The numbers of Chinese immigration in Italy and in Veneto

Immigration in Italy is a relatively new phenomenon. Flows of people coming from abroad start to be relevant only ten years ago. Nowadays, in the European context, Italy is one of the main destination countries. At the end of 2010 legal resident immigrants in Italy were almost 4.5 million (the 7.5% of the total population), mainly concentrated in the northern part of the country. Veneto region is one of the main immigration destination areas. With about 500,000 foreign people staying in its territory, Veneto is the third Italian region for the number of immigrants and the fourth one if you consider the immigration rate on the overall population (10.2%).

Chinese immigration has grown sharply during last years both in Italy and in Veneto region. Immigrants coming from China is nowadays one of the main foreign community in Italy: Chinese resident are about 210,000 (5% of the total numbers of immigrants in Italy). Chinese people living in Veneto are around 30,000 (6% of total immigration).

Statistic evidences and results of repeated regularization programs give the idea of large presence of irregular Chinese immigration.

Looking at the gender distribution, no significant gap can be observed between male and female presence. Chinese people living in Italy and in Veneto are 52% male and 48% women.

By age, Chinese immigrants are largely concentrated in central age classes (working age class), but there is also a growing number of very young people (mainly born in Italy). As we can see from statistics referred to the presence of foreign students in the national educational system, Chinese immigration is becoming important especially in the lower education.

In the national contest we can find some geographical concentrations. Chinese community is relevant (in terms of high rate of presence) in Florence-Prato area, in the south-west part of Sardinia and in the area between Marche and Abruzzo regions.

Also in Veneto we can find areas with a high presence of Chinese immigrants. The province of Treviso collect the large number of Chinese people (more than 8,000 at the end of 2010, the 27% of the total regional amount). The province of Rovigo has the largest Chinese immigration rate: in this area Chinese represent about the 20% of the resident immigrants.

Looking at the Veneto’s labour market data (referred to dependent work), Chinese employed at the end of September 2011 were about 19,600. They are mainly concentrated in the textile industry. A high number of Chinese employees can be found in services such as trade (both retail and wholesale) and tourist services. A new phenomenon in data (even if not proved by empirical evidences) is the presence of Chinese workers in health and care services.

Due to the restrictions imposed by Italian immigration law in force, especially for people coming from extra-European countries, a lot of immigrants try to get a regular permits through the available pathways. In the last years a great number of visa were only for health and care sector workers. The regularization program set up in 2009 involved only people irregularly employed as colf or care-giver in (Italian and immigrant) families, too. On the other hand, we have huge restriction to regular entry possibilities for dependent workers. Chinese hiring flows in the regional labor market (more than 10,000 per year in the last period) are mainly characterized by permanent contracts (in a relevant number of cases with part-time arrangements). Just less than one half of recent Chinese hiring in the labour market is connected with textile industry. Almost 20% in trade and tourist services.

In most cases, industry (especially textile industry) or generally working place are Chinese managed. It means that Chinese immigrants work mainly as employees in Chinese factories set up in the regional territory.

Evidences on yearly occupation balance (difference between hiring and firing/ quitting) show good performances for Chinese working dynamics. Despite economic crisis and a wide set of difficulties in the labour market, Chinese involvement tend to be stable.

Large sense of community (together with immigration obligations) tends to support people in life choices, in the labour market but also in business. Indeed, Chinese communities are mainly self-referred with a low rate of interaction within Italian communities.
The numbers of Chinese immigration in Italy and in Veneto

Letizia Bertazzon
Veneto Lavoro, Osservatorio & Ricerca

Venice, December 2nd 2011

VENETO LAVORO is the technical agency for the employment of the Veneto Region.
It supports the institutions and other organizations, featuring qualified services in terms of planning, management and evaluation of the labour policies.
Specific research and analysis competences are carried out from:

THE OBSERVATORY AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Observatory of the Labour Market
www.venetolavoro.it
Section: Osservatorio&Ricerca

Regional Observatory of Immigration
www.venetoimmigrazione.it
Section: Osservatorio Regionale Immigrazione
Referring to immigration items, the Observatory provides and process data especially on:

- dynamic and feature of immigration flows in the region;
- involvement in the labour market of immigrants.

Data come mainly from national statistics sources (such as demographic balance, number of residence permits allowed, etc.) and the regional labour market administrative archives (made up of compulsory reports made by firms on opening and closing work relationships).

At the end of 2010 legal resident immigrants in Italy were almost 4.5 million. The 7.5% of the total population.
Veneto region in the national context

Immigration in Italy → mainly concentrated in the northern part of the country

Veneto region is one of the main migration destination areas.

Veneto is the third Italian region for number of immigrants and the fourth one if you consider the immigration rate on the overall population.

Foreign residents in Italy on overall population by province and regions (2010)
Source: processing of Veneto Lavoro on Istat data

Veneto region in the national context

Immigration dynamic in Veneto

In Veneto the number of immigrants have been on the rise since 2003.
At the end of 2010 about 500,000 foreign citizens in Veneto. The immigration rate on the overall population reached 10.2%.

… but with many differences on the territory.
Chinese immigration has grown sharply during the last years both in Italy and in Veneto.

- Chinese immigrants today are one of the main foreign communities in Italy (the 4th): there are about 210,000 Chinese residents (5% of the total numbers of immigrants in Italy).
- Chinese living in Veneto are around 30,000 (6% of total immigration). Chinese immigrants are the 5th foreign community in Veneto.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Foreign Residents</th>
<th>% on total foreign residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>968,576</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>462,627</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>452,424</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>209,514</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>205,730</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>134,154</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>130,948</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>121,038</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>109,018</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>106,291</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foreign residents in Italy and in Veneto. First 10 nationalities (2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Foreign Residents</th>
<th>% on total foreign residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>101,972</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>57,707</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>42,435</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>35,986</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>29,647</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>19,075</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>17,958</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>15,179</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>14,746</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chinese immigration

Demographic features

BY GENDER
No significant gap can be observed between male and female presence.
Chinese living in Italy and in Veneto are 52% male and 48% women.

BY AGE
Chinese are largely concentrated in central age classes (working age class), but there is also a growing number of very young people (mainly born in Italy).

As we can see from statistics referred to the presence of foreign students in the national educational system, Chinese immigration is becoming important especially in the lower education.
**Chinese concentration in Italy**

In the national context we can find some geographical concentrations.

The Chinese communities are relevant (in terms of high rate of presence):
- in Florence-Prato area;
- in the area between Marche and Abruzzo regions;
- in the south-west part of Sardinia.

But also in some cities:
- Cuneo (Piedmont)
- Avellino (Campania)
- Matera (Basilicata)

*Source: Ministry of the Interior and Oim (2008)*

---

**Chinese presence in Veneto**

Also in Veneto we can find areas with a high presence of Chinese immigrants.

With reference to the distribution:

the largest number of Chinese live in the province of Treviso (more than 8,000 at the end of 2010, 27% of the total regional amount)
Chinese concentration in Veneto

Chinese immigration rate on total immigration by municipality

1) The province of Rovigo has the largest Chinese immigration rate: in this area Chinese represent about the 20% of the resident immigrants.

2) Some other relevant concentrations:
   - the area across the southern part of Padua province and the southern part of Venice province;
   - the western part of Treviso province;
   - some mountain areas of Belluno province.

BUT… statistical evidence and results of repeated regularization programs give the idea of a large presence of illegal/irregular Chinese immigrants.

Irregular/Illegal RESIDENTS
Illegal immigrants → illegally entered in the country
Irregular Immigrants → without residence permit (mostly overstayers)

… also in the labour market

Irregular WORKERS
→ irregular/illegal residents without a contract
→ regular residents without a contract
Looking at the Veneto’s labour market data (referred to employees), about 19,600 Chinese were employed at the end of September 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>11,233</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>8,055</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19,624</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They are mainly concentrated in the textile industry. A high number of Chinese employees can be found in services such as trade (both retail and wholesale) and tourist services.

**Stock of Chinese people employed in Veneto by detailed sector (end of September 2011)**

- Health and care services: 17%
- Tourist services: 13%
- Wholesale and retail trade: 10%
- Textile and clothing sector: 46%
- Other industries: 2%
- Other made in Italy: 5%
- Other services: 2%

Due to the restrictions imposed by the Italian immigration law in force, especially for people coming from extra-European countries and for work purposes, many migrants try to get regular permits through the available pathways.

- In the last years a great number of visa – within the national Entry Quotas System – were issued only for domestic workers (employed as domestic helpers and caretakers of the elderly, the ill and children);
- The (last) regularization program set up in 2009 involved only people irregularly employed as domestic workers or care-givers in (Italian and foreign) families;
- On the other hand, we have huge restrictions to regular entry possibilities for dependent workers.
Entry quotas planning in 2010 for employees (not seasonal) were followed two different systems: one for workers coming from a selected number of countries and with no restriction on employment sectors; one for all the other countries and only in domestic work.

About 6,900 applications submitted involved Chinese citizens (about 71% of the total amount): 6,700 concerned applications for domestic work; 205 domestic services as care givers. 50% of the employers involved were Chinese families.

Looking at the regularization program of 2009 which involved people irregularly employed in the domestic services sector, a number of applications involved Chinese citizens.

In Veneto, the numbers of workers regularly employed by families after regularization were almost 14,000. Workers coming from China were 1,200, about 9% of the total.

Strategies to obtain a regular resident permit can be observed from different statistical evidence!

---

**Recent flows in the labour market**

Chinese employment flows in the regional labour market (more than 10,000 per year in the last period) are mainly characterized by permanent contracts (in a relevant number of cases with part-time arrangements).

Hiring flows of Chinese citizens in Veneto by contract (quarterly data 2008-2011)

Just less than half of the recently-employed Chinese is connected with textile industry. Almost 20% in trade and tourist services.

In most cases, industry (especially textile industry) or generally working place are run by Chinese. It means that Chinese immigrants mainly work as employees in Chinese factories set up in the Veneto area.
Evidence on yearly occupation balance (difference between workers into and out of employed status) show good performances for Chinese workers. In spite of the economic crisis and a wide set of difficulties in the labour market, Chinese employment tends to be stable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italians</td>
<td>7,271</td>
<td>-37,451</td>
<td>-11,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>3,339</td>
<td>-6,867</td>
<td>2,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- China</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>1,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Morocco</td>
<td>-38</td>
<td>-1,353</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Romania</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>-2,293</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Veneto. Occupation balance by citizenship (2008-2010)  
Source: processing of Veneto Lavoro on Silv data

A great sense of community (together with immigration obligations) tends to support people in life choices, in the labour market but also in business. Chinese communities are mainly self-referred with a low rate of interaction within Italian communities.

Thank you!

Letizia Bertazzon  
Veneto Lavoro, Osservatorio & ricerca  
letizia.bertazzon@venetolavoro.it  
tel. 041.2919346