

Intentions to leave Italy or to stay among foreigners: some determinants of migration projects

Le intenzioni degli stranieri di restare o lasciare l'Italia: alcune determinanti dei progetti migratori

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Abstract The topic of migration intentions and return migration has been analyzed by different theoretical approaches (Stark (1996); Dustmann (2003)) but still the process of migration decision-making and behaviour is not fully understood (Arango (2000)). On basis of Istat survey “Social Condition and Integration of Foreign Citizens” (SCIF, 2011-2012), this paper aims to explore the migration project of foreign citizens resident in Italy. Using a binomial logistic regression model, has been studied the association of different determinants (socio-demographic characteristics, migration background, personal relationships in Italy, social integration in host country) with the intention of staying permanently in Italy.

Abstract *Il tema delle intenzioni migratorie e delle migrazioni di ritorno è stato analizzato seguendo diversi approcci teorici (Stark (1996); Dustmann (2003)). L'affermarsi di letture diverse e in parte contrastanti rimanda alla complessità di fattori che entrano in gioco nel definire e orientare le intenzioni migratorie (Arango (2000)). A partire dai dati dell'indagine Istat “Condizione e Integrazione Sociale dei Cittadini Stranieri” (SCIF, 2011-2012), questo lavoro si propone di esplorare le intenzioni migratorie degli stranieri che vivono in Italia attraverso un modello di regressione logistica binomiale considerando alcune determinanti (socio-demografiche, del background migratorio, le relazioni interpersonali e alcuni indicatori di integrazione sociale).*

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Key words: foreign citizens; migration projects; return behaviour.

1 Background

The issue of return migrations and intention of stay in host country has been analyzed by different theoretical approaches (Stark (1996)); Constant, Massey (2002)). The neoclassical theory associates the decision to return to the country of origin to the lack of integration process in the receiving country, by considering migration as an exclusively individual experience. Instead, the new economic theory of migration considers the return migration as a factor of success of migration experience in which the family plays an important role (Dustmann (2003)). Moreover, the social capital theory (Coleman (1988)) and network analysis approach take into account the role of social networks in return home decision. Therefore no theory is enough to explain factors associated to the intention of return home or stay in host country. However each one refers to the complexity of factors correlated to migrants' decision or intentions.

Since some decades Italy has been a country of immigration with a rising number of migrants. Moreover in the last few years the share of long-term residents has increased (Conti, Strozza (2012)). However, the last census recorded about one million foreigners less than the population register. Likely they have left Italy to re-emigrate to the country of origin or to a third country (onward migration) (Blangiardo (2012)). According to recent studies, based on regional data, the percentage of migrants intending to leave Italy has considerably increased (Terzera (2015)). Therefore, a focus on migrants' intentions seems likely current. The intentions of mobility may vary according to the family and employment conditions or legal status in Italy (Toma, Castagnone (2015); Barbiano di Belgioso (2016)).

2 Research hypotheses and goals

According to the recent debate in the literature, the intention to remain in Italy is not considered only as a positive outcome of the migration project. Indeed, the study aims to explore migrant's intentions (to stay in Italy or to return to the country of origin), taking into account the possible determinants that play an important role to define the migration project.

This study contributes to highlight the importance of socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, citizenship, education level and employment status), as well as the individual migratory background (migratory intentions at the start, age at the arrival in Italy, years of stay). Moreover it is considered as relevant the family situation in migration (presence of family members in the country of origin or in the

3 Intentions to leave Italy or to stay among foreigners: some determinants of migration projects receiving country, mixed family, etc.). In fact, the migratory project, regardless of the direction of intentions (stay or return to the country of origin), can represent the outcome of a family choice. The survey data allow a multidimensional analysis of the factors associated to the intentions of individuals living in the family. Similar importance is given to the relational context and to the contacts maintained with the country of origin (periodic return to country of origin) and to some aspects related to social integration in the receiving country (perception of discrimination, knowledge of the Italian language).

3 Data and methods

The analysis of migratory projects was carried out on the data of the sample survey on “Social Condition and Integration of Foreign Citizens” (SCIF), launched for the first time by Istat (Italian National Institute of Statistics) between 2011 and 2012, in partnership with other Italian Institutions¹.

The SCIF sample survey aims to provide a collection of information about many features of socio-economic inclusion of migrants in Italy in order to explore living condition of resident foreigners. There is a focus on several aspects: family composition, education, migratory path, employment status, discrimination, health conditions and accessibility of health services, migrant integration, citizen's security and victimization, housing conditions. The survey data provides a framework on characteristics, behaviors, attitudes and opinions of the foreign citizens in Italy, as a integration and complement to administrative sources, currently produced by Istat.

SCIF sample survey's target population is foreign population resident in Italy. The sampling unit is the households resident in Italy with at least one component with foreign citizenship. The family is defined as a group of people living together and related by marriage, kinship, affinity, adoption, protection or affection. In addition to members of the family, people without family ties with residence in Italy have been also interviewed. In the SCIF survey, foreign citizens are identified by citizenship, not by the place of birth.

All the members of 9,553 families were interviewed using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) techniques. In terms of individuals with foreign citizenship, the survey involved 20.379 people.

The choice of the survey is given by the opportunity to study not only the orientation of migratory projects, but also to investigate the relationship between these and the individual, family and relational sphere of the migrant. To verify the empirical evidence that emerged in the literature, the different association of the factors influencing the migratory pathways was evaluated through logistic regression. The use of this model makes possible to estimate the probability to want to stay permanently in Italy as opposed to the desire to return to one's country of origin ($\beta > 0$)

¹ This experience was co-funded in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior for a project funded by the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals.

means an higher propensity to settle down in Italy). The sample used to estimate the model is made up of around 16,000 foreign citizens aged over 15 years.

4 Results

Over 70% of all interviewed migrants had planned to stay in Italy: what are individual, familiar and migratory experience determinants associated to the intentions to stay in Italy?

Results of logistic model confirm the importance of some determinants related to migration background, social integration and socio-demographic characteristics on migration project.

By taking into account migration background emerges how foreigners arrived in Italy with the intention to settle down permanently are likely to confirm same intention at the interviewing ($\beta=3.18$). As well as, migrants long-stayers in Italy are more likely to declare to stay compared to short-stayers ($\beta=0.72$). Moreover migrants who have never came back to the country of origin ($\beta=0.21$) unlike people who came back at least once.

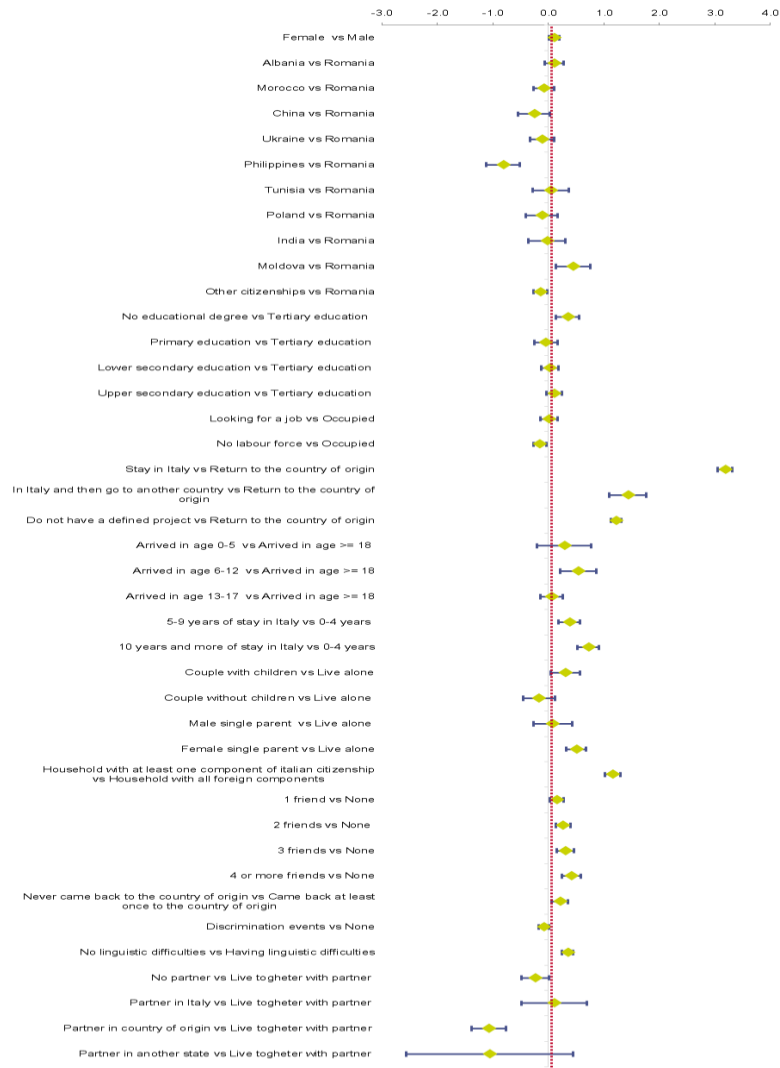
Migrants with a good proficiency of Italian language have higher probability to plan to stay in Italy too ($\beta=0.35$). On the economic side, intention to leave Italy is related to less participation to labour market (no labour force $\beta=-0.16$), a condition that should makes more difficult socio-economic inclusion.

The intention to stay is higher among foreigners who have settled down in Italy, with own family and a wide friendship network. Compared to those who live alone, couples with children ($\beta=0.31$) and single-parent families of mothers ($\beta=0.5$) have a higher association with the propensity to stay in Italy. As expected, among people who live with other Italians, the probability of stay in Italy is higher than those who live in families of foreigners only ($\beta=1.16$). On the contrary, people with partner in country of origin declare more propensity to go back ($\beta=-1.07$).

The citizenship and the ethnic group pattern of social settlement in Italy have an impact on intentions of migrants to stay or come back to the country of origin. Compared to Romanians, Moldovans are more likely to declare to stay, whereas Filipinos have lower propensity to settle down in Italy. Citizenship of origin seems to play a fundamental role to define intentions of migrants as well as years of stay in host country. Therefore the interaction effect between years of stay and citizenship has been taken into account. Filipinos, regardless of during of stay, are always oriented to go back to the country of origin. Instead, Moldovans have higher probability to want to stay in Italy among long stayers ($\beta=0.46$ for 5-9 years of stay, $\beta=0.52$ for over 10 years of stay). Only among long-stayers, Chinese and Tunisians are more likely to declare the propensity to return to their homeland.

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Figure 1: Binomial logistic model. Probability to stay in Italy vs to return to country of origin. β value and confidence intervals.



Source: SCIF, 2011-2012.

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