

# A geographic and social profile of Italy's great migration (1876–1913)

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## Abstract

This article sheds light on Italian emigration flows with a focus on their geographical origins in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, that is, during the so-called Great Migration. Annual province-level data on Italian emigration are analysed in order to reconstruct the regional origins of emigrants, the factors motivating their decisions, their gender, and their literacy levels. The regions generating the largest population outflows were located in the North of the country. Despite the literature's focus on the Italian south diaspora to the US, the main destinations of Italian emigration in this period were other European countries. Explanations focusing on economic factors as emigration drivers prove weak. The provinces generating the greatest outflows do not appear to share any characteristics nor obey any underlying pattern: some tentative explanations concerning provinces of origin will be offered. Data relating to the emigration of women and children point to the central role of nuclear families, displaying a higher rate of growth compared to overall emigration, with peaks during the migration booms to Latin America (1890s) and the United States (1905–1907). No obvious connection emerges between emigrant outflow size and literacy levels: people migrated from the literate North as well as from the more impoverished regions featuring much lower literacy levels.

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## INTRODUCTION

This article sheds light on Italian emigration flows with a focus on their geographical origins in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, that is, during the so-called Great Migration, almost immediately after Italian unification in 1861. More specifically, we examine emigrants' areas of origin and destination and develop an original typology of province clusters on the basis of their similarity or deviations from the overall national distribution of emigration flows over four sub-periods. We also provide an overview of the incidence among emigrants of women and minors, as well as emigrants' literacy levels and labour backgrounds, within the pertinent policy contexts. Moreover, we explore and question some of the misconceptions about Italian emigration, such as the prevalence among population outflows of Southern Italian origins across sub-periods and destinations, the link between migration and illiteracy and the allegedly crucial role of poverty as an emigration driver.

Using annual province-level data on Italian emigration between 1876 (the first year for which these detailed data are available) and 1913 produced by the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, the Italian Statistics Bureau and national censuses, we show that the regions generating the largest population outflows were located in the Northern part of the country. Despite the research literature's tendency to dwell on the Italian South diaspora to the US, the main destinations of Italian emigration in this period were other *European* countries. Explanations focusing on economic factors as emigration drivers prove to be unconvincing. The provinces generating the greatest outflows do not appear to share any characteristics nor obey any strong underlying pattern as regards their economic profile. Data relating to the emigration of women and children point to the central role of nuclear families, which displayed higher growth rates compared to overall emigration, with peaks during the migration booms to Latin America (1890s) and the United States (1905–1907). Finally, no obvious connection emerges between emigrant outflow size and literacy levels: people migrated from the literate North, as well as from the more impoverished Mezzogiorno regions featuring appreciably lower literacy levels.

## SIZE AND ORIGIN OF EMIGRATION FLOWS

Whereas just over 100 thousand individuals left Italy in 1876, a rapid increase followed and attained an initial peak between 1887 and 1888 (Figure 1). The 1890s witnessed slightly smaller, trendless outflows, perhaps disrupted by brief international or local crises in destination countries. Increasing flows ensued until a new peak was reached in 1913, with over 872 thousand emigrants. The year 1914 ushered in a collapse of emigration flows and a strong expansion of return migrants, with net negative outflows being recorded as early as 1915. Nearly 13.5 million Italians left their country in this roughly 35-year period (without considering repatriates).<sup>1</sup>

Deep-seated economic cultural and social differences between Italy's North and South, stretching back for centuries, characterized the country (and are still influential today).<sup>2</sup> Life expectancy and GDP per capita were lower in the South, albeit significantly improving overall from 1881 to 1911.<sup>3</sup> The North–South literacy gap was already huge in 1881; despite generalized improvements, half of the population of the South was still illiterate in 1911 (Table 1 and Figure 2). Such differences stretch back centuries and shape the Mezzogiorno's continuing long-term underdevelopment.<sup>4</sup> Life expectancy and GDP per capita were appreciably lower in the South. Even though conditions improved significantly between 1881 and 1911, in Northern-Central Italy they improved to a greater degree, in relative terms (Table 1). The North–South literacy gap was huge in 1881; again, although the situation improved in the following decades, half of the Southern population was still illiterate in 1911. Incomes were higher in the North, and the differences grew larger over time, especially in comparison to the industrializing North–West. However, these macro-territorial differences conceal the fact that one of the largest and most populated regions of the North, Veneto, had a very low GNP per capita, lower than in Campania,<sup>5</sup> which helps explain why Veneto's inhabitants displayed the highest propensity to emigrate (see below).

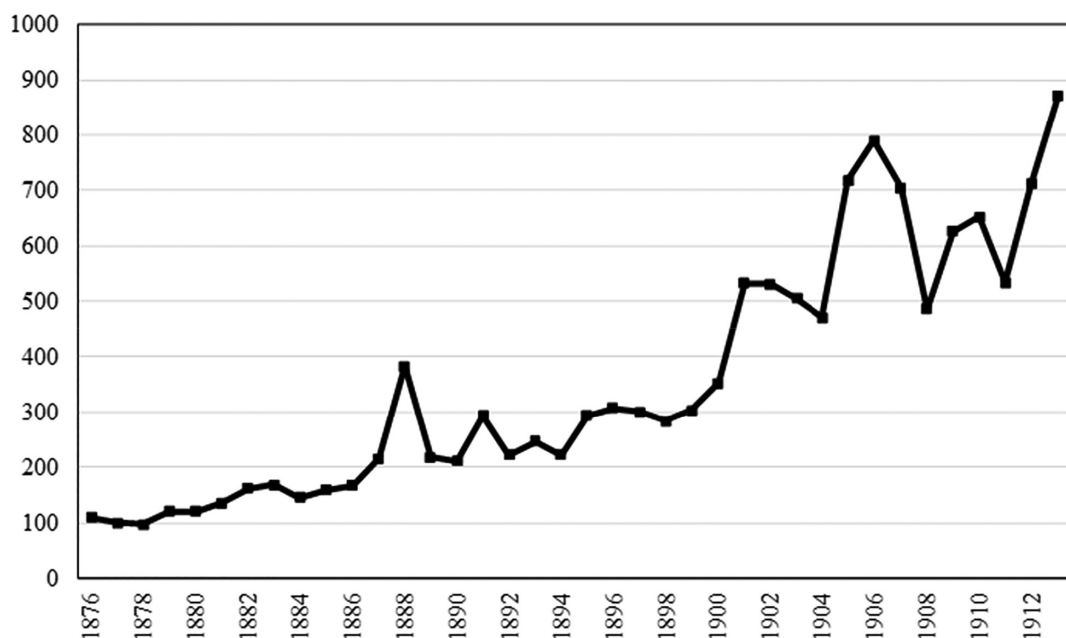


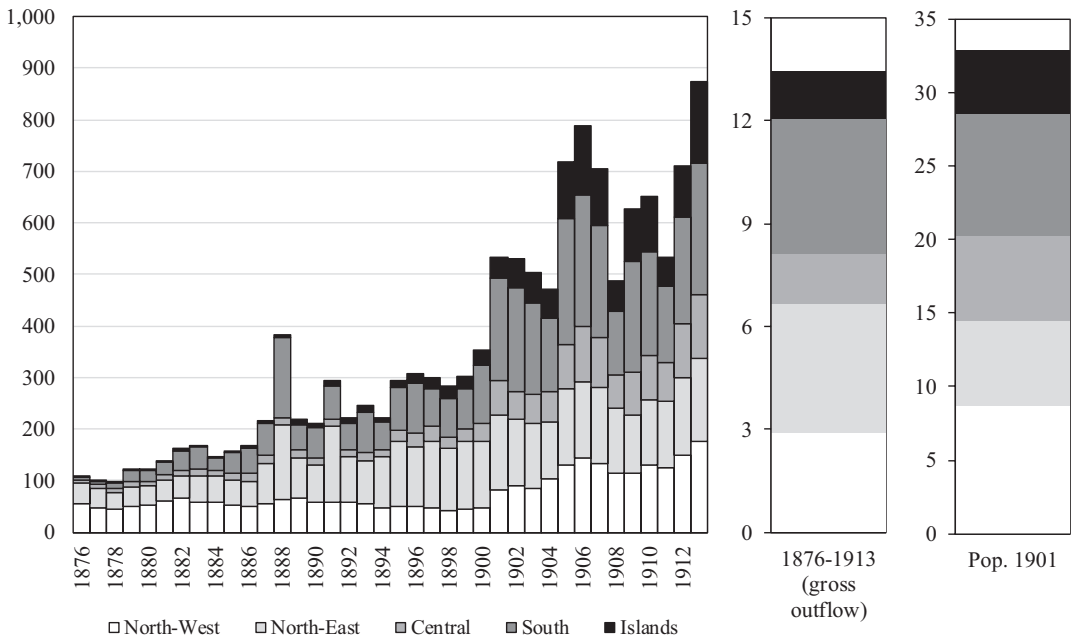
FIGURE 1 Total emigrants from Italy (000s), 1876–1913. Source: Ministero di Agricoltura, Industria e Commercio, Direzione di Statistica, Statistica della emigrazione italiana all'estero 1876–1914, various yearly issues (MAIC data hereafter).

TABLE 1 Territorial differences in Italy in 1881 and 1911.

	Life expectancy (years)		GDP (euro equivalent, 2011)		Literacy rates (15–19-year-olds)	
	1881	1911	1881	1911	1881	1911
North–West (NW)	36.6	46.7	2559	3647	77.5	96.2
North–East (NE)	35.9	49.0	2247	2929	51.7	87.0
Central (C)	34.4	45.0			40.0	71.8
South (S)	33.9	43.0	1958	2541	22.5	51.5
Islands (I)	35.6	42.7			21.5	52.4
Italy	34.7	45.4	2225	2989	45.4	73.4
Area/Italy ratios						
North–West (NW)	1.05	1.03	1.15	1.22	1.71	1.31
North–East (NE)	1.03	1.08	1.01	0.98	1.14	1.19
Central (C)	0.99	0.99			0.88	0.98
South (S)	0.98	0.95	0.88	0.85	0.50	0.70
Islands (I)	1.03	0.94			0.47	0.71

Source: MAIC data and Vecchi (2011).

As to the origins of the emigration by area flows, Figure 2 shows the slightly greater propensity to emigrate from the North (especially the North–East), although this might depend on short-term emigration flows and high incidence of returns (see below). In any case, emigration interested all Italian areas to an appreciable extent.



**FIGURE 2** Total emigration flows by area 1876–1913 and resident population 1901 (000s). Second stacked column = overall 'gross' emigration (in millions). Third stacked column = population according to the 1901 census (in millions). *Source:* MAIC data.

In order to reconstruct the regional origins of emigrants, we have used annual data on province-level emigration.<sup>6</sup> In the period under consideration, the regions that underwent the largest population outflows were: Veneto (3.10 million), Piedmont (1.45 million), Campania (1.41), Sicily (1.28) and Lombardy (1.25). Of course, the numbers of emigrants should also be considered in relation to the regions' resident populations. [Table 2](#) reports the incidence of emigration on the resident population for each region according to the nearest census data, broken down into four sub-periods.

In addition to being the region with the greatest number of emigrants, Veneto was also the region that between 1876 and 1905 showed the highest incidence of emigration in proportion to the resident population. At the turn of the century, 32.5 per 1000 citizens from Veneto left their homes to seek a better fortune abroad. While there were various 'push factors' (pellagra, taxes and excess of mouths to feed) driving emigration, it was essentially poverty that motivated people from Veneto to leave, whereas their alleged diligence and docility made them 'sought after all over the world'.<sup>7</sup> At the turn of the century, we find Abruzzo and Basilicata in second place, so to speak, each with an exodus of 23–24 per 1000 inhabitants. In the final period under analysis (1906–1913), when emigration became mass flight, depopulation was most evident in Abruzzo and Calabria, which lost 24–25 per 1000 of their residents, closely followed by Basilicata – where hyper-migration became a social problem of crucial importance: 'vast areas of the countryside deserted by farmers are already reverting to a wild state, especially in Basilicata'.<sup>8</sup> Studies conducted at the time attributed the outflow from Abruzzo to the progressive worsening of sharecroppers' conditions and complementary sharecropper contracts and in general a farming sector that was becoming increasingly less profitable, struck by disease and a shortage of chemical fertilizers. Long periods of the year in which wages were insufficient and unemployment was widespread contributed to intolerable economic hardship as 'the main cause of emigration'.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, depopulation in Calabria at the end of the 19th century was strongly propelled by flight from the mountains. It was no coincidence that Cosenza was both the region's most mountainous province and the one with the highest emigration rates. Highlands were less fertile, predominated by 'the archaic quality of

TABLE 2 Overall emigration (in thousands), mean yearly migration flows (YF, in thousands).

Region	Total emigration, 1876-1913		IM, 1881-1901 <sup>a</sup>		YF, 1886-1895		IM, 1901-1913		YF, 1906-1913	
	YF, 1876-1885	IM, 1881	YF, 1886-1895	IM, 1881-1901 <sup>a</sup>	YF, 1896-1905	IM, 1901	YF, 1906-1913	IM, 1911		
Piemonte (NW)	29.4	9.5	30.1	10.8	34.7	10.5	63.0	14.8		
Liguria (NW)	5.3	5.7	4.6	4.9	4.9	4.5	8.1	5.4		
Lombardy (NW)	19.9	5.3	21.4	8.2	32.9	7.6	64.7	10.6		
Veneto (NE)	36.8	12.8	88.4	34.2	103.8	32.5	101.5	21.7		
Em.-Rom. (NE)	5.4	2.2	8.3	9.7	23.8	9.3	36.2	0.2		
Tuscany (C)	8.6	3.9	12.3	9.5	22.3	8.9	36.8	1.0		
Marche (C)	1.0	1.0	2.4	13.2	13.3	12.5	26.0	18.6		
Umbria (C)	0.03	0.1	0.2	8.2	4.4	7.6	13.5	17.6		
Lazio (C)	0.04	0.0	0.1	4.4	6.2	3.9	16.0	7.2		
Abruzzo (S)	3.4	2.6	12.2	24.1	33.6	23.0	47.2	24.9		
Campania (S)	9.1	3.4	23.9	19.8	55.1	18.9	66.7	17.2		
Puglia (S)	0.6	0.4	11.5	5.6	10.1	5.1	28.7	10.4		
Basilicata (S)	5.0	9.4	9.4	22.7	11.7	23.8	14.0	23.1		
Calabria (S)	5.2	4.0	13.4	21.5	29.3	20.3	46.3	24.3		
Sicily (I)	1.7	0.6	9.2	12.9	42.0	11.8	94.6	19.9		
Sardinia (I)	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.9	2.1	2.7	8.5	7.8		
Total	131.4	4.5	247.4	13.9	430.4	13.1	671.9	15.0		

Source: MAIC data and official census data.

<sup>a</sup>Since no census was undertaken in 1891, the incidence of migration (IM) for the 1886-1895 period was calculated on the basis of the average population size across the 1881 and 1901 censuses.

soil, the least favourable for farming' and with 'sad' living conditions: 'there were no public services, and all types of waste were simply thrown out onto public roads... (with the spread of infectious diseases among humans and animals). Out of 120 municipalities, 89 have no sewage systems and 72 have no electricity. Potable water is scarce, there are few wells or cisterns, and water is often taken from mountain streams'.<sup>10</sup> In the mid-1800s most Calabrese emigrants, many of whom had had disappointing experiences in South America, began to move to the US. According to a parliamentary inquiry on Calabria, when asked about whether they had been successful, only half of emigrants to Argentina responded affirmatively, while 85% of those who had emigrated to Brazil had returned without success. For those who had chosen to relocate to the US, on the other hand, migration had almost unanimously positive outcomes.<sup>11</sup> 'Calabrese farmers in North America become miners, ditch diggers, travelling fruit and vegetable salesmen, or take other jobs. Some of the cleverer ones even become bankers, but all are successful'.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 3 shows the ratios of emigration flows to the resident population across four time sub-periods and five distinct geographical areas. The North-East initially displayed higher rates and showed consistently high rates over the four sub-periods. Central, South and (especially) Insular Italy – Sicily in particular – expressed strong growth over time and became the major areas of emigration only at the end of the overall period examined here.

## A provincial-level analysis

On the eve of World War I there were about 20 Italian provinces with over 13,000 emigrants leaving per year. These provinces were distributed along the entire stretch of the Italian peninsula (Table 3). Massive numbers departed from both the poor Southern provinces as well as the rich provinces of Lombardy, where emigration was fed by mountain communities with a long tradition of seasonal and temporary emigration.<sup>13</sup> More specifically, in Lombardy an increasing number of emigrants came from the Alpine valleys, which entered into a deep crisis at the end of the final decades of the 19th century, disrupting the local productive system and equilibrium and transforming migration flows from seasonal into permanent.<sup>14</sup>

As shown in Table 3, Udine was the major generator of emigration for the entire period; Belluno also boasted a nearly constant outflow throughout this period with significant peaks in the last decade of the 1800s (both provinces were part of the Veneto region).

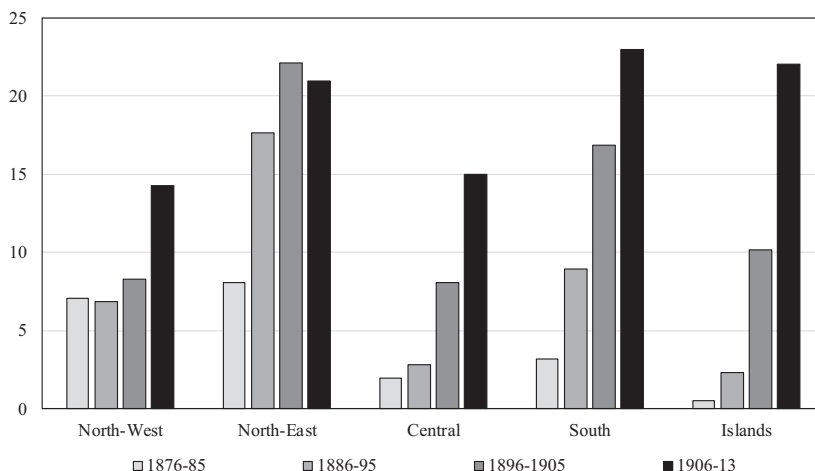


FIGURE 3 Origin and timing of emigration flows across areas and sub-periods (ratio between mean annual migration flows/population  $\times$  1,000). Source: MAIC data.

TABLE 3 Provinces generating the highest number of emigrants (absolute values).

Province	Pop. 1881	1876	1880	1884	1888	1892	1896	1900	1904	1908	1912
Udine (NE)	501,745	17,871	17,800	25,366	38,429	81,248	41,451	43,306	26,042	32,841	42,048
Caserta (S)	714,131	455	889	304	2827	7559	5353	8606	14,524	12,975	24,419
Novara (NW)	675,926	9143	3373	3379	3264	7133	3989	4561	18,539	18,456	22,796
Turin (NW)	1,029,214	14,181	12,826	6381	8413	14,113	2676	4292	16,918	18,310	22,242
Rome (C)	903,472	224	17	2	25	172	64	1253	6571	8362	17,873
Vicenza (NE)	396,349	1837	2643	2742	8128	16,592	7382	11,270	11,022	10,297	17,378
Belluno (NE)	174,140	11,740	9687	10,139	11,378	29,328	16,467	25,479	14,561	17,814	17,121
Cosenza (S)	451,185	764	2725	256	9662	5799	0	0	14,246	13,345	17,076
Bari (S)	679,499	310	465	273	1080	2097	1305	20	9313	11,165	16,494
Como (NW)	515,050	4018	6586	4690	5154	6248	979	2371	12,494	13,554	16,412
Bergamo (NW)	390,775	4250	3299	3034	2537	10,512	4078	5902	7796	9827	15,986
Catanzaro (S)	433,975	105	142	8	5092	3582	56	0	10,391	8938	15,885
Catania (I)	563,457	34	27	8	692	896	396	301	6456	11,533	15,754
Siracusa (I)	341,526	10	1	3	33	139	149	484	5659	7019	15,308
Palermo (I)	699,151	441	299	248	3451	8213	754	54	13,908	9681	14,922
Potenza (S)	524,504	1102	5182	124	9348	7327	0	0	11,856	10,126	14,868
Salerno (S)	550,157	1295	5811	0	9703	7923	0	0	11,985	7984	14,601
Aquila (S)	353,027	3	128	1346	1764	6010	3908	4157	10,355	9689	14,471
Reggio C. (S)	372,723	33	85	9	270	659	0	6	10,845	8269	14,362
Messina (I)	460,924	387	419	31	1309	3258	2013	6129	10,666	7498	14,287
Perugia (C)	572,060	60	18	6	109	169	156	1900	6683	10,210	14,041
Girgenti (I)	312,487	141	29	14	862	1504	216	0	6522	5516	13,312

Source: MAIC data.

TABLE 4 Province clusters on the basis of emigration flow timing: Percentage distribution of overall emigrations outflows across sub-periods.

	1876–1885	1886–1895	1896–1905	1906–1913	Total
<b>Italy</b>	9.8	18.3	32.0	39.9	100
<b>A. Early generators</b> Porto Maurizio (Imperia), Como, Milan, Turin, Massa Carrara, Genoa, Lucca, Cuneo	22.9	22.8	23.4	30.8	100
<b>B. Middle-early generators</b> Ferrara, Mantua, Padua, Foggia, Treviso, Venice, Rovigo	4.6	38.4	26.3	30.7	100
<b>C. Average (nation-similar)</b> Macerata, Sondrio, Novara, Pisa, Catanzaro, Bergamo, Modena, Parma, Pavia, Cosenza, Verona, Piacenza, Naples, Cremona, Vicenza, Campobasso, Potenza, Salerno, Livorno, Belluno, Udine, Ravenna, Aquila	12.0	21.0	34.0	33.0	100
<b>D. Middle-late generators</b> Caserta, Chieti, Palermo, Benevento, Avellino, Reggio Emilia, Reggio Calabria, Bologna	2.6	11.9	41.9	43.6	100
<b>E. Late-comers</b> Sassari, Siracusa, Caltanissetta, Grosseto, Trapani, Perugia Catania, Roma, Lecce, Arezzo, Cagliari, Bari, Siena, Pesaro, Teramo, Ascoli Piceno, Florence, Girgenti (Agrigento), Forlì, Messina, Brescia, Ancona, Alessandria	2.4	4.9	29.7	63.1	100

Bold value indicates cluster outflows appreciably larger than those observed at the overall national level.

Many Southern provinces had fluctuating flows between 1876 and the end of the 1880s when the difficult years of 1887 and 1888 sparked emigration from many cities in the South – Caserta, Catanzaro, Bari and all of Sicily's urban centres – which had previously experienced the emigration of at most a few hundred people per year. On the other hand, Southern provinces such as Cosenza, Potenza and Salerno showed significant emigration as early as 1876, and outflows grew over the years from 11 thousand to 17 thousand emigrants annually at the turn of the century.

Table 4 displays a clustering of provinces on the basis of their similarity to the overall national distribution of emigration flows over the four sub-periods. Five groups of provinces were identified on the basis of the (dis)similarity of the emigration timing to the national trend. Group C ('average', or 'nation-similar') includes provinces with trends that are, by and large, similar to the national one, with greater numbers in the latter half of the observed period. Group A ('early generators') includes provinces that had a much higher concentration of emigrants in the first sub-period compared to the national trend, with almost half of all outflows in the first half of the observed period. Group B ('middle-early generators') comprises provinces with emigration concentrated in the 1886–1895 sub-period. Group D ('middle-late generators') features provinces that are about 10 points distant from the national trend during 1906–1913 sub-period, with emigration lows more significantly shifted towards the second half of the entire period. Finally, Group E ('late-comers') refers to provinces experiencing an outflow surge in the final sub-period, with 20-point differences compared to the national average.



In the first sub-period (1876–1885) the provinces pertaining to Liguria, Lombardy, Piedmont and Tuscany ('early generators') displayed a greater propensity to migrate compared to the national average, although numbers were relatively small. In the following decade outflows moved eastward, towards the 'middle-early generators': more people left from the area between Mantua and Treviso, comprising various Veneto provinces, as well as Foggia in the South. The 'middle-late generators' are quite scattered across the country: from Reggio Emilia to Palermo, passing through Benevento and Reggio Calabria. Finally, among 'late-comers', where sizeable outflows materialized mostly in the fourth sub-period, one finds many provinces from the Islands and Central Italy, but also areas in Puglia in the South, as well as Brescia and Alessandria in the North–West. There is no obvious, strong pattern underlying the trends expressed by Italian provinces in producing demographic outflows (Figure 4). These trends appear to coincide with, for example, Gould's analysis in which the migratory propensity of Italian provinces changes in a 'process of diffusion' (of information and ideas) from the areas more accustomed to their inhabitants seeking their fortune abroad, to areas less inhabited, but ready to follow the example.<sup>15</sup>

One possible interpretation of these province clusters is to resort to historical-social explanations of emigration. For example, in these pre-war years the mass exodus from some provinces compared to others could be clarified by reconstructing local and family histories and well-established migration chains.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, among late-comers one finds many (but not all) provinces that were formerly part of the less economically innovative and more socially conservative Papal States and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.<sup>17</sup>

## DRIVERS OF EMIGRATION FLOWS

Emigration drivers are not the same for all origin countries. Hatton and Williamson's (2002) quantitative and econometric analysis of 12 European countries (1860–1913) seems to adequately attest an interesting inverse relationship between migratory propensity and incidence of agricultural employment.<sup>18</sup> Although a subsequent study on the Norwegian case found that migrants from urban areas were negatively selected from the sending population,<sup>19</sup> in the Italian case overseas migratory movements involved high numbers of agricultural workers, whose propensity to migrate was apparently influenced also by agricultural-price shocks.<sup>20</sup> Nor does a recent study of the standard economic model explaining migratory flows, based mainly on financial motivations and demographic pressure, account for the migratory dynamics of all countries involved, nor does it provide an exhaustive interpretation of the Italian case.<sup>21</sup> The combination of backwardness and emigration, which has shaped some interpretative paradigms of Italian emigration, does not hold up to more detailed analysis, opening the way for greater attention to the persistence of migratory traditions prior to the age of industrialization, as well as the importance of family networks and pathways<sup>22</sup> and political and migration institutions.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, the decision to migrate in the nineteenth century entailed nonpecuniary considerations as well, which represented significant factors of attraction. Ramella,<sup>24</sup> for example, studied the temporary migratory flows of workers from Piedmont to France and textile workers from Biella (Piedmont) to the United States. In the second case a sizeable exodus to Paterson (New Jersey) began in the early 1880s (with the introduction of steam-powered looms). These immigrants were specialized workers and earned 7 instead of 3.5 lire, and women's wages were almost identical to men's. But what the letters from these emigrants highlighted the most was how 'we enjoyed so much freedom', politically and in terms of trade unions, and they all underscored the positive image of the United States, incessantly encouraging more emigration.

According to mainstream economic theory migration is spurred by income differentials and, in general, by poverty at home and better living standards abroad.<sup>25</sup> The relationship between emigration and smaller wage differentials has been the object of several studies: Taylor and Williamson (1997) hypothesize that in the absence of mass immigration after 1870, Italians' real wages in 1910 would have been 27% higher in Argentina, 17% higher in Australia and 9% higher in the United States, whereas real wages would have been 24% lower in Ireland and



trap effect on migration (according to [Hatton and Williamson](#),<sup>28</sup> had Italy's income per capita remained unchanged from its 1900 value, emigration in 1913 would have been almost 27% lower) does not seem to capture the regional and provincial differences in emigration propensity.

Hence, other factors must have come into play and contributed to flow size and variability. As recently underlined,<sup>29</sup> for instance, even protectionist policies might have reduced the relative incentive to migrate away from the new sugar-producing areas. Other widely acknowledged push factors include demographic pressure,<sup>30</sup> agricultural-price shocks (as previously mentioned), assessment of risk and future prospects offered by destination countries,<sup>31</sup> migration chains (the initial migration flows influenced the nature of subsequent ones), but perhaps above all the role of the family in the Italian case. In general, neo-classical migration theory views the decision to emigrate as an individual choice aimed at maximizing one's income and reacting to geographical differences in labour supply and demand.<sup>32</sup> Basically, 'it did not consider other motives as the basis for migration, nor did it account for differences between migrants in terms of their social groups, families or communities'.<sup>33</sup> As correctly underlined by the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM), the neo-classical theory is too rigid in its identification of the causes of migration insofar as the decision to migrate often rests on a family strategy aimed at spreading out the risk of unemployment and overcoming the limits of local markets.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, family and social relationships in the area of origin also represent a key element of individual migration strategies.

For example, Sardinians tended not to favour departures and, in any case, opted for short-term, short-range migration routes. In spite of its strong and traditional culture of mobility (linked to fishing), migrants were few, went mainly to the nearby Mediterranean African countries and almost always ended up returning to Italy. In 1901, the great majority continued to prefer Africa as a short-term destination and income source. Many Sardinians disembarked on the Tunisian coast in May and went to work in the forests (where for instance they knew how to remove the bark of cork-oaks) or in the mines over the summer months – Sardinians from Iglesias were renowned for their technical knowledge about minerals, which was often matched by their ability in tunnel construction and mineral triage.<sup>35</sup>

It was not only the presence of weak and archaic traditions or the more isolated Sardinian population's limited horizons (defined by [Coletti](#) as 'too wild to emigrate') that kept Sardinians from emigrating.<sup>36</sup> Above all, strong family cohesion, in which patriarchal authority acted powerfully to maintain the compactness of village communities, prevented a mass exodus and made repatriation a widespread practice.<sup>37</sup> Only with the loosening of this strong cultural dimension and the growing marginalization of the rural population did Sardinians begin (after World War II) to join the strong, domestic migratory flows, particularly towards Italy's urban-industrial areas in the North, and implement an ability to solve problems and recurrent crises through what has been defined as the 'culture of mobility': 'Often in the Central and Eastern Alps just one child, generally the eldest, would marry... The others, younger ones, were often encouraged to emigrate'.<sup>38</sup> The underlying idea was that it was necessary to leave 'temporarily one's land in order to better maintain it'.<sup>39</sup>

In sum, migration is a remarkably complex phenomenon and cannot be easily explained by strictly economic models. Migrants have always been social actors whose decision to emigrate was often a temporary solution to a state of necessity, supported by comparatively well-organized family planning. If the propensity to migrate is defined in social terms, the central role of the family helps shed light on the varying tendencies to move expressed by geographical areas, as well as apparent discrepancies in timing and consistency of migration flows, as seen above.

Finally, according to authoritative economic interpretations, one last possible push factor driving the rapid growth of emigration flows after 1880 regards the relationship between improved well-being and increasing outward movements, the key factor being the rise of per capita income supported by a strong positive correlation with the migration rate.<sup>40</sup> According to these authors, the increase in per capita income acted as a sort of emigration multiplier: once the initial emigrants' leaving had been facilitated, subsequent migrants were helped to overcome the 'poverty trap' with remittances which were (also) used to purchase the family's passage.<sup>41</sup> According to a complementary historical interpretation, overcoming the poverty trap was the result of shared family decisions based on calculations and forecasts made by the extended families of small landowners or sharecroppers (who

were simultaneously owners, tenants and day labourers, a combination common all over southern Italy) selling a small piece of property, 'a hovel or fragment of land' that was not sufficient to feed a family, but could be sold for enough resources to finance the trip abroad.<sup>42</sup> Later on, as it was increasingly understood that migrating was a profitable enterprise, opportunities to obtain credit multiplied, from loans by notable locals or labour associations (peasant leagues lent the sum for the journey at a 10% interest rate) to the increasingly common use of wives' dowries to pay for the trip.<sup>43</sup> Young men who owned nothing, as revealed by a parliamentary inquiry in Sicily, married before emigrating 'and sold or used the dowry with the consent of the wife, who was left at home'.<sup>44</sup> More recent historical analyses emphasize the importance of female participation in the enterprise, with their dowries, as well as savings or the sale of small pieces of land.<sup>45</sup>

## DESTINATIONS OF EMIGRATION FLOWS

In 1911 Italians living abroad corresponded to about one-sixth of those residing in Italy itself (Choate, 2007, p. 732).<sup>46</sup> What were the destinations of this mass exodus between 1883 and 1913? In the period examined here Italian migrants' major destinations were, in order of flow size, Europe, the United States, and Latin America. Figure 5 indicates the changing incidence of these three areas: it is quite clear that as Latin America (primarily Argentina and Brazil) lost ground over time, as the United States became the preferred destination; the appeal of the European labour market remained stable and managed to compensate for the lack of labour demand in the United States during the crisis of 1907. In spite of the impetuous growth of the United States' appeal (between 1899 and 1906 the share of Italian emigrants departing for the United States rose from 20% to 45%), on average there have always been strong migration flows towards Europe, absorbing 40% of departures with a stable incidence over time, while the United States accounted for 33% of all emigration flows and South America for 25%.

Other European countries were especially preferred as short-range destinations by Northern Italians (Figure 6): France appealed to emigrants from North-West and Central Italy, Switzerland to the entire North, while Germany, Austria and Hungary exerted their appeal almost exclusively to North-East migrants.

It is also clear that there was only a marginal incidence of Southerners among emigrants towards Europe. Most people from the South and Islands opted for long-range migration, towards the Americas, and especially the United States, as did people from Central Italy, especially immediately prior to World War I. Flow destination

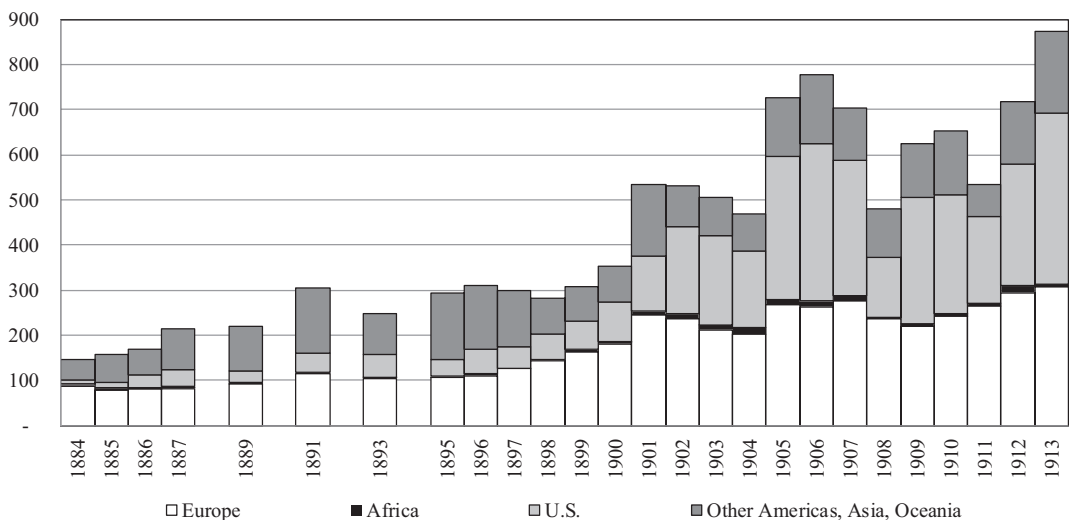


FIGURE 5 Destinations of emigration flows 1884–1913 (in thousands). Data missing for some years.

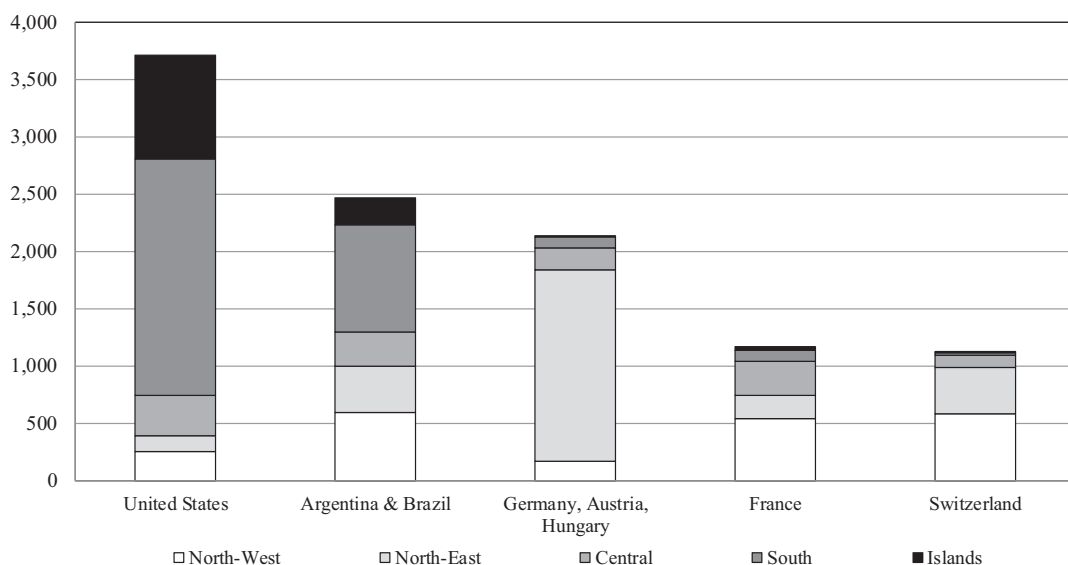


FIGURE 6 Area of origin of emigration flows for selected major destinations, 1884–1913 (in thousands). Data missing for some years. Source: MAIC data.

is equally important in view of recent studies investigating possible long-run effects of past international mass migration on current trade among migrants' origin and destination communities. Many Italian regions still export goods to national economies that were once destinations of migrants, giving rise to a so-called diaspora effect on current Italian regions' exports.<sup>47</sup>

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ITALIAN EMIGRATION FLOWS

Italian emigration flows were made up prevalently by men. The share of women varied between 15% and 24% and followed a slightly different path than that of men. In the 1890s the proportion of women peaked, rising to one-quarter of overall flows (Figure 7). This can be explained by a large wave of family groups migrating together, mainly to South America.

In absolute terms, on the other hand, the decline at the end of the century, for example, is not in line with male migrants whose numbers remain rather stable and probably reflect the difficulties experienced in the Latin American destination countries towards which family groups traditionally emigrated. Female migration subsequently returned to growth, this time towards the United States. Finally, by analysing index numbers on a fixed basis and using 1884 as a benchmark (=100), the year 1913 emerges as the year male emigrants increased more than five-fold in the span of 30 years, but female emigrants increased up to seven-fold. This impetuous growth in the 13 years prior to World War I was led by three regions in particular. Veneto, Sicily and Campania – with respectively 358, 335 and 329 thousand emigrants (in the period 1884–1913) – are the three regions with the greatest overall number of female emigrants. Furthermore, the temporal distribution of departures shows how the numbers of female emigrants from Sicily reached the greatest peaks in the new century and, overall, in the last 2 years before the war. These women left most frequently alone or with children to join their husbands overseas, almost always in the United States.

Women from Sicily and Campania accounted for nearly one-half of all female emigrants over the long term, with very high peaks in the 1890s, settling down to about one-quarter of total departures in the new century. On

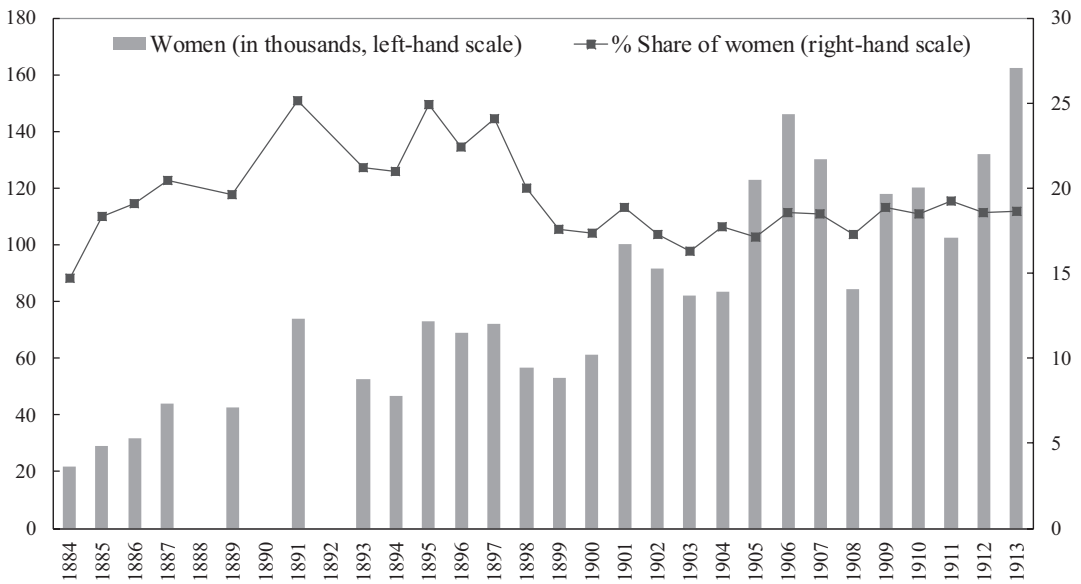


FIGURE 7 Women emigrating from Italy, 1884–1913. Data missing for some years. Source: MAIC data.

the other hand, women from Veneto began to leave in massive numbers at the end of the 1880s, following nuclear families mainly to South America. These flows slowed towards the end of the century due to crises in the receiving countries. Flows returned to growth at the beginning of the 1900s with high points after 1911, but this time flows were directed mainly to Europe (Germany and Austria) and reflected family reunification strategies, as well as an increasingly sharp upward trend in the supply of women's jobs – an early sign of emancipation and escape from poverty through work abroad.<sup>48</sup>

An analysis of migratory trends of Italians over the long term, along with that of minors and women (Figure 8), reveals a similarity between female and underage emigration, reinforcing the hypothesis of movements mainly involving nuclear families and demonstrating a higher rate of growth compared to overall emigration. Women's and children's migratory tendencies consistently follow the trends of total emigration and indicate the steady propensity of families to leave together or rejoin each other later in places of work abroad – with peaks during migration booms in Latin America (the 1890s) and the United States (1905–1907). Overall, in the period analysed 19% of emigrants were women and 11% were minors. The incidence of women and minors among emigrants was consistently higher, across all periods, in the Islands and South. Both subgroups, however, express a small decline over time, perhaps indicating a weaker centrality of families (or an increase in circular migration, with more frequent male emigrants crossing the Atlantic and leaving the family behind).

There is no obvious connection, at aggregate level, between emigration flows and emigrants' literacy levels. People migrated from the literate North as well as from the Islands, where the level of literacy was significantly lower. By 1911 the level of literacy in the South had improved, only rising to just over 50% of 15–19-year-olds (Table 5).

Only at the beginning of the 1900s was widespread illiteracy in Southern Italy addressed as a major emigration policy concern. The need to provide better schooling to illiterate adults was being felt on all sides, particularly once it became concretely possible that the U.S. labour market, as had already happened in the Commonwealth countries, could close its doors to illiterate workers. Attempts – undertaken in 1897, 1902, 1907 and 1913 – to introduce legislation limiting immigration to those passing a literacy test were blocked by vetoes by U.S. Presidents Cleveland and Taft, but the issue was certainly not resolved. Among immigrants allowed into the United States between 1899 and 1920, the ethnic group with the highest illiteracy rate was Southern Italians (54%; Table 6; it

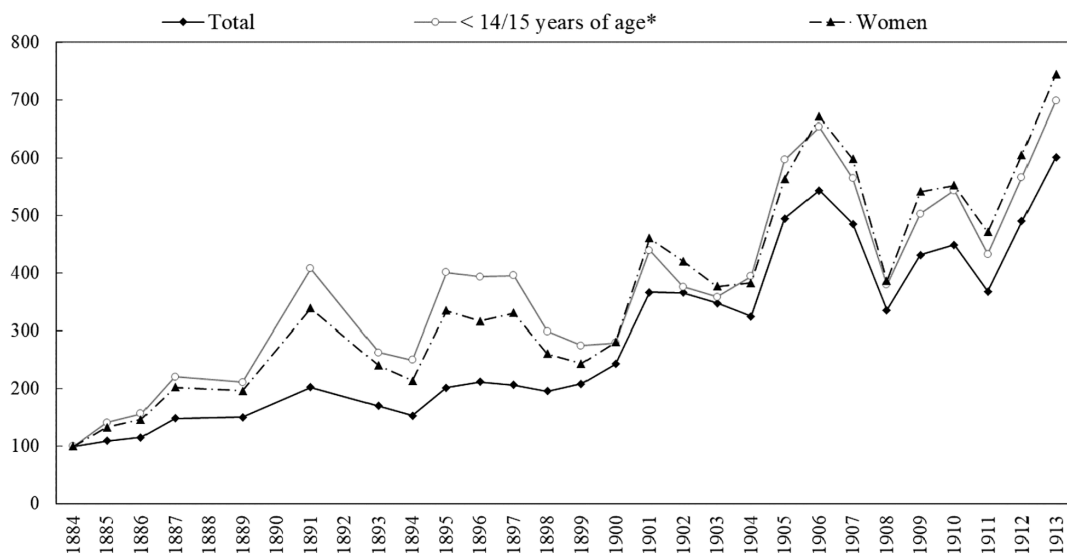


FIGURE 8 Italian emigration flows 1884–1913, highlighting minors and women: Index numbers (1884 = 100). \*14-year-olds or younger until 1903, 15-year-olds or younger from 1904. Data missing for some years. Source: MAIC data and Istat, *Annuario statistico*, various issues.

TABLE 5 Literacy rates among 15–19-year-olds by area in 1881, 1901 and 1911.

Year	North-West	North-East	Central	South	Islands	Italy
1881	77.5	51.7	40.0	22.5	21.5	45.4
1901	91.0	75.6	59.3	37.7	35.3	61.9
1911	96.2	87.0	71.8	51.5	52.4	73.4

Source: Vecchi (2011).

TABLE 6 Illiteracy rates among 15+–year-old immigrants allowed into the United States in 1899–1910.

	Total immigrants admitted (at least 15 years of age)	Of which illiterates	% of illiterates
Southern Italians	1,690,376	911,566	53.9
Croatians and Slovenians	320,977	115,785	36.5
Polish	861,303	304,675	35.4
Hebrew	806,786	209,507	26.0
Slovaks	342,583	82,216	24.0
Northern Italians	339,301	38,897	11.5
Hungarians	307,082	35,004	11.4
Germans	625,793	32,236	5.2
Irish	416,640	10,721	2.6
English	347,458	3647	1.0
Scandinavian	530,634	2221	0.4

Source: Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1914).

TABLE 7 Schools for emigration-bound adults, 1921.

Region	Schools	Enrolments	Completion rate (%)
Marche	18	805	52
Umbria	5	118	86
Lazio	24	978	37
Abruzzi-Molise	141	5367	44
Campania	115	3707	53
Puglia	75	3443	25
Basilicata	43	1506	52
Calabria	218	7512	52
Sicily	148	7124	60
Sardinia	7	400	41
Total	794	30,960	49

Source: [Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione](#), *L'emigrazione italiana*, p. 1509.

is telling that the only national origin that American authorities saw fit to divide into subnational groups was the Italian one).

The comparatively low levels of literacy of Italians vis-à-vis other migrants were a source of concern in Italy. Out of fear of even a partial block of the American market, the Italian government in 1904 began to offer emigrants evening and Sunday courses in reading and writing.<sup>49</sup> One-half of the cost of these courses was covered by the Ministry of Education and the other half by the Fund for Emigration.<sup>50</sup> In the 1904–1905 financial year the Ministry of Education managed to establish 300 evening and weekend schools for illiterate adults as well as 450 similar schools in Southern regions. The 100 2-h lessons were held on workday evenings and Sundays when a sufficient number of pupils could be gathered. The courses were limited to those who were committed to emigration, but youths over the age of 12 who had never gone to school were also accepted. In 1921 the schools involved in this experiment had grown to 794, mainly located in the South and generally in regions with high rates of illiteracy (Table 7). The courses were shut down in 1921, with approximately one-half of all pupils successfully completing the course requirements. From this perspective, emigration flows definitely had a positive impact on literacy. The emigrants themselves quickly understood the handicap associated with not knowing how to read and write and in their letters home urged their relatives and friends to pursue education. In Calabria illiteracy declined in areas featuring the strongest emigration propensity: 'in 1911 the highest percentage of illiterates 1911 was in the province of Reggio, that had contributed least to emigration'.<sup>51</sup> During the years of mass exodus, literacy improved throughout the entire country, but most markedly in the Southern regions and on the Islands. A study on individual heights (determined by living standards besides fundamental genetic factors) reveals that the seemingly disadvantaged southern Italian immigrants were, indeed, 'the best of their class', thus changing the interpretation of the Italian migration for the receiving and the sending economies.<sup>52</sup>

Emigrants' professional qualifications at the time of departure reflect a high (but fluctuating) percentage of farm workers. From 1904 onwards, however, the incidence of farm workers began to steadily decrease, going down to 40% of total emigrants (Figure 9).

One can understand that many agricultural workers (including small landowners, tenants and farm labourers) – but also artisans affected by the crisis, excessive taxes, the breakdown of local markets and import competition by cheaper industrial products – chose to leave.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, it should be emphasized that professional status data is based on statements made upon departure, and emigrants may have opportunistically adapted their status to what was required on foreign markets: Italian emigrants 'did not always do the same job abroad that



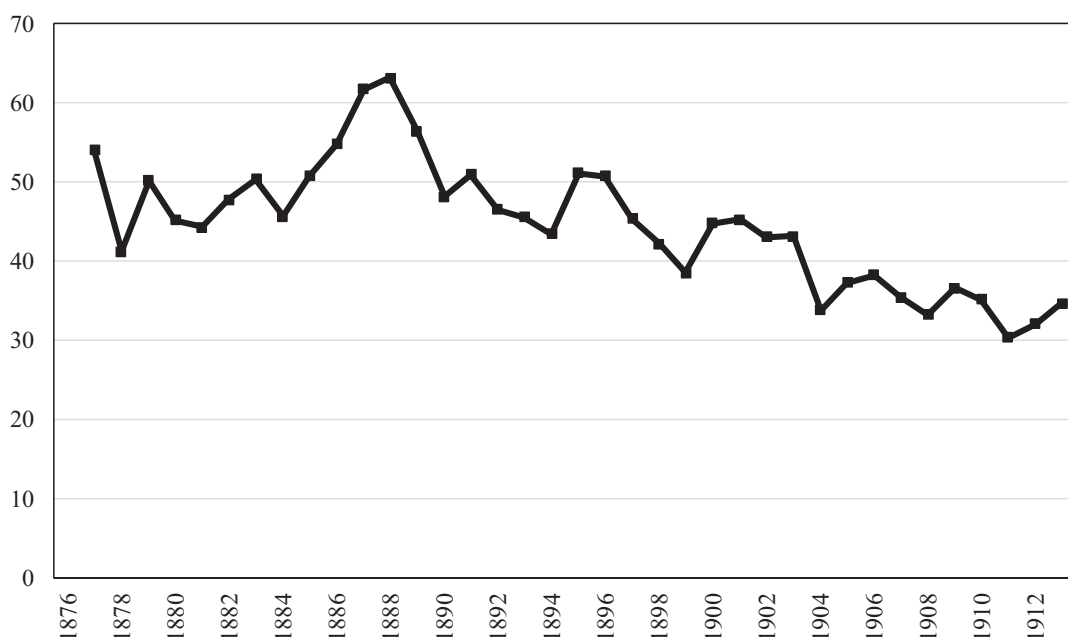


FIGURE 9 Incidence of farm workers among emigrants, 1877–1913. Source: MAIC data.

they did at home and generally in the country of immigration they adapted to any job that would ensure them a living wage'.<sup>54</sup> Anticipating that abroad they would not work in agriculture, some emigrants probably preferred to conceal their rural background so as not to compromise their chances of future employment. An investigation by the Emigration Fund Commission brought to light how in 1909 the most prevalent category among emigrants was still farm labourers (64%), followed by 20% declaring no profession (composed mainly of women and children).<sup>55</sup> Regarding the U.S. market, Rossi wrote in 1910: 'Four-fifths of the Italians are unqualified farm labourers, farmers and house servants and this proportion has increased in recent years, reaching 90.5% of immigration in 1908–1909. The remainder consists of qualified workers: employees in the garment industry, carpenters, cabinet makers and other woodworkers, tanners, leather workers, saddle makers and shoemakers, barbers and hairdressers. In general miners, stonecutters and masons come mainly from Piedmont, Lombardy, Veneto and Emilia'.<sup>56</sup>

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although studies on migratory patterns often examine a single (origin or destination) country during the 'age of mass migration' in the latter half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, some significant efforts focus on the comparison of population flows from major European countries, identifying enlightening specificities of the Italian case which helped shape the size and the nature of its outflows (and some of which are also highlighted here): the country's comparatively late industrialization and the high incidence of agricultural workers; the prominent role played by South American destinations; the strong prevalence of practitioners of Roman Catholicism (shared, for instance, with Irish emigrants) and the diffidence displayed by North American countries towards Catholics; the gender imbalance reflecting the sturdy dominance of men; the lack of push factors engendered by major agricultural crises (such as the Great Famine in Ireland and crop failures in 1860s Sweden).<sup>57</sup>

In this article, we have instead focused mostly on internal territorial differences of migratory flows.<sup>58</sup> Our analyses thus fill a gap in the literature on Italian emigration. Using annual province-level data on Italian emigration between 1876 and 1913 we have shown not only that the regions generating the largest population outflows

were located in the Northern part of the country and were directed to European destinations, but that explanations privileging economic factors as emigration drivers are feeble. The Italian provinces generating the greatest outflows do not appear to share any characteristics nor follow any strong underlying pattern as regards their economic profile.

All of Italy was involved in the Great Emigration, thus disproving the misconceptions such as the prevalence of *Southern* origins. Indeed, a slightly greater propensity to emigrate was observed in the North (Veneto, Lombardy and Piedmont), especially in Veneto with more than 3 million citizens who moved abroad and the highest incidence of emigration in proportion to the resident population. Nevertheless, ratios of emigration flows to resident population show a very strong increase also in Central and Southern Italy towards the end of the period analysed (1906–1913).

Italian mass migration cannot be explained solely by the existence of situations of underdevelopment, backward economic conditions and income differentials with the destination country. In fact, regions with the similar socio-economic features, for example Sardinia and Sicily, tell two very different stories: Sicily shows high and increasing, almost depopulating, migration flows, while Sardinia was the region displaying the weakest propensity to migrate and the lowest number of people who left. Other explanations have to come into play.

Analysis of migration propensity by province and over time reveals that, from the 'early generators' (Liguria, Lombardy and Piedmont), the exodus moved eastward (with the province of Udine as a consistent major contributor) and then finally to the provinces of Central-South (Palermo, Potenza and Salerno). The migratory propensity of Italian provinces changed as information and ideas spread around the country following a West to East to South geographical path. However, the lack of a precise trajectory among 'late-comers' (1906–1913), comprising provinces scattered all over Italy, has no obvious explanation. We can speculate that these late-comers, who had been left out of the mass exodus, began to 'catch up' before World War I.

The United States was not the prevalent destination of Italy's emigrants. The strongest migration flows were towards Europe, which absorbed 40% of departures, while the United States accounted for 33% and South America for 25% of overall emigration flows. The stable incidence of Europe over time underscores the importance of geographical proximity and long-term pre-unification migration currents. However, this was mainly the case of emigrants leaving from the North, while people from the South tended to undertake long-range migratory projects.

There was a consistently higher incidence, across all periods, of women and minors coming from the South – indicating families or family reunifications. Women and minors tended to join long-range movements of male migrants to overseas destinations. Since emigrants' literacy levels were much lower in the South compared to the North (and to other nationalities, as well), when the United States threatened to close its doors to illiterate workers, the Italian government promoted literacy among aspiring emigrants setting up hundreds of schools for 'emigrant adults' in the areas with the highest illiteracy rates. Farm workers accounted, on average, for half of the people departing until the beginning of the new century, when the incidence of farm workers dropped to one-third of total expatriates. This changing incidence is difficult to interpret; however, since the professional status was based on statements made upon departure, perhaps emigrants adapted to (perceived) foreign markets' requirements, preferring to declare themselves not engaged in agriculture so as not to compromise their possibilities of future employment.

These reflections on the nature of the Great Migration might also contribute to a better understanding of Italy's current phase of emigration. At the end of the 20th century, emigration was no longer an issue of public concern in Italy; the country was busier addressing its newfound status as a mass immigration destination. But since then, there has emerged a new era of emigration, fuelled by the Great Recession, relaxed constraints on international mobility promoted within a framework of European integration, and the persistent structural weakness of the domestic labour market. The 'new emigration' displays novel features (a relatively high incidence of well-educated individuals, expressing a 'brain drain'; the spread of emigration among naturalized Italians; a substantial gender balance), but shares traits with the Great Migration: the geographic variety of emigrant origins, albeit with a higher incidence among Northern regions; the continued incidence of relatively low-skilled and low-educated individuals among those leaving the country; the comparatively attractive nature of labour markets

abroad; the overall complexity of the phenomenon – thus highlighting the long-term continuity underpinning emigration from Italy.<sup>59</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## PEER REVIEW

The peer review history for this article is available at <https://www.webofscience.com/api/gateway/wos/peer-review/10.1111/imig.13344>.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> During the period 1811–1911, net emigration was about one-third of the gross flow. In general, data show a higher proportion of returns among emigrants to Europe than among emigrants to the United States and Latin America (Del Boca & Venturini, *Italian Migration*). As regards emigrants to overseas destinations, between 1905 and 1915 almost 2 million people repatriated, of which two-thirds from the United States and one-third from South America (Favero & Tassello, *Cent'anni di emigrazione italiana*, p. 28).

<sup>2</sup> On the evolution of Italy's regional inequality in the long run, from around Unification up to the present, see: Felice, 'The Roots'.

<sup>3</sup> See: Zamagni, *The Italian economy*; Fenoaltea, *L'economia italiana*.

<sup>4</sup> The North–South literacy gap was already substantial in 1821 and grew markedly wider through the beginning of the 20th century (Ciccarelli & Weisdorf, 'Pioneering into the Past'). These findings are reflected in recent research on access to education and its capability to generate literacy; rates of enrolment differed substantially between 1861 and 1912, with the Northern regions aiming to increase schooling for all, while the Centre and the South implemented a more elitist model (Bozzano et al., 'Whither education?'; Di Martino & Vasta, *Ricchi per caso*).

<sup>5</sup> Vecchi, *In ricchezza e in povertà*.

<sup>6</sup> We are aware of previous studies on Italian regional migration using different, *less-detailed* datasets (Rosoli, *Un secolo di emigrazione*). The data underlying this article were drawn from a yearly dataset on Italian migration published by the Ministero di Agricoltura, Industria e Commercio, Direzione di Statistica between 1876 and 1920, which we've used for the 1876–1914 period.

<sup>7</sup> Franzina, *Storia dell'emigrazione veneta*, pp. 55 and 84. See also: Franzina, *La grande migrazione*.

<sup>8</sup> Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Studio sulle migrazioni moderne d'Europa in special modo quella d'Italia'.

<sup>9</sup> Inchiesta parlamentare, pp. 253–4. See also: Bevilacqua et al., *Storia dell'emigrazione italiana*. On wages in agriculture see: Zamagni, *Dalla periferia al centro*, pp. 63–93 and Federico et al., 'The Origins of the Italian Regional Divide'.

<sup>10</sup> Taruffi et al., *La questione agraria*, p. 709.

<sup>11</sup> On the history of Italian emigrants in the United States (and also on their success stories), see: Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* (1919), one of the first books in English on Italian emigration, arguing that Italian workers, especially Southern ones, have been faced with only three alternatives: striking, revolution or migration. See also: Rolle, *The Immigrant Upraised*; Tomasi, *Italian Americans*; Aldrich and Waldinger, 'Ethnicity and Entrepreneurship'; Sensi-Isolani and Martinelli, *Struggle and Success*; Fichera, 'Entrepreneurial behaviour in an immigrant colony'; Franzina, *Gli italiani al nuovo mondo*; Gabaccia, *We are what we eat*; Luconi, 'Dalla nicchia al mercato'; Pretelli, *L'emigrazione italiana negli Stati Uniti*.

<sup>12</sup> Taruffi et al., *La questione agraria*, pp. 743–51.

<sup>13</sup> Ramella, 'Emigration from an Area of Intense Industrial Development: The Case of North-western Italy'.

<sup>14</sup> Tedeschi, 'Economie rurale et pluriactivité dans les vallées alpines lombardes (XVIIIe-XIXe siècles)'; Mocrelli et al., *The 19th Century in the Lombard Alps: The unfulfilled promise of industrialization*.

<sup>15</sup> Gould, 'European Inter-Continental Emigration'.

- <sup>16</sup>On the role of migration chains see [Lochore](#), *From Europe to New Zealand*; [MacDonald and MacDonald](#), 'Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighbourhood and Social Networks' pp. 82–97; [Foreman-Peck](#), *Storia dell'economia internazionale*, p. 250; [Hvidt](#), *Flight to America*; [King](#), 'Migration in a World Historical Perspective', p. 42; [Devoto](#), 'A History of Spanish and Italian Migration', p. 29.
- <sup>17</sup>[Farolfi and Fornasari](#), 'Agricoltura e sviluppo economico'.
- <sup>18</sup>[Hatton and Williamson](#), 'What Fundamentals Drive World Migration?'.
- <sup>19</sup>[Abramitzky et al.](#), 'Europe's Tired, Poor, Huddled Masses', pp. 1832–56.
- <sup>20</sup>[Sori](#), *Mercato del lavoro ed emigrazione*, p. 1784; [Gray et al.](#), 'Globalization, Agricultural Markets and Mass Migration: Italy, 1881–1912'. The authors hold that exogenous shocks in agricultural commodity prices influenced international migration flows from Italian provinces between 1881 and 1912.
- <sup>21</sup>[Ardeni and Gentili](#), 'Revisiting Italian Emigration'.
- <sup>22</sup>[Audenino](#), *Emigrazione lombarda*; [Corti](#), 'L'emigrazione italiana e la sua storiografia'.
- <sup>23</sup>[Bertocchi and Strozzi](#), 'International Migration'.
- <sup>24</sup>[Ramella](#), 'Across the Ocean or over the Border', p. 105.
- <sup>25</sup>[Hatton and Williamson](#), *Global Migration and the World Economy*, pp. 113–15; [Borjas](#), 'Assimilation, Changes in Cohort Quality'; Id., 'The economic benefits from immigration'; Id., 'The labor demand curve is downward sloping'.
- <sup>26</sup>[Taylor and Williamson](#), 'Convergence in the Age of Mass Migration'.
- <sup>27</sup>[Hatton](#), 'A Model of UK Emigration 1870–1913'.
- <sup>28</sup>[Hatton and Williamson](#), 'Italy' chapter in *The Age of Mass Migration*.
- <sup>29</sup>The model illustrates how a tariff that favours local producers may affect residents' incentives to migrate abroad ([Ciccarelli et al.](#), 'Home Sweet Home').
- <sup>30</sup>[Easterlin](#), 'Influences in European Overseas Migration'; [Hatton and Williamson](#), *The Age of Mass Migration*, 104; Id. [What Drove the Mass Migrations](#), 557.
- <sup>31</sup>For example, from the last decade of the 1800s, the United States was the preferred destination above all others: the United States offered optimal public schools and healthcare, functioning democratic institutions and a stable currency, all public goods that were not always accessible or reliable in the South American agricultural colonies, for example. Many Sicilian emigrants returned from Argentina to move to North America: [Fauri](#), *Storia economica delle migrazioni italiane*, p. 142.
- <sup>32</sup>[Sjaastad](#), 'The Costs and Returns of Human Migration'; [Todaro](#), 'A Model of Labour Migration'.
- <sup>33</sup>[De Haas](#), 'Migration and Development', p. 277.
- <sup>34</sup>[Stark and Boom](#), 'The New Economics of Labour Migration'.
- <sup>35</sup>[Fauri](#), 'Italians in Africa (1870s–1914)'.
- <sup>36</sup>[Coletti](#), *Dell'emigrazione italiana*.
- <sup>37</sup>[Gentileschi](#), 'Il bilancio migratorio'.
- <sup>38</sup>[Corsini and Reginato](#), 'L'emigrazione piemontese'. [Ramella](#), 'Il biellese nella grande emigrazione', p. 349.
- <sup>39</sup>[Lorenzetti and Merzario](#), *Il fuoco acceso*, p. 36.
- <sup>40</sup>[Faini and Venturini](#), 'Italian Emigration in the Pre-War Period', p. 80; [Moretti](#), 'Migration and Social Networks', pp. 640–657; [Gomellini and Ó Gráda](#), *Outward and Inward Migrations in Italy*, p. 16.
- <sup>41</sup>Besides these positive effects of Italian emigration in improving the dynamics of real wages and GDP per capita in Italy other interesting findings relate to the positive association of emigration with Italian exports and product presence in destination markets ([Timini](#), 'The drivers').
- <sup>42</sup>[De Clementi](#), *Di qua e di là dall'oceano*; [Martellone](#), *Una little Italy nell'Atene d'America*.
- <sup>43</sup>[Rossi](#), 'Vantaggi e danni dell'emigrazione' pp. 32–33; [De Clementi](#), *Una little Italy*, 44.
- <sup>44</sup>[Inchiesta parlamentare](#) sulle condizioni dei contadini nelle province meridionali e nella Sicilia; [Taruffi et al.](#), *La questione agraria e l'emigrazione in Calabria*, pp. 123–130.
- <sup>45</sup>[Reeder](#), *Widows in White*.
- <sup>46</sup>[Choate](#), 'Sending States', pp. 1–62.
- <sup>47</sup>[Petraglia and Vecchione](#), *Long-run pro-trade effects of diasporas: evidence on Italian regions*.
- <sup>48</sup>[Mazzi](#), *Donne mobili*.

- <sup>49</sup> In 1903 a member of the Parliamentary Supervision Committee requested resources for the education of emigrants insofar as "it almost certain that the United States would adopt measures restricting the admission of illiterate emigrants... Due to this threat and in order to avoid the damage to emigrants, especially from Southern Italy, the Commissioner, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, promoted the establishment of evening and Sunday schools for illiterate adults in the towns featuring more emigration and to this end reserved a sum of 50 thousand lire in the 1904–05 budget." De Amicis, 'Relazione della Commissione parlamentare', p. 21.
- <sup>50</sup> Fauri, *Storia economica delle migrazioni italiane*, 79; Gallo, 'Educare chi se ne va' pp. 177–92.
- <sup>51</sup> Balletta, 'Emigrazione e struttura demografica in Calabria', p. 23.
- <sup>52</sup> Spitzer and Zimran, 'Migrant Self-Selection', pp. 226–47. A recent study seems to point in another direction and offers provisional evidence that migrants were negatively selected on literacy: A'Hearn and Ciccarelli, 'Literacy in the Italian census of 1911'.
- <sup>53</sup> Birindelli, 'Le migrazioni con l'estero', p. 201.
- <sup>54</sup> Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione, *Movimento dell'emigrazione*.
- <sup>55</sup> Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione (ed.), *Annuario Statistico*, pp. 27–33.
- <sup>56</sup> Commissariato Generale dell'emigrazione, *Relazione sui servizi*, p. 66.
- <sup>57</sup> Hatton and Williamson (1998), Glynn, *Emigration across the Atlantic...*, 2011.
- <sup>58</sup> For a somewhat similar attempt focusing on more recent migratory waves, see Ricciardo (2024), *Not Only the Poor!...*
- <sup>59</sup> Impicciatore and Panichella (eds.), *Fuga dall'Italia?*; Pugliese, *Quelli che se ne vanno*; Pugliese and Vitiello, *Storia sociale dell'emigrazione italiana*.

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