The fear of immigrant between stereotype and stigma: an empirical survey on immigrant perception

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Abstract - In recent years, the migration phenomenon that has as directrix the southern Europe, and especially Italy, was characterized by peculiar elements both with reference to the dimensional aspect and to that of the subjects that undertake this path. Although among the attractive elements, as economic-productive structure of the host country plays a primary role, in the last decade, the profound transformations that have affected the phenomenon have substantially changed conditions and migratory motivations. As can be seen, the phenomenon of intolerance and racism has purely sociological and emotional connotations and is based above all on an often stereotypical unilateral vision of the human being contextualized both as an individuality and within the reference community. For this reason, the research work involved the drafting and administration of specific questionnaire in order to identify the forms of migrant social stigmatization, as well as the related connection with the safety perception in urban areas. The definition of the sample was initiated by the territorial scope of choice within which the sample was taken; in detail it was decided to give importance to different urban contexts of Sicilian region in order to highlight how the perception, social and economic, of migrant is changing as a result of the constant focus on theme by the mass media. The first evidences collected have allowed to highlight how the fear towards immigrants is strongly correlated with the social inclusion systems. The sensitization interventions on the theme, as well as those in the intercultural field, have proved suitable, according to initial estimates, to reduce the forms of social stereotype. However, it should be stressed that future research should investigate the interconnections present on theme by increasing the number of variables and subjects involved in the measurement.

Index Terms - Immigrant, Fear, Social Exclusion, Stigma, Crime

I. INTRODUCTION

Migration flows experienced a steadily increasing trend mainly due to the increase of landings of immigrants who seek shelter in European "lands of opportunities". The huge size of phenomenon has profoundly changed the composition of host society modifying social, demographic and economic balances (Marinello and Gervasi, 2016; Marinello and Dinicolò, 2017). Therefore, socio-economic integration of foreign population is the main issue, to harness full integration into the host environment. In recent years, the perception of immigrants as well as the driving forces behind them have received growing interest in literature. Perception of immigrants by the native population has also an important policy dimension. Almost all European countries are confronted with demographic change, an increasing demand for high-skilled labor, welfare activities and a growing need to prevent illegal immigration, though to varying degrees. The topics considered in the surveys are numerous but the primary scope is to understand the idea of foreigners as a presence among Italians, such as the intercultural contacts, the relationship between immigration and criminality, economic impact, and migration policy. In order to understand nature and changes of phenomenon, first paragraph makes a brief analysis of the main contributions in literature in order to understand how the perception of immigrants has evolved. The second paragraph sets out the method engaged for the analysis, placing particular emphasis on the characteristic of the sample. Finally, in the last section investigates about certain variables that could effect on the stigmatization process of immigrants, highlighting the possible relations existing between selected variables.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The first approaches between '800 and '900 were mainly directed to the criminalization of the foreigner, considered a bearer of deviance. The theory of cultural conflicts, elaborated in the '30s, identifies in the contrast between different cultural systems the main cause of the discomfort and the subsequent deviant behavior of a subject. The resulting of cultural conflict must be considered as a conflict between norms that can occur when simultaneously the following phenomena occur: the frontier one, that is, two culturally inhomogeneous groups that live in neighboring territories; that of colonization, when the culture of a people is forcibly imposed on another population; that of immigration, where the immigrants, by keeping as reference standards those of the culture of origin, can come into conflict with the cultural norms of the country in which they moved (Sellin, 1938). The contact between members of different groups, even for the individual, determines a change / conditioning such that each primary group evolves starting from the situation of isolation that characterized it at the beginning, leading to an immediate closure and the return to traditional behavior to
avoid contamination with other cultures. With the publication of "The Polish Peasant in Europe and in America", the process by which the culture of origin of Polish immigrants affects the way in which they are part of the arrival community is analyzed; it becomes crucial the role attributed to the interpretation that the individual gives of the objective situation in which he finds himself, deriving from his cultural background (Znaniecki, and Thomas 1918, 1920). In the essay on social antagonism, Znaniecki emphasizes that the foreign can only be perceived through encounter and contact; this would allow the individual or the social group to perceive commonality or diversity of the value systems of which they are carriers and which would help to understand a concordance of meanings; contact would be sufficient to explain the strangeness, but not the antagonism which is a feeling of negative hostility towards the foreign (Znaniecki, 1931). Michels, in the essay "Materialien zu einer Soziologie des Fremden" (1925) collected in the volume of the German magazine "Jahrbuch für Soziologie: eine internationale Sammlung", deepened the analysis of foreigner and introduced a classification in which are there four types of foreign: individuals whose citizenship and nationality coincide efficiently and effectively; individuals who have adapted to the cultural model of the residence society, but without having acquired the nationality of the foreign state in which they are located; individuals who have emigrated abroad but who remain psychologically and legally linked to their original nation; individuals who have completely adapted to the conditions of life of a different society from they come from and which arouses the disapproval of their parents and that part of the family that has remained in their homeland (Michels, 1925). Park began the reflection on foreigner starting from the crisis that would hit this figure when it moves away from its own system of belonging, and from the change that would occur in the society that hosting it. Park elaborates the figure of the "marginal man" and suggest a model of integration that exists between individual and group based on its cultural belonging, due to the migration of goods and culture, the foreigner finds himself at the margins of two cultures and two social systems. Park's marginal man combines the knowledge and awareness of those who do not participate in certain goods and rights of citizenship with the attitude and critical judgment of those who are "on the margin" of society. It is the product of a process of cultural accumulation where the host society is not necessarily negative, or is there necessarily opposition from the marginal man who appears endowed with the necessary detachment useful for a functional adaptability (Park, 1928, 1950). The condition of the immigrant is deepened in studies on some degraded areas (ghettos) of the city of Chicago, defined criminal areas, which see the presence of immigrants, more exposed to crime (ecological theory). A further analysis regarding the predictability of the criminality levels of immigrants states that if the first generation of immigrants tends to reproduce the crime rates of the origin place, the second generation tends to adapt to the type of criminality of the area in which it lives, by choosing areas where there is a high level of social mobility and less social controls. The conclusion reached by the authors of the School of Chicago is that immigrants have higher crime rates, but not higher than those of the natives living in the same social conditions of immigrants (Shaw and McKay, 1969). The theme of the stranger and deviance is also at the center of Merton's reflections: using the principles of structural-functional sociology, he has extended the concept of Durkheim's anomie to understanding the crime. Mertonian theory of anomie investigates the relationship between cultural and structural level of a social context and explains the deviant behavior as a result of a conflict between these two levels. According to Merton a society is in anomie conditions when its culture proposes goals without being provided to all members the institutional and legitimate means to achieve them. Therefore, in some social groups such as lower classes, immigrants and ethnic minorities, given the situation of disadvantage and inequality of such social structure, the goals can only be reached through the use of illegitimate means (Merton, 1964). The unfavorable economic and social conditions result into a limitation of opportunities, so that this concept is known under the label of "differential opportunities". Society theoretically offers everyone the same opportunities to achieve the goals of social success but, in practice, competition limits the opportunities of the disadvantaged, therefore, class, race, social class, region of origin limit opportunities for access to the goals and promote the development of deviant subcultures (Cloward and Ohlin, 1968). The concept according to which society is based on a set of values shared by the majority of consociate, is put in crisis, after the '60s, by the theorists of the labeling approach; the latter, initiate new socio-criminological theories focused on social reaction to deviant behavior in terms of stigmatization, marginalization, punishment. The creation by society of the deviant adjective responds to the advantage of not perceiving as deviant other deviant conduct undertaken by the ruling classes and to polarize in the figures of the marginalized, the poor, the immigrant, the colored person, emotionality and disdain for the mistakes they commit (Traverso and Verde, 1981). Quinney notes how the criminal behavior of immigrants is mainly dictated by the position they occupy in society, meaning it as a reaction to subordination, to job instability and to limited participation in community life (Marotta, 2003).

Chambliss, analyzing the American criminal system, came to the conclusion that the control of the ruling classes on the lower ones was given by the administration of the law, aimed at criminalizing the behavior of the lower classes: immigrant suffered a downgrading, since the latter was devoid of power and victim of the penal system (Chambliss, 1964). Emphasizing that the judicial system should be considered the producer of the true crime and responsible for social inequalities, Chapman emphasizes that monitoring agencies behaviors place themselves against blacks and immigrants reinforcing their negative role. It would be the police to hold immoral behavior that lead blacks and immigrants to respond with illegality (Chapman, 1971). Although the theoretical contributions were aimed at affirming the numerical superiority of the immigrants’ crimes, criminological investigations carried out contradicted this trend. Sutherland and Cressey showed, on the basis of research carried out in American prisons, that the rates of delinquency of immigrants were consistently lower than those of the natives and that the type of crimes ranged according to their origin (Sutherland and Cressey, 1966). Killias found that the crime rates of second generation immigrant were higher than those of the natives of Europe, attributing this phenomenon to the discrimination in access to the world of work. If the combination between immigration and crime was initially addressed mainly in the US context, it has become increasingly important in Europe (Killias, 1989). Barbagli argue that foreigners (regular and irregular migrants) present in Italy commit a disproportionate amount of crime to

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their number (Barbagli, 2008), while Melossi believes that there is a process of labeling and stigma against immigrants; this last phenomenon does not lead to reflect on the fact that, given the most unfavorable conditions in which foreigners live in Italy, the number of who delinque among them is much lower than that of who could potentially do it (Melossi, 2008). Simmel places at the center of his reflection the figure of the stranger of his time, is the figure of a stranger who "today comes and tomorrow remains"; focuses on that figure of stranger who, even if he stops longer in society, has not completely overcome the lack of bonds of going and coming. The foreign, while sharing the space of the indigenous community, is the bearer of the characters of strangeness, becoming an internal enemy and excluded, occupying a peripheral position and who does not is part, despite being a person like the rest of the individuals of the community (Simmel, 1989). According to Schutz, when a foreigner finds himself in a new context, he has to deal with an already consolidated system of knowledge, so a crisis of his own identity and a non-sharing of the social presuppositions is inevitable. The foreigner tries to be accepted or at least tolerated by the group he enters into, taking into account the language problem, the psychological discomfort he experiences and the difficulty that arises from the lack of an effective interpretive scheme that allows him to act and interact with the group members (Schutz, 1971). The cultural model with which he experiences is a new environment, not an instrument for solving problematic situations, because he finds himself in a problematic situation that is difficult to dominate (Schutz, 1979). When he returns home, after a period of distance, he believes that, during his absence, everything has remained unchanged. Instead, the reality will be different and he will not recognize and respect it, but also he not admits to belonging in this community. Since much has changed in social and relational dynamics, as well as in the subject itself, also because the experiences lived during the distance have changed the subject (Schutz, 1979). Elias elaborated the concept of "social representation" in reference to the relationships established between individuals belonging to the integrated community and the foreigner. In its theoretical vision, the groups live in a constant struggle for their affirmation, within a framework in which some are protagonists of a social ascent, while others experience a decline. In this perspective, the human groups better positioned socially would be continually engaged in a struggle, whose aim is to defend themselves from the attack of others in the attempt of a social climb. In Elias' analysis, outsiders are perceived as a threat or an anomaly of the system, since they could destabilize social equilibrium. The outsiders are stigmatized, offended, humiliated, in a process that weakens their ability to react and their internal cohesion, making the power differential between them and the rooted ones even less energetic and more evident (Elias, 1965).

Sombart introduced in the sociological reflection on foreigner some aspects of this figure related to his function of innovation and social change: the foreigner would not be guided by its original values that gave him an identity, rather, by their absence, in order to the orientation to the future (Sombart, 1902). Wood has proposed a classification of the forms of social relationship that are established between the stranger and the group with which subject comes into contact. Author believes that the structure of pre-existing relationships would influence both the behavior among the group members and the encounter with the foreigner. The inclusion of the foreigner within a community depends on the flexibility of the group's relationship system, but also on the individual qualities of the foreigner; the meeting between the foreigner and the group members takes place between people who are strangers to each other: only the first is considered a foreign because, coming from outside, and invades the space of a cohesive group. Moreover, the absence of ties can turn into extreme isolation, "unnatural" despite the high frequency of encounters that urban life assumes for the inhabitants of the metropolis (Wood, 1934). Cesareo has classified different responses to multi-ethnicity, distinguishing monoculturalism from cultural pluralism and multiculturalism. The first is based on the idea that there must be a single culture within a territory capable of identifying a society. Monoculturalism, according to the authoritarian version, would tend to impose, through the coercive power, a specific cultural principle considered superior to the others; in the "illuminated version", on the other hand, it would admit gradual processes of cultural homologation. Cultural pluralism, instead, recognizes the existence of different cultures within society assuming a separation between public and private sphere: in the conflictual version, the emphasis is on the contrast between different (dominant and dominated) cultures; in the consensual version, however, the different cultures maintain their traditions while conforming to some shared values. Finally, multiculturalism tends to recognize and accept cultural differences, affirming the equal dignity of all cultures and respect for the fundamental rights of people. Also in this case, Cesareo distinguishes between temperate and radical multiculturalism: the first aims at dialogue between different cultures, but presupposes their selection based on respect for human rights, in order to focus respect for freedom on the basis of coexistence and of the rights of the person; radical multiculturalism, on the other hand, accepts and recognizes every culture, neglecting the aspect of respect for human rights (Cesareo, 2000). Bauman analyzes the condition of the foreign of the post-modern era, opposing it to that of modernity: in the past, the stranger was an individual who did not adapt to the dominant cognitive scheme and did not accept the principles of modern order. At that time the foreigner was perceived as an anomaly to be corrected, therefore, his presence was considered temporary. Considered as responsible for the disorder, it should not be visible, rather, it was preferred to exclude it or eliminate physically and culturally, by implementing the so-called "creative destruction", in order to reconstruct and create order. The postmodern foreign, on the other hand, shares with the rest of the community a feeling of constant uncertainty and disembonding, in a context in which this condition affects all individuals; it can not be eliminated because it represents a general condition typical of post-modernity (Bauman, 1996). Today, it is a common opinion that there is a direct relationship between the increase in immigration and the increase in crime, which translates into a real phobia of the immigrant, followed by a general need for security. Maslow, in relation to human needs, points out that, beyond those "instinctive", there is also the "need of security" defined as stability and dependence on an efficient protector. This security leads to the defeat fear and anxiety and implies the guarantee of law and social order (Maslow, 1992). The need of security is inversely related to the concept of insecurity that depends on the risk feeling experienced by community members; the risk is an expression of the more general tendency to rationalize and control nature and human actions of this era, for this reason it is possible to propose a
statistical calculability to estimate it (Castel, 2004). According to Tonnis, one of the first major transformations potentially influencing the security need was the transition from traditional to modern society, which took place between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is supported, specifically, in the theory about the transition from the Gemeinschaft (community) to the Gesellschaft (society). In the transition to the Gesellschaft the endogenous control mechanisms of the groups would be weakened. Moreover, the solidarity structures, value and protective social relations would be less pronounced. This could favor the transition to pre-social or anti-social behavior, and the re-emergence of atavistic tendencies (Tonnis, 1979). In the case of the need of security, the sense of danger of the external environment is prevalent and therefore the analysis of the opportunities takes second place. In this perspective, fear is never a rational consequence of a decision, but a way of interpreting the world as a structure devoid of: security, trust and opportunity (Luhman, 1991).

Fear of crime does not usually correspond to a direct experience of violence and/or crime (Lagrange, 1992, 1993), but it has been found that the perception of insecurity depends on factors such as the quality of urban space in which person lives, social vulnerability and networks, interpersonal and institutional trust (Mosconi, 2000). If the subjective sphere of insecurity is mainly based on the natural impulse of fear and on the consequences produced by it on the psychophysiological level, it is necessary to distinguish it from anxiety. Fear is connected to a real event, while anxiety is an abstract and not perfectly definable event. The use of the same terminology in common language, but also in research focused on the causes of insecurity, should be reviewed and corrected in the light of this definition. The tendency to the indiscriminate use of the term fear could, in fact, lead to an artificial and autogenous construction of reality. Ideally it is possible to construct a continuum, with an increasing intensity of insecurity feeling and a decreasing level of rational control of the situation, on which to place a sequence of emotions that range from the sense of vulnerability, worry, fear, anxiety, anguish, panic and finally to terror. According to Sidoti, there are three main forms of vulnerability: physical, social and economic. The first depends on physical capacity or on health state, the second on the integration degree in social frame and in the community, while the last concerns a fairly recent factor: the level of income inversely related to fragility (the lower income level are correlated to the greater subjective fragility) (Sidoti, 1999). As known, Goffman defines the term stigma as the set of physical or social traits that function as a real "brand" attributed on some individuals and groups. In identifying the three categories of stigma (physical, moral, tribal) Goffman places the immigrant in the category of tribal stigma, which refers to issues related to race, nation or religion (Goffman, 2003). Sayad, resuming Goffman's research, argues that stigma and marginalization process of that derives from it depend not only on individual's traits or on the simple interaction between people, but also on a whole range of relationships between the social positions occupied from individuals (Sayad, 2002). As stated by Sullivan, need of security, which comes from individuals and more often from groups (more or less consolidated), incorporates the claim of the exclusive right to construct the social space on their own non-negotiable criteria; it means, more precisely, to claim a power that is threatened by the foreign presence. In this case the request for security, as the right to build one's own social space, can also generate widespread anxiety, unify the fears in a danger that regards the criminal, the immigrant or the drug addict, who can eliminate keep away this subject. For this reason, modern condition is structurally characterized by a sense of individual and collective insecurity that can never be definitively placed under control, because it is the society itself that continuously nourishes it (Sullivan, 1937).

III. Method

Many empirical studies explore the diversity of certain behaviors or cognitions within a given population, semi-structured interviews with members selected from that population. Typically, the analysis involves the comparison of interview data for each topic inquired and then a summary of their diversity into a number of categories (themes of concern, types of behavior, attitudes, etc.). Several authors have criticized the weak methodological justifications or even the confusion regarding the logic of this simple type of qualitative research (Jansen, 2010; Baker, Wuest and Stern, 1992; Caelli, Ray and Mill, 2003; Charmberlain, 1999; Sandelowski and Barroso, 2003; Reichertz, 2009). According to Groves et al. (2004.), survey could be an effectiveness method to collected data and information on a larger population starting from a sample. The aim of this work is offering a general overview on Italian opinions in the field of foreign immigration and the relation with the social system. For the purpose of this study, diversity to be studied is defined beforehand and the aim of descriptive analysis is only to see which of the predefined characteristics exist empirically in the sample, translating every question into a diversity in the participants' meanings, in order to measure frequencies and correlations. Primary knowledge aim of this type of study is to explore participants’ views as expressed in the questionnaire administered. Data collection starting with the coding activity, which consist in dividing responses into meaningful parts and attributing topical categorical labels to each segments. There are a lot of contribution in literature on matter but the guidelines for coding (e.g. Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Dey, 1994; Corbin and Strauss, 2008) will be considered secondary to the core task in coding, which is determinate by the relationship between data and the aims of the study. A common strategy is coding and categorizing, which is possibly only with close question. In our empirical application we utilize data from a questionnaire collected in Sicily during the last part of 2016 and 2017, to estimate the perception of immigrants and its correlation with public policy. We assume as general framework the model developed by Fertig and Schmidt (2002) and its application in Brenner and Ferting (2006). According with the approach proposed by the authors, we aim at identifying the determinants of an attitude towards immigrants from a large set of different questions, which are analyzed in an equation model. In total, we choose only such questions are considered whose answer scale allows a clear ordering from positive to negative attitudes towards immigrants. Furthermore, in our model
observable socio-economic factors are permitted to exhibit a direct impact on the answers to survey items. Hence, demographic characteristics like as age, education, household, family income might reflect life experience, are allowed to influence respondents’ answer. The sample of the survey was carried out in six Sicilian provinces representing major places of immigrants’ residence/arrivals in relation to native inhabitants (Agrigento, Caltanissetta, Catania, Enna, Palermo, Trapani). Individuals included in the sample were required to meet the two following inclusion criteria: residence and citizenship in Italy, adequate Italian language abilities to participate in the survey; the first restriction criteria was introduce, according to the aim of this paper, to investigate the attitudes of native towards immigrants. All selected individuals meeting the inclusion criteria were invited to participate and were provided an informational letter explaining: rights, guarantee, confidentiality on data. Participants were provided with an informed consent document which they signed and were told that participation was voluntarily. Informed consent was obtained for participation in all phases of this study; the participation was totally free and voluntary, no rewards or remuneration were obtained. Individuals were instructed to complete the survey in all its section; their identities were anonymous and all data was entered/stored manually on a password protected computer. All the information was treated in the strictest confidence. Respondents completed eight-page questionnaire (including the informational letter) in about 45 minutes. The research team was present to respond on questions during survey administration. All analyses were conducted using MathLab 2015a. The survey research approach derive partially from the model developed in Fertig and Schmidt (2002) in which parameters of interest try to capture the impact of variables in attitudes on survey response. The item in questionnaire was developed with the aim of gathering information on socio-demographic characteristics such as: sex, age, formal education (related to ISCED scale), employment status, number of family members, family income, dimension of residence area, that could affect immigration perception; all item are clear transformed into a positive or negative such as: sex, age, formal education (related to ISCED scale), employment status, number of family members, family income, population size, each of the six provinces was subdivided into four strata by city dimension: large city (over 500,000 residents), city between 80,000 and less than 500,000 residents, city with less than 80,000 residents, and town (under 10,000 inhabitants).

Our dataset contains 1,722 individuals for which we observe a set of answers to questions on immigrant in Italy. For all of them, there are four ordered answer categories (high value indicating a negative evaluation) or Likert five-point scale; this approach is also supported by Quillan (1995) for measuring anti-immigrant prejudice among society. The response rate was 86.47% (1,489 responses out of 1,722 trials). From the data set, we selected the 1,489 respondents who had no missing answers on any of the variables included. The participants were male and female with a range age from 18 to 78 years old. The mean age was 34.6 years; from the sample about 53% were females and 47% males. According to the population size, each of the six provinces was subdivided into four strata by city dimension: large city (over 500,000 residents), city between 80,000 and less than 500,000 residents, city with less than 80,000 residents, and town (under 10,000 inhabitants).

In Table 1 are showed correlations, means, and standard deviations among the selected variables (multicollinearity was not present).

### Table 1 - Correlation coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
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<td>1 Age</td>
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<td>2 Gender</td>
<td>0.393**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td>3 Age Squared</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td>(0.091)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 City Dimension</td>
<td>0.179*</td>
<td>(0.068)</td>
<td>0.501**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Labour Status</td>
<td>0.306**</td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>0.098</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Income Level</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>(0.100)</td>
<td>0.299**</td>
<td>0.312**</td>
<td>0.321**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td>7 Personal Ed. Level</td>
<td>(0.499)**</td>
<td>(0.296)**</td>
<td>(0.077)</td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td>(0.098)</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td>8 Family Ed. Level</td>
<td>(0.301)**</td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
<td>0.179*</td>
<td>(0.043)</td>
<td>(0.210)</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.431**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Religious</td>
<td>0.199**</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td>(0.207)</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>0.189*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Family Member</td>
<td>(0.211)**</td>
<td>(0.168)*</td>
<td>(0.136)</td>
<td>(0.132)</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.179**</td>
<td>0.235</td>
<td>(0.031)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Technologies User</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>(0.190)*</td>
<td>(0.211)</td>
<td>(0.055)</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>(0.138)*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Martial Status</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>(0.201)*</td>
<td>(0.060)</td>
<td>(0.003)</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Means        | 34.6   | 1.34   | 1.43   | 1.45   | 1.40   | 1.37   | 1.34   | 1.34   | 1.33   | 2.51   | 1.46   | 3.60   |
| SD           | 5.45   | 0.41   | 0.38   | 0.62   | 0.48   | 0.61   | 0.40   | 0.32   | 0.12   | 1.32   | 0.73   | 1.43   |

***p<0.01  **p<0.05  *p<0.10
Of the 1,722 participants only 1,489 provided data for all the variables of interests. Age was significantly associated with gender, City dimension, labour status and Religious to educational level (personal and family). More specifically, gender was significantly (p<0.01) and negatively associated with personal educational level and number of family members, and positively associated with labour status. As in our initial hypothesis of work, income level was positively correlated with labour status; conversely, marital status does not seem to play any clear attitudes with towards foreigners; the latter conclusion is also argued by Brenner and Fertig (2006). Some of the main important topics of our survey were related to questionnaire administrated by the Institute for Population Research (IRP) and the Institute for Research on Population and Social Policy (IRPPS) of the National Research Council (CNR); in detail was asked opinion about: 1. number of foreign that living in Italy; 2. Relation between terrorism, crime and immigrants; 3. Immigration flux; 4. Migration policy and labour market. We use as benchmark the latest data available by the institute and Bonifazi (2006), in order to observe the presence of territorial difference across the country. Huge part of sample reply that are there too many immigrant (83%), only the 4% a few immigrants, 5% I don’t know and finally 8% neither too many not few. Refers to the study already published on matter, as be noted an increase of negative opinion about stranger their lifestyle, culture and work status. In the recent years, fears regarding immigration increased, about the 54% of the sample declare that immigrants lead to social insecurity, crime and terrorism. This data could be influenced by the constant migratory flow on the Italian coasts and that origin from North Africa; this greatly amplifies the focus on the subject by mass media with a direct impact on the opinion of the sample members. As it is argued by Bonifazi and Kamaras (1998) there is a substantial independence between opinions and real dimensions of the immigration phenomenon (Bonifazi, 2006).

This fact suggests that international tensions and the associated public discourse on national security have affected the strangers in local and institutional relations, whit form of discrimination against all immigrant groups, along with a higher perception among immigrants of hostility or ambiguous treatment (Rousseau et al., 2011). The present results suggest that economic integration, which can be considered as a proxy for structural discrimination, may have a stronger global effect on minority distress than on discrimination linked to prevalent social representations.

V. Conclusion

The findings of our surveys seem to confirm the complexity of reasons behind people’s attitudes towards immigration. Considering the most recent survey, education level appeared to be a key variable in defining the opinions of the interviewees. Our questionnaires highlight how socio-economic characteristic began a fundamentals driver to influence people opinions. Negative stereotypes of immigrants as deviants with values incompatible with those of the host society may play a role in shaping assessments of immigration’s effect on societal safety (McLaren and Johnson, 2007), although prevalent in people’s minds, the association of immigrants with crime lacks consistent objective evidence (Fitzgerald et al., 2011). According with the authors, for this findings comes from evidence that racial attitudes are important drivers of crime policy preferences (Peffley and Hurwitz, 2002). For the evidence expose, educational level plays a fundamental role in opinion about immigrants. Nevertheless, is not negable the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and attitudes to stranger. This survey was confined to a regional focus thus the primary findings may not be generalizable to all the country’s population. Another limitation is the relatively small number of sample that was used in the various statistical analyses. Individual questionnaire could affect the truthfulness of answers and therefore bias the results of the study. Therefore, these findings should be taken as preliminary until more robust research, with bigger sample and variables, could confirm the estimates obtain or produce new findings. According with the purpose, this study provided primary evidence of an interaction between socio-demographic characteristics and the fears of strangers, in order to implement action at institutional level to prevent form of social stigmatization and racism. Our findings suggest that it may be beneficial to devote more attention to identifying (and assisting) immigrant who have a propensity of social exclusion that could degenerate into social isolation activities and deviance activities. Nonetheless, we urge future research to include a wide sample and triangulate our study results. A limitation of our study refer to the use of self-report questionnaire in line to assessing these variables objectively. These may not be very accurate because people tend to overestimate or underestimate the aspect of their inner self. (Connor Gorber, Tremblay, Moher and Gorber, 2007). For the reasons exposed above, a wider system of social inclusion should be developed through intercultural exchange policies, both at local and institutional level. Future research, it would be ideal to directly measure these variables. Considering both the benefits and limitations of our research, the current study should be considered to be a first step in demonstrating the value of pro-active policies to reduce deviant behavior, and we believe it is a necessary first step.

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