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Research Project

“Children of Italian migrants in postwar Turin and Marseille: a comparison on gender inequalities between internal migration and migration abroad

Integration processes of migrants and their children in countries of destination are at the focus of interest of many scholars. One of the most fruitful lines of research has been the comparison of the occupational and educational outcomes of the second generations of migrants in different contexts (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, Alba and Waters 2011, Kasinitz et alii 2008, Crul et alii 2012, Tribalat 1995, Attias-Donfut et Wolff 2009). These studies have elaborated various hypothesis in order to explain the differences in social paths based on national origins and within national (ethnic) groups, and based on gender, as far as educational careers are concerned (in the last decades, girls have systematically obtained better results in school than boys, as it is the case for natives: Feliciano and Rumbaut 2005, Duru-Bellat 2004).

Among the different national groups that have been studied in France, Italians represent the most important group of migrants in the whole country (Noiriel 2006). Historians agree in considering that their integration in the host society has on the whole been a success, which became evident in the second half of the twentieth century (Blanc Chaléard 2003).

A recent study (Impicciatore 2005), based on a considerable database (Ined 1999), analysed the educational attainments of the children of Italian migrants in France: the generations born after 1950 appear to have reached on average good educational outcomes, despite some differences between different areas of the country.

After the Second World War, during the 1950s and the 1960s, with the upturn of the migratory flows from Italy towards France (Rinauro 2009) the migrant sending areas – traditionally Northern and Central regions – change. Those of Southern Italy prevail.

During the same years, massive internal migration streams develop from these regions to the North-West, the core of the “Italian economic miracle”. Turin and its surrounding areas are one of the main destinations (Ramella 2003, Badino 2008). These internal migratory flows, like the ones headed towards France from the same regions, are mainly represented by low qualified workers with a low grade of education.

An aspect of this extremely significant phenomenon of internal migration, that has been little explored so far, is represented by the patterns of occupational and social mobility of the second generations born between the 1950s and the 1960s in the areas where parents had migrated: children of internal migrants seem to have realised in general lower educational (therefore occupational) achievements compared to their peers who grew up and attended school in France. The material that I collected from 2010 to 2012 in the framework of a wide interuniversity research on second generations in Turin¹ and which I published in a recent book (Badino 2012) show a widespread premature interruption of education, as well as a premature entrance in the labour market, that led the children of Southern migrants to perform manual labour, reproducing in this way the occupational trajectories of their parents.

Therefore, the comparison between the second generations of Southern Italian migrants in France and of internal migrants from the same regions in Italy would shed light on a supposedly paradoxical situation. The chances of success would be higher in foreign rather than domestic migration.

My research proposal aims at studying in a comparative perspective the ways gender inequalities are generated among children of migrants and hence at exploring the factors, linked to migration, that contribute to diversify paths of integration of daughters and sons (Green 2002). I will collect information and data on the careers in school and work of the children of Southern Italian migrants that arrived in the Fifties and Sixties in Marseille (Fournier et Mazzella 2004, Bordigoni 1988, Sirna 2007) - one of the main destinations of the emigration from Italy to France in modern times (Témime 1989-91) – and I will compare

¹ The research has been achieved into the *SecondGen* project (Second generations: migration processes and mechanisms of integration among foreigners and Italians (1950-2010) <http://secondgen.rs.unipmn.it>), which aimed at comparing international and regional migration, coordinated by Professor Michael Eve, involving various departments of University of Turin and University of Piemonte Orientale .

them with the results from my previous research on children of Southern Italian workers, who emigrated to Turin in the same period.

One of the main results of my research in Turin showed significant differences between females and males of second-generation migrants in their educational and working careers. In fact, the social immobility prevailing among the children of Southern immigrants in Turin, which is a consequence of a low grade of education, partially changes with a comparison between males and females. Indeed, in a higher percentage compared to their brothers, the daughters of Southern families in Turin achieved higher levels of education and accessed non-manual occupations (Badino 2012). My research aims to investigate whether the gender differences that emerged in the internal migration towards Turin are also present (or not, and why) in the migration from the same regions towards Marseille.

The comparison between migrants within the country of origin and abroad offers the opportunity to analyse – in very different contexts in terms of institutional profile, welfare policies and educational systems – their family trajectories in the receiving local society focusing on factors other than those of cultural difference and of national origin (Ramella 2013). The migrant population background is the same, but the cultural distance between the immigrants and the population of the receiving society clearly varies considerably from migration abroad to internal migration. This comparison, therefore, encourages the adoption of a research perspective that is not the prevailing perspective in the studies on migrations, which puts cultural difference as the central issue.

My hypothesis is that migration has some specific effects on the reorganisation and on the local development of migrants' social networks, because it implies an uprooting. The social relationships shaped by migrants in the receiving society have an essential influence not only on their own social trajectories, but also on the ones of their children, downward and upward (Eve 2010). At the core of my analysis there are, therefore, the **social mechanisms** connected to migration in itself, which can be found with the same peculiarities in culturally, socially, economically and institutionally different receiving societies. These mechanisms perform a crucial task in affecting the social paths. That is the reason why I expect their analysis to give a contribution to explain them and their differences. The literature shows that migration is a long-term process, which affects not only the lives of migrants

themselves, but also the lives of their children, their educational and occupational careers (Kasinitz et alii 2008).

The analysis of the forms and composition of the **social networks** will be one of the main aspects of the research. As is known, quantitative sources like censuses do not provide any information about networks. Therefore, much time and energy will be devoted to in-depth interviews.

Particular attention will be placed on the **local social contexts** in which social ties are shaped by migrants and their children: neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, specific urban areas. It is important to note that the family network affects those of the second generations and that the role of friends and peer groups is crucial in orienting young boys and girls in one direction or another, at school and at work.

METHODOLOGY

The combination between qualitative material (in-depth interviews), quantitative data, and an **inter-disciplinary approach** will be the methodological basis of the research. On one hand, indeed, the historical research needs to cross different kinds of sources, which provide different kind of information, to analyse contexts and processes. On the other hand, as the *SecondGen* research carried out in Turin has proved, it is useful to adopt, at the same time, diversified approaches to the study of social paths and migrations (besides the historical, sociological and anthropological ones), able to show different aspects and to propose different interpretations.

Lastly, it is important to highlight the fact that the research intends to rigorously respect the **privacy of the individuals**: the personal data collected in all the steps of the research will be rigorously treated anonymously.

Researches **comparing internal migration and international migration** are rare. Comparison on paths and processes of integration via networks among mass movements of populations sharing the same origins inside and outside national borders has not drawn the attention of scholars so far. The case of second generations of Italian migrants coming from the same regions internally and abroad appears to be highly suitable to explore this perspective of research.

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TIME FRAME AND WORK PLAN

The project will last 12 months and will be divided into 3 work packages: reconstruction of the context (WP1), gathering and analysis of school records (WP2), gathering and analysis of the interviews (WP3).

Work Package 1: reconstruction of the context (2 months)

OBJECTIVE: my aim is to collect data and information about the urban society of post-war Marseille and the wave of Italian immigration in this period, in the wider context of migration flows from other countries.

DESCRIPTION: I will examine some of the main historical works and the research in social sciences about the main aspects of Italian immigration in France and in Marseille in the post-war period, and of the economic, social and institutional context of the receiving national and local society.

Work Package 2: records of schools (4 months)

DESCRIPTION: I will explore the archives of primary and secondary schools of two of Marseille's working-class districts with a significant presence of Southern Italian immigrants. I will collect systematic data on female and male students of some sample classes in the years between 1950 and 1970, using the *fiches d'inscription* stored in the archives: sex, parents' job, age at the moment of enrolment (a very important factor, indicative of the repeated years), notes on educational efficiency, besides all the materials produced by teachers. The Italian students will be compared with those of North African origins and with the *Français de souche*. Furthermore, I will follow the educational *cursus* of a sample of Italian immigrants' daughters and sons in the transition from primary to secondary school, and from secondary to high school (also including cases of drop-out). The personal data collected will be rigorously treated anonymously.

OBJECTIVE: My aim is to investigate the educational careers of Italian immigrants' daughters and sons residing in working-class districts of Marseille in the post-war period in order to

compare differences and similarities with the second generation of Italian Southern immigrants in Turin.

Work Package 3: the interviews (6 months)

OBJECTIVES: my aim is to collect and analyse family histories of migration and integration in the Marseille area. To this end, I will investigate the processes whereby Italian immigrant parents and children shape their social networks in the place of arrival; the social trajectories of parents and paths of integration of daughters and sons in the local labour market. The purpose is to identify elements related to the migration process, which could be used to understand the paths of social mobility (or immobility) of the sons and daughters of Southern Italian migrants in Marseille. I will compare these informations with the results of my previous research on Turin.

DESCRIPTION: I will collect approximately 35 in-depth semi-structured interviews to people born or growing up in Marseille from immigrant parents around the 1960s (25 to women and 10 to men).

The work will start with the drafting of the in-depth interview schedule. Then, I will create my sample and make contacts in order to interview persons who were born in Marseille from Southern Italian immigrant parents, or who arrived as children between the 1950s and 1970s. While creating the samples for the interviews, I will try to avoid the “snowball method”. Therefore, I will also interview people who are not part of the same social network, and I will try not to focus my analysis on a too specific context, which would cause significant distortions. Test interviews will be carried out and the interview guide adjusted accordingly. The interviews will be analysed in combination with the data gathered in WP2.

WP3 will investigate themes emerging from the interviews conducted with Southern Italian immigrants in Turin and their children, which I carried out in my previous research (about 100 interviews with first generation immigrants and 40 interviews with members of the second generation, mainly women), in order to explore differences and similarities thoroughly.

A useful source that will help to retrace the mechanisms of integration of the parents' generation, is to be found in the interviews filed at the MMSH Phonotèque (Phonotèque de la Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l'homme, *Aix-en-Provence*): a full archive of oral

sources in which depositions of Italian immigrants who arrived in Marseille in the post-war period can be found.

In order to investigate gender inequalities the objectives of the interviews are:

- An understanding of the mechanisms underlying women's entry into the labour market (perhaps in the informal sector). This issue is also important for the comparison with internal migration in Turin. In Turin, in the 1960s and 1970s, immigrant women were employed mainly in unqualified service jobs, often without a regular contract. There is evidence that these jobs were attractive because of the flexibility of the hours required. The research will try to clarify the connection with migration trajectories, trying to understand exactly why this kind of phenomenon should be recurrent. The interviews will try to show the relationship between various factors which affected the labour market histories of migrants and migrants' daughters: education, age at marriage, age at birth of first or subsequent children, responsibilities for housework and childcare, presence or absence of parents to provide childcare, etc.

- A better understanding of women's access to the labour market, and the difference between women arriving before their husbands and those arriving to join them (family reunification). The relatively low rates of (formal) participation in the labour market found in many situations of migration are also true in the case of waves of Italian immigrants in Marseille. It is expected that the interviews will provide evidence of the role played by social networks in the process of searching for a job.

During my research on Turin, it emerged that an important role was performed by elder sisters, even though they were still children, in the care of the house and in taking care of younger brothers: delegating care to daughters allowed immigrant mothers to have a job outside the home environment. This is a recurring factor in many migrations, and the research on Marseille will try to observe if and how this happened, in that specific migratory context, and which consequences it had on the educational paths of the daughters. Comparing the results with those which emerged from my research on Turin, and from research on international migrations, I will investigate deeply the differences of gender in relation to school: aspirations, gratifications, personal plans, or reactions of rejection, and the desire to find personal fulfilment in one area rather than another (e.g. in the labour

market). From my research on Turin, and from research carried out on North African immigrants' children coming from French urban working-class neighbourhoods, for the boys street culture seems to have been important, a factor which seems to lead to early school leaving and entry into manual work. Immigrants' daughters in Turin and North African girls observed in France seem to mostly stay away from street culture, because their families exerted more control over them (recent immigration tends to increase parents' sense of insecurity). This factor seems to foster in girls a greater attachment to the school and greater investment in gratifications deriving from educational profit. It will be useful to verify if a mechanism of this kind is found in second generations of Italian immigrant girls in Marseille. The overall aim of the research is to understand how family trajectories in migration have long-term consequences. Understanding the role played by women in influencing the social paths of their family and children is an essential part of the description and of the identification of sociologically significant differences within female migration.

Expected results include: a better understanding, via exploration not possible through quantitative or archive material, of the migration paths, and the trajectories in the labour market, of the families involved in migration who have profound effects on daughters' and sons' social destinies; the interviews with second generation immigrants from South of Italy will highlight the influence exerted by the local social environment in which they grew up on the educational and occupational choices of females and males. To this end, it will be useful to analyse the level of attachment to the urban working-class neighbourhood/s where they have lived. I can evaluate this attachment especially through the observation of "strong" social relationships built on site. In-depth information on the entry into the labour market will also be collected, on the reasons for the decision to leave school early or stay on. Throughout, the focus is on the consequences which the specific situation of parents' integration into their labour market, neighbourhood etc. has on children's trajectories and especially of the daughters.

Finally, I will try to verify if and how families have "orientated" in different ways the educational and professional choices of daughters and sons. Concerning females, it will be important to analyse how significant is considered to be the mothers' experience, especially

for decisions regarding their working life. Is the maternal model of worker/housewife to be imitated or rejected?

The final results of the research carried on in Marseille will be publicised inside the scientific community through scientific publications on international journals and through a **book**, which shall gather all the results of the research and of the comparison with the case of Turin.