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**LABOUR MIGRATION  
IN EUROPE  
VOLUME I**

Integration and Entrepreneurship  
among Migrant Workers -  
A Long-Term View

**Edited by  
Francesca Fauri and  
Paolo Tedeschi**



# Labour Migration in Europe Volume I

Francesca Fauri • Paolo Tedeschi  
Editors

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Integration and Entrepreneurship  
among Migrant Workers – A  
Long-Term View

palgrave  
macmillan

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# 1

## Introduction: The Economic and Social Influence of Migrants as Job Seekers and Entrepreneurs in Host Countries

Francesca Fauri and Paolo Tedeschi

**Abstract** In this volume, the contributors explore the universe of migrants as both job seekers and ethnic minority entrepreneurs in Europe over the last hundred years. Migrants' motivations, adaptation to new cultural and working environment and the effects of their presence on social and economic structures in the country of destination are analysed. In addition, rather than engaging with the question of why some ethnic groups compete more successfully in business, authors concentrate on specific case studies of ethnic groups with a high level of entrepreneurship and self-employment.

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**Keywords** Migratory movements/traditions • Drifters/wanderers

- Migrant workers • Entrepreneurial attitude of migrants
- Economic/social impact of migration

European populations have never been static, and traditionally tended to be much more mobile than was once thought (Lucassen and Lucassen 2009). Migratory movements have been an integral part of the life of Europeans since the Middle Ages: permanent settlement was not a universal way of living. Whether they were short or long-term, linked to seasonal or periodic mobility, or towards proximate or distant destinations, these movements were important mechanisms for the functioning of society at particular times and gave rise to well-established migratory traditions in numerous geographical areas of Europe from the coasts of the North Sea to the Iberian Peninsula (Lucassen 1987, pp. 110, 116–117, 201; Lucassen and Lucassen 2015).

Short term and long term migrant workers have been drawn from different categories of people at different points in time: in the first place, farm workers were accustomed to migratory movements since they “came from a society used to movement, with men and women accustomed to uprooting themselves from their villages, even for months at a time” (Bevilacqua 2001, pp. 4–6). They usually moved from poorer areas, such as the mountainous zones of the Alps, the pre-Alpine areas and the Apennines and often crossed international borders to take up seasonal wheat harvesting work in flat land plains. Secondly, some historians have also focused on the role of drifters in paving the way for international migrants: these included nomads, itinerant workers, and wandering migrants who went from Italy and France to Scotland and did not have a fixed home but supported themselves with various jobs. Among their ranks were travelling salesmen, seasonal harvesters and even beggars (Davico 1968; Fontaine 1996; Bade 2000, p. 47). These wandering vagabonds, tinkers, pipers, musicians and coppersmiths were often the first ones to take off for distant lands, and they paved the way for subsequent migratory currents: “The emigration of wanderers was thus the adjoining link between traditional forms of nomadism and the modern phenomenon of mass migration of the Twentieth century” (De Clementi 1996,

pp. 393–394). Wanderers were often the first migrant entrepreneurs, opening up a small independent business once they decided to settle in a foreign country: the first Italian migrants to Argentina, for instance, improvised in this fashion, but it is important to underline that past as well as present-day migrants often intended to become entrepreneurs, that is they planned to manage a shop, a restaurant, an artisan workshop, etc. They emigrated because they were jobless and without prospects and they were determined to be masters of their own destiny in their new countries. Finally, we should not forget the movements around the Mediterranean of professionals, entrepreneurs, merchants, doctors, and political exiles who were scattered “nearly all around the Levant” as well as overseas (Audenino and Tirabassi 2008). In the Middle Ages the Mediterranean was not only a place of conflict, but also and especially of peaceful inter-relationships, trade, reciprocal exchanges of ideas and scientific knowledge and naturally, migratory waves. On the coast of Africa, the scale and variety of movement was such that “the Sardinian, Tuscan, Venetian and Sicilian consulates are as busy as the French consulates” (Speziale 2011). A paradigmatic example relates to a group of well-educated Italian Jews from Livorno who settled in Tunis around 1700: most of them were merchants who made use of the linkages to Mediterranean commercial networks to assume important roles in Tunis, as agents for the corsairs and their financial backers. They developed thriving trade relations with Tuscany and Sardinia. Their contacts and wealth enabled them to join the circle of the ruling elite, where they served as advisors, business representatives or physicians to several Beys (Fauri 2016).

From the mid-Nineteenth century, as the revolution in transportation made travelling abroad easier and faster, the custom of migrating contributed to facilitating the choice of leaving for north or south America as well as more traditional destinations. Thus, in many ways, the psychological preparedness for leaving Europe had been built upon the long established tradition of internal and international migration in Europe. This is evident, for example, in the case of Italian emigration both at the end of the Nineteenth century and post-World War II: it is also interesting to note that domestic public institutions favoured migration flows which reduced pressure on the internal labour market and increased the volume of remittances sent home by migrants (De Clementi 2010; Fauri 2015).



Despite the attraction of the Americas, Europe remained a continent where people continued to move around a lot in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, especially from the Southern countries to the richer Northern countries. After World War II, then, decolonization prompted large migration movements from extra-European countries to Europe. From the 1950s the newly born European institutions had to deal with migrant flows from non-ECSC/EEC countries: the proportion of non-European migrants continued to increase even as the number of EEC/EU member countries increased. This provoked support for the creation of ‘Fortress Europe’. This idea of ‘Fortress Europe’ assumed central political relevance with the accession to the EU of eastern European countries from 2004 and the economic and social effects of the international financial crisis of 2008 (Koff 2008; Blanco Sio-Lopez and Tedeschi 2015).

Migration is a multi-faceted phenomenon and not easy to define. Most migrants have traditionally been job seekers attracted by wage differentials, better living standards and job opportunities, but the migration choice also depended on non-economic reasons. The place of destination was sometimes the result of ethnic chains and connections built by pre-existing immigrant communities. Similarly, migration cannot be considered an income-maximizing choice taken by an individual alone; as historians underline, it is often a household strategy, a decision taken within the family context to support and improve living conditions at home. Furthermore, some ethnic groups are more or less likely to engage in the entrepreneurial process. This difference may be a function of ethnicity per se or the outcome of the complex interplay of social, economic and institutional processes known as “mixed embeddedness”.

In this volume, the contributors explore the universe of migrants as both job seekers and ethnic minority entrepreneurs in Europe over the last hundred years. Migrants’ motivations, adaptation to new cultural and working environment and the effects of their presence on social and economic structures in the country of destination are analysed. In addition, rather than engaging with the question of why some ethnic groups compete more successfully in business, authors concentrate on specific case studies of ethnic groups with a high level of entrepreneurship and self-employment. Ethnic ventures often rely on social networks to access information and resources as well as to achieve legal status. Ethnic entre-

preneurs are risk takers but they must also be capable of navigating between the intricate relationships among organizational learning, social networks and the country of destination's rules.

Two papers will look at Southern Europeans moving to Northern European countries after the Second World War: numerous Spanish migrants moved to work in German factories during the years of the economic miracle, while Belgian mines consistently attracted flows of Italians after 1945. Over the years many Italian immigrants have achieved successful results in terms of both integration and entrepreneurship. Over the last fifty years in particular, Europe has become a very attractive continent for immigrants from all over the world. This is another theme which emerges quite clearly from the four contributions: latter-day migration is an increasingly cross-cultural phenomenon. In Vera Zamagni's words: "We can easily admit that the more distant the cultures that come into contact are, the more impressive the impact of migrations on societies will be" (Zamagni 2015). The fact that most migrants come from outside Europe today has not only increased the "distance" between cultures of origin and cultures of destination but has sometimes complicated the integration process, though in a largely positive fashion. Chinese immigrants, for instance, might first arrive to work in a fellow countryman's firm but their dream is to become small entrepreneurs. This is a pragmatic policy in the face of the challenges of integration but it is also a marker of the tradition of small business inherited from home provinces such as Wenzhou. Immigration waves from Africa have tended to experience greater problems in respect of integration and identification. These difficulties have given rise to social phenomena that need to be studied at a deeper level, because a minority of cases have involved dangerous spin offs to terrorism.

Therefore, as these four contributions will show, the economic and social impact of migration varies a lot depending on the "distance" between the two communities, both parties' efforts to facilitate integration and the entrepreneurial spirit of incoming migrants. The ultimate aim of this and future studies in this direction is to contribute to a better understanding of the effect that different forms of migration have had and will continue to have on economic and social change in recipient countries. These policy-relevant issues remain underexplored to a degree,

but only a better understanding of history can help avoid (increasingly prevalent) forms of racism. These can involve a lack of initiative on the part of host countries and desire for revenge fuelled by a sense of exclusion on the part of immigrants.

This book offers four examples of integration and entrepreneurship among migrant workers coming to Europe from other European countries and from the rest of the world. In the first chapter Patrizia Battilani and Francesca Fauri identify three distinct waves of Chinese migration to Italy. The first wave occurred in the very early stage of Sino-Italian relations (1850–1915), and was characterized by the sporadic presence of Chinese citizens, most of them involved in Sino-Italian diplomatic relations or Catholic missionary work. During the second wave of Chinese immigration (1930–1970), a cohesive and closely interconnected community started to develop, especially in Milan but also in Bologna. After the forced interlude of the Second World War and with the onset of Mao's Communist regime, emigration for the purpose of family reunification was permitted and the Chinese community in Italy was gradually re-established. During the 1950s, the Chinese stopped working as street vendors and set up workshops or trading centers all over Italy. In Bologna, they participated in the city's thriving leather and leatherette bags production (in the early 1970s, 70 out of 300 workshops were run by Chinese craftsmen). When that business slowed down, Chinese entrepreneurs moved into new areas and into the service sector (restaurants, shops, travel agencies, etc.). The most recent wave of Chinese immigration started in the 1990s and has built dispersed ethnic Chinese communities around Italy, all independent of each other but all equally well-integrated into their respective local economies. All things considered, the two authors underline how the common denominator of the three unique waves of Chinese immigration to Italy is a strong entrepreneurial attitude together with a sense of close community kinship. In each of the three eras, the Chinese family circle has proved decisive in the establishment of small businesses and their successful integration into the Italian economy.

In the second chapter Gloria Sanz considers the integration of Spanish immigrants in the West German labour market in the 1960s and 1970s, the period of the guest-worker system. In proportional terms, Spaniards

were better represented in all the major industrial companies than any other immigrant group. Despite various factors determining high labour turn-over and conditioning job promotion figures among Spanish immigrants, they often shared the short-term migratory aim of maximizing remittances. Moreover, negative business cycle fluctuations in 1966–1967 and again in 1973–1974 caused many immigrants to return home. Nonetheless, Spanish workers steadily supplemented the German labour market throughout the 1980s. They were rarely self-employed and generally remained in the category of guest workers but in general they were very well-integrated in German industry and society.

In the third chapter Paolo Tedeschi and Pierre Tilly illustrate the impact of migration flows on Belgium's economy and society during the second half of the twentieth century. The chapter uses particular case studies to illustrate the effects of the arrival of foreign workers in Belgian mines, in textile, iron and steel factories, and in the building sector. The research also examines related changes in Belgian life style (concerning food, music, sport, agronomics etc.) and in particular the creation of a real social melting pot. The migration process included very different people as far as language, religion and education are concerned (from the poorest migrants who needed training courses to improve their language and labour skills to the high skilled migrants who were executives in the European institutions in Brussels). The integration process for "foreigners" was complicated in particular for those who had a different religion and/or skin colour and/or a low knowledge of the French (or Dutch) language. As happened elsewhere in Europe, immigration to Belgium before the Second World War was almost exclusively white, Catholic and European. This profile changed significantly after the war and featured large numbers of non-white and non-Christian manual workers from outside Europe. Some migrant entrepreneurs created new markets dedicated to the traditional clothes and dishes of their countries (e.g. Italian pasta and pizza or North African couscous shops and restaurants): they also edited newspapers and books in their native language and advised on family reunification. Migrants' sons and their descendants studied in Belgian schools and became new Belgian citizens: they were sometimes able to play very important roles in political and economic institutions.

The case of Italian migrants is a case in point: the sons or grandsons of Italian miners (or bricklayers or manual workers) have often become important entrepreneurs or trade unions leaders and one of them has recently served as Prime Minister of Belgium. For this community the process of integration was clearly facilitated by the new rules established by the ECSC and EEC in favour of communitarian migrants. In other cases, such as that of Moroccan migrants, integration was more difficult and very few Moroccans of subsequent generations were able to achieve upward social mobility and avoid their parents' low paid jobs (as unskilled bricklayers or dustmen or maids). For other Islamic communities (e.g. the Turkish one) these problems were amplified because they did not know French. This meant that they were dramatically under-represented in higher paid occupations (the only relevant exception was Turkish carriers). Their process of integration was also made more difficult by the absence of the type of emigration and welfare protections reserved for EEC migrants. The rarity of bilateral agreements contributed to increase the number of illegal immigrants: the latter obviously found it difficult to get work and shelter and had no real opportunity to improve their quality of life. In a few cases, young adults who were born in the 1980s and 1990s and were not able to be fully integrated into Belgian society because of these factors, were attracted to radical Islam, which had no followers in Belgium until late in the twentieth century. Analysis of the rules governing Moroccan and Turkish migration to Belgium reveals how European policies were shaped in response to changing political and economic conditions in North Africa and the Middle East. For example, it is interesting that the European Union recently signed new agreements with the Moroccan and Turkish governments to regulate migration to Europe through these countries (Yıldız 2016).

In the fourth chapter Donatella Strangio addresses the characteristics of immigrant businesses, their spatial location and the unique dynamics of this increasingly important component of Italian entrepreneurial community. As Strangio underlines, the number of companies run by immigrants in Italy in 2014 was 524,674 or 8.7% of the total. In line with the traditional protagonists of Italian business, they belong to the SME category. As for the business sectors, immigrant entrepreneurs involved in the trade and construction sectors accounted for more than half of all

immigrant-owned businesses, followed by the manufacturing, food and travel services sectors. Quite interestingly, females are well represented as business owners: Ukraine (56.7%), Nigeria (46.2%) and China (45.8%) all have high rates, as do Pakistan, Bangladesh and Albania to a lesser extent. This chapter concludes by offering a very interesting overview of recent developments in immigrant businesses. It enriches the body of knowledge on migration, entrepreneurs and economic development.

This book is the result of a research project that started in 2015 on the economic and social impact of European migration flows on host countries. Three workshops allowed scholars to elaborate and compare their studies with colleagues from the disciplines of economics, history, law and sociology. The editors wish to thank their colleagues from the following conferences: 'The EU as a Forum of Labour Migration: Entrepreneurship, Exploitation, Dignity and Development' (Forlì, December 2015); 'The economic impact of migration: lessons from history' (17th World Economic History Congress, Kyoto, August 2015); 'Labour Migration from and to Europe: Migrants as Job Seekers and Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurs' (The American Historical Association 130th Annual Meeting, Atlanta, January 2016). Thanks also to the anonymous referees who have reviewed this work at various stages.

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# 2

## Chinese Migration to Italy: Features and Issues

Patrizia Battilani and Francesca Fauri

**Abstract** This essay examines the Chinese experience of migration to Italy. Archival material has been integrated with oral history field work conducted in Bologna and the Romagna. We have identified three distinct waves of Chinese migration to Italy. The first wave occurred in the very early stage of Sino-Italian relations (1850–1915), when only four categories of people moved to Italy from China: the students and priests studying and teaching at the Chinese college in Naples, the diplomats and their families based in Rome, a few sailors and the first street vendors. The sporadic presence of Chinese citizens in Italy was matched by the low number of Italians in China mainly living in the territorial concessions of Tianjin. During the second wave of Chinese immigration (1930–1970), a small but cohesive community started to develop both in Milan and Bologna. The most recent wave of Chinese immigration started in the 1990s. Involving Chinese born and educated under the flag of the People's

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Patrizia Battilani wrote paragraphs 1-3-4. Francesca Fauri wrote the Introduction, paragraphs 2 and 5. The conclusion was a joint effort.

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Republic, this wave bears little or no resemblance to the preceding one. Today, there are widely dispersed ethnic Chinese communities in Italy, all independent from each other but all equally well-integrated into their respective local economies. All things considered, the base common denominator between the three unique waves of Chinese immigrants to Italy is a strong entrepreneurial attitude together with a sense of close community kinship. In each of the three eras, the Chinese family circle has proved decisive in the establishment of small businesses and their successful integration into the Italian economy.

**Keywords** China Club • Chinese language and dialect • Chinese migration • Chinese enterprises • Qingtian • Zhejiang province

## Introduction: Chinese Migration to Europe

The majority of the early Chinese migrants to Europe originated from a few counties in Zhejiang province, south of Shanghai. Beginning in the 1820s, as the Qing government gradually eased the restrictions on maritime trade, an increasing number of people left the country to do business abroad. Between 1821 and 1850, many Chinese arrived in Europe to sell their Qingtian stone carvings. Then again, in the period between the end of the Qing empire and under the Republic of China (1911–1949), Chinese were allowed to leave their homeland at will.

Until the first decade of the twentieth century, Chinese settlers in Central Europe and Italy came mainly from Tianmen-Hubei province and Qingtian-Zhejiang province. The first group sold paper flowers and the second Qingtian stones (Mette 1996, pp. 275–296). In 1917, the Nationalist government in Peking abandoned its policy of neutrality, declared war on Germany and joined the Allied powers. Somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000 Chinese were subsequently drafted as labourers to serve the war effort in Europe. Once the war was over, 1000 of these conscripts stayed behind in the old Continent (Mette 1999, pp. 159–180). Chain migration started after the First World War and there were soon 3000 Chinese in France, more than 1000 each in Holland, Austria and Italy, 300 each in Belgium and Spain, and more than 200 in

Portugal. The first Chinese workers recruited to Great Britain had been replacements for sailors sent to fight the Napoleonic Wars. In the following decades, most of the Chinese who decided to remain in Britain worked as transient seamen. From there, they went into the laundry and restaurant (or café) businesses and by 1931 there were already 1194 Chinese immigrants in London alone (London Census Data). The proportion of Chinese emigrants who made their way to Europe was small, however. Of the 20 million Chinese who went overseas from 1840 to 1940, 90% went to Southeast Asia.<sup>1</sup> While a minority in this respect, the dynamics of the Chinese migrant communities in Europe post-1900 are extremely interesting. More and more, they came from the most impoverished part of Zhejiang, the Qingtian county located in the mountainous zone west of Wenzhou. Most of the population of this region were farmworkers (86%), traders (especially in grain, since local production did not yet provide for self-sufficiency in food) and stone carvers of a pale-green soapstone. These stoneworkers were probably the first to move to Europe, crossing Siberia to Russia. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the majority travelled by sea. Steamers carried a great number of migrants to France in particular (Kuhn 2008, p. 336). There were two traditional modes of taking the journey: to travel as a legitimate passenger with a passport cost of 300 silver coins in the early 1900s; but it only cost 200 silver coins to bypass all the formalities and board a ship disguised as a crew member.<sup>2</sup> The most reliable estimate for the number of Chinese living in Europe during the 1930s is 10,000–25,000 (Mette 1999, p. 164). In the interwar period, a network of experienced migrants developed. This eased the costs and risks of migration while Chinese banking houses helped migrants with loans, tickets to French or Italian ports and travel documents. They also supplied merchandise to be sold in Europe. Sales of stone and stone carvings had started to decrease by early 1916 so merchants swiftly switched their focus to pearls, neckties, carpets, paper flowers, wallets and silk. In 1926, an Italian newspaper wrote of the “Pearl invasion” when 68 Chinese street vendors arrived in Turin to sell fake

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<sup>1</sup> Chinese migration was part of the global wave of mass migration from 1840 to 1940 (McKeown 2010, pp. 95–124).

<sup>2</sup> After arriving at their destination port, they took advantage of the cover of darkness and were led ashore to inns run by earlier migrants from Qingtian (Mette 1996, p. 281).

pearls, a trade which apparently could lead to fabulous earnings (1000 lire a day).<sup>3</sup> In 1935–1936, several hundred emigrants from the townships of Baimen Li’ao and Zi’ao in Wenzhou moved to Europe. At that time, many Chinese living in Europe had achieved a degree of upward social mobility and were no longer pedlars but shopkeepers or small businessmen in the leather industry. Due to favourable conditions in host communities, many of these existing emigrants moved on from sojourning (a venturesome/entrepreneurial period of unpredictable duration according to Wang or a period spent unassimilated and on the margins according to Sui) to settle permanently.<sup>4</sup> For the newcomers, however, life was difficult and they had to search for territories with markets for their products. Some of them went as far as Algeria, and others returned to Baimen Li’ao and Zi’ao having had little success. Ultimately, in 1937, the Japanese occupation of China stopped the outward flow of people, closed down all Chinese banking houses and halted the Chinese curios trade to Europe.

According to some scholars, the push factors behind this first wave of Chinese migration to Europe were not only economic in nature, but social/familial also. In respect of Qingtian County in particular, as well-established in the case of European migrants,<sup>5</sup> there were long-standing practices of (domestic) collective migratory movements and migratory decisions were governed by family strategies designed to achieve upward social mobility based on migrants’ savings and remittances (Mette 1999; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 193).

This essay examines the Chinese experience of migration to Italy. Archival material has been integrated with oral history field work conducted in Bologna and the Romagna. Thirty interviews have been conducted with descendants of the first migrants as well as with members of various migration waves.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “L’invasione delle perle” in *La stampa*, 5 marzo 1926. On the alleged earnings of fake pearl vendors: “Cinesi di via Canonica” in *Il Corriere della Sera* 8 marzo 1932.

<sup>4</sup> Wang also underlines that sojourners have been viewed as potential enemies to nation-building efforts (Wang 2003, p. 55; Sui 1952, pp. 34–44).

<sup>5</sup> As Lucassen has well demonstrated, there have been strong migratory traditions in Europe from the North Sea to the Mediterranean since 1500 (Lucassen 1987, pp. 110, 116–117, 201–202 and also Lucassen and Lucassen 2014, pp. 13–38).

<sup>6</sup> All interviews are available—please contact the authors.

## The First Chinese Migrants in the Context of Sino-Italian Foreign Relations, 1861–1914

As with many other European countries, the first Sino-Italian contacts, which occurred between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, were due to the Italian Jesuits who had been on mission in China since 1582.<sup>7</sup> In 1732, the Jesuits' efforts led to the foundation of a Chinese College in Naples to train Chinese priests and contribute to the propagation of the Catholic religion in China (Fatica 2006). The patron of the school was Matteo Ripa, an artist and a priest who had been working as a painter at the Machu court of the Kangxi Emperor, under the Chinese name Ma Guoxian, between 1711 and 1723. His return to Italy with four young students and a teacher of Chinese was the first step in the establishment of the new college. As one of the few institutions to teach spoken Chinese (schools specializing in Chinese usually focused on the written word), it became a hub for interpreting activities in Europe. After Italian unification in 1861, the school was transformed into the Real Collegio Asiatico (Royal Asian College) and new languages were introduced. Today, it is still part of Naples' public university system. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Chinese College accommodated at least 4–5 young Chinese per year (Fatica 2006). Most of them returned to China as priests, but some remained on in Italy at the end of their studies. According to *Il Corriere della Sera*, the newspaper of record of the day, in July 1879: "Some years ago the government financed the education of some young Chinese at the Naples College. Now they are grown ups and the Ministry of Education has hired them".<sup>8</sup>

A second typology of Sino-Italian contacts was due to commercial and political relations. An epidemic of silkworm disease in the mid-nineteenth century prompted greater Italian interest in the Far East, where silk production and trade were well developed. So the first Italians to settle in

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<sup>7</sup> Matteo Ricci was one of those prominent figures committed to the diffusion of Western culture at the Chinese Court.

<sup>8</sup> "Cinesi al Ministero" *Corriere della Sera*, 25th January 1879; "Due Annegati" (one of them was a Foreign Department employee), 8 luglio 1879; "Un Cinese geloso" (one of the Education Ministry's employees killed himself), 22 luglio 1882.

China after the Jesuits were a handful of silk producers sent there by the Kingdom of Sardinia (the foremost Italian state prior to unification). From there, the relationship grew. In 1865, only two out of 1618 ships calling at Shanghai harbour were Italian.<sup>9</sup> In 1866, however, as the new Italy was emerging, the government signed a treaty of friendship, commerce, and navigation and appointed an officer (albeit one of junior rank) as representative of the Italian Legation at the Courts of Tokyo and Beijing. For the first twelve years, the Italian Diplomatic Mission to China was based in Tokyo, and only in 1878 was a permanent office finally opened in Shanghai. This was a sign of Italy's increasingly ambitious economic foreign policy. Finally, in 1889, the Italian Legation moved to Beijing, Italy envisioned a new political role for itself in the Far East, including requesting to replace France as protector of Catholic missions in China (Onelli 2013). Italian assertiveness led to embarrassment, however, when the government overstretched by requesting a colonial settlement in the province of Zhejiang (Sanmen Bay) in 1899 (Vinci 2016, pp. 117–144; Borsa 1969, pp. 618–644). There was some consolation in 1902 when the great powers awarded Tianjin to Italy (see below) in the wake of the Boxer Uprising.<sup>10</sup>

It was also in 1902 that the first permanent Chinese Delegation was built in Italy. Officers of different levels, along with their wives and children, started to live in Rome. Occasionally, the capital's newspapers provided information about them. In 1907, for instance, the ambassador's wife died after a short illness and a public funeral was organized. The lady was described as a quiet and discreet person, devoted to her husband and children, who spent her time at home and only rarely ventured out into the city in which she lived. The funeral was one of the very few occasions in which the ambassador and his family had shown themselves in public.

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<sup>9</sup>Quite surprisingly, ships under the Italian flag transported coolies from Macao to Latin America: in 1865, 6284 coolies out of a total of 13,784 were transferred by 14 ships flying the Italian flag. Great Britain and the USA had prohibited this kind of trade but the Italian government either did not know or pretended not to know (Francioni 2003).

<sup>10</sup>M. Marinelli and G. Andornino (eds), *Italy's encounters with modern China: imperial dreams, strategic ambitions*, Palgrave, New York, 2014; A. Francioni, *Il 'banchetto cinese': l'Italia fra le treaty powers*, Nuova immagine editrice, Siena, 2004; M.C. Donato, *Italiani in Cina contro i Boxer*, *Rivista di Storia Contemporanea*; 14 (2)1985, 169–206.

The weakness of Sino-Italian relations is demonstrated by the low number of Italian and Chinese people living in the other country. A report from Alessandro Bardi, the Italian state representative in China, indicated that the number of Italians there had increased from 70 in 1882 to 133 in 1891, and that the number of companies they owned had doubled, from 2 to 4.<sup>11</sup> US government statistics for 1899 recorded 124 Italians and 9 Italian companies in China, a tiny minority out of 17,933 foreigners and 933 companies.<sup>12</sup>

The number of Chinese living in Italy was so low that it was only in 1911 that the Population Census started to list China as a country of origin. The Census for that year records the presence of 39 Chinese men and 6 women in Italy, and only 20 of them had been there for more than three months. As regards their profession, there were 11 sailors, 9 diplomats, 9 students and 6 peddlers, as well as some housekeepers and secretaries (Italian Census of Population 1911). They were concentrated in 6 big and middle size cities: the port cities of Genoa and Venice (almost all of the 14 Chinese temporarily living in Italy were staying in one of these two), Rome (which hosted the 6 women, two of them born in Italy, and 15 men), Naples (with 3 students or professors), and finally the industrial cities of Milan and Turin (where the peddlers had settled down). In this opening phase of Sino-Italian relations, then, only four categories of people moved to Italy from China: the students and priests studying and teaching at the Chinese college in Naples; the diplomats and their families based in Rome; the sailors docking in port cities such as Genoa, Livorno, Venice and Trieste; and the street vendors.

Having looked at how Chinese students and diplomats originally arrived in Italy, we can turn our attention to more mainstream migrants. Chinese sailors made their way to all the largest Italian port cities but only in small numbers. Prior to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, there was no traditional commercial relationship between Italy and China and Italian ports did not feature on routes from Europe to the Far East. It was only in the 1880s that Italian shipping companies such as Lloyd Triestino scheduled regular passenger and cargo voyages to Singapore and

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<sup>11</sup> "I commerci della Cina con l'Italia", *Corriere della Sera*, 30 Dicembre 1897.

<sup>12</sup> "Il numero degli stranieri in Cina", *Corriere della Sera*, 10 luglio 1900.

Hong Kong (1880) and Shanghai (1881). But there was no immediate surge in the volume of goods and passengers. In 1886, only one Italian shipping company asked for a government incentive to travel to China, and only 629 passengers took the route (Istat 1887). In the same year, only three foreign ships (all British) carried Chinese or Japanese goods to Italy. Sino-Italian trade did not increase significantly in the following decades. In 1910, trade with the Far East as a whole amounted to just 2.4% of Italy's total trade (Tamagna 1940).

Chinese peddlers as well as sailors were infrequent visitors to Italy. The newspapers kept track of their presence by monitoring special events such as the birth of a child in a public dormitory or the enforced return to China of 25 jugglers and street artists from Milan.<sup>13</sup> To sum up, before the First World War, then, Chinese migration to Italy revolved around the establishment of foreign and economic relations between the two countries.

## Italians in China During the Interwar Period and Until the End of the Chiang Kai-Shek Era

This section will place the evolution of Sino-Italian relations in the context of major Chinese political events between the end of the First World War and the birth of the People's Republic of China. Following the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1912, the Republic of China came into being. From the outset it was unstable, riven by internal strife and a north-south political division. In 1928, the Kuomintang (KMT) party leader Chiang Kai-shek declared an end to the civil war that had been plaguing the country and proclaimed an era of unity in the new Nationalist Republic of China.<sup>14</sup> This façade evaporated quickly, however, as regional uprisings erupted, imperial Japan seized Manchuria in September 1931 and Kai-shek's government, dominated by military leaders, conducted relentless military

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<sup>13</sup> "Cinese nato a Milano" *Corriere della Sera*, 21st August 1914; "Le tribolazioni dei cinesi a Milano" *Corriere della Sera*, 17 luglio 1915.

<sup>14</sup> In 1937 as Japan invaded Northern China an alliance was formed between Chiang Kai-shek and the Communist army. But with the defeat of Japan in 1945 the civil war broke out again (Roberts 2013, p. 269).

campaigns against communist guerrillas in the southeast of the country. Against this background of internal Chinese division and strife and fascist Italy's support for Japan, Mussolini and Kai-shek attempted to build a viable relationship.

When Mussolini took power in 1922, Italy's presence in China was mainly confined to Tianjin, which was Italy's prize for sending troops to fight with the International Liberation Corps against the Boxer. The 1901 treaty between the restored Imperial Government and its international allies included territorial concessions and Italy was granted 457,800 square metres of marshland in Tianjin, plus the restoration of its Legation in Beijing and its coastal garrison at Shanhaiguan. The Royal Navy was put in charge of Italian interests in China but there was little private or public reaction to the acquisition. No private capital was channelled in its direction despite the setting up of a company for that purpose and the government did not even acknowledge Tianjin's status as a zone of Italian military occupation for a decade (Marinelli 2010, pp. 536–556) let alone that it required public funding.<sup>15</sup> Finally, in 1910, Italy started to construct sewers, an electrical power grid, streets, piazzas and public buildings there.<sup>16</sup> The first government building in Tianjin was a neo-renaissance two-story villa. In 1917, the *Circolo Italiano* was set up in the Italian park where the 100–150 residents of Tianjin socialized. Italy's last major project in Tianjin was a hospital that opened on December 21, 1922. Originally a forty-bed hospital run by Franciscan nuns, in the first six months of 1924 it treated 78 European and 272 Chinese patients.<sup>17</sup> It changed its name to Sacred Heart Hospital in 1937 (Smith 2012, p. 19, 142).

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<sup>15</sup> Archival sources demonstrate that expenses were invariably greater than incoming funds from taxes. ASMAE (Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri), Rappresentanza diplomatica Cina Pechino Busta 109 Concessione italiana Tientsin Verbale di consegna della cassa al consiglio municipale della concessione italiana.

<sup>16</sup> “The Italian administration has financed various public works ... which have turned our concession into one of the most modern and healthy European districts of residence, where the right of asylum is fully safeguarded to foreigners, including eminent Chinese politicians”. ASMAE Rappresentanza diplomatica Cina Pechino BUSTA 60 Regia amministrazione della Concessione italiani di Tientsin, Tientsin 15 settembre 1922.

<sup>17</sup> ASMAE Rappresentanza diplomatica Cina Pechino BUSTA 60 Consolato d'Italia Tientsin 27 agosto 1924 Ospedale italiano a Tientsin.



Apart from investments in Tianjin, fascist Italy's efforts to forge closer bonds with KMT China involved Mussolini sending Chiang Kai-shek an airplane as a gift in 1935. This preceded an agreement on the construction of an aircraft factory. Breda (an engineering company that had started building aircrafts during the war) and an Italian Consortium called Air China were to build the facility in China and it was to construct 100 airplanes a year (Marinelli and Andornino 2014, p. 100). Also in the 1930s, two twin ocean liners, Lloyd Triestino's Conte Rosso and Conte Verde, started to cruise regularly between Italy and China.

Japan's invasion of China in 1937 put a halt to Mussolini's diplomatic efforts, however. The Sino-Japanese war lasted eight years, engaged and exhausted KMT troops (assisted by Chinese communist guerrillas) and killed fifteen to twenty million Chinese, directly and indirectly (Eastman 1991, pp. 115–176).

The Japanese were defeated in August 1945 with the KMT government in control of all the country's major cities, its entire industrial base, and more than three quarters of a total population estimated at about 450 million. Albeit a civil war started between the Communist troops and KMT forces, which were much better equipped and, with 2.5 million men, numbered more than double the enemy. Everybody including the Americans (who were supplying and training KMT armies) expected Chiang to win the civil war in China: "That this did not happen was a surprise to almost everyone except perhaps the Communists" (Van Slyke 1991, pp. 177–290).

The repressive measures adopted by the nationalist government following the Japanese surrender, including the outrageous takeover process of its officials and the closing of many rural wartime industries, caused not just unemployment but also widespread disillusionment (Pepper 1991, pp. 291–356). The terrible toll inflicted on the Chinese people during and after the war accelerated the KMG's political and economic decay and the demise of Chiang Kai-shek's regime. The Chinese Communist Party eventually emerged victorious from the long civil war and on October 1, 1949, Mao announced the birth of the People's Republic of China (PCR). Chiang retreated to Taiwan (Shambaugh 2000). Control of Taiwan had shifted from Japan to the Chinese Nationalists under the

terms of a 1943 agreement between Franklin Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek and two million Chinese had moved to Taiwan by the autumn of 1949.<sup>18</sup>

## Chinese Migration in the Interwar Period

The increasing number of Chinese migrants in northern Italy in the 1920s stimulated commentary in the leading Italian newspapers. The migrants first came to public attention in 1926, when a hundred peddlers of fake pearls took to the streets. Seventy of them set up in Turin and the local newspaper, *la Stampa*, reported on their activities from March 1926. Unhappy with the prices offered by locals on the street, the vendors started selling to shopkeepers. Newspaper reports suggested the pearls in question had been mass-produced in a Shanghai factory employing 1000 people and exported all over the world. It seems, however, that the pearls were produced in France.<sup>19</sup>

Since the Chinese street vendors did not pay the required licence fees, the Municipality of Turin soon ordered them to leave the city. The possibility of a negotiated settlement was ended by shopkeepers' protests against the granting of any permit. The peddlers moved to other cities, including Florence and Milan.<sup>20</sup> National newspapers announced soaring numbers. *Il Corriere della Sera* reported that around 300 had come to Milan in 1926. The shopkeepers of Milan were just as unhappy as their counterparts in Turin and the Superintendent of the Municipality settled the issue by granting only 10 full licences for street vendors.<sup>21</sup> Whatever the official figures, the reality is that many more migrants continued to sell their wares on the streets of Milan and other Italian cities. Their presence in Ancona was noted in April 1926.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ensuing Taiwanese uprisings were brutally suppressed by GMD and nationalist martial-law was enforced until 1987 (Brown 2004, pp. 7–9).

<sup>19</sup> "Collane di perle" *La Stampa*, 13 marzo 1926; "L'invasione delle perle" *La Stampa*, 5 marzo 1926.

<sup>20</sup> "L'invasione cinese anche a Firenze" *Corriere della Sera*, 17 marzo 1926.

<sup>21</sup> "La penosa condizione dei rivenditori cinesi" *Unità*, 13 marzo 1926; "Il fermo dei trecento cinesi rivenditori di perle", *L'Unità*, 12 marzo 2016.

<sup>22</sup> "Esodo di cinesi anche a Firenze", *Corriere della Sera*, 6 aprile 1926.

The issue soon became politicised and caused concern at the highest levels. Within two months, the Ministry of Home Affairs had issued an edict ordering the arrest and expulsion of all Chinese peddlers as communist propagandists.<sup>23</sup> This did not deter the peddlers from appearing on the streets of Milan, however. The response of the municipal police was to fine them (10 lire for each instance).<sup>24</sup>

[My father] left China in 1928, practically when he was 18 years old. One day he told me: ‘We all started with fake necklaces ... We remained in France for a while ... then we came to Italy’. Some friends gave him hospitality in France for two or three months ... Then he came to Milan ... He stayed there for a little time ... until they [the Chinese street vendors] suggested that he go to Bologna [in 1934]<sup>25</sup> because there were already too many of them in Milan.<sup>26</sup>

Street vendors travelled far and wide and settled down in many Italian cities. According to the censuses of 1931 and 1936, there were Chinese migrants in all large and middle-sized Italian cities, but the overall numbers remained trifling: 331 in 1931 and 531 in 1936. Milan housed what was the only real Chinese community in the country, and it was a small one, numbering 77 in 1931 and 175 in 1936.<sup>27</sup>

Press coverage indicates that by the early 1930s, Chinese migrants were selling Italian-manufactured petty trade products in small Chinese-run shops located both within the big cities and on their outskirts. This is corroborated by the fact that upon their arrival in Milan, Chinese vendors initially relied on local artisans to supply them with products but

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<sup>23</sup> “I cinesi rivenditori di perle propagandisti sovversivi” *L’Unità*, 11 maggio 1926.

<sup>24</sup> “Gesti cinesi” *l’Unità*, 16 maggio 1926; “Rompicapi cinesi” *L’Unità*, 18 novembre 1927.

<sup>25</sup> Tong arrival in Bologna dated from 1934 when he obtained the street vendor licence. Municipal Archive Bologna, Commercial licences.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Antonio Tong by Patrizia Battilani and Luigi Yen Liao, Bologna, June 31st 2015.

<sup>27</sup> Other estimates provided by newspapers ranged from 136 to 300. “Cinesi di Milano e il loro lavoro”, *Il Corriere della Sera*, 30 agosto 1938. The Chinese community of the time had its own: “before the second world war, there were in 700–800 Chinese in Italy. After the war there were 60 in Milan, 25–28 in Bologna, 10 in Rome, 10 in Florence, 7–8 in Genoa, less than 300 in the whole of Italy. When the war ended the majority of them had returned to China” (Interview by Patrizia Battilani and Luigi Liao with N. T., Bologna, June 8th 2015. Nino T., born in 1943, migrated to Italy in 1959, two years after his father and about 30 years after his grandfather).

this relationship had ended by 1932. The Chinese were already manufacturing their own goods at incredibly competitive prices in “small firms where they do not pay workers contributions or taxes and no control on their labourers’ wages is ever enacted”.<sup>28</sup>

Traditionally a country of emigration, Italian governments had rarely legislated for immigration. Thus, it was quite easy for foreign people to settle in Italy. A law of 1912 had regulated mixed marriages and meant that Italian women lost their citizenship if they married a foreigner (Legge 555, 13 giugno 1912). However, their citizenship would be restored if they became widows. Restrictions on migration were gradually introduced under the fascist regime in a framework of generalized surveillance of opponents. In 1926, the Provincial office of the political police was established. In 1929, the Central Office for foreigner registration followed. Then, in 1931, compulsory visas were introduced for all foreigners and this evolved into a residency permit in 1942 (Law Rd 18 giugno 1931, n. 773).

The true turning point, however, was the approval of the race laws of 1938 (Law Rd 17 Novembre 1938, XVII n. 1728). These laws prohibited marriage between Italians and people of different races, unless otherwise stated by the competent authority. This had a major impact on the integration of Chinese migrants, who were primarily men and had often married Italian women. From December 1938 the Home Department forbade marriage between Italians and Chinese.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the San Marino-Italian Friendship Agreement meant that mixed marriage (although only in the religious and not the civil sense) remained possible in the Republic of San Marino (a microstate in the northeast of Italy) until it passed its own race laws on September 17th 1942.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>One journalist referred to a shop producing fake pearls and other gadgets “near a lake in the North”. See: “I Cinesi di via Canonica” *Il Corriere della Sera* 8 marzo 1932 and also “I sorridenti cinesini e le merci giapponesi” *Il Corriere della Sera*, 13 ottobre 1934.

<sup>29</sup>State Archive Bologna, Prefettura. Gabinetto, Serie 1944, Matrimoni con stranieri anni 1938–1944. See the request forwarded by the Prefect of Bologna to allow Calderoni Maria to get married to Tong Ling Sin Giovanni (26 September 1939). The Home Department twice rejected the request.

<sup>30</sup>“My parents married between 1939 and 1940 in the Republic of San Marino because they couldn’t do it in Italy”. Interview by Patrizia Battilani and Luigi Yen Liao with Antonio Tong, Bologna, 17 June 2015. Antonio Tong, born in 1940, was the first Sino-Italian male baby born in Bologna.

The situation for Chinese migrants deteriorated further when Italy signed the Tripartite Pact with Japan and Germany on September 27th 1940, making China an enemy state (the Sino-Japanese war was ongoing). On the September 4th 1940 Mussolini signed a decree establishing 43 internment fields for the citizens of enemy states living in Italy: about 150 Chinese were interned in Tossiccia (Abruzzo) in 1941, then from September 1942 to October 1943 in Isola del Gran Sasso (Capogreco 1987, 2004). Upon the armistice of September 1943, by which Italy broke its alliance with Japan and Germany, Chinese migrants were released from internment but faced with all the difficulties and tragedies confronting the rest of the Italian population.<sup>31</sup> For a regional breakdown of Chinese immigrants from 1911 to 1951 see Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1** Regional breakdown of Chinese migrants, years 1911, 1931, 1936 and 1951

	1911	1921	1931	1936	1951
Piemonte e Valle d'Aosta	3	0	17	61	48
Liguria	9	75	36	75	241
Lombardia	4	3	80	181	514
Veneto	5	42*	12	21	83
Trentino Alto Adige	0		1	0	12
Friuli Venezia Giulia	0		35	26	29
Emilia Romagna	0		19	32	40
Toscana	0	6**	56	17	39
Marche	0		3	11	4
Umbria	0		3	6	11
Lazio	21	38	50	55	783
Abruzzi e Molise	3	0	0	3	3
Campania	0	0	9	14	172
Puglia e Basilicata	0	0	5	15	10
Calabria	0	0	4	4	4
Sicilia	0	0	1	11	45
Sardegna	0	0	0	7	8
Italy	45	164	331	539	2046

Source: Italian population census, 1911, 1931, 1936, 1951

\* Friuli Venezia Giulia and Trentino Alto Adige included

\*\* Emilia Romagna, Marche and Umbria included

<sup>31</sup> "One bomb hit the building where he lived. The caretakers, wife and husband, died in the courtyard. My husband was frightened. And then he lost most of his things. So he got away and a family living on the outskirts of Bologna housed him". Interview by Patrizia Battilani and Luigi Yen Liao with Cecilia Geslao, Bologna, 7 July 2015. Cecilia Geslao, born in 1929, married Wu King in Bologna in 1949.

## The Italian Chinese Communities from the 1950s to the 1980s

In the immediate post-war years, a huge number of refugees returned home with the support of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). Many of them were Chinese who had fled to South East Asian countries during the Sino-Japanese war. UNRRA defined 'displaced persons' as anyone displaced after 1937 and from September 1946 to July 1947 (Peterson 2012). In this context, many of the Chinese living in Europe before the war decided to return home.

One day the Chinese Consul or whoever he was, called and said to my husband there was the possibility to return home with an all-expenses paid trip.... So all Chinese feeling homesick returned to China. There were so many of us. We left little by little.<sup>32</sup>

In June 1944, a refugee camp was organized in Rome (in the area of Cinecittà) to provide housing to displaced people in Italy. From 1946, Chinese waiting to depart for home were also housed there.

They brought us to the refugee camp in Cinecittà. There was a shower and they fed us. My son was born there. We should have left the camp after a few days but I was pregnant and they didn't allow me to embark. Our luggage was already on the boat, therefore we lost everything. But they helped us. My son was born on 18th October 1946. Then when my baby started to eat solid food we embarked.<sup>33</sup>

Many Sino-Italian families went back to China and settled in Shanghai or in Wenzhou province. After the proclamation of the People's Republic by Mao Tse Tung in 1949, however, they were treated as politically suspect and during the 1950s many of them attempted to return to Italy with the help of the Italian Red Cross or the Catholic Missions. In most

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<sup>32</sup>Interview by Patrizia Battilani with Giovanna Rilli, Bologna, March 18th 2016. Mrs Rilli was born in 1927, married Ho Tin Fee in 1945 in Bologna and in 1946 moved with her husband to China, where they stayed for 3–5 years.

<sup>33</sup>Interview by Patrizia Battilani with Giovanna Rilli, March 18th 2016.

cases, since all their Chinese relatives were living in China, they could not claim to be joining kinfolk in Italy. The chaotic circumstances of the day did not aid their cause.

We fled from China with a false passport ... and reached Italy on an Italian Red Cross boat in 1952. We arrived in Rome and were housed in the Refugee Camp of Cinecittà. Fortunately my mother had some relatives in Milan and we went there.<sup>34</sup>

“One day the Italian Consul said they had to leave. So I told my husband that it would be better if we returned to Italy too. The Consul prepared all we needed to leave. However, when we arrived at the Hong Kong border, my husband wasn’t allowed to cross, because he was Chinese. He returned to Shanghai. It was a desperate situation. I crossed the border with my two children. I didn’t have anything. Fortunately, the Mission’s Sisters helped us. I stayed there for at least three months, then we embarked to Italy. We arrived in Naples and we were housed in a Refugee camp ... Meanwhile I wrote to Sister Giulietta, because in Italy I was told she had helped many Chinese fleeing from China to return to Italy”. She told me: “We are waiting for his permission. He will arrive. He will arrive. And he arrived after three months in Venice. So I went to meet him. Before then, I picked up my son and daughter [who had been hosted in a religious boarding school] and I went. When we met, he was so serious, but we hugged each other. He was moved. The Sister had dressed him well, he was keeping well. He looked like a gentleman”.<sup>35</sup>

The Mao Tse Tung government included migration policy in a wider strategy of population management, stimulating great movements of Han Chinese towards the Chinese border (Amrith 2011). Despite the substantial internal movements of the Chinese population, between 1949 and 1978 international migration was restricted and usually directed to the socialist bloc countries. However, emigration for the purpose of family

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<sup>34</sup> Interview by Patrizia Battilani and Luigi Yen Liao with Antonio Yen, Bologna 5th October 2015. Antonio Yen was born in China in 1949, his parents having returned from Italy.

<sup>35</sup> Interview by Patrizia Battilani with Giovanna Rilli, Bologna, March 18th 2016. Families experienced a range of difficulties in returning to Europe from China. See: “Un’italiana sposata ad un cinese ottiene di rimpatriare con i due figli” *Corriere della Sera*, 16 Settembre 1955.

reunification was permitted and this facilitated the movement of a limited number of Chinese migrants to Europe and the USA.

Little by little, the Chinese community in Italy was re-established. While its members had settled down in many provinces, Milan continued as a central point and Bologna emerged as a base also. As had happened in the interwar years, Sino-Italian communities developed on the back of Chinese migrant men marrying Italian women, embracing Catholicism and raising children. The first Chinese women started to arrive from the mid-1950s, to join their fathers or husbands.

In the mid-60s, I don't know if it was a legal issue or out of necessity, I remember the arrival of a guy, the son of [my father's] brother who had returned to China ... Then I remember a guy named Ivano ... Then the arrival of Chinese wives started....<sup>36</sup>

In some case they arrived from Taiwan.

In 1949, when the Communists took power, my uncle left China and moved to Taiwan with his family. He lived there until 1958 ... when my father helped him to come here [to Italy] ... with his wife and the three children. They settled down in Milan.<sup>37</sup>

The majority of the first generation of migrants did not go back to China until old age, although they maintained close ties with their native land, regularly sending remittances to relatives.

My husband sent money to his parents. He said: "My mum and my dad are there I must send it". From the bank here (in Bologna), the money went to Milan and then from Milan to Switzerland. From there, money arrived in Hong Kong ... He didn't tell me but we received a letter from the bank.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Interview with S. Y. by Patrizia Battilani, Francesca Fauri and Luigi Yen Liao, Bologna, January 31st 2015.

<sup>37</sup>Interview with Itala Wu by Luigi Yen Liao, Bologna, November 18th 2015.

<sup>38</sup>Interview with Cecilia Geslao, who married with Wu Lung King Paolo in 1949, by Luigi Yen Liao Bologna, July 7th 2015.



Chinese migrants were very well integrated from a business point of view. During the 1950s, they stopped working as street vendors and set up workshops or trading activities and undertakings all over Italy. In Bologna, they participated in the city's thriving leather and leatherette bags production. While Italian craftsmen usually focused on the production of real leather items, the Chinese concentrated on leatherette goods. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were around 300 workshops producing bags in Bologna, and 70 of them were run by Chinese craftsmen. The Chinese community was closely integrated in the economic life of the city and employed Italian workers (normally female homeworkers) and suppliers.<sup>39</sup>

From the late 1970s, as bag production became less lucrative, the focus and nature of Chinese enterprises started to change. Some of them moved up the production chain and became wholesalers of raw material (for the apparel and furniture industries), while others moved into new areas altogether. For instance, between 1970 and 1983 the first five Chinese restaurants opened in Bologna, four of them by entrepreneurs coming from the leather sector and with no experiences in catering. Others set up food shops or travel agencies.<sup>40</sup>

Mao's rise to power also had consequences for foreign affairs at the level of high politics. Italy's government seemed willing to recognize the People's Republic of China on its foundation, but the Cold War complicated matters.<sup>41</sup> Despite Italy's intention to pursue its own foreign policy independent of its Nato allies, it proved impossible to develop political and commercial relations with China until 1970 (Fardella 2017, pp. 181–197). During the 1950s and 1960s, however, some Italian companies did establish economic relations with the People's Republic, among them Eni, Fiat, Olivetti and Snia Viscosa (Meneguzzi Rostagni 2012).

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<sup>39</sup> For a description of the work organization model, see the interviews with Lo Hueng Yuk, Antonio Tong, Antonio Yen, Nino T., Cecilia Geslao. On the relationship between craftsmen and suppliers, see the interview with Corrado Veronesi and Vainer Neri.

<sup>40</sup> Interviews with Nino T., Pietro Sun Pai Cheang, Marco Tung, Maria Grazia Sun, Tse Weik Wang Ugo, Dick Ting.

<sup>41</sup> Legislatura 11 – Discussioni – Seduta 8th June 1954, Seguito della discussione del bilancio del Ministero del commercio con l'estero, Tonetti and Martinelli's speeches.

China's interest in normalizing its diplomatic relations with Western European countries progressed only after its relationship with the Soviet Union deteriorated. Its pro-European initiatives were part of a strategy aiming at undermining Soviet influence in Asia and combating the USA's non-recognition policy. It also served to isolate the Republic of China (Taiwan). The first success of the new strategy was the announcement of mutual recognition with France in 1964. This progressive climate meant that Italy could open a commercial office in Beijing and operate it as a de facto embassy. Full normalization between Italy and China only became a reality after the further deterioration of Soviet-Sino relations in 1968 and the establishment of formal talks with the USA in 1969. Italian state recognition of the People's Republic of China came in 1970 and included the taking note by Italy of China's 'declaration' of its rights over Taiwan.<sup>42</sup> Despite the many official visits of Italian ministers to Beijing, however, Sino-Italian relations remained quite stilted and there was no surge in economic exchanges between the two countries.

As a consequence of the establishment of official foreign relations with China, the Chinese living in Italy (including their Italian wives and children) had to choose between citizenship of the People's Republic and Italy. At that time, many Chinese immigrants were politically connected with Taiwan as a consequence of their original support for the KMT, and some of them did not wish to be citizens of the People's Republic, preferring to become Italian. As a result, the official number of Chinese living in Italy decreased from 2133 in 1971 to 1494 in 1981 and the Milan community from 277 to 194 (Istat Population Census).

## The New Chinese Migration Wave of the 1990s

The 1978 Reform and Opening Period and further migration legislation in 1985, which granted passports to those with overseas invitation letters and sponsors, facilitated another wave of international migration. From 1979 to 1986, 10,948 Chinese obtained passports and in 1987 alone

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<sup>42</sup> It is important to note that Italy found much greater favour with the Beijing government once it accepted the Chinese stance on Taiwan (Melchionni 1970, pp. 651–652).

another 3128 did likewise (Minghuan 2013, p. 184). During this period, migration trends within Europe gradually shifted from Northern Europe to the Southern Mediterranean region. Chinese migrants were attracted to the new sweatshop factories opening across Italy, Spain, and France (Chang 2012). In 1994, of the 165,000 Wenzhou migrants in Europe, 95% lived in four countries—France, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain. The reasons for this huge and continuous flow of Wenzhou people to Europe (even when things had greatly improved at home) have been widely debated by scholars. Many potential motivations factors have been identified but one key factor which certainly prompted Wenzhou people to migrate to Europe was the pull of family reunion and the opportunity to help establish or expand the family's business in Europe (Gungwe 2006, pp. 926–948).

There was also a sense that it was possible to get rich quickly in Europe without having specific abilities or education: “to earn a high income in any Chinese restaurant without possessing any special skills, investment or even knowledge of the host society. All that is required is to be a hard-working person”.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the lure of “unlimited mobility”, the practice of Chinese immigrants to continue moving until they were satisfied that they had located the best possible opportunity, was a powerful draw (Minghaun 1988, pp. 21–41; Carchedi 1994, p. 60). Last but not least, the Zhejiangese also had a strong psychological drive to migrate to Europe. They were in fact often pushed to leave in the aftermath of the adoption of the “Wenzhou Model”. In the early 1990s, the underdeveloped southern port city of Wenzhou burst onto the economic scene as a “beehive of small-scale entrepreneurship” financed by newly created financial facilities (Hood 1999; Cologna 2005b, p. 126). The Wenzhou Model was touted nationwide (Koo and Yeh 1999). However, for those inhabitants who did not share in its success or lived outside its zone of influence, “envy or relative deprivation” effect pushed them to seek their fortune in Europe and figured as one of the most prominent reasons for migration (Cologna 2005b).

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<sup>43</sup>The annual average income of peasants in Wenzhou in 1994 was more than 12 times that of 1980: “We are richer than in the past but still poorer than our fellows in Europe” (Minghuan 2013, p. 185).

While these push factors were crucial to the migration wave of the 1990s, Italy's relaxed immigration policy was a vital pull factor in its case (Pieke et al. 2004, p. 117). In particular, law no. 943/86 (1986) regularized the status of those in paid employment in Italy and gave newly legal residents the right to apply for family reunification. However, the residence permits granted to non-European community citizens were given almost exclusively to dependent workers. According to some authors, this law created dependency among recent pre-1986 Chinese immigrants on their employers, a dependency that translated into acceptance of hard working conditions (Christiansen 2003, p. 29). In the case of the Chinese community, this legislation clearly contradicted the terms of the Italian-Chinese Treaty of 1985, which aimed to intensify economic cooperation and to create favourable conditions for investment and business ventures by one country in the other, thus offering the opportunity to set up enterprises in either Italy or China. Finally, new legislation in 1990 (law no. 39/90) provided for the regularization of irregular immigrants and also clarified the position of self-employed immigrants (Carchedi and Ferri 1998, pp. 261–263). Independent workers or relatives who had arrived spontaneously (and illegally) to join their families were given legal status in Italy. Chinese immigrants who had been residing illegally in France, England and Holland came to Italy to benefit from this indemnity (Pan 1998).

Italy was seen to be using the promise of amnesty and legalization as a recruitment system. As well as making it a major destination country in Europe, this open system also attracted Fujian Chinese to Italy for the first time (Pieke 2002).

Apart from the perk of regularization, the opportunities available to entrepreneurial immigrants were also a big draw to Italy, especially since most Chinese migrants' ultimate goal was to save enough funds to establish their own business. The Zhejiangese were quite successful in setting up family workshops based on minimal capital, thanks to familial and friendship networks providing a ready supply of labour. As previously discussed, the Chinese working in Italy were more reliant than other immigrant communities on a network of chain migrants to supply badly needed labour: as one study found, "production units with the same ethnic components are typically Chinese" (Carchedi 1994, p. 58).

This third great migration wave, despite the divergence in the social and political background of migrants (the most recent additions having been born and raised in Maoist China), showed a similar attitude toward work and entrepreneurship as their predecessors. The new Chinese immigrants swiftly inserted themselves into economic sectors such as the Chinese catering business, Italian leather/clothing workshops and the wholesale/retail trade. The Zhejiangese, in particular, were capable of establishing economic niches within trades once dominated by Italians (Tomba 2013). In this case, our recent oral history interview field work in Bologna and the Romagna region has revealed how the entrepreneurial attitude of Chinese migrants coming from Zhejiang suited the small family business dynamic inherent in the Italian economy. In Ferrara (a city near Bologna), for instance, the Chinese epitomized the traditional notion of close community kinship. In many cases, the family unit played an important role in providing the necessary financial help to start up a business.<sup>44</sup>

Xumei moved to Italy in 1994 to join her husband who worked as a cook in Rome. When they decided to start their own business in 1997, they moved to Copparo, near Ferrara, and bought a restaurant with the help of her relatives (who were quite well-off and had themselves moved to Italy and settled in Cuneo with Xumei's help). Similarly, the owner of another restaurant in Copparo tells us that, after a few years in France, she moved to Italy in 1987. After working in the restaurant of her husband's uncle in Foligno (Umbria), the family moved to Ferrara and bought a restaurant and a house with the help of "relatives and local banks".<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, the deindustrialization taking place in some sectors of the Italian economy actually facilitated the Chinese in some instances, such as in their entry into the garment industry and more recently the services sector (Chinese bar-keepers and hairdressers have been proliferating over the last 5 years). Some Chinese tend to take over small firms on the verge of collapse. These "broad-parasite entrepreneurs" have been accused of exploiting immigrant Chinese labour to make these firms viable, but they

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<sup>44</sup> Sometimes they are also held together by bonds of trust and by a network of mutual loans that offered everyone a chance to start a business of their own (Zhou 1992).

<sup>45</sup> Interview by Luigi Liao with Y. Y. born in 1963 in Guenzhou, Ferrara April 2015.

represent the only alternative to failure and are deeply connected with the network of small and middle sized businesses led by Italian entrepreneurs in surrounding areas (Battilani and Fauri 2016). Many of the firms or sectors they are working in would have all but collapsed in the absence of fresh Chinese entrepreneurship. Several of the region's industries have survived thanks solely to Chinese manufacturers. Chinese migration has thus been defined as "noninvasive" because by establishing separate economic sectors such as ethnic restaurants all over Europe, leather and garment workshops in Italy and import-wholesale-retail networks in Eastern Europe, "Chinese migrants have tended to add to local economies without challenging non-Chinese for jobs" (Pieke et al. 2004, pp. 25–26).

Finally, many scholars suggest that living in Italy has required a majority of the Chinese to develop ethnic enclaves, and while they are unlike the homogenous Chinatown models developed elsewhere, they remain incapable of integrating the community into the national social fabric (Cologna 2005a, p. 270). Thus, while economically integrated, the Chinese in Italy have remained socially alienated and isolated.<sup>46</sup> Rather than generalize, however, we should consider each geographical area on its own merits. If Prato and Milan can be thought of as economic enclaves, in Bologna and the surrounding area the immigrant Chinese have not congregated in clearly defined zones of economic activity. Although there are certainly some ethnic-based communities, they are generally fairly dispersed and independent from one another, integrated both with local society and among themselves but via innovative connections which entail religion for instance.

A recent set of interviews with some of the newer members of the Chinese immigrant community in Emilia Romagna reveals that the spiritual awakening which has been taking place in China since the early 1990s (and is currently perceived as a threat by the Communist government)<sup>47</sup> has also been occurring among the Chinese in Italy, who

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<sup>46</sup>Living in Italy has required a majority of the Chinese to develop their ethnic enclaves "within mixed multiethnic neighbourhoods and not within homogenous ethnic landscapes like in traditional Chinatowns" (Mudu and Li 2005, p. 278; Chang 2012, p. 187).

<sup>47</sup>"In China churches are being demolished and new laws are set to increase monitoring of religious activities. As more Chinese turn to Christianity, the Communist Party sees a rival in a struggle for hearts and minds" (Rahn 2018).

regularly worship at (Chinese) Evangelical Churches. Silvia Huang and her mother, who moved to Italy in 2005 and 2000 respectively, and who work at the same garment factory in Crespellano (Bologna), attend their local Evangelical Church every Sunday. The religious ceremony offers an opportunity to the widely dispersed Chinese community to congregate. Chinese come to Bologna from Imola, Forlì and even Rimini in the hope of establishing friendly contacts with other members of the immigrant community and because they want to raise their children in this religious culture:

We meet around 3 pm and pray, sing and listen to the Minister all together for at least three hours. We also look after the children and help them grow up as Christian, we use big screens where we reproduce the written words used in our religious ceremony. This helps everyone to understand ... We also organized Chinese classes for children.<sup>48</sup>

A closely related characteristic of the latest additions to the Chinese community is a pronounced interest in passing on the Chinese language and culture to their children. When the Chinese courses her daughter was attending in Bologna shut down, Zhang Min (who was born in 1975 in Whenzou, immigrated to Bologna in 1993 and is currently engaged in the wholesale business) first relied on Chinese students attending the Italian University to teach her girl. But when her second born turned 6 years old, Zhang Min decided to set up a small school in Bologna to teach Chinese to not just her own children, but to those of her sisters and some friends also:

Nowadays Chinese parents want to make sure their kids know Chinese because China is growing so much and their children might want to go back to China one day. However, Bologna is not like Milan or Padova where all Chinese live close by and have organized Chinese courses in the afternoon after school. Here we are a more dispersed community and therefore we have organized the school on Saturdays and Sundays when children do not attend Italian schools and can come from far-off places.

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<sup>48</sup> Interview by Luigi Liao with S. H., Bologna May 16th 2015.

On Saturdays they stay here all day and go to school for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, it is important to note the contribution of Associna, which fosters Sino-Italian identity and represents those Sino-Italians who feel a strong sense of attachment to both cultures. Associna's slogan is "Free to be" (*Liberi di essere*). Sun Wen-Long a member of the association, argues that it does not serve any political function but simply seeks to offer practical advice to Sino-Italians based on the experience accumulated by immigrants of long-standing:

We act as cousins do in Chinese culture, we are able to help since we know about intercultural dynamics. We are also here to help teenagers. We often meet locally (in Ferrara) and every two or three months we also get together with Milan and Prato Associna members. Then once a year, in October or November, we arrange a national assembly. We also exchange information online, often about recent news report, since if anything happens within the Chinese community, we are the ones the press gets in touch with.<sup>50</sup>

## Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, we can identify three distinct waves of Chinese migration to Italy. The first wave occurred in the very early stage of Sino-Italian relations (1850–1915), when only four categories of people moved to Italy from China: the students and priests studying and teaching at the Chinese college in Naples, the diplomats and their families based in Rome, a few sailors and the first street vendors (the first Chinese born in Milan in 1914 was presumably from a peddler family). The sporadic presence of Chinese citizens was thus substantially connected with Sino-Italian diplomatic relations as well as with Catholic mission work. Similarly, China was one of the few countries where Italian migrants didn't settle down.

During the second wave of Chinese immigration (1930–1970), a small but cohesive community started to develop. Chinese migrants took

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<sup>49</sup>Interview by Luigi Liao with Zhang Min, Bologna 15th April 2015.

<sup>50</sup>Interview by Patria Battilani and Luigi Liao with Sun Wen-Long, Bologna 15th April 2016.



many different routes to Italy after the first world war: across Siberia before stopovers in East and Central Europe, via France or the United Kingdom, or directly from China to the ports of Venice or Genoa. Here are some of the first Chinese migrants' experiences reconstructed through oral interviews:

My grandfather arrived before the first World War from Quingtian. The village was very very poor and all the people tried to go away. To Beijing, to Shanghai, to Siberia. My grandfather arrived in Europe from Russia, then went through Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Netherlands. Then he came to Milan because he had relatives and friends there.<sup>51</sup>

I think he arrived in Italy in 1935–36. He travelled around Europe for a long time. He said he arrived first of all in England. He worked as a cook. Then he went to France where he remained for 5 years. Then he went to Germany, but he didn't like it, that was in the Hitler period, and finally he reached Italy. So he must have left China very young.<sup>52</sup>

He left by boat and he remained on board for 40 days, because when he arrived in Trieste he wasn't allowed to disembark. Then the boat went to Genoa, but he could not disembark there either. So he started to travel up and down and at the end he landed at Genoa. Then he went to Milan, and after that to Bologna where his brother was.<sup>53</sup>

From the 1930s, most Chinese immigrants settled in Milan. After the Second World War, this community was rebuilt and new ones were set up, including in Bologna. The small number and common origin of this wave (almost all of them came from Quingtian) made for close kinship ties, so all of these communities (especially those in Milan and Bologna) were very cohesive and strictly interconnected:

Every so often, we spent time with the Milan community, that was even better organized ... That was a significant community, with some person-

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with Nino T. by Patrizia Battilani and Luigi Yen Liao, Bologna, 8th June 2015.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with G. W. by Luigi Liao Yen, Bologna 22nd November 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Cecilia Geslao, who married Wu Lung King Paolo in 1949, by Luigi Yen Liao Bologna, 7th July 2015.

alities which stood out ... more charismatic ... Therefore we went there, from time to time.<sup>54</sup>

We all knew each other ... And we did the celebrations together. And the marriages? There were 400 guests at my wedding. And we went to weddings in Rome and Milan.<sup>55</sup>

The second wave of migrants usually spent their spare time within their small community, playing Mah-jong, chatting in the Zhejiang dialect and eating homemade Chinese food. In Bologna, in the early 1960s, they set up a self-financing association called the China Club. This was a place to meet regularly on Sundays and bank holidays, and especially for family celebrations such as marriages or children's First Communion or Confirmation (Catholic sacraments).

We had the habit to gather on Sundays and spend time together [at the China club]. The dads played Mahjong, we [the children] played together and mums chatted ... After the death of my father we stopped going there [in 1970].<sup>56</sup>

This community was also very well integrated from an economic point of view, it never became an ethnic enclave. Even if they all specialized in the production of one precise good, the leatherette bag, they interacted daily with Italian workers and companies and sold their items to Italian customers, while the Italian craftsmen specialized in leather bags or in shoes.

These Chinese shared in the Italian economic miracle and lived the "Italian dream", based on home and car ownership, and the embrace of modern conveniences like television and other lifestyle factors like going away for holidays.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Antonio Yen by Patrizia Battilani and Luigi Yen Liao, Bologna, 10th June 2015.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Tommasina Wang by Francesca Fauri and Luigi Yen Liao, Bologna, 9th September 2015.

My father was the first one [in the Chinese community] to buy a car, the first to buy the television.<sup>57</sup>

The doctor said our son needed to go on holiday ... Then when June arrived, well he [the husband] took us to the seaside. To the Springtime Pension in Cesenatico. He brought us to the seaside in June and July, then in August I wanted to go back.<sup>58</sup>

We had bought a flat ... My husband told me: “do it by yourself because I don’t know how “... In the city centre houses were so expensive and I chose to buy in (...) street. It was like a dream, such a wonderful house, all the furniture was new.... There was the bath tub. The bath tub! Then the childrens’ room. I bought the house with cash. I never signed a promissory note.<sup>59</sup>

This second wave of Chinese immigration ended with the 1960s. Italy’s recognition of the People’s Republic of China (1970) prompted many of the Chinese living in Italy to choose Italian over Chinese citizenship because of their objections to Chinese communism and their connections to Taiwan.

The most recent wave of Chinese immigration started in the 1990s. Involving Chinese born and educated under the flag of the People’s Republic, this wave bears little or no resemblance to the preceding one. Second and third wave immigrants rarely know each other and have no occasion to meet. Today, there are a host of widely dispersed ethnic Chinese communities strung around Italy, all independent of each other but all equally well-integrated into their respective local economies. All things considered, the base common denominator between the three unique waves of Chinese immigrants to Italy is a strong entrepreneurial attitude together with a sense of close community kinship. In each of the three eras, the Chinese family circle has proved decisive in the establishment of small businesses and their successful integration into the Italian economy.

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with Adriana Wu by Patrizia Battilani and Luigi Yen Liao, Bologna 25th June 2015.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Cecilia Geslao by Patrizia Battilani and Luigi Yen Liao, Bologna 7th July 2015.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Giovanna Rilli by Patrizia Battilani, Bologna, March 18th 2016.

Based on our ongoing oral history project, it seems reasonable to conclude that while the most recent immigrant Chinese influx has not been able to create a cohesive community, it has certainly been successful in building interconnecting networks and relationships among the immigrant population.

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# 3

## Job Promotion and Labour Turnover Among Spanish Workers in West Germany, 1960–1973

Gloria Sanz Lafuente

**Abstract** Spain became part of the *guestworker system* with the signing of the Agreement between Spain and West Germany in 1960 to the end of the system in 1973. The question of the integration of immigrants in the labour market is a long-standing focus of sociological and economic research on immigration to West Germany. This chapter revisits the case of Spanish workers from an historical perspective. It considers two areas of integration—job promotion and labour turnover. By combining survey based research on the immigrant stock with qualitative material originating from both the host and home country, it reveals details that are not captured in official national data. The central themes of my case study include the inter-related issues of immigrants’ previous positions in their home country, their industrial roles in West Germany, their high rate of eventual return home and the legal obstacles they encountered as immigrants and non-European Economic Community (EEC) citizens.

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**Keywords** West Germany • Spain • *Guestworker system* • *Guestworkers* • Integration

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Human capital theory, as formulated by Jacob Mincer and Gary Becker analysed occupational achievement and earnings. They evaluated the improvements in skills and included education, labour market experience, health and knowledge about the labour market. The pioneering research of Peter Doeringer and Michael Piore revealed the segmentation of domestic markets linked to immigration. The social sciences produced a large body of literature on the integration of foreign workers (Sengenberger 1978; Han Hoffmann-Nowotny and Hondrich 1982; Korte 1985; Dietz 1987; Fijalkowski 1990; Chiswick and Hurst 1998, pp. 73–94). Moreover, scholars have consistently studied market segmentation in West Germany including conducting case studies based on advances data analysis.<sup>2</sup> Some of this social science scholarship has been dedicated to the experience of Spanish workers in West Germany (Leib and Mertins 1980, pp. 195–206; Garmendia 1981, pp. 245–258; von Breitenbach 1982; Alonso Antolín 1983; Harms 1986, pp. 49–86; Mertins 1990, pp. 117–139; Antolín 1992; Gualda 2001), as have a number of recent historical researches (Sanz Díaz 2004, 2012, pp. 119–132; Sanz Lafuente 2006, pp. 27–50, 2009a, pp. 141–175, 2011, p. 363–406, 2015, pp. 173–216).

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<sup>1</sup> The preliminary findings of this research were presented at “The EU as a fórum of labour migration: Entrepreneurship, Exploitation, Dignity” conference, University of Bologna, Forlì Campus, December 2015 and at the 130th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Atlanta, January 2016. Thanks to Campus Iberus for funding a research-visit to the Institut für Migrationsforschung und Interkulturelle Studien (IMIS) in Osnabrück, Germany. Thanks to Mario García-Zúñiga for his help with provincial estimates of population from 1960 to 1973. Thanks to Joseba de la Torre for his comments.

<sup>2</sup> The first generation of migrant workers were recruited into Germany to take unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Klaus F. Zimmermann pointed out that as immigrants prolonged their stay in West Germany they acquired increasing amounts of country-specific human capital—language, work experience, training—and began to practice occupational mobility (Klaus F. Zimmermann 1998, pp. 56–66). Furthermore (Constant and Massey 2005, pp. 489–512).

This chapter's aim is to revisit the question of the integration of Spanish workers in the German labour market between 1960 and 1973 from a dynamic historical perspective. Specifically, it will examine labour turnover and job promotion among the first generation of Spanish workers in West Germany in the context of their previous achievements in Spain, the *guestworker* project, the legal barriers they faced and the disruptions caused by the crisis of 1966–1967 and 1973–1974.

Spanish statistics did not report serial data on turnover and promotion among assisted emigrants in the main host countries (France, Switzerland and West Germany). The Spanish Emigration Institute (SEI) charged with interpreting, collecting and compiling data. Spanish statistics, however, only recorded assisted emigration arranged under official management and resulting in a work contract with a German company. This did not account for the full extent of emigration to West Germany. Over 40% of male emigration occurred outside the assisted official hiring system, while the corresponding figure of female emigration ran as high as 63%. In addition, the Spanish Labour Attaché in the Embassy in Bonn compiled reports on the labour integration of immigrants. The embassy's main source of data was the West German Federal Agency of Labour (FAL). Nevertheless, the documents produced by the Attaché are particularly valuable for the historian in respect of their commentary on the workings of legal barriers to free movement.

FAL, formerly the Federal Office for Recruitment and Unemployment Insurance (FARU) was responsible for compiling data on immigration into West Germany. The FAL put the German Commission in charge of the official recruitment of Spanish workers and carried out the work for the first survey-based-research in 1968. There was no data recorded on turnover and promotion among immigrants groups in West Germany from 1960 to 1968. This reflected the perspective that immigration would be temporary and there would be no need for integration.<sup>3</sup> The FAL published official survey data on promotion and turnover in 1970 and 1973. Official survey based figures on turnover took the absolute number of immigrants. There were disaggregated outcomes regarding

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<sup>3</sup>Bundesanstalt für Arbeit and the former Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung. Furthermore (Bade and Oltmer 2007, pp. 159–161).

promotion. The researches took a wide view and provided a broad range of indicators on integration, as outlined in the first research:

Thus, an attempt is made, for the first time, to have an overall differentiated vision regarding the duration of the stay, labour relations, fluctuation, specific activities and the professional qualifications of the foreign workers. Questions relating to the previous and continuous training as well as the labour promotion of the foreigners in the Federal Republic of Germany are also studied. Moreover, an important part of the data was devoted to knowing the family relationships and the type of housing of the foreign workers.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, there were survey-based figures of a private nature and origin, such as the survey carried out by the German Caritas Federation, among 491 Spanish immigrants in 1967.<sup>5</sup> In the end, qualitative data, literature and archive research were necessary to complete this chapter.

## Contributing Factors to Labour Turnover and Job Promotion for Spanish *Guestworkers* in West Germany

The economic cycle shaped the pattern of emigration from Spain to West Germany, particularly during the boom years. This involved the huge presence of manufacturing businesses as the job destination. A labour-intensive industry with abundant migrant employment played a key role in West Germany's "economic miracle". Whereas in 1961 foreign workers accounted for barely 1.3% of the industrial labour force, by 1985 they held 11.5% of all jobs in industry. Only the building sector followed a similar pattern from 3.3% in 1960 to 12.4% in 1985. Foreign nationals accounted for 1.6% of the overall workforce in metallurgy and steel

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<sup>4</sup>(Bundesanstalt für Arbeit 1970, p. 45). Following researches (*Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* 1973; Mehrländer et al. 1981).

<sup>5</sup>The Caritas Federation took charge of social assistance for Spanish immigrants ADCV (Archiv des deutschen Caritasverband), Karlstr 40, 79104 Freiburg (Germany) 380.22.708. Sozialdiens für Spanier. Survey based research. 1967.

manufacturing in 1961. This figure peaked at 14% in 1985. The highest increases in the rate of *guestworkers* occurred across various branches of the manufacturing industries. The percentage of emigrants finding jobs in industry was higher than the corresponding rate that sector represented for the local population. Albeit in different branches, over 75% of the jobs held by Spanish women and 68% of those held by men linked to industry between 1965 and 1973.

The broad process of intra-European labour migration affected several countries with marked differences in terms of development and per capita income. Between 1960 and 1975, over five and a half million people left Italy, Greece, Portugal, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Spain. European *guestworkers* entered West Germany between 1955 and 1973 and Spain joined the programme in 1960. In the early 1970s, Spanish migrants formed a minority group in West Germany (Table 3.1) that accounted for 11% of the overall number of foreign workers in the job market. The Spanish share had reached its maximum of 15% in 1965. From then on, their presence declined to just 6% in 1975. There were over two million foreigners working in West Germany, and Spain provides the fifth largest

**Table 3.1** Basic data of foreign employment and Spanish immigration in West Germany 1960–1980

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980
Immigrants in West Germany					
Employees in thousand	279	1119	1807	2061	2018
% immigrants of overall workforce	1.38	5.14	8.12	9.36	8.77
% of women of overall migrant employment	15.5	24	29.3	31.6	30.9
% industrial employment	50.9		62.8		53.9
Spanish immigrants					
Employees in thousand	61	182	171	124	86
% of women of the overall Spanish migrant employment	18.4	30.2	30.1	32.3	31.6
% of industrial employment	68.8		73.6		65.4
% unemployment rate in West Germany	1.3	0.7	0.7	4.7	3.8
% immigrant unemployment rate			0.2	5.8	5

Source: Own elaboration based on OECD Economic Survey 1978, 1986. Amtliche Nachrichten der Bundesanstalt für Arbeit. Arbeitsstatistik (1975, 1980, 1985)

contingent, although well behind Turkey (26%), Yugoslavia (20%), Italy (14%) and even Greece (9%) (Werner 1986, pp. 543–557; Bauer and Zimmermann 1996, p. 99; Venturini 2004, p. 16).<sup>6</sup>

Assisted emigrants to West Germany came largely from Andalusia (32% of the total assisted emigration) and Galicia (20%), as well as from Castile-Leon (11%), Madrid (9%), Extremadura (7%) and Valencia (5%). Structural changes in the Spanish economy did not involve a complete rural-urban, agricultural-industrial or service sector transfer domestically, but instead meant emigration in the 1950s, 1960s and in the early 1970s. If we consider disaggregated province-based data in relative terms (emigrants from 1960 to 1973 per 10,000 inhabitants), there were significant differences between regions (Map 3.1). To fully understand the causality of this phenomenon, however, a much more nuanced micro-historical approach will be necessary. For example, the technological development of mechanised harvesting led to more unemployment and emigration but mechanisation had different chronological patterns in small and large properties and in olive and cereal crop cultivations (Fernández Prieto 2003, pp. 97–98; Martínez Ruíz 2000, p. 109). From 1960 to 1973 63 percent of assisted Spanish emigrants to West Germany were classified as “*craftsmen, industrial labourers and labourers*” by the Spanish Emigration Institute.<sup>7</sup> “Women and 15-year-old-minors” were classified in the same group and women emigrants were not accorded any professional classification in the Spanish Statistical Yearbook until 1967. Women then disappeared from the professional classification yearbook again in 1968. Moreover, young people were not specifically catered for in the vocational training programs of the 1970s.

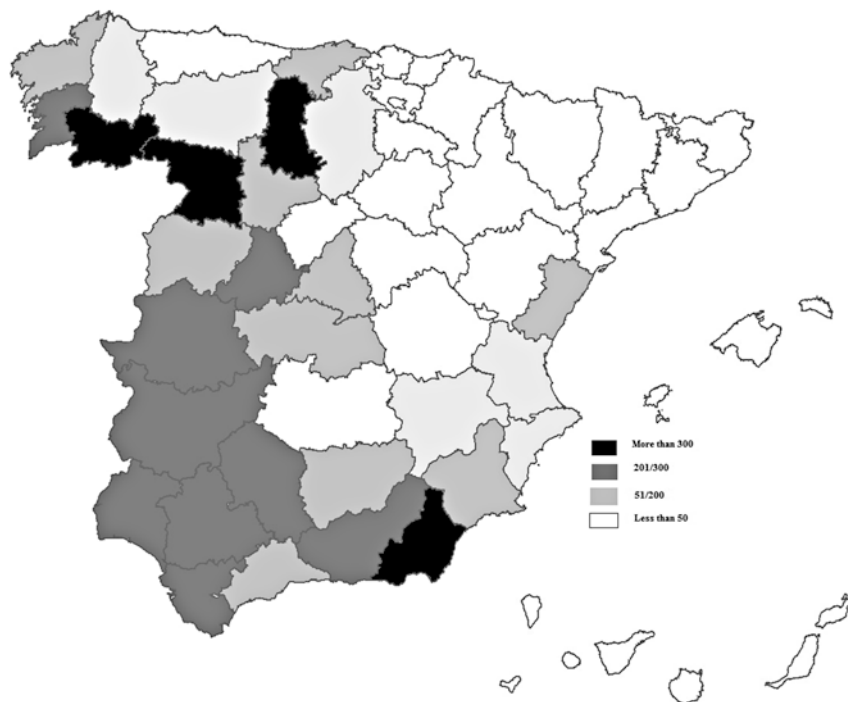
The professional classifications listed in the Spanish Statistical Yearbook did not allow for distinction to be made between men and women or between groups. The political discourse of the time focused on agricultural labourers and small farmers.<sup>8</sup> However, there was a liquidation of

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<sup>6</sup>On Spanish emigration in its historical context, see De la Torre and Sanz Lafuente (2009, pp. 11–61).

<sup>7</sup>On the classification see (Rengifo 1966, pp. 16–17; Anuario Estadístico de España, 1967–1973). Some references in (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit 1974, p. 47).

<sup>8</sup>See Leal et al. (1986, pp. 179–224). On applications to emigrate (Sanz Lafuente 2009a, pp. 153–155).



**Map 3.1** Stock of assisted emigrants to West Germany per 10,000 inhabitants from 1960 to 1973. Sources: Own elaboration from Rengifo, Alvaro, *La emigración Española a Alemania*, (Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo. Instituto Español de Emigración, 1966), pp. 16–17 and Spanish Statistical Yearbook 1966–1973. Provincial population estimates based on census data

traditional bio-based industries and there was technological unemployment in rural and urban areas. For example, the crisis in the hemp industry, which manufactured rope, footwear and fishing nets, and esparto-grass in some districts in the provinces of Murcia, Albacete and Alicante, led to the liquidation of traditional cultivation and industries. The result was a difficult substitution process, seasonal emigration and emigration to Europe also. New food and footwear industries underwent new mechanization process in the 1960s and 1970s and they were less labour intensive than the old ones.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>A good description of the regional process (Hansen 2015, p. 126, 151, 183, 239). The original publication of the book in 1967.

Formal vocational training was present in the first generation of Spanish *guestworkers*. However, very few skilled workers arrived in West Germany with recognised professional training. Towards the end of the 1950s and during the 1960s, immigrants arriving from Southern Europe came from countries with models of vocational training that were discontinuous, informal and lacking in specialisation. This was due to severely restricted public investment and a subsequent reliance on-the-job-training. There were further complexities with regard to the qualifications of Spanish workers. First, Spain regulated the official hiring of skilled labour, so emigrants did not necessarily reveal the full extent of their qualifications in their applications (Sanz Díaz 2004, p. 28; Sanz Lafuente 2009a, pp. 157–165). Second, there was an administrative sub-register of the emigrants' prior work experience in the home country, which they applied in the host country's industrial workplace. During this period, however, neither immigrants nor locals could have their previous practical knowledge certified. Third, *professional disqualification* could be associated with the migration process. An industrial *fordist* production system reduced skills required to perform many jobs. Employers were able to use newly arrived immigrant workers for some of these standardised and routine tasks.<sup>10</sup> By the end of the 1970s, two thirds of the foreign workers surveyed who claimed to have been skilled in their countries of origin, started in unskilled or semi-skilled positions in West Germany. Finally, there were also unskilled immigrants who acquired expertise (on the job) within the new industrial context of full employment.<sup>11</sup>

The gender balance of Spanish emigration weighted heavily towards men. Of the 408,811 who arrived with official work contracts up until 1973, some 79.5% were men and 20.5% were women. The West German labour market managed to reduce sectorial differences between Spanish men and women by accommodating them both in industry. Moreover,

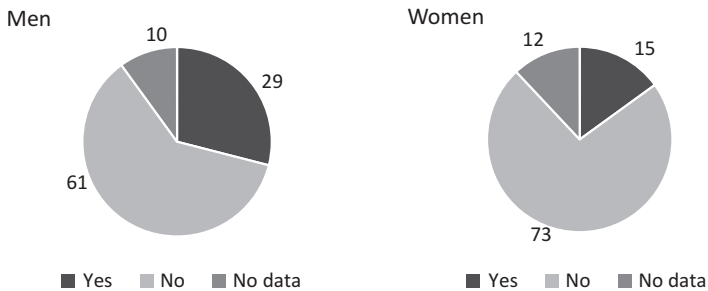
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<sup>10</sup>To improve their ability to absorb less qualified workers, firms started to train skilled workers to perform supervisory functions as well as work preparation or performance control. Techno-organisational changes could mean promotion to a supervisory position over low- and semi-skilled workers. See Sengenberger (1981, p. 246).

<sup>11</sup>ADCV 380.22.708 Sozialdienst für Spanier. Furthermore Aguirre Menéndez (1979).

Spanish women had a high employment rate in the destination country.<sup>12</sup> In the early days of the *guestworker* system, skilled workers were not in high demand but qualifications became increasingly important as the 1960s progressed. According to the survey-based research in 1967, 50% of Spanish men and almost 70% of women had completed elementary school, but 63% of men and 73% of women did not have any accredited professional certification (Fig. 3.1). The results of the German FARU's researches in 1968 and 1973 were similar. More Spanish men than women had attended secondary level, vocational training and upper secondary level. The lower level of education was an additional barrier for many Spanish women. Moreover, language barriers, culture gaps and differing educational backgrounds, all had to be bridge in the new job market.

Multiple factors influenced labour turnover and job promotion among Spanish immigrants in West Germany. On the one hand, the Spanish emigration Institute promoted rotation. On the other hand, some emigrants wanted to return to Spain with savings after a “short-term” emigration



**Fig. 3.1** Accredited professional certification among Spanish immigrants (1967). Source: Own elaboration based on the survey based research. 1967. ADCV.380.22.708. Sozialdiens für Spanien. Deutscher Caritasverband

<sup>12</sup>Around 70% of the estimated 770,000 people who went to West Germany between 1960 and 1975 were men. The average annual rates of official recruitment of women under the *guestworker* system were lower in Spain (22%) than in Greece (39%) but they were akin to Turkey (20.9%), Portugal (20%) and Yugoslavia (22.9%). Consideration of the Spanish figures must take into account the political management of the migratory flow of men and women and public gender perspectives during the Franco dictatorship (Mattes 2005, pp. 138–148; Sanz Lafuente 2009a, pp. 154–155). There was underregistration of women's employment in Spain. See Borderías and Gálvez (2014, p. 10).



period (Sanz Díaz 2008, pp. 361–380; Sánchez López 1969). Such projects favoured interregional mobility and intercompany rotation in search of wage increase. High labour turnover, as indicated by the surveys, did not result from negative business cycles fluctuations—except for 1966–1967 and 1973–1974—but from voluntary decisions. Furthermore, there were legal barriers in West Germany—e.g. to family reunification—which played a growing role in discouraging a permanent settlement of Spanish immigrants. The temporary emigration of men (in most cases) had in consequence transnational family economies founded on split apart households. Over 50% of the married foreign workers interviewed by the FAL in 1968 were seeking family reunification (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit 1970, p. 64).

Finally, the crises of 1966–1967 and 1973–1974 interfered with an eventual accumulation of skills and on-the-job-experience. This leads to increased rates of unemployment and return to Spain. The “industrial reserve army” went home (Table 3.2) but there was no uniformity across immigrants groups.<sup>13</sup> In fact, return led to under-registration of unemployment and labour turnover in response to fluctuating business cycles.

**Table 3.2** Percentage changes in the number of migrant workers in West Germany

	Recession 1966–1967	Recession 1974–1975
Greece	–25	–13
Italy	–31	–13
Yugoslavia	1	–12
Portugal	–6	–14
Spain	–30	–18
Turkey	–13	–10
All immigrants	–22	–11

Source: Dietz (1987)

<sup>13</sup> Furthermore Fijalkowski (1984, pp. 399–456).

## Looking for a New Company: Spanish Immigrants and Labour Turnover

Assisted emigrants got a work contract, a work permit for a company and a residence permit valid for one year. There were cases of positive labour experiences in Lower Saxony, where many immigrants wanted to extend their one-year contract. Things did not always run smoothly, however. In 1963, a group of Spanish women left their jobs in Hattorf am Harz due to the poor working conditions there and moved to a new company in Wolfenbüttel. This amounted to a breach of contract but not even a dispute resolution process involving the local labour office could convince them to remain where they were. When Spanish workers in the city of Goslar went on strike to protest against substandard working conditions their employer withheld their passports to prevent them leaving for other jobs. Assisted emigration schemes involved employers paying the travel expenses of workers.<sup>14</sup> When several workers left the firms in Baden-Württemberg, the authorities clamped down in relation to their residence permits.<sup>15</sup> The Spanish Emigration Institute distributed a Guide for the Emigrant in West Germany in 1971 and warned of problems in case of breach of labour contract (Instituto Español de Emigración 1971, pp. 32–34).

The phenomenon of labour turnover among immigrant populations was nothing new. It has been the subject of scholarly attention since the beginning of the twentieth century and turnover was a bigger problem for employers during the 1920s than after the Second World War (Cole 1979; Jacoby 1983, pp. 261–283). Mass production technologies contributed significantly to the reduction by leading to the formation of internal work markets in companies seeking to establish more stable employer-employee relations. As the scale of companies expanded in the post-war era, human resources management started to play a much more

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<sup>14</sup> ADCV 380.22.172 Fasz. 2. Sozialdiens für Spanier. Bericht über die Betreuung der spanischen Gastarbeiter in Niedersachsen, 1963. See Sanz Lafuente (2006, pp. 27–50).

<sup>15</sup> City of Weinheim Archive (CAW) Weststraße 12. 69469 Weinheim (Germany), Innenministerium Baden-Württemberg an die Regierungspräsidien 21.12.1962. Betr.: Beschränkung der Aufenthaltserlaubnis für ausländische Arbeitnehmer. Rep. 16. N. 1749.

pronounced role in industrial relations and workforce planning (OCDE, 1970, p. 28). Control of hiring costs and reduction of labour fluctuation were two of the prime targets for employers in post-war Europe and the United States. High rates of turnover were negative in the full employment context and the objective was to minimise the associated outlays. To this end, human resources departments attempted to restrict labour fluctuation.

The aim of the theories of the School of Human Relations was to improve performance and reduce turnover in a stable work environment. New labour policies and new theories of human resources management strengthen the attachment between employees and firms. Human resources departments were crucial in developing these links. Prospects for tenure, seniority based compensation and the provision of on-the-job training or internal promotion were central to the changing employment landscape. German firms began to use selective instruments of the School of Human Relations slowly and used it to reduce fluctuation too (Hilger 2004, pp. 244–247). Furthermore, in West Germany, the practice of codetermination or *Mitbestimmung*—the idea that workers should have the right to participate in management of the companies they work for—became more and more common.<sup>16</sup> However, the situation varied across the OECD countries. The number of resignations, layoffs and discharges per 100 employees was lower in West Germany than in France or Great Britain in 1965. Rates also differed within the West Germany economy. Turnover was higher in the building, trade and food sectors than in the chemical, electrical and metal industries (OCDE, 1965, p. 66).

Demographic research in the 1980s showed that immigrants had played an important role in recent inter-regional mobility in West Germany (Kridde 1987, pp. 58–60). There was surging interest in such movement patterns from the 1960s. Many observers began to recognize that labour turnover was costly for firms in terms of increased hiring and training expenditures.<sup>17</sup> In 1966, Rolf Weber, a Cologne-Based member of the Federation of German Employers—*Deutscher Arbeitgeberverband*—

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<sup>16</sup> The law confirms the participation of foreign workers in the work councils in West Germany in 1972 (Trede 2012, p. 188). The Spanish Office was installed in 1971 in the DGB (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund), the German Trade Union Confederation.

<sup>17</sup> On immigrants and overtime (Dohse 1988, p. 430).

expressed concern over labour turnover of immigrants (Weber 1966, pp. 33–44). FAL's annual reports highlighted problems caused by breach of assisted immigration contracts.<sup>18</sup>

Surveys conducted in response to these anxieties in the 1970s indicated a turnover rate of 32% among West German workers (Hofbauer and König 1973, pp. 37–66). A FAL survey from 1973 found that 58% of immigrant workers had experienced a least one change. There was no definitive gender dynamic at play as far as FAL could make out but its 1972 survey identified 20% of male immigrant workers and 30% of female, as having had more than three employers.

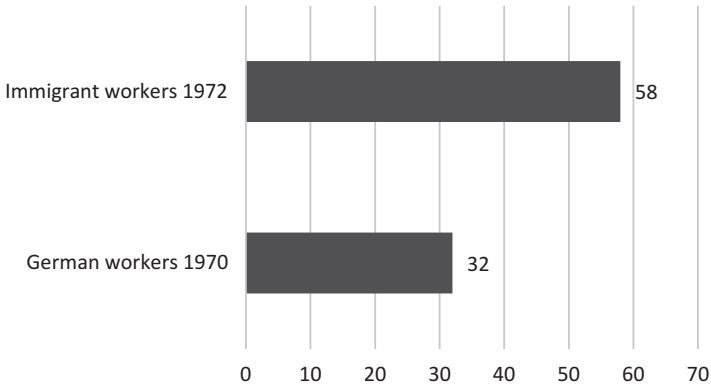
It was instructive to track rates of turnover among immigrants as a whole. There was a higher rate of voluntary turnover during the boom period. An average of 78% of men and 81% of women had chosen to quit at least one job. There was a high rate of dismissals in 1967 however. In the Opel factory of Rüsselsheim there were 2156 Spanish workers in 1966 (accounting for 42% of immigrant workers in the plant) but only 330 remained at the end of 1967 (Sonnenberger 2003, p. 471). In 1964, over 45% of the workers in Bahlsen's Barsinghausen and Hannover manufacturing plants were Spanish women. These numbers started to decrease gradually from 1965 before plummeting during the crisis (Mattes 2005, pp. 290–291). Seasonal layoffs were very low among men and did not affect women at all.<sup>19</sup>

The gap between local and immigrant workers narrows in respect of occupational status. If we bear in mind their respective relative positions in the West Germany labour market, turnover rates for foreign and native semi-skilled and low skilled workers were similar (Figs. 3.2 and 3.3). Unsurprisingly, rates for both were significantly higher than for high-skilled experts. There are no sources for an explicit comparison of the occupational status of Spanish and West German workers. Turnover rates among Spanish workers were similar to those of other immigrant groups in West Germany. The 1967 German Caritas Federation survey showed

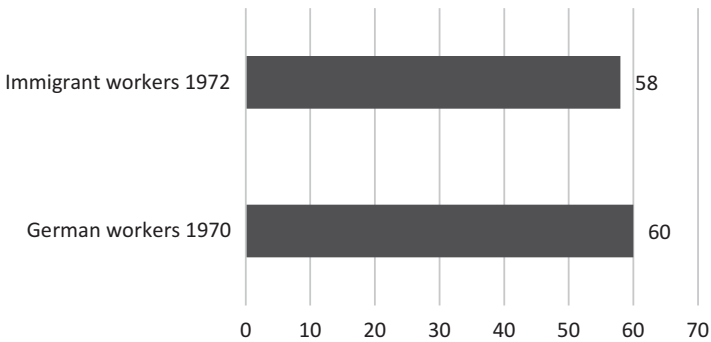
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<sup>18</sup>Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BA-Koblenz) Postdamer Str. 1. 56075 Koblenz (Germany). *Bericht Beschäftigung ausländischer Arbeitnehmer in der Bundesrepublik*. 1966.

<sup>19</sup>See Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (1970, p. 72).



**Fig. 3.2** Turnover rate of German and foreign workers 1970/1972 (%). Source: Own elaboration based on the survey based research of the Federal Agency of Labour in 1972 and Hofbauer and König (1973)



**Fig. 3.3** Turnover rate of German and immigrant semiskilled and low-skilled workers 1970/1972 (%). Source: Own elaboration based on the survey based research of the Federal Agency of Labour in 1972 and Hofbauer and König (1973)

that 54% of the men and 35% of the women had experienced at least one employer change in West Germany.

Given that the highest rates occurred among semi-skilled and low-skilled workers and that all immigrants in West Germany started at a lower rung on the wages ladder disadvantage (according to FAL's surveys), potential pay rises were generally the determining motive in turnover. In 1968, however, in the wake of the 1966–1967 crisis, return home

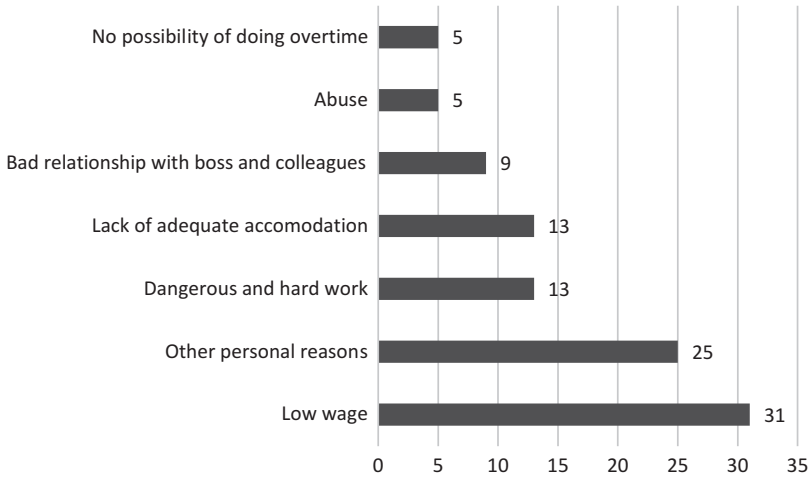
was an important reason. Family reunification was a recognized dynamic in labour turnover and it affected more women than men. Furthermore, more men (56%) than women (45%) mentioned pay rises in 1972 (*Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* 1973, p. 63).

West German and foreign workers changed jobs for different reasons. Working conditions were more important for natives (28%) than for immigrants (17/18%). Wages were decisive for 55% of immigrants but only 25% of locals. Given many young immigrants' lack of previous experience in the industrial sector, these tendencies had important implications for the formation of health risk perception. As many as 15% of West German workers considered health as a justifiable factor in leaving an employer but only 3% of immigrants mentioned this issue.

Spanish workers in West Germany were no different (Figs. 3.4 and 3.5). Low wages were the most likely reason for them to move to a new company. However, the design of questions in the survey instruments is an important issue. The definition of key causes of labour turnover was wide-ranging in the 1967 Caritas survey. Working conditions were variously categorised under "dangerous and hard", "abuse"—a category drawing very low response—"bad relationship with colleagues" and "no possibility of doing overtime". Non-work related issues were also important. Over 25% of men and 33% of women mentioned "personal reasons". The lack of adequate accommodation played a role too. The right to family reunification required the immigrant to have adequate accommodation. Health related risk perception was higher in this case—13% of men and 10% of women stressed hard or dangerous work as reasons for leaving a company. However, 5% of men left a job because there was no possibility of doing overtime. Up to 62% of men and 50% of women were doing overtime and almost 25% of both men and women wanted to do more overtime.

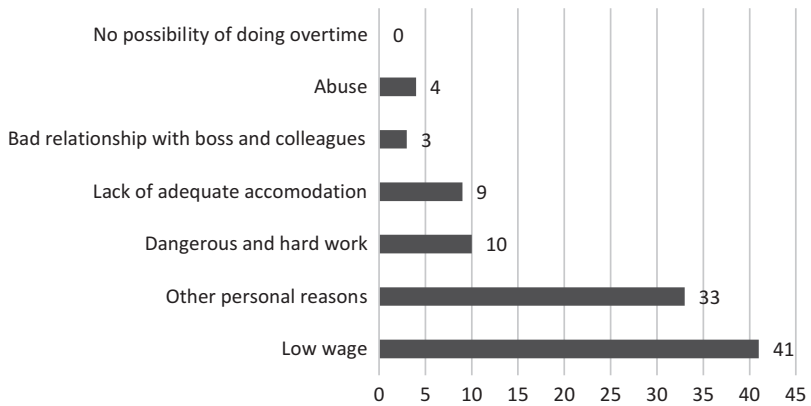
In sum, there was a higher frequency of labour turnover among immigrants generally including Spanish immigrants than there was among West German. The gap narrows when we compare like-for-like positions. Across all foreign workers, most who left a job did so in pursuit of better wages. Abuses like those described above were rarely factors. Immigrants were less likely to move jobs because of health related risk perception than they were for purposes of family reunification or to return home.

### Men



**Fig. 3.4** Causes of labour turnover of Spanish men 1967 (%). Source: Own elaboration based on the survey based research. 1967. ADCV.380.22.708. Sozialdients für Spanier. Deutscher Caritasverband

### Women



**Fig. 3.5** Causes of labour turnover of Spanish women 1967 (%). Source: Own elaboration based on the survey based research. 1967. ADCV.380.22.708. Sozialdients für Spanier. Deutscher Caritasverband

“Working conditions” covered a broad range of questions, from remuneration to working time in the Caritas survey of Spanish immigrants. This survey revealed some differences in the key causes of their labour turnover.

## The Relationship Between Emigration and Promotion in West Germany

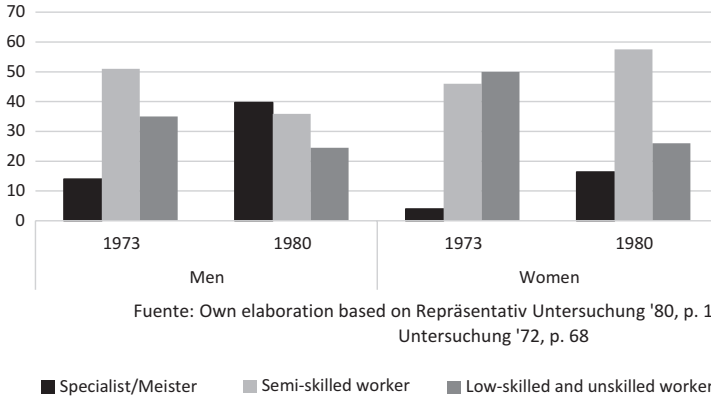
Longitudinal study would be the only way to determine how exactly these high rates of labour turnover affected the occupational status and promotion prospects of immigrants.<sup>20</sup> In the absence of such dataset and researches in this period, we must rely on survey-generated data, some of it dedicated to the Spanish stock of immigrants.

There are several biographical examples of mobility among Spanish immigrants in West Germany in the 1960s who, after up-skilling in one position, moved on in search of better pay (Sanz Lafuente 2015, pp. 200–201). The vast majority of immigrants remained in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs according to the survey of 1968 and 1973. Eventually, however, forms of immigrant skills changed over time and space. Labourers were still in the majority in the 1980s but the data reveal the existence of a more skilled stock of human capital among immigrants in West Germany, including among Spanish immigrants too. Accrual of long-term experience contributed greatly to this improvement, but the emergence of a second generation of immigrants was a factor also (Mehrländer et al. 1981, pp. 654–656). Spanish emigrants were beginning to occupy better and more senior positions but there were differences in terms of pay (Mehrländer et al. 1981, p. 659). The proportion of specialist foreign workers rose from 16% in 1972 to 23% in 1980. Steady improvements from 1970 meant that by 1980 35% of the Spanish men in West Germany were performing specialist roles (Fig. 3.6). There was an important gender gap with less women employed as specialist or *Meister*. This situation caused gender inequalities in terms of pay.

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<sup>20</sup> Better datasets, such as those of the IAB-Beschäftigtenstichprobe Basisfile 1975–1995 and the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP), recorded since 1984.





**Fig. 3.6** Position of the Spanish immigrants in the job structure (%). Fuente: Own elaboration based on Repräsentativ Untersuchung '80, p. 124. Repräsentativ Untersuchung '72, p. 68

Short-term emigration was oriented toward return to the home country. Evidence about return migration is scarce and empirical analyses are limited due to missing or problematic data (Nicolau 2005, p. 141). The number of emigrants who returned home to Spain from other European countries in the period 1964–1973 was somewhere between 800,000 and 1,000,000 (between 40 and 50% of the assisted outflow of approximately 2,000,000) (Rodenas 1994; Pujol Antolin 1979, p. XIIIf; Sanz Lafuente 2009b, pp. 143–144). This strategy increased turnover and had a negative impact on job promotion prospects. The focus for these workers was on immediate income generation with an eye to saving money for their return home. The question of career trajectory was hardly on the agenda, although some returned emigrants did use the experience they gained abroad to secure jobs in industry or to enter the ranks of the self-employment in the Spanish service (Castillo 1980).

Return was not always voluntary. Economic crises led to reductions in the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled workers in host countries, reducing immigrants' chances in the job market and leaving some with no choice but to return home (Table 3.2). The number of Spanish workers in West Germany declined from 1970 to 1975 (Table 3.1). Moreover, there was a significant reduction in the decade from 1975 to 1985. In

1970, over 60% of immigrants in the little city of Weinheim came from Spain. The 1966–1967 crisis did not have major consequences there and did not upset the steady increase that had begun back in 1960 and would continue until 1973. From then until 1979 the number of Spanish immigrants dropped each year.<sup>21</sup> Thereafter, Turkish immigrants and another groups of European immigrants replaced the Spanish immigrants in Weinheim.

Legal barriers increasingly played a role in discouraging Spanish immigrants from settling permanently in West Germany. The Spanish emigration Institute promoted rotation and the question of immigrant rotation was central to migration policy debates from the end of 1960s in West Germany. Minister Hans Merk (Bavaria) in 1973 and Minister Hans Filbinger (Baden-Württemberg) in 1974 advocated “voluntary rotation”. Minister Heinz-Schwarz (Rhineland-Palatinate) and Minister Werner Figgen (North Rhine-Westphalian) criticised rotation as an impediment to integration.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, there were differences between EEC-citizens and non-EEC citizens. In the 1960s and 1970s, immigrant workers from EEC countries like Italy could remain in West Germany for 12 months after dismissal, whereas Spanish workers only had a 3 month grace period. Italian workers got a 5 year residence permit as opposed to a one-year permit for Spaniards.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, there were flexible social practices between firms, labour markets and the local authorities managing migration flows.<sup>24</sup>

Federal studies showed that in percentage terms, Spanish workers and foreign nationals in general, were more prevalent within large industrial corporations. This accentuated their link to the technological change associated with the spread of Fordism in German big business and to the *americanisation* of production designed to standardise processes and cre-

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<sup>21</sup> CW-Archive Adressbuch Weinheim an der Bergstraße Ausgabe 1980/1981, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Staatsanzeiger für Baden-Württemberg, 12.06.1974. *Das Rotationsprinzip für Gastarbeiter*. Weinheimer Nachrichten 1.3.1973. *Bund und Länder streben einheitliche Politik an. Sollen Gastarbeiter eingebürgert werden?*

<sup>23</sup> See Agregaduría laboral de la Embajada en Bonn (1970, pp. 79–80).

<sup>24</sup> Local perspectives on the implementation of immigration policy in CW-Archive. Regierungspräsidium Karlsruhe an die unteren Verwaltungsbehörden im Regierungsbezirk Karlsruhe. 31.7.1974. Rep. 16. N. 1751.

ate economies of scale (Sanz Lafuente 2015, pp. 182–197). The influx of labour stabilised levels of standardised mass production until the mid-1970s, and helped to limit the increase in unitary labour costs in semi-skilled job sectors such as the car, textile and food industries, as well as in more innovative areas such as electronics.

There was no delay in introducing processes of rationalisation to German industry. Neither was there any lag in investment in technology or the application of flexible means of production. In aggregate terms, then the integration of immigrants in its companies did not have any negative impact on the productive performance of West Germany's manufacturing industry during the growth period. The available data show a leadership in Europe and a process of convergence of labour productivity—measured in terms of value added generated per hour—in the manufacturing industries of West Germany and the US between 1950 and 1985, but the former did not outstrip the latter. The eventual impact of these changes on immigrants working in the sector was to limit their opportunities for promotion in the fordist technological industries due to the reduction of occupational grades.<sup>25</sup>

Immigrants did not show any tendency to engage self-employment during the boom times. FAL reports from the 1960s do not even refer to the issue. There were some few instances of self-employment among the immigrant labour force but the numbers involved were negligible. Some *guestworkers* who prolonged their stay and became experienced in the West German labour market started their own business. This happened more frequently in the 1970s.<sup>26</sup>

The 1970 report of Labour Attaché in the Spanish embassy made it obvious that entrepreneurial immigrants faced major challenges. Less than 100 Spaniards ran their own business in West Germany, mostly as merchandisers.<sup>27</sup> At that time, governments were negotiating the Establishment Treaty—*Niederlassungsvertrag*. There was a restrictive German-Spanish treaty in effect from 1972 until Spain's entry into the

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<sup>25</sup> On productivity see Broadberry (2006, pp. 103–133) and Spitznagel (1987, pp. 250–259). The high rate of investment in Carlin (1996, p. 457).

<sup>26</sup> Some interesting outcomes on emigrant self-employment and entrepreneurial gastronomy in West Germany in Möhring (2012, p. 22). On early outcomes in the USA, see Borjas (1986).

<sup>27</sup> *Agregaduría laboral de la Embajada en Bonn* 1970, pp. 82–83.

EEC in 1986. There were diplomatic tension caused by rights of Spanish immigrants in West Germany. In fact, some veteran *guestworkers* attempted to use it to secure residence permits, which permitted their extended family to engage in entrepreneurial activities.<sup>28</sup>

In the 1970s, self-employment provided a route out of unemployment not just for immigrants, but for West German workers too.<sup>29</sup> The issue of the form of residence permit available to long-term immigrants with entrepreneurial ambition came to a head at a meeting of municipal authorities and districts representatives at Karlsruhe in 1974. There was no discussion at the previous meeting of these bodies in Baden-Württemberg but there was already in some West German courts. A consensus formed in the Karlsruhe meeting in favour of “controlled expansion” of small immigrant-led businesses. Together with the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Skilled Crafts, municipalities and district representatives would monitor both the scale of the entrepreneurial activity involved and the individual immigrant’s duration of residence in the municipality.<sup>30</sup> Slowly, the West German job market began to present new routes for immigrants. Nevertheless, the bulk of Spanish workers remained rooted in the industrial sector.

Exploring Spanish immigrants’ experiences of turnover and job promotion in West Germany manufacturing requires a sophisticated approach based on the theories of human capital accumulation, analysis of reactions to the changing demands of industrial technology, and assessment of workplace performance. Further important factors included short-term migratory projects, which revolved around maximising immediate income streams before voluntary return, legal barriers and the economic crisis of 1966–1967 and 1973–1974, which forced involuntary return.

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<sup>28</sup> CW-Archive. Regierungspräsidium Karlsruhe. An die unteren Verwaltungsbehörden, 14.05.1974. Betr. Wahrnehmung der Interessen spanischer Staatsangehöriger durch die Spanische Botschaft. Rep. 16. N. 1751. CW-Archive. Auswärtiges Amt. An den Bundesminister des Innern. Betr: Aufenthaltsrechtliche Gestaltung der Ausübung selbständiger Erwerbstätigkeiten durch spanische Staatsangehörige. 11.02.1974. Rep. 16. N. 1751.

<sup>29</sup> See Hofbauer (1980, pp. 521–530).

<sup>30</sup> CW-Archive. Archive. Regierungspräsidium Karlsruhe. An die unteren Verwaltungsbehörden im Regierungsbezirk Karlsruhe. Betr.: Besprechung ausländerrechtlicher Angelegenheiten am 4. Juli 1974 und am 9. Juli. 1974./Gastattung selbständiger Erwerbstätigkeit nach langjährigem Aufenthalt. Rep. 16. N. 1751.

## Conclusions

Spanish immigrants had a strong presence in West German industry. In percentage terms, it was higher than in any other immigrant group. Spanish immigrants worked in large industrial companies. Their formal educational attainments were low and there was a gender gap in respect of their previous achievements with fewer women with secondary level or vocational training. A variety of factors also conditioned turnover and job promotion figures. On the one hand, there were the short-term migratory projects culminating in voluntary return with maximised savings. On the other hand, hostile business cycle fluctuations in 1966–1967 and again in 1973–1974 caused unwanted returns.

This historical case study suggests that labour turnover among Spanish immigrants was high but similar to those of other immigrant groups in West Germany. There was a higher rate of voluntary turnover during the years of growth. Although immigrants' propensity to change jobs was an important issue in the 1960s and 1970s, the rate of change was analogous to that among West Germans of the same occupational status (unskilled and semi-skilled industrial workers).

The high labour turnover recorded in surveys resulted from immigrants' voluntary decisions. Like their West German work colleagues, their choices were based on wage rates and working conditions. Health related risk perception was less of a concern for Spanish immigrants than it was for West Germans. Non-work-related motivations for leaving a job included return home, family reunification, lack of accommodation or other personal reasons.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the specific Fordist technological environments of large industrial companies led to the narrowing of occupational grades and increased the demand for low- and semi-skilled workers. Surveys indicated that the situation changed little between 1970 and 1973. Apart from technological changes, promotion prospects for Spanish immigrants also suffered as result of the aforementioned short-term migratory projects, legal barriers and economic downturns. Nonetheless, Spanish workers steadily supplemented their skills through the 1970s and 1980s. A sizeable gender pay gap also emerged during this

period. Spanish men had more high-skilled positions but Spanish women did not share the same benefits. *Guestworkers* were rarely self-employed although an increasing number of long-term Spanish immigrants sought this status in the 1970s. In sum, economic fluctuations, individual agency, institutions and labour market structures all played vital roles in shaping the experience of Spanish immigrant workers in West Germany. Spanish workers were a minority within West German industry, but they became well-integrated in the sector.

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City of Weinheim Archive (CAW) Weststraße 12. 69469 Weinheim (Germany).



# 4

## Notes on the Economic and Social Impact of the Migration Flows in Belgium from the Post-World War II to the New Millennium: Some Case Studies

Paolo Tedeschi and Pierre Tilly

**Abstract** This paper aims to illustrate the impact of emigration on the Belgian economy and society during the twentieth century. We analyse some particular case studies and illustrate the effects of the arrival of foreign workers in Belgian mines, textile and iron and steel factories, and the building sector. Our research also illustrates the related changes in the Belgian life style (concerning food, music, sport, agronomics etc.) and in particular the creation of a real melting pot in the Belgian society. The paper also shows that the migration process included, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, very different people as far as

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language, religion and education are concerned (from the poorest migrants who needed training courses for improving their language and labour skills to the high skilled migrants who came as the executives of the European institutions in Brussels). The integration process of “foreigners” was complicated in particular for those who had a different religion and/or skin colour and/or a low knowledge of the French (or Dutch) language. As it happened elsewhere in Europe, while the immigration in Belgium until the second world war was almost exclusively white, Catholic and European, the post-war immigration was in fact much more different, with its large numbers of non-white and non-Christian manual workers from outside Europe.

Their process of integration was also made more difficult by the absence of the “protecting” rules on emigration and welfare reserved to EEC migrants. There existed some bilateral agreements only and this increased the number of illegal immigrants: the latter obviously had a lot of problems in finding a job and an accommodation and they had no possibility to improve their quality of life. This has also favoured, in the case of few young adults who were born in the 1980s and 1990s and were not able to be fully integrated in the Belgian society, the growth of feelings in favour of the radical Islam which had no followers until the last decades of the twentieth century.

**Keywords** Italian migrants • Moroccan migrants • Turkish migrants  
• Belgium • Belgian society

## Introduction: Topic and Aims

The aim of this paper is to survey recent historical and empirical studies on the economic and social impacts of immigration on the Belgian economy and wider Belgian society in the period between the end of World War II and the opening decade of the new millennium.<sup>1</sup> Without

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<sup>1</sup> For their invaluable commentary and suggestions, the authors wish to thank their colleagues from the following conferences: ‘The EU as a Forum of Labour Migration: Entrepreneurship, Exploitation, Dignity and Development’ (Forlì, December 2015); ‘The economic impact of migration: lessons from history’ (17th World Economic History Congress, Kyoto, August 2015); ‘Labour Migration from and to Europe: Migrants as Job Seekers and Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurs’ (The

conducting an exhaustive analysis of the issue, this work concentrates on some immigrant workers' realities of assimilation and integration into Belgian labour markets and the concomitant experiences of natives. The body of scholarship on the area is extensive, so the approach adopted here is to highlight a selection of the most pertinent matters and subject them to a rigorous scrutiny. At this regard, as the lack of space got impossible to put in evidence all aspects, the paper offers a wide bibliography allowing to examine them in depth.

Like many other Western European countries, Belgium welcomed a significant number of migrants during the second half of the twentieth century. Belgium was not traditionally a territory of significant migration flows, especially inward, and the first wave of immigration into the country, in the 1920s, was not legion (except the traditional French and Dutch migrations). A first generation of migrants came from neighbouring countries, Italy and Central Europe to work in Wallonia's heavy industries and coal mines. After World War II, it was predominantly Italians who immigrated to Belgium. Foreign miners and labourers were required to meet the needs of Belgium's coal works and associated activities. The country needed immigrants to maintain its position as one of Europe's leading industrialised nations, a status it had enjoyed since the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. The so-called Belgian 'economic miracle', a period of rapid growth, particularly between 1945 and 1948, unfolded on the back of immigrant labour.<sup>2</sup> Waves of migration into Belgium have been closely linked to wider EEC/EU migration cycles. From the 1960s workers were also recruited from Turkey and Morocco for the traditional industries. Most of them were directed to the Flemish cities and to the capital, Brussels. The proportion of migrants in the total population progressively increased from 4.3% in 1947 to 8.9% in 1981, before stabilizing at around 9% in the late 1990s (Tricot 1979; De Lannoy et al. 1991; De Biolley 1994). At this regard, the Appendix including some tables and graphs concerning migration flows to Belgium

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American Historical Association 130th Annual Meeting, Atlanta, January 2016). Thanks also to the anonymous referees who have reviewed this work at various stages.

<sup>2</sup>There is a wide body of work on Belgian industrial development and Belgium's 'economic miracle'. See, among others, Kurgan-Van Hentenryk 1993; Cassiers 1995; Cassiers et al. 1996; Cammarata and Tilly 2001.

allows to note the number of foreigners and the fluctuations related to economic conjuncture and the changes of Belgian policies about migrants. The relatively significant presence of foreigners had a pronounced impact on certain aspects of economic and social life in Belgium. The location of major European institutions in Brussels, for example, meant that the capital gradually transformed into a cosmopolitan city with its own unique eating habits and customs.

The strong migration flow created in Brussels tensions around the provision of accommodation for migrants and complicated the relationship between migrants and local citizens. There was resistance to the changes, but it did not avoid the transformation of the town. The same process occurred in the larger towns of Flanders and Wallonia (in particular Charleroi, Mons and Liège). From the 1960s, many immigrant workers were joined by their wives and families. The Italian, Moroccan and Turkish communities became the biggest ethnic minority populations (Phalet and Swyngedouw 2003; Phalet et al. 2007).

The focus of the current study is on the effects of the arrival of foreign workers on the Belgian mining, textile, iron, steel and building sectors: it also considers how these workers' families (especially the youngest generations) took to life in Belgium and how they influenced Belgian lifestyle in terms of food, music, sport, agronomics, sociability etc. While Belgian society became something of a melting pot, there were enduring problems between immigrants and the Flemish and Walloon communities (Roosens 1981; Manço and Amoranitis 2002; Tedeschi 2017). Immigrants' experiences of the process of migration and integration were strongly influenced by their educational and work background, language skills, religion and race. The poorest migrants tended to lack the most relevant (French or Dutch) language and labour skills, whereas the mandarins of European institutions in Brussels and the executives of multinational companies faced no such barriers. Many immigrants needed training courses for improving their French or Dutch language and their integration process was complicated, in particular for people having a different religion and/or colour of the skin. As elsewhere in Europe, while immigration to Belgium before World War II was almost exclusively white, Catholic and European, post-war immigration featured large numbers of non-white and non-Christian manual workers from outside Europe. These immigrants encountered challenges that white Christian

Europeans did not: the 'old' immigration flows involved Catholic Europeans and it was less difficult to integrate their customs than in the case of non-European Muslims who formed the majority of the 'new' waves.

The exploitation of migrants through unduly low wages and exorbitantly priced or exceedingly rare accommodation was common. The initial segregation of immigrants into camps was followed by their confinement to very definite residential areas in the most dilapidated parts of towns. Other forms of socio-economic exclusion (school dropout, social and cultural marginalization and female unemployment) reinforced their sense of alienation and isolation. They were denied opportunities for political participation and active citizenship. So, this paper also tells stories that were not successes and to examine the reasons for failure.

The case studies chosen for review involve Italian, Moroccan and Turkish immigrants who had difficult experiences or success stories in Belgium. Since Italians arrived in Belgium before Turks and North Africans, they have generally attained higher levels of resources and socio-economic standing than the relative newcomers. But they still lag behind the native Belgian population (Martiniello 1992; Kagné 1998; Phalet et al. 2007; Martiniello et al. 2007). The decisive factors in shaping the course of integration were, firstly, emigrants' skills and related job prospects and, secondly, the availability and standard of accommodation. Other variables influencing integration included: the protections granted by the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC) which favoured Italian migrants; the fact that French-speaking migrants from Africa were presented with more opportunities to work in Wallonia and Brussels. Meaningful economic and social integration was realised in many cases, in particular for migrants who arrived in the 1950s and 1960s and also for the second- and third-generations of migrant families who considered themselves Belgian citizens and were able to enjoy better material circumstances thanks to the sacrifices of their parents. In general terms, however, the process of integration of migrants into Belgian society was far from smooth and featured many of the negative characteristics that blight such processes internationally. Immigrants were castigated as slackers and thieves (in the literal sense but also in the figurative sense that they were taking jobs that should rightly have been filled by natives). Sometimes, their presence was just about tolerated; other times, they were isolated. A minority of immigrants



and their descendants (particularly Islamic immigrants) did not regard themselves as Belgian and loudly proclaimed their non-Belgian identity.

Looking at the Italian, Moroccan and Turkish experiences, the argument proposed here is that those who benefitted most from the economic dimension of illegal immigration were employers (because of cheap labour, reduced social charges and increased flexibility) and the migrants' countries of origin (because of remittances).

## The Socio-Economic Position of Migrants in Belgium

As happened in all industrialised European countries, during the second half of the nineteenth century and through the twentieth century, immigrant workers in Belgium (whether legal/regular or illegal/irregular) commonly served as a supplement to the native workforce. There was not sufficient local manpower to satisfy the demands of the economy. Immigrants worked on the fringes and in the worst health and safety conditions. Their wages were the lowest in the economy. Thus, their status affected both employment structures generally and wage levels specifically. But none of this was unique to Belgium. As elsewhere, immigrants represented a cheap and mutable supply of labour. This reduced other workers' bargaining power. Within trade unions, their presence provoked mixed feelings: native workers complained that immigrants' reluctance to join strikes and long-term industrial relations campaigns undermined the internal solidarity of labour groups. Furthermore, cultural differences could lead to conflict and confusion regarding common economic interests. The contractual standing of immigrants depended on the nature of their work permits: short-term permits subject to renewal meant they did not have the same negotiating power as native workers. This situation obviously facilitated employers in offering only temporary employment and low wages. It also allowed for some serious forms of ethnic discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>The life experiences and problems of migrants arriving in Belgium were broadly similar to those encountered by foreign workers in other European countries and in America during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See, among others, Lucassen et al. 2006; Castles and Miller 2009; De Clementi 2010; Fauri 2015a; de Maret 2016a.

In Belgium, most foreign manpower was at first recruited from Eastern Europe and Italy. The rate of immigration increased after World War I (when Belgium was liberated from German occupation). Immigrants worked in construction, textile sector and coal mining: these industries were dependent on their availability. The scarcity of local workers was so acute that while the Great Depression of the 1930s and the associated restrictions on foreign immigration reduced the level of immigration, Belgian enterprises continued to take on foreign workers. But it was also during this period that the Belgian government started to enforce immigration legislation and that a wave of xenophobia broke out (as elsewhere in Europe). World War II (and the new German occupation) put a halt to immigration but again this was temporary. New waves of immigration were collectively regularized by bilateral agreements (including Belgium and Italy's one of 1946) and international accords.<sup>4</sup> In 1947, there were some 350,000 migrants living in Belgium, barely 4% of the total population. The demand for labour was particularly strong in the coal industry and in the building sector, which was charged with reconstructing infrastructures: foreign workers could not find a job in other sectors and there were some exceptions only in the steel and quarrying industries. Only after 1957 the recruitment of foreigners extended beyond the coalmines, gradually spreading to the metal industry and construction. After five years, foreign miners were permitted to seek work in other sectors. As they became increasingly successful in this transition, the coal industry had to look abroad to find replacement labour. The heart of the Belgian economy depended on migrants.

When the immigration movement started, Belgian governments thought that it would be temporary (and of relatively short duration). Post-World War II, however, the economic development and the growth of world (and in particular European) markets increased the need for foreign labour: so the immigration of workers became an ongoing phenomenon. The central challenge was to achieve a level of labour market elasticity which avoided both drastic reductions in wages (thereby depressing the consumption of goods and services) and an over-supply of manpower

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<sup>4</sup> On the Belgian state's agreements with the home countries of authorized migrant labourers, see Vincineau 1984.

(which created social problems during cyclical economic slowdowns). Finally, the government was pre-emptive in regard to potential labour agitators and carefully monitored migrants workers who were suspected of engaging in 'communist political activities' or 'immoral behaviour'.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from family migration, which progressively became the major form of legal migration, two other categories of migrants gained prominence in the 1970s as the Belgian government decided to curtail the numbers of non-EEC entrants: asylum-seekers and irregular migrants. Asylum procedures were increasingly resorted to not only by genuine refugees but also by migrants whose motivations were in fact economic. Some of them applied for a residence permit but did not obtain it. Instead of leaving the country as they were supposed to, some remained on despite lacking access to regular employment and health services. Others foreigners entered the country illegally or became illegal migrants by overstaying their work permits. The net result of all this was to increase migrants' vulnerability generally. Their skill levels were still low and the political status of many, including regularized immigrants, was shrouded with uncertainty.

The pressing demand for labour during the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s explains the 'open-door' policies adopted towards European migrants: the integration of Italian workers was facilitated by the protection granted under ECSC and EEC rules. Positive economic trends also smoothed the integration of non-European migrants also, in particular French-speaking Africans. Most found a job and were able to reunify their family in Belgium or to create a new family. Catholic institutions, bodies within the voluntary sector and provincial public authorities assisted foreign workers and their families in joining Belgian society. Trade unions also played a major role in this process. Belgium was the forerunner in Europe in starting a public debate on securing immigrants' residency status and political rights. Migrants in Belgium obtained the right to vote and to stand for local elections in 1969. On 17 February 1970, immigrant workers were awarded the same rights as Belgians in

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<sup>5</sup> On Belgian policies concerning migration flows, see, among others, Blaise et al. 1997; Cornet 2004; Caestecker 2000; Bastenier 1992; Commissariat 1989; Stengers 1978. Concerning the control of migrants' behaviours and ideologies, see Pleinen 2008.

terms of work councils and other consultative bodies within enterprises. Finally, in the early 1970s, new institutions such as the *Consultative Council on Immigration* (CCI) in Wallonia and the *Liaison Committee for Immigrant Worker Organizations* (CLOTI) were founded to provide a link between existing labour union representative groups and immigrant workers' own associations (a similar regime had actually been in place in Flanders since the late 1960s). Numerous immigrant residents were included on these boards alongside state and provincial representatives (Martiniello 1997, pp. 108–110; Ireland 2000, pp. 251–252).

This positive conjuncture helped many migrants to improve their living conditions: they could find better paying jobs and buy a house. Some migrants became entrepreneurs and created new markets dedicated to the traditional clothes and dishes of their countries (e.g. Italian pasta and pizza or North African couscous). Newspapers and books in the native language of immigrants advised on practical matters, including the reunification of family (when the migrant was initially the husband only). Others organized spaces for dance and music so that migrants could maintain a link with their native culture and socialize with compatriots: this also facilitated the development of support networks that could be vital sources of jobs and solidarity in the face of discrimination or disadvantage. Unmarried people often met their future husband or wife there. Moreover, migrants' children studied in Belgian schools, became Belgian citizens and participated in Belgian public life, occasionally (and increasingly) assuming central roles in political and economic institutions.

While the process of integration was not without its difficulties, migrants and succeeding generations interacted with the Belgian state and its citizens throughout the twentieth century. Their participation in the Belgian economy and wider society inevitably influenced Belgian culture and lifestyle. This interplay continued through the Great Depression of the 1930s, the oil crisis of the 1970s and the most recent global downturn, even if these crises impelled public opinion to display a sharp preference for employment-related migration only, as well as a preference for skilled workers and for temporary migration. Public expressions of cultural diversity created difficulties between some communities of migrants and between migrants and their Belgian hosts, who feared what they perceived as a challenge to their traditional way of life. Still, the majority of migrants'

descendants continued to produce for the Belgian economy and to contribute to the renewal of Belgian society. A minority rejected integration. Their opposition was to the western socio-economic system generally rather than the Belgium version specifically. Opponents of integration represented (and continue to be) a real threat to the Belgian social order.

## Post-World War II Migration Waves and the First Steps of the ECSC and EEC

During the post-World War II economic reconstruction of Europe and the simultaneous emergence of new European institutions, it was mostly Italians who comprised the waves of migrants flowing into Belgium. Italian migration to Belgium had been consistent since the late nineteenth century and had been interrupted only by the world wars. Italian migrants were not exclusively coal miners. Among their number were restaurant owners (or waiters and barmen), hawkers, door-to-door salespersons, retailers, political exiles, musicians (or street musicians at least), students, intellectuals and those who were not favoured by the fascist regime under the terms of their 1929 agreement with the Catholic church, that is Jehovah's Witnesses, Evangelicals, laics and anticlerical figures (Casano 2016; de Maret 2016a, b). In many ways, then, post-World War II Italian immigration to Belgium was a continuation of what had gone before, but it took on some new characteristics. The most important novelty was in the numbers, which more than doubled, from 37,143 in 1938 to 84,134 in 1947. The Italian government sacrificed these migrants as pawns, exchanging them for the raw materials desperately needed in the rebuilding and revitalization of Italian industry (Morelli 2016b, pp. 8–11).

An arrangement was struck between the two states such that coal and miners flowed in opposition directions and according to specific benchmarks. From the Italian government's perspective, the deal reduced unemployment levels and meant high value currency would enter the Italian financial system via emigrants' remittances (as well as securing coal). At the beginning of 1946, the first 500 Italian miners went to Belgium. By mid-1946, 20,000 had gone. The Italian government guaranteed 1000 new miners per week, all of them under 35 years of age.

In 1948, the migration wave from Italy to Belgium peaked. Reduced rates of economic growth and a concerted campaign by trade unions, protesting against falling wages in the face of the incoming wave, slowed the flow for a spell. It increased again in the early 1950s, however: between 1951 and 1953 over 44,000 new Italians entered the Belgian labor market. Most of them found jobs in the Walloon mines, where they fought in the battle for coal. Italians were the most prized migrant workers and their numbers remained consistently high, even amid slowdowns or restrictions. This trend continued under the more liberal immigration laws introduced in May 1955. After Belgians, Italians were the largest 'ethnic group' working in the coalmines. From 1955 to 1957, over 20,000 Italians came to Belgium to work in the mines, but things changed thereafter. When Italians accounted for more than half of the 256 fatalities in the disaster at 'Bois du Casier' in Marcinelle, the attitude of the Italian government altered significantly (the deaths made a massive impact on Italian public opinion). Italy demanded improved safety conditions for its nationals. The response of the Belgian coal industry was to turn to miners from elsewhere, in particular from non-ECSC/EEC countries, and new agreements were signed with Spain and Greece. This represented a significant departure: up to 1956, Italian miners were the only foreign workers in Belgium protected by a bilateral migration agreement.

Trade unions campaigned for tight quotas on immigration between 1958 and 1961, but new pacts were negotiated with Morocco and Turkey in 1964. Belgian migration policy differed sharply from that of other former European colonial powers in that there was no massive recruitment drive in the Congo (which only achieved independence in 1960).<sup>6</sup>

Immigrants who came to work in Belgian coalmines in the 1950s were issued a work permit exclusively for the coalmines, in which they had to work for at least five years before they could apply for work permits for other industries. For Italian miners only, the period of compulsory employment was reduced after the Marcinelle disaster. For the others, it was progressively reduced in the 1960s but only because the mines gradually closed down and the demand for factory workers increased. The majority of the Italian migrants came from the Mezzogiorno region and

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<sup>6</sup>On migrants coming from the Belgian Congo see Boussetta et al. 2005; Cornet 2004.

were low-skilled or unskilled workers. The purpose of their migration was to support their families (who often remained in Italy). Once they had found a job, they could capitalize on the networks and associations that Italian migrants had created in the period stretching from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1930s. They also attended badly needed language training courses, with mixed results, and attempted to improve their work skills. They usually belonged to one of the professional categories mentioned in the ECSC/EEC agreements, especially those dedicated to migrant coalminers. When the migrant had accumulated enough money to pay for the accommodation of his wife and children, he could request family reunification.<sup>7</sup>

During the 1960s, right up until the first oil shock, between 8000 and 10,000 Italians immigrated to Belgium each year. After the great recession of the 1970s, the migration flow restarted and, in the 1980s, the number of Italians entering Belgium remained high, at up to 2500 people a year. Brussels became the most attractive destination, while the closing of coalmines stifled migration to the Hainaut, where descendants of Italian migrants already represented a substantial proportion of the population. By the 1980s, Italians were ‘fully integrated’: they were no longer subject to discrimination and they were no longer economically and politically marginalized, as they had been during the 1950s and 1960s. Second or third generation Italian-Belgians became important entrepreneurs, trade union leaders and political representatives: the descendant of an Italian migrant recently served as prime minister.

The circumstances created by the birth of the ECSC and then of the EEC—which guaranteed Italian migrants particular protections—were conducive to integration. European institutions oversaw the implementation of the clauses of the Belgian-Italian agreement granting Italian immigrants the same rights as native Belgian workers. Throughout the

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<sup>7</sup>On the evolution of Italian emigration to Belgium and the Italian governments’ attitude, see, among others, Clémens et al. 1953; Martens 1976; Morelli 1988, 2008; Dumoulin 1989; Perrin and Poulain 2002; Beyers 2005, 2008; Blanchart 2008; Tilly 2008, 2015; Van Ingelgem 2014; Fauri 2015b, pp. 191–209; Carta 2016; Cumoli 2016; Pion 2016; Walvarens 2016. For a general analysis of Italian emigration in the European countries also see Dumoulin and Trausch 1984 (pp. 5–19, 41–57, 101–108 for further information about migrants to Belgium).

1960s—before the laws concerning the free circulation of EEC workers were enforced—Italian migrants enjoyed straightforward access to the Belgian labour market. They also enjoyed the same social rights and welfare protections as natives. There existed a small number of clandestine Italian migrants who either failed medical controls or did not want to work in the coalmines. This minority was subject to the usual exploitation facing irregular migrants, but in a lot of cases the Italian network provided adequate protection.<sup>8</sup> The common Catholic religion also made integration easier, as did the attraction that Italian cuisine, fashion and singing held for Belgians. The emergence of small and medium-sized Italian enterprises and the celebration of many mixed marriages (especially among the second generation) also helped migrants integration into Belgian society.

The birth of the ECSC and EEC ‘created’ a particular type of Italian migrant, namely the Italian executives of the European institutions in Brussels. Their experience was in stark contrast to that of other Italian migrants: they demanded and obtained high salaries, plush accommodation, good services, fiscal privileges and the creation of special structures for their families such as international schools where executives’ children could learn a variety of European languages, including their parents’ native tongue. The presence of these executives and their seamless integration did not discomfit Belgians.

This was possible only for Italian migrants, however, because Italy was the only one of the six ECSC—EEC countries with a high volume of migrants. The other countries sending large numbers of migrants to Belgium were in the grip of depressions and dictators, as in the cases of workers arriving from Eastern Europe.<sup>9</sup> The flow of these migrants had significantly increased during the inter-war period and in particular in

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<sup>8</sup> On the relevance of European institutions’ policies to emigration in EEC countries (and also in the EU after the Schengen Treaty), see, among others, Comte 2016; Paoli 2015; Blanco Sio-Lopez and Tedeschi 2015; Boswell and Geddes 2011; Caruso 2008; Martiniello 2001; Louette 1998; Miles and Thranhardt 1995; Romero 1991, 1993.

<sup>9</sup> About migrants coming from the European Eastern countries see: Clémens et al. 1953; Caestecker 1992; Venturas 2002; Dumoulin 2005; Goddeeris 2005; Venken 2010, 2011; Venken and Goddeeris 2006.



the 1930s, that is after the great economic crisis related to the fall of the New York stock exchange in 1929. Poland was a case in point: there were 5329 Polish migrants in Belgium at the end of 1920s but 50,626 a decade later. The Polish presence peaked at 61,809 in 1928. The Poles were the first group of foreign workers to arrive in Belgium who were not from neighbouring countries such as France or the Netherlands. Like the Italians, the Poles went to the coalmines of Wallonia (in Borinage there was a street called 'rue de Varsovie', that is 'Warsaw street') and Limburg (in the Flemish region). Other miners and workers in iron and steel came from Eastern Europe (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Greece and the Ukraine), but Polish ones also benefited from the special agreements existing between the Belgian and Polish governments. As in the Italian case, some of the Eastern European immigrants were exiles and refugees who had previously passed through the Ruhr basin. Some were passing through the port of Antwerp on the way to America. The first Polish community was well structured and subject to social and paternalistic control both by mining entrepreneurs and by some cultural organizations intent on maintaining national traditions. The Poles, like the Italians, sometimes suffered bad press and a part of Belgian society certainly had a negative opinion of them: migrants from Eastern Europe generally were sometimes denigrated as 'dirty Polish'. During the post-World War II, however, many 'dirty Polish' participated in the rebuilding of the Belgian economic. An influx of political refugees between 1947 and 1949 saw the number of Eastern Europeans in Belgium surge to nearly 23,000. They represented a third community of coalminers, after locals and Italians. During the Cold War, they refused repatriation to their Soviet-controlled home countries. Belgium became a long-term host country for many, and an important transit point for many others leaving Europe for North America.<sup>10</sup> In the second half of the 1950s, Eastern exiles helped to substitute for Italian miners: for example, almost 2000 Hungarians fled to Belgium after the failed nationalist uprising of 1956, a section of whom stayed on in the Belgian coalmines.

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<sup>10</sup> On the policies concerning migrants which were adopted in Western Europe during the Cold War, see Venturas 2015.

## Economic Decline and the Integration of Non-European Migrants

In the 1960s, the Belgian economy was in full swing and needed plenty of strong hands to work in the coalmines, textile factories, steel and construction industries, and other sectors. European workers alone could not fulfil its needs, so non-Europeans were called on to fill the void. In 1964, Belgium signed new labour treaties with Morocco and Turkey.<sup>11</sup> New agreements were also made with Tunisia in 1969 and Algeria in 1970. The first major hurdle for the integration of non-European workers was the economic recession of 1967. When some new immigrants could not find a job or were so badly under-paid that it made little difference, their poor standard of living damaged their prospects for proper integration. The situation deteriorated further with the oil shock of autumn 1973 and subsequent soaring unemployment. The persistently high unemployment rates of the 1970s prompted the EEC countries to gradually retreat behind protectionist policies deterring immigration from non-EEC countries: new Belgian migration policies were characterized by creeping prohibition of the issuing of work permits to foreigners. On 1st August 1974, by means of a simple decision of the cabinet, the government officially put a strict limit on the number of new immigrants allowed into the country and declared the end of non-EEC immigration based exclusively on the finding of a job: Belgium was 'open' only for students or for people with professional skills that were not available in the country. There were some exceptions to the rule for certain categories of specialised workers, however, such as the Polish mechanics who were highly valued by Belgian enterprises. The door was firmly shut to all low skilled workers who were not directly requested by the Belgian labour market. Normally, Belgian employers could not hire workers (blue collar or white collar) who did not have Belgian nationality or who were not EEC

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<sup>11</sup> On Moroccan and Turkish migration to Belgium see, besides the references in the following notes, Manço and Manço 1992; Surkyn and Reniers 1997; Manço 2000; Lievens 2000; Kagné and Martiniello 2001; Fargues 2004, pp. 1359–1360; Bayar et al. 2004; Bousetta and Martiniello 2004; Khoojinian 2006; Akgunduz 2008; Gubert and Nordman 2009, p. 477; Schoumaker and Schoonvaere 2012. On migrants coming to the EEC/EU from Mediterranean areas in the last decades of the twentieth century, see Comte 2015.

nationals unless they previously obtained the authorization for hire from the competent minister. Despite these formalities, however, Belgian public authorities took no decisive or efficient measures to curb the current of illegal immigration. This wave increased because of the economic crisis (which most seriously affected those African and Asian countries already short of oil). The number of clandestine migrants in Belgian society spiralled upwards: applying restrictive government policies was in fact very difficult because it had to overcome the protective shield thrown up around illegal migrants by their regularized relatives and friends (Leman 1995, 1997).

The oil crisis showed that 'the effects of economic downturns on migration are complex and hard to predict' (Castles and Miller 2009, p. 230). Beyond its predictable effect on immigration rates, the implications of the slump for the social standing of migrants were extremely serious. There was a marked increase in discrimination and xenophobia, intensified labour market competition between native and migrant workers and heightened protectionism around local workers. Most immigrants shared the sociological profile of the workers who were most vulnerable during recessions. Low-skilled, generally working in the most exposed positions in the most exposed industries and services, they were often the first to pay for the damage. This was the case in the 1970s and in the 2010s.

Immigrants who arrived during the downturn were not granted regular work permits and were in direct competition with low-skilled Belgian workers. They were viewed less preferentially than previous migrants (especially Italians), and they were also looked on less favourably than the sons of the previous generation (including those who had not flourished in the Belgian education system). This second-generation had voting rights and were afforded protection by the Belgian government. Politically, it was essential to control new migratory flows because they had the potential to provoke dissatisfaction in the Belgian electorate. There was a fear that rapid changes in the political environment could lead to the rise of new right-wing nationalist movements. At the same time, naturalized migrants who were now Belgian citizens were elected to the national parliament and to local institutions: this section of the electorate grew in size and significance and leaned towards the socialist movement.

In 1974, there were an estimated 87,000 irregular migrants residing in Belgium. They organized themselves in a collective movement and, during the summer 1974, campaigned for full legalization. Many of them were jobless, but some worked in construction and cleaning, collaborating in the development of the Belgian economy alongside the pre-crisis arrivals. The unemployed stressed their desire to work and the difficulty of finding jobs while irregular and without a permit. Protests, including a hunger strike in a church welcoming irregular migrants, continued for several days. The police entered the church and broke up the resistance. The problem could no longer be ignored, however, and the onus was now firmly on the government and the courts to play a more active role in designing new migration policies, including guidelines for employers who would have to clearly indicate the professional skills they required of migrant workers. The exploitation of low-skilled irregular immigrants would be consigned to the past (theoretically at least). A concurrent effort was made to regularize the position of foreigners who were living in Belgium illegally. In 1975, no fewer than 9000 previously irregular foreigners were granted residence permits. This “amnesty” revealed that the majority of illegal migrants were located in the two largest Belgian cities, Brussels and Antwerp. In Brussels, five municipalities were home to high concentrations of Muslims and to the attendant mosques and prayer rooms.

The first migrant wave from Turkey and Morocco consisted predominantly of workers who were recruited in their country of origin. Gradually, family members and relatives who had initially stayed behind followed the early pioneers. With an increasing number of Turkish and Moroccan youngsters growing up in Belgium, the demand for partners from the home country gave rise to an influx of brides and grooms. The majority of Turkish migrants originated from a cluster of central Anatolian provinces, especially Afyon, Eskisehir and Kayseri. This first generation of Turks usually had rural backgrounds. Almost one-third of them were from Emirdag, in Afyon. Contrary to some other immigrant groups (such as the Italians and Moroccans), Turks settled widely in urban Belgium. They were not confined to Brussel and Antwerp and were particularly prominent in Ghent and Limburg. The Turkish community in Belgium was in itself composed of persons of diverse ethnic, religious and

cultural backgrounds, including Kurds, Christians, Sunnis and Alevis. Moroccans, for their part, were actively encouraged to emigrate by the Moroccan government, whose policies closely resembled those of Italian post-World War II. Starting in 1968, Morocco's five-year economic development plans included the goal of maximising labour emigration to relieve high domestic unemployment levels. The Moroccan government very deliberately contributed to creating a strong 'culture of emigration' among large sectors of the population.

The religious profile of the migrant waves of the 1960s and 1970s left Belgian public authorities with no choice but to pay serious attention to the effects of the encounter between different faiths. European countries encountered Islam in a variety of ways as large numbers of Muslim migrants came to the continent for the first time (Dassetto 2001, p. 100): for Belgian society, the experience was a largely positive one because Muslim migrants (who were concentrated in urban areas) were discrete in their religious practice. On 19th July 1974, Islam was recognized in law as an official religion in Belgium. This decision, enacted just before the planned visit of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia to Belgium, was a gesture to oil-exporting countries (Blaise and de Coorebyter 1997). Even though most Belgian-Muslims were of Moroccan or Turkish origin (these two communities comprised the great bulk of labour migration from non-EEC countries), the first diplomatic talks on the Islamic presence in Belgium were conducted with Saudi Arabia because, while the oil price was increasing of 400 per cent, it evidently became very important to satisfy the wishes of the world largest oil producer. The Turkish and Moroccan embassies went on to play a central role in the institutionalisation of Islam in Belgium, however.

The EEC inaugurated a new policy towards external in the mid-1970s: France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany were among those countries that engaged in a bartering process with Islamic states. They wanted to promote integration, not as worthy in itself, but as a bargaining tool for better industrial and commercial relations with Islamic countries. Borders would be closed but they would be less tightly shut to migrants from certain non-EEC countries than they would be to others. So, while Belgium and its EEC partners ceased formal recruitment, migrants from non-EEC countries continued to arrive from outside the EEC: Belgium took in an

average of 6500 migrants per year from 1973 to 1995, the Netherlands an average of 18,000 and Germany an average of 4000 (Natter 2014, p. 18).

The recession, and in particular the crisis in the coal industry, led to high rates of unemployment in Belgium, and non-EEC workers were not immune to this problem. Turkish miners found it particularly difficult to adapt to the altered labour market landscape after the mines closed down because they did not speak sufficient Flemish or French to perform many other jobs (Ouali 2003). Despite drastically reduced job openings and the newly restrictive immigration policies, however, immigration did not grind to a complete halt. Moroccan and Turkish workers remained in Belgium and their ranks were continually supplemented by compatriots entering the country for the purposes of family reunification and family formation.

The government clampdown did not prohibit family reunion among non-EEC-immigrants, partly because it was considered as a means of combating demographic problems in Wallonia, where the native population was ageing dramatically. Migration flows to Belgium from other EEC countries, especially neighbouring states, represented an alternative solution: neighbouring countries and the UK had accounted for 24% of immigration to Belgium in the period 1962–1966 (that is before the economic recession) and 36% during the period 1967–1982 (that is the period encompassing the end of the ‘golden age’ and the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979) (Grimeau 1993, p. 119).

From 1977, several groups including both Belgians and immigrants campaigned vociferously for clarification and strengthening of the legal status of foreign workers and for the enfranchisement of non-nationals at the local level. In 1979, the lobbying influenced a centre-left-wing government to promise initiatives on both issues. Due to political instability and technical difficulties the local franchise was not extended to foreign residents, but a more streamlined legal framework on immigration and the residential status of foreign citizens was introduced in 1980 (Jacobs 1998). In the following years, Belgian public authorities facilitated the development of appropriate infrastructure and socialization processes to reflect the growing number of migrants in the country.

Furthermore, during the second half of the 1970s and through the 1980s, the nature of the political debate on immigration matured and new approaches to integration emerged. From the early 1980s, a new

migration cycle became evident: 'the phase of the fragile migrations' featured six different types of migration, namely family reunification, refugees, legal labour migration, economic migration, illegal immigration and legal migration of undocumented migrants (Dassetto 2001, p. 27). Family reunification took two forms: 'primary' family reunification consisted of Moroccan women and children joining the predominantly male migrant workers; 'secondary' family reunification happened when the children of Moroccan migrants in Europe married people living in their parents' country of origin. While primary family reunification was largely completed by the end of the 1980s, secondary family reunification became an important channel for continued migration from countries such as Morocco during the 1990s.

In the 1990s, in a global economic and political context strongly modified by the fall of the USSR and the birth and enlargement of the European Union, the Belgian government was obliged to use new methods to identify an ever-increasing number of irregular migrants. The apex of this process was the promulgation of the Royal Decrees of 1998: they required all employers to hold a workforce register at the work place and it had to be available for inspection by the monitoring authorities (Heirman 2000, p. 145). So, during the last decade of the twentieth century, the Labour and Social Inspectorate increased its efforts to combat illegal and undeclared work by foreigners: for example, every month in each judicial district the Inspectorate organized a systematic and coordinated control action of 'temporary employment' and in so-called 'critical sectors' such as exotic food services, hotels, agriculture, horticulture, cleaning, building, the garments industry and prostitution.

## **Increasing Irregular Migration in the Late Twentieth Century**

Confronted with further and tighter restrictions, non-EEC migrants concentrated on settlement and family migration and started to resort to irregular entry channels. This was a European-wide pattern: for example, between 1981 and 2012, about 445,000 Moroccans were reg-

ularized in France, Belgium, Italy and Spain. This figure highlights the level of irregular migration that had been occurring. Its Belgian dimension was only fully revealed when the government regularized all foreigners who met certain conditions regarding employment and residence (Belguendouz et al. 2013). Regularization is an important pathway out of irregular status, offering the opportunity to irregular migrants to obtain legal residence and work standing. Nonetheless, there is a chance that the number of undocumented migrants may increase again (Triandafyllidou 2010, p. 12). This will be dictated by how the public authorities manage legal and undocumented immigration. While it is difficult to compile a precise list of all the different occupations practised by undocumented immigrants, information from regularization programmes shows a far wider range of sectors than might be expected (Delaunay and Tapinos 1998).

A study of six OECD countries has identified the main sectors involved: agriculture; construction and civil engineering; small-scale industry; tourism, hotels and catering; services to households and to business, including computer services (OECD 2000, p. 65). Despite the declining share of agriculture and industry in the gross domestic product of most industrialized countries, illegal immigrants have become very much involved in the services sector where their presence has coincided with a rise in total employment. In countries such as France and Italy, undocumented skilled foreigners find work in science and language teaching, though usually at much lower rates of pay than for nationals. Seasonal tourism, and retail trading and catering, where long hours are expected, are other sources of employment. The growth in services to businesses (such as equipment maintenance and servicing, and caretaking) and services to households (such as child minding and other domestic services) has also been favourable to undocumented workers.

From 1992 to 2001, about 430,000 Moroccans living in Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway were granted nationality by an EU Member State. For Moroccan and Turkish migrants, however, their working conditions often remained the worst in the Belgian labour market. They were disproportionately represented in precarious



low-wage sectors. They were dramatically under-represented in higher paid occupations, especially the Turks, who increasingly found themselves in competition with Sub-Saharan African migrants. Only Turkish hauliers bucked this trend. In the late twentieth century, then, Turks and Moroccans were largely confined to blue-collar positions. Unsurprisingly for Islamic communities, the participation rate of female Turks and Moroccans in the labour market was lower than that of their male compatriots. It is also interesting to note that there were no significant differences between foreigners and Belgian nationals in regard to self-employment, except for Turkish and Moroccan migrants who did not show any widespread inclination to engage in entrepreneurial activities in an effort to improve their labour market position. The higher unemployment rates endured by these migrants were not caused just by shortfalls in educational attainment or professional skills. As argued in a study commissioned by the ILO at the end of the 1990s (the findings of which were confirmed by recent research on ethnic discrimination in the Brussels market labour), non-native Belgians had to contend with ethnic prejudices (Billiet et al. 1990; Arryn et al. 1998; Eurwork 2007, that is the study commissioned by the ILO). Their employment contracts were more likely to be temporary and they were unlikely to find work in the public sector. The first generation of migrants faced formal barriers and recruitment practices favouring Belgian nationals when it came to statutory civil service positions, but there was no such justification for the passing over of subsequent generations who were themselves Belgian nationals.

Discrimination against non-EEC migrants occurred in all European countries but it did not reduce inward migration. For example, by 1998, the number of people of Moroccan descent residing in the main European destination countries had risen to 1.6 million. Return migration among Moroccans has remained relatively limited compared to other immigrant groups in Europe. Analysis of available migration data from Northern and Western European destination countries suggests that about 25% of Moroccans who migrated between 1981 and 2009 returned to Morocco, although the rate fluctuated with the business cycle in Europe. This low rate of return corresponds with a high rate of naturalization (Nys and

Beauchesne 1992; de Haas 2007; IOM 2008). Since the turn of the century, more migrants have been coming from other countries. Nigerians, for instance, have experienced some of the same problems encountered by Italians during the twentieth century while displaying the same inclinations to maintain a connection with their home country, through food for example (Chinyere Duru 2017).

In the Belgian case, most discrimination was directed against members of the Moroccan and Turkish communities, which were the two largest non-EEC contingents. These were also the communities which had the most transformative impact on Belgian society in the late twentieth century. They accounted for 60% of foreigners who became Belgian nationals during this period. Between 1995 and 2000, of 202,786 new Belgian citizens, 36% were from Morocco and 24% from Turkey. Only 6% were from Italy.<sup>12</sup>

Continuing discrimination meant that second and third generation Moroccans, Turks, Italians and others, who were Belgian citizens, had more difficult to fully participate in Belgian society: when the migrants' children obtained negative results in the education process in Belgian schools, their consequent poor educational attainment and high unemployment easily led some into criminality. This provoked elements of Belgian public to unjustly equate immigrants with illegality (when the numbers involved were actually very small). Such disadvantages and negative experiences deprived the affected parties of the possibility of fully identifying with their parents and of inheriting a familial and collective memory. Receiving contradictory instructions from their parents and from society ('be successful but be faithful to our traditions'; 'be integrated but remember you are an immigrant'), they sometimes found it difficult to escape from social processes that assigned them a devalued identity of difference and were obliged to construct new forms of identity. For some young adults born in the 1980s and in 1990s and struggling to integrate fully in Belgian society, the lure of radical Islam proved strong where before it had no Belgian followers.

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<sup>12</sup>About the emigration to Belgium during the last years of the twentieth century and in the early new Millennium see Tables 4.1 and 4.2 in Appendix. See also Grimeau 1991; Poulain and Perrin 2002; Feld 2010; Direction 2010.

To better evaluate the influence of these phenomena, it is necessary to consider the role of the Muslim community in Belgian society. At the end of the twentieth century, more than 5% of Belgian citizens were Muslim. In Brussels, that figure was 20%. It reached approximately 33% in Molenbeek, where Muslims replaced Italians as the dominant immigrant group, and more than 40% in Saint-Josse, one of Belgium's poorest municipalities (Renaudin 2016). Other statistics show lower percentages but they clearly illustrate why it is so important to promote and realize the full integration of Belgium's Muslims. Because national statistics did not (and still do not) include any information on the religious affiliation of the population, it was (and remains) extremely difficult to accurately calculate the number of Muslims living in Belgium. Some estimates put the Muslim population at between 350,000 and 370,000, corresponding more or less to 4% of the Belgian population (Martens and Caestecker 2001, p. 100). These figures included between 6000 and 30,000 converts from Belgium or other European countries. In Brussels, five communes or municipalities had (and continue to have) a very high concentration of Muslims and associated manifestations, including mosques and prayer rooms. In the early 2000s, the Muslim population of Brussels was estimated at 160,000, representing 39% of all Muslims in the country and nearly 17% of the total population of the city. This makes Brussels 'one of the most Muslim cities in the Western world' (Kanmaz and Mançon 2004).

Data recorded by the National Statistics Institute on the countries of origin of the population of Brussels and the correlation with states where Islam is the dominant religion, confirm that this population is highly concentrated in certain city centre neighbourhoods where accommodation is cheaper and more readily available and where average incomes per tax declaration were lower than the regional average. This concentration of the Muslim population in and around Brussels is due to the historical character of migration as a search for work. Immigrants settled in or near their original place of work (particularly those employed in the construction industry) or re-located during the economic recession of the 1970s. Either way, a very large majority of Muslim families belonged to categories of the population whose precarious socio-economic conditions prevented any possibility of residential mobility.

Consequently, they stayed in the same neighbourhoods, even when jobs were no longer plentiful in the areas where they had initially settled. The economic recession of the 1970s, and the increasingly precarious economic conditions that followed, further limited the possibilities of social and spatial mobility, thereby consolidating the presence of Muslim families in these neighbourhoods.

## Conclusion

The Kingdom of Belgium received immigrants throughout the twentieth century, as did most North-Western European countries. Migrants were vital to Belgian economic development because they guaranteed the availability of the labour that was fundamental to Belgian coalmines and industry. In some cases, migrants were economically and socially full integrated; in other cases, barriers to integration created wider problems.

The experience of Italian migrants was generally positive: some of the sons and grandsons of Italian miners (or bricklayers or industrial workers) became successful entrepreneurs and trade union or political leaders. The policies of the ECSC and EEC facilitated the movement of communities of migrants and the integration of Italians. Not every migrant group benefitted in the same way, however. Moroccan migrants had more difficulty in integrating and second and third generation Moroccans did not enjoy upward social mobility but remained in the same low paid jobs as their parents, working as manual labourers, dustbin men or maids. For other Islamic communities, such as the Turks, these problems were accentuated by their lack of knowledge of the French language and so they rarely obtained high paid jobs. Their integration was also hindered by the absence of the welfare protections afforded to EEC migrants. There were a number of bilateral agreements in place between Belgium and other states but the first oil crisis was followed by the introduction of strict quotas for the number of unskilled immigrants to be accepted into the country. This led to a rise in the number of illegal immigrants, and they struggled to find work and accommodation, not to mention improving their quality of life. While the Moroccan and Turkish communities

certainly left their mark on the last fifty years of Belgian social, economic and cultural history, they had less influence on the evolution of Belgian society than the members of other immigrant communities, especially the Italians.

The challenges presented by successive waves of job-seeking migrants were not always successfully met by Belgian state policy, or by other European governments in a similar situation. During the 1970s and 1980s, for example, when the number of illegal migrants soared, the authorities were unable to control the impact on the labour market and on Belgian society. Instead of innovating in the area of labour policy, the state abandoned migrants to the mercy of the market and to the laws of supply and demand. Inevitably, the vulnerable endured exploitation. As their perspectives of real and meaningful economic and social integration were diluted, their quality of life suffered. Migrants were the clear losers. The winners were the manufacturers and service providers who paid low wages and obtained competitive advantages through illicit practices.

## Appendix: Statistics on Migrants in Belgium (End Nineteenth–Early Twenty-First Century)

**Table 4.1** Foreign nationals resident in Belgium, 2006–2008

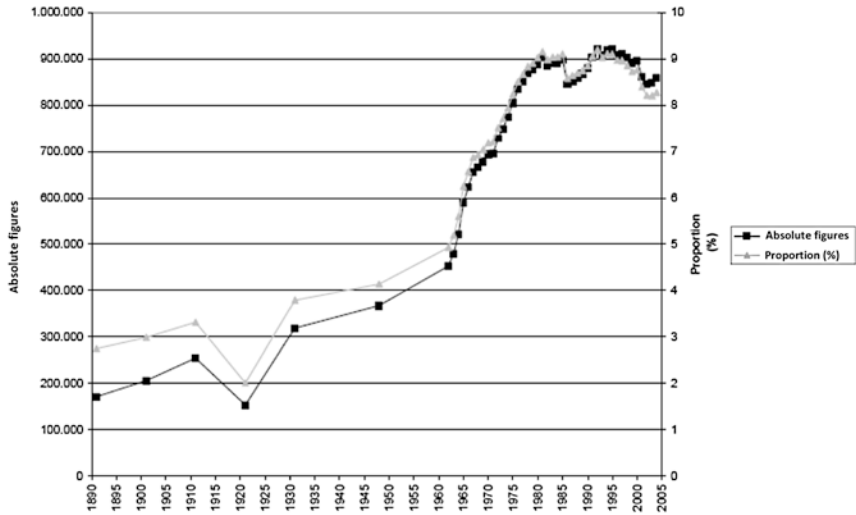
	2006	2007	2008
Italy (I)	171,918	169,027	166,956
France (F)	125,061	130,568	136,939
The Netherlands (NL)	116,970	123,454	130,230
Morocco (MA)	80,579	79,858	79,426
Spain (E)	42,765	42,705	43,629
Turkey (TR)	39,419	39,532	39,564
Others	355,449	386,304	416,516
Total foreigners	932,161	971,448	1,013,260
(EU)	(617,250)	(658,589)	(691,115)
(Non-EU)	(314,911)	(312,859)	(322,145)

Source: Statbel [2010](#), p. 8

Table 4.2 Foreign nationals resident in Belgium, 1997–2006

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
I	205,782	202,645	200,281	195,792	190,792	187,021	183,021	179,015	175,498	171,918
F	103,563	105,113	107,240	109,322	111,146	113,037	114,943	117,349	120,600	125,061
NL	82,300	84,213	85,763	88,813	92,561	96,643	100,700	104,978	110,492	116,970
MA	132,831	125,082	121,984	106,822	90,642	83,631	81,763	81,279	80,602	80,579
E	47,415	46,635	45,917	43,356	44,958	44,460	43,802	43,200	42,907	42,765
TR	73,818	70,701	69,183	56,172	45,866	42,562	41,336	39,885	39,664	39,419
Others	257,411	257,571	266,742	261,408	270,769	282,723	294,722	305,156	330,710	355,449
Total	903,120	891,960	897,110	861,685	846,734	850,077	860,287	870,862	900,473	932,161

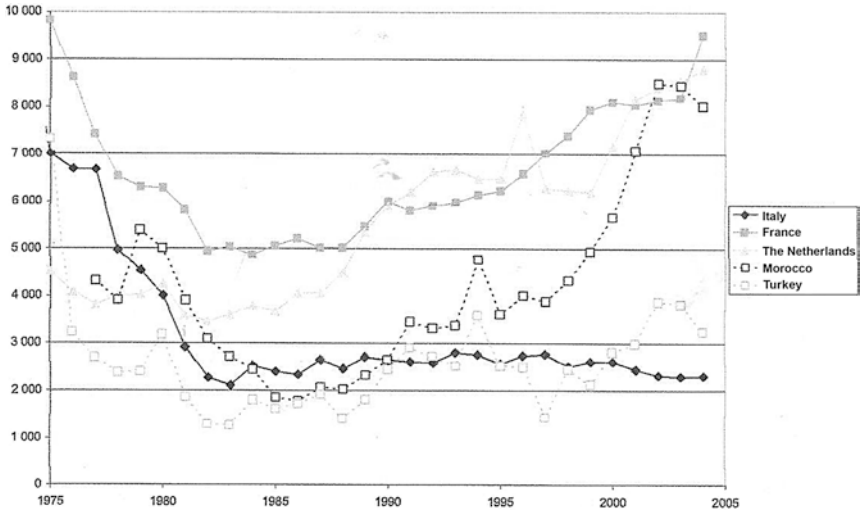
Source: Statbel 2010, p. 41



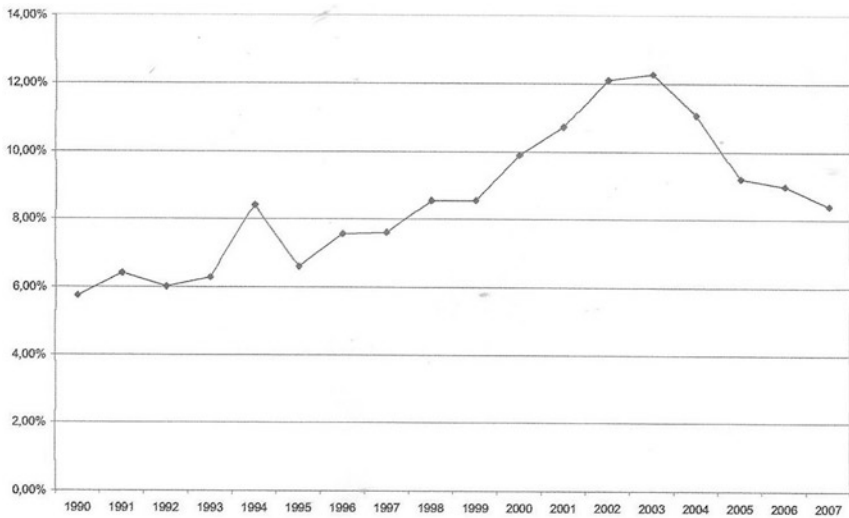
Graph 4.1 Foreign population in Belgium: major trends 1890–2005. Source: Fondation 2008, p. 11



Graph 4.2 Migrants in Belgium, 1949–2004. Source: Fondation 2008, p. 11

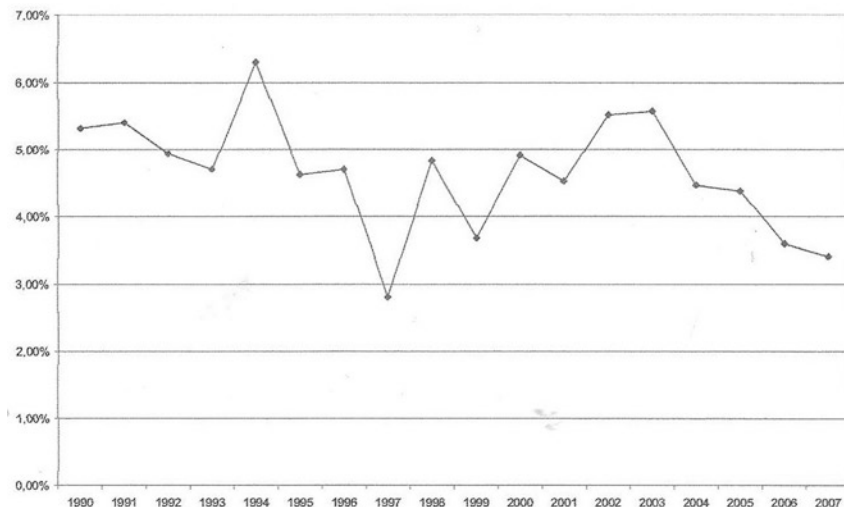


**Graph 4.3** Development of main immigration flows, 1975–2004. Source: Registre national/SPF Economie, direction statistiques et informations économiques, quoted in Perrin, 2006, p. 7



**Graph 4.4** Share of Moroccans among immigrants to Belgium, 1990–2007 (excluding asylum seeker and refugees). Source: RN/Service Public Federal Economie DGSIE, quoted in Groupe, 2008, p. 39





**Graph 4.5** Share of Turks among immigrants to Belgium, 1990–2007 (excluding asylum seeker and refugees). Source: RN/SPF Economie DGSIE, quoted in Groupe, 2008, p. 37

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# 5

## Entrepreneurship and Immigrant Business Groups in the Italian Labour Market

Donatella Strangio

**Abstract** The analysis of the characteristics of immigrant businesses, their spatial location and the unique dynamics of this increasingly important component of Italian trade, is essential in order to fully exploit the potential synergies created by the proliferation of entrepreneurial foreign nationals.

This paper aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on the relationships between migration and economic development, and migration and entrepreneurs. Integrating sources of official data will illuminate the Italian experience over the last fifteen years.

**Keywords** Entrepreneurship • Immigrant • Business • Labour Market • Social Policy

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## Introduction: Topics and Aim

The topic of immigrant entrepreneurship is receiving increased attention in the context of the most developed economies because of the associated commercial and social opportunities. Unlike the political debate, which primarily frames the migration issue in terms of safety and assimilation, the academic debate focuses instead on the potential fiscal and societal benefits of harnessing the cultural strengths of the immigrant population for the common good (Castles 2010). From this perspective, analysis of the characteristics of immigrant businesses, their spatial location and the unique dynamics of this increasingly important component of Italian trade, is essential in order to fully exploit the potential synergies created by the proliferation of entrepreneurial foreign nationals. This approach remains in its infancy in Italy and has focused on the evolution of legislation on self-employment among the immigrant population: This sector of the labour market was totally informal and unregulated until 1990, when the Turco-Napolitano law extended the right to exercise self-employment to all foreign nationals legally residing in Italian territory (Regini 2007). Fostering the integration of immigrants into a host society is a complex process, dependent on variables including cohesion and composition, and one which is difficult to predict and manage (Ambrosini 2006). Migration networks routinely facilitate the entry of their members into the labour market, but this often involves low-skilled positions which they control. These networks can vary enormously, however: scholarship on ethnic entrepreneurship typically examines the economic interactions within a particular area of relatively new settlement. It also looks at the dynamics, such as social capital, that are brought into an area by immigrants (e.g. Light 2004; Martini 2016). Maintaining forms of belonging and a distinct ethnic identity seems to depend on implementing the networks' practices and is important in meeting migrants' needs (Thomas 1997 [1921]).

The fact that large-scale international migration usually involves poorly qualified people means that the process of integration is automatically undermined and this in turn may lead to widening regional and national

inequalities in areas of settlement.<sup>1</sup> Human capital is badly affected and development suffers. This paper aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on the relationships between migration and economic development, and migration and entrepreneurs. Integrating sources of official data will illuminate the Italian experience over the last fifteen years.

## Background: Social and Economic Context

Immigration has long been an important component in the social and demographic dynamics of the country. In recent years, it has been a particularly significant factor in the rate of population growth (Istat 2015). Since the early 1970s, the number of immigrants has consistently exceeded the number of emigrants. But the rate of this excess increased markedly after the turn of the century. Immigration figures, mostly relating to foreign citizens, escalated dramatically between 2002 and 2011. In this period, more than 3.9 million people immigrated, of whom 3.5 million had foreign citizenship. In absolute terms, the majority of arrivals were Romanian (943,000, or one in four immigrants). Among the other major nations of origin were Albania (278,000), Morocco (258,000), Ukraine (215,000) and China (150,000).

The Romanian immigrant flows are exceptional (over 89,000 in 2011—see Bonifazi et al. 2016, p. 181). Post-2007, the ‘entry effect’ of Romania (and Bulgaria) joining the European Union has seen the registration of a large number of births to immigrants (Idos 2015, p. 261).

The language employed in discussing this subject is, of course, critical. American literature has influenced European art and these issues are nuanced and evolving. The scale and nature of business must also be taken into account. In our case, we employ the term ‘ethnic entrepreneurship’ to refer to independent businesses run by immigrants.

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<sup>1</sup> International migration presents the human face of globalization, with consequences that make headlines throughout the world. *The Cross-Border Connection* addresses a paradox at the core of this phenomenon: emigrants departing one society become immigrants in another, tying those two societies together in a variety of ways. In nontechnical language, Roger Waldinger explains how interconnections between place of origin and destination are built and maintained and why they eventually fall apart (Waldinger 2015). See also Portes (2003).

‘Entrepreneur’ is not applied here in the classic Schumpeterian sense.<sup>2</sup> It is not germane to the new entrepreneurs from abroad for a number of reasons. Innovation or creativity do not even exist in some cases; (A) sometimes immigrants who run a company do not enjoy sufficient autonomy, meaning they depend on other subjects; (B) some immigrant-run companies undertake activities which occupy market niches but do not display entrepreneurial spirit and are limited by their marginality. The majority of immigrant entrepreneurship in Italy involves small or very small firms (micro-enterprises).<sup>3</sup>

After 2000, migration flows became increasingly heterogeneous. The individuals and groups that comprised migrant populations had increasingly disparate backgrounds and needs. This further complicated their entry into host societies, their reception and, subsequently, their experience of the process of integration.

In general terms, we can divide the flows into: (a) forced migration: the migrations of refugees who flee from conditions of war and famine, to whom European countries are required to give adequate protection (*asylum*) by recognition of the status of ‘political refugee’ and the implementation of effective paths of humanitarian protection; (b) economic migration (also called ‘migration for legitimate interest’): the migration of

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<sup>2</sup>Schumpeter (1934, 1954), considers the entrepreneur as the engine of growth; the key is innovation, i.e. new products, new production methods, new markets, new sources of raw materials or semi-finished goods, or a new form of organization involving the creation of a monopoly or the collapse of a previous monopoly position. Innovation means change and imbalance. Baumol (1993) wrote that ‘The entrepreneur is simultaneously the most intriguing and one of the most elusive between the characters that make up the subject of economic analysis’. Knight Frank (1965) write that ‘the ability to cope with difficult and uncertain situations is one of the attributes normally accorded to the entrepreneurial function as well as a common topic that is considered a demonstration of leadership skills: the ability to organize and coordinate the factors of production and distribution’. Chandler Alfred (1962), states that the task of an entrepreneur is the creation of a managerial hierarchy. This network is essential for the proper functioning of big business, and in turn an indispensable instrument for growth and economic competitiveness in the age of the second industrial revolution. See Amatori Franco (2008, pp. 505–543) for further studies.

<sup>3</sup>The interpretations regarding the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship in general are also enriched by the relationship between the entrepreneur and the environment; in this context the economic success achieved by migrant ethnic minorities emerges (Godley 2006; Cassis and Minolglou 2005). Many of the advantages enjoyed by ethnic groups have their roots in the special relationship that these emigrants have with their homeland. A recurring finding is the lack of entrepreneurial spirit among the inhabitants of the destination country. Ethnic minorities become entrepreneurial because they can enjoy insider benefits and share their knowledge and economic solidarity with other members of the group.

those who usually move in search of economic improvement or for other legitimate reasons (study, medical care, reunions, and so on). These migrations are regulated by the ‘flow-decree’ in Italian legislation.

Recently, the European Union has become interested in immigrant entrepreneurship and the European Commission has brought small- and medium-size enterprises to the centre of its political agenda. These are the businesses that have been most affected by the economic crisis of the last decade, and the Commission is now promoting the exchange of information on best practices and systematic consultation between the various stakeholders. The Commission’s Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan calls for decisive action to unleash Europe’s entrepreneurial potential.

It is difficult to compare the histories of immigrant entrepreneurs around Europe, because the registration criteria are different in the various member states. In the Italian case, challenges are presented by the sheer volume of data related to issues including residence permits, social security and registrations at the Chambers of Commerce. At the EU level, Eurostat’s Labour Force Survey data highlight that in 2013 there were 30.3 million entrepreneurs and self-employed people in the 28 member states. Italy, with 4.9 million of them, topped the list and had approximately 1 million more entrepreneurs than both Germany (4 million) and the United Kingdom (3.8 million). Moreover, the incidence of self-employment in Italy stood at 82% compared with the European average of 14%. In respect of self-employment among immigrant entrepreneurs, Italy ranked fourth after the United Kingdom, Germany and Spain (see Fig. 5.1).

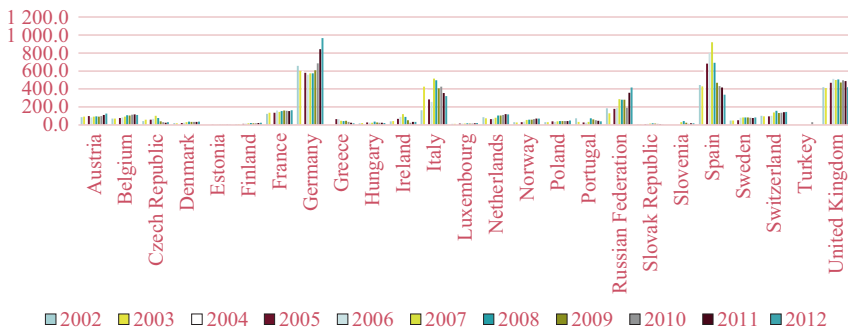


Fig. 5.1 Inflows of foreign population into selected OECD countries and the Russian Federation. Source: Idos 2015

However, Italy ranked first in the number of self-employed immigrant entrepreneurs from non-EU states. Moreover, according to this survey, Italy had fewer immigrant enterprises with employed workers than the European average (about 1 in 6 as opposed to 1 in 4).

## Research Question

On this basis, our principal questions are: What ethnic businesses are there in Italy? What types of employment contract govern work in the sector? What is the geographical distribution of migrant entrepreneurs? What is the nature of the relationship between the high number of immigrant businesses and their growing contribution to the country's productive system?

Non-EU foreigners wishing to work in Italy must get a valid residence permit, which allows for regular employment, seasonal work that might be recurring and self-employment. The number of foreigners who can enter Italy for work purposes, however, is not unlimited. Rather, it is rigidly fixed by specific decrees such as the 'flows decree' issued by the Prime Minister on the basis of information provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. It is also dictated by political imperatives, which are shaped by employment trends and the number of foreigners registered as unemployed, as well as data on the demand for labour, which is harvested by the Computerized Registry, established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The law regulates the issuance of residence permits for work by setting the conditions and requirements necessary to qualify for them, as well as the operational procedures for requesting and obtaining them.

In determining cash flow, you can also establish some preferential quotas in favour of citizens from those countries with which Italy has concluded specific bilateral agreements on the regulation of entry flows. For workers of Italian origin who are resident in non-EU countries, provisions can be made on the basis of strictly-defined links to relatives living in Italy.

The recent Decree Law 145/2013, converted with amendments by Law 9/20149, provides for two exceptions to the above limit on entry quotas. These exceptions cater for university researchers and highly skilled workers.

Loss of employment does not constitute grounds for withdrawing residence permits from non-EU workers and their legally resident families. Foreign workers in possession of a residence permit for employment who lose their jobs can be registered as unemployed for the period of validity of their residence permit. This even applies in the case of resignation (Website Rights and Answers: Working in Italy for foreigners, Immigration and Citizenship, 2014).

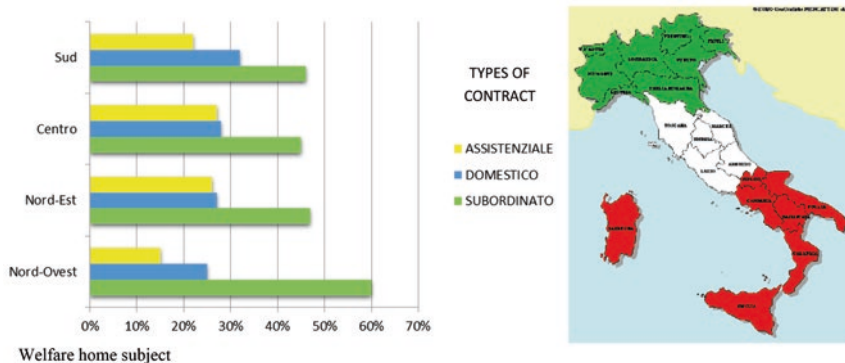
Foreigners who wish to run an industrial or commercial trade or business, or form or run a company in Italy, must also demonstrate that they have adequate resources for the activity that they intend to undertake in Italy; that they fulfil the requirements of Italian law for the exercise of individual activities, including, where required, the requirements for entry in the registers and records; and that they are in possession of an up-to-date (within three months) certificate from the competent authority declaring that there are no impediments to the authorization or permit required for the activity that they intend to conduct.

Workers from outside the European Union must still establish that they have suitable accommodation and an annual income from legitimate sources, which must be higher than the minimum required by the law for exemption from participation in healthcare.

In Italy, the characteristics of the principal types of employment contract are designed in response to the shortfall in the local supply of labour. Contracts for home care and domestic work are the most-sought after and common among foreign women residing in Italy (see Fig. 5.2).

Analysis of the prevalence of contract types reveals much about the composition of regional economies. A breakdown of job applications submitted by foreigners in Italy shows (see Fig. 5.2) that the North-West provides 36.5% of employment. The domestic sector is most important in Central Italy, at 32%, and in the North-West, at 30%. Central Italy routinely registers the most applications for assistance contracts, at 34%, followed by the North-West, at 26%. In the South, the Campania region accounts for 8%, 12% and 11% of the national total of the three respective contract types, and 45%, 54% and 58% of the southern total. Sicily and Calabria record much lower percentages. The percentage distribution is the result of several factors: the high rate of applications for employment in the North is mainly accounted for by the demand for work in small





**Fig. 5.2** Type of contract % by region (2013), yellow: care work; blue: housework; green: employment. Source: Data processing from Istat report Market of foreign workers, 2013

and medium-sized enterprises that offer stable work, often requiring low qualifications; for domestic work and care, the most significant data are those for metropolitan areas such as Rome and Milan, but also Naples, where this a growth in demand for personalized services that enable female workers to enter and remain in the labour market.

The North-West appears to be Italy's most industrialized zone, with 60% of its workers employed in that category. Another 16% are engaged in domestic situations and care giving, with the remainder in a variety of other positions. The North-East's regularization figures are 47% for employment, 21% for domestic work and 21% for care work, while the pattern of distribution in Central Italy is more homogeneous, at 47% for subordinated work, 30% for domestic work and 23% for care work. The South follows the general Central trend, with 48% for employment, 32% for work and 20% for home care work. A gradual increase is therefore confirmed in domestic and care work rates, and this is also the case in the provincial labour markets. The largest groups of women come from Ukraine, Romania, Poland and Moldova. Greater numbers from South America have also been in evidence in recent years. As for employment, 18% of the total number of women in the industry are Chinese. The rates are not as high in the labour and household welfare markets. Among men, 13% of employees and 8% of domestic workers are Moroccans. In

general, the average age of men and women who migrate to Italy is 28 and 32 respectively (Zucchetti 2004; Istat 2013).

## Discussion

Italy fits neatly into the global scenario of industrialized economies requiring immigrant labour as their population ages their demographic trends spiral downwards and their supply of local workers is not enough to meet demand. However, the significant element of regularization 'of foreigners by foreigners' should be stressed. This is especially prevalent in respect of the emergence of employment, a movement that confirms more stable migration patterns and means that foreign company owners are usually long-term residents in Italy. In total, about 17% of employers in Italy are foreign, but this proportion falls to around 5% for domestic work and 1% for support activities. In fact, the real prime example of 'foreign entrepreneurs that regularize foreign workers' is offered by the Chinese (with 23,000 regularization applications, of which only 21,400 are in paid employment).

Cases of Albanian, Romanian, Moroccan and Egyptian employers are less frequent (but together with the Chinese they account for two in three foreign employers), but they conform to general trends in employment.

These data confirm the growth of foreign entrepreneurship.

The data on applications for regularization record the nationality of both worker and employer as well as the type of contract. They highlight the tendency of Chinese employers to employ Chinese workers. This is particularly the case in traditionally Chinese-dominated production niches or in territories with a well-established Chinese presence (the so-called 'Third Italy') or in the big cities. The Chinese specialize in packaging of clothing and leather goods, as well as restaurants. The other ethnic groups mentioned above are more likely to employ immigrants who do not share their nationality; this is especially true in the case of Egyptian employers, 27% of whose employees are not Egyptian; the rate falls to between 9% and 13% in the case of Albanians, Moroccans and Romanians. Some differences are also apparent in respect of the type of contracts offered to regularized workers. All of the Egyptian workers

employed by Egyptians, and 93% of Chinese workers employed by Chinese employers have submitted their applications. The vast majority of them work in sectors traditionally associated with their ethnicity, for example catering, construction and business services in the Egyptian case. At least 14% of Romanian workers employed by Romanians are regularized in the domestic sector and at least 3% in the service sector. This suggests the implementation of a strategy, organized on the basis of social networks within the community, to support employment for recent arrivals in Italy, the ultimate purpose being to facilitate regularization. The same assumption can be made in the case of Moroccan and Albanian employers, although the practice is less pronounced among these ethnicities (approximately 8–9%). This high rate of concentration, nonetheless, and field studies indicate that entrepreneurs of these nationalities play a significant role in the building trade, brokerage services and distribution and business services (Zucchetti 2004).

The data extracted from a survey carried out by Unioncamere Study Centre (Table 5.1) show that non-EU citizens owned 335,452 companies in Italy in 2014. This was an increase of 6.2% in the year since 2013. The companies are located chiefly in Lombardy (18.7%), followed by Lazio (11.4%) and Tuscany (10%).

The national distribution of immigrant businesses is as follows: the North account for slightly more than half of the total (30.4% in the North West and 21.3% in the North East), Central Italy for over a quarter (26.3%) and the South for over a fifth (22%). Regionally, Lombardy leads the way with 94,000 immigrant businesses (19% of the total). Lombardy is further distinguished by being the only region of the North-West with a positive balance between undertakings (immigrant and otherwise) recorded and deleted during 2013 (net of cancellations). Following Lombardy came Lazio (60,000, 12.2%) and Tuscany (48,000, 9.7%) and then two North-Eastern regions, namely Emilia Romagna (46,000, 9.2%) and Veneto (42,500, 8.6%). These five regions hosted almost 6 out of every 10 immigrant companies (58.7%).

Tuscany, Liguria and Friuli Venezia Giulia also stand out, however, thanks to the impact of the 10% plus of their businesses that were immigrant-owned.

**Table 5.1** Companies belonging to non-EU citizens

Italian regions	2013	2014	Var. % ↑ 2014/2013
Abruzzo	7387	7560	2.6
Basilicata	1145	1144	-0.1
Calabria	9199	9875	7.3
Campania	22,852	25,825	13.0
Emilia-Romagna	29,908	30,665	2.5
Friuli Venezia Giulia	6508	6656	2.3
Lazio	33,666	38,206	13.5
Liguria	12,324	13,019	5.6
Lombardia	58,827	62,744	6.7
Marche	9393	9535	1.5
Molise	1064	1066	0.2
Piemonte	22,243	22,732	2.2
Puglia	11,151	11,699	4.9
Sardegna	6322	6720	6.3
Sicilia	17,351	18,556	6.9
Toscana	32,419	33,592	3.6
Trentino Alto Adige	3392	3412	0.6
Umbria	4238	4457	5.2
Valle D'Aosta	372	381	2.4
Veneto	26,130	27,588	5.6
Total	315,891	335,452	6.2

Sources: Data from UnionCamere

Immigrant-run business had the greatest effect on local production in the provinces of Prato (24.4%), Florence (14.1%) and Trieste (13.7%). They are the provincial context in which immigrant-run companies appreciably affect local production (in Rome and in Milan the impact was 11% and 11.8% respectively). A closer examination of Italy shows that Prato is the Italian province with the high percentage of foreign companies, exceeding Milan and Florence, with almost 40% of companies. Prato has considerable foreign presence, equal to 6718 firms (39.89% of the total firms in the area). Next to Prato was Milan (27,804), then Florence (10,210), Reggio Emilia and Rome. Only 1.67% of the companies in the province of Enna were foreign-directed. While Chinese enterprises dominated the manufacturing sector, Albanian entrepreneurs were a formidable presence in construction. In business, however, the figure of 47,277 Moroccan companies dwarfed their nearest competitor, the Chinese with 19,294 (Research Center Idos 2014).

In the North-East, where in 2013 only Trentino Alto Adige had a positive balance for business overall, the negative effects of the crisis (2007–2008) on the extensive network of local SMEs are particularly evident. The smallest enterprises suffered the most especially those active in subcontracting, the less specialized and those less open to foreign markets. Another phenomenon in Trentino Alto Adige, however, and which ran parallel to the decrease in the number of Italian-run companies (−1.4% in 2013), was the 2.9% rise in the number of immigrant-run businesses at a time of growing difficulties in manufacturing and building. A similar contraction in the number of Italian-managed firms (−1.2%) and expansion in foreign-run companies (+3.3%) occurred in the North-West.

The most positive general trend was identified in Central Italy—and in Lazio in particular—and in the South, especially in Campania. In both cases, the stagnation in the volume of businesses run by Italians (+0.3% in the Centre and +0.7% in the South in 2013) was accompanied by a sharp jump in the number of immigrant-run businesses (+5.4% and +5.5%). The situation in the Islands was more problematic (−1% in 2013 for Italian-run businesses and +3.3% for their immigrant-run equivalents) (Research Center Idos 2014).

Although often referred to as ‘ethnic’ firms, the products and services they offer are dedicated largely to Italian customers, although they do not ignore the needs of immigrant communities, as evidenced not only by popularity of specialty shops of countries of origin, but also by specific service companies. For example, there are many small publishing companies offering ‘ethnic’ newspapers, legal aid and bureaucratic services assisting with documentation processes, and social services such as nurseries, as well as travel agencies, call centers and so on. Their contribution to the craft sector is also significant, where many trades no longer practiced widely by Italians assume ‘protected’ status when immigrants take over. A large majority of non-EU workers in Italy are involved in one of these activities (384,318 enterprises account for, 77.4% of the total). Countries of origin making a significant contribution include Morocco (61,177 enterprises, 15.3%), Romania (46,029, 11.5%), China (45,043, 11.2%), Albania (30,376, 7.6%), Bangladesh (20,705, 5.2%) and Senegal (16,894, 4.2%). The incidence of sole proprietorships has decreased in localities with relatively prosperous economies: to 71% in Trentino Alto Adige (and 66.1% in the Autonomous Province of

Bolzano), 74.7% in Lazio and 75.4% in Lombardy, 69.4% in Milan and 74% in Rome (Clumps, National Monitoring of the Financial Inclusion of Migrants in Italy, Third Report, 2014).

The acknowledged prevalence of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, typical of Italy but characterizing the entire EU framework, implies heightened vulnerability in the current context of globalization, especially in the wake of the international economic crisis. The decline of small businesses in recent years is no surprise.

Families lend support at the time of the creation and launch of a company, but can also function as a brake on expansion. Obstacles to growth further act as barriers to access to bank credit. This is a common challenge for immigrant entrepreneurs, who tend to respond mainly through self-financing and reliance on kinship networks and communities. This culture is intensified for members of ethnic communities.

Looking at the sectoral distribution of economic activity, we find the highest concentration of non-EU workers in the wholesale and retail trades and the motor vehicle repair business (44.9%), followed by the construction sector (22.3%) and manufacturing (8.5%). The sectors with the lowest participation rates were agriculture, forestry, fisheries and the extraction of minerals and quarrying.

There were a number of significant increases: in so-called unclassified companies (23.1%); in rental and travel agencies and business support services (18%); and in other service activities (10.6%); the only negative changes were in the extraction, mining, transportation and warehousing industries.

The sector offering the highest levels of recruitment to foreign workers was agriculture (35.3%), followed by construction (24.4%) and industry (20.9%). According to the 2014 SISCO survey, the non-EU states providing the most recruits were Albania with 141,140 accounts activated, China (121,133) and Morocco (119,421). The statistics allow us to enumerate the structure of labour demand for individual nationalities. Indian citizens were awarded 54.3% of agricultural contracts, 46.2% of contract in industry and commerce (excluding construction) went to Chinese nationals, Egyptian took 29.7% of construction contracts and Ghanaians had a near monopoly in the service sectors (93.8%).

The number of companies run by immigrants in Italy in 2014, based on the difference between registrations and cancellations during the year,

net of terminations of office, was 524,674. This was more than 1 company in every 12 in Italy (8.7% of the total). This rises to 1 in 8 if you limit the analysis to individually-owned companies only.

Smaller companies, the traditional protagonists of Italian business, were the most widespread form of immigrant-run company (53.9%).

More than 8 immigrant companies in every 10 (80.2% or 421,004) were sole traders and just over half of those were run by indigenous people (51.4%).

The trade and construction sectors accounted for more than half of all immigrant-owned businesses, followed by other sectors such as manufacturing and property, food and travel services.

Finally, if we divide business owners by gender (Table 5.2), females were well represented, particularly those from Ukraine (56.7%), Nigeria (46.2%) and China (45.8%), and to a lesser extent, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Albania.

**Table 5.2** Non-EU born business owners, by origin and gender

Birth place	Male (%)	Female (%)
Morocco	88.5	11.5
China	54.2	45.8
Albania	90.9	9.1
Bangladesh	94.4	5.6
Senegal	92.8	7.2
Switzerland	68.5	31.5
Egypt	94.1	5.9
Tunisia	91.4	8.6
Pakistan	94.9	5.1
Nigeria	53.8	46.2
Serbia and Montenegro	80.9	19.1
India	86.3	13.7
Brazil	62.6	37.4
Macedonia	91.6	8.4
Moldavia	71.9	28.1
Argentine	71.6	28.4
Ukraine	43.3	56.7
Algeria	94.8	5.2
Peru	70.5	29.5
Venezuela	64.2	35.8
Total	79.0	21.0

Source: UnionCamere-InfoCamere, Movimprese

The increased involvement of women was a significant factor in the rise of immigrant entrepreneurship in this period of crisis. In the last few years, the number of companies run by women of foreign origin (117,703) increased by 5.4% and at the end of 2013 accounted for almost a quarter of the total of immigrant-run businesses (23.7%). The proportion was even higher in Molise (35.6%), Basilicata (33.5%) and Abruzzo (31.5%). Rome and Milan, the two major provincial sites of immigrant businesses, were home to the businesses of 22% of all women entrepreneurs in Italy, almost 1 in 10 of whom was born abroad. In 2015, women-owned foreign businesses in Italy numbered 109,000, 6000 more than the year before (+6%) and 18,000 more than four years earlier (+20%). They employed over 200,000 people. Among the most numerous were the Chinese women (21,000), Romanians (9000), Moroccans (7000), Nigerians and Swiss (5000 each), and Germans (over 4000). The highest numbers were in Rome (10,000), Milan (8000), Turin (5000), Florence (4000), Naples and Prato (3000 each) and Brescia (over 2000). But the record for the fastest growth between 2011 and 2014 went to Reggio Calabria (from 600 to over 800; +33%), followed by Ferrara (400 to 600; +50%) and Ravenna (from 500 to over 600; +20%) (Report 2014; OECD 2014).

## Conclusions

Migration flows that bring new cheap and low-skilled labour can only be helpful, as long as the broader economic environment facilitates their arrival. Such availability of human capital can only offer important opportunities for the destination economies, as in the case of Italy, contributing to the revival of industry and SMEs. Moreover, as we have tried to highlight, in the context of the global economic crisis, which is a huge contributory factor in the advent of increased immigration to Italy (including illegal immigration), state institutions must be proactive in regulating the labour market so that it can accommodate most of this newly available labour. The important role that women are likely to play must also be reckoned with. This article has not addressed issues concern-



ing political refugees and asylum seekers, including from Syria, because that topic requires dedicated discussion.

In terms of earning power among immigrants, the most disadvantaged communities were the Ukrainian and Filipinos, because they were predominantly female and concentrated in domestic services; Filipino and Peruvian men lost out also because they did the same kind of work. The Chinese, Indian, Moroccan and Albanian communities enjoyed higher than average monthly wages.

In addition, the relative lack of innovation in the Italian economy and demographic trends (including a low birth rate) mean that there is a continuing demand for low-skilled foreign labour, which has negative effects on the quality of employment. Given that ethnic networks indirectly promote a work integration process that often requires re-specialization and the culture of immigration leads to acceptance of low-skilled jobs, it is understandable that immigrants remain entangled in a market of low-paid jobs that do not provide opportunities for upward mobility.

The recent economic crisis can only have slowed the process of integration of immigrants at the various levels of society, and this will only improve if institutions, businesses, families and states become more open to dialogue and more tolerant. The crisis led to an increase in general unemployment among Albanian immigrants, especially those employed in industry and construction, and made them rethink their migratory project. In particular, it has forced them to resume and to strengthen the transnational ties of their migratory networks, and has prompted many of them to consider returning to Albania from Italy (Conti et al. 2016).

Entrepreneur and entrepreneurship are two key words in the current debates among economic historians, economists and sociologists on the topic of economic development.

The reason for this is simple: assuming that economic development (growth) is a politically desirable objective for a local, national or super-national community, it is by now very clear that there can be no development without entrepreneurs.

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