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Social Transformation, Resistance and Migration in the Italian Peninsula over the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

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Abstract

This paper studies the evolution of internal and international migration in Italy over the mid-nineteenth to the late-twentieth centuries. Notwithstanding Italy's large international emigration flows, most Italian migration has been inter-regional, with rural-rural, rural-urban and urban-urban migration systems expanding in geographical scope and complexity over time. This paper analyses the interplay between internal and international migration, revealing four distinct patterns of (i) regions where internal migration always dominated and that turned into the destinations of internal migrants in the early-nineteenth century; (ii) regions that were initially characterised by strong international emigration before evolving into important destinations for internal migrants, (iii) regions that transitioned gradually from sources of to destinations for international and internal migrants and (iv) regions that largely remained sources of international and internal migration. Overall, these patterns reflect Italy's social transformation from a feudal system in agricultural production to a modern welfare state with an industrial economy, a transformation which affected regions in strikingly different ways. More specifically, these ways are linked to state (re)formation, urbanisation, the rise of agricultural and industrial capitalism and the peripherisation of the South. These profound transformative processes altered the social structure and people's livelihoods, engendering new opportunities in some regions and greater uncertainty in others. Rather than poverty, it was the combination of these transformative processes that encouraged many Italians to pursue migration. Because the social transformation unfolded unevenly across the Italian peninsula, it engendered inequalities and the (re)framing of central and more peripheral areas, which explains the different internal and international migration patterns.

Keywords: internal migration, international migration, social transformation, inequality, hope, Italy

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1. Introduction

This paper explores the evolution of internal and international migration in Italy over the mid-nineteenth to the late-twentieth centuries. It examines how patterns of internal and international migration are associated with a long-term social transformation which affected the economic, demographic, technological and cultural landscape during key state (re)formation and consolidation phases. The questions driving this paper are:

- What explains the observed patterns of internal and international migration in Italy over the mid-nineteenth to the late-twentieth centuries?
- How do internal and international migration interact?
- What explains their interaction?

Starting in the 1850s and continuing well into the 1970s, Italy recorded a high volume of international emigration, making Italy an exemplary emigration country. The Italian peninsula, however, always had high levels of migration. Foreign rulers and their courts immigrated to the peninsula, while ‘Italians’ departed to both nearby and far away destinations such as Tunisia, the Middle East and overseas Spanish territories in Central and South America (Corti and Sanfilippo 2012). Internal migration between rural areas and to urban centres had historically been part of agricultural production cycles and the ongoing urbanisation process. Overall, migration was a strategy of men and women, peasants and artisans, court musicians and street artists following diverse life and livelihood trajectories (Colucci and Sanfilippo 2010).

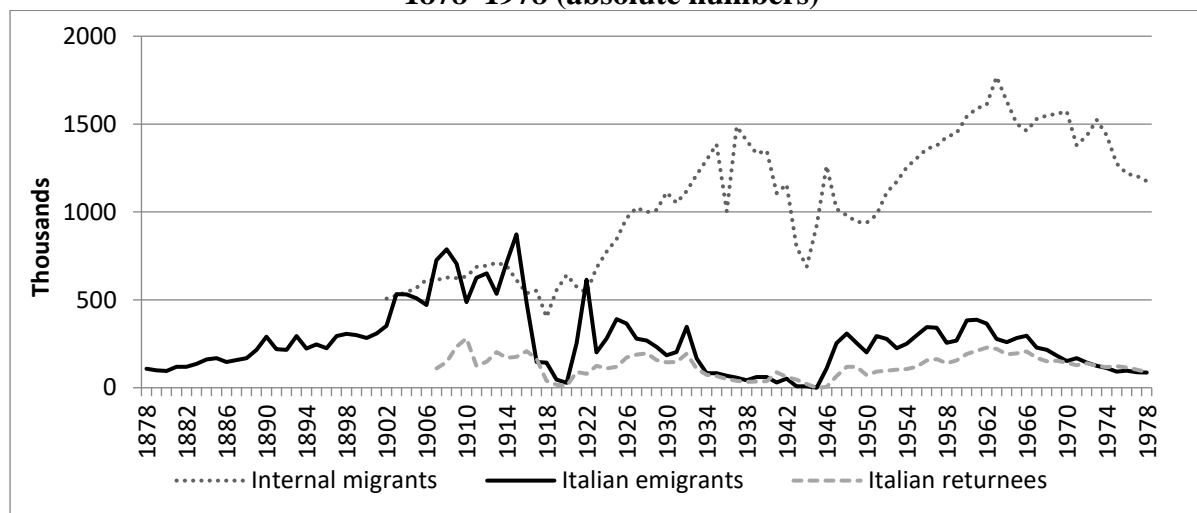
Italian emigration has often been associated with mass emigration to the Americas in the late-nineteenth–early-twentieth century. This migration has been commonly linked to economic and demographic factors such as the poverty of Italian peasants, a large young population and its poor economic opportunities (Del Boca and Venturini 2003; Hatton and Williamson 1992). Yet, this justification is unsatisfactory. As just indicated, migration was common among various segments of the population – not only poor peasants. We also know that the poorest people in society are often unable to migrate due to a lack of resources (de Haas 2008), which suggests that the Italians who did emigrate had the necessary resources and contacts. The biggest error in attributing migration to poverty, however, is that subsistence agriculture had been customary over most of the Italian peninsula and livelihoods had been indeed poor-to-modest throughout modern history. So what triggered such an increase in migration, which started in the mid-nineteenth century and went on until the middle of the twentieth?

A myriad of changes take place over a century, but this was a period of remarkable social transformation which saw the gradual disintegration of the old order and the slow emergence of the new one (Kertzer 1984; Zamagni 1993). The main markers of this social transformation are the unification of very diverse political and cultural units into one Kingdom in 1861 (see Figure A1 in the Annex for a map of Italy in 1843) and the formation of a modern state with a bureaucracy, infrastructure, economic plans that reached the outmost regions of the peninsula from the mid-nineteenth century up until the mid-1910s. Another marker is the rise of nationalism and the introduction of a range of protectionist policies which promoted self-sufficiency, planned urbanisation and land reclamations and which curtailed international emigration between the mid-1910s to 1945. The final marker is from the post-WWII period to the 1970s with the reconstruction – after the devastation of World War II – and a rapid economic boom that exacerbated regional inequalities but that also saw the emergence of a welfare system which provided employment opportunities and improved living conditions for most Italians.

To explore these profound changes, this paper adopts a social transformation framework, which studies changes in social phenomena, such as migration, as the outcome of profound shifts in political, economic, demographic, technological and cultural dimensions, which together encompass the *social realm* (de Haas *et al.* forthcoming 2020). The social transformation framework invites the researcher to account for all forces of development so that, for example, higher incomes and better infrastructure are considered alongside increased uncertainty, social unrest and the rise of organised labour movements. A deep analysis of processes of social transformation focuses on changes as well as on reactions to change in what Polanyi (2001) called movement and counter-movement. Observing forms of resistance and adaptation to change can provide useful insights which can explain major shifts in migration patterns, such as Italy's rapid rise in international emigration. We observe, for example, that Italy's Unification gave rise to growing inequality and more precarious living conditions in some areas of the country, stimulating – in some instances – labour movements and, in others, internal and international migration.

Beyond international migration, this paper seeks to understand the relation between social transformation and varied forms of mobility, building on Zelinsky's mobility transition model (Zelinsky 1971). In this model, various types of mobility interplay, strengthening and weakening according to demographic and economic shifts. Zelinsky (1971) presents internal and international migration as largely complementary so that, in a society in the early phases of development (the 'early transitional society' in Zelinsky's terms), a growing population with decreasing work opportunities in agriculture would choose between four destinations: cities; internal frontier destinations, where migrants could engage in agriculture; international cities; and international frontier areas. Thus, migrants may migrate to internal and international cities in pursuit of urban jobs or they may seek to continue working in agriculture by migrating to peripheral areas within the country or abroad. These options create intricate interplays between internal and international migrations, both at the individual and at the aggregate level (King and Skeldon 2010).

Figure 1. Annual migration of Italian emigrants, internal migrants, Italian returnees,¹ 1878–1978 (absolute numbers)



Sources: ISTAT Historical Data, Table 2.11.1 – Registrations and cancellations for internal migration movement and internal migration balance by region and geographical distribution – Years 1902–2014 (a); Table 2.10.1 – Emigrants and national return immigrants by region and geographical area (a) – Years 1876–2005; DEMIG TOTAL.

¹ Internal migrants reflect gross internal migration – that is, the total number of people who registered a change of residence across regions in a given year.

Italian migration data reveal that internal and international migration were equally important at the turn of the twentieth century but, starting in the late 1910s, inter-regional migration became more dominant than international emigration (Figure 1). This latter increased again in the late 1940s to early 1970s, albeit at much lower levels.² These national trends, however, hide great regional variations. While Southern regions were continually the source of internal and international emigration, other regions, such as Veneto (Figure 2), displayed great shifts: from being one of the first sources of international emigration, Veneto became the source of internal migrants; however, starting in the 1970s, it became a destination for internal migrants and, lastly, the destination for immigrants (Pugliese 2015).

By analysing trends of internal and international migration at the regional level, we observe four distinct migration patterns: (i) regions where internal migration always dominated and which turned into destinations for internal migrants in the early-nineteenth century; (ii) regions that were initially characterised by strong international emigration before evolving into important destinations for internal migrants, (iii) regions that transitioned gradually from sources of and to destinations for international and internal migrants and (iv) regions that largely remained sources of international and internal migration. Overall, these four patterns show different transitions from sending international emigrants to receiving internal migrants; however, some regions remained sources of both international and internal migrants. What might be responsible for these divergences? Might it be the regions' political histories, their varied economic structures, growing inequalities during the state consolidation process, people's resistance to change (Polanyi 2001), their reaction to unsatisfactory transformation by 'voting with their feet' (Hirschman 1970) or other factors – such as the postwar bilateral labour recruitment agreements with many industrialised countries in Europe and beyond?

This paper explores these questions by focusing on the period between the 1850s and the 1970s, when flows of internal migration and international emigration assumed a stable pattern and immigration gained in importance. Some figures, however, include more recent data to illustrate how the period under analysis fits within the country's long-term migratory evolution. The analyses rely on Italian migration data and historical development indicators, supported by evidence from the migration literature and studies on Italian social history, which were essential to identify key periods of social transformation and specific processes that shaped migration patterns. Five broad themes emerged as central when explaining migration transitions: the state and its policies; fertility and urbanisation; land, agriculture and labour; industry, services and labour; and the (re)drawing of the centre and the periphery.

Before continuing, a clarification is necessary concerning the terminology used in this paper. The term international migration includes both international immigration and emigration. International emigration is also referred to as international out-migration. Internal migration represents both in-migration and out-migration from and to Italian regions. Internal migration may also be described as inter-regional migration as this paper only addresses internal migration between regions. When referring to migrants, the terms used are Italian emigrant, Italian returnee (rather than Italian immigrant), immigrant (rather than foreign immigrant) and internal migrant, with an indication of the direction of the movement.

² Note that the peak in internal migration in 1964 seems to be associated with the emergence in the statistics of internal migrants who were clandestine until the repeal in 1961 of Fascist anti-urbanisation policies that banned rural-urban migration (Pugliese 2015).

Figure 2. Map of Italy with its regions



Source: Vemaps.com ©

2. Connecting internal and international migration and deep social transformation processes

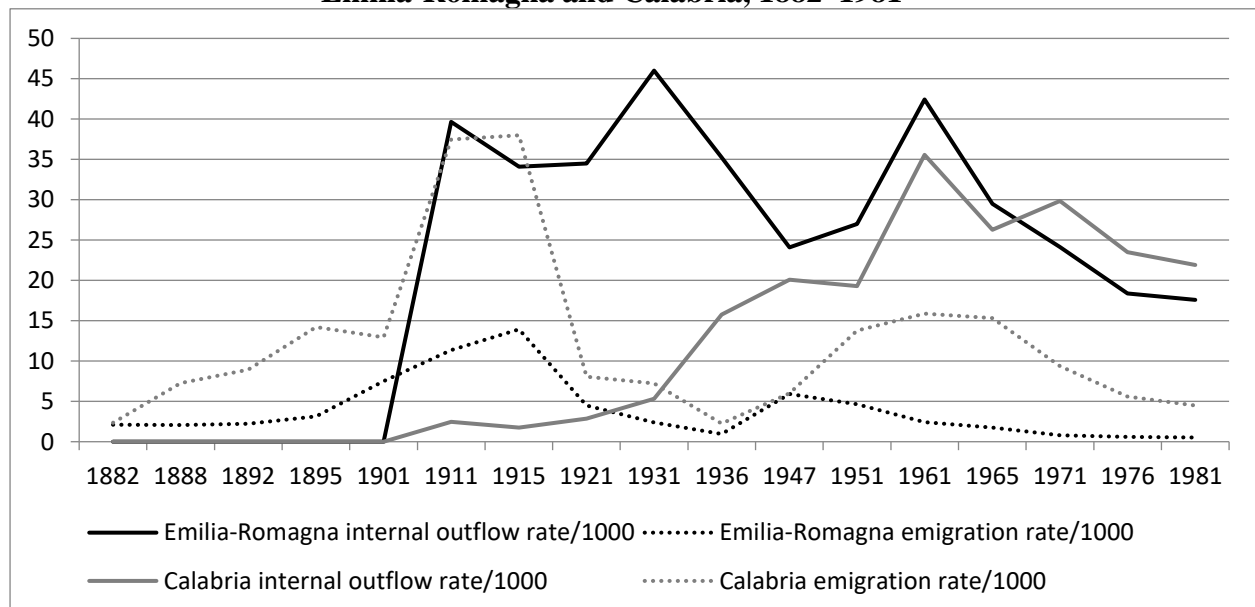
The literature on Italian international and internal migration is very rich, reaching back to artisans' migration in the Middle Ages (Davids and De Munck 2014) and up to Italy's turn to international immigration in the late-twentieth century (Bonifazi, Heinz, Strozza and Vitiello 2009; King 1993). Most of these studies are specialised and divided by discipline and thematic areas so that emigration experts do not study immigration and scholars of international migration do not focus on internal migration (Colucci 2012). Other studies remain descriptive, portraying specific isolated cases while, in most instances, existing studies analyse short-term migration – e.g. of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries or the post-WWII period (Sanfilippo and Corti 2009). While of great value, these studies result in a fragmented corpus (Bianchi 2012; Sanfilippo 2003; Sanfilippo and Corti 2009) that has failed to produce generalisable findings from the Italian migration experience to advance Migration Studies (Sanfilippo 2003).

Despite these critiques, a few studies on Italian international emigration over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have reached beyond the case-specific to generate theoretical insights (Ben-Ghiat and Hom 2016; Corti and Sanfilippo 2012; Pugliese 2015;

Sanfilippo and Corti 2009). With a specific focus on international emigration, Foerster (1908) suggested that the late-nineteenth-century increase could be associated with three factors: emigration was a ‘safety valve’ for the Italian government; cheaper and faster transport; and the openness of destination countries to receive cheap labour (Foerster 1908). A study by Del Boca and Venturini (2003) indicated that the determinants included poverty, a lack of jobs and low incomes from poor agricultural production in Northern and Southern regions as well as large wage gaps and labour market opportunities at destination. Yet others have stressed that, in addition to economic factors, population growth and the presence of a large cohort of young people set up the potential for large-scale emigration (Hatton and Williamson 1992).

In their later work, Hatton and Williamson (1998) suggested that the large increase in emigration was not associated with poverty but, rather, with the removal of the poverty trap: as incomes increased in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the capabilities of the Italian population grew, enabling migration. This might explain why high emigration originated in areas with high prosperity indexes (Cinel 1984; MacDonald 1963). At the same time, data show that international emigration was very different in regions with comparative levels of relative poverty: Calabria and Emilia-Romagna had similar poverty levels but Calabria had high emigration rates and Emilia-Romagna very low ones (Cinel 1984). The reason for these migration divergences may be found in the focus on international migration without accounting for internal migration. Figure 3 presents international and internal outflows from these two regions and shows that, while international emigration was relatively low in Emilia-Romagna, with a rate of just under 15 per 1,000 residents, the internal outflow rate was 35/1,000. Conversely, Calabria had an international emigration rate of almost 38 but less than 2/1,000 for internal outflows. Thus, the population in both regions engaged in high migration but their destinations differed. What explains such different propensities for internal and international migration?

Figure 3. Internal and international out-migration rates (over 1,000) from the regions of Emilia-Romagna and Calabria, 1882–1981



Sources: ISTAT Historical Data, Table 2.11.1 – Registrations and cancellations for internal migration movement and internal migration balance by region and geographical distribution – Years 1902–2014 (a); Table 2.10.1 – Emigrants and national return immigrants by region and geographical area (a) – Years 1876–2005.

To explore the evolution of migration and the interactions between internal and international migration, we must study migration as a phenomenon that is connected to major moments of social change (Ballinger 2016). For example, Sanfilippo and Corti (2009) focused on continuities, discontinuities and variations in migration, among whom elites, exiles, peasants, artisans, artists and musicians. Arru and Ramella (2003) examined the relations between demographics, economic history, political studies and internal migration, while Colucci (2012) suggested that Italian migration has been the result of deep changes such as the reclamation of lands under Fascism, industrialisation, social conflicts, welfare and the growth of the tertiary sector (Colucci 2012). Focusing on the post-WWII period, Bonifazi and Heins (2000) indicated that migration patterns reflected radical postwar changes in the economic and social structure, the return to democracy after 20 years of dictatorship that banned internal mobility and the gradual decrease of agricultural employment and urbanisation³ (Bonifazi and Heins 2000).

Despite this promising literature, analyses of international and internal migrations are generally conducted in parallel rather than in conjunction. Yet Figures 1 and 3 demonstrate the need to observe the interplay between these two types of migration. Many scholars argue that the forces that drive internal and international migration may be very similar and, in fact, these two forms of movement cannot be disentangled from each other as they are part of an integrated migration system (Corti and Sanfilippo 2012; Impicciatore and Strozza 2016). These two types of migration may show similarities in their initial motivation, the nature of networks and the selection of destinations; such commonalities make it counterproductive to use the crossing of an international boundary to justify a distinct analytical approach (Pryor 1981).

King and Skeldon (2010) suggested that internal and international migration may be analysed concurrently using a unified theoretical framework such as the migration–development framework, which can associate various development processes with a specific sequencing of migration types, as envisioned by Zelinsky (1971) (King and Skeldon 2010). This is the path followed by this study, which first presents the observed migration patterns, and then examines Italy’s development processes, drawing conclusions on how they have influenced internal and international migration and their interplay.

After describing the methodology, I briefly sketch out historical Italian migration and then present the four patterns of internal–international migration that emerged from the analysis. I then present the main turning points in the country’s social transformation, focusing on the five themes previously introduced. The paper concludes by drawing the main insights and key observations from the analysis of Italian migration transition using a social transformation framework and a migration transition model.

3. Methodology

This study draws on the collection of statistical data on migration, populations and social indicators, the literature on Italian migration and migration studies and Italian historical texts, particularly social histories at the national level and case studies.

The majority of the data collected and analysed is provided by ISTAT – the Italian statistical institute – and includes longitudinal datasets on internal and international migration and returns, birth and death rates, GDP *per capita* and occupations by sector. Data were also extracted from DEMIG TOTAL and from Mitchell (2013), while small subsets of historical migration data were collected from Foerster (1908) and Treves (1976). Given the objective of

³ In the early 1950s, 43 per cent of the population were still employed in agriculture and 27 per cent still lived in municipalities with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants (Bonifazi and Heins 2000).

this paper, an important effort was made to collect the most extensive internal and international migration data in order to allow an analysis of their shifts at the national and regional levels. For internal migration, the data reflect registrations and cancellations in population registers in municipalities throughout the country. There is no time limit on registrations and cancellations, so that people who changed residence more than once in a year would be included multiple times. At the national level, internal migration is reported as total, as in Figure 1, representing total registrations of people who changed residence across regions. For the regional level, I use net internal migration, which reports registrations minus cancellations.

Migration data are used as absolute figures as well as migration rates (over 1,000 residents) to give a sense of migration ‘intensities’. National, major area (i.e. North, Centre, South, Islands) and regional data were collected and analysed. I analysed the sequencing of migration types by observing the dominance of one migration type over another in each data-year at the national, major area and regional levels. Since the findings challenged conventional North–Centre–South divisions, I focused on the region, which is the official administrative unit below the national level. This generated interesting internal–international migration shifts and new patterns, as presented in Section 4.2.

A second component of the methodology consisted of a review of the literature on Italian migration, including a wide range of texts – from descriptive cases of specific types of migration and migrants’ testimonies (e.g. Hyams and Peter 1974) to articles that examined the determinants of migration reaching back to the classics (Foerster 1908) and on to studies of contemporary migration trends (Albani, Guarneri and Piovesan 2014; Bonifazi *et al.* 2009).

The third methodological component involved a review of studies on Italian social and economic history (Davis 2016, 2000; Duggan 1994; Dunnage 2002; Header 1990; Malanima and Zamagni 2010; Zamagni 1987, 1993), of studies on specific types of shift such as demographic transitions (Livi Bacci 1977), family life (Barbagli and Kertzer 1990), land tenancy and reform (Cinel 1984; Curtis 2013; MacDonald 1963; Russo 1999) as well as case studies that illustrate social change and its relation to mobility and migration in a few locations in Italy (Bell 1979; Kertzer 1984; Snowden 1986). At times, their observations pointed to known migration drivers while, at others, the authors drew attention to specific social changes that tend to be ignored in Migration Studies. For instance, migration associated with the release of labour from agriculture is generally considered to be a post-WWII phenomenon. However, the socio-historical literature indicated that, in some areas, the introduction of capitalist principles in agriculture dated back much earlier, starting in the 1860s, with important repercussions on sharecropping, the sustainability of livelihoods among farm workers and their expanding need to supplement their income with non-agricultural work (Kertzer 1984).

However, in this study I have chosen not to explore the role of the state at destination, which also had an impact on Italian migration. It is a conscious choice in order to keep the focus on the social transformation taking place within Italian society and to refer to external factors as identified and proven by previous research. Nor do I analyse immigration from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, which went beyond the scope of understanding the long-term trends of the internal–international migration of Italians.

4. Historical migration: from a national to a regional perspective

4.1. Historical migration trends in broad strokes

The year 1861 is conventionally used to demarcate the moment when Italy entered the mass European emigration flows to overseas destinations (Bianchi 2012). 1861 corresponds to Italy’s Unification, 1871 is the year when the statistical office began counting Italians abroad

and 1878 is the first year of publication of the annual statistical reports on emigration (Douki 2007). However, while this period is central for statistical records, from a migration transition perspective, these years do not have any real meaning, as emigration and immigration were taking place before Unification and were linked to the presence of foreign powers (Bianchi 2012) and extensive historical commercial, political and cultural exchanges (Pugliese 2015).

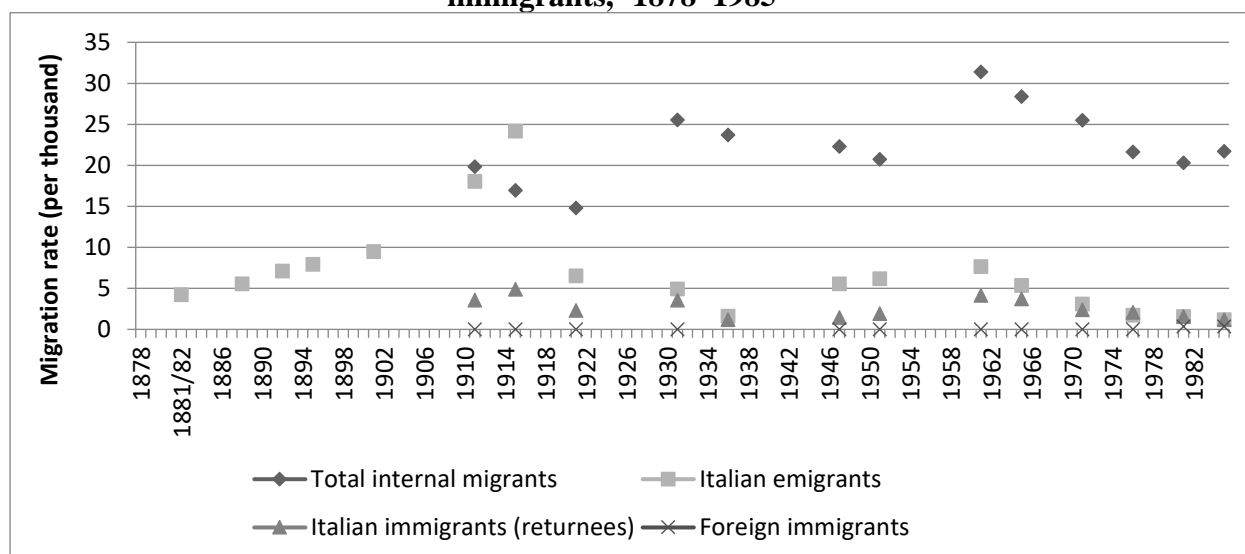
When we consider internal migration, it was also of great historical importance before Unification: artisans' guilds in cities such as Venice and Florence regulated the labour market by controlling the departure of members and the entry of new artisans. Over time, these guilds gave rise to urban-urban and rural-urban networks of skilled labour migrants which were replenished by new trainees who often came from rural areas (Davids and De Munck 2014). By the mid-nineteenth century, there was international immigration and emigration across the peninsula as well as rural-rural, rural-urban and urban-urban migration associated with mountain seasons,⁴ agricultural production cycles, itinerant artisans and artists, urbanisation and early infrastructural developments (see the first row of Table A1 in the Annex).

The topography of the Italian territory influenced mobility. Two important mountain ranges – the Apennines along the spine of the peninsula and the Alps framing the northern regions – shaped the nature and direction of historical mountain migration linked to transhumance and the seasonal migration of mountain people selling their products on the nearby plains (Colucci and Sanfilippo 2010) as well as skilled artisans providing services away from home, religious minorities and political exiles who left the valleys of Piedmont to take advantage of the fluid borders with France and Switzerland (Corti 2003). Important port cities such as Genoa, Venice, Naples and Bari hosted seafaring societies that attracted workers from their hinterlands and other Italian regions and were also important hubs of departure to faraway destinations. Large plains such as the Po Valley (Northern Italy) have been home to rural populations who always engaged in short-, medium- and long-distance movements in search of agricultural work (Colucci and Sanfilippo 2010). All this amounts to complex and interrelated mobility patterns that have deep roots and that connected small rural and mountain communities to distant international locations such as the Greek communities in Calabria (Pipyrou 2010), the Sicilian *contadini* in Chicago (Vecoli 1964) and the colony of fishermen from Molfetta (Apulia) who settled in South Australia in 1898 (Castles, Alcorso, Rando and Vasta 1992).

Table A1 in the Annex summarises the main internal and international in- and out-migration. I highlight three main turning points: firstly, *between 1861 and 1915*, when international emigration increased and peaked in 1913 with 873,000 departures, primarily from southern regions towards overseas destinations in North and South America (about 55–60 per cent of all international emigration) (Bonifazi *et al.* 2009). The second turning point was *between 1915 and 1945*, after Italy entered World War I, when international emigration slowed down and internal migration increased. The data show a strong drop in international emigration from 24/1,000 in 1915 to 6.5/1,000 in 1921, while the rate of Italian inter-regional migration decreased from just under 17/1,000 in 1915 to just under 15/1,000 in 1921 (Figure 4). Finally, over the period from *the mid-1940s to the mid-1970s*, we observe the growth of international emigration, first to Western Europe, then to Latin America and Australia, but mostly an important growth of internal migration. By the late 1970s, however, Italian emigration and return had reduced significantly and internal migration stabilised at 21/1,000, down from 31/1,000 in 1961. Notably, by the 1970s, internal migration occupied a role that had been played by international emigration in 1915 (Figure 4).

⁴ Primarily transhumance, the movement of cattle to high pastures during the summer season and back to the valley after the summer, where shepherds would sell their products.

Figure 4. Migration rates of Italian emigrants, internal migrants, Italian returnees and immigrants,⁵ 1878–1985



Sources: ISTAT Historical Data, Table 2.11.1 – Registrations and cancellations for internal migration movement and internal migration balance by region and geographical distribution – Years 1902–2014 (a); Table 2.10.1 – Emigrants and national return immigrants by region and geographical area (a) – Years 1876–2005; DEMIG TOTAL; population data 1882–1999 (Lahmeyer 2006).

4.2. Rethinking regional trends: exploring internal–international migration patterns

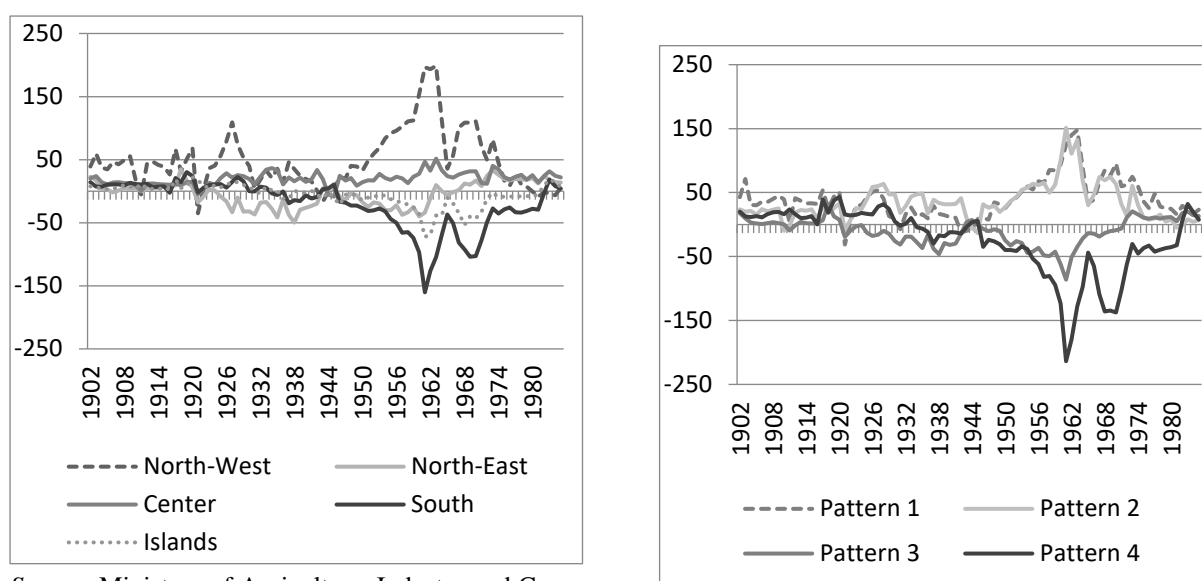
National data are generally disaggregated into five major areas – the North-West, North-East, Centre, South and Islands⁶ – which expose distinct patterns of internal and international migration. Since the early-twentieth century, North-Western regions have been the destination for internal migrants, who came primarily from the North-East in the intra-war period and from the South and the Islands in the post-WWII period (Figure 5, left-hand graph). All major areas had significant international emigration in the period between the 1870s and the 1930s, with the Northern regions engaged in international emigration before the Centre, the South and the Islands. International emigration from the South gained momentum in the early 1900s and again in the post-WWII period, when it dominated and endured for much longer than in other regions (Figure 6, left-hand graph).

However, the left-hand graphs in Figures 5 and 6 hide important patterns. By moving away from conventional major areas and regrouping the data for the 20 administrative regions by their patterns of internal–international migration, four important features emerge: (i) regions which primarily received internal migrants; (ii) regions which, after having had high international out-migration, became mostly receivers of internal migrants; (iii) regions which became mainly sources of internal migrants; and (iv) regions that sent international and internal migrants (right-hand graphs in Figures 5 and 6). These four patterns are represented geographically in Figure 7.

⁵ Internal migrants reflect gross internal migration – that is, the total number of people who registered a change of residence across regions in a given year.

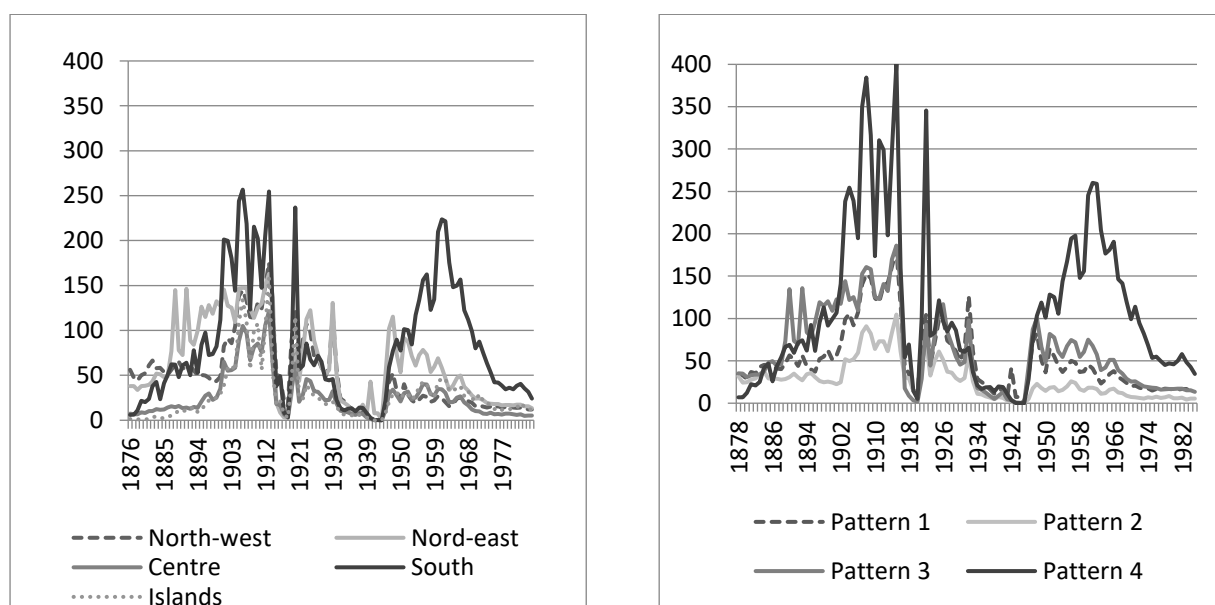
⁶ The North-West includes Liguria, Piedmont, Valle d’Aosta and Lombardy; the North-East includes Veneto, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Emilia-Romagna; the Centre includes Tuscany, Umbria, Marche and Lazio; the South includes Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicata and Calabria; and the Islands include Sicily and Sardinia. The South and the Islands are sometimes reported as one area.

Figure 5. Net internal migration balance (1,000s) across major areas of Italy (left) and by four internal–international migration patterns (right), 1901–1985



Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce (end 1925); ISTAT, Relevance of the movement and calculation of the resident population (from 1926).

Figure 6. Absolute figures of international emigration (1,000s) by major areas of Italy (left) and by four internal–international migration patterns (right), 1876–1985



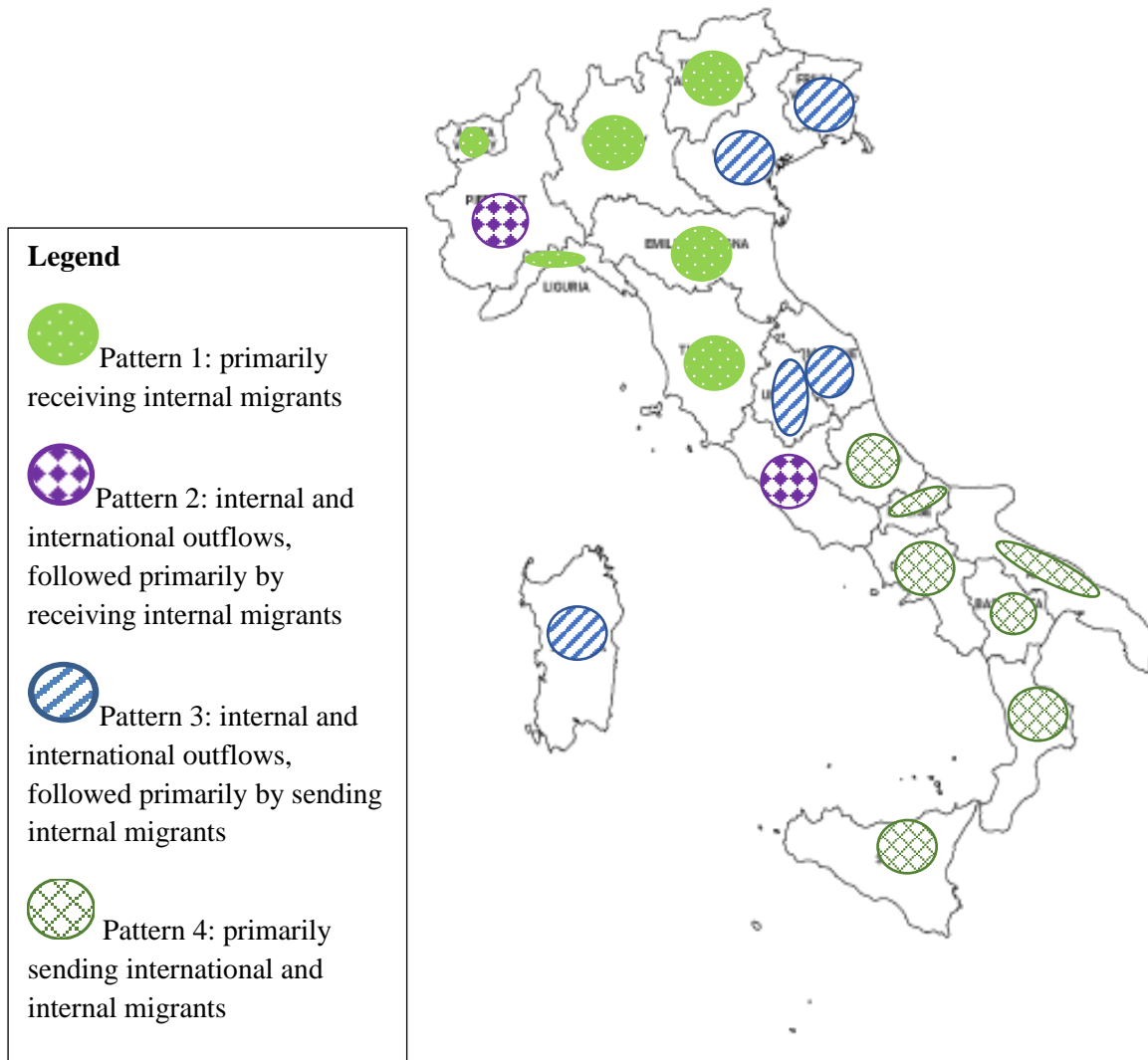
Source: Table 2.10.1 – Emigrants and national return immigrants by region and geographical area (a) –Years 1876–2005.

Pattern 1 includes six administrative regions⁷ and was characterised by relatively low international emigration until 1915, although we observe a small upswing in the post-WWII period (Figure 8, Pattern 1). Internal inflows gained strength from the 1920s as these regions become primarily a destination for internal migrants (Figure 9, Pattern 1). Pattern 2 includes Piedmont and Latium, two regions that are home to two capital cities: the former capital Turin (Piedmont) and Rome (Latium). Pattern 2 exhibits equal levels of internal inflows and international emigration up to the early 1920s (Figure 8, Pattern 2); thereafter internal inflows

⁷ Emilia-Romagna, Liguria, Lombardia, Toscana, Trentino-Alto Adige and Valle d’Aosta.

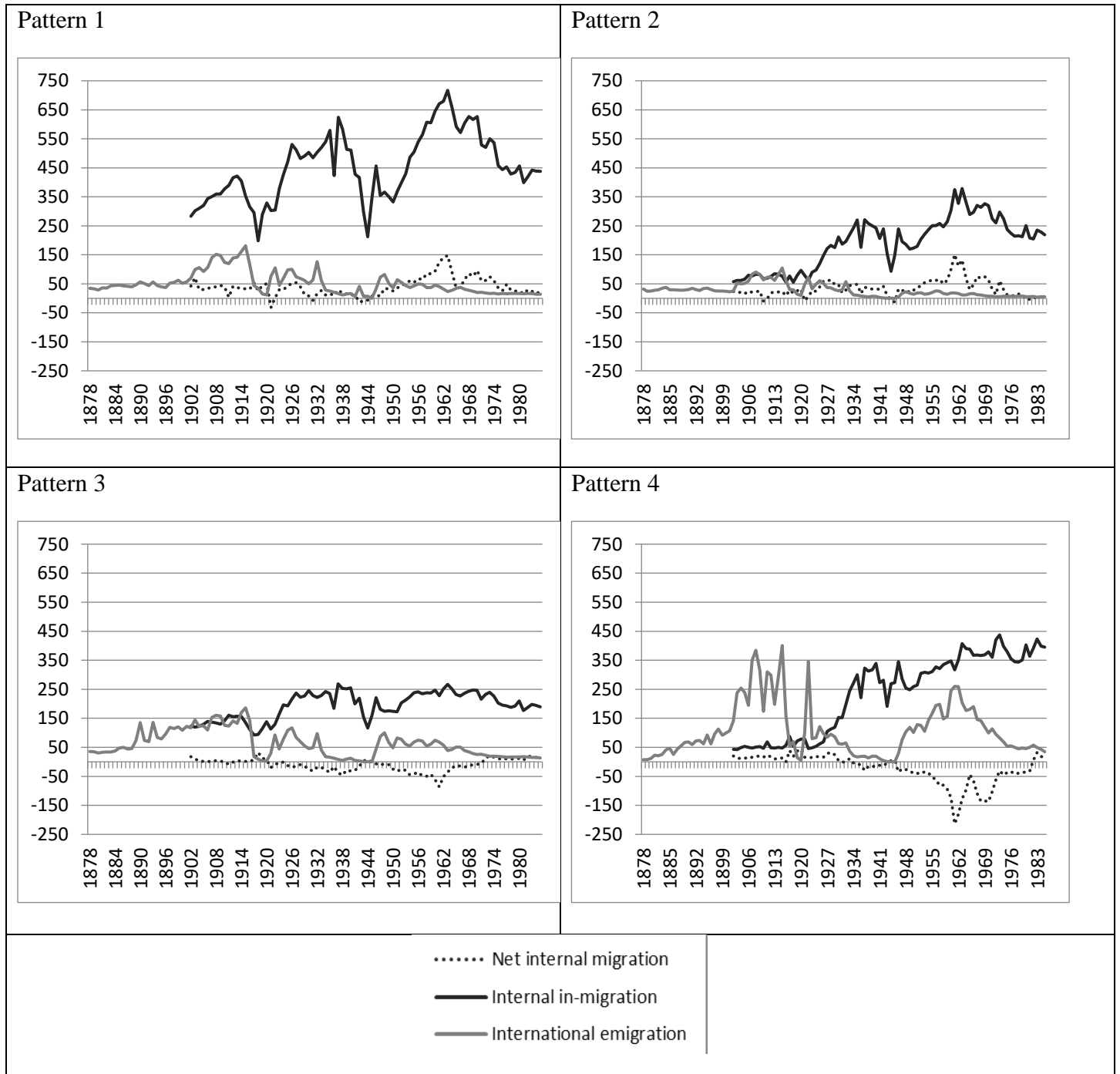
dominated, as these two regions became important destinations for internal migrants (Figure 9, Pattern 2).

Figure 7. Map of Italy with regions grouped by patterns of internal migration and international emigration



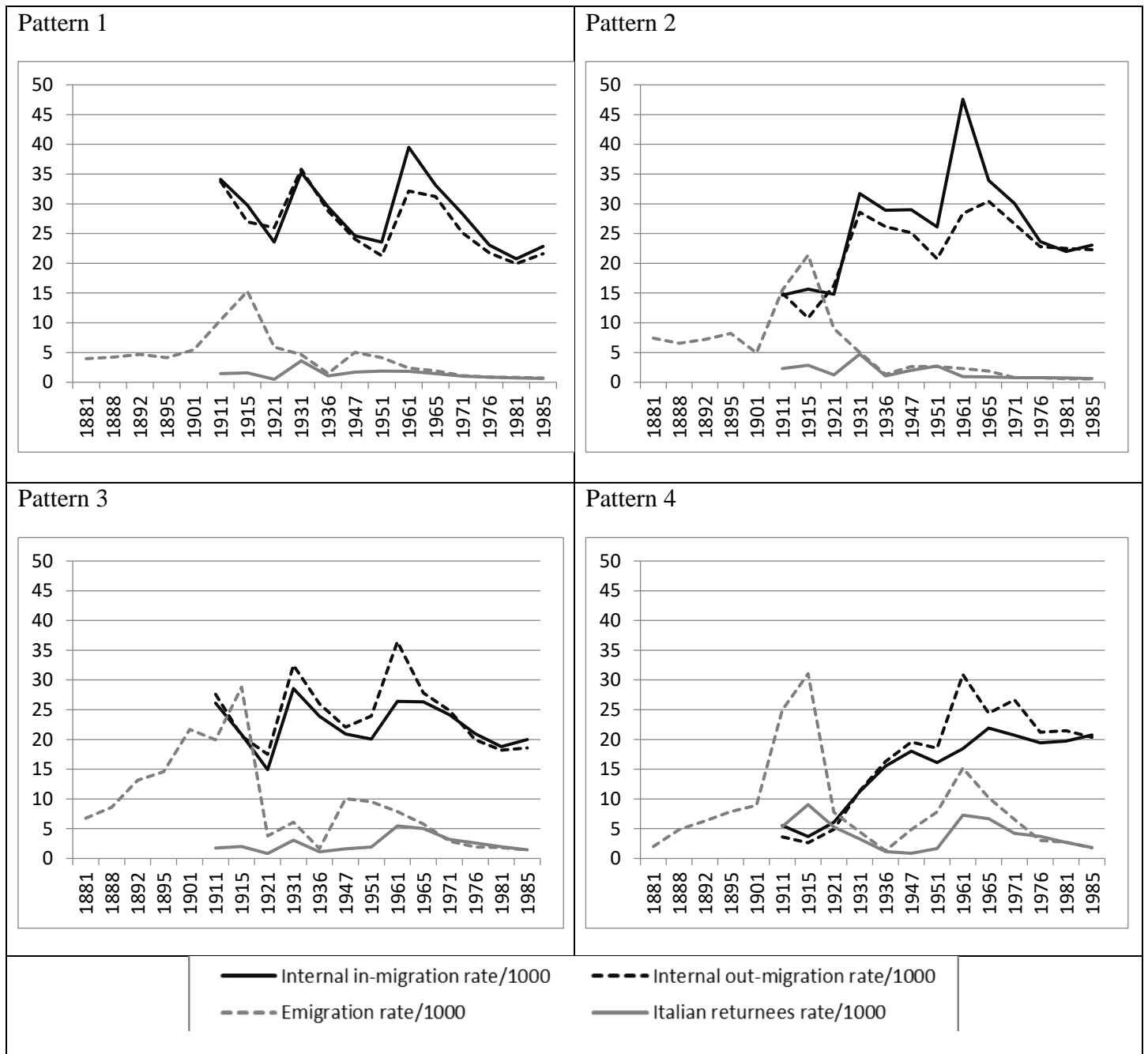
Source: Map by Vemaps.com ©; patterns by author.

Figure 8. Internal in-migration, net internal migration⁸ and international emigration by pattern, absolute numbers (1,000s), 1878–1985



⁸ These graphs present net internal migration to show how net internal outflows and international emigration mirror each other in some instances.

Figure 9. Internal in-migration and out-migration and international emigration and return by pattern, rates (in 1,000 population), 1878–1985



Pattern 3 includes Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Marche, Umbria and Sardinia (five regions): the data clearly show that internal in- and outflows and international emigration were at similar levels up until the early 1920s (comparable to Pattern 2) but that, thereafter, internal outflows dominated (Figure 8, Pattern 3), although international emigration reappeared at low levels in the immediate post-WWII period (Figure 9, Pattern 3). Pattern 4 includes seven Southern regions⁹ and shows the stereotypical pattern of Italian migration: strong international emigration was replaced by internal outflows in the mid- to late-1920s, with a dominance of outflows to Northern and Central Italian regions (Figure 8, Pattern 4). An important peak of

⁹ Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily.

international emigration in the early 1940s to the late 1970s mirrored the growth of internal outflows, but at much lower rates (Figure 9, Pattern 4). Having sketched out the four internal–international migration patterns, the next section explores the social transformation that underscored these migration transitions.

5. A changing society: uneven development, uncertainty, resistance and migration

To gain a fundamental understanding of changing migration patterns across Italian regions, this section adopts the social transformation framework. I first present an overview of the main trends governing Italy’s social transformation from the mid-nineteenth to the mid- to late-twentieth centuries. Then, for the five broad areas which have been identified as crucial in explaining the observed shifts in migration patterns, I present the turning points over the entire period. These five areas are: the state and its policies; fertility and urbanisation; land, agriculture and labour; industry, services and labour; and the re-making of the centre and the periphery.

5.1. A brief overview of general trends from the mid-nineteenth to the late-twentieth century

From the mid-1800s to the mid-1910s, gradual processes of demographic transition, urbanisation and agricultural change were contrasted by rapid shifts in manufacturing, technology and infrastructure, as deep political and cultural adjustments were underway. These were all signs of profound changes dismantling the old order – the feudal system – as the new order, the market economy, was gradually asserting itself (Kertzer 1984; Zamagni 1993). The uneven territorial distribution of this process meant that some areas were directly exposed and thrown into a rapidly changing social environment, as for sharecroppers in the Po Valley, while people in remote villages, such as Nissoria in Sicily, remained largely embedded in the feudal system for longer periods (Bell 1979). Nevertheless, the arm of the state was reaching out to its most peripheral territories with taxes and military conscription, making living conditions even more precarious and engendering social unrest. New ideas spread amongst the people, giving rise to organised protests and labour movements and eventually triggering state oppression. As these internal processes took hold, external relations impacted on Italy’s economy and trade. In particular, the trade war with France between the 1870s and the 1890s and the agricultural crisis of the 1880s impacted on production, innovation and migration (Bell 1979; Carter 2011). These turbulent times were at the origin of the rise of Italian international and internal migration over the turn of the twentieth century.

Over the intra-war period (1915–1945), the transformation of Italian society continued as political events reshaped the country’s economic strategy and its identity. These events influenced a migration transition from international emigration to a rapid deviation towards internal migration, with certain regions becoming net receivers and others net senders of internal migration. The rise of the Fascist regime (1922–1943) introduced ambitious plans for self-sufficiency, protectionism and industrialisation – which had their roots in the WWI defence industry. However, industry remained concentrated in just a few areas and most people continued to rely on small-scale agriculture. The 1930s brought about deteriorating political and economic conditions, which worsened further with the state pressure to finance WWII (Bonifazi and Heins 2003; Malanima and Zamagni 2010). Internationally, we observe the growing restrictiveness of immigration policies in North America and the 1929 economic crisis, which influenced the shift from primarily international to internal migration. However, this change of migration direction mainly reflects the stronger hand of the Italian state, which aimed to control the economy, the population, its identity and its movements.

At the end of WWII, Italy's focus was on economic and political recovery. Pre-existing internal and international migration re-ignited rapidly, partially encouraged by the state (Oblath 1947; Pugliese 2015). A speedy economic recovery led to the 'economic boom' of the 1960s (Duggan 1994; Zamagni 1993) although some regions were left behind (Scrivano 2005). Although many early migrants left Italy, particularly from the more disadvantaged regions (Bonifazi and Heins 2003), internal migration rates were much higher throughout this period. In fact, internal migrants found suitable opportunities in the rapidly changing agricultural sector in the Northern regions before industrial opportunities became available (Cinotto 2011; Vezzoli 2020). Italy's economic restructuring, which started in the nineteenth century, had turned farmers into agricultural day labourers, then manual workers in public infrastructure and, later, into industrial and service-sector workers. With this economic restructuring, uncertainties grew for many people; however, the political class failed to deliver change. For instance, while many people hoped for a purge of the Fascist elements, many of the Fascist leaders, among whom there were large landowners in the South, retained power. Political disillusionment provoked anti-system disruptions, protests and terrorism in the North, distrust in the state and a growing popular support for organised crime in the South (Duggan 1994), which influenced international emigration. Nevertheless, the state also strengthened its social protection, provided access to all levels of education and built a modern infrastructure which, overall, contributed to the improvement of living conditions and encouraged a high volume of internal migration.

5.2. The Italian state, its infrastructural development and its social and migration policies

Before Unification in 1861 (see Figure A1 in the Annex), the Italian peninsula was dotted with political units that held distinct ideologies, styles of governance and attitudes towards innovation. After Unification, these distinctions continued to shape perceptions of governance. In the North-Centre, there was a rich history of guilds and, by the late-eighteenth century, rulers embraced Enlightenment ideas and began to organise a bureaucratic state based on standardisation, measurement and record-keeping (Duggan 1994). On the other hand, the Papal State and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in the Centre-South were less open to new ideas: these rulers and the elite felt threatened by technological change and feared that economic growth and industrialisation would lead to social tension (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). All states, however, displayed a strong drive to penetrate into all areas of their territory through taxation and military conscription, regulating both family and inheritance rules and primary and vocational education. Their degrees of success, however, diverged: for example, the Casati Law (1859), which introduced elementary schooling and vocational/teacher-training for girls and boys, resulted in good elementary and technical education in some North-Western regions, while large areas in the South had a near-absence of elementary education up to the post-WWII period (Malanima and Zamagni 2010; Zamagni 1993).

Transport services varied across the territory. Already in the early-nineteenth century a road had been built across the Alps, allowing trade with Northern Europe (Duggan 1994). The road and railroad networks remained concentrated in the North-West (Zamagni 1993) and only in 1861 did roads begin to connect with the Adriatic coast. However, in Tuscany the railways remained an isolated system and the rest of the country had very limited transport networks (Fenoaltea 1971). This was particularly striking in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Zamagni 1993): in Sicily, for example, the only operable routes provided connections to the ports, from where goods and people were transported by sea (Russo 1999). In fact, it was easier and cheaper

from some parts of Italy, such as Sicily, to reach faraway destinations across the ocean than from other parts of the peninsula (Bell 1979).

The establishment of the Fascist regime in 1922 marked a policy shift, including the establishment of socio-economic policies that at once set the ground for post-WWII developments but, concurrently, also furthered inter-regional inequalities (Duggan 1994; Zamagni 1993). In general, Fascist policies aimed to display an image of a benevolent regime, while concurrently promoting strong control over the population. Thus, while educational reforms led to more educational services and the growth of university admissions by 350 per cent between 1913–14 and 1940–41, the regime also imposed a single government textbook for all Italian primary schools and required all teachers to pledge allegiance to the regime (Zamagni 1993). This latter introduced healthcare and family allowances to support workers who had been laid off; however, it dismantled the mutual-aid society system, reducing protection and access to healthcare for most workers (Zamagni 1993). The regime also built new railway stations, connected important lines such as Bologna–Florence and built a wider road network which would permit the transit of the first cars in the early 1930s. It also promoted communications via the telephone and radio as well as the development of light industry (clothing, leather, wood) (Duggan 1994; Zamagni 1993).

The Fascist regime aimed to control both international and internal migration. Immediately after WWI, it accepted some emigration in a bid to reduce pressure on the labour market but also encouraged remittances and return, which would supposedly provide a stimulus for Italian industries (Del Boca and Venturini 2003; Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). Partially in reaction to the US immigration restrictions in 1917 and 1921 (Bonifazi *et al.* 2009), the regime started limiting the issuance of passports in 1924 (Bell 1979). Concurrently, the regime promoted skills development for emigrants to enable them to meet US immigration requirements and proposed alternative destinations, such as Libya, where migrants could work on the regime's colonisation projects (Cometti 1958). The regime also stipulated a labour agreement with Nazi Germany so that, in 1942, about 300,000 Italians worked in Germany (Helstosky 2004).

With obstacles to international emigration and industrial developments continuously concentrated in certain areas of the North and Centre, internal migration became a viable option for many unemployed workers in the countryside who wished to leave agriculture (Zamagni 1993). Starting in the 1920s, internal migrants left certain regions – such as Veneto in the North-East and, to a lesser extent, Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany in the Centre – and moved towards the industrial triangle. From the late 1930s, internal migrants also left Southern regions for the Centre-North and Rome, which became an important destination for migrants from many Italian regions. Curiously, internal migration took place despite the regime's attempts to ban internal labour mobility (Pugliese 2015; Sanfilippo 2011). For instance, a 1939 law made it illegal for workers without employment contract to change residence. While these laws were often not implemented (Bell 1979; Zamagni 1993), they meant that Italians who were migrating internally were doing so irregularly (Colucci 2012).

After WWII, the government secured bilateral recruitment agreements with several industrialised countries – ranging from Argentina to Czechoslovakia and Sweden – which could accept many workers in exchange for raw materials, such as coal from Belgium (Oblath 1947). New policies targeted economic growth, social services and social protection. Resources were allocated for the promotion of literacy and the Italian language through schools as well as literacy programmes for adults on television. Television, introduced in 1954, was perceived as 'an instrument of education for the masses' (Penati 2013: 9) and, indeed, it exposed illiterate people to a modern world where they could learn about hygiene, domestic economy and literacy. Social reforms in the 1970s aimed to improve living and working conditions. For the working classes, a Charter of Workers' Rights assured a base salary, health and safety

regulations and protected workers against dismissal for unjust causes (Molé 2010). Overall, the working classes saw the ‘fruits’ of capitalism – such as higher wages, accessible household goods and affordable cars – for the first time. More generally, reforms restructured the health service and expanded human rights with a new pension law and access to public housing (Duggan 1994).

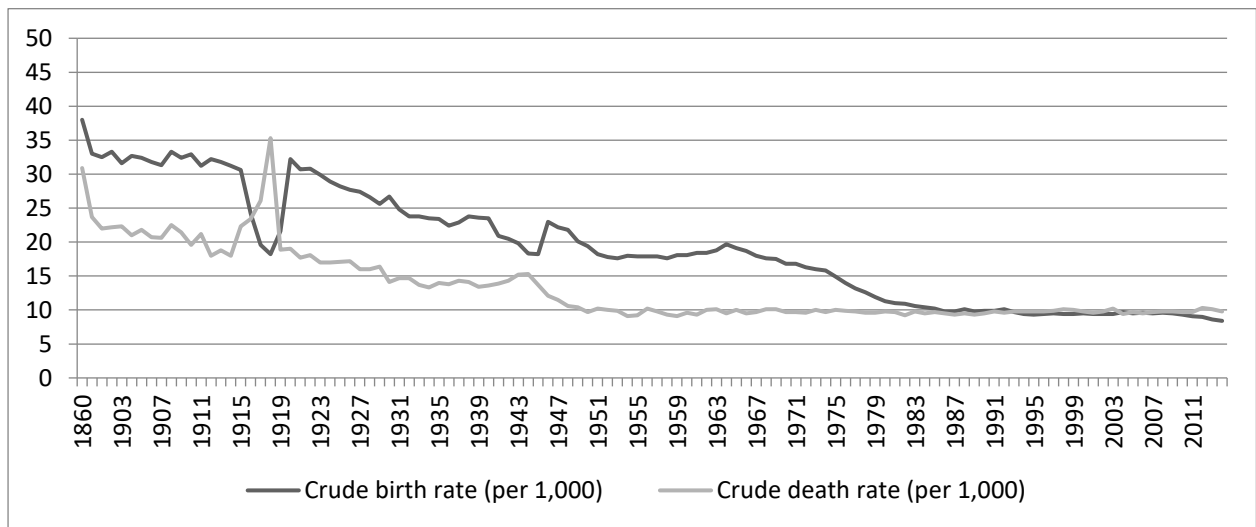
However, Italy’s governance did not move away from the traditional power-holders (Davis 2016) and even the 1970s decentralisation/regionalisation process, which moved resources and decision-making to the regions, proved to be ineffective in reducing regional inequalities (Levy 1996). The creation of industrial hubs in Southern regions increased employment opportunities but also nurtured networks of organised crime (Davis 2016). By the 1980s, practices of corruption weakened the country, which was beset with terrorism and organised crime (Duggan 1994). The social consequences of corruption and inequality included a decline in social capital and a loss of trust in the South (Felice 2010) and raised frustration levels, as people could compare their living conditions through images on the television (Franklin 1961), which thus stimulated internal migration and, to a lesser extent, international emigration.

5.3. Fertility and urbanisation

Italy’s demographic transition began in the late-seventeenth century, when mortality started its gradual decline (Malanima and Zamagni 2010). Fertility rates decreased, beginning in the 1860s (Livi Bacci 1977) (Figure 10) among modernising urban elites in the North and Centre. Fertility decline was delayed in Southern regions, where the elite were the guardians of the traditional large family (Livi Bacci 1977) and where the decrease in fertility rates took place only in the 1930s (Barbagli and Kertzer 1990). The Fascist regime’s pro-natalist policy, which included birth grants, marriage loans and a punitive tax on unmarried men (Duggan 1994) prevented the diffusion of family-planning knowledge, which further delayed the fertility decline (Livi Bacci 1977). As a result, in the intra-war period, population growth continued to be higher in Southern regions, particularly in the countryside. However, by the end of WWII, demographic trends generally converged.

After WWII, the domestic sphere underwent major shifts with the introduction of divorce, women’s participation in the labour market (Sgritta 1988), an emphasis on the nuclear family and the ‘modification of domestic desires’ through imported images from abroad, such as from the US (Scrivano 2005: 325). While some elements of domestic life remained traditional, such as the reliance on the family for childcare, women postponed parenthood as they stayed longer on the labour market (Sgritta 1988).

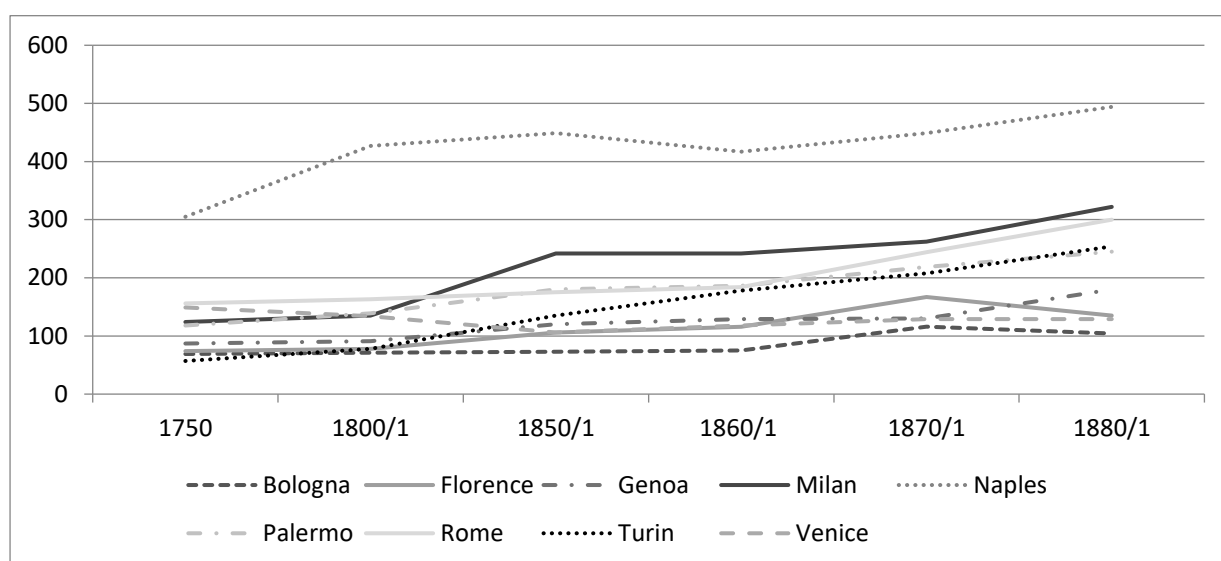
Figure 10. Crude birth and death rates, per 1,000 population, 1860–2014, Italy



Source: Data from Mitchell (1992) and Zamagni (1990) cited in Duggan (1994:147)

Urbanisation is an old phenomenon in the Italian peninsula, where many cities and towns have been lively artisanal and commercial centres since the Middle Ages (Bonifazi and Heins 2003; Duggan 1994; Zamagni 1993). Urban centres have been destinations for skilled artisans (Davids and De Munck 2014), peasants from the countryside who sought relief from unemployment (Duggan 1994; Kertzer 1984) and young women from rural households who found domestic work in cities (Barbagli and Kertzer 1990). Domestic industries also spread from cities to smaller towns and the countryside (Davids and De Munck 2014). This high circulation of labour ‘gradually eroded the social significance of city walls’ (Ehmer 2014, 115) and led to the fact that many peasants actually lived in a ‘rural city’ with populations of thousands or even tens of thousands, experiencing an urban life despite their work on the land (Vecoli 1964). Rural-urban migration was so voluminous that the city of Bologna grew by 93 per cent between 1800 and 1880, forcing the city to expand beyond its city walls (Kertzer 1984). Florence and Genova experienced similar arrivals from their respective rural hinterlands in the 1850s (Figure 11) (Livi Bacci 1977). In 1861, Castel San Giorgio, a town of just under 5,000 inhabitants close to Salerno and Naples, experienced the high circulation of its population, particularly to Naples (Bell 1979). Nevertheless, the north-west of the country had more urban centres with satellite towns, while the south had fewer urban centres with weaker connections (Stannard 1999). As a result, rural people’s exposure to urban life varied significantly across the peninsula.

Figure 11. Population of major Italian cities (1,000s), 1750–1881



Source: Mitchell (2013).

While the Fascist regime took an open stand against urbanisation and rural-urban migration, it was fully vested in the urban renewal of many cities which, in the end, reinforced urbanisation. In the name of ‘purification’ and ‘progress’, old city neighbourhoods were demolished and rebuilt (Sanfilippo 2011) and working-class families were relocated to poor-quality apartment blocks in the peripheries. Urban renewal included new urban infrastructure such as hospitals and polytechnics in existing cities (Zamagni 1993) and the creation of new cities, such as Aprilia and Sabaudia, which were born out of nothing between 1932 and 1938 (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). Both the ‘renovated’ and the new cities became magnets for internal migrants (Sanfilippo 2011), particularly among rural populations with precarious livelihoods (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011).

In the 1950s–1960s, most urban growth took place in large cities in the Centre and the North but, in the 1970s, intermediate cities began to grow. This reflects a general transfer of people from the countryside and mountainous and hilly areas to the plains, coast and intermediate cities. Population growth was concentrated in the Northern and Central regions, while the population of the South decreased from 37.2 to 34.9 per cent between 1951 and 1971, despite the higher fertility rate in the South (Bonifazi and Heins 2003), indicating high levels of out-migration. Yet rural-urban migration was important also within the South, leading to an increase in the urban population from 22.6 to 24.4 per cent between 1951 and 1959 (Franklin 1961). Within the South, as part of the 1950s’ land reform, which will be presented next, new rural towns were established on former large estates. However, the small agricultural enterprises did not flourish and people rapidly abandoned their new land and these towns (Franklin 1961).

5.4. *Land, agriculture and labour*

In the nineteenth century, agriculture was Italy’s largest economic sector: in 1861, it occupied 60 per cent of the population and remained largely small-scale (Malanima and Zamagni 2010). The national strategy encouraged small-scale agriculture based on share-cropping in order to prevent a large exodus of farm workers (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). Despite these continuities, agriculture was undergoing profound change. Innovation took place in the form of state-funded land reclamations, irrigation and drainage schemes, the introduction of fertilisers and the

establishment of agricultural societies to educate farmers (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011; Zamagni 1993). Large landowners in the Po Valley imported the English agricultural system with its rotation of cultivation and cattle-raising and, of the utmost importance, the introduction of permanent and seasonal salaried farm workers (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). The introduction of capitalism in agriculture meant that peasant societies became rapidly embedded in a stratified international market system (Kertzer 1984), leading to the proletarianisation of agricultural work. The 1880 agricultural crisis further weakened the position of farm workers, as landowners attempted to produce more efficiently to compete with cheap US grains by providing primarily day jobs on the farm. This triggered the high mobility of day labourers in search of work on farms and, more and more frequently, on the growing urban job market (Kertzer 1984).

The transformation in agriculture in the nineteenth century is demonstrated through the shifts in share-cropping. In this period, many rulers, facing financial debt, aimed to expand their tax base by taxing large estates owned by the elite. Suddenly, these latter, whose land had never been measured, monitored or taxed, had to pay land taxes. The ramifications of this decision were wide. In the Bologna region, landowners faced these taxes by putting pressure on share-croppers to become more productive (Kertzer 1984). By introducing a capitalist system of production, the landlords gradually dismantled the share-cropping system and transformed share-croppers into day labourers. Entire families lost their relatively secure access to land and family members were in constant search of agricultural work and, more and more, jobs in infrastructural development (Kertzer 1984). Migration became an increasing necessity for a growing number of farmers and their families.

This process took place over the course of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in central Italy and in areas of the Po Valley, where share-cropping and technological innovation were the most common. In the Kingdom of Two Sicilies there was little technological innovation and large undercultivated estates and small subsistence farmers persisted (Zamagni 1993). Yet in some areas, such as in the Capitanata in Apulia in the South, peasants on great estates demanded better wages and working conditions through large and often violent labour movements until the outbreak of WWI (Snowden 1986). Resistance, rebellion and social unrest also accompanied the transition from share-cropping to proletarian farm labour. As the old order of agricultural production gave way to a new order, agricultural workers protested and organised themselves. Some migrated to internal destinations in the North and Centre, while many engaged in international emigration to faraway destinations, sometimes as the result of disillusionment. Brazil was one of these destinations: in 1837, exiles from the Centre who had rebelled against the Pope emigrated to Brazil; however, by the 1870s, it was primarily peasants from the southern provinces who moved to southern Brazil (Franzina 2003).

During WWI, the ruling classes promised hundreds of thousands of young soldiers that, after the war, they would gain access to land and work. When these promises did not materialise, social movement emerged – particularly among the landless and the unemployed, who took part in strikes and riots (Pintus 2014). These disturbances took place in central areas such as the Po Valley as well as in the South, where agricultural workers occupied land in violent ways, demanding greater security and better distribution of products in agriculture (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). In Sardinia, wages in mining, agriculture and dairy farming were very low, leaving Sardinians destitute in poor living conditions (Pintus 2014). To placate social unrest in the immediate post-WWI period, the government initiated land redistribution in the North, Sicily and Apulia, which led to the growth of small–medium landowners. However, while some peasants were able to purchase small plots of land, they frequently had no capital for land improvement. The Fascist regime continued land redistribution to provide greater stability for day labourers, the most politicised segment of farm workers (Farolfi and Fornasari

2011). The regime increased the numbers of renters, partial share-croppers and cooperatives, which included oil presses, wineries and social dairy farms. These became particularly important in Northern regions (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011).

From the early 1920s, the Fascist regime also promoted state-funded projects, including land reclamation from wetlands, drainage, irrigation and deforestations (Duggan 1994). The policy of land reclamation, begun in 1923, provided reclaimed lands – mainly in the North but also around Rome, Sardinia and small areas in the South (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011; Zamagni 1993). Peasants from the Po Valley were encouraged to migrate to reclaimed lands (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011; Sanfilippo 2011) in order to reduce social tensions in the valley. In the South, large landowners failed to take advantage of state-led infrastructural improvements – aqueducts, dams and roads – to invest in the land, leading to falling wages and living standards among the southern peasantry (Duggan 1994). Overall, land reclamation had little effect on agricultural productivity but had a positive impact on technological innovation and the reduction of malaria throughout the country (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011; Zamagni 1993).

All in all, despite these interventions, agricultural livelihoods became increasingly precarious. Between 1928 and 1934, many small landowners lost their land as a result of the fall in crop prices, leading to an increase in rural unemployment. By 1943, food shortages, limited rations and the high cost of living led to widespread protests (Helstosky 2004). Agricultural workers increasingly integrated agricultural work with other artisanal jobs (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). Manual industrial jobs, although generating low wages, became highly desirable as they provided a sense of security (Bell 1979), strengthening the movement from the countryside to areas of high industrial concentration.

From 1944 to the early 1960s, farm workers were numerous and strongly organised (Mottura and Mingione 1989), although agricultural employment was rapidly declining (Malanima and Zamagni 2010). Landowners tried to crush workers' protests by replacing local workers with seasonal migrants from further afield, using similar tactics to those employed in the early 1900s (Snowden 1986). Violent episodes in Calabria and other parts of Italy led to the 1950 land reform laws, which authorised the expropriation of large uncultivated properties in the North-East, Centre and South so that they could be cultivated by peasants (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). This reform redistributed about 3 per cent of the country's agricultural area, primarily in the South, benefiting 105,000–120,000 peasant families (Franklin 1961). However, the land was often unproductive and lacked any access to infrastructure (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). In Sardinia, land redistribution encouraged the creation of small agricultural firms that worsened the conditions of pastoralists and stimulated emigration (Pintus 2014). In Apulia, the failed land reform created a stark contrast between these unsuccessful initiatives and the booming industrial economies of the North (Bianchi 2007).

The lack of concrete improvement in farmers' lives crumpled the resistance and any hope for radical social change (Cinotto 2011). Concurrently, a profound cultural change was taking place. While living in poor conditions might have been bearable in the immediate post-WWII period because the future was promising, by the 1950s disillusionment nurtured the feeling that the future had to be found elsewhere (Bell 1979). In the rice industry in Piedmont, women were no longer prepared to weed in the rice fields, preferring work in the garment industry, which offered better working conditions and similar wages (Cinotto 2011). In Apulia, young men felt that they had no prospects in agriculture and left their small family agricultural plots to pursue industrial work in Northern Italy and in Switzerland (Vezzoli 2020).

The decrease of agricultural employment was associated with processes of mechanisation which began in the 1950s and, notably, with young Italians' preference for non-agricultural work (Mottura and Mingione 1989). In some instances, agricultural machines made farm workers redundant but, in others, machines were a last resort to fill the jobs that landowners could not fill. In either case, leaving agriculture often meant migration. Since farm

workers were already very mobile in their search for agricultural work, they were able to rapidly switch to industrial work (Cinotto 2011). Certainly faraway destinations were more challenging for farm workers, who were the most often illiterate or had very limited literacy (Bell 1979); however, such workers could rely on state-sponsored emigration (Bianchi 2007; Vezzoli 2020). Eventually, the decline in agriculture and the rise of industrialisation ended most rural-rural seasonal migration between neighbouring regions (Cinotto 2011). While industrialisation led to mobility over greater distances, it also allowed highly mobile agricultural workers to reduce their overall mobility.

5.5. *Industry, services and labour*

Italy did not experience the first industrial revolution (1760–1820) as the territory lacked any prime resources, infrastructure and financial institutions and had limited education (Malanima and Zamagni 2010). By the mid-1850s, however, the metallurgical industry burgeoned – mainly concentrated in Genoa and Turin – while, in Lombardy, around Palermo, Naples and Salerno, the textile industry was modernising, with the mechanised spinning of cotton and wool (Zamagni 1993). Industry grew primarily in the western part of the country, reflecting the pre-Unification concentration of centres of political power on the western part of the peninsula. These first industrial cities attracted internal migrants from nearby regions. However, they were also important departure points for peasants from these regions who were emigrating to Spanish colonies and frontier areas in Africa, Asia and the Americas. These migration flows were tied not only to economic but also to political transformation, forged alliances and occasional tensions among rulers (Sanfilippo 2011).

The defense industry that grew during WWI provided the basis for the growth of metal-making, engineering and the chemical industry after the war (Felice and Carreras 2012). Limited numbers of small-scale light industries also emerged in the north-east, allowing industrial value-added to overtake agriculture for the first time. However, Italy could not be considered an industrial country given the limited geographical spread of these industries, particularly the slower economic growth of most southern regions (Malanima and Zamagni 2010).

The Fascist regime took a turn towards protectionism, which allowed Italy to recover speedily from the Great Depression through its focus on engineering, textiles and foodstuff (Felice and Carreras 2012). Over the 1930s, industrialisation spread to more areas on the peninsula and agriculture lost its place as a primary contributor to the GDP although, in 1938, it still employed 52 per cent of the active workforce (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). This industrial growth was partially supported by state subsidies to industries in the war effort, such as Liguria's shipyards (Felice 2010). This was the beginning of an important state presence in Italian heavy industry which would last until the late-twentieth century (Malanima and Zamagni 2010).

Work conditions underwent a profound transformation at this time with the introduction of 'Taylorism' and its assembly lines, piece-rate system, conveyor belts and reorganisation of office work. Both industrialisation and Taylorism took off after WWII. These changes were attractive to workers, who left the countryside to secure jobs in the industrial triangle (Zamagni 1993). At the same time, some workers resisted these new forms of production and, in some cases, factory work encouraged emigration (Corti 2003). In the meantime, the growth of the public sector introduced the figure of the civil servant, a possible occupation that could secure a middle-class livelihood (Zamagni 1993).

After WWII, the US Marshall Plan boosted industrial production by contributing 75 per cent of the 2 billion US dollars invested between 1943 and 1948. The beneficiaries were textile industries, automobile industries such as FIAT and a number of private–public companies, such

as the steel producer Finsider (Duggan 1994). One key industrial development programme was the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* (Fund for the South), formed in 1951 to support industrial development in southern regions through state-owned enterprises and to provide subsidies to corporations that opened plants in the South (Malanima and Zamagni 2010). In the short term, the programme generated better employment opportunities in industry in the South, although the top-down approach failed to improve social and human capital, non-subsidised enterprises and, ultimately, economic growth (Felice 2010). In Sardinia, for example, the *Cassa* established industrial hubs which led to important internal migration flows as peasants left the countryside and small agricultural towns in search of industrial work. However, with the lack of economic take-off, this programme moved regions such as Sardinia from underdevelopment to complete dependence on state funds (Pintus 2014).

This period also saw the growth of small family-size businesses engaged in artisanal work in the North-East and, later, in Le Marche and Umbria in the Centre. In 1955–1971, these became the destination for internal migrants from the South (Farolfi and Fornasari 2011). Further regional economic differentiations included Trentino-Alto Adige with tourism and Lazio with commerce, tourism, personal services and public administration. Industrial production reached its peak in 1973 and was surpassed by the service sector (71 per cent of GDP) in 2008, displaying a rapid shift from secondary to tertiary sectors (Malanima and Zamagni 2010). Over the post-WWII period, public administration created numerous public jobs throughout the peninsula (Zamagni 1987).

The great impact of industrial employment on internal migration must be understood as part of many farm workers' desire to leave behind a life of sacrifices, high degrees of uncertainty, constant dependency on barter and a lack of cash, as consumerist items were becoming available (Cinotto 2011). The industrial hubs established through the *Cassa* offered local people the chance of gaining full-time employment within commuting distance of their homes, which is associated with the reduction of internal migration in the 1970s (Vezzoli 2020). Commuting had many advantages: for instance, it allowed commuters to earn a steady salary and also to participate in the agricultural seasons, making industrial and agricultural work complementary (Bell 1979; Cinotto 2011; Vezzoli 2020). In addition to encouraging households to engage in such pluri-activity – merging industrial and agricultural work – it also contributed to the spreading of 'modern urban lifestyles' into rural areas (Bell 1979).

5.6. *The re-making of the centre and the periphery*

Inequality across the Italian peninsula increased after Unification as the North and Centre consolidated (Daniele and Malanima 2017). Some regions, which had been politically and economically central in previous sovereignties, became peripheral and largely excluded from investment in infrastructural, agricultural and industrial development (Pintus 2014). Grievances over poor working and living conditions existed all over the peninsula but, in dynamic areas of the Centre and North, social unrest could be partially placated by economic opportunities in the burgeoning industry and public infrastructural work in nearby areas, reachable through internal migration. In peripheral areas, alternatives to agriculture were scarce and connections to the emerging Italian industrial hubs were weak: for many peasants, the only alternatives were perceived to be international overseas destinations, which could be reached from the port cities (Bell 1979).

During WWI, the growth of the defense industry further consolidated economic power in the North and Centre, while the decline in agricultural exports put the agricultural South under pressure (Malanima and Zamagni 2010). The Fascist regime attempted to create a nation by building infrastructure, setting social and cultural standards on gender and family roles (Saraceno 1990) and attempting to create a national culture around food practices and national

and regional cuisines (Helstosky 2004); yet, these policies did not solve regional inequalities. In fact, Southern Italy fell behind the rest of the country: by the late 1930s, southern populations were living in extreme poverty as agricultural output declined and food was scarce (Duggan 1994); in Apulia and Sicily, workers in agriculture increased, unlike in the rest of the country (Felice 2010); and Sardinia, whose population mainly relied on pastoralism, saw no investments, which left shepherds at the mercy of falling livestock prices, increasing land prices and the continuous worsening of living conditions (Pintus 2014). As regional inequalities grew and the radio disseminated information from the cities, feelings of isolation and relative deprivation grew in rural villages (Bell 1979). An important phenomenon was taking place: as local traditional economies were stagnating, social and cultural ambitions were advancing, giving great impulse to the post-WWII growth in international and internal migration from regions with the most depressed economic conditions, including from a low migration region like Sardinia (Pintus 2014).

Economic divergence between the various regions continued in the post-WWII period and feelings of relative deprivation grew alongside it, a phenomenon strengthened by the return of war veterans (Vezzoli 2020). Statistics from 1951–1952 show that one quarter of the population in the South had minimal access to drinking water, electricity and inside toilets, together with widespread illiteracy and low day wages. By the 1970s, the gap between Northern and Southern Italy had grown so that unemployment in the South was three times that in the North (Duggan 1994).

North-South inequalities have been associated with the lack of human capital, the paternalistic southern leading classes and protracted colonial relations that have given northern regions control over most resources (Mottura and Mingione 1989). Recently, Davis (2016, 10) suggested that inequality was an intended objective of the policies introduced to advance ‘the interests of northern industry, finance and services’. In fact, northern industries and trade unions feared the competition of state-supported southern industries and opposed development projects in the South (Davis 2016). Besides the North-Centre-South division, however variations also persisted within individual regions. While Veneto overall had low unemployment, it was high in Veneto’s province of Rovigo, and Emilia-Romagna showed socio-economic growth overall but its Apennine provinces were suffering from depopulation and, (Stannard 1999). This partially explains why people in Emilia-Romagna might have chosen to migrate internally within the region or to nearby regions, while for the inhabitants of Calabria – in the new periphery of the country – internal migration in the late-nineteenth century still required movements across a badly-connected peninsula, making international emigration a viable possibility (see Figure 3). According to Stannard (1999, 311), ‘orthodox divisions, whether of two or three Italies, or even a division based on the administrative regions, all fail to capture the scale at which processes are operating to produce differentiation’. It is with this reminder that we move onto the analysis of Italy’s social transformation and its migration.

6. Social transformation and migration transitions: analysis and conclusion

This paper’s main contributions have included (i) four insights into the combination of factors driving historical Italian internal and international migration and (ii) key observations that advance Zelinsky’s mobility transition model (1971).

The first insight is that international and internal migration must be understood as an integral, inseparable part of a society’s deep social transformation; in fact the phenomenon of migration provides a lens through which we can better understand social dynamics. Italy’s nineteenth- and twentieth-century migration flows reveal processes of disintegration of the old

order and the emergence of a new order. We observed the persistence of feudal vestiges in agricultural production as capitalism expanded and contributed to the rapid dissolution of share-cropping, an agricultural system that had entailed both security and dependency. Concurrently, the state extracted resources from its citizens – through taxation and military conscription – much before providing protection and economic opportunities. These phases of economic restructuring and state formation suggest a turbulent national context where international emigration, despite its risks, might have been seen as a relatively safe investment. However, as small economic hubs began to emerge and infrastructure and transport were stimulated – increasing connectivity and generating public work opportunities – internal migration gained increasing appeal.

This reveals the second insight: Italian migration was *not simply the result of poverty*. In fact, *poverty is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for emigration*. Evidence shows that, historically, migration enabled the transfer of skills across major European cities as middle- and upper-class bankers, architects, artists and military personnel migrated to provide their expert services. Poverty had been a customary situation for the majority of the population in the peninsula but, in this period, poverty was accompanied by rapidly changing political and economic strategies and shifting cultural preferences. Profound changes in the social system within which people had secured their livelihoods for generations *raised fears that conditions would become even more precarious and triggered resistance and, in some instances, also migration*. Polanyi (2001) indicated that social transformation engenders both movement and counter-movement, as social actors feel a sense of alienation and take action by defying the shifts that alter their livelihoods. Multiple instances of peasant rebellions, social unrest and organised labour movements signaled the population's attempts to voice their discontent, gain their rights and obtain better working conditions. Italian history is fraught with examples of peasants voicing their discontent and politicians promising change, often involving land reform, which raised peasants' expectations of being able to secure a plot of land and improve their economic standing. Recurrently, reforms failed to achieve substantial changes in people's livelihoods, generating new cycles of social unrest. The state's repression of social movement reinforced feelings that the powerful elite was unwilling to truly improve the living conditions of peasants, which resulted in disillusionment and the fear of ever-worsening conditions. This sequence of protest → reform promises → hope → disillusionment → protest → oppression → disillusionment → exit recalls the voice–exit–loyalty model proposed by Hirschman (1970) and suggests that much internal and international out-migration was influenced by the *loss of hope in any favourable change and fear that stagnation would further deteriorate their living conditions* (Bell 1979; Sanfilippo 2011). Both resistance and migration were weapons that disillusioned segments of the population pursued, at times following this sequence and at times separately, with some people keeping up the resistance despite state oppression and others migrating early on. In sum, all represented counter-movements to a growing sense of vulnerability and alienation.

The third insight – the analysis of various social transformative processes, which included urbanisation, shifts in agricultural and industrial production as well as infrastructural development – points to *growing inequalities* (i) between areas of concentrated industrial and infrastructural build-up and other areas that became increasingly peripheral and neglected by investment and economic development; and (ii) between people who could only find (under)employment in agriculture and those who could access security and relative prosperity through industrial jobs and, later, through service-sector employment (Malanima and Zamagni 2010). However, we should refrain from thinking that migration was solely linked to a switch from agriculture to industry because *agriculture and industrialisation both imply mobility*. In Italy, agriculture was associated with short-distance to regional and inter-regional temporary/seasonal migration for many generations; over the period under consideration, the

distance increased as peasants from Southern Italy worked ‘seasons’ in Northern Italy, where they could earn wages three times those in their rural towns (Vezzoli 2020). Industrialisation has often encouraged more long-distance migration to industrial hubs, resulting in long-term, often permanent migration, thus implying greater distances but a lower frequency of non-migratory mobility than in agriculture. However, the growth of a few industrial hubs in the southern regions transformed potential long-distance internal migrants into intra-regional commuters.

The fourth insight is that by using a social transformation framework we can fully appreciate the *great relevance of state (re)formation* in shaping migration processes. These include the propagation of new ideas and an openness to innovation and technology, and the establishment of a central system of governance, an educational system and infrastructural developments. For the southern regions in particular, we cannot ignore the role of the central Italian state in long-term processes of the peripherisation of once-central regions, such as the demise of the central function of Naples. The role of the state varied over time but remained central in creating conditions that influenced migration decisions. If, initially, there were processes of state formation, such as land taxation, radical shifts in prioritising agricultural productivity and infrastructural development, all of which encouraged migration, the authoritarian Fascist government, in the 1930s, banned certain types of migration while concurrently encouraging some forms of state-sanctioned migration to new rural and urban areas and using exile to expel political opponents. After WWII, the state encouraged migration through bilateral recruitment agreements with more industrialised countries although it also reduced migration through its own economic stimuli and the establishment of a social protection system.

What do we learn from considering the evolution of internal–international migration patterns in relation to the mobility transition model proposed by Zelinsky (1971)? We saw that most regions experienced internal and international migration throughout the entire period, which reflects the expected sequencing from an early transitional to an advanced society envisioned in the mobility transition model (Zelinsky 1971). However, we see great variations: already, in 1902, regions in Pattern 1 (Emilia-Romagna, Liguria, Lombardy, Tuscany, Trentino-Alto Adige and Valle d’Aosta) transitioned rapidly to become primarily destinations for internal migration flows as these regions were historically dominated by rulers who stimulated infrastructural development, transalpine roads and links to major ports, which facilitated both international migration and internal migration across and into these regions from nearby areas. Moreover, by the end of the 1800s, these regions were well into their demographic transition and had early heavy and textile industries, which provided non-agricultural employment. Piedmont and Latium, the two regions in Pattern 2, initially sent many international emigrants, while also receiving internal migrants. This was associated with the presence of Turin and Rome, two major centres of power. Moreover, Piedmont’s closeness to France and Switzerland also facilitated European migration (Corti 2003) while Latium, being the core of the Papal States, had connections to international destinations around the world. The growth of industry in Turin and the consolidation of Rome as the capital city of Italy significantly decreased their international emigration while securing their continued attractiveness for internal migrants from all over the peninsula.

Regions in Pattern 3 (Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Le Marche, Umbria and Sardinia) saw a slow evolution from international emigration to internal out-migration and eventually internal in-migration. International emigration was strongly driven by Veneto, a region with share-cropping, low industrial growth and early road connections to nearby regions. Despite the development of small-scale light industry in some of these regions in the intra-war period, many residents continued to leave, primarily directed to nearby regions in Patterns 1 and 2. Le Marche and Umbria in Central Italy clearly show a switch: from initially having comparable

levels of out-migration to internal and international destinations, they shifted rapidly to internal out-migration in 1918, coinciding with the tightening of US immigration policies. International emigration regained strength in the post-WWII period but at much lower rates. It was, instead internal in-migration and shortly thereafter international immigration, that would gain strength, as these regions experienced strong economic growth associated with small-sized family-based enterprises.

The southern regions in Pattern 4 (Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily) represent the most closely the stereotypical picture of Italian migration, with the dominance of international emigration until the early 1920s. Despite the presence of important cities in the South, growth and development there stagnated after Unification. Although some internal migration took place within the southern regions, it was particularly international emigration that increased, since some of these regions were much better connected to faraway destinations reachable by sea than to inland locations in the Centre-North. In the 1920s, migrants switched to internal destinations. This corresponded to the higher restriction of immigration policies in North America as well as to the increasingly poor conditions in these regions, while economic opportunities were concentrated in the North and Centre regions. Although international emigration regained strength after WWII, facilitated by labour recruitment agreements, internal out-migration dominated. Continuous internal and low international out-migration from this group of regions points to ongoing structural inequalities and limited economic growth. This deviates from the mobility patterns which Zelinsky (1971) associated with an ‘advanced’ society.

This points overall to a few limitations in Zelinsky’s model. First, its conceptualisation of modernisation was narrow as, eventually, he reduced it to demographic and economic dimensions, ignoring the political, technological and cultural aspects which accompany economic shifts and which, as we observed, can be very important in shaping migration. Second, the view of a society that moves across development stages uniformly as a monolith except for rural and urban distinctions is a simplification that is far from reality. Aside from leading us into the trap of methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003), this view also ignores the fact that processes of modernisation or development happen differently across societies as these latter find their own way to be modern – ways based on national and cultural experiences (Gaonkar 1999). It also calls into question the idea that all societies or regions within a country will eventually reach the ‘advanced’ stage.¹⁰ The Italian peninsula was home to multiple societies shaped by historical rulers’ diverse ideological positions and by political and economic decisions after Unification. As these different societies were brought under the same umbrella of a unified country, they experienced different development levels. While regions in Patterns 1–3 moved towards being ‘advanced societies’ with the mobility patterns envisioned by Zelinsky (1971), the disinvestment in the regions in Pattern 4 produced ongoing internal and international outflows as these regions stagnated at the phase of a ‘late transitional society’.

Finally, history is often interpreted as a sequence of improvements as societies progress. This notion ignores how history shows us that it is not ‘unidirectional and irreversible’ (Herlihy 1969). We find ample examples of the rise and fall of empires, of the beginnings and ends of towns and cities, and of the consolidation and fragmentation of social organisations. History is filled with stories of interest groups who sought improvements that benefited some but led to detrimental outcomes for certain classes or other segments of the population. We observe how social changes lead to the creation and recreation of areas from periphery to centre and *vice versa*. Thus, while Zelinsky (1971) offers a valuable blueprint through which to understand changing societies and mobility transitions, migration must be understood through a historical

¹⁰ I thank Hein de Haas for bringing my attention to this point.

and sub-national lens that allows us to see the transitions of agricultural areas into industrial and service hubs and the diversity in the size and function of urban areas, as towns and cities specialise in economic, educational or religious purposes and trigger a peculiar volume and composition of migration. In simple words, migration must be understood as being in continuous transition, along with the constant transformation of societies.

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Annex

Table A1. Overview Italian migration by historical periods and types of migration

	Internal migration	International emigration	International immigration
Late-middle ages to 1850s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal mountain migration, e.g. transhumance, selling products in plains and cities; • Small-to-medium distance rural-rural migration for sharecropping lands; • Urban-urban migration of artisans; • Rural-urban to many historical cities such as Naples, Rome, Turin and Venice and new cities like Livorno, a port city in Tuscany – growth of public works in some political units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-Alpine migration to neighbouring countries; • Migration of skilled workers to European capitals, e.g. birth of Italian hospitality niche; • Migration to Spanish colonies in Africa, Asia and the Americas; • Musicians and entertainers to Europe from the Northern regions and to the Americas from the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily in the South; • Politically motivated emigration linked to the failure of the 1848 revolutionary uprisings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Napoleonic wars are followed by the scattering of the French army across Europe, including Italian regions; • International emigration was frequently temporary, leading to high rates of return.
1860s–1915	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal mountain migration; • Strengthening of existing skilled migration; • Continuation of rural-rural, rural-urban and urban-urban migration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emigrants with diverse objectives, migration of peasants and skilled workers: • Among those who wanted to save and return we find surplus labourers from the Padania Plain who went France, Belgium, Switzerland and Germany; and small landowners from the South who went to North America; • Among those who wanted to emigrate to acquire land and settle permanently abroad are peasants from Veneto, Trentino Alto Adige and Friuli to Latin America, who previously migrated seasonally to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return of migrants with the outbreak of WWI as they either wanted to return before the escalation of the war or because they aimed to fight for Italy.

1915–1945	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land reclamations by the Fascist regime encouraged migration from Veneto and Romagna to Sardinia and the Agro Pontino in Lazio; • Antifascists migrate from the South to the Centre-North of Italy; • The Fascist regime created new cities and encouraged people to populate them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General discouragement of emigration, but the Fascist regime organised a labour recruitment programme to Nazi Germany; • Fascist regime re-directs emigration towards colonial territories where Italian workers were meant to build assets for the regime; • Antifascists migrate from Northern Italy towards France. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return of Italian emigrants continues at similar rates.
1945–mid-1970s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural-urban migration strong until late 1950s; • Inter-regional migration gains strength both in regions in the North and Center and later from Southern regions; • Some internal migration from the South is directed to border areas with France and Switzerland as migrants engaged in cross-frontier labour movement; • However, internal migration already began to decrease by the 1970s. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-frontier movements from Liguria to France and Lombardy to Switzerland; these movements were halved by the 1970s; • Important emigration stimulus with bilateral labour recruitment agreements with European states as well as Argentina, Brazil, and Australia; • Emigration shifts in main destinations: • 1946–48: emigrants were mainly directed to Western Europe; • 1949–50: as European migration decreased, emigration towards Latin America and Australia increased; • 1951–55: authorised and unauthorised European migration increased, particularly towards France and Belgium; • 1956–60: migration to France and Belgium declined, but short-term migrations towards Switzerland and Germany increased; the UK and destinations outside the EEC are less important. • Among the emigrants are professionals and technicians working both in developed and developing countries; • By the 1970s, international emigration declined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return continued but now not necessarily towards areas of origin, but towards other areas in Italy; • Immigration of foreign nationals is limited.

Sources: author's own based primarily on Sanfilippo (2011) and from Biranchi (2012), Bonifazi *et al.* (2009), Pugliese (2015).

Figure A1. Italy in 1843



Source: Gigillo83; derivative work: User: Enok – File:Italia 1843.svg, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=20322994>