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LEAVING OR STAYING – AN ANALYSIS OF ITALIAN GRADUATES' MIGRATORY PATTERNS

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Sociology at the University of Sussex

September 2011

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree. I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Signature.....

**Men pass away, ideas remain. Their moral tensions remain,
and those will continue to walk on other people's legs.**

**The Italian anti-mafia judge
Giovanni Falcone (1939-1992)**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	2
Abstract	7
Acknowledgements	7
CHAPTER 1	8
INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 Scoping the Topic of Italian Graduate Migration Patterns	9
1.2 Defining Italian Graduate Migration.....	13
1.3 Research Design and Methods	15
1.4 Structure of the Thesis	16
CHAPTER 2	17
THE MIGRATION OF GRADUATES: CONCEPTS AND THEMES	17
2.1 Introduction	17
2.2 Studying Graduate Migration.....	17
2.2.1 <i>Graduate Migration within and to the UK</i>	19
2.2.2 <i>Student Migration as a Preamble to Graduate Mobility</i>	20
2.2.3 <i>The Field of Skilled Migration</i>	22
2.2.4 <i>Intra-European Migration</i>	24
2.2.5 <i>Scientific Migration and Brain Drain</i>	25
2.3 Studies on Italian Student Migration, Graduate Migration and Brain Drain	28
2.3.1 <i>Italian Student Migration</i>	28
2.3.2 <i>Italian Graduate Migration</i>	29
2.3.3 <i>The Italian Graduate Labour Market and Internal Migration</i>	30
2.3.4 <i>The Italian “Brain Drain”</i>	33
2.4 Linking Internal and International migration	34
2.4.1 <i>The Italian Scenario</i>	36
2.4.2 <i>An Overview of Italian Emigration</i>	37
2.4.3 <i>Italian Emigration to the UK</i>	38
2.4.4 <i>The Rise of Internal Migration</i>	40
2.4.5 <i>The Reprise of Internal Migration in the 1990s</i>	41
2.5 Theorising Migration and its Determinants	44
2.5.1 <i>Linking Migration and Society</i>	44
2.5.2 <i>A Sociological Understanding of Migration</i>	46
2.5.3 <i>Conceptualising Migration and Agency</i>	48
2.5.4 <i>The Study of Migratory Determinants</i>	52
2.5.5 <i>Recent Developments in the Study of Migratory Determinants</i>	55
2.6 Conclusion	58
CHAPTER 3	59
ITALY AND ITALIANS: BACKGROUND TO MIGRATION	59
3.1 Introduction	59
3.2 Italy as a Modern Nation State.....	60
3.2.1 <i>Italy’s Unfinished Nation-Building</i>	60
3.2.2 <i>Nationalism and National Character</i>	62
3.2.3 <i>Toward a New National Identity?</i>	65
3.2.4 <i>An Alternative Perspective: Mentalità</i>	66
3.2.5 <i>Views of Italy and Associated Critiques</i>	68
3.3 The Southern Question.....	70
3.3.1 <i>The History of the Southern Question</i>	71

3.3.2 <i>The New History of the South</i>	73
3.3.3 <i>The Southern Question Revisited</i>	74
3.4 Young Italians and Contemporary Italian Society	75
3.4.1 <i>The Transition to Adulthood and the Role of Young Italians in Society</i>	76
3.4.2 <i>Professional and Existential Precariousness</i>	79
3.5 Conclusion	81
CHAPTER 4	83
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	83
4.1 Introduction	83
4.2 The Use of Qualitative Methods	83
4.3 The Rationale for the Study Conducted	86
4.3.1 <i>Research Questions</i>	88
4.3.2 <i>Sampling for Respondents</i>	88
4.3.3 <i>Access to Respondents</i>	94
4.3.4 <i>The Interviews</i>	95
4.3.5 <i>Data Analysis and Coding</i>	98
4.3.6 <i>Limitations of the Approach Taken</i>	101
4.4 Positionality and Reflexivity	103
CHAPTER 5	106
“ITALY IS A DIFFICULT COUNTRY”	106
THE MANY REASONS TO MIGRATE OF ITALIAN GRADUATES	106
5.1 Introduction	106
5.2 Common Traits	107
5.2.1 <i>The Importance of Early Experiences Abroad</i>	108
5.2.2 <i>The Choice of the UK</i>	110
5.3 Professional Motivations: The Italian Labour Market as a Push Factor	114
5.2.1 <i>Academic Mobility</i>	118
5.3 Personal Motivations: Migration as a Personal Quest	122
5.4 Cultural Reasons to Migrate	129
5.4.1. <i>Views of Italy</i>	129
5.4.2 <i>A Different Mentalità</i>	133
5.5 Conclusion	136
CHAPTER 6	138
“MOVING NORTH IS NOT EASY”	138
THE CURRENT INTERNAL MIGRATION OF ITALIAN GRADUATES	138
6.1 Introduction	138
6.2 The Decision to Migrate	139
6.3 The Choice of Destination	141
6.4 The Dominant Role of Professional Considerations	146
6.5 The “Raccomandazione”	148
6.6 A Forced Migration?	153
6.7 Professional Self-Realisation (and family resources)	154
6.8 The Emotional Costs of Migrating Internally	157
6.9 The Importance of Relationships	158
6.10 Views of the South and of the Future	161
6.9 Conclusions	163
CHAPTER 7	165
STAYERS VS MIGRANTS	165
THE PROS AND CONS OF MIGRATION	165
7.1 Introduction	165

7.2 Background to “Immobility”	166
7.3 The Decision to Stay	169
7.3.1 Professional Considerations	169
7.3.2 The Practice of the “Raccomandazione”	171
7.3.3 The Other Side of Italian Academia	175
7.4 The Importance of Friends and Relationships	177
7.5 The Role of the Family	180
7.6 Feeling Attached to One’s Place	183
7.7 The Decision to Stay vs. the Decision to Migrate.....	185
7.8 Conclusion	191
CHAPTER 8	193
MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	193
8.1 Contributions.....	193
8.2 Why Do Italian Graduates Migrate?	195
8.3 What Characterises Different Migratory Patterns?	199
8.4 The Future	203
BIBLIOGRAPHY	204
APPENDIX A	231
Interview schedule rationale	231
APPENDIX B	234
APPENDIX C	236
Respondents Table	236
APPENDIX D	242
List of Codes	242
APPENDIX E	246
Examples of Query Tool Analysis Using.....	246
Atlas.ti	246
APPENDIX F	256
Examples of Query Tool Analysis using “Families of Codes” in Atlas.ti	256
APPENDIX G	258
Consent Form for Project Participants	258

ABSTRACT

The migration of graduates is one of the main characteristics of the current phase of Italian emigration. This thesis investigates why Italian graduates are migrating both within and outside Italy. The main research questions this thesis gravitates around are: why do Italian graduates migrate? What is the difference, if any, in terms of motivations, between graduates who decide to migrate internally within Italy as compared to the ones who decide to migrate to the UK? Why do some graduates stay in their home town despite regional and national differentials in terms of employment and lifestyle opportunities?

Namely, this thesis examines and compares the motivations that drove three samples of Italian graduates to migrate. Firstly, those who migrated to the UK; secondly, those who from the southern Italy moved internally to the Italian cities of Rome (centre) and Milan (north); and thirdly, those who decided to stay in the Italian cities of Palermo (south), Rome (centre), and Milan (north). The analysis proposed is qualitative and exploratory in nature and is based on 87 in-depth interviews conducted with Italian graduates in 2008-2009.

The study provides an integrated view of different migratory patterns. In particular, the comparison between internal and international flows indicates that Italian graduates are generally oriented towards the UK and particularly towards London because of the many professional, educational and cultural opportunities that London as a global city has to offer. Meanwhile, internal migration within Italy (south to north) is generally experienced as constrained by deep regional differences in terms of employment opportunities between southern and northern Italy. Finally, staying in one's home town emerged as a decision based, among other factors, on the lack of interest in experiencing mobility vs. the importance a person attributes to social, emotional and cultural ties to his or her own family, friends, partners and the local area.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scoping the Topic of Italian Graduate Migration Patterns

The subject of this thesis is Italian graduate migration patterns and their causes as experienced by different samples of “mobile” and “non-mobile” graduates. This brief introductory chapter will delineate the context and objectives of this study, in order to provide the reader with a preliminary understanding of the topic and rationale behind my thesis. My research is concerned with providing an analysis of the reasons why Italian graduates are currently moving to the UK, particularly to the London area – as this is one of the prime destinations for skilled migrants in Europe (Favell, 2008; Sassen, 2001) – as well as examining the current internal south-to-north migration of graduates within Italy toward the cities of Rome and Milan, which are historically key destinations for internal migrants within Italy. In addition, the reasons to remain of a sample of non-mobile graduates living in the Italian cities of Milan (north), Rome (centre) and Palermo (south) will be examined in order to compare and contrast migrants’ rationales with those that stay in Italy. These cities have been selected in order to symbolically represent the decision to stay in the north, centre and south of Italy.

Migration is a key aspect of Italian history. Italy has been a country of mass emigration since its foundation as a modern nation-state in 1861. Throughout the “Great Migrations” period from the 1860s to the 1970s, more than 26 million Italians left the country, mostly escaping from impoverished rural areas and directed towards continental Europe, the Americas and Australia. Internal migration, mostly from south to north, reached its peak during the economic and industrial boom of the 1950s-1970s that centred around the industrial triangle of Milan, Turin and Genoa in the north-west of the country.

London as a global city is generally considered. Finally, the Italian cities of Rome and Milan (Pugliese, 2002).

Today, Italy is both a country of emigration and of immigration, currently hosting approximately 3.5 million migrants mostly from North Africa and Eastern Europe, while counting about the same number of Italians officially living abroad (Fondazione Migrantes, 2011). In both cases, these estimates are considerable under-statements. In particular, the number of Italians who live abroad cannot be easily quantified because most of the current migration is directed toward other EU countries where Italians as EU citizens have free right to settle without the need to register formally. The immigration figure is an underestimate because of the considerable, but unknown, quantity of undocumented migrants living in Italy. Hence, other recent sources revise these estimates upwards, especially as regards immigrants in Italy for whom Caritas Migrantes (2010:13) gives a figure of 4.9 million, including the undocumented.

This thesis is about the contemporary phase of Italian internal and international migration, and is especially concerned with the movement of recent university graduates and their reasons to migrate. In Italy, this is a popular topic of discussion because the emigration of graduates is often portrayed by the media as a “brain-drain” phenomenon which generally reflects the inadequacy of the Italian state to provide a future for its young generations of citizens.¹

Moreover, the movement of Italian graduates within and outside Italy questions the traditional dual classification of migratory flows as “international vs. internal” and “permanent vs. temporary”. Italian graduate migration towards other European countries, such as the UK, can be considered both as an internal and as an international

¹ Examples of recent media articles on this topic can be found in the two most widely read Italian newspapers, *La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere della Sera*. See for instance:
<http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2011/05/21/laureati-finiti-allestero-40-in-anni.html>
http://www.corriere.it/cronache/11_febbraio_13/donne-intervento-alessandra-farkas_a900b91e-378d-11e0-b09a-4e8b24b9a7d0.shtml
<http://franceschini.blogautore.repubblica.it/2011/09/14/dove-vanno-i-laureati-italiani/>
 A recent episode of the Italian TV programme “Report” was also dedicated to this topic:
<http://www.report.rai.it/dl/Report/Puntate/PublishingBlock-bb72d2c0-f15b-40a3-97df-81932dfe068a.html>

Finally, Ian Fisher has written a well received reportage on this phenomenon in *The New York Times*, 13 December 2007, entitled: In a Funk - Italy sings an Aria of Disappointment.

migratory phenomenon within the European Community. In this respect, the use of the term “migration” could be replaced with “mobility” (Urry, 2000), especially considering the unrestricted and unstructured nature of Italian graduates’ migratory flows.

However, the use of the term “migration” is particularly significant in the case of Italy, as it indicates an historical continuum between the Great Migrations of the past – which have characterised Italy since its foundation as a modern nation state in 1861 – and the present. Indeed, despite the different historical circumstances that characterise past and present flows, there are still large numbers of Italians who decide to leave the country.

Therefore, the terms “migration” and “mobility” are used interchangeably in this thesis to indicate on the one hand, the flexibility of the current migratory processes and on the other, the ongoing presence and significance of migration in Italian history.

Moreover, despite the public attention generated by these phenomena, there are not many academic studies which look at current Italian migratory patterns *per se*. This is possibly because the recent transformation of Italy into a country of immigration has attracted, and rightly so, the attention of many scholars both within and outside Italy, while the current reprise of both internal and international emigration have been generally overlooked (Pugliese, 2002). Moreover, the literature on Italian graduate migration *per se* is quite scarce because graduates as a distinct category of migrants are often overshadowed by overlapping fields of study such as student migration, skilled migration and the brain drain literature. In this regard, my thesis aims to show the significance of Italian graduate migration both as a social phenomenon and as a field of research.

Examining graduates’ mobility pattern can be especially attractive for social scientists. From a theoretical perspective, looking at graduate migration means looking at the mobility of a vast and heterogeneous section of a country’s population at a particular point of the life-course – the early post-graduation years – which often coincides with

other important life-transitions, such as full-time entry into the labour market and the departure from the parental home.²

From a sociological point of view, assessing the extent to which different forces impact on the development of individual migratory decisions leads us to question the variable roles of individual agency, structural push and pull factors, and social change. In this respect, the study looks at Italian graduate migration through the lenses of broad sociological theories which look at the transformations of the individual life-course in late modernity (Beck et al., 1994; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001; Giddens, 1991).

However, the main theoretical approach of this thesis from a sociological perspective is not so much the application of existing sociological concepts or debates such as “agency vs. structure”, but the use of a “sociological imagination” as envisaged by Wright Mills (1959) – in terms of a broad sociological framework capable of capturing the historical structures that influence individuals’ lives. I adopt this approach in order to analyse the “double embeddedness” advocated by King (2002) of each migratory act. Firstly in each migrant’s life-course, and secondly within the historical conditions and societal processes in which any migratory flow is necessarily located.

As Castles (2010) has recently suggested, any study which attempts to make sense of migratory behaviours should include an understanding of the societies involved. In the case of Italy, as argued by Gabaccia (1997), a global, comparative and systematic interpretation of the history of Italian emigration and of its impact on both the process of nation building and on Italian national identity *per se* still needs to be explored. I believe this thesis is a step forward in this direction. In particular, this study pursues an integrated view of different mobility patterns among Italian graduates, incorporating into a single framework the analysis of their internal migration, international migration and non-migration or immobility, which are generally analysed as separate phenomena (Hammar, Brochmann, Tamas and Faist, 1997).

² Please note that this thesis only looks at the mobility of recent Italian graduates in the immediate years after their graduation, setting the temporal limit (after which individuals could no longer be considered as suitable respondents) at 5 years after the end of their studies.

Moreover, the study of migratory determinants has been traditionally dominated by an economic paradigm (Massey et al., 1998), and only recently has the causal study of migration been open to consider a wider range of reasons for people to migrate. In particular, recent studies (Favell, 2008; Hadler, 2006) on skilled and intra-European migration have indicated that the reasons why people move across Europe tend to include many non-economic considerations. Studying Italian graduate migration provides a good opportunity to investigate a wide range of push and pull factors, especially in a country characterised by a long and varied history of migration such as Italy.

In this regard, my study of Italian graduates' reasons to migrate will show that the reasons to leave the country encompass personal, cultural and ethical reasons as well as significant professional and economic considerations. The use of new analytical concepts such as "*mentalità*" will be introduced and advanced in order to capture the nuances which characterised Italian graduates' reasons to migrate: more on this presently.

The results of this research will be useful to academics working in the fields of graduate migration, highly skilled migration, emerging forms of migration across Europe, brain drain and also those interested in sociological aspects of contemporary forms of migration and mobility. In addition, this study will benefit policy makers and institutions dealing with migration in Italy as well as the UK, as both countries have an interest in graduate flows, given the positive impact that qualified migrants have on the development of their increasingly specialised national economies (Faggian and MacCann, 2009; Iredale, 2001; Salt, 1984; 1992).

1.2 Defining Italian Graduate Migration

Considering that a variety of terminology is often used to indicate different typologies of migrants and of students worldwide, I will start by defining what is meant by the term *graduate migration* in the Italian context.

Generally, graduate migration literature in the European context refers to the migration of individuals who have completed their first university degrees in their home countries and subsequently migrated to another place. Recent graduates are usually the subject of graduate migration research and the timing in this context is crucial. Graduate migration studies often look at how mobility decisions are taken after the completion of higher education and what are the main factors that affect them in different contexts (for example: King and Shuttleworth, 1995a; 1995b, for the Irish case). In the case of Italy, Italian graduates (*laureati*) are a particularly diverse category of individuals and citizens. This is partly due to the recent reforms of the Italian school and university system which I will briefly describe below.

The Italian system of higher education has been subjected – and still is – to a number of reforms (in particular in the years 2000 and 2002) which attempted to shorten the length of degrees while Europeanising their structures following the Bologna Process agreements (1999). These reforms have created different levels of degrees and of graduates. Under the old system (*Vecchio Ordinamento*), a first university degree (*Diploma di Laurea*) required four to six years of study, depending on the discipline. After the *Laurea*, graduates could choose to apply for different post-graduate courses such as *Corso di Perfezionamento*, a specialising course in the same discipline of one year, or a *Diploma di Specializzazione* which took two to five years. The third level degree, *Dottorato di Ricerca*, the equivalent of a Ph.D (three to four years), was only accessible through a public competition called *concorso*.

After the 2000 and 2002 reforms, under the new university system (*Nuovo Ordinamento*), university first degrees have been divided in a 3+2 model: firstly, the new first level degree (*Laurea di Primo Livello*) which lasts three years; and then a second level degree or specialised degree (*Laurea di Secondo Livello or Specialistica*) which can be obtained by carrying on studying for two more years in the same or a related discipline. The latter is in most cases considered the equivalent qualification of the old *Laurea* and is necessary to access most post-graduate courses and public recruitment examinations. The length and admission to post-graduate courses have mostly been untouched.

For this study, as I will discuss in more detail in the methodology chapter, I chose to select as suitable respondents only individuals who had completed a full cycle of tertiary education in Italy, and who have graduated through either the old system *Laurea* or the full new 3+2 degree before migrating to the UK.

1.3 Research Design and Methods

The key aim of this study is to identify and explore the factors affecting the migratory decision-making and behaviour of Italian graduates. In particular, I am interested in comparing and contrasting the motivations of internal and international graduate migrants, and those of non-mobile graduates, to investigate whether their reasons to migrate or not are different, and in what way.

My main research questions are:

- Why do Italian graduates migrate?
- What is the difference, if any, in terms of motivations, between graduates who decide to migrate internally within Italy as compared to the ones who decide to migrate to the UK?
- Why do some graduates stay in their home town despite regional and national differentials in terms of employment and lifestyle opportunities?

Semi-structured interviews with Italian graduates are the main method of data collection. Interviews have been carried out with three different samples of Italian graduates: international graduate migrants already living in the UK; internal graduate migrants, mostly coming from the southern regions already living in the cities of Rome and Milan; and “immobile” graduates, living in their home-town cities of Palermo (south), Rome (centre), and Milan (north).

All interviews have been conducted, transcribed, coded and analysed using the software Atlas.ti by myself. I paid particular attention to the ways in which migrants rationalised and to a certain extent were able to “explain” their decisions to migrate, trying to

capture the complexity of their decision-making processes and paying attention to the patterns emerging from their narratives. However, it should be noted that migratory decisions are not static entities and do not imply permanent decision-making. A broader discussion of the research process, its rationales and the methods used will be provided in Chapter 4.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 locates the study of Italian graduate migration in the existing literature, incorporating the existing research on internal and international migration in the context of Italy and of the analysis of migratory determinants. The main themes and issues which my investigation of Italian graduate migration patterns addresses will be identified and discussed. Chapter 3 will explore Italy's societal traits and will examine some of its characteristics and ongoing issues, particularly for graduates. Chapter 4 will present and discuss the rationale, methodology and the research process undertaken. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 illustrate and discuss the empirical findings of the research conducted. Chapter 5 will look at the reasons to migrate of Italian graduates who have moved to the UK. Chapter 6 looks at internal migration, south-to-north, toward the cities of Rome and Milan. Chapter 7 then compares the reasons to remain of a sample of Italian graduates living in the cities of Milan, Rome and Palermo with those of Italian graduate migrants previously analysed. Chapter 8 summarises and evaluates the main findings, contributions and implications of the study.

CHAPTER 2

THE MIGRATION OF GRADUATES: CONCEPTS AND THEMES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises and examines the study of graduate migration in relation to the academic literature on migration and migratory determinants while looking specifically at the issues that have characterised the historical development of Italian emigration through time. It consists of six main sections. The first looks at how graduate migration has emerged as a field of study, and at its links with neighbouring literatures such as student migration, skilled migration and brain drain. The second section will locate these studies in the Italian context. The third will look at the challenges posed by an integrated study of migratory patterns. The next then looks at the history of Italian migration until its current developments. The fifth will analyse the study of migration in relation to the societies involved and to sociology as a discipline. The final section will look at the study of migratory determinants and their evolution over time.

2.2 Studying Graduate Migration

Despite the huge and fast-growing literature on migration, there are not many studies which focus specifically on graduate migration. This is partly because, as previously mentioned, there are other bodies of literature – such as student migration, skilled migration and brain drain – that overlap and at times overshadow the distinctiveness of graduates as a category of migrants. Nevertheless, some general characteristics can be outlined. Graduate migration can take place both internationally and internally within a country. In general, graduate migration originates in areas in which a labour market for highly skilled occupations is partially missing or is underdeveloped or where there is an

over-production of graduates relative to what the local labour market can absorb. Consequently, graduate migrants are generally directed toward the core of the global financial and economic markets, which for many European graduates is traditionally located in London and the United States (Charsley, Bond and Grundy, 2006; Csedo, 2008; King and Shuttleworth, 1995a; 1995b).

International career paths in different fields such as finance and science can also play a significant role in the development of skilled migration flows between countries. A certain degree of mobility is usually expected among early professionals who wish to pursue a high profile career in these professions (Ackers, 2008; Cappellen and Janssens, 2005; Stahl, Miller and Tung, 2002). For example, in the financial sector is not uncommon for brokers to move from London to Frankfurt or New York and vice versa.

Moreover, the movement of graduates is an increasingly important share of transnational forms of professional and highly skilled mobility and it is typical of advanced capitalist countries in which access to higher education has been progressively expanded such that (by some) over-education is seen as a common problem (Büchel, de Grip and Mertens, 2003; Kler, 2006; Ortis, 2010). In this respect, looking at the mobility of graduates is particularly important because the existence and directions of graduate flows often indicate a general mismatch between the demand and supply of parameters of the labour market, and might signal economic peripherality (King and Shuttleworth, 1995a). Due to the established link between retaining human capital and economic development, there is a shared interest from governments, states and regions in preventing the loss of human capital in the form of graduate migration and brain drain.

In the following subsections, I will map out the existing knowledge on graduate migration and its neighbouring fields, first in the European context, and then in the case of Italian graduates.

2.2.1 Graduate Migration within and to the UK

Overall, studies on graduate migration within and toward the UK have concluded that graduate migration is generally unstructured and driven by the perceived opportunity of London and South-East England as an “escalator region” (Fielding, 1992a) in terms of social and occupational mobility. However, economic and professional considerations do not always comprise the entire picture and studies such as Charsley et al. (2006) and Faggian, McCann and Sheppard (2007a; 2007b) on Scottish graduates, and King and Shuttleworth on Irish graduates (1995a, 1995b), have also indicated that graduate migration to and within the UK is deeply affected by social and cultural factors in the country or region of origin. Outlined below are some of the key findings on these issues.

To begin with, Faggian et al. (2007a) indicate that the “best and brightest” UK graduates (from the best universities and with the best grades) are the ones who are more likely to migrate. Secondly, Faggian et al. (2007a) conclude that previous mobility is an important factor for both Scottish and Welsh graduates. In particular, those graduates who have moved longer distances in order to attend university were the ones who were more likely to migrate afterwards. Thirdly, the same authors suggest that female graduates might be more likely to migrate than males. In their view, this is because female graduates within the UK are more willing to use migration to compensate for the unfavourable gender dynamics within provincial labour markets (Faggian et al., 2007b).

In the case of Irish graduates migrating to the UK during the 1980s and early 1990s, King and Shuttleworth found that – apart from a truncated Irish labour market which offered few opportunities to find highly qualified occupations – their moves to London were primarily motivated by personal and cultural factors linked to the perceived “backwardness” of Irish society in comparison to a modern and cosmopolitan lifestyle expected in London (King and Shuttleworth, 1995a; 1995b). In addition, the existence of a “culture of migration” in Ireland was also considered an important factor (King and Shuttleworth, 1995a; 1995b). This concept, which is also relevant in the case of Italian graduates, will be discussed later in this thesis. In this context, it will suffice to say that some scholars (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kohuaouci, Pellegrino and Taylor, 1998) have observed that in areas characterised by a long and recurrent history of migration, like

Ireland or Italy, migration tends to become deeply ingrained in the repertoire of people's behaviour in a way which tends to favour future migration as its adoption has come to be seen over the generations as natural and socially acceptable.

In the case of Scottish graduates, Charsley et al. (2006) point to the importance of graduates' region of origin, noting that those graduates who moved the furthest distance to attend university were the ones who were most likely to migrate afterwards (echoing Faggian et al., above). Their conclusions are supported by other studies (Findlay, Stam, King and Ruiz-Gelizes, 2005; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002) which point to the significance of student mobility in encouraging future migration. This will be a significant theme in the case of Italian graduate migration and will be discussed at length in the following chapters. The next section looks in more detail at the international student migration literature.

2.2.2 Student Migration as a Preamble to Graduate Mobility

In the last two decades, student migration has comprised a growing share of international migration worldwide and, as such, it has been increasingly attracting the attention of migration scholars. Data from UNESCO indicates that in 2005 approximately 2.7 million students were studying outside their countries of origin – a 61% increase since 1999 – with the US, UK, Germany, France and Australia as the main destinations (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007).

In the European context, the establishment of the Erasmus-Socrates university student exchange programme in 1987 has been of particular significance for the development of intra-European student migration. From 1987 to 2000, it is estimated that the Erasmus programme supported the move of approximately 750,000 students, plus of course many more since then. Southern European countries like Italy and Spain have particularly high rates of participation in the Erasmus programme (Findlay and King, 2010).

Internal and international student migrations comprise a variety of migratory flows that are inevitably linked to the structure and social characteristics of higher education and

its provision in each country. In this context, the case of the UK is quite emblematic. Here, it is generally considered the norm for a middle class student to move away from the parental home in order to attend university. This is not the case in many European countries, where most students attend local universities while cohabitating with their parents (Christie, 2007). Interestingly, the UK is also one of the main receiving countries of Erasmus students, but not a major sender: the latter being southern and continental European countries such as Spain, Italy, Greece and Germany. These statistics indicate that UK students are more likely to be “internally” mobile while their peers in Europe tend to be more internationally mobile, possibly because of their higher level of competence in foreign languages and also because the perception of the “quality” of English degrees (King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003).

Student mobility also varies across regions and states within a country. Scottish students, for example, are less likely to move to the rest of the UK to attend university because of the different requirements and lengths of their educational system (Faggian et al., 2007a), as well as different financial incentives (currently Scottish students pay no university fees if they stay in Scotland). Student internal mobility in Italy is mostly directed south-to-north, reflecting the deep regional differences existing in the country and the historical delay in building and financing universities in southern Italy.

In terms of understanding the current development of international student migration, the most important studies carried out in this field (Findlay et al., 2005; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002) have pointed out the need to look at the “mobility culture” within which individual decisions to study abroad are taken. In particular, the study by Findlay et al. (2005) has pointed to the historically and socially embedded nature of students’ values associated with their decisions and interests in participating in mobility exchange programmes. In the case of European students, it is argued, this cannot be separated from wider discourses of meaning associated with international opportunities which are socially and culturally constructed (Findlay et al., 2005). In addition, Murphy-Lejeune’s (2002) ethnographic work on student migration found that the main difference between student travellers and their “immobile” peers is the acquisition of “mobility capital” (2002: 51): a sub-component of human capital that favours future mobility. In this respect, it can be concluded that many researchers agree that previous experiences of migration while at university are likely to predispose

towards future migration (Charsley et al., 2006; Faggian et al., 2007a; 2007b; Findlay et al., 2005; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003).

However, it needs to be considered that mobility is still an option which is not fairly distributed among the student population worldwide or even in western societies, and hence it may play a role in the recreation of class inequalities (Christie, 2007; Findlay et al., 2005; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). Moreover, for some scholars, the social networks established as an international student constitute the foundation for future mobility decisions to such an extent that international student migration should be included in the study of highly skilled migration (Koser and Salt, 1997; Vertovec, 2002). More details on the interplay within these two fields of study are illustrated in the following section.

2.2.3 The Field of Skilled Migration

Skilled migration has rapidly increased in both size and significance following macro trends such as the globalisation of firms and professions and the internationalisation of higher education (Iredale, 2001) as well as the foundation of the European Union and the possibility of free circulation for its citizens. Traditionally this field of study has been dominated by an economic paradigm and a focus on human capital which tended to overlook the diverse human component of these flows. In recent years, this gap of knowledge has been filled by scholars such as Sam Scott (2006) and Adrian Favell (2008; also Smith and Favell, 2006) who have directed their attention to the human dimension of highly skilled migration, especially in the European context. The next paragraphs will provide a brief overview of the ways in which the study of skilled migration in Europe has developed.

A starting problem for scholars interested in skilled migration has been the lack of a shared definition of skilled migrants. Definitions of what parameters or variables constitute skills are socially and culturally constructed and tend to vary across countries and disciplines. In some studies, skills are linked to educational qualifications; in others, a more professional focus is implied (Koser and Salt, 1997).

Temporality is another critical issue, as the phenomenon of highly skilled migration includes different kinds of short-term stays abroad and business trips which hardly fall under the traditional notion of “migration”. This general lack of agreement leads to a lack of consistent and comparable data on skilled migration across countries.

Moreover, skilled migration flows, especially across Europe, tend to be considered “unproblematic” for the receiving countries. The case of Italian graduates is particularly revealing in this scenario as they do not need to register once migrating to another EU country, making the compilation of official statistics very difficult. Due to these circumstances, researchers have been united in lamenting a lack of reliable quantitative information on skilled flows.

The focus of studies on skilled migration has also shifted. Studies in the 1980s and 1990s (among which Salt, 1984; 1992) focused primarily on corporate structures, career paths and international labour market dynamics in order to explain the emergence of skilled migration and its role in national economic development. More recently, and especially in the European context, scholars have recognised that skilled migration has become a varied and diverse middle-class phenomenon which is not merely economically driven. Recent studies have indicated that international mobility is no longer a prerogative of a small elite as more and more individuals choose and are enabled to move (Favell, 2008; Scott, 2006). In this enlarged context, life-style preferences and personal motivations are indicated as important factors.

Moreover, the new waves of skilled migrants within and into Europe are generally directed toward big cosmopolitan urban centres, the so-called “eurocities” in Favell’s terminology (Favell, 2008). These include the cities of London, Paris, Amsterdam and Brussels where the market for highly qualified occupations is mostly concentrated. Indeed, I find that the work of Adrian Favell (2008) on the free movement of professionals in the EU is particularly insightful in this field. Conducting qualitative oral-history style interviews with a sample of mobile Europeans in the cities of London, Amsterdam and Brussels, Favell pointed out that their reasons to migrate are quite idiosyncratic and very diverse. Large numbers of “young and hopeful” Europeans – and not only Europeans (see, e.g. Conradson and Latham, 2005b) – are attracted to European global cities, not solely for economic reasons and for educational and

professional opportunities, but for the modern, independent and cosmopolitan life-style that these cities can offer (Favell, 2008).

Overall, Favell suggests that contemporary voluntary intra-European migration flows are “individualised” trends that can be quite emotionally costly for those involved. This is because those who migrate generally move independently and are not institutionally or politically supported – excluding the corporate sector, where employees’ mobility is usually favoured. According to Favell, this lack of support from both the sending and the receiving countries may have severe consequences in the long term, taking into consideration the persistence of strong nationally-structured barriers to full integration in EU countries, where local knowledge is still necessary to negotiate access to housing, childcare, education and political participation (Favell, 2008). More details of the characteristics of current intra-European migration will be discussed in the following section.

2.2.4 Intra-European Migration

It is usually assumed that European residents are not very inclined to move across national borders, as apparently less than 5% of Europeans live in a country different from the one of their birth. However, it is not certain whether this image of “sedentary” Europeans actually reflects reality (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Recchi and Favell, 2009). In fact, this assumption can be questioned, as previously mentioned, if one takes into consideration the ongoing problem with the measurement of new fluid forms of mobility across Europe such as the ones analysed in this study.

In order to overcome this lack of information, the Pioneur study – which has involved different universities and scholars across Europe – has recently attempted to map the new geographies of mobility within Europe (Pioneur, 2006; Recchi et al., 2003; Recchi and Favell, 2009). This study concluded that these new migrants are generally well integrated in the destination countries and feel more “European” in terms of their identity than the average EU citizen (Recchi and Favell, 2009). Moreover, the Pioneur project concluded that even though EU movers are not a unitary population, some predominant patterns of intra-European mobility can be identified. These include: a

continuation of south-to-north labour-driven migration; highly skilled migration; a north to south flow of retirement-driven type of migration; and finally student migration.

Taking into consideration all the existing studies on these new migratory trends across Europe, it could be expected that current Italian graduate migration to the city of London is part of a wider phenomenon which is not country-specific but rather generation-specific in the sense in which it involves young middle classes across different (affluent) countries. This seems to comprise, among other aspects, a modern “rite of passage” characterised by the broad desire to experience the core of Europe in the form of the cosmopolitanism and internationalisation of the life-styles associated with “eurocities” such as London (Conradson and Latham, 2005a, 2005b; Catalbiano and Gianturco, 2005; Favell, 2008; Smith and Favell, 2006). The relevance of this aspect in the case of Italian graduates will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

A particularly important sub-group of skilled migration and of intra-European migration is scientific migration and brain drain, the focus of the following section.

2.2.5 Scientific Migration and Brain Drain

The term “brain drain” was firstly introduced by the British Royal Society in the 1950s to refer to the flight of scientists and intellectuals, mostly British, directed to the US and Canada. Since then, debates surrounding brain drain have encompassed different international contexts and have usually focused on the detrimental effects of the loss of human capital for the country of origin (Constant and D’Agosto, 2008); and on the transmission of knowledge and technology across countries (Ackers, 2005; Ackers and Gill, 2008; Francovich, 2000). Moreover, brain drain has increasingly come to be seen as a “Third World” phenomenon.

The former assumption has been recently challenged by the work of the economist Oded Stark who has advocated the view that, when a country opens to the possibility of migration, this revises the internal structure of incentives among its population. According to Stark, when more and more people invest through education and training in their human capital formation, society becomes more productive and, consequently,

the supposed detrimental effects of brain drain on the country of origin do not hold (Stark, 2005).

In recent decades, international institutions such as the OECD and the World Bank have attempted to measure brain drain phenomena worldwide. New terms have been introduced to conceptualise these phenomena: in some cases, given the temporary nature of movements of scientists and intellectuals, especially between more developed countries, the term brain drain has been replaced with the concept of “brain circulation” which emphasises the circular nature of scientists’ movements across countries (Constant and D’Agosto, 2008).

In the European context, brain drain flows are very heterogeneous, multi-directional and difficult to quantify statistically, as the EU is a crossroads for different and at times concomitant typologies of migration (King, 2001). Moreover, the definition, even in the case of brain drain flows, of who exactly can be classified as “brain migrants” is often ambiguous; and it might or might not include, for example, students.

The migration of intellectuals and scientists also has many antecedents in the history of Europe: in the context of this thesis, I will just recall, among these, the case of Italian intellectuals (many of whom for historical reasons were Jews) who escaped to the US during Fascism (Avveduto and Brandi, 2004).

The US is the single biggest recipient of migrating brains worldwide, thanks to its abundant research funds and the international prestige of its institutions; while in the European context, the UK and Germany are the key destinations. A recent study on scientific mobility across the EU, the MOBEX project (Mobility and Excellence in the European Research Area), has pointed to the persistence of unbalanced flows of scientists across the EU, and thus of a brain drain phenomenon taking place, particularly in the case of Italy (Ackers, 2005; Morano-Foadi, 2005; 2006). In particular, the Mobex study has concluded that scientists move across Europe because of the necessity to find research funds and suitable working conditions in which to carry out their researches and projects. The case of Italian scientists is very emblematic of this trend, as will be shown later in this study.

In addition, the Mobex project has pointed to the difficulties in returning for the scientists who have migrated, highlighting the need to develop and implement new anti-brain drain strategies and policies across the EU. In particular, it has been argued that the establishment of the European Research Area in 2000, which focused on supporting “centres of excellence” across the EU, does not seem to produce the desired anti-brain drain effects and may be even contradict these aims by creating unbalanced research growth across the EU area (Ackers, 2005; Baláz, Williams and Kollá, 2004; Giannoccolo, 2005).

Scientific mobility is partly demanded and expected from scientists, especially those who wish to pursue a high-profile career, as it is often considered necessary for a scientist to be involved in the circulation and knowledge exchange in their field if both the individual, his/her country and institutions wish to stay competitive (Ackers, 2005; Ackers and Gill, 2008; Constant and D’Agosto, 2008).

However, this is not to say that scientists’ decisions to migrate are only economically or professionally driven, as it has also been shown that gender and family dynamics play important roles in their mobility behaviour (Ackers, 2003; 2004). In particular, Ackers has shown that the mobility of female scientists seems to drop drastically from post-graduate level onward, when females are more likely than males to defer their careers in order to stay close to their partners, children and family (Ackers, 2004). Moreover, it is important to remember that even among scientists, mobility is not a single event but a process which evolves during the life-course and that decisions regarding mobility are constantly on-going and under revision.

In this regard, the literature points to the general need of understanding the “double embeddedness” of migratory flows (King, 2002) by recognising the contextual factors which regulate them both at the macro scale (national and international research resources, expectations and discipline-specific networks) and at micro level (individual, family and gender dynamics).

I now turn to look at the state of the literature on student, graduate and scientific migration in the Italian case.

2.3 Studies on Italian Student Migration, Graduate Migration and Brain Drain

In the Italian literature there is not a *de facto* distinction between student migration, brain drain and skilled migration. To give an example, an important article published in 2004 entitled “Skilled Migration in Italy” by Avveduto and Brandi focused in the first half on the historical development of Italian intellectual migration or brain drain, and in the second half on the increasing rates of student participation in the Erasmus exchange programme. At the same time, studies which supposedly look specifically at the Italian brain drain phenomenon such as the one by Becker, Ichino and Peri (2003) focused on measuring the number of graduates working in Italy in comparison to the number of graduates migrating abroad. This elision between graduate migration and allied flows is not methodologically inappropriate if we consider the overlapping nature of these migratory phenomena. However, in order to illustrate the features of each of these trends, I divide this section into three main subsections and present a review of the data and information available distinctively on Italian student migration, graduate migration, and brain drain.

2.3.1 Italian Student Migration

As previously mentioned, student migration is often the first step toward future mobility. In the case of Italian graduates, student migration certainly seems to be the early seed of subsequent migratory flows as Italian students – and graduates – have one of the highest rates of international mobility across the EU (Findlay and King, 2010).

In particular, Italian participation in the Erasmus-Socrates exchange programme, which is the most popular mobility scheme in Italy, has affected more than 120,000 students until the year 2000, showing an increasing presence of female student migrants (Avveduto and Brandi, 2004). Among the factors which affect the desire to participate in the Erasmus programme, family background does not seem to be particularly relevant. Instead, there seems to be a certain discipline-based predisposition toward mobility; humanities and language students are the most mobile, followed by social sciences and economics. The main destinations of Italian students are Spain, in constant rise in popularity, followed by the UK, Germany and France.

In terms of internal migration, young Italians from the southern regions are historically quite mobile, and many choose to study in universities in the centre and north of country, which are generally considered more prestigious, especially if family networks and associated accommodation are available in the host towns, perhaps as a result of previous northward migration of family members seeking work. This movement is linked to broad structural inequalities persisting between the north and the south of the country, which will be analysed in more detail in the next chapter.

2.3.2 Italian Graduate Migration

Few studies address Italian graduate migration *per se* and reliable statistical data are partially missing both regarding internal and international movements of graduates. As previously explained, for Italian migration to other European countries, this is partly due to the very flexible nature of intra-European migration which does not require registration in the receiving country, and also to the generally politically unproblematic nature of Italians living in other European countries, which contributes to make them “invisible” (Fortier, 2000). Nevertheless, some confirmation of the increasing number of recent Italian graduates migrating abroad can be found – even if it is considerably underestimated – in the official data on Italian emigration. According to the registry of Italian residents abroad (AIRE), the number of graduates abroad increased by 53% between 2000 and 2006 (Del Pra, 2006: 107). This trend would not be so serious if it was counterbalanced by a compensatory inflow of graduates from other countries, as part of a European or global circulation of graduates; but there is evidence that Italy does not attract or would not employ graduates from abroad, while the loss of Italian graduates is constant (Becker et al., 2003; Morano-Foadi, 2006).

The internal movement of graduates within Italy is also difficult to measure, as many graduates do not de-register from their hometown residential registry because this would result, for instance, in losing their entitlement to the local medical provision and other social security arrangements (Berti and Zanotelli, 2008).

Nonetheless, Italian graduates are currently and increasingly at the centre of public debates on the future state of the Italian economy.³ This renewed interest is due to the increasing difficulties encountered by Italian graduates when looking for employment after the end of their studies and also their assumed subsequent migration. Italian graduate migration is suspected, empirically assumed, and publicly discussed in Italy, often in combination with discussions about the brain drain. Of particular importance in this scenario is the graduate labour market in which it is generally assumed that graduates' unemployment and regional economic disparities play key roles in favouring graduate migration.

2.3.3 The Italian Graduate Labour Market and Internal Migration

The Italian graduate labour market is largely underdeveloped, especially in the southern regions, the so-called *Mezzogiorno*. The employment structure reflects the existing deeper regional inequalities between the north and the south of the country.⁴ Thus, employment rates are much higher in the north than in the south, which suffers from a serious and systematic lack of industrial development and infrastructures. As a study carried out by Ciriaci in 2005 indicated, this is partly due to the lack of specialised industries in the south of Italy and more generally to the incapacity of the Italian economic system to develop a market for skilled and qualified occupations.

Graduate unemployment rates have been particularly high in recent decades. The unemployment rate of Italian graduates between 24-29 years old was 18.9% in 2004 compared to the 1.7% of UK graduates (ISTAT data in Bartolini and Volpi, 2005) and it has remained mostly unchanged since then with a peak in 2009 of 21.9% (Cammelli, 2009). Moreover, unemployment rates in Italy do not usually decrease with higher

³ See for example: http://www.repubblica.it/2007/03/sezioni/scuola_e_universita/servizi/alma-laurea-laurea/alma-laurea-laurea/alma-laurea-laurea.html
http://www.repubblica.it/2009/11/sezioni/scuola_e_universita/servizi/celli-lettera/laureati-fuga/laureati-fuga.html
http://www.corriere.it/cronache/10_marzo_18/laureati_disoccupati_58a51c02-325d-11df-b043-00144f02aabe.shtml

⁴ More information on the south and north division of the country will be provided in the following chapter.

levels of education, as is often the case in other advanced capitalist countries, but tend to decrease with the actual ageing of the workers (Livi Bacci, 2008; Reyneri, 2005).

A study carried out by Pezzulli in 2004 – based on the Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) data on the occupational rates of Italian graduates – indicated that “unsatisfied” job-seeking graduates were twice as numerous in the south as in the centre, and three times as numerous in the south compared to the north (Pezzulli, 2004: 155). At the same time, Pezzulli noted that internal graduate migration from the southern regions directed to the north of the country was increasing and it was a much wider phenomenon than a brain drain type of migration. Pezzulli calculated that between 1988-1999, approximately 1,700,000 people left the south, mostly directed to the centre and north of the country, and approximately 70,000 of these were graduates (Pezzulli, 2004: 152). Internal graduate migration was particularly high from the southern region of Calabria where, despite the establishment of a local university in the 1970s, the market for qualified occupations was practically absent due to the lack of industrial development in the region (Pezzulli, 2004). Pezzulli’s findings are confirmed by the latest reports on the economy of the *Mezzogiorno* produced by the Svimez (Association for the Development of Industries in the South).⁵

The 2010 Svimez report on the occupational situation of Italy’s young generations – based on all citizens between 15 and 35 years old, thus including graduates – indicates that the occupational problems faced by young educated Italians are primarily a “southern question” (Svimez, 2010).⁶ In this regard, Svimez scholars estimate that between 2008-2010, 60% of the job shrinkage in the country was located in the south, and among individuals who were usually under 35 years old (Svimez, 2010: 2). Moreover, according to the Svimez, family and territorial resources are particularly crucial in Italy for meeting individual professional expectations; young Italians, as the weakest social category of workers, pay a particularly high price for the current stagnation and geographical immobility of the national economy. These considerations find substantial confirmation in the data which I collected in my thesis, and these themes will be discussed at length in the following chapters.

⁵ Svimez Reports are available online at: <http://www.svimez.it/>

⁶ The historiography of the Italian “southern question” will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Gender disparities can also be observed among all categories of workers and among graduates both in terms of employment rates and salaries (Buzzi et al., 2007; del Boca and Wetzels, 2007). Female participation in the labour market has increased in recent decades but the traditional nuclear family is still the dominant family structure and women are generally penalised when looking for jobs, particularly in the south. It has been estimated that women earn, on full-time work average, 27% less than men. Higher educational levels do not seem to reduce this gap, suggesting that the success of Italian women in education does not usually pay off in the labour market (Cammelli, 2009).

2.3.4 The Italian “Brain Drain”

There is vast interest in Italy on the so-called “*fuga di cervelli*” or brain drain. In Italy the term “brain drain” is used in everyday language to indicate the “forced” migration of highly skilled Italians who wish to work in the fields of research, science and academia. The presence of irregularities in the recruitment for academic posts in Italy has been extensively illustrated by existing literature (ADI, 2001; Gardini, 2009; Morano-Foadi, 2005; 2006). Italian newspapers often report and describe this phenomenon as representative of the country’s malaise and as evidence of the corruption of its institutions.⁷

This is mostly related to the highly bureaucratic, anti-meritocratic nature of Italian academia which has often been described as a pseudo-medieval system characterised by nepotistic practices and a rigid hierarchy. Key powerful professors, often of elitist background, are referred to as “barons” or *baroni* (ADI, 2001; Gambetta and Origgi, 2009; Gardini, 2009; Morano-Faodi, 2005; 2006). Barons often head up university departments. In order to access an academic post it is generally considered necessary to have the favours of the local academic baron – his or her *raccomandazione* – even

⁷ See for example:

http://www.repubblica.it/scuola/2010/11/30/news/fuga_di_cervelli_in_20_anni_persi_4_miliardi_in_brevetti-9685992/

<http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2011/12/27/continua-fuga-cervelli-istat-ricercatori-allestero/180110/>

http://www.ilgiornale.it/interni/ma_fuga_cervelli_e_figlia_politica_prediletti/27-12-2011/articolo-id=564242-page=0-comments=1

though, at least officially, all academic posts are allocated through national recruitment examinations called *concorsi*. In reality, it is generally recognised that these examinations are often highly corrupt practices, which are only organised in order to appoint the already-chosen candidate. As confirmation of this general belief, a number of illegal appointments through the practice of the *concorsi* both in academia and in the public sector in general are often reported by the Italian media (see Morano-Faodi, 2006, for an overview). Moreover, the Italian academic system is considered self-protective and hence self-perpetuating in nature, to the extent that internal candidates are almost always selected and employed. This practice is believed to preserve the existing internal order of power relations, closing *de facto* each university to foreigners and other Italians (Gambetta and Origgi, 2009; Gardini, 2009).

As previously discussed, the Mobex study has confirmed the existence of a serious exodus of Italian brains (Ackers, 2005; Morano-Faodi, 2005; 2006), highlighting the lack of research funding and the anti-meritocratic nature of Italian academia as the main determinants of the Italian brain drain. Although the size of these phenomena are quite difficult to measure, an attempt to quantify the Italian brain-drain has been carried out by Becker et al. in 2003. These authors demonstrated that since 1994 there has been a loss of human capital per worker in Italy due to the increase of university graduates migrating abroad, which resulted in a reduction of graduates of working age staying in Italy. Moreover, their research also indicates that the majority of graduates who migrate abroad are from the northern (and richest) regions of Italy, while those from the southern (and poorer) regions tend to move to the north of Italy in what could be assumed to be a “compensatory” flow of graduates, thus suggesting the existence of a binary system of brain drain within and from Italy (Becker et al., 2003).

Finally, in terms of the international direction of the brain drain flows, a comparative study carried out by Constant and D’Agosto in 2008 revealed that, whenever possible, Italians tend to remain in Europe. This is especially the case for those individuals who have already a PhD from Italy or abroad; while scientists are mostly attracted to the US if they have some specialist skills which could make them easily employable on the US labour market.

A survey carried out by the Italian embassy in the UK in 2006 on Italian researchers and academics working in the UK, reached similar conclusions. Most of the respondents (40%) moved to the UK already with a degree from Italy, and decided to stay in the UK for the better working environments and opportunities perceived and experienced. Respondents shared the view that Italian academia needed to change to become more competitive and that more meritocracy was needed both in terms of recruitment procedures and funding applications (Ambasciata D'Italia, 2006). In this regard, the use of the term “brain drain” in this thesis should not be generalised. The Italian “brain drain” is a unique phenomenon closely associated with issues regarding institutional corruption, lack of meritocracy and nepotism in Italy.

However, Italian academia is not the only field in which clientelism and non-meritocratic practices of recruitment take place (Piattoni, 2001). As we shall see later in this thesis, difficult access to qualified occupations characterises the Italian graduate labour market as a whole and usually plays a crucial role in the decision to migrate.

2.4 Linking Internal and International migration

In the last decade, a few migration scholars (in particular, see King at al., 2008; King and Skeldon, 2010) have challenged the existing assumption of internal and international migrations being distinct types of mobility, advocating an integrated view of internal and international migration patterns. This is partly because it has been recognised that people can engage in different and overlapping typologies of migration during their life-course and that internal and international flows within and across countries are interrelated and cannot be viewed as separate phenomena. Moreover, within the “free mobility” space of the EU, migration is a kind of hybrid between internal and international movement. Another situation arises when individuals are sequentially mobile within and between countries. For example, for people who grow up in a rural area, the first mobility step could be to move to a local urban centre and then possibly move from there to another region or country. The possibilities are many and varied, because if sometimes internal migration leads to international migration, the opposite – international migration leading to internal migration – can also take place, as demonstrated by the research carried out by Skeldon (2006) in the Asian context.

There is no reliable global estimate for internal migration, due mainly to lack of statistical data and the different distance thresholds involved in measuring internal moves. Changes in residence and/or jobs are also generally reported in different datasets, which increases the difficulty of the task.

However, it is generally assumed that the quantity of people moving internally within countries is much larger than the number of people who move across international borders. One of the main measurement issues in this context is represented by the difficulty in establishing a minimal distance over which an internal movement can be categorised as internal migration: i.e. the range of scales involved, which in Italy might be the region, the province or the borough. In the case of Italy, the distance between some of the respondents' home towns in the southern regions of Italy and the capital city of Rome, their destination, might be a relatively short train ride or car drive. For example, the distance between the cities of Naples and Rome is just 189km (117 miles), but can be perceived by some internal migrants as a big step, which is both culturally and emotionally challenging, as we will see later in this thesis.

In terms of determinants, it can be assumed that the causes of international and internal migration are, at least in principle, similar: regional inequalities in terms of economic development, employment opportunities and living conditions, as well as the presence of big urban centres, can act as relevant push and pull factors. In this case, the motivations and socio-economic theorisation of the two "types" of migration are the same. Thus, we can hypothesise that, for a graduate from the south of Italy, a move to Milan or one to London might be seen as direct alternatives.

In terms of the characteristics of the migrants themselves, the broader international literature tends to indicate that there is not a simple answer. Some of the literature on Mexican migration suggests that Mexican emigrants in the US tend to be males, more educated, with more household resources, from larger families and more likely to have some kin connection in the US; while internal Mexican migrants seem to have more intermediate characteristics in terms of their socio-economic and demographic features (Stark and Taylor, 1991). This is because, according to Stark and Taylor, *relatively* deprived households are more likely to engage in international migration than the

households which are more favourably placed in terms of their local village income distribution (1991: 1176).

Finally, another study that looks at both internal and international migration in terms of migratory intentions is the one carried out by de Jong, Ricardo, Arnold, Carino, Fawcett and Gardner (1983) on the Philippines. These authors concluded that intending migrants, especially those aiming to go abroad, were more resourceful in many ways compared to the “stayers”, especially in terms of financial, human and demographic capital. Moreover, they also indicated that the decision to migrate is only in part a rational assessment of costs and benefits as subjective elements are also important (1983: 479).

However, these Mexico and Philippines studies are “general” migration studies comparing economically-driven migration flows to richer destinations either within or outside the respective countries. They are basically labour migrations and say nothing specific about graduates, who are likely to be a minimal component of the aggregate flows. My Italian case study is distinguished from this broader literature on comparing the determinants of internal vs. international migration flows in two respects: I deal only with graduates; and the international border is easily crossed (because it is within the European space of “free movement”), unlike Mexicans, for example, who cannot freely enter the US.

2.4.1 The Italian Scenario

Migration, in all its different forms, is a key aspect of Italian history. Traditionally, Italian international migrations have attracted more attention and research than internal flows. Only recently have historians and social scientists acknowledged this gap of knowledge and directed their attention to the history of internal migration within Italy, challenging the false impression of Italy as an “internally immobile country” until the 1950s when internal mass migration, south-to-north, began (Arru and Ramella, 2003). Fundamentally, it can be summarised, borrowing the words of Enrico Pugliese, one of the few Italian scholars studying both internal and international Italian migration dialectically, that “the history of Italy between international and internal migration is

very complex and it reflects some of the peculiarities and the large transformations of the country” (2002: 13).⁸ The following sections will briefly recap the development of internal and international migratory flows within and from Italy since the Second World War, focusing on Europe, and the UK in particular, as destinations and highlighting their connections and interrelations.

2.4.2 An Overview of Italian Emigration

The inhabitants of the Italian peninsula have long been among the most migratory of people. Most Italian emigration took place within the hundred years between the 1870s and the 1970s. Mass emigration started soon after the unification of the country in 1861 and continued until the interwar Fascist regime, then resuming after the Second World War until the 1970s. Despite the general representation of Italian emigration as being mostly directed overseas, this was only true at the turn of the 20th century. Europe was the main destination of Italian migrants before 1900 and after the Second World War. In particular, France and Switzerland hosted an accumulation of approximately 4 million Italian migrants each (Fassmann and Münz, 1994).

Italian emigration has been complexly patterned across space and time and involved specific geographies of departure and destination. The northern regions, which were historically involved in seasonal migration to France and Switzerland, tended to reproduce this trend by sending emigrants mostly to continental European countries. Southern Italy instead tended to send more migrants overseas, due to different recruitment processes operating and also to transportation and logistic costs (at the end of the 19th century it was cheaper to ship migrants from southern Italy to New York than to transport them to northern Germany). Overall, after World War Two, Italian emigration became increasing Europeanised and Italian migrants – who came mostly from specific rural and impoverished areas in the north and south of Italy – were mostly working in the making of roads and buildings across Europe, and in factories of many types in many countries.

⁸ This translation of Pugliese’s words is my own.

Donna Gabaccia in her book “Italy’s Many Diasporas” (2000) offers an insightful analysis of the ways in which Italian emigration worldwide has produced a number of distinct diasporas, differentiated by historical epoch and by regional origin. According to Gabaccia, Italian diasporas rested on migrants’ identification and feelings of belonging with their town or cities of origins, rather than forming a single, shared, Italian national diaspora based on a common feeling of national identity. In this context, it is interesting to note that the role of Italian emigration in the making of modern Italy has only been recently recognised (Fondazione Migrantes, 2011). The publication of a volume of the “Annales of Italian History” by Corti and Sanfilippo in 2009 dedicated to Italian emigration is possibly the turning point of this trend. Nevertheless, Italian emigration, including the mass transoceanic flows of the past centuries, are still hardly mentioned in any school handbook of modern Italian history in Italy. As Gabaccia argued (1997), a global, comparative and systematic interpretation of the history of Italian emigration and its impact on both the nation building and the Italian national identity still needs to be explored.

2.4.3 Italian Emigration to the UK

Italian emigration to the UK has a long history. Even though the number of Italians in the UK has never reached the scale of other European countries, such as France, Germany, or Switzerland, Italians have settled in the British Isles and in particular in the city of London since the Middle Ages. At the beginning, migrants were mostly scholars and members of the Italian elite. Then, from the 19th century, artisans with different skills settled around the central London neighbourhoods of Holborn and Clerkenwell.

However, it is the period after World War Two that witnessed the largest arrival of Italian migrants who were involved in a traditional kind of labour migration from impoverished rural areas, mostly in the Campania region of southern Italy, which brought unskilled Italian migrants to work in the industrial areas to the north of London, in particular to the brick factories of Bedford and Peterborough. The Italian population in the UK increased from 38,000 in 1951 to 108,000 in 1971 (D’Angelo, 2007). From the 1970s onward, changing labour demands and the expansion of the service sector in

both Italy and the UK signalled the end of this typology of migration and the beginning of what would become the new wave of Italian emigration to the UK.

The emergence of a new and distinct Italian migration to the UK began in the 1980s, continuing increasingly during the 1990s until the present, thanks to the expansion of cheap transportation and mobile technologies. This new flow is characterised by the presence of young, generally middle-class and well-educated individuals who move primarily to London for educational and professional reasons and from different geographical areas. The new migrants have little or no contact with the members of the past migrations. They tend to live scattered around the London area and indeed seem unaware of the traditional forms of association instituted for Italians abroad (Bartolini and Volpi, 2005). Instead, internet forums and social networks such as Facebook seem to be the most common ways for them to interact and exchange information (Scotto, 2010).

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) has recently carried out a study based on the LFS (Labour Force Survey) in the UK which looks at the economic contribution of different migrant groups in the UK, including Italians. The sample of the Italian community analysed comprised a mix of previous and recent migratory flows: it is comprised by 28% of recent Italian migrants, arrived since 1996, and the average age of respondents is 51 years old (IPPR, 2007: 14). Thus, it is only partly indicative of the new migratory trends. Nevertheless, the study shows that the Italian community in the UK is generally moving upward in term of average salary and employment, with scores that are now very close to the UK cohort. In terms of employment distribution, the IRRP looks only at the contribution of migrant groups in the public sector. In the case of the Italians, 29% of the working sample analysed is employed in the public sector, especially in Education, 10%; and Health and Social Care, 10% (IPPR, 2007: 31).

Students, graduates, researchers and professionals made up the bulk of the new Italian migration to the UK. Their migrations are usually unstructured and temporary in intention (even though it is very difficult to estimate the number of permanent settlers and returnees), partly driven by the faster expansion of the service-based economy, and of a graduate labour market, in the UK compared to Italy. More information on the general characteristic of the new migrants are also available through the latest notes

“Appunto” of the Italian Embassy in London on the Italian community. This source stresses the increasing numbers of Italian professionals migrating and working in the city of London in the financial, research and the service sectors and also the continuing primary presence of Italians in the catering (restaurants, snack-bars etc.) sectors (Ambasciata D’Italia, 2007).

2.4.4 The Rise of Internal Migration

Internal migration within Italy has also a long history. For example, the population of the city of Turin during the mid 19th century consisted 40% of “*forestieri*”, so-called foreigners or “outsiders” from other regions in the Italian peninsula (which at the time were different states); while the city of Rome has always attracted people from all over the peninsula and beyond (Arru and Ramella, 2003). Nevertheless, the historical moment which most Italians associate with the phenomenon of internal migration is the industrial boom of the 1950s and 1960s, the so-called “*Miracolo Italiano*”, which was led by the industrial cities of Milan, Turin and Genoa where the largest industries were concentrated (Ginsborg, 1998). During this period, approximately 4 million Italians left the impoverished and largely rural areas of the south and islands, and migrated towards the industrial urban centres in the north and to the city of Rome.

Italian uneven regional economic development can be identified as the underlying cause of these internal migrations. In fact, Italy is still nowadays characterised by a deep divide in terms of economic development and level of industrialisation between the north of the country – which is the richest and most prosperous part – and the south, which is poorly industrialised and from many points of view still underdeveloped (Dunford and Greco, 2005). The causes of the uneven distribution of wealth within the country have a long history. Nevertheless, it is not too much of a generalisation to say that historically the south of Italy has been penalised by decades (and for some historians, even centuries) of corrupted administration and chronic lack of investments which have resulted in low levels of industrialisation, development and modern infrastructures combined with a growing informal or underground market for jobs and services (Barberis, 2004; Bollati, 1983; Ginsborg, 1998).

In this context, internal flows can be viewed as the result of the dualistic south-north divide that characterises Italy's national economy. Evidence of the persistence of this uneven regional development can be found in a range of different indicators, such as the distribution of income levels across the country – which showed in 2003 the deepest regional disparities of any country in the EU; and the distribution of relative poverty across the country, which shows that most of the Italian families living in relative poverty, 65% of the total, live in the south (ISTAT data reported in Berti and Zanolli, 2008: 16).

In terms of their composition, the internal flows of the 1950-1970s were different from the international and transoceanic streams – which were mostly comprised of impoverished and unskilled peasants – as they included members of the southern rural bourgeoisie, which incorporated young, competitive male workers and skilled professionals. Nevertheless, these south-north internal migrants also included large numbers of poor, unskilled rural-origin workers who took jobs in the factories and construction sites of the main northern cities. Moreover, while international migrations flows were mostly temporary in intention, internal flows of the 1950s-1970s were conceived and resulted in definitive moves and settlements which have been instrumental in the transformation of Italy into a urban and industrial society (Pugliese, 2002; Raymer, Bonaguidi and Valentini, 2006). This also included southern cities, which during the same period witnessed a growth in size due to the increase of inter-provincial migration within and across southern regions.

Overall, it can be claimed that internal migration has been a key element of social change in Italy, transforming the urban landscapes of Italy by favouring urbanisation and industrialisation, and also affecting the rural areas of the Mezzogiorno, where the occupational structure changed because of migration, and agriculture became an occupation largely in the hands of females and elders (Arru and Ramella, 2003).

2.4.5 Internal Migration in the 1990s

The historical development of internal migratory flows in Italy followed and coincided with social and economic transformations on the macro level. The mass internal

migration to the industrial cities in the north decreased drastically with the collapse and restructuring of the Fordist industrial system following the oil crisis in 1973. Consequently, during the 1980s inter-regional migration was at its minimum rate, while moves within each region to suburban areas increased (Bonifazi and Heins, 2000).

During the 1990s, Italy experienced important transformations in its social and economic structure: economically, the country still suffered from the decreased primacy of the industrial mode of production due to the emergence of the knowledge and service-based economy, which Italy has been slow to embrace (Reyneri, 2005). Moreover, due to other changes happening in the social sphere – particularly in terms of family structure due to the growing emancipation of women – fertility dropped drastically. At the same time, the population was ageing and the economy was becoming, for the first time in its modern history, more and more dependent on the work of immigrants, who had started to arrive in large numbers to Italy (Pugliese, 2002).

Around the mid 1990s, an increase of internal migratory flows started to be observed. The new flows of migrants coming from the south and the islands were predominately directed toward the north-east of the country, the so-called “The Third Italy”, which has recently witnessed an economic and industrial boom based on the expansion of small-scale skilled production units which offered a valuable alternative to the large-scale traditional industrial model of the north-west (Dunford and Greco, 2005).

According to the Svimez, the number of graduates leaving the south is constantly increasing. In 1992, those who left the south were 6% of the total graduates, while in 2001 they were 22% (D’Antonio and Scarlato, 2007: 34). In this regard, a recent paper by Capuano (2011) has shown that a veritable internal brain drain is taking place, which sees the most skilled graduates leaving the south for either the north or the central regions of the country. Moreover, Capuano pointed to the social class dimension of these moves, arguing that having parents in high-level occupations significantly deters migration.

In terms of internal migration trajectories, the study carried out by Berti and Zanutelli (2008) on internal migrants living in the Valdelsa region of Tuscany indicates that the

new internal migrations are very precarious and temporary, both in terms of migrants' intentions and of actual occupations. These authors suggest that internal moves are conditioned by the high level of job insecurity that characterises the current condition of the Italian labour market and economy. Therefore, individuals tend to follow job opportunities whenever and for how long they can find them, without making long-term settlement plans in the host regions. Consequently, these new migrations may be even more difficult to quantify statistically as migrants, given their precarious conditions, prefer not to change their residency officially, making their moves very difficult to trace.

There are also indications that the family plays a decisive role in the resumption of internal migration by financially supporting the decisions to migrate of its younger family members, in the hope that mobility will be the key for improving their social status and achieving social mobility. This represents a big difference with the past, when migrants would generally leave the south precisely because of the lack of household resources available, and would then support their families through remittances (Pugliese, 2002).

Women in particular seem to represent an increasing share of the new internal migrations. This is generally viewed as a consequence of the increasing presence of Italian women in higher education and in the labour market, and more critically, is seen to be related to the higher difficulties experienced by young women in the south when looking for a job (Cammelli, 2009; Tagliacozzo, 2008).

Concluding, it should be emphasised that the current re-emergence of internal migration in Italy indicates the persistence of regional inequalities which have proven to be unresponsive to short-term changes in the social and economic spheres (Bonifazi and Heins, 2000). In fact, future mobility predictions indicate that prospective flows are likely to be a continuation of past trends, and thus will still involve large-scale south-north migration (Raymer et al., 2006). Recent internal migration has also been shown to have an effect on regional growth rates (Etzo, 2008), especially when large numbers of highly skilled migrants are involved. As a consequence, assuming that internal migratory flows will be ongoing, regional disparities in Italy are not likely to diminish in the future.

2.5 Theorising Migration and its Determinants

As a concept, migration stands for a variety of quite often distinct phenomena that range from forced migration and displacement (recent Pakistani flood victims for example) to retirement migration (British upper-middle class pensioners living in Tuscany for instance), including almost every other type of movement in between. It is very difficult to think of a general theory that may do justice to this wide range of human experiences and in fact, a general theory that explains all typologies of migration has hardly been attempted, and is not recommended (Castles, 2010).

Moving to new places, discovering new territories and at times conquering them, has always been a key element in the history of humanity. However, the nature, scale and patterns of migrations constantly change. For some scholars, the late 20th century has been a century particularly characterised by international migrations (Castles and Miller, 2009), while for others such as John Urry (2000; 2007; 2008), *mobilities* are the ultimate characteristic of the current phase of modernity.

This final section of this chapter will explore some of these issues.

2.5.1 Linking Migration and Society

Until now, a general theory of migration has not been pursued by scholars – Ravenstein’s *Laws of Migration* (1885) being a major exception, although the extent to which these “laws” (which comprised empirical generalisations) constitute a true “theory” can be debated. Some of the main difficulties in developing a universal theory of migration are related to the *historicity* of migrations: their existence at different points in space and time, as well as their diversity and complexity. This makes the development of a single migration model very difficult, if not impossible, for scholars.

Fischer, Martin and Straubhaar (1997) have identified at least three major “anomalies” in the development of migratory flows worldwide. Firstly, migration from poor to rich

countries is not as frequent as expected according to basic economic assumptions. Indeed the broad data on global migrations indicate that south-to-south and north-to-north moves are almost as important in scale terms as south-to-north movements (King, Black, Collyer, Fielding and Skeldon, 2010). Secondly, economic growth does not seem to reduce migration; rather, it may actually lead to an increase in migration as more people have access to the possibility of migration. And thirdly, in countries which present similar socio-economic conditions, migration rates are very different.

In this respect, it could also be assumed that the present development of migratory flows worldwide reflects the transformations taking place in contemporary societies, institutions and economies. One of the topics of this thesis, intra-European migration from Italy to the UK, is an example of these transformations and their impact on the nature of current migratory flows if we consider that the free right of movement across the EU, on which intra-European migration is based, is in itself a recent development of the contemporary history of Europe which was unforeseeable until few decades ago.

The relationship between migration and society is complexly multifaceted. On the one hand, migration can be seen as a product of a society and its particular historical conditions; on the other, scholars have emphasised the transformative force of migration on both the societies of origin and destination, arguing that the circulation of people, resources, information and ultimately cultures, has been a key element in the making of the modern nation states (Papastergiadis, 2000).

In the literature, distinct views of migration have been proposed. Scholars such as Saskia Sassen (1999) have proposed a systemic view of migration across European history which emphasises the structural conditions underlying the origin of migratory flows. According to Sassen, migrations are overall conditioned by historical, economic and demographic processes in specific locations which ultimately limit them in time, volume and space. However, on the whole the relationship between migration and western societies has not been static but has evolved across time. Scholars seem to agree in indicating that the nature of migration in Europe has changed quite dramatically since the previous centuries. In particular, according to Vitale (2004) the main transformation has been a shift from collective forms of migration to more individualised ones. The modern European migrant, according to Vitale, is alone, even when there are many

other migrants with similar background and motivations going through the same routes (2004). This is because there are not shared collective goals and intentions at the base of their migrations, but personal ones. Vitale's considerations resonate with recent studies' insights on skilled and intra-European migration (in particular, see Favell, 2008; Hadler, 2006; Recchi and Favell, 2009; Scott, 2006) previously cited in this chapter.

Moreover, in the contemporary scenario, another important element which is often associated with migration is the process of globalisation, which emphasises the interdependence of economic and social processes at a global level, challenging traditional conceptualisations of society and culture (Bauman, 1998; Papastergiadis, 2000). In this context, methodological nationalism – the naturalisation of the nation-state as the common unit of analysis for the social sciences, and in particular the equation of society with the nation-state – has been challenged by the emergence of the transnational perspective, which emphasises the connections *between* societies and cultures (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003).

In particular, social scientists such as Papastergiadis (2000) and Urry (2007) argue that migration, and the mobilities of people, goods, resources and information, are the quintessential characteristics of contemporary societies and this awareness should challenge the way in which social scientists look at contemporary social phenomena. Urry's ideas will be discussed in further detail in the following section which will look at the historical development of the involvement of sociology in the study of migration.

2.5.2 A Sociological Understanding of Migration

Sociology has shown an interest in migration and its effects on the host societies since its very foundation. The Chicago School's early works on the assimilation of migrants in the US are an example of this trend (see the overview of Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003). Nowadays, the interests and objects of sociology as an academic discipline have become very diverse and the discipline itself is no longer characterised by a definite object of enquiry but by a general approach which tends to emphasise the social embeddedness of individual behaviours and social phenomena. According to the Italian sociologist Laura Zanfrini (2004), the sociological approach to migration is

characterised by a view of migration as a system of social relations which involve migrants, non-migrants and potential migrants. In her perspective, migrations are generally considered by sociologists as “*total social facts*” (Mazzadra, 2006; Zanfrini, 2004) which are the result of a plurality of factors – economic, social, cultural and psychological – whose complexity is reflected in the identity of the subjects involved.

In this regard, a typically sociological perspective on migration would be, according to Faist (1997), developing a *meso level* explanatory framework, which takes into consideration both micro and macro factors, while at the same time recognising the semi-autonomy of migration from its structural causes. In particular, Faist (1997) has argued that, from a theoretical perspective, sociological approaches to migration have been mainly concerned firstly with immigrants’ incorporation in the host societies; and secondly, with the role of migrants’ networks (for example, Massey and García España, 1993). A key question that has, according to Faist (1997), remained unanswered is why some people migrate, while most do not; and why, among migrants, many choose to return to their home country, whilst others stay on. The present study aims to contribute to an understanding of this question in the case of Italian graduates.

From a grand theoretical perspective, Urry (2007; 2008) has been the main promoter of a revision of the social sciences in the form of a development of a “mobility paradigm”, in which all social relationships are conceptualised as “circulating entities” which necessitate some form of “connection” in order to exist (2008: 18). The mobility paradigm, according to Urry, examines how social relations necessitate the intermittent and intersecting movement of people, objects, information and images across distances. *Mobilities* are conceptualised in this optic as the general principle of modernity in the same ways in which concepts of *rationality* or *individuality* have been traditionally associated with modernity (Canzler, Kaufmann and Kesselring, 2008).

Thus, Urry (2007) has indicated that the sociological agenda for the 21st century should include studies of different transnational mobilities. This is because traditionally sociology has evolved around the concept of “society”, which was conceptualised as an “entity” within the nation states, and of “social processes” which were taking place within the national borders. Currently, due to the increasing internationalisation of the life-course and the blurring of the national borders, this is no longer the case as

individual lives, goods and technologies are increasingly mobile and influence more than one society at the same time.

In this context, it needs to be considered that typologies of migration have also evolved through time and if one takes on board what scholars have illustrated so far in terms of the emergence of new forms of intra-European mobilities by young, well-educated Europeans – migrating in voluntary and unstructured ways, outside strong communities or family dynamics – then the emergence of these migrations could be linked to the process of *individualisation* of the life-course as theorised by Beck and Giddens (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001; Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994; Giddens, 1984; 1991). Hence, the sociological concept of *agency* becomes more important.

2.5.3 Conceptualising Migration and Agency

The question about the demographic and social selectivity of migratory processes remains very critical, as most of the world's poor people do not migrate, but stay living in their places of origin. In this regard, migration can be viewed as the possibility and ability to pursue an alternative life-course, which is not equally shared across any population because – at least initially – migration necessitates some threshold levels and forms of financial capital and information about the destination in order to be initiated.

The sociological concept of individual *agency* – broadly defined as the capacity for social actors to reflect on their positions, devise strategies and take action to achieve their desired goals – is often implied in the analysis of migratory intentions and motivations, but it is hardly ever discussed as a factor *per se* (Bakewell, 2010). This is mostly because attributing agency to migrants is a problematic assumption, which may tend to obscure the contextual factors that, on the one hand, may play a role in enabling an individual to take the decision to migrate – such as the access to information and to resources – and on the other, may obscure the structural conditions which condition and in some cases limit the decision to migrate. Also, even if the quintessence of human agency may seem to be embodied in the individual, single individuals are not the only entities that reach decisions and act accordingly. In the case of migration, states, government agencies and different types of organisation are examples of social actors

with an agency, and agency cannot be simply equated with decision-making capabilities. Moreover, agency is not a universally stated concept, and different societies and cultures interpret and construct it differently (Long and Long, 1992). Finally, attributing or recognising agency to a group or an organisation does not imply that others do not have it. As subsequent chapters will illustrate, these considerations are particularly relevant in the case of Italian graduates whose agency can be recognised, whether or not they migrate.

The concept of “social structure” applied to migration is somehow even more problematic to define and to categorise. According to Bakewell (2010), once as researchers we start to look at the social milieu in which people exercise agency, we generally move toward a discussion of social structures. These, however, tend to be conceptualised as static and unchanging entities which are separated from the individuals involved, thus preventing any comprehensive account of the ways in which migration tends to change social realities.

The conceptualisation of the relationships between individual agency and social structure which my research gravitates around is the one proposed by Giddens in his *Structuration Theory* (1984). Giddens’ theory predicates that the relationship between agency, the individual, and social structure needs to be conceptualised as a duality, which implies mutual dependence of agency and structure. In his view, social structures are a set of rules and resources which are both enabling and constraining for the individuals. For Giddens, a person’s actions are embedded within, and constitute elements of, institutional structures that stretch well beyond the individual in time and space. Moreover, according to Giddens, structures are not independent of the knowledge that agents have about their actions in everyday life. In this respect, human agents possess, according to Giddens, more knowledge of their societies than is normally assumed because of their “practical consciousness”, a tacit kind of knowledge about their society, which enables them to carry on different aspects of their social lives (1984: xxiii). Giddens’ notion of agency indicates the capability to do something, which is not necessarily deliberate (1984: 9), and it postulates that every act of an individual is at the same time an act of social reproduction because the structures that make all actions possible are, in the performance of such action, reproduced. Therefore,

structures are constituted by human agency and are also the very same medium of this constitution.

According to Bakewell (2010), Giddens' structuration theory has been typically used in migration studies by those researchers who felt the need to acknowledge the importance of taking into account both structure and agency in their research. However, in Bakewell's opinion, the use of Giddens' theory poses its own set of risks and limitations, primarily because it does not offer any precise indication as to how to conduct research and how to account for the duality of structure and agency. Bakewell (2010) argues this point by referring, among other studies, to his own personal experience of researching Angolan refugees in Zambia and the difficulties he encountered trying to account for their very limited agency using Giddens' theory.

Despite the timeliness and usefulness of Bakewell's critique, I believe that Giddens' approach to structure and agency remains the most suitable in the case of my research on Italian graduates and their mobility patterns. This is primarily because Italian graduates can be generally assumed to be a fairly resourceful category of migrants possessing, by definition, a high level of education, and are from a relatively wealthy European country, with all the political and institutional advantages that derive from this particular condition both within and outside Italy. In the case of Italian graduates migrating to the UK, this is particularly evident in their unconditional access to work and social security in the UK as well as the transferability of their degrees.

Nevertheless, I would agree with Bakewell in advocating that Giddens' theoretical framework needs to be questioned in its claims and assumptions in order to be used sensibly. In this regard, apart from his structuration theory, Giddens has also elaborated, together with Beck and Lash (Beck et al., 1994), the emergence of a second phase of modernity in western societies following the epochal social and economic transformations that occurred during the 20th century. These include the re-structuration of the world economy, the end of full-employment societies, the sexual revolution of the 1960s and the advent of global media. "Second modernity" is characterised, according to these scholars, by a high degree of *individualisation*, a weakening of social and family ties and the emergence of fragmented life trajectories.

Even if they share critical elements, Beck's and Giddens' theories are somehow separated by their different aims and focus. As Beck pointed out in an interview about the difference between his and Giddens' work, *reflective modernisation* as the foundation of modernity is the actual core of Giddens' theory, while in the case of his own work, Beck pointed to the unintended consequences of the process of modernisation, which include individualisation processes and the "do-it-yourself biography" (Beck and Willms, 2004).

In particular, according to Beck, the socio-economic and technical transformations which occurred in western societies have resulted in individuals experiencing fragmented and unpredictable life-courses in which social destiny is no longer certain and social trajectories are multi-directional. The individual has been placed in charge on his/her own destiny and this leads to the necessity of making multiple choices. Moreover, inherent in the process of "institutionalised individualisation" is that the central institutions of modern societies, including paid employment, work by focusing on individuals rather than collective entities (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001), and they lead individuals to feel personally responsible for their lives. This is not to say that risks and inequalities have stopped being socially produced, because they are not; it is just the necessity to cope with them that has been individualised (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001: xv). Moreover, despite the wide range of choices available for the individual in this historical moment, the process of individualisation, according to Beck (1992), is not based on the free decision of individuals, as people are ultimately condemned to individualisation. Another key difference between Beck's and Giddens' ideas is their conceptualisations of reflexivity. If for Giddens, the self is a reflective project (1991), for Beck decisions are demanded and are inescapably risky (Beck, 1992; 1994).

To be sure, the theories of Beck and Giddens have been heavily criticised for their universalistic and ethnocentric assumptions, but they nevertheless remain very influential across the social sciences and migration studies. One of the main sociological critiques of individualisation theories, put forward by Furlong and Cartmel (1997), pointed to the existence of an epistemological fallacy embedded in the theory of second modernity, where the structural dimensions of inequalities, in terms of social class, gender and so on, still deeply influence individual life chances in western societies, but

have increasingly become more obscure. Meanwhile, Elliot (2002) has criticised the concept of individualisation because it seems to rest too much on a rational-choice model overlooking other external influences over an individual's behaviours, such as the mass media. The increasingly significant role of mass media in western societies has been the subject of a vast literature, including the works of Appadurai (2001), Morley (2000) and Rapport and Dawson (1988). Other commentators have questioned whether social continuities have been really eroded in the second modernity (Brannen and Nilsen, 2002; Evans, 2007; Heelas, 1996; Mythen, 2005). However, Woodman (2009) has argued that most of these critiques, particularly concerning Beck's ideas of a *choice biography*, are the result of sociologists' general tendency to misinterpret Beck's work in an attempt to preserve a more balanced view of the role of agency and structure within society. Therefore, even the counter arguments need to be questioned and contextualised. Moreover, according to Woodman (2009), Beck's main theoretical contribution to sociology has been the suggestion that concepts such as class are no longer capable to reflect properly the "real" and changing social world. In this respect, his concept of individualisation should be considered as an alternative to analyse the current dynamics between structural inequalities and the ways in which those continue to affect individuals.

The following section will look at the development of theories and approaches on the initiation and perpetuation of migration.

2.5.4 The Study of Migratory Determinants

Reflecting the lack of a general theory of migration, the study of migratory determinants has traditionally been carried out quite independently by different scholars from different disciplines. Massey and an associated group of other scholars are responsible for a useful and systematic organisation of the main theories and approaches developed on the study of migration and its origins (Massey et al., 1998). According to their categorisation, it is generally acknowledged that economists made the first attempts at explaining migratory flows. According to the neo-classical economic paradigm, all migrations (both internal and international) are caused by the existence of differences across countries and regions of different levels of supply and demand of labour, which

are responsible for wage differentials and different life standards. According to this logic, an individual acts as a “rational actor” in deciding to migrate, following a cost-benefit calculation which leads him/her to expect a positive return from moving. Thus, migration is seen as an investment in human capital, as people migrate where they can be the most productive.

One of the most common criticisms of this perspective is that neo-classical economic models are *a-historical*, as in principle these differential conditions can take place anywhere at any time; and they do not take into consideration the social and historical contexts in which labour market dynamics evolve and express themselves (Zanfrini, 2004). Moreover, the neo-classical models do not explain or account for different typologies of migration worldwide, as outlined by Hammar et al. (1997), or for the reasons why migrants are not generally the poorest category of citizens in their home country, and thus the ones who would seem to have more to gain by migrating.

Nevertheless, this simple and compelling model has strongly shaped, and still does, public opinion on migration and the making of many immigration policies. This is partly because of its many implicit assumptions: for example, that the elimination of wage differentials across countries would end migrations; and that labour markets are the primary organisms that induce migrations and therefore, by controlling them, governments would ultimately be able to control migration.

An attempt to improve the neo-classical perspective on migration has been made within the same economics discipline. The “new economics of migration” was developed, of which Stark (Stark and Taylor, 1991; Stark, 2005) is a key exponent. This approach takes into consideration variables outside of the labour market. According to this model, migration in developing countries is a household decision rather than an individual one, and is taken to increase family income while minimising possible risks. Moreover, looking at the push-factors in the country of origin, Stark developed the concept of “relative deprivation” which indicates that migrants’ perception of wealth is made in relation to their community of origin which represents the reference point for individuals and their families.

The main criticism of this approach is that it limits attention to the influence of the community of origin. Especially with the development of communication technology since the 19th century, news and perceptions of wealth and opportunities may also be coming from outside the local milieu, and especially through information sent by previous migrants.

From a different theoretical perspective, dual labour market theory and world systems theory looked at migration not as an individual or as a household decision but as the result of the intrinsic demands for labour of modern industrial societies (dual labour market perspective); or as the result of the structure of the world market economy (Massey et al., 1998). A corollary of world system theory is that the world economy is generally managed from relatively small number of cities in which finance, administration and professional services are concentrated. These “global cities” (Sassen, 2001) – New York, London, Tokyo, etc. – attract and direct many migrants worldwide, both skilled and unskilled. According to this model, migration is shaped by the same logic that characterised the development of capitalism and it needs to be conceptualised as a fruit of the capitalist logic.

Potential limitations of these more structuralist approaches are that they do not seem to take into consideration that the decision to migrate of any individual is embedded in the historical, social and cultural contexts of the countries involved. In this regard, the role of space and locality is surely important, i.e. the particular history and culture of emigration of specific areas, especially in terms of the existing networks and linkages between spaces and people. Networks in fact, play an important role in the perpetuation of migratory cycles and have been generally considered as the single most important variable affecting the continuation of existing migratory flows to specific localities. At the same time, the existence of a migratory culture in a specific location has been shown to play a considerable role by favouring the view of migration as a socially accepted option for new and potential migrants (Massey et al., 1998). The concept of culture, according to Bottomley (1992), is largely unexplored in migration studies because of the inherent difficulty in measuring its effect on migratory processes, though the notion of culture as a “way of life” is naturally important in the study of migrants as people who leave one place to move to another. In some places, indeed, migration become a “way of life”.

Place-identity has been the subject of many studies from different disciplines (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Rapport and Dawson, 1998). Nevertheless, there is not a grand theory adequate to explain comprehensively the links between an individual's identity and the environment (Cuba and Hummon, 1993). As Dixon and Durrheim (2000) have argued, questions of personal identity, of “who we are”, are often intimately linked to questions of “where we are”, even though place-identity is often taken for granted until this association is questioned or broken, as in the case of migration.

2.5.5 Recent Developments in the Study of Migratory Determinants

Recent studies of migratory determinants and intentions have indicated that individuals' reasons to migrate can be more diverse than traditional labour or economy-driven approaches have suggested. In this section, an overview of the most important findings and theoretical developments will be proposed with particular emphasis on the cases of intra-European migration and Italian migration as the contextual topics of this thesis.

The autonomy of migration from its causes has been generally recognised by migration scholars. For example, Castles and Miller stated in *The Age of Migration* (2009) that international migration can develop independently from the policies of different governments because it is people that, apart from governments, give force to migratory flows. A more radical view has been proposed by Papastergiadis (2000) who sees contemporary migrations as phenomena characterised by “turbulence” and unpredictability, even though this view does not always find agreement across migration scholars as the ensuing discussion will demonstrate.

A recent paper by Van Dalen and Henkens (2007) on the migratory intentions of Dutch citizens indicated that public domain factors, which include services and infrastructures provided by the state (such as education and welfare), environment and personality traits (in particular, self-efficacy and sensation-seeking), are significant determinants in the intention to migrate of Dutch citizens. Moreover, Van Dalen and Henkens indicate that potential Dutch migrants may decide to migrate despite an expected decrease of their salary if they consider their gains in other areas as more important.

These findings are supported by other studies on the decisions to migrate of European citizens. As previously illustrated in the case of graduate migration to the UK and highly skilled migration, the migration of young, middle-class and well-educated individuals is generally considered not to be driven solely by economic reasoning but by individual and personal considerations surrounding life-style and the perception of the general opportunities available in the host country (Conradson and Latham, 2005b; Favell, 2008; Smith and Favell, 2006). This view has also been supported by the psychotherapist Greg Madison (2006) who has labelled as “existential” the voluntary migration of young and educated individuals across advanced industrialised societies. In his view, these migrations are mostly driven by people’s desire to explore foreign cultures in order to access and express their own identity.

Moreover, a recent study carried out by Hadler (2006) has shown that, despite traditional socio-economic theories predicting that mobility is more likely to happen from less developed countries to more developed ones, this is only true when looking at single countries within Europe; between countries, the highest intentions to move are found in more developed areas. It is worth highlighting the relevance of these findings for the Italian case and its contribution to an integrated study of internal and international migration patterns within and across Europe. Hadler pointed out that economic factors do not explain, on their own, people’s decision to migrate. Other significant elements influencing individuals’ intentions to migrate are the desire for a better social life; issues related to quality of life; and – above all – having children, which decreases the intention to migrate regardless of the country (2006: 117-135).

As the literature on student migration indicates, migration is rarely a single action and its propensity tends to be enhanced by engaging in previous mobility at an early stage in life (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). Overall, this body of literature suggests that migratory decision-making processes are often subtle and far-reaching rather than a simple and rational “costs and benefits” type of analysis, as recent interdisciplinary studies on the subject have demonstrated (see Brettell and Hollifield, 2007).

The question of gender is also often overlooked. Even though recent studies are attempting to fill this gap (Ackers, 2003; Kofman and Raghuram, 2006; Kofman,

Phjizacklea, Raghuram and Sales, 2000; Tagliacozzo, 2008; Todisco, Cristaldi, Cariani and Tattolo, 2004), women have been historically excluded in the study of migration or reduced to the role of accompanying partners or to the study of family reunification processes. This has had the effect of overshadowing the diversity of women's experiences of migration. In addition, there is evidence that, in terms of decision-making processes in other areas of life, such as careers and education, men and women tend to give different priority to aspects of their lives such as family and relationships (Crompton, 2006; 1999; Govier, 1998; Procter and Padfield, 1998; Radford, 1998; Woodfield, 2007). Therefore, it could be assumed that gender plays a significant role in the decision to migrate at different levels, even though this dynamic and the question of how migration is initiated and perpetuated is largely under-theorised.

In addition, studies which focus on the determinants to migrate generally fail to explain the reasons why, even within countries with presumed strong migratory cultures such as Ireland and Italy (King and Shuttleworth, 1995b), some people migrate, but most people do not. The case of Italian graduates which will be analysed in this thesis reflects precisely this paradox. In a country in which one could assume that a "culture of migration" might exist due to the long and recurrent history of both internal and international migration (Choate, 2007; Gabaccia, 2000), two different trends can be observed: on one hand, the majority of Italian graduates stay living at home with their parents (Buzzi Cavalli and de Lillo, 2007); on the other, more and more graduates move within and outside the country every year (Becker et al., 2003).

In order to analyse the complex relationships between stayers and migrants in each country, Hammar et al. (1997) have highlighted the importance of studying *immobility* in combination with migration, arguing it is only possible to grasp the complexity of individuals' migratory behaviour by looking at mobilities in comparison with immobility. This is the approach taken in my study. So far, the question of why most people do not move – in spite of significant differences in terms of wages, employment and life-style opportunities between regions and countries – has been traditionally overlooked although a sub-literature on "immobility" has started to develop (Cairns, 2009; Carling, 2002; Fischer and Malmberg, 2001; Hammar et al., 1997; Werner and Barcus, 2009). This recognition seems particularly important in countries like Italy with a long history of migration, where mobility patterns are varied and, to some extent,

contradictory. Italian graduates' migratory patterns, the subject of this thesis, are an example of this phenomenon. In fact, Italian graduates, on the one hand, display high rates of both international and internal mobility (Becker et al., 2003; Capuano, 2011). On the other hand, those who are immobile tend to stay living with their parents for a prolonged period of their adult lives (Buzzi et al., 2007).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the main concepts and themes surrounding the study of internal and international patterns of Italian graduate migration. In particular, the state of knowledge on graduate migration and its cognate academic fields have been explored, paying particular attention to the ways in which knowledge and understanding of migratory flows and their causes have evolved through time. In this respect, the theoretical and methodological shift from a traditional economic-based structural understanding of push and pull factors toward a more holistic and multifaceted approach to the study of migratory determinants has been discussed. In particular, the relevance of studying Italian graduate migration has been shown in relation to the significance of Italian migration in the country's national history and the critical role occupied by graduates in its current scenario.

In conclusion, it could be argued that a single theoretical perspective is often not adequate to make sense of the multiple factors which play a role in the emergence, patterning and perpetuation of both internal and international migration. As King and Skeldon (2010) have recently argued, comparative and inter-disciplinary studies which recognise the blurring of old distinctions and models of migration, such as temporary versus permanent, internal versus international, voluntary versus forced, etc. are needed. This thesis aims to take a step in this direction as I share the view advocated by scholars in recent years, that there is a need to understand migration *from within* (Zanfrini, 2004; Findlay et al., 2005; Massey et al., 1998; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002).

CHAPTER 3

ITALY AND ITALIANS: BACKGROUND TO MIGRATION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will look at the characteristics of Italy as a country of emigration and of internal migration for its graduates. Its aim is to provide a critical portrayal of the context in which these movements are taking place, based on secondary literature. The making and the characteristics of Italy as a modern nation state are discussed in the first part of the chapter which focuses on the historical difficulty of forging an Italian national identity and the debates surrounding the negative features of its national character, particularly in terms of the lack of civic values. Secondly, the “southern question” – the existence of sharp and persistent regional inequalities between the south and the north of the country – will be examined since its emergence in the aftermath of Italy’s unification until the present day. In this regard, the traditional view of a “backward” Italian south as opposed to a “modern” north will be critically discussed, especially in light of recent research which has challenged stereotypical views of the south of Italy and highlighted the critical role of the Italian state’s policies in reproducing the south-north divide. In the final section, my analysis will move to consider some of the present issues affecting Italy’s young generations. In this context, the particularly long transition to adulthood and the associated professional and social precariousness experienced by young Italian adults will be illustrated and discussed.

3.2 Italy as a Modern Nation State

Since its early stages, the Italian state has struggled to build a relation of loyalty and identification with its citizens. The famous expression attributed to the nationalist Massimo D’Azeglio in the aftermath of unification in 1860, “we made Italy, now we must make Italians” (Gabaccia, 2000:11), encompassed what was then, and has remained still nowadays, one of the recurrent issues of Italy as a modern nation state, that is the fragile and problematic relationship between its governments and its citizens. The foundation of modern Italy, the *Risorgimento* (literally “the resurgence”), was a top-down process, guided by a relatively small group of nationalist intellectuals who took the initiative to unite what had been for centuries a peninsula characterised by political, linguistic and cultural fragmentation. Geographically, too, the Italian “space” has always been fragmented: the Alps, the Po plain, the long chain of the Apennines forming the backbone of the peninsula, and the large islands of Sicily and Sardinia form a diversity of regions, climates and cultures that historically have been detached from each other, hampered by large distances and poor communications.

3.2.1 Italy’s Unfinished Nation-Building

The task of nation-building is, according to John Dickie (1996), a metaphor which is made of two main elements: the concrete initiatives carried out by the state such as propaganda, increased communication, educational initiatives and so forth; and socio-cultural changes which are not entirely in the hands of the state. The latter can create the conditions in which a nationalistic feeling may emerge and be embraced by a population, but its successful outcome is not guaranteed. In the case of Italy, the distrust of Italians for their state, institutions and governments has been a constant worry for the ruling classes. Early nationalists saw, in their shared pride for the artistic and humanist achievements produced within the peninsula, particularly during the Renaissance, the potential source of the nation’s cultural roots. This belief, however, found little support among the mostly poor, rural and largely uneducated inhabitants of 19th century Italy (Gabaccia, 2000). The ideal of a united Italy, both politically and culturally, was often

being promoted by Italian thinkers in exile or living abroad, as in the cases of Garibaldi and Mazzini, two key figures of Italy's unification (Duggan, 1994). The willingness to unite the country did not emerge from within; and as a matter of fact, most of the inhabitants of the peninsula welcomed it with scepticism.

Moreover, in the aftermath of its foundation, migration from Italy reached impressive proportion with 14 million Italians, mostly men, leaving the country during the four decades before World War One. Italians abroad were as fragmented, in terms of their identity and loyalties to different home towns and villages, as Italians in Italy. The turning points for the real cultural unification of the country were the World Wars and the advent of Fascism. Mussolini tried hard to impose among Italians a sense of national identity and loyalty, promoting a love for the country rather than for the home towns (Gabaccia, 2000). To some extent, he succeeded, even though still nowadays it is often claimed that the quest of making a strong and shared national identity among Italians has failed.

This popular negative assessment of Italy's *Risorgimento* is also related to the fact that the process of Italian Unification and its outcomes have been historically assessed in light of what happened subsequently, in particular the rise of Fascism, and not in its own terms as an historical process per se (Carter, 1996). The collapse in the early 1990s of the First Italian Republic and of its party system – culminating with the arrest of many high profile politicians and the subsequent advent of Berlusconi's populist policy and controversial persona and the political rise of the Northern League party and its federalist agenda – have been considered by scholars as renewed signals of a break in the relationship between the Italian state and its citizens (Dickie, 1996; 2001; Duggan, 1994). The tension between a fragile but desired (at least by some) national loyalty and identity, and a pessimistic view of its achievability, can be considered as one of the main features of the Italian national discourse still today. The next section will look more deeply into these notions.

3.2.2 *Nationalism and National Character*

Nationalism is an intensively private phenomenon, capable of provoking powerful emotions such as pride, nostalgia and even embarrassment, as well as a very public, institutional and collective phenomenon in its manifestations (Dickie, 1996). Considering Italy's difficulty in building a national identity, it is not surprising that most scholars have argued that nationalism and patriotism in Italy are quite weak at both levels. To begin with, there are very few rituals and even monuments – in a country characterised by an impressive artistic heritage – dedicated to the values of patriotism and the glorification of Italian history. The official festivity to celebrate the unification of the country, the 20th of September, is hardly noticeable. It was a primary goal of the previous president of the Italian Republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, to re-introduce in 2000 the 2nd June, official anniversary of the Italian Republic, as an official festivity, which was previously mostly forgotten. The national unification itself is only celebrated as a festivity every 50 years.

This lack of enthusiasm and of interest for collective manifestations of nationalism in Italy can be explained, according to Lanaro (1988), by the lack of a “*siglo de oro*” (golden era) in the history of Italian nation-making, which was characterised by a series of local events and charismatic leaders scattered across different centuries which then ultimately culminated in the “unexpected” Unification of the 1860s. Since then, the Italian state seems to have failed in becoming and providing the necessary point of reference that Italian citizens needed, mostly because of the corruption, and the political *trasformismo* that characterised many of its governments (Altan, 2000). I return to the definition of “transformism” below.

However, other factors also need to be considered. Italian nationalism is characterised, rather ironically, by a chronic “inverted patriotism” (Dickie, 2001), of which the worry over the inadequacy of Italy as a modern nation state and a pessimistic view of the “perceived” immutable negative features of its “national character” are the main characteristics. The Italian state itself does not look at its citizens as allies or in a

benevolent way, so the mistrust between citizens and institutions is to a certain extent reciprocal. Since its foundation, the Italian state perceived the “Italian character” as a political problem which needed to be fixed. Italians needed to be made, or better transformed into loyal citizens, possibly suppressing along the way their feelings of belonging and attachment to local places, home towns and communities which have historically characterised them. The political discourse around the notion of the Italian national character is quite revealing in itself of the complexity of this issue. As Bollati argued in a famous essay (1983), the Italian national character was a project that existed well before the *Risorgimento* but what became significant about it was the political use that the Italian state made of it since its foundation.

The concept of national character implies the existence of objective dispositions of a population, which supposedly shares certain common moral and psychological traits. This notion has been increasingly abandoned by scholars looking at nationalism (see for example, Anderson, 1983). However, in the case of Italy, intellectuals, both within and outside of Italy, have always been particularly interested and concerned with the nature of the Italian national character. Among the attributes which have been more often associated with Italy and being Italian, *transformism* and *familism* have been the most recurrent. Transformism refers to the political practice of forming a coalition with members of the opposition party. It is usually used in negative terms to indicate a disposition to create political compromises in order to protect personal interests (Altan, 2000). The concept of familism, or better of “amoral familism” was introduced by the North American anthropologist Edward Banfield (1958) in his famous study of a southern Italian village in the 1950s. The term “familism” generally refers to the cultural practice of prioritising the interests of one’s family over those of one’s community. Here again, especially in Banfield’s use of the term, familism has a negative connotation as it constitutes the “moral base of a backward society” (1958).

It could be argued that both transformism and familism are not really Italian peculiarities. In many countries, family interests are seen as primary and transformism is not a rare practice in international politics. Nevertheless, these two concepts, together with other vices as well as a few positive traits, of which “Italians are good- hearted people” (“*brava gente*”) would be one example, came to be deeply associated by observers and scholars with Italians as a population and Italy as a country. According to

Patriarca (2001; 2010), the reasons for this association are to be found in the genealogy of the discourse around the Italian national character which has a long intellectual and political history. In her view, the reasons why Italians still nowadays believe that social and cultural traits such as corruption and familism are part of their “national character” is because anti-Italian feelings have been embedded in the political and intellectual discourses surrounding their national character for centuries. This is partly because historically Italian intellectuals and scholars have been quite often cosmopolitan in their views and life-styles and felt and created a distance between themselves and the average Italian citizens, whose vices and inadequacies vis-à-vis more civilised and modern countries they often emphasised. It should be noted that not all scholars agree with Patriarca’s thesis on the historical responsibility of Italian intellectuals for the development of a weak national identity (see Garboli, 1997), and Ferrarotti (1997) maintains that the relationships between collective memory and national history are necessarily unresolved and problematic.

And yet, as previously stated, the belief in the need to forge Italians as loyal citizens was part of the project of nation-building from the start. In this context, the views of Italian nationalists and early politicians were characterised by the belief that the “other” existed within the national borders, and especially in the South whose inhabitants were regarded as primitive peasants or *terroni*, “earth grubbers”. In synthesis, the discourse of the national character has been produced, according to Patriarca (2010), by the nation-building project itself and by its own aspirations, and has possibly never been abandoned since then.

Nevertheless, to conclude this discussion on national identity and nationalism, it is useful to remember that Italy is not the only country in which the use of rhetoric about national character has been used or abused. Other European countries such as France or the UK have historically used national character-based discourses and ideologies to justify their imperialism and military interventions. Moreover, it is in the realm of ideas, rather than facts, that the unity of history can be found, as the Italian philosopher Croce reminded us (in Dickie, 2001: 29). In reality, national identities as unitary entities have hardly ever existed anywhere in the world. Identities, as Bauman pointed out (1996), are not stable entities and are constituted in the realm of representations, which is why

discourses which stress the actual existence of national characteristics can be dangerous as they systematically naturalise subjective social and cultural traits.

3.2.3 Toward a New National Identity?

After 1945, Italy experienced some epochal transformations in its socio-economic and cultural structures (King, 1985). These included the economic boom and the expansion of large-scale industries in the north-west; the related processes of urbanisation and internal migration; the expansion of the media and in particular of television; the sexual revolution and the increasing participation of women in the labour market. Because of these transformations, Italy started to become a secularised, modern, standardised, European society where a uniform culture and language began to emerge. However, this process of cultural standardisation which took place since the 1950s did not eradicate regional differences and senses of belonging.

According to scholars such as Cento Bull (2000) and Dunford and Greco (2005), Italy can still be divided in three main distinct areas: the north-west (characterised by large-scale industries and urbanisation); the north-east and centre (characterised by small industries, vibrant social networks and an informal economy); and the south (characterised by superficial modernisation, underdevelopment and clientelism). Overall, most scholars working on Italy tend to agree that regions and home towns, rather than the nation, still tend to represent the point of reference for Italian economy, culture and society. In particular, Cento Bull's study (2000) on the characteristics of social and political identities in two northern towns concluded that territorial subcultures continue to shape people's identity in Italy more than social status, religion, gender or age.

Moreover, in Italy the concept of *culture* – whose genealogy, uses and meanings are historically and socially situated – has been identified with education, literacy and high arts more than in other countries. Cultural studies scholars have explained this phenomenon by relating it to the Italian intellectual tradition of associating the cultural history of the country with its intellectual history (Forgacs and Lumley, 1996). Nevertheless, some attempts at identifying the shared elements of what would

potentially constitute a future Italian national identity or culture have been made. Among those, the Italian sociologist Giumelli (2010) has recently proposed a paradigm shift from *Italian identity* to *Italic identity*. In his view, an “Italic” identity includes not only facts and features of Italians living within Italy, but also those of the Italians living abroad. The Italic identity is, according to Giumelli, cosmopolitan in its approach and worldviews, reflecting both the local and global histories of Italians within Italy and worldwide, and would represent an actual response to the traditional attributed backwardness of Italian culture and society. An analysis of the critiques of traditional views of Italy will be expanded in the following sections.

3.2.4 An Alternative Perspective: Mentalità

On the matter of what constitutes the Italian national identity or national character, another perspective that needs to be taken into account is the analysis of its *mentalità*. This term has a long and well-established tradition in the French and continental European historiography of the *Annales*, of which the “history of mentalities” (*mentalité*) was a key element (Bloch, 1954; Burguière, 1979; Campbell, 1998; Revel, 1979). From this theoretical perspective, a *mentalité* represents the collective psychic structure of a country or of a group of people, or the collective sensitivity of a country at a particular point in history. According to Le Goff (1981), what a mentality indicates is the general “tonality” of the sensitivities, and of the ways of thinking of a country, or of a community of people. In this regard, the existence of a mentality cannot really be proved empirically, but it can be seen operating in everyday life contexts and it is expressed in the impersonal content of individual thinking. In this regard, it is important to remember that there is difference between an identity, whether individual or collective, and a mentality. The latter in fact is not a conscious phenomenon, while the notion of an identity always contains a perception that an individual has of the self or of others (Gambino, 1998).

The concept of *mentalità* is hardly used in sociology and migration studies, possibly because of its presumed empirical inaccessibility and impossibility of measurement. The sociological concept which is close to *mentalità* is Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* (1977; 1990). A key difference between the two concepts is that the *habitus* – broadly

defined as a structural set of dispositions which is internalised and experienced as second nature by individuals – is a purely sociological concept, which does not have an immediate meaning in everyday language, while *mentalità* is a term which is commonly used in Italian and other Latin-based languages like French and Spanish, to indicate the general ways of thinking of an individual, a group of individuals or of an entire country.

Moreover, as an analytical notion, *mentalità* has an established tradition in both social and cultural history as well as anthropology (from earlier studies on “primitive mentality” by Levy-Bruhl in 1923 onwards). As this concept emerged prominently during the interviews I conducted with Italian graduates for this thesis, I will argue in the next chapters for the recognition of its interpretative and analytical potential for my findings and, more widely, in the social sciences.

An attempt to analyse the Italian mentality has been carried out by Gambino (1998) who, using *mentalità* as an interpretative model, has reviewed representations of Italy and Italians made by both Italian and foreign intellectuals through time. He concluded his analysis by indicating that there seem to remain across time, specific social traits – such as lack of trust in governments, the search for a patron or a protector and so on – which could be viewed as a structure of an overall mentality, that seems resistant to time and social change. Gambino theorised that this *mentalità* has its core the Italians’ tendencies to bring into the collective sphere – the public life of the country – the same values experienced in their private lives. This inability to recognise that society may need impersonal relationships in order to develop would be, according to Gambino, the root of Italians’ difficulty to create a strong civic society, which he ultimately explains by theorising the existence of a maternal kind of mentality which has remained the same through epochal social and economic transformations (1998).

However, it could also be argued that these same cultural traits which Gambino has associated with the Italian *mentalità* – for example the lack of trust in governments and institutions – reflect how historically untrustworthy governments and the Italian state have been (De Monticelli, 2010). Therefore, the Italian *mentalità* might actually reflect objective and long-term structural elements of Italy as a country and society.

The societal weaknesses of Italy as a nation state will be further discussed in the next section which will look in detail at how some influential views and images of the country have affected its nation-building and ultimately its modern and contemporary history.

3.2.5 Views of Italy and Associated Critiques

In terms of anthropological studies of Italy, two main traditions can be identified: the Anglo-American perspective and the Italian. These two bodies of literature are not completely separated and ideas from the former have influenced the latter and vice versa. Nevertheless, some important differences remain. Anglo-American anthropologists' work on Italy reached a peak in the 1950s-60s, when Italy and the other regions of the Mediterranean were largely considered as middle-range countries in the "ideal" transition from "traditional" to "modern" societies typical of the evolutionist paradigm of the time. On the other side, Italian scholars, especially Marxist thinkers in the post-war decades, guided by Antonio Gramsci, started to be interested in Italian popular culture or folklore – whose study they encouraged – as they viewed it as a survival of pre-modern cultures which, in the view of Gramsci (Forgacs, 1988), could form the base for the autonomous culture of the Italian proletariat (Filippucci, 1996).

In terms of the Anglo-American traditions, the most influential thesis of this period is certainly Banfield's (1958) famous work on a southern Italian village. His thesis saw "amoral familism" as the moral base and cause of its backwardness. In other words, the poverty and backwardness of the village could be explained by the inability of its villagers to act together for the common good, transcending the immediate need of their nuclear families. Banfield's thesis has been widely criticised, especially by Marxist writers who pointed to the role that material deprivation and the socio-economic context play in shaping culture, arguing that the two spheres cannot be looked at separately. Attachment to the nuclear family is, according to the Marxist critique, a result of extreme poverty (Filippucci, 1996). Nevertheless, even though its actual empirical foundations can be debated, Banfield's thesis of amoral familism is still very prominent. For instance, Putman's (1993) study on civic traditions in Italy and Altan's (2000)

account on the crises of Italian society are clearly influenced by the notion of amoral familism.

Putnam (1993) compared northern and southern Italian towns and regions in order to look at the reasons why some democratic institutions and regional governments seemed to succeed while others do not. He was particularly interested in finding out what were the conditions necessary for creating strong and effective representative institutions and in doing so, he analysed the civic life of different Italian communities. His conclusions were that some regions (the northern ones) are more “choral” (in the sense of doing more things together in groups, like choirs), with higher degrees of civic engagements, of trust in the institutions and interest for the public good; while others (the southern) were more “uncivil”, public life was more hierarchical, and interest in politics more driven by personal greed and corruption. The reason for this sharp regional difference has to be found, according to Putnam, in the different histories of the regions, particularly their medieval experiences of governance, which included a long presence of the Bourbon monarchy in the south of Italy compared to the independent administration experienced by many medieval city-states in the centre-north of the country.

Putnam’s theory, despite his considerable efforts, remains very partial and dubious. Firstly, the very same concept of “civic society” is not universal and it is ethnocentric in its assumptions. Scholars such as Edwards (2010) have argued that Putnam has mis-theorised his findings about civic values in Italy, reaching the wrong conclusions. Others, like Cento Bull (2000) have proposed to replace the term “civic society” with the more general and neutral concept of “political culture”. Moreover, understanding that different regions have had different histories should lead to a deeper consideration and acknowledgement of their different histories, not an evaluation of some of their social traits against an ideal standard. In particular, it is also debatable to assume that medieval experiences, which are four centuries old, can affect the ways in which individuals and institutions work at present. Finally, both Banfield’s and Putnam’s studies cannot really explain local variations within each region, in the north as well as in the south. Considering, for example, the primary role that internal migration has had in shaping northern Italy in the last century, it seems to me that explanations that look stereotypically at the differences between the north and the south of Italy are not realistic and do not take into consideration the ongoing contact and interconnections

between the different regions of the country. On the other hand, the counter-argument to this might be that the south-north migrations are a response to, and a continued expression of, this structural duality; and even that they have introduced “southern” mentalities to the migrant destinations in the centre and north of the country.

Finally, the notion of backwardness in itself is not value-free and it tends to be used to explain a number of different phenomena (Agnew, 1996). An example of this trend is the work of Altan (2000), who has been deeply influenced by the Anglo-American anthropological tradition of studies on Italy, and in particular Banfield’s work. To sum up his conclusions, Altan argued that Italy was condemned by the perpetual repetition of its primordial conditions of civic immaturity, which he attributed to the persistence of familism and in the failure of the unification process to overcome the south-north divide. In his view, Italian backwardness is a syndrome which underpins populism and transformism in the political sphere.

Concluding, Italy as a modern nation state has certainly earned to some extent the negative views which both Italian and foreign scholars have elaborated. However, the role of these particular images and representations of Italy and Italians should not be underestimated because, as the next section will show, these ideas had a deep influence in terms of the historical development of the relationships and the political orientation of the Italian state toward the south of Italy. Moreover, it should also not be forgotten that the modern Italian state also improved the quality of life of many of its citizens and transformed the country into one of the most powerful industrial states in the world. Nevertheless, many questions and issues clearly remain unresolved, including the south-north divide.

3.3 The Southern Question

Italy’s southern question (*la questione meridionale*) is a controversial topic. On the one hand, it is a political discourse and a historical construct which has accompanied the Italian nation state since its unification. On the other, it is the recognition of the south-north divide and of the relative underdevelopment of the south of Italy compared to the north. Rather than spend time looking at the objective statistical facts of the north-south

divide, which would take this account in a different direction (see Dunford and Greco, 2005, for an overview), this section will look at the ways in which the southern question has emerged mostly as a political issue. It explores how representations and views of Italy and of its south by both Italian and foreign scholars have contributed, whether accidentally or not, to its making and persistence through time. My account ends by illustrating the main insights of the “new historiography of the south” which proposes a more dynamic and heterogeneous view of the south of Italy and highlights the critical role of the Italian state in the making of the southern question itself.

3.3.1 The History of the Southern Question

Views of the Italian south, or *Mezzogiorno*, have been traditionally constructed in comparison to the north. The dialogue between these two geographical areas has never been balanced, with the south often represented as the poor, backward and problematic part of the country compared to an unproblematic, modern, industrialised and wealthy north. In the imaginary of the south, reality and representation are often mixed. The “South” of Italy has come to symbolise, not only a geographical area, but a separate entity, a myth and a metaphor for what is hidden at the borders of European liberal democracies. A famous quote by De Lesser in 1806 encompassed this traditional view of south of Italy: “*Europe ends at Naples and ends badly. Calabria, Sicily and all the rest belong to Africa*” (cited in Maeterlinck 1997: 7-8). This was also the image that early Italian nationalists had of the south of the peninsula in the aftermath of Italy’s unification. Concerns about what was lacking in the south, in terms of a bourgeoisie, a middle class, creative individualism and group solidarity, was their main priority. Cultural features of the south were not positively recognised either. The history of the south before unification was treated as a dark age while the roots of the Italian nation were sought in the medieval city-state tradition of the centre-north and in Renaissance Florence and its arts. The south was virtually excluded. Such was the origin of the “southern question” (Lumley and Morris, 1997).

Fascism took very different trajectories in the north and in the south of Italy. Being at its origin a northern phenomenon, fascism did not spread easily into the south, where its approach was purposively modified to meet the local needs. Fascist rhetoric in the south

was mostly populist and ruralist and its propaganda was to liberate the poor peasants from corruption and violence, and from the handicap of what was seen as a harsh physical environment. A turning point in the relationship of the Italian state with the south was the post-war period, when a development discourse started to shape the Italian state's views of the south. Underdevelopment in the south needed to be measured and analysed; the idea of backwardness and an interest for understanding the south from within (re)emerged among scholars. Banfield's (1958) thesis of "amoral familism" can be included in this optic. Even though his study was only about a single village in the south, his thesis had a deep impact at the time, influencing views of the south in both Italian and foreign policy and scholarly circles.

Nevertheless, despite the dominant discourse on the north-south economic, political and cultural divide, integration between the north and the south of Italy increased significantly in the second half of the 20th century, expressed by intermarriages (many caused by internal migration); and high numbers of southerners made it to the political and managerial elites of the country. Moreover, in the post-war decades most regions in the south did improve their economy, notably the Adriatic-coast regions of Apulia and Abruzzo which experienced a substantial growth, and tripled their gross regional product between 1947 and 1983 (Davis, 1998). The gap with the northern regions remained high because the north of Italy experienced at the same time an economic boom of unprecedented proportions centred on the large industries of the north-west.

However, the economic growth of the southern regions did not stop the use of negative stereotypes and images to represent the south. It can actually be argued that in recent years, especially since the relative political success of the Northern League political party in the 1990s and its anti-south propaganda, negative views of the south have dominated Italian politics. The Northern League's vision of the south as a place where investments and state funds are wasted has become popular across the country; while the old image of the backward south as a place and as a people who are socially and culturally different from the rest of the country has re-emerged. The south-north divide has proved in this context to be an ideal vehicle for channelling public hate and dissatisfaction of the northern electorate (GriAUDI, 1997).

In this context, some of the most recent studies carried out on the southern question have indicated that since its unification the Italian state has never made a concerted effort to decrease the gap with the north. Although the southern question is a crucial problem in Italian society, it has never been the top priority of governments (Mutti, 2000). On the contrary, there is no agreement among scholars on whether the Italian state has ever consistently invested in the south, and it seems that economic incentives have completely stopped since the 1990s (Scalella and Balestrieri, 2010), therefore suggesting that Italian governments might have played, and carry on playing, a decisive role in reproducing the south-north divide.

At present, it is generally assumed that the economic divide between the north and the south of the country is increasing. Reports on the economy of the Italian Mezzogiorno, such as those published annually by the Svimez institute mentioned in the previous chapter, are generally alarming, and a reprise of internal migration has been registered with further negative consequences for the south and its delayed economic progress. Nevertheless, the relative underdevelopment of south of Italy and its well-known issues with organised crime and mafias should not lead to simple generalisations which encompass the whole region and its inhabitants because, as the next section will indicate, the realities of the south are far from being homogenous.

3.3.2 The New History of the South

From the 1980s a revision of the history of the south of Italy started to be pursued by scholars who have challenged the premises on which earlier accounts of the south – centred on the ideas of backwardness and lack of civil values – were constructed. Firstly, the new historiography of the south suggests that the different realities of the south have been distorted by the constant comparison with the north of Italy. Secondly, it is also argued that the history of the south itself has been historically reduced to the history of the southern question, leading earlier scholars to overlook other important characteristics of the southern regions and most importantly their internal diversity (Lumley and Morris, 1997). Thirdly, these new histories stressed the dynamism of the socio-economic structures existing in the south of Italy and their flexibility and variability through time. Traditional features of the southern agricultural economy, such

as the *latifondo* (traditionally considered an exploitative medieval system of land ownership and agrarian production), were revisited and an overall image of a more dynamic and heterogeneous southern economy is proposed.

This new historiography, however, is far from saying that the south does not have its peculiarities and issues. Nevertheless, these works began to rethink ways to explain them outside of the traditional frames in which the south was interpreted. They have strongly critiqued theories – such as those of Banfield (1958) and Putnam (1993) – which contributed to a stereotyped and homogenised view of the south.

3.3.3 The Southern Question Revisited

The idea of an internal difference between the south and the north of Italy has a long history, but it took its radical form in the 1870s-1880s, soon after the country's unification. Recent works have also re-considered the genealogy of the southern question. For example, Cammarano (1997) has showed how, in the immediate post-unification period, early nationalists and political elites did not permit the participation of the nation in terms of encouraging forms of political expression across the south, because they feared that this would ultimately undermine their legitimacy.

Other authors such as Schneider (1998) described the southern question in Italy as a case of “orientalism” within one country, applying Edward Said's (1978) famous thesis on the construction of the “others” in the context of south of Italy and the southern question. In particular, Schneider argued that contributions to the orientalist discourse in the case of southern Italy can be seen in the writings of southern intellectuals and early politicians as well as those by Banfield and Putnam already discussed in this chapter. According to Schneider, this is still a dominant discourse and represents the conventional way in which the south and the north are conceptualised and understood by Italian citizens and politicians.

Parallel conclusions have been reached by Davis (1998) who argues that the south of Italy after World War Two was a prisoner of its own notoriety. This was mostly because most of the documentation available at the time was produced by the very same scholars

who have created the traditional backward image of the south. Even though in the post-war decades some of these ideas were proved wrong, they remained and still are largely unquestioned. Even though the southern problem, Davis concluded, has partly derived from factors existing within the south, it has also been shaped by the process of Italy's nation-building, and the Italian state has often exacerbated the existing divisions.

Finally, it can be argued that the recent revisionist works carried out on the history of the south have revealed that the south of Italy has not benefited much from the efforts and policies of the national state which has always tended to consider it as an external problem that needed to be fixed. The southern question can be seen in this optic as a product of a political and intellectual tradition which viewed the south of Italy as "different" from the rest of the country, and in particular detached from, and an obstacle to, Italy's nation-building policies. From this line of historical interpretation, it is concluded that there is nothing "naturally" backward in the south of Italy or in the mindsets of its inhabitants. Rather, the uneven regional development of Italy as a nation state is the product of its history and of the particular ideologies and ideas that have shaped it.

3.4 Young Italians and Contemporary Italian Society

According to Eurostat surveys (in Buzzi et al., 2007), Italian youths are few in number, with a lower level of education compared to their peers in Europe and they enter the labour market later. The Italian intellectual Umberto Eco famously stated that "*the future of Italy depends on when a bunch of people who are already old, will die*" (quoted by Vecchio, 2009: 155). Eco's opinion, as we shall see in this section, is quite representative of the views and analyses provided by Italian social scientists on this issue (among which, see Livi Bacci, 2008). This section will provide an overview of the most significant factors affecting young Italians' lives, focusing on the characteristics of the transition to adulthood, and the perceived professional and existential precariousness of Italy's young generations.

3.4.1 The Transition to Adulthood and the Role of Young Italians in Society

The main characteristic of the transition to adulthood in Italy, which can be generally calculated in terms of the timing of leaving the parental home and full entry into employment and parenting, is that it tends to happen slowly and later compared to the rest of Europe, especially northern Europe. In all of the three main aspects mentioned, Italian young people seem to be actively delaying their transition to adulthood. The transition to employment for those who complete tertiary education starts already late compared to the rest of EU. An average university student in Italy completes a 3+2 years degree at 27 years old. The protracted cohabitation with parents is the highest in the EU with 66% of men and 47% of women between 25-30 years old living, often it seems quite happily, in their parental home (Buzzi et al., 2007). The situation on the labour market is no different, with Italy having the lowest percentage of the EU in terms of the employment rate for citizens between 20-30 years old (Buzzi et al., 2007). Moreover, the process of entering the labour market is marked by a long period of job insecurity and *precariato* (job precariousness) characterised by a wide range of atypical and short-term employment experiences. Unemployment is highest among young individuals looking for their first occupation; this represents 30% of the overall unemployment rate and has been described as “transitional” kind of unemployment, linked to the lack of employment opportunities and the congestion of the labour market in terms of the scarcity of jobs (Boeri, 1994; Cammelli, 2009; Reyneri, 2005).

As previously mentioned, media and public debates in Italy are generally centred on the professional difficulties experienced by young workers when looking for a job. However, in terms of the labour market, the situation is quite complex, and responsibilities might not be only one-sided as labour markets in any country can be differentiated by geographical scale, sector and so on, as the following chapters will illustrate.

The reasons why the Italian labour market is structured in a way which does not favour the absorption of young workers reflect, according to the Italian sociologist and demographer Massimo Livi Bacci (2008), the weakening position of Italian youths in politics which has coincided with their decrease in number, following the rapid birth-rate decline of the 1980s. To give an idea of the scale of the deep demographic changes

that took place in these last decades, it is enough to note that in 1980 nearly a million people in Italy turned 15 years old, while in 2008 in the same age group there were only 590,000 people (Livi Bacci, 2008). The particularity of the Italian situation is that, instead of the state investing in the relatively few young people living in the country, youths have been progressively alienated and isolated from national policies, especially labour policies, whose main prerogatives are placed around the needs and interests of adult workers and pensioners, who represent the majority of Italian population and of the electorates. In this respect, the Italian policies have practically declassified young individuals from their status of citizens to that of “children” (Deriu, 2008).

Moreover, there is general consensus that access to many career pathways in Italy seems blocked from within. Nepotism and clientelism, especially in the form of the cultural practice of the *raccomandazione* (Zinn, 2001), are generally considered the main barriers to entry to occupations. The term *raccomandazione* refers to the practice of appointing somebody, the *raccomandato*, for a job based on personal connections, rather than merit. In this regard, despite the analogies with the English verb “to recommend” and the institutionalised practice of writing “recommendation letters” in the Anglo-American labour markets, the Italian practice of the *raccomandazione* represents, according to Zinn, a deeper ideological and cultural phenomenon which shapes the ways in which Italians conceptualise the role of personal relationships within society (2001). The role of the *raccomandazione* on the decision to migrate of Italian graduates will be illustrated in my empirical chapters.

The use of informal networks and acquaintances to allocate jobs is not unique to Italians and this practice has been observed with various degree of success in many OECD countries (Pellizzari, 2004). In some contexts, scholars have argued that the use of personal connections in the labour market might even favour a fairer distribution of job opportunities within society (Granovetter, 1973; Montgomery, 1992). However, the use of informal networks to access occupations in Italy – where clientelism in the labour market is widespread and the economy is stagnant – is considered particularly problematic because there is evidence that it severely interferes with genuine processes of recruitment selection, disproportionately favouring job-seekers who are more socially connected instead of the more talented and suitable candidates, particularly in less developed regions (Pellizzari, 2004; Ponzo and Scoppa, 2009).

The Italian private sector is substantially comprised of small and medium-sized family-owned companies, which make up 55% of the entire manufacturing workforce (Censis data in Cucculelli and Micucci, 2008). These firms are usually run by elderly family members who have become self-made entrepreneurs, often without advanced schooling. The whole production sector is characterised by thousands of small firms whose founders are generally siblings or relatives and even after decades managers belong to the same founding family. This organisational model does not only apply to small settings. The Agnelli dynasty (behind Fiat) and the four Benetton brothers are two examples of the worldwide success of this model (Dalla Zuanna, 2001).

The predominance of family-run businesses facilitates the absorption of young family members, friends and acquaintances through the practice of the *raccomandazione*. However, it also reduces chances for outsiders to access professions in fields where no family members and acquaintances work. This is particularly true for some professions, such as pharmacists, lawyers, dentists and architects whose access is institutionally restricted and at times “blocked from within” by the existence of professional “castes” and “families” of professionals, thus blocking access to potentially talented but “external” candidates (Stefanoni, 2011). This dynamic plays an important role in the decision of migrate of some Italian graduates as illustrated in the following chapters.

Moreover, recent decades have also witnessed an increasing flexibilisation of the labour market, following the country’s economic restructuring and rise of the service sector, which has been combined with the introduction of many short-term and flexible entry-level contracts. These, according to many scholars, have particularly affected young workers and the graduate labour market, inflicting job insecurity on an already weak category of workers (Buzzi et al., 2007; Catanzaro and Sciortino, 2009; Deriu, 2008; Gallino, 2007; Livi Bacci, 2008; Reyneri, 2005). Labour market flexibilisation was also accompanied by a further decrease in earnings for young workers and for those in entry-level occupations. Salaries in Italy tend to increase with age and the gap between young and old workers in terms of earning capacity is particularly high compared to the rest of the EU. According to Inps (Italian national institute for social insurance) data, adult workers between 50-60 years old earn 2.8 times more than young workers between 20-29 years old (Livi Bacci, 2008: 63).

There is a general consensus among scholars and even politicians that the long and difficult transition to full employment and professional stability in Italy is a major issue for the country which has consequences not only for the individuals involved, but for the country as well, especially in terms of decreasing levels of innovation, creativity and economic growth. In particular, Deriu (2008) has argued that it is because of the professional insecurity experienced, or even to a certain extent expected, that young adults in Italy delay leaving the parental home and starting themselves the stage of parenting. Nevertheless, on this point there is no general agreement among scholars. Italian youths are also considered partly responsible for their current life-styles, at least as regards their long cohabitation with parents. This debate will be explored in more detail in the next section.

3.4.2 Professional and Existential Precariousness

According to data from most social surveys (Buzzi et al., 2007), the great majority of young Italian adults who live with their parents are generally satisfied with their lives, do not seem to suffer a lot for the lack of independent housing, and have very good relationships with their parents. This would suggest that, overall, they do not seem to be in a rush to live independently, and for a number of reasons. In this regard, Livi Bacci (2008) has argued that young adults in Italy prefer to live longer with their parents and to actively delay their transitions to full adulthood because of the importance they attribute to self-realisation and self-discovery both professionally and existentially. Taking more time to decide what to do with one's life, to explore more possibilities and delaying full responsibilities, for those who can afford it, or who have parents who can afford it, is quite common. Moreover, co-habiting for many years with their parents has reduced generational differences to an extent that parents and children's mindsets are very similar, and this is partly why, according to Livi Bacci (2008), Italian younger generations are no longer innovative and tend to seek to reproduce, even when they leave the parental home, the same family model that they have experienced.

However, on this point there are some different perspectives which need to be considered. According to Deriu (2008) in her study on the relationship between professional instability and family planning in Rome, gender choices and expectations

are still quite different among young Italians. While it is generally considered necessary for men to be in stable employment in order to leave the parental home and in particular for starting a new family; women's professional security is not considered as important, and for those women who are in a relationship, the role of the bread-winner is still largely assigned to their male partners. Moreover, the decision to reduce the number of children among young couples is not a matter of choice *per se* but the result of coping with the lack of adequate state provisions of assistance to young mothers in terms of job security and nursery care.

Actually, the delay in entering full adulthood is not only an Italian phenomenon; similar trends can be observed across Europe. However, in Italy this phenomenon takes on impressive proportions possibly because of the structure of the labour market: the difficulty to access occupations and job stability combine in strengthening young adults' needs and attachment for family resources and support, which in practice compensate for the lack of a welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Nevertheless, according to Livi Bacci (2008), the transition to the current way of living of young adults in Italy has been quite painless because it was not accompanied by a decrease in terms of their living standards. Their quality of life is in fact quite high because of the prolonged cohabitation with parents and the savings that result from it, and also because Italian society has adapted to these changes by making them possible and socially acceptable.

In this respect, the delay in entering adulthood cannot be analysed as separated from the global and national events which have affected the last two decades of the country's development and social history. First of all, according to the Iard report (Buzzi et al., 2007) – which provides the most comprehensive study on Italian youth – the crises of the so-called First Italian Republic in the early 1990s – with the subsequent collapse of the party system which had previously ruled the country since the end of the Second World War – has contributed to lowering Italians' future expectations and has instilled widespread forms of cultural pessimism. This generalised fear, that the future is going to be worse than the past, has led young Italians and their families to take a more defensive or protectionist approach to the future.

Generally, young Italians emerge from the Iard report as fairly realistic, semi-conservative individuals, who share no trust in the country's main institutions

(government, banks, army and TV channels), do not engage in politics and value family and friends more than work (Buzzi et al., 2007: 20-27). The strong attachment to the local milieu is also reflected in the decreasing propensity for “mobility”, conceptualised as the willingness to move to other non-commutable destinations, which declined from 68% among youths of 15-24 years old in 1987 to the 51% for the same cohort in 2004 (Buzzi et al., 2007: 103). The propensity for mobility is generally higher among males and among southerners, and much lower among northerners. This is not surprising considering the existing south-north divide and the existence of a strong culture of migration in the south due to the mass internal and international migrations of the past already discussed in this and the previous chapters.

The long transition to adulthood appears in the Italian context to be both a strategy implemented by Italian youth to maintain their high living standards but also a necessary reaction to deal with professional precariousness and the lack of adequate support by the state and its institutions. The Italian state, its political orientations and ideologies emerge once again as critical structural factors shaping the conditions of living of Italy’s young generations, particularly regarding the fragility of young workers as a category of citizens whose interests are hardly prioritised.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined some of the most significant societal traits that have affected Italy as a nation state since its unification. In the first section, the difficulty in forging a strong national identity and the particularities of the discourses surrounding the characteristics of the Italian national character, characterised by an historical pessimism toward the ability of the country to become a proper modern nation, were identified as key components of the country’s modern history.

My analysis of the historical tendency of portraying negatively the characteristics of the country and of its citizens has shown that these have played a significant role in the process of Italy’s nation-building, particularly in relation to the south. As a result, the “southern question” is still one of the key unresolved issues of Italy as a nation state. In

this regard, it has been argued that the Italian state has played a significant role itself in systematising through its logic and policies the south-north divide since its foundation.

Finally, the last section of the chapter introduced some of the current debates surrounding young Italians as a sociological category of workers and citizens. In this context, the difficulties experienced by young Italians in entering the labour market and their delay leaving the parental home have been identified as two main themes, which have been discussed in relation to the weakening positions of young Italians as a category of citizens and workers.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter engages critically and reflexively with the practice of doing qualitative research while openly presenting and discussing the research process undertaken for this study. It has three main parts. It begins with a general discussion on the use of qualitative methods in social research, focusing particularly on issues of validity and generalisation. These methodological debates are then linked to my rationale for the choice of research strategy and methods adopted for this study. At its core, in the second and longest part, this chapter provides a detailed and reflexive analysis of the different stages of my research process. My positionality will be discussed and evaluated in the last section of the chapter, which will focus on questions of reflexivity in conducting social research and my own experience as a (field) researcher.

4.2 The Use of Qualitative Methods

The use of a qualitative perspective on social research is shared by many disciplines. In sociology, the use of qualitative methodologies has its roots in the work of the Chicago School scholars in the 1920s-1930s and in the academic establishment of the British social anthropological tradition and its main methodology, ethnography, throughout much of the 20th century. In general, what characterises qualitative research is, on the one hand, a quest for interpretation, for understanding meanings attributed to individual actions and social phenomena; and on the other, a “naturalistic” approach, which is a commitment to study phenomena as they happen in their natural settings (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). In other words, all qualitative researchers seek understanding of

complex data that can only be approached in context. What differentiates each study is the way in which each researcher thinks in terms of the data, and subsequently conceptualises it (Richards and Morse, 2007).

Above all, qualitative research is interpretative in its perspective. The research itself is conceptualised as a process in which both the researcher and the respondents play significant roles in constructing knowledge, which is subjective, interactive and dynamic in kind (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1997). Generally, qualitative researchers start from the assumption that reality is subjective and not external to the individuals involved in its making and understanding. The researcher is seen as an integral part of the research process and his or her role, and the research process itself, is under constant scrutiny. Triangulation of data relies on the use of multiple qualitative (and perhaps quantitative) methodologies and a constant re-elaboration of the ideas, assumptions and hypotheses that comprise the researcher's own interpretation of the subject studied. However, objective reality can never be captured entirely. The use of triangulation reflects the researcher's attempt to add rigour, richness and depth to the qualitative enquiry, rather than a pursuit of impartial objective truth about social reality.

The inescapable subjectivity of interpretation, and ultimately of the analysis carried out, is possibly the main limitation and also the main strength, of any qualitative inquiry (May, 2003). Issues of generalisability and representability inevitably inhabit qualitative research findings. The quest for rigour is one of the main preoccupations of qualitative researchers, and it does not have a simple solution. Most social scientists these days advocate, whenever possible, the use of a mixed-methods approach, which aims to gather the widest range of data and information about the subject of inquiry, possibly including a mix of quantitative and qualitative data and of primary and secondary sources (for an overview see Plano Clark and Creswell, 2010). However, this is not always possible, and in any case the use of a mixed-method approach does not change the intrinsic subjectivity of qualitative research.

The question of validity for qualitative research and its main practice, interpretation, can only be solved philosophically. In this respect, Bateson (1972) reminds us that all qualitative researchers are "philosophers" in the sense that they are guided by principles which combine beliefs about their ontologies, epistemologies and methods (cited in

Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 33). Summing up these preliminary remarks, qualitative research can be seen as a powerful and meaningful tool only if the subjectivity of any human experience and its role in the production of knowledge is accepted. What remains to be discussed is how to best evaluate qualitative research and according to which criteria: in other words, issues of validity in qualitative methods.

Qualitative interviewing, the core method used in this thesis, is one of the most common methods for the collection of qualitative data.⁹ The practice of interviewing has deep epistemological, methodological and ethical implications (Mason, 2003). Interviewing, seen as the practice of initiating an interaction between the researcher, seen as the knowledge-maker, and the respondent, the knowledge-giver, is not a neutral act. Post-structuralist and feminist researchers have particularly questioned the role of the researcher in the interview process, especially in terms of the role played by his/her gender, race, and class in affecting personal interaction and the construction of knowledge that can be derived from an interview (Fontana and Frey, 1998). The interview is an exchange process in which the researcher, who would generally lead the conversation in relation to his/her interests and research agenda, is in an uneven position of power in respect to the interviewee. This asymmetrical relationship between the interviewer and interviewee leads to questions of ethics and values in qualitative research.

In itself, the choice of undertaking qualitative research is not value-free, especially considering that often the need for such an approach to research emerges in contexts in which meanings are contested. It is also the case that qualitative research generally aims to give people a “voice” – which, however, is in practice instigated and framed by the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Because of these issues, the role of the researcher in qualitative research is contested at all stages of the research process.

The ideal qualitative researchers, often described as methodological bricoleurs (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; 2003), constantly multi-tasking and self-reflecting on their own experiences, should be aware of their positions. They should know that they are telling a story from a particular perspective which reflects their own points of view, which in

⁹ See Appendix A for my interview guide.

turn are necessarily influenced to some extent by their biography, class, gender, research interests, previous research experience, views of the world and ultimately too their values. Looking at the significant amount of literature on social research methods, it is clear that the social sciences have been engaging in deep self-reflection about their own practices and methodologies for quite some time. In this respect, May (2003) has observed a shift in qualitative social research from the general idea of “data collection” to that of “data production” or even “evidence” in which the researcher is more critically scrutinised in terms of the ways in which he/she has dealt with questions of theory, knowledge and methods. A failure to understand the forces and the conditions that affect the research process in social research will, according to May, lead to a limited understanding of its place and values in social life and of its contributions to society overall. These ideas support Becker’s (1967) earliest thoughts on the inevitability of values influencing social research, as the result of which he encouraged sociologists to acknowledge the “sides” which they would inevitably take while doing social research, in the belief that, little by little, the work done by each scholar will help to build a more comprehensive knowledge of the social world.

The next section will incorporate these ideas and put them into practice in the context of the research conducted for this thesis.

4.3 The Rationale for the Study Conducted

As the previous chapters have indicated, there is evidence that Italian graduates have one of the highest levels of emigration within the EU (Recchi and Favell, 2009). This fact alone can lead us to question whether there are national-specific structural forces and push factors that can explain the high rate of mobility among Italian graduates, and whether there is something unique about Italian graduates’ dispositions toward migration which is worth examining. Moreover, the overlapping literatures on “highly skilled migration” and “scientific mobility” (Avveduto and Brandi, 2004; Becker et al., 2003; Morano-Foadi, 2005; 2006) were quite clear in suggesting that, for a variety of reasons, reliable quantitative data on the current migratory flows of Italian graduates was not available. In particular, the information available through the Italian Embassies Registers of Italians living abroad (AIRE) and the annual statistics administered by the

Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) both indicated that internal and international migrations were increasing but suggested that the real proportion and significance of these trends were significantly underestimated.

Following on from other scholars who previously looked at these topics, my research was informed at an early stage by a perception that the data available was not capturing “the real story” behind these new migrations. Therefore, I planned a research project which would look in depth into the reasons why Italian graduates were moving abroad and internally.

In this regard, the primary aim of my research has been to analyse graduate migrations as distinctly patterned movements of people and also of rationalities, emphasising the different meanings associated by migrants with their migrations and to the factors that have and are still affecting such movements in different contexts. My assumption in this regard was that, as suggested by Brettell and Hollifield (2007), it was possible to get to the subtleties that characterise individual decisions to migrate by encouraging and listening to the voices of the migrants themselves and analysing how they tell their stories and what meanings they ascribe to their actions.

However, as Fincham, Guinness and Murray (2010) have argued, analysing the current mobilities of objects, goods and people poses many inevitable methodological challenges which often necessitate the development of new methodologies to capture these mobilities “on the move”. Nevertheless, having taken into consideration different methodological options, qualitative interviewing was chosen as the most adequate method of enquiry. Firstly, as mentioned above, this decision was based on the belief that, by analysing existing statistical information, I would have not being able to provide any new insights into these phenomena. Secondly, building my own set of quantitative data, or running a different kind of survey would not have provided in-depth, exploratory data on these phenomena. Moreover, the flexible nature of Italian graduate flows makes potential respondents quite difficult to trace in large numbers. At the same time, journalistic accounts on the migration of Italian graduates were quickly forming a politicised “brain drain” type of discourse surrounding the current migration of Italian graduates which encouraged me to think that undertaking a new qualitative study which would examine critically these flows was the best contribution that I could

make to a broader understanding of these phenomena. This, I believe, was best achieved by providing the space for the individuals involved to talk about their migrations.

4.3.1 Research Questions

The central research questions that this study seeks to answer are the following:

- Why do Italian graduates migrate?
- What is the difference, if any, in terms of motivations, between graduates who decide to migrate internally within Italy as compared to the ones who decide to migrate to the UK?
- Why do some graduates stay in their home town despite regional and national differentials in terms of employment and lifestyle opportunities?

These research questions are grounded on a systematic review and interpretation of the existing literature cited in the previous chapters. This was helpful in indicating what could potentially become areas of interest for this study. However, it is important to underline the fact that no leading hypotheses were formulated prior to the fieldwork stage, beyond, that is, the overarching research question “why do Italian graduates (e)migrate?”. This is because I wanted to look at the factors associated with graduates’ mobility patterns with an open mind, and without committing myself to any particular hypothesis or ideas before collecting and analysing the data.

4.3.2 Sampling for Respondents

Choosing a sample requires careful forethought and planning. The obvious goal is to select groups of individuals who are strategically located to shed light on the phenomena under investigation. In the broad sociological tradition, this practice reflects C. Wright Mills (1959) call for a sociological imagination which would bring together individual biographies, history and social structure (Gerson and Horowitz, 2003).

Considering that Italian graduates do not constitute a homogenous unit of analysis, the respondents were selected according to a number of criteria that reflect the specific purposes and areas of interest of this study. One of the most important of these criteria is the respondents' regions of origin and present residency. Given the time and financial limitations of this study, the places of origin were broadly divided in broad sub-samples: northern, central and southern regions of Italy. In terms of the locations of non-migrants' current residencies within Italy, the respondents were selected among those living in the cities of Milan for the north, Rome for the centre and Palermo for the south. These cities were chosen because they are geographically well distributed across the country and differ in terms of their socio-economic and cultural connotations and also recruitment culture and practices (Buzzi et al., 2007; Reyneri, 2005).¹⁰

It should also be acknowledged that carrying out fieldwork only in urban areas poses its own elements of bias in the construction of knowledge. Reasons to migrate and to stay in one's home town might be very different from those associated with migrating and living in rural areas. Meanwhile, the reason for distinguishing graduates according to their regions of origin is that, as previously highlighted in the literature review, the north and south of Italy have different histories and characteristics in terms of development and patterns of migration. Rome and central Italy constitute a different reality both from the highly industrialised and "European" north of Italy, and from the underdevelopment of the "deep south". Therefore, the reasons why graduates may leave these areas might differ to some extent, so that it is useful to analyse them separately. Moreover, separating graduates from different regions has enabled me to look at the ways in which regional differences in terms of distribution of wealth and resources might affect migrants' dispositions, trajectories and motivations. This does not necessarily imply that the study will be fully representative of the overall Italian national context in terms of graduate migration patterns, but it was nevertheless designed to investigate qualitatively a fair representation of those phenomena.

In terms of their educational profile, for the purpose of this research I selected pre-2001 university reform graduates and their equivalent (completed 3+2 study cycle) in the

¹⁰ See Appendix B, Figures 1 and 2 for a visual representation of the migratory flows studied.

post-reform years, because, as I explained in the introductory chapter, in both cases, these graduates would have completed a full cycle of their tertiary education, normally five years. Moreover, I place five years after graduation as the maximum length of time within which migrants could be considered as suitable respondents. This time limitation was included in order to select respondents at a similar stage in the life-course.

In terms of personal characteristics, all samples of graduates are equally divided in terms of gender. This reflects the equal gender composition of the Italian university population (Cammelli, 2009) and also the increasing presence of women within international migration patterns across Europe and within Italy (Kofman et al., 2000; Pugliese, 2002).

Furthermore, most of the respondents are unmarried or similarly formally uncommitted in civil partnerships and without children.¹¹ This criterion was adopted because my primary interest was to capture early-career pathways when individuals' lives allowed them to take decisions about their mobilities without having to take into account the influence of spouses and children. As suggested by other studies – especially the one carried out by Hadler in 2006 – this is the single most important factor in reducing the willingness to migrate among European residents. Although I am aware that this distinction restricts the composition of the samples to one type of family and relationship dynamics – and that there could be many more personal and familial factors which may have an impact on migratory dispositions and behaviours – the distinction between graduates who have “officially” formed a new family and those who have not was a key factor that I could control at a preliminary stage of the study.

This choice might have led to a potential bias in the analysis, particularly regarding the influence of gender and family duties in the decision to migrate, and indeed these do not emerge as significant factors among the sample of Italian graduates interviewed in the UK. This is unsurprising given the limitations applied to the sample. However, as we shall see later in the thesis, the role of partners had a significant impact in the mobility decisions of female graduates living in Italy. This study might not have captured

¹¹ All respondents were unmarried and without children when they decided to migrate.

significant gender dynamics in the UK sample because of its particular structure and sampling rationales. This issue will be addressed in the relevant sections of the analysis.

In terms of employment distribution, respondents in the UK were selected by trying to represent the existing variety of profiles outlined by the Italian Embassy's reports on the Italian community living in the UK. The reports suggest a large presence of young educated Italians working in finance, research, academia and other skilled occupations (Ambasciata D'Italia 2006; 2007).

My scoping of the field generally confirmed existing trends in this context. This is the case for instance with the relatively large proportion of respondents working or studying at university (postgraduate only) who responded to my call for participants. I do acknowledge that the high response rate among graduates working in research and academia might have also be the result of their familiarity with doctoral research.

Finally, interviewees have not been systematically categorised or analysed in terms of traditional social class indicators, such as parents' employment or educational titles. This is because this study aims to provide an explorative analysis of the motivations to migrate of recent graduates without distinguishing *a priori* between different categories of graduates. A systematic analysis or selection of graduates based on social-class indicators would have meant to narrow the direction of the study toward specific socio-economic variables and perhaps other methodologies.

Moreover, in terms of social stratification scholars seem to agree in indicating that the prime characteristic of Italy as a society is the extent to which its economy is family-run. Namely, the private sector is dominated by small to medium-size family-owned companies which are often run by elderly family members without official qualifications and schooling (Cannari and D'Alessio, 2010; Reyneri, 2005; Schizzerotto, 2009). This results in a quite peculiar societal configuration in which parents' educational achievements and even official employment status are often not good indicators of the actual wealth or resources of any given household.

This makes the analysis of class composition in Italy quite controversial, fuelling academic debates about the "end of class" as a significant category of sociological

analysis (Reyneri, 2005). Nevertheless, the importance of social status and familial financial resources should not be underestimated, especially in a national context characterised by a stagnant economy and difficult access to many professions. For Italian graduates, being able to “wait” for the right opportunity – often relying solely on family resources for a protracted period of time – is not uncommon and it is of primary importance in terms of their future life and professional chances, as illustrated in the following chapters.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the Italian labour market does not usually favour young employees and recent graduates tend to earn on average much less compared to senior colleagues, even if they are better qualified (Livi Bacci, 2008).

My strategy of interviewing respondents as “recent” Italian graduates, rather than, for instance, in terms of their current occupations or disciplines studied, has enabled individuals to talk about their experiences of migration (and of non-migration) quite freely and in the wider context of their life-course, reflecting the open-ended, exploratory perspective that this research aims to provide.

Table 1. Characteristics of the samples of graduates analysed

Categories of Migrants	Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Total number of respondents	Total number of respondents divided by gender M = Males F = Females
Italian graduates who have migrated to the UK (London and South-East England only)			
	North of Italy (from Emilia-Romagna upward)	12	6 M, 6 F

	Centre of Italy (from Tuscany to Lazio and the Abruzzi)	12	6 M, 6 F
	South of Italy (from Campania southward)	14	8 M, 6 F
Total		38	20 M, 18 F
Italian graduates who have migrated internally towards the cities of Rome and Milan			
	To the city of Rome	12	6 M, 6 F
	To the city of Milan	12	6 M, 6 F
Total		24	12 M, 12 F
Italian graduates residing in the Italian cities of Milan, Rome and Palermo			
	Milan (north)	7	3 M, 4 F
	Rome (centre)	8	3 M, 5 F
	Palermo (south)	7	3 M, 4 F
Total		22	9 M, 13 F
Overall total number of respondents interviewed		84	41M, 43F

Table 1 summarises the essential features of the graduate samples interviewed. As can be noted, the number of respondents for each sample is not equal. This is because the phenomenon of Italian graduate migration to the UK includes graduates coming from all regions of Italy, whereas the case of internal migration mostly affects graduates living in the south and the centre of the country. As regards the non-migrants, I feel that the phenomenon of “immobility”, which reflects the majority of the country’s population, would necessitate a study on its own, but this is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore – despite acknowledging its importance and relevance in my analysis on the characteristics of Italian graduates’ mobility behaviours and patterns – the case of

the “immobile graduates” will be mostly used to compare and assess the respective cases of internationally and internally migrating graduates with their non-mobile peers.

4.3.3 Access to Respondents

Apart from snowballing and personal contacts through friends and acquaintances, the first step to access respondents was through the online social network of Facebook and its specific “groups” dedicated to Italians living abroad or in other cities.

The use of online social utility networks such as Facebook is opening up new frontiers to social scientists. Among the different online social networks available, Facebook is possibly the most suited one for social research, especially to construct “snowball” samples because of its size, approximately 500 million users worldwide, and its continuous growth (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007). Each Facebook user is directly linked with his or her personal “friends” and is allowed to join one or more of the 70 million groups that link users. Any researcher can simply search for a specific population by looking at the list of Facebook groups for a specific keyword. In my case, I searched for “Italians abroad” or for people living in specific cities, looking for keywords like “living in Milan”.

There are many “Italians abroad” groups in Facebook which could have been used for this scope. As a Facebook user, I am allowed to contact members or to post a message on the front page of a specific group, unless more strict security measures are in place. I generally sent messages to the members of the Facebook groups that I thought would be likely to fit my selection criteria, pre-judging from the biographical information that was available to me through their Facebook profiles, particularly in terms of the university they attended and/or home town. This strategy proved to be particularly successful to contact internal graduate migrants in Rome and Milan. In this case, I contacted and wrote on the front pages of Facebook groups entitled “Sicilians in Milan” (or similar), explaining my research and that I was looking for respondents. I also used snowballing and personal connections when available, particularly via former participants who often offered their help in finding other suitable respondents for my study.

The initial message I sent was very basic, stating “PhD on Italian graduate emigration. Some graduates needed to be interviewed. Please see below for further information”. This posting was followed by a further paragraph with a more detailed explanation about my study, the typology of respondents I needed and a link to the University of Sussex website where they could verify my status as a PhD student. Consent forms and an abstract of the research were sent by email after an initial contact was made and/or during the interview.¹²

This methodological approach is not free from bias and unintended consequences, especially since it potentially excludes those graduates who are not familiar with the internet or do not use online social networks. However, given the impressive, widespread and ever-growing use of online social networks and in particular of Facebook among Italian students and professionals (Censis, 2011), this is unlikely to be a significant factor. However, there is a risk that all respondents who replied to my invitation online are characterised by a pro-active disposition toward online social networks and this could represent in itself an element of partiality across the samples (Ellison et al., 2007). However, many of the respondents I met using Facebook did not think of themselves as very pro-active Facebook users and most of them stated that it was the first time they had ever participated in and responded to a study of this kind. The main reason why they responded to my Facebook message was because of their personal interest in the topics under investigation and out of curiosity.

4.3.4 The Interviews

The semi-structured interviews which this study is based on (see Appendix A), aimed to unveil the complex set of socio-economic, cultural, familial and personal dynamics which affected the decision to migrate for each respondent. Qualitative interviewing is conceptualised in this study not only as a research tool, but rather as a way of creating knowledge based on the notion that “understanding is achieved by encouraging people to describe their world in their own terms” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 2).

¹² See Appendix F for a copy of the consent form used.

The choice of using semi-structured face-to-face interviews to collect the data rather than, for example, online surveys, reflects this perspective. As previously mentioned, considering that a general picture of intra-European migrations has already been proposed in other studies (in particular, Favell, 2008; Recchi and Favell, 2009), I chose to adopt a “pure” qualitative perspective in order to look at how these movements were experienced and conceptualised by the individuals involved.

The interview schedule used for each sample of graduates was quite similar and the major variances occurred according to the specificity of each individual experience and narrative. All the interviews took place in neutral public spaces (typically cafes or snack-bars) located near respondents’ homes or in workplaces, and lasted approximately one hour each. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed with the permission of the interviewees.¹³

In general, the interviews covered comprehensively the chronological progress of each respondent’s migratory and non-migratory experience from the origin of their migratory project to the day of the interview. Ice-breaking questions were about their degrees and the topic of their final dissertations. Following this first set of questions, I would ask them to start telling me what they did after they graduated and what were their thoughts back then. In particular I was interested to know whether they were already thinking before graduating about moving to other places or if it was something that happened as a consequence of other events and if so, what were these events and what had triggered their decisions to migrate (or not).

As Gerson and Horowitz (2003) have suggested, people do not tend to think of their lives as a set of factors but rather as the unfolding of events, perceptions and feelings over time. A chronological approach to asking questions enables respondents to have a structure to follow when recalling and describing events and life experiences, and it gives them a chance to reflect back on their own lives and choices. I followed a chronological life-course strategy in all the interviews conducted and I always felt that respondents were quite comfortable with it. Reflecting on the research process in

¹³ The informed consent form used is provided in Appendix G.

retrospect and based on the feedback received from respondents after the interviews took place, I feel quite confident on the method and approach utilised in terms of interviewees' experiences of being part of this project. Interviews were always relatively relaxed and the narratives that emerged were rich in anecdotes and information. I generally felt that I collected more information than what I asked for.

As the interviews were conducted over a period of time which covered about 18 months from early 2008 to autumn 2010, it is fair to say that my interview style and method "settled" during this time. The first round of interviews generally felt more exploratory than the later ones because, as the fieldwork progressed, so did my analysis and I progressively started to develop a number of ideas that I wanted to explore and test during the later interviews. To this extent, then, the interview survey was a "progressive" strategy rather than a uniform replication of an identical instrument.

Nevertheless, all interviews were conducted in a broadly exploratory perspective which enabled me to investigate a wide range of topics including: personal background; previous experiences abroad and previous attitudes toward mobility (in particular as a student, participation and interest in student exchange programmes such as Erasmus-Socrates); timing and the development of the idea to migrate; reasons and motivations to migrate; reasons and motivations for choosing a particular destination; pre-arrival perceptions and expectations of the destinations; experiences of the process of departure and adaptation in the new place; current assessment of their migratory experiences; links with the new place and back home; future intentions and ideal duration of their stays.

I am fully aware that accounts collected during semi-structured interviews might be subjected to lapses and embellishments on the part of the interviewees, consciously or unconsciously, in order to rationalise the decisions taken; this syndrome has as already been observed in other studies (Brettell and Hollifield, 2007; Gerson and Horowitz, 2003). This dynamic will be discussed in relation to my findings in the following chapters. Nevertheless, these considerations should not lead us to question the overall validity and the genuine contribution that respondents have brought to this study by allowing their lives to be known and analysed.

4.3.5 Data Analysis and Coding

The interviews were personally transcribed by myself and their contents approved by my respondents. Once fully transcribed, the transcripts were entered into Atlas.ti software, which has been developed to support qualitative researchers in managing and analysing their data. The use of a software package for the analysis of qualitative data can pose its own set of issues to the researcher (Fielding, 2003). On the one hand, the software helps in organising and getting to know the data, and it enables the researcher to check for recurrences and correlations within the data very quickly. On the other, submitting the data to the scrutiny of a software package can be controversial because the software has some embedded functions that can “take over” the analysis of the data, thereby betraying the interpretative essence of any qualitative investigation.

The first step in analysing the data was the identification of possible themes and areas of interest. Initially this was done by carefully reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, underlining potentially interesting and insightful passages. In order to avoid the danger that Atlas.ti would replace my own interpretation of the data, I always tried to think independently about the data and I started checking for the numerical recurrence of some of the themes that initially emerged from the interviews only at a later stage of the analysis. During the reading of the transcripts, I identified possible themes (codes), their related quotations, and I made some notes on the implications that these items of information may have for my analysis using the Atlas.ti’s function of linking “memos” to the texts.

Coding the interview transcripts was an ongoing activity which accompanied my study from the fieldwork phase to the writing process. Atlas.ti allows the researcher to add new codes to the analysis and to change or merge existing ones as new meanings and concepts emerge. I continually added new codes to my analysis as my ideas and interpretation of the data developed through time.

I generally used three different types of codes. Some were merely descriptive of the information given by respondents to straightforward questions about their background: codes like “family with history of migration” or “family no history of migration” are an example of this typology. Other codes reflect a first level of interpretation of the data

which is still in part descriptive of the ways in which respondents talked about their lives and experiences but contains a first level of my own interpretation as well: examples of this typology are the codes “reason to migrate – self realisation” or “reasons to migrate – bored of Italy”. The third type of code represents a deeper and later level of analysis and interpretation of the data: for example the code “personality – high agency” was introduced after fieldwork and interviews were completed and I recognised that notions of agency permeated some of the respondents’ narratives. The same rationale was used for the formulation of the code “key choices – influenced by views of Italy” which I introduced at a later stage of my analysis when I started to recognise that views of Italy were, for some respondents, very significant factors in the decision to migrate.

Overall, the coding process through Atlas.ti progressed together with my analysis, reflecting the conceptual shifts taking place in my interpretation of the data collected. The final stage of analysis was characterised by narrowing down the main factors and the codes accumulated, which at this stage were approximately 300 as part of the process of consolidating my coding activity and thinking. At this point, I also attempted a process of internal triangulation of my own hypotheses. Using the software Atlas.ti, I was able to create “families of codes” which are groups of codes that include similar and/or closely related codes. An example of these is the family code “South of Italy – negative traits” (which include the codes: south of Italy – lack of resources; south of Italy – backwardness; south of Italy – bad working conditions; south of Italy – clientelism/*raccomandazioni*; south of Italy – no job opportunities). Using families of codes considerably facilitated re-running the analysis and double-checking for recurrences and correlations between different topics mentioned during the interviews, and it helped me to finalise my findings and my interpretation of the data through the use of the “query tool”.¹⁴

The Atlas.ti Query tool allows the researcher to analyse the relationships and the correlations between the codes used, which is useful to either verify or reject emerging working hypotheses on the data collected. For example, as the following table will

¹⁴ See Appendix D for the list of codes and families of codes used.

show, the Query tool would allow the researcher to check the frequency of a particular family of codes among different categories of migrants in terms of their gender and regions of origins. Table 2 is an example of this process in the case of the family code “south of Italy – negative traits”. Appendixes E and F provide more examples of the analysis conducted using the Query tool.

Table 2: Results of the Query tool for the family code “South of Italy – negative traits”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 1/21	4%	All graduates in the UK 8/39	20%
All graduates from the Centre 0/24	0%	All Internal migrants 12/24	50%
All graduates from the South 27/40	67%	All immobile graduates 7/21	33%
Males 14/41	34%		
Females 12/42	28%		

The output of a query is also a list of relevant quotations within which the code or families of code were attached. The resulting quotes were used to verify the emerging hypotheses and also to check that the meanings associated to each code were still relevant. The analysis process reached its end when no major anomalies were encountered and an overall reasonable coherence between the texts analysed and the hypotheses formulated was observed. As can be noted, the number of interviews analysed with the Query tool can be slightly different to the total number of the interviews collected among a particular sample of graduates. For example, in Table 2, the number of immobile graduates analysed is 21 rather than 24 which is the total number of non-mobile graduates interviewed. This is because some of the interviews conducted were too short or the characteristics of the graduates involved did not exactly match the selection criteria and thus were not considered suitable respondents for a detailed analysis and for triangulations purposes. Even so, these interviews, and the

information derived from them, were not completely discarded and are included in the overall data on which this study is based.

Finally, it is important to underline the fact that, despite the multi-level analysis carried out on the interview transcriptions, my final analysis of the data is still a subjective interpretation of its multiple and often contested meanings, which is rigorous in its process-making but subjective in its essence. Even so, the use of Atlas.ti enabled me to efficiently analyse multiple aspects of the data collected, making an analytical foundation from which to make my claims. The following section will discuss further the inevitable limitations of the study conducted.

4.3.6 Limitations of the Approach Taken

This study has – like most research – a number of embedded limitations. First of all, it excludes other categories of graduates who do not fall under the sampling criteria. For example, it omits graduates who have migrated internally within their own regions of origin, from a peripheral rural area to the nearby city or bigger town within the same broad geographical areas (south, centre and north). An example of the latter would be internal migrants who have moved from the northern eastern region of Italy to the north-west, for instance from Venice to Turin. Moreover, especially in terms of internal migration, a comparative analysis of different places of origins, especially in the south, apart from destinations, would complement the study conducted.

In this sense, the use of three distinct samples of graduates – which is fundamental for the comparative approach that this study aims to take – should not be seen as the only possible approach. The specific migratory patterns under investigation certainly exist and involve large numbers of people, but they represent only three of the possible mobility choices that Italian graduates can make, and other mobility options should not be underestimated. The range of destinations for graduates who decide to move abroad or internally are manifold and include other regions and countries within and outside of the EU with completely different trajectories and requirements (for example, Canada or Australia).

Moreover, the classification of immobile graduates is also, of necessity, quite flexible in the sense that it includes all those graduates who are living in locations which are situated at a commutable distance from their home towns. The concept of commutable is defined in this thesis as a distance that can be comfortably covered daily without the need to stay overnight. In this case, the home town is defined as the place in which the respondents have resided previously and during their university degree because, as other studies on graduate migration have demonstrated, there is close correlation between migrating for studying and future migration (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). In this respect, the sample of immobile graduates is intended to function mainly as a control group for the other samples.

Another limitation of this study is that in most cases, I could only meet and interview the respondents once, keeping in touch mostly by emails afterward. A longitudinal approach would have certainly added something meaningful to the analysis. In some cases, I did meet some of the respondents on a number of occasions after the initial interview, particularly when they acted as a medium for me to meet other suitable respondents. This was especially true in the case of the internal migrants living in Rome, my own city of origin, which I had the chance to visit en route to Palermo, for instance, and during the post-fieldwork phase of analysis and writing up. These later informal conversations were quite useful for me to test some ideas and to discuss some of my hypotheses with a few respondents. Similarly, I also had the chance to meet again some of the graduates living in the London area. On the other hand, I did not have the chance to meet again graduates living in the cities of Milan and Palermo, which I have not visited since my fieldwork.

Despite the limitations mentioned so far, the research offers some interesting insights about the broader phenomena of Italian graduate migratory patterns. This is not to say that the findings and ideas that will be proposed in the following chapters aspire to be considered as objective; but in line with other researchers such as Williams (2003), I believe that qualitative research does contribute to advancing the state of knowledge on different social phenomena. Moreover, another key strength of qualitative research is that it can produce the “right” questions for larger surveys then to ask future research to focus on. This point will be discussed in detail in the concluding chapter, which will examine the main contributions and implications of my study.

4.4 Positionality and Reflexivity

Reflexivity can be defined as thoughtful, conscious self-awareness, which in the practice of conducting social research means to maintain a continuous evaluation of the ways in which the research has been carried out and of the different dynamics that might have affected its process and the construction of knowledge itself (Finlay, 2002). Currently, among social scientists, there is increasing suspicion about the actual possibility of carrying out objective, value-free research, while the socially constructed and situated nature of knowledge production is generally acknowledged. The practice of reflexivity is seen in this context as a way to unveil the subjective dynamics that may have affected at different stages the research, making the whole process and the role of the researcher open to public scrutiny (England, 1994).

However, it must be remembered that reflexivity can help the researcher to be more aware of the possible biases occurring in research, especially that involving field-based methods, but it cannot remove them. At best, the researcher can acknowledge and take responsibility for them. As I personally conducted the research at all stages, I am aware that my status and my influence on the research process as a young, well-educated Italian female needs to be acknowledged.

As I briefly noted above, I have many things in common with some of my respondents, who could have been my peers or colleagues. In this regard, I am aware that I shared a degree of insider knowledge with some of my respondents in relation to some of the issues discussed during the interviews. This was particularly true in the case of Italian graduates in the UK and generally those who worked in research and academia. In particular, my being Italian, now 31 years old, originally from Rome and living in the UK was, I believe, often an advantage in terms of being able to understand references to stereotypical images about Italy, about the different ways of living and working in Italy and the UK, and so on.

Nevertheless, like other Italian researchers before me (Seganti, 2010), I tried to adopt a detached perspective while listening to my respondents during the interviews.

Moreover, I felt and still feel quite an outsider in relation to some of the issues discussed in my study. Before doing this research, I had never visited Sicily, and I had only been briefly to Milan once. My familiarity with ways of living in these and other Italian cities and regions was very limited and rested mostly on stereotyped images from films, literature and television in a way which is not that different from any other “average” Italian or foreign observer. There is also a general challenge posed by investigating the same phenomenon in different places (Murray, 2010) and the ways in which I, as the researcher, had to adjust to different people and circumstances.

In fact, I observed that my role as researcher and interviewer was perceived quite differently when I approached Italian graduates living in the UK compared to when I met Italian graduates living in Italy. I was generally perceived more as an “insider” by the Italians abroad because I was living abroad myself, while I was generally treated as a “foreigner” when I was in Italy, especially when I was in Sicily and in Milan where respondents were at times explaining “their lives” from zero. Thus, all knowledge produced needs to be inevitably contextualised by taking into consideration the particular conditions in which it was produced.

Moreover, my own emotions and views associated with emigration and mobility, and on Italy more generally, might have shaped my interaction with the respondents and my response to the respondents’ narratives while analysing the data. As Grey (2008) has indicated, reflexivity can only take us so far, while the technical practice of conducting research cannot be separated from the economies of emotion and the associated political projects which shape the reasons why knowledge is produced, and why a particular research topic is chosen in the first place. In social research, according to Grey (2008), the separation between emotions and knowledge is an artificial one. I would certainly agree with her. As an Italian researcher, I had an interest in studying Italian graduates’ reasons to migrate because I felt that, as a social phenomenon, Italian graduate migration could shed some light on the current socio-economic and cultural landscapes of Italy and in particular of Italy’s young generations. Moreover, I generally feel quite uncomfortable with the national stereotypes and jokes about Italy and Italians – the pizza, mafia and mandolin images – and their more recent developments triggered by Prime Minister Berlusconi’s political and sexual scandals. In this context, I was keen to

explore the validity of some of these common discursive clichés in relation to the reasons to migrate of Italian graduates.

In terms of gender, I never felt that my being a female particularly affected the interview process or the attitude of my respondents toward me or mine toward them. Being of the same age as most of my respondents probably diminished the influence that gender would have had on the interview process, encouraging a degree of familiarity and “companionship”. However, I am aware that my being a woman could have been seen as “unthreatening” and might have indirectly encouraged some respondents to talk differently, as suggested by the wide literature in this field (see for example England, 1994).

Nevertheless, I generally felt that my respondents were quite happy to have somebody to talk to and were generally excited that somebody outside their family and circles of friends was interested in their lives, opinions and experiences. This was particularly true for internal migrants in Italy, whom I think felt that their status and efforts were largely unseen and invisible to others. The main concern at present is possibly constituted by my willingness to produce something back which is meaningful, without distorting the realities that respondents have so generously allowed me to investigate.

CHAPTER 5

“ITALY IS A DIFFICULT COUNTRY”

THE MANY REASONS TO MIGRATE OF ITALIAN GRADUATES

5.1 Introduction

This first empirical chapter will analyse Italian graduate migration to the United Kingdom. This phenomenon is an example of intra-European mobility, whose favourable conditions, from an institutional and political point of view, cannot be overlooked. As illustrated in previous chapters, Italians are, as founding members of the EU, free to come and leave the UK without administrative impediments and at relatively low cost, thanks to the recent expansion of low-fare airlines across Europe.¹⁵

Overall, throughout this chapter, I will argue for the recognition of the concomitant roles played by economic and non-economic factors in structuring Italian graduates' decisions to migrate to the UK. In this regard, my aim is to provide a sociological analysis through which the relationships between the subjective contents of each migratory experience collected, and the characteristics of Italian graduate migration as a social phenomenon, can be revealed. As mentioned in Chapter 4, this approach represents an ideal attempt to apply C. Wright Mills' (1959) call for the development of a “sociological imagination” to examine the relationships between individual biographies and the history of the societies in which any individual action is necessarily located.

¹⁵ In fact, Italy is now extraordinarily well connected to the UK, with budget airline (especially Ryanair and Easyjet) flights connecting dozens of airports, from Turin and Trieste in the far north of Italy to Catania and Cagliari in the far south, to a range of UK hubs.

Within this context, the characteristics and the different motivations of Italian graduates to migrate to the UK will be analysed. The first section of this chapter will look at the general characteristics of the migratory experiences collected, particularly in terms of migrants' background and their reasons to migrate specifically to the UK. This initial analysis aims to build an overall framework in which the subsequent details of each migrant's story can be located. Next, the important role that professional considerations and economic factors have in orienting these migrations will be discussed. This will include an analysis of the particular case of Italian scientific migration and "brain drain", which constitute a significant sub-sample of narratives analysed. Then, the non-economic aspects of these migrations will be analysed in terms of the role that personal motivations play in the mobility behaviour of Italian graduates. Finally, cultural and ethical typologies of motivations will be presented and discussed, particularly in terms of migrants' views of Italy as the home country and their sense of belonging and identification with its culture, national identity and *mentalità*.

The qualitative material presented is based on the 39 interviews I conducted with Italian graduates living in the London area in 2008-2009.¹⁶

5.2 Common Traits

Italian graduate migration to the UK is a wide-ranging phenomenon which encompasses many different migratory experiences. Motivations to migrate among my sample of graduates were varied. When I enquired about it, respondents often recalled different considerations – some pragmatic and some more personal and subjective – which first led them to consider moving to the UK. Professional considerations were frequent, and often mentioned as the objective foundation on which the different decision-making narratives were constructed, but these were not isolated and each graduate added his or her own twist of personal and ideological motivations. Despite the variety of human experiences and considerations encountered, some common characteristics can be observed.

¹⁶ See appendix C for the outline biographical characteristics of these graduates. All names are pseudonyms.

Firstly, most respondents in the UK did not speak about their decisions to move to the UK using the Italian term *migrazione* (migration), but talked about “leaving” Italy and about their reasons to “move abroad”. In this regard, it is important to clarify that the Italian verbs “to migrate” or “to emigrate” (*emigrare*) are generally used to describe the Great Migrations of the past. To migrate or to emigrate are rather “dated” terms for most Italians. However, this shift in the use of language does not necessarily indicate a different view and approach to the act of “migrating” itself, which is still considered a significant and “no-ordinary” event by most graduates, as illustrated in the following section.

Secondly, most respondents seem to share a background of previous experiences abroad. Student exchange programmes such as the Erasmus-Socrates emerged as particularly popular. Other common characteristics of these migrations are their association with a general perception of the advantages associated with learning English as the global language, and with working in the UK as one of the “percieved” core markets for most professions in Europe. These will be the themes of the following sub-sections.

5.2.1 The Importance of Early Experiences Abroad

Early experiences of migration and travelling, equally shared by males and females, were common among 70% of the graduates interviewed. Among these, the Erasmus student exchange programme emerged as the most popular form of previous mobility, an experience shared by 12 respondents, nearly one third of the total UK sample interviewed. Respondents seemed to agree that studying and living abroad during their student years was a deeply transformative experience which changed their views, interests and aspirations once they got back to Italy, as the following quotes illustrate:

Once you do an experience such as the Erasmus, it is very hard to go back to your previous life. It an experience that changes you, that changes your priorities in life. It changes the perceptions of your life, of the things which before you thought were unreachable and then you realised are easily accessible for many people. (Guido, 30, male, from the centre)

This experience [of Erasmus] was very important because I had the impression of a country [Germany] in which everything works and I had to make a big effort once I got to Italy to settle in. (Emiliano, 31, male, from the north)

In any case, after the Erasmus I was no longer the same person, because I had realised that I needed people who had something in common with me, I was no longer interested in hanging out with the gang of friends of my first years of university, I would wave hello and that is it, then look for other kinds of people. (Franca, 32, female from the north)

As these extracts indicate, participating in the Erasmus programme can bring significant changes in the lives of the students involved. According to my respondents, these were mostly related to the changes in perception brought by comparing the experiences that they had previously lived in Italy, to the experiences they had while studying abroad. In particular, as Guido and Franca's quotes suggest, living abroad might trigger in some students a process of "high reflexivity" characterised by deep self-reflection about their lives and inner aspirations (Bagnoli, 2009). This not only affected their perceptions of themselves in terms of their own identities and interests, but on a broader scale, I would argue, also impacted their views of Italy as the home country. In this specific context, particularly significant were the comparisons between the life-styles and resources available while studying abroad, and the more limited resources experienced while studying in Italian universities. The role of Italian universities as the sending institutions should not be underestimated, because Italian universities are famously characterised by a chronic lack of investment, poor infrastructures and scarce resources that Italian students are generally well aware of (Cammelli, 2009), but whose practical implications might only be fully understood once a student has a chance to experience studying in a better equipped and resourced university.

Moreover, respondents who participated in the Erasmus programme shared a difficulty in fitting back in their previous social contexts once they returned to Italy. This was mostly due to the transformative effect that living abroad had on them, compared to the "unchanged" appearance of life back home. For some, as Franca's quote suggested, going back home coincided with another transformative phase during which the returnee would actively attempt to reproduce, at least partly, the novelties experienced abroad by looking for new friends and activities. This process can ultimately lead to

further mobility, when the interviewees involved realised that the things he/she was looking for, were not available in Italy.

These findings support the existing literature on student migration which stresses on the one hand, the need to look at student mobility in the context of wider discourses of meanings associated with international opportunities, which are socially and culturally constructed (Findlay et al., 2005); and on the other, the formation of “mobility capital” which tends to favour future mobility (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002).

However, the impact of the “Erasmus” in the narratives collected needs to be questioned as these commentaries tend to emphasise the importance of previous experiences of mobility, and do so retrospectively. Therefore, they might reflect individuals’ need to construct a personal narrative which explains and makes sense of one’s decisions. After all, as Beck (1992) argues, modernity encourages individuals to be rational and self-asserting in the process of building their biography and this emphasis on the importance of Erasmus as a “fateful moment” (Procter and Padfield, 1998) might be a reflection of this modern rationalising attitude.

Moreover, as will be illustrated in Chapter 7, the degree of personal success experienced abroad plays an important role in shaping future mobility plans, and experiencing mobility at an early stage in life is generally not enough to trigger future migration in itself. Therefore, it could be argued that these findings support the view that the decision to migrate among international students is socially embedded (Brooks and Waters, 2010; 2011), and that migration is not a sudden, single event but the result of multiple considerations, values and aspirations built over the life course. The following section will further investigate these themes in the context of migrants’ rationales for choosing the UK as their country of destination.

5.2.2 The Choice of the UK

The view of the country of destination and of the opportunities it might offer in comparison to the conditions experienced in the home country are obviously a

significant factor in the decision to move. In this respect, the choice of the country of destination is partly already indicative of the motivations that accompany migrants. Italians are widely present in other European countries, particularly in Germany (Recchi and Favell, 2009), but with significant differences in terms of their socio-economic characteristics and the typology of their migrations. If, on the one hand, current Italian migration to Germany is still partly characterised by remnants of the “guestworkers” model, Italians moving to the United Kingdom are generally conceptualised as “free movers” (Favell, 2008), individuals who move voluntarily and independently for a plethora of individual reasons. This section aims to unveil the nature of the reasons why Italian “free movers” choose to move specifically to the UK, investigating the pull factors underpinning their migratory decisions, and illustrating what the UK has to offer from their point of view. Push factors from Italy are dealt with later.

Across my sample, the choice of moving to the UK seemed to be predominantly associated with the idea of learning (or improving an existing knowledge of) English as the “global language”. This factor was articulated by 21 respondents, roughly equally divided in terms of gender. Moreover, the perceived “centrality” of the British labour market for most professions in Europe – at least in comparison with Italy; the international prestige of the UK’s companies, universities and institutions; and finally, the general appeal of living in the city of London as a global, cosmopolitan melting-pot also appeared as important pull factors. These considerations are not unique to Italians, as they have been observed in the case of other migratory flows from southern Europe (Smith and Favell, 2006).

From my sample of Italian participants, learning English was considered important because it was perceived as an advantage and often as a requirement to access qualified occupations back in Italy. For example, Alessandra, a female graduate from the south, recalled an earlier job interview she had in Italy, in which speaking English emerged as a significant requirement, and how this experience affected her decision to move to the UK. “The story is”, she said, “that I went for an important interview [in Italy] and at the end they asked me to speak in English and I did not do well. After that experience, I said to myself that I absolutely have to learn English” (Alessandra, 27, female, from the south).

Alessandra's experience provides an example of how it was, at times, the direct experience of the difference that being fluent in English would make in the Italian labour market that encouraged some respondents to spend time in the UK to improve their English language skills, in the context of English-language training as a well-developed service industry in the UK. Most respondents have enrolled, at some point during their stays in the UK, in English language courses. Some of them first visited the UK as part of English-language summer schools in Oxford, Cambridge or Brighton, while others had friends or relatives who had done so. In most cases, the idea of moving to the UK to learn or to improve their English was mentioned as one of their motivations. In this regard, the general rationale that emerged from the narratives collected was that it was worth investing some time and money to move to the UK for a few months, even just to improve English, because this would add benefit in the future. Reasons to migrate, I will argue, are often overlapping and concomitant, and learning English emerged as the perfect, valid, objective "reason" for moving to the UK; while only in a few instances was this indicated as the main or only motivation to migrate.

Moreover, the UK and in particular the city of London, have earned through previous migrants' accounts and via media and films, a reputation for being culturally and professionally ahead of the times (Favell, 2008). This is a factor that generally increases Italian graduates' desires to move to the UK, because London is perceived as a cultural and professional escape from the more traditional and provincial life-styles available in Italy as the following quotes from Michele, a male graduate from Sardinia, and Manuela, a female graduate from the north, will illustrate:

My idea was to go abroad [...] to learn a completely different life-style...and also growing up, I thought about the educational opportunities I could have here...[in London] they do [everything], even a Master's in plumbing, can you believe it? [...] I come from a generation of older brothers who have been here in London before me, for a couple of years, and so I had an idea of London which was...a bit hippy, liberal, so I come with the idea of "London is cool". (Michele, 25, male, from the south)

When I finished university I did not want to stay in Italy, for the usual reasons, I did not really like it there, I was a bit confused and I did not know what to do...at the same time, I always had this thing for London so I came here...

How come you wanted to leave?

I did not like the place, the people, apart from the mentality, I was tired of it, I really had enough of it when I think about it now, I was in a relationship which was not working...so I don't know if then the desire to leave was also a bit of an easy way out, you know, to end things...I don't know... and then I always had this thing about coming back to London.
(Manuela, 28, female, from the north)

As these quotes suggest, the reasons to choose the UK as a destination can include a combination of both economic and non-economic considerations. Knowing friends, family members or acquaintances who have previously visited the UK seems to facilitate graduates' decisions to migrate (Epstein and Gang, 2006), even though these migrations do not conform to a typical pattern of chain migration and constitute rather individualistic and unstructured type of moves, as the following sections will illustrate. Moreover, as Manuela's quote indicates respondents' degree of happiness in their personal and social lives in Italy could also play a significant role in their decisions to migrate. The importance of this point will be explored in further detail in Chapter 7, where I compare migrants' considerations on this issue with those of non-mobile graduates living in Italy.

Nevertheless, a common narrative associated with the perceived opportunities and benefits of moving to the UK to improve English language skills and to enjoy a country which is considered more advanced than Italy, both economically and culturally, can be identified. This was found to be particularly significant for those graduates who come from small towns or peripheral Italian regions, such as Sardinia, but it would also play a role for graduates from bigger cities, because their general view of Italy is still one of relative backwardness compared to northern and continental Europe. An in-depth analysis of the role and impact that negative views of Italy have on graduates' decisions to migrate will be provided later in this chapter. In the next section specific patterns of motivations, starting from professional considerations will be discussed.

5.3 Professional Motivations: The Italian Labour Market as a Push Factor

Professional motivations had a primary role within the narratives I recorded, particularly among male graduates. Overall, approximately two thirds of the interviewees stated work or the desire to pursue a specific career as their main reasons to migrate to the UK and this percentage increases even further – to 80% – among male migrants in this sample. In particular, aspects of respondents' working experiences in Italy were usually stated as factors which triggered or contributed to their decisions to migrate to the UK. Nevertheless, this is not to say that every graduate was affected by economic and professional considerations in the same way, but a general view of the Italian labour market seemed to emerge from the narratives which centred around the difficult access to many professions, and the difficulties encountered when pursuing a specific career in Italy. The next quotes from Luca and Michele, two male graduates, are an example of this pattern:

The United Kingdom has offered me things which I would have never had in Italy. What I adore about this country is that they judge you for what you can do; there may be internal games but, in my case, I think that I would have never managed to get to the same position in Italy. (Luca, 35, male, from the south)

I started working in this company as market analyst...it is very interesting. In Italy, if I started to work for a call-centre, begging to get a temporary contract, I would have earned €500 per month...this [promotion] would have never happened in Italy, [the employers] would have never allowed me to become a market analyst [starting from call-centre-position]...in the UK things move, they employed me, they trained me...they noticed that I have skills that could benefit them. (Michele, 25, male, from the south)

As suggested by these quotes, the general belief that emerged from the respondents' narratives was that the UK offers more professional opportunities to Italian graduates than Italy does. This is partly explained by Italian graduates by reference to the more open and meritocratic recruitment processes for jobs in the UK, compared to the lack of meritocracy and the abundance of irregularities that are generally associated with the access to jobs in Italy.

Ultimately, filling jobs that are available in the UK, but not in Italy, emerged as a main factor in the decisions to migrate. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that their migrations are largely unstructured in nature, and that the greatest majority of respondents moved to the UK with only a vague idea of how to look for jobs. In this regard, the relatively close distance between Italy and the UK, the rise of the service and knowledge economy in the UK, the cheap travelling available between the two countries, and the favourable institutional circumstances that surround these migrations, clearly play an important role in offering a chance to Italian graduates to “try” moving to the UK to fulfil their aspirations.

This finding supports recent studies on the new geography of intra-European migrations which have indicated that despite the “affective” nature of intra-European migration in general, migration from southern Europe to central and northern Europe is still characterised by a large share of work-oriented migration, particularly in the case of Italy (Avveduto and Brandi, 2004; Bartolini and Volpi, 2005; Favell, 2008; Recchi and Favell, 2009). In particular, the possibility to pursue the “desired job” was considered a very significant factor in their decisions to migrate of these graduates. The following quote from Gianni, a male graduate from Sardinia, demonstrates this point:

In my sector, in Italy, there is not a lot of mobility, there is a sort of little *mafia* at the local level, especially in my region...and I said to myself, sooner or later I have to leave [...] I started looking for jobs over the internet [...] the main motivation to leave was the job. With great surprise, I found my first job after three weeks [...]

Would you have left anyway if you had a job back in Italy?

No, if I had *my job* [his emphasis]. For any job, I would not have, because what has pushed me to move here was the opportunity to do *my job* [his emphasis], what I really want to do. I mean, I think that there are people who have the luck and the bad luck simultaneously of knowing what they want to do in life. (Gianni, 33, male, from the south)

As Gianni’s extract suggests, the desire to work in a particular field, or to pursue a career which was not available in Italy, often acted as a key trigger to migrate also bearing in mind that over-qualification is a widespread characteristic of the Italian graduate labour market (Cammelli, 2009; Reyneri, 2005). The lack of opportunities to

pursue the dream job in Italy was often associated, as in the case of Gianni's account, with the presence of clientelism in many professions. Gianni's statement about the "existence of a little mafia" in his field in Italy needs to be read in this optic, as the word *mafia* in Italian is often used not to refer directly to an association with a criminal organisation, but to indicate the existence of irregularities and corruption. These themes will be discussed in depth later in the thesis.

Moreover, respondents tended to refer to the problems of the Italian labour market as a "graduate problem" or as a problem of "their generation" (Guido, 30, male, from Rome), which suggests that a generational divide between young job-seekers and senior employees exists (Buzzi et al., 2007; Livi-Bacci, 2008), and plays a significant role in the decision to migrate of Italian graduates. This suggests that the difficult access to specialised and skilled occupations in Italy is a widespread phenomenon which interests all graduates, thus representing the single most important push factor of these migrations.

In terms of gender, the fact that most Italian male graduates stated that they migrated in order to pursue a gratifying career abroad suggests that professional motivations might be particularly significant for young adult males. Landing a good job is considered very important in a patriarchal society such as Italy, in which young males are generally expected to become future breadwinners (Gallino, 2008; Ginsborg, 1998; Leccardi, 2007). This point will be explored further in relation to the difference between male and female graduates in other aspects of their decisions to migrate, such as the desire to be away from home to build their characters, which will be analysed in later sections of this chapter.

Furthermore, for those graduates who already had a job in Italy before they migrated, moving to the UK was often perceived as a significant step up for their careers. In these cases, moving to the UK was associated with the broader opportunities that UK-based companies could offer. The following quote from Ferdinando, a male engineer from the north, is an example of this mechanism:

I consider this a step forward because above all, and this is the main reason why I am here...I have realised that there are opportunities in Italy but they are quite limited, at least

in my sector [...] Working in the UK enables me to have a global perspective. If you work in Italy, you only work for the Italian market; if you work in England, because of the professional networks that they have, or because English is the global language, you can aspire to work on projects anywhere [...] If they take you on to work here, they allow you to grow professionally faster than in Italy...Apart from saying that work in Italy is not meritocratic, which is true, there are also not many opportunities to pursue a career there. (Ferdinando, 30, male, from the north)

As Ferdinando's quote indicates, the centrality of UK companies and institutions in the European and global labour market plays an important role in the decision to migrate of some respondents, especially those with high professional aspirations and ambitions. The city of London is the core of the European graduate labour market for many professions, including banking and finance, marketing, research, IT and engineering, and acts as a powerful pull factor and as an "escalator region" for most migrants (Fielding, 1992a). This would particularly appeal to career-oriented and ambitious graduates like Ferdinando, who associated the UK with better opportunities of career progressions.

Nevertheless, the decision to migrate often comprised of a combination of different factors and professional considerations should not be analysed in isolation from other desires and aspirations. In fact, a general discontent in other areas of their lives back in Italy often emerged as the decisive factor to migrate. The next quote from Daniele illustrates this pattern:

I wanted to move away but I got this job offer [soon after graduating] that overall was not bad and I stayed there, but I really wanted to go away, even from Milan...

Were you tired of your home-town?

Yes, absolutely! [...] Then there is the experience of working there where you get badly squeezed, badly paid, they give you a salary increase of only 50€ per year. All these things, and on top you also come from a small place, which is not the best. Then in my sector, you are in touch with other people abroad that do your same job and they earn three times as much...and it is not that life in Italy is that much cheaper [in comparison]. (Daniele, 30, male, from the north)

As indicated by this extract, even though considerations on the difficult access to occupations and the lower quality of jobs and salaries available in Italy were frequently-stated reasons to migrate, migratory decision-making generally encompassed both economic and personal motivations. Nevertheless, the recurrence of mentions about the difficulties encountered in the professional sphere, either while looking for a job or while working in Italy, makes it important to emphasise the significant role that the Italian labour market had in triggering these migrations.

Overall, it could be argued that my analysis of Italian graduate migration to the UK confirms the existence of a significant mismatch between the demand and supply of labour in the Italian graduate labour market (Ortiz, 2010; Reyneri, 2005). In this regard, my findings raise the question of whether these migrations can be considered fully voluntary in nature. Perhaps, as we shall see throughout this thesis, the traditional distinction between voluntary and forced migration needs to be replaced by a more nuanced understanding of current migratory flows, as indicated by King et al. (2008).

Nevertheless, it is important to look at the context of specific professions in order to fully understand how these professionally-led migrations take place in specific contexts. The following section will look at these dynamics in the case of Italian academia.

5.2.1 Academic Mobility

The mobility of Italian academics and research students emerged as a significant phenomenon during my fieldwork. About one-third of my respondents moved to the UK either to enrol on a PhD programme, or to work in research and academia. Anecdotes about the corrupt nature of Italian academia permeated these respondents' narratives. This is not entirely surprising considering existing literature on this phenomenon (ADI, 2001; Ambasciata d' Italia, 2006; Avveduto and Brandi, 2004; Becker et al., 2003; Morano-Foadi, 2005; 2006) and the significant presence of non-UK nationals in British academia (Ackers and Gill, 2008).

In particular, as the Mobex study indicated (Morano-Foadi 2005; 2006), the problems faced by aspiring academics and scientists in Italy are linked predominantly to two main issues: a chronic under-investment in research, partly due to a traditional scepticism of Italian politicians toward science; and secondly, the corrupted and semi-feudal nature of Italian academia particularly in terms of its recruitment culture, characterised by nepotism and abuse of power by key professors. This analysis finds some confirmation in the data collected (stories, anecdotes, experiences) especially as regards the corrupt nature of Italian academia. The following quote from Angelo, a male researcher in biochemistry, is a typical example of many collected on this topic:

I was doing well in Italy, but I was not really motivated because the Italian university environment is quite slow...there is not really a way to speed up, to make a career...not based on meritocracy. Progressing depends on how long you have been there for, on the disposition of people who are at the top...Therefore, I said to myself, this is not for me, I want to work, have a career. I like working, I think I have good chances in this field [...] I found myself here in this lab, with my own tools, with resources, it was such a huge quality jump [...] To obtain the same results in Italy it would have taken me 5-6 years, because there is no money in Italy to do these kinds of experiments [...] and then the experience of working directly with my supervisors, without intermediaries [...] In Italy ahead of me there are three or four people who are waiting for a stable contract, if you look at the department overall, there must be around 40 people on the waiting list for jobs [...] At the end of the day, you realise that being good at what you do is not enough, I saw other students with lower grades than me getting jobs before me, and how is that possible? Either you know people...being good is not enough. (Angelo, 26, male, from the centre)

As Angelo's quote illustrates, the lack of research funds, coupled with the difficulties experienced in pursuing a career in Italian academia, emerged as the primary reasons to migrate for this male scientist. The following quote supports Angelo's statement, illustrating a very similar scenario. The narrator is Emiliano, a male graduate in international relations, who was actually on relatively good terms with his senior colleagues back in Italy.

So how did you decide to come for a visiting period here?

Well it was also because [back in Italy] they told me that, as I spoke a few languages, if I could settle abroad it would be better, so they would have one less person [they

needed] to fix a place for. In Italy it is like that, if you participate in a *concorso* [recruitment examination] in your university, they would let you win it; in other places, they will not [...] At university, I was always asking to work, to mark exams, and once the head of department told me “I already have two children” [...] Moreover, in my case, besides an objective discourse of intolerance toward the Italian university system, there is also a personal discourse of trying other professional experiences in other places, before locking myself up in Italy. (Emiliano, 31, male from the north)

This extract is an example of the nepotistic logic of recruitment which, according to many respondents, characterises Italian academia. The advice which the respondent received on this occasion – to go abroad for lack of internal opportunities – confirms a trend already indicated in the existing literature on scientific mobility. Given the diminishing funds allocated to research in Italy, even those young researchers who had the sympathy of a key professor or “baron” back home, would be advantaged by going abroad (Morano-Foadi, 2006).

However, there are also other dynamics to consider. Overall, my data indicates that most of the graduates who decided to migrate abroad either did not have and/or did not wish to pursue the protection or the *raccomandazione* of a key professor back in Italy. The following quote from Viola, a female psychology graduate from the north, is an example of this dynamic:

My university in Italy was quite good for my field; however, there were a lot of things at university level that I didn't like [...] This mega-hierarchy, in which [...] you have to adulate the professor [...] I cannot see myself there, I needed a break [...] and I want to do my own project as I like it, but if you work under a professor, you have to do whatever they want you to do. (Viola, 28, female, from the north)

As illustrated by the quotes above, the feeling of being against a system which was considered impenetrable often provoked the decision to migrate among these participants. However, moving abroad is not without consequences, and might reduce even further their chances of working in Italian institutions in the future, as the next quote from Mirella, a female language graduate, points out:

In Italy I was told by a professor who was very close to me “Why don’t you do a doctorate? Look, if you go abroad to do a PhD, you are not going to come back afterward; because here you need to lay your foundations by staying close to a professor for some years...so that when he dies you will take his place. It is not possible that you do a PhD abroad and then come back, forget it!” (Mirella, 28, female, from the centre)

Mirella’s extract further illustrates the closed nature of the Italian academic system, which results in a difficult return for those who decide to pursue an interim academic career abroad. This is firstly because a close collaboration with an important professor is considered necessary, even by other professors, to pursue an academic career in Italy. Secondly, if a student decides to step outside the system, he or she will not be trusted to become a part of it in the future. This is because it is feared by the barons – and the protectors of the existing power structure – that experiences abroad will be likely to have introduced the academic migrant to new ideas and values. The fear is that they will then come back possibly feeling more critical of the home country and less willing to accept the existing entrenched system and hierarchy. This dynamic of self-preservation has been fully analysed in a recent paper by Gambetta and Origgi (2009), and it finds confirmation in my own interview data.

Moreover, in the wider academic world, a certain degree of mobility, especially among scientists, is expected and is generally considered a necessary step to enhance one’s chances of future career progression (Ackers, 2005). However, as the previous quotes have indicated, this appears not to be the case for Italian graduates for whom keeping a close relationship with a key professor in their home institution is ultimately the most important enabling factor to pursue a career in academia. Having said that, it is important to emphasise that this account of Italian academia could be seen as partial and one-sided. The negative ways in which Italian academia is portrayed could be exacerbated by the overall nature of migrants’ narratives which may tend to justify their decisions to migrate by stressing their previous “bad” experiences in Italy. In addition, my own position as an Italian PhD student enrolled in a British university, might have influenced the desire to talk about Italian academia in negative terms, even though I never particularly encouraged respondents to talk about Italian academia as I was generally more interested in their experiences as “graduates”.

Nevertheless, academic mobility narratives were surprisingly similar in their views and motivations, and encompassed subjective differences and experiences in terms of background, gender, institutions, and discipline studied, suggesting that this phenomenon is widespread and ongoing. Moreover, the extensive literature on the key role of clientelism in Italy (Piattoni, 2001) indicates that this trend might not be limited to academia. In this regard, my findings support Favell's (2008) observations that southern Europeans who migrate to the "eurocities" are likely to be the ones who are "blocked" in their home countries and have decided to move to follow the international routes to professional advancement and self-realisation.

Finally, these quotes indicate the significance of individual values in the decisions to migrate, and the ethical nature of some of the respondents' prime motivations to move to the UK, particularly in relation to corruption and work ethics, which will be analysed in the following sections.

5.3 Personal Motivations: Migration as a Personal Quest

A "personal" motivation is the general term used in this thesis to indicate all the motives mentioned by respondents that concern their private lives. These might include family and relationship issues and/or personality traits such as open-mindedness, adventure-seeking and curiosity. Recent studies on intra-European migration have already suggested that international mobility across the EU is strongly related to life-style preferences and non-economic factors (Favell, 2008; Hadler, 2006; Scott, 2006). Therefore, this section aims to identify and to discuss which personal factors affected Italian graduates' decisions to migrate to the UK. The analysis of the meanings associated by respondents with their "private" reasons to migrate will offer new insights into their decision-making processes, enabling us to grasp the concomitance of factors which usually affect individuals' decisions to migrate and their double embeddedness in both societal processes and the individual life-course (King, 2002).

Among the most general "personal" considerations made by respondents about their decisions to migrate to the UK, there was the view that migration – as the act of actively choosing to experience life in a different country – represents a *rite of passage* which

could lead to full adulthood, independence and self-realisation. Fascination with travelling as a self-discovery adventure is not a new phenomenon and neither it is unique to Italian graduates (Conradson and Latham, 2005a; 2005b; Kennedy, 2010). Nevertheless, among Italian graduates, this idea emerged quite strongly and it is therefore important to investigate why this was the case and the possible implications of this finding.

Moving to the UK was an experimental journey which seemed to appeal the most to the more open-minded, reflective and anti-conformist graduates and to those who were leaving the parental home for the first time. Overall, Italian graduates in the UK tended to define themselves as individuals who generally desire living independently, travelling and meeting new people. These features were both presented as personality traits and as desired life-styles, as the following quotes illustrate:

...the idea was a bit of adventure, of testing oneself; to go abroad, to have a bit of experience...and from that point I never went back. (Luca, 36, male, from the south)

I always needed to stay outside [of Italy], even when I was a child I was always asking to go for summer schools abroad but my parents did not allow me to...I was always like this, I was a very normal girl, it is not that I ever behaved strangely or something, it is a matter of character, even now that I am here [in the UK], I don't have a boyfriend that I say I am staying because of him, I am here alone for myself. (Gabriella, 33, female, from the centre)

These considerations confirm existing literature on intra-European migration, particularly the work of Adrian Favell (2008) on the “pioneers” of European integration, whom he claimed are individuals – like the migrants interviewed in this study – with a courageous attitude toward their futures, who are willing to take their chances through mobility, seeking ways of expressing and fulfilling their life ambitions and desired life-styles. However, it must also be considered that these respondents did not have any particular home responsibilities at the time and could afford “to try” moving to the UK. Therefore, these considerations cannot be generalised because they may exclude graduates who might not have been able to experiment a different lifestyle.

Moreover, as outlined in Chapter 4 (methodology), the sample of graduates interviewed in the UK was, except in two cases, unmarried and without children. This might have influenced the findings on this sample of graduates where gender and family did not emerge as significant factors. Indeed, it could be assumed that the role of gender and family is likely to become more important at a later stage in life as indicated by existing literature on these phenomena (Ackers, 2008; Anthias and Lazaridis, 2000; Kofman, 1999; 2000).

As the previous quotes suggest, migrating to the UK as young adults was generally considered a powerful and transformative experience, which was linked by respondents to their personalities and interests. To a degree, this can also be considered the result of each respondent's attempt to explain and to rationalise their decision to migrate. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that to a certain extent, these respondents demonstrate the personality traits that they claimed to possess. For instance, their professed love for travelling and meeting new people was demonstrated by their living in a foreign country, speaking a new language with non-Italian friends and so on. These graduates, I would argue, are more likely to be independent, open-minded and adventure-seeking than their average peers back in Italy (this point will be explored further in Chapter 7).

Moreover, for some graduates, moving to the UK represented a modern "rite of passage" which they felt embodied their decisions to actively take control over the life course. The following quote from Guido exemplifies this phenomenon:

Surely today there is tendency of wanting to travel and to escape [from Italy] also because there is the possibility to actively shape your future. Many people are a bit scared of what is their preordained destiny and want to travel to feel more alive. I know people who work in banks [in Italy] and envy those who work abroad in a bar in Brighton. It is a world in which you receive constantly a lot of information, in which you can compare your situation with lots of different realities, you know that you could potentially do anything you like, despite where you are originally from and therefore, if you don't do anything, you feel like you are *missing out* [expression used in English by the respondent]. (Guido, 30, male, from the centre)

As Guido's extract illustrates, travelling and moving abroad can be perceived as ways to change one's destiny and to exercise one's agency in a world where alternative life-styles are constantly challenging traditional views of the life-course. In particular, Guido's considerations seem to support Appadurai's (2001) and Urry's (2007) views that, in an increasingly globalised world, individuals are constantly faced, through the daily experience of the constant flows of goods, people and information, with the existence of multiple life-styles and possibilities which alter their desires and expectations.

This seems particularly relevant in the case of Italian graduates if we take on board Rapport and Dawson's (1988) and Morley's (2000) arguments that, firstly, modern societies in the West are characterised by the increasing impact of communication technologies and media, which are deeply affecting individuals' sense of identities (Rapport and Dawson, 1988). And secondly that, according to Morley (2000), modern media and communication technologies – thanks to their power to connect individuals with ideas and life-styles worldwide – are reinventing individuals' senses of belonging, blurring the traditional distinction between home and abroad. Or that, as Urry argued (2007; 2008), “mobilities” of goods, people and information are the key characteristics and engines of modern societies.

However, this form of narrative argument, which is essentially agency-based, needs to be contextualised and tempered. Firstly because, as shown in previous sections, macro-factors operating at a political and economic level certainly play a significant role in creating these opportunities and directing migratory flows to particular destinations. Secondly, the perception of “unlimited possibilities available elsewhere”, expressed in Guido's quote, might not be equally shared by other, less resourceful categories of Italians. The right to be mobile, as Bauman (1998) has shown, is more class-specific and selective at present than ever before, and these migrations and the associated rationales reflect relatively privileged points of view.

This interpretation generally supports Bakewell's (2010) view that appointing agency to migrants is highly problematic primarily because it tends to hide structural forms of inequality which might affect people's dispositions and opportunities to migrate. Nevertheless, as Guido's quote illustrated, some graduates saw their migration as the

incarnation of their individual agency and of their desire to take charge of their lives. In this respect, I would argue that, with the necessary precautions, their agency should be recognised as a significant component of the migratory process.

Moreover, this kind of narrative can also be read as evidence of the inevitable pressures felt by individuals to build their own biography and to fulfil their dreams of self-realisation, as theorised by Beck and Giddens (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001; Beck et al., 1994; Giddens, 1991). As the following quotes will illustrate, this was felt particularly strongly by some male graduates, for whom demonstrating a strong, independent character emerged as a significant reason to migrate. The following quote from Riccardo, who complained about his controlling parents and the limited life experiences that he was able to have in Italy, vindicates this point: note how he reverts to English to emphasise the keywords “challenge” and “character building”.

It was absolutely my choice, I wanted a different experience...it was because I wanted a *challenge* [in English]. It is very sad this mentality of staying back home, where you can have a comfortable life...I always try to fight this attitude of my parents...because you as person must do something of your own...I always thought that having an experience abroad brings a certain *character-building* [in English] and I always thought that if you don't do anything on your own, what are you going to teach to your own children in the future? I always asked myself that. (Riccardo, 30, male, from the north)

Similar considerations were also made by Mirco, who moved to the UK in order to test his own skills and abilities. He stated:

I have always been at home [during university], I wanted to live away from home...

Were you tired of living at home?

Yes, I wanted to do something extra, I wanted to do it on my own, without asking somebody to help me, or else someone telling you “call if you have a problem”... even now I am really on my own, because I have some friends here...it is a test, you reach a point at which you know how things work back home, what you have to do and how things will go and the time comes that you say to yourself “ok, but are you capable of doing something on your own?” (Mirco, 26, male, from the north)

As these quotes indicate, it was at times the desire to test personal skills, without the influence and the support of the family, that triggered the decision to migrate. In this regard, the general view that emerged from the interviews was that living abroad would enable an individual – if the process was successful – to prove oneself, and to reach full maturity as a person. These considerations resonate with some of the literature on youth travel (Bagnoli, 2009; Desforges, 2000) which indicates travelling as a resource which is used by young people in order to reconstruct the self through narratives which emphasise the challenges posed and overcome by travelling.

In the case of Italian graduates, this phenomenon can also be affected by the particularity of the Italian social context in which families generally replace the welfare state in providing support and security for its younger members (Cannari and D'Alessio, 2010; Esping-Andersen, 1990). Hence, moving abroad can be perceived by some graduates as an opportunity to verify their abilities to get on with life independently, thus reinforcing the idea of migration as a rite of passage and as a turning-point toward adulthood, especially among males.

In terms of gender, this finding questions the role that patriarchy might have in the making of modern self-identities in Italy. As the data collected among male graduates suggested, ideas surrounding the necessity of strengthening one's character may have a significant gender connotation in countries like Italy, where the pressure of demonstrating a strong personality might be felt particularly strongly by young males due to general expectations of them taking as adults the role of breadwinners (Leccardi, 2007). This might not be the case for women who are still less generally expected to invest in their careers (Bernardi, 1999).

This is not to say that, for Italian female graduates, moving abroad was not considered important in terms of developing their identities independently from their families' influence. However, the narratives of female graduates in this context tended to portray the idea of migration as a gateway to independence rather than in terms of character-building itself. The following quotes from Manuela and Arianna, two female graduates illustrate this difference.

I liked the fact of getting to know people from all over the world and the fact that I was far from home, from my family... Another reason why I moved here is because in the UK people do much more *flat-sharing* [originally in English] compared to Italy, and I did not want to live with my parents until I was 40. (Manuela, 28, female, from the north)

I liked the idea of getting to know people from all over the world and the fact that I was far away from home, from my family. (Arianna, 36, female, from the south)

Clearly, the desire to live independently and away from home was strongly felt by both male and female graduates. However, as the quotes above have illustrated, for female graduates “independence” was associated with the desire to experience living outside of the parental home and to get to know a different culture and meeting new people. While for male graduates, the desire to live away from home seems to be associated with dreams of self-realisation and the strengthening of their personalities. This difference might reflect, as previously mentioned, the traditional patriarchal culture that characterises Italy as a country and the different expectations that young Italians have to cope with through their transitions to adulthood (Buzzi et al., 2007; Livi Bacci, 2008).

Nevertheless, on the whole, Italian graduates in the UK seem to be quite similar in terms of their aspirations and mindsets, generally characterised by a modern, cosmopolitan and open-minded mentality. In this regard, my data suggest that the selectivity embedded in the migratory process does not work only in terms of skills and educational progress, but also in terms of values and predispositions toward a less traditional, more adventurous and experimental life-style. In the eyes of many graduates, these aspirations and ambitions are closely associated with living abroad. These traits differentiate Italian graduates abroad from their peers in Italy, as the following chapters will illustrate.

Summing up, it could be argued that Italian graduates’ reasons to migrate often contain subjective motives that reflect the emerging characteristics of EU societies, in terms of privileging flexibility, mobility, a search for alternative life-styles and ultimately self-fulfilment (Beck, 1992; Beck et al., 1984; Favell, 2008; Giddens, 1991; Recchi and Favell, 2009; Urry, 2007). The next section redirects our gaze more firmly back to Italy as the home country and the ways in which more cultural push factors are seen by my

respondents to operate in their decisions to leave. In particular, we revisit the concept of *mentalità*.

5.4 Cultural Reasons to Migrate

My analysis begins by examining the ways in which negative views of Italy have affected graduates' decisions to migrate and their intentions not to return to Italy. Secondly, I will illustrate how the lack of identification with the Italian culture and *mentalità* can constitute a significant reason to migrate.

5.4.1. Views of Italy

Critical considerations on Italy as the home country and on Italians as fellow-citizens were frequently expressed by participants living in the UK. Nearly half of them, equally distributed in terms of gender and regions of origin (see Appendix E for details), articulated a distinctively negative view of Italy. These negative considerations often emerged in relation to other aspects of their lives in Italy. The perceived lack of meritocracy and the presence of irregularities in the recruitment process for many professions represented a main source of frustration and disillusionment toward Italy as a country. In addition, a more general sense of discontent about Italian culture and the way of living of Italians themselves also emerged from the narratives. In particular, the perception of Italy as a country characterised by social, moral and cultural decay was quite recurrent and seems to play an important role in supporting the decision to migrate and the future mobility intentions of Italian graduates.

The following quotes from Marco and Guido are examples of the distinctively negative views of Italy articulated by graduates living in the UK:

I think that for Italy this is a very sad moment... despite who is going to win the next election...it is still a sad moment, it is a miserable moment for Italy. I see my school friends who have remained there, for sure they eat very well, dress very well, but they live a life which, in my opinion, is 50, 100 years old, backward, they all live at home with their parents

[...] There is a psychological dynamic which is very miserable in Italy at the moment.
(Marco, 30, male, from the north)

Italy is a difficult country [...]. My parents made many sacrifices but they knew they could attain some good results. Us, as a generation, we know that, with an equal amount of sacrifices, we will never be able to afford to buy a house. (Guido, 30, male, from the centre)

Overall, respondents in the UK showed more negative and critical views of Italy compared to their less-mobile peers back in Italy. This is not to say that graduates in Italy had an idealistic and positive view of their country, because very harsh opinions on Italy were also expressed by some graduates *in* Italy, as we shall see later. Nevertheless, in the case of Italian graduates who have moved to the UK, their negative opinions about Italy were often expressed as part of their reasons to live abroad. In this respect, Italy is generally seen by these respondents as a country which is going through a difficult historical phase. This belief was expressed not in reference to the recent international economic crisis, which started just after most of these interviews took place, nor the recent sexual scandals surrounding Prime Minister Berlusconi, which have likewise emerged since my fieldwork. Even so, the high presence of cultural pessimism that seems to characterise these views cannot be analysed in isolation from significant events of the country's recent history – such as the collapse of the first Italian republic and of its political class in the early 1990s – which have already been identified as the main possible causes of the societal malaise that seems to characterise the country at present (Buzzi et al., 2007; Ferrarotti, 1997; Livi Bacci, 2008).

What these quotes indicate is a general scepticism as to what Italy as a country has to offer to its younger generations. The quotes express a kind of “inverted” patriotism (cf. Dickie, 2001). Nevertheless, it could be argued that this lack of belief in one's home country and the negative views of Italy articulated by some respondents could be both a cause and a product of migration itself, as they might be used to justify one's decision to live abroad. In turn, living abroad might also exacerbate the views of Italy as the sending country, as the following quote from Elio illustrates:

As regards my view of Italy, in the first two years in the UK, there was always the realisation of how badly things work in Italy, I saw everything as black, while in the UK

all was good, just because you are considered on the basis of what you can actually do, and they give you some space [rather than because of clientelistic mechanisms]... In the last couple of years however, I think I reached a more balanced view of both countries, also because during my first few years here I still had some anger toward Italy because I really felt forced to leave. (Elio, 37, male, from the centre)

As Elio's quote indicates, migrants' views of Italy need to be contextualised within the specific life-course processes which have, at least partly, generated them. As Elio frankly admitted during the interview, his view of Italy was very balanced during the first couple of years abroad because he was still feeling upset and angry about the events which had led him to migrate. In this respect, it could be argued that these negative views of Italy could also be partly the result of living abroad in the UK which was perceived as a more advanced and meritocratic country.¹⁷

Nevertheless, I would argue that the recurrence of the negative views of Italy indicates a common perception among graduates of the limited life-chances that they would have there. This belief considerably affects their future intentions to return to Italy, once they migrate. The following quotes from Arianna and Andrea, two southern Italians, reinforce this point:

Why don't you go back to Italy?

Because there is a socio-political situation that I don't like...In my opinion, Italy is an old society which is folded in on itself...there is no investment in young people and you can see this from the policies, from what happens when you look for a job... It seems like they do you a favour in giving you a job [...] I like Italy, at the end there are things that I miss like living outside in the squares, the way of socialising, my friends, food, but these are not things which make me want to return. (Arianna, 26, female, from the south)

There is always a bit of sadness for the places left, for your country, but when I actually think about what I would have done there, if I stayed, what were my real perspectives? I had a job with my parents and that is all...even the fact that I got married here, when I was in Italy I didn't think about it at all, for the atmosphere, for everything... Italy is a country

¹⁷ There is an interesting parallel here with the findings of Karen O'Reilly on another, very different, kind of "life-style" migration, that of the British retired in Spain. O'Reilly found that here, too, British residents on the Costa del Sol fashioned a narrative of a "bad Britain" (rain, cold, crime, poor National Health System, too many immigrants etc.) partly to justify (to themselves and to others) that they had made the "right decision" to move to Spain (O'Reilly, 2000).

with one of the lowest birth rates, with fewer children; but why? I can understand that, because when I lived there, I did not have any intentions to get married and to have children... I am done with Italy...there are the most beautiful places in the world but I would never go back there to live. (Andrea, 35, male, from the south)

As these quotes suggest, the perception that Italy does not offer much to its young citizens can be a significant factor in the decision of Italian graduates to migrate permanently. These considerations can be particularly influential if the respondents come from regions of the country where job opportunities are already limited, notably in the south. Nevertheless, as previously stated, negative views of the country were not restricted to graduates coming from a particular geographical area and covered a wide range of issues, which were not necessarily linked to the lack of job opportunities. The Italian political class was at times deemed responsible for this scenario, but not by a significant number of graduates, who generally pointed to the unresolved issues of Italy as a whole, and the vague origin of these problems, reflecting the popular belief that problems in Italy are due to the Italian “national character” and its unresolved issues (Altan, 2000; De Monticelli, 2010; Dickie, 2001; Patriarca, 2010). Moreover, cultural representations unite a country’s past with its present and future, and are necessary, as Marinelli, Paltrinieri, Pecchinenda and Tota (2007) argue, for the formulation of individuals’ identity and sense of belonging.

In this respect, it is interesting to note that, during all the interviews I conducted with Italian graduates, within and outside Italy, encouraging aspects of Italy as a country, or references to positive historical episodes or to cultural achievements, such as for example, the liberation from Fascism or the unification of the country itself, were rarely mentioned. This supports the argument that Italians tend to have a peculiar and quite partial view of Italy and of its history as a country (Ferrarotti, 1997); a view that seems naturally biased toward the negative side of the coin, as shown by Dickie (1996; 2001).

These findings have critical implications. In terms of their future orientations, half of the sample of Italian graduates interviewed in the UK foresaw their future lives in the UK or abroad, while another quarter thought that a return to Italy would be very difficult and unlikely. In this respect, it could be argued that holding a negative view of the home country and a pessimistic view of its future significantly shape the decisions

to migrate and not to return of graduates, even in the case of a relative wealthy country such as Italy, which also has much to offer in terms of culture and lifestyle. Moreover, it also transpires from the quotes presented that being idealistic, and to a certain extent anti-conformist, are common characteristics of the graduates interviewed in the UK. The next section will explore these themes.

5.4.2 A Different *Mentalità*

The relationship between the level of conformity to the dominant culture and the emergence of migration, which is expected to be higher in areas where conformity is lower, has been pointed by Fielding (1992b) in an intriguing essay on culture and migration. This correlation seems to be quite significant in the case of Italian graduates. As the quotes in this chapter suggested so far, an underlying motive of the narratives presented is constituted by a general lack of identification with Italian society and culture. Feeling “atypical” was a sentiment shared by nearly half of the graduates interviewed in the UK, who tended to consider themselves as “outliers” (cf. Gladwell, 2008). In particular, a lack of identification with what was perceived as the collective *mentalità* – the general ways of thinking and feeling of the country – was identified, in some cases, as a significant reason for leaving Italy.

Mostly, the term “Italian *mentalità*” was used by respondents to indicate the “Italian way of doing things”, broadly defined, which constitutes, if it is shared with others, a key feature of Italians’ collective identity. This is not to say that Italian culture and mentality were felt and portrayed as monolithic fixed entities by my respondents. On the contrary, identifying with the home-country culture and mentality mattered in the decision to migrate of some graduates, despite their differences and nuances. Moreover, as will be shown in next two chapters, feeling atypical is a characteristic which is quite unique of Italians abroad, while Italians in Italy tend to have a more benign view of Italy as a country and of fellow Italians.

The following passages from Rita’s and Andrea’s interviews are typical exemplifications of the ways in which respondents used and referred to the concept of *mentalità*.

There are two factors, actually three: the economic one, that whether you like it or not, it is a pull...the second one is the career factor, [...] of career satisfaction...and then there is a question of *mentalità*, that I still notice today, possibly even more now when I visit home...that I cannot see myself there, neither myself or my husband. It is like you feel that you are a fish out of water, you feel atypical, you feel like you have nothing to share with the people there, and this makes you suffer quite a lot, because what can you do? You cannot succeed there, you become anti-social, you feel like you are not integrated...here instead [in London] we identify much more with the social models, with their lifestyle models. (Rita, 29, female, from the south)

The discourse is not only about the job, it is also about realising your own life, because in my case I was working and having a “good life” [in Italy] but I did not feel at ease with anyone, I disagreed with everything and everyone. I disagreed with the local values, with the *mentalità*, and I was always arguing with everybody. At some point, I could not take it anymore. It was ok to have a good life but it was not in fact a good life, I was not happy there. (Andrea, 35, male, from the south)

These quotes indicate that not sharing the social and cultural norms of one's country can be a significant reason to migrate, and to stay away. As these considerations appear not to be particularly regionally or gender specific, we can assume that feelings of belonging and self-identification with the national culture among Italian graduates are conditioned, above all, by personal values and individual sensitivity. Therefore, I would argue that for those who felt more critical about Italy as a state and as a society, migrating represented a move which is not only spatial and economic but also cognitive and emotional (Jansen, 1998). Migration offered, to those who needed it, an existential kind of freedom which is the freedom to live and to pursue a desired style of living free from Italy's distinct norms and patterns. The term *mentalità* can be used here to explain a double dynamic: on the one hand, migration can be seen as an escape from the national culture; on the other, these interviews suggest that a special type of *mentalità*, possibly more idealistic and anti-conformist, is needed in order to migrate. Following on from this, I would argue that, in the case of the Italian graduates interviewed in the UK, the references to an Italian national identity, culture, and *mentalità* that were made reflected the historical development of a weak sense of national unity and identity. In this regard, the term *mentalità* was used to refer to different scales – the national, Italian

mentalità; the provincial home-town *mentalità*, which might be seen as more isolated and backward than the Italian norm; and the *mentalità* of the respondent's particular family or kinship group, which they found constraining, and therefore needed to escape from, at least for a time.

Thus, it could be argued that Italian graduates in the UK are tied into an identity dilemma, which is centred on their sense of belonging to Italy as a country toward which they feel very critical. Nevertheless, as studies of political dissidence indicate (among which, see Ranciere, 1999), even those who feel more strongly in disagreement with the mainstream culture of their country, can paradoxically find their sense of alliance to the home nation in their conditions of "dissidence". This idea seems relevant in the case of the Italian graduates. In fact, despite their criticisms toward Italy, the graduates whom I interviewed never declared that they did not "feel" Italian, but rather they tended to portray themselves as being a different kind of Italians, who do not conform to the general negative stereotypes that are attributed to the country and who manifest therefore, a different *mentalità* compared to their peers who remain in Italy. This finding supports a previous study by Bartolini and Volpi (2005) which indicated that some of the new Italian migrants were made up of people who generally felt a sense of "discontent" with Italy as the home country (2005: 103). The data presented in my study suggests that this trend is continuing and possibly reinforcing itself in the case of graduates.

From a different perspective, this kind of discourse also re-states the importance of individual subjectivities in the decisions to migrate of Italian graduates. Generally, as the quotes have illustrated, respondents accounted for their migratory decision-making in an "individualised" fashion, emphasising their active role in the process and the importance they attribute to self-determination and self-realisation (cf. Beck et al., 1994; Giddens, 1991).

Finally, as previously illustrated in Chapter 3, it is interesting to note that the term "mentality" is hardly ever used in either migration studies or sociology. My analysis indicates that this concept has a significant explanatory and analytical potential in social research, particularly in relation to the complex feelings of belonging that individuals might feel toward their culture and home country.

5.5 Conclusion

On the whole, my analysis in this chapter indicates that Italian graduates' decision to migrate to the UK is a complex and multi-level process which merges, on the one hand, the unique structural characteristics of Italy as a sending country, and on the other, the subjective experiences and personalities of each migrant. This generally confirms the view advocated by sociologists like Zanfrini (2004) that migration is a total social fact in which cultural, social, individual and economic strategies play a significant and concomitant role (Friedman and Randeria, 2004).

In the case of Italian graduates moving to the UK, the experience of a hierarchical and difficult labour market in Italy is at the base of many of the migratory narratives analysed. In this regard, Italy and its irregular and anti-meritocratic labour market emerged quite strongly as reasons to migrate *per se*. This was particularly evident in the case of the Italian brain drain; my analysis confirms that this phenomenon is strongly related to the corrupt nature of Italian academia (Morano-Foadi, 2005; 2006). Moreover, my data suggest that the Italian brain drain is ongoing and continues to involve Italy as a whole.

Moreover, my analysis also indicates that previous experiences abroad, particularly as part of student exchange programmes such as Erasmus, certainly play an important role in instigating future migration among Italian graduates, who generally chose to move to the UK because of the relative economic success of its economy in the European context, and because of the cultural fascination of living in London as a modern and cosmopolitan global city. In this regard, Italian graduates seem to share with other privileged, young adults in Europe the view that migrating to the UK could be experienced as a symbolic rite of passage, through which to seek and establish one's identity and personality. Moreover, I have argued for the recognition of their agency, which is "doubly embedded" (King, 2002) in their migratory processes, reflecting on the one hand each individual effort in the making of their life-course, and on the other hand, the particular conditions which make those individuals a resourceful and privileged category of migrants.

Finally, I have argued that negative views of Italy as the home country and a lack of identification with its culture and *mentalità* significantly affected the decisions to migrate and the future mobility intentions of Italian graduates living in the UK. The emergence of an “inverted” kind of nationalism (Dickie, 2001) among these graduates – largely characterised by the idea of Italy as a weak society, unable to resolve its problems, and by the lack of belief that this might change in the future – was identified as a key factor in these migrations. In this regard, I have identified and promoted the concept of *mentalità* to express and examine how individuals’ feelings and perceptions of their own country and fellow citizens might affect their decisions to migrate.

The next chapter will examine Italian graduates’ motivations to migrate internally, south-to-north within Italy, and how their reasons might differ from those discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6

“MOVING NORTH IS NOT EASY”

THE CURRENT INTERNAL MIGRATION OF ITALIAN GRADUATES

6.1 Introduction

Internal migration within Italy is an heterogeneous and far-reaching phenomenon. As previously discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, despite the importance of these flows in the Italian context, general interest in studying Italian internal migration came to a halt in the 1970s, following the end of the mass internal migrations that accompanied Italy's industrialisation and economic boom in the 1950s and 1960s. Recently, since the early 1990s, a reprise of south to north migrations has been observed. Between 1997 and 2008, 700,000 people are estimated to have left the south and approximately a quarter of those are graduates (ISTAT data in Scalella and Balestrieri, 2010).

This chapter presents and discusses the characteristics of current graduate internal migration from the south to the cities of Milan in the north and Rome in the centre. The data analysed is based on 24 interviews conducted in 2008-2009 with Italian graduates (12 males, 12 females) who have moved to these two cities after graduating.

Even though this chapter primarily aims to identify and to discuss the most salient features of these migrations *per se*, the analysis of graduates' motivations to move internally to these two cities will also be compared, whenever relevant, with those of graduates who have moved to the UK. Having said that, a more comprehensive comparative perspective on different mobility and non-mobility behaviours among Italian graduates will be provided in the following chapter.

The material covered by this chapter will be organised in the following order. It starts with a brief overview of the factors constituting the decision to migrate internally. Then, the rationales that characterise, and distinguish, migration to the two destinations of Rome and Milan will be analysed and compared. Next, analysis turns more specifically to the role of professional considerations in internal migration behaviour. Throughout this section, and in other parts of this chapter, the theme of the north-south divide in the geography of employment opportunities, especially for “good” jobs appropriate to graduates, remains dominant. The topic of “*raccomandazione*” comes under particular scrutiny. The final parts of the chapter look at the voluntary vs. forced nature of south-to-north graduate migration, the role of family resources in sustaining such moves, and the affective dimensions of emotions and relationships. The final section picks up the theme of respondents’ view of Italy and the “southern problem”.

6.2 The Decision to Migrate

Considering the lack of qualitative information on this topic, my initial aim in the interviews was to gather some basic information about how and when respondents first thought about moving to other places within Italy. Generally, the data I collected indicates that the idea to search for jobs or post-graduate study opportunities elsewhere in Italy first emerged during the respondents’ student years. This pattern was shared by 10 graduates from the southern regions (Calabria, Campania, Apulia, Sardinia and Sicily), while it was not mentioned by the five graduates who moved from Rome to Milan. The large scale and the “inevitability” of the south-north graduate relocations are illustrated in the following set of interview quotes:

None of the people I studied with in Naples, today work or live in Naples...in the last few months of university this idea that Naples would not have a lot to offer to us...was already taking place among us. (Federico, 33, male, from Taranto to Rome)

I don’t know how to say it, all the students who have preceded me have left, therefore it was a natural consequence that I left too, I did not think too much about staying in Naples at the time. I thought “yes, let’s go to Rome, let see what I can find”. (Antonio, 29, male, from Naples to Rome)

In my course 30 people graduated, and of these 30, perhaps only three stayed in Calabria afterwards, and I can tell you more...during my first year as a student I was sharing a flat with five engineers who are all working elsewhere now too...for everyone it's the same. (Silvio, 37, male, from Cosenza to Rome)

Generally, these quotes suggest that “a culture of migration” might be present in the south of Italy. Considering that these moves are dominated by professional considerations, this might explain the prevalence of this kind of narrative among male graduates from the south, for whom pursuing a career in light of their future roles as breadwinners is traditionally expected (Leccardi, 2007).

In terms of the particular social settings in which the idea to migrate first emerged, my data supports the view that the experiences and opinions of friends and peers are generally important in decisions to migrate (Epstein and Gang, 2006). This might be particularly significant among recent graduates for whom former students and friends represent the most direct points of reference in terms of the possible strategies to utilise for completing a successful university to work transition.

The persistence of a strong culture of migration in the south of Italy is not entirely surprising if one considers the remarkable history of migration in this region and the persistence of deep structural inequalities between the south and the north of the country which continues to trigger these moves (Dunford and Greco, 2005; Pugliese, 2002). Moreover, it could be argued that the collective awareness of better opportunities and life-style in the north might have influenced the identity formation of graduates in the south since a young age, reinforcing the idea of migration as an obvious vehicle to access social and professional mobility. This process would lead to the perpetuation of a culture of migration in the region, so that emigrating tends to be seen as the norm rather than the exception for both migrants and potential migrants (Massey et al., 1998). In fact, it will be shown later in this chapter, graduate internal migrants tend to see their migrations as a common destiny which they share with the other inhabitants of the south.

In addition, in terms of their upbringing, internal migrant interviewees seemed not to be new to migration. They share with their peers abroad a background of previous

experiences of travelling and mobility, in other words the formation of “mobility capital” (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). Among these, some are former Erasmus students while others referred to experiences abroad in the context of internships and language schools, particularly those who had been enrolled in social sciences and international relations degrees, for whom competence in foreign languages was expected. Other internal migrants experienced some previous temporary experiences of internal migration within Italy. These include short stays linked to study purposes or job training and previous working experiences that did not develop into full-time and permanent positions.

However, as we shall see later in this chapter, on the whole, these graduates do not show a particular predisposition toward migration, even if previous experiences of mobility were quite common. In this regard, it could be argued that having a background in mobility does not necessarily dictate that the individuals involved enjoy being mobile. Especially if, as in the case of Italian graduates from the south, the individuals involved come from the less developed and more peripheral areas of the country and thus their moves might be not completely voluntary. Moreover, as will be illustrated in the case of non-mobile graduates in the next chapter, mobility is not always experienced positively (Brooks and Waters, 2010; Kennedy, 2010).

6.3 The Choice of Destination

Overall, the rationale that characterises internal migrants’ choice of destination seemed to be shaped by the disciplines studied and the related jobs and career pathways that graduates wished to pursue. These would direct graduates’ job-search strategies toward specific places. The two destinations that I analysed, Rome and Milan, are an example of this trend. For those graduates who were particularly interested in jobs in the public sector, Rome, as the political and administrative capital of Italy, was the obvious choice. Milan – long considered the economic capital of the country – was chosen particularly by those graduates who were interested to pursue a career in the private sector. This city stood out from the narratives as the prototypical incarnation of the south and north divide, as these extracts illustrate:

Is design a well-developed sector in Milan?

Yes, generally yes, if we make a comparison...for every 10 studios in Rome, there are 200 in Milan... there is much more demand for designers here, there is also more competition, but it is not too bad because there is so much work here, enough for everybody. (Pietro, 27, male, from Rome to Milan)

Is there work in IT in Sicily?

There is IBM in Palermo, but there are no jobs available there... those who work in IT in the south, work in marginal areas...I think that there are some good small companies in Sicily...but here in Milan there are all the companies' headquarters and therefore many more job opportunities. (Valerio, 28, male, from Palermo to Milan)

Rome is much less dynamic; there is nothing to do about that. It is an obvious thing to say but the fact that Milan is closer to Europe, that it is so international...once somebody told me that Milan was like a little Italian "New York" and I think it is a little bit like that...it is a city where one does not go in order to settle but to do some temporary experience and then you will see...you can come, find the man of your life and then stay, or go back, or go abroad... it is a good starting point. (Alessia, 33, female, from Rome)

As these extracts suggest, the city of Milan was usually considered as the "key stone" (Alfredo, 30, male, from Messina to Milan) of the Italian national economy and labour market, a place where more job opportunities are available because of a well-developed private sector which creates a higher demand for jobs and skills compared to the south and even to the city of Rome. Indeed, it could be argued that these perceptions "on the ground" are an actual reflection of the socio-economic reality of the region. The province of Milan is one of the richest areas of Europe and within the Italian context, the Lombardy region is ranked very high in terms of its economic performance (Dunford and Greco, 2005). These considerations suggest that Milan and the Lombardy region can be considered the Italian "escalator" in terms of social and professional mobility (Fielding, 1992a). Similarly to the ways in which Fielding (1992a) has shown that London and south-east England function in the UK context, Milan and Lombardy attract a big share of the young mobile labour force from Italy. Thanks to a higher density of high-quality jobs available, those who move to this area are more likely to be promoted faster than in any other place within the country.

Moreover, as Alessia's quote suggests, Milan is the Italian "eurocity", to borrow Adrian Favell's jargon (2008). Its cosmopolitanism makes it particularly attractive for individuals who wish to "try" living in a European-style city and escape the provincial feeling of their home towns. Nevertheless, as the following account in this chapter will illustrate, internal migrants generally see their moves more pragmatically compared to those graduates who moved to the UK because they were fascinated by living in London as a global city. In this respect, the city of Milan was not "romanticised" as such by the majority of internal migrants, and its choice as a destination was primarily explained in terms of the better employment opportunities available rather than in terms of its life-style or cultural appeal. Relatedly, it is also important to keep in mind that historically, the migrations to the industrial cities of the north, like Milan and Turin at the time of the industrial boom in the 1950s and 1960s, were characterised by many episodes of discrimination against southern workers (Arru and Ramella, 2003). These might contribute, even at present, in fostering an idea of the north as an unfriendly place to live for southerners. In fact, many graduates from the south did not look forward to moving to the north and generally were not so enamoured of living in Milan, even though they appreciated the better job opportunities available.

Moving to Rome was characterised by a slightly different rationale. Overall, Rome was considered a "southern city" as regards the way of living of its citizens and the characteristics of its labour market. Nevertheless, despite the cultural closeness, life in the city and the job opportunities it offered were not considered very positively, and half of my interviewees were not completely satisfied with the outcome of their migrations to Rome. This can be partly attributed to the particular kind of professional expectations that many of the graduates in this sample seemed to share, as approximately a third of these respondents aimed to be employed in the public sector. For those, the advantages of living in Rome were initially associated with the presence of many courses and events organised by public institutions and the potential employment opportunities which could follow from these. The following quotes from Michela and Valerio are an example of this scenario:

Rome has many positive and negative sides, it is difficult to say...it is a beautiful city to live in but it is a very particular place...I didn't find many differences with my previous working

environment and the difficulties I encountered are the ones that you can imagine, the practical ones, the traffic, the expensive rent. (Michela, 30, female, from Salerno to Rome)

I came for a stage at the Foreign Office and then I decided to stay in Rome for the wider job opportunities available...

Are there many more opportunities here?

Not really, because there is a lot of politics that corrupts professional relations and recruitments... there are some opportunities to access public ministerial jobs but the *concorso* [recruitment examinations] is organised every 10 years or so, there are not many opportunities there. (Valerio, 30, male, from Salerno)

As these quotes indicate, respondents tend to have mixed feelings about their lives in Rome. Even though they enjoy living in the city because of its artistic beauty and the richness of its cultural life, many complained about the difficulties encountered when looking for jobs and the expensive housing and living costs. Their remarks find confirmation in existing studies which analyse the problematic socio-economic living conditions in Rome in terms of employment and housing (Deriu, 2008). The economy of Rome is generally considered a peculiar middle ground between the south and the north of country because its labour market is skewed toward the public and the service sectors, while many important industries which flourish in the north of the country such as textile and food manufacturing are under-represented (Dunford and Greco, 2005). In this respect, the impressions and experiences of the graduates interviewed seem to reflect this ambivalent setting. Therefore, it could be argued that the city of Rome, despite its administrative and political centrality, is not a reliable “escalator region” (Fielding, 1992a) in terms of opportunities for professional fulfilment and social mobility. In particular, for those aspiring to find a job in the public sector, clientelism, as we shall see presently, emerged as a significant barrier to access occupations, thus reducing migrants’ chances of stepping up the social ladder.

In fact, in the case of the most unfortunate migrants, the interview data suggest that some graduates might return to the south or move up north in the hope of finding better occupations and living conditions. For example, Piera, who was struggling to find a secure employment in Rome, stated:

I moved up here to Rome, but I realised that here is the same too because since I arrived, the working conditions are not more favourable than in the south...one needs to move farther away, go further north or abroad to see a difference...because the situation in Rome is still the same. (Piera, 27, female, from Cosenza to Rome)

Similar considerations were also made by Silvio, who said: “Rome is a beautiful city but it is impossible to live well here because of the high costs of housing and of the rents available”. In the future, he concluded: “I will probably give up my job here and move elsewhere, probably in one of these small, little towns in the north where the costs are lower and I can afford to buy a house” (Silvio, 37, male, from Cosenza to Rome).

Overall, these extracts confirm that what happens after an individual migrates in terms of the degree of personal success experienced, deeply matters for the formulation of future mobility plans (Kennedy, 2010). Moreover, my analysis suggests that migrating to either Milan or Rome was a rational decision based on each migrant’s professional aspirations but whose outcomes might be significantly affected by the type of careers pursued. Among my respondents, the most successful moves to Milan seemed to have happened at a later stage of graduates’ transitions to the labour market, usually after an initial unsatisfying professional experience, and following an educational or professional offer received from a company based in the north. While in the case of internal migration to Rome, most of the migratory stories seemed to have begun straight after the end of respondents’ degrees, generally triggered by the hope to access a first entry-level job, which eventually proved quite difficult to find.

Finally, in both cases, internal moves to Rome and Milan were not characterised by an existential impulse linked to the idea of migration as a “rite of passage” or as a way to seek and express one’s true personality and identity *per se* (Favell, 2008). This is possibly because leaving the south was often felt like a necessity, and therefore the act of migrating was deprived of part of its existential appeal. This difference will be discussed further in Chapter 7, which will compare graduates’ approaches to different typologies of mobility. Meanwhile, the next section looks in more detail at the ways in which professional considerations dominate internal migrants’ rationales.

6.4 The Dominant Role of Professional Considerations

The causal relationship between internal migration and regional inequalities is well established in migration studies (for an overview see Champion and Fielding, 1992) and in the Italian context more specifically (Bonifazi, 1999; Ciriaci, 2005). Professional considerations and difficulties in accessing qualified occupations in the south can be identified as the single, most recurrent and significant reason to migrate for internal graduate migrants. Around two-thirds of those interviewed indicated work as their main reason to migrate. For example, Tiziano, a male graduate in engineering from the region of Apulia:

One moves for the job, work, that is all. You move where you find a job [...] When you start looking for a job in the south, you immediately realise that there is not much work there and that in order to make a living you have to move elsewhere; it is sad but it is like that. (Tiziano, 28, male, from Bari to Rome)

Similar arguments were made by Alfredo, a male law graduate from Sicily living in Milan, who explained:

Overall, as a reason to migrate, work comes first, and the opportunities that Milan offers. (Alfredo, male, 30, from Messina to Milan)

Considering the under-developed economy of the south of Italy, particularly in terms of the lack of specialised industries (Ciriaci, 2005), these narratives confirm that internal migration is mainly triggered by the lack of job opportunities in the south. As already discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, it is generally considered difficult to access occupations in Italy, and job insecurity is a widespread phenomenon among graduates trying to enter the labour market. According to recent statistics, graduate unemployment is increasing and overall it affects approximately 20% of all Italian graduates, but this percentage is nearly twice as high in the south (Cammelli, 2009). In these difficult conditions, it is not surprising that graduates from the south, disadvantaged by the existing regional disparities, would invest in mobility to increase their chances to access occupations.

Moreover, approximately 40% of internal migrants pointed to the low quality of the few jobs that are available in the south. This sub-sample includes graduates who have tried to work in the south before deciding to move elsewhere. For example, Tiziano recalled the events which lead him to decide to migrate in this way:

After graduating, I started looking for jobs with the idea of working in the south...with the idealistic intention to work in my city...I knew that there was not much to do in the south but at the beginning I thought “let’s try”...I had an opportunity so I started to work there...but then, while working, I started to have problems with my boss, plus the company had some financial problems... it was not a very honest working environment, we were faced with situations which were not always clear [legally], so in the end I decided to leave and to change job and environment. (Tiziano, 28, male, from Bari to Rome)

Other respondents, like Angela, a female engineer from the Calabria region, articulated similar views:

The working environment in the south is de-qualifying. For me it was a devastating experience, I felt that I nearly had to thank my employers for giving me a job for €300 per month! [...] If I tell you the truth, I think employers in the south really take advantage of people, I think they take advantage of the hunger that there is for jobs, especially among graduates. (Angela, 30, female, from Cosenza to Rome)

This kind of account, despite the inevitable differences in terms of occupational pathways depicted, was found to be quite consistent in indicating that the working conditions experienced in the south were of a low standard. This raises important questions around the voluntary nature of these flows in a country which is objectively characterised by deep regional inequalities. In fact, if at the beginning of the 1990s, the reprise of internal migration was initially interpreted as a positive sign – because it was believed to signal the redistribution of employment among the population – at present, the increasing migratory flows from the south are seen as a product of the stubborn persistence of the south-north divide and its resistance to policy changes and interventions (Bonifazi, 1999). This questions the capacity of the Italian state to solve the “southern question”, which has shaped the history of the country since its unification (Gribaudi, 1997; Lumley and Morris, 1997; Pugliese, 2002).

However, the labour market in any country cannot be analysed monolithically and important differences remain in terms of the typologies of jobs that graduates were willing to pursue and where. In particular, the difficult access to many occupations was often linked by interviewees to the impact of clientelism in the recruitment process. This seems to represent one of the main obstacles to obtaining employment in the south and in the city of Rome, above all the pernicious practice of the *raccomandazione*.

6.5 The “Raccomandazione”

The *raccomandazione* to provide someone with a job or a service is one of the most common manifestations of clientelism in Italy even if the use of informal and social connections to access and to allocate occupations is not uniquely an Italian phenomenon. However, as illustrated in previous chapters, the use of personal connections in the Italian labour market is considered particularly problematic because there is evidence that it does interfere with meritocratic processes of recruitment selection, disproportionately favouring job seekers who are more socially connected in place of the more talented (Pellizzari, 2004; Ponzo and Scappa, 2009). Here I will look at the cultural practice of the “*raccomandazione*” which many of my interviewees believed to affect significantly the access to jobs in Italy, particularly in the south. As illustrated by anthropologist Dorothy Zinn (2001), the practice of asking for a *raccomandazione* – seeking other people’s help and connections – is a widespread phenomenon in southern Italy. The following quote from Angela illustrates the negative effects of this practice when looking for a job in southern Italy:

The problem is not the mafia but the *raccomandazione*! [...] You really need to be connected with somebody in the south...because if you have connections...at least you have a chance to start... It is a question of...poverty in general, I think, in which this practice increases, because I am sure that the *raccomandazione* exists in England as well as in Milan, but in the south where there is less work, it gets worse [...] The little work that there is, gets high-jacked in this way. In the same way that I think these things happen here in Rome, but here you feel it less because there are more jobs available; in the south, in Calabria, there are five places available and those five are already allocated, unfortunately it is like that. Maybe here is the same, but because there is a bigger job market, people manage to find a way to move on either way. (Angela, 30, female, from Cosenza to Rome)

Angela's extract is quite representative of the views of the eight graduates from the south who commented specifically on this topic. According to them, the practice of the *raccomandazione* is particularly significant in the southern context because of the scarcity of the job opportunities available. It was common among these respondents to believe that because of the insufficiency of jobs available in the south, the few which were available would be fully absorbed by clientelistic networks. These graduates seemed to agree that the difference between the north and the south of Italy in terms of the impact of the *raccomandazione* on the labour market was due to the higher demands for labour in the north, which decrease its impact, as the following words from Paolo, a male lawyer working in Milan, suggest:

The difference between the south and the north of Italy as regards the labour market is that in the south all labour gets absorbed into clientelistic networks... actually, even the one that is available is not enough to fulfil these requests because maybe there is only one place for three preferred candidates, and even if you are one of those, it is not for sure that you will get the job [...] In the north, some jobs are still allocated through clientelistic logics, but there are still some that remain open to other people and this makes a huge difference... (Paolo, 35, male, from Bari to Milan)

In particular, respondents seem to identify a significant difference between Rome and Milan in relation to the use of the *raccomandazione* in the recruitment for different professions. The following quotes from Piera, a female pharmacist from the south who has migrated to Rome to pursue her career, and from Alessia, a female graduate in art history who has moved from Rome to Milan, will illustrate this point:

...there is no meritocracy, the candidate that gets the job... is always the one who is connected to this or that person...and this is what makes me angry...it is like going against a wall. (Piera, 27, female, from Cosenza to Rome)

I did 15 job interviews in Milan...that would have never happened in Rome!...It is a difficult moment to find a job in my field but at least this interest in my CV makes me feel more positive about the future... My field is very small and even here it works a little bit through word of mouth but at least it works! It is not like in Rome that you have to go

somewhere because a friend of a friend needs to make a phone call for you...here in Milan at least they evaluate your profile. (Alessia, 33, female, from Rome to Milan)

As these quotes suggest, Rome and Milan represent two distinct typologies of labour markets. If Milan seems to be characterised by more job opportunities and a less significant impact of the *raccomandazione*, Rome still seems largely affected by this practice which reduces respondents' chances to find stable employment. In one sense, these insights question the motivations of Italian graduates who moved to the UK, analysed in the previous chapter. It could be argued that if the difference between the south and the north of Italy in terms of the overall quality of the jobs available is so significant, then graduates from the north of the country would not leave their home towns for professional reasons. However, as was previously illustrated, this was often the case. Therefore, one could assume a "relative" difference to be in place, in terms of the quality of the job opportunities available, depending on each person's place of departure, thus supporting Stark and Taylor's ideas of "relative deprivation" (1991) as a critical element in the migratory decision-making process. In the case of Italian graduates, it could be argued that the labour market in the north of Italy is perceived by graduates from the south as more meritocratic than the one in the south, but might not be so in comparison to another country, like the UK, which is considered to offer more opportunity for career progression and higher standards of job opportunities than Italy as a whole.

However, these considerations need to be questioned as there is a degree of ambivalence in respondents' ideas on the use of personal connections in society. Overall, the use of the *raccomandazione* seems to be viewed negatively by all respondents who tend to describe it as an "embarrassing" societal trait, confirming Zinn's findings on this matter (Zinn, 2001: 167). Nevertheless, those graduates who were more critical of this practice were those who did not seem to have one. Therefore, their views might have been exacerbated by their lack of connections and social capital.

For example, Angela explained: "It is common for graduates in the south to wait for a while after the end of their degrees to see if they can get a job through a *raccomandazione* and connections. I did it myself" (Angela, 30, female, from Cosenza to Rome). Considering the widespread use of the *raccomandazione* in Italy (Zinn,

2001), it could be assumed that Angela's experience – of waiting to see if it was possible to get a job through connections in her home town before considering migrating somewhere else might be quite common, even though most people would be reluctant to admit it publicly, or to a researcher like myself, considering the negative connotations of being associated with this kind of practice.

Moreover, it could be assumed that a graduate from southern Italy with a family that holds a high position within society would generally be “well-connected” and able to find a suitable occupation in the south. This was indeed that case of Angela, who frankly admitted she belonged to a well-established and quite wealthy family – this was part of the reason why she initially stayed in the south. However, as her experience suggests, the absolute scarcity of job opportunities in the south affects all graduates, even those whose families occupy a high position on the social ladder. This is not to say that the effects of unemployment are equally felt by all graduates. “Leaving the south” might be perceived as the only available option particularly by graduates who cannot dispose of significant financial resources and by those who cannot rely on the help of their families to find a job in their specific fields.

In this regard, there have been some scholarly attempts to explain the varieties and presence of different forms of clientelism and corruption across Italy (Piattoni, 2001). According to Faraoni (2010), on a macro level, this has mostly to do with the political behaviours of local groups and regions. A broad political cohesion – meaning individuals voting for the same party and having a clear majority in the local administration – is considered a key element to reduce corruption and to improve the local economy (Faraoni, 2010). The data that I collected does not offer specific insights into this “local politics-clientelism” dispute. Nevertheless, my analysis suggests that Italian graduates' perceptions and experiences of clientelism “on the ground” are more significant in southern Italy, where personal connections are considered more important because of the lack of regular pathways and opportunities to access employment and social mobility. Thus, it could be argued that the use of the *raccomandazione* is not a natural characteristic of the southern culture, but a result of the lack of job opportunities in this area which pushes individuals to use all their resources, including their social and personal connections, to look for potential employment opportunities. Therefore, my analysis supports the view that there is nothing “natural” about the backwardness and

underdevelopment of the south (Filippucci, 1996). Instead, I would look to the existing structural inequalities that characterise Italy as a country, in order to find the root causes of the extensive use of the *raccomandazione* in the south of Italy.

Nevertheless, these narratives also seem to suggest a general sense of continuity in terms of the historical development of the relationship between clientelism and migration. Popularly, in fact, during the period of the mass migrations of the 19th century, southerners were attributed the choice of becoming “either emigrants or brigands” (De Rosa and Verrastro, 2007: 20). Despite the highly debatable representativeness of this common stereotype of the south, it is interesting to note that this dialectic narrative typology is still present among southerners. This statement does not imply any support for superficial stereotypes of the south of Italy as a “land of illegality” or of organised crime. Quite the opposite, it tries to capture the dilemma faced by some graduates from the south when deciding whether to leave the region, which at times is tinted by moral connotations about the working culture experienced in the south. This debate will be explored further in the next sections which look at graduates’ perceptions of internal migration as “forced” and at the emotional cost that moving to other regions might entail.

Italian graduates’ ambivalence toward the use of *raccomandazione* and the value they attribute to social relations within society will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter. Overall, it could be argued that my findings support the logical view that the use of the *raccomandazione* in the Italian labour market has negative consequences for those who are not well connected in society (Pellizzari, 2004; Ponzo and Scappa, 2009).

Finally, apart from the Italian brain drain literature previously discussed, it is interesting to note that the link between clientelism and migration in Italy has hardly been made in the existing literature. My analysis suggests that the link between those two phenomena might be very important in the Italian scenario and it encourages more research to analyse the impact of clientelistic phenomena on Italians’ mobility dispositions – a topic which, despite its relevance, is beyond the scope and possibilities of the present study.

6.6 A Forced Migration?

As previously discussed, internal migration comes across as fundamentally labour-driven, and job and career considerations tend to dominate the decision-making process. This represents a clear difference with the more personalised kind of reasons to migrate of some of the Italian graduates who moved to the UK. For example, as a way of drawing attention to this contrast, Silvio stated:

One leaves out of necessity. Of course, you do it, like in my case because I found a job here in Rome and I moved here because of that, but I really don't understand those who move as a choice. (Silvio, 37, male, from Cosenza)

Internal migration seems to be experienced quite fatalistically by these respondents who attributed their decisions to migrate to the lack of occupations in the south and other external factors rather than their own choice. Moving internally within Italy does not seem to entail the same sense of existential adventure and excitement which was associated by some graduates with moving abroad. Nevertheless, this is not to say that moving internally does not necessitate some degree of individual choice. In fact, despite the difficult access to occupations in the south, it could be argued there are graduates who remain in the south, and those who move to other places still make a decision to do so. Even so, this choice seems to be heavily constrained by the limited range of alternatives available. In this case, the attribution of true *agency* to internal migrants might be quite problematic, supporting Bakewell's (2010) view on this point.

In fact, it is reasonable to assume that, on the one hand, compared to graduates from the north of the country who could hypothetically be employed in different sectors in their home towns, graduates from the south have limited options if they decide to stay in the south. On the other hand, it could also be argued that the "necessity" to leave the south is not an objective phenomenon because accessing qualified occupations might be a common desire among graduates and young people everywhere, and understandably so, but it does not constitute a "necessity" *per se*.

These considerations do not aim to dismiss the crucial role that a structural lack of professional opportunities in the south certainly plays in these migrations. Nevertheless,

it cannot be assumed that structural constraints have the same effect on all graduates and that the necessity to migrate is equally distributed. The belief that migrating internally is a necessity might also represent the perceptions of the more ambitious, resourceful and perhaps career-oriented graduates as the following paragraphs will indicate. In fact, it was not only the lack of jobs *per se* which triggered some graduates to leave the south but the desire to pursue specific occupations and careers; again as the following account will show.

6.7 Professional Self-Realisation (and Family Resources)

As we have seen, career aspirations played a very significant role in the decision to migrate of the graduates interviewed. Nearly 90% of my interviewees mentioned professional and career factors as part of their reasons to migrate internally. Like some of those graduates who moved to the UK following precise professional aspirations, for some internal migrants too it was not only the lack of professional opportunities *per se* that triggered their decisions to migrate, but the desire to pursue their “dream jobs”, often relying on their families’ help and support. The following quotes flesh out this point:

I did not leave Naples because there was nothing to do there, I left Naples because for the kind of study cycle that I had chosen, I thought it was necessary to gain a different kind of professional experience ...clearly moving back is difficult now because the job I do here in Rome does not exist there...I won a *concorso* in Naples to work in a bank, but I didn’t take it because I knew that I would get bored doing that. (Renato, 30, male, from Naples to Rome)

I am one of the few who could afford to go back to Sicily if I wanted to. My father is an independent professional so I could go back and work with him and live well there, but I believe that one should do the job that one likes because working occupies the majority of our time so...I decided to follow my passion and to move here to Milan. (Valerio, 28, male, from Palermo to Milan)

I followed what I felt was the right thing to do for myself, and I am very lucky because if my family would not have supported me or did not understand my aspirations...I would have considered my choices differently. (Laura, 30, female, from Bari to Milan)

These narratives confirm the latest Svimez report which indicates that family resources in the south are necessary to support young individuals' professional aspirations (Svimez, 2010). Moreover, these findings suggest that graduates who leave the south tend to place a high value in fulfilling their professional aspirations. In fact, "self-realisation" was identified as a reason to migrate in 62% of the interviewees conducted with internal migrants, which is approximately the same percentage (64%) that was found among graduates who migrated to the UK. This supports Beck's (Beck, 1992; Beck et al., 1994) theory that a self-made biography, constructed reflexively and individualistically, has become an inescapable characteristic of living in post-industrial societies, at least for those individuals who can afford it. However, the predominance of this kind of narrative, which generally emphasises professional self-realisation, needs to be contextualised, as this emphasis might not be shared by other less resourceful categories of migrants from the south. Nevertheless, the high presence of this feature indicates that this might be a key component of Italian graduate migration flows, possibly because Italian graduates are, by definition, a category of individuals and migrants who have invested many years in training and education. Therefore, their professional expectations might be particularly ambitious because of their relative high human and cultural capitals.

In this respect, family support and resources emerged as the most important enabling factors for internal migrants, as the following quotes from Valentina and Federico reveal.

I was very lucky because my parents financially supported me throughout, while if they would not have... it would have been completely different...I think it is also a question of money, of the opportunities that you have, there are many factors to consider, what your parents can offer you is important. (Valentina, 32, female, from Naples).

It was quite natural to move, my brother was already living in Naples...my family pushed me, my dad is the first person to recognise that Taranto is a city which does not offer many opportunities. (Federico, 33, male, from Taranto)

Overall, my analysis highlights the importance of parents' financial and emotional support in the migratory decision making of Italian graduates, which suggests that even in the case of graduate internal migration within Italy, which is supposed to be a relatively accessible typology of mobility, initial resources are often necessary for the migration process to be initiated.

Looking at the historical development of internal migration within Italy, this represents a significant difference with the past, when migrants left the south because of the chronic lack of household resources. It could be argued that this change reflects the deep economic, social and cultural transformations that took place in Italy in the last century, which had witnessed, by and large, the end of mass poverty across the whole peninsula (Pugliese, 2002). In particular, my data indicates that, in the case of Italian graduates, the support provided by the families of origin does not seem to be based on the expectation of getting something in return, for instance in terms of remittances. On the contrary, the Italian family, particularly in the south, emerges as the true and possibly only "welfare system" existing in the country, confirming Esping-Andersen's (1990) views of Italy on this matter.

Moreover, it might be the case that parents' support for internal migration could be partly influenced by the relief that their children were not moving abroad, and thus further away from them. However, this was not mentioned directly by respondents who tended to stress the extended support received from their parents and in some cases their own unwillingness to move too far away from their families. In this regard, it could be argued that the uncontested parents' support experienced by internal migrants might reflect the existence of an ingrained "culture of migration" (Massey et al., 1998) in the south and the shared belief amongst southerners that there are not enough opportunities for social mobility in the south. Hence, it could be further argued that moving north can be an option for attempting social mobility and professional realisation for the most resourceful and ambitious graduates and their families, as well as for those graduates

who do not have the necessary social and economic capitals to access occupations in the south.

However, on the whole, the problematic nature of internal migration within Italy should not be overlooked as some of these moves were experienced quite painfully by respondents, especially those who felt “forced” to migrate. The emotionality of this phenomenon will be analysed next.

6.8 The Emotional Costs of Migrating Internally

Despite the relatively short distances covered by their moves, 10 of the graduates interviewed considered their internal migrations emotionally challenging and difficult. This was mostly related to the fact that at least in principle some of these respondents did not want to leave the south. The following three quotes are examples of this pattern:

I always think about what I have given up by having moved here in Rome, I think about my loved ones back home, about the fact that while you are away, your parents get old and that you are not there... I think a lot about these kinds of things...then of course, one moves for necessity anyways. (Silvio, 37, male, from Cosenza to Rome)

You move with pain in your heart because, honestly, I see this like a big injustice because I think of myself as somebody who is capable and to see that there is not space there, that there is no future, that you do not have a chance to stay even if you are happy to live there...then you leave with a broken heart, I didn't take this decision lightly...honestly, that was a very painful moment of my life. (Alessia, 30, female, from Cosenza to Rome)

The passage from Rome to Milan was not easy, it was a big shock to see and to realise that there were no opportunities to work in my city in the field that I studied for...I really suffered because of this...because I had a passion for that career, and to leave... it was a difficult decision, the first year in Milan was really tough...it was not easy... at the end moving is something you do against your own will. (Linda, 28, female, from Rome to Milan)

These considerations could be explained by taking into account that, for those who felt that their moves were induced by external factors, leaving might have felt particularly hard. Moreover, compared to the graduates who moved to the UK, these respondents show a relative low propensity toward mobility and no particular interest in the experience of internal migration *per se*. The emotional costs which they claimed to suffer were to do with the distance to friends, partners and family and with the conviction of not being able to make a living in the south and thus in the lack of opportunity to move back in the future.

Clearly, these considerations cannot be generalised to all internal migrants, because not everyone suffered the move in the same way or for the same reasons. Nevertheless, these narratives show that internal mobility within Italy can be experienced as a problematic and emotionally costly kind of migration. This suggests that what might appear as an “unproblematic” typology of migration – because of the lack of administrative or political barriers – might hide very challenging dynamics for the individuals involved. In this respect, it could be argued that internal migrations should be recognised as complex and potentially problematic moves, which can be experienced as “invisible” struggles by the individuals involved. Moreover, my analysis strongly indicates that internal migrations within Italy should attract more institutional and political support than what is available at present.

The following sections develop further my analysis of the emotionality of migration and will look at the role of partners and relationships which can also play a key role in these migrations, especially, it seems, in the case of female graduates.

6.9 The Importance of Relationships

The study of personal factors in migration studies has been traditionally limited to relationships and family unifications issues. Even though current literature on skilled migration and intra-European migration has emphasised the importance of personal motivations in these migrations (Favell, 2008; Hadler, 2006; Scott, 2006), the question of “love” as a pull factor have been generally overlooked (King, 2002; Mai and King, 2009). In the case of the Italian internal migrants interviewed, personal reasons to

migrate were mentioned by a third of my respondents, mainly females. For example, Cristina, who initially moved to Milan to enrol in a Masters, stated that the reason why she stayed in Milan after the end of the course was her boyfriend. She explained her reasoning in the following way:

I started a one-year master degree in Milan and then... I think this is an important variable... I got into a relationship with one my colleagues. This at the time was a very important factor for staying in Milan [...] At the end of the day, we can talk about thousands of different factors, but for me the person I am with was always very important in my decisions. (Cristina, 34, female, from Naples to Milan)

Cristina's admission of considering her partner as the most significant variable in her life decisions embodies the gendered difference that emerged from the narratives of internal migrants. This centred around the differential degree of importance that Italian graduates seemed to attribute to their partners and relationships, which was generally much higher among female graduates than their male peers. Similar considerations were also made by Linda and Michela when explaining the events that led them to move to Milan and Rome:

I was primarily looking for jobs in Rome and I only sent a few CVs to Milan [...] my fiancé is from Milan... If I wasn't in a relationship with him, I would have never looked for jobs outside Rome. (Linda, 28, female, from Rome to Milan)

My prime motivation was sentimental, my boyfriend was here, he was from Rome and plus when I looked for jobs here, I found one very soon, so I moved. (Michela, 30, female, from Salerno to Rome)

As these quotes suggest, following one's partner might be a prime reason to migrate internally for some female graduates. In the three cases illustrated above, it is important to specify that the relationships in question were formed during the university years and were considered by my interviewees quite stable and promising at the time when their decisions to follow their partners were taken. Moreover, moving to the cities where their boyfriends were living was also made possible by the fact that their partners were living in the cities of Rome and Milan, where job opportunities were available. There are no cases among my respondents of attempts made to move to more peripheral places

because of “love” factors. This suggests that despite the strong emotional component of these moves, the decisions to migrate were not entirely detached by the predominant south-north divide logic that tends to dominate internal migrants’ narratives.¹⁸

Nevertheless, overall this narrative type, surely not unique to Italian female graduates, seems to reflect the “contradictory position” in which young women in western countries find themselves (Procter and Padfield, 1998) when juggling between employment and family aspirations. This is reflected in the general tendency of young women to place more value and effort in investing in their relationships than their male peers. Thereby, my data supports the general insights provided by studies on gender aspects of career and family decision-making processes as well as gender and skilled migration, which indicate that females are generally more likely to follow their male partners than vice versa (Ackers, 2004; Kofman et al., 2000; Leccardi, 2007; Woodfield, 2007).

Interestingly, this was not the case among the Italian female graduates who migrated to the UK, who usually moved abroad independently and not following their partners. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that the samples of graduates interviewed were not controlled for in terms of family aspirations. Respondents chosen were mostly unmarried and without children, so the role of relationships in their mobility decisions is limited to that of un-formalised relationships and does not include parenting which is the most likely factor to reduce mobility intentions across Europe and within Italy (Guetto and Panichella, 2011; Hadler, 2006). Moreover, the focus on recent graduates might also explain the lack of traditional family reunification stories within the narratives collected in the UK. Even though, as Kofman has argued (Kofman, 1999; Kofman et al., 2000; Kofman and Raghuram, 2006), the assumed equation of female migrants with family reunification processes in post-war Europe is debatable and there are indications that women were always more heterogeneous in their migratory behaviours than what migratory theories seem to suggest.

¹⁸ However, I acknowledge that my research design, with only the Sicilian city of Palermo as my “southern” field site, might have diminished the chances of picking up such moves to the “periphery”.

6.10 Views of the South and of the Future

As illustrated throughout this chapter, there seemed to be a general agreement among respondents on what characterises and triggers internal migration. The south-north divide in terms of the distribution of job opportunities emerged in different shapes and forms as the main migratory determinant. This shared view was reflected in interviewees' tendencies to consider their experiences as typical products of the socio-cultural and economic context in which they lived. In this regard, it is interesting to note that cultural and ideological motivations did not emerge as significant factors among internal migrants. In particular, internal migrants' views of Italy were on average not entirely pessimistic. Only 25% of interviewees expressed a distinctive negative view of Italy compared to nearly 50% of graduates in the UK. This can be partly explained by taking into consideration that internal migrants' views of Italy were dominated by the perception of a deep south-north divide. The prevailing idea was that living in the south was particularly challenging and because of this, for those who migrated, moving back was not appealing or indeed possible. The following quotes from Claudia and Michela illustrate this particular point:

I miss many things but the problem is that down there in the south, there is really nothing to do, so it will be like a regression, also psychologically, it will be like giving up... I feel this way and many people feel like this too, I think. (Claudia, 26, female, from Cosenza to Milan)

For what I can see from my perspective, those who leave never come back! Once you make a choice which is so strong, you don't go back...because in any case it is difficult to get used again to the difficulties, after you experience something else. (Michela, 30, female, from Salerno to Rome)

Claudia and Michela's considerations were not shared by all graduates, and there were cases of respondents whose future intentions were to go back to the south as soon as possible (three respondents said this). Others mentioned that they would move back given an opportunity but they thought that this was unlikely. Moreover, as in the case of Italians' display of anti-Italian feelings when abroad, the representation of a "problematic south" which individuals felt compelled to leave and not to go back to

might partly reflect respondents' attempts to justify their decisions to migrate and their intentions not to return.

In the same perspective, a more positive view of Italy as a country might reflect interviewees' attempt to support their decisions to stay in the country rather than moving abroad. This will also be the case of non-mobile graduates, whose situation and perspectives will be analysed in the next chapter. Additionally, it is important to stress that in terms of future orientations, none of the internal migrants I interviewed wished to move abroad. Half of them expected their future to be in Italy, another four were uncertain while the rest wished to move back to the south. This professed lack of interest and willingness to move abroad further indicate, in my opinion, that this category of graduates has a lower propensity to migrate compared to their peers abroad. Again, this difference might be rooted in the perception of the "necessity" to migrate from the south versus the multi-faceted decision to go abroad illustrated in the previous chapter.

Nevertheless, on the whole, my data suggest that internal migration of graduates from the south to the centre-north of the country and the international outflow of graduates toward the UK are not deliberately correlated in a "step" kind of migration as hypothesised by Becker et al. (2003). These two migratory patterns seem to differ deeply in terms of their rationales. In particular, the narrative material suggests that, at least theoretically, internal migration might involve individuals who would not have moved if they had been able to find work in their home towns. This questions the voluntary nature of these migrations, supporting the view that the traditional distinction between forced and voluntary migration might not be truthful to the actual experience of migrants, even in the case of relatively short internal moves such as the ones analysed in this chapter. These issues will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter which will compare Italian graduates' decision to migrate, either internally or abroad, with those of their non-mobile peers.

6.9 Conclusions

This chapter aimed to illustrate the features and motives that characterise the internal migration of Italian graduates from the south of Italy to the cities of Rome and Milan. Overall, the renewal of internal migration within Italy can be seen as evidence of the historical inability of the Italian state to resolve the “southern question” and the structural inequalities which characterise Italy as a country (Pugliese, 2002). In fact, the lack of job opportunities in the south was nominated as the prime determinant of these migrations, which emerged as a more structured and less idealistic kind of moves compared to the migration to the UK analysed in the previous chapter.

On the whole, the graduates who moved to the cities of Rome and Milan did so in the hope that relocating to these two key cities would improve their chances for professional and social mobility, while personal and non-economic motivations did not seem to play a significant role in their migrations (with the exception of relationships). However, if in the case of graduates moving to Milan a real “escalator” effect (Fielding, 1992a) could be observed, in the case of graduates moving to Rome, migrants’ expectations were often deluded. The lack of meritocracy and the corrupted nature of the Italian labour market in the south and in the city of Rome were identified as the main obstacles to access good occupations in these areas. This belief was particularly emphasised by some respondents in their accounts and critiques of the extensive use of the *raccomandazione* in the labour market, which seems to be more prevalent in places, like the south, where regular opportunities to access good occupations were missing.

Internal migrants emerged as a resourceful and ambitious category of migrants who, nevertheless, often rely on the financial support of their families to fulfil their professional aspirations. This suggests that moving to the centre-north might be a strategy used not only by those graduates who cannot access employment in the south – and might feel they have no other choices but to migrate – but also by the most resourceful graduates who might opt to migrate to retain their privileged positions within society.

Nevertheless, internal migration, which geographically may appear as short and unproblematic, emerged as a challenging and problematic phenomenon. Resentment

toward Italy as a country which does not provide enough job opportunities for graduates to live and work in the south, was widespread. For some respondents, this proved to be particularly difficult to accept and the emotional costs associated with these moves were quite high, even though, compared to their predecessors in earlier generations, these migrants did not seem to suffer a lack of integration in their destinations.

And yet, it could be argued that being able to blend in easily might have its unwanted consequences as these migrations tend to be both politically and institutionally forgotten. Further, my analysis has indicated that these internal migrations could be as distressing for the individuals involved as any other type of migration. Therefore, it could be concluded that internal migrations have the potential to become, if they are not already, another structural “unresolved issue” (Altan, 2000) of Italy as a country. And it can only be assumed that if the south-north divide remains intact, which is largely expected (Bonifazi, 1999; Svimez, 2010), internal flows will continue and might even increase in the future.

CHAPTER 7

STAYERS VS MIGRANTS

THE PROS AND CONS OF MIGRATION

7.1 Introduction

Despite its numerical importance – that is to say, many more people remain at “home” as opposed to those who move internationally or to another region within their own country – immobility is not the subject of a vast academic literature, especially in comparison to the wider interest generated by the study of migration and mobilities.

This chapter, then, will investigate the “reasons to stay” of a sample of Italian graduates, 23 in total, who live in the Italian cities of Milan (north), Rome (centre) and Palermo (south). The analysis aims to identify and to discuss the factors that lead individuals to stay rather than to migrate. Considering that home-town differences do not appear to have a significant impact on these graduates’ decisions to stay, their narratives will be presented holistically rather than city by city.

However, the results cannot be claimed to be representative of the overall phenomenon of graduate immobility, which is beyond the scope and the possibilities of this study. Rather, stayers’ rationales have been collected and analysed in order to function more as a control group to compare with the internal and international migrants discussed in the previous two chapters. For these purposes, immobility is conceptualised as a “mobility option” which is not necessarily in opposition to migrating, as both conditions refer to spatial strategies that any individual can adopt during the life course. The fact that my particular sub-sample of non-movers are immobile for the time being does not preclude the possibility of them migrating later on.

The analysis of graduate “stayers” is organised in the following order: initially, the mobility background of these graduates will be discussed. Next, the role played by different factors in their decisions to stay in their home towns will be examined. This includes both professional considerations linked to job status and aspirations, a further digression on the role of the practice of the *raccomandazione* in the Italian labour market, and some considerations on Italian academia from the stayers’ point of view. Then, social and emotional ties with family, friends, partners and the home towns will be discussed as migratory deterrents. Finally, the decision-making processes of stayers will be analysed and compared to those of migrants in an attempt to bridge the gap between these traditionally separated fields of enquiry and to identify the key differences between graduates who decided to migrate and those who stay put in Italy.

7.2 Background to “Immobility”

As shown in previous chapters, a background of travelling and previous experiences abroad tends to favour future mobility (Findlay et al., 2005; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). In the case of Italian non-mobile graduates, this does not seem to be the case. Previous experiences of mobility were shared by eight respondents who had lived for sometime abroad (five) or in other places within Italy (three). Nevertheless, for this sub-set of “immobile” graduates, these experiences of mobility were not generally emphasised or glorified. This represents an interesting contrast to the ways in which migrants in the UK tended to idealise their previous experiences abroad, particularly as Erasmus students, as illustrated in Chapter 5. Thus, Linda an archaeology graduate from Palermo, recalled her attempt to study in another Italian town as quite painful. When I asked if she ever considered leaving Palermo, she said:

Well, in fact yes, I did for my studies. I tried for a few months when I was 19 years old to live in Viterbo [a town in the Lazio region] in order to follow a specialised course in art restoration. I started university there but I did not manage to integrate well, I felt homesick and after six months I decided to move back. (Linda, 31, female, from Palermo)

Linda's experience supports Kennedy's view (2010) that what happens after an individual migrates, thus the experience of migration itself, is very significant for the development of future mobility intentions. As Kennedy (2010) has argued, personal dispositions are surely important but they cannot be separated from the degree of success that each migrant achieves once in the place of destination, both in terms of job and educational status and of the quality of the new friendships and social relationships forged. As Linda's quote suggests, not being able to socially integrate can lead to a quick and final return back home.

Moreover, in the case of stayers it seems that, even when positive, experiences of mobility were "normalised" and portrayed as either a positive or a negative "parenthesis", which did not alter substantially the overall direction of the life-course. The following quotes from Maurizio and Alessandra, two non-migrant respondents who participated in the Erasmus programme in the past, are an example of this pattern:

I did the Erasmus for three months in Scotland, it was a very beautiful experience from a personal point of view, but apart from that, I never took into consideration the idea of moving. (Maurizio, 30, male, from Palermo)

When I came back from the Erasmus in France, I had to write my final dissertation, then...I started working. (Alessandra, 27, female, from Milan)

This way of representing the Erasmus programme contrasts sharply with the ways in which many graduates who moved to the UK described their previous mobility experiences. The Erasmus stay, in fact, was usually identified by international migrants as a significant turning point in their lives and often as the seed from which their subsequent mobility plans started. For example, Silvia, a female graduate in economics now contentedly working in London, stated:

I came to England for the first time in 2000 for a three weeks summer school to learn English in London...and then I did the Erasmus in Liverpool for five months...Thank God I did these experiences! I would have never managed to leave otherwise! (Silvia, 27, female, from the north)

Overall, my research supports the view that, on the one hand, previous experiences of mobility, if successful, can certainly favour future mobility (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002); on the other, these cannot explain or determine further migration on their own (Brooks and Waters, 2010). As the quotes above have indicated, experiencing life in other places or participating in student exchange programmes can have a very different impact on the individuals involved, which suggests that other factors need to play a role if an individual decides to engage episodes of mobility.

Moreover, as illustrated in Chapter 5, studying and learning English was one of the most common reasons to migrate among Italian graduates. Looking at the other side of the coin, for some stayers, not being able to speak fluently other languages was considered a key obstacle to migrate. For example, Roberto, an IT engineer from Rome stated:

The differences are simple: those who are immobile, it's because they don't speak any foreign languages [...]

Would you move somewhere else?

If I could speak better other languages, then maybe. (Roberto, 26, male, from Rome)

Similar considerations were also made by Alessandro, a male architect from Milan:

Another strong factor is the language, in the sense that I love to speak in Italian! I know some English but when I speak in English I speak like an Italian, I cannot really engage in any deep conversation [...] Speaking in another language is a big limitation. (Alessandro, 37, male, from Milan)

It could be argued that language limitations are an obstacle that could be overcome by migrating and improving one's language skills. The difference, it would appear, is in the personal attitude and desire to learn other languages, which can be perceived by some individuals as an incentive and by others as a deterrent to migrate. In fact, it could be argued that a person's willingness to learn another language reflects his/her motivation to adapt to another culture and to another way of thinking, which is only possible if the person is willing to leave, at least temporarily, his/her cultural and linguistic comfort zone. This desire, as this chapter will illustrate, is largely missing among stayers, who tend not to be particularly interested in experiencing other cultures.

7.3 The Decision to Stay

In 2000 Fischer et al. set out to analyse “Why do people stay?” arguing that, for most people in Europe, it is fully rational *not* to consider migrating because they have accumulated too many location-specific advantages by living in the same place over time (Fischer et al., 2000). This section will attempt to answer the same question in the case of Italian graduates. Even though the results do not aim to be representative of the multiple dynamics which undoubtedly characterise Italian graduates’ lives in Italy, my analysis aims to identify and discuss the factors which seem to play a significant role in shaping respondents’ reluctance to consider migration as a feasible option in comparison with migrants’ rationales analysed in previous chapters. I start by looking at stayers’ professional motivations not to migrate.

7.3.1 Professional Considerations

In terms of their professional characteristics, six graduates in my “immobile” sample were precarious workers in insecure or flexible employment, while all the rest were employed in relatively good and stable occupations in different fields. Appendix C provides more details. Work was considered as a main potential reason to migrate by ten respondents, suggesting that professional considerations might play an important role in this sub-sample of graduates. In particular, being unemployed was considered by some stayers as a main hypothetical reason to migrate, as the following quotes illustrate:

I never really thought seriously about leaving Milan [...] because the dilemma is there only when you do not have a job obviously...

Would you consider moving if you did not have a job?

If I did not have a job, yes, but it has to be a necessity; as a voluntary choice, I wouldn’t.
(Milena, 31, female, from Milan)

I am here and I make €1,500 per month, I am very lucky [...] Many people leave because they don’t even make €1,500 per month. (Marco, 30, male, from Palermo)

Apart from fears of unemployment, having a stable job was also considered a main migratory deterrent, especially for those who were content with their current occupations. For example, Emilio, a male lawyer from Milan, considered moving to other regions at the beginning of his career but then found a good job in Milan and he “put aside, if it was ever there, the idea to move elsewhere within Italy, because it meant to leave that position”. He then carried on, saying that “the reasons for which a person does not move are professional, because you can think about family and other factors, but those do not really impede you to move if you want to” (Emilio, 33, male, from Milan).

Similar opinions were expressed by Dario, a male graduate in marketing from Rome, who spent a year in Milan following a job offer and then returned to Rome for another job. When I asked if he would consider moving again in the future, he answered: “no, much less now” and then explained: “before, I did not have a very stable job, you see?” (Dario, 28, male, from Rome).

These considerations support the view that, in countries characterised by high rates of graduate unemployment and “precarious” employment, job security is highly valued (Cammelli, 2009; Livi Bacci, 2008; Ortiz, 2010; Reyneri, 2005). In addition, having a stable job in Italy is generally considered a necessary precondition to leave the parental home and to initiate a family, and it tends to mark the transition to full adulthood (Buzzi et al., 2007). In fact, the decision to migrate seems more likely to emerge, among stayers, during moments of professional insecurity, anxiety or dissatisfaction. The following quote from Cristina, an NGO freelance employee from Palermo, illustrates this scenario:

I thought many times about going away and leaving everything, but I realise now that I tend to think in this way when I am upset.... At present, for example, since I started to work again, I don't feel the need to leave, because here in Palermo I have my family, this is my city, here I have my friends. (Cristina, 31, female, from Palermo)

Cristina's extract points to the historical embeddedness or “historicity” of the decision to migrate in individuals' lives and career cycles, thereby supporting Desforges' view (2000) that travelling and moving away from one's place tends to appeal to individuals

at particularly sensitive moments during the life-course. This is not to say that it is all a matter of individual subjectivities and circumstances, because the Italian labour market surely poses its own set of structural difficulties to graduates who attempt to land their first jobs (Buzzi et al., 2007; Cammelli, 2009).

In this respect, the data collected from my interviewees suggest that the willingness to migrate can be highly influenced by the specific professional conditions and aspirations of each graduate. As illustrated in Chapters 5 and 6, among other factors, migration is more likely to be contemplated by those graduates who wished to pursue a specific career and felt that their chances to advance professionally in their home towns were few. For example, Guido, when recalling the considerations that accompanied his decision to move to the UK, stated:

I was saying to myself “if I have to work hard, then I will try working abroad” because in any case abroad you can grow professionally much faster than in Italy. (Guido, 30, male, from the centre)

Moreover, other characteristics of the Italian labour market can play a role in triggering migration, such as the lack of meritocracy and the extensive use of the practice of *raccomandazione*, discussed in the previous chapter. The point of view of stayers on these phenomena will be analysed in the next section.

7.3.2 The Practice of the “Raccomandazione”

Nearly a third of stayers thought that work in Italy was generally of a low quality and that the practice of the *raccomandazione* was a main obstacle to access qualified occupations in Italy, indirectly confirming the views of internal migrants on these phenomena. For example, Alessandro, a male architect aged 37 from Milan, stated: “In Italy you work in very difficult environments, because all is based on the “*conoscenze*” [acquaintances] that you have. If you don’t know people, you can’t work”. The use of the term “*conoscenze*” equates to “*raccomandazione*”. “Working in any other way” he concluded, “is very difficult”.

Alessandro's considerations resonate with the opinions expressed by internal and international migrants on the significant role of the "*raccomandazione*" in the Italian labour market. For example, Rita, a female graduate from Sicily now working in London stated:

If you stay in Italy, the only way to get a job is through a *raccomandazione*. When you ask for work, people tell you that you need a *raccomandazione*. If you try to stay in Italy and to work without a *raccomandazione* then you are an idiot because you either make it your life goal to go against the system, or you end up staying at home with your parents until you are 50. (Rita, 29, female, from the south)

This finding confirms the critical importance of the *raccomandazione* in the Italian labour market (Zinn, 2001) and the negative connotations that this practice takes in the Italian context. This is particularly true in some fields like academia, already discussed in Chapter 5 and which will be further analysed later in this chapter, but also it would seem to be the case in the field of architecture, as the following quote from Elisa, a female architect from Rome, reveals.

There is a big mafia in my field, a big mafia! Italians only promote those who have connections... there is not meritocracy [...]

Do you mean mafioso in terms of raccomandato?

Raccomandato and corrupted...because if you are *raccomandato* you have a mafia-like mentality. (Elisa, 37, female, from Rome)

Elisa's extract suggests that for some individuals the use of a *raccomandazione* to get a job is an ethical statement which can indicate a degree of moral corruption. It is important to note that the two architects interviewed, Elisa and Alessandro, are the only two respondents in this sub-sample who would be willing to migrate in the future in order to work in more meritocratic environments. Overall, my data suggest that the difficulties encountered in the labour market, also because of *raccomandazione*, can represent a significant push factor for graduate migration. The following quote from Daniela illustrates this shared belief. Asked about what she thought were the reasons why some graduates were leaving the country, she answered:

I think the discourse of leaving to pursue a career is a realistic one; it is not true for all professions, but I know people who have studied to become lawyers, doctors, etc. and who cannot work in Italy because in order to do these jobs here you need to have a relative in the field or to be connected with somebody... this might sound like common sense, but unfortunately, it is true. (Daniela, 28, female, from Rome)

Daniela's considerations support the argument made in previous chapters that a negative working experience in Italy, often as a result of irregularities in the labour market, might lead individuals to migrate. Nevertheless, it needs to be taken into consideration that, similar to the case of internal migrants, the non-mobile graduates who were more vocal about the negative impact of the *raccomandazione* were also those who seemed not to be able to use one. Thus, their views might be exacerbated by their lack of connections and might not represent an average view of these phenomena.

Moreover, as with the cases of the internal migrants analysed in the previous chapter, a certain degree of ambivalence in stayers' approaches toward the use and benefit of knowing people in society could also be observed. In particular, seven respondents (about a third of this sample) mentioned acquaintances and local knowledge as key benefits of staying in Italy. For example, Daniela, at an earlier stage of her interview, admitted that her biggest fear in moving abroad was "being alone" because, she explained:

Here in Rome, for example, if I want to do an internship I could get to know somebody who has done it before... but if you move somewhere else, who do you ask? It is also the network of "*conoscenze*" that you have here that helps. I think many people don't move because they would not know who to ask for things. (Daniela, 28, female, from Rome)

An even more positive interpretation of this syndrome was made by Valeria in Palermo, who considered the practice of asking people for help and favours a key characteristic of the Sicilian *mentalità*, which she explained in these terms:

The *mentalità* here is to say "I will ask somebody for help" even if, for example, your scooter is stolen, you don't go to the police, you go and ask a friend of a friend to help you... Another example, I want to do this course and I immediately started asking around

how it works. I ask friends, friends of friends...it works like that for everything. (Valeria, 27, female, from Palermo)

These considerations bring into discussion another aspect of the phenomenon of the *raccomandazione*, which is the value Italians attribute to being known in society. As the quotes above suggested, the importance of social connections in Italy goes beyond the professional sphere and can be considered as a wider cultural trait. This supports Zinn's (2001) argument that the *raccomandazione* in Italy is a total social fact which encompasses many different practices and beliefs.

Moreover, this kind of interpretation can also be considered in the perspective of other theories such as Banfield's (1958) "amoral familism" or Putnam's (1993) ideas on the lack of civic values as embedded characteristics of the culture of the south of Italy. In this regard, my data indicate that the use of *raccomandazione* in the south seems to derive from the need to compensate for the structural lack of job opportunities in these regions, rather than constituting an inner aspect of the *mentalità* of these places. Thus, it could be argued that individuals' reliance on social connections and acquaintances of various kinds reflects the weak presence of the Italian state, and the lack of trust of Italians in its institutions which might be felt particularly strongly in the south, as the less developed and resourceful area of the country, as there is evidence that public provisions and services in Italy (such as housing policy, transport, social security) are – generally speaking – of a very low quality in southern Italy compared to other European countries (Dalla Zuanna, 2001).

To conclude, my research data support existing studies which indicate that the use of informal networks to allocate jobs in Italy has negative impacts for job seekers and the wider society (Cingano and Rosolia, 2006; Pellizzari, 2004; Ponzo and Scoppa, 2008). Moreover, my findings suggest that Favell's (2008) impression – that some of the southern Europeans who migrate to global cities like London are the "nationally blocked", i.e. those who could not make it through the official social mobility pathways in their own countries and thus tried the European route to self-realisation – might be correct in the case of Italian graduates. In this regard, the number of Italian migrants under this category might be particularly abundant because the Italian labour market is notoriously difficult to access and many individuals are at risk of finding themselves

isolated, especially graduates who are a relatively unprotected category of workers, despite their high educational credentials (Cammelli, 2009; Livi Bacci, 2008; Reyneri, 2005; Svimez, 2010).

Moreover, as the previous quotes indicate, the type of career that graduates wish to pursue can also make a difference in terms of the impact of the *raccomandazione*. One particular example treated in this thesis is academia, which will be now analysed from the stayers' perspective.

7.3.3 The Other Side of Italian Academia

As previously illustrated, academic mobility is generally considered a very significant phenomenon in Italy. The data presented in Chapter 5 confirmed the prevailing views among scholars on the closed nature of Italian academia and the irregularities of its recruitment culture (Becker et al., 2003; Capuano, 2011; Morano- Foadi, 2005; 2006). In this regard, Italian academia offers an interesting case-study to compare the experiences and the perceptions of graduate migrants with those of Italian graduates who have pursued academic careers without leaving their home regions.

The number of interviews carried out with Italian academics in Italy is limited to four doctoral students and two academics, and once again does not aim to be representative of this group of professionals. Nonetheless, these interviews provide an opportunity to look at the difference between migrants and stayers in terms of the relationship between specific career considerations and mobility. The following quotes illustrate the experiences of Marco, a researcher from Palermo, and Maria, an assistant professor from Milan, on these issues.

I had a chance to participate in a recruitment selection for a researcher post in my own university. My supervisor was a member of the internal commission and he told me to apply. I studied a lot and I got the job [...] I was very anxious about that exam because I know very well that as another professor wisely used to say, we are a generation which will only get one opportunity. If the morning that you have an important interview your alarm clock does not work, your life is going to be affected much more compared to the generation of your parents [...] In my case, my only regret is that I never invested in any alternative somewhere

else [...] I invested everything in my job here. I consider myself... a fortunate case, the exception to the rule, with my €1500 per month. I know that there are many people with a better CV than mine who cannot find a job. I am aware of my own luck. (Marco, 30, male, from Palermo)

Being in the same place helps because you need to cultivate good relationships with people at work. You can leave temporarily to gain some international experience, to do a Masters, something like that, maybe for a year, a year and a half, but you need to maintain these relationships[...] What I believe, very subjectively, is that Italy is a very old country, employers tend to want to see in their employees what they have done themselves and since they didn't do certain things, they don't see any value in new approaches...They tend to think, "why do you bother to go abroad? I became a professor without going abroad, what is the problem?". (Maria, 31, female, from Milan)

Overall, my data, although quantitatively very limited, confirm the state of Italian academia as highly hierarchical and not meritocratic; the same story as emerged from the mobility narratives analysed in Chapter 5. The two academics interviewed above were quite critical of their working environments. This could have been influenced, as in the case of the previous brain drain narratives, by my own positionality, and their awareness of this, as an Italian enrolled in a PhD programme abroad. Nevertheless, with the necessary precautions, some broad considerations about working in Italian academia can be extrapolated from these narratives (that is, the two above and four others). In the first place, staying in one's university and investing in building good relationships with senior members of staff seems to be the best strategy to pursue an academic career in Italy. This confirms existing studies which portray Italian academia as a protectionist kind of institution which tends to reproduce itself by constantly favouring internal candidates (Gambetta and Origgi, 2009; Morano-Foadi, 2006). However, even in these "fortunate" cases, working in Italian academia does not seem ideal. As the first quote above indicated, the perception of being given only one chance to pursue a career, and being aware of the general lack of meritocracy within one's working environment, might be significant sources of stress and professional anxiety. Moreover, as the second quote suggested, investing in mobility and international working experiences, which is normally considered an advantage among scientists (Ackers, 2005), does not seem to be valued in the context of Italian academia where staying close to key professors seems to be the most significant factor in the potential allocation of jobs.

Moreover, given the difficulty in accessing stable jobs in academia and the lack of research funds in Italy, it can be assumed that graduates who intend to pursue a career in academia need to be able to afford “waiting” for their chance. This could potentially exclude graduates who have set up a family and those who do not have enough economic resources to live in a condition of prolonged financial instability.

Overall, my analysis of Italian academia from both the migrants’ and the stayers’ points of view supports the recognition of a “brain-drain” kind of phenomenon (Brandi, 2004; Becker et al., 2003; Capuano, 2011; Gambetta and Origgi, 2009; Morano-Foadi, 2005; 2006). Moreover, the recurrence of mentions about the corrupted nature of Italian academia by graduates from different universities and regions suggests that this might be an ongoing and widespread phenomenon. Even though some financial incentives have been recently instituted by the Italian government to encourage the return of highly skilled migrants and to stop this phenomenon one can rightly be cynical about the chances of success of such measures and about the continued power of personal contacts in facilitating returns.¹⁹

Finally, professional considerations usually need to be combined – in order for an individual to consider migrating – with the willingness to live for a period of time away from one’s family, friends and partners and in an unfamiliar setting. The importance of these factors will be discussed next.

7.4 The Importance of Friends and Relationships

Apart from professional considerations, the reason for which many Italian graduates were reluctant to consider leaving their home towns was their sense of attachment to families, friends, and partners. Giovanni’s narrative provides an example of this phenomenon. He stated that, apart from his job, there were a number of factors that kept him in Milan. In particular:

¹⁹ See Italian embassy website for details:

http://www.conslondra.esteri.it/Consolato_Londra/Archivio_News/incentive_fiscali_rientro_lavoratori

With some friends we have started a school to teach Italian to foreigners, it would have bothered me a lot to stop that and not to be able to carry on many relationships with my friends...It is not only what you build professionally, it is also what you build outside the working hours that matters. For example, I always played in a basketball team, not professionally, but still I enjoy it, and I would not want to leave that. All these things that you build during the course of your life, they are part of your personal satisfaction at the end of the day, and you have to bear the cost of losing them all to leave. (Giovanni, 28, male, from Milan)

Friends and social life were highly valued by all stayers. As Giovanni's extract illustrates, migrating has an emotional cost which is due to the distance from family and friends and the suspension, at least temporarily, of a number of social activities. In this regard, feeling satisfied with one's social life can be a significant factor not to migrate. Another example of this dynamic is provided by Dario. When asked what were the advantages of living in Rome, he said: "Friends, for sure". "For the moment, my friends, if I had my own family and children, then having my family near by would be an advantage", he concluded (Dario, 28, male, from Rome). As Dario's words suggest, the importance attributed to friends might be subject to changes during the life-course. Existing studies show that friends and social lives in Italy tend to be considered as very important before marriage and parenting, which usually then tend to switch an individual's life prerogatives toward the newly formed family (La Valle, 2007). In this regard, it must be remembered that respondents were selected who were mostly unmarried and without children; thus the importance they attributed to their social life is also a reflection of their life-style at this particular point of their life-cycles. Moreover, indirectly these findings also support the view that feeling dissatisfied with one's social life might have a significant role in triggering the decision to migrate of some Italian graduates, as illustrated in Chapter 5.

In terms of relationships and partners, the individual sense of belonging seems to be more varied and gendered. In fact, being in a relationship was considered a significant reason not to migrate by nine female graduates, the majority of the female stayers interviewed. For example, Ilaria stated: "Surely, the thing that keeps me here the most is my boyfriend" (Ilaria, 28, female, from Rome). And Daniela pointed to the need to

include her boyfriend in her future plans: “As I am in a relationship here, I also think about what my boyfriend could find in another place, considering that I spent a lot of time building this relationship, I try to carry it on” (Daniela, 28, female, from Rome). Similar considerations were also made by Alessandra, who after participating in an Erasmus programme in Paris during her undergraduate studies, thought about going back to France, but then decided to stay in Italy because she was in a relationship. She said:

I wanted to go back to Paris because I really liked it there, but I have been in a stable relationship for a couple of years...so I thought “before transforming all my life for good, let’s try to look for jobs here first”. (Alessandra, 27, female, from Milan)

As these extracts suggest, being in a stable relationship seems to reduce the willingness of some female respondents to consider mobility, unless this was something they could share with their partners. In this regard, it could be argued that these narratives reflect the traditional Italian patriarchal model of gender relationships which generally sees females in an unequal power relation with their male partners (Facchini, 2007; Leccardi, 2007). This is not to say that these respondents were passively letting their partners decide their lives, because, as the extracts above show, the decision to invest in these relationships was apparently taken consciously by these female graduates.

Nevertheless, as this kind of rationale was largely missing among the male graduates interviewed, it could be assumed that this approach to relationships is the result of existing gender inequalities and different patterns of socialisation which are not unique to Italy or to Italian graduates, as similar findings can be found in other contexts (Crompton, 1999; Woodfield, 2007). For example, in the UK it has been shown that young females tend to invest more and earlier in relationships than males (Proctor and Padfield, 1998), while the literature on gender and skilled migration suggests that female professionals are more likely to follow their partners than vice versa (Ackers, 2004; Boyle and Halfacree, 1999; Kofman et al., 2000). Additionally, it might also be the case that the role of relationships might increase its significance in the occupational and mobility decisions of all Italian female graduates in the future, as the Italian labour market is famously rigid in incorporating flexible work provisions for women who desire to balance family and career aspirations, and the difficult entry into the labour

market has, according to Maione (2000), forced women to adopt male behavioural patterns in order to access occupations.

Finally, my data on these themes support the existing literature on immobility, which indicates emotional ties as one of the most significant reasons for individuals to stay living in their countries (Cairns, 2009; Fischer, et al., 2000; Fischer and Malmberg, 2001). The following section continues this line of investigating the importance of social and emotional ties by looking at the role of the family in the decision not to migrate of Italian graduates.

7.5 The Role of the Family

The crucial importance of the institution of the family in Italy has been the subject of a vast literature which tends to stress the relative strength of family ties in Italy compared to other western countries (Altan, 2000; Banfield, 1958; Dalla Zuanna, 2001; Gambino, 1998; Putnam, 1993). More specifically, recent studies have indicated that young Italians have a relationship of reciprocal dependence with their parents which is facilitated by a general communion of values and expectations (Sartori, 2007). In this regard, young Italians have been accused by some scholars of being too similar to their parents, and thus incapable of changing or innovating society (Buzzi et al., 2007; Livi-Bacci, 2008). Moreover, the Italian family is generally considered the main supplier of social security in Italy, which often results in parents filling a dual role as both affective and financial providers for their children (Esping-Anderson, 1990).

The importance of the family certainly emerged during many of the interviews I conducted with non-mobile graduates. Firstly, this was obvious in terms of housing, as the majority of the respondents in this sample were living in the parental home or in family-owned houses, confirming official statistics on this phenomenon (Buzzi et al., 2007). Moreover, respondents usually acknowledged the importance of their families' support and resources as a key advantage of living in Italy. The following quotes illustrate this scenario:

The benefit of being at home is to be safe, both economically and emotionally...which is a benefit but also an incredible limit because when you are at home with your parents you are protected against anything that can happen to you. (Claudia, 28, female, from Rome)

The thing about staying is that obviously your family is here and if you want to buy a house they can help you more than if you go to live alone in Asia. (Vincenzo, 32, male, from Rome)

It counts a lot, in my opinion, the economic support of your family. In my case, the house where I live now with my husband was bought by my parents and among the reasons which push me to live here, there is also a very strong tie with my family... we go to see my parents for lunch nearly every Sunday. (Linda, 31, female, from Palermo)

As these extracts suggest, parents have an important role in providing younger generations with both financial and emotional resources. Nevertheless, this often comes at the cost of independence, as shown by some of the narratives collected in the UK. For example, Marta stated about her reasons to move away from Bologna, her home town:

I did it because I wanted to live on my own, even if my parents did help with money, I told them that I would have moved anyway, even without any help...

Did you do it to get your independence then?

Yes, even if I love them, but yes. (Marta, 27, female, from the centre)

As these narratives suggest, relying on family resources can be enabling as much as constraining, especially for some female graduates. The closeness of one's family can be considered a reason to stay or to migrate depending on the personality and the life conditions experienced by each graduate. Nevertheless, in the case of stayers, a sense of duty towards one's parents seems to be a particularly important factor in keeping female graduates close to their families. In fact, within the sub-sample of stayers, nine females (versus only three males) mentioned their families as a reason to stay in their home towns. The following quotes from Milena and Ilaria are an example of this dynamic:

I had an opportunity to go and work in the US, but at the moment in which I had to decide whether to leave or not, I thought: "I am an only child, my parents one day will be old". And, I don't know, the family ties won, and even though I don't consider myself a person

who is particularly trapped within family dynamics, when there was a choice to make, I put aside the US because of this. (Milena, 28, female, from Milan)

It is not particularly attractive for me to have my family here, but I feel the responsibility of staying here because my parents really would like me to stay close to them and my brother is already abroad, so...My parents think that caring for them is more of a female duty because men traditionally have to think about their careers while females have the responsibility of the family [...] I think it is a matter of mentality; there are people who are more open-minded than others. My family is like this. (Ilaria, 28, female, from Rome)

As these quotes indicate, family expectations and feeling responsible for the care of ageing parents can significantly affect the mobility dispositions of some female graduates. This finding confirms that despite the significant social transformations that have occurred in Italy during recent decades, family responsibilities are still predominantly considered a female duty (Sartori, 2007). Moreover, gender might affect the meanings associated to notions of home and belonging as women are generally more likely to use “home” as a spatial point of reference (Cuba and Hummon, 1993). Thus, leaving home might take on a very different meaning for males and females and it could be suspected that for females from more traditional family settings, moving might be a particularly difficult step to take.

Nevertheless, on the whole, the picture that emerged from my research evidence indicates that the family is the only resource that Italian graduates can rely upon, confirming existing studies on this matter (Buzzi et al., 2007; Esping-Anderson, 1990; Ginsborg, 1998; Sgritta, 2001). This statement is not meant to overlook the inevitable consequences that this phenomenon might involve, particularly for women. Nonetheless, I would agree with Sgritta (2001) in saying that it would be a mistake to blame the family for the structural deficiencies of the Italian state in providing an adequate and alternative social security scheme to its citizens. In this regard, it could be assumed that an improvement in welfare policies might reduce the importance of family resources, and the pressure on women as carers (Esping-Anderson, 1990; Lewis, 1992). Familism, as Gribaudi (1994) has argued, is not an explanation for the characteristics of Italian society, but rather the result of the historical underdevelopment that has characterised Italy as a modern nation state in the past and the current incapacity of the

Italian state to guarantee impartial welfare to its citizens – a fault that is hardly likely to be rectified in the present financial climate.

7.6 Feeling Attached to One's Place

According to the latest IARD report, home towns are the main sources of identity and attachment for young Italians between 15-35 years old, followed by Italy as a country and then Europe (Guglielmi, 2007). This hierarchy of “belongings” seems to be reflected in the interview data that I collected, as feelings of attachment toward one's home town were stated as a significant reason not to migrate for both male and female graduates. The following quote from Mario, from Palermo, illustrates this point in a rather evocative way:

It is a matter of personal identity. I am Sicilian and then Italian...for historical reasons the Sicilians that you are going to meet are 90% the sons of other Sicilians [...] Here in Sicily, we make a distinction between *siciliani di scoglio* and *siciliani di mare* [literally, sea-rock Sicilians and sea Sicilians]: the first are those who stay attached to their homeland even if they are looking to the sea, the latter are those who leave and take the sea. (Mario, 32, male, from Palermo)

As Mario's quote suggests, the sense of belonging to one's city or homeland can be a significant factor not to migrate, especially if a person associates his/her personal identity with a specific place. Moreover, in the case of Italians, local senses of belonging are generally considered the result of a weak national identity (Dickie, 1996; 2001; Gabaccia, 2000; Patriarca, 2001; 2010). In this regard, my findings support the view advocated by Cento Bull (2000) that indicated the predominant importance of a local sense of belonging in the making of Italians' identity.

These considerations are not unique to Sicilians, even though being from such a peripheral region might have exacerbated these feelings. In fact, respondents from Rome and Milan also made similar remarks, suggesting that to some extent the association of one's identity with one's spatial surroundings is a common experience.

For example, Valentina, a female graduate from Rome who participated in an Erasmus programme in France, explained that the reason why she stays in Rome is because she cannot feel at home in any other place. She said:

I think I could have stayed in France, but abroad you never really feel at home, you feel that it is not your country. You can never be 100% comfortable and you are far away from your family and this for me matters. (Valentina, 29, female, from Rome)

Feelings of belonging are generally hard to define and to measure. Nevertheless, it could be argued that, overall, the stayers seem a socially and culturally well-integrated cohort of individuals who have strong social and emotional ties in their home towns and communities. Moreover, as Valentina's quote suggests, feelings of belonging cannot be separated from the presence of family and loved ones in a specific location.

In this respect, stayers seem to live their sense of local belonging more peacefully compared to the more turbulent feelings expressed by some migrants in the UK and discussed in Chapter 5. These in fact were often characterised by anti-Italian feelings which resembled an "inverted patriotism" (Dickie, 2001). Negative views of Italy were also shared by six stayers, but in comparison these were twice as common among graduates in the UK. This suggests that, on the whole, stayers maintain a more benign attitude toward Italy as their home country. For example, Daniela stated about her reasons to stay in Italy:

I evaluated the hypothesis to move somewhere else. The situation was that this job opportunity happened and I took it as period of formation.... I did not take this job because I thought I could not go anywhere else if I wanted to, or because I could not afford other options [...] And also, I wasn't, I am not, and I don't want to give up... I have to try here, then if things do not work out, I will think about leaving...I don't start from the assumption that here there is nothing for me, I don't know yet, I will see. (Daniela, 28, female, from Rome)

As Daniela's quote suggests, an optimistic view of the opportunities available and the belief that things will "work out" in one's country can significantly affect a person's decision to stay. This decision, of course, might change as it also depends on the degree

of personal satisfaction experienced by each graduate at any given moment during the life-course. Moreover, it needs to be considered that each narrative tends to support the mobility option embraced by the interviewee – the classic “post-hoc rationalisation” syndrome inherent in retrospective interview accounts. Therefore, for an immobile graduate to be highly critical of Italy and of his/her life choices would be quite uncharacteristic in the same way as it would be for graduates who decided to migrate to the UK to be completely uncritical of the situation they left in Italy or for internal migrants to be uncritical of the south.

Nevertheless, on the whole, it could be argued that stayers are more confident about their life and professional chances in Italy compared to both internal and international migrants and this belief certainly plays a significant role in their decision to stay in their home towns. The following section will continue to examine this dynamic by comparing the decision to stay with those of migrating.

7.7 The Decision to Stay vs. the Decision to Migrate

It is traditionally assumed that location-specific advantages are the main reasons for people to stay in one place over time (Hammar et al., 1997), while migration, on the other side, is generally considered a selective process, which tends to appeal to individuals who possess the skills, personal characteristics, and social and cultural resources which favour a positive migratory outcome, particularly in terms of professional and economic advancement (Findlay et al., 2009; Massey et al., 1998). In the limited literature which attempts to combine the study of both internal and international migration, it is argued that these different types of mobility can theoretically be triggered by the same push factors, especially in terms of structural inequalities and employment opportunity differentials within and across countries (King and Skeldon, 2010; King et al., 2008; Pugliese, 2002). And yet, this is not completely true in the case of Italian graduates. In fact, as shown in this study, internal and international Italian graduate migrations tend to appeal to distinct categories of graduates. If, on the one hand, graduates who move to the UK can be generally seen as

more ambitious and cosmopolitan in their views and aspirations; on the other, internal movers have emerged as a more traditional, labour-oriented kind of migrants whose moves are fundamentally driven by the unequal distribution of wealth and employment opportunities across Italy. The following quote from Valentina, an internal migrant, reflects this perceived difference between moving internally and abroad:

I think that these are two different things, migrating abroad and internally, because those who go abroad want to go, want to do something different... while migrating from a city to another within Italy is different, those are people who are constrained to do so because for various reasons they cannot do what they want where they are. (Valentina, 32, female, from Naples to Rome)

Valentina's remarks generally reflect stayers' opinions about mobility and the pros and cons of living in Italy in comparison with migrating. Her views are given further nuance by some other voices below:

It is a question of whether you live to work or you work to live; if one lives to work then everything else, like girlfriend, friends, acquaintances and family is less important, and the person invests everything into one's career thinking: "How can I do this job in the best way?" "Where can I earn more money?" (Mario, 32, male, from Palermo)

I never really considered moving abroad, because yes, in London you can earn more money, but you also have more costs and at the end if you add the emotional cost of leaving your own town, of leaving your friends, it is not worth it. (Maria, 31, female, from Milan)

If I leave my city, in which I have my loved ones, I am going to lose a lot from an emotional point of view, therefore I need to have a return in terms of salary, which will allow me to increase considerably my living standards...If I have to move to live in a city which is not my own to earn just a little bit more, I don't think it is worth it. (Marco, 30, male, from Palermo)

As these quotes suggest, professional ambition and different attitudes toward work and the work-life balance can have a deep impact on individual dispositions toward mobility. This is partly because migrating, whether to another region or to another

country, tends to push individuals to justify their moves. For stayers, the prospect of a professional advancement elsewhere and of higher wages is counterbalanced – and outweighed in the final calculation – by the emotional costs of leaving one's family, relationships and friends behind. These costs are judged to be too high, which ultimately leads them to stay.

Interestingly, stayers' hypothetical reasons to migrate are much more economically based than those expressed by migrants themselves, especially by those who moved to the UK. This is partly because, for many graduates, going abroad was also associated with a number of non-economic factors, including an interest in meeting new people and living independently, which transcend wage differentials *per se*, even though professional considerations were surely significant. In fact, moving to the UK, which was largely considered a more advanced and modern country compared to Italy, often signified an individual search for a new life-style and identity. For example, Federica, who used to work as a nurse in Italy before migrating to the UK, stated: "I liked my life in Italy but I was tired of it and I wanted to change" (Federica, 28, female, from the north). Similarly, Mirco, an IT graduate, argued: "I wanted to live somewhere else...to experience something different" (Mirco, 26, male, from the north). These considerations suggest that one of the key differences between international migrants and Italian graduates who stay in Italy is the actual degree of personal dissatisfaction experienced in the home country. In this regard, stayers appeared not to be particularly interested in changing their lifestyles or experiencing living in other places or in a cosmopolitan melting-pot such as London because they generally portrayed themselves as being quite content living in Italy.

This difference can be explained considering that migrating to another city within Italy generally did not emerge as a disruptive move in terms of relationships and ties with partners, friends and family. Even though migrating abroad does not necessarily involve the breaking or the suspension of previous relationships, respondents tend to conceptualise going abroad as a "break" which they took with the intention of bringing some change in their lives, which often included meeting new people and reorienting their social lives. Nora, a graduate in anthropology from Rome, recalled the events and the different reasons that led her to decide to migrate:

I lived for a couple of years with my boyfriend and then we split up and I had to go back to live with my parents. After a few months, I was already planning to move out, but I needed another incentive to leave...In Italy, the professional situation for young graduates like me was delusional...in the end, I took the decision to apply for a Masters abroad the night that Berlusconi won the last elections. I thought that I really did not understand my country anymore that day [...] but then, since I am here in the UK I realised that you cannot just run away, I found myself even more interested in the future of Italy as a country than when I was living there. (Nora, 25, female, from Rome)

Nora's thoughts indicate that the decision to migrate is hardly ever taken purely on economic terms, even if international and regional differentials in terms of occupation and life-style opportunities certainly play a major role in directing migratory flows (Favell, 2008; Massey et al., 1998). It could be argued that although migration can be a response to economic, societal and personal forces and expectations, the specific act to migrate is always unequivocally related to the individual's life-course which includes both past experiences as well as future expectations. In this context, graduates' agency needs to be recognised as a continuous flow of conduct, which is both enabled and constrained by the structural conditions of which this is in itself a part (Giddens, 1984; 1991). Moreover, Nora's feelings toward Italy suggest that a person's sense of belonging and national identity does not necessarily decrease with migration, and her account supports the view that migration does not necessarily reduce place-identity or ties to the homeland. In fact, in many occasions, quite the opposite seems to happen; there are many examples in the literature of the glorification of ethnic traits in the diasporas (Ahmed, 2003; Cohen, 2008).

Moreover, some stayers identified in their peers abroad particular personality traits, such as curiosity, courage and adventure-seeking, which they thought they did not have. For example, Claudia, a psychology graduate from Rome, said about the difference between migrating and staying:

Staying here or migrating are linked to one's personal development. Apart from work, those who are more predisposed to leave are those who are more willing to discover new things, to see new things, and to do new things. But on the other side, [there are] also those who could not integrate well here, and therefore need to leave, to jump somewhere else, and this is why I delay taking this decision because I know what it means [...] The benefits of being at home

are that you are protected against anything, in your home, in your country, everything is clear, easier, you have your networks, your people...you have your securities. (Claudia, 28, female, from Rome)

As Claudia's remarks suggest, a benefit of staying is the security and the stability provided by living in a familiar territory, whereas migrating necessitates a jump into the unknown. Low risk adversity has been traditionally considered a migrant characteristic (Borjas, 1990; Jaeger, Dohmen, Falk, Huffman, Sunde and Bonin, 2007). Even though the association of migrants with a lower risk aversion has been recently debated (Bonin, Constant, Tatsiramos and Zimmermann, 2006), migrants are generally assumed to be more prone to take risks.

Considerations about security vs. risks were also present in Giovanni's interview. Looking back at his choice to stay in Milan rather than pursuing a research career elsewhere, he concluded:

Thinking back about the decisions I took...in terms of financial security, of what I have here... surely I am better off here, it went well for me in the end. (Giovanni, 28, male, from Milan)

As these quotes suggest, some non-mobile graduates recognised that migrating entails leaving one's security for the prospect of a new, potentially satisfying life elsewhere. It certainly takes some self-belief and confidence to think in those terms. And, possibly, also a less traditional mind-set. This kind of narrative seem to support Beck's views (1992) on the inevitable risks associated with the "do-it-yourself" biography, which individuals in western society are theoretically required to construct for themselves.

According to some respondents, this particular predisposition toward migrating and pursuing a different life elsewhere is linked to a person's background. For example, Giacomo, a male graduate from the south who lives in the UK, commented that in his opinion, the factors which he thought played a significant role in forming his interest in travelling and living abroad were rooted in the ways in which he was brought up. He said:

I think what matters are one's personality and one's family. I think that you need to be socialised into travelling. There are people who are too attached to their habits to travel [...] For example, my parents are both medical doctors, and as a family, we are one of the few among their colleagues who do not own a summer house somewhere, because my parents have always preferred to take us on holiday to different places. (Giacomo, 26, male, from the south)

Giacomo's ideas reflect the interviews taken among non-mobile graduates in Italy. In some cases, in fact, stayers commented that migrating was not something they thought about because it did not belong to their behavioural repertoire and upbringing. For example, Carla, a language graduate from Milan, stated that despite the fact that her studies would have naturally directed her toward going abroad to improve her foreign language skills, she never really considered going because:

The idea of leaving, of leaving my friends, never really appealed to me, and my parents have never encouraged me to go either, so I never really tried. (Carla, 28, female, from Milan)

These considerations support the view that background factors significantly affect individual propensities to migrate and that migration is hardly ever a sudden event but a process, which builds over the life-course (King, 2002; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). Nevertheless, being immobile is not a passive choice either. As some of the stories presented in this chapter have suggested, the opportunity to leave one's home town can be pondered and then discarded or simply not wanted. For example, Linda, reflecting about her reasons to stay in Palermo, concluded:

Apart from everything else, I am happy here in Palermo, I never really felt the need to leave, not even when I was a teenager. I have always appreciated this place, even if there are many problems here and many things that do not work. (Linda, 31, female, from Palermo)

As this extract suggests, immobility does not just simply happen due to inertia or various commitments (Bonney et al., 1999). Rather, the decision not to engage in migration is the result of a decision-making process which is as complex and multi-layered as the decision to migrate (de Jong, 1983), especially in a country characterised by a long and ongoing history of migration and by deep regional inequalities like Italy.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the reasons to stay of a sample of Italian graduates from different locations. With the exception of two respondents – both architects who wished to work in more meritocratic environments – the evidence suggests that these graduates stay in their home towns because they have either reached a relatively satisfying work and life balance or because they feel too attached to their family, friends and partners to consider migration as a profitable option. This is an outline of the main findings: overall, work emerged as a significant *potential* factor to migrate, confirming the importance of professional considerations in the mobility behaviour of Italian graduates. Other reasons to stay were friends, a satisfying social life, seen as very important sources of well-being for Italian graduates, and a lack of interest *per se* in migrating to experience different cultures and life-styles. Attachments to partners and to family were also considered important reasons not to migrate, especially by female graduates, suggesting in turn that the costs and benefits associated with migrations (and non-migration) are inevitably gendered (Boyle and Halfacree, 1999).

In terms of belongings to and views of Italy, stayers seem to constitute a more “comfortable” category of individuals compared to international migrants, with internal migrants perhaps somewhere in between. Nevertheless, Italy and in particular the lack of meritocracy within the labour market, mostly associated with the extensive use of the *raccomandazione*, emerged as significant barriers to access occupations and as potential reasons to consider migrating for those who are directly affected by these practices. The peculiarities of the Italian labour market have been analysed through the specific case study of academia. In this regard, the experiences of some non-mobile academics working in Italy indicate that cultivating good work relationships in one’s university is possibly the most important enabling factor to pursue a career in Italy, confirming the existence of widespread forms of irregularities in the recruitment culture in this field.

Overall, the narratives that I have presented in this chapter indicate that stayers do not live in Italy passively and their lives are significantly conditioned by the desire for self-realisation. Like all individuals, non-mobile Italian graduates are caught up in what

Beck (1994) has described as the “grand experiment” of post-traditional societies, in which the accomplishment of a self-made biography is an inescapable responsibility of any individual. In this context, the decision to stay emerged as a multifaceted decision-making process in which each graduate attempts to choose the life-style and the mobility option which best reflects his/her views of the world, aspirations and values (Fielding, 1992b). After all, as Castles (2010) reminds us, economic factors are important but hardly sufficient to understand specific experiences of migration, as not everyone who can, in the end does migrate.

CHAPTER 8

MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Contributions

One of my study's main purposes was to demonstrate the significance of Italian graduate migration as a social phenomenon and as a field of enquiry. This goal has been pursued by providing an integrated, sociological analysis of the reasons to migrate internationally, internally, and not to migrate, of Italian graduates. My broad epistemological approach was to apply C. Wright Mills' (1959) notion of a "sociological imagination" to the study of the "double emdeddedness" (King, 2002) of migratory flows. Thus, a "migratory imagination" has been developed over the course of this thesis in order to capture the roles that different economic and non-economic factors play, often concomitantly, in the mobility behaviours of Italian graduates. As well as its sociological base, this thesis has also drawn on, and hopefully contributed to, the interdisciplinary field of migration studies.

The study of migratory flows necessarily involves an analysis of the countries involved (Castles, 2010; Gabaccia, 2000). In this regard, my research has provided an extensive evaluation of the different push and pull factors which characterise Italy and the UK as the sending and receiving countries of Italian graduate migrants, as well as of south of Italy and the cities of Rome and Milan as places of origin and destination of the internal migrants. Moreover, my study has provided a unique comparison of the reasons to migrate to different destinations with those of staying in the Italian cities of Milan, Rome and Palermo. To the best of my knowledge, a comparative analysis of different mobility patterns in the case of Italian graduates has never been attempted before; therefore, this study might represent the most comprehensive analysis yet made on these linked phenomena.

Researching Italian graduate mobility patterns is not only significant to the study of Italian migration. The conclusions reached in this thesis are potentially relevant to other countries and disciplinary contexts. For example, countries like Spain and Greece which are similar to Italy in terms of their societal configurations – characterised by the lack of a fully developed graduate labour market and an inefficient welfare system replaced by a strong family culture (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Ortiz, 2010) – might present similar phenomena. Further similarities across the southern European countries are found in the role of patronage, clientelism and equivalent forms of *raccomandazione* (Piattoni, 2001)

As illustrated throughout this study, the field of graduate migration touches a number of issues and is interlinked with the literature on different forms of skilled migration which make my theoretical contributions potentially significant not only for Italian graduate migration *per se* but for the study of skilled migration, student migration and brain drain worldwide. Nevertheless, before extending the hypotheses discussed in this study to other countries and populations, systematic comparison should be developed. This is the task for further research, and other researchers.

Moreover, in terms of the study of migratory determinants, this study makes an original contribution to this field by providing an in-depth analysis of how different kinds of economic and non-economic motivations play a role in each of the mobility behaviours considered. The relationship of each individual with Italy as the country of origin and with their home towns has been shown to be particularly significant in this process. Another significantly original element has been my introduction of the concept of *mentalità* to indicate the importance of individuals' views and perceptions of their culture and society.

Pursuing further analysis of the concept of *mentalità* could be useful in many different contexts, apart from migration, and my study strongly advocates for the recognition of the analytical potential and value of this concept, which has hardly been used in the social sciences, despite its rich theoretical tradition in the French historiography of the 20th century (Bloch, 1954; Le Goff, 1981; Revel, 1979). The concept of *mentalità* could be particularly useful in studies which address the complex relationships between individuals' perceptions of the self in relation to society, a theme which is at the core of

sociology as a discipline. As a straightforward migration factor, too, I would argue, the notion of *mentalità* has rich potential to be applied in other contexts.

My study reaffirms the need to look at individuals' mobility as a quintessential characteristic of contemporary societies. Beyond the standard study of *graduate migration*, itself a relatively under-researched field, my project has also contributed to the broader sociological and geographical literature on the *mobilities paradigm* (cf. Urry, 2000; 2007), since (Italian) graduates exhibit various patterns and typologies of (non-) movement within and beyond Italy. Finally, I would claim that my research constitutes a significant updating of the long historiography of Italian migration studies, by highlighting its latest phase.

At this stage, is important to go back to the original research questions which my research has gravitated around and to evaluate the main conclusions reached. The fundamental questions which this study aimed to answer are the following:

Why do Italian graduates migrate?

What is the difference, if any, in terms of motivations, between graduates who decide to migrate internally within Italy as compared to the ones who decide to migrate to the UK?

Why do some graduates stay in their home town despite regional and national differentials in terms of employment and lifestyle opportunities?

The following sections will contextualise the findings provided on these themes, highlighting the implications and contributions of the research that I carried out.

8.2 Why Do Italian Graduates Migrate?

Above all, my study indicates that Italian graduates' reasons to migrate both toward the UK and internally within Italy are tightly connected to the difficult access to many professions that characterises the Italian labour market, even though these distinct kinds of migration seem to have different appeals for the individuals involved, which will be discussed in the next section, 8.3.

First, my analysis supports existing studies in indicating that the transition to a stable occupation in Italy is long and problematic and that the Italian graduate labour market seems still highly underdeveloped, particularly in the south (Cammelli, 2009; Ciriaci, 2005). More specifically, my study suggests that Italian graduate flows indicate the existence of structural disparities between Italy and the UK and between the south and the north of Italy in terms of the availability of graduate job opportunities. It signals a general mismatch between the demand and the supply of labour in the Italian graduate labour market.

Moreover, the predominant role of professional motivations among Italian graduates supports the view that Italian graduates are a particularly vulnerable category of workers and citizens (Livi Bacci, 2008; Reyneri, 2005). My findings suggest that migration might be an option taken on particularly by those graduates who experienced a difficult or unsuccessful transition to the labour market in their home towns and thus decide to migrate to the cities of Rome and Milan or to the UK in order to increase their chances for social and professional mobility. In this sense, my research results play firmly into the “rational choice” model of economically-driven migration behaviours, which was reviewed in some depth in Chapter 2. Of course, this is not the whole story, as we shall see presently.

The perceived lack of meritocracy in the Italian labour market, often associated with the existence of many irregularities in the allocation of jobs due to the use of the *raccomandazione*, emerged as a more specific but no less significant reason to migrate, particularly from the south. With the exclusion of the Italian brain drain literature, the link between clientelism and migration in Italy has not been addressed directly by researchers. In this respect, my study indicates that the link between those two phenomena in Italy – but the same could be assumed to take place in other southern European countries like Greece or Spain traditionally characterised by high levels of clientelism and corruption (Piattoni, 2001) – might be very significant. My research contributes to this field of enquiry by raising awareness of how the experience of irregularities in the recruitment process for many occupations can play an important role in the decisions to migrate of Italian graduates, particularly by directing their migrations

towards regions and countries which are perceived to be more meritocratic like the UK and (in a relative sense, compared to the south) the north of Italy.

This dynamic emerged particularly strongly in the case of the Italian brain-drain, which my findings suggest to be ongoing and to interest Italian academia as a whole. The predominant role of professional motivations linked to the inability to access good occupations in Italy questions the voluntary nature of some of these migrations, which are highly affected by the structural inefficiency of Italy as a country to provide enough life and professional chances to its younger generations. Pushing this argument a little further, the structural conditions of the regional labour markets in different countries and parts of Europe (and for that matter, the world), especially in a “peripheral” region like southern Italy (which is peripheral both geographically and in terms of economic power relations), can be seen to constrain or even to “force” some graduates to migrate in order to survive in the job market (Castles and Delgado Wise, 2008).

Yet, on the whole, my study indicates that an economic and structural understanding of migration does not adequately reflect the full spectrum of reasons why Italian graduates decide to migrate, which often include, especially when moving abroad, an array of more subjective and agentic motivations. In particular, I have shown that in the case of Italian graduates moving to the city of London, the idea of migration as a personal quest and a modern rite of passage – to experiment new life-styles and to enable one’s true identity to emerge – is quite important. In this respect, my analysis supports the general development of the study of skilled migration and migratory determinants, which suggests that migratory flows across Europe are characterised by an increasing prevalence of personal factors (Favell, 2008; Hadler, 2006; Scott, 2006). In particular, I have argued that, for those who can afford it, the idea to escape from the provincialism of Italy and of its *mentalità* plays a significant role in the decisions to move to the UK of Italian graduates, who generally consider the UK as both a professional and a cultural alternative to Italy.

Overall, my study indicates that Italian graduates tend to think about their decisions to migrate (or not) from within an individualised perspective, which is centred on the idea of self-realisation as the ultimate goal to achieve, if necessary through engaging in different kinds of mobility. This body of findings generally support “individualisation”

theories (Beck et al., 1994; Giddens, 1991) on the reflective and inescapable impact of the need to pursue a “do-it-yourself” biography for people living in western societies. What seems to make a difference, in the case of Italian graduates, in combination with the structural constraints experienced in Italy, is the typology of life-styles and arrangements that individuals thought would ultimately lead them to achieve their self-fulfilment. For some, migration became a vehicle to overcome professional and existential difficulties during their (sometimes rather late or delayed) transitions to adulthood and to the labour market; while others, particularly non-migrants, resolved the same tensions by finding their sense of self-realisation in a life-style which prioritises ties with family, friends and partners above professional and personal ambitions.

Therefore, my study strongly suggests the need to recognise and to discuss the role of individual agency in the migratory process of Italian graduates, who we can also see (setting aside the structuralist paradigm for a moment) as a generally resourceful and proactive category of migrants. My thesis thereby contributes to the debate recently opened by Bakewell (2010) on the application of the sociological concept of *agency* to the study of migration. In this regard, now reinstating the structuralist critique of “rational behaviour” economics, my study indicates that, for some typologies of migrations and of migrants, like Italian graduates and their mobility patterns, it might actually be feasible to account for their agency as theorised by Giddens in his *Structuration Theory* (1984), i.e. without minimising the significant structural conditions which affect their capacities to move within and across the national borders. In fact, my study shows that the attribution of agency varies according to the structural and personal conditions experienced by each migrant. Such a view departs from the stereotypical categorisation of migration as voluntary because, as my analysis of internal migration demonstrates, even short-distance moves within a western country like Italy, which would normally be considered voluntary and unproblematic, might be experienced as a necessity for the individuals involved. My findings in this area nuance the role of agency in these kinds of migration, which involve individuals like Italian graduates, who are relatively resourceful and have the free right to migrate to other regions and countries within the EU, yet who are also subject to powerful outward “push” factors.

Overall, Italian graduate migrations emerge from my study as generational phenomena which bridge together the structural characteristics of Italy as a country and the subjective motivations of each migrants. Sociologists have traditionally made an analytical distinction between culture and social structure (Portes, 2010). Migration, in the Italian context, seems to affect both. The lack of trust in the capacity of the Italian state to provide decent life and professional opportunities to its graduates was a shared sentiment among all graduates. In particular, negative views of Italy as a society and home country have been shown to affect the decisions to migrate of many Italian graduates. At the same time, the existence of an ingrained *culture of migration* was also identified as a significant enabling factor in these migrations, especially in the case of internal migration, where northward migration paths had been beaten by earlier generations of mainly labour migrants. Hence, I have argued for the recognition of the importance of both cultural and societal push-factors in the migratory behaviour of Italian graduates.

Finally, gender seems to play a role, even if perhaps not always a decisive one. My findings suggest that female graduates seem more inclined than their male peers to invest in their relationships and partners, while at the same time, female graduates who stay in Italy seem to be expected to look after their families more than their male peers, supporting the view of Italy as still a rather traditional patriarchal society (Ginsborg, 1998; Leccardi, 2007). For sure, more research should be undertaken in order to evaluate comprehensively the effect of gender on the decision to migrate of Italian graduates and on the relationship between individual identity and migration, as there might be other subtle differences between and among male and female graduates which this study has not captured.

8.3 What Characterises Different Migratory Patterns?

I now move to evaluate my answers to the second of the key research questions. My comparative analysis of Italian graduate migratory patterns aimed to provide a good case-study to illustrate the value of an integrated view of international migration, internal migration and immobility. This was based on the belief that, as Hammar et al. (1997) and King and Skeldon (2010) have argued, there is a need to cross-fertilise

research frameworks on these research areas and to recognise that different mobility options are often available to individuals, including immobility. In this respect, my study contributes to the promotion of an integrated view of both mobility and immobility, which aims to re-direct the attention of both scholars and policy makers to the important role that all kind of mobility have on individuals' life courses and chances. Nevertheless, this is not to say that all *mobilities* are the same or that they have the same implications for the individuals involved. My main findings on this issue are the following.

First, in terms of the general characteristics of the Italian graduates who migrate (or not) to different destinations, my study indicates that the current movements of Italian graduates are comprised of individuals who are generally resourceful, mostly thanks to their family resources, but are not strictly an elite. This social-class aspect supports recent insights into evolving intra-European migrations which indicate the diffusion of mobility among a wider share of the European population (Favell, 2008; Recchi and Favell, 2009).

Second, previous experiences of mobility, especially as part of student exchange programmes such as the Erasmus, have been shown to play a significant role in stimulating future migration among Italian graduates, confirming the main assumptions of the existing literature on this issue (Faggian et al., 2007b; Findlay et al., 2005; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). However, my analysis suggests that this might not be true for all Italian graduates who share a background in mobility, and important differences can be observed in terms of graduates' dispositions toward mobility. This is because, as my findings have illustrated, the degree of personal success experienced since migrating is more important than the experience of migration *per se*.

In particular, graduates who have moved to the UK seem to have a higher predisposition toward migration and are generally interested in and highly value living abroad as a life experience; while internal migrants do not seem to have such a strong interest in mobility and travelling *per se* and look at their migrations more pragmatically. In fact, if crossing the national border was often infused by the desire to experience life elsewhere, meeting new people and testing one's limits and personality; moving within Italy was less idealised and often considered as a necessity.

Internal migration emerged from this study as the ultimate expression of the unresolved “southern question” which has bedevilled the history of Italy since its foundation as a modern nation state. My analysis of internal migration indicates that these moves can generate issues and distress for the individuals involved that can be as complex and significant as those involved in any other kind of migration. In this respect, my findings lead me to support the need to abandon stereotypical views and conceptualisations of different typologies of migration, particularly in relation to the traditional distinction between “forced vs. voluntary” migrations, which does not adequately reflect the nuances of current migratory flows (King, 2002).

Moreover, it can be noted that the societal traits which are generally associated with Italy as a country – a weak national identity, the south and north divide, the centrality of the family and the lack of trust of Italians in their state and institutions – all find some confirmation in the interviews I conducted with the graduates. In particular, the south-north divide dominates the narratives of internal migrants; while a pessimistic view of Italy and of its future emerged strongly among Italians abroad, for whom these views represent significant reasons to migrate and not to return.

The centrality of the family in Italian society is also reaffirmed by this study. Family support was found to be an important enabling factor for graduate migration, which is often initiated thanks to the economic and emotional resources of the families of origin. This represents a deep difference with the past, when impoverished migrants left their villages and the country because of the lack of family resources. This indicates that the current migration of graduates is largely a privileged kind of mobility.

Next, my research has shown that being non-mobile can also be an actively chosen condition, as graduates engage in complex decision-making processes about their mobilities, even when they decide to stay put. This is seen to be especially the case in countries characterised by a long and ongoing history of migration like Italy (or Ireland, Greece, Portugal etc.), where a culture of migration is already in place and migrating might be an option which has been considered at different points in time by many citizens. The interview findings indicate that stayers remain in Italy because they are able to find a reasonable work and life balance and because they feel more attached to

their lives in Italy and are usually less pessimistic about their chances to live happily in their home towns in the future. This conclusion vindicates the approach of Hammar et al. (1997) who argue that immobility should be considered as a mobility option and included in any comprehensive study of migration.

Nevertheless, more research should be carried out on Italian graduate flows to and back from different destinations in order to explore further the implications of my findings. In the case of Italian graduate migration to the UK, the centrality and the international prestige of British companies, institutions and universities might attract a particularly large share of ambitious and career-oriented graduates. Thus, it would be interesting to develop my analysis of Italian graduates in the UK by comparing their motivations with those of Italian graduates who have moved to countries which apparently possess different appeals, like Spain for example, which has been attracting an increasing amount of Italian students and graduates in recent years, despite its relative economic stagnation (Recchi and Favell, 2009). The other obvious comparator – more akin to the UK in terms of its global economic, business and cultural attractions, but much further afield – is the United States, especially New York. Or there are Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Berlin, the Gulf States: the list goes on, as Italian graduates are undoubtedly widely spread around the world.

Regarding the case of internal migration, my study strongly encourages the reprise of more studies on this phenomenon. In particular, further research to analyse and compare the reasons to migrate of Italian graduates from different regions in the south would be beneficial, as this would enable us to examine the nuances of these phenomena and the differences which might exist between different areas and regions in the south of Italy. For example, it would be interesting to compare graduate flows from the region of Calabria, which has been historically and still is the most underdeveloped area of the country, with those from Apulia, which is the region of the south which has grown faster in the recent decade and is performing economically better at present (Dunford and Greco, 2005). Sicily and Sardinia, as autonomous island-regions with somewhat separate histories and identities, both from each other and with the mainland, might have different migrant mobility profiles.

Finally, my study of Italian graduate mobility patterns can be seen as a product of both Castles' (2010) and King and Skeldon's (2010) incentivations to carry on more comparative and interdisciplinary studies on migration. As noted above, my study has used a "sociological imagination", following C. Wright Mills' (1959) call for the development of a broad sociological perspective, in order to make sense of the multilayered intersections between individual biographies, history and the social processes in which all social phenomena, including migrations, are necessarily located. I hope that my analysis of Italian graduate migratory patterns has demonstrated both the necessity and the potential of this perspective.

8.4 The Future

Migration has played a crucial role in the processes of population and social change, urbanisation, modernisation and development of Italy as a modern nation state. Like any complex society, Italy cannot be constrained into a unitary synthetic description and its future is open to multiple scenarios, some of which are impossible to predict. The "Arab Spring" revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia are a recent example of the kind of unforeseen social transformations that can take place in previously assumed problematic but stable Mediterranean countries. In the case of Italy, it is difficult to predict whether there will be significant changes which will impact on its social and political status. Most commentators see the country currently in a moment of historical transition, slowly moving toward the post-Berlusconi era (political elections are supposed to take place in 2012 and the latest polls indicate a sharp decline in support for the Berlusconi coalition). Nevertheless, as shown in previous chapters, Italy has the tendency to delay social and cultural change (Altan, 2000; Gambino, 1998). Thus, it could go either way.

In terms of the future of Italian graduates' migratory flows, making some predictions might be more reasonable. The data collected and the analysis undertaken suggest that overall, Italian graduate migration to the UK and internally, south-to-north, are ongoing and there are no obvious signs that these flows will stop or decrease in the short term, especially considering that recent governments have not successfully dealt with their most significant structural push factors – the difficult access to most occupations and the south and north divide – which continue to characterise Italy as a whole.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE RATIONALE

The following questions functioned as guidelines for the interviews conducted. Each interviewee was given the time to elaborate more substantially on the topics which he/she considered more relevant.

Interview Questions

On respondents' background

- Please, tell me about yourself, where do you come from, which degree did you take back in Italy and in which University? How was your university experience?
- Are you currently working or studying? If yes, in what type of occupations are you in? How long have you been working/studying?

On previous experiences abroad and attitudes toward mobility

- Have you ever considered going abroad? Have you been abroad before? In which occasions? For example, work, travel, study.
- Did you ever consider or participate in student exchange programmes such as the Erasmus or Leonardo?
- Is (or "would be" in the case of immobile graduates) migration something totally new for you?
- Did you know somebody who migrated to the same place before deciding to migrate yourself?

- Do you have friends, acquaintances, and relatives abroad/or in Rome and Milan?

On the development of the idea to migrate and the reasons to migrate to a specific destination

- When did you first start considering the idea to migrate? Why did you start thinking to migrate? Was there any particular event or reason that characterised the emergence of this idea?
- I would like to know more about the reasons why you decided to move to (name of the city). What are the factors that have determined your decision to move to (name of the city)?
- What other factors have determined your decision to move to (name of the city)?
- What image did you have of (name of the city) before you arrived? Has it changed?
- Did you consider other possible destinations? If yes, which ones? And for which reasons? If not, Why not?

On the migration experience

- How long have you been in (name of the city)?
- What were the circumstances in which you first came?
- Did you have a prospect of a job or something in particular that you wanted to do in (name of the city)?
- Did you have any difficulties in adapting and integrating? If yes, in which area? For example, making friend, finding job, language...

On conceptualising the experience of migration to the UK:

- Why did you choose to migrate to the UK in relation to other European countries?

- Do you perceive any difference between moving within the EU and outside the EU?
- How often have you been back to Italy during the past year and since you arrived?

On future plans

- How long do you think to stay in the UK?
- Are you planning to go back to live in Italy (as opposed to just visit) at some point?
- What could be the reasons for you to go back to Italy?

On conceptualising the experience of internal migration

- Why did you choose to migrate to Rome or Milan in relation to other destinations?
- Do you perceive any difference between moving within Italy and outside Italy?
- How often have you been back to your home town during the last year and since you moved here?

On future plans

- How long do you think to stay in Rome or Milan?
- Are you planning to go back to your home town as some point?
- What could be the reasons for you to go back?

Conceptualising immobility

- What do you think are the benefits and the disadvantages of living in your home town?
- Did you ever or would you consider in the future to move to another city or country? Why yes? Why not?

APPENDIX B

Figure 1: Visual illustration of the Italian graduate migration flows toward the UK investigated in this study. The arrows represent the symbolic direction of the migratory flows from the south, centre and north of Italy analysed, not the precise places of departure and arrival of the migrants interviewed.

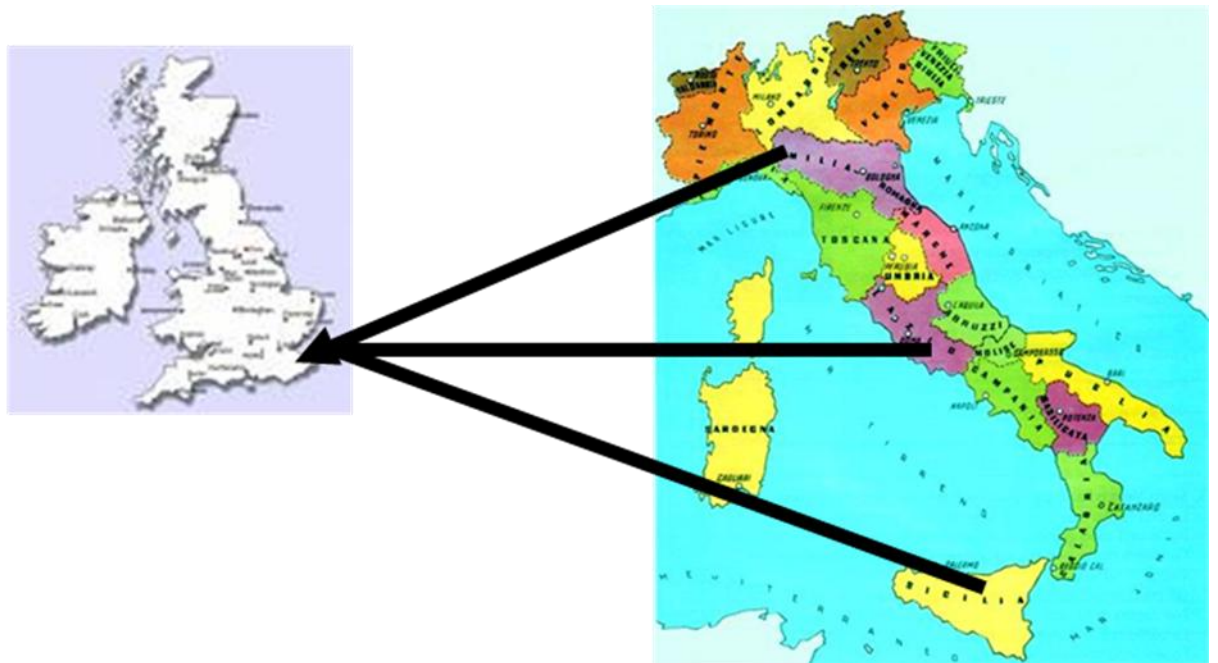


Figure 2: Visual illustration of the internal graduate migration flows, south to centre/north, investigated in this study. The arrows represent the symbolic direction of the migratory flows analysed, not the precise places of departure and arrival of the migrants interviewed.



APPENDIX C

RESPONDENTS TABLE

Table 1: Italian graduates who migrated to the United Kingdom

	Name	Age	Discipline studied	Previous occupation	Current occupation in the UK
From the NORTH					
MALES					
1.	Ferdinando	30	Engineering	Project manager	Engineer
2.	Daniele	30	Engineering	Engineer	Engineer
3.	Riccardo	30	Economics	Student ²⁰	It project manager
4.	Marco	30	Philosophy	PhD	Company manager
5.	Emiliano	31	International relations	PhD	Contracted lecturer
6.	Mirco	26	Informatics	Unemployed	Studying English
FEMALES					
1.	Federica	28	Nursing	Nurse	Nurse
2.	Silvia	27	Economics	PhD	Consultant
3.	Deborah	25	Business	Internship in Turkey	Tour Operator
4.	Viola	28	Psychology	Student	Researcher
5.	Manuela	28	Languages	Call centre employee	Publishing company trainee
6.	Franca	32	Law	Student	Solicitor
From the CENTRE					

²⁰ The label “Student” is used to indicate that the respondent left Italy soon after graduation and was not enrolled in any significant occupation before migrating.

MALES					
1.	Guido	30	Economics	Office employee	Consultant
2.	Alberto	26	Medicine	PhD	PhD
3.	Leandro	25	Engineering	Student	PhD
4.	Giancarlo	27	International relations	International development worker in different locations	Post-graduate student
5.	Luigi	33	Physics	Researcher in the US, PhD from the UK	Permanent lecturer
6.	Elio	37	Politics	Italian NGOs employee	Researcher
FEMALES					
1.	Anna	25	Languages	International development worker	PhD
2.	Marta	27	Language translation	Student	Translator
3.	Gabriele	33	Economics	Student	Project manager
4.	Franca	29	Law	PhD	PhD
5.	Mirella	28	Languages	Language student in China	NGO trainee
6	Nora	25	Anthropology	Student and internship	NGO worker
From the SOUTH					
MALES					
1.	Paolo	33	Economics	Researcher	PhD
2.	Giancarlo	26	Economics	Office job	PhD
3.	Corrado	27	Languages	Army officer	Project coordinator
4.	Michele	25	Psychology	Student	Market analyst
5.	Gianni	33	Languages	Temporary teacher	Office job + free lance translator
6.	Vittorio	26	International relations	Student	Post-graduate student
7.	Luca	35	Business and	Student	Project

			finance		manager
8.	Andrea	35	Business	Self-employed	Project manager
FEMALES					
1.	Alessandra	27	Media studies	Office job	Insurance advisors
2.	Maria	27	Architecture	Student	Office job
3.	Rita	29	Media studies	Free-lance journalist	Company vice-director
4.	Arianna	36	Mathematics	PhD	Contract researcher
5.	Tiziana	38	Languages	Shop owner	Insurance company manager
6.	Arianna	26	Anthropology	Student	Post-graduate student

Table 2: Italian graduates who migrated internally to the cities of Rome and Milan

	Name	Age	Home town	Discipline studied	Previous occupation	Current occupation in Rome
In ROME						
MALES						
1.	Valerio	30	Salerno	International relations	Student	Project Area coordinator
2.	Antonio	29	Napoli	Political sciences	Student	Free-lance worker
3.	Renato	30	Napoli	International relations	Student	Project coordinator
4.	Federico	33	Taranto	International relations	Student	Journalist
5.	Tiziano	28	Bari	Engineering	Free-lance project coordinator	Self-employed
6	Luca	33	Napoli	International relations	Student	Project manager
7	Silvio	37	Cosenza	Geology	Project	Map

					employee	designer
FEMALES						
1.	Valentina	32	Napoli	Economics	Student	Senior office manager
2.	Michela	30	Salerno	Languages	Airline Hostess	Company coordinator
3.	Givevra	30	Napoli	International relations	Student	Researcher
4.	Piera	27	Cosenza	Pharmacy	Student	Lab researcher
5.	Gaia	30	Napoli	International relations	Student	Associate tutor
6.	Angela	30	Cosenza	Engineering	Researcher	Project coordinator
In MILAN						
MALES						
1.	Luca	29	Rome	Art History	Student	Exhibitions curator
2.	Paolo	35	Bari	Law	Internship	Lawyer
3.	Pietro	27	Rome	Design	Student	Designer
4.	Nando	30	Rome	Political Sciences	Market analyst	Marketing Coordinator
5.	Alfredo	30	Messina	Law	Student	PhD
6.	Valerio	28	Palermo	IT	Student	IT manager
FEMALES						
1.	Alessia	33	Rome	Art History	Office worker	PR officer
2.	Cristina	34	Napoli	Economics	Student	Freelance consultancy
3.	Claudia	26	Cosenza	Linguistics	Student	PR officer
4.	Linda	28	Rome	Archaeology	Student	HR employee
5.	Laura	30	Bari	Political Sciences	Student	Clown therapist
6.	Daniela	29	Bari	Communications sciences	Photo journalism	Photo designers

Table 3: Italian graduates who live in the Italian cities of Milan (north), Rome (centre) and Palermo (south).

City	Name	Age	Discipline studied	Current occupation
In MILAN				
MALES				
1.	Emilio	33	Law	Lawyer
2.	Giovanni	28	Economics	Specialised employee
3.	Alessandro	37	Architecture	Architect
FEMALES				
1.	Alessandra	27	Communication sciences	Communication employee
2.	Maria	31	Economics	Assistant professor
3.	Milena	28	Psychology	PhD
4.	Carla	28	Languages	English teacher
In ROME				
MALES				
1.	Roberto	26	ICT engineering	
2.	Dario	28	Marketing	Marketing employee
3.	Vincenzo	32	Asian languages	Marketing Assistant
FEMALES				
1.	Ilaria	28	Asian studies	PhD
2.	Elsa	37	Architect	Free-lance consultant
3.	Daniela	28	Communication sciences	Insurance marketing employee
4.	Manuela	29	Statistics	State researcher
5.	Valentina	29	Humanities	Costumer service employee
In PALERMO				
MALES				
1.	Maurizio	30	Law	Lawyer
2.	Marco	30	Literature	Researcher
3.	Mario	32	Medicine	Specialised doctor
FEMALES				
1.	Cristina	31	Sociology	NGOs and project casual worker

2.	Noemi	28	Medicine	Specialised doctor
3.	Valeria	27	Political science	HR employee
4.	Linda	31	Archaeology	Digital media self-employee

APPENDIX D

LIST OF CODES

(alphabetical order)

BACKGROUND-TEMPORARY INTERNAL MIGRATEATION
 BACKGROUND-ERASMUS
 BACKGROUND-HIGHLY MOBILE
 BACKGROUND-PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES ABROAD
 BACKGROUND-STUDIED AND COMMUTE TO CLOSEST UNIVERSITY
 BACKGROUND-STUDY AND LIVED IN ONE CITY
 BENEFIT OF STAY-CONOSCENZE
 BENEFIT OF STAY-SECURITY
 BENEFIT TO STAY-FAMILY
 BENEFIT TO STAY-FRIENDS
 BENEFIT TO STAY-LOCAL KNOWLEDGE
 CHOICE OF UK-ACADEMIC PRESTIGE
 CHOICE OF UK-CLOSE TO ITALY AND WORK AND STUDY OPPORTUNITY
 CONOSCENZE-AS KEY TO GET JOBS
 DECISION TO MIGRATE- AS THE VERY LAST CHANGE
 DISCIPLINE-INFLUENCE ON APPROACH TO MOBILITY
 DISCIPLINE-LINKED WITH PERSONALITY
 DISTANCE-MATTERS
 EMOTIONAL COST OF MIGRATEATING
 FAMILY- ECONOMIC SUPPORT
 FAMILY- INFLUENCE/IMPORTANCE
 FAMILY- NO HISTORY OF MIGRATEATION
 FAMILY- WITH HISTORY OF MIGRATEATION
 FAMILY-DO NOT LIKE MIGRATEATION
 FAMILY-SUPPORT MIGRATEATION
 FEAR OF PARENTS GETTING OLDER
 FRIENDS-INFLUENCE
 FRIENDS IN ITALY- ALSO MIGRATEATED
 FRIENDS/FAMILY ABROAD-AS KEY TO MIGRATEATE
 FUTURE- RETURN TO HOMETOWN-NO
 FUTURE-DESIRE TO SETTLE AND FAMILY
 FUTURE-IN ITALY
 FUTURE-UK OR ABROAD
 FUTURE-UNCERTAIN
 HIGH AGENCY-AS NECESSARY TO MIGRATEATE
 INTERNAL MIGRATE-AS FORCED MIGRATEATION
 KEY CHOICES- EMOTIONAL ASSESSMENT
 KEY CHOICES-INFLUENCED BY VIEW OF ITALY
 MENTALITA'-AS COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR
 MENTALITA'-ASSOCIATED WITH LIFE-STYLE
 MENTALITA'-OF PARENTS/FAMILY AS INFLUENTIAL

MENTALITA' IN ITALY - NEGATIVE
 MENTALITA'/DESCRIPTION/GENERAL
 MENTALITA- RACCOMANDAZIONE, CLIENTELISTIC
 MENTALITA-REGIONAL CHARACTERISTIC
 MENTALITY-AS PERSONALITY TRAIT
 MENTALITY AS SOCIAL STRUCTURE
 MILANO-BENEFITS
 MILANO-NEGATIVE SIDES
 MORAL IMPACT OF THE CORRUPTED ITALIAN LABOUR MARKET
 NEGATIVE VIEW OF ITALY
 NORTH-BETTER WORKING ENVIRON
 NORTH-MORE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK
 PERSONALITY-AMBITIOUS
 PERSONALITY-FEELING ATYPICAL AND DIFFERENT
 PERSONALITY-FLEXIBLE/ADAPTABLE
 PERSONALITY-HARD WORKING
 PERSONALITY-HAS A PASSION/JOB TO PURSUE
 PERSONALITY-HIGH AGENCY
 PERSONALITY-IDEALISTIC
 PERSONALITY-INDEPENDENT
 PERSONALITY-LOVE FOR TRAVELLING
 PERSONALITY-PRACTICAL
 PROFILE- CREATIVE/OPEN MINDED
 PROFILE- NO ADVENTUROUS
 PROFILE-HAPPY ABOUT LIFE AT PRESENT
 PROFILE-HAPPY IN NEW PLACE
 PROFILE-NO ANTI-ITALIAN
 PROFILE-NOT A PASSION TO FOLLOW
 PROFILE-NOT HAPPY ABOUT CURRENT SITUATION
 PROFILE-OPTIMISTIC
 PROFILE-OVERALL HAPPY IN ITALY
 PROFILE-PRECARIA
 PROFILE-SOME PROBLEMS WITH UNIVERSITY STUDIES
 PROFILE-SUCCESSFUL STUDENT
 PROFILE-WORK AND LIFE BALANCE
 RACCOMANDAZIONE-NECESSARY/AS A NEED
 RACCOMANDAZIONE-REGIONAL DIFFERENCE
 RACCOMANDAZIONE AND CORRUPTION AS MAIN OBSTACLES TO GET JOBS
 REASON TO MIGRATE-DISAPPOINTMENT ABOUT ITALY
 REASON TO MIGRATE-LEARN ENGLISH
 REASON TO MIGRATE-PURSUE THE DESIRED JOB/career
 REASON TO MIGRATE- MORAL DISSONANCE WITH ITALY/HOMETOWN
 REASON TO MIGRATE- SELF-REASONLIZATION
 REASON TO- MIGRATE- EXPERIENCE ABROAD/ADVENTURE
 REASON TO MIGRATE- INDEPENDENCE
 REASON TO MIGRATE-PERSONAL FACTORS
 REASON TO MIGRATE-RELATIONSHIPS
 REASON TO MIGRATE-GAIN A WORKING EXPERIENCE USEFUL FOR THE FUTURE IN ITALY

REASON TO MIGRATE-PER NON ACCONTENTARSI
 REASON TO MIGRATE INTERNALLY- REGIONAL DIFFERENCE IN
 DEVELOPMENT
 REASON TO MIGRATE- TO STUDY
 REASON TO STAY-PARTNER
 REASON TO MIGRATE-DIFFERENT MENTALITIES AS PUSH FACTOR
 REASON TO MIGRATE- TIRED/BORED OF ITALY
 REASON TO MIGRATE-NO CAREER OPPORTUNITY IN ITALY
 REASON TO MIGRATE-S STABLE JOB
 REASON TO STAY- EMOTIONAL TIES
 REASON TO STAY-ATTACHMENT TO HOMETOWN
 REASON TO STAY-FAMILY
 REASON TO STAY- FEAR OF LOSING JOB IN ITALY FOREVER
 REASON TO STAY-FRIENDS
 REASON TO STAY-LOSING SOC CONTACTS
 REASON TO STAY-PERSONAL IDENTITY
 REASON NOT TO MIGRATE- NO LANGUAGE SKILLS
 RELATIONSHIP-IMPORTANCE
 RETURN- UNCERTAIN/AS A COMPLEX DECISION
 RETURN-DIFFICULT
 RETURN-YES
 ROME-POSITIVE VIEW
 ROME-PROBLEMATIC/NEGATIVE
 SOUTH- LACK OF RESOURCES
 SOUTH-BACKWORDS/UNDERDEVELOPED
 SOUTH-BAD WORK CONDITIONS
 SOUTH-CLIENTELISM/RACCOMANDAZIONI, LACK OF MERITOCRACY
 SOUTH-COMPLEX ENVIRON
 SOUTH-CULTURE OF MIGRATION
 SOUTH-NO JOB OPPORT
 SOUTH-POSITIVE TRAITS
 STRESS- RELATED TO WORK BACK IN ITALY
 UK-BETTER ASPIRATIONS AS A MIGRANT
 UK-GOOD ASPECTS
 UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR-KEY FIGURE
 UNIVERSITY/RESEARCH ABROAD-BETTER RESOURCES
 UNIVERSITY IN ITALY- LACK OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FUTURE
 VIEW ITALY-LACK/LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES
 VIEW OF ITALY- AS BACKWORD
 VIEW OF ITALY- GENERATIONAL PROBLEMS
 VIEW OF ITALY- INFLUENTIAL IN DECIDING TO MIGRATE
 VIEW OF ITALY- JOB SECURITY-IMPORTANCE
 VIEW OF ITALY-CLIENTELISM, CORRUPTION
 VIEW OF ITALY-GOOD FACTORS
 VIEW OF ITALY-LACK OF MERITOCRACY RACCOMANDAZIONI
 VIEW OF ITALY-NEGATIVE
 VIEW OF ITALY-OVERALL POSITIVE
 VIEW OF ITALY-POLITICAL CLASS-CORRUPTION
 VIEW OF ITALY-POLITICAL CLASS RESPONSIBLE
 VIEW OF ITALY-REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

VIEW OF ITALY-SAME ISSUES THAN OTHER EU COUNTRIES
VIEW OF ITALY-SO AND SO
VIEW OF ITALY-SOUTH AND NORTH DIVIDE
VIEW OF ITALY-THE PROBLEMS
VIEW OF ITALY-UN-DIVIDED
WILL TO MIGRATE ABROAD-YES
WILL TO MIGRATE INTERNALLY-NO
WILL TO MIGRATE INTERNALLY-YES
WILL TO MIGRATE ABROAD - NO
WORK AS THE MAIN PUSH FACTOR TO MIGRAT
WORK EXP IN ITALY-IRREGULAR ENVIRONMENT
WORK EXP IN ITALY-NO SECURITY
WORK EXP IN ITALY-OVERALL POSITIVE
WORK EXP ITALY-UNDER EMPLOYMENT
WORK EXP. IN ITALY-LOW QUALITY
WORK EXP.IN ITALY-EXPLOITMENT
WORK EXP.IN ITALY-LOW PAID
WORK EXPERIENCE IN ITALY-NEGATIVE
WORK IN ITALY-CI SI ACCONTENTA
WORK IN ITALY-GOT THROUGH CONOSCENZE
WORK IN ITALY-NO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
WORK IN ITALY-NO FLEXIBILITY
WORK IN THE UK-MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREER PROGRESSION
WORK IN UK-BETTER WORKING ENVIRONMENT
WORK ITALY-DIFFICULT TO GET JOBS

APPENDIX E

EXAMPLES OF QUERY TOOL ANALYSIS USING ATLAS.TI

Code used: “Background - Previous Experiences Abroad”

Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates in the UK 25/39	64%
All Internal migrants 10/24	41%
All immobile graduates 5/21	23%
Males 19/41	46%
Females 21/43	48%

Code used: “Reason to Migrate - Self-Realisation”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 10/21	47%	All graduates in the UK 25/39	64%
All graduates from the Centre 15/24	62%	All Internal migrants 15/24	62%
All graduates from the South 22/40	55%	All immobile graduates 7/21 ²¹	33%
Males 23/41	56%		
Females 23/42	54%		

²¹ Note that the number of interviews analysed with the Query Tools are at times lower than the total number of interviews taken. For example, in the case of immobile graduates, the total number of interviews analysed here are 21 rather than 23, as two interviews are considered too short to be compared with the rest.

Code used: “Reason to Migrate – Independence”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 7/21	33%	All graduates in the UK 14/39	35%
All graduates from the Centre 7/24	29%	All Internal migrants 8/24	33%
All graduates from the South 9/40	22%	All immobile graduates 1/21	4%
Males 9/41	21%		
Females 13/42	30%		

Code used: “Reason to Migrate - Personal Factors” (the generic code used to indicate personal factors in general)

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 7/21	33%	All graduates in the UK 17/39	43%
All graduates from the Centre 10/24	41%	All Internal migrants 7/24	29%
All graduates from the South 12/40	30%	All immobile graduates 6/21	28%
Males 12/41	29%		
Females 17/42	40%		

Codes used: “Reason to Migrate - Personal factors” or “Relationships”

Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates in the UK 20/39	51%
All Internal migrants 9/24	37% of which 6 females; 3 males
All Immobile graduates (intentions) 6/21	28%
Males 13/41	31%
Females 22/42	52%

Code used: “Personality-High Agency”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 17/21	80%	All graduates in the UK 25/39	64%
All graduates from the Centre 15/24	62%	All Internal migrants 19/24	79%
All graduates from the South 31/40	77%	All immobile graduates 9/21	42%
Males 23/41	56%		
Females 30/42	71%		

Code used: “Personality-Ambitious”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 11/21	52%	All graduates in the UK 19/39	48%
All graduates from the Centre 11/24	45%	All Internal migrants 9/24	37%
All graduates from the South 17/40	42%	All immobile graduates 7/21	33%
Males 18/41	43%		
Females 17/42	40%		

Code used: “Personality-Feeling Atypical”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 11/21	52%	All graduates in the UK 18/39	46%
All graduates from the Centre 6/24	25%	All Internal migrants 1/24	4%
All graduates from the South 5/40	12%	All immobile graduates 3/21	14%
Males 9/41	21%		
Females 13/42	30%		

Code used: “Family - Does Not Like or Does Not Support Migration”

Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates in the UK 7/39	17%
All Internal migrants 0/24	0

Code used: “Work as the Main Reason to Migrate”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 9/21	42%	All graduates in the UK 18/39	46%
All graduates from the Centre 12/24	50%	All Internal migrants 14/24	58%
All graduates from the South 21/40	52%	All immobile graduates 10/21	47%
Males 25/41	60%		
Females 17/42	40%		

Codes Used: “Work as Main Reason to Migrate” and “Reason to migrate – to Pursue the Desired Job/Career” and “Reason to migrate – Stable Job”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 13/21	61%	All graduates in the UK 23/39 of which: 8/12 are from the south 7/12 from centre 8/14 from the north	58%
All graduates from the Centre 16/24	66%	All Internal migrants 21/24	87%
All graduates from the South 30/40	75%	All immobile graduates 14/21 of which: 5/7 from north 6/7 from the centre 3/7 from south	66%
Males 33/41	80%		
Females 26/42	61%		

Codes used: “Work in Italy- Negative”; or “Exploitative”; or “Low Quality”; or “Low-Paid”

Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates in the UK 10/39	25%
All Internal migrants 10/24	41%
All immobile graduates 7/21	33%
Internal migrants in Milan 3/12	25%
Internal migrants in Rome 7/13	53%
Males 16/41	39%
Females 14/42	33%

Codes Used: “Raccomandazione as Necessary” and “Raccomandazione and Corruption as Main Obstacles to Get Jobs”

Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates in the UK 6/39	15%
All Internal migrants 8/24	33%
All immobile graduates 7/21	33%
Males 10/41	24%
Females 10/41	26%

Code used: “Emotional Cost of Migration”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 4/21	19%	All graduates in the UK 9/39	23%
All graduates from the Centre 6/24	25%	All Internal migrants 10/24	41%
All graduates from the South 11/40	27%	All immobile graduates 3/21	14%
Males 10/41	24%		
Females 11/42	26%		

Codes used: “Emotional Cost of Migration” and “Internal Migration as Forced”

Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
Internal migrants 14/ 24 of which 5 males and 9 females	58%

Code used: “Internal Migration as Forced Migration”

Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
Internal migrants 9/24	37%

Code used: “View of Italy – Negative”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 10/21	47%	All graduates in the UK 19/39	48%
All graduates from the Centre 7/24	29%	All Internal migrants 6/24	25%
All graduates from the South 14/40	35%	All immobile graduates 6/21	28%
Males 14/41	34%		
Females 16/42	38%		

Codes used: “View of Italy - Negative” or “Backward” or “Lack/Limited Opportunities”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 16/21	76%	All graduates in the UK 32/39	82%
All graduates from the Centre 18/24	75%	All Internal migrants 10/24	41%
All graduates from the South 23/40	57%	All immobile graduates 14/21	66%
Males 34/41	82%		
Females 26/42	61%		

Codes used: “View of Italy- Regional Differences” or “View of Italy- South and North Divide” or “South-Lack of Resources” or “South-No Job Opportunities” or “South-Backwards” or “South - Bad Working Conditions”

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 13/21	61%	All graduates in the UK 24/39 of which 9 are from the south; 10 are from the north; 5 are from the centre.	61%
All graduates from the Centre 8/24	33%	All Internal migrants 18/24	75%
All graduates from the South 32/40	80%	All immobile graduates 12/21	57%

Code used: “Future - UK or Abroad”

Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates in the UK 21/39	53%
All Internal migrants 0/24	0%
All immobile graduates 1/21	4%

APPENDIX F

EXAMPLES OF QUERY TOOL ANALYSIS USING “FAMILIES OF CODES”

IN ATLAS.TI

FAMILY CODE used- **“SOUTH NEGATIVE TRAITS”** - Including Codes: **“South-Lack of Resources”**; **“South- Backward”**; **“South-Bad Working Condition”**; **“South-Clientelism/Raccomandazioni”** and **“South- No Job Opportunities”**

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 1/21	4%	All graduates in the UK 8/39	20%
All graduates from the Centre 0/24	0%	All Internal migrants 12/24	50%
All graduates from the South 27/24	67%	All immobile graduates 7/21	30%
Males 14/41	34%		
Females 12/42	28%		

FAMILY CODE used – **“IDEOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS”** - including codes: **“Reason to Migrate- Disappointment about Italy”**; **“Reason to Migrate -Moral Dissonance with Italy and/or Hometown”**; **“Reason to Migrate - Different Mentalità”** and **“Reason to Migrate - Tired/Bored of Italy”**

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 10/21	47%	All graduates in the UK 22/39	56%
All graduates from the Centre 8/24	33%	All Internal migrants 7/24	29%
All graduates from the South 15/40	37%	All immobile graduates 4/21	19%
Males 18/41	43%		
Females 14/42	33%		

FAMILY code used – **“REASON TO MIGRATE- JOB RELATED MOTIVATIONS”**- including codes: **“Reason to Migrate- to Pursue the Desired Job/Career”**; **“Reason to Migrate- No Career Opportunity in Italy”**; **“Reason to Migrate- to Get a Stable Job”** and **“Work as the Main Reason to Migrate”**

Respondents’ demographic characteristics	Recurrences	Categories of Migrants	Recurrences
All graduates from the North 15/21	71%	All graduates in the UK 26/39	66%
All graduates from the Centre 17/24	70%	All Internal migrants 21/24	87%
All graduates from the South 30/40	75%	All immobile graduates 14/21	66%
Males 33/41	80%		
Females 27/42	64%		

APPENDIX G**CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS**

NAME OF STUDENT/RESEARCHER: Francesca Conti

NAME(S) OF SUPERVISOR(S): Dr. Ruth Woodfield, Prof. Russell King

INSTITUTION: Sussex University, Sociology Department

PROJECT TITLE: **Leaving or Staying - An Analysis of Italian Graduate Migratory Patterns**

Participant's Agreement:

I agree to take part in the above research project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I may keep for my records.

I understand the intent and purpose of this research. I am aware the data will be used for a doctoral thesis. I have the right to comment on the interview transcription before the thesis gets completed. I grant permission for the use of this information.

I understand that agreeing to take part in this research project means that I am willing to:

- be interviewed by the researcher
- allow the interview to be audio taped and transcribed

Data Protection

This information will be held and processed for the following purpose(s):

- DPhil thesis and relative academic papers on Italian graduate migration patterns.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published.

I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the research.

Withdrawal from study

I understand that my participation is voluntary; that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project.

Name:(please print)

Signature:

Date: