

# Chapter 14

## Italy

Ankica Kosic and Anna Triandafyllidou

Like other countries in Southern Europe, Italy has, in the course of less than two decades, rapidly and unexpectedly changed from a country of emigration to one of immigration. The immigrant population is approximately three million people out of a total of 58 million inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> While the immigrant population amounts to just under 5 per cent, among them, asylum seekers (successful and rejected ones) are only a tiny fraction.

Immigrants come to Italy mainly in search of employment and of a better life. They come from many different countries and continents of origin,<sup>2</sup> profess different religions, and carry with them a mosaic of cultures and habits.

Italy has developed a piecemeal approach to immigration, lacking until recently a comprehensive and consistent policy framework. Because of its geographical position, this country is highly exposed to penetration by illegal immigrants from the south and from the east. Moreover, like other southern EU countries, Italy has a widespread informal economy, thereby providing fertile ground for illegal migration to operate in. Combating undocumented immigration and the trafficking of human beings is a priority for both security and foreign policy. It is also an issue to which public opinion is extremely sensitive.

Despite several regularization programmes enacted since the late 1980s,<sup>3</sup> allowing the legalization of more than two million immigrants, immigrant integration is still at an early stage in Italy. Significant steps toward integration were taken in the period 1998–2001, when a centre-left government was in power. The Berlusconi government on the other hand put more emphasis on tight management of flows, limited the scope of integration to legal migrants only, and made the procedures involved in obtaining or renewing legal status even more bureaucratic and cumbersome. Nonetheless, in 2002, this centre-right government enacted the largest regularization programme ever, involving 700,000 immigrants. At the same time, public opinion remains concerned about immigrants ‘invading’ their national territory, as well as endangering their national welfare and identity.

### **Major developments in Italy’s immigration policy**

Although the history of immigration into Italy is a relatively recent phenomenon, it can be divided into different phases or periods in relation to the numbers and socioeconomic features of the

---

1 This includes an estimate of undocumented migrants present in Italian territory.

2 The main three groups, Romanians, Moroccans and Albanians, account for only 30 per cent of the immigrant population, while the first ten nationalities account for just over 50 per cent of the total immigrant population.

3 1986, 1990, 1996, 1998 and 2002.

immigrants, their absorption into the labour market and the immigration policies adopted by the Italian state.

In contrast to other EU countries, immigration to Italy did not begin in a period of reconstruction and economic development. Rather, it took off during a period of economic recession characterized, among other things, by an increase in the rate of unemployment.

The first flow of immigrants into Italy started in the mid-1970s and included relatively limited numbers of students and refugees from different countries. The significant increase in the number of immigrants in Italy was witnessed after 1984, in the period when Britain, Germany and France closed their borders to immigrants, and when flows were, therefore, partially diverted towards Southern Europe. The first comprehensive immigration law was introduced into Italian legislation in 1986 (Law 943/1986). It regulated the entry of immigrants seeking employment and provided amnesty for undocumented immigrants who could prove such employment. Since the idea behind that law was that the immigration phenomenon was limited and transitory, it contained no rules aimed at encouraging integration (Campani and De Bonis, 2003).

The period between 1990 and 1996 was characterized by migratory flows mainly from the Balkan region and Eastern Europe. This was a period of transition for the Italian political system (D'Alimonte and Bartolini, 1997), political crisis and corruption scandals,<sup>4</sup> and the emergence of new parties being hostile towards immigration (for example *Lega Nord*). Italian immigration policy also had to adjust to emerging European migration policy (Butt, 1994; Stetter, 2000) and the attention paid by northern EU member states to the weak borders of the southern European countries. Through Law 39/1990, most commonly known as the 'Martelli Law',<sup>5</sup> immigration began to be considered as a long-term phenomenon in Italy. This law defined special provisions regarding immigration, including the annual planning of migratory flows, and certain norms regarding the rights and obligations of foreigners in Italy. These involved their stay and work conditions as well as other matters concerning family reunification and social integration.

The second half of the 1990s saw a major settlement of immigrants in Italy and a higher number of requests for family reunification. The centre-left government in power between 1997 and 2001 tried to implement a new immigration policy (Law 40/1998). This was the so-called *Turco-Napolitano* law or the Single Text – *Testo Unico* – which set annual quotas for immigration flows and established a set of measures and consultative bodies aimed at immigrant integration. Annual flows were to be based on triennial plans to be prepared by the government. Workers could enter and stay in Italy under the following conditions: a) for seasonal employment (within the annually defined quotas); b) if they had an offer of employment in Italy (again within the annual quotas predefined by the government; stay permits for work purposes were initially issued for one year); and c) if they were 'sponsored' by an Italian or a foreign citizen legally residing in Italy. Law 40/1998 stated that integration policies should ensure parity of access to public services (see also Zincone and Ponzo, 2006).

The immigration policy landscape has changed again since 2002, when the centre-right government coalition at the time adopted a new, more restrictive law 189/2002 (known as the *Bossi-Fini* law). This law specifies that all 'social integration measures' are limited to legal immigrants, and introduces a more repressive policy toward undocumented immigrants through the use of compulsory repatriation. Conditions for issuing or renewing a permit vary in line with the reasons for entering Italy (for example dependent employment, self-employment, family reunification,

4 The *Mani pulite* ('Clean hands') investigation that started as a local scandal in Milan soon took on huge dimensions as it revealed widespread corruption among the political and economic elites. Two-thirds of the members of Parliament ended up under investigation by the Public Prosecutor.

5 Claudio Martelli was the deputy prime minister who promoted this legislation.

study and so on). The residence permit cannot last more than the work contract and a maximum period of nine months has been defined for seasonal workers, one year for temporary workers, and no more than two years for other workers (that is for work on a self-employed basis, work as an employee for an indefinite period and family reunification). Non-EU workers can enter Italy on a 'residence contract' (*contratto di soggiorno* only). This is a contract of dependent employment signed by the employee and the employer. Upon expiration of the contract, the immigrant worker is allowed to stay in Italy for another six months in search of employment. It also establishes a needs-test for foreign workers, similar to the one existing in other EU countries such as Germany or Greece. The employer is obliged to advertise the job opening for at least 20 days. If s/he finds no Italian citizen or legal resident able to take up the offer, the prefecture authorizes the entry of a new non-EU worker.

The centre-left coalition that has been in government since April 2006 has prepared a new immigration bill that is currently (spring 2007) under discussion in Parliament and will become effective in January 2008. This bill includes an important innovation, notably the introduction of a points-based entry system whose aim is to manage more efficiently incoming flows of economic migrants. The new government is also processing proposals regarding the concession of the right to vote in local elections to non-EU citizens who reside in Italy, and changes in the citizenship law that would ease naturalization requirements for non-EU citizens.

#### *Annual quotas for immigration*

The management of foreign labour flows in Italy essentially centres on the quota system. There is a three-year programme which spells out the quotas for each period. Nonetheless, on 30 November of each year, the Ministry of Labour publishes the positions (*flussi di ingresso*) available for the following year. These quotas are decided on the basis of the estimated need for foreign labour as provided by local and regional labour offices of the Ministry, and employers' associations in each region or province. The quotas have always fallen short of national estimates of demand for foreign labour (as estimated by the Excelsior Unioncamere, 2004) and applications to provincial labour offices almost always exceed the available quotas (Zanfrini, 2003). The national quotas are divided in relation to four parameters (Chaloff, 2003):

- Regional, with the overall quota divided into sub-quotas for the 20 regions, which then allocate the quotas to the country's 104 provinces.
- Type of labour, with the usual divisions being seasonal, dependent work and self-employment. In 2006, seasonal work permits were issued only to citizens of Serbia-Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania, to the citizens of those countries with which seasonal labour agreements have been signed (Tunisia, Albania, Morocco, Moldavia and Egypt), and to those individuals who had seasonal work permits issued in the previous three years (thus allowing past workers to return, regardless of nationality). The remaining 170,000 permits had to be distributed between dependent work and self-employment.
- Job category. In 2006, 45,000 permits were reserved for housekeepers and private carers and 4,000 for highly skilled professionals (some special categories are exempted from the quota).
- Nationality, with some sub-quotas reserved for citizens of specific nationalities. One part of the preferential quotas is reserved to workers of Italian origin (whose parents were Italian in ascendant line within the third degree) who wish to enrol in the list. In 2006, the

decree established a quota of 500 immigrants of Italian origin from Argentina, Uruguay and Venezuela, for seasonal, dependent or self-employed work.

Legal entry for work was set at 58,000 persons in 1998, increasing to 83,000 in 2000 and to 170,000 in 2006. Of these, 50,000 permits were assigned to seasonal work and 78,500 to dependent non-seasonal work. Students and other foreigners with non-work permits have the option of converting to work permits within the limits of the quota (3,500 in 2006 of whom 2,000 in dependent work and 1,500 in self-employment). It is worth noting that family reunification in Italy is exempt from the quotas, and that those with a family permit are allowed, but not required, to work.

Although annual quotas are to be used for immigrants entering Italy through the legal procedure for employment purposes, they have often been used by undocumented immigrants who already reside and work in Italy in order to legalize their status. Indeed, the initial legal provision was adapted to reflect reality by allowing undocumented immigrant workers to apply for a residence permit from within Italy, provided their employer is willing to undertake the procedure of regularization (Triandafyllidou and Veikou, 2001).

The gap between the planned legal quotas, the demand for foreign labour and the immigration pressure from non-EU countries continuously produce large numbers of undocumented immigrants. Italy's geographical location in the centre of the Mediterranean and its extensive coastline make it a relatively accessible country to illegal immigrants. It is also common practice for immigrants to enter Italy on a tourist visa and overstay and/or abuse their visa. Furthermore, the existence of a considerable informal economy, the rapid growth of the domestic and personal services sector and the predominance of small businesses where unregistered labour can be hidden with greater ease, provide work for undocumented migrants.

The systematic inflow of undocumented immigrants has led to periodic regularization programmes. Five such programmes have taken place in the last 20 years: 1986, 1990, 1995, 1998 and 2002, involving more than two million immigrants. These programmes provide an indication of the number of undocumented immigrants residing in Italy in each period. It should be noted, however, that some were repeat regularizations of immigrants who had fallen back into an irregular status after failing to meet the criteria for a permit renewal.

The latest regularization, in September 2002 (approved by Law 189/2002), aimed to regularize two types of irregular immigrant workers: maids and private carers, on one hand, and workers in factories and industry (mainly in the north of Italy) on the other. Previously, documented immigrants whose residence permits had expired were also eligible to apply, provided they had been hired before 10 June 2002, and had never received an expulsion order. There were 704,113 such applications – indeed, a record number compared to all other regularization programmes in Southern Europe (Caritas, 2004). The impact of this regularization was to increase the legally resident population of foreigners by about 50 per cent in some areas of northern Italy.

### **The Italian immigrant population: main demographic and social features**

As can be seen in Table 14.1, between 1986 and 2005, the legally resident foreign population in Italy rose from under 300,000 to an estimated 3.0 million (including EU Member State nationals, and minors), thereby accounting for 5.2 per cent of the total resident population (Caritas, 2005, p. 97). The legally resident foreign population rose by 4 per cent from 1991 (see Table 14.2), also because of workers regularized under the 2002 Law. Among immigrants with legal stay status,

short-term employment contracts predominate (70.6 per cent), whereas long-term employment contracts are rather rare. Fewer women than men have a work contract for an indefinite period.

**Table 14.1 Foreign residents in Italy holding a residence permit (1986–2005)**

Year	Total with residence permits	Of whom non-EU
1986	289,068	151,714
1990	550,457	422,489
1995	677,791	563,158
1996	729,159	606,974
1997	986,020	857,897
1998	1,022,896	887,689
1999	1,090,820	948,692
2000	1,340,655	1,194,792
2001	1,379,749	1,233,584
2002	1,448,392	1,308,335
2003	1,503,286	1,352,420
2004	2,193,999	2,040,530
2005	3,035,000	

*Note: The table refers to the total number of foreign citizens (excluding minors) residing legally in Italy.  
Source: Adapted from Zincone 2000; Caritas 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006.*

**Table 14.2 Italian and foreign residents in Italy (non-EU, including minors)**

Population – official data	1991	2001	2004
Total population of Italy	56,778,031	56,995,744	58,462,375
Of which foreigners	692,630	1,448,000	2,786,340
In %	1.2	2.5	4.5

*Source: Istat (<http://www.istat.it/>); Dossier Caritas 2002, 2005.*

The migrant population in Italy is quite heterogeneous in terms of ethnic origin. There are no dominant nationalities, although the 10 largest groups at the end of 2003 were Romanians (10.9 per cent of the total foreign population), Albanians (10.6 per cent), Moroccans (10.4 per cent), Ukrainians (5.1 per cent), Chinese (4.6 per cent), Filipinos (3.4 per cent), Poles (3.0 per cent), Tunisians (2.8 per cent), Americans (2.2 per cent), and Senegalese (2.2 per cent). In sum, these 10 groups represent just over half of the total immigrant population (see Table 14.3).

**Table 14.3 Stocks of immigrant population by country of origin (December 2003)**

Country of origin	Number	% of total number
Romania	239,426	10.9
Albania	233,616	10.6
Morocco	227,940	10.4
Ukraine	112,802	5.1
China	100,109	4.6
Philippines	73,847	3.4
Poland	65,847	3.0
Tunisia	60,572	2.8
USA	48,286	2.2
Senegal	47,762	2.2

Source: Caritas 2004.

Owing to an increasing demand for care-providers, the number of female immigrants registered in Italy has increased significantly in more recent years. From a total number of approximately 2.2 million foreign residents in Italy at the end of 2004, 1,344,000 were women (Caritas, 2005, p. 132). The largest groups originate from Romania, Ukraine, Albania and Morocco. There are significant differences in gender distribution among different nationality groups. For instance, the Ukrainian community is characterized by a strong female presence (84.6 per cent). The same gender distribution applies to the Polish and other East-European Communities (Russian, Moldavian), as well as the Latin American ones (Caritas, 2005, p. 140). On the other hand, Moroccans, Tunisians, Senegalese and Egyptians are, by a large majority, men.

The impact of family reunification on Italian immigration flows is still relatively low. In 2003, 24.3 per cent of residence permits were issued for reasons of family reunification (Caritas, 2004). Foreigners who have held a permit for dependent work or self-employment, study or religious reasons for at least one year, or a residence card (Art. 29) can apply for reunification with: a) their spouse; b) dependent children; c) dependent parents. Parents over the age of 65 are allowed to enter under family reunion only if they can prove that no other child can provide for them in their native country, while siblings and other relatives are not entitled to legal entry.

There is no dominant religion among immigrants in Italy. According to Caritas (2005), in December 2005 22.6 per cent of immigrants were Catholic, 20.3 per cent professed other Christian religions and 33.0 per cent were Muslims, while the remainder claimed they belonged to either another or to no religion.

Most immigrants are young people, aged between 20 and 40 years, who are in Italy for economic reasons. As regards integration into the labour market, immigrants are employed in specific sectors usually characterized by tough working conditions, namely strenuous physical effort, endurance, overtime and night shifts (that is, working in small manufacturing firms, the construction industry, agriculture, catering and domestic services). Immigrant workers usually take jobs that the native population is unwilling to take. These occupations have been described by Ambrosini and Berti (2003) as the 'five-p jobs': *pesanti, precari, pericolosi, poco pagati, penalizzati socialmente* (heavy, precarious, dangerous, poorly paid, socially penalized), also known as the 'three-d jobs': dirty, dangerous, and demanding. Immigrant women are typically employed in the informal economy as housekeepers or private carers for the elderly. Research on the Italian labour market suggests that self-employment is a desirable objective for immigrants and, in fact, in more recent years

the number of 'ethnic' enterprises has increased. In June 2004, 71,843 ethnic enterprises were registered at the Chamber of Commerce (Caritas 2004: 296).

Earlier studies (Reyneri, 1998; Zanfrini, 2002) found that high percentages of immigrants have a relatively high level of education and professional skills, yet take up unskilled jobs in Italy, as these are the only ones available. According to Caritas (2005, p. 99), among adult immigrants resident in Italy, 12.1 per cent possess a university degree, 27.8 per cent have a high school diploma, and only a mere 2.5 per cent have not had any schooling. Very few immigrants obtained the recognition of their previous educational attainments by Italian authorities (Zanfrini, 2002).

Asylum seekers have traditionally been only a small component of total migration flows in Italy (around 10,000 applications annually), and delays in the asylum procedure, coupled with a lack of housing and social support, have meant that many asylum seekers fail to appear at their hearing and are presumed to have moved elsewhere. Under the Dublin Convention,<sup>6</sup> many are sent back to await a new hearing. The average wait for an asylum hearing is 12–15 months, during which applicants have no right to work. Public support is available only for the first 45 days, after which applicants are left without any support, although medical care is guaranteed. In recent years, requests for asylum have come primarily from Turkish and Iraqi Kurds, Pakistanis, citizens of former-Yugoslavia (Kosovo in particular) and some African countries. In 2003, Italy received 13,455 asylum applications (Caritas, 2004, p. 502), of which less than 10 per cent were accepted. Nevertheless, acceptance rates have varied significantly during the last decade. When recognized, refugees receive a two-year renewable residence permit allowing them to work and have access to public assistance. After five years, they can apply for citizenship.

### *Naturalization*

Italian citizenship and the possibilities for the naturalization of foreigners are defined by Law 91/1992 implemented by Presidential Decree No. 572/1993. The law is based on a combination of the *ius sanguinis* and *ius soli* principles. A child can become a citizen through descent (parental citizenship) or by birth within the Italian territory, if certain conditions are satisfied. Citizenship is automatically granted to children of at least one Italian parent, regardless of place of birth; to children born in Italy to unknown or stateless parents, to minors whose parents become Italian citizens, and to foreign children adopted by Italian citizens. The law also provides that foreign citizens who are able to demonstrate that at least one parent or grandparent was born with Italian citizenship have the right to citizenship.<sup>7</sup> The 1992 citizenship law also allowed those who had 'lost' their citizenship under the previous law to regain it. When the re-acquisition period ended in 1997, 163,756 former Italian citizens had regained their citizenship. Of these, 75 per cent were emigrants to the Americas, and almost all the rest were emigrants in Europe. There is an accelerated procedure for those born in Italy from non-Italian parents and continuously resident in Italy until 18 years of age. Upon turning 18, these second-generation individuals have one year to request citizenship. Moreover, citizenship may be acquired following marriage with an Italian citizen. Among the 13,420 applications accepted in 2003, 11,300 were through marriage (Caritas, 2004, p. 148).

---

6 The 1990 Dublin Convention (ratified by Italy in 1992, but effective since 1997) introduced a second norm by which a request for asylum can be refused if such a request has already been made in a country which guarantees political and civil rights.

7 In this case, certain conditions have to be satisfied: male applicants must undergo their military service in Italy; the applicant must work for the Italian state, either in Italy or abroad, and request citizenship; or the applicant is an 18-year-old, resident for at least two years in Italy.

An individual can request citizenship based on length of residence in Italy. Residence requirements vary depending on the country of origin. For EU citizens, four years are required; for adopted foreigners who are no longer minors, or for refugees and stateless persons, five years; and for non-EU citizens, ten years of residence are necessary. Double citizenship is also permitted. However, the bureaucratic procedure when applying for naturalization is complex, time-consuming and hard work. As a result, it effectively acts as a deterrent to potential applicants. Italy has one of the lowest naturalization rates, a high rejection rate of applications (45 per cent) and a very long time for receiving a decision (Caritas, 2003, p. 159).

### **Immigrant rights and participation in public life – issues of immigrant integration**

Italy's integration policy adopts a rather 'paternalistic' approach: immigrants are seen as socially weak subjects and, as such, are marginalized as civic actors (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2006). An overview of the literature on civic participation of immigrants revealed that the integration of immigrants in Italy has not been given its due attention in the literature.

As early as 1986, immigration laws set up structures and channels that have encouraged civic participation of immigrants in consultative bodies at the municipal, provincial, regional and national levels. Particularly relevant for the promotion of immigrant civic participation was Law 40/1998 (Caponio, 2000; Caponio and Dota, 2001; Zincone, 2001). This law includes provisions for the support of immigrant associations, through governmental bodies, NGOs and non-profit associations, which assist both the social integration of immigrants and the promotion of 'knowledge and [the] valorization of cultural, social, economic and religious expressions of legally resident immigrants ...' (Art. 40.) Furthermore, of great relevance was the implementation of Art. 3 (paragraph 6), which stated that representatives of immigrant associations should take part in the Territorial Immigration Councils. According to Article 57 of Law 40/1998, immigrant associations must be represented in these Councils by at least two members, and another two members must be Italian citizens representing volunteer associations.

Nonetheless, the wide range of consultative bodies instituted at the local, regional and, to a certain extent, national level have not significantly contributed to increasing the political involvement and/or influence of immigrants even though they have institutionalized their involvement in local issues (Martiniello, 1999). Such integration and immigrant civic participation is given scope to function bottom-up through non-state agencies such as the Church, non-governmental organizations and trade unions (CNEL, 1999, 2003; Carpo et al., 2002; Meli and Enereuzor, 2003; Attanasio and Facchini, 2004; Bentivogli and Geria, 2005). Their networks are active in various fields ranging from primary assistance (food, accommodation, help to find a job) to new immigrants, including those who arrive undocumented, to a wider range of social services (such as assistance in dealing with the national bureaucracy, organization of cultural festivities, or courses in the Italian language). Immigrants actively engage in these organizations either as appointed or as elected members.

Immigrants are also active in ethnic (both mono- and multi/interethnic) associations. The number of associations varies among immigrant groups. We know little about the type and level of involvement of members of these associations. Nonetheless, these associations are an important referent, both for the communities to which they belong, and for the local institutions, since they may represent immigrant populations in the consultative bodies mentioned above as well as in instances of formal social dialogue. The immigrants' associations' field of action is focused on the reproduction and protection of the culture of origin, or to offering assistance to immigrants.

Many difficulties that affect civic participation have to do with structural problems which may prevent civic activism both at the individual and at the group level. The most important hurdles



include lack of funds, logistic support, information, space, and suitable resources. The limited political rights that are offered to third country nationals residing in Italy necessarily restrict the scope and frequency of independent migrant activism.

European legislation has become increasingly open to the granting of political rights to non-EU citizens. The granting of the local vote to resident immigrants is provided for by Article 8b of the Treaty of Maastricht, and subsequently by Article 19 of the Treaty of Amsterdam. Italy, however, has never ratified the latter. Moreover, in 1992, the Council of Europe issued the 'Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at the Local Level', which Italy only partially ratified in 1994. The Convention aims to improve the integration of foreign residents into the life of the community. This is thought to be achieved through guaranteeing them the basic rights which are also important for the maintenance and expression of their cultural identity. Such rights include freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and the right to free association. Furthermore, the European Convention stipulates that every foreign resident should be granted the right to vote and to stand for election in local authority elections, provided that s/he has been a lawful and habitual resident in the State concerned for the five years preceding the elections. The chapter which provides for the granting of the right to vote in local elections, however, had not been accepted in Italy at the time of writing (June 2007).

Law 40/1998 originally contained the proposal of extending the vote in local elections to non-EU citizens who are holders of the residence card (*Carta di soggiorno*). That proposal was later presented in the Parliament by Gianfranco Fini, secretary of *Alleanza Nazionale* and Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2001 and 2006. A proposal to revise Article 48<sup>s</sup> of the Constitution (Chamber Act 4,167) was also put forward, but did not get onto the parliamentary agenda for discussion before the end of that legislature (April 2006). One of the most common concerns regarding immigrant participation in local elections was that granting the right to vote would lead to the formation of ethnic parties (Zincone, 2000). Some municipalities (such as Genoa, Venice, Turin, Pisa, Ragusa, Brescia and others) have proposed to modify their Statute to allow immigrants the right to vote at the local level.

Political parties are principal players in matters concerning migrant civic participation in Italy. This becomes particularly problematic when one considers that there is a strong (at least implicit) reluctance in the effective integration of immigrants in Italian political party rank and file. This is partly because, unless they have been naturalized, immigrants do not yet enjoy voting rights, and partly because non-EU citizens are still widely perceived as outsiders to national politics.

## Public and media discourses on migration

Italians with their long emigration history have often considered their country to be 'different' and 'immune' to the racism experienced in other countries. However, Italian public attitudes, initially characterized by 'social tolerance' towards immigrants, have given way to hostile and xenophobic behaviour in recent years (Bonifazi and Cerbara, 1999; Triandafyllidou, 1999). It is since the 1990s that creeping xenophobia in new forms (Balbo and Manconi, 1990) or virulent and explicit racist reactions, such as those seen in the propaganda of the northern Lombard League, have emerged.

These hostile attitudes have surfaced against a backdrop of various factors. First, the number of immigrants to Italy has steadily risen over the past few years (that is, an average influx increase of 11.4 per cent between 1990 and 2000<sup>9</sup>). Second, the country has suffered from unclear and

8 Article 48 confers the right to vote to 'all the citizens': the problem is if the reference to citizens should be understood in its strict sense or simple as a synonym of 'person' (Zincone, 2000).

9 See EUROSTAT at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/>.

underdeveloped immigration and settlement policies, combined with an inefficient public administration responsible for the management of the phenomenon (Zincone, 1999). Immigrants in Italy, as in many countries, were suitable 'scapegoats' for all kinds of problems that society was facing. The idea of immigration as a 'problem' develops with reference to three main points: a) a security threat (the invasion threat, undocumented immigration, and criminality); b) a threat to jobs (the destabilisation of the labour market); and c) a threat to cultural and religious identity (Diamanti and Bordignon, 2002).

During the last two decades, the Italian mass media have promoted a negative and highly stereotyped image of immigrants (e.g., CENSIS, 2002; for a review, see Sciortino and Colombo, 2004). The main criticism against the media is the tendency to transmit alarmist information on immigration. News reports have been linking immigration and undocumented (clandestine) entry to Italy, transforming all immigrants into 'illegals', 'criminals' or 'threats' for a large part of public opinion.

Several studies carried out during recent years have shown how mass media have focused on immigrants mainly when they were involved in criminal episodes (CENSIS, 2002; ter Wal, 2001). On the contrary, the everyday aspect of integration processes does not appear in communications. Research carried out by Cotesta (1999) revealed that, between 1991 and 1997, nearly half the articles dealing with the presence of immigrants in Italy concerned incidents of conflict and only about one-third was devoted to some in-depth analysis of their living conditions. A study of the language used in the newspaper titles and articles reveals that 'Albanians', 'immigrant', 'arrested', 'public force', 'clandestine', '*extracomunitari*', 'drugs', 'Moroccan' and 'refugee' were the words used most frequently to describe migration-related events (Stoppiello, 1999). The ethnic, racial and national identity of the groups or individuals involved were consistently referred to by the media when immigrants' arrests or accusations were mentioned (Dal Lago, 1999).

The other common theme in Italian political discourse and mass media is their perceived threat to Italian 'national identity' (Marletti, 1995; Tambini, 2001). Italy is a country that lacks a strong sense of nationhood (Diamanti, 1999; Doumanis, 2001; Triandafyllidou, 2005); but the perceived threat posed by Muslim immigration produces a re-interpretation of religion as an identity marker for the definition of national identity. When reporting on cultural and religious difference at the collective level, namely as regards the cultural and religious rights of the immigrant population, the coverage becomes ambivalent at best. Media discourse emphasizes that diversity can pose a threat to social cohesion and national culture. While living together with people from different cultures may be feasible at the individual level, it is presented as an almost insurmountable challenge at the societal level (Triandafyllidou, 2002).

In recent years, some media have developed a more sensitive approach when addressing immigrants. Moreover, they have paid some attention to immigrant integration and to the issue of multiculturalism. In July 1999, the AGCOM (Italian Regulatory Authority in the Communications Sector) approved a project for the monitoring of the content of television programmes. This monitoring project focuses on four main areas: 1) user protection (especially of minors); 2) programming obligations of licensees (for example, European quotas); 3) advertising (for example, transmission time); and 4) pluralism (political, cultural, social). The Service Contract (2000–02),<sup>10</sup> signed by the Ministry of Communications, the Government and RAI (*Radiotelevisione Italiana*), defines the functions, contents and mission of the Italian public broadcasting service. One of the assumptions underlying the contract is that it is 'an explicit duty of the public broadcasting service to guarantee the display of the multi-coloured realities of the world of employment and emerging social and cultural realities in a weak condition on the level of information tools, paying particular

---

10 <http://www.medialaw.it/Rai/contratto.htm>.

attention to those relating to voluntary services, feminism, environmentalism, problems of elderly, immigration, and so on'. Moreover, Art. 6 *bis* stipulates that special attention shall be paid to programming for foreign citizens: '...the licensee shall undertake to dedicate special attention, possibly with special programmes in foreign languages, to the social, religious, employment problems of foreign European Union and non-European Union citizens in Italy, also for the purpose of promoting integration processes and for guaranteeing adequate information about the rights and duties of immigration citizens'.

Despite these generous provisions defining the role of the public media as a lever for promoting multiculturalism, equality and social inclusion of foreign residents in Italy, the reality on the ground is disappointing. Several studies (for example COSPE, 2003) have shown that ethnic media are largely non-existent while cultural diversity/minority broadcasting is scheduled outside peak times or is outsourced to special channels and thus plays a marginal role in promoting multiculturalism.

### **Concluding remarks**

This chapter has provided an overview of recent immigration trends in Italy. It has focused on employment characteristics, labour market dynamics and the characteristics of the immigrant population itself. It has also covered the main elements of current Italian immigration policy; namely the quota system for workers, permit types and conditions of stay. Moreover, it has offered a description of Italy's national integration policy, looking at the main features of policy for settlement of migrant workers and their civic participation.

It is important to specify the meaning accorded to the word 'integration' in Italian immigration policy. Italy, as a whole, is not formally a 'migration' country, like Canada or Australia, nor is it declaredly 'multicultural', as are the Netherlands and Britain. Its migration policy is based on limiting migration into the country to specific labour market sectors. At the same time, immigrant workers have certain rights such as family reunification, gradual reassurance regarding the possibility of staying in the country, and parity of access to public services. The Italian citizenship law is separate from the 1998 immigration framework law and, with 90 per cent of applications for naturalization being rejected, it is highly restrictive in both rhetoric and practice. Nonetheless, Law 40/1998 rests on three pillars, of which one is 'integration'. The broad assumption underlying the legislation is that labour market integration – employment – is a necessary and sufficient condition to guarantee social integration, when coupled with parity of right of access to public services.

Several NGOs, trade unions and charitable organizations have been active since the 1980s in providing assistance to immigrants in the process of integration. To facilitate contacts, these organizations have encouraged the civic participation of immigrants and their involvement in representative bodies. Furthermore, these organizations have provided support to immigrant associations. Immigrant participation in trade unions, voluntary organizations and immigrants' associations ensures their access to what is called 'intermediate political rights'. From an institutional perspective, civic and political participation remains mostly the realm of Italian citizens and naturalized immigrants.

## References

- Ambrosini, M. and Berti, F. (2003), *Immigrazione e lavoro* (Immigration and Labour). Milan: FrancoAngeli.
- Attanasio, P. and Facchini, A. (2004), 'Rappresentanza politica e diritto di voto' (Political Representation and Right to Vote), in Caritas and Migrantes (eds) *Immigrazione: Dossier Statistico*, 186–95. Rome: Antarem.
- Balbo, L. and Manconi, L. (1990), *I razzismi possibili* (Possible Racisms). Milan: Feltrinelli.
- Bentivogli, F. and Geria, A. (2005), 'Immigrati, tutela contrattuale, associazionismo' (Immigrants, Protection of Work Contract, and Associationism), in Caritas and Migrantes (eds) *Immigrazione: Dossier Statistico*. 308–317. Rome: Antarem.
- Bonifazi, C. and Cerbara, L. (1999), 'Gli immigrati stranieri: valutazioni, conoscenze e giudizi degli italiani' (Foreign immigrants: evaluations, knowledge and opinions of Italians). *Studi Emigrazione*, **133**(133), 3–38.
- Butt, P. A. (1994), 'European Union Immigration Policy: Phantom, Fantasy or Fact?' *West European Politics*, **17**(2), 168–91.
- Caponio, T. (2000), 'Partecipazione politica' (Political Participation), in Zincone, G. (ed.) *Primo rapporto sull'integrazione degli immigrati in Italia* (First report on immigrant integration in Italy), 355–400. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Caponio, T. and Dota, S. (2001), 'Partecipazione politica e rappresentanza' (Political Participation and Representation), in Zincone, G. (ed.) *Secondo rapporto sull'integrazione degli immigrati in Italia* (Second Report on Immigrant Integration in Italy), 309–327. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Caritas (2001), *Immigrazione: Dossier Statistico*. Roma: Antarem.
- (2002), *Immigrazione: Dossier Statistico*. Roma: Antarem.
- (2003), *Immigrazione: Dossier Statistico*. Roma: Antarem.
- (2004), *Immigrazione: Dossier Statistico*. Roma: Antarem.
- (2005), *Immigrazione: Dossier Statistico*. Roma: Antarem.
- (2006), *Immigrazione: Dossier Statistico*. Roma: Antarem.
- Cotesta, V. (1999), 'Mass Media, Ethnic Conflicts and Migration. Research on Italian Newspapers in the Nineties', *Studi Emigrazione*, **XXXVI**(135), 387–499.
- D'Alimonte, R. and Bartolini, S. (eds) (1997), *Maggioritario per caso. Le elezioni politiche del 1996* (A majoritarian system by accident. The 1996 election). Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Dal Lago, A. (1999), *Non persone. L'esclusione dei migranti in una società globale* (Non persons. The exclusion of immigrants in a global society). Milano: Feltrinelli.
- Diamanti, I. (1999), 'Ha senso ancora discutere di nazione?' *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, **XL**(2), 293–321.
- Doumanis, N. (2001), *Italy: Inventing the Nation*. London: Arnold.
- Kosic, A. and Triandafyllidou, A. (2006), 'Urban cultural policy and immigrants in Rome: multiculturalism or simply "paternalism"?' in Meinhof, U. H. and Triandafyllidou, A. (eds) *Transcultural Europe: Cultural Policy in the Changing European Space*, 157–78. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marletti, C. (1995), *Televisione e islam: immagini e stereotipi dell'islam nella comunicazione italiana* (Television and Islam: images and stereotypes of Islam in the Italian communication media). Torino, RAI - Nuova ERI.
- Martiniello, M. (1999), 'The Limits of Consultative Politics for Immigrants and Ethnic Immigrant Minorities', in Council of Europe, Directorate of Social and Economic Affairs (ed.) *Political and Social Participation of Immigrants through Consultative Bodies*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

- Meli, A. and Enereuzor, U.C. (2003), *Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at the Local Level*. COSPE: National Focal Point of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia.
- Reyneri, E. (1998), 'The Mass Legalization of Migrants in Italy: Permanent or Temporary Emergence from the Underground Economy?' *South European Society and Politics*, 3(3), 82–102.
- Sciortino, G. and Colombo, A. (2004), 'The Flows and the Flood: The Public Discourse on Immigration in Italy, 1969–2001', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9(1), 94–113.
- Stetter, S. (2000), 'Regulating migration: authority delegation in justice and home affairs', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 7(1), 81–103.
- Stoppiello, S. (1999), 'Nomi e Immagini dell'Altro. Un'Analisi Multidimensionale della Stampa' (Names and Images of the Other. A Multidimensional Analysis of the Press). *Studi Emigrazione*, 36(135), 417–42.
- Tambini, D. (2001), *Nationalism in Italian Politics: the Stories of the Northern League, 1980–2000*. London: Routledge.
- ter Wal, J. (2001), 'Minacce territoriali, socio-economiche e di sicurezza: immagine degli immigrati nella stampa quotidiana' (Territorial, socio-economic and security threats: the image of immigrants in the daily press). *Incontri*, 16(1–2), 67–78.
- Triandafyllidou, A. (1999), 'Nation and Immigration: a Study of the Italian Press Discourse', *Social Identities*, 5(1), 65–88. [DOI: 10.1080/13504639951626]
- (2005), 'Italy and Europe: Internal Others and External Challenges to National Identity' in Ichijo, A. and Spohn, W. (eds) *Entangled Identities: Nations and Europe*, 88–105. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Triandafyllidou, A. and Veikou, M. (2001), 'Immigration Policy and its Implementation in Italy' in Triandafyllidou, A. (ed.) *The State of the Art in Migration Pathways: A Historic, Demographic and Policy Review of four Countries of the European Union*, 63–85. Brussels: European Commission Research Directorate.
- Zanfrini, L., *Sostenere il lavoro. Le attività dei Centri per l'Impiego a favore dei lavoratori extra-comunitari* (Employment support. The Activities of Employment Centres for Non-EU Workers), unpublished report.
- (2003), 'Employment Needs of Firms and Planning of Flows', in unpublished IRES Report.
- Zincone, G. (1999), 'Rappresentanza e diritto di voto' (Representation and the Right to Vote), in Atti del Convegno 'Partecipazione e rappresentanza politica degli immigrati' (Conference proceedings 'Participation and political representation of immigrants'), Commissione per le Politiche di Integrazione degli Immigrati, Dipartimento degli Affari Sociali, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Roma, 21 giugno, 1999.
- (2000), *Primo rapporto sull'integrazione degli immigrati in Italia* (First Report on Immigrant Integration in Italy). Bologna: Il Mulino.
- (2001), *Secondo rapporto sull'integrazione degli immigrati in Italia* (Second Report on Immigrant Integration in Italy). Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Zincone, G. and Ponzio, I. (2006), 'Out of Paradigms: the Italian Reasonable Way to Integration', *Canadian Diversité*, 5(1), 51–56.

**Internet-based references**

- Campani, G. and De Bonis, A. (2003), *Migration Policies in Italy* (available at [http://www.emzberlin.de/projekte\\_e/pj32\\_1pdf/MigPol/MigPol\\_Italy.pdf](http://www.emzberlin.de/projekte_e/pj32_1pdf/MigPol/MigPol_Italy.pdf)).
- Carpo, F. et al. (2002), *Immigrants and Political Participation: the Case of Italy*, SACHEL Research/action on citizenship education for old, new and future EU citizens (available at <http://www.retericerca.it/Satchel/documents/Rapporto%20finale%20Italia-EN.pdf>).
- CENSIS (2002), *L'immagine degli immigrati e minoranze etniche nei Media* (The Image of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities in the Media), Final Report (available at [http://www.edscuola.it/archivio/stranieri/immagine\\_immigrati.pdf](http://www.edscuola.it/archivio/stranieri/immagine_immigrati.pdf)).
- Chaloff, J. (2003), 'Italy', in Niessen, J. and Y. et al. (eds) *EU and US Approaches to the Management of Immigration*, Brussels: Migration Policy Group (available at <http://www.migpolgroup.com/publications/default.asp>).
- CNEL (1999), *Primo rapporto sulla rappresentanza degli immigrati* (First Report on Immigrant Representation), Roma: Documents CNEL (available at <http://www.portalecnel.it/portale/pubblicazioni.nsf/>).
- (2003), *Secondo rapporto sulla rappresentanza degli immigrati* (Second Report on Immigrant Representation), Roma: Documenti CNEL (available at <http://www.portalecnel.it/portale/pubblicazioni.nsf/>).
- COSPE (2003), *Media e Immigrazione Rapporto sulla Settimana Europea di Monitoraggio dei Media in Italia* [Media and Immigration. Report on European Week of Monitoring Media in Italy]. Documents COSPE (available at <http://www.cospe.it/news/media.pdf>).
- Diamanti, I. and Bordignon, F. (2002), 'Migration and Citizenship Rights in Europe: European Citizens' attitudes', Quaderni FNE. Collana Osservatori, No. 21 – November 2005 (available at [http://www.fondazione Nordest.net/uploads/media/english\\_version.pdf](http://www.fondazione Nordest.net/uploads/media/english_version.pdf)).
- Excelsior Unioncamere (2004), *Ministry of Labour*, Documento programmatico 2004–2006 [Programme Document 2004–2006] (available at <http://excelsior.unioncamere.net>).
- Triandafyllidou, A. (2002), 'Religious Diversity and Multiculturalism in Southern Europe: The Italian Mosque Debate', *Sociological Research Online*, 7(1) (available at [www.socresonline.org.uk/7/1/triandafyllidou.html](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/1/triandafyllidou.html)).