1 Introduction

The interest about immigrants’ immediate descendants in Italy grew during the most recent years (Ambrosini and Molina 2004; Casacchia et al. 2008; Dalla Zuanna, Farina and Strozza 2009; Barbagli and Schmoll 2011), together with the increasing presence of minors of non-Italian origins (Strozza 2015). However, the attention to the youngest generations of immigrants has been occurred since the late 1980s in those specific Italian contexts in which foreign presence was perceived more and more (Strozza 2015). It have been undertaken for several years an intense and constructive debates on multiculturalism at different levels (from the Ministry of Education to Regional School Offices, to local administration, to single schools, teachers and social operators) on internal organization, on teaching contents and on innovative approaches of education to be adopted in the presence of pupils with different cultural experiences and backgrounds (Besozzi, Colombo and Santagati 2013; Demetrio 1997; Favaro 2007; 2011; Giovannini 2006; Ongini 2011).

The school represents an extraordinary context of socialization for immediate descendants of immigrants (Strozza, de Filippo and Buonomo 2014), as well as it is an important opportunity to acquire the training needed to reach their own professional aspirations and the personal and familiar social promotion (Strozza and Mussino 2011). The Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (Miur) published in February 2014 the new guidelines for the reception and integration of non-Italian students1. This document used the statistical information and scientific researches conducted during recent

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1 The MIUR guidelines are available at the following web-link: http://www.istruzione.it/allegati/2014/linee_guida_integrazione_alunni_stranieri.pdf.
years to provide operational indications to schools, as well as to Regional School Offices and local administrations.

In particular, the problems of inclusion of children and adolescents of immigrant origins in the Italian educational system have been highlighted on several occasions, with particular reference to their regular participation, school success and training choices (Strozza 2008; Dalla Zuanna, Farina and Strozza 2009; Mussino and Strozza 2012; Conti et al. 2013; Strozza 2015). There are important signs of a difficult inclusion process of children of immigrants in the Italian school system, comparing them with their native peers, such as: more frequent school dropouts, less effective performances, more frequent school retreats, and higher concentration of children of immigrants in professional and technical high schools to enter in the labor market immediately (Strozza 2015).

The aim of this paper is to analyze university intentions and dropouts schooling of immigrant youths (thus non-Italian citizens born in Italy or abroad) using survey data on the “Social Condition and Integration of Foreign citizens” held in 2011-2012 by Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat).

After introducing data and methods in section 2, we apply multivariate regression analyses in order to look at the main individual, origin family and school determinants of failure to enrol at university among immigrant youths aged 14-20 years old (section 3) and of early leaving from education and training among immigrant youths aged 18-24 years old (section 4). We include some final remarks and implications for social and school policies in the last section (section 5).

2 Data and methods

The survey on “Social Condition and Integration of Foreign citizens” (since now on only SCIF) was carried out in the period 2011-2012. It is the first sample survey on this subject designed by Istat in the system of multipurpose household surveys. The survey collects data on families with at least one foreign citizen and provides original information on foreigners living in Italy. The general goal of the survey is to provide information on the living conditions and integration of foreign citizens (including naturalized persons). In particular, different aspects of the lives of individuals are considered: family, marriage, fertility, education, religious affiliation and language, migration history, employment history, working conditions, health status, use of and accessibility to health services, lifestyle, social relationships, social participation, experiences of discrimination, housing conditions, etc. The survey covers a sample of about 12,000 households with at least one foreign (or foreign origin) member.
In particular for our analyses, we consider two specific sub-samples of youths. The data allow us to associate each young individual of immigrant origin with his/her parents’ characteristics (e.g. age, citizenship, degree of study, family type) and to estimate four different indicators of integration.

The first sub-sample relates to immigrant high school students aged 14-20 years old (an initial sample of 800 individuals in the SCIF survey, that represent a population of around 135 thousand of students in Italy with the same characteristics). SCIF provides information about their intention to continue (or not) their own studies at university.

We decided to exclude the doubters from the analyses. We don’t have information on the classroom; however it is evident that as the age at interview grows, the proportion of doubtful students decreases (it is over 19% among students aged 14-17 and is below 15% among the ones aged 18-20) and the proportion of those who intend to continue their studies increases.

On average the quota of students (excluding the doubters) that intend to continue their studies is 59% (respectively 56.5% among students aged 14-17 and 63.5% among the ones aged 18-20). Among women the same quota is 74% while it is 45% among men.

In the end we excluded both the doubters and the missing data, therefore our final sample includes 538 individuals. The logistic regression on the intention to continue or not own studies (a dummy variable that assumes value 1 in case of a negative answer and value 0 in the opposite case) allows to analyze its main determinants.

Another indicator we want to look at is the one of Early Leaving from Education and Training (since now on only ELET). According to Eurostat, ELET indicator represents the “quota of immigrant youths aged 18-24 with at most a compulsory level of education, who leaved school before they have finished their course and do not have attended any other course since last four weeks” (European Commission 2014, 33).

The phenomenon of early leaving is very significant in particular in the countries of South-Europe (Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece) where reaches on average the quota of 40% if we consider only the immigrant resident population. European Commission included the goal of reducing the quota of ELET below the 10% among Europe 2020 strategies to improve European policies of education and social inclusion (European Commission 2014). Different studies show how the ELET have important economic negative effect on the society (European Commission 2013; Belfield 2008). Moreover, the ELET increases the social and economic emargination of individuals (Checchi 2014, Miur 2014).

According to the SCIF available data, the ELET are 1,779 individuals, that represent around 380 thousand individuals in Italy. Thus the ELET quota is 37% of immigrant youths aged 18-24 with at most a compulsory level of
education. This quota is 4 percentage points below the one provided by Eurostat (based on Labor Force Survey). This different estimate depends on the different ELET definition (the SCIF survey refers to early leaving youths that do not have attended any other course since last 12 months), on the sample survey (unaccompanied minors are not considered), and on selection process (we excluded Italian naturalized foreigners from the analyses).

Also in this case, we conduct logistic regression analyses. The dependent dummy variable assumes value 1 in case of ELET youths and 0 in case of youths that are still in education or have reached at least high school degree.

2.1 The analyzed determinants of future training intentions and of ELET

Looking at the main determinants of the two observed phenomenon, scholars cluster them into two main macro-groups (Thibert 2013; European Commission 2014): one considers the characteristics of respondents and of their family of origin; the other one concerns the aspects related to the school. In this section we will consider those determinants we included in the analyses only according to the available data.

In the first macro-group, the sex is very important according to the literature. Generally speaking, boys are more likely to leave their studies than girls, who have higher school performances and reach higher educational levels (Croll 2009).

Age assumes a significant effect as well. ELET are very low during compulsory studies, but after age 15 they increase as the age grows (Miur 2013). On the other hand, especially over the last 10-years period, school dropouts have fallen and the enrollment of students completing the university course is growing (Anvur 2016). Despite these improvements, according to Eurostat, Italy remains in Europe among the countries with the lowest quota of graduate population, even among the youths.

In particular the quota of ELET is higher in the South of Italy than in the Center and in the North and the number of university registrations is decreasing in the Southern regions. More and more students choose to move from Southern Italy to enroll in the most prestigious Northern universities (Anvur 2016).

Scholars showed the multi-faced picture of migrant descendants according to the time of their migration underlying that there is no single, undifferentiated, category of immigrants’ children. Groups by migratory generation are defined according to the Rumbaut’s classification (Rumbaut 2004) based on the respondent’s place of birth, parents’ place of birth and age at arrival in the host country of the respondent. The resulting groups are: G2.0 (individuals born in the host country with at least one parent born abroad); G1.75 (immigrants arrived before age 6); G1.5 (individuals arrived at 6-12 yrs. old); G1.25 (individuals migrated at 13-17 yrs. old).
The school performances differ according to the migratory generation. In particular G2.0 and G1.75 observe higher school marks and better educational training that the other generations (Chiswick and DebBurman 2004; Strozza 2009; Bertolini, Lalla and Pagliacci 2015). Conversely, G1.25 reaches lower educational levels and higher quota of ELET than the others (Chiswick and DebBurman 2006).

Another important determinant on school issues is the country of origin (Hirschman and Wong 1986). It can be considered a proxy of the origin background and of the native language: the larger the distance with the Italian language, the higher the risk of encountering difficulties at school (Cardinali et al. 2015).

Integration represent an important determinant of school attitudes and performances (European Commission 2014). According to the methodology adopted in Blangiardo et al. (2013)\(^3\), we look at four different dimensions of integration: political (related both to the attention to the issues of Italian politics and to the opinion about the importance of acquiring Italian citizenship); economic (related to the occupational conditions); social (related to the active participation in social and public life); cultural (related to the knowledge of the Italian language and frequency of use, to the healthcare and to the eating habits).

International literature showed how the political and social dimensions (Grasso 2015; Mantovani 2013), the economic dimension (Freeney and O’Connell 2012; Traag and van der Velden 2011), and cultural dimension (Chiswick and DebBurman 2004; Favaro 2007) of integration tend to directly affect the risk of school success or enrolling at the university.

The attitudes and behaviors of parents toward the education affect school performances of their children. Larsen (2014) shows how low levels of family and cultural background together with negative parents’ behaviors reduce school performances and increase early leaving from education of descendants. Conversely, highly educated parents invest more in the education of their children (Lamb 1994; Rumberger 2004), regardless of individual cognitive abilities (de Graaf and de Graaf 2002).

\(^3\) Methodologically, the four dimensions of integration are analyzed building-up composite indicators of different variables. The single modalities of each variable have been ordered according to an increasing level of integration. The range of the scores is from -1, that represents the “worse” condition, to +1, that represents the “best” condition (for each mode of the variables considered, the corresponding score is obtained with the difference between the sums of the relative frequencies of the previous mode minus the sum of the relative frequencies of the following modes). Those scores of all variables have been summarized by an arithmetic mean within each of the four observed dimensions in order to estimate the respective indexes of integration: cultural integration, social integration, political integration, economic integration (for a detailed description of the method, see Blangiardo et al. 2013; Blangiardo and Cesareo 2013). In this paper the values of the indexes were normalized between -100 and 100, which correspond with absence and maximum integration, respectively.
The school failure (or rejection) obviously reduces school performance, but also reduces educational expectations and projects (Silberglitt et al. 2006; Jacob and Lefgren 2009; Blount 2012).

Homework assignments should be considered a proxy of high school type (information not included in the survey) as, generally speaking, only students enrolled in lyceums have in Italy homework assignments while the same does not occur for students enrolled in professional and technical institutes. According to the literature, students enrolled in lyceums, Italians or non-Italians, have an higher probability to reach the highest level of education (Dalla Zuanna, Farina e Strozza 2009).

3 Future training intentions: enrol or not at university?

In this section we analyze the main determinants of the failure to enroll at university among immigrant youths aged 14-20 years old. The stepwise approach allows to define the significant determinants through both the forward procedure, that adds one after the other the most significant variables from the baseline model, and the backward procedure, that progressively eliminates non-significant variables from the model. Table 1 shows the final model that includes eight significant variables and it is able to correctly assign ¾ of cases (75.2%).

According to the literature, the risk of failure to enroll at university is higher among boys (reference category) than among girls (odds ratio, OR, equal to 0.227).

In addition, immigrant youths arrived in Italy after twelve years old (G1.0 and G1.25) have a risk of failure four times higher than second generations’ one (OR 3.916). The same odd ratio is 2.433 for G1.75 (thus pupils arrived in Italy at less than six years old have a risk of failure higher more than twice than second generations’ one).

Considering the citizenship and net to the other covariates, East-European citizens (excluding the Albanians, the Ukrainians, the Moldavians and the Romanians) have a risk to failure to enrol at university three times higher than the referent group (OR 3.166); conversely, and somehow surprisingly, the Asians have the highest probability to continue their studies at university (the probability of failure is the 67% lower than the Romanians – OR 0.327). In other words, the Asians intend to achieve high levels of education despite the distance of their origin language and culture.

Table 1 – Logistic regression of the failure to enroll at university among immigrant high school students aged 14-20 years old. Italy, 2011-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinants</th>
<th>Odd Ratios</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex (ref. Boys)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Girls</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.227 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The last individual variable concerns the cultural integration at family level\(^4\). According to the expectations, the highest is the level of cultural integration the lowest is the risk of failure (OR 0.976).

Conversely, the educational level of parents is very important. The lowest is their education the highest is the risk of failure of their children. In fact, this risk is twice (in respect to the graduate referent group) when both parents have at most an high school level (OR 1.982) and is four time higher when the educational level is even lower (respectively OR 4.308 in case of compulsory level and 4.457 in case of primary level).

Also the school performances of students and the attitudes of their parents toward the school are very important. Obviously, having experienced at least one rejection during the school increases the risk of failure to enroll at university (OR 2.490).

\(^4\) In this paragraph we are also analyzing young foreign minors (the youngest are 14 years old), therefore the cultural integration is obtained at family level (calculating the average integration of each family member).
According to the literature, the lack of parent-teacher relationship, as well as a non-continuous relationship, increases the risk of failure (OR respectively equal to 2.834 and 2.681) in respect to a continuous relationship.

In the end, homework assignments assume a negative odd ratio (OR 0.441). Thus, according to the literature, students enrolled in lyceums have a higher probability to continue their studies at university.

### 4 Early Leaving from Education and Training

Looking at the determinants of ELET and using the same *stepwise* procedure described in the previous section, we show two nested models (see table 2).

Model 1 includes individual demographic characteristics only. Surprisingly we observe no significant sex differences, controlling for the other co-variables. The risk of early leaving from education and training is higher among youths aged 21-24 yrs. old (OR 1.239 in respect to 18-20 yrs. old), among residents in the South (OR 1.828 in respect to residents in the North) and above all among G1.50 (OR 4.274 in respect to G2), but also among G1.25 and G1.0 (OR 2.191).

Moreover, we observe interesting differences by citizenship. The most disadvantaged are immigrant citizens coming from Middle East, Central and Southern Asia (OR 3.192), Morocco (OR 2.756) and China (OR 2.395). The Albanians and the other East-European citizens (excluding the Ukrainians, the Moldavians and the Romanians) have a risk to early leaving from education and training higher than the referent group (OR respectively equal to 1.890 and 1.714).

#### Table 2 – Logistic regression of the early leaving from education and training among immigrant youths(a) aged 18-24 years old. Italy, 2011-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinants</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Odd R.</td>
<td>p-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at interview (ref. 18-20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 21-24</td>
<td>1.239</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macro-area of residence (ref. North)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Center</td>
<td>0.998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- South</td>
<td>1.828</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migratory generation (ref. G2.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- G1.75</td>
<td>1.710</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- G1.50</td>
<td>4.274</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- G1.25 and G1.0</td>
<td>2.191</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship (ref. Romania)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Albania</td>
<td>1.890</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ukraine and Moldova</td>
<td>0.944</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other East-Europe</td>
<td>1.714</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Morocco</td>
<td>2.756</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Other North Africa 1.395 0.830
- Sub-Saharan Africa 1.849 *** 1.068
- Middle East, Central and Southern Asia 3.192 *** 2.736 ***
- China 2.395 *** 1.329
- Other East and South-East Asia 1.756 *** 0.936
- Latin America 1.365 1.526 *

High Educ. level between parents (ref. Graduation)
- High school degree 1,409
- Professional 2,461 ***
- Compulsory 4,671 ***
- Primary or less 6,975 ***
Cultural integration (continuous variable) 0,977 ***
Social integration (continuous variable) 0,994
Economic integration (continuous variable) 0,990 ***
Political integration (continuous variable) 1,002

Number of cases 1.779 1.688
% correctly assigned cases 64.4 71.4
pseudo-R2 0.094 0.252

Notes: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10. (a) We consider the immigrant youths with at most a compulsory level of education, who left school before they have finished their course and do not have attended any other course since last 12 months.


Model 2 includes also the variable on parents’ education and different aspects of individual integration. Generally speaking, the odd values and the significance of the individual demographic characteristics reduce themselves moving from model 1 to model 2. In particular, only G1.50 continues to have an odd-value (OR 1.995) significantly different from G2.0.

An exception is represented by the odd-values of Albania, Ukraine and Moldova and Latin America: they increase moving from model 1 to model 2. In other words, controlling for the variables included in the model 2 (unobserved selection process), they show a more evident risk of early leaving from education and training than the Romanians. This result is particularly interesting for Albanians who despite the greatest geographical and cultural proximity to Italy show worse school attitudes.

The educational level of parents is very important also in this case. The lowest is their educational level the highest is the risk of their children of early leaving from education and training.

According to the expectations, the highest is the level of cultural and economic integration the lowest is the risk of failure (OR respectively equal to 0.977 and 0.990), while the odd-ratios of social and political integrations are not statistically significant.

5 Concluding remarks
Some concluding remarks help to suggest inclusion policies in the educational system to favor immigrant immediate descendants. This is important, mostly in Italy, as their school performances are significantly below the ones of Italian peers; in adding the quota of ELET is higher for immigrants than for Italian natives (Mussino and Strozza 2012; Strozza, de Filippo and Buonomo 2014).

Integration policies for a positive social cohesion are significantly linked to school participation and performances. Our results show how favor the cultural and economic integration of immigrants’ immediate descendants (and their families) produces positive effects on the school participation and performances, as well as on reaching higher educational levels useful for a better occupational inclusion.

Moreover, according to our results, also the attitudes and behaviors of parents toward the school system affect school performances of their children. As well as it is very important the capacity of the school system to accommodate and promote the foreign pupils’ learning path (Strozza e Di Bartolomeo 2015). School strategies to involve origin families and actions aimed at reducing the cultural and linguistic distances can significantly have positive effect on school performances of immigrant youths.

In the end, we have highlighted on average that specific categories among immigrant youths present greater fragilities and difficulties in achieving higher levels of education. Generally speaking, the results show that the worst school performances mostly occur among boys, among residents in the South of Italy, for those encountering problems with the Italian language, and they increases with age on arrival in Italy. According to the Oecd (2007; 2010), such results suggest to adopt original strategies which take into account the whole family of young immigrants.

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MIUR. Different years. Alunni con cittadinanza non italiana. Scuole statali e non statali. Rome.


