

INTERACT – RESEARCHING THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS’ INTEGRATION AS A THREE-WAY PROCESS - IMMIGRANTS, COUNTRIES OF EMIGRATION AND COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRATION AS ACTORS OF INTEGRATION

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The integration of migrants in Italy: an overview of policy instruments and actors

Elena Caneva

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Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of
Integration

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an overview of policy instruments and actors

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INTERACT - Researching Third Country Nationals' Integration as a Three-way Process - Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of Integration

Around 25 million persons born in a third country (TCNs) are currently living in the European Union (EU), representing 5% of its total population. Integrating immigrants, i.e. allowing them to participate in the host society at the same level as natives, is an active, not a passive, process that involves two parties, the host society and the immigrants, working together to build a cohesive society.

Policy-making on integration is commonly regarded as primarily a matter of concern for the receiving state, with general disregard for the role of the sending state. However, migrants belong to two places: first, where they come and second, where they now live. While integration takes place in the latter, migrants maintain a variety of links with the former. New means of communication facilitating contact between migrants and their homes, globalisation bringing greater cultural diversity to host countries, and nation-building in source countries seeing expatriate nationals as a strategic resource have all transformed the way migrants interact with their home country.

INTERACT project looks at the ways governments and non-governmental institutions in origin countries, including the media, make transnational bonds a reality, and have developed tools that operate economically (to boost financial transfers and investments); culturally (to maintain or revive cultural heritage); politically (to expand the constituency); legally (to support their rights).

INTERACT project explores several important questions: To what extent do policies pursued by EU member states to integrate immigrants, and policies pursued by governments and non-state actors in origin countries regarding expatriates, complement or contradict each other? What effective contribution do they make to the successful integration of migrants and what obstacles do they put in their way?

A considerable amount of high-quality research on the integration of migrants has been produced in the EU. Building on existing research to investigate the impact of origin countries on the integration of migrants in the host country remains to be done.

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Abstract

Despite the 2008 economic crisis and the increase in emigration flows, immigration to Italy has continued, albeit to a lesser extent than in previous years. In 2013 immigrants stood at 7.4% of the country population. Nevertheless, immigration is still considered a problem, even an emergency: political and public attention is often focussed on illegal migration, whereas a well-structured integration policy discourse is nowhere to be seen.

This paper offers an insight into this issue, giving an overview on integration policies in Italy: which social actors are involved in the formulation and implementation of these policies, and how the issue is discussed in public and political discourses.

Mapping the main policy tools and social actors in migrant integration, the paper highlights how Italian integration policies are mostly concentrated on economic integration, whereas social and cultural policies remain marginal. The paper also shows that a gap between policies and practices may occur, due to failed or absent policies, which is largely compensated for by the intervention of non-state actors.

Key words: integration policies, immigration, Italy, local authorities, non-state actors

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1. Introduction

In 2013 there were 4,387,721 immigrants in Italy, 7.4% of the country's population. The most numerous national groups were Romanians (21.2% of all immigrants), Albanians (10.6%), Moroccans (9.9%), Chinese nationals (4.6%) and Ukrainians (4.4%). Overall, about 14% were EU-nationals, while approximately 86% came from non-EU countries (Caritas Migrantes 2013).

Despite the economic crisis and the increase in emigration flows from Italy to other European countries, immigration has continued to take place over the last years. Italy, however, has not yet adopted adequate laws and policies. Migration flows have always been managed through amnesties and there is an absence of effective and efficient integration policies.

This paper offers an insight into this issue, giving an overview of Italian integration policies, and the role of governments, institutions and non-state actors in implementing them.

The paper is divided into three parts. First, I describe how integration and immigration are dealt with in the Italian public and political arenas, and which immigrant groups are considered the most difficult to integrate. Even though there is not a well-structured integration policy discourse in Italy, in political and public discourses some immigrants groups are considered more problematic than others. African Muslims, Chinese nationals and Roma are discriminated against: they are perceived as being different because of their religious claims (Muslims), their alleged unfair participation in the labour market (Chinese), and their cultural differences (Roma). Finally, I examine how integration is dealt with in immigration laws and policy documents. I outline how integration policies have concentrated on economic integration, whereas social and cultural policies remain marginal.

In the second part I give an overview of the ministries, agencies and bodies engaged in integration issues. At present, there is not a specific body dedicated to immigration matters. Instead, there are many bodies which deal with integration issues as part of their brief. The most recent policy tool is the *Patto per l'Integrazione* (transl.: Integration Agreement), which specifies integration goals that have to be achieved by immigrants. In addition, there are some policy tools for migrants before their departure, in the countries of origin, which are implemented thanks to bilateral agreements. Nevertheless, most integration actions are supported and implemented at local level, by local authorities and non-state actors. I discuss the prominent role of local authorities and non-state actors in the last part of the report.

The report has been written in the framework of the INTERACT project, implemented by the Migration Policy Centre in collaboration with CEDEM and UPF.

2. Immigration and integration in the public and political debate in Italy

2.1 How immigration and integration are dealt with?

In Italy immigration has always been considered a problem or even an emergency. At the core of political and public attention there is usually the issue of illegal migration, and particularly the arrival of African migrants at Lampedusa.

Immigration (but not integration) was an important subject of political debate in the 2008 national elections. Italian citizens, in fact, voted for those parties (the centre-wing coalition), which proposed strict policies towards immigration. According to its political programme, the new government introduced some legislative changes in 2008/2009, i.e. the so called "Security Package", a set of regulations whose aim was to guarantee security for Italian citizens, to fight against illegal migration,

the crimes and anti-social behaviour of immigrants. By contrast, opposition parties avoided opposing this approach in the political campaign and the right wing government that followed.¹

In the 2013 national elections immigration was discussed in a little more depth: the PD (Democratic Party, the centre-left party, at present the governing party) emphasized the need for a new law and criticized the existing security-based frame, whereas the centre-right parties continued (as in previous political campaigns) to emphasize security and the fight against illegal immigrants. Nevertheless, as Pasini and Rebessi (2013) state, while immigration mattered in the 2013 elections, the importance of immigration policy had a low profile for all parties except for the Northern League (NL) and the *Popolo della Libertà* (centre-wing party coalition), which, however, consider immigration policy only in as much as policy can combat illegal flows: there is no concern for integration policies.

So, whereas, immigration policy is usually linked with issues of security, illegality and crime, integration is never at the core of public and political discourses. It is not a central political priority for politicians and governments. On the contrary, integration has always been conceived as a *de facto* process, which occurs through participation in the labour market: integration has been seen as related to, or at least as a consequence of, economic insertion (Caponio 2013).

Only recently the concept of integration has become part of political discourses, with the introduction of the “*Patto per l’integrazione*” (transl.: “Integration Agreement”) and the “*Piano per l’integrazione nella sicurezza*” (transl.: “A plan for integration in secure environment”, further referred to as “Integration Plan”) in 2010, and the designation of a Minister for Integration, Cécile Kyenge.² Nevertheless, both documents and the designation of Cécile Kyenge provoked political and public turmoil. The “*Patto per l’integrazione*” has been criticised on several grounds: for example, for the fact that immigrants have to gain credits (e.g. attending a civic course, passing a language exam, or attending professional courses) to obtain a resident permit, whereas there is an absence of real integration policies. Cécile Kyenge has often been attacked by politicians of the Northern League for her foreign origins.

2.2 The main target groups

Even if there is not a well-structured integration policy discourse in Italy, in political and public discourses some immigrants groups are considered particularly difficult to integrate because of cultural and religious diversity. Migrants are accepted as workers and they are economically integrated – albeit in “subordinate integration”. However, if they become a visible community and/or demand public and institutional recognition, then opposition towards them increases.

Muslims (above all, North-Africans), Chinese nationals and the Roma (Ambrosini and Caneva 2010) are particularly poorly tolerated.

African Muslims are considered difficult to integrate because of their religious diversity, especially when they demand the building of mosques or Arabic schools, or the recognition of festivities or of prayer during work time. These requests are seen by Italian institutions and society more generally as attempts to increase power and visibility and, in extreme cases, a way to breed terrorists. The Italian state does not respond to Muslim demands in a structured way, but on a case by case basis and in

¹ The opposition parties did not strongly oppose anti-immigrants discourses, probably because these discourses have public appeal so bring votes and political consensus. The opposition parties also deal with the issue of immigration linking it to the issue of security and to the necessity to govern illegal migration, even though their approach was more moderate than the right-wing parties’ approach.

² The Ministry for Integration was an innovation in the Italian context for two reasons: first, it had never existed before the Monti government (2011-2013); second, in the Letta government (2013) a person of African origin, Cécile Kyenge, was chosen to hold office (in Italy very few people of foreign origin hold public office). Nevertheless, in 2014 the Ministry was abolished by the Renzi government as part of cuts to reduce government spending.

accordance with relations between the local institutions and Muslims. In fact the State does not have a clear and defined political approach to address the presence and the claims of Muslims. It does not even have an integration policy for them (Spena 2010; Ambrosini and Caneva 2010).

Another group which is considered difficult to integrate are those Chinese nationals in Italy. There are various stereotypes circulating in the mass media and in public opinion. The most common is that they use the labour market unfairly. Their firms are accused of tax dodging and overworking their employees, and of exploiting their fellow countrymen and paying them salaries that are below the going rate. Instead of enforcing integration policies, in some local contexts (e.g. in the city of Milan or Prato) policies of control and restrictions have been introduced, whose aim has been to damage Chinese economic activities (Ambrosini and Caneva 2010).

A third immigrant group that is discriminated against are the Roma. This group is subjected to intolerance in many European countries, but in Italy the opposition to them has provoked violent reactions in local communities, including the burning of Roma camps. In Italy the Roma are, as it happens, a very heterogeneous group: there are Italian citizens, refugees, irregular migrants, EU citizens and stateless people. All these subgroups are different from each other not only in terms of their legal status but also in terms of their history, language and migration processes: there are Rom, Sinti, Rom Harvati, Rom Khorakhanè, etc. Nevertheless, public opinion tends to group them together. Concerns are often centred on public security and social order: the Roma's way of life is seen as deviant and their camps are seen as centres of criminality and examples of urban decay. The solution adopted by some Italian Municipalities is to destroy illegal camps, or to allow the implementation of temporary camps, which are then situated on the outskirts of the cities, very often abandoned areas, near dumping grounds. Hygiene conditions are sometimes bad and there are not always electricity, water and sewage systems.

Policy discourses for the Roma do not exist. There are though attempts to monitor them in some Italian territories. So in May 2008 there were emergency decrees declared in three Italian Regions: the so-called Decree "Declaration of the state of emergency in relation to settlements of the nomad communities in Campania, Lazio and Lombardy".³ The best known measure is the proposal to record and fingerprint Roma of all ages, including children. The proposal was contested even at an international level, and the Italian government was urged by the European Parliament not to take this measure (Resolution of 10 July 2008 on the census of the Roma on the basis of ethnicity in Italy). Also the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) criticized the Italian approach to its Roma. It stated, in fact, that "in addition to a frequent lack of basic facilities, the housing of Roma in such camps leads not only to a physical segregation of the Roma community from Italian society, but a political, economic and cultural isolation as well" (CERD, Concluding Observations concerning Italy of March 1999).

2.3 Integration measures in laws and policy documents on immigration

In the 1980s and the 1990s there were not well-structured policy discourses, but the immigration laws referred to generic measures to integrate migrants, which, however, had to be enforced by regions. The immigration law no. 40/1998 was the first immigration law that specified the necessity of introducing some integration measures, recommended funding for national and local bodies for integration (e.g. the Commission for Integration Policies, the Council for the Problems of Immigrants and their Families), and provided national funds for integration policies. The law focused on health care, education, interventions for integration (e.g. language courses, intercultural activities), housing and social assistance as areas in which to intervene for better integration. The law also stated that the government, after consulting various bodies including the regions, should have drawn up a policy

³ For more information on the Decree see Ambrosini and Caneva (2010).

document on immigration. The document had to specify both immigration quotas and integration measures, and it should be valid for three years. The last enacted policy document goes back to 2007-2009, and included a chapter entitled “Interventions to favour inclusion and reception”. Recommended interventions regarded: 1) accessibility to resident permit and naturalization; 2) accessibility to political rights and political participation; 3) valorisation of the *Consigli territoriali per l’immigrazione* (transl.: Territorial Councils for Immigration); 4) support for families in accessing social and health services (with particular attention to women and children); 5) a requirement to change the law on unaccompanied minors; 6) measures to favour integration for children of immigrant origin; 7) guarantee of access to health services for immigrants; 8) the introduction of changes in educational system because of immigrant children; 9) the recognition of immigrants’ qualification; and 10) the introduction of housing policies.

In 2010 the policy document on immigration only included instructions on immigration quotas.

Integration policies had mostly concentrated on economic integration until the 2000s, whereas social and cultural policies remained marginal (Caponio and Zincone 2011). A shift towards a more cultural concept of integration first occurred in 2006, with the drafting of the Charter of the Values and Citizenship and Integration,⁴ and then in 2010, with the “*Piano per l’integrazione nella sicurezza*” (transl.: “Integration Plan”). It is worth noting here that the Plan was proposed by the Ministry of Interior Maroni (in accordance with the Ministry of Labour). Maroni is a politician of the Northern League party,⁵ and it gave emphasis to the need to combine immigrant integration with the preservation of public security emphasizing immigrants’ duties, for example, in terms of public order and the basic rules of cohabitation).

Therefore, the Plan, together with the “*Patto per l’integrazione*” (transl.: “Integration Agreement”), is the instrument adopted by the Italian government for action on integration.

The Plan identifies five areas where integration occurs and in which it is necessary to intervene. First, the educational system has the task of helping with Italian, values and civic culture; language courses are also planned for adults, with particular attention to women, and training courses for Italian civic culture, laws and values are promoted.

The second area of attention is the labour market: the need to avoid the development of a black economy is stressed, the necessity of training courses in the countries of origin is noted, and entrepreneurship of immigrants is promoted. Third, housing policies have to be encouraged to support migrants in search of a house and to avoid the formation of ethnic enclaves. Fourth, access to social and health services has to be promoted, through publicity, cultural mediators, training for health and social workers, cooperation between the State, regions and municipalities. The fifth area, finally, regards children and second generation migrants, where the right to be educated has to be guaranteed; special attention is dedicated to unaccompanied minors and a Committee for foreign children (the Committee for Foreign Minors) is established to promote integration policies.

Integration policies are implemented with money from the National Fund for the Social Policies, which is given to regions by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. The fund is allocated to regions to favour and improve social services, including those for the inclusion of immigrants. Nevertheless, from 2008 to today funds for social policies have been drastically reduced; those for the inclusion of immigrants have been eliminated. Another fund which was provided by the 2007 financial

⁴ The Charter was elaborated by a team of experts, with the help of various voluntary organizations and immigrant and religious communities in order to sum up the main principles regulating social life in Italy, and to deal with integration issues.

⁵ The Northern League party is based mainly on the opposition to Rome centralism, the promotion of a strong federalism (or even secessionism), and hostility towards immigrants and Roma. The Security Package was proposed and promoted by it.

law, the Fund for social inclusion of immigrants, has never been implemented. Today funds for integration policies are mostly provided by the European Union (the European Integration Fund).

3. Description of public integration policies

3.1 Ministries and agencies engaged in integration issues

Integration is a matter of a number of ministries and agencies with specific tasks regarding integration to commissions, directorates, and the like: with the understanding though that none are primarily tasked with immigration. Specifically, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, which is responsible for some immigration issues, entrusts practical activities to an internal body, namely: the General Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies; within the Ministry of Interior, the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration deals with issues regarding the integration of immigrants.

The Turco-Napolitano law (n.40/1998) planned other bodies aimed at monitoring and immigrant integration, including the “*Consulta per i problemi degli stranieri immigrati e delle loro famiglie*” (transl.: the “Consultative body for the problems of immigrants and their families”), the “*Commissione per le politiche di integrazione*” (transl.: “Commission for integration policies”), and the “*Consigli territoriali per l’immigrazione*” (transl.: “Territorial Councils for Immigration”).

The various ministries and agencies are engaged in quite different matters.

The General Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies (within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies) manages both immigration quotas and integration policies. Specifically, it monitors the labour market; plans quotas; implements bilateral agreements of cooperation with the countries of origin of immigrants; coordinates integration policies and initiatives to prevent and combat discrimination, xenophobia and racism; manages resources for integration policies; keeps a register of the associations which carry out activities on behalf of immigrants; supports the activities of the Committee for Foreign Minors; promotes humanitarian interventions, etc.

The Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration (within the Ministry of Interior) carries out some tasks concerning the protection of civil rights: including those related to immigration, asylum, citizenship, and religion. It participates in the definition of government migration policies, it has the task of supporting asylum seekers and irregular migrants, as well as the task of favouring the integration of immigrants who stay legally in Italy. Among the most important tasks, the Department draws up a multiannual programme to distribute the European Fund for the Integration of non-EU immigrants. In 2013 it financed projects in the following areas: 1) language courses and training activities on civic education; 2) inclusion at schools and social inclusion of youth of foreign origin; 3) integration of families; 4) social, linguistic and intercultural mediation; 5) intercultural dialogue and empowerment of immigrant associations; 6) development of capacity building; and 7) exchange of good practices.

Since 2011 a sort of consultative group, the “*Tavolo Permanente interistituzionale fra amministrazioni centrali e regioni*”, has met at the Department: to decide how best to implement integration policies; to draft the annual programme for European Integration Fund; and to identify the migration needs of individual territories. The working group is formed by the Italian regions, the autonomous provinces and the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Labour and Social Affairs, Health, and Education, which are all involved in integration issues.

There is another agency that dealt with integration issues, the National Council for Economy and Labour. It is a consultative body which collaborated with the parliament on social and economic issues. In 1998 (thanks to the immigration law no. 40/1998) the National Organism of Co-ordination of the Policy for Social Integration of Immigrants was created with the council: 1) to support integration of immigrants, their representation and participation at local level; and 2) to promote

dialogue between institutional and social subjects at local level to exchange experiences for integration. The agency also drew up an annual report on integration indicators to measure the social and economic integration of migrants. In March 2014 Prime Minister Renzi's government presented a bill to remove the National Council for Economy and Labour. The bill has still to be discussed and approved by Parliament.

Besides these bodies, the Turco-Napolitano law (n.40/1998) provided the foundation of other bodies to monitor integration policies.

The *Consulta per i problemi degli stranieri immigrati e delle loro famiglie* (transl.: the "Consultative body for the problems of immigrants and their families", art. 42 of law no. 40/1998) is formed of representatives of associations and organizations working on immigration issues, immigrant associations, trade unions representatives, local administrations and representatives of various Ministries. The *Consulta* was formed in 2007 for the first time. Article n. 11 of the Decree n. 179/2011, which provides guidelines for the Integration Agreement, confirms the role of the *Consulta* (together with the *Consigli territoriali*, see below) in integration processes: they monitor immigrants' language and cultural needs, and they promote initiatives to favour integration.

The *Consigli territoriali per l'immigrazione* (transl.: "Territorial Councils for Immigration") locally monitor the presence of immigrants and promote integration initiatives. Their members include representatives of local administrations, organisations that are locally active in assisting migrants, workers' organisations, employers' organisations and non-EU workers' organisations. Their local representatives communicate with the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration in the Ministry of the Interior and exchange information to direct integration policies across the country. On the website *Integrazione migranti* (transl.: Migrants' integration)⁶ activity reports have been published since 2008. Among other things, the last report (2011) provides evidence that the most important issues dealt with by the *Consigli* in 2009 regarded minors, the activities of the "*Sportelli Unici per l'immigrazione*" (the Prefecture help desks, to handle bureaucratic procedures for immigrants at the local level, e.g. employment, family reunions, etc.), and work related issues.

The Turco-Napolitano law of 1998 also tasked the *Commissione per le politiche di integrazione* (transl.: "Commission for integration policies") with monitoring the integration policies and for reporting to Parliament in order improve them. The Commission worked in 1999 and 2001, but it has not been met since 2001.

3.2 The main policy tools

To favour integration the Italian State established the "*Patto per l'integrazione*" (transl.: Integration Agreement) in 2010 (but it has only been in force since 2012). Once in Italy and at the moment of the receiving a resident permit, immigrants have to sign the agreement and commit themselves to specific integration goals within two years. Specifically, immigrants have to: 1) learn Italian (level A2); 2) obtain a sufficient knowledge of the Italian constitution and institutions; 3) know Italian civic culture, particularly notions about the functioning of the health system, the educational system and social services, the labour market and taxes; and 4) respect the rule according to which their children have to attend school up to 16 years old (ten-year schooling).

The agreement is articulated in credits: at the moment of signing 16 credits are given to immigrants, but they have, then, to score 30 credits within two years. Credits can be obtained through

⁶ The website was established under the coordination of the General Directorate of Migration Policies and Social Integration in 2012, and it is part of the actions provided by the Integration Plan. Its main aim is to give key information about education and learning, work, housing, access to social services, Italian legislation on immigrants and to spread the knowledge of the best practices on migrants' integration among relevant actors (for more information on the website see Congia 2013).

participation in certified Italian language courses, Italian history and civic courses, professional and vocational training, etc. These courses are not compulsory, except for a session on Italian civic culture, which immigrants have to attend within three months of signing. The session lasts 5-10 hours and gives information about the Italian Constitution and institutions, information about the educational system, health care, work, social services, and immigrant rights and duties. Language courses are not compulsory, but immigrants have to pass an exam to prove their knowledge of Italian (corresponding to level A2). Many non-for-profit organizations and the Italian educational system offer language courses free of charge. At present, courses are financed through the European Integration Fund. Nevertheless, local administrations have stated that funds from this source are insufficient; in addition, no -profit organizations are involved as providers of language courses, but it is not clear under which financial conditions they interact with local administrations (Caponio and Zincone 2011).

Even though language courses are not compulsory, learning Italian is considered very important for integration, consequently many measures are implemented to teach Italian, both for minors and for adults. Among other things, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education and Rai Education have created a web site to teach Italian and Italian civic culture to migrants. The website is financed by the European Fund for the Integration of non-EU immigrants.

All these initiatives are promoted to support migrant integration and to respect the Integration Agreement, which they signed. In fact, if they do not pass the language test, do not attend the session of civic culture, and/or do not respect Italian laws, they lose credits and, if they lose all credits, the resident permit will be revoked and they will be expelled.

The Integration Agreement has to be considered together with the Treaty for Integration, in which the most important integration points are identified: education and language, labour market, housing, access to social services, minors and second generation migrants.

Today integration policies are mostly promoted through the European Integration Fund, because the funds for social policies (a part of which should be destined to migrant integration policies) have been drastically reduced. The implementation of integration policies occur mostly at local level (see par. 3.3).

As regards policy tools before departure, the immigration law no.189/2002 (the Bossi-Fini law) provided for collaboration between Italy and migrant countries of origin to organize training courses for workers. These courses are mostly aimed at the insertion of migrants into the Italian labour market in those sectors where labour force is needed. Art. 19 of the Bossi-Fini law states that workers who have attended these training courses take precedence over those who have not attended them when the Italian labour market require workers.

The Integration Plan (2010) reaffirmed the need to promote pre-departure training courses in order to favour integration in Italy. Nevertheless, it highlighted not only training courses to learn a job but also courses to learn Italian and Italian civic culture. Bilateral agreements are asked for to implement these policy tools.

The Italian state, in fact, signed agreements with Mauritius, Albania, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Morocco, and Moldova (an agreement with Tunisia is being discussed). The main aims of these agreements are: to favour the match between supply and demand through the exchange of information; to promote training courses and educational cooperation programmes; to assign preferential quotas, especially for those who have attended training courses in their countries of origin; and to enhance the role of immigrant communities in Italy. For example, through the agreement with Morocco the parties undertake to support activities for the matching of labour supply and demand, the promotion of educational and vocational training, as well as language courses in Morocco. Italy undertakes to draft a list of potential workers to insert into the Italian labour market, who are then given priority. Training expenses are free of charge for Moroccan workers. The agreement with Moldova provides for the assignment of preferential quotas for Moldovans, the implementation of training programmes and

language courses in Moldova for its citizens, and the right of first entrance into Italy for Moldovans who have attended these courses. The parties also undertake to favour circular migration. Italy has also said that it will support immigrant communities in Italy in order to favour integration. Another important bilateral agreement is with China: the aim there is to favour economic agreements and cultural exchange between the two countries. Within this agreement, the most important measures for integration are the programmes for Chinese students. The Turandot programme and the Marco Polo project let Chinese students enrol in Italian higher education institutions (there are Chinese quotas) and also allows them to attend language courses to learn Italian.

Other policy tools prior to departure include those implemented thanks to the 2011 European Fund for the Integration of non-EU immigrants. Among the six areas of intervention, an area was dedicated to the job placement: funds were given to projects which favour training courses in the countries of origin. Training courses covered Italian, civic education, security at work, and vocational training (Fama 2012).

Nevertheless, policy tools provided before departure have to do mainly with the economic sphere: bilateral agreements promote cooperation between Italy and foreign countries regarding the match between labour supply and demand; interventions to favour circular migration, and vocational training to learn jobs, needed in the Italian labour market. As regards training courses, after an initial selection of individuals who have relevant skills and want to leave for Italy, there are Italian and Italian civics courses with information on Italian laws, and health and security at work. In addition, in some projects, vocational training on specific jobs is provided. After training, migrants leave for Italy and enter specific firms, which have supported the whole project (in some other cases, training is on the job, in Italy).

Generally, all migrant groups are eligible for the same policy tools, regardless of ethnicity, nationality or religion. Nevertheless, particular attention is given to those who are considered the most vulnerable. The Integration Agreement recommends the promotion of interventions for women and children. Women are considered active agents in integration, consequently specific interventions are implemented for them, e.g. language courses or training on health services. Particular attention has also to be paid to minors and second generation migrants, in order to favour their inclusion in the educational system and in society, more generally. Within this category, programmes for unaccompanied minors are recommended. For this purpose the Committee for Foreign minors was implemented to develop integration policies (actually, in 2012 the Committee was removed by a decree on spending review – converted into law, l. n. 135/2012 – and The Committee's functions were transferred to the General Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies). In addition, the National Programme of Protection of unaccompanied minors was reinforced with the help of many municipalities, in order to offer support to these young migrants.

The Integration Agreement also pays special attention to some categories. The agreement has not to be signed by: immigrants applying for a resident permit of less of one year; foreign nationals with disabilities or pathologies that undermine their individual capacity for cultural and language learning; and unaccompanied minors and women victims of trafficking who are beneficiaries of a protection programme. In addition, the agreement specifies that some individuals are protected from expulsion: refugees, asylum seekers, foreign nationals with a stay permit for humanitarian reasons or for family reunion, not to mention long-term residents and their family members.

3.3 The role of local authorities

In Italy local authorities have a certain degree of autonomy in some spheres of government, thanks to decentralization provided by the Italian Constitution and the legal changes introduced over the years. Specifically, regions plan, organize and coordinate the social services at the local level, and have a crucial role in providing social and welfare services.

According to this, the first immigration law (no. 943/1986) gave important tasks to regions regarding integration (to favour language courses, promote cultural programmes, to integrate migrants, etc.). But it did not provide funding for these activities. Only in 1998 did immigration law no. 40 provide national funding for immigration policies to the regions, namely the National Fund for Migration Policies (which merged into the Fund for Social Policies in 2003).⁷ Regions also participate in establishing immigration quotas, analysing market demand at local level and taking part in the State-Regions Conference, formed by the Presidents of the Italian regions and of the Autonomous Provinces. This is aimed at promoting the cooperation and the exchange of information between the State and regions.

Immigration law no. 189/2002 states that local authorities can also provide educational and professional courses for immigrants in their countries of origin, in order to favour their insertion in the Italian labour market when they emigrate.

Consequently, integration policies are implemented by regions and local administrations, and financed by the National Fund for Social Policies (and also by the European Integration Fund). Regions can decide if and to what extent they want to finance integration measures. Funds are usually allocated for projects on language learning, intercultural education, access to housing and reception facilities for immigrants.

In addition to these kinds of policies, some local authorities have also introduced other measures to favour migrant integration at the political level, i.e. the foundation of consultative bodies made up of immigrants, the Municipal Consultative Bodies (*Consulte comunali*) (which are made up of Italians and immigrants) and the Extra Foreign Advisor (*Consigliere straniero aggiunto*). It is worth noting here that these bodies failed in many local contexts and were not set up again (see Ambrosini and Caneva 2012). Other bodies previously quoted include the *Consigli territoriali per l'immigrazione* (transl.: Territorial Councils for immigration), which promote integration initiatives at local level

Since integration policies are decided and implemented by regions and municipalities, their implementation is not homogeneous across Italy. It depends on various factors, e.g. the socio-economic conditions of regions or their willingness to implement interventions for immigrants. In general, their implementation is more effective in the northern regions, where social and welfare services are more efficient (Caponio 2004), and where most immigrants live.

The project PROSINT analysed the integration policies implemented by the Valle d'Aosta (Dalmaso 2011a) and Piedmont regions (Dalmaso 2011b). In the Valle d'Aosta many language courses have been implemented, for newcomers but also for those people who need to take advanced Italian courses, or for those who need to acquire specialized language for work. Courses are offered by the Italian educational system or by NGOs and *Agenzie Formative* (private organizations which offer publicly-funded language courses). In Turin (in Piedmont) the *Centri territoriali permanenti* (CTP, schools which are part of the national educational system but which train adults for a middle school certificate) decided to reserve a CTP for immigrants alone: whereas all the CTP adapted themselves to the growing presence of immigrants, implementing language courses. They also organized citizenship education, in collaboration with other associations thanks to the financial support of a private bank foundation. Beside CTP, NGOs, specially linked to the Catholic Church, offer language courses and are involved in specific projects of integration, like Alma Mater with the Hopeland Project, which deals with the integration of women with a refugee status or human protection status. Allasino and Sisti (2011) describe other integration policies implemented by Piedmont in 2010: they are about the

⁷ Beside the National Fund for Migration Policies, the law no. 40/1998 provided for the foundation of the National Commission for Immigration Integration Policies, made up of experts and scholars and aimed at proposing, as the name suggests, integration policies. Nevertheless, during the the right-wing government that followed integration policies were “frozen”. As a result the Commission did not meet again and the migration Fund merged into the Fund for Social Policies and was reduced.

inclusion of minors at school, participation of migrants in local public life, intercultural education, interventions on discrimination and the protection of the weak, training and vocational courses, health protection and housing policies.

According to the 2012 CNEL report, the best conditions for social integration of migrants are in Friuli Venezia Giulia (in the north), Umbria and Marche (in the centre), and finally in Trentino Alto Adige (in the north).

Indeed, Friuli Venezia Giulia has provided funds specifically for migrants for five years. In 2013, public tenders were published to finance interventions in the five areas of the Integration Agreement. Specifically, funds have been allocated for: interventions aimed at: intercultural education (involving students, teachers, and families); training for teachers on intercultural issues; implementation of language and civic courses; support for housing needs and problems (e.g. circulation on information, provision of temporal accommodation, loans to rent a house); linguistic mediation in the public health care facilities; social services (e.g. help desks) to favour the circulation of information; cultural exchange; support to enter the labour market; and help for victims of human trafficking and asylum seekers; analysis of data on immigration to monitor the phenomenon and participation in EU project on migrants' integration.

The Umbria region also draws up a programme every year to specify in which areas funds will be allocated. The areas are those indicated in the Integration Agreement (school, language courses, housing, and insertion in the labour market) with particular attention to initiatives which support collaboration among local institutions; makes citizens aware of issues related to immigration and discrimination; and privilege immigrant women. Umbria also has a website dedicated to immigration, as well as Friuli Venezia Giulia.

Information on regional activities, help desks, administrative offices, etc. can be found on the web site *Integrazione migranti*. By clicking on the different intervention areas it is also possible to see a list of public and/or private organizations that provide support in these specific areas. It is also possible to see the best local integration practices.

Other examples of good local practices can be found in *Libertàcivili*, the journal on immigration issues edited by the Department of civil liberties and immigration. A successful project on language and civic courses implemented in the Lombardy region is described (De Marchi and Pozzi 2013) in *Libertàcivili* of March-April 2013, as well as a project on housing for migrants in the city of Turin (Cattai and Garbaccio 2013).

Even though some regions are more active in implementing integration policies than others, none of them implements policy tools designed for specific ethnic groups. Nevertheless, some local authorities take part of international projects in which non-EU countries are also involved. For example, the Puglia region (in the south) is part of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR), of which Tunisia and Morocco are also part. CPMR actions are aimed at: constructing a territorial cohesion throughout Europe; increasing regional competitiveness and balanced development focusing on transport, agriculture and rural development, research and innovation, employment and social inclusion. The cities of Bologna (in the centre of Italy) and Turin (in the north) take part in the European network of cities for local integration policies for migrants (CLIP), a network of 30 cities which exchange information on more effective local integration. The issues they examine are: housing, employment, intercultural dialogue, and ethnic entrepreneurship.

4. The involvement of non-state actors

In Italy non-state actors are very important in migration matters. Since the 1980s, when the first immigration flows began, Italian non-state actors have provided support for newcomers and have defended their rights. These actors include trade unions, voluntary associations, Catholic institutions, and NGOs. Even now they fight in defence of migrants and their rights, and provide initiatives for their integration (e.g. language courses, help desks for labour market insertion). A case in point is the voluntary association, the National Association Beyond the Borders (ANOLF), which is linked to CISL (one of the most important trade unions). The aim of the association is to favour migrant integration across Italy through intercultural integration, orientation to social services, training activities for women, language courses *et alia*.

But there are also other non-state actors that are active in offering integration services and activities: Catholic organizations such as the Christian association of Italian workers ACLI, or the *Ufficio Pastorale Migranti* (transl.: Pastoral Office for migrants), and Caritas; trade unions, NGOs e.g. Doctors without Borders, or Opera San Francesco, a charity run by Capuchin friars; associations and voluntary organizations, e.g. Arci, an association for the social promotion of citizens, or the Association of Pro Bono Lawyers, lawyers who try to guarantee justice for the weak. In 2013, 995 associations were to be found in the Register of associations and organizations that worked on integration matters (Congia 2013).

These non-state actors sometimes collaborate with local authorities in integration projects (receiving funds and organizing activities on a professional basis, cfr. Campomori 2008), but they often substitute them. This is due to the lack of a real integration policy in Italy (especially before law no. 40/1998 and the recent Treaty for Integration), and the inhomogeneous distribution of interventions in Italian regions.

Ambrosini (2013b) summarizes the actions of non-state actors in 4 forms: 1) protest, 2) promotion of networks, 3) provision of advocacy, and 4) production of services. By contrast, migrant associations and migrant-led NGOs are not as effective as Italian non-state actors, at least in the public arena. These associations were created to satisfy cultural, social and religious needs, to promote the cultural identity of their members and to sustain integration (Meli and Enwereuzor 2003; Caselli and Grandi 2011). They offer a context in which to meet, to exchange information, to socialize, to share customs and (religious) rituals. They are usually formed by migrants of the same ethnic and/or national origins. They are locally organized and they operate only in their municipalities (Caselli and Grandi 2011; Kotic and Triandafyllidou 2005). They have only occasional relations with Italian institutions and they lack a framework of institutionalization and public support (Caselli 2008). Their participation in the public arena is possible only through the intermediation of Italian associations and organizations: they collaborate with trade unions or Catholic organizations (e.g. parish recreation centres) and sometimes with local administrations (Caselli and Grandi 2011). They are also economically weak, so they sometimes close down. Their participation in the public arena is possible only through the intermediation of Italian non-state actors (Ambrosini and Caneva 2012).

A specific case in which these migrant associations participate in integration policies is that of co-development projects: Italian NGOs often involve immigrant associations in tenders for co-development projects, strengthen relationships with them and promote immigrant associations in public contexts.

Some co-development projects are aimed, among other things, at involving immigrant associations in Italy, strengthening relationships with them and creating networks and links between Italy and foreign countries. For example the Centre for Studies on International Politics (CeSPI) has implemented many projects of this kind over the last 10 years. For example, there is the Fondazioni4Africa-Senegal project. The project is particularly novel because different stakeholders

and actors were involved: NGOs, local authorities, civil society actors. The project promoted networks between Italy and Senegal, supported migrant associations in Italy and involved them in the co-development project, trained students in Italy and in Senegal on migration issues, supported economic activities, etc.

Other CeSPI projects include: 1) AENEAS COOPI-CeSPI project (information can be found in Ceschi and Stocchiero 2006a); 2) OIM-MIDA programme (information can be found in Ceschi and Stocchiero 2006b, and Stocchiero 2008); 3) the tender call of the Milan Municipality on co-development projects (information can be found in Mezzetti and Ferro 2008).

Besides these projects implemented by non-state actors, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs finances several co-development projects around the World, according to the Millennium Goals.

Non-state actors provide two kinds of services for migrant integration. On the one hand, they provide services to support them on arrival and in integration matters: they give various types of information through help-desks (e.g. work, legislation); offer meals for people in need; provide medical care for those without access to the national health system; offer language courses to learn Italian; assist minors in their homework, etc. Civil society actors have provided these kinds of services since the first immigration flows in the 1970s-80s, and over the years they have improved and diversified, for example, offering language courses for women or promoting integration projects for adolescents.

Non-state actors also commit themselves to the defence of migrant rights, and this type of action has become particularly important in the last few years. In fact, with the introduction of the Security Package in 2008, restrictive measures were introduced in the fight against illegal migrants and to guarantee urban security. Nevertheless, many of these measures were/are discriminatory, such as the so-called “local policies of exclusion” (Caneva forthcoming; Ambrosini 2013a; Ambrosini and Caneva, 2012). Non-state actors combat legally, but also from a cultural point of view with public awareness campaigns. Ambrosini (2013b) describes two such actions: the provision of medical assistance to irregular migrants by NGOs (even though medical care is provided to them only for necessary and urgent treatments); and the advocacy coalition against the “local policies of exclusion” by some civil society actors.

Beside Italian non-state actors, and migrants associations there are migrant-led NGOs. These provide mainly cultural services: as noted above, they offer meeting contexts, especially with co-ethnics and co-nationals, share customs, celebrate traditional holidays, participate in religious rituals, organize sport activities. They also provide social services, because these are contexts in which people exchange useful information for integration (e.g. how to have access to social and health services, how to enrol their children at school), and they find support in the defence of their rights, while developing activities of co-development.

Migrant associations have become more active in the public arena in the last few years. For example, they have taken part in co-development projects (Caselli 2012; Caselli and Grandi 2013), and in public protests, demonstrations and campaigns (e.g. the campaign to change the citizenship law started in 2011, called “*L’Italia sono anch’io*” – transl.: I’m also Italy), or through work with Italian organizations and institutions. An example of the last is the *Forum della Città Mondo* – transl.: Forum of the World City – a network of migrant associations funded in 2011 thanks to the Municipality of Milan. These associations meet regularly to promote initiatives related to the development of cultural and economic policies involving migrants.

The actions of non-state actors are open to all migrants, regardless of their origin. These actors sometimes pay particular attention to vulnerable categories. The target groups are usually women, minors, victims of human trafficking, asylum seekers, refugees, unaccompanied minors, Roma and irregular migrants. It is worth noting here that some national groups have easier access to certain services offered by non-state actors. For example, Catholic organizations offer services to all migrants,

but most migrants who avail themselves of their services are Catholics such as Peruvians, Ecuadorians, Brazilians and Filipinos.

The objectives of the Italian non-state actors are in line with state actors' aims, at least from a theoretical point of view. Or rather, the institutional approach to migrant integration is in favour of interventions aimed at providing services and support migrant integration, as one can see in the Treaty for Integration. Nevertheless, there are also some contradictions at an institutional level, for example, the resistance to change in the citizenship law, which is one of the most restrictive in Europe: 10 years of residence are necessary to naturalize, and children with foreign origins can naturalize only if they are born in Italy and have always lived in Italy. Since 2011 a campaign has been carried out by non-state actors and migrant associations to change the law, but nothing has been done politically yet. There is also the implementation of the "local policies of exclusion" by local administrations, which have been lawful since the sentence by the Constitutional Court (Ambrosini and Caneva 2012; Caneva forthcoming).

Immigration has always been a political issue, and the political parties have always dealt with it according to their political interests and their needs for gaining political consensus. In addition to this, in recent times a hardening of migration policies has occurred.

Consequently, on the one hand, non-state actors compensate for the absence or for the unwillingness of interventions by Italian institutions, on the other, they fight against those political forces which oppose migrant integration (e.g. the Northern League Party). A case in point is the Naga, an association in the city of Milan that offers medical assistance to irregular migrants, giving an alternative and complementary service to public services (Ambrosini 2013b). However, other services are offered by non-state actors, compensating in this way for the lack or shortage of public services (e.g. language courses offered by voluntary organizations).

Conclusion

In the Italian context immigrant integration is considered an awkward political issue. Political parties prefer to talk about immigration as a security and legality issue rather than a question of integration, because these are more appealing issues to gain political consensus. By contrast, integration is never at the core of public and political discourses, but it is conceived as a *de facto* process, essentially participation in the labour market. As a consequence, until a few years ago integration policies were mostly formulated to favour the economic insertion of migrants.

Only recently has cultural and social integration become part of political discourses, and policy instruments have been planned.

Nevertheless, by examining Italian integration policies two observations might be made. First, integration policies may have an assimilative approach. For example, the Integration Agreement emphasizes requirements that immigrants have to satisfy to integrate: i.e. to assimilate, whereas there are not references to the protection of immigrant cultures and languages. Second, there is a gap between policy and practice. Various policy documents plan the allocation of funding or the implementation of bodies committed to integration issues, but these actions have never been implemented or, after a brief period of implementation, they have been removed.

By contrast, integration policies have been implemented at local level. Regions are active in this regards. Thanks to a certain degree of autonomy, they coordinate the whole local system of social services. They consequently decide how to allocate integration funding. Local authorities invest in language courses. In many local contexts language courses are implemented by various organizations and associations in collaboration with the local authorities, thanks to the European Fund. Another area in which regions invest funds for integration policies is housing. Some regions (e.g. Lombardy and Piedmont) implemented projects in order to offer temporal accommodation to migrants, supporting

them in finding permanent accommodation, and favouring relations with Italian neighbours. Some initiatives are implemented in the area of work, particularly help desks which help with labour supply and demand. Minors and women are particularly catered for.

But non-state actors are also active, and they have a very important role because many integration initiatives were (and are) implemented thanks to them. They, in fact, have compensated for the lack of integration policies for many years (since the first immigration flows), and they are complementary or substitute Italian institutions even now.

As a consequence, the implementation of policy tools is fragmented and inhomogeneous in Italy. They depend on the initiatives of local authorities and non-state actors that are active in a specific territory. Hopefully, the good practices of some local contexts will be implemented in other Italian regions.

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Appendix. Website consulted

Centre for studies on international politics – CeSPI

<http://www.cespi.it/home.html>

Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe – CPMR

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=1>

Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration

http://www.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/ministero/dipartimenti/dip_immigrazione/English_version.html

European network of cities for local integration policies for migrants – CLIP

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/clip.htm>

European Parliament resolution of 10 July 2008 on the census of the Roma on the basis of ethnicity in Italy

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0361+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

Fondazioni4Africa project

<http://www.fondazioni4africa.org/Fondazioni4Africa/page148a.do?link=oln91b.redirect&seu311a.oid.set=1>

Friuli Venezia Giulia web site

<http://www.fvgsolidale.regione.fvg.it/homeSezione.asp?Sezione=02>.

General Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies

<http://www.lavoro.gov.it/md/AreaSociale/Immigrazione/custom/Uffici/Pages/EntraDGImmigrazione.aspx>

Integrazione Migranti

<http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/en/territorial-councils-for-immigration/Pages/default.aspx>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs - co-development projects

<http://www.cooperazioneallosviluppo.esteri.it/pdgcs/inglese/intro.html>

Rai education

<http://www.italiano.rai.it/>

Turandot programme and the Marco Polo project

<http://www.study-in-italy.it/php5/study-italy.php?idorizz=3&idvert=167>

Umbria web site

<http://www.immigrazione.regione.umbria.it/mediacenter/FE/home.aspx>