians (Syrian Christians, some of whose churches do not recognise papal authority in Rome), are more likely to work in more prestigious destinations such as the US and UK; Italy is home to mostly Roman Catholics of a variety of castes, including lower middle class Syrian Catholics and an increasing number of “Latin Catholics”, who come from the lower castes.

With regards to gender, one can observe a marked contrast between the Punjabis and the Malayalees in terms of their gendered occupational profile. Among Punjabis, a minority of women are employed full-time outside of the home. The general trend, particularly for married women with small children, is to work as homemakers. This is due to a combination of deeply rooted cultural beliefs (in Punjabi culture the man is traditionally the breadwinner for the family), language barriers (which is compounded by the absence of free Italian courses in a number of localities), and also due to the fact

⁶ This telephone interview took place on September 8th, 2011.

that many Punjabi women cannot get their vocational qualifications recognised in Italy (such as seamstress). In the Punjab, it is traditionally only poor, low-caste women who work; women who work therefore suffer from low social status. In Italy, these beliefs are still current, and many Punjabi husbands, if circumstances permit, prefer for their wives not to work outside the home in order to signal his economic success and ability to provide for his family. Among Malayalees in contrast, the overwhelming majority of women, both single and married, work outside of the home, as either nurses or in domestic service. A different migration trajectory can explain this much higher labour force participation: most Malayalee women migrate independently as opposed to via family reunification as is the case among Punjabi women. In a reversal of gender roles, it is Malayalee women who then sponsor their husbands to come to Italy.

Below are some tables that give a general idea of the employment status, labor force participation and occupational sectors in which Indian nationals are found in Italy.

Table 2. Indian nationals holding residence permits (*permessi di soggiorno*) by category, Italy, 2010 (Jan 1st)

Category	Number	%
Work	62,259	48.1
<i>of which dependent workers</i>	58,755	45.4
<i>self employed workers</i>	2,153	1.7
<i>workers who are looking for a job</i>	1,351	1.0
Family	60,226	46.5
Religion	4,642	3.6
Study	1,302	1.0
Refugee status	14	0.0
Asylum seekers status	30	0.0
Humanitarian reasons	79	0.1
Health	158	0.1
Others	806	0.6
Total	129,516	100.0

Source: Istat.

Table 3. Indian nationals residing in Italy by labor force status and occupation, Italy, 2001

Labor force status		
	Number	%
Employed	13,551	56.4
Unemployed	1,073	4.5
Inactive	9,407	39.1
Total	24,031	100.0
Sector of occupation		
	Number	%
Agriculture and fishing	3,169	23.4
Mining and quarrying	46	0.3
Manufacturing	5,541	40.9
Electricity, gas and water supply	25	0.2
Construction	656	4.8
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	723	5.3
Hotels and restaurants	565	4.2
Transport, storage and communications	234	1.7
Financial intermediation	49	0.4
Real estate, renting and business activities	241	1.8
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	152	1.1
Education	441	3.3
Health and social work	769	5.7
Other community, social and personal service activities	361	2.7
Private households with employed persons	520	3.8
Extra-territorial organizations and bodies	59	0.4
Total	13,551	100.0

Source: OECD.stat

Caste Profile

The caste profile of the Indian population is quite diverse in Italy. Among the Punjabis, three main caste groups are present: Jats, Ravidassias, and Lubanas. The Jats are considered to be “upper caste”, and are the dominant caste group in the Punjab both economically and culturally, particularly in the countryside. They are also the predominant caste group demographically in Italy (although statistics are not available, the Jats have the largest number of gurudwaras in Italy). Traditionally, the Jats are farmers/landowners and their economic power derives in large part from their land ownership. They all profess the Sikh faith (an independent religion founded in 1469 in the Punjab), and have established fourteen Sikh temples or gurudwaras to date throughout Italy. Indeed, it is this caste group that is largely responsible for the increasingly visible presence of Sikhism in Italy. A large number of them are employed in the dairy industry. The second leading caste community are the Ravidassias, a formerly untouchable caste group (the lowest in the caste hierarchy), that has experienced growing upward economic mobility in post-war India. The Ravidassias have historically worked with leather (considered to be a polluting and low-status occupation) and as agricultural labourers for the Jats, although they are now employed in a variety of jobs and have greatly improved their educational level. Up until very recently (2008), the vast majority of the Ravidassias identified as Sikh, although they have always also simultaneously worshipped their own patron saint, known as Guru Ravidass, who was from their community and championed their cause during the 15th Century. In response however to the assassination of one of their leading living holy men (or *sants*) by Sikh fundamentalists, the Ravidassias have been increasingly distancing themselves from the Sikh faith and some local communities have even taken the momentous decision to remove the Sikh holy book from their temples and replace it with a new holy book composed entirely of the sacred hymns of Guru Ravidass. In Italy there are eight Ravidassia temples in total, five of whom follow the new independent faith centered exclusively on the worship of Guru Ravidass. In an indication that the Ravidassia population is expanding, there are a further four Ravidassia committees in various Italian cities that organise religious gatherings, and plan to eventually establish Ravidassia temples when numbers/finances permit (information supplied by Mr. Kapoor, the president of the Ravidassia gurudwara in Bergamo)⁷. According to Ravidassia contacts living in Italy, most members of this caste are employed in factories or in the non-dairy agricultural sector. The Lubanas constitute the third most important caste group in Italy among the Punjabi community, an estimate based on Punjabi sources and the number of Lubana specific gurudwaras. A small caste community in the Punjab, they are overrepresented in the diaspora, particularly in the Italian diaspora, due to their very high emigration rates. Historically the Lubanas worked transporting salt and other goods from city to city. They are now a prosperous business community in the Punjab that has also invested in land (key to power in Punjabi society). In Italy they are employed in a variety of occupations: in factories (Brescia), the leather industry (in Vicenza), in agriculture and as bricklayers (telephone interview with Satbir Singh, a Lubana Sikh living in Vicenza)⁸. They are devout Sikhs and are more likely than the Jats to wear the visible Sikh symbols (known as the 5 K’s) such as the turban, mandated by Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the ten Sikh gurus. There are presently three Lubana Sikh gurudwaras in Italy (two in Vicenza and one in Brescia). The much smaller Hindu Punjabi community has four Hindu temples in northern Italy, although among the Hindus divisions are more related to sect rather than caste, since many Hindus settled in Italy are of Brahmin origin (the “highest” and most prestigious caste in the Hindu caste hierarchy) (source: interview with Mr. Verma, Indian Consul General in Milan). The Punjabi Sikh community in Italy is thus highly fractured along caste lines, with all places of worship organised on the basis of caste, which also strongly conditions social life. Intercaste relations between the Jats and the Ravidassias are particularly tense, due both to traditional Ravidassia economic dependence on the Jats in the Punjab, as well as to theological debates surrounding the Ravidassias’ unorthodox religious practices. Caste tensions are therefore covert and underlying rather than overt or violent: there have

⁷ Telephone interviews with Mr. Kapoor took place during the week of the 5th to the 9th of September, 2011

⁸ This telephone interview was carried out on the 3rd of November, 2011.

been no instances of violent conflict among the different caste groups. The Ravidassias however, complain of continuing prejudice and derogatory attitudes towards them on the part of upper-caste Punjabis that has not abated in Italy. In particular, intercaste marriages are rare, and negative stereotypes about the Ravidassias persist among both the Jats and the Lubanas.

Among the Malayalees, the community is divided into two main caste groups: the “Syrians” and the “Latins”, both of whom are Christian and live predominantly in Rome. The Syrians are upper-caste in origin (indeed many claim Brahmin origins) and follow the Siro-Malabar Catholic rite (a Catholic rite that is longer and involves more hymns/prayers). They converted to Christianity in the 1st century and are considered the highest status Christians in Kerala. The Syrians are divided into a number of sub-groups, several of which do not follow Rome, but those Syrians who are in Italy are majority Roman Catholic. The Latins are “low caste”, traditionally fishermen from the Mukkuvan and Araya castes, but not former untouchables, and follow the Latin Catholic rite (the rite most familiar to European Catholics) (Fuller 1976: 55). They converted to Christianity in the 16th century in the wake of the arrival of St Francis Xavier (Fuller 1976: 55). There are very few “New Christians” in Italy, who are former untouchables (Dalits) and mainly Protestants who converted to Christianity in the 19th century (the last wave of conversion to Christianity in Kerala). As with the Punjabis, there are underlying tensions between the Syrians and the Latins due to historic caste inequalities in Kerala, a society that is profoundly imbued with caste discrimination. These tensions are becoming more acute as the presence of Latin Catholics grows in Italy and threatens to overtake the traditional demographic dominance of the Syrian Catholics. There are currently more Masses celebrated in the Malabar rite in Italy than the Latin rite, but the incidence of Latin Masses is increasing, particularly outside of Rome. The National Coordinator of Indian Catholics in Italy, Fr. Antoney George Pattaparambil, estimates that in 2011 there are approximately 5000 Catholics of Keralite origin who follow the Siro-Malabar rite, and 3000 Catholics of Keralite origin who follow the Latin rite⁹. In Rome, the main Malayalee place of settlement, two Masses are celebrated in the Siro-Malabar rite, and one in the Latin rite. Caste thus continues to structure and divide the Malayalee community, although lip service is paid to Catholic solidarity and brotherhood. Intercaste marriages occur but are often obstructed by the Churches themselves: Knanaya Syrian Catholics who belong to the Diocese of Kottayam for example (a group that has its own association/weekly Mass in Rome), are forbidden from marrying Catholics from outside of this Diocese; if they do, they must leave. More broadly, the Knanayas (who consider themselves to be a separate ethnic group who must safeguard their ethnic purity/identity), whether they be Catholic or ‘Jacobite’ (not following Rome), strictly practice endogamy and there is strong social pressure to continue this practice despite being in open conflict with Christian belief. Caste identity therefore continues to come before religious identity for many Malayalees.

Why is caste important? Caste, along with kinship, plays a key role in facilitating chain migration. Transnational caste networks are a major force driving migration to Europe, since Indians are far more likely to migrate when they know family members and/or caste members who are already settled in the country concerned and can help at all stages of the migration process, from pre-departure to initial settlement and eventual family reunification. Remittances from Europe are also important in driving migration: villagers who see other families benefit from money sent abroad are strongly encouraged to consider migration as a strategy for economic uplift in a context of high unemployment in India. In the Punjab, the initial example of the Jat caste and the remittances that they received from family members abroad led members of other castes, including traditionally poor castes, to also invest in migration. Surveys carried out by Gallup reveal that the tendency to migrate when international connections are in place is particularly strong in Asia: 26% of respondents affirm that they would like to migrate if they have relatives/friends in another country, versus only 7% of those who lack such contacts (Esipova & Ray: 2011). Once settled abroad, help with finding employment, accommodation and schools comes primarily from one’s caste group (which is often simultaneously a religious community), making caste

⁹ This telephone interview was carried out on the 6th of July, 2011.

an essential yet often overlooked aspect in the long-term integration process of new Indian communities. Religious groups in India are frequently caste-based, leading casual observers to view religion as the leading force facilitating immigrant integration, when in fact religious affiliation and caste often overlap and it is caste solidarity (in a religious framework) that is dominant.

Gender and Migration

The migration experiences of Indians are shaped by gender just as much as they are by caste and state of origin. Among Punjabis, both women and men seek to migrate in order to improve their material circumstances and quality of life. However, their migration trajectories differ. In the Punjab, patriarchal ideology mandates that it is men who migrate abroad independently, and as a family project, family funds are raised to support young men who wish to migrate irregularly with an eye on future remittances that will eventually recoup this investment. Young women are rarely granted this opportunity, for they are viewed as dependents who must be accompanied and protected at all times by male family members. Punjabi women are rarely sent to even another Indian state to study or work alone, yet alone abroad, since this could harm their marriage chances- an independent woman's 'moral character' is questioned. Instead, the migration route for young Punjabi women consists in marrying an Indian settled abroad (preferably someone who already has overseas citizenship), for which their families pay a handsome dowry; an investment that at times equals the massive sums that are paid to 'agents' for irregular migration. Throughout the Punjab many young men who are not highly educated or from business families, and hence with little prospects in India, aspire to migrate to continental Europe- their life projects revolve around migration and dreams of 'making it big' abroad. Young Punjabi women, blocked from migrating independently, aspire to fix "good matches" that will enable them to migrate via their husbands. It is common for young women to enroll in certain MA programmes (such as English Literature or Computing), that are viewed as attractive to NRI families. The migration industry has led to "dowry inflation" and a surge in ostentatious weddings, with grooms' families escalating their demands (both explicit and implicit) for a "good wedding". In a relatively new development, women, along with men, are increasingly viewed as 'migration conduits' that can facilitate the migration of entire families through family reunification. Parents throughout the Punjab frequently arrange their daughters' marriage to secure other family member's migration, converting their daughters into strategic pawns in the migration game.

The different migration routes available to men and women in the Punjab conditions the problems they face as migrants in Italy. Since Punjabi women are overwhelmingly sponsored to come to Italy rather than migrate independently (whether regularly or irregularly), they are much more vulnerable upon arrival. Their situation is one of complete dependence on their in-laws, reinforced by their lack of Italian, lack of recognition of their qualifications in Italy, and knowledge of the great debt that their parents have incurred to pay their dowry. Fieldwork carried out by a number of scholars (Nicola Mooney, Christine Fair, Margaret Abraham) working on the Punjabi/Indian diaspora in North America has revealed high levels of domestic violence directed at young wives on the part of both husbands and in-laws, including mother-in-laws. Some of this violence is related to dowry harassment (punishing the new wife for her 'inadequate' dowry), and some of it is part of a broader cultural code that sanctions routine abuse of newly married women within the family. While such gender-based violence also occurs in India, young women in India with supportive parents have the option of returning home should the abuse become unbearable. In Italy, not only is it more difficult for young women to escape abusive marriages, but they are often reluctant to reveal to their families the truth of the violence they are suffering in order not to disappoint their parents (who often have high expectations of the benefits that an NRI marriage can bring). The migration dream thus soon turns sour for an unacceptably high number of Punjabi newlyweds. According to evidence supplied by the Indian Consul-General in Milan (which largely deals with Punjabi Indians living in Northern Italy), the consulate receives at least one case of domestic violence a week, which is likely the tip of the iceberg considering that most cases of violence in the home go unreported. While both men and

women face the common challenges of adapting to a new country as well as learning a new language, by working outside of the home men learn Italian quicker, as well as have the opportunity to learn Italian culture and habits on the job. Women are more isolated socially, and hence their mastery of Italian is limited. Many Punjabi women furthermore do not have a driver's license, which compounds their isolation and restricts their mobility, rendering them dependent on others for travel (this is particularly the case for those families working in isolated villages in the dairy industry). To remedy the linguistic deficit, the Consulate in Milan has established a working partnership with an association known as *Nav Chintan* ("New Way") based near Brescia, which trains housewives in Italian via a three-month course, who then teach the language to a further four housewives. The idea is to reach women who work within the home, and teach them Italian in Punjabi. Thus far, 57 housewives have been trained and the Consul General has judged the project a success. Despite his optimistic assessment however, there is no doubt that Italian language education- for both men and women, could be improved. Most Sikh temples do not have Italian language classes in place, but rather Punjabi language classes for children to learn how to read and write in Gurmukhi (the Punjabi alphabet). For example, not one of the Ravidassia temples offers Italian language classes. Many Indians learn Italian via classes offered by the municipality, but such classes are usually not free. Municipalities with a large Indian population would do well to consider sending volunteer Italian teachers into Sikh temples in order to improve access to Italian language learning on the part of women, the elderly, and newly arrived teenagers who might not be sent to school in Italy. An Indian Women's association has yet to be established such as those that exist in other diasporic countries, which addresses concerns specific to migrant women such as domestic violence in a context of lack of papers, forced marriage, and other gendered forms of discrimination such as female feticide. Nor do Punjabi women have a voice in Sikh gurdwaras (temples): gurdwara management committees in Italy are completely male dominated.

Young Punjabi men in Italy are not without their specific problems and challenges, despite migrating independently and not being at the mercy of their in-laws. According to reports from the Indian consulate in Milan, they are at a high risk of developing or worsening an already present drug and alcohol addiction. In the Punjab, it is estimated that 70% of male youth have some sort of drug problem (BBC: 2010). In Italy, although statistics are not available, it is well known that alcoholism and drug abuse are widespread among Punjabi men. Aggravating an already underlying problem of addiction in the Punjab are the additional stresses linked to irregular migration: lack of papers, living in overcrowded all-male accommodation, economic stress and uncertainty, and horrible working conditions for those who toil in exploitative greenhouses in the Lazio region (Rome area). In addition, young men face pressure to prove themselves overseas, show that they are successful, and the moral obligation to send money to relatives back home, all of which can add considerable psychological strain to the already stressful process of migration. As with women, there are as yet no Indian associations that cater to the specific problems (addiction-related and otherwise) of Indian men in Italy. The Indian Association of Northern Italy, formed in 1982, was founded by businessmen and professionals, the elite of Indian society, and works to promote Indian culture in its many facets in Italy, but does not address the many social problems affecting a largely non-professional wave of Indian immigration.

The gendered situation of the Malayalee community differs significantly from that of the Punjabis in Italy. In many respects, Italy represents a unique case for the Malayalees, since in the Middle East, migration from Kerala is overwhelmingly masculine in nature. In Italy, it is Malayalee women who have been the pioneers of migration- first women who went to Rome to train as nuns (many of whom later left the convent), followed by a much wider range of women seeking opportunity abroad. Although Malayalee culture is also patriarchal in structure and cultural norms, there appears to be greater flexibility in the regional gender ideology that enables young women, including young unmarried women, to migrate independently- particularly among Keralite Christians. Ironically, here too marriage is a key driver of migration: research carried out by Esther Gallo (2005) among Christian Malayalee women in Kerala reveals that a number of young women are motivated to migrate to Italy in order to be able to contribute towards their dowries and hence ensure themselves a "good marriage"

in the future. Migration is seen to be a more honourable option than a “poor match” in Kerala, or the shame of not being able to afford a sufficient dowry. Although Christian Malayalee women have the opportunity to migrate abroad independently, as either nurses, home carers or maids, they are still expected to get married, and indeed their eventual marriage seals the ‘respectability’ of their decision to migrate as single women and legitimates their success abroad. The key difference with their Punjabi peers is that independent migration favours their economic independence, which in turn leads to greater personal agency in their choice of marriage partners. Gallo’s research reveals that the first wave of female migrants from Kerala tended to enter into “love marriages”, including with Italians, a phenomenon that is much rarer among Punjabi women (Gallo 2005: 227). The key problems that Malayalee women face are similar to those of Punjabi men (as well as their Malayalee husbands): economic stress and uncertainty, at times humiliation in having to accept jobs for which they are over-qualified or that are considered degrading in India, and the psychological stress of adapting to a new culture and way of life while juggling a full-time job and all the disadvantages that come with being a foreigner in Italian society. However, despite these sacrifices, Malayalee women settled in Italy are proud of their achievements, and of their ability/power to sponsor other family members to come to Italy. Further research is needed to ascertain the specific challenges of Malayalee men, many of whom at least initially are in a position of economic dependence when they arrive in Italy, and find it difficult to secure a job without a specific qualification such as nursing. In addition, Gallo’s interviews show that Malayalee women expect their husbands to cook, carry out household tasks and care for the children when they are at work, in what constitutes a dramatic gender role reversal. When it comes to gender then, the Punjabi and Malayalee communities present very different pictures, which should warn us about making generalisations about “Indian women” in Italy. The status and living conditions of Indian women in Italy depend a great deal on their migration trajectory, and in turn, their migration trajectory can be linked to their region of origin.

Remittances: Volume and Regional Destination of Remittances to India

India is the largest recipient of international remittances in the world and also hosts the second largest domestic remittance market in the developing world. The question of remittances from the Indian diaspora is thus critical to the Indian economy, and in particular, to the GDP of certain Indian states who are heavily dependent on remittances. In 2008, Indians living in Italy sent 139.868 Euros in remittances via formal channels to India, which represents a 35.7% increase from 2007 (Giangaspero 2009: 7). This amount places the Indian population in tenth place in terms of the volume of formal remittances sent by immigrant communities in Italy (the three leading senders are the Chinese, Filipinos and Romanians). However, while the remittance flows of some immigrant groups have been declining in recent years, such as the Chinese and Romanians, Indians have registered the second highest increase in remittance sending after the Bulgarians (in absolute terms). Thus it is likely that Indians will soon constitute one of the leading remittance sending groups in Italy, as can be witnessed by the high-profile advertising campaign undertaken by the money sender Western Union in buses in the Tuscan region aimed specifically at the Punjabi Sikh population. Indians use a variety of methods to send money to family members back home: electronic bank transfers, special Internet-based providers such as Remit2India and the Western Union, which in 2001 signed an agreement with India Post (the world’s largest postal network) which has enabled it to penetrate especially the rural areas of India. These remittances are destined for two states that account for almost 40% of India’s international remittance flows: the Punjab and Kerala. While Kerala receives the largest amount of international remittances in India overall thanks to its large diaspora in the Gulf, in the case of Italy it is the Punjab that receives the highest number of remittances due to the predominance of Punjabis among the Indian population in Italy. The nature of these remittances varies according to state: Kerala has a much higher share of NRI foreign deposits (special bank accounts for Non-Resident Indians) than the Punjab. Thus while household remittances or what are known as inward remittances (direct cash flows) are high for both states, Kerala has a higher percentage of remittances (19% versus 6.3%) in the form of local withdrawals

from NRI accounts that are typically used to invest in the vibrant Indian real estate market (Tumbe 2011: 12). There is some discrepancy regarding the proportion of household (direct) remittances versus NRI deposit accounts. Chishiti maintains that the phenomenal growth in remittances to India has principally been driven by withdrawals from NRI accounts, as NRI Indians rush to take advantage of India's growing economy. He states that in recent years, withdrawals from NRI accounts have exceeded household remittances (Chishti 2007: 3). However, Reserve Bank of India data from 2007-08 show that 50% of remittances were classified as payments towards family maintenance, and 43% as local withdrawals/redemptions (in the case of Indian bonds) from NRI deposits. Regardless of the exact proportion, it is clear that the Punjab and Kerala welcome and need both types of remittances in order to prosper economically. This is reflected in ever increasing institutional efforts to cultivate relations with and defend the rights of their NRI nationals. Kerala created the Non Resident Keralites' Affairs Department in 1996, and the Punjab the Department of NRI Affairs in 2007. How dependent are the Punjab and Kerala respectively with regards to remittances from their global diaspora? The most glaring example is that of Kerala, where 35.3% of its GDP is derived from remittances. The Punjab is in third place, behind Goa, with 12.9% of its GDP coming from remittances. The specific contribution of Italy- and indeed Europe more broadly, to the Punjabi and Keralite economies is still relatively small compared to the remittance flows from North America and the Gulf. Data from the Reserve Bank of India (2006 figures) shows that the Indian diaspora in North America contributed almost half of all remittances to the 'mother country': 44%. The Gulf region contributed a further 24%. Europe is in third place with only 13%. Although country-specific data was not available from the Reserve Bank of India, given the size and established nature of the Indian community in the UK, the UK likely contributes the lion share of Europe's portion. As the Indian diaspora grows and becomes more economically established on the continent, we shall see how Italy in particular plays an increasingly important role in the state economies of both the Punjab and Kerala.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Migration Policy in Italy: Historical Context and Recent Reforms

The history of migration policy in Italy has been conditioned by Italy's historic status as an emigrant-sending country. Italy has traditionally been more concerned with its large diaspora abroad, and with ensuring that the Italian diaspora maintains citizenship and other ties with Italy, than with its growing non-Italian immigrant population (Zincone: 2009). A series of laws have made it increasingly easy for ethnic Italians living abroad to obtain Italian citizenship, whereas the procedure for migrating legally to Italy as a non-EU national is bureaucratic and varies annually. Italian migration policy is characterised by the contradictions inherent in its political economy: there is a growing populist backlash against immigration and the abstract figure of the 'immigrant' (whose political voice is the Lega Nord party), yet Italy has a large underground economy (estimated to constitute 22.3% of its GDP) that encourages and indeed depends upon irregular migration, as well as strong employer and individual demand for cheap legal labour from poorer countries, especially in domestic service and elderly care. In addition, another particularity of Italy is the role played by the Roman Catholic Church, who is supportive of immigrants, including illegal immigrants, despite the broader cultural hostility towards immigration. The tensions inherent in catering to rising anti-immigrant sentiment while meeting the structural needs of the Italian economy, have resulted in five general amnesties designed to regularise the status of irregular migrants already living and working for some time in Italy- the highest number of amnesties in Europe. Between 1986 and 2002 Italy legalised over 1.5 million migrants, a number surpassed only by the United States (Levinson 2005: 1). The number of migrants regularised in each amnesty has varied due to different eligibility requirements each time, some of which were quite strict, including the requirement of having paid into social security for a minimum length of time.

Italy's large clandestine immigrant population is also driven by the limited channels available for legal migration. The aim of successive Italian governments has been to restrict irregular migration, promote the integration of migrants, and control the flows of legal migrants. However, many argue that the quota system introduced to regulate legal migration has not adequately responded to the economy's needs, and has often been used as a de facto tool of regularisation for migrants already working in Italy rather than for new migrants. Since 1988, each year the Italian government has announced annual job quotas according to employment sector and nationality for non-EU nationals; quotas that are judged by a number of experts to be consistently too low, since employer demand always greatly exceeds the annual quota established (Finotelli & Sciortino 2008: 5). In 2007 for example, in just 38 minutes the quota for home carers for the elderly was exceeded via their online process- the Ministry of the Interior received 136, 382 applications for 65, 000 places available (Polchi: 2007). In the year 2010-11, the Italian government has set an overall quota of 98, 080 persons: 86, 580 entry permits for new work contracts, and 11, 500 places for conversions of other permits into work permits. For the first time, Indian nationals are included on a special 'reserved list' of nationals whose governments have signed immigration cooperation agreements regarding repatriation with Italy. 1800 places have been reserved for Indian nationals, slightly more than Pakistan, but still quite small when compared to the numbers reserved for Moldavia (5,200), Albania (4,500), Tunisia (4000) and Sri Lanka (3,500). The jobs in this reserved category are domestic work and all other 'dependent' work (i.e. no self-employment). Therefore, albeit in small numbers, Indians now have a privileged legal route for migrating to Italy. In addition to this reserved list, Indians can apply for seasonal work, to come to Italy as a self-employed person, or as a skilled migrant who has followed a programme of training in their home country. However, the numbers in all these categories, particularly the last two, are small, and Indians are competing with all other non-EU nationals for a very limited number of places. Given the paucity of legal channels, combined with stiff competition from other nationals, it is not surprising that many Indians decide to circumvent this system by migrating irregularly and then attempting to regularise their status once settled in Italy.

As mentioned above, since 1998, the accent in Italian migration policy, besides distinguishing between 'good' and 'bad' immigrants, has focused increasingly on immigrant integration. To this end, foreign residents applying for a long-term residence permit are now required to pass an Italian language test (level A2 according to the European language framework), a new requirement that was adopted as part of a broader series of measures in 2009. The only way to avoid this test is to prove that one has passed an equivalent-level Italian language course (exam certificates must be provided). Another new requirement introduced in 2009 and being enforced in 2011, is the 'Integration Contract' for all new migrants (it is not retroactive), which in addition to the linguistic requirements noted above, requires immigrants to commit to acquiring a sufficient understanding of the fundamental principals of the Italian constitution and civic life in Italy, and to adhere to a 'Charter of Values of Citizenship and Integration'. Integration will be measured by performance in Italian language tests and points awarded according to other courses/training followed, formally registering one's rental contract, setting up a business, and having a family doctor. Points will be lost for any fiscal/administrative irregularities and for legal condemnations (Pasca 2011: 5). Immigrants in Italy are thus being subjected to ever greater levels of state control and societal anxiety over their variable levels of socio-cultural integration. This intensified surveillance regime signals the end of the initial laissez faire Italian approach towards immigration.

In common with a number of other European governments facing a backlash over irregular migration, which has been linked with criminality in the press, Italian immigration policy has become increasingly severe with regards to 'illegal' migrants. In 2009, a new immigration law was passed known as the 'Security Package' that contained a number of measures designed to punish irregular migration. The crime of being a clandestine immigrant was introduced (applied to both illegal entry and overstaying one's visa) with fines ranging from 5000 to 10000 Euros, as were jail sentences (from six months to three years) and confiscation of property for landlords who rent out their flats to irregular immigrants. The Italian Penal Code was changed so that it was possible to deport a foreigner

or remove an EU national found guilty of committing a crime requiring a sentence of more than two years. Furthermore, the maximum length of time that an irregular migrant can be held in one of Italy's 13 Centers of Identification and Expulsion was extended from 60 to 180 days. However, despite funds being released to construct new Centers of Identification and Expulsion and expand existing ones, the new law did not address the fundamental underlying issues driving irregular migration in Italy: its large underground economy and acute shortage of native Italians willing to carry out a number of jobs in the dairy/health/domestic sectors. This latest battery of measures will not dent irregular migration from India, which will continue as long as demand exists in the 'shadow economy'.

Residence Permits: An Overview of Migration Pathways for Indians in Italy

At the EU level, Indians represent the largest group of non-EU nationals granted residence permits in the EU-27 according to the latest Eurostat report on residence permits issued to non-EU citizens in 2009 (Scarnicchia: 2011).

Table 4. Main groups of citizenship granted a new residence permit in the EU-27 and main EU Member States issuing the permit, 2009

Country of citizenship	Total permits	Main EU-27 Member states issuing permits								
		Rank 1	%	Rank 2	%	Rank 3	%	Rank 4	%	Others (%)
India	191418	UK	63.2	IT	18.2	DE	3.1	SE	2.5	13.0
United States	174729	UK	67.8	IT	7.0	DE	4.9	FR	3.2	17.1
China	171389	IT	30.6	UK	27.8	ES	9.0	FR	8.3	24.3
Morocco	157733	ES	40.6	IT	32.9	FR	15.9	BE	5.9	4.7
Ukraine	87677	IT	45.2	PL	9.6	CZ	9.1	ES	5.8	30.3
Albania	85349	IT	54.7	EL	39.7	UK	1.8	BE	1.3	2.5
Brazil	73467	PT	32.2	UK	17.2	ES	14.2	IT	14.2	22.2
Russia	60260	UK	15.9	DE	11.8	IT	10.9	CZ	7.1	54.3
Philippines	59121	UK	45.7	IT	26.7	CY	5.2	DK	4.9	17.5
Turkey	59005	DE	20.5	UK	16.0	FR	12.6	AT	7.9	43.0

Source: Eurostat

As can be seen from the above table, this is largely thanks to India's historic links with the UK, but Italy is in second place for the highest number of residence permits granted to Indians, an extraordinary ranking considering that Italy has only recently become a desirable migration destination for Indians. Italy surpasses other countries such as Germany and France, which have a longer tradition of receiving immigration. Within Italy, in 2009 India came in fifth place in terms of the number of residence permits granted to foreigners (Scarnicchia: 2011). The majority of these residence permits (when all nationalities are considered) were for employment purposes (46.6%), followed by family reunification (14.8%). However, in the case of Indians, at least in 2008, this trend was reversed: a slightly higher number of Indians were granted residence permits for family reunification (representing almost half of all residence permits issued to Indians), versus work permits. It is possible that these figures are the result of a backlog of applications that were finally cleared in 2008, since most Third Country nationals in Italy have a greater proportion of work to family reunification permits. Another explanation is the fact that the data on families from Istat includes accompanied minors and not just formal family reunification applications. A total of 1,301 Indians were granted student visas in 2008, which represents just 1.2% of the total residence permits issued to Indians in Italy. More broadly, Italy has a low level of foreign student enrollment for all non-EU nationals: only

6.4% of all residence permits were issued for educational purposes in 2009. The Italian government could evidently do much more to promote its universities in India (many of whom offer English-language programmes), in order to better exploit the growing demand for international education among Indians. In particular, Italy can take advantage of a law passed in 2009 that allows foreigners who have completed a Masters or Doctoral degree in Italy to apply to convert their student visa into a work visa, or to apply for a visa that enables them to look for work for up to one year. Greater publicity surrounding this new provision in India and other non-EU countries can greatly enhance the appeal of Italy's higher education sector.

Compared to other European countries, the national share of residence permits granted for family reunification is quite low- neighbouring Spain for example has a share of 43%, which is more representative of the European average (Scarnicchia: 2011). This low number of permits issued for family reunification can in part be explained by new rules which came into force in 2009, tightening eligibility requirements for family reunification (discussed above in the section on male/female composition of the Indian community) and introducing a new requirement of being able to prove, via certification by the local authorities, that one's home meets certain standards for the purposes of family reunification. Involving the *comune*, or local council, can be problematic for non-EU nationals who might not have a rental contract that has been legally registered, or have family members living at home who have not yet been 'regularised'. The fact that Indians appear to be less affected by these new regulations can be attributed to their strong tendency towards purchasing a home as early as possible after settling in Italy, as well as the fact that as the Indian population becomes more established, it is becoming easier for at least a section of the community to navigate the bureaucratic hurdles of the Italian state. Another migration pathway, particularly for Christian Indians, is a religious visa: Istat data from 2008 shows that 4, 857 Indians came to Italy via this route (representing 4.6% of all residence permits). Asking for asylum, on the other hand, is likely to fail in the Indian case: only 9 Indians were granted asylum by the Italian state in 2008. The main migration pathway for Indian migrants to Italy is thus via employment and family reunification, which is also the case across the EU-27 in the case of employment. Comparative data from Eurostat reveals that Italy is consistently the second most important country for Indian migration, after the UK, in all categories of residence permits with the exception of education. With 45, 387 work permits issued to Indians in 2008, Italy has become the leading continental European country for Indian migrants. Italy's key challenge is to attract more students and other highly skilled migrants to its shores, as the UK has successfully done.

Access to citizenship

Indian nationals in Italy, along with their children, face a long process of naturalisation. Non-EU nationals must have resided continuously and legally for ten years before being able to apply for Italian citizenship. This contrasts with four years for nationals from other EU states and two to three years for ethnic Italians up to the third generation 'returning' to Italy from abroad. The application process itself is long and can take up to five years, even though the Italian government is formally required to process applications within a maximum of two years. Indeed, according to an article in the *Il Venerdì* magazine published by *La Repubblica* (a leading Italian newspaper), these long and persistent delays have led a group of hundreds of exasperated applicants to launch a class action lawsuit against the Ministry of the Interior, in order to force it to finally deal with their applications (Zanolli: 2011). Italian nationality law is based on the principle of maternal or paternal *ius sanguinis* and hence privileges ties of blood over those of place of birth. This ethnic conceptualisation of nationality, common throughout continental Europe, makes it difficult for non-EU citizens and their children to obtain Italian citizenship. Children of Indian nationals born in Italy do not automatically become Italian citizens, but must wait until they reach the age of eighteen before applying for citizenship. They must prove that they have lived continuously (uninterrupted residence) and 'regularly' since birth, with supporting documents such as a residence permit and registration certificate at birth. However, since a significant number of Indian nationals are at least initially

'irregular' upon arrival in Italy, they do not always immediately register the birth of their children, leading to problems later on when it comes time to initiate naturalisation proceedings at the age of maturity. These legal obstacles are reflected in statistics: very small numbers of Indians have been granted Italian citizenship. Statistics from the Italian Ministry of the Interior for the year 2010 reveal that a total of 640 naturalisation applications from Indians were successful, the vast majority based on residency (having lived in Italy for at least 10 years). Only 87 Italian passports were granted for marriage with an Italian national. The Ministry of the Interior statistics also demonstrate that there is still a marked gender imbalance in Italian nationality applications on the part of Indians: in those for residency, 455 men were granted Italian citizenship versus only 98 women in 2010. India is in seventh place for the number of successful Italian passports granted, lagging behind countries such as Morocco, Albania and Egypt. The relatively low number of citizenship applications for marriage can be explained by both legal and cultural factors. A new Security Act passed by the Italian parliament in 2009 toughened the law on access to citizenship via marriage, increasing the amount of time applicants must be married (from six months to two years for those resident in Italy) and forbidding any separation (including *de facto*) at the time that the public authorities must decide on their case. Culturally, whereas it is well known in India that some men marry European women only to secure citizenship (and then proceed to divorce), marriages of convenience are not a widespread practice in Italy. More Indian women (56) have married Italian nationals than men (37), a curious statistic given the predominance of men among the Indian population in Italy, as well as the general tendency for more Indian men than women to marry outside of the community. The overall low marriage numbers can be attributed to the large and increasing size of the Indian population in Italy, which is leading to stronger social pressure to marry within the community. An Indian spouse is considered ideal, even essential: non-Indian marriage partners are widely perceived to be less reliable and faithful than Indian spouses, and such marriages are considered highly likely to fail due to cultural differences. Since marriage with non-Indians is frowned upon, marrying for convenience will be resorted to only if no other avenues are available. The cultural preference for intra-ethnic marriage is born out by statistics from Canada: federal government numbers from 2004 reveal that 87% of South Asians prefer marrying within their group, the highest such preference recorded for visible minorities in Canada (Sheel 2005: 349). No statistics are available from the Ministry of the Interior on the number of naturalisations from minors who have reached the age of eighteen, since such data is collected locally. However, two circulars issued by the Italian Ministry of Interior in 2007, aiming to achieve a flexible interpretation of the uninterrupted legal residence requirement of the 1992 Citizenship Law will likely result in an increase in the number of Indian children born or brought up in Italy receiving Italian nationality. Finally, when Indian nationals are granted Italian citizenship, they must by law renounce their Indian passports, since the Indian government does not recognise dual nationality. In its place, they can apply for Overseas Citizenship of India, which gives them a life-long, multiple entry and multi purpose visa and many of the rights of Non Resident Indians in the fields of education, employment and banking, with the exception of the right to vote, hold public office or a government job, and invest in certain types of property such as agricultural land. In conclusion, as the Indian population becomes more established in Italy, it is predicted that the number of successful naturalisation applications will increase, reaching the numbers currently shown by other non-EU nationalities such as the Moroccans.

Sociocultural integration of the Indian Population

The Indian community is generally well-integrated economically in Italy, but socially this integration is weaker. Indian social life revolves around family and friends- the majority of whom are Indian. In particular, the regular/irregular divide plays a big role in the level of integration achieved. Those Indians who are '*clandestini*', and work in agriculture without a legal contract, are horribly exploited, many of whom only earn 3 Euros an hour, and work up to 15 hours a day in conditions that contravene Italian labour laws (Di Cesare: 2010). Those who have paid a *caporalato* or job broker to secure their position, must pay him a cut of their pay, and end up with slave-like wages of 80 cents an hour (Di

Cesare: 2010). Very few complain or challenge their employers, due to the fear of expulsion. The linguistic integration of the community is highly variable, depending on gender and length of settlement, but for the most part even recent (male) migrants have a basic knowledge of Italian. Their children are fluent in Italian, but may face bullying at school, particularly male Sikh children who are singled out because of the *patka* (head covering) that they wear to cover their long hair as mandated by their religion (personal communication with an Italian school teacher based in Monteverdici, Tuscany, where there is a Sikh temple)¹⁰. Sikh boys have the right to wear both the *patka* and the turban at schools (the latter is banned in French public schools), but understanding of these religious articles is slight, leading to a strong stigmatisation of Sikh symbols. In some regions (for example Reggio Emilia), a disturbing new phenomenon has been detected whereby Indian children are sometimes segregated into special 'Indian' classes, despite a Ministry of Education recommendation that the percentage of foreigners in any one class should not exceed 30% (Restilli: 2009). There are significant differences in the integration dynamics of Punjabi Sikhs and Christian Malayalees: the former face greater barriers to socio-cultural integration due to their visibly different faith and symbols, as well as dress (Malayalee women tend to adopt Western dress more than their Punjabi counterparts). The Italian state has yet to officially recognise the Sikh faith for the purposes of special tax breaks for religious organisations (Reschia: 2008), while Catholic Malayalees enjoy the benefits of belonging to the majority religious community.

Perhaps the most vexing issue for Punjabi Sikh Indians has been recognition of their most emblematic religious symbol: the turban. Italian (and other) Sikhs complain of being regularly asked to publically remove their turbans at Italian airports, despite not posing security risks. The issue has become so sensitive that it has provoked diplomatic tension between Italy and India (EP: 2011). In 2011, a well-known Indian golf trainer was asked to remove his turban with other passengers present (considered highly disrespectful and humiliating for a practicing Sikh), leading the Indian government to recall the Italian ambassador in Delhi over the incident. This occurred twice to the Indian golf trainer, on both arrival and departure, and his high profile in India made the issue of Italian handling of the turban at airports a political issue; the Indian Foreign Affairs minister condemned the incident in Parliament (EP: 2011). In September 2011, a high-level meeting was held in Rome between representatives of the UK Sikh Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Italian Civil Aviation Authority, Italian Sikhs, and representatives of the Indian Embassy of Italy. At the conclusion of this meeting it was agreed that the Italian airport authorities would draw up consistent guidelines for how to deal with the turban inspired by the British model, and would no longer specifically target Sikh men due to the turban (Singh: 2011). When a security search is necessary, it will be performed only as a last resort, and in a separate room, as demanded by practicing Sikhs, in order to protect their privacy. Here we can see the influence exerted by the larger and more politically powerful British Punjabi community in changing Italian policy. Their role has been vital in effecting a change in attitude on the part of the Italian authorities. This extends beyond the treatment of Sikhs at airports to a deeper understanding that the turban is a religious requirement and not an accessory like a hat, that can be removed at will. Sikhs will also henceforth have the right to take ID card photos with their turban on (Special Correspondent: 2011). Ordinary Sikhs have not been absent in voicing their grievances: many took their protests to the streets in both London and Rome in order to demand 'respect' for all at Italian airports, demonstrating that the Italian government still has a long way to go in its integration efforts for the majority Indian community in Italy. Italian Sikhs have yet to win the right to ride a motorcycle or work in a construction site with their turbans, as they have in the UK, two prospects that seem unlikely to pass in the near future in Italy.

¹⁰ This meeting was carried out in Florence the 9th of July, 2011.

Media Perception of the Indian Community

My internet review of articles related to the Indian community in Italy reveals that most tend to focus on the Punjabi Sikh community, as it is more numerous and visible (Indian Christians are almost completely invisible in the press). The general portrayal of the Indian community is quite positive, Sikhs are depicted as industrious, hard-working, and praised particularly for their role in saving the cow-milking industry in northern Italy. However, they are also victims of essentialist depictions that suggest that the Sikhs have a 'natural' aptitude for tending cows, since they are also farmers in India. A number of articles have been devoted to the opening of new Sikh temples, which provide information about the Sikh faith/symbols, and generally underline the important economic contribution that Sikhs make to the Italian economy. Time and time again, employers and employer associations are quoted praising their reliable and conscientious Sikh employees, adding to an already positive impression of the community. Rarely do Italian press articles discuss issues of discrimination against the Indian population, except for the left-wing newspaper *Il Manifesto*, which has published an article on the exploitation of irregular Indian migrants in the Lazio region, and touched upon the racial discrimination that they sometimes face. Issues of caste and gender discrimination within the Indian community are not mentioned- Indians are generally painted as a united and harmonious community, when this is far from the case. Two specialist websites which regularly cover issues related to Indians in Italy are www.milleorienti.com and www.stranieri.it. These however do not have a general readership. Although certain politicians of the xenophobic political party the Lega Nord have criticised and indeed even attempted to prevent the recent opening of large Sikh temple in Cremona (which should, in their view use Italian and not Punjabi in their worship services), for the most part the Lega Nord tacitly accepts their presence and welcomes their economic contribution, without which Northern Italy would lose a significant chunk of its economic prosperity. In the eyes of the Lega, the Sikhs might be foreign, and hence 'undesirables', but at least they are not Muslim, and are generally a low-profile community, which conservative forces in Italy are happy with.

The Role of Indian Associations and Places of Worship in Integration

Indian Associations play a negligible role in facilitating the integration of Indians in Italy, due to low involvement in their activities. The Malayalees are more active in the field of associations, with three associations, based in Rome, Milan and Genova respectively, that organise cultural events. The real basis of Malayalee social life are their Churches, which serve as a meeting point for their particular religious orientation within the complex world of Keralite Christianity. It is debatable however whether they serve as effective bridges with Italian Catholics, since Malayalees prefer to worship in their own language. The same applies for the Sikh community, whose points of reference are *gurdwaras* (Sikh temples) and not associations. When help is needed, Sikhs turn towards their local or caste-based *gurdwara*. Although Sikh *gurdwaras* are in theory open to all, and indeed Sikhs warmly welcome Italians to their services, in practice, they are ethnic spaces that promote the transmission of an ethnic-specific religious identity. Rather than serve as direct bridges with the native Italian population, Indian places of worship, whether Christian or Sikh, provide vital social and psychological support services to their congregations, which over the long term can help facilitate a successful integration process. However, till date there have been few Sikh-led initiatives to promote greater awareness of the Sikh faith in Italy. Only one good-quality website in Italian exists dedicated to Sikhs and their religion (www.sikhismo.com), although the large *gurdwara* in Novellara has recently established their own, not very detailed, website (www.khalsa.it). The Italy-India Association, composed of both Italians and Indians, is elitist in nature, and is primarily concerned with organising events that enjoy the patronage of high-ranking Indian officials. In order to bring India closer to home to the vast majority of Italians who have very little knowledge about the Sikh faith/Punjabi culture, the tradition of 'open days' in religious places of worship could be instituted. Already practiced in the UK by some mosques, open days can be a useful tool in enabling Italian Sikhs to reach out to their

neighbours and hence reduce the mistrust that they experience despite being portrayed in the press as 'exemplary' immigrants.

Conclusion

The Indian population in Italy, although relatively low in profile and recent newcomers to the Italian multicultural mosaic, is already making its mark, whether it be in the dairy industry, or in nursing/elderly care. The growing visibility of Indian culture is reflected in cultural events such as the annual 'River to River' Indian film festival in Florence, which has now acquired even a global reputation on the film circuit. The key challenges for the future lie in attracting a greater number of Indian students and highly skilled workers to Italy, while simultaneously raising awareness especially among male Punjabi migrants about the risks of irregular migration, in order to stem the extreme exploitation that some Indians suffer in the agricultural sector. To further these goals, introducing a greater number of English-language degree programs, such as those that exist in the Nordic countries, and English-language international workplaces, can go a long way in increasing Italy's attractiveness as a highly skilled destination. For the highly skilled, the linguistic barrier is significant and hence needs to be minimised. Although social integration is currently weak, with the passage of time and each succeeding generation, this problem will recede and produce creative syntheses of both cultures. It is not farfetched to imagine a time in which spicy pizza becomes both an Indian staple as well as a popular national dish akin to chicken tikka masala in the UK.

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