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New Profiles of Adults in Education. Clustering Students to Rethink Innovative Targeting Strategies of CPIAs

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ABSTRACT: *The reforms of adult education in Italy are beginning to be effective after almost a decade (De Luca Picione, Madonia 2017, INDIRE, 2018). A significant consequence of the reorganization of CPIAs seems to be the differentiation of targets, which was not expected until some time ago. MIUR data (2020) suggests they are predominantly non-EU adults and youth, whereas Italian adults have become a minority. This would have increased the social representation of CPIAs as 'schools for foreigners' (De Luca Picione and Madonia 2017) resulting in the gap between courses for foreigners and Italians (e.g. early-school leavers). Therefore, understanding the current profile of CPIA students is central to rethinking new strategies of adult education. On this basis, the paper aims to answer these questions: who are the people studying in CPIAs? How do they are similar and different? Is it because of age, nationality, or something else? The authors examine the students who joined CPIAs in Campania in the 2016/2017 school year, exploring their main socio-demographic characteristics and training backgrounds. Through a clustering analysis of participants, a varied scenario emerges compared to the common (and simplistic) dichotomy of 'foreign students vs. Italian adults'. On the other hand, in the largest cluster, nationality is not a relevant discriminant. Indeed, there are features with more weight, such as educational content and experimentation with new learning purposes e.g., inclusion and adult re-entry needs. This empirical evidence suggest that rethinking adult education policies also could mean thinking about CPIA targeting policies.*

KEYWORDS: *Adult Education, CPIA, Clustering, Students*

Introduction

This contribution is part of a broader research framework coordinated by the Regional Observatory on Adult Education of the Federico II University and with the collaboration of the Regional Center for Research Experimentation and Development (RCRED).

This research team with the 'territorial service network' of *Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti* (CPIA, Provincial Center for Adult

Education) initiated an exploratory survey on 'The social base of adult education in Campania' from the 2014/2015 school year.

The paper develops a secondary analysis of enrollment data for CPIAs in Campania. Exploring the social base of enrollees also means understanding what implications the evolution of adult education policies in Italy has with the 2012 reform (De Luca Picione, 2015; De Luca Picione, Madonia, 2017), and perhaps may represent evidence for rethinking adult education and rethinking lifelong learning policies.

The research takes a snapshot of the local situation of CPIAs in 2017 by framing the decade of lifelong learning policy reforms in Europe and Italy. The research takes a snapshot of the local situation of CPIAs in 2017 by framing the decade of lifelong learning policy reforms in Europe and Italy. What has happened during this decade? Who are the people involved in lifelong learning activities?

There are eight CPIAs that make up the regional and provincial network of adult education in Campania. The survey began with the construction of a comprehensive database with background information on the characteristics of users, collected at the individual points of service delivery to be analyzed with multivariate techniques in relation to their distribution by gender, age, type of course, nationality, level of previous education and other standard indicators. The goal is to reconstruct the social background of individuals who have resumed or begun their studies.

The paper attempts to answer these questions through five paragraphs. The first frames the issue through a broader scenario analysis that investigates the gaps regarding some possible targets of adult education in macro and micro contexts. The second introduces the case study with an analysis of those enrolled in the eight CPIAs in the Campania Region in the 2016/2017 school year. The third explores the methods of construction and analysis of the data, The fourth presents the results, with descriptive statistics and multidimensional data analysis for the definition of clusters of enrolled students. Finally, the conclusions offer some insights into how to rethink adult education policies because of the new emerging targets in CPIAs.

1. An overview of Lifelong Learning Targets: Gaps Permain

The CPIAs are part of the lifelong learning strategies. Lifelong Learning (LL) began to be talked about in the 1930s, when the need was to educate the workforce with the aim of stimulating production. Over the years, it has taken on a very different meaning, becoming an innovative element in the framework of the individual's learning systems (Longworth, 2003). In fact, it is based on the assumption that the education of the individual should not end with basic or higher education, but should be continuous and aimed at updating and
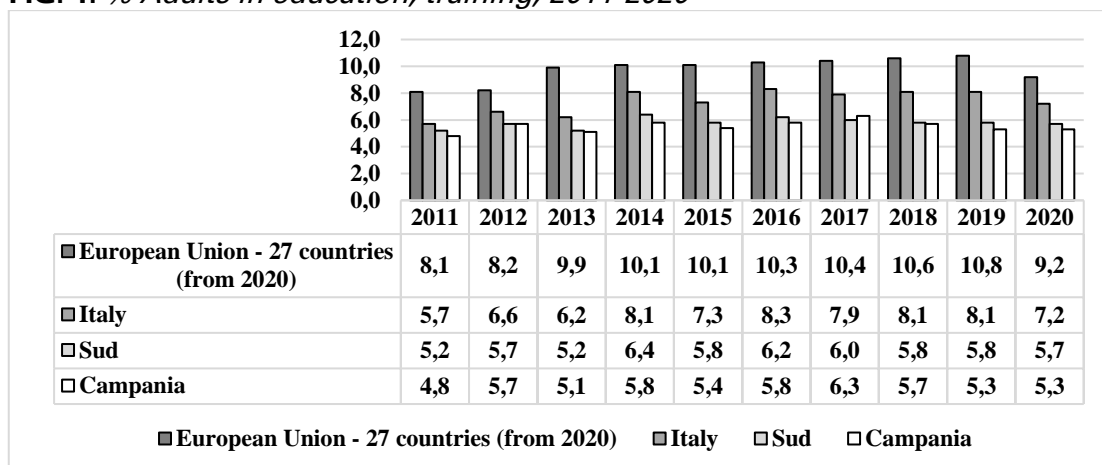
continuing training of the individual, especially in the context of actions aimed at the formative recovery of the student in need.

LL is a strategy that is very applicable to people in conditions of hardship, because they are assumed to be the ones with a large learning gap with implications for their economic, social and cultural lives. The European normative guidelines on LL[1] have guided national and local regulations, conditioning the targeting of adult education. Among the objectives of the European recommendation was that LL should be an instrument not only of adult learning, but above all of inclusiveness and social cohesion.

In Italy this has found a concrete implementation with the creation of territorial networks for adult learning, first with the *Centri Territoriali Permanenti* (CTP) and then with the 2012 reform with the CPIAs[2]. Through CPIAs adult education became an important point not only for educational policies but also for those of social inclusion. For example, at the regional level, the involvement in LL policies of institutions such as prisons certainly offered a lot of space for this type of objective. This has had important implications for the nature of the users of CPIAs, which, as we shall see, are in a phase of strong change. It is worth noting what trends have occurred over the past 10 years regarding adults engaged in education.

Looking at the statistics on adults in education and learning and on some specific vulnerable targets, there are contexts at different speeds. Fig. 1 shows the trend over the past 10 years in relation to the percentage of adults engaged in training. There are some elements to highlight. The first is that in all contexts, there is a positive trend even if with different speeds, except for 2020 (probably the cause is the pandemic). The second is that there is a significant gap between the supra-national, national and regional levels.

FIG. 1. *% Adults in education, training, 2011-2020*

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
■ European Union - 27 countries (from 2020)	8,1	8,2	9,9	10,1	10,1	10,3	10,4	10,6	10,8	9,2
■ Italy	5,7	6,6	6,2	8,1	7,3	8,3	7,9	8,1	8,1	7,2
□ Sud	5,2	5,7	5,2	6,4	5,8	6,2	6,0	5,8	5,8	5,7
□ Campania	4,8	5,7	5,1	5,8	5,4	5,8	6,3	5,7	5,3	5,3

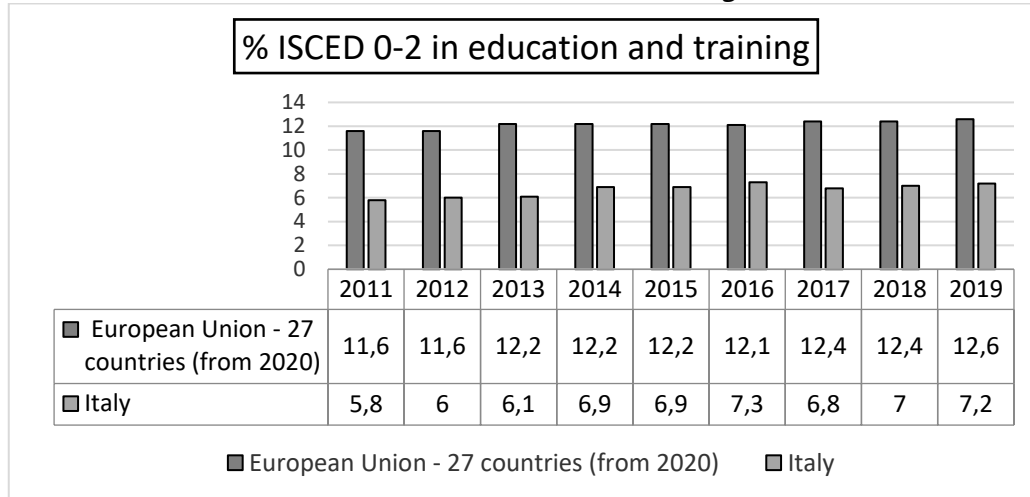■ European Union - 27 countries (from 2020)　　■ Italy　　□ Sud　　□ Campania

Source: Our elaboration on Eurostat data.

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[1] Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, 1–6

[2] Presidential Decree of 29 October 2012 n. 263

If we consider three possible targets of LL, that is, people with low levels of education, the unemployed and foreigners in the twenty-five to sixty-four age group, we find a gap between the European, Italian and regional situations.
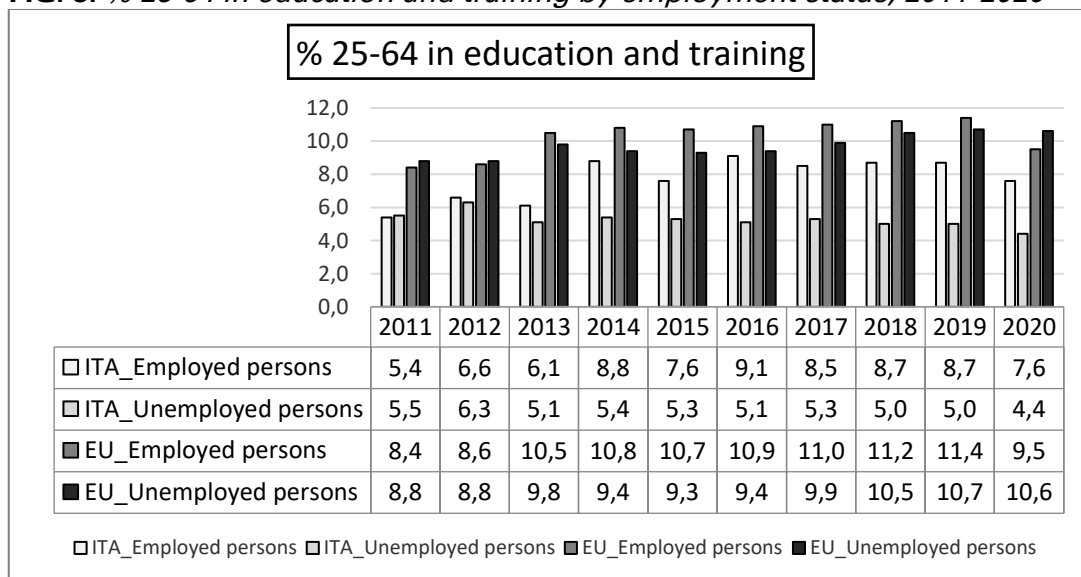
FIG. 2. *% Low education adults in education, training, 2011-2019*

% ISCED 0-2 in education and training

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
European Union - 27 countries (from 2020)	11,6	11,6	12,2	12,2	12,2	12,1	12,4	12,4	12,6
Italy	5,8	6	6,1	6,9	6,9	7,3	6,8	7	7,2

Source: Our elaboration on Eurostat data

One of the targets of LL is certainly the individual with low levels of education or early-leaver. Fig. 2 shows the percentage of those with a low level of education (ISCED 0-2) engaged in training and the comparison between Italy and the EU. Since 2011 the percentage of low education adults engaged in training has increased overall by about one point. However, in Italy the proportion of adults with low education engaged in training is still low. In fact, there is a constant gap with the EU of about 5 percentage points.

FIG. 3. *% 25-64 in education and training by employment status, 2011-2020*

% 25-64 in education and training

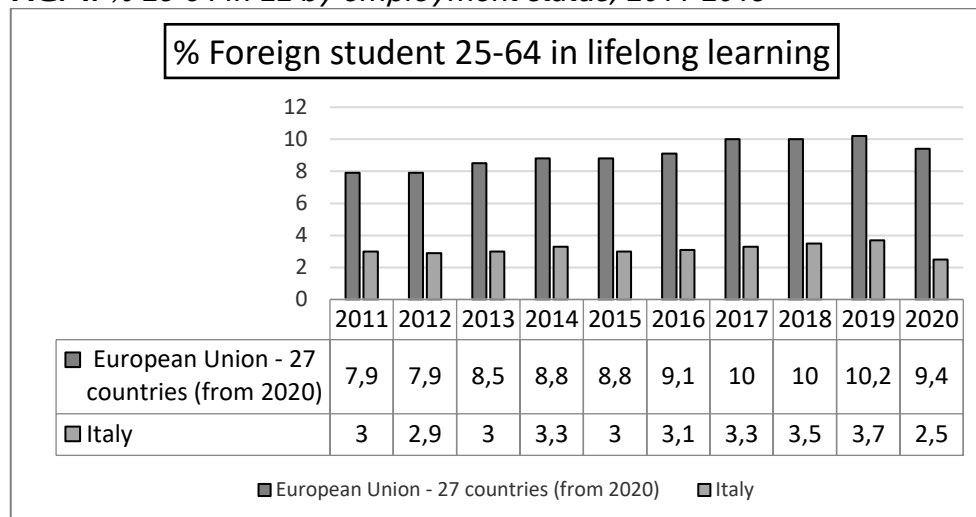|	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
ITA_Employed persons	5,4	6,6	6,1	8,8	7,6	9,1	8,5	8,7	8,7	7,6
ITA_Unemployed persons	5,5	6,3	5,1	5,4	5,3	5,1	5,3	5,0	5,0	4,4
EU_Employed persons	8,4	8,6	10,5	10,8	10,7	10,9	11,0	11,2	11,4	9,5
EU_Unemployed persons	8,8	8,8	9,8	9,4	9,3	9,4	9,9	10,5	10,7	10,6

Source: Our elaboration on Eurostat data.

As a way to be successful in the job search, LL could also be framed as a sound strategy for vocational training. Fig. 3 takes into account the employment condition in the European and national context over the last 10 years. In Italy it can be seen that the gap between the employed and the unemployed has increased. While the percentage of the former engaged in training has increased, that of the latter has actually decreased. In the EU, on the other hand, the difference between the two conditions has never been significant, and in the last year (2020) the non-employed in lifelong learning exceeded the employed.

LL activities are very important for the foreign population because they represent an opportunity for good social inclusion, for cultural integration, to reduce the risk of social and economic marginalization. How many foreigners are involved in education and training? In Europe, from almost 8% in 2011, they have reached 9.4% in 2020 (in 2019 they were more than 10%). In this case, too, there is a large gap with Italy, which in the same period of time has seen the percentage decrease (from 3 to 2.5) (Fig. 4).

FIG. 4. *% 25-64 in LL by employment status, 2011-2019*

% Foreign student 25-64 in lifelong learning										
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
European Union - 27 countries (from 2020)	7,9	7,9	8,5	8,8	8,8	9,1	10	10	10,2	9,4
Italy	3	2,9	3	3,3	3	3,1	3,3	3,5	3,7	2,5

Source: Our elaboration on Eurostat data

These data outline a scenario that is certainly a wake-up call on priorities regarding strategies for targeting adults in training. This is especially true in the national and regional contexts, which still suffer from a significant gap with European benchmarks. The case study of the CPIA student profiles in Campania, in next par., is a local look that could help guide National and European policies in the area of adult education.

2. Case study. The profile of CPIA students in Campania

As of 2017, the territorial network of Adult Education in Campania, Southern Italy, was divided into 8 CPIAs distributed in the five provinces

of Campania (Tab.1). The interest of this research was purely exploratory. The opportunity to have at our disposal micro data of those enrolled in Campania's CPIAs from the 2016/2017 school year allowed us a first snapshot of adults in training, a target audience still little explored by scholarly research (Bochicchio, 2021; De Luca Picione, Madonia, 2017; Foley, 2020). Starting with the 2016/17 screenshot, we were intent on understanding what the socio-anagraphic base of the CPIA student population was.

The availability of micro-level data also allowed us to perform a clustering of enrollees, that is, to define partitions of students based on their social characteristics and learning trajectories. There are also substantive curiosities underlying this analysis. We mentioned that the research is still in its early stages in terms of in-depth study of adults in education. Research and official data (MIUR-ANPAL, 2020) tell us that CPIAs are often perceived as 'schools of foreigners' (De Luca Picione, Madonia, 2017).

The definition of some specific training paths dedicated to foreign users (e.g., Italian language courses) would have created a strong demand from the non-Italian target. However, if we want to understand how CPIA users are articulated, it is useful to describe their profiles and especially to identify the latent relationships between training trajectories and their social characteristics. It is also interesting to take into account the territory to the extent that there are centers where the CPIA audience changes. To answer these questions, we carried out a secondary analysis of the data from the eight CPIAs in Campania using a basket of indicators taken from the CRSS archive that built the Centers' network databases. Since these were different actors, data construction was not easy. The data did not always meet predefined and standard criteria, and many data were also missing.

3. Data and Methods

3.1. Data collection and limits
The construction of the database of CPIA students in Campania, in the school year 2016/17, has been strongly affected by the lack of a single and harmonized system of data collection and management. Each CPIA, in fact, in the absence of specific guidelines for data collection, adopted entirely personal solutions often making it impossible to compare the different CPIAs with respect to some characteristics of the users.

It is mainly for this reason that the data presented will refer exclusively to very general aspects such as the number of enrolled students, the sex and age of the users, their citizenship (simplified in a dichotomy between Italians and foreigners), the nationality and the type of course followed. It was not possible, in fact, to investigate in depth and in a generalized manner for all CPIAs other socio-demographic characteristics of the users such as levels of education, working

conditions, characteristics of the family they belong to and the type of contact through which they became aware of the services offered by this institution. For the same reason, even the data regarding the outcomes of the 2016/17 school year will only be able to contemplate the type of certification achieved, since other socio-demographic variables have not always been made available.

TAB. 1. *CPIAs of Campania Region*

1	CPIA Avellino
2	CPIA Benevento
3	CPIA Caserta
4	CPIA Naples città 1
5	CPIA Naples città 2
6	CPIA Naples prov.1
7	CPIA Naples prov.2
8	CPIA Salerno

3.2. Data analysis techniques and tools

Analyses have been performed following a quantitative perspective only. Secondary analysis of the social base of CPIA students has been performed through common descriptive statistical techniques (frequency tables, contingency tables, and measures of central tendency such as median, mean, and fashion and measures of dispersion such as standard deviation, used only for age).

Multidimensional analysis of the variables has been performed using Multiple Correspondence Analysis (Gherghi, Lauro, 2008). It is a technique for analysing categorical variables and it is a form of factor analysis for categorical data. MCA is very important to under-stand how categorical variables are related. In our case, it proved useful in identifying the latent dimensions underlying the relationships between the characteristics of the student population, identifying the factors that synthesize the variables considered.

On the factors identified by the MCA was applied the cluster analysis through Hierarchical clustering (Blashfield, Aldenderfer, 1978). The Hierarchical Clustering is the most common type of hierarchical clustering used to group objects in clusters based on their similarity. We could define it as a 'bottom-up' approach: each observation starts in its own cluster, and pairs of clusters are merged as one moves up the hierarchy. Descriptive analysis and tabular representation have been performed using Excel 2019 software. The application of Clustering Analysis and MCA has been performed via version 6.0 of SPAD statistical analysis software.

4. Findings

4.1. The description of the 'potential' social base of CPIA student

The number of enrollees in Campania's CPIAs during the 2016/17 school year of which we have counted is 11.274 units (Tab. 1) not equally distributed among the eight CPIAs. If the CPIAs of Avellino and Benevento, in fact account for a total of 21.7% of enrollments compared to the total, the other CPIAs stand at an average lower share between 6.2% of the CPIA Naples prov.1 and 17.4% of the CPIA Naples prov. 2 (Tab.2)

TAB. 2. *CPIA students by CPIA, 2016/17 s.y.*

	n.	*(%)*
Avellino	1.066	9,5
Benevento	1.373	12,2
Caserta	1.541	13,7
Naples Città 1	1.637	14,5
Naples Città 2	1.310	11,6
Naples provincia 1	698	6,2
Naples provincia 2	1.964	17,4
Salerno	1.685	14,9
Total	**11.274**	**100**

Source: Our elaboration

We mentioned earlier the perception of the CPIAs as 'foreigner schools'. The data actually show us a strong foreign presence in the CPIAs of Campania. More than 71% are non-Italian enrolled. Some measures of central tendency have been calculated taking into account gender and citizenship. There are significant differences. As we observe in Table 3 overall, the median age of those enrolled is 27 years (average 31.2). Males are much younger than females (median 24 for the former, 40 for the latter). The other factor considered, citizenship, is likely related to the previous characteristic. We find a difference in the median age which is almost similar (39 Italians, 25 Foreigners). This descriptive evidence leads us to think of a connection between Italian-female and foreigner-man. It is a relationship that we will explore further with cluster analysis.

TAB. 3. *Average, median and mode of student age, by sex and citizenship*

	Total	Males	Females	Italians	Foreigners
Average	31,2	27,6	39,7	38,9	28,2
Median	27	24	40	39	25
Mode	18	18	43	17	18
St. Dev.	13,746	11,555	14,791	15,919	11,415

Source: Our elaboration

Another important element useful to describe the students of the CPIAs in Campania is the training course formally followed. It has been categorized into six classes:
  – Literacy A2 First Level – is the course for learning the Italian language.
  – First Level – I period (Secondary school License) – is the first level course that provides for the achievement of the secondary school license
  – First Level - II period (825 hours) – extends the first level course to the acquisition of basic skills related to basic education.
  – IT – is the course for the knowledge of information technology and new technologies.
  – English – is the course for the knowledge of information technology and new technologies.
  – Other language – is the course that involves learning other languages.
  – Other course – other specific courses.

Table 4 compares this information with the citizenship of the student. It emerges that the large number of foreigners is oriented, above all, towards courses that enable them to learn the Italian language (68.9% of the foreigners enrolled) and towards first level courses for the achievement of the secondary school license (25.4%). In the other courses, the number of foreigners is small. The majority of Italian enrolled students (more than 66%) follow a first level course. The remaining part is divided in a more or less balanced manner between computer courses (9.8%), English (9.2%) and other courses (8.5%).

TAB. 4. *Enrolled in CPIAs in Campania, by course, and citizenship, a.a. 2016/17*

	Italian		Foreigner		Citizenship Tot.	
	n.	(%)	n.	(%)	n.	(%)
Literacy A2	164	5,4	4.965	68,9	5.129	50,2
First Level – I period (Secondary school License)	1.192	39,5	1.829	25,4	3.021	29,5
First Level - II period (825 hours)	820	27,2	279	3,9	1.099	10,7
IT	296	9,8	28	0,4	324	3,2
English	278	9,2	74	1,0	352	3,4
Other language	10	0,3	0	0,0	10	0,1
Other course	256	8,5	35	0,5	291	2,8
Tot. valid	3.016	100	7.210	100	10.226	100

Source: Our elaboration

At this point it is interesting to understand where the students come from, and which countries are most represented. Table 5 allows us to observe the data on the macro-areas of origin, even if there are more than 2000 missing due to the limitations of the data that we previously underlined. Almost 40% of the students enrolled come from the sub-Saharan zone. This percentage is also higher than that of Italian students, 27.6%. Another significant percentage comes from Asia (15%) and Eastern Europe (9.3%). This is followed by students from North

Africa, who make up almost 6%. The remaining 2.7% is divided between South and Central America, the Middle East, Western Europe and North America.

TAB. 5. *CPIA students, geographic area, n. and %*

|	n.	%
Sub-Saharan Africa	3667	*39,6*
Italy	2552	*27,6*
Asia	1387	*15*
Eastern Europe	859	*9,3*
North Africa	544	*5,9*
South America	150	*1,6*
Central America	55	*0,6*
Middle East	28	*0,3*
Western Europe	18	*0,2*
North America	2	*0*
Total	**9262**	***100***
Missing	2010	

Source: Our elaboration

4.2. Young and foreigners. The modale profile
In order to understand what relationships, emerge between the characteristics of CPIA students, we considered three different variables: gender (male/female), nationality (Italian/foreign), and age group (young, up to 35/adult 36 -65/elderly +65). The combination of the respective categories has allowed us to construct a typology of twelve possible socio-anagraphic profiles of those enrolled (Fig.5).

The modal profile is that of the young male foreigner, 3912 enrolled, or 2 out of 5 enrollees. Despite the advanced age target of the CPIAs, there are very few elderly enrollees, especially elderly foreign males, present in a very small way (9). It should be noted that there is a substantial balance in the adult 'cluster', where Italian women prevail marginally (7.4% of the total).

Moreover, it is interesting to note that this profile (adult Italian woman) is the one most frequently found among the women enrolled. This confirms the gender difference that emerges in the data between young enrollees (predominantly male) and older enrollees (tendentially female). The CPIA paradoxically represents a learning center for young people who, beyond their nationality, have the desire to re-enter the educational and training circuit of the school system.

**FIG. 5.** *Nr of CPIA student by aggregate socio-anagraphic profiles*
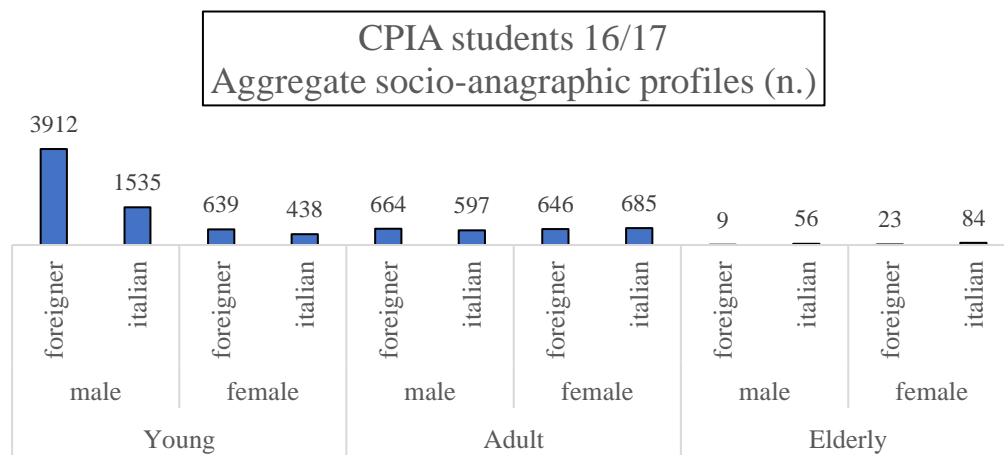
Source: Our elaboration

4.3. Back to learning vs. Italian school for immigrants

The MCA applied to the variables we have considered so far calculates new factors that summarize the characteristics of students. The intersection of the first two factors[3] brings out two opposing clouds of points, which we have circumscribed with two colored shapes to highlight a radically different user base, both from the social and anagraphic point of view, and in terms of training needs. In fact, the group in yellow, which we have called 'Back to learning', is made up of the modalities that construct the profile of the no-longer-young, Italian user (tending to be female) who enrolls at the CPIA to finish the years of obligatory schooling (second school period).

FIG. 6. *Cartesian plane and the two emerged dimensions*
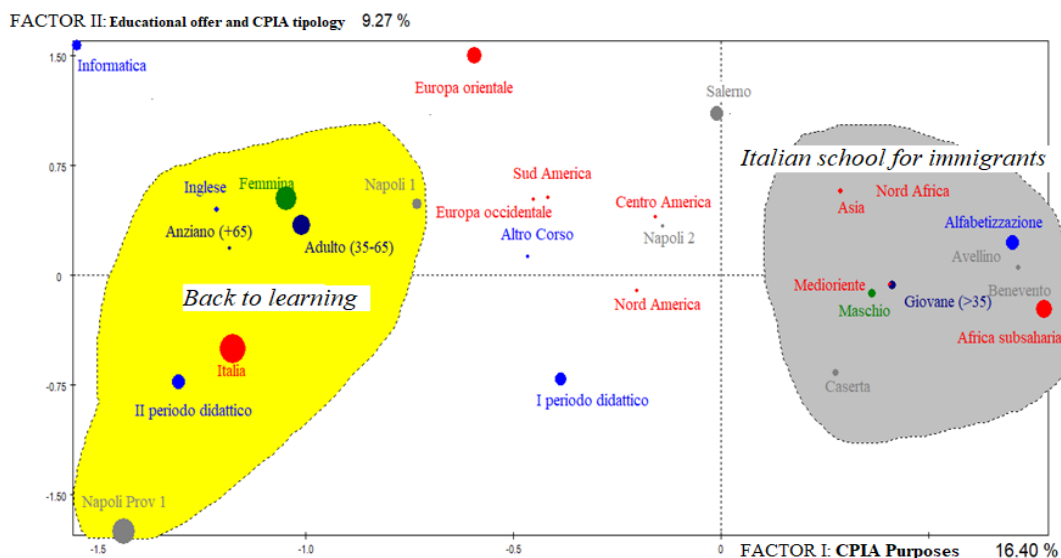
Source: Our elaboration on SPAD 6.0

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[3] For summary purposes, we do not report the contributions of each mode. We have recognized *CPIA purposes* in the first factor, and *Educational offer and CPIA Typology* in the second.

This is a type of user that finds space above all in the CPIAs in the Naples area (Naples I and Naples prov.I). The other cloud ('Italian school for immigrants') groups the modalities referring to the profile of immigrant students, whose experience with this type of school is configured with the learning of the Italian language. It is reasonable to think that these are subjects who have lived in Italy for a short time and for whom the CPIA represents, in all probability, a first contact with Italian institutions.

4.3. New profiles of adult education. Beyond a consolidated dichotomy

To explore this issue in depth, this time leaving out the relationships between variables to focus on the cases of our matrix, we apply the clustering technique to the factorial values of the MCA, through the hierarchical agglomerative method.

Following Ward's method of aggregation[4], the dendogram seems to suggest a 4-group cutoff ensuring a good balance of within and between groups variability (Fig.7). The percentages of variability in the four groups (16%, 20%, 49%, and 14%) suggest to us a good proportion.

FIG. 7. *Dendrogram with 4-group cutoff and percentage of variability for each group*
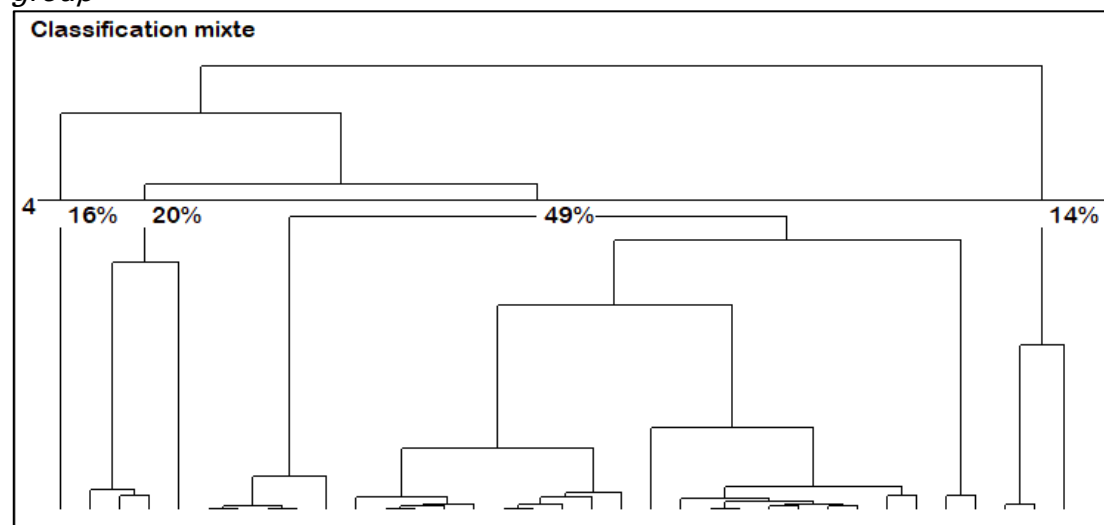
Source: Our elaboration on SPAD 6.0

The four clusters (Integration and mixte learning, Young foreign men and social inclusion, Italian adults and back to learning, Young foreign women and LL) overcome and deepen the dichotomy foreign students/Italians on which official statistics and literature have often insisted referring to the world of CPIA and adult education. In order to describe the clusters, we relied on the modes with a v.test greater than 2.2, that is, statistically significant association values. Below we can see a description of the clusters and their modalities.

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4   Ward's method is an agglomerative method of groups which consists in minimizing the variance within groups and maximizing the variance between groups.

Young foreign women and LL (18,1%) – It is the cluster characterized above all by young foreign women who are not placed in specific training paths. Of this group, belonging to the CPIA Salerno is very characteristic. (v. test = 93.57) (Table 6).

TAB. 6. *Cluster 'Young foreign women and LL', class and v.test*

Young foreign women and LL (18,1%)	
class	*v.test*
CPIA Salerno	93.57
North Africa	8.61
Asia	5.59
Female	4.03
Eastern Europe	2.81
Young	2.48

Source: Our elaboration

Young foreign men and social inclusion (33,6%) – It is the group characterized by the presence of young foreigners enrolled at the CPIA to learn the Italian language. They are, for the most part, male immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa who attend the CPIAs in Avellino, Benevento and Naples 2. This is the second largest group and underscores the fact that foreigners are an increasingly important target group for CPIAs and adult education policies (Table 7).

TAB. **7**. *Cluster 'Young foreign men and social inclusion, class and v.test*

Young foreign men and social inclusion (33,6%)	
class	*v.test*
A2 Literacy	67.16
Sub-Saharan Africa	57.93
Benevento CPIA	44.65
Young	42.31
Male	34.24
Avellino CPIA	32.84
Naples 2 CPIA	7.93

Source: Our elaboration

Integration and mixte learning (33,9%) - It is the largest group, likely the one that represents the average group, useful for describing the current condition of CPIA students. The average profile of this group shows us the figure of the adult enrolled who has rather mixed educational interests ranging from first level certification to computer courses. It is interesting to note that in this group both Italian and foreigners coexist: it is no coincidence that the CPIAs most representative of this group are those of a multi-ethnic reality such as Naples (Naples 1 and Naples 2) (Table 8).

TAB. 8. *Cluster 'Integration and mixte learning', class and v.test*

Integration and mixte learning (33,9%)	
class	*v.test*
I period	38.9
Naples 1	38.3
Caserta	28.3
Adult	23.4
IT	16.1
Eastern Europe	14.6
Female	13.4
North Africa	12.2
Italy	12.1
Naples 2	11.9
Asia	10.5

Source: Our elaboration

Italian adults and back to learning (14,4%) – It is the least numerous cluster. It is mainly composed of Italian adults (above all women) who decide to re-enter the training circuit in order to obtain I and II level certifications. It is a group in which the foreign presence is very marginal. Very relevant for this cluster are the CPIA of Naples Prov. 1 and Naples 1 (Tab. 9)

TAB. 9. *Cluster 'Italian adults and back to learning', class and v.test*

Italian adults and back to learning (14,4%)	
class	*v.test*
II period	93.57
Naples Prov.1 CPIA	8.61
Italy	5.59
Female	4.03
Adult	2.81
I period	2.48
Naples 1 CPIA	2.48

Source: Our elaboration

The results of the clustering of CPIA Campania students in 2016/2017 tells us that the target of these schools is changing and the audience of students is not made of closed compartments (Italians and foreigners) with their predefined educational paths (e.g. literacy for foreigners). There is, in fact, a large group characterized by mixed courses that involve both foreigners and Italians and that, therefore, exceed situations of ghettoization risk and instead promote shared spaces of learning.

Conclusion. Rethinking CPIAs to strengthen the 'gray zone' of learning

Although the construction of the data on CPIAs in Campania had many limitations, we were able to produce a description of the profiles of CPIA students enrolled, highlighting, moreover, some interesting aspects related to their registry condition and their specific training paths. Until 2017, in the Centers of Campania, the imbalance between foreign and Italian participants was quite significant (in some Centers the ratio between foreigners and Italians is 9 to 1), feeding the representation of CPIAs as 'schools for foreigners' (De Luca Picione, Madonia, 2017).

It is not difficult to imagine how this perceptual bias can have no small effects on the creation of ghetto-schools with negative consequences compared to the need to build paths of social integration for immigrants (De Luca Picione, Madonia, 2017). Similarly, there is a cluster of Italian students who are concentrated in a few provincial centers and are involved mainly in return training courses for Level I certification.

Beyond this division between foreigners and Italians, however, there is another 'reality'. It is less definite and vaguer, in which it is possible to find a teaching experimentation dedicated to a heterogeneous audience in terms of social characteristics and educational needs. The main actors of these new mixed experiments are the CPIAs in vulnerable areas for migratory phenomena. What is emerging is that there is a grey area, and this could be the sign of a change, at least at the local level, in the policies of reception of CPIA students.

The limited data did not allow us to go into greater depth. However, we believe that this work can be a reasonable starting point to investigate in the future all the aspects that have emerged on the characteristics of the users of the CPIAs in Campania. In the context of the increasing importance of lifelong learning in Europe, and with a view to understanding the outcomes of the latest reforms in Italy, we believe that further cognitive efforts on this issue are an absolute priority. It would be convenient to follow a mixed research approach in order to provide evidence-based support to future policies and interventions on lifelong learning and adult learning pathways, in Italy and especially in Campania.

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