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When in Rome, Not All International Students Do as the Romans Do

A Survey-based Typification of International Students' Experiences and Profiles at Sapienza University of Rome

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A ROMA NON TUTTI GLI STUDENTI INTERNAZIONALI
FANNO COME I ROMANI. UNA TIPIZZAZIONE BASATA
SU SONDAGGI DELLE ESPERIENZE E DEI PROFILI
DEGLI STUDENTI INTERNAZIONALI PRESSO L'UNIVERSITÀ
SAPIENZA DI ROMA

ABSTRACT

Universities often consider international students as a homogeneous group, that is of value for internationalisation purposes. Yet, migratory paths, cultural encounters, motivations and expectations make the experience of these students much varied and highly differentiated. Acknowledging this diversity allows to go beyond aggregate statistics and to assess specific needs and constraints. The present study focuses on the Italian context, introducing a quali-quantitative survey developed to investigate the variety of experi-

ences and profiles of international students enrolled at Sapienza University of Rome. An analysis of multiple correspondence was applied to the survey's responses. Results were triangulated with qualitative data collected in previous steps of the research, confirming the reliability of the survey and its capacity to discriminate different profiles. Three groups were identified (the «transnational migrants», the «international students», and the «invisible» ones), revealing a series of specificities, and a particular group as most vulnerable. Results are discussed highlighting the need to implement inclusive policies.

Keywords: Diversity; Higher Education; Inclusivity; International students; Migration; Multi-method.

1. INTRODUCTION

The experience of international students is at the crossroads of different processes (migratory, educational, cultural, psychological), which is reflected in the way this population is defined and considered. The OECD, for instance, defines these students as those who received their prior education in another country and are not residents of their current country of study (2021). International students, and particularly those who engage in a degree mobility, are indeed a driving force for intercultural exchange and comprise an important segment of the global migrant community.

In the past twenty years, international student mobility has been expanding consistently (OECD, 2020), and Europe is one key geographical area for inward mobility: United Kingdom, France and Germany (with nearly 260,000 students) are major host countries, far ahead of Italy (98,000), the Netherlands (96,000) and Austria (74,000).

From the university perspective, international activities have not only expanded in volume and scope, but also in complexity (OECD, 2017). As part of their internationalisation strategy (Altbach & Knight, 2007), universities have been changing admission rules for international students, creating double degrees, revising curricula to encourage teaching in foreign languages, and offering online courses. Yet, as Hans de Wit (2020) points out, the push for competition, revenue and academic branding has moved to the side-line traditional values that have driven international activities in the past, such as cooperation, solidarity and peace. In this regard, analysis based on aggregates such as number of international students, credits achieved, or time to degree, fail to acknowledge that international mobility should pursue other and deeper goals: cultural exchange, mutual understanding and human development. This advocates the opportunity to explore the experience of international students and to examine if the

different challenges they encounter and paths they take actually lead to intercultural growth of both students and institutions.

Answering to this call, in this paper we illustrate a study which is part of a broader research aimed at examining the experience of international students at Sapienza University of Rome, one of the largest European universities. We present results of a quali-quantitative survey developed to assess different domains of students' experiences. The results of the survey are discussed in relation to other stages of the overall research, including in-depth interviews and ethnographic observation.

Before illustrating the research setting and the results, we present a description of the main characteristics related to the international students' experiences according to the existing literature and refer to the internationalisation process at Italian universities.

2. CHARACTERISATION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

International students meet all the traditional criteria used to define migrants: their movements occur across geographic boundaries, involve permanent or semi-permanent changes of residence, and are observed over specific periods of time (Yaukey *et al.*, 2007). However, international students are limitedly studied as a group of migrants. Related literature, which has particularly increased in the last decade, has favoured the analysis of their educational path and of macro-scale processes, such as the international «business» of Asian student migration in Western countries (Bodycott & Lai, 2012; Wu, 2014; Ding, 2016; Heng, 2018; Zhang-Wu, 2018; among others) and the allied phenomenon of brain-drain (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003), yet overlooking the diversity existing within the international students' population.

Some push and pull factors have been identified to explain the mobility decision and the choice of the destination country: besides the cost of study, political stability, immigration policies (OECD, 2019), cultural and religious proximity between countries of origin and destination (Weisser, 2015) play an important role.

Coming to the students' experience, research has focused, on one hand, on the learning potential of international education and its benefits in terms of communication and understanding (Lillyman & Bennett, 2014, among others), and on the other hand, on international students' adaptive difficulties (for a review of acculturation experiences, see Smith & Khawaja, 2011), discrimination perceptions (Lee & Rice, 2007; Karuppan

& Barari, 2010), social isolation and nostalgia («homesickness», Sawir *et al.*, 2008). Within this research line, some authors have studied specifically difficulties they encounter in adjusting to the host academic context (e.g. Hellstén, 2002; Dimmock & Ong Soon Leong, 2010; Hunter *et al.*, 2013), variously labelled as «culture shock» (Zhou *et al.*, 2008) or «acculturative stress» (Berry, 1997). For instance, Sherry, Thomas, and Hong Chui (2010) indicate language problems, finances, and alienation from the broader university community as sources of international students' vulnerabilities, whereas Hellstén (2002), focusing on Asian students in Australian universities, identifies specific communication issues as possible causes of misunderstanding with academic staff. Interestingly, some studies (Jones, 2017; Starr-Glass, 2017) have emphasized the risk of exclusion that could result from the use of the categorization of students as «internationals». Using such label could create a fracture between these students and the academic community, ultimately compromising their integration and social inclusion. Situated and ethnographic research on international students' experience were conducted by Lorraine Brown and Ian Jones (2013) on the encounters with racism of international students in British universities, and by Hunter and colleagues (2013) focusing on barriers in meaningful international experiences. Also, the recent works by Guo and Guo (2017) and Nada and Araújo (2019) focus on the gap between internationalisation policies and the international student experiences using qualitative approaches. The current research contributes to this literature focussing on the Italian context that has been examined at a lesser extent.

3. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT ITALIAN UNIVERSITIES

The number and variety of international students in Italy can be seen as a positive result of internationalisation strategies. However, their status is bounded to the immigration policies, with their legal and migratory norms and requirements, which limit students' mobility or access due to slow and complex procedures. International students are considered for the Italian academic system as one sub-group pertaining to «foreign students» (those who hold a foreign citizenship), diverse from those who reside in Italy and have obtained prior education at an Italian institution.

To our knowledge, only few studies have focused on the Italian context (Staniscia, 2012; European Migration Network, 2013; Montanari & Staniscia, 2013; Norton & Giudici, 2017; Norton & Fatigante, 2018; Giudici *et al.*, 2021), highlighting the necessity of investigating these students in terms of access, academic pathways and success (or dropout),

social inclusion (well-being) and university-work transition. Indeed, in previous stages of our study (Norton & Fatigante, 2018) we found that international students at Sapienza reported about a not so welcoming environment inside and outside the university, referred the discomfort experienced in living between «two worlds» (their own culture and the host culture), and showed a progressive shift from being «international students» to becoming migrants. These previous investigations call for further exploration of the many facets of being an international student in Italy.

4. AIMS

This study is part of a wider research, which aimed at assessing the migratory and the academic experiences of international students enrolled at Sapienza University of Rome by focusing on structural and psychosocial dimensions. Within this framework, the current study aimed to individuate different profiles within the international students' group on the basis of their migratory and academic experience, taking into account individual characteristics, thus shedding light into its internal heterogeneity.

5. CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

The wider multi-method research plan included: (a) an ethnographic study in campus through participant observation and interviews with key informants; (b) mapping the organization and structure of the welcome and orientation offices and services put in place by the university; (c) in-depth narrative interviews and (d) a quali-quantitative survey aimed at exploring the students' perspective. Results of the first two steps documented the ways in which the Institution present itself, interact and support international students, especially at their arrival. The discursive analysis of the interviews showed a critical perspective on the reception system (Norton & Fatigante, 2018).

The present study complements the analysis of the institutional perspective and the students' interpretative *repertoires* aforementioned, further exploring the students' experiences and profiles through a quali-quantitative survey developed on the bases of the previous steps.

Sapienza University of Rome, the largest Italian university, has implemented a range of actions (English taught courses, double and joint degree programmes, reduction fees for international students) for reinforcing their institutional strategy aimed at recruiting students from abroad. According

to data provided by Sapienza statistical office, the student population in the academic year 2016-2017 reached 109.404 individuals. Among them, 7.234 hold a foreign citizenship. Those holding both a foreign citizenship and prior education obtained abroad were 3.480, constituting a significant presence in Sapienza.

5.1. *Method*

An extensive questionnaire was developed to assess the international students' migratory and academic experience. The questionnaire included 76 close-ended questions and 5 open-ended questions. Specifically, the questionnaire targeted eight areas of investigation, which emerged as key themes from the literature and from previous phases of the research: personal data, income, family background, housing, experience of the city and mobility, free time, knowledge and practice of Italian, and academic career. At the end of the questionnaire, further questions asked about the motivations beneath the choice of coming to study in Italy and particularly in Sapienza, expectations about future mobility after graduation, and suggestions to give to hypothetical prospect students.

5.2. *Analysis*

Quantitative and qualitative data were jointly considered and submitted to Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) and hierarchical cluster analysis. We used as active variables the ones about students' demographic and socio-economic characteristics, family background, academic career, housing, leisure and social activity, knowledge and practice of Italian. Open responses were submitted to repeated cycles of individual reading and then collective discussions among the authors, using the method of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to gather the different individual responses within a set of categories, which were assigned numbers and as such they entered the analytic matrix as supplementary variables.

5.3. *Participants*

A total of 622 questionnaires were collected. The analysis was conducted on the 262 completed questionnaires. Respondents aged between 23-30, while the gender distribution does not differ among the two groups. As for the country of origin, most of respondents come from India (11%), Russia (6.9%), Albania (6.1%) and Iran (5.3%).

6. RESULTS

The MCA allowed us to summarize the answers given to the questionnaire and led to the identification of three different groups within the international students' sample (*Fig. 1*). In order to interpret the field emerged from MCA, the output was triangulated with ethnographic observation and other qualitative data collected in other steps of the broader research (Norton & Fatigante, 2018). Both qualitative and quantitative data converged, thus showing the capacity of the proposed survey to distinguish among different typologies of international students. Open-ended questions collected in the survey further show the nuances of the students' perspectives within each of the three main profiles detected.

Results show three groups, which we labelled: the transnational migrant student (group 1), the international student (group 2), and the vulnerable and invisible student (group 3).

A fourth aggregate of students does not gather into a single group. Sparse subjects in *Figure 1* hold individual characteristics – such as a young age (18-25 years), enrolment at single cycle course degrees, high academic achievement, and high cultural and social capital – that, however, are not significantly associated, which means that they do not belong to a particular group and that may be conceived more in terms of individuals with peculiar characteristics and experiences.

First group: the transnational migrant student

The first group is mostly composed by females aged more than 30 years born in East-European countries (Romania, Russia, Moldova and other EU countries). As regard the educational paths, these students are currently enrolled in Humanities and Social Science Bachelor's courses. They take lessons sporadically and are not on track with their exams and declared to be satisfied of their study path at university. Most students in this group are working at the time of the survey and reported that their work represents their main economic income.

This group is characterized by the level of integration in the Italian context, defined by individual proficiency level of the Italian language and by social support. In fact, they spoke Italian before even enrolling at university and this aspect has a clear consequence in their educational career: for them, taking oral examinations is very easy, as well as communicating with Italian students. Related with their free time and living conditions, students declared to be very much satisfied of the relationship with Italians.

Their families were already in Italy by the time they arrived for enrolling at university, meaning that there was somehow a «safety net» for social support, as they were never alone during the academic experience. This information indicates that their parents were a first-generation of immigrants in Italy, while they grew up abroad. All these elements invite to think of these students as close to the so-called second-generation students (who, instead, were born in Italy). For these reasons, we labelled the first group the «transnational migrant student».

Open ended question regarding their motivations for coming to Italy confirm that prior knowledge of the country or the feeling/expectation of a similar cultural background figure as the pull factors. When asked «Why did you decide to come to Italy?» (item A17), they often report cultural and practical advantages:

- «Because I feel like at home. I like the culture and the language».
- «Because I already spoke Italian and it was cheaper than France».

Most of the respondents would make again the choice of moving to Italy and express their wish to stay in the country after graduation and find a job relevant to their education. The experience of mobility is framed as one of (permanent) migration. As such, the experience appears to be midway between a sense of «necessity» to migrate and one of a personal preference, even triggered by cultural aspects such as the passion for soccer, or Italian cooking, besides Italian beauty and history (answers to item A17):

- «Because I like Totti and he allowed me to know this country when I was a little girl. So I like this, thus is the country I know better».
- «Italy as Persia. Is an ancient country».

Some of the answers particularly illustrate the tension between personal desire and necessity, or pressure from the (either nuclear or extended) family:

- «Really, I've come here because of my mother that already lived in Rome».
- «(Because of) some family ties, then again, for me, to go to university in Italy was a big opportunity that I had decided to pursue».

Despite such an apparently integrated profile, these students also declared to have experienced discrimination. However, the confinement of this experience to the workplace would suggest that academic context is perceived by these students as a welcoming territory, to a certain extent «safe» from phenomena of racism and discrimination. The analysis of their responses regarding possible advice and suggestions for prospect students revealed nevertheless that they had to face quite a lot of challenges and to bear a high «cost» in terms of tolerance and acceptance of the difficulties of being an international student in Italy: administrative procedures for getting access to the university and procedures for the renewal of residence permit were reported. To a prospect student, they suggest the need

of having a «psychological» preparation in order to engage (in their own words) «a hard path»: nerves of steel, patience, staying calm, good preparation and having faith. Again, though, this is referred as mainly applying to the «outside world», while the university is cast as a friendly context.

Second group: the international student

The second group includes students aged between 26-29, mostly males coming from India, Pakistan, Azerbaijan and other countries of the Asian region.

These students are enrolled at English taught master's courses in Engineering. As already mentioned, the university has implemented for some years now a recruitment strategy offering these kinds of international courses. This second group, then, corresponds for its most part to students who have responded to this call. For this reason, we labelled them the «international students» *per excellence*.

In this group, language and social support play a symmetric role compared with the first one. They declared either to have studied Italian informally or not to know Italian at all. In fact, they find very difficult to communicate with Italian students and prefer to communicate with other students and with friends in English. Accordingly, in the leisure time, they prefer to hang out with other foreigners (rather than Italians) and/or with co-nationals. They share the flat with other co-nationals, but not with Italians. Furthermore, students from this group are very unsatisfied of the relationship with their neighbours.

They have no one in Italy at their arrival, as their families live at their home country. Their main income is based on scholarships, and they do not work. Most of the students are either graduating or on track with their exams. They take lessons and study less than an hour in a day.

As regards motivations («Why did you choose to study at Sapienza?», item H3), they report to have chosen to come to Italy because of English taught and prestigious courses offered, and because of the university's reputation:

- «Because is one of the oldest and more important universities and they had the master programme that I was interested in».

Beauty of Rome as an additional benefit of studying is also mentioned, but in a cold and detached way:

- «A top university in Italy, also situated in the lively and beautiful city of Rome».

Students report a discrepancy between an idealized picture of studying at Sapienza in Rome and their real experience. As a matter of fact, they declare very unsatisfied of their course of study and report difficul-

ties in holding oral examinations. The cause of this disadvantage does not only refer to the language gap but appears to also include a certain feeling of alienation. Their main suggestion for future students is to learn very well Italian before coming to Italy, and to keep focused on the educational tasks, as a preventive and coping measure against the sense of frustration (answer to item H19):

- «To stay focused on the studies and not be destructed by the inefficiency of the country».

As one student declares in giving advice to an imaginary prospect student (item H21):

- «Don't do it, unless you know that the course you are choosing and the staff that is responsible for that course will give you an incomparable advantage over other courses in the world».

For all these characteristics, this group seems to interpret the experience of studying in Italy as only temporary, due either to the failure of their expectations and their proneness to continue a career of education mobility elsewhere. In fact, individuals in this group report an ambition – uniquely as compared to those in the other two groups – to continue studying and enter a higher level of education outside Italy, rather than going back to their home country. When asked directly «What are your expectations for the future, once you end your studies?» (item H 19), they report:

- «Hopefully find a job or a scholarship for keep studying».
- «Take a master's degree in robotics in a Japanese university».

Third group: the vulnerable/invisible student

Students pertaining to the third group, which we called the «vulnerable/invisible student», gather a sense of negative experience related both to their academic path and to the social inclusion in the host context, and raise the most unanswered questions with regards to what kind of (identity) profiles are included in the general label of «international student» (see also Norton & Fatigante, 2018 on this).

As compared to members included in the other groups, these students show a higher heterogeneity of provenience, manifested by both the number of regions of origin included, and by the degree of their mutual cultural difference (countries include Iran, China, Cameroon, Israel and Congo).

Their academic experience is not satisfactory: they find very difficult to hold oral examinations and, although they study more than 3 hours in a day, they are not near to graduation yet. Furthermore, students are not characterised by specific motivations beneath the choice of coming to Italy, while they mostly would go back to their country of origin once they graduate.

Most of these students have experienced discrimination and they declared to have been insulted and even assaulted because of being a foreigner.

Overall, members in this group prefer to communicate in Italian with other students, although they find it very difficult to communicate with Italians. They are currently enrolled at single cycle Italian taught courses in Medicine, Mathematics, Physics and Natural Sciences and Architecture. The choice not to enrol in English taught courses would suggest that these students either master Italian as second language, or they wish to improve it with an immersive language, since they hold a proficiency or an intermediate level of Italian knowledge and have studied Italian language abroad prior to the arrival in Italy. The analysis also reports that they take notes at lessons both in Italian and in their mother tongue.

Instead, they select their mother tongue to communicate with their friends that remained in their birthplace, with whom they are often in contact. In Rome, they are not satisfied with the relationship with their neighbours. This information would cast them as members who maintain a close tie with their home country and are less available to establish new relationship in the host country.

Uniquely in this group, the free time is occupied by religion instead of cultural activities such as theatre, cinema, or music. Their expectations once they graduate are not clear: they seem to be confused and irresolute or declare not to have any expectation at all (examples of answers given to item H19):

- «Not much, hope for the targets I could achieve, and I do not want to really disclose with anyone».
- «The closer the future gets, the more I have no answer to this question».

Such answers picture this group as reporting a sense of betrayal of expectations nurtured by the students' families also. As we know from responses about their main sources of income, these students rely on family finances and are indeed sent to Italy by their parents for reaching an academic achievement: this is possibly intended to enhance the student's chance of being a successful student, and then a successful worker and individual. Yet, the students' experience refers to a strong disorientation and psychosocial vulnerabilities.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Labelling «international» students for categorizing a particular group within the student's population may entails the risk of exclusion from the host community (Jones, 2017; Starr-Glass, 2017), especially if its internal

diversity is ignored. Although an academic experience abroad may have positive effects (Lillyman & Bennett, 2014), language problems, alienation from the broader university community and discrimination can impact on the international students' experiences, thus enhancing their vulnerabilities (Sherry, Thomas, & Hong Chui, 2010; Brown & Jones, 2013). By taking into account such factors, different experiences and profiles can be assessed within the international students' population.

Adding to the scholarly discussion that invites to reconsider the label of international student as an idealized phenomenon, we developed mixed-method research aimed at collecting the perspective of the students themselves and at assessing the internal variability of this group at one of the most important Italian universities.

The survey's results presented in this paper were consistent with the experiences reported through in-depth interviews and with the ethnographic observation outcomes ((Norton & Fatigante, 2018) and confirm that the international students' population is indeed highly heterogeneous. Even if with plenty of further nuances, the three international students' groups identified in the study help in the understanding of their specific characteristics, needs and coping strategies. Language, social support and cultural proximity emerged as relevant factors associated with three main different academic and life trajectories. Other individuals hold different experiences and profiles, but do not gather «statistically» as a single group.

A first typology emerging from our study is that of «transnational migrant students». This group was also observed through previous in-depth interviews conducted in the same context. Their migratory profiles identify them with members belonging to immigrant communities already residing and partially integrated in Italy, which could have been also favoured by the geographical proximity and a tradition of economic migration from East Europe that has begun soon after the demolition of Berlin Wall (King, 1993). This bi-cultural profile (Norton & Fatigante, 2018) is reported both as an advantage and a constrain. On the one hand they are equipped with language and cultural resources that make them more similar to Italian students. On the other hand, this is also a «fabricated» identity which helps them mitigate and cope with an underlying sense of frustration with regards the poor capacity of the host context to adjust and meet their needs as students and foreign citizens.

The second group depicts the ideal profile of the international and «global» students, who migrate uniquely for study purpose, pursuing a higher standard of education, where this is not available in their home country, or when moving to a host country and a specific university is valued as an element of prestige. This group represents *par excellence* the successful

result of internationalisation and recruitment strategies enhanced by the university, reported at the ethnographic stage of the research (Norton & Fatigante, 2018). Though, the analysis indicate that these students are not only disappointed with the academic experience, but also secluded from the local cultural and social context. As regards intercultural advantages – which could benefit both origin and host countries –, our results show that are largely missed, as these students are planning to leave Italy and not to return home after graduation. This result can be interpreted considering three contextual elements:

- university paths for international students seem not to take into account the social inclusion in the wider context, nor engagement or social activities outside the international classrooms;
- the slow and dull bureaucracy of migratory procedures does not adjust to educational timings and sometimes opens the unfortunate chance that students may be cast as irregular migrants: this happens for example when their resident and study permit has expired while they still attend their courses (Norton & Fatigante, 2018);
- a job market characterized by lack of opportunities, chances of mobility, and an unequal correspondence between specialization and income, which shapes Italy as a not attractive country, particularly for foreign graduates.

All these contextual elements help us understand the attempt of this group of students to create their own niche and isolate from the context. At the same time, this result deeply questions the success story as in terms of recruitment strategies and goals achieved observed from the institutional side, and further stress the importance of considering more ideal goals and the values that should be at the forefront of international activities, first and foremost cooperation and solidarity (de Wit, 2020).

The third group (vulnerable/invisible) push our concerns even further. These students are engaged in difficult educational paths which they are struggling to successfully pursue, due, among other factors, to their low level of Italian proficiency. This group is the most heterogeneous as regards the country of origin, the motivations and the expectations declared, and as such, the hardest to interpret. Overall, the analysis of their profiles shows a strong clash between their personal and parental socio-economic and educational investment on the academic and migratory paths, and their actual experience, marked by many obstacles and alarming discriminatory experiences. These latter cast them as victims of direct and structural violence, and eventually make them view their future expectations as highly unclear and in a pessimistic light. Moreover, they are secluded from the network of international students and lack a net of social ties and cultural belonging to the host country. This group appears to be the most exposed to the risk of

perduring alienation and identity loss, besides that of an educational failure and dropout in academic career. This risk of failure is even worsened by perceived responsibility towards students' families and host country who made an educational and economic investment for enhancing the mobility of global intellectual capital. From the point of view of hosting academic institution this is also a failure.

The study has some limitations that relate to its exploratory purposes. The first is having considered the international students at a single university. The second is that the survey has reached a small number of students compared to the total of Sapienza international students. By addressing other universities and a larger sample, richer and more diversified data on the internal heterogeneity of international students could emerge.

Despite these limitations, the main result of the study has been the opportunity to identify different groups in the broad, ideal category of international students. Although all international students encounter many challenges in the host university, the study shed light on similar paths. These similarities go beyond possible commonalities due to cultural background. The groups' characteristics are specifically related to the personal migratory and academic experience in the host educational context. As Norton and Fatigante reported in a previous ethnographic study (2018), some institutional stakeholders are aware of the necessity of offering tailored support services to respond to specific needs of international students and to retain them in the host country. We consider that our results, if replicated by further and more extensive studies, indicate the need to tailor and differentiate inclusive programmes to the needs, expectations, resources and constraints that are at the same time specific and diverse among international students. Overall, our results suggest clear needs that policymakers and internationalisation practitioners should address to enhance the well-being of diverse typology of international students, well beyond measuring their academic performance.

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ABSTRACT

Le università spesso considerano gli studenti internazionali come un gruppo omogeneo, utile ai fini dell'internazionalizzazione. Tuttavia, i percorsi migratori, gli incontri culturali, le motivazioni e le aspettative rendono l'esperienza di questi studenti molto varia e altamente differenziata. Riconoscere questa diversità permette di andare oltre le statistiche aggregate e di valutare bisogni e vincoli specifici. Il presente studio si concentra sul contesto italiano, introducendo un'indagine quali-quantitativa sviluppata per indagare la varietà di esperienze e profili degli studenti internazionali iscritti alla Sapienza Università di Roma. L'analisi delle corrispondenze multiple è stata applicata alle risposte del sondaggio. I risultati sono stati triangolati con i dati qualitativi raccolti nelle fasi precedenti della ricerca, confermando l'affidabilità dell'indagine e la sua capacità di discriminare i diversi profili. Sono stati identificati tre gruppi (i «migranti transnazionali», gli «studenti internazionali», e gli «invisibili»), rivelando una serie di specificità, e un particolare gruppo come più vulnerabile. I risultati vengono discussi, evidenziando la necessità di implementare politiche inclusive.

Parole chiave: Diversità; Inclusività; Migrazione; Multi-metodo; Studenti internazionali; Università.

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