

Roberta Ricucci

Fondazione ISMU, "Dodicesimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2006". Milano: Franco Angeli, 2007

(doi: 10.2383/24772)

Sociologica (ISSN 1971-8853)

Fascicolo 2, settembre-ottobre 2007

Ente di afferenza:

()

Copyright © by Società editrice il Mulino, Bologna. Tutti i diritti sono riservati.

Per altre informazioni si veda <https://www.rivisteweb.it>

Licenza d'uso

Questo articolo è reso disponibile con licenza CC BY NC ND. Per altre informazioni si veda <https://www.rivisteweb.it/>

Recensioni

Fondazione ISMU, *Dodicesimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2006*. Milan: Franco Angeli, 2007, 359 pp.

doi: 10.2383/24772

Dodicesimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2006 is the twelfth national report published by ISMU concerning current immigration trends in Italy. This annual report represents an important instrument in monitoring and assessing societal development in light of ethnic and cultural diversity in Italy. The study of immigration can be looked at as based on three basic pillars: 1) the study of the motivating factor for migration; 2) the study of the changes taking place in the immigrants themselves, in their behaviour and cultural identity; 3) integration, assimilation, multiculturalism, and national identity. One of the most interesting aspects of this book is the authors' ability to carefully outline these pillars in the Italian context, even if the third pillar is the most important focus. The Report further details previous information by describing the trends, obstacles and opportunities for integration in the following areas: housing, labour market, education, health, criminality, religion. The organisation of the volume is very similar to that of previous reports, offering an unusual opportunity for easier and simpler comparisons between the same topics in different periods.

The first section, entitled "The general picture," outlines the legal framework and presents the phenomenon through statistics. With respect to legal immigrants, it is worth noting the continuous and marked growth in the number of Romanians, who remains the third largest national group after Albanians and Moroccans. At the beginning of 2006 registered immigrants were over three millions, coming from more than 191 countries, especially Central Eastern Europe, Northern Africa, Latin-America, and South-East Asia. There are neither predominant nationalities nor a predominant religion. According to residence permits, it is clear that in the Italian context Islam is not the main religion among the immigrants' group: 50% of them are Christian, coming e.g. from Romania, the Philippines, South America, Ukraine, and Poland. Immigration is affecting different regions of Italy in different ways. The greatest number of non-EU citizens lives in the North or Centre of Italy, where job opportunities are higher. Large urban centres, mainly Rome and Milan, host substantial numbers of immigrants. The migratory phenomenon becomes an important part of the Italian context, contributing to business growth and economic development as well as to demographic increase. Nevertheless, the Report shows that public attention rarely focuses on this: An analysis of news and articles dedicated to migrants in four Italian daily newspapers shows as the main focus of news reporting is devoted to immigrants' involvement in criminality and illegal arrivals instead of their contribution to Italian society.

The second part of the volume, "Areas of concern," analyses numerous aspects concerning the fundamental issues of the lives of immigrants in Italy: work, schooling, housing, health, criminality, and religion. These contributions aim at achieving two goals. The first is providing an update by reporting some of the most interesting activities concerning research, experiences, and developments in these areas. The second goal is to comment about existing opportunities and limits in both the fields of research mentioned

above, and regarding the necessary tools for establishing and enforcing national and local policies addressed at the immigrant population. Starting from statistical indicators of integration (i.e. length of stay, age structure, rate of inter-marriage, rate of school attendance), the Report points out the immigrants' actual conditions of life under different perspectives – demographic, social, economical, cultural, religious. In the above mentioned areas, the Ismu Report contains extensive and in-depth information, and continues its tradition of examining national and local statistics in an effort to produce relevant analysis relating to integration. The picture emerges of a continually developing situation moving towards a multicultural society. The underlying theme merging all analysed areas is the question whether it is possible to reduce the gaps between Italians and immigrants and increase integration. The one clear conclusion which emerges from the Ismu Report is that the individual's opportunity to enter into the labour market and to advance in one's working life is crucial for integration. Just as work is the key to integration, a correlation exists between lack of diversity in the labour market and segregation in other areas of society. An individual's schooling, continuing education, housing situation and health are all factors of significance. For example, residential segregation is a phenomenon that reflects structural obstacles in society, while stereotypical categorisation of students with foreign backgrounds reflects an approach detrimental to those students. Another conclusion evidences the importance of improving networking and bottom-up cooperation of relevant role-players from the local and municipal level, focused on the intervention, on the creating and implementation of integration policies and on the effectiveness of these measures. The Report calls for the sharing of the best practices used in these crucial fields at local level: for each field, the authors present projects and initiatives that at the local level have promoted integration and social cohesion among Italians and immigrants.

The third section, entitled "Exploration," examines specific and problematic themes. In this report the "Exploration" is focused on "immigration's sons." Many studies have been carried out to investigate this specific issue, studying its various facets: school, family, identity and, more recently, friendship relations across all ages from infancy to adolescence. It is important to stress that, according to the recent history of immigration in Italy, these studies focus mainly on children and adolescents belonging to the so-called "1.5 generation:" the rate of growth of the second generation (the Italy-born child of first generation immigrant) is increasing, but at the moment it is mainly represented by children under 10 years of age. Moreover, focusing on this issue could contribute to: 1) a better managing of the socio-economic integration of second and 1.5 generation children; 2) the identification of strategies to promote the positive interaction between pupils from different backgrounds and the process of secondary socialization to tolerance, pluralism and democratic values; 3) the prevention of negative effects on the welfare system and social cohesion due a lack of integration; 4) the avoidance of the risk of reproducing exclusion through generations in a knowledge based society and of stabilizing stratifications along ethnic lines. The identity of second generation immigrants is becoming a crucial issue in the analysis of foreign adolescents in Italy. The definition of identity on the part of teenagers and their social integration sway between a strongly emotional cultural system within the family context and the complex array of social symbols and meanings conveyed by the host society. For foreign adolescents, the status

of “immigrant’s son” involves a greater risk of facing difficulties in building their identity. Like everyone else, foreign adolescents are called to take up a role and create an identity, which is not an solitary process but rather involves family, school and friends.

The last section of the Report, dedicated to the “International panorama,” presents an analysis of migratory trends and policies. More interesting is the emphasis given to international developments in migration in the European context and to the role-played by the European Union managing this issue. Understanding these phenomena requires as broad a cognitive picture as possible, in part because it is both a cause and an effect of globalisation now under way.

In summing up, this book has two noteworthy features. First, the book is a comprehensive informative and well-written work and so it makes a valuable contribution to the growing literature on migration to Italy. Second, the book provides a broad diversity of topics and will stimulate active discussion about these themes. Immigration issues are complex, with wide-ranging consequences that span individual rights, the rule of law (both at national and European level), the way cities and the labour market operate to name but a few. Immigration issues are also controversial, especially focussing on defining border controls, managing religious diversity and promoting economic and social integration. This volume contributes to summarize the main points of some crucial issues, helping scholars, researchers, fieldworkers and policymakers to understand the changes happening in Italian society.

Roberta Ricucci
Università di Torino