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## CHAPTER 4 INTERNATIONAL MIGRATIONS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE (ITALY AND PORTUGAL): THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND METHODS OF INQUIRY

**Fortunata Piselli**  
**University of Trento, Italy**

The aim of this paper is to present and discuss the theoretical paradigms that have guided studies of migratory movements in southern Europe. I shall concentrate on international emigration since the second half of the last century until the present-day in two countries: Italy and Portugal. I shall not consider all the studies conducted on migratory movements (even the briefest survey of these would require an enormous bibliography), only those most relevant to the argument that I wish to develop.

My intention here is to outline the two most important traditions of research on migratory movements--historico-comparative quantitative study, and case studies--in order to discuss their validity and shortcomings and to examine their future prospects.

The central thesis of the survey that follows is that all too frequently studies of migratory movements, rather than constructing models of concrete behaviour, proceed by classifying data and documents which fail to capture the economic-social logics of migrations and at most propose typologies and purely descriptive images.

### Quantitative Historical-Comparative Analyses

#### *Research Agendas*

These analyses of emigration--historical, statistical-demographic, economic and sociological--mostly reconstruct the phenomenon from the quantitative point of view and attempt to draw syntheses and comparisons. They analyze the evolution and trend of emigration: the size of migratory flows and their destinations, novelties and continuities with respect to previous historical periods, and so on. They reveal a number of waves and directions of emigration which, save for some understandable differences, are shared by both Italy and Portugal (1): (i) the long-period and long-distance emigration to the Americas from the mid-1800s until the Second World War which was interrupted by the conflict and then resumed until the 1950s; (ii) medium and short-range emigration to the countries of Western Europe during the 1960s

and early 1970s; (iii) the fall-off and then cessation of emigration after the mid-1970s (in concomitance with the world economic crisis and, in Portugal, with the revolution of 25 April 1974), again mainly to the countries of Western Europe but counter-balanced and often outstripped by emigration in the reverse direction; (iv) the resurgence, albeit moderate, of migratory flows towards Western Europe and new destinations in the Arab countries, and especially the onset of flows of immigration.

Besides the periodization and trajectories of migration, these studies examine the trend and magnitude of regular and clandestine flows, the socio-demographic characteristics of emigrants, family patterns, the demographic consequences in the zones of exodus (senilization, femalization, etc.). They study the historical development of the migratory area, the occupational structure of the populations in the areas of emigration and immigration, the distribution of losses and gains, that is, inward and outward movements in the various areas.

Following this line of inquiry, large-scale socio-psychological surveys have examined the problem of the insertion and integration of emigrants in their new socio-political contexts. Given the scale of such inquiry, researchers make use of accurate sampling procedures and employ quantitative techniques based on questionnaires. Economists are also interested in the quantitative aspects of migration, paying particular attention to the relationship between emigration and economic development. That is to say, they study emigration in relation to the processes of industrialization, urbanization and the depopulation of rural and mountain areas. They examine the role of remittances by emigrants in the country's overall balance of payments, highlighting the contribution they make to family incomes in the zones of exodus. They study the consequences of emigration on patterns of culture and consumption, as well as its effects on the labour market and the class structure in the areas of both departure and arrival, in order to identify the implications of emigration for the dynamics and direction of economic development. The research agendas outlined above frequently overlap.

#### *Theoretical Approaches*

Until the 1970s, these studies were oriented by two principal theoretical paradigms: a) the neoclassical theory of push-pull, which treated migratory movements as responses to forces of propulsion and attraction (push-pull) in the countries of departure and arrival, respectively; b) the approach adopted by Marxists and dependency theorists, who considered emigration to be a consequence of the inequalities and mechanisms of the capitalist system. More recently, prompted principally by changes in migratory flows, new interpretative models have revised and elaborated these two approaches. I shall examine these new models in some detail, although it should be borne

in mind that it is not always possible to distinguish the approach used with any degree of certainty, because elements from one theory often merge with elements from another.

(a) *Push-pull theory*: Scholars working within the neoclassical framework (mainly economists)—in the wake of late-nineteenth-century liberals—consider migratory movements to be responses to push and pull forces in both the countries of their origin and destination; that is, they describe migratory processes as spontaneous self-regulated movements. They postulate that the comparative advantages offered by the countries of immigration are a necessary and sufficient condition for the onset and persistence of migratory movements. Emigrants are economically-rational decision-makers who seek to maximize their chances of economic success and therefore assess the costs and benefits of the migratory enterprise; that is, they weigh the comparative advantages of the society of arrival against those of the society of departure. Emigration is therefore the outcome of voluntary individual choices made in response to disequilibria in the regional distribution of social and economic opportunities. Emigration is a demographic, economic and financial adjustment device which fosters internal stability: it alleviates demographic pressure and reduces structural unemployment, and thanks to remittances by emigrants has positive effects on the balance of payments and on national savings (in Italy, this line of argument was developed by the nineteenth-century liberals, the ruling class in the fascist period, the journal *Nord e Sud* until the 1950s; in Portugal, again by the liberals of the last century, and then by Gentil da Silva (1969), Evangelista (1971), and Sousa Ferreira (1976).

(b) *Marxists and dependency theorists*—whose theoretical influence was paramount throughout the 1970s and early 1980s—regarded emigration as enforced and dictated by the inner inequalities of the capitalist system. Emigration is tied to the capitalist economy in which labour is imported and exported like any other commodity and exchanged and exploited in the international market. Emigration is a population transfer from the peripheral countries to the central countries of the capitalist system which is determined and regulated by the latter according to their requirements (Navarro 1973; Almeida-Barreto 1974; Cinanni 1975; Anido-Freire 1978). Emigration is not a free choice but is driven by economic necessity. When an individual decides to emigrate, he or she does so for reasons of hunger, oppression and lack of security (Almeida Barreto 1974; Cinanni 1975; Sori 1979; Ascoli 1979; Reyneri 1979; Alpalhão 1980). Thus the correlation is established between emigration and misery, between emigration and proletarianization.

The study of emigration necessarily involves an analysis of the socio-economic structure of the countries of departure (economic and social backwardness; failure to achieve industrial development; pre-capitalist social relationships; economic dualism; high population density; structural

unemployment or under-employment in rural areas; etc.). Besides the causes of emigration, its effects have also been analyzed in demographic and economic terms: population decrease, low marriage rate, femalization, stagnation of rural areas, decline in skilled labour, inflation and its effects on the cost of living, etc. The effects of emigration on the countries of destination are very different. These can indiscriminately exploit selected labour without having to sustain the costs of reproduction. Thanks to immigration these countries can solve the problem of a shortage of manpower and increase their production potential; they can curb pay rises and curtail inflation; and so on. For their part, the immigrant workers who make such a major contribution to the economic growth of the host country experience discrimination and socio-economic marginalization/ghettoization (Trinidade 1973; Alpalhão 1980; Arroiteia 1984).

The studies just considered have certainly increased our conceptual understanding of migration. They have been able to give an idea of the overall dimensions of the phenomenon and of the problems connected with it, but they suffer from a number of shortcomings which may provoke a reading which is not just partial but indeed distorted of the economic-social logics of migratory movements. Neoclassical studies restrict themselves to a wholly economic explanation and hypothesize the absolute rationality of actors, which is highly dubious. On the other hand, in explaining migratory movements, dependency theorists rely exclusively on general interpretative models which emphasise external factors and entirely ignore the context of reference, social practices and the role of their protagonists. Sociological inquiries treat the behaviour of migrants as the result of the shared attributes of individuals. Quantitative analyses, historical and demographic, which draw on secondary statistical sources, seek to measure the magnitude of emigration and its variability over time in order to provide some sort of objective and rigorous description of the phenomenon as a whole. These analyses are based on the assumption that only what is measurable, only what can be measured in percentage ratios and in somehow 'photographable' states and conditions, can be regarded as scientific. However, because they ignore strategies and reference contexts, these studies are unable to explain local persistence and diversities, different responses to the same external stimuli, the variability of social practices, and deviations from the models proposed. They introduce errors of interpretation which are not immediately obvious; they construct causal chains which may prove to be arbitrary; they proceed by generalizations which may turn out to be entirely unfounded. Consider, for example, the correlation established between emigration and underdevelopment, or between emigration and proletarianization, or the generalizations on the behaviour of ethnic groups.

(c) *Revision of classical theories and the systemic approach:* In recent years the explanatory paradigms of push-pull and dependency theorists have been drastically revised. A growing number of scholars have found them

inadequate in explanation of the complexity of the migratory phenomenon, in particular the characteristics and novel features of the migratory trends that have emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. These trends display features very different from previous migratory patterns: after the fall-off of the 1970s, migratory flows towards Europe have resumed, albeit to a moderate extent, and flows of temporary and clandestine emigration have increased. Most significant, however, is the fact that the countries that traditionally exported labour, like Italy and Portugal, have become the target of intense immigratory flows.

Scholars have accordingly proposed new explanatory paradigms which, influenced by dependency and world-system theorists, adopt a systemic approach to migration. They emphasise previously neglected aspects of the migratory process, such as the interdependencies and economic and political ties between the countries of departure and arrival; in particular:

- i. the importance of direct recruitment by the immigration countries in activating and encouraging first migratory flows (Baganha 1990);
- ii. the importance of the policies pursued at either end of the migratory trajectory (i.e. in the countries of departure and arrival) in determining the volume and characteristics of migratory flows (Stahl 1982; Baganha 1990; Chiesi-Regalia-Regini 1995);
- iii. changes in the internal and external political situation (Alpalhão 1980; Stahl 1982; Reyneri 1996);
- iv. the crucial role of migratory chains - the migratory network - in sustaining flows once they have been activated (Silva Santos 1977; Reyneri 1979; Penido Monteiro 1985; Baganha 1990).

These works have shed considerable light on the phenomenon of migration, overcoming the rigidities of previous interpretative schemes and introducing important but previously neglected aspects into analysis. And yet, apart from some exceptions (e.g. Baganha 1990), these studies often display the same shortcomings as their predecessors. They continue to simplify the reference context, to accumulate information and to propose typologies (rather than construct models) which are added to the others. Nevertheless this is certainly the route to follow: as a phenomenon which connects the points of departure and arrival, emigration must necessarily be studied in systemic terms, but it cannot be isolated from its context. This is demonstrated by the fact that models of concrete migratory behaviours have been proposed by studies which did not take emigration (or only emigration) as their specific subject of analysis, but rather the formation and evolution of sub-regional systems and their processes of peripheral incorporation (Arrighi-Piselli 1987).

### Case-Studies

Falling under the heading of "case-studies" are investigations which differ greatly in terms of their theoretical perspectives and areas of inquiry. I shall concentrate on community studies. Three lines of inquiry can be broadly identified, each of them relating to different traditions or schools:

1. The *Marxian paradigm*, which I delineated earlier at the macro level, is reformulated at the micro level. These studies concentrate on social and economic conditionings which, in the community of departure, induce emigration, while also examining the exploitation and marginalization suffered by immigrants in the countries of immigration (this being the line pursued by the community studies of the 1970s and early 1980s).

2. *French structuralism* provides the setting for analyses which seek to identify the rules and laws that govern exchanges and kinship structures over time and which attempt to reconstruct the detailed and complex normative framework that determines behaviour and therefore the decision to emigrate. These studies emphasise emigration as a mechanism of demographic re-equilibrium: they set out to identify the social forces that influence the decision to emigrate, considering emigration to be a dependent variable, the result of various socio-economic structures, of various forms of landownership and of devolution practices, or of different systems of kinship and organization of households. By concentrating on structure, these studies run the risk of functionalistically heightening the rigidity of their interpretative schemes (this is the line of inquiry pursued by historical-demographic studies).

3. *Anglo-Saxon anthropology* is the direct referent of those who study emigration in terms of relational and ecological context using an anthropological approach (Piselli 1981; Monteiro 1985; Brettell 1986; Scartezzini-Guidi-Zaccaria 1994, etc.). Scholars working within this framework have analyzed emigration in situational and dynamic terms by examining life-histories, trajectories and genealogies, and the migratory dynamics that involve the emigrant's kin in broad strategies of survival and social mobility. They have set renewed value on subjective factors and on the dual character of emigration as simultaneously the cause and effect of various forms of demographic and social behaviour (Brettell 1986). They have reconstructed the framework of rules and social practices in which individuals and families operate without relying exclusively on generic external causes unable to explain local differences and the heterogeneity of results.

Whereas the structuralist-based line of inquiry emphasises the rules and the mechanisms that restore demographic equilibrium, the anthropological approach stresses strategies and the manipulation of norms in order to highlight the contradictions between norms and actual behaviour and the actual effect of social constraints on individual choices, the aim being also to study their changes over time. In short, these studies have restricted the scale

of observation in order to introduce complexity, thereby to verify the extent to which the interpretative models proposed are generalizable and to restore an active role in promoting and managing change to the actors concerned.

The analytical productiveness of the case-study in its Anglo-Saxon version is amply confirmed by the results. Some of these results have altered certain aspects of the model constructed to describe and interpret emigration, showing that many of the current hypotheses on emigration are unfounded, or else sharpening their focus. I cite an example taken from my research on emigration in a community of the Italian Mezzogiorno (Piselli 1981). A widely-held view in the literature is that there is a close connection between emigration and proletarianization. The former, it is argued, is a consequence of the alienation of producers from the means of production and in its turn exacerbates such alienation. My research (which was subsequently confirmed by studies conducted in other settings (Barazzatti 1989, Scartezzini-Guidi-Zaccaria 1994)) showed that this hypothesis does not have the general validity sometimes attributed to it. Indeed, as regards long-distance (overseas) emigration, which predominated until the Second World War, not only is the connection dubious, but if some correlation is discernible, it is a negative one.

Overseas emigration, in fact, due to its high costs and risks, was a major undertaking and therefore only involved those able to sustain such costs and risks: the intermediate strata of the population by age and social condition; that is those who had reached majority or who were about to do so — peasants, small farmers, artisans, small businessmen and tradesmen. Kinship structures offered the means and the incentives to emigrate. Only a sufficiently cohesive and extensive kinship group could mobilize both the material resources required to pay for the emigrant's journey and the assistance necessary to integrate him/her in the place of immigration and to support his/her family, which was normally left behind for a relatively long period of time in the country of origin.

It was from the end of the 1950s onwards that proletarianization, past and present, began to fuel emigration to a significant extent. Emigration was by now mainly medium-to-short-term and over medium-short distances to the industrial cities of northern Italy and western Europe (Germany and Switzerland in particular). Because the costs and risks had greatly diminished compared with overseas migration, it was now available to everybody: to proletarians as much as small property-owners, to offspring as much as their parents. And, given the characteristics of demand for immigrant labour by the industrial centres, in this phase emigration principally involved the younger and more proletarianized components of the labour force (2).

This example shows that this is not solely an evident problem of contextualization; it is also one of explanation and meaning. Identical formal indicators conceal completely different underlying patterns; the mechanisms that engender and sustain emigration change over time in relation to a

complex set of economic, political and social variables. And such change cannot be explained solely in terms of external causes without taking account of the active role of the social actor's adaptation, responses and choices.

Despite their important contribution to understanding of migration, case-studies, too, have their shortcomings. They introduce distortions which do not emerge immediately and may produce errors of interpretation. The size of the community is taken for granted, for example, or established a priori; an operation which is reductive because it is extremely difficult to define the boundaries of a community. Moreover the social complexity that case-studies have the merit of highlighting is not always, or only partially, formalized.

#### *The Network Approach*

One way to overcome these limitations is to employ network analysis. Studies that have used this approach seek to introduce complexity, by dint of ever-increasing realism, and to use mathematical tools to achieve rigorous formalization. It is true that the concept and image of 'social network' have oriented numerous studies on emigration (introducing, wrongly, the concept of 'migratory chains' as a corrective to the classical theories); but their use has been almost entirely metaphorical. That is to say, no specification has been given to the morphological and interactional features of social networks, and no attempt has been made to set them in relation to the behaviour of the individuals at the centre of them. In other words, no precise and restricted use has been made of statistical and mathematical methods. The few important studies of migratory movements to have applied network analysis have been conducted in other countries (Grieco 1987; Werbner 1990), but some results produced in Italy are highly promising (Decimo 1994).

Social network scholars have anchored their analysis on the individual as the hub of a network of multiple relationships, as the indispensable unit of analysis of a complex society characterized by heterogeneity, conflict and fluidity. The emigrant moves among different worlds which straddle different social and territorial ambits, in a dimension comprising a plurality of languages and meanings. The emigrant has several identities and acts for multiple purposes. The network proves to be an analytical tool particularly able to grasp this fluid and constantly evolving reality, to construct a process-based dynamic explanation of emigration. It is able to depict the negotiative and conflictual nature of social relations and to define people's ideal frames of reference and their multiple, ambiguous and contradictory relationships with the environment.

Studies applying the concept of network in analysis of emigration have concentrated on egocentric (personal) networks. Starting from focal individuals, they have reconstructed the trajectories, the migratory routes, the dynamics of choice from the place of departure to that of arrival, linking them

to occupational groups and to the broader spectrum of a person's social relationships and options. They have plotted the formation of new groups and described the morphology of the networks that, through continuities and cleavages, form in the workplace, in cities, in neighbourhoods; they have followed situations of crisis and conflict which have redrawn the map of social relations.

These studies therefore depict a complexity of choices and relations which breaks down the unity of apparently monolithic elements and which corrects notions which constituted the central pillars of previous models. For example, now superseded is the concept of the geographical community of departure, which has been replaced by that of the area of real (not postulated) solidarity from which the emigrant departs. The space of departure or arrival is not taken for granted but becomes the object of analysis in order to establish the effective rootedness/rootlessness of emigrants. Exploration is conducted of the discontinuities in the process of identity construction; the inter-relations among social spheres, among production sectors, institutions, territory and ethnic groups, communication networks and the cultural contents exchanged.

It is evident that the theoretical and methodological picture that emerges from these studies is very different from that expressed by the dominant paradigms of American structuralism, which has reformulated descriptions of the social world in 'relational' terms in order to describe morphology and structure in synchronic terms. The theoretical and methodological referent is once again Anglo-Saxon anthropology, in particular the Manchester School (Mitchell 1969; Boissevain and Mitchell 1973). The concept of network--as applied by Manchester--is a methodological tool with which to observe the complexity and richness of the links and dynamics of interaction, the processes whereby social forms and spaces are constructed, from a situational and diachronic point of view, and from within an interpretative framework which postulates social change as a process of differentiation and diversification and emphasises discontinuity and difference in history. The task of the researcher, therefore, is not to study the relations among the units of the social system and fix them in static models, but to analyze processes, the individual dynamics of interaction, the movements of the social system, its mechanisms of change.

By way of a brief conclusion, those studies that have applied the network approach to migratory movements, although they are still few in number, propose a new method of analysis which may aid understanding of the dynamics and real conditions of choices and strategies and thereby make a contribution of extreme importance to theoretical debate on migration.

#### **Notes**

- (1) In the case of Portugal, analysis is complicated by the difficulty of distinguishing analytically between colonists and emigrants, between colonizing emigration and

emigration proper, two phenomena that have always coexisted. Whereas the emigration tied to colonization of past centuries signaled Portugal's economic power, the emigration of recent decades has resulted from the economic weakness of a country unable to keep pace with the economic development of the advanced countries of Western Europe (Serrão 1982)

(2) Nevertheless certain interpretative schemes--like the connection between emigration and poverty, between emigration and proletarianization--still persist in recent studies. For example, the fact that the majority of non-EU immigrants in Italy are well-educated, with previous professional experience, with economic, relational, psychological, resources is often treated as being a new and specific feature (Reyneri 1996).

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## CHAPTER 5 ON LINKAGES BETWEEN URBANISM AND URBAN RESTRUCTURING IN MEDITERRANEAN EUROPE

Lila Leontidou  
University of the Aegean, Lesvos, Greece

"...It was a past that changed gradually as he advanced on his journey, because the traveler's past changes according to the route he has followed: not the immediate past, that is, to which each day that goes by adds a day, but the more remote past. Arriving at each new city, the traveler finds again a past of his that he did not know he had: the foreignness of what you no longer are or no longer possess lies in wait for you in foreign, unpossessed places".  
Italo Calvino (1974, pp.28-9)

Among the narratives structuring our understanding of cities and urban life, that of the industrial revolution is dominant. Notions of "tradition" and "modernity" have been constructed on its basis, which are recently intercepted by the third pole of postmodernity (Leontidou 1993; 1996). Southern urban development can no longer be explained away as "retarded", as in Anglo-centered convergence theories. These took for granted that industrialisation leads urban restructuring. In the linear urban development models which crushed alternative trajectories of development, such as "urban life cycle" models (Hall and Hay 1980, van den Berg et al. 1982, Cheshire and Hay 1989), it is still claimed that urbanization is "determined" by industrialisation and counter-urbanization is linked with de-industrialisation. Cities presenting no apparent linkages are considered underdeveloped, precapitalist or, more strongly, parasitic or overurbanized.

Such Anglo-American interpretations or, rather, postulates, also affect other world regions besides Third World cities: Mediterranean Europe is among these, where urban restructuring has not been centered on the industrial revolution and economically-motivated urban growth. This paper will argue the theme of culture, and more particularly urbanism as a major force in urban restructuring. The central role of the city in Mediterranean cultural traditions will be portrayed, starting from the very word for the experience of urbanization in Greek: *astyfilia*, which means, literally, "friendliness to the city".

We will abandon the industrialisation narrative, and seek the roots of urban restructuring in the culture of urbanism. It is as if rediscovering a past that these cities did not know they had, as it was obscured by Anglo-American stereotypes. Mediterranean cultures were always based on cities and towns, from ages lost in prehistory, until our days. Instead of dual categories such as