



**Proceedings of the 2nd International
Conference**

of the Journal Scuola Democratica

REINVENTING EDUCATION

VOLUME III

**Pandemic and Post-Pandemic
Space and Time**

**ASSOCIAZIONE "PER SCUOLA
DEMOCRATICA"**

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**Pandemic and Post-
Pandemic Space and
Time**

Via Francesco Satolli, 30 – 00165 - Rome, Italy

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***Title* Proceedings of the Second International Conference of the Journal “Scuola Democratica” – Reinventing Education VOLUME III Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Space and Time**

This volume contains papers presented in the 2nd International Conference of the Journal “Scuola Democratica” which took place online on 2-5 June 2021. The Conference was devoted to the needs and prospects of Reinventing Education.

The challenges posed by the contemporary world have long required a rethinking of educational concepts, policies and practices. The question about education ‘for what’ as well as ‘how’ and ‘for whom’ has become unavoidable and yet it largely

remained elusive due to a tenacious attachment to the ideas and routines of the past which are now far off the radical transformations required of educational systems.

Scenarios, reflections and practices fostering the possibility of change towards the reinvention of the educational field as a driver of more general and global changes have been centerstage topics at the Conference. Multidisciplinary approach from experts from different disciplinary communities, including sociology, pedagogy, psychology, economics, architecture, political science has brought together researchers, decision makers and educators from all around the world to investigate constraints and opportunities for reinventing education.

The Conference has been an opportunity to present and discuss empirical and theoretical works from a variety of disciplines and fields covering education and thus promoting a trans- and inter-disciplinary discussion on urgent topics; to foster debates among experts and professionals; to diffuse research findings all over international scientific networks and practitioners’ mainstreams; to launch further strategies and networking alliances on local, national and international scale; to provide a new space for debate and evidences to educational policies. In this framework, more than 800 participants, including academics, educators, university students, had the opportunity to engage in a productive and fruitful dialogue based on research, analyses and critics, most of which have been published in this volume in their full version.

Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Space and Time

A Premise

Papers in this third volume deals with the Covid-19 pandemic which is having an enormous impact on education systems worldwide. Policy makers, teachers, school managers, parents and students have been called to the reinvent their way of 'doing school'. At the same time, the governance of the education system and schools' organizations have been exposed to unprecedented tensions.

Within a short period of time, radical changes had to be introduced, simultaneously, at various levels of the school system. At national and regional level, there has been the need to rethink the way in which teachers are recruited, engaged and managed. National assessment and evaluation systems have been suspended or redefined in their uses by school actors. The ways through which institutes were managed and organized had to be rethought, passing in a very short time through an on and off of dematerialization and hyper-normativity of time and space. Within schools, managers and teachers have been called to redefine the role of digital technologies in their didactic, as well as in their relationships with families and students. In some cases, these set of changes led to experience novel and unexpected daily proximities, in other prevailed a context characterized by distance and unsatisfactory relationships. Managers and teachers have been asked to re-invent their professionalism to rethink their organizational, didactic and relational competences. Students and families, on their side, have been called to rebuild and reimagine new way of being at school, re-inventing the spaces and time of schooling and the way in which they relate among each other and with teachers.

The pandemic emergency has been a lens revealing intersections and structural tensions among various level and actors of the education system, but also allowing opportunities of changes thanks to the exogenous shock. At the same time, it must be considered that the emergency is interacting on pre-existing inequalities and contradictions. The pandemic clearly revealed the deep disparities of educational opportunities associated to students' life and housing conditions, beyond their access and uses of technological devices. Remote teaching and the enactment of an 'emergency didactic' has exacerbated learning difficulties for underprivileged students (children facing material deprivation, students with migratory background, students with special needs or disable, etc.). The interaction between the pandemic and pre-existing inequalities created different contextual conditions for actors' agency, orienting

toward different directions the pandemic's transformational potential.

Higher education systems have been affected too: in constant evolution due to constant transformations of society and changed functions of knowledge, universities have undergone a structural change along with pandemic times. Simultaneously, the growing relevance of knowledge for the economic development of the capitalistic system has profoundly affected higher education systems, characterized by the neo-liberal approach which has subject of increasing critical analysis.

However, Higher education systems are starting to be affected by other somewhat inevitable changing processes due to the evolution of knowledge and the consequent forms of its transmission. These forms have to be necessarily new both because of the availability of new instruments and the increased need to develop interpretative models of a constant and often unpredictable change. In this juncture the university might assume a renewed central role. At Higher Education System level, the growing use of digital instruments is envisaged in order to cope with the rising of the management rates of the training offer as well as to answer to the growing differentiation of user categories. A feasible consequence could be the increasing of the already pressure for the differentiation among the universities, with the related social implications.

At individual university level, it is foreseeable the demand for university involvement in tackling the problems of society and the economy will increase. And this at global, national and local level. From an organizational point of view the most significant feature is represented by the accumulation of traditional and new tasks that do not seem to be possible to manage. Whatever form the higher education systems will come to take, it remains that a central point to be clarified concerns the management of change. It will be the market that will impose its rules and the universities will organize themselves individually within the invisible enclosures that will guide their policies (with predictable growing social and territorial differences), or instead the State will choose incentive policies to direct its training system. It remains that in a condition of uncertainty and constant change the university's roles multiply and become – at least potentially – more and more central. It can therefore be argued that the university is not only called upon to respond to the demands of society but by elaborating answers and solutions to the problems it progressively affects the functioning of society.

We are fully aware that each educational experience produces specific results and definitions of teaching-learning practices. The well-established model of the magister teacher, based on a one-to-many transmission of knowledge, is complemented by new configurations of teaching-learning practices. There are

teaching practices that cultivate the ambition to combine the technological innovation with the psychological and pedagogical issues. Educational technologies, such as the Interactive Whiteboard, incorporate a new grammar and pragmatic in which the emphasis is placed on the involvement and the participation of the student, as well as on a “reverse teaching”, compared to the traditional one. The diffusion of online educational platforms, based on algorithmic architectures and data-driven approaches, also draws attention to a personalized way of learning and a datafication of teaching. Digital technologies are therefore stimulating a series of transformations in the socio-material order of the class affecting the spatial and temporal configuration of teaching. At the same time, they are embedded in the complexity of the educational contexts that rework their practical and symbolic value.

In the European framework of strengthening the relations between the labour market and education, we also witness the implementation of teaching practices associated with the idea of knowledge as an economic and social investment. Recently, a large field of critical investigation has highlighted how teaching aimed at improving the employment prospects of students is deeply affecting public values in education. At the same time, different points of view in the educational field claim to postpone the transmission of skills related to the labour market to broader educational objectives of social inclusion and civic participation.

The new proxemics imposed by the current pandemic challenge traditional spatial configuration, from the arrangement of desks to the mobile use of chairs, from the forms of communication in virtual environments to the interaction in the classroom. Therefore, this is to register the need to re-elaborate the ecology of the educational practices, starting from the socio-material space of learning.

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Foreign Students in Italian Universities: A Statistical Analysis of the Last Decade

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ABSTRACT: *In recent years university students' mobility has become increasingly important at a national level. It has been the subject of numerous studies on the South-Centre and South-North mobility flows of Italian students who choose university out of their residence region. The aim is twofold: to provide quantitative information on the university enrollment of the foreign students in the Italian universities (the size of the flows of foreign students enrolled at Italian universities, according to some socio-demographic characteristics); to measure the dropout rates and the time taken to obtain the degree comparing to the Italian students. Foreign students (FS) were classified into two groups: students with a high school diploma obtained abroad (i.e., IST international students) and foreign students with a high school diploma obtained in Italy (i.e., SGI second-generation immigrants). The analysis is based on the database 'Anagrafe Nazionale Studenti' (ANS) of the MIUR, concerning the careers of the university students enrolled in Italy from 2008/09 to 2017/18 (Mobysu.it). The results show that the IST and SGI enrolled in Italy have increased in the last decade, especially from 2014 to 2017 (+19%), but their presence is still very limited if compared to other European countries: 4.5% in 2011 and 5.3% in 2017. Their university performance is poor with much higher dropout rates than the Italian ones, even if the SGI perform better. Only a small amount of IST and SGI students enroll in Southern universities. Finally, the results confirm that the dramatic dropout rates at university are in line with their performance in the high school.*

KEYWORDS: *University student performance, Foreign students, North-South divide.*

Introduction

University student mobility is a phenomenon that recently became very important at a national level. In fact, it is the subject of numerous studies on the South-Central and South-North migratory flows of Italian university students who choose universities located outside their residence. In the last years, the dimensions of these flows have become increasingly consistent, with certainly not negligible consequences on the socio-economic structure of the areas of origin. Student mobility

plays a relevant role in widening the 'gap' between the regional macro-areas (North-Central and South and Islands), that is the socio-economic gap that has always afflicted our country. Recent literature has produced several works on the mobility and the university success in general (Enea, 2018; Attanasio, Enea, 2019; Contini *et al.*, 2018), and with reference to the Government Fund towards universities, as an element of further depletion for the southern universities (Ezza *et al.*, 2019). This work belongs to the previously described context, and its objects are the mobility of foreign students and their university performance. The university career of these students is the object of this paper. In addition, we include students with foreign passports who have attended a high school in Italy to compare the two groups with each other and with Italians. Our goal is to provide quantitative information on the failure/success of foreign students in Italian universities. We will consider students' data at enrolment, in terms of the students flows enrolled at our universities, according to some socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, citizenship, and the country where they attended high school; and during the course, in terms of number of graduates or dropouts and the time to get the bachelor degree.

The work is organized as follows: the first section is dedicated to the data, the second to the descriptive analysis at enrolment, the third to the analysis of the career at the end of the first year, and, finally, the fourth to the analysis of success/failure in terms of the bachelor's degree.

1. Foreign Presence Data in Italy

The data used here to describe the foreign students' mobility to Italy come from the database of the MIUR National Student Registry (ANS), containing the careers of all the students enrolled in Italy since the academic year 2008/09 to date (Mobysu.it). These are longitudinal individual data, with a record for each student and each cohort, containing both socio-demographic and university career information, from the enrolment to the 'exit' from the system, that can be due to one of the following events: graduation, dropout, or moving to another university.

We analyse the data relating to three cohorts of students enrolled in any Italian university, in the academic years 2011/12, 2014/15 and 2017/18 with respect to some relevant the relevant information, as:

1. the citizenship.
2. the country where they attended high school.
3. the gender.
4. the macro-region of the Italian university of enrolment.
5. the field of study of the enrolment course (Health, Scientific, Social, Humanities).
6. the University Credits per year.

7. the *status* at the beginning of the second year: stayer (student remaining in the same degree course), mover (student changing the degree course), or dropout.

8. the response variable: the number of years to get the degree (BA's). For comparative purposes, the analysis will be conducted considering, on the one hand, the country where they attended high school, on the other hand, the citizenship of the student.

The aim is to highlight differences between 'real' foreigners, i.e. those who have attended high school abroad (i.e., the international students, IST), and 'Italian' foreigners, i.e. those who have attended high school in Italy (i.e., the second-generation immigrants, SGI). Considering these two groups is important to better understand if the university failure rates of the foreign students 'follow' the failure rates of the foreign students in the Italian high schools. In fact, in 2012/13, the 'irregularity' of foreign students is 67.1% against 23.9% of Italians and the rate of further education of foreign students who attended high school in Italy is 3.1%, compared to 45 – 50% of Italian students (Colombo, Ongini, 2014).

Let us now deal with foreign student mobility to Italy for university studies, providing, firstly, a general description. Then, we consider the students' distributions by the country of origin and some demographic variables and, finally, by the choice of the disciplinary area.

Table 1 shows the cohorts of enrolled students in Italy, for the academic years 2011/12 (2011), 2014/15 (2014) and 2017/18 (2017), according to citizenship, foreign (FS) or Italian (IT): the last row contains the coexistence relationship (expressed as percentage), obtained as the ratio between the number of foreigners and Italians enrolled in the Italian universities, for each cohort; the last two columns contain percentage change rates between each cohort and the previous one.

TAB. 1. *Students enrolled in cohorts 2011, 2014 and 2017, in Italy: foreigners (FS), Italians (IT).*

	Citizenship	Cohort			Variation rates	
		2011	2014	2017	2014/2011	2017/2014
Italy	FS	12496	13027	15503	4,2	19,0
	IT	265904	257730	278625	-3,1	8,1
	TOT	278400	270757	294128	-2,7	8,6
FS (%)		4,5	4,8	5,3		

Comparing the first two lines of data, it is possible to appreciate that the number of foreign students enrolled grew more slightly in the first interval (4.2%) and by a substantial share in the second (19%), while Italians of the same cohort increased by 8.1%. The coexistence ratio between foreign and Italian students shows a positive trend, going from 4.5% in 2011 to 5.3% in 2017.

Table 2 shows the joint distribution of enrolled students by the citizenship held at the time of enrolment, Italian (IT) or foreign (FS), and

the nation where they attended the high school (ISCED levels 3 – 5), in Italy or abroad. Then, this yields four groups of students:

- i. FS-abroad (IST), students with non-Italian citizenship and diploma obtained abroad.
- ii. FS-Italy (SGI), students with non-Italian citizenship and diploma obtained in Italy.
- iii. IT-abroad, students with Italian citizenship and diploma obtained abroad.
- iv. IT-Italy, students with Italian citizenship and diploma obtained in Italy.

The first group includes foreign students with foreign education who came in Italy to enrol in a university; the second group should include foreign students who have grown up and studied in Italy and decided to continue their higher education in Italy: these should (or could) be immigrants in Italy with their families, or rather they could be second generation immigrants, born in Italy from immigrant families. The third group is numerically the smallest one, and it is probably composed of Italian students who have attended high school abroad and who have returned to enrol in an Italian university: in the following analysis, the two last groups are put together in the IT group, which will be considered the reference group.

TAB. 2. *Students enrolled in Italy, according to citizenship and to the country of the high school diploma, cohorts 2011, 2014 and 2017.*

Cohort	Citizenship		Diploma		
			FS	IT	TOT
2011	FS	N.	6687	5809	12496
		%	53,5	46,5	4,5
	IT	N.	1053	264851	265904
		%	0,4	99,6	95,5
	TOT	N.	7740	270660	278400
		%	2,8	97,2	100
2014	FS	N.	5533	7494	13027
		%	42,5	57,5	4,8
	IT	N.	1131	256599	257730
		%	0,4	99,6	95,2
	TOT	N.	6664	264093	270757
		%	2,5	97,5	100
2017	FS	N.	6913	8590	15503
		%	44,6	55,4	5,3
	IT	N.	1576	277049	278625
		%	0,6	99,4	94,7
	TOT	N.	8489	285639	294128
		%	2,9	97,1	100

The distribution of Italian students according to the country where they attended high school, shows no substantial change over time. It is noted that the fourth group (IT-Italy) represents almost the totality of students,

while the third one (IT-abroad) is numerically irrelevant. The same distribution of foreign students shows a different behaviour: these with a foreign diploma (IST) prevail only in the 2011 cohort. From the second cohort onwards, a turnaround is observed: in fact, SGI students show a steady growth in the last two three-year periods. This could be firstly due to the general poor attraction exerted by Italy worldwide, and to the increase of first and/or second-generation immigrants enrolled in an Italian university.

The totals (in the last column) confirm that the number of foreign students enrolled in Italy has grown in the most recent cohorts. The IST group is numerically stable, while the SGI group increases, indicating the access to the university of both the immigrants' children and/or second-generation immigrants (not yet in possession of Italian citizenship). Therefore, it seems that the growth in the number of foreign students over time is due more to the growth of SGI students than to IST ones.

This hypothesis is supported by Strozza (2015), which highlights the strong growth in the number of foreign students who are children of immigrants who register for a second-grade secondary school, from 196141 units of the school year 2001/02 to 574133 in 2007/08 (+192%), and to 802785 units in 2013/14 (+39.8%). The percentage of Italian students who attended high school abroad and returned in Italy to enrol in a university appears to be irrelevant, and, as already said, from now on, this group will be included in the group of Italian students with an Italian diploma.

Finally, table 3 shows the distributions of the three groups of students by gender, in the three cohorts: apart from small percentage variations, it seems that no distribution varies over time.

TAB. 3. *Students enrolled in Italy, in cohorts 2011, 2014 and 2017, according to gender, citizenship and location of the high school diploma (values and column percentages).*

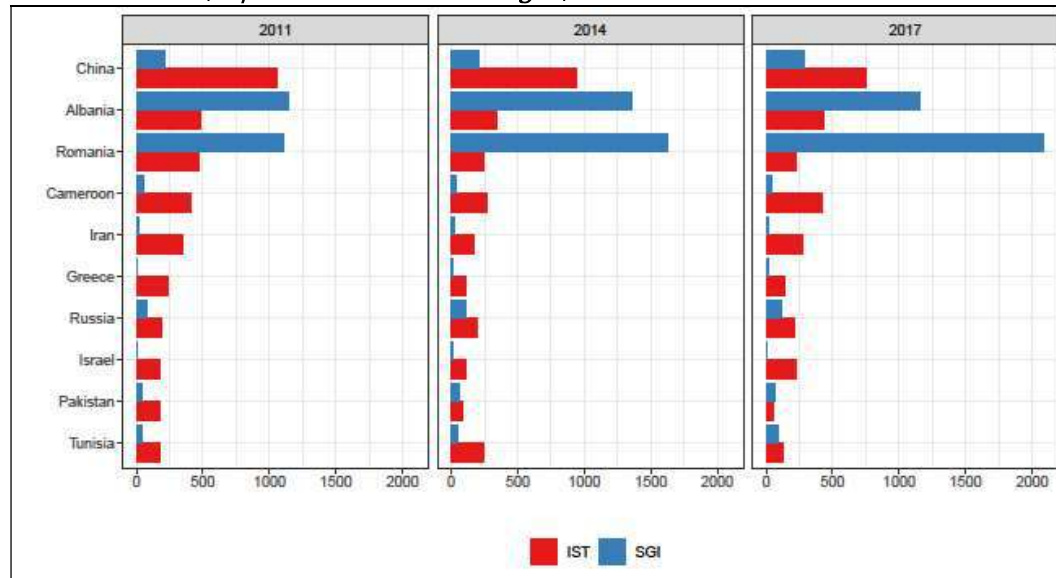
Cit-Dip	Gender		Cohort		
			2011	2014	2017
IST	F	N.	3633	2941	3686
		%	54,3	53,2	53,3
	M	N.	3054	2592	3227
		%	45,7	46,8	46,7
SGI	F	N.	3678	4656	5250
		%	63,3	62,1	61,1
	M	N.	2131	2838	3340
		%	36,7	37,9	38,9
IT	F	N.	149195	141967	152655
		%	56,1	55,1	54,8
	M	N.	116709	115763	125970
		%	43,9	44,9	45,2

Moreover, female students are always and everywhere more numerous than male ones, especially among the SGI group where the female presence is more marked (over 60%) and it does not vary over time.

1.1. Citizenship

The distributions of the two groups of foreign students, namely the IST (red) and the SGI (blue) students, by the first 10 citizenships, sorted by the number of IST students, over time, are shown in figure 1. On average, 47.5% of the total IST students and 43.7% of the SGI students come from these ten countries.

FIG. 1. *Distribution of IST and SGI students enrolled in Italian universities in the three cohorts (top 10 countries of origin).*



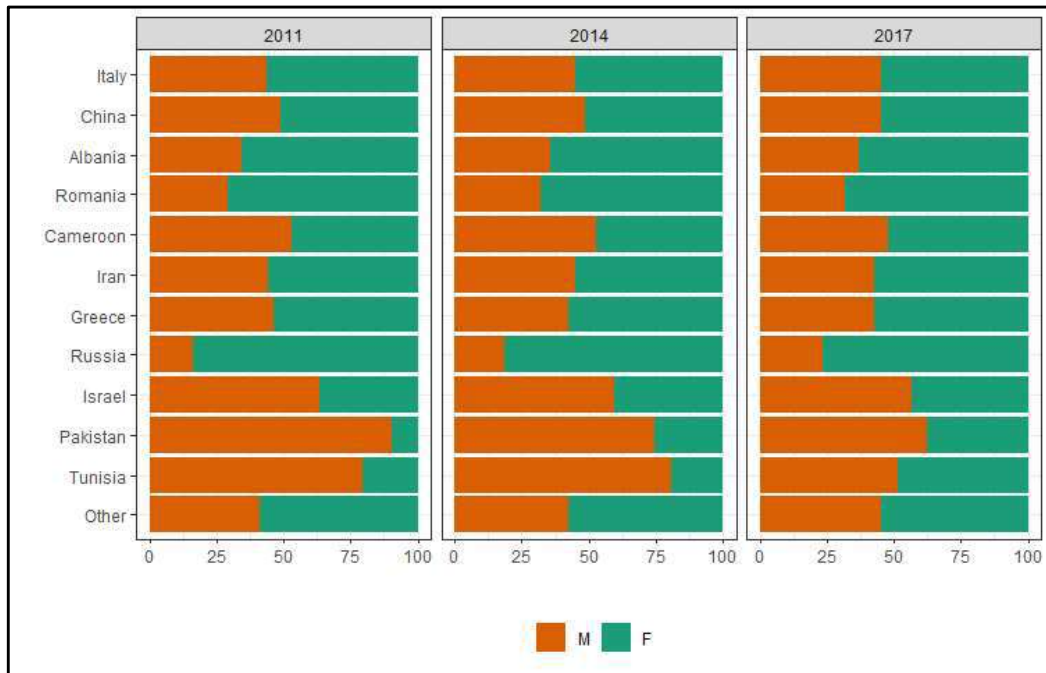
Moreover, for some countries, mainly non-European, foreign students are predominantly ISTs, but Albania and Romania; the share of SGIs from Albania, Romania, and China increases significantly, because the children of the immigrants from the 1990s have started to enrol in an Italian university.

1.2. Gender

The percentage distributions of the foreign students (FS) by gender, controlling for the citizenship, over time, are shown in figure 2. The distribution of the Italian students is also shown as a reference for making comparisons.

It is worth to note that European countries, as Italy, Albania, Romania, Russia, and Greece, have a greater female component, that seems to be constant over time, while non-European countries, as Pakistan, Tunisia, and Israel have a greater male component, that seems to decrease over time.

FIG. 2. *Percentage distribution of foreign students enrolled in Italian universities in the three cohorts, according to citizenship and gender.*

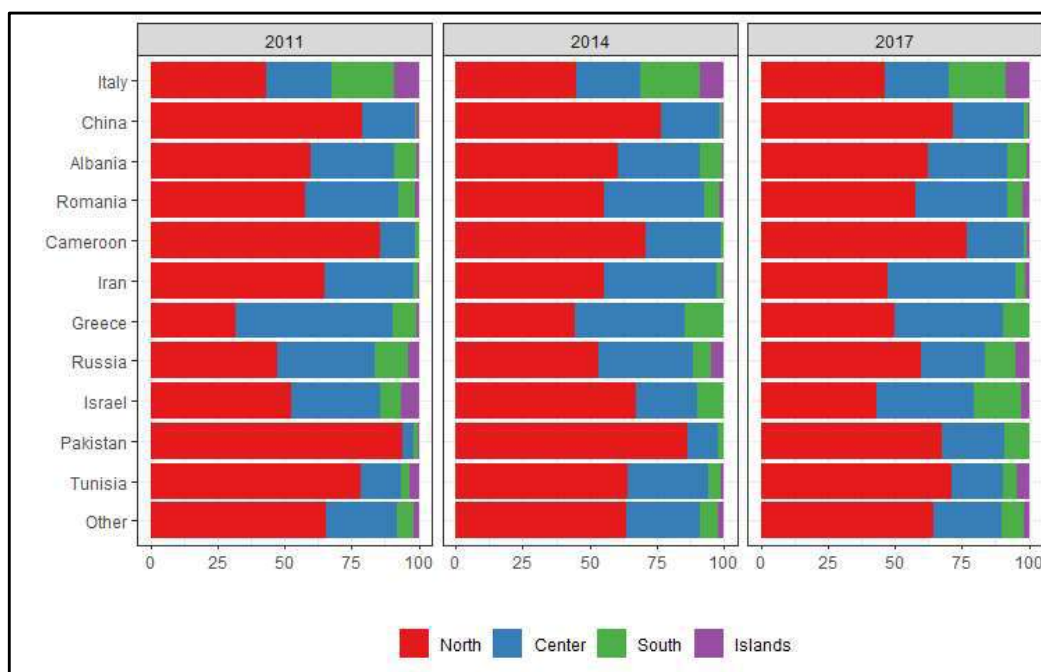


1.3. Macro-region of the Italian university of enrolment

The percentage distributions of foreign students (FS) by the macro-region of the Italian university of enrolment, controlling for the citizenship, over time, are shown in Figure 3.

From the North to the Islands, the percentages of foreign students gradually decrease; universities of the Islands have the lowest percentages (around 10%) of foreign students, mainly from Russia, Israel, and Tunisia; in the Southern universities, the foreign component is slightly stronger, and it is noted that here the Israeli students are about 15%, in 2017, due to the growth recorded in the two previous cohorts; Central universities seem to attract mainly students with Greek and Iranian citizenship: for the former, the percentage was slightly higher than 50%, in 2011, falling over time in favour of the Northern universities; conversely, for the latter there was an increase over time to the detriment of the Northern universities. It is worth noting that Chinese and Cameroonian students are almost totally distributed between Central and Northern universities, with a strong preference for the latter. Finally, it can be said that most foreign students prefer to enrol in a university in the North.

FIG. 3. Percentage distribution of foreign students enrolled in Italian universities in the three cohorts by citizenship and macro-region where the university is located.



TAB. 4. *Enrolled ISTs and SGIs in Italy, in cohorts 2011, 2014 and 2017 in the first 6 universities.*

University of enrolment	Cit-Dip		Cohort		
			2011	2014	2017
University of Bologna	IST	N.	556	462	599
		%	57,7	54,1	47,1
University of Bologna	SGI	N.	408	392	674
		%	42,3	45,9	52,9
La Sapienza	IST	N.	395	299	388
		%	50,5	35,9	37,6
La Sapienza	SGI	N.	387	533	644
		%	49,5	64,1	62,4
University of Turin	IST	N.	351	264	433
		%	46,4	37,4	40,4
University of Turin	SGI	N.	405	442	639
		%	53,6	62,6	59,6
Polytechnic of Turin	IST	N.	744	536	491
		%	80,3	77,3	80,8
Polytechnic of Turin	SGI	N.	183	157	117
		%	19,7	22,7	19,2
University of Florence	IST	N.	293	320	319
		%	49,5	45,6	46,4
University of Florence	SGI	N.	299	381	368
		%	50,5	54,4	53,6
University of Milan	IST	N.	461	421	313
		%	90,6	55,4	49,8
University of Milan	SGI	N.	48	339	315
		%	9,4	44,6	50,2
First 6 universities	IST	N.	2800	2302	2543
		%	41,9	41,6	36,8
First 6 universities	SGI	N.	1730	2244	2757
		%	29,8	29,9	32,1
Other universities	IST	N.	3887	3231	4370
		%	58,1	58,4	63,2
Other universities	SGI	N.	4079	5250	5833
		%	70,2	70,1	67,9

Among the six preferred universities by foreign students, reported in table 4, Turin (considering its two universities: University of Turin and Polytechnic of Turin) hosted almost 1700 foreign students, in 2017,

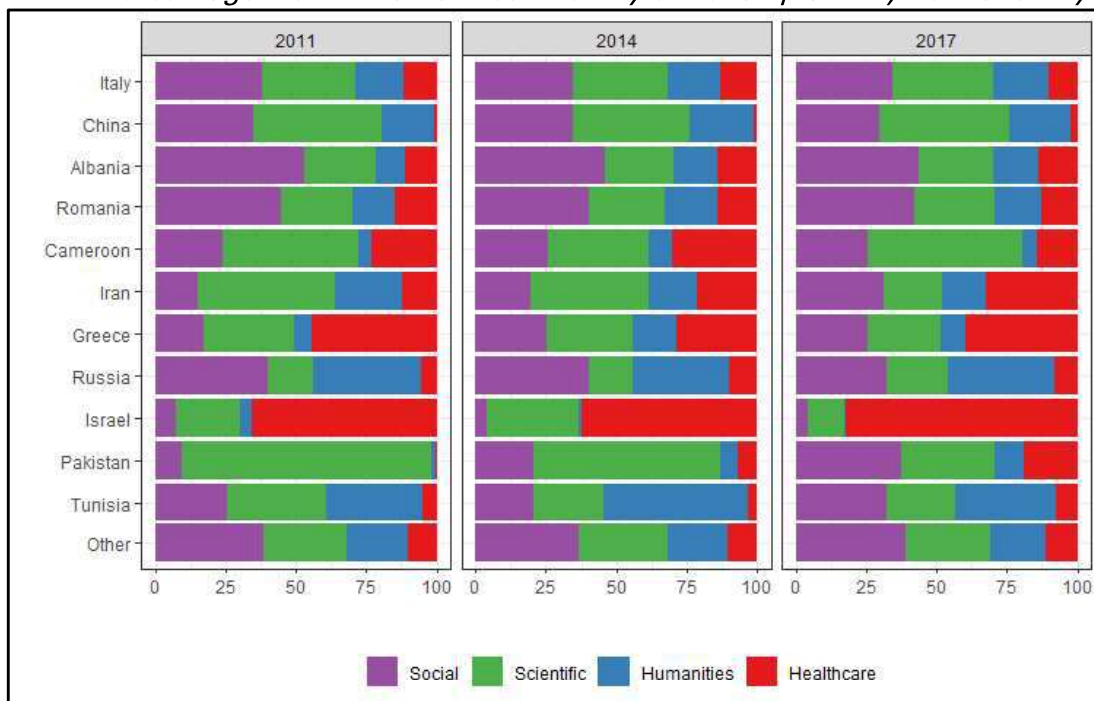
despite the enrolled ISTs at the Polytechnic recorded a sharp drop over time, going from 744, in 2011, to 491 students, in 2017. Among the university of the Centre, the university of Rome 'La Sapienza' exhibits an increase in the percentage of ISTs, from 49.5% in 2011 to 62.4 % in 2017. On average, the first six larger universities are responsible for about 40% of the IST group and about 31% of the SGI group. The high share of IST students can be explained by the attraction exerted by the large cities where these universities are located, while the share of the SGI group is only slightly higher than 30% because this group is spread over the whole Italian territory.

1.4. Field of Study

The preferences of foreign students in terms of field of study, controlling for the citizenship, and over time, are shown in figure 4. It shows that preferences made by students from China, Albania and Romania seem to be confirmed over time.

The health and medicine field are chosen by most Israeli students, followed by the Greeks and the Iranians. The scientific field shows the greatest heterogeneity: in fact, the percentages exhibit a decreasing trend over time, most for students coming from Pakistan, Iran, and Israel. The two latter field of study show less variability over time, and some heterogeneity among countries.

FIG. 4. Percentage distribution of freshmen by citizenship and by field of study.



Moreover, Table 5 shows the distributions of the two groups of foreign students, namely the ISTs and the SGIs, according to the field of study of enrolment, in the three cohorts. The IST group mostly prefers courses in the scientific and social areas, both with percentages always greater than

30%, but with two opposite trends: the first one slightly decreasing and the second one slightly growing, over time. Courses in the healthcare and humanities areas follow. On the other hand, the SGI group mostly prefers courses in the social area, with percentages always at least around 40%, albeit with a slightly downward trend: scientific (with percentages higher than 30%), humanities (around 16-21%), and finally, healthcare (about 10%) courses follow.

TAB. 5. *IST and SGI students enrolled in Italy, in cohorts 2011, 2014 and 2017, according to the field of study of enrolment (values and column percentages).*

Area of enrolment	Cit-Dip		Cohort		
			2011	2014	2017
Health	IST	N.	925	708	1164
		%	13,8	12,8	16,8
	SGI	N.	533	811	828
		%	9,2	10,8	9,6
Scientific	IST	N.	2336	1858	2140
		%	34,9	33,6	31,0
	SGI	N.	1692	2183	2619
		%	29,1	29,1	30,5
Social	IST	N.	2196	1807	2466
		%	32,8	32,7	35,7
	SGI	N.	2549	3004	3423
		%	43,9	40,1	39,9
Humanities	IST	N.	1230	1160	1141
		%	18,4	21,0	16,5
	SGI	N.	1035	1496	1719
		%	17,8	20,0	20,0
Total	IST	N.	6687	5533	6911
	SGI	%	5809	7494	8589

2. Analysis of the Career

2.1. The Transition From 1st To 2nd Year

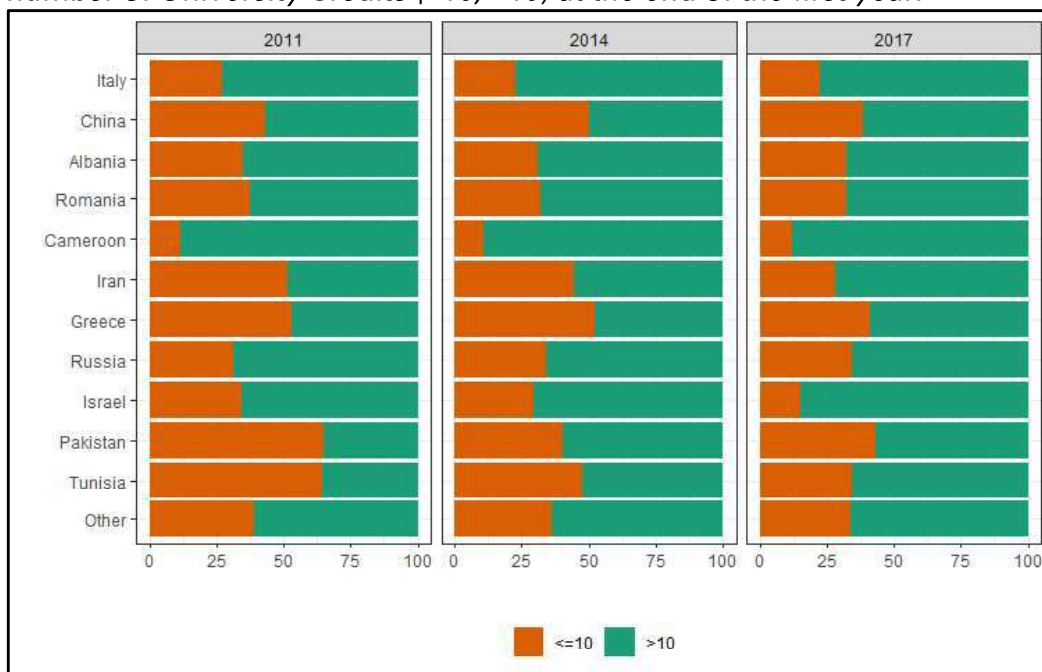
Before considering university 'success', it is very helpful to look at what happens between the first and second year, as it is known from the literature that this is a very important step in students' careers, and it is 'predictive' of university success. To do this, it is useful to consider two variables: the first one is the number of University Credits at the end of the first year; the second is the student's status at the beginning of the second year (which will be defined later).

First, to evaluate the performance of foreign students, in figure 5 we study their distribution with respect to the number of University Credits at the end of the first year, setting a threshold at 10 credits. This threshold allows to identify a student who did not actually attend the first year of university, because many students, despite not having passed any

exams, have accumulated a certain number of credits thanks to basic courses, such as English or Computer Science.

Generally, moving from the first cohort to the more recent ones, there is an improvement: in fact, the percentage of students who at most reach the threshold of 10 credits at the end of the first year decreases. Students from Tunisia vary between 63% in 2011 and about 33% in 2017, and those from Iran from 52% in 2011 to 30% in 2017. The best performances in terms of university credits over time, are those of students with Cameroonian citizenship, followed by the Italians: the former show consistently percentages of students not exceeding the threshold around 10%; the latter show a slight drop, going from more than 25% in 2011 to just less than 25% in 2017. Finally, it is worth noting that the Israeli students, despite having higher percentages than the Italian colleagues in 2011, show an improvement in their performance. In fact, only 13% of them do not exceed 10 credits in 2017. These are mainly students enrolled in a degree course of the health area.

FIG. 5. *Percentage distribution of freshmen by citizenship according to the number of University Credits (≤ 10 ; > 10) at the end of the first year.*



To assess student performance, it is interesting to add a detail to the analysis, splitting the foreign students into the two groups IST and SGI. Table 6 shows the distributions of the two groups according to the achievement (or not) of the credits' threshold at the end of the first year. The Italian students are also included as the reference group. Students from Greece, Iran and Israel are not reported, due to their numerical exiguity. In general, the highest percentages of foreign students with the best performance are observed among those who have had a previous study experience in Italy. The exceptions are the Cameroonians and the Russians, with the former having even better performances than the

Italians, and the latter showing increasing percentages over time of students who exceed the threshold. The students with most marked differences and/or most interesting trends are those from Pakistan and China. Among the first ones, the ISTs have the highest percentage of students who do not exceed the threshold in the 2011 (69.4% against 46.2% of the SGIs); in 2014, the performance of both groups improved, and the gap narrowed; in 2017, performance almost matched, with the percentage of ISTs crossing the threshold exceeding that of their SGI compatriots (58.6% and 54.8% respectively). On the other hand, the percentage of Chinese ISTs that exceeds the threshold goes up and down over time, while the Chinese SGIs perform as the IT group, with a trend that is always positive and a more marked gap between the first and second cohort (70.8% and 73.7%). It is also noteworthy the behaviour of Tunisian students from both groups, whose performances improve over time, as the SGIs perform better (44.7% in 2011, 46.3% in 2014 and, finally, 69% in 2017) than the ISTs (33.3% in 2011, 53.7% in 2014 and 63.1% in 2017).

TAB. 6. *ITs, ISTs and SGIs enrolled in the 2011, 2014 and 2017 cohorts, according to the number of University Credits at the end of the first year (absolute values and % of line).*

		Cohort								
		2011			2014			2017		
Citizenship	Cit-Dip	<=10	>10	TOT	<=10	>10	TOT	<=10	>10	TOT
Italy	IT	27,1	72,9	265904	22,5	77,5	257730	22,7	77,3	278625
Albania	IST	37,2	62,8	478	35,5	64,5	344	36,8	63,2	429
	SGI	34,2	65,8	1145	29,6	70,4	1355	30,6	69,4	1161
Cameroon	IST	8,5	91,5	410	8,1	91,9	273	10,1	89,9	425
	SGI	32,7	67,3	55	36,7	63,3	30	31,6	68,4	38
China	IST	44,7	55,3	1057	54,7	45,3	945	43,3	56,7	751
	SGI	37,3	62,7	209	29,2	70,8	209	26,3	73,7	281
Pakistan	IST	69,4	30,6	173	45,8	54,2	83	41,4	58,6	58
	SGI	46,2	53,8	39	33,3	66,7	63	45,2	54,8	62
Romania	IST	42,5	57,5	464	38,8	61,2	245	34,1	65,9	226
	SGI	35,5	64,5	1101	31,0	69,0	1620	31,9	68,1	2090
Russia	IST	30,5	69,5	187	33,2	66,8	196	34,4	65,6	212
	SGI	33,3	66,7	84	36,1	63,9	108	33,9	66,1	118
Tunisia	IST	66,7	33,3	171	46,3	53,7	242	36,9	63,1	130
	SGI	55,3	44,7	47	53,7	46,3	54	31,0	69,0	87
Others	IST	40,0	60,0	3747	36,4	63,6	3205	31,1	68,9	4682
	SGI	40,2	59,8	3129	36,8	63,2	4055	35,5	64,5	4753
Total Foreigners	IST	40,0	60,0	6687	38,7	61,3	5533	31,9	68,1	6913
	SGI	38,0	62,0	5809	34,1	65,9	7494	33,7	66,3	8590

To analyse the transition from I to II year, the second variable created is the status variable, defined as follows:

- 'Stayer': is the student who attend the same course in the second year, at the same university as in the first year.
- 'Mover': is the student who attend a different course in the second year, at the same or at a different university from that of the first year.
- 'Dropout': is the student who drops out university in the second year.

As can be seen in figure 6, in recent years there has been a general increase of the stayers. More specifically, the most marked increase is recorded for students from Iran and Israel. As already mentioned, the latter are students mainly enrolled in a course in the health area, where the drop-out rate is generally very low. Instead, students from China and Pakistan show increasing rates of both dropouts and movers (more marked for the latter).

FIG. 6. Percentage distribution of matriculated by citizenship in the transition from I to II year.

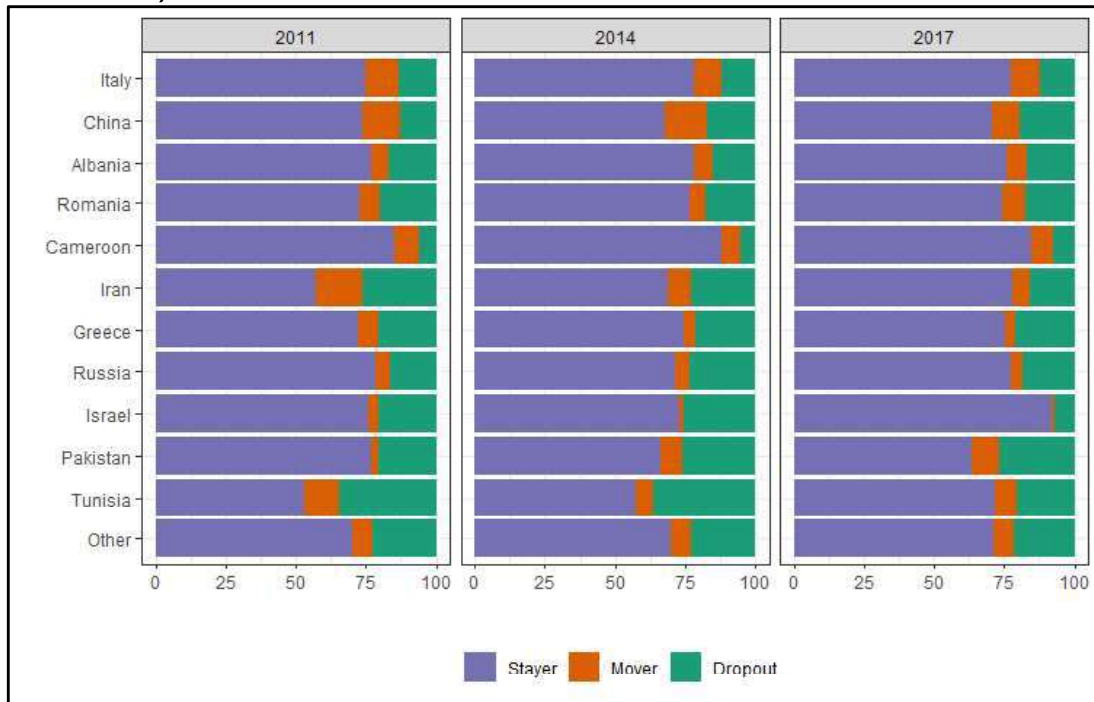


Table 7 shows the distributions of the two groups of foreign and Italian students according to their status in the second year. Firstly, there are some differences between the three groups, especially regarding the movers and dropouts' rates, in the three cohorts. The foreigners, rather than changing the course of studies and/or university (with percentages around 7%), they have a greater propensity to dropout (with percentages of at least 20%), compared to Italians (with percentages around 12-13%, respectively). Cameroonian ISTs have very high stayer rates (around 90%), even higher than the IT group. Then, both the ISTs and SGIs from Albania that have a similar behaviour, in the 3 cohorts, and the Russian ISTs (with percentages ranging from 79% in the 2011 to 68% in the 2014, even they increase to 76% in the 2017). Finally, the Tunisian ISTs have the lowest stayer rate (51% in the 2011).

TAB. 7. ITs, ISTs, and SGIs enrolled in Italy in the cohorts 2011, 2014 and 2017, according to the status at the beginning of the second year (% of row and total).

Citizenship	Cit-Dip	Cohort											
		2011				2014				2017			
		ST	MOV	DROP	TOT	ST	MOV	DROP	TOT	ST	MOV	DROP	TOT
Italy	IT	74,7	11,8	13,5	265904	78,2	9,8	12,1	257730	77,4	10,6	12,0	278625
Albania	IST	76,2	4,2	19,7	478	76,5	4,7	18,9	344	76,7	4,7	18,6	429
	SGL	77,2	7,3	15,5	1145	78,5	7,2	14,2	1355	75,7	8,4	15,9	1161
Cameroon	IST	88,0	9,0	2,9	410	89,7	6,6	3,7	273	86,4	7,8	5,9	425
	SGL	65,5	7,3	27,3	55	73,3	6,7	20,0	30	65,8	7,9	26,3	38
China	IST	74,2	14,0	11,8	1057	63,7	16,6	17,7	945	67,9	10,9	21,2	751
	SGL	73,2	9,6	17,2	209	78,5	6,7	14,8	209	78,3	6,8	14,9	281
Pakistan	IST	79,8	2,3	17,9	173	59,0	7,2	33,7	83	69,0	3,4	27,6	58
	SGL	64,1	2,6	33,3	39	76,2	7,9	15,9	63	58,1	16,1	25,8	62
Romania	IST	69,6	3,9	26,5	464	70,6	3,3	26,1	245	73,9	2,2	23,9	226
	SGL	73,9	8,5	17,5	1101	77,5	6,1	16,4	1620	74,4	8,9	16,7	2090
Russia	IST	79,7	4,8	15,5	187	68,9	5,1	26,0	196	76,4	3,3	20,3	212
	SGL	76,2	6,0	17,9	84	75,9	5,6	18,5	108	78,8	6,8	14,4	118
Tunisia	IST	50,9	11,7	37,4	171	55,8	6,2	38,0	242	72,3	6,9	20,8	130
	SGL	61,7	14,9	23,4	47	64,8	7,4	27,8	54	71,3	8,0	20,7	87
Others	IST	68,9	7,2	23,9	3747	67,4	5,8	26,8	3205	72,5	5,4	22,1	4697
	SGL	70,9	8,2	20,9	3129	72,1	8,1	19,9	4055	71,9	7,9	20,2	4780
Total	IST	71,6	7,8	20,6	6687	68,3	7,5	24,2	5533	73,2	5,9	20,8	6928
Foreigners	SGL	72,7	8,1	19,2	5809	74,6	7,4	18,0	7494	73,2	8,2	18,6	8617

2.2 Completion Time of the Three-year Degree

We now consider the Bachelors' degree (BA's) rates of the first two cohorts, as the observation period of the third one is not enough to observe the Bachelors completion within four years.

TAB. 8. *Bachelors' degree rates within 4 years from enrolment for ITs, ISTs and SGLs in Italy.*

Country	Cit-Dip	Cohort			
		2011		2014	
		% BA's	Total	% BA's	Total
Italy	IT	44.9	220456	51.3	212024
Albania	ES-ES	24.8	395	26.3	278
	ES-IT	32.2	993	35.8	1195
Cameroon	ES-ES	48.8	371	44.1	227
	ES-IT	36.4	44	30.8	26
China	ES-ES	18.7	1052	16.0	931
	ES-IT	35.8	204	42.0	200
Pakistan	ES-ES	6.9	173	14.6	82
	ES-IT	30.6	36	32.7	55
Romania	ES-ES	30.9	408	31.9	210
	ES-IT	32.5	988	38.0	1449
Russia	ES-ES	31.0	174	30.6	170
	ES-IT	35.9	78	34.4	96
Tunisia	ES-ES	5.4	167	5.9	236
	ES-IT	22.0	41	21.3	47
Others	ES-ES	30.4	2675	28.8	2390
	ES-IT	28.5	2834	31.9	3628
Total	ES-ES	26.7	5923	25.4	4797
	ES-IT	30.3	5247	34.1	6721

Table 8 shows the Bachelors' degree rates of ISTs, SGLs, and ITs, according to the citizenship. SGLs and ITs show increasing BA's rates: from 30.3% of the 2011 cohort to 34.1% of the 2014 cohort, for the former,

and from 44.9% of the 2011 cohort to 51.3% of the 2014 cohort, for the latter; while the ISTs show decreasing rates, from 26.7% of the 2011 cohort to 25.4% of the 2014 cohort.

For the 2011 cohort, the highest rate is for Cameroonians (also higher than for Italians); while for the 2014 cohort the highest rate is for the Italians. It is important to note the difference between the BA rates of ISTs and SGIs: as expected, attending a high school in Italy is a significant advantage, as the differences in favour of the second group range from 32 percentage points for Chinese, to 4 for Russians. Probably, the knowledge of a European language and of the school organization plays an important role; in fact, students from European countries seem to have better performances.

In Table 9 BA's rates for male and female students, of the three groups are reported, according to the citizenship. It appears clear that females perform better than males. The countries with the greatest difference in favour of women (ranging from 17% to 20%), are Pakistan, Romania, and Greece. In contrast, males with slightly better performance are among students from Iran and Israel. Further analysis is needed to understand these differences, which may also be attributable to the small number of students for some nationalities.

TAB. 9. Degree rates within 4 years by citizenship and gender, cohorts 2011, 2014 and 2017.

Country	2011				2014			
	F		M		F		M	
	% BA's	Total	% BA's	Total	% BA's	Total	% BA's	Total
Italy	50.3	120679	38.3	99777	57.0	114239	44.6	97785
Albanya	34.7	896	21.7	492	38.8	925	25.9	548
Cameroon	57.9	195	38.2	220	50.8	118	35.6	135
Chna	27.2	637	15.7	619	25.7	580	15.2	551
Greece	17.6	51	18.0	61	36.0	50	17.2	29
Iran	14.2	183	15.0	147	16.1	87	19.5	77
Israel	24.3	37	27.6	58	26.9	26	27.6	29
Pakistan	38.9	18	8.4	191	36.4	33	17.3	104
Romania	36.0	963	23.1	433	42.7	1114	26.1	545
Russia	32.9	210	31.0	42	34.6	214	21.2	52
Tunisia	24.4	41	4.8	167	20.8	48	6.0	235
Others	33.2	3219	24.1	2290	35.9	3415	23.8	2603
Total	33.2	6450	21.8	4720	36.4	6610	22.5	4908

Conclusions

In conclusion, this work has showed – for the first time, given the availability of the ANS database that covers all Italian universities – the importance of some characteristics of the foreign presence in the Italian universities.

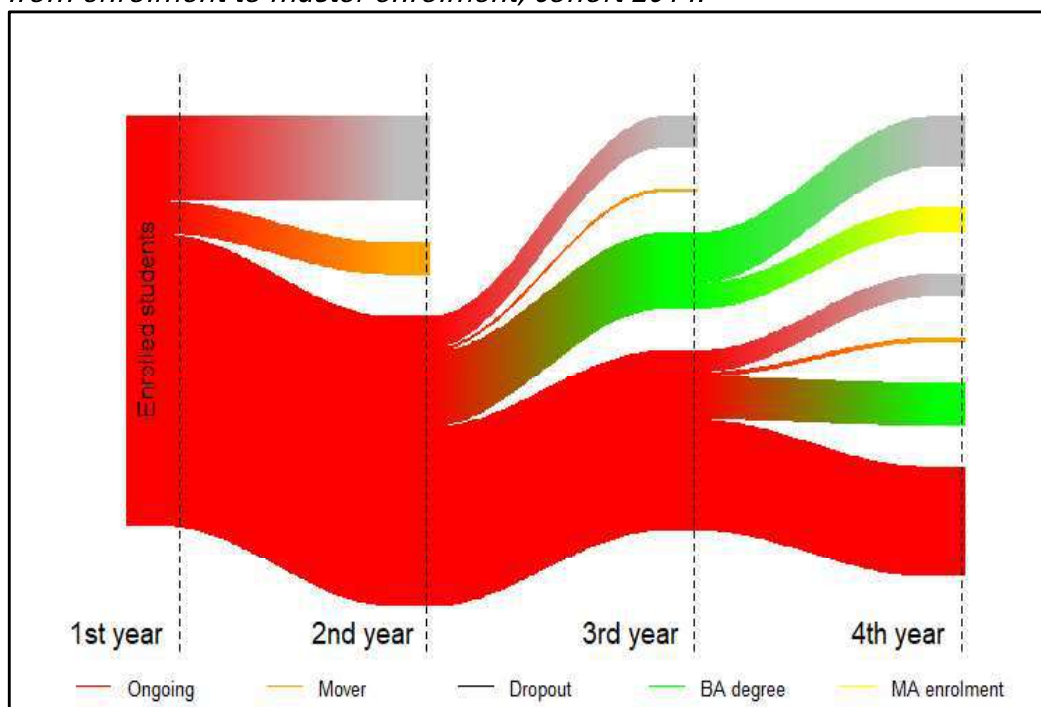
Here we have analysed three points in the university career: enrolment, the end of the first year and graduation, comparing the performance of Italian and foreign students, distinguishing the latter according to the country in which they attended high school, in Italy or abroad.

The difficulties of foreign students enrolled at a three-year degree course, are shown below (figure 7): 2412 students out of 11518 enrolled in 2014 drop out after the first year and only 3344 achieved the Bachelors' degree within 4 years.

The analyses clearly showed, as already mentioned, the existence of two different profiles that struggle differently at university: the first is the group of foreign students who have attended a high school in Italy (SGI), the second is that of foreign students who have attended a high school abroad (IST). In particular, the IST group has extremely low success rates (the three-year degree rate within 4 years for students enrolled in 2014 is 30.4%). Finally, it is important to underline the great difference in terms of success between the IT and SGIs (Strozza *et al.*, 2018): it is somehow an indirect measure of how much the integration between foreigners and Italians is far away.

This statement should be further investigated because many other confounding factors should be considered, such as the type of high school attended, the geographical area, the socio-economic level of the family of origin, the level of education of the parents and many other elements. Our university results are in line, unfortunately, with what happens in high school.

FIG. 7. Transition from I to IV year of students with foreign citizenship in Italy, from enrolment to master enrolment, cohort 2014.



In fact, evidence from a MIUR research (Colombo, Ongini, 2014) shows «that the percentage of failures among the foreigners is greater than

among their Italian classmates and the disadvantage of the first ones grows with the increase of the school level up to the first year of the high school».

In conclusion, the dropout problem that emerged in primary and secondary school continues at university, affecting the degree courses with low success rates, to which foreign students frequently belong. The results of this work therefore highlighted the difficulties of foreign students in their university path: the results obtained represent a basis for further research, both quantitative and qualitative, useful for generating discussions on immigration in Italy and on integration policies, considering that school and university education represent two fundamental elements of the integration process and of the foreigners' life in Italy.

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