

# 30<sup>th</sup> Italian Report on Migrations 2024

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with the contribution of



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# Thirty years of ISMU: a research agenda still relevant for society

Nicola Pasini and Laura Zanfrini

Describing, understanding, interpreting and unpacking migration—this has been the goal or, rather, the mission of ISMU over the past thirty years through its Report on Migrations in Italy. As a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary publication, it has narrated and analyzed, first and foremost, the evolution of migration and inclusion across various societal domains shaping from an empirical perspective. It has also addressed complex policies that, over time, had to consider the profound transformations that the Italian society has been undergoing, becoming—whether we like it or not, embedded in an increasingly interdependent global context from an economic, technological, communicative, social, cultural and even political perspective.

In political terms, anyone working on and around policies—or more specifically, migration policy—inevitably feels the need to explain the complexity they observe. Thirty years after the publication of our first report, the key question is still whether we are witnessing long-term trends and regular patterns or, rather, discontinuity with Italy's migration history. Can we argue, for instance, that after the early phase, from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, a second phase has lasted until the so-called “refugee crisis” in Europe in 2015 and that now, in the current international geopolitical context, a third phase is starting?

Empirically, the systematic monitoring provided by our annual reports—especially the ones published on key anniversaries—seems to support the idea of continuity. More precisely, it shows a “natural” and progressive “sedimentation” of the migrant presence in Italy surrounded by events like the EU enlargement and the inclusion of new Member states with high migratory pressure towards Italy, regularization procedures, economic crises and, most recently, the pandemic. These events have accelerated certain trends and triggered new ones.

At the same time, analyses from the “institutional” chapters of the ISMU Annual report, that cover key areas such as demographics, legislation, employment, education, health, religion and public opinion show how the evolution of migration, inclusion and integration processes are indicative of a society that has profoundly changed over the past three decades. Italy is gradually coming to terms with its transformation into a multiethnic and multireligious society—not without difficulty and conflict—increasingly centered around the issue of “second generations”.

In terms of institutional responses, the common narrative—amplified by the media—often emphasizes discontinuity, with terms like “turning point,” “shift” and “change of course” being overused as part of the pluralism of political actors governing the country. However, the analyses from this and the previous reports indicate that there is pattern where decisions are taken incrementally, often leading to similar solutions regardless of the ruling parties. Sometimes this process is even unstable or fragmented, resulting in inconsistent solutions and implementation across the country.

At first glance, this might seem to contradict the very essence of policies which, as defined by Theodore Lowi, can be described as a rule that expresses an intention to influence the behavior of citizens, individually or collectively, through the use of positive or negative sanctions. This definition implies that choices—and non-choices, since inaction also has consequences—are never neutral. They are always based on value assumptions (whether shared or not) and, like all policy implementation procedures, are aimed at achieving specific goals.

From this perspective, migration policies serve as an excellent test of a government’s willingness and ability to translate declared values and objectives into concrete actions. By viewing society as a space of cooperation and conflict among individuals and groups, the policies of any political community are always future-oriented, even though the past and history matter greatly.

The importance of the past is precisely what comes out of the analyses in our 2024 report. While the problems to be solved may change over time—in terms of how they look like and how they are perceived by stakeholders—the political solutions often lack innovation. This is due to institutional isomorphism and the inherently sensitive and complex nature of migration, as well as a public opinion that is not always well-informed or aware.

We are convinced that, in an increasingly hyper-specialized research environment, interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary based on empirical evidence

are essential to understanding complex phenomena—especially controversial and “slippery” ones like migration. Viewing migration through a single lens risks producing partial or biased perspectives and unintentionally reinforcing the very stereotypes we aim to challenge. ISMU has always strived to observe and interpret migration with the greatest possible scientific objectivity, focusing on asking meaningful research questions rather than offering hasty solutions.

The 30<sup>th</sup> ISMU Report includes contributions from authors with diverse political and value-based perspectives to enrich the debate by showing how migration reflects broader social changes and contemporary challenges, engaging politics, civil society, and research alike. The Report is structured into four parts:

1. Flows, presence and citizenship: chapters from this part analyze thirty years of migration in Italy and the impact of integration, with attention to legislative developments.
2. Inclusion and coexistence: chapters from this part examine labor, welfare, education, health, and religion, assessing institutional responses and future challenges.
3. Italy in the European and global context: chapters from this part offer comparative data and political reflections on borders, public opinion, mobility and the new European Pact.
4. Differences and inequalities: chapters from this part address emerging issues such as media narratives, disability, remittances, artificial intelligence and precision welfare.

# Part I

## Flows, presence and citizenship

## Chapter 1

# The foreign population in Italy: numbers and trends

Gian Carlo Blangiardo

By highlighting the significant increase in residents, statistical data indicates that the foreign population is becoming more oriented towards stability and full integration. This is further confirmed by the growing share of those who have acquired Italian citizenship.

### Generally, a more stable phenomenon

As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024, the foreign population with usual residence (i.e., residents) in Italy reached a record 5.25 million (8.9% of the total population), about 70% of whom were non-EU citizens. However, if we consider the total number of people present in the country—both regularly and irregularly—there is a slight decline compared to the previous year, in line with the downward trend that started in 2019.

The moderate decrease in the total number of people present in the country (-20,000) results from the combination of more residents (+113,000), a nearly stable number regular non-residents (+4,000), and the continued decline in irregular migrants (-137,000). These latter have been steadily decreasing since 2019 and are currently estimated at just over 300,000 (5.6% of the total).

Table 1. Foreigners in Italy as of 1st January (2021-2024) by type of stay (in thousands)

| Type                        | 1.1.2021 | 1.1.2022 | 1.1.2023 | 1.1.2024 |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Residents*                  | 5,172    | 5,031    | 5,141    | 5,254    |
| % on the total of residents | 8,7      | 8,5      | 8,7      | 8,9      |
| Regular non-residents       | 224      | 293      | 176      | 180      |
| Irregulars                  | 519      | 506      | 458      | 321      |
| Total                       | 5,915    | 5,830    | 5,775    | 5,755    |

\* Values modified on the basis of subsequent ISTAT revisions after recalculation of the resident population during annual censuses as of 2018.  
Source: Elaborations and estimates by ISMU based on ISTAT data

The nearly 6 million foreign citizens currently in Italy reflect a complex and multifaceted trend that that started about fifty years ago. This trend was shaped by major historical events—from the fall of the Berlin Wall and the USSR to the crisis in the Balkans and the recent Russia-Ukraine conflict—that profoundly changed the intensity and motivations of migratory flows. Over the years, the structural characteristics of the foreign population have changed, with differences in countries of origin and settlement. Over time, the first generations have been joined by the second generations—who are increasing in numbers and are reaching adulthood, making space even for third generations—as well as by many who have acquired Italian citizenship. This has resulted in nearly two million new Italians.

Signs of consolidation

In reviewing the essential features of migration in Italy, one cannot overlook its key contribution to the demographic evolution of the past fifty years. The foreign population has been an integral part of the demographic and social changes seen in Italy, both influencing and being influenced by these changes. In particular, the 2000s were marked by the fastest growth in immigration in Italy. This phase ended at the end of the first decade, when a slowdown in incoming flows accelerated the demographic aging of residents and led to a continuous population decline since 2014.

Between the 2001 census and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011, foreign residents in Italy accounted for nearly the whole demographic growth, with an increase of 2.98 million individuals (99.3% of the total growth). However, in the following years, net migration contributed far less (about 700,000 people between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 and 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022) and was not enough to offset the increasingly negative natural balance. As a result, Italy’s resident population began to decline, driven

by the steady and intense decrease in the Italian citizen component, despite a substantial increase in new citizens through naturalization.

The complexity of population growth

The consistent and continuous increase in the foreign resident population in Italy is due to various dynamics working in opposite directions. Inflows are not only due to immigration but also to births from foreign parents. Outflows, on the other hand, are due to (still relatively few) deaths and emigration, and especially to acquisition of Italian citizenship.

Looking at the flows feeding into the foreign resident population we see that, despite fluctuations due to frequent regularization campaigns, it was mainly the registration of foreign citizens into population registers that dominated the first decade. However, since 2010, arrivals have declined due to economic difficulties and restrictions on labor migration, and the recent post-COVID recovery has not yet fully compensated for this drop.

As for births, there was an upward trend since 2001 until the historical peak of about 80,000 births in 2012. Since then, there has been a gradual decline—despite the increasing foreign population—down to 50,000 births in 2023. This decline is partly due to the alignment of foreign women’s fertility rates with the low levels among Italian women and—possibly—to the naturalization of foreign parents who have lived in Italy for long and may be more inclined to have children. As one would expect, these births are now recorded as Italian.

Citizenship acquisition may also have influenced how outflows from Italy function. It is not uncommon for foreigners who become Italian citizens to later emigrate with an EU passport to other countries, which results in the removal of Italian residents from the population registry due to relocation abroad.

Conclusions

The nearly 6 million foreign citizens currently in Italy represent the final point of a trend that started half a century ago and has both affected and been affected by major historical events. Over time, the structural characteristics of migrants have changed, and the initial “trendsetting” flows have been affected by migration chains and family reunification, leading to second—and even third—generations often born in Italy.

By highlighting the significant increase in residents, statistical data indicates that—as already anticipated in the previous ISMU Report—the foreign population is becoming more oriented towards stability and full integration. This is further confirmed by the growing share of those who have acquired Italian citizenship. Today, among the 59 million residents in Italy, 12.4% (i.e., one in eight) belong to

the diverse group that includes Italians born abroad, foreign citizens born in Italy, new Italians born in and outside Italy, and immigrants born abroad. More than half of immigrants born abroad hold long-term residence permits, which are often the logical step before becoming Italian.

In conclusion, while immigration and its progress toward stabilization and “normality” can now be considered consolidated—even in the general perception at country level—some persistent critical issues remain to be addressed: employment, housing, access to services, etc. These are all challenges that should be tackled promptly to ensure better and faster access to full integration pathways for migrants legally residing in Italy.

## Chapter 2

# Arrivals and asylum applications

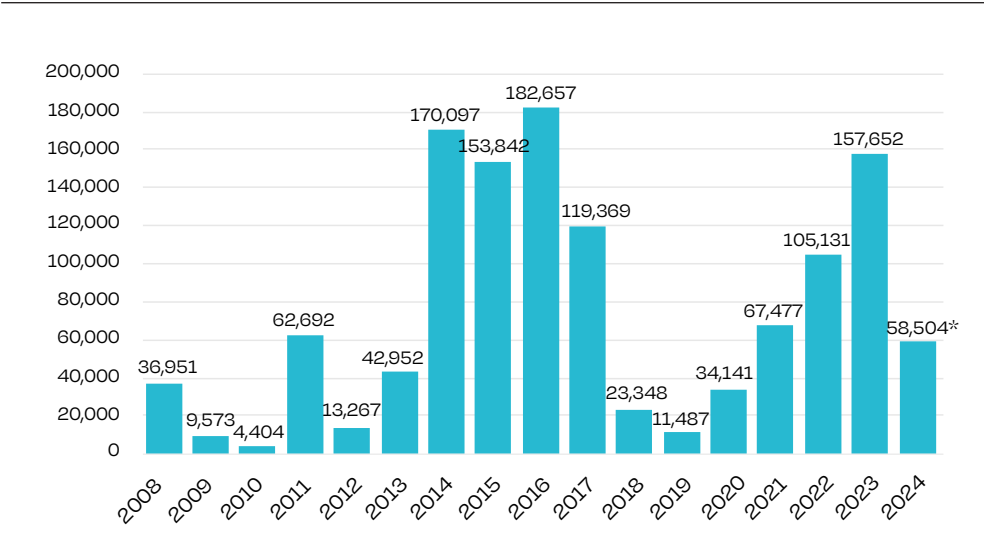
Livia Elisa Ortensi

It is clear that the migratory pressure from sea and land arrivals is decreasing.

### A general decline in arrivals by sea and land

Unauthorized entries of asylum seekers and economic migrants by sea and land represent the most dynamic and poorly predictable component of migratory flows to Italy. Between 2019 and 2023, migratory pressure at the sea borders grew steadily, reaching levels in 2023 that were over 13 times higher than in 2019. However, in 2024 this trend started reversing, as the year ended with just over 66,000 (-57.9% compared to 2023) (graph 1).

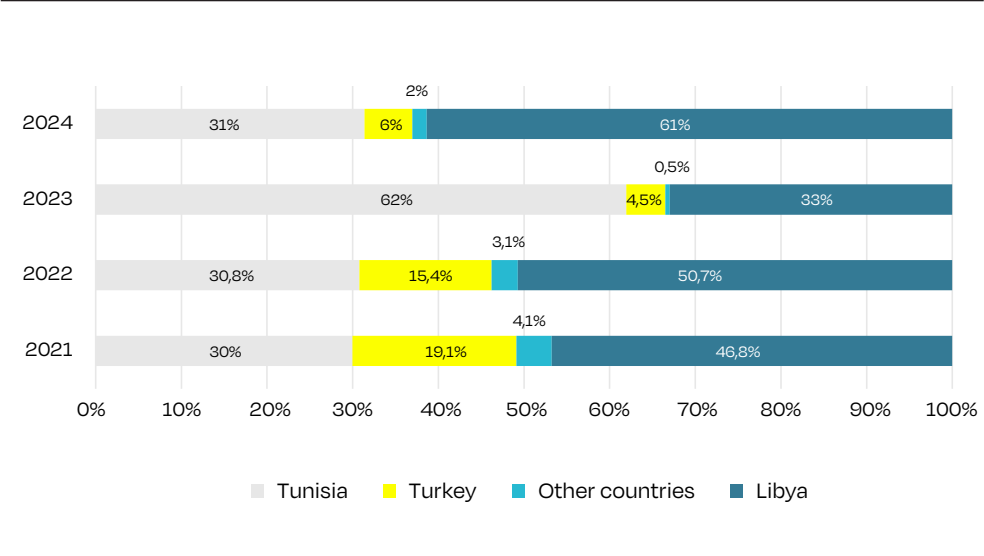
Graph 1. Number of sea arrivals recorded in Italy. Years 2008–2024\*



\* 2024 data refers to arrivals as of 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024.  
Source: ISMU ETS based on Ministry of the Interior data, 2024

This trend is mainly due to the new agreements with Tunisia, that have worsened the living conditions of migrants in the country, with reports of deportations and violence especially against people from Sub-Saharan Africa. The reduction in sea arrivals from Tunisia (-81.3%) is part of a general decline in arrivals from Libya (-31.2%) and Turkey (-54.4%). In 2023, over two-thirds of migrants left from Tunisia, while in 2024 Libya became again the main country of departure (graph 2). The origin of migrants varies based on the route. Those leaving from Tunisia were mainly from Guinea (18.4%), Ivory Coast (16.0%), Burkina Faso (8.5%) and Mali (5.8%), while those leaving from Libya were from Bangladesh (23.7%), Pakistan (14.5%), Syria (17.4%) and Egypt (21.3%). Bangladesh, for the first time, was the main country of origin of migrants who landed, with a 9% increase compared to 2023 (table 1). Many Bangladeshis first reach a Middle Eastern country with a tourist visa and then move to Libya and attempt to cross the Mediterranean. Arrivals from Egypt, on the other hand, dropped by 63.2%.

Graph 2. Sea arrivals by place of departure. Years 2021–2024\*.



\* 2024 data refers to the first 10 months.  
Source: ISMU ETS elaborations based on IOM-UNHCR (2024a) and UNHCR (2024) data.

Table 1. Top 5 nationalities declared at arrival and their share out of total arrivals. Years 2019–2024\*

|       |                    |                    |                     |                   |                    |
|-------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 2019  | Tunisia<br>23,1    | Pakistan<br>10,3   | Ivory Coast<br>9,9  | Algeria<br>8,8    | Iraq<br>8,5        |
| 2020  | Tunisia<br>37,7    | Bangladesh<br>12,1 | Ivory Coast<br>5,7  | Algeria<br>4,3    | Egypt<br>3,7       |
| 2021  | Tunisia<br>23,4    | Egypt<br>12,5      | Bangladesh<br>11,7  | Iran<br>5,8       | Ivory Coast<br>5,7 |
| 2022  | Egypt<br>19,5      | Tunisia<br>17,3    | Bangladesh<br>14,3  | Syria<br>8,2      | Afghanistan<br>6,9 |
| 2023  | Guinea<br>11,6     | Tunisia<br>11,0    | Ivory Coast<br>10,2 | Bangladesh<br>7,7 | Egypt<br>7,7       |
| 2024* | Bangladesh<br>19,8 | Syria<br>18,7      | Tunisia<br>12,8     | Egypt<br>6,5      | Guinea<br>5,5      |

\* 2024 data refers to arrivals as of 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024.  
Source: ISMU ETS elaborations based on Ministry of the Interior data (2024).

Land entries are also decreasing. In the first six months of 2024, UNHCR estimated around 3,400 arrivals, 39.3% less compared to 2023. Most of the arrivals are citizens of Bangladesh, Syria, Türkiye, Morocco and Afghanistan. For years, systematic abuse and violent pushbacks have been recorded along this route.

The number of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine continues to decrease too. In the first 10 months of 2024, less than 16,000 new applications were registered, compared to 21,000 in the whole of 2023. Since 2022, 197,000 permits for temporary protection have been issued, of which 60,000 were issued to minors. In particular, 79% of adults with temporary protection were women, differently from other groups of asylum seekers.

Asylum applications

In 2023, Italy received approximately 130,000 asylum applications, most of which from men (84%) in line with previous years. In the first 9 months of 2024, 116,000 new applications were submitted with an increase of 27.1% compared to the same period in 2023. The main countries of origin among asylum seekers in 2024 were Bangladesh, Peru, Egypt, Pakistan and Morocco (table 2). The growth in the number applications was particularly strong for China (+882%), Sri Lanka (+335%), Morocco (+115%), India (+137%) and Peru (+119%).

Table 2. Top 20 citizenships by asylum applications. Years 2023–2024\* and variation (%) compared to the previous year\*

|    | First 10 countries | 2024   | Var. %<br>first 9 months<br>2023 - first 9<br>months 2024 | First 10 countries | 2023   | Var. %<br>first 9 months<br>2021 - first 9<br>months 2023 |
|----|--------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Bangladesh         | 25,610 | 56,8                                                      | Bangladesh         | 23,195 | 59,0%                                                     |
| 2  | Peru               | 11,420 | 119,4                                                     | Egypt              | 18,175 | 105,7                                                     |
| 3  | Egypt              | 9,305  | -34,1                                                     | Pakistan           | 16,685 | 46,7                                                      |
| 4  | Pakistan           | 9,010  | -28,1                                                     | Tunisia            | 7,515  | 40,1                                                      |
| 5  | Morocco            | 7,360  | 114,9                                                     | Peru               | 7,485  | 149,5                                                     |
| 6  | Tunisia            | 7,045  | 50,4                                                      | Ivory Coast        | 7,040  | 345,6                                                     |
| 7  | Burkina Faso       | 3,720  | 30,3                                                      | Burkina Faso       | 5,660  | 2.164,0                                                   |
| 8  | Sri Lanka          | 3,305  | 334,9                                                     | Morocco            | 5,085  | 82,6                                                      |
| 9  | India              | 3,080  | 136,9                                                     | Guinea             | 3,305  | 416,4                                                     |
| 10 | Mali               | 2,645  | 57,0                                                      | Mali               | 3,050  | 283,6                                                     |

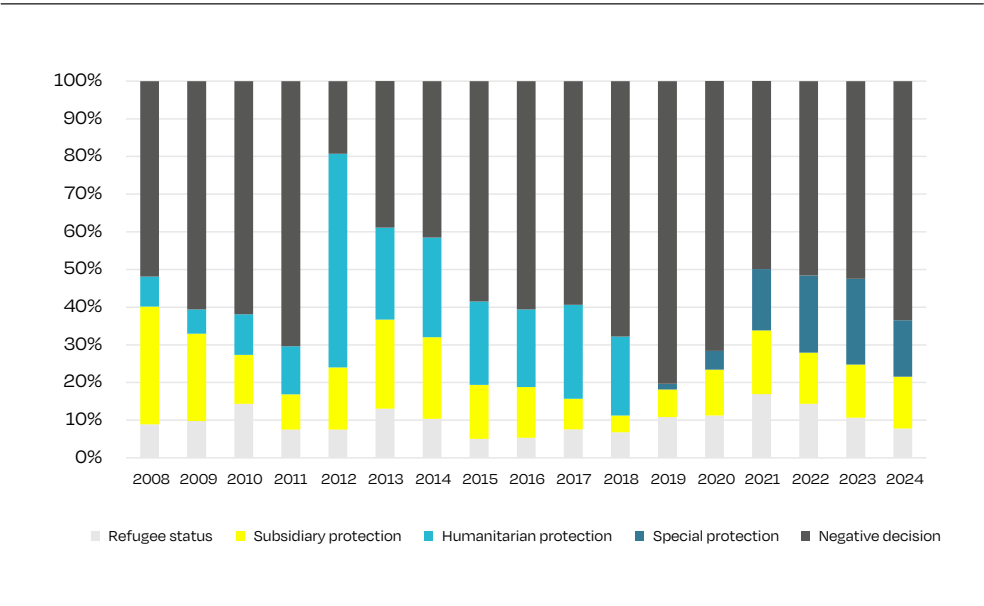
\* 2024 data refers to the first 9 months.  
ISMU ETS elaborations based on Eurostat data (2024) migr\_asyappctza and migr\_asyappctzm, updated as of 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024.

Asylum applications from Bangladeshis and Pakistanis exceed arrivals by sea, suggesting that Italy is often a country of arrival rather than transit. On the other

hand, Sudanese, Syrians and Guineans submitted a very limited number of asylum applications in Italy, indicating that the country is often considered an intermediate step towards other destinations in Europe, such as France, Germany, Belgium and Spain.

As regards asylum decisions, in the first 9 months of 2024 the share of negative decisions rose to 63% compared to 52% in 2023, particularly for special protection (from 23% to 15%), due also to Law 50/2023 (graph 3). In 2023, the highest rates of negative decisions related to applicants from Egypt (83%), Algeria (78%), Tunisia and Morocco (76%), Senegal (69%), while in 2024 the same data increased for Kosovo (93%), Morocco (90%), Egypt, Senegal and China (87%). The lowest rate of negative decisions were recorded for people from Burkina Faso (1%), Palestine (4%), Mali (6%), Somalia (7%) and Venezuela (10%). Between 2023 and 2024, negative decisions increased for applicants from Serbia, Brazil, Albania and Sierra Leone (+26-28%). The increase in negative decisions in 2024 reflects a reduced propensity to grant asylum.

Graph 3. Outcomes of asylum applications. Years 2008–2024\*



\* 2024 data refers to the first three quarters, based on Eurostat data (2024).  
Source: ISMU ETS elaborations based on Ministry of the Interior data (2024) and Eurostat data (2024).

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## Chapter 3

# The legal framework and its evolution

Ennio Codini

It is difficult, if not impossible, to consider a country 'safe' for minorities and political opponents if there is no effective protection of human rights.

In the field of migration, no structural changes have been enacted in the Italian legislation after Law No. 40 of 1998 and the amendments made in 2002. Entry for work is generally subject to annual quotas and the prior availability of an employer willing to hire the migrant worker. Entry for family reunification, on the other hand, is a right and is granted against certain requirements. In response to de facto irregular flows of economic migrants, several regularization campaigns have been launched, and even the annual quotas have often benefited migrants without a residence permit.

As for asylum, in the years 2000s a specific framework was developed in line with EU directives, including two statuses—refugee or beneficiary of subsidiary protection—along with the possibility of obtaining another type of permit in special cases. Applications are examined by special administrative bodies, the territorial commissions. Reception should always take place in facilities under the system of local centers developed by cities (currently called SAI) although, in practice, emergency facilities—which are inherently inadequate for promoting integration—play a significant role. The lack of legal pathways to seek protection remains a serious gap and over the years has led asylum seekers to reaching the EU through irregular pathways.

The overall migration framework and asylum system have been repeatedly amended through decree-laws, as if migration were an extraordinary phenomenon, but without major changes and leaving the aforementioned issues unsolved. As for the acquisition of citizenship, Law No. 91 of 1992 introduced a new framework in line with previous ones but with some more restrictive measures, such as extending the waiting period for naturalization based on residency from five to ten years. This framework has since only undergone minor adjustments. In 2024 the legal framework was only slightly modified, with no major changes and persistent critical issues.

Following the controversial agreement between Italy and Albania on 3rd November 2023, implementing provisions were adopted. The Decree-Law No. 158 specifically revised the list of countries to be “safe” as the agreement aims to discourage irregular flows of asylum seekers by allowing for the transfer and detention in Albania of applicants from safe third countries whose claims are presumed unfounded. However, in practice, the facilities built in Albania for detention remained empty in 2024. This is because the agreement only applies to people rescued at sea by Italian navy ships, while most asylum seekers reach Italy on their own or are rescued by ships own by NGOs. In addition, minors, women and other particularly vulnerable groups are excluded from the agreement. The few asylum seekers taken to Albania were later brought back to Italy after a court found it inappropriate to presume the unfoundedness of asylum claims from people coming from countries—albeit officially deemed “safe”—where many face violence or persecution due to their political beliefs, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

As for general migration regulations, Decree-Law No. 145 introduced adjustments to the rules on entry for work to address cases of regular new entries where employers’ willingness to hire is fictitious.

In fact, acquisition of citizenship is the only area of legislation where there was some the commitment to introduce substantial changes was seen in 2024. A governing party—Forza Italia—and an opposition party—the Democratic Party—submitted proposals that differed in some points but converged on the idea of introducing the so-called *ius scholae*, i.e., the possibility for children of foreigners born in Italy or who arrived through family reunification to obtain citizenship before reaching adulthood based on school attendance. This would give value to education and prevent these children from remaining “foreigners” upon reaching adulthood, which is seen as an obstacle to integration.

Another important event on citizenship legislation was the collection of over 500,000 signatures needed to organise a referendum for the partial repeal of the 1992 law, aiming to restore the old rule of five years of continuous residence needed for naturalization. Deemed admissible by the Constitutional Court, the referendum has been scheduled for 2025.

In the face of the *de facto* irregular flows of economic migrants, nothing has been done to address the root causes. These causes are, among other things,

due to current regulations being at odds with the functioning of the Italian labor market, where the matching between supply and demand—including for migrant workers—tends to occur within the country.

Moreover, the issue of irregular flows of asylum seekers—generally avoided at the EU level—has not been seriously addressed. The main reasonable tool that can ensure human rights should be to establish legal pathways to enter Italy, possibly building on the recent experience of the humanitarian corridors. Nothing has also been done to move away from the use of what are supposed to be emergency reception centers, with their related issues, despite the positive experience of reception of Ukrainian refugees which largely relied on innovative solutions compared to those generally provided to asylum seekers.

Finally, it should be noted the recent developments in citizenship acquisition may not come to fruition. The two proposals mentioned have indeed not yet been discussed in Parliament, and more than half of the legislative term has already passed. The outcome of the 2025 referendum cannot be predicted, but there is a real risk that the voters’ apathy that has long been affecting Italian democracy will lead to a participation rate below the 50% threshold required by the Constitution for the referendum to be valid.

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## Part II

# Inclusion and coexistence

## Chapter 4

# Migrants in the Italian labour market

Laura Zanfrini

All workers—whether Italian or foreign—who remain on the margins of the labor market should be a warning sign for an economy that will face a massive generational turnover in the next two decades.

### Introduction

In 2023, there were 2.3 million employed non-Italian workers aged 15–64 in Italy (Eurostat), accounting for just over 10% of the total number of employed persons. This figure has remained fairly stable for several years and is in line with the percentage of foreign people out of the total population. However, the share of migrants among the unemployed is 15.5%, nearly 6% higher than their participation in the labor force.

The multiethnic and multireligious transformation that the labor market has undergone over the past decades seems to have left labor inclusion processes largely unchanged. While career advancement certainly exists at individual level, their statistical significance is not enough to affect the overall characteristics of migrants' employment.

Families have always been the main employers of migrant workers, who, in turn, make up the majority (69.5%) of the nearly 900,000 formally employed domestic workers—a staggering figure that also overshadows the very high incidence of undeclared work (estimated at 51.8%). Besides home-based care, migrants work in personal and community services (30.4%), agriculture (18%),

hospitality and tourism (17.4%), and construction (16.4%). Nearly 9 out of 10 migrant workers (86.7%) are employed, compared to 77.7% of Italians. Conversely, migrants are underrepresented among the self-employed, although migrant entrepreneurship is considerably dynamic.

Compared to the overall number of foreign workers, migrants are particularly represented in unskilled jobs—more than three times the equivalent data among Italian workers—as well as among service and sales workers and, for men, in manual work and craft. In contrast, more than 4 out of 10 Italians perform highly skilled work, compared to just 17.5% of migrants. This highlights the problematic relevance of people's ethnic/national background in the allocation of job opportunities—which can be due to both labor supply and demand. Labor supply is shaped by push factors as well as accessible opportunities, and its weaknesses have been accentuated over time in terms of educational capital and qualifications. In 2023, indeed, only 53.3% of foreigners aged 25–64 held at least an upper secondary degree, compared to 66.9% of Italians and the share of university graduates was 12.4% compared to 22.7% (Istat, 2024). Demand is primarily focused on recruiting profiles for manual jobs with no, low or medium qualifications—especially represented by the traditional “migrant jobs”.

## What shapes the migrants' labour market

Migrants' employability is largely due to their adaptability, flexibility and low reservation wages. It is also precisely for this, however, that they risk being discriminated against when, for instance, they seek jobs aligned with their educational credentials and risk becoming inactive (especially women), unemployed, and underemployed. Just over 20% of people with a title obtained abroad have high-skilled jobs, compared to 70% of Italians (Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, 2024).

Given Italy's demographic outlook, every potential worker left on the margins of the labor market should be a red flag in an economy that, over the next two decades, will face a massive generational turnover. The catering sector, for instance, is exemplary of the current hardships in recruiting and retaining staff. The healthcare and care sectors are even stronger cases—it is sufficient to think about the long-standing shortage of thousands of nurses (Zanfrini, 2025). Against this backdrop, many solutions can be envisioned but require a new targeted approach to migration that needs to be structural to ensure not “only” social justice, but also sustainability. However, there are still major challenges in terms of both recruiting abroad and managing migrant human resources.

Poor employment conditions is widespread across the Italian society and economy—not only among migrant workers—and are often the result of businesses outsourcing or sub-contracting work driven by the need to contain costs or ensure economic sustainability. This process, however, has also created an army of working poor, unable to meet basic needs with their income. In 2022,

11.5% of employed workers were at risk of poverty, but this figure reached by 15% among foreigners and 18% among non-EU migrants (Istat, 2024a).

In the end, low wages—between 2013 and 2023, Italy was the only OECD country to record a decrease in real wages—affect not only the ability to attract educated migrants but also, more broadly, sustainability of migrant integration.

## The governance of labour migration: bridging the gap between laws and reality?

In recent months, several changes have been introduced in the management of labour migration. Besides significantly increasing the number of authorized entries, lawmakers expanded the category of “out-of-quota” entries, enabling those participating in pre-departure training programs abroad to access legal pathways and expanding the Blue Card beyond the scope of the EU directive. They also added the possibility of converting study permits into work permits and fixed-term work permits into permanent ones without numerical limits and outside the quota system established by the “Decreto flussi”. Efforts to simplify and digitize authorization procedures have been introduced, along with new measures to support victims of illegal intermediation and labor exploitation. These developments represent the most that a center-right (or right-center) government with a strong security and protectionist component could do.

However, these developments have not met employers' demands or bridged the serious gap between the legal framework and real life—a persistent theme in Italy's history that all the legislative and procedural reforms of the past thirty years could not successfully address (for a deeper analysis see Zanfrini, 2023). The staggering low ratio between migrant workers quotas/applications and actual employment contracts signed (“Ero straniero,” 2024) reveals the fictitious—even fraudulent—nature of many residence permit requests.

There is certainly room for legislative and procedural innovation. However, higher levels of legal compliance by all involved actors and stakeholders is a pre-condition for implementing a system that can ensure rapid recruitment of human resources, combating frauds, respect migrant workers' rights and support sustainable labour inclusion.

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## Chapter 5

# Education

Mariagrazia Santagati

The new generations belonging to politically racialized or ethnicized minorities in Italy strongly claim a new role, spaces to share their views, recognition and citizenship.

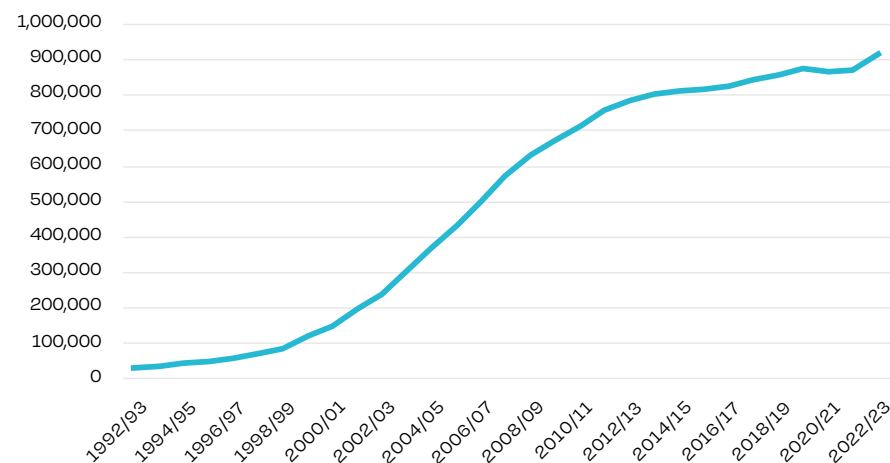
Over the past thirty years, Italian schools have played a central role as a place of multicultural transformations and inclusion for the children of immigrants (Besozzi, 2005; Santagati, 2014). Since 2011, the Education unit of ISMU has analyzed and produced several reports on the presence and educational paths of students with a migrant background thanks to the partnership with the Italian Ministry of Education. The following reflections stem from these studies.

### Thirty years of multicultural schools in Italy

The presence of students with non-Italian citizenship over the past thirty years can be seen as following four phases. The initial phase (between 1992/93 and 1997/98) saw the number of these students increase from 31,000 to 70,000 (corresponding to less than 1% of the total students). The second phase was characterized by an exponential growth until 2012/13, with over 700,000 students enrolled, i.e., ten times over 15 years (reaching 8% of the school population). The third phase was a sort of stagnation (between 2013/14 and 2019/20), with slower growth rates (+12,000 students per year, on average) leading to 9-10%

of students with a migrant background. The last phase (between 2020/21 and 2022/23) was characterized by fluctuations, with a preliminary drop of 11,000 students during the pandemic (2020/21) followed by a record growth of +42,500 in 2022/23 due to Ukrainian refugees making the share of students with a migrant background exceed 10% threshold. At the same time, the overall school population decreased due less Italian students entering or staying in education – a drop that was not compensated by the increase in those with non-Italian citizenship. In 2022/23, students with non-Italian citizenship were 914,860 (11.2% out of 8,158,138 enrolled students), from pre-school to upper secondary schools (MIM, 2024).

Graph 1. Students with non-Italian citizenship across different years. School year 1992/93 - 2022/23.



Source: Elaborations by ISMU on Ministry of Education data

Students come from approximately 200 countries, reflecting a wide diversification of citizenships: 44% are from Europe, more than 25% from Africa, around 20% from Asia and nearly 8% from Latin America. The largest national group is Romanians (149,000 students), followed by Albanians (118,000) and Moroccans (114,000)—all accounting for over 40% of students with non-Italian citizenship. Chinese are the main Asian community, with 48,000 students in the 2022/23 school year—albeit in decline.

Between 2007/08 and 2022/23, students with non-Italian citizenship born in Italy tripled, getting from 200,000 to 598,745, i.e., 65.4% of students with non-Italian citizenship. Over two thirds of non-Italian students are therefore so-called second-generation migrants: 81% in pre-school, 69% in primary school,

63% in lower secondary school and 50% in upper secondary school. The number of students entering the Italian education system, on the other hand, is 29,186 (2.7% of students with non-Italian citizenship).

A quarter of the students with non-Italian citizenship live in Lombardy (231,819), Emilia-Romagna (111,811), Veneto (99,604), Lazio (83,716) and Piedmont (81,762). Emilia-Romagna has the highest incidence (18.4%), followed by Lombardy (17.1%). Furthermore, over the last thirty years, the number of schools without students with non-Italian citizenship has decreased (from 43.1% to 15.5%) and those with significant numbers have increased. Schools with up to 30% of students with non-Italian citizenship have gone from 56.9% to 73.3%, while those with over 30% have risen to 7.9%.

## Between failure and success: the educational paths of students with non-Italian citizenship

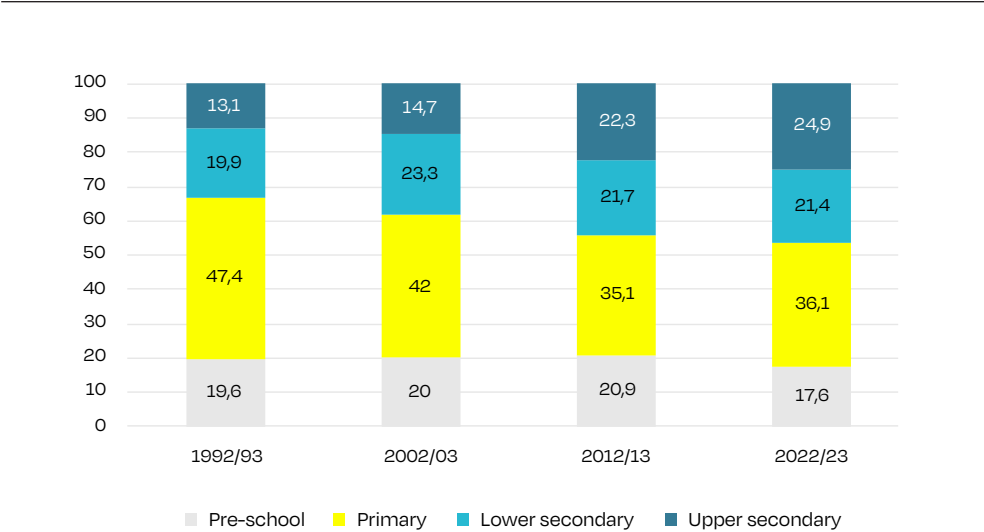
In addition to quantifying the number of students with a migrant background, it is also important to look at the hardships and progress that these students undergo.

Grade retention remains critical, despite having decreased over time. In 2022/23, 26.1% of students with non-Italian citizenship lagged behind compared to 7.9% of Italians, especially in upper secondary schools (48% v. 16%). This kind of delay can also influence early dropout. In 2022, 28.7% of young third-country nationals between 18 and 24 years old had dropped out of school after a lower secondary diploma, compared to 9.7% of Italians.

Access to education by unaccompanied foreign minor is also a concern. An ISMU study (Santagati et al., 2024; Ferrari et al., 2025) indicates that only 21% of a representative sample of unaccompanied minors (in 2020/22) had access to regular schooling. ECRI, in citing this study, recommends increasing educational support and ensuring sufficient places in schools close to reception centers and adequate transportation (2024, p. 6).

One positive sign of school inclusion is the increasing number of students with a migrant background in high schools. Over the last twenty years, their presence in technical schools has remained stable (+4.4%) while it has decreased in vocational schools (-15.9%) and increased in lyceums (+11.5%). In 2022/23, 33.4% of students with non-Italian citizenship attended lyceums, compared to 53.7% of Italians. However, school selection continues to be affected by the migrant and socioeconomic background rather than actual competence (Santagati & Bertozzi, 2023; Manzella & Argentin, 2024).

Table 1. Students with non-Italian citizenship in the different types of secondary schools (%). School year 1992/1993, 2002/03, 2012/13 and 2022/23



Source: Elaborations by ISMU on Ministry of Education data

According to the INVALSI 2024 Report, first-generation migrant students at the end of upper secondary education obtain a score in Italian of 9.3 points lower than the average, while second-generation students show a gap of -7.6 points. In Mathematics, the gap is smaller, -2 points for the first-generation migrants and -3 for the second-generation students, with the former obtaining better results. In English, however, the migratory background has a positive effect, as first-generation migrant students obtain a higher score in reading (+8.2 points) and in listening (+13.2 points), while second-generation students obtain +5.5 points in reading and +9.8 in listening.

Some final reflections

After thirty years of studies on multicultural schools, the goals achieved seem comforting, but inequalities continue to be a cause for concern (Santagati, 2019). We are undoubtedly living in a time of great change. The new generations belonging to politically racialized or ethnicized minorities in Italy strongly claim a new role, spaces to share their views, recognition and citizenship (Hakuzwimana, 2024). Teachers who still embrace outdated views are also called upon updating their approach and recognizing the richness of the "new" students' identities (Nur, 2024). In the next years, the challenge that we will have to face as adults and privileged

people is to build alliances that can help youths in their commitment to social justice, experimenting with new measures of inclusion and learning success, and enhancing the competence of teachers.

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## Chapter 6

# Health

Nicola Pasini and Veronica Merotta

There is a direct relation between greater acculturation and the increase in prevention of health risk behaviors (smoking, substance abuse, unbalanced diet and lack of physical activity), with positive effects also on the knowledge and use of local healthcare services.

The chapter analyzes the health status of the foreign population in Italy with a diachronic approach, comparing data between 2016 and 2023. The analysis considers differences across continents of origin and makes a comparison with the Italian population, based on ISTAT and Ministry of Health data. Life habits, hospitalizations and maternity are examined.

The data shows a more marked reduction in sedentary lifestyle among foreigners (-13.5%) than among Italians (-2.7%). However, obesity is more widespread among foreigners (11.1% v. 10.4%), while overweight has increased for both groups. Healthy eating (i.e., percentage of people who consumed 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day) is more frequent among Italians, alcohol abuse (i.e., binge drinking) has decreased among foreigners and remains lower than among Italians (7.8% v. 9.8%), and smoking among foreigners has decreased more significantly than among Italians (-5.5% v. -2.8%) despite remaining particularly present in both groups (1 in 4 people). The perception of health is better among foreigners (77.9% v. 74.6%), as is mental health, with a lower incidence of depressive symptoms. The chapter also focuses on hospitalizations as a key to understanding the relationship between migration and health. In 2022, hospitalizations mainly involved Europeans (3.32%), followed by Africans (1.52%), Asians (1.04%)

and Americans (0.65%). Between 2018 and 2022, hospitalizations of Africans decreased (-2.6%), while hospitalizations of Asians and Americans increased (+8.3% and +10.2%). COVID-19 reduced hospitalizations in 2020, with a subsequent recovery, especially among Ukrainians (+26.3%).

In 2022, foreign women seemed to be over-represented among hospitalized patients, but, when excluding pregnancy-related diagnoses, they were under-represented compared to the resident population—a case that particularly involves South Americans (-14 points), Europeans (-14), Asians (-13) and Africans (-10). Ukrainian female patients are the most under-represented (-19).

Hospital diagnoses vary by origin and gender. In 2022, tumors accounted for between 5% (African citizens) and 6.1% (American citizens) of diagnoses among various groups of foreigners, compared to 12.1% among Italians. Respiratory diseases mainly affected Africans (+19.5%) and Asians (13.3%) with a significant gap compared to Italian citizens (17.7%), while digestive system diseases were more frequent among Americans (15.9%) and Asians (13.3%) compared to Italians (11.4%). Cancer diagnoses among women increased from 2018 to 2022, especially among Oceanian patients (+62%) and Asian patients (+30.8%).

Complications related to pregnancy and childbirth mostly affected Africans (50.9%), Asians (47.8%) and Americans (34.5%), among whom a value was recorded well above the Italian equivalent (13%). The share of childbirths by foreign women, despite increasing from 21% in 2018 to 20% in 2022, remains significant, especially due to African mothers (28.7% of the foreign component). The average age at childbirth increased among foreign women (from 30.5 to 31.1 years). Caesarean sections are more common among Italian women (31.8%) than among foreign women (27.4%), but are decreasing among the former (-5.6%) and increasing among the latter (+1.5%).

As we have reiterated during the thirty-year research of ISMU on the migration-health nexus, the health conditions of migrants are relatively good and health has never been a priority for migrants compared to employment and housing,. However, two distorting effects should also be taken into account as they tend to create a narrative where migrants are seen as healthier than they actually are. On the one hand, there is the “healthy immigrant effect”, for which those who emigrate are on average healthier than both peers who remain in their countries of origin and those in the countries of destination. On the other, there is the “salmon bias”, according to which an immigrant with poor health or very old age prefers to return to his or her country of origin. The health of irregular migrants is difficult to monitor, but it is known that they face greater difficulties in accessing health services. Socioeconomic conditions strongly influence physical and mental health, with economic and social hardship increasing the risk of illnesses and depressive symptoms. Awareness raising and training improve prevention and the use of health services. The new challenges of health citizenship concern both the governance of health policies and the variety of meanings that are attributed to health. A thorough monitoring of the health conditions of

immigrants, especially women, and infectious, psychiatric and cancer diseases is needed. A more inclusive approach to health is needed too, in line with the WHO definition, which considers it as a dynamic balance between physical, mental and social well-being.

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## Chapter 7

# Religion

Giovanni Giulio Valtolina and Alessio Menonna

Reflecting on both the universal and the specific nature of each religious experience is the first step in rethinking the relationship between European citizens and immigrants.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024, it is estimated (ISTAT, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c; Menonna & Valtolina, 2024) that most of the migrant population residing in Italy were Christian, in line with previous data but decreasing for the first time to 53% despite the significant influx of migrants from Ukraine—who are predominantly Orthodox Christians—following the Russian invasion. In fact, the number of Orthodox Christians has decreased to just over 29%, while Catholics are 17%, and Evangelicals, Copts and other Christians together make up about 7%.

Muslims, on the other hand, have grown slightly and were nearly 30% of the total migrant population, consolidating their margin over Orthodox Christians. Lastly, as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024, atheists or agnostics still made up around 10% of the migrant population. Buddhists (3%), Hindus (2%) and migrants with other religions (2%, mainly Sikhs) remained much smaller groups, with no significant variation compared to the previous year.

In absolute terms, the number of Muslims has increased by nearly 50,000 units over the past twelve months, reaching a total of approximately 1.6 million, compared to about 1.5 million Orthodox Christians. Catholics were estimated at 894,000, and other Christians at 362,000 (including 145,000 Evangelicals and 84,000 Copts). As of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024, there were 175,000 Buddhists, 111,000 Hindus,

89,000 Sikhs, 22,000 immigrants of other faiths, and just over 500,000 atheists or agnostics.

Among Muslims residing in Italy, Moroccans remained the largest national group (414,000), although their share has dropped by 1% compared to the previous year, probably due to a slowdown in new arrivals and an increase in Italian citizenship acquisitions. More than a quarter of migrant Muslims in Italy were Moroccans (26%), more than 2.5 times the number of Albanians (10%, or 156,000)—who are also declining, likely for similar reasons. In contrast, Bangladeshis (149,000) are growing and now account for nearly 10% of the total Muslim population in Italy, followed by Pakistanis (139,000, 9%), Senegalese (111,000, 7%), Egyptians (108,000, nearly 7%), and Tunisians (105,000, 6%).

The distribution of nationalities among Orthodox Christians is less diverse than among Muslims, in line with past. Orthodox Christians continued to come predominantly from Romania (57%), with 874,000 people. They were followed by Ukrainians (225,000, or 15%), whose numbers have grown significantly due to the ongoing war, Moldovans (96,000, 6%), Albanians (85,000, 6%), and, further behind, people from other Eastern European countries such as Russia (34,000), North Macedonia (34,000), Bulgaria (33,000) and Georgia (30,000), each representing about 2%.

Catholics were the third-largest religious group among migrants in Italy and were the most diverse in terms of national groups—unlike Orthodox Christians, with whom they share the Christian affiliation. Among Catholics, Filipinos remained the largest group in 2024 (141,000, or 16% of Catholic immigrants), followed by Albanians (88,000, 10%), Peruvians (81,000, 9%), Poles (76,000, 9%), Ecuadorians (48,000, 5%), and Nigerians (44,000, 5%). As in previous years, six nationalities accounted for half of the Catholic migrant population, and fourteen accounted for three-quarters. While Catholic migrants come from all over the world, Orthodox Christians come exclusively from Eastern Europe.

Regarding religious affiliation by gender, the female component of the migrant population in Italy is estimated at 51%. However, this varies significantly by nationality—very high among Georgians (85%), Russians (81%), and Ukrainians (77%), and very low among Gambians (4%), Malians (5%), and Guineans (14%). This difference is reflected in religious affiliations, as women and girls make up 61% of Orthodox Christians and 57% of Catholics, but only 39% of Muslims. Among Hindu and Sikh communities—where Indians represent 67% and 92% respectively—women make up 43%.

Other religious groups show smaller variation: women and girls represent 53% of atheists, agnostics or people from other minor religions, 51% of Evangelicals, 49% of Buddhists, and 47% of Christians who do not identify as Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical or Coptic.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024, 936,000 Orthodox women and girls represented 35% of the female migrant population in Italy—more than 1.5 times the number of Muslim women (606,000), who accounted for only 23% of the total female mi-

grant population. The same figure is almost perfectly reversed among men, with 595,000 Orthodox males representing only 23% of the male migrant population and 961,000 Muslim males accounting for 37%. The gap between Catholic and Muslim women is less than 100,000 (510,000 vs. 606,000). On the other hand, Catholic males (386,000) are nearly 600,000 fewer than Muslim males.

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## Part III

# Italy in the European and global context

## Chapter 8

# Migration in Europe

Livia Elisa Ortensi and Elena Pons

Migratory movements adapt to control measures, following principles similar to fluid dynamics and communicating vessels. When a route is subject to greater control or increasing obstacles due to insecurity or mobility restrictions, activity increases along adjacent routes in a continuous and resilient process.

According to the most recent Eurostat data (2024), on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 there were 59.9 million citizens (13.3% of the resident population) residing in one of the 27 EU Member states and born in a country other than their country of residence. This kind of data is a valid measure of the so-called first-generation migrants.

On the same date, there were 41.3 million people who, regardless of their place of birth, held the citizenship of a country other than their country of residence (9.2% of the total population). For the first time data on both dimensions have shown significant growth compared to the previous year, after a long period of stagnation characterized by the COVID-19 pandemic, showing an increase of 7.3% and 10.4% respectively.

The distribution of third country nationals varies significantly between the Member States. Germany hosts over 12 million foreigners (29.8% of the EU27), followed by Spain (6 million), France (5.6 million) and Italy (5.1 million), which together host 70% of the Union's third country nationals.

Smaller countries show higher incidences: in Luxembourg, foreigners are 47.4% of the population, while in Malta and Cyprus they represent 25.3% and 19.9%. In contrast, countries such as Slovakia (1.1%) and Romania (1.1%) record minimal values, with Poland hosting only 1.2% of third country nationals despite

being the main EU country in terms of first residence permits issued. Monitoring first residence permits is crucial to understand the most recent trends in legal migration from countries outside the EU. In 2023, the EU issued 3.7 million first residence permits, of which 1.26 million for work, 986,000 for family reunification and 534,500 for study.

As has been the case for some years, in 2023 Poland issued the highest number of first residence permits (642,789, equal to 17.2% of the total) followed by Germany with 586,144 permits (15.7%) and Spain with 548,697 permits (14.7%). Italy, with 389,542 permits, ranked fourth (10.4%), followed by France with 335,074 permits (9%). Poland's primacy as the main destination of migratory flows is characterized by temporary permits—71.4% of permits issued have indeed a duration of less than 12 months—and only Croatia has a higher percentage of temporary permits (89%). These can therefore be seen as seasonal work permits that, unsurprisingly, have not resulted in an increase in the migrant population permanently settled in this country. Among the main entry countries, we also find a significant incidence of short-term permits in Ireland (57.6%), Italy (41%) and France (37.7%). Germany (33.6%) is just below the EU27 average at 35%

## A look at unauthorized flows: the asylum routes

Italy has consistently been the main place of arrival in the EU for migrants crossing the Mediterranean by sea through the so-called Central Mediterranean route (CMR). In the peaks during the migration crisis, the decline resulting from the 2017 Italy-Libya MoU and the overall slowdown in mobility induced by the pandemic, migrant arrivals started to grow again and peaked in 2023 (157,652 arrivals). In 2024, flows dropped dramatically, due to a series of new agreements signed with Tunisia. On the other hand, along the Eastern Mediterranean route (EMR), Greece has recently faced high numbers of arrivals by land and by sea (in particular between 2014 and 2016 and in 2019). In 2024, numbers were in line with the previous year, when sea travels resumed. Along the same route, Cyprus has also faced significant increases since 2020, in particular in 2023 with 11,617 arrivals. Finally, as regards the Western Mediterranean route (WMR), after peaking in 2020 (23,023) flows along the Canary Islands route have increased again (39,827) compared to 2023. While in 2020-21 the surge along this route had been interpreted as a reaction to the difficulties in reaching countries such as Libya and Tunisia due to the pandemic, the recent growth seems to be determined by the worsening of economic and social conditions in Senegal and other countries in the area (Frontex, 2024a). The trends observed in the numbers of arrivals in Spain, spread across two different migratory routes, demonstrates how migratory movements adapt to control measures, following principles similar to those of fluid dynamics and communicating vessels: when a route is subject to greater control or to increasing obstacles due to insecurity or limitations

to mobility, activity increases along adjacent routes in a continuous and resilient process. When there are no alternative routes, the number of third-country nationals in transit countries increases, as demonstrated by IOM data collected in Libya between 2022 and 2024 (Chart 4) that shows a growing presence of migrants in the country amidst widely documented human rights violations. Outside the Mediterranean, data on the first nine months of 2024 indicates a decline in crossings along the Balkan route (Frontex, 2024b). While in the 2022-2023 period most of the transits had occurred along the route going through Serbia, since 2023 part of the pressure has been directed towards the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia (Frontex, 2024a), consistently with the increased migratory pressure observed at the border with Austria. Finally, due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, the number of refugees in the EU has settled at around 6.1 million according to the most recent data (October 2024), while the total number of refugees from the country is 6.7 million (UNHCR, 2024), mainly in Germany (1.2 million), Poland (981,000) and the Czech Republic (380,000).

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## Chapter 9

# Complexity to govern: data on global migration

Luca Merotta

One of the major tasks of the new European Parliament and the new European Commission will be to manage the complexity of migration flows through policies that can strike a balance between the different aspects of this phenomenon.

In 2024, the European Union underwent significant institutional and political changes, including the adoption of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum. In this context, the management of migration flows returned to the center of the public and political debate. This chapter offers an updated and detailed statistical overview of global migration, with a particular focus on flows directed toward the EU, to better understand current dynamics and future challenges.

### Global migrant stock

According to the latest estimates (UNDESA, 2020), in 2020 about 281 million people were living in a country other than their birth country, representing 3.6% of the global population. Although this data continues to grow in absolute terms, the percentage has remained stable. Migrant workers are mainly concentrated in three regions: Northern America, Arab states and Europe (ILO, 2021). Among the main international migration corridors, only two involve EU countries: Algeria–France and Ukraine–Poland (UNDESA, 2020; UNHCR, 2023). In 2023, the EU hosted 27.4 million non-EU citizens, equal to 6.1% of its total population. In ab-

solute terms, Germany, Spain, France and Italy hosted the highest numbers of non-EU citizens, while Malta, Estonia and Latvia had the highest percentage out of the total population (Eurostat, 2024a).

## Irregular migration

In 2023, Frontex recorded over 442,000 irregular border crossings at the EU's external borders, including about 380,000 entries and 62,000 exits. This was the highest figure since 2015–2016, with a 17% increase compared to 2022 (Frontex, 2024a). The most active routes were the Central Mediterranean (+49%) and the West African route to the Canary Islands (+161%). The Eastern (+55%) and Western Mediterranean (+12%) routes also saw significant increases. However, in the first eight months of 2024, irregular flows dropped sharply on some routes: -85% in the Western Balkans and -74% in the Central Mediterranean, while they doubled on the Eastern land route (Frontex, 2024b). On the other hand, secondary movements—irregular movements between EU member states—involved over 410,000 people in the first eleven months of 2023, a 32% increase from the previous year (Frontex, 2024a). The number of effective returns remains lower than the number of return decisions: in 2023, there were 90,000 returns out of 420,000 decisions (21.4%).

## Residence permits

The number of residence permits issued by EU member states has been steadily increasing: 3.48 million in 2022, compared to 2.96 million in 2021 and 2.31 million in 2020 (Eurostat, 2024a; 2024b; 2023c). Ukrainian citizens were the main recipients between 2020 and 2022, with 374,846 permits issued in 2022 alone. The main reasons for issuing permits were work (35.8%), family (26.1%), education (13.3%), and other reasons (24.9%), including international protection. Within this last category, 30.1% were for refugee status or subsidiary protection, 17.6% for humanitarian protection, and 40.1% fell under the “other” subcategory, which includes unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking and unspecified cases. Only 10% of work permits were issued to highly skilled migrants (e.g., Blue Card holders and researchers), while 17% were issued for seasonal work. The remaining 73% concerned other types of work-related reasons.

## Internally displaced people and resettlement

At the end of 2023, 75.9 million people were internally displaced within their own countries (IDMC, 2024). Of these, 68.3 million were displaced due to conflicts,

particularly in Ethiopia, DRC, Sudan and Ukraine. The global resettlement need for 2025 is estimated at over 2.4 million refugees, with Syrians at the top of the list for the eighth consecutive year due to the ongoing civil war, the 2023 earthquake, and worsening economic conditions (UNHCR, 2024a). Other groups with high resettlement needs include refugees from Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and the DRC. Between January and September 2023, over 112,000 refugees had begun the resettlement process, 80% of whom were women and children (UNHCR, 2024b).

## Remittances

In 2023, remittances to low- and middle-income countries reached \$656 billion, with a growth rate of 0.7% compared to the previous year (World Bank, 2024). The regions with the highest growth were Latin America and Caribbean (+7.7%), South Asia (+5.2%), and East Asia and the Pacific (+4.8%, excluding China). In contrast, remittances declined slightly in Sub-Saharan Africa (-0.3%) and significantly in both the Middle East and North Africa (-15%), and Europe and Central Asia (-10.3%). Remittances remain a vital source of financial support for many developing countries. The top recipients in absolute terms were the Philippines (\$39 billion), Pakistan (\$27 billion), Bangladesh (\$22 billion), Nigeria (\$20 billion), and Ukraine (\$15 billion). In terms of GDP share, Lebanon (31%), El Salvador (24%) and Gambia (23%) stood out. The global average cost of sending \$200 was 6.4%, up from 6.2% in 2022 and still well above the SDG target of 3%.

## Conclusions

Europe remains a major destination for migrants, with increasing numbers of permits issued for work and international protection. However, several challenges persist: irregular flows, low levels of skilled migration, rising secondary movements, and growing resettlement needs. European policies need to strike a balance between promoting legal migration and combating irregular migration, between attracting highly skilled workers and supporting essential but less specialized workers, and between internal management and cooperation with countries of origin and transit. Monitoring migration data and implementing the new Pact on Migration will be essential to address future challenges effectively.

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## Chapter 10

# Recent European developments

Alessia Di Pascale

Despite the unexpected, strong political convergence that enabled the approval of the new Pact, migration remains a contested political area where different visions and interests clash.

This chapter focuses on the legislative novelties adopted by the EU in 2024. The most relevant development was the approval of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum after intense negotiations that were accelerated by a strong political pressure between April and May, only a few weeks before the end of the EU legislature. The very concept of a pact evokes the commitment between different actors. The call for a shared commitment seems more necessary than ever, considering the persistence of contrasting visions on immigration, as clearly seen during the negotiations.

Migration was one of the key themes of the electoral programs of European political groups before the European elections in June 2024, where parties advocating for a tightening of migration policies recorded a significant advance in election results. Some programmes urged to externalize the assessment of asylum application, implicitly evoking the “Rwanda model” adopted by the UK Government as well as similar proposals in Denmark and the Italy-Albania memorandum of understanding. Similar arguments were also echoed by the President of the European Commission. In stressing the historical importance of the Pact, Ursula von der Leyen said the new Pact does not close the debate on other available tools and that that in the new institutional cycle attention should be

paid to innovative strategies to prevent irregular immigration, addressing asylum applications further away from the external borders of the EU and strengthening collaboration with third countries, which many Member States are evaluating.

In Autumn 2024, the Commission President proposed to establish return hubs in third countries to address irregular migration. However, on 4<sup>th</sup> October the Court of Justice of the EU issued a ruling after preliminary reference by a Czech judge where it questioned the scope of the concept of safe country of origin under Article 37 of Directive 2013/32 and the role of judges in the concrete assessment of the risks that migrant would be exposed to in the event of repatriation. The ruling highlighted significant legal problems associated with these approaches to managing migration. In light of the Court's observations, the Commission committed to review the concept of "safe third countries" along with the current Return Directive.

While the Pact especially responds to concerns related to the fight against and containment of irregular flows, it also mentions the need to identify legal migration pathways. In this regard, the new Regulation (EU) 2024/1350 establishing a Union resettlement and humanitarian admission framework is aimed at admitting third-country nationals or stateless persons to the territory of Member States to grant them international or humanitarian protection by establishing admission rules without altering the voluntary basis of participation by Member States.

Finally, with regard to the status of third-country nationals legally residing in the EU, in April 2024 the so-called Single permit directive (Dir. (EU) 2024/1233) was approved. The revision provides for shorter times in issuing the permit (within three months from receiving the completed application) and aims to strengthen the rights of third-country workers, allowing them to change employers and access unemployment benefits for a limited time. The diverging positions among Member States, however, turnout out to be irreconcilable on the reform of the Long-term residents Directive.

There has been much criticism around the overall restrictive approach of the new system, which is aimed at preventing entry into the EU territory by strengthening the use of the so-called border or accelerated procedures and introducing the legal "fiction of non-entry" as well as some vague provisions (e.g., the concept of crisis and force majeure).

The new system foresees mandatory solidarity and yet makes it flexible in terms of different solidarity forms leading, in any case, to limited impact compared to the size of the flows (30,000 relocations per year compared to over 250,000 irregular arrivals in the EU in 2023), and increases the risks of fundamental rights violations.

EU migration and asylum policies remain characterised by contradictions and divergences, and the new institutional cycle has started within an overall political scenario characterized by an increasing aversion to the presence of foreigners.

This has been shown for instance by Germany reintroducing controls at all borders due to the security risks related to irregular migration, including migrant

smuggling, at the EU external borders and the Netherlands intending to request an opt-out from the EU acquis on asylum and migration in the event of a Treaty change. The political message sent to the EU is clear.

The new instruments adopted under the Pact define the framework, with implementing acts being foreseen at a later stage. Important tasks await the European Commission, but the role and effective participation of the Member States will also be crucial. In particular, in the implementation phase the new solidarity mechanisms will always require Member states to reach a political compromise between divergent positions. Migration remains, in short, a contested political area where different visions and interests clash, and the next two years will be crucial to see whether the common determination that strongly characterized the final phase of the Pact adoption will remain, allowing to combine different approaches, or whether the underlying contradictions will resurface.

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## Chapter 11

# Migration in the Italian and European public opinion

Marta Regalia and Giovanni Giulio Valtolina

Immigration continues to be perceived as a problem, despite the majority of respondents in Italy and Europe believing that migrants are a resource.

Understanding what Italians think about migration is critical to understand which policies to adopt to address concerns and strengthen attitudes towards inclusion. Policies, indeed, cannot be effective unless they are supported by public consensus.

More than half of those interviewed by SWG (2024) (51%) believe that the main cause of migration is the search for a better life and 59% believe that second generations will have an easier life than first-generation migrants. While this may seem like a good result, in 2018 this percentage was actually 73%. The deterioration of the international and internal socio-economic situation is likely to have led Italians to be more pessimistic on the integration prospects of those who were born in Italy to migrant parents.

If we look at a longer period we see that, in general, Italians' attitudes towards migration have changed for the better. On the one hand, over the last 25 years the share of those who consider immigration as a resource for the country has increased (from 41% in 1998 to 53% in 2023, albeit with fluctuations). On the other hand, even the narrative of immigrants as a source of job insecurity for Italians is no longer as convincing as before. Indeed, while back in 1998 54% of interviewees believed immigrants took away job opportunities from Italians, in 2023 this percentage dropped to 32%.

In terms of policies, 72% believe that organizing professional training courses for migrants can be useful for improving migration management.

Young people represent an important part of the population and their opinion are worth being investigated when looking at the future. A study conducted in high schools by researchers from the University of Genoa and Helpcode Onlus shows a fairly reassuring picture on relations between Italian and foreign students in education, with 92% of the students interviewed saying they were indifferent about having an Italian or foreign friend and 72% being in favor of the so-called *ius scholae* (i.e., extending citizenship to migrant students who have completed 5 years of education in Italy). However, data also shows that 70% of foreign students have experienced at least one episode of discrimination within and outside schools. Students tend to overestimate the percentage of migrants (22% instead of 10%). This leads a third of them believing that the number of foreign residents in Italy is too high and increases the level of crime.

It is also useful to look at the positioning of Italians compared to Europeans. According to Eurobarometer data (2024a, 2024b), while Europeans on average believe that immigration is the second most important issue the EU should address, Italians only consider it to be the fifth. In general, respondents who have negative views of the EU also tend to consider migration as the most problematic issue.

Half of European respondents have negative views of migration from third countries outside the EU. Italians score just below the average (48%). Older people as well as less educated, less well-off people living in rural areas and people seeing the EU negatively, tend to have more negative views of migration. However, more than half of respondents (56%) at the aggregate level (and 48% of Italians) think that migrants contribute positively to the well-being of their country. In this case too, the most negative views are found among the less educated, the less well-off and among those who share a negative view of the EU. As for policies, two thirds of respondents (67%) are in favor of a common migration and asylum policy, with Italy coming in fourth place (78%).

One aspect seems to play a particular role based on this data. Migration continues to be perceived as a problem despite the majority of respondents, both in Italy and in Europe, believing that migrants are a resource. What can explain this glaring contradiction? On the one hand, the way that media and politicians frame the phenomenon could play a role. Due to their intrinsic mechanisms, media tend to show negative events that often trigger more interest than positive stories. Politicians, in pursuing their own interest, tend to exploit this sensationalism to develop key points of their manifestoes. On the other hand, policy responses are often insufficient. Despite the new Pact on Migration and Asylum adopted by the Council of the EU in May 2024, Member States continue to intensively protect their sovereignty in matters related to migration and citizenship, struggling to put together responses that, as we have seen, two thirds of Eurobarometer respondents would like to see at European level. The hardship of framing the issue and

the lack of policy responses could therefore explain the gap between EU citizens perceiving migration more as a collective problem than an issue affecting them at individual level.

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## Chapter 12

# Externalization of asylum management: the Italian approach

Ennio Codini, Marina D'Odorico and Sara Morlotti

In Italy there is undoubtedly the intention to symbolically distance migrants from the territory building on the idea that, in the face of flows perceived as unsustainable, something different must be attempted—almost regardless of its substance.

In recent years, some countries have started relocating asylum seekers to third countries to assess asylum applications remotely and discourage migratory journeys. This approach is known as externalization of asylum management, a policy adopted by both Australia and the United Kingdom. Italy has also taken this path, signing an agreement with Albania on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and ratifying it on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024. This chapter examines the Italian externalization model in comparison with the Australian and British cases.

The UK externalization program was abandoned after the Labour Party's victory in the July 2024 elections, before relocations had begun. However, this approach remains an important reference point (Codini, 2024). The plan envisaged that asylum seekers who had arrived irregularly across the English Channel would be transferred to Rwanda, a third country considered as “safe,” where their applications would be examined by local authorities with possible granting of international protection. However, the UK Supreme Court ruled that Rwanda could not be considered a safe country merely by law, without a concrete assessment of human rights compliance. The case highlights two relevant aspects: on the one hand, it represents a model of full externalization of asylum management, on the other, it clearly brings to light the legal issues related to the protection of human rights.

The Australian model of externalization serves as a second reference. It has been characterized by varying approaches over time. From 2001 to 2008, asylum seekers intercepted at sea were relocated to third countries, but the policy later shifted toward pushbacks, with relocation resuming only in 2023. Externalization mainly involved Nauru and Manus Island, where asylum seekers were held in private facilities while their applications were being examined. Only a portion of those granted protection managed to reach Australia, while others were “stuck” in the relocation venues or transferred to countries like Cambodia, with little success. Compared to the UK program, Australia retained a role in managing the asylum system, adopting a model of partial externalization that excluded access to Australian territory and led to very critical reception conditions, far from meeting international standards.

Italy's externalization approach differs from the Australian and British ones in its territorial and temporary management. Asylum seekers transferred to Albania remain under Italian jurisdiction: Italian authorities handle the applications and, if accepted, guarantee protection in Italy. Albania serves only as a “border zone” for examining requests, without playing a decision-making role (Celoria & De Leo, 2024). This approach, defined as purely territorial externalization, maintains Italy's competence over asylum matters but raises legal issues related to EU law.

The main initial concern regarding the implementation of the Italian externalization agreement was the protection of the human rights of migrants, particularly those with vulnerabilities (Siccardi, 2024). The agreement stipulates that only single men from safe countries can be transferred to Albania, and that minors and vulnerable individuals are excluded from accelerated procedures. However, the criteria for identifying these vulnerable individuals are not clearly defined, and identification on ships may not be effective, as vulnerabilities are not always easily detectable. Moreover, there are many doubts regarding detention, return and legal representation of asylum seekers as well as reception conditions of the detention centers.

Judicial oversight of the Italian externalization agreement has severely tested its practical implementation, sparking a broad legal and political debate. The Court of Rome ruled that the detention and transfer of migrants is unlawful, arguing that the countries of origin (Egypt and Bangladesh) could not be considered “safe” under EU regulations and, therefore, the accelerated border procedure could not be applied to the applicants. According to the Court of Justice of the EU (C-406/22), countries of origin must be “generally and consistently” safe. Since Egypt and Bangladesh exhibit systematic human rights violations against certain minorities, the Court of Rome found that the procedure applied in the case was incompatible with EU procedures. The Italian government reacted by adopting a decree-law (October 2024) that redefined the list of safe countries but still confirmed the safety assessment for Egypt and Bangladesh. Several Italian courts have asked the Court of Justice of the EU to clarify the criteria for designating countries of origin as “safe” and the role of judicial oversight. The

legal debate is ongoing, with delicate issues related to the protection of human rights—which could be compromised by externalization.

In conclusion, the analysis highlighted the differences between the externalization strategies of various countries. The Italian model proposes a form of externalization that maintains strong competence by Italian authorities, aiming to ensure the same standard of reception even outside national territory. However, this raises some questions. Although the system appears to be rights-based, it may be ineffective in discouraging migration and could increase reception costs. Similarly to the United Kingdom, the political rationale behind this approach seems to be to symbolically distance migrants from national territory, trying alternative solutions to tackle migratory flows deemed unsustainable. However, practical difficulties and legislative shortcomings could reduce the quality of reception and the protection of rights, making continuous monitoring of the agreement implementation necessary. This approach also raises concerns around the relationship between national authorities, with the risk of conflicts arising between the government and the judiciary. Finally, there is a contradiction in the Italian approach as this latter calls for greater European cooperation on asylum but opts for a national solution instead of a shared European initiative, like the one adopted by Germany with EU-Turkey agreement. It is difficult to predict whether this will be a positive experience or a failed attempt.

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## Chapter 13

# Migration as an issue in the 2024 European Elections

Nicola Pasini and Marta Regalia

Some values once shared by contemporary European liberal democracies are now being questioned in public debate, in the relation between public opinion and political offerings, and in the competitive dynamics among parties.

Between 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2024, citizens from the 27 EU Member states elected their representatives to the European Parliament (Fasano et al., 2024). In line with past elections, migration proved to be a particularly divisive topic (Pasini & Regalia, 2023). In this chapter we aimed to describe and interpret the changing political landscape across the continent through the analysis of electoral programs, starting precisely from the—often—tense relationship between Europe and migration.

We identified the main migration-related issues mentioned in the electoral manifestoes and the stance on various policies taken by the groups in the European Parliament. In simple terms, parties can be in favor of, opposed to, or silent on a specific issue or policy proposal. From the table below, which distributes parties along the left-right axis, it becomes clear how the left/right divide also reflects and reproduces the divide on migration issues. The traditional left/right cleavage is deepened and made more divisive by the issues raised by migration.

Table 1. Party position on key migration issues

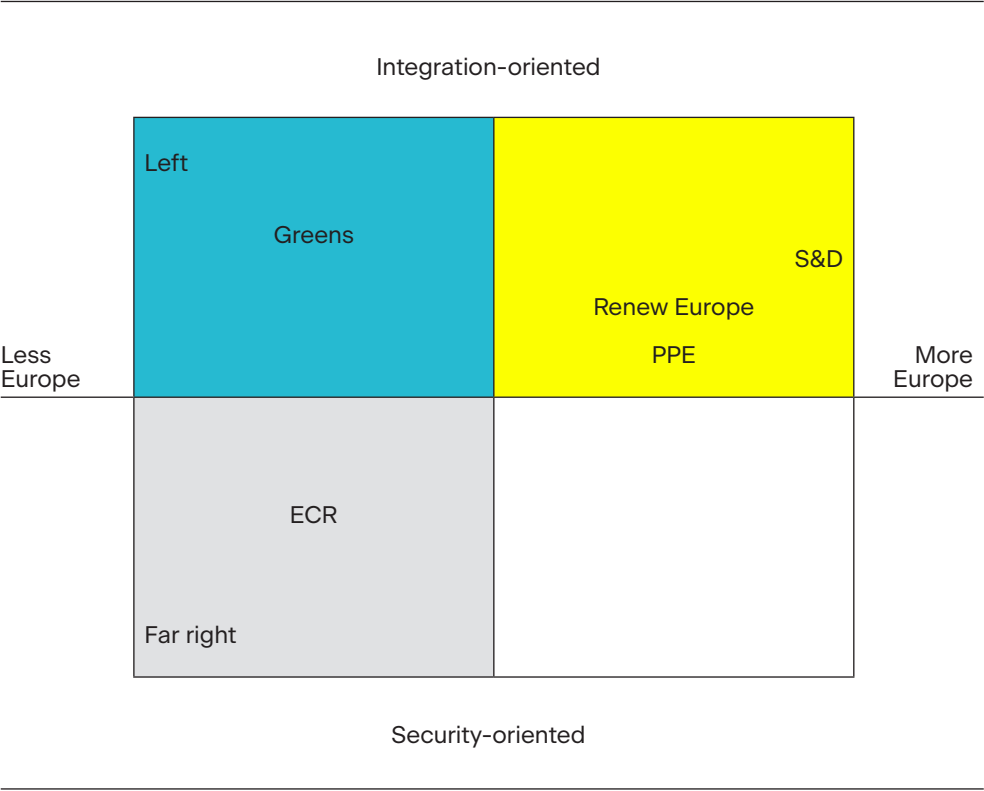
|                                                                             | Left          | Greens        | S&D           | Renew Europe  | EPP           | ECR           | Far right     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Pact on Migration and Asylum                                                | Against       | Against       | Not mentioned | Not mentioned | Not mentioned | Not mentioned | Not mentioned |
| Legal and safe pathways                                                     | Favourable    | Favourable    | Favourable    | Not mentioned | Against       | Against       | Against       |
| Frontex                                                                     | Against       | Not mentioned | Not mentioned | Favourable    | Favourable    | Favourable    | Not mentioned |
| Externalisation of border management                                        | Against       | Against       | Favourable    | Not mentioned | Favourable    | Favourable    | Not mentioned |
| Relocation of detention centres outside the EU                              | Against       | Against       | Not mentioned | Not mentioned | Favourable    | Not mentioned | Not mentioned |
| European reception system based on mandatory solidarity among Member states | Favourable    | Favourable    | Favourable    | Assente       | Against       | Against       | Against       |
| Enhanced protection for migrants and migration as an opportunity            | Favourable    | Favourable    | Favourable    | Favourable    | Against       | Against       | Against       |
| Fight against irregular migration                                           | Not mentioned | Not mentioned | Favourable    | Favourable    | Favourable    | Favourable    | Favourable    |

How can we map the proposals of the various parties in the European Parliament within the political space in which they compete? We attempted to outline a new graphic configuration of the European political space (Figure 1), where the different parties are positioned along two main dimensions: the first (horizontal) reflects the degree of support for European integration, with two poles—“more Europe” and “less Europe”. The second dimension (vertical) refers to the dichotomy between an integration-oriented perspective and a security-oriented one. In the figure, we tried to represent the various European political families according to their positions within this competitive space around the two issues considered: immigration and Europeanism.

As can be seen, the positions of both the Greens and the Left, located in the first quadrant, are quite clear as they are critical of the European Union but sensitive—albeit in different ways—to an integration-oriented perspective. The Christian democrats (EPP), the Socialists (S&D) and the Liberals (Renew Europe) are situated in the second quadrant, being strongly pro-European and pragmati-

cally integration-oriented. Finally, in the third quadrant we find the Conservatives and reformists (ECR), characterized by their traditionalist, security-focused and nationalist stance, while the far-right sovereigntists are defined above all by their nationalist orientation and strong anti-migration values. The fourth quadrant remains empty, as there are no parties that are both pro-European and security-oriented.

Figure 1. A new configuration of the political space



The actions of the political forces in the European Parliament often reflect dynamics that cannot be uniformly replicated across national contexts. However, it is possible to identify significant trends that shape migration policies both nationally and at the European level. While the growing importance of the EU political agenda over national agendas is pushing parties from the same supranational group toward policy convergence, it is still possible to find common positions among parties from different European groups that are united by national interests. This makes it difficult to apply tools that are often used to study national party systems to the European party system.

After thoroughly reviewing the electoral programs of political groups, we

developed the following question: does the new European Parliament—given its composition and the groups formed around the issue of migration (see Table 1 and Figure 1)—represent a new configuration of the European political space, marked by a new divide between integrationist and security-oriented perspectives?

The electoral results attained in the 2024 European elections by parties labeled as “sovereigntist”, “populist”, “nationalist” and “anti-European” (see also their positions on the Russia-Ukraine war)—albeit not majoritarian—will strongly influence the political agenda over the next five years, particularly on migration policy and the future of the EU itself. This will also impact the stability of the European institutional setting and political system as a whole.

We can therefore argue that the June elections confirmed a trend that has been seen for at least twenty-five years: Europe and migration—especially their negative framing—are strongly represented by political forces that dominate the political scene with electoral support that, in some (significant) countries, is quite substantial. From the very beginning of this legislative term, this will inevitably force institutional actors such as the European Commission and the European Parliament to deal with a precarious and fragile balance when shaping the migration policy agenda—a topic where increasing pressure comes from national governments and strongly Eurosceptic parties.

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## Chapter 14

# Immigration and integration in Europe. The key role of rights and culture

Vincenzo Cesareo

Many fundamental rights exist, starting from all forms of freedom to social rights. The right to migrate does not fall within this scope.

The cultural distance between European values and those of migrants is an essential element in qualifying integration. However, cultural distance is also characteristic of ethnocentrism, which occurs when a national ethnic group believes its own culture is superior to others. The existence of a link between cultural distance and integration is quite evident, since the more migrants' culture is different from that of Europeans without a migrant background, the more difficult integration becomes. The same can apply to ethnocentrism. However, it should not be taken for granted that anticipatory socialization leads to integration. Indeed, one should not exclude that people's expectations before arriving in a European country may be disappointed by the reality, leading to a failure to integrate. Furthermore, migrants who face considerable hardships in integrating into the new context may react by forming ethnic-cultural groups that choose to self-segregate. There are many cases of stakeholders from public or private institutions who should facilitate the reception of migrant but sometimes act in the opposite way, hindering and preventing integration. Across EU Member states, long-term residency facilitates integration, although this correlation does not always occur automatically. In all countries women integrate more quickly than men and some ethnic groups struggle to integrate and risk segregate themselves as a result of

specific cultural aspects. It should be kept in mind in Europe, like anywhere else, integration is a multidimensional process and takes place at an economic, cultural, social and political level. Therefore, one may achieve high levels of economic integration and low levels of political or cultural integration at the same time.

From a time perspective, it is widely demonstrated that these four integration dimensions do not develop simultaneously but, rather, diachronically. The reality of migration to EU countries is also becoming increasingly complex, although it is often mistakenly perceived as a homogeneous due to persisting stereotypes. It is now empirically proven that the growing heterogeneity of migrants means many of them might be more integrated than European without a migrant background. It should also be underlined that integration is always necessarily a two-way process as it does not concern—as is often claimed—only immigrants but also all citizens of Member states and, therefore, of the European Union itself. This is particularly relevant if integration is envisioned as an integral part of building a "common European home" that is cohesive, strong and safe and which people with or without a migrant background are called to equally collaborate to. Both groups should therefore acknowledge and respect each other as people, with the dignity of human beings as well as their uniqueness, history, culture, and relationships. These are all distinctive elements that can help promote or hinder integration. Natives and immigrants are therefore all called to engage in European integration, knowing that there are different and contrasting opinions on the future of Europe and its role on the global stage. The possible differences between immigrants' ethnic national communities and individual immigrants (the world of migration) and between the EU political parties and the Europeans' political orientations (the world of politics) raise a question: if we want to build a "common European home" that is cohesive, strong and safe, what is more dangerous, the cultural distances with migrants or the political distance with politicians and Eurosceptic Europeans? Whatever the answer to this question, what is increasingly necessary is to implement an efficient migration governance that ensures respect for human rights for all and focuses particularly on cultural distances that are incompatible with human rights and, therefore, with democracy – as in the case of Islamist extremism or neo-Nazism. At the same time, the EU should demonstrate, in particular to its politicians and Eurosceptic citizens, that only by developing a cohesive, strong and safe can Europe position itself credibly on the global stage and counter the expansionist ambitions of autocratic regimes that aim to bring some EU Member states under their control.

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## Chapter 15

# Border walls, migration and international mobility

Antonio Zotti

Rather than blocking unwanted migration flows, barriers redirect them to other routes, making them harder to monitor.

This chapter analyses the proliferation of border walls as a symbolic and political response to global phenomena such as migration, insecurity and challenges to state sovereignty. Although most irregular migration occurs through legal entry followed by overstaying visas, the collective and political narrative continues to portray irregular crossings as the dominant scenario. This fuels a narrative where borders are seen as indispensable tools for protecting political communities, leading to the resurgence of walls—seemingly obsolete instruments which are nonetheless becoming increasingly common.

After World War II, border walls were extremely rare, even during the Cold War. In the 1990s, post-war liberal optimism seemed to be making physical barriers into a thing of the past. More recently, in a context of widespread disillusionment with globalization, political leaders began to exploit collective fears by proposing symbolic solutions such as walls. These have remerged as tools for containing flows, protecting against systemic threats, and reasserting territorial control.

About 20% of fortifications are built in areas of former or ongoing conflict (e.g., North-South Korea, Israel-Lebanon, India-Pakistan). Another 25% of walls have been erected as a response to terrorism, as in the cases of the barriers between Israel and Palestine or between India and Nepal. An additional 25% aim

to contain trafficking—especially of drugs and goods—such as the fortifications in South Africa or Turkey. Over 30% of walls explicitly aim to prevent or divert irregular migration. Well-known examples include the US-Mexico wall, the barrier between Hungary and Serbia, the fences between Greece and Turkey, and those erected in Poland to block flows from Belarus. Less-known walls include those in Botswana, Ethiopia, the Dominican Republic, China and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Vallet 2022; Gülzau & Steffen 2021).

The US-Mexico case illustrates the discontinuity and complexity of these barriers: of the 3,145 km border, about 1,100 km are fortified, while the rest is monitored electronically. Under construction since the Clinton presidency, the wall became a centrepiece of the first Trump administration, and to this day it remains part of a longer bipartisan policy of border fortification. In 2024, there were about 3 million ‘encounters’ at the border, over 2 million of them along the southwestern section alone (Green, 2024). The other notorious case—the barrier between Hungary and Serbia—shows quite conspicuously how borders may end up redirecting flows rather than stopping them—in particular, diverting Balkan migration routes toward Slovakia—as well as weakening local cross-border ties (Fülöp 2024). Finally, the Polish barrier, built in 2022, indicates the overlapping of traditional security issues with migration-related societal ones, as its combination of a physical wall with advanced electronic surveillance and is designed not only to control human movements, but also to function as part of the “East-Shield” project with NATO support.

Alongside physical barriers, the practice of externalizing border control, aimed to block flows far from national frontier, has become more common. Examples include the militarization of Mexico's border with Guatemala through U.S. intervention and the 2016 EU-Turkey agreement. The COVID-19 pandemic further reinforced this trend, legitimizing new closures and providing governments with a pretext to test their actual capabilities to isolate their territory, thereby normalizing the concept of closure as an emergency response.

From a functional perspective, in general walls have not proved effective. Migration is rarely stopped, but rather shifted towards more dangerous routes, increasing both demand for smugglers and migrant vulnerability. The social costs generated by the erection of border walls are high, as local communities become isolated, cross-border economies are damaged and cooperation diminished. In some cases, barriers have fostered parallel black markets and strengthened criminal networks. The environment is also impacted, as barriers obstruct wildlife and alter ecosystems (McLennan, 2022).

The U.S. example shows that the reduction in entries of irregular immigrants is to be ascribed more to stricter controls than the physical presence of the wall. Similarly, in Hungary, the wall seems to be less effective than police repression. Nevertheless, walls keep being used because they hold strong symbolic value. To the eyes of the public, barriers represent a safeguard against perceived chaos and, for political leaders, a tool for garnering support, and their ineffective-

ness can become politically convenient, to the extent that sustained levels of illegal crossings are used to justify further restrictive measures. The local scale of the border-walling clashes with the virtually global scale of today's migration, yet they are perceived and presented as simple, tangible responses favoured by politicians and decision-makers. In this context, walls serve as tools for identity construction and symbolic protection, reinforcing the idea of a closed and threatened community (Hansen & Pettersson 2021; Benedicto et al 2020).

Border walls are not so much technically rational solutions to specific issues as political responses to dominant narratives. They reflect the crisis of global governance and the difficulty states face in managing transnational phenomena, embodying a securitised model of migration management focused on closure rather than cooperation.

In conclusion, walls do not eliminate problems but, rather, postpone, displace and conceal them. A real solution requires deep reforms and new cultural paradigms. Some possible pathways to change include:

- Overcoming the logic of migrants' physical exclusion and focus on shared management policies;
- Addressing the structural causes of migration (e.g., conflicts, violation of human rights, personal aspirations, poverty, environmental crises);
- Promoting multilateral and collaborative migration governance;
- Replacing barriers with legal, humane and efficient tools for regulating flows;
- Countering narratives that associate migration with threats by promoting a rights-based approach.

In the absence of changes in public representations of migration, walls are likely to continue spreading, with increasingly sophisticated barriers segmenting states and regions. Without profoundly rethinking the relation between security and mobility, and without promoting international and domestic policy initiatives aimed at managing flows and integration, the normalization of fortifications will become increasingly pervasive.

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# Part IV

## Differences and inequalities

## Chapter 16

# The narrative on migration and the role of media

Paola Barretta, Cecilia Lindenberg  
and Vittorio Longhi

One of the international challenges related to the correctness and accuracy of information on migration is selecting news based on two elements: relevance—the 'what'—and presentation of facts—the 'how'. The combination of these two elements affects the quality of information and its capacity to tackle the unjustified social alarmism that relies on improper associations between news and people (migrants and refugees) at the core of the events.

The chapter looks at the narrative on migration in the media, highlighting the crucial role of correct information to counter misinformation, stereotypes and racism. ISMU has been promoting a more fair and aware narrative for over thirty years. During the launch of its 2023 Report (13<sup>th</sup> February 2024), ISMU organised a roundtable where the limits of current media coverage and the need for greater representation of people with a migrant background were identified and analysed based on the wider national and European framework.

### Invisibility of Afro-descendants in the media

The European Parliament (2019) has recognized Europe's colonial history and the rights of Afro-descendant people, promoting actions such as the declassification of colonial archives, public apologies and the inclusion of African history in school curricula. Despite this, Afro-descendants remain largely invisible in the media and underrepresented in European public life.

The death of George Floyd in 2020 reignited the anti-racist debate, prompting the European Commission to launch a EU Anti-racism action plan (2020-2025).

However, in individual Member states there is still a lack of concrete political action to combat Afrophobia. Although Afro-descendants represent between 15 and 20 million people in the EU, they remain an unrecognized group, often stereotyped or distorted by the media.

Conservative media portray them as a security threat, while progressive media use paternalistic tones. The lack of non-white journalists and managers in European newsrooms accentuates this problem. The European Commission, through programs such as Creative Europe, aims to encourage pluralism and inclusiveness.

Media discrimination is also reflected in everyday life, e.g., in housing, work, education and health. Regarding environment, Africa—which is responsible for only 3% of global emissions—is severely affected by the climate crisis, but its problems remain little visible in the European debate (UN, 2023). According to Dunja Mijatović, former Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe, there is no lack of tools to act against racism but, rather, lack of political will. Greater institutional commitment is needed to adequately represent minorities and combat hate speech.

## Balancing news: information on migration between politics and current affairs

The XII Report of the Charter of Rome (2024) reports a 34% drop in headlines on migration compared to 2023. News on the front page and in the newscasts are decreasing, while the story remains polarized and superficial. The voices of migrants are rare, except for some sensational cases such as the death of the farm worker Satnam Singh or the collapse of a construction site in Florence. Rai's daily newscast (TG3) stands out for giving more direct space to migrants.

A central theme in 2024 was the Italy-Albania agreement for reception centers, which was treated by the media with alarmist tones that reinforced the perception of migration as a "permanent crisis". Even positive initiatives, such as humanitarian corridors, are often described in an emergency context. At the international level, the challenge of ensuring accurate and contextualized information is growing, which is essential to counter unjustified fear and alarmism. A holistic approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is needed, investing in both the content and the structure of newsrooms.

## Raising awareness against disinformation on migration: the AWAKE Project

In 2024 ISMU launched the AWAKE project, funded by the ECAS (European Citizen Action Service), to counter disinformation on migration in Italy. The project organized an awareness-raising campaign developed based on a survey among journalists, students and communicators that highlighted how the word "migration" is commonly associated with emergencies and threats. Media narratives also tend to ethnicise news, fueling stereotypes and prejudice.

The campaign included the production of four short videos on Instagram, aimed at young people between 18 and 25. Two journalists with a migration background co-created the content, proposing an alternative story that aimed to deconstruct prejudice and provide different perspectives. The goal was to encourage critical reflection among the public and raise awareness of the information dynamics and risks of disinformation.

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## Chapter 17

# The double invisibility of people with disabilities and migrant background

Laura Zanfrini, Chiara Formichi  
and Maria Giulia Pascariello

It is precisely by focusing first and foremost on the invisible groups—protecting their rights and enabling them to shape their own autonomous life projects and contribute to the common good—that we can build a sustainable development model and promote the quality of democracy.

People with disabilities and a migrant background constitute an invisible group, both scientifically and statistically. This invisibility is especially evident in academic research, where their status has not been sufficiently investigated, as well as in statistics (Zanfrini, Formichi, 2023). The available information is limited, fragmented across regions, restricted to specific subgroups and lacks standardization, making it impossible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of their conditions (EASPD, 2020). The difficulty in collecting complete data is amplified by limited institutional attention and the absence of systematic data collection procedures. This invisibility becomes even more pronounced for irregular migrants (Scarano, 2023), with many people with disabilities being often excluded from major information and support networks.

At the international level, IOM has estimated that about 15% of the global migrant population (12.4 million people) has a disability (IOM, 2024), though the actual figure might be higher. In Italy, the 2023 SAI (the national system for reception and integration) Report mentions 1,039 beneficiaries of projects on mental disabilities or specialized healthcare (ANCI, 2023). In the educational field, 14.3% of students with a migrant background have a diagnosed disability, a higher incidence than among Italian students (MI – DGSIS, 2022).

The group of people with disabilities and a migrant background are characterized by significant heterogeneity. Some disabilities predate migration and concern a minority of individuals drawn by the welfare systems of the receiving countries. Others develop impairments during the journey, particularly psychological trauma, that are not always identified due to the limited resources of reception centers. Finally, some disabilities develop in host countries due to precarious living conditions and/or physically demanding jobs.

Women and children face additional challenges. Minors can be exposed to violence during the migration journey, and in destination countries the certifying disabilities is complex due to the difficulty in distinguishing different forms of communication from disability-related issues. Women face triple discrimination due to the intersection of multiple social factors. They are vulnerable to violence, sexual abuse and trafficking, and sometimes develop disabilities in their countries of origin or transit.

People with disabilities and a migrant background face vulnerabilities that require an intersectional approach, based on the combination of the multiple factors of disadvantage and discrimination to which they are exposed. Disability represents one of the main barriers to social inclusion and, when combined with migrant status, overlaps with other barriers such as limited access to services, economic insecurity and poor living conditions. It is therefore necessary to develop a support system that makes social and healthcare services more accessible and inclusive. At both global and national levels, greater institutional commitment is required to ensure the fundamental rights of migrants with disabilities. Moreover, the collection and analysis of disaggregated and up-to-date data are essential for developing more effective policies and monitoring inclusion (Pescetti, 2019). Another crucial aspect is ad-hoc training of service providers, who are often unprepared to address the specific issues of this group. The lack of resources and knowledge leads to underreporting of disabilities, especially mental ones, that are harder to detect. Furthermore, in many countries support systems are not designed to meet the needs of this population, exposing them to a higher risk of discrimination and reduced social and work participation.

Nevertheless, there are examples of good practices that demonstrate that effective responses can be possible. In Italy, the "CiSiamo" project—designed and coordinated by ISMU in Lombardy—stands out for its support model that promotes concrete and integrated solutions based on users' real-life experiences, the resources of service providers and the skills of local organizations. This bottom-up approach, focused on people's daily life, is essential for building a more inclusive and democratic society where no one is left behind.

In conclusion, a paradigm shift is needed—one that goes beyond a sectoral approach and promotes synergies among different services, ensuring that people with disabilities and a migrant background can exercise their rights. Only in this way will it be possible to build a fairer and more inclusive society that recognizes the value and potential of all its members, including the most invisible ones.

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## Chapter 18

# Migrant remittances

Maurizio Ambrosini

Whether or not intentionally, migrants' remittances also bring along new life- styles, political and social values, consumer practices into their territories of origin, highlighting migrants' role as catalysts of change.

According to the World Bank, in 2022, migrant remittances generated a global flow of 647 billion dollars to low-middle-income countries (+8% compared to the previous year), while the forecast is 656 billion for 2023 and 666 billion for 2024, a trend conditioned by economic uncertainties due to the invasion of Ukraine and the slowdown of the Chinese economy (Luatti, 2023). Furthermore, these figures only concern official remittances and not the money migrants send informally, via couriers or other intermediaries, or bring directly when visiting their country of origin.

Remittances have confirmed to follow countercyclical dynamics, by increasing in times of hardship or remaining unaltered against all odds in adverse situations, e.g., during the COVID-19 pandemic—in 2021, remittances recorded an increase of more than 10%. The World Bank argued that, surprisingly, remittances are “bold” and “resilient” (Luatti, 2023). Migrants are the first to provide help “at home”: in low- and middle-income countries, the funds sent by migrants exceed the combined value of official development assistance and foreign direct investment. The World Bank has also explored the role that remittances could play in helping beneficiaries cope with the effects of climate change, especially in the poorest and most at-risk areas, both by building more resistant housing and

by moving to safer places (World Bank-Knomad, 2022). However, this renewed acknowledgement of migrants' ability to save and provide for the needs of their communities of origin raises some questions on an implicit neo-liberal scheme, as the message seems to be that it is up to the affected populations to organize themselves, also through remittances, to respond to the damage of global warming caused mainly by developed and developing countries. Another aspect to consider is the cost of sending remittances through official channels. Despite multiple requests and commitment from international institutions, including under the Global Compact on Migration, costs are not decreasing. According to the World Bank data, the average cost of sending 200 dollars to low- or middle-income countries was 6.2% in the fourth quarter of 2022, more than double the 3% set under the Sustainable Development Goals (Luatti, 2023).

As for Italy, according to data provided by the Bank of Italy and processed by the Leone Moressa Foundation, 8.2 billion euros were sent in 2023, a slight decrease compared to 2021 and 2022. Considering informal remittances, the overall volume of remittances is estimated between 9.4 and 11.9 billion.

Bangladesh has been the leading destination for remittances from Italy for several years, with 1.2 billion euros—14.3% of the total, followed by Pakistan and the Philippines. In 2023, remittances to almost all the main countries have decreased, with the exception of Georgia, India, Sri Lanka, Peru and Tunisia.

It should be noted that the country ranking in terms of remittances from Italy does not coincide with the main nationalities of migrants in the country, where people from Romania, Morocco, Albania, Ukraine, China, India ranks on top while people from Bangladesh and from Pakistan rank only sevenths and tenth respectively. Migrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan have only recently arrived to Italy and only part of them is joined by other family members (women represent 28,0% of Bangladeshis, and 26,5% of Pakistanis). In addition, the great distance means migrants visit—and therefore bring money into—these two countries less often.

Migrants who have settled for a longer time and were joined by their families tend to send less remittances. The possibility of reaching the country of origin with relatively short and inexpensive trips also favors informal remittances outside official channels. These are the most likely explanations for the drastic drop in remittance flows to Romania, which have decreased by 56.1% over ten years. Today, Romanians in Italy—who account for 1,200,000 people, nearly three times the number of people from the second national group—are only sixth in the ranking of remittances sent. Moroccans and Albanians are also quite far behind in the ranking of remittances sent—respectively in fourth and thirteenth place. Filipino immigrants are partly an exception, as they have been in Italy for several years now, were largely joined by their families (women represent 57.5%) and yet continue to send a significant volume of remittances, which places them in third position of the ranking.

In conclusion, sending remittances is a social practice that connects migrants with their territories of origin and keeps family and social ties alive (Ambrosini,

2019). It shows the persistent obligations to help towards family members—first of all children, spouses and parents—and takes on different meanings and nuances. It positions migrants into their territories of origin, motivates them to commit to work, make sacrifices and face the loneliness that comes with being abroad alone.

Whether or not intentionally, migrants' remittances also bring along new lifestyles, political and social values, consumer practices into their territories of origin, highlighting migrants' role as catalysts of change.

In addition to sending remittances to their families, migrants sometimes engage in collective forms of support vis-à-vis their communities of origin, especially in the event of disasters and conflict (Galstyan and Ambrosini, 2023). Remittances therefore increase the resilience not only of families but also of local communities.

For those who receive them, remittances improve living conditions and alleviate, at least on a material level, the emotional loss due to separation from the community of origin. Furthermore, something that is less visible at the economic level and is overlooked by institutions is that there are forms of reversed remittances that migrants receive from family members remaining in countries of origin. Remittances also create tensions, mutual accusations and inequalities between those who receive them and those who do not. Replacing them with public development aid, however, will be neither easy nor short-term task.

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## Chapter 19

# Artificial Intelligence as a means of discrimination: the impact on migrants

Emanuela Bonini

The use of artificial intelligence in managing aspects related to migration presents numerous discriminatory elements and biases, especially if it is based on distorted data or fails to consider cultural and individual differences.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now an integral part of our daily life, with applications ranging from security to entertainment, finance to public services. However, its impact raises important ethical questions, particularly regarding the biases and discrimination it can perpetuate. In recent years, the issue of bias in AI systems has drawn public and political attention, leading to regulatory initiatives such as the EU AI Act, aimed at promoting a fair and transparent use of AI.

According to UNESCO's definition, AI systems have three fundamental components: algorithms, data and human component. Algorithms, since they do not know the content of the object they process, should theoretically be neutral (Stinson, 2022), yet they can produce discriminatory outcomes due to a lack of transparency and the quality of the data used. If data contains social biases (i.e., gender-based, racial, economic), it can amplify existing inequalities. Even the creation of ethical artificial data has limitations, as it entails risks of underrepresentation or overexposure of certain social categories (Mehrabi et al., 2021).

The human component is equally crucial: those who develop and manage AI systems bring their own values, goals and social affiliations. Currently, the AI sector is marked by significant gender and racial inequality, with low representation of women and Black individuals in both tech companies and academia (West et

al., 2019). This imbalance contributes to the creation of systems that do not reflect the diversity of society and may reinforce structural inequalities.

AI is therefore not neutral but, rather, co-created by society, with significant political and social implications. Its decisions influence crucial aspects of people's lives, such as access to credit, employment, housing and justice. The underrepresentation of minorities in AI development can lead to tools that ignore their rights and needs, even criminalizing poverty, as shown by studies on the use of algorithms in social services in the United States (Eubanks, 2019).

The discrimination produced by AI particularly affects women, Black people, poor people, people with disabilities, migrants, and even more so those at the intersection of these categories (Buolamwini and Gebru, 2018). This chapter aims to further explore the impact of AI on the migrant population in order to analyze its specificities and consequences.

## The impact of AI use on migrants

AI is increasingly used in migration management, which raises concerns on the risks of discrimination. The main aspects where negative effects on migrants are observed include facial recognition, profiling of asylum, automatic translation, predictive policing and use of personal data.

### a. Facial recognition and border control

Biometric systems, such as facial recognition, are used to identify migrants at borders, for example in the EU EES system. However, these tools are less accurate with people with darker skin as they are trained predominantly on images of white individuals. This leads to identification errors, stricter controls and privacy violations. Organizations like Amnesty International and the EDPB have expressed concerns about the risks of using biometric data without adequate safeguards.

### b. Asylum seeker profiling and automatic translation

In some European countries, AI is used to assess asylum applications, for example through voice recognition to determine nationality. However, these systems struggle with dialects and inflections, leading to errors and unfair decisions. Additionally, algorithms assign probabilities of truthfulness to names and nationalities or analyze phone conversations to classify asylum seekers. In the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden, cases of discrimination and incorrect translations compromising the outcome of asylum applications have been documented.

### c. Predictive policing

AI-based predictive technologies are used to monitor migrants' movements

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and prevent risks related to irregular immigration. These systems, based on historical data, tend to reinforce racial profiling, disproportionately affecting African and Asian migrants. The EU project "iBorderCtrl," for example, has been criticized for using facial analysis to detect lies, proving to be unreliable and culturally biased.

### d. Use of personal data

Some governments analyze migrants' personal data, including from social media, to assess the truthfulness of their stories or their "dangerousness." This approach raises concerns about data transparency and governance, with the risk of arbitrary profiling and violations of fundamental rights.

## Final reflections

The use of AI in migration management highlights serious risks of discrimination, especially toward minority groups that are often treated as statistical anomalies. Algorithms, based on correlations that do not imply causation, can generate incorrect predictions and unfair decisions, especially in the absence of human oversight (Forti, 2024). Technologies such as "digital borders" risk limiting fundamental rights based on race, language or nationality. Moreover, migrants are never involved in decision-making processes, remaining passive subjects.

It is therefore urgent to move beyond the idea that AI is neutral and design systems that are able to mitigate bias. Based on these reflections, two distinct levels of intervention should be prioritised. On one hand, it is essential to abandon the idea of an inherently "neutral" algorithm, which limits the ability to identify and counteract the biases embedded in systems. To prevent AI from amplifying existing inequalities, systems should be designed to mitigate the biases that especially affect the most vulnerable groups. In this perspective, Leslie (2019) emphasizes the importance of including the identification and elimination of discrimination risks in ethical AI criteria to keep these new technologies from exacerbating pre-existing social imbalances. On the other hand, it is necessary to develop AI regulation and oversight systems that are extremely flexible and adaptable, to effectively respond to the continuous evolution of these technologies and the evolving contexts where biases can potentially arise (ibid.). Regulation, therefore, should follow a dynamic and adaptable model that, given the speed of technological development, can address the complexity of AI through risk management rather than fixed and static rules.

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## Chapter 20

# New tools to improve welfare services

Daniela Carrillo and Marina D'Odorico

Unlike equality, equity considers individual differences and distinct needs, aiming to ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities and resources.

The digital revolution that has been transforming human societies for years is now experiencing a strong acceleration thanks to the introduction and spread of Artificial Intelligence (AI). For Europe—and therefore Italy—this represents a new opportunity to address widespread shortcomings in innovation and productivity and to restore its potential for growth.

Policies on inclusion and access to welfare for migrants have changed, influenced by economic, social and political factors. The universalistic aspirations toward inclusive and welcoming welfare systems continue to clash with fragmented and inequitable services that, in practice, are highly discriminatory (Pasini, 2011).

While most measures result from welfare policies that are territorially differentiated—and therefore potentially more responsive to local needs—efforts to reduce public spending often culminate in discrimination against individuals who are entitled to social rights but, in practice, cannot enjoy them. Among these, the migrant population is particularly affected.

The gap between aspirations and their realization became especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely tested reception and integration systems (Pasini, Merotta, 2023; Pasini, Merotta, 2022), clearly revealing inequalities in treatment and systemic weaknesses that disproportionately affect mi-

grant women (Carrillo & Farina, 2022). Striking examples include the digitalization of services and the use of online platforms to deliver benefits, including essential ones. While delivering services online represents a significant step forward accessibility, it also tends to exclude migrants from the potential benefits due to a significant digital divide (Ortiz Cobo & Jeri Levano, 2023).

In light of this visible inadequacy, two types of interventions could enhance the responsiveness of the welfare system. The first looks at forms of institutional discrimination that hinder access to rights and involves recognizing and accepting a broader view of what makes up the Italian civil society, enhancing collaboration among all the actors involved. The second builds on the concept of differentiated welfare (Pasini, 2011) and considers individuals' characteristics, recognising the increasingly complex demographic and social profiles of our population, which demand essential yet specific services from the welfare system (Fellini et al 2023).

In this context and using AI tools, forms of "precision welfare" (Azzone & Caio, 2020) can analyze user profiles in greater detail, taking into account the specificities individuals bring. Precision welfare would also help avoid standardized approaches that often fail to adequately meet emerging needs, while more accurate assessments would lead to more effective preventive and therapeutic interventions.

Service delivery would be improved through AI by analyzing large volumes of data and specific information about individual users, leading to major benefits both for individuals (especially migrants) and service providers or donors. On the other hand, precise and reliable data collection is among the many potential benefits of AI that have already impacted welfare by enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, and personalization of social services.

However, there is an undeniable risk that individuals may be continuously monitored, leading to privacy violations. Yet, it should be noted that digitalization has long "colonized" nearly every aspect of daily life—from consumption to information sources and social interactions.

Certainly, the use of these technologies can produce perverse effects that go against the intended goals. This is why the EU passed the AI Act a, a regulation that came into force in 2024 and that classifies AI systems by risk level to ensure transparency, safety, accountability and innovation. In February 2024, the European AI Office was also established to oversee the implementation of the law and promote international cooperation. In September 2024, the European Commission signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence to establish shared principles for AI regulation.

It is within this context, between control and opportunities, that the concept of precision welfare has recently taken on a prominent role in the public and political debate (Azzone & Caio, 2020). The concept essentially evokes the idea of a social protection system whose main quality is the personalization of its offer with the aim of ensuring effectiveness and efficiency (Ibid.).

Enhancing knowledge and expertise, co-designing interventions and harnessing the potential of artificial intelligence and big data are now aspects that can no longer be overlooked. There is a growing need to value conversational data and data on the target population's shifts in order to gather information from both raw data and personal assessment.

In conclusion, the recent and relentless innovations affecting the technological evolution of human knowledge can support the welfare system in its mission to promote equality among the population living in the territory. If the goal is to promote equity in service provision and achieve equality in outcomes, the strategies should then respond swiftly to the demands of a constantly evolving society. For this reason, it is essential to make use of new tools governed by specific European regulations. This involves creating synergies among different actors, i.e., institutions, academia and research centers, to progress in applying science to the territory and its needs. In this sense, precision welfare represents a crucial step forward.

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The Report offers a comprehensive statistical overview of migration in Italy, delving into key issues such as participation in the labour market, multicultural education, health, and religious affiliations. It also explores the evolution of migration policies, particularly focusing on the externalisation of the asylum system.

At the European level, the Report assesses the impact of the Pact on Migration and Asylum and explores global migration flows. It addresses current issues like physical and symbolic borders, the media narrative on migration, the role of migration in shaping public opinion, and the conditions faced by people with disabilities and a migrant background.

Additionally, it provides insights into Italian attitudes towards migrant populations, income capacity and remittances, welfare and new tools to improve services, and the dangers of discrimination related to artificial intelligence.

Fondazione ISMU ETS is an independent scientific institution that promotes studies, research, training, and projects on multiethnic and multicultural society, with particular attention to the phenomenon of international migration. ISMU collaborates with institutions, public administrations, the third sector, schools, companies, international agencies, and both Italian and foreign scientific research centers.

