

**Doing it better: economic performance and
social mobility of migrant entrepreneurs in
Rome and Milan restaurant sector**

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the differentiation of migrants' entrepreneurial performances in the restaurant sector. By adopting a biographical approach, this study analyses five main dimensions and their combinations in shaping performances: the context in which migrant entrepreneurs operate, the different businesses' characteristics and strategies, migrants' reliance on networks, their implementation of human capital, the individuals' life trajectories, their classes of origin, and paths of upward (and eventually downward) social mobility. This study is based on 50 biographical interviews conducted in the two most important cities in Italy: Milan and Rome. In order to better understand the differentiation of performances, the sample includes entrepreneurs who reach good performances, those who manage to survive, and those who are in crisis. The findings evidence the intersection between networks, human capital, motivation, projects, and experiences of migrant entrepreneurs. These elements implement themselves, by creating a virtuous cycle, as far as successful cases are concerned. However, when these elements do not foster each other, migrant entrepreneurs tend to face many difficulties in conducting their businesses. This study also emphasises how economic performance and social mobility are not always interrelated, and some counterintuitive results emerge. On the one hand, it is underlined the importance of shelter enterprises, that do not have good business performances, but can play a relevant social role in fostering upward social mobility for those entrepreneurs who come from lower classes of origin. On the other hand, good business performances are not always connected to the entrepreneurs' upward mobility, which is often barely maintained and, in some cases, even declined.

Keywords: migrant entrepreneurship; entrepreneurial performances; social mobility; life stories; Rome; Milan; restaurant sector.

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Introduction

This thesis provides an insight into the differentiation of performances among migrant entrepreneurs throughout a biographical approach. The research is based on 50 in-depth narrative interviews conducted with migrant entrepreneurs who operate in the restaurant sector, in Milan and Rome. I have decided to analyse the restaurant sector because it is important to understand the debate on migrant entrepreneurship, since food does not only play an important role for migratory experience, by constituting both a symbolic and a material connection with the country of origin, but it also creates a field of negotiation between migrants and autochthones (Zincone, 2009). In this sense, food assumes the role of collective and individual identity negotiation, through the complex process of integration and interaction within the host society (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009). Therefore, the restaurant sector is strategic to analyse the different managerial decisions adopted by migrant entrepreneurs, their life trajectories and their diversification of performances.

The choice of the two Italian cities has been adopted because the economic activities of immigrants are more and more embedded in the urban¹ economy (Volery, 2007; Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp, 2009; Barrett et al., 1996; Kloosterman and Rath, 2010). In this scenario, the Italian context is particularly interesting because of the important role that has traditionally been played by small and medium enterprises within the national economy², and because of the increasing relevance of migrant entrepreneurship since 1997³. Therefore, to better understand the diversification of performances among migrant entrepreneurs, the two most important Italian urban centres in Italy are analysed: Milan and Rome.

¹ Migrant entrepreneurship mainly concerns urban areas, though this phenomenon has also been growing at the rural level (Moon et al., 2014).

² Italy has more than 3.947.000 SME, 94,5% of which are micro-enterprise (CNEL report, 2011).

³ This remarkable evolution of the phenomenon is due to a change of the Italian legislation. Until 1997, the Italian law had imposed limitations on migrant entrepreneurship through the institution of reciprocity clauses with third countries on self-employment foreign national. According to the reciprocity clause, introduced in the 1942 Civil Code, foreign citizens could open a business in Italy when their country of origin was establishing the same authorisation for Italian citizens. Despite this constraining rule, even before 1997, foreign citizens were opening their businesses, since those who did not fit the clause used to create their enterprises throughout Italian nominees (Castagnone, 2011).

Within this framework, this research aims at answering the following questions:

- *Which are the opportunities and/or constraints encountered by migrants in Italy? How is migrant entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector, with its diverse range of performances, positioned and combined within Milan and Rome?*

I investigate the context, that plays an important role in shaping the opportunities and limits for migrant entrepreneurs. This study examines both the national and the local level. Throughout the biographies, I analysed the main constraints for migrant entrepreneurs created by the Italian normative and institutional framework. Moving at the urban level, I underline the opportunities and constraints that are present in the two urban contexts examined, Milan and Rome, with a focus on the markets, and on the chances for migrants' restaurants in the different urban areas. As far as the business dimension is concerned, I explore the strategies adopted by migrant entrepreneurs, concerning every detail of the restaurants, such as the dimensions, furniture, employees, suppliers, types of cooking, customer targets, quality-price relationship, and communication.

- *How do networks, human capital, and individual trajectories combine with each other to characterise the diversification and range of business performances?*

Three main dimensions and their combinations are investigated in this study since they play an important role in business performances. I explore the most important networks for migrant entrepreneurs and their combination, the relationship with the country of origin and eventual transnational linkages, and solidarity ties. The second important resource is human capital, which can be acquired throughout different ways. This study underlines the role of education, courses of professional specialisation, working experiences and intergenerational transmission of skills. The third dimension concerns individuals' life trajectories. The present research analyses the experiences, motivations, projects and life events that have been undertaken during the migrant entrepreneurs' paths.

- *How and at which point of their trajectory do migrant entrepreneurs manage to improve their previous social and economic conditions? Does the improvement of social and economic conditions correspond to the attainment of good business results?*

This research aims at analysing not only the economic performances of migrant entrepreneurs but also their social mobility. By doing so, the class of origin of the entrepreneurs interviewed, and the improvement of their social and economic position are explored. This study investigates whether migrants achieve upward social mobility with access to entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector, or they barely manage to maintain their social position, up to experience downward mobility. Moreover, I focus on social mobility and performances, by examining whether those entrepreneurs who achieved good results also manage to improve their social and economic position or, on the contrary, their business results are not reflected in their social and economic achievements.

Thesis outline

This dissertation is composed of seven chapters. Chapter 1 reviews the theoretical debate on migrant entrepreneurship, that has been taking place since the first half of the XX century. To understand the diversification of performances and the main dimensions of analysis, this chapter examines the discussion concerning social stratification, which shapes the opportunities of migrant entrepreneurs. Particular attention is given to human and social capital, to the evolving role played by the context, from the opportunity structure to mixed embeddedness theories, and to the biographical approach and resources.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the Italian context and to the presentation of data and studies that show the strategical importance of Italy as the reference country of this study, of the urban areas considered, Milan and Rome, and of the restaurant sector. Therefore, this chapter considers the features of businesses and the characteristics of entrepreneurs. Chapter 2 analyses the trend, change and evolution over time, with a focus on the diversification among migrants' businesses. Specifically, it is shown that, on the one hand, many businesses have suffered during the economic crisis, and others are settled at the margins of the economy, with poor results, but they are maintained because many migrant entrepreneurs do not have an alternative. On the other hand, in the last decades, several studies have been increasingly shown how many migrants' businesses manage to be competitive, to adopt relevant strategies and to obtain good performances.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological framework of the study, the research design, and data collection criteria. The main sampling technique is the web portal Tripadvisor. Since Tripadvisor represents the main website used for searching and evaluating restaurants worldwide, this chapter describes how this source has been adopted to sample the migrant entrepreneurs, and which are its limits. Chapter 3 also describes the other sampling techniques adopted in the fieldwork. Biographical interviews and supplementary ethnographical observations are presented in Chapter 3, with a glance at the profiles of migrant entrepreneurs selected, and on the main topics discussed in the interviews. Furthermore, I show the analytical techniques to examine performances.

Chapter 4 analyses the context in which migrant business-owners operate and it provides a first presentation of the actors involved. The examination of the biographies allows understanding the differentiation of the strategies adopted by migrant entrepreneurs to make their business work, that concerns every detail of the restaurants. As far as the context is concerned, entrepreneurs' life stories allow exploring both the national level, and the main barriers that migrants face when they open a business in Italy and the local dimension. Specifically, by analysing Milan and Rome, the constraints and chances offered by the two markets are shown. Furthermore, the different opportunities among the two cities are discussed, with a focus on the location of the businesses according to the different urban changes and evolution, on specific intra-urban patterns and the development of migrant entrepreneurship within these frameworks.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the first resources used by entrepreneurs in terms of social capital. Specifically, this chapter explores migrant entrepreneurs' networks and the role that they play in the business performances. Different kinds of networks are examined: family, kinship, co-national and mixed national network. Throughout the biographies, it is shown how migrant entrepreneurs combine their networks on the basis of their business activities. This aspect is also present in the analysis of professional networks and their overlapping or separation with personal relationships, and of the connections with the country of origin and eventual transnational networks.

Chapter 6 investigates the role played by human capital in the performances of migrant entrepreneurs. The biographies underline its importance and the different combination of human capital elements that occurs during the entrepreneurs' life trajectories. The main

elements of human capital discussed are education, courses of professional specialisation, working experiences and intergenerational transmission of skills.

Chapter 7 is dedicated to migrant entrepreneurs' life trajectories and their social mobility. The analysis of biographies concerns, first of all, the experiences, motivations and projects that intersect themselves in every phase of the migrants' trajectory (before the migration, and during the migratory, professional and entrepreneurial path). Furthermore, the most important life events that play a role in performances are discussed in this chapter. As far as social mobility is concerned, this chapter examines its attainment and the moment of the life trajectory when an upward social mobility has been achieved. Chapter 7 provides an analysis of social mobility by considering the entrepreneurs' class of origin, their transitions, and their current position. At this point, this chapter argues whether social mobility coincides with economic performances. Specifically, chapter 7 explores the possible improvement of social and economic positions of those entrepreneurs who reach good performances and the role of social mobility for those who do not achieve good economic results.

In the final chapter, I summarise the main results of my research, and I define the implications concerning the debate on migrant's entrepreneurial performances. In particular, I develop four points: the role of migrants in the "ethnic" restaurant sector in Italy; the combination of different forms of capital in the trajectory of migrant entrepreneurs; the relationship between economic performance and social mobility, and how they do not always correspond; policy implications mainly concerning the development of course of specialisation for migrant entrepreneurs/aspiring migrant entrepreneurs.

1. Theorising migrant entrepreneurship: stratification, resources and the context

1.1 Introduction

Migrant entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that is widespread within developed and developing economies, and it presents various characteristics across countries and contexts. Therefore, the theoretical debate is broad. Since the beginning of the XX century, seminal studies on migrant entrepreneurship have arisen from all over the world. In this chapter, I present the most relevant studies on migrant entrepreneurs and their performances, by tracing a path which emphasises the relevant elements that play a role in business results and individuals' social mobility, such as the context, social stratification, social and human capital, and individual trajectories. These main elements are further investigated in the empirical chapters of this dissertation.

The first section focuses on the first theories on migrant entrepreneurship: cultural and disadvantage approaches. Cultural explanations argue that migrants' entrepreneurial performances are connected to groups' characteristics. This theoretical framework has dominated the debate on migrants' entrepreneurship during the XX century, and it is still largely considered among scholars⁴. The second branch of research is constituted by disadvantage theories, which consider migrant entrepreneurship as the only alternative to barriers encountered in the primary labour market, and the only feasible way to reach social and economic mobility⁵. In this section, I focus on the main limits that are present in these two theories, since they are not able to explain the extreme diversification of performances that is present within every national group. Furthermore, other aspects need to be considered, starting from the context in which entrepreneurs have to operate, their resources in terms of social and human capital and their trajectories.

⁴ See, for instance, Bonacich, 1973; Waldinger *et al.*, 1990; Basu, 1998; Borooah and Hart, 1999; Brown, 2000; Metcalf *et al.*, 1996; Basu and Altinay, 2002; Basu, 2004; Borjas 1986; Marger and Hoffman 1992; Min and Bozorgmehr 2000; Yoon 1991; Masurel *et al.*, 2002.

⁵ Auster and Aldrich, 1984; Light, 1979; Min and Borzorgmehr, 2003; Bonacich, 1983; Kim, 1981; Tsukashima, 1991.

In the second section of this chapter, I analyse the debate concerning the context in which migrants have to operate, by analysing the opportunities and constraints that migrant entrepreneurs can face. I investigate the evolution of the debate on the context, starting from the first studies on the opportunity structure, to the mixed embeddedness theories and the most important features that can play a role in performances.

At this point, before shifting to the individuals' resources and trajectories, social stratification has to be analysed. Therefore, this third section aims to show the role played by social stratification in shaping migrants' human and social capital, and the individual trajectories and experience. Furthermore, I draw on the concept of "translocational positionality" (Anthias, 2007; 2008; 2013) to understand migrants' social mobility by analysing not only their social and economic position in the country of destination but also, and most importantly, in the country of origin.

The fourth section examines the debate on social capital, by underlining its relevance for migrant entrepreneurship, and the complexity of this phenomenon. Specifically, I analyse the different kinds of networks and relationships and how they can variously foster access to entrepreneurship and business maintenance. Furthermore, this notion considers the advantages and disadvantages of social capital. Finally, I point out how the various kinds of networks have to be taken into account, and not only those that concern relationships with co-nationals.

The fifth section analyses the role of human capital, by considering this resource from its broader sense, which includes not only formal education and working experiences but also those skills and knowledge that are informally assimilated, generally in the household. Therefore, I analyse the debate on the importance of human capital, and the role of intergenerational transmission, which is also connected to the social stratification.

In the sixth section, I shift to the individual, and to the biographical approach, that allows understanding how trajectories, experiences and motivations shape not only the access to entrepreneurship but also the entrepreneurial path itself. I present the various studies on the biographical approach, by underlining how the study of life trajectories and events is relevant to understand performances.

In the final part, I synthesize the main theoretical discussion, and I evidence the role of the six main dimensions of analysis: context, business, social capital, human capital, individual trajectories, and social mobility.

1.2 Cultural and disadvantage theories: main characteristics and limitations

The first studies on migrant's self-employment stressed the importance of culture in entrepreneurship, following the theories carried out by Weber at the beginning of the XX century. According to Weber, the protestant values⁶ are fundamental in influencing the constitution of the spirit of modern capitalism, since rational individualism, a significant feature of the protestant ethic, was absent in the other spiritual traditions (Weber, 1930). Though Weber referred to specific religious faiths, the first studies on migrant entrepreneurship have followed this idea, by emphasising that certain migrant groups are more likely to become self-employed or to obtain successful results because of the influence of values, beliefs, ties, and norms, which are specific of certain migrants' communities⁷. These conclusions also emerge from studies of business practices undertaken by certain migrant groups in the US, such as Jews, Koreans and Japanese (Glazer, 1955; Light 1972; Bonacich 1975; Kim 1981; Light, 1984).

According to the cultural perspective, common beliefs and values favour the constitution of ethnic communities, which are distinguished by strong solidarity among members, that contributes to the mobilisation and the exchange of resources, by positively influencing the entrepreneurial results.

Cultural explanations have also been applied to explain how some groups of migrant entrepreneurs, the "middleman minorities", occupy an intermediate and favoured position in the host societies (Blalock, 1967; Bonacich, 1973; Rinder, 1959; Schermerhorn, 1970; Stryker, 1959). According to this view, migrants turn to self-employment activities because of barriers encountered in the primary labour market and open specific types of activity (generally characterised by high liquidity and low barriers to entry), which tend to be "middleman occupations", because migrants' entrepreneurial businesses are situated in the middle between the ethnic niche to which they belong and the élite for which they trade. Middleman minorities are identified as those groups characterised by high rates of self-employment in small

⁶ Frugality, asceticism, saving and the belief that wealth was a sign of redemption.

⁷ However, Weber also believed that Puritanism had ceased to exert an independent influence in the XIX century. Indeed, Weber's emphasis upon the ineluctable growth of giant bureaucracies aligned him with successive authors who concluded that big business should have suppressed the entrepreneurial function in advanced market economies. In this sense, Joseph Schumpeter took this step in proclaiming the obsolescence of the entrepreneurial function. According to Schumpeter, big firms managed to achieve innovation as a routine function of the enterprise in the usual bureaucratic ways (Pécoud, 2010).

businesses, which trade to minority customers on behalf of large corporations. Therefore, they maintain strong ethnic cohesion, which facilitates their commercial activities.

Furthermore, scholars have stressed that, under certain circumstances, solidarity and social networks within migrants' communities are able to originate enclave economies. According to this theory, enclave entrepreneurs operate in migrant neighbourhoods which are mainly composed by people who belong to their co-ethnic group, tied in a system based on solidarity and social network, which can originate enclave economies, that generate opportunities for social and economic mobility of migrants (Wilson and Portes, 1980)⁸.

Cultural theories adopt two different perspectives: on the one hand, the "orthodox" cultural approach affirms that migrant groups have specific cultural traits that influence their entrepreneurial performance. On the other hand, according to the second "reactive" perspective, cultural features provide ethnic resources which can foster entrepreneurial behaviour and sustain the entrepreneurs (Light, 1980; 1984). These resources include, for instance, financial sustain, information or business advice gathered from family members, friends or rotating credit associations, solidarity ties, family, kin and co-ethnic labour force (Light, 1984). Many scholars underline a connection between the differences in ethnic resources to those in self-employed rates among national groups.

However, cultural theories present many limits. The first problem of these perspectives is connected to the notion of "ethnicity" and "ethnic groups". In this sense, Barth (1969) suggests that ethnicity does not concern shared traits or cultural commonalities, but rather practices of categorisation and classification. By developing this framework, Brubaker et al. (2004) apply a cognitive approach to de-construct concepts of ethnicity, race, and nationality. Furthermore, according to Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2002), for many decades migration studies have been trapped into "methodological nationalism", which is characterised by the emphasis on cultural differences between migrants who belong to different "ethnic" communities. In other words, perspectives that emphasise cultural factors have been considering migrant/ethnic groups as socio-culturally homogenous, and these theories are often characterised by the absence of the individual level (Yoon, 2001; Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2019). This aspect that characterises cultural explanations is particularly relevant so far

⁸ Portes (1981) formally defines ethnic enclaves as migrant groups which concentrate in a distinct spatial location and organize a variety of enterprises serving their ethnic market and/or the general population. The basic characteristic of an ethnic enclave is that a significant proportion of the migrant workforce works in enterprises owned by other minorities (Portes & Shafer, 2007).

as the phenomenon of migrants' entrepreneurship is analysed, as it is stressed by Werbner (1999:549), which argues whether culture makes a difference in the achievements of migrant entrepreneurs. Specifically, Werbner underscores the relativity of cultural values in examining migrants' entrepreneurial performances:

“Cultures can only be made sense of in their own terms, and that moral ideas and practices are embedded in culturally specific, historically determined relations of production and sociality. When cultures are juxtaposed, explanations about the success or failure of a particular culture risk essentialist assumptions about closure, and a universal, fetishized notion of <success>”.

Following Werbner's thesis, a pitfall of cultural theories is that individual performances cannot be understood on the basis of its group values, because entrepreneurial performances are different even within the same national groups. In addition, each individual has different access to important resources, such as human, financial, and social capital, and they undertake a various range of experiences, which play an important role in the performance of migrant entrepreneurs (Valdez 2011, 2016; Cederberg 2017; Villares-Varela 2017; Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2019; Yoon, 1991; Kontos, 2003). Furthermore, as it is emphasised by Jones and Ram (2007: 443), cultural explanations often risk underestimating the role of the context where migrant entrepreneurs operate.

The second traditional theoretical framework that needs to be critically discussed is that of “disadvantage”. According to disadvantage theories, migrant entrepreneurs become self-employed because they have to face many barriers in the primary labour market, such as lack of knowledge of the host country language, low education, inadequate skills and discrimination against racial, ethnic and religious groups in the primary labour market (Auster and Aldrich, 1984; Light, 1979; Min and Borzognmeh, 2003; Bonacich, 1983; Kim, 1981; Tsukashima, 1991). For these reasons, migrants are pushed to the margins of the economy, towards low skilled jobs or unemployment (Bonacich, 1973; Mars and Ward, 1984; Jenkins, 1984). Therefore, these people look for a strategy of survival and perceive self-employment as the only alternative; even marginal self-employment may be seen as an improvement to their original conditions (Tsukashima, 1991).

A similar perspective is blocked mobility framework. As in the case of disadvantage theories, migrants become self-employment because they have limited access to the primary labour market. The difference between the two perspectives lays in the outcome. In the case of disadvantage scholars, migrant entrepreneurs tend to remain in a more unfavourable position than native ones. Instead, blocked mobility perspective frames migrants' opportunities in self-employment from a more optimistic view than disadvantage theories, by considering entrepreneurship as the most likely employment option for migrants to gain upward mobility (Barrett *et al.*, 1996; Borjas, 1986; Price and Chako, 2009).

These two theoretical perspectives highlight the role of motivation for migrants to enter self-employment, that are identified as unemployment, low wages, labour market discrimination, language barriers, incompatible education or training, social marginality and no possibilities of career (Light, 1979; Bates, 1997; Fairlie and Meyer, 1996; De Freitas, 1991). However, though some individuals set up their businesses because of these reasons, migrants' entrepreneurship is extremely variegated, and the main motivations to self-employment cannot be reduced to escape from poor conditions in the labour market. In this sense, many authors emphasise the presence of aspects that render entrepreneurship attractive, rather than the only alternative, by showing a great differentiation between different migrants' businesses (Clark and Drinkwater, 2000). Some of these elements, that are defined by Soydas and Aleti (2015) as "extrinsic motivators", can be linked to blocked mobility theory, such as expected higher earnings or higher probabilities of upward mobility, while "intrinsic motivators" are psychological rewards, which go further financial and mobility tasks. Indeed, these motivators are defined in need of greater independence, autonomy, freedom, and control (Zuiker, 1998; Shinnar and Young, 2008; Wilson *et al.*, 2004; Langan-Fox and Roth, 1995). As the elements that can play a role in the choice of becoming entrepreneurs are extremely variegated, also the outcomes of entrepreneurship are much diversified and connected to a variety of elements that cannot be simplified only to the migratory background.

In addition, the disadvantage approach has often been connected to cultural theories, since this perspective is applied to a specific ethnic group (Tsukashima, 1991), or used to compare different migrants' groups (Johnson, 2000). In fact, the disadvantage approach underscores the particular features of a national group that influence their business participation (Portes and Rimbaut, 1996). However, as it has been shown in the first part of this section, performances are largely heterogeneous even within the same ethnic group (Robinson *et al.*, 2007). At the same time, migrants' entrepreneurial paths are particularly differentiated among individuals

and they are not always connected to the disadvantages encountered in the primary labour market.

Furthermore, according to the disadvantage theory, foreign-owned businesses tend to remain in a marginal position in the labour market. However, the entrepreneurial path of migrants is diversified, and, on the one hand, it is undoubted that many activities are confined at the margin of the market. On the other hand, it is necessary to remark that many migrant-owned businesses manage to grow and affirm themselves. Moreover, as it has been pointed out by Nopper (2010), the disadvantage thesis concerns group dynamics, without considering structural factors, that shape socio-economic stratification within ethnic groups, and the context in which actors are embedded.

1.3 The role of the context in shaping entrepreneurial opportunities and constraints

1.3.1 Opportunity structure and the interactive model

The “opportunity structure thesis” has first emerged in the debate concerning ethnic enclaves. Specifically, it has been argued that migrants usually create enclaves by concentrating on specific neighbourhoods which provide opportunities for the development of old and new businesses. This phenomenon can happen through the origination of networks and informal communications of market opportunities (Light, 1972; Basu and Goswami, 1999; Hammarstedt, 2001; Chaudhry and Crick, 2004). According to these studies, migrant entrepreneurs do not open their activity in the mainstream market, but they focus on ethnic enclaves, that are characterised by the absence of interethnic competition, and they mainly operate in import/export and retail of ethnic goods’ sector (Singh and DeNoble, 2004; Corsino and Soto, 2005). However, migrant entrepreneurs do not always operate in ethnic enclaves, but they deal with the same context as businesses owned by autochthone entrepreneurs, which provide for them similar or different opportunities and constraints. For this reason, the necessity to have more complex models for the analysis of the context has emerged.

Waldinger *et al.* (1990), provide an interactive model that was focused on the context in which migrants’ businesses are settled. This framework is based on three dimensions: the characteristics of an ethnic group⁹, the opportunity structure and emergent strategies. The second and the third dimensions of this model are particularly relevant, since the second dimension of the interactive model is the opportunity structure, which mainly consists of market conditions, and the strategies concern the positioning and choices undertaken by the entrepreneurs. The first condition is constituted by the development of markets within the community of the same country of origin. This condition is considered by Light (1972) as the “protected market hypothesis”, according to whom the first market where migrant

⁹ According to the authors, group characteristics include predisposing factors such as selective migration, culture, and aspiration levels, together with possibilities to mobilise resources, ethnic social networks, general organizing capacity, and government policies that limit or incentive resource acquisition. We have already seen in the previous section the criticalities of considering the characteristics of a group as a homogeneous entity, together with analysing only the role of “co-ethnic social network”, without analysing the great social and economic differences also within the same group.

entrepreneurs build their business is within their ethnic community. According to Aldrich and Waldinger (1990), the start of the activity within the same ethnic or co-national community is favoured by other circumstances, such as the distance of the group's needs from governmental dispositions and migrants' residential concentration. Because of these elements, many migrants open businesses to favour the needs of their community. This condition constraints migrants' businesses potential of growth (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990), since only a small number of businesses can be maintained within the "so-called" ethnic market, because of its restricted dimensions and because the migrant population has not enough power to foster businesses growth by their own.

Therefore, Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) stress some important characteristics of the mainstream market economy that can favour the accessibility to foreign migrant entrepreneurs. First, the number of migrants' enterprises tends to increase in sectors that have been abandoned by natives, since they are characterised by low economies of scale and they operate in a market characterised by instability and uncertainty. Second, migrant entrepreneurs are able to develop their businesses in the general market, when it is characterised by rising demand for "exotic" goods among the native population. This condition allows migrants "to convert both the contents and symbols of ethnicity into profit-making commodities" (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990: 117). Indeed, the development of businesses into the "exotic" market, such as in the restaurant sector, can be profitable for migrants not only because of the lack of competition with the native population, but also because they can offer products of their country of origin at relatively low prices and thereby capture customers that have been priced out of firms conducted by native self-employed (Ma Mung & Guillon 1986).

Furthermore, Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) identify as important elements of the opportunity structure the level of interethnic competition for jobs and businesses, and government policies. On the one hand, competition can be direct, by actually expecting the possibility for migrants to lose access to markets, or it can be mediated throughout means of residential and occupational succession, which can allow the opening of vacancies in a predictable and patterned way. On the other hand, the two authors consider that, in modern societies, the impact of State policies in migrants' entrepreneurship is indirect, since policies and regulation can hinder or favour the development of migrant entrepreneurship.

Aldrich and Waldinger's model has managed to emphasise the role of the context, that had been underestimated in the debate during the XX century. However, the interactive model highlights

the characteristics and strategies of ethnic “groups”, without considering the great differentiation between them and, therefore, the role of individuals’ characteristics, experience, and linkages.

Moreover, Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) stress the importance of ethnic niches. Specifically, they describe the “breaking out” of ethnic niches, which is the entry into the mainstream market, after a slow process of loss of their ethnic identity. As it has been shown by Engelen (2001), this concept of “economic assimilation” is controversial because of two main reasons. First of all, in the analysis of strategies, all the choices undertaken to start and maintain the business should be taken into account, and this complex range of decisions cannot be simplified into the dualism “ethnic niche vs. mainstream market”. Secondly, Aldrich and Waldinger’s concept of breaking into the mainstream market does not consider the role of innovation, since the entry of similar businesses in the mainstream market may cause cut-throat competition rather than achievement.

1.3.2 A re-elaboration of the role of the context: mixed embeddedness

The role of the context has been re-elaborated by Rath (2000), who acknowledged that Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) gave an important contribution to the debate on migrants' entrepreneurship by introducing the role of the host countries' environment in the debate on migrant entrepreneurship. However, this innovative approach has not been deepened (Rath, 2000). A further step in recognising the role of the context has been realised by Kloostermann and Rath (2001), who connected social networks¹⁰ to the social, economic and political environment which characterises the countries in which migrants have settled. According to Kloostermann, mixed embeddedness is “not just about linking the meso-level of the opportunity structure to the micro-level of the individual entrepreneur. The opportunity structure itself has to be problematized and related to the wider institutional framework” (Kloostermann 2010: 40).

Even though migrant entrepreneurship has mainly developed during the XX century, Kloostermann and Rath (2001) shed light on structural changes that have been characterising the last decades, such as the extensive development of new technologies, transformations concerning new and differentiated consumer demands, business strategies and the shift to services, that created new opportunities for small businesses and, thus, for migrant entrepreneurs.

Kloosterman and Rath (2001) stress that the relationship between migrant entrepreneurs and the context cannot be only composed of static opportunity structures to which business-owners respond. In fact, some migrant self-employers are able to change their structure of opportunities by showing innovative behaviour and, therefore, by creating new chances for investment and by acting as typically Schumpeterian entrepreneurs.

¹⁰ The role of social network is discussed in the section dedicated to social capital. So far as mixed embeddedness is considered, it is important to stress that, even though social capital is usually a local asset (Wahlbeck, 2013), many authors considered also the importance of the transnational dimension (Bagwell, 2008; Miera, 2008; Katila and Wahlbeck, 2012). Moreover, it is essential to understand that “mixed embeddedness” connect social networks to the opportunity structure, by underlining the way in which migrants manage to find possibilities to open a business and, in a second moment, to maintain or expand that (Rath and Kloostermann, 2001). Furthermore, as it is evidenced by Engelen (2001), social embeddedness approaches put a lot of emphasis on social capital and ethnic network, without taking into account the importance of the institutional dimension, which is composed by markets and the regulatory framework. In other words, though the importance of social capital is unquestionable, its benefits are also influenced by the social, economic and political context (Kloosterman and Rath, 2010; Kloosterman *et al.*, 1999; Nakhaie *et al.*, 2009; Ram *et al.*, 2008; Wahlbeck, 2013).

Another important innovation introduced by Kloosterman and Rath (2001) consists of the analysis of the interaction between migrants' strategies and opportunity structures, that should consider three main levels: national, regional and local (or neighbourhood). At the national level, institutions are central in determining the requirements to start a business and, therefore, this threshold could act as a constraint for a migrant to begin a new activity¹¹. Moreover, the role of the general regulation on entrepreneurship (for instance bureaucracy and taxes) is very important, since it creates opportunities and/or constraints both in starting and in the maintenance phase of the business.

The regional or urban dimension of opportunity structures has to be considered in the processes of introduction and consolidation of migrant entrepreneurs in the host markets¹². At this sub-national level, relevant regional and urban forces play a role in shaping markets and influence both accessibility and growth potential for aspiring migrant entrepreneurs (Kloostermann and Rath, 2001). A high concentration of international headquarters characterises global cities and generate their opportunity structures, that are characterised by high-value-added services that drive the expansion of low-level personal and producer services that are highly accessible for migrants (Sassen 1991). Furthermore, urban and regional policies which can, for instance, be targeted to small businesses, are also able to variate the opportunity-structure at the meso-level. Access to market and growth potential does not vary only between towns, but also within the urban space. Specifically, the neighbourhood level is important as far as networks are concerned, since the proximity level is significant. Therefore, while analysing the urban level, not only social, political, economic and market dimensions should be considered, but also the different business opportunities that are present between the many areas of the cities. In fact, the local organizational landscape allows the individual migrant entrepreneur to recognise the habits and tendencies of what he/she identifies as the target audience for his/her business activity (Soehl, 2013).

The context in which migrants are embedded plays an important role in setting all the conditions, regulations, norms that act as opportunities or constraints for the achievement of migrant entrepreneurs. Indeed, the opportunity structure is very different not only between host countries but also within them, since the market conditions, local institutions, and regulations

¹¹ An example concerning this difficulty is that of special qualifications that can be acquired only in the host country. This measure could act as constraint for those migrants who want to start a business, even though they have not the necessary degrees.

¹² So far as the role of the market is concerned, Rath and Kloostermann (2001) pointed out two characteristics of the market that are significant in order to determine the opportunity structure that the entrepreneur has to face, such as the accessibility for newcomers and the potential growth.

change according to various urban and neighbourhood environment. This aspect is particularly relevant concerning the Italian case, where migrants' self-employment is framed within different local territories and different opportunity structures. In fact, many scholars have shown that the Italian territory is characterised by considerable differences at the local level that present different conditions of the context in which migrant entrepreneurs have to operate. These differences are particularly evident if we consider the regional industrial districts, such as Emilia Romagna, Tuscany or Veneto (Giaccone, 2002; Vatta, 2001; Andall, 2007), within different urban environments and the same neighbourhoods (Giaccone, 2014; CENSIS, 2015). Therefore, the different dimensions of analysis, in particular, the national and the local ones (Kloostermann and Rath, 2001), have to be considered in the analysis of the context in which migrant entrepreneurs operate. The context in which migrants are embedded is able to influence the strategies adopted by migrant entrepreneurs. However, many scholars still focus on group strategies (Waldrich and Aldinger, 1990; Price and Chacko, 2009; Ley, 2006) without considering that within the same group individuals can adopt different strategies, in terms of, for instance, market positioning, choice of the customer target, use of technological instruments, marketing¹³ and in determining the price-quality relationship of the product. Glick Schiller *et al.* (2006) have extensively underlined the necessity of going "beyond the ethnic lens" in migration studies. In their work, they suggest, in order to overcome the concepts of "ethnic group", migration studies should focus on the study of specific localities, in order to find out multiple pathways of incorporations. My study analyses two different urban contexts: Milan and Rome, trying to understand their evolutions, differences and similarities in creating opportunities and constraints for migrant entrepreneurs.

¹³ The most common marketing strategies for migrant entrepreneurs can be traditional, such as personal relations and reliance on customers to spread the word, promotions through exclusive offers, advertisement on local newspaper or television channels (Goel *et al.*, 2010), or linked to technology, like websites and social networks, such as Facebook, in particular.

1.4 Social stratification of migrant entrepreneurship

The concepts of class and social stratification have been constituting a central principle of sociology since the first classic contributions of Marx and Weber. On the one hand, according to Marx, class was shaped according to the possession of the means of production. On the other hand, Weber distinguished between class and status. Class is considered as the position in the economic life, while status is seen concerning the wider community or society, by incorporating the idea of social honour or prestige. According to the Weberian theoretical framework, social stratification was identified with forms of sociality and economic inequality, connected to the sphere of the distribution, allocation, and exchange of skills and resources in the marketplace (Weber 1964). The importance of class has been stressed during the XX and XXI centuries, throughout critical analysis and modification of the Marxist and Weberian notions.

Though class and socio-economic differentiation have been constituting important pillars in social sciences, many authors (Van Hear, 2014; Cederberg, 2017; Villares-Varela 2017a, 2017b, Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2019; Anthias, 1992; Valdez, 2011; 2016) have underlined that these concepts have been underestimated in migration studies. Specifically, those studies that have taken into account class, socio-economic inequality or social mobility have analysed these issues by referring to migration outcomes in host countries (e.g. Castles and Kosack, 1973; Cohen, 1987; Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010; Portes, 2010; Card and Raphael, 2013; Pero, 2014), and the class position in the countries of origin¹⁴ has been less considered (Van Hear, 2014).

An important approach that is valuable in understanding the relationship between migration and class is the conceptualisation carried out by Bourdieu (1987), who retains that individuals are endowed with different forms and amounts of capital. According to Bourdieu (1987), these forms of capital are economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital. The economic capital is constituted by the economic resources and assets available to the individuals. Cultural capital refers to knowledge, tastes, skills, education, and other competencies owned by a person. This concept partially overlaps with that of human capital. However, in this dissertation, I refer to human capital, because of its central importance within

¹⁴ Therefore, less attention has been given to the way class shapes the migration process itself, by affecting for instance migrant decision-making, routes, channels, and destinations (Van Hear, 2014). Nevertheless, some studies have started to reconsider class in the transnational experiences of migrants (see Fresnoza-Flot and Shinozaki, 2017; Fresnoza-Flot, 2017).

the debate on migrants' entrepreneurial performances. In particular, many studies have underlined the role of human capital in migrants' entrepreneurial strategies and performance, by including not only traditional elements, such as education and working experience, but also the role of informal skills, such as family transmissions, individual learning, knowledge, leadership style and life experiences, which include abilities and motivational incentives (Moon *et al.*, 2014; Sanders and Nee, 1996). Therefore, I analyse social capital in its broader sense. Social capital is intended by Bourdieu (1987:4) as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources, which are linked to the possession of a durable network.". Symbolic capital is the form that the different types of capital are perceived and recognised as legitimate.

The various forms of capital are unequally distributed among individuals. Furthermore, they could be accumulated, transferred, and converted (Bourdieu, 1987; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This notion of capital with its different forms is particularly useful for migration studies, especially in order to explain how people with a small amount of economic capital may be able to rely on their social capital (for instance, by using their network). Furthermore, I draw on Bourdieu's form of capital to analyse how migrant entrepreneurs use, combine, and convert their resources.

By focusing on the role of class in the debate concerning migrant entrepreneurship, many scholars have evidenced the same problems as migration studies. In fact, as it has been highlighted by Cederberg and Villares-Varela (2019), many studies on migrant entrepreneurship have been focusing on ethnicity and nationality, while heterogeneity within groups and social class have been marginal in the debate (for a discussion, see Villares-Varela 2017a). Furthermore, so far as migrant or minority entrepreneurship is concerned, the analysis of social stratification has been undertaken regarding the country of destination and not to the countries of origin.

Nevertheless, these studies have given an important contribution to understanding the stratification and mechanisms of social mobility. For instance, in their study concerning the relationship between social stratification and entrepreneurship of African American women, Robinson *et al.* (2007: 132) define social stratification as "the end result of institutional processes that partition society into advantaged and disadvantaged socially constructed groups". Robinson *et al.* (2007) put a strong emphasis on the influence of stratification on the entrepreneurship process, since it affects every step of the process, by influencing who accesses to self-employment and who does not, the types of opportunities that are seen and evaluated

and by shaping how a venture opportunity will be pursued. Specifically, Robinson *et al.* (2007) identify three ways through which social stratification can interact. First of all, entrepreneurship is seen by migrants as a mean throughout which obtaining social and economic mobility (Robinson, 2007; Yoon, 2001). Indeed, entrepreneurial activities can be sources of wealth for entrepreneurs and their families by allowing them to shift to higher status positions. The role of self-employment in social mobility is not only to provide an alternative to dependent jobs, but it also offers an opportunity of upward mobility to people who lack the education or skills that could allow them to move up in large organizations (Wong, 1992). Furthermore, entrepreneurship can have a role in challenging a stratified society throughout, for instance, programs that support self-employment as an alternative to a dependent job or through market processes that are aimed at directly dealing with social problems¹⁵.

However, social stratification can deeply influence the process of access to entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial behaviour for those actors who hold lower-status positions in society, since, “for those entrepreneurs who hold disadvantaged positions in the social structure, social stratification can have profound effects on how they identify, shape, and pursue entrepreneurship” (Robinson *et al.*, 2007: 135). In other words, as it has been discussed in the paragraph concerning disadvantage and blocked mobility theories, the decision of becoming entrepreneurs for migrants does not automatically correspond to upward mobility and sometimes business survival is an important indicator, but it is not sufficient in order to guarantee a positive performance (Riva and Lucchini, 2015). In this sense, the constitution of businesses also depends on the opportunities encountered by migrants (Dei Ottati, 2013). Specifically, network, market, institutional and regulatory dynamics can provide significant constraints to upward mobility (Kim, 2006). Therefore, many migrants' activities are at risk of becoming “shelter enterprises”, acting as insecure solution to unemployment (Ambrosini, 2011) since, for various reasons (such as limited investments, scarce or wrong kind of social capital or high competition within sectors characterised by high concentration of migrants coming from the same country or regions), these businesses have limited possibilities of growth¹⁶. As consequences, a great differentiation emerges among migrant entrepreneurs. It is possible to identify many figures. For instance, we can find those who have constructed and consolidated their activities, those who have tried to conduct an activity but have failed, those who manage

¹⁵ An example is the case of social entrepreneurship.

¹⁶ These businesses are often settled within the informal economy, mainly in the service sector, and reveal exploitation mechanisms that are similar to piecework jobs of XIX century or to current illegal recruitment of agricultural workers for very low wages.

to survive, without possibilities of growth, and those that are located at the margins of the economy (Camera di Commercio Torino and Fieri, 2009).

A relevant contribution to the discussion on migrant entrepreneurship and social stratification is constituted by the recent studies carried out by Villares-Varela (2017a) that adopt the framework of “translocational positionality” to analyse the meaning of becoming an entrepreneur (Anthias, 2008; 2013). The concept of translocational positionality aims to consider identity by avoiding some of the problems identified with the concept, such as the treatment of identity as a specific feature owned by individuals or groups (Brubaker 2004; Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Anthias 2002). The concept of translocational positionality “addresses issues of identity in terms of locations which are not fixed but are context, meaning and time related and which therefore involve shifts and contradictions” (Anthias, 2008:5). This concept is useful to the debate on migrant entrepreneurship stratification since it provides an interpretation “of narratives, identities, practices and outcomes by considering both the simultaneously experienced complexities of different social hierarchies and the role of multiple locations in time and space” (Villares-Varela, 2017a:110). Therefore, throughout translocational positionality, it is possible to understand migrants’ class positions across different spaces, for instance by taking into account both the country of origin and that of destination, and occupational transitions, such as from being an employee to become an entrepreneur. This aspect is particularly useful in my research since it allows understanding, first of all, the class of entrepreneurs with migrant background starting from their country of origin. Secondly, adopting the translocational positionality, it is possible to analyse the trajectory of the entrepreneurs and to understand the possible changes and evolution in their social and economic position.

Cedeberg and Villares-Varela (2019) highlight the centrality of social class in shaping migrants’ entrepreneurial process and in understanding the trajectories of migrant entrepreneurs. In addition, Cederberg (2012) recalls that the various forms of capital can be converted into other resources to achieve advantages or avoid disadvantages. It is therefore important to understand the role of social stratification and class before analysing the resources used by migrant entrepreneurs (Villares-Varela, 2017a; Cedeberg and Villares-Varela, 2019; Vallejo and Canizales, 2017). Moreover, the stratification that characterises entrepreneurship needs to be deeply examined while analysing performances since the present work considers not only economic results, but also social mobility processes. For these reasons, the resources

available to migrant entrepreneurs and the individuals' class of origin need to be deeply analysed in this dissertation.

1.5 Exploring social capital beyond “co-ethnic” networks

A fundamental role in business access and maintenance is played by social capital. Social capital has been largely explored in the sociological literature. Coleman (1988:98) defines social capital as:

“a variety of entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain action of actors—whether persons or corporate actors—within the structure”.

Social capital is based on different dimensions since it is available to each individual, but it takes place throughout relations with others (Tolciu, 2011: 401). The first dimension is constituted by the individual-rational actor level, that refers to the ability of decision-makers, such as entrepreneurs, to draw on resources from their social networks or to use these resources for social exchange (Lin *et al.*, 1981; Portes, 1998; Emerson, 1972; Deakins *et al.*, 2007). When entrepreneurs decide to start up a business, they must access to information, capital, skills and labour. Since migrant entrepreneurs do not often have all the financial resources they need, they have to look for support from their contacts in order to obtain them. The acquisition of resources through social networks is considered as an important component of every entrepreneurial activity (e.g. Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Cope *et al.*, 2007; Davidsson and Honig, 2003). Barbieri (2003) underlines how social capital differently structures work experiences between highly qualified professionals and managers, “traditional” skilled and unskilled self-employed. In this study, it has been evidenced that the amount of social capital varies significantly among different kinds of self-employed people, with an important influence on working and personal experiences. Specifically, Barbieri (2003) underlines that highly skilled professionals dispose of a higher amount of social resources and, thus, they are thus more able to instrumentally use their networks to improve the quality of their working life.

The second relevant dimension of social capital concerns the meso-level, and it is composed by the so-called “collective social capital” (Sanders and Nee, 1999; Tolciu, 2011; Kwon *et al.*, 2013; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993). In fact, as it has already been shown in the previous section, entrepreneurs’ social networks are embedded in a broader societal context (Kwon *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, individuals’ actions and outcomes are influenced not only by personal relationships with network contacts but also by the broader social environment (Granovetter 1995). Putnam (1992; 1993) emphasises the role of social networks as sources of community

social capital that facilitates resource accessibility to entrepreneurs. However, it is necessary to point out that not all the members of the community benefit in the same ways for all its members (Kwon et al., 2013; Cederberg, 2012).

Social capital becomes even more important for migrants' and ethnic minority businesses, since networks, ties and connections assume particular relevance for foreign self-employed (e.g. Light and Gold, 2000; Sanders and Nee, 1996; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Light *et al.*, 1993). Indeed, according to Granovetter (1995), social capital is often the only type of capital that a minority can produce to a larger extent than a resource-rich majority.

In this sense, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) emphasise the role of social capital in the context of migrant entrepreneurs by carrying out the concept of “social embeddedness”. Specifically, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) argue that important elements, which enhance social capital, in the context of migrant entrepreneurs, are shared values¹⁷, reciprocity transactions¹⁸, bounded solidarity and enforceable trust. Specifically, bounded solidarity focuses on those situations that can lead to the birth of group-oriented behaviour, which is different from previous value introjection. As far as enforceable trust is concerned, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) present an example which concerns loans made by Cuban and Dominican entrepreneurs that are paid with certainty despite their “paperless” nature (Kalnins and Chung, 2006). Connected to the mutual trust that is developed across familiar and kin networks, Sanders and Nee (1996) emphasise that family is an institution that embodies an important form of social capital from which usually migrants draw upon. Indeed, these advantages are not only tangible products, such as unpaid family and kin labour but also include mechanisms of mutual obligations and trust.

Since social capital is a fundamental resource to migrant entrepreneurs, in every phase of their business activity, it is necessary to analyse the different kinds of social capital and ties. On the one hand, “bonding social capital” has been identified as the resources in social networks within social groups, by mobilising solidarity within families or co-national groups (Putnam, 2000:22–24). These types of groups are characterised by “strong ties”, that are relationships with high levels of emotional commitment and high frequency of contact, characterised by mutual trust

¹⁷ Shared values underline the “moral character” of economic transaction, that are driven by value imperatives apprehended during the socialisation process, has been emphasised.

¹⁸ Reciprocity transactions consist of intangible goods that are exchanged within a community.

and reciprocity (Granovetter, 1973). For migrant entrepreneur, bonding social capital plays a relevant role, especially in the initial phase of a business (Davidsson and Honig, 2003; Greve and Salaff, 2003), by constituting a significant resource to those businesses managed by owners of migrant origin (e.g. Deakins *et al.*, 2007; Sanders and Nee, 1996). On the other hand, bridging social capital concerns the networks between groups and connections to external actors, by encompassing people across diverse social connections (Putnam, 2000: 22–24). Bridging social capital is based on weak ties. Bridging social capital is essential in obtaining a more comprehensive range of information (Davidsson and Honig, 2003). Bridging ties gain relevance in order to access to a broader range of information since they strengthen networks and relationships across different groups (Davidsson and Honig, 2003; Deakins *et al.*, 2007).

In the analysis of social capital for migrant entrepreneurs, it is important to analyse the role of transnational social capital, with particular reference to the transnational ties, which can provide useful economic and social resources for migrant entrepreneurs (Katila and Wahlbeck, 2012). The concept of transnationalism refers to multiple ties and interactions that connect people, associations and institutions across different countries (Vertovec, 2009).

Transnational entrepreneurship is defined as the situation in which an individual emigrates, by still maintaining economic linkages with the country of origin. The study of transnational enterprises implies a change of the traditional research on migrants' enterprise since this new perspective allows to focus not only on the destination but also on the country of origin. On the one hand, transnational social networks are more frequent and important for first-generation migrant entrepreneurs (Faist, 2000); they can still assume relevance for second generations (Rusinovic, 2008). Furthermore, Portes *et al.* (1999, 2002), argue that those entrepreneurs whose activities are developed at the transnational level are more likely to be associated with positive performances.

The transnational social capital frames a resource that migrants are able to access. According to Urbano *et al.* (2011), transnational social capital is fundamental for businesses which conduct activities that are not limited to the host country. Many scholars (Guarnizo *et al.*, 2003; Portes, 1995; Portes *et al.*, 2005) highlight that transnational networks are more likely to be engaged by those migrants who have a high social and economic position since they have a greater amount of resources.

Portes (1998) identifies three positive functions for social capital. First, social capital is a source of social control since, within small community networks, it is adopted by people who exert

authorities to keep discipline and promote the observance of rule among those under their charge. This function is connected to bounded solidarity and enforceable trust, and its main outcome is to make formal controls unnecessary. The second function of social capital is that of family and kin support both in financial and human capital terms (e.g. Becker 1975; Oort and Atzema 2004; Portes, 1998). Third, Portes (1998) highlights the role of benefits mediated by extra-familial support. This aspect is linked to access to self-employment, social mobility and entrepreneurial success. This function is connected to the concept emphasised by Granovetter (1973) as the “strength of weak ties”. This expression refers to the influence of people who do not belong to the tight circle of family and close friends. In particular, according to Granovetter, weak ties are able to constitute bridges between distinct groups bound together by strong internal networks and, therefore, these ties are able to create new opportunities and overall community cohesion.

In the debate concerning social capital, this resource is often considered as an asset to migrant and ethnic minority businesses (e.g. Davidsson and Honig, 2003; Deakins *et al.*, 2007; Flap *et al.*, 2000; Light and Gold, 2000; Sanders and Nee, 1996), though it assumes complex and different forms. Many studies have evidenced the complexity and diversity of social capital among migrant entrepreneurs. As far as performance is concerned, a large body of literature establishes that social and community networks based on trust are able to provide the basis for entrepreneurial development, both for recently started migrants’ business and for those who are well established in the local context of the host country. According to Deakins *et al.* (2007), the essence of successful networks depends on the level of trust, the environment in which the business is settled and regulations.

Negative features have been evidenced in the use of social capital in certain situations (Deakins *et al.*, 2007; Portes, 1998). Specifically, Portes (1998: 15) emphasises the presence of negative social capital and its “less desirable consequences”. First, social capital constituted by bounded solidarity and trust increases the facilitation and efficiency of economic exchange within a group. However, at the same time, this group can also present barriers from access, by excluding the outsiders (Portes, 1998; Waldinger, 1995). Second, this enhancement of “within-group performances” does not always take place. In fact, too closed groups may inhibit good performances of businesses owned by the community group members¹⁹. Third, participation in

¹⁹ This problem has also been stressed by Granovetter (1995), who underlines this issue as a problem identified by classic development theory among traditional enterprises. Therefore, close within-group relations present in communities characterised by high solidarity can cause a free-riding problem, since “less diligent members enforce on the more successful all kinds of demands backed by a shared normative structure. For claimants, their social

a group requires conformity to the rules. As consequences, individual freedom can be restricted by high levels of social control (Boissevan, 1974; Portes, 1998).

On the one hand, high levels of social control are able to bind the community. On the other hand, they could act more as constraints to the achievement of positive results, rather than facilitation. Fourth, Portes (1998) underlines the risk of downward levelling norms by those group where solidarity is created throughout paths of opposition to mainstream society. In these cases, the stories of individual achievements weaken group cohesion, since within-group solidarity is based on the supposed impossibility of similar circumstances.

Portes and Sensebrenner (1993) also highlight negative aspects of social capital, by arguing that those communities which have strong internal network can be closed and isolated from the rest of the population²⁰. Moreover, Deakins *et al.* (2007) underline the double role of help and hindrance played by social capital. As far as constraints are concerned, the advice obtained through social networks can be inappropriate, and it is not as reliable as those obtained from professional sources.

In addition, scholars connect social capital to cultural explanations, by linking the use of social capital to a particular group or by comparing two different groups (Katila and Wahlbeck, 2012; Pedrini *et al.*, 2015; Tolciu, 2011). For instance, Kathila and Wahlbeck (2012) study the different role of social capital between two national groups. In particular, they explain that migrants' social capital can be accumulated through different ways on the basis of the migration pattern of the group. In this sense, also Portes and Sensebrenner (1993) put much emphasis on the social capital that is developed within migrants' "groups". However, the concept of "group" has been criticised by Brubaker (2004), and it is necessary to go beyond this concept in analysing migrants' social capital. In this sense, it is important to consider that individuals who compose each national group are very different and have heterogeneous migration pattern.

At this point, an important further step needs to be undertaken. Many studies have considered social capital of migrant entrepreneurs by primarily analysing their relationship, ties and networks with co-nationals or entrepreneurs coming from the same region or area of origin. However, while some entrepreneurs are obligated or willing to activate these kinds of ties network, others prefer to utilise networks which are outside their migrant group (Tolciu, 2011;

capital consists precisely of privileged access to the resources of fellow members. In the process, opportunities for entrepreneurial accumulation and success are dissipated" (Portes, 1998:16).

²⁰ Many barriers to social mobility could be structural and long lasting, such as, for instance, in the case of segregation.

Sanders and Nee, 1999). Furthermore, many studies indicate that migrant entrepreneurs lack bridging capital, which is very important for business maintenance and growth (Deakins *et al.*, 2007). However, as we have already discussed, migrant entrepreneurship is highly stratified and variegated, and migrant entrepreneurs belong to different social classes, as it is shown in this research. Therefore, also migrant entrepreneurs' social capital is highly differentiated, and many important relationships can make the differences for business results. In addition, in the previous paragraph related to social stratification, we have seen how different kinds of resources combine themselves in migrants' experiences. This result also emerges from the study of Ndofor and Priem (2011), which argues that positive performances are linked to a specific combination of human and social capital and entrepreneurial strategies. This particular aspect emerges from the current study. I investigate how many migrant entrepreneurs combine their networks and human capital to formulate particular strategies and how these combinations characterise the performances.

1.6 Human capital: education, skills, and intergenerational transmissions

The second important resource that needs to be discussed in dealing with migrants' entrepreneurial performances is human capital. The term "human capital" has traditionally been applied to the educational level attained at school and university, and to experience and skills acquired in the labour market. However, human capital assets for entrepreneurs include both formal and informal skills, that are constituted by family transmissions, individual learning, knowledge, leadership style and life experiences, which include abilities and motivational incentives (Moon *et al.*, 2014; Sanders and Nee, 1996).

The relevance of human capital in migrant entrepreneurship has been argued in different ways. On the one hand, many authors highlighted that individuals who have attained higher levels of education encounter less constraints not only in accessing to entrepreneurship, but also in the following phases of survival and growth (Clark & Drinkwater, 2000; Hjerm, 2004; Carbonell *et al.*, 2011; Moon *et al.*, 2014; Yazdanfar *et al.*, 2015). On the other hand, other scholars stress that education is not significant in entrepreneurial behaviour (Constant *et al.*, 2003; Hammarstedt, 2004). Carbonell *et al.* (2011) also maintain that higher education and experience could negatively influence the predisposition to become self-employed since they enable them to be more aware of the risks and the difficulties of setting up a business and managing it successfully. Furthermore, these studies point out that higher education could facilitate the access to high skilled jobs, by reducing the need to take risks to gain upward mobility.

However, it has to be underlined that the degrees acquired in the country of origin are often not recognised in the host country (Carbonell *et al.*, 2011). These constraints render complicated the process of accessing the primary labour market through skilled jobs.

Therefore, this dissertation underlines the important role played by human capital in both access to self-employment and entrepreneurial behaviour. Human capital is intended in the broader sense, by including professional experience, knowledge and ability, elements learned by the individuals in their households, through intergenerational transmissions enacted by family, work or activities of parents or kin in the country of origin (Smith-Hunter, 2004).

According to Sanders and Nee (1996), migrants often acquire high levels of education and experiences in their country of origin, which, at the legal level, have little importance in the host country, because of the difficulties in recognising degrees. Despite this constraint, the

relevance of human capital can rapidly increase since education and language proficiency enable migrants to deal with a set of challenges, by positively influencing business strategies once they open their activity (Sahin *et al.*, 2011; Sanders and Nee, 1996; Ley, 2006). In order to investigate the role of human capital for migrants' entrepreneurial performances, not only the educational level needs to be explored, but also the country in which the degree has been attained and the subject studied. In addition, on the basis of my empirical analysis, I examine the role not only the working experience, but also professional training courses.

Furthermore, an important role is played by intergenerational transmissions of human capital. The family can be considered as a system of obligations that comprehend the social, economic, and cultural investments made before the migration process. Migrants continue to draw on this system during the process of adaptation (Bourdieu 1983). Therefore, migrant entrepreneurs strongly rely on the skills, values and knowledge transmitted by their parents, family and people belonging to the environment in which the individuals grew up. This aspect is related to the social stratification of entrepreneurship, since those who grew up, for instance, in entrepreneurial families, have more advantages than the individuals who belonged to the lower classes. Also in the case of human capital, many scholars have adopted cultural explanations, by analysing specific groups or undertaking comparison (e.g. Bates, 1997; Fairlie, 1999; Butler and Greene, 1997; Sahin *et al.*, 2011).

1.7 The biographical approach: the relevance of trajectories, experiences and motivations

This literature review has analysed the main dimensions that are able to influence the performance of migrant entrepreneurs. Moreover, throughout the deconstruction of the notion of ethnic groups (Basch *et al.*, 1994; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002; Brubaker *et al.*, 2004), it is possible to understand the dynamics of social belonging that go beyond traditional group identity frameworks. In this sense, Brubaker (2004: 164) criticises the notion of ethnic groups, by defining as common sense groupism “the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis”.

In the previous sections, I have analysed the most important elements which play a role in migrants’ entrepreneurial performances, starting from the context, that provides opportunities and/or constraints. Before shifting to the individuals’ resources, I have examined the most important studies on social stratification for migrant entrepreneurs, by pointing out the role played in the reliance of social capital, and the accumulation of human capital. At this point, it is important to shed light on the individual trajectory. Specifically, a micro-oriented biographical approach is suggested to analyse the behaviour of self-employed migrants (Apitzsch, 2003; Kontos and Apitzsch, 2003; Brettell and Alstatt, 2007; Slavnich, 2012). Therefore, mixed embeddedness approach should be supplemented by “the processual and dynamic perspective of the biographical embeddedness of entrepreneurial activity” (Kontos, 2003: 190). The biographical approach describes the importance of individual characteristics, experiences, motivations, the migratory and entrepreneurial path in the activities of migrant entrepreneurs (Kontos, 2003; Brettell and Alstatt, 2007).

Furthermore, Kontos and Apitzsch (2003) integrate the theoretical framework of ethnic and class resources by adding biographical resources for entrepreneurship, that is composed of experience and motivation. Indeed, according to Kontos (2003), class and ethnic resources, which have traditionally been argued by scholars (e.g. Light and Gold, 2000; Light, 1984) are not satisfactory in order to understand the ways in which migrant entrepreneurs can access to

self-employment, since these elements are afflicted by “collectivity”²¹ bias. In particular, those who access self-employment bring to their endeavour biographical experiential and motivational resource. In other words, the biographical context which embeds migrant entrepreneurs is characterised by cognitive aspects of experience and motivational features (Kontos, 2003). Experience has been considered by Hoernig (1989), on the one hand, as a “resource in the process of biographical construction” and, on the other hand, as concerning possible prestige and social recognition. Kontos (2003) considers motivation as a complex process, with different characteristics across individual migrant entrepreneurs. Therefore, biographical resources are particularly important to characterise the entrepreneurial path. However, Kontos' study analyses the phase of opening business for migrant entrepreneurs. Brettel and Alstatt (2007) adopt the biographical embeddedness approach in order to analyse the beginning of migrants' enterprises by examining the role of experience and motivation.

Therefore, the biographical approach is useful to understand how and which kind of experiences and motivations, embedded within a particular social and economic context, are able to play a role in the performance of migrants' entrepreneurs. For this reason, the biographical approach should be adopted not only to discover the initial motivations and experiences, but also to understand the entrepreneurial path of migrant entrepreneurs. Therefore, an identification of entrepreneurial trajectories is necessary (Pijpers and Maas, 2014). Specifically, the analysis of the migratory path allows the understanding of how experience and motivations (Kontos, 2003) have been able to influence the decision of becoming entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial path examination is useful to understand distinguishing elements of positive performances. In addition, the biographical approach also allows us to identify important events that might play a role in entrepreneurs' performances (both before and during the entrepreneurial path). In addition, through the biographical approach, it is also possible to analyse plans, or also past projects that have characterised the entrepreneurs' trajectories. This approach is considered as relevant to analyse “the diversity, complexity, and transformational character of migration phenomena” (Apitzsch and Siouti, 2007:3).

²¹ According to Kontos (2003) a “gender bias” or “gender blindness” to the concept of ethnic resources has been generated by the collectivity bias, because it does not argue the hierarchical characteristics of the gendered social dynamics of ethnic solidarity.

1.8 Conclusions

This literature review has emphasised the differentiated characteristics of migrant entrepreneurship and the important role played by many elements in the performance of activities owned by people of foreign background. For these reasons, a single agreed-upon definition does not exist among scholars, in order to identify business positive or negative performances. In fact, positive entrepreneurial achievements are not only linked to economic indicators (Robinson *et al.*, 2007). In this sense, Werbner (1999: 556) points out that success may be defined as “the competitive achievement of prestige or honour, and of the symbolic goods signalling these, within a specific regime of value”. In other words, the definition of migrants’ business achievements has to be expanded, since economic measures do not provide a complete evaluation of performances. Hence, non-economic measures of migrants’ entrepreneurial achievements have to be considered together with economic measures of success (Robinson, 2007). The differentiation of migrant entrepreneurial performances would validate Werbner’s argument since it is influenced by many dimensions (Robinson, 2007), that are fundamental in analysing achievements. Therefore, migrants’ entrepreneurial achievements do not comprehend only economic aspects, but also non-economic aspects that are linked to the individual entrepreneurs and to the context in which they are embedded. Specifically, this literature review has shown that migrants’ entrepreneurship is a very stratified and multi-dimensional phenomenon. For this reason, six dimensions have been identified, and each of them contains elements that have to be considered in analysing migrants’ entrepreneurial performances.

First, this literature review has shown the relevance of the context in which migrants are embedded. It is important to understand how the constraints and opportunities encountered by migrants can influence their access to self-employment, strategies and entrepreneurial paths. The main elements of the opportunity structure need to be considered: markets, institutions and regulations. So far as markets are concerned, the main features concern positioning aspects, competition with other migrants and natives, and constraints. As far as regulation is regarded, difficulties in understanding and applying regulations and bureaucratic procedures have to be explored. Furthermore, Kloostermann and Rath (2000) stressed that the context should be analysed both at the national and the local levels, by also analysing the role of the entrepreneurs’

relationships with local and national institutions, through consultations, help and constraints provided.

Second, the economic aspects of the business and, therefore, the enterprise dimension have to be explored. Specifically, I focus on the strategies adopted by migrant entrepreneurs in market position, taking into account the role of institutions and regulations and barriers encountered (Jones and Ram, 2010; Panayiotopoulos, 2008). Other relevant strategies that are able to influence achievements are linked to the relation between price and quality, human resources management (such as rise or decrease in the number of employees, the type of skills required and their role within the business), marketing strategies (Kourtit and Nijkamp, 2012; Masurel et al, 2002; Ley, 2006; Saxenian, 1999; Hart and Acs, 2011).

The third relevant dimension is that of social capital, by analysing the entrepreneurs' social networks, their change and construction over time (Portes, 1998). Furthermore, since the individual is a social subject in constant interaction with the world around him/her, networks should be examined at two levels: local and transnational (Wong and Ng, 2002; Urbano et al, 2011; Rusinovic, 2008; Portes et al, 2002). In order to investigate social networks, norms and reciprocity practices, exchange directions, and solidarity constraints have to be analysed (Storti, 2014; Kourtit and Nijkamp, 2012; Portes and Sensebrenner, 1993). Furthermore, the social and symbolic boundaries of migrant entrepreneurs should be explored, by investigating their relations with native people and native entrepreneurs, those with other migrants coming from different countries or the same country. Moreover, social capital has to be examined by considering the entrepreneurs' relations with their employees, customers and suppliers, in order to understand their linkages. In addition, the role of the more relevant linkages (Granovetter, 1992) for migrant entrepreneurs should be analysed.

The fourth dimension is that of human capital. It has been highlighted that highly educated migrants have to face fewer difficulties than low educated individuals in every phase of their activities (Clark & Drinkwater, 1998; Dávila and Mora, 2004; Hjerm, 2004; Carbonell et al., 2011; Moon *et al.*, 2014; Yazdanfar *et al.*, 2015). However, human capital is composed by both formal education and informal skills and an important role in influencing both the access to self-employment and entrepreneurial behaviour is played by intergenerational transmissions enacted by family, by the work or the activities of parents or kin in the country of origin (Heckman *et al.*, 1999; Smith-Hunter, 2004).

Fifth, it has been evidenced that the analysis of the trajectories of migrant entrepreneurs allows understanding the performances. The migratory path has to be examined (Storti, 2014; Labrianidis and Hatziprokopiou, 2010; Pijpers and Maas, 2014), with a focus on pre-migration experience (Kushnirovich, 2013). While some scholars have analysed the migratory paths and motivations of different national groups (e.g. Andall, 2007; Willemse, 2014), the necessity of examining individual trajectories has to be evidenced. Indeed, every migrant has a different story and experience that can influence through the different way his/her access to self-employment and entrepreneurial behaviour. Furthermore, not only the migratory path has to be explored, but also the individual trajectories and the entrepreneurial path (Labrianidis and Hatziprokopiou, 2010; Storti, 2014; Harney, 2006). In this way, the life-story approach (Bertaux and Kohli, 1984) is implemented in order to understand how different trajectories can influence migrants' entrepreneurial conditions. Through this approach, it is possible to reconstruct experience and motivations that are relevant not only in accessing self-employment, but also during the development and evolution of the activity.

Sixth, social mobility can be inserted among the main reasons that push migrants towards entrepreneurship (Pang, 2002; Storti, 2014; Waldinger 2011) and has been indicated by Robinson *et al.* (2007) as one of the three results of the interaction between social stratification and entrepreneurship. However, social mobility is not granted to all migrants who decide to become entrepreneurs, because of the variegation of this phenomenon and mechanisms of social stratification, that can negatively influence the entrepreneurial path for those who have a lower status (Robinson, 2007). By taking into account the individual trajectories, the class of origin needs to be analysed, to examine the mechanism of social mobility, for those who have a lower status, but also for those who come from higher classes.

2. Migrant entrepreneurship in Italy and the relevance of the restaurant sector

2.1 Introduction

Migrant entrepreneurship is a complex and differentiated phenomenon, characterised by various evolving schemes across the world²². In recent decades, migrant entrepreneurship has gained prominence in Europe because of many changing historical circumstances (Volery, 2007). First of all, large-scale migration flows have been involving also Southern European countries since the beginning of the 1980s. Furthermore, economic restructuring has led to deep changes in the structure of European labour markets, because of the shift from industrial to post-industrial economies. In fact, until the 1970s, big cities grew as industrial productive centres, on the basis of the Fordist model, where the economic urban structure was characterised by the prevalence of big firms. However, during the 1970s-1980s, this industrial city framework faced a crisis because of various elements²³ and it was involved in the changes brought by the Post-Fordist model, such as the production of small-scale and highly de-standardised goods. One of the most important features of economic restructuring has been a general shift from employment in big firms to self-employment in small ones. In addition, the urban environments have been transformed into dynamic centres, constituted by localised industrial networks, which are at the economic core of the most important city-regions, and in many cases, they play an important role for urban expansion (Scott, 2001). The evolution of the current business environment, the reinforcement of small and medium enterprises, and the arising global economy have, in recent years, shed a new light on creative and innovative businesses (Scott, 2000; Florida, 2002; Kourtit and Nijkamp, 2012).

²² Migrant entrepreneurship has been already developing during the first half of the XX century in the US (e.g. Light, 1972; Light, 1984; Turner and Bonacich, 1980; Zhou, 2014; Tsukashima, 1991; Strong, 1933; Ma, 1984; Brozen, 1954), and from the 1950s-1960s in Europe (e.g. Clark and Drinkwater, 2009; Strüder, 2003; Ostberg 2003; Storti, 2014). This process has been concerning both developed and developing countries (e.g. Light *et al.*, 1987; De Vita *et al.*, 2013; Yuniarto, 2015).

²³ The most relevant elements are: the saturation of standardised good markets, rising labour costs, increasing competition with countries characterised by lower costs of production, changing demands towards non-standardised good, the crucial growing importance of the tertiary sector and the development of new technologies (Scott, 2001).

As consequences, the transformations have created a more favourable opportunity structure for enterprises conducted by immigrants, which are more and more embedded in the urban²⁴ economy (Volery, 2007; Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp, 2009; Barrett *et al.*, 1996; Kloosterman and Rath, 2010).

The economic activities of immigrants are framed in the larger context of changes in the urban economic structure (Sassen, 1988; Sassen, 1991; Rath and Kloosterman, 2000). In this sense, the strategic importance of migrant entrepreneurship concerns the macro-level, in terms of substantial contribution to the economic growth (for instance, in terms of GDP or job creation), and to the urban development of the host countries (Carbonell *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, this phenomenon has become an important essential socio-economic dimension of the presence of migrants in modern cities, and a relevant aspect of multicultural urban life (Dana, 2007; Kourtit and Nijakamp, 2012).

Furthermore, migrant entrepreneurship also assumes a very important role at the micro-dimension, since the passage to self-employment is seen as the only way to achieve social inclusion and upward mobility. However, it has to be taken into account that self-employment is not always the solution to blocked mobility, since many of these businesses tends to be concentrated and segregated in particular sectors and neighbourhoods, with low possibilities of growth. Moreover, not all migrant entrepreneurs start from a disadvantage position, with low levels of human capital, and lack of fluency in the language of the host country (Sanders and Nee, 1996; Storti, 2009). For these reasons, the changing urban structure offers an even more visible scenario of the diversification of social and economic performances of migrant entrepreneurs.

This paragraph aims to trace an overview of migrant entrepreneurship in Italy, and to contextualise the dynamism and the rising importance of migrant entrepreneurship, with a focus on food and the food sector. Therefore, this chapter is divided into four main sections.

In the introductory section, I show the importance of self-employment in Italy, and the relevance of this phenomenon that has become more and more important in the national economy. The second section analyses the rapid increasing of migrant entrepreneurship in Italy, with a focus on the impact of the crisis, on the different characteristics of businesses and entrepreneurs, and on the geographical and sectorial distribution. At this point, the third section is dedicated to the presentation of the sector examined by this study, the restaurant sector, by

²⁴ Migrant entrepreneurship has mainly concerned urban areas, though this phenomenon has been growing also at the rural level (Moon *et al.*, 2014).

focusing on the importance of food for the migratory experience and on the innovations brought by the introduction of foreign cuisine in the Italian urban areas. Finally, the fourth section shows the high differentiation among migrants' enterprises, by showing the presence of businesses who manage to achieve good performances.

2.2 The increasing relevance of migrant entrepreneurship in the Italian context

In Italy, self-employment has always been playing a significant role, because of processes and aspirations to social mobility of low social classes (Reyneri, 2002, Ambrosini, 2010). According to Ambrosini (2010), from these complex and sometimes controversial paths of change within self-employed population, the micro-entrepreneurship phenomena that constitute the main component of the Italian development model have emerged.

Table 1. Dimensions and value of EU-27 businesses.

	Number of businesses (million)	People employed (million)	Value added (EUR 1000 million)	Apparent labour productivity (EUR 1000/ person)
All enterprises	21	135,8	6176	45,5
All SMEs	20,9	90,6	3117	39,9
Micro	19,3	39,3	1348	34,3
Small	1,4	27,9	1147	41,2
Medium	0,2	23,4	1122	47,9
Large	0	45,2	2559	56,6

Source: Eurostat, *Size Class Analysis*, 2011.

Table 1 shows the total number of enterprises and their dimensions in EU-27. CNEL report (2011) underlines that Italy is the country with the highest number of small and medium businesses in Europe, by contributing to the general framework shown above with 3.947.000 SME, 94,5% of which are micro-enterprise. According to IDOS (2017) Italy is the European country characterised by the highest total number of businesses (15,5% of EU-28), and the third country for the number of migrants' owned businesses (14% of EU-28). The prevalence of small and medium enterprises has constituted an important feature for the development of migrants' businesses.

Migrant entrepreneurship has been rapidly increasing during the last two decades. This remarkable evolution of the phenomenon is due to a change of the Italian legislation. Until 1997, the Italian law had imposed limitations on migrant entrepreneurship through the

institution of reciprocity clauses with third countries on self-employment foreign national. According to the reciprocity clause, foreign citizens could open a business in Italy when their country of origin had established the same authorisation for Italian citizens. Despite this constraining rule, even before 1997 foreign citizens were opening their own businesses, since those who did not fit to the clause used to create their enterprises throughout Italian nominees (Castagnone, 2011). The “Testo Unico sull’immigrazione” (d.l. 286/1998) eliminated the reciprocity clause, by fostering the development of migrant entrepreneurship. In addition, during the same period, the commercial sector has been partially liberalised. Therefore, since 1997, migrants’ engagement in entrepreneurial activities has been subjected to a rapid and constant increase. Furthermore, increasing migration flows have brought Italy among the most important receiving countries in Europe. The number of businesses owned by migrants has increased from 85042 in 2000 to 590452 in 2017. Moreover, the relevance of migrant entrepreneurship in the Italian context particularly emerges by analysing the 2008 economic and financial crisis: according to Andria *et al.* (2010), migrants’ enterprising spirit is among the phenomena that are more able to spread positive input to the development of the productive system. In addition, the growth of migrant entrepreneurship indicates a progressive stabilisation of foreign people in the Italian territory.

According to Ambrosini (2010), migrant entrepreneurship has been introducing in the last decades many innovations in the relationship between migrant population and the host economic systems. These innovations concern many aspects, such as the diversification of migrant population, the display of social mobility elements in developed societies, the introduction of new products and services in the host markets²⁵, and the transformation of neighbourhood and urban spaces (Agustoni and Alietti, 2009).

As it is furthered explored in the empirical chapter dedicated to the context (4.2), migrant entrepreneurs have to face the huge bureaucracy and the high taxation level that characterise the Italian entrepreneurial fabric. These aspects create a great number of constraints also for Italian entrepreneurs, that become even worse for foreign self-employed because of the barriers that they face in the host countries (e.g. language problems, limited information and human capital). Nevertheless, migrant entrepreneurship continues to rise, characterised by fragmentation and significant urban and regional variations (Schmoll, 2012). For this reason, the following analysis takes into consideration the trend of migrant entrepreneurs by examining

²⁵ The introduction of new products has concerned, in particular, food and entertainment sectors, and the commerce of furniture and fabric of the country of origin.

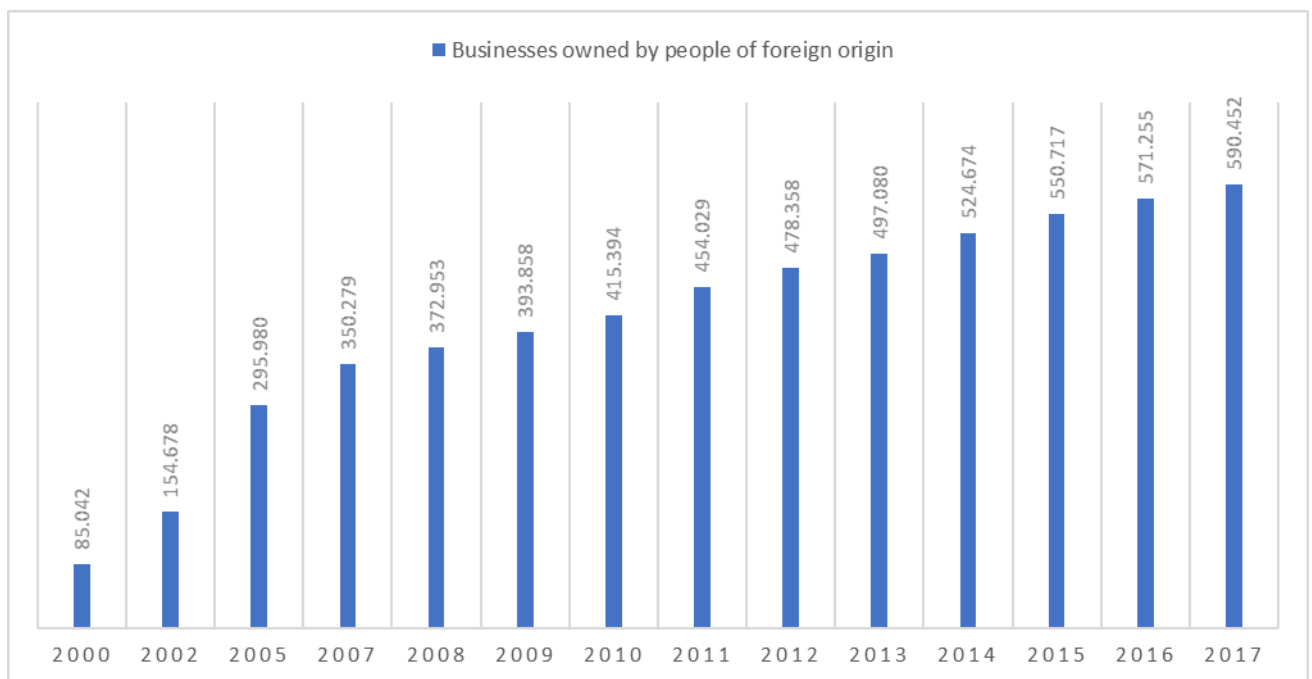
the characteristics of entrepreneurs, the evolution during time, the different geographical areas and industry sector and, finally, a focus on the restaurant sector and on diversification of performances is carried out.

2.3 Trend of migrant entrepreneurship in Italy

2.3.1 Variations across time and the economic crisis

As it has been shown in the introductory paragraph of this chapter, immigrant entrepreneurship has been subjected to a rapid increase. In 1997, just 4,2% of new businesses were owned by entrepreneurs of migrant origins, while in 2011 the new foreign-owned businesses are the 33,4% of the total amount of recently opened enterprises (Riva and Lucchini, 2012).

Figure 1. The trend of business owners or partners of foreign origin²⁶, years 2000, 2002, 2005, 2007-2017²⁷



Source: Elaboration on Unioncamere and Infocamere data (Idos, Unioncamere, ISFOL and CNA reports).

²⁶ As it has been evidenced by Chiesi (2011:25) in the CNEL report, though all data come from Infocamere, their elaboration is very different on the basis of the sources of the report. Though all the sources are characterised by apparent accuracy in providing data, most of them are quite different. The reasons for these differences refer to 1) the eventual exclusion of entrepreneurs coming from foreign countries characterised by a strong economy. 2) The impossibility to exclude enterprises that are no more active, though they are still registered to the Chamber of Commerce. 3) The difficulties in measuring those activities developed in the informal economy. 4) The possibilities that part of registrations do not correspond to entrepreneurial activities (Chiesi, 2011).

²⁷ Because of the issues explained in the previous footnote, it has not been possible to obtain comparable data to those presented in the picture, so far as years 2001, 2003, 2004 and 2006 are concerned.

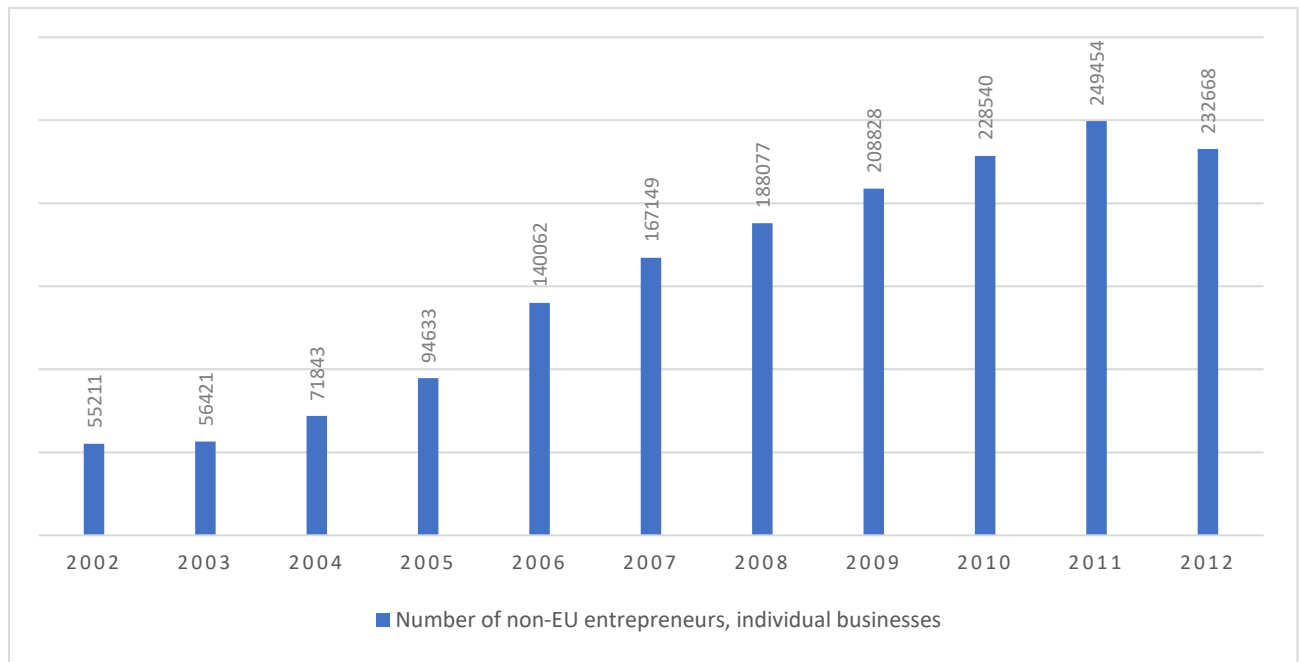
Figure 1 shows that the number of migrant entrepreneurs has been rapidly growing during the last 17 years, by reaching in 2017 more than six times the number of 2000. By looking at these data, three main observations arise. Firstly, during the first decade after 1997 (when the abolition of the reciprocity clause took place), the number of migrant entrepreneurs has hugely increased, by almost quadrupling in the period 2000-2007. Secondly, in the second decade, the increase seems quite constant, though slighter than those that occurred during the decade before. Thirdly, the number of migrant entrepreneurs has continued to rise despite the adverse economic situation during the second decade, since Italy has gone through a great economic crisis.

As it has been stated by the IDOS report (2011)²⁸, the situation has been very critical and uncertain because of different factors, such as the crisis of public debts, the downgrading of Italian rating, the recession, the increase of interest rates, the scarce liquidity of interbank markets, the weakening of labour markets and precariousness of family incomes. These circumstances have negatively influenced both the credit supply by banks and the trust level. By observing migrant entrepreneurship from a financial point of view, the 2009 Report “Finance and entrepreneurial behaviour in a multi-ethnic Italy”²⁹ has underlined that more than 25% of businesses owned by migrants has never had any relationship with banks, not even through the opening of bank accounts. Businesses owned by migrants are considered by banks as riskier because they are perceived as structurally weaker and with fewer guarantees than enterprises owned by autochthones. Immigrants’ businesses are perceived as riskier than those owned by Italian people, mainly because they are concentrated in those sectors that have mostly dealt with the crisis, such as construction, commerce, transports, and restaurants. Nevertheless, even when their loan request is rejected, migrants find the necessary funds to open their business throughout alternative ways, and the dynamism of foreign-owned enterprises has not lost his shine, as it is shown by the constant rise of the number of migrant entrepreneurs (IDOS, 2011).

²⁸ Edited by Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS

²⁹ Edited by Unioncamere, Nomisma and Crif

Figure 2. The trend of individual businesses owned by migrants coming from non-EU countries (2002-2012)



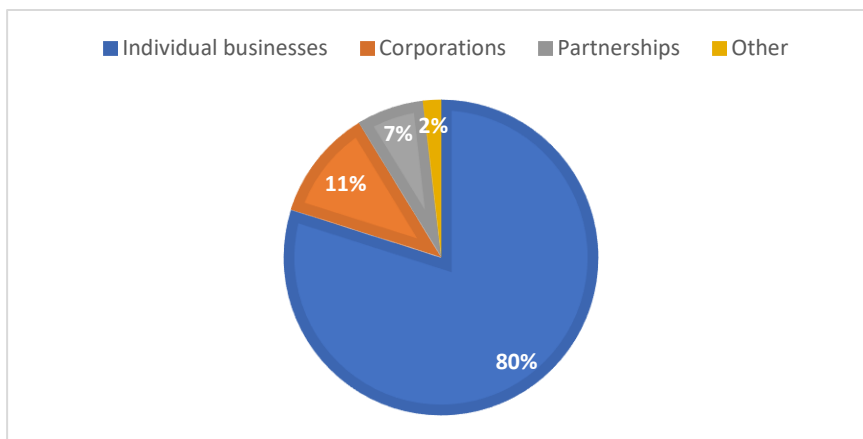
Source: Elaboration on Unioncamere data, CNA 2013.

By looking at Figure 2, which shows the data on individual businesses owned by people who come from non-EU countries, it appears that this kind of business has faced a decrease (-6,7%), as consequences of the economic crisis. However, this negative result does not undermine the significant contribution given by individual businesses owned by people coming from non-EU countries, since they had been growing since 2007 (+39,2%). According to Bontadini and Segre (2013) and Fondazione Leone Moressa (2011), migrants have to face the same problems of Italian entrepreneurs, connected to the massive amount of bureaucratic procedures, and to difficulties related to delay in payments. Nevertheless, 2014 data on individual businesses show a new increase of migrants' enterprises, amounting at 258.771. In fact, after a two-year period of contraction, also the number of individual businesses that belong to non-EU entrepreneurs has started to increase again.

2.3.2 Characteristics of migrant entrepreneurs and their businesses

This paragraph aims to shed light on the profile of immigrant entrepreneurs and their businesses and to have a first look at their differentiation and complexity. So far as the businesses are concerned, their legal status and variation over time need to be explored. This aspect allows understanding the complexity of the phenomenon, since, although the vast majority of them decided to constitute an individual business, this choice is not exclusive.

Figure 3. The legal status of migrants' businesses (2015)



Source: Openmigration elaboration on IDOS, *Rapporto Immigrazione ed imprenditoria*, 2016

As Figure 3 shows, the 2016 “Rapporto Immigrazione ed Imprenditoria”³⁰ indicates that individual businesses are 80% of the total amount of businesses owned by migrants, followed by corporations (11%), partnerships (7%), and other forms of businesses (2%). What appears to be interesting from these data is the variation over time of businesses, during the four years 2011-2015. The higher increase has been faced by corporations (+44,5%), followed by individual businesses (+19,9%), other forms of society (+18%), and partnerships (+8,5%). These changes show that, even though most of the migrants choose to open an individual business, during the last years a tendency towards most complex societies has appeared, especially so far as corporations are concerned, implying, on the one hand, higher ambitions on

³⁰ Edited by IDOS in cooperation with Unioncamere, CNA, CCIAA Roma, Moneygram and OIM

the part of these entrepreneurs and, on the other, an increasing differentiation within the phenomenon of migrant entrepreneurship.

By looking at the profile of migrant entrepreneurs, the number of businesses owned by migrant women has risen proportionally to the total number of foreign-owned businesses. In 2004, the number of businesses owned by women of foreign origin was 18,7% of the total amount of migrant owned businesses (Andria *et al.*, 2010), in 2010 they were 18,9% (De Luca, 2011), while in 2013 they slightly grew to 23,7% (IDOS, 2014³¹). A branch of the literature shows the increasing participation in the trading and entrepreneurial sphere of women in their host countries (e.g. Schmoll, 2004).

Table 2. Main nationalities of men and women entrepreneurs in Italy (30th September 2011)

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	MEN	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	WOMEN
MOROCCO	53929	CHINA	22769
RUMANIA	41177	RUMANIA	12301
ALBANIA	32871	MOROCCO	6745
CINA	29555	NIGERIA	4085
EGYPT	17509	ALBANIA	3702
BANGLADESH	16329	BRASIL	3273
SENEGAL	14377	ARGENTINA	3014
TUNISIA	12961	UCRAINA	3003
PAKISTAN	9406	VENEZUELA	2873
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO	8125	SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO	2511
Total men migrant entrepreneurs	321.647	Total women migrant entrepreneurs	97.933

Source: Elaboration on Unioncamere data (De Luca, 2011)

So far as the nationalities of migrant entrepreneurs are concerned, according to the “Rapporto Immigrazione e Imprenditoria 2017³²”, the most spread country of origin is Morocco (14,5% of the total amount of foreign entrepreneurs). Among them, women entrepreneurs are 13,3%. As far as the sector is concerned, Moroccan activities are highly concentrated in the commerce (81,4%). The second nationality of migrant entrepreneurs is Chinese (11,4%). Among them, women are 46,5%. Most of the Chinese entrepreneurs operate in the commerce (37,8%) and

³¹ Rapporto Immigrazione e Imprenditoria (2014), edited by IDOS in cooperation with Unioncamere, CNA, CCIAA Roma, Moneygram, and OIM.

³² Edited by IDOS in cooperation with Unioncamere, CNA, CCIAA Roma, Moneygram and OIM.

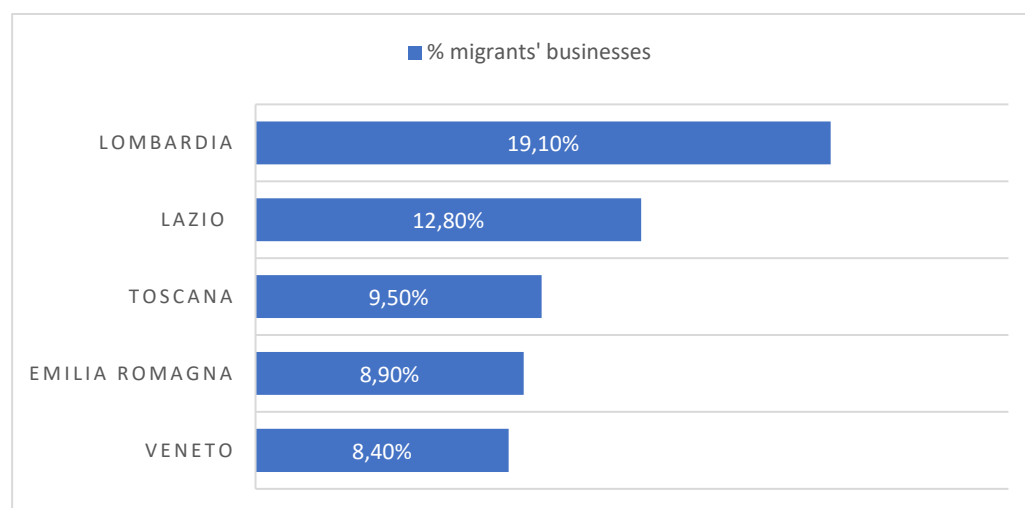
manufacture sector (34,4%). The third nationality of migrant entrepreneurs in Italy is Romanian (10,6%). Among them, women are 23,7%. 61,9% of Romanian entrepreneurs operate in the construction sector. These three nationalities are followed by Albanians (6,9%) and Bangladeshi (6,8%). From these results, it appears that there is not a “dominant” nationality of entrepreneurs in Italy, but they come from very different countries.

At first glance, it would appear that migrant entrepreneurship is a rather homogenous phenomenon. However, by deepening the theme, we can see dynamics of differentiation, in the increasing constitution of businesses with different juridical status, women’s businesses that grow as proportionally as men’s, and the absence of a prevailing nationality, that indicates great variegation among their provenience.

2.3.3 Geographical and sectoral distribution of migrants' businesses

The geographical distribution of migrants' businesses shows a concentration in specific areas of Italy. According to the “Rapporto Immigrazione ed Imprenditoria” (IDOS, 2016), the great majority of businesses owned by migrants are in the North (50,9%) and the Centre of Italy (26,5%). Furthermore, by looking at the single regions of this area, a great regional concentration emerges.

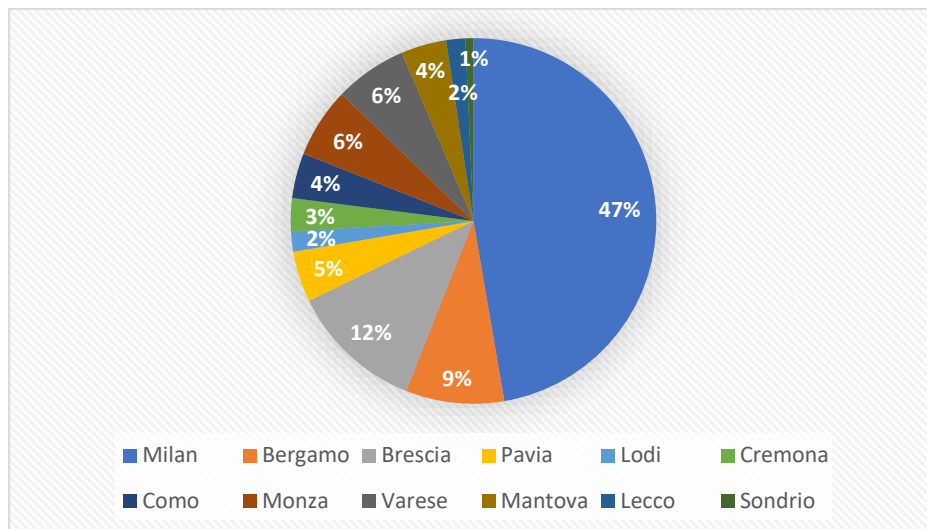
Figure 4. Top 5 regions for the number of migrant-owned businesses, 2016.



Sources: Elaboration Openmigration on Idos, Rapporto Immigrazione ed imprenditoria, 2016

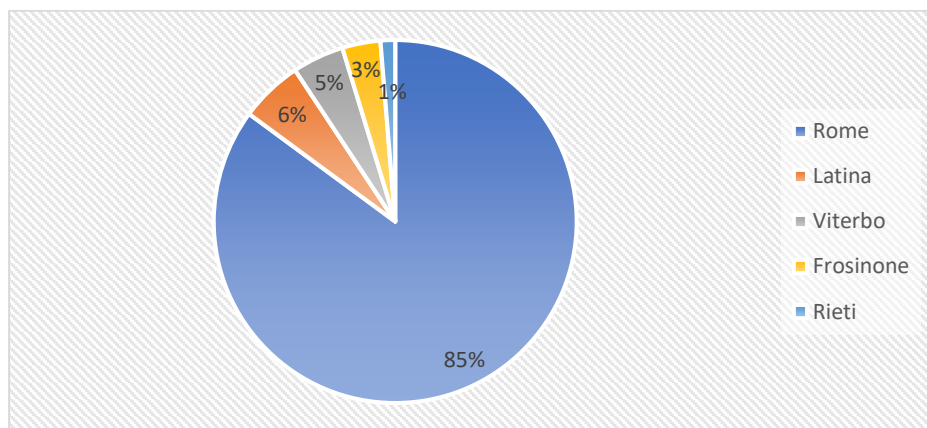
Figure 4 clearly shows that more than half of migrants' businesses in Italy are located in five Regions, all positioned in the Northern and Centre Italy. In detail, almost 20% of the businesses are located in Lombardia, and the second region is Lazio (12,8%). Therefore, more than 30% of migrant businesses in Italy are settled in two regions: Lombardia and Lazio. Since the two most important Italian cities, Rome and Milan, are in these regions, the second step requires analysis at the urban level, to identify the towns or cities where this phenomenon has impacted the most.

Figure 5. Distribution of migrants' businesses by Provinces, Lombardia, 2016



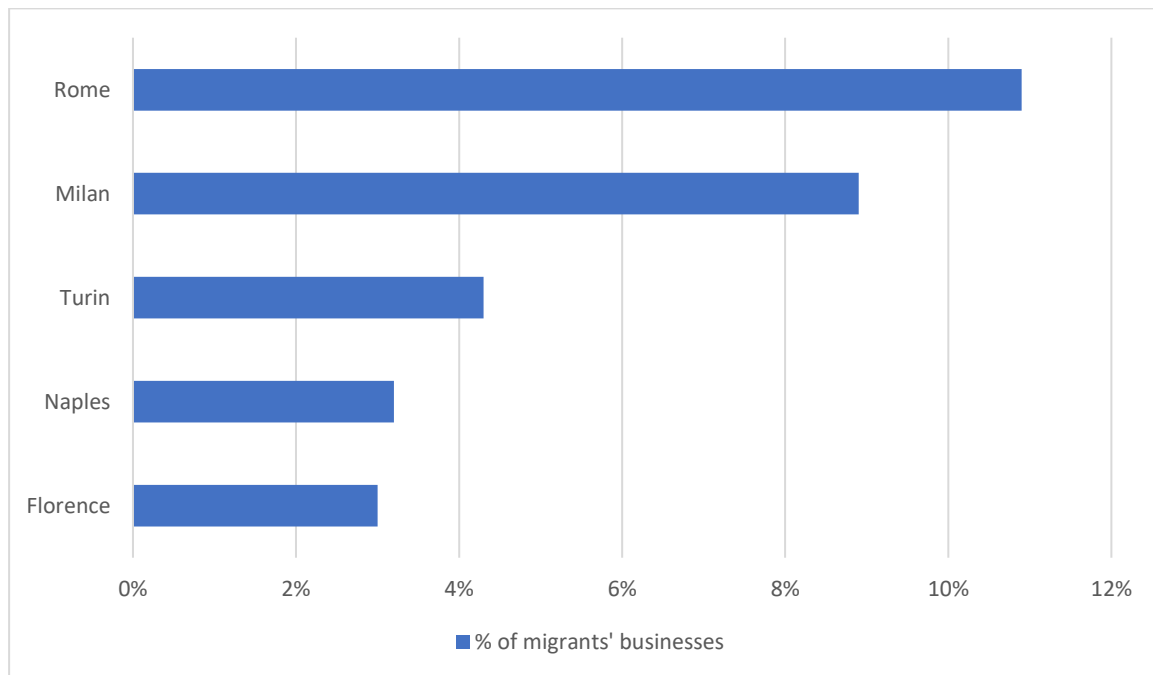
Sources: Elaboration Openmigration on Idos, Rapporto Immigrazione ed imprenditoria, 2016

Figure 6. Distribution of migrants' businesses by Provinces, Lazio, 2016



Sources: Elaboration Openmigration on Idos, Rapporto Immigrazione ed imprenditoria, 2016

Figure 7. Top five urban centres for migrant entrepreneurship in Italy, 2016



Sources: Elaboration Openmigration on Idos, *Rapporto Immigrazione ed Imprenditoria*, 2016

Figures 5 and 6 show the distribution of migrants' businesses across provinces in the two top regions. Almost half of the businesses owned by migrants in Lombardia are located in Milan, and 85% of foreign activities in Lazio take place in Rome. Moreover, Figure 7 shows that Rome and Milan are the top two urban centres for the number of businesses owned by migrants.

According to the “Rapporto Milano Produttiva” (2018)³³, in 2017, the total number of businesses in Milan has grown (+1,5%), by doubling with respect to the national rate (+0,8%) and to the Lombard one. In this scenario, migrants' businesses have faced an even higher increase (+4,2%). By examining the dynamic over time, Riva and Lucchini (2012) underline the growth of registration to the Chamber of Commerce of individual migrant businesses.

³³ Realised by Camera di Commercio Milano, Monza-Brianza, Lodi,

Specifically, in 1997 the registration of new businesses owned by migrants was 4,2% of the total number of businesses in the province of Milan, while in 2012 they amounted to 33.4%.

As far as Rome is concerned, the 2016 Report³⁴ highlights that the number of registered businesses in the Italian capital city amounts at 486.284, with a growth rate of 2,08%³⁵, triple with respect to the national one.

Table 3. Italian and foreign-owned businesses in Rome and Milan, 2014-2015.

CITY	MILAN 2015	ROME 2015	MILAN 2014	ROME 2014
ITALIAN BUSINESSES	250.661	295.073	249.583	294.508
FOREIGN BUSINESSES	42.047	50.958	38.516	48.046
TOTAL	292.708	346.031	288.099	342.554

Sources: Elaboration on Camera di Commercio data, 2016

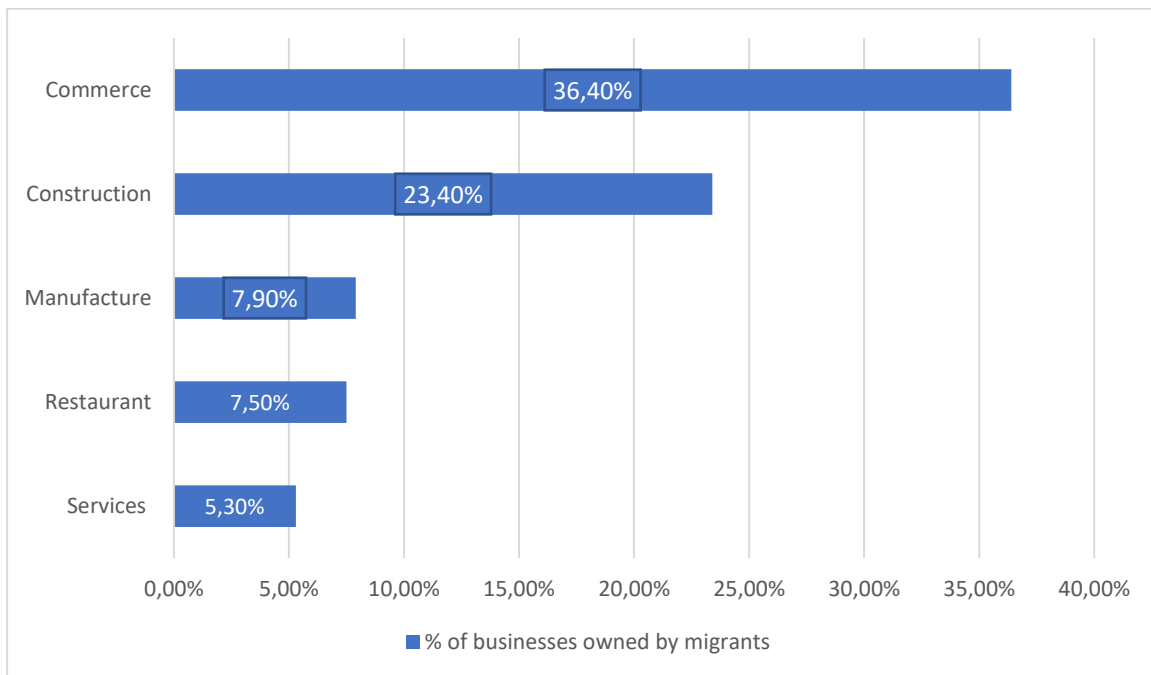
Table 3 shows the dynamics of migrant and Italian owned businesses during the years 2014-2015 in Milan and Rome. In this period, the number of migrant businesses has highly increased both in Milan (+9,2%) and in Rome (+6,1%), while the increase of Italian business has been much lower (+0,4 in Milan and +0,2 in Rome). These data indicate that Rome and Milan are two urban centres with great entrepreneurial dynamism, which is more and more reflected in the phenomenon of migrant entrepreneurship.

A strong concentration among sectors characterises migrant entrepreneurship in Italy. As we can see in figure 7, more than 80% of migrant-owned businesses are concentrated in five industries: commerce, construction, manufacture, restaurant, and services.

³⁴ Realised by Camera di Commercio di Roma.

³⁵ Source: Elaboration Ufficio Studi CCIAA Roma on InfoCamere data.

Figure 8. Top 5 sectors of migrants' businesses, 2015.



Sources: *Elaborations Openmigration on Idos, Rapporto Immigrazione ed Imprenditoria, 2016*

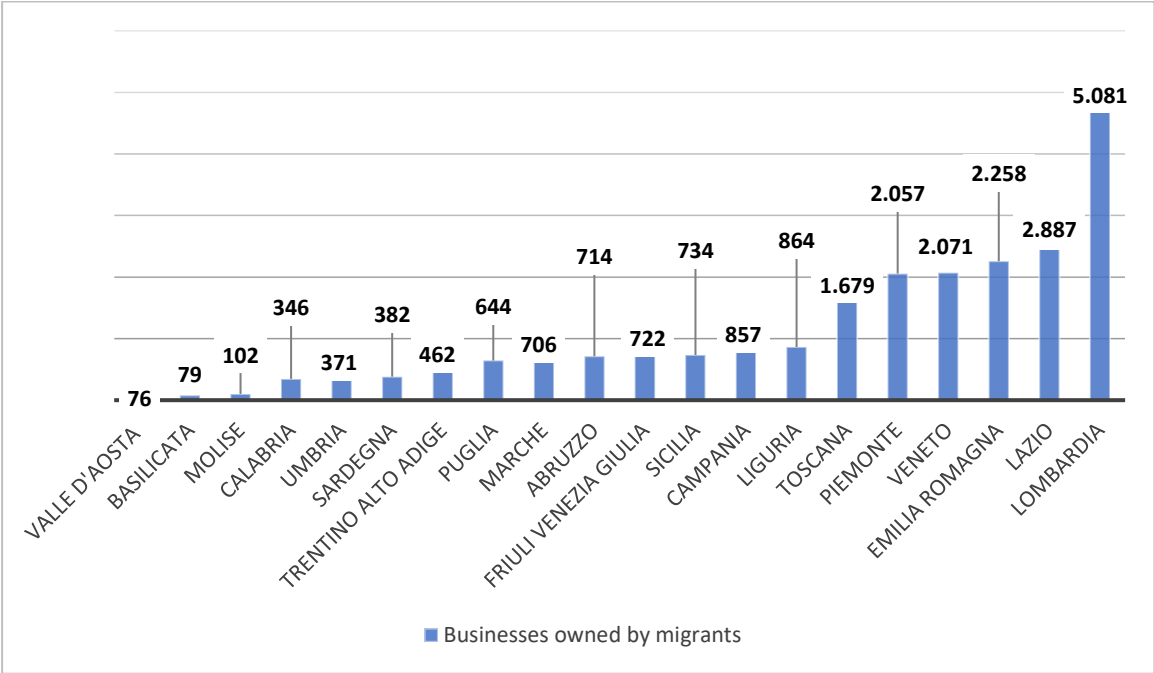
The commerce sector is highly fragmented, as it has been evidenced by Avola and Cortese (2011) in the CNEL report: it is a complex phenomenon that includes street trading, that can be constituted both by “shelter activities” in informal economies, and by trading enterprises with regular license, retail businesses and wholesale of ethnic products. As far as the construction sector is concerned, it is considered by Barberis (2008) as a traditional “shelter sector” for the weakest classes of the population. However, Ambrosini and Boccagni (2004) trace a more variegated situation characterised, on the one hand, by individual firms composed by workers who choose (or are sometimes obliged) to become self-employed as an outcome of subcontract and, on the other hand, by real businesses that often have more than five employees. Manufacture firms owned by migrants are mainly employed in the food industry, above all in bakeries, and packaging of clothes and fashion accessories (CNEL, 2011).

The restaurant sector is the fourth sector with the highest number of migrants’ businesses. What appears to be interesting about this sector is, first of all, the dynamic of this phenomenon: according to Di Pasquale (2015)³⁶, in 2014 the number of migrants’ restaurants amounted to 60250. Specifically, they have highly increased (+36%) during the five years 2009-2014, even

³⁶ Elaborations Fondazione Leone Moressa on Infocamere data.

more than commerce (+30%), construction (+9,4%), and manufacture (+9,7%) sectors. Furthermore, during the same period, the increase of Italian-owned restaurants is much lower (+2,4%). The dynamic development of migrants' businesses in the restaurant sectors renders this industry very interesting to the study of differentiation of performances.

Figure 9. The number of migrants' restaurants by region, 2011.



Sources: Elaborations on FIPE, 2011

Figure 9 shows the distribution of migrants' restaurants across regions, and we can see that more than a third of migrants' restaurants are settled in Lombardia and Lazio, the two regions where the two urban centres taken into analysis are located. Data concerning the characteristics of migrants' restaurants are explored in the fifth chapter, whose first section is dedicated to the analysis of the restaurant sector in Milan and Rome. For this reason, the next section undertakes an in-depth analysis of this sector, starting from the role of food in the migration experience.

2.4 The restaurant sector and the role of food

As the previous paragraph has shown, the restaurant sector has been one of the sectors in which migrants have mostly increased their activities since many decades (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009). Censis report (2015) has identified 21176 migrant entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector, 12.9% of the total number, with consistent growth in the period 2010-2015 (+43.3%). Thus, it is fundamental to have an in-depth look at this sector and its attractiveness for migrant self-employed, starting from the role of food.

Before examining the role of food, I recall that, as we have seen in chapter 1.2, ethnicity does not concern shared traits or cultural commonalities, but rather practices of categorisation and classification (Barth, 1969). Therefore, the terms “ethnic restaurant”, “ethnic food”, and “ethnic cuisines”³⁷ are not used to indicate a particular linkage with a specific national “group”, but to identify the branch of the sector analysed, that is highly differentiated.

The debate concerning the role of food in the migratory experiences concerns the change of migrants’ dietary practices, which takes place throughout contact and confrontation with autochthones. Furthermore, food is used as a symbolic and narrative way to represent migrants’ past, by diminishing the role of traumatic events, blurring negativities, and, if necessary, creating new forms of tradition (Di Renzo, 2006). According to Di Renzo (2006: 398), these occurrences have happened in the birth of the so-called “Italian national cuisine”. Di Renzo (2006) underlines the role of Italian cuisine exported by migrants in other European and non-European countries. Censis (2015) analyses the situation in Italy since food consumption has followed the same dynamics of the socio-economic evolution of the country. Timing, places, and products reflect the changes in lifestyles, consumers’ behaviour, and ways of searching for wealth. After the Second World War, Italian consumers “progressively left those lifestyles characterised by simplicity and necessary sobriety” (Censis, 2015: 5) and, so far as diet is concerned, the easier access to specific kind of food (such as meat) has constituted a symbol of overcoming the mass-poverty condition. The role of food has been subjected to significant

³⁷ According to many authors (e.g. Mintz and Du Bois, 2002; Arvela, 2013), ethnicity is constructed on acknowledged difference. Therefore, ethnic cuisines are connected to a geographically and/or historically defined migrants’ community (e.g., Lockwood & Lockwood 2000a). According to Mintz and Du Bois (2002) this construction concerns not only ethnicity, but also nationhood (Murcott 1996) and, thus, the associated cuisines could also be constructed, by providing added concreteness to the idea of national or ethnic identity. “Talking and writing about ethnic or national food can then add to a cuisine’s conceptual solidity and coherence.” (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002: 109).

changes and evolution during the second half of the XXth century. During the last decades, food has become the symbol of the Italian lifestyle, composed of tradition, authenticity, quality, and relationship, throughout the added values of safety and traceability (Censis, 2015). However, food is also considered as a way through which Italian people can meet the migrants' community, as a way of experimentation, globalisation, meeting, and hybridisation with other culinary traditions that have settled in Italy. In fact, food is not just tradition but also knowledge, discovery, research of innovation.

Food plays an important role in every phase of migrants' trajectory and experience since it constitutes a symbolic and a material connection with the country of origin. The material connection has been taking place throughout the spread of ethnic restaurants and ethnic food shops in the host countries. The symbolic connection occurs because migrants often establish a relationship with the past throughout their traditional food, and it becomes a mean to consolidate their cultural practices (Calvi, 2017). In fact, food allows reconstructing cultural and material practices connected to the pre-migratory experiences of individuals, acting as an agent of memory (Mohring 2008). Throughout food migrants experience a recollection, that takes place at the cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions³⁸.

This aspect is considered as a significant mean to represent migrants' identity and support connections with family and community members who have remained in the country of origin. Mares (2012: 335) explains the centrality of food:

“Food is central to the longing for home and the often painful struggle to accommodate to new ways of being in the world; and preparing, eating and sharing meals that are resonant with one's foodways – the eating habits or food practices of a community, region or time period – is a vital piece of maintaining a sense of self in a new environment.”

Nevertheless, the migratory process carries out deep changes concerning diet, social relationships, and identity (Mares, 2012; Morhing, 2008). Therefore, food also represents a field of negotiation of identity between migrants and autochthones (Pravettoni 2013; Zincone, 2009). In fact, migrants use food to cling to their traditions, that are reproduced in the countries of destinations. Often, this kind of food is reproduced with many variants, and migrants become relevant agents of changing consumes in the host countries (Cook and Crang, 1996; Sassatelli,

³⁸ paralleling notions such as Bourdieu's (1977) habitus, Connerton's (1989) notion of bodily memory, and Stoller's (1995) emphasis on embodied memories.

2004). Donna Gabaccia (1998), in her book concerning ethnic food and its role and evolution in the American history, states that consumers often use to eating “the other”³⁹, and this kind of feeding customs implies tolerance, curiosity, and a willingness to share some contact with “the others”.

Food can play a double role as a “cultural signifier” (Arvela, 2013: 3). On the one hand, it can symbolise fondness and social inclusion. On the other hand, food may also indicate exclusion, produce stereotypes and feelings of dislike that could mark boundaries between autochthones and migrant communities (Arvela, 2013; Abarca, 2004). Therefore, the spread of ethnic food also meets some resistance from the host societies. These resistances are fostered both by economic motivation, such as downward competition, and ideological reasons, such as mistrust of the diverse. For instance, in the case of Lucca, ethnic food constituted a “threat to Italian-ness”⁴⁰ (Arvela, 2013). This mistrust has even sharpened during the economic crisis (Zincone, 2009; Cristaldi, 2014). In fact, many policy measures at the local level of “economic exclusion”⁴¹ (Ambrosini, 2013) have emphasised the right to “remain themselves” and to respect the local and national culinary traditions (Lombardo, 2018: 116).

At the same time, Italy has been facing a process of culinary integration, and initiatives aimed at letting know and appreciating “ethnic food” have been spreading in many Italian cities (Cristaldi, 2014). Many authors have underlined that food plays an essential role in everyday multiculturalism⁴² (Martiniello, 2000; Wise and Velayutham 2009; Semi *et al.*, 2009; Schmoll and Semi, 2013).

The continuous process of interaction between international migration and local integration of food in the Italian context carries out three important innovations that involve the restaurant sector (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009). First, Italian consumers are increasingly opening towards “ethnic” food. According to Ambrosini and Castagnone (2009), this developing market aims to create a relationship between sellers and consumers that is based on diversity. However,

³⁹ According to Mohring (2008), eating is “an incorporation of what is considered as “the known” and “the other” and thus functions as a primal means of producing ethnic identities”.

⁴⁰ In his work, Arvela (2013) evidences the irony that is present in narratives of “culinary Italian-ness”. These narratives are constructed around concept of “natural”, unification and establishment in time and practice, without taking into account that many products that are considered as typical of the Italian cuisine (such as tomatoes and eggplants) are not “native” ingredients, and they have been introduced in the Italian foodways by others.

⁴¹ These measures are part of the anti-migration rhetoric (Lombardo, 2018). For example, Arvela (2013) analyses the situation of Lucca, an Italian town in Tuscany, where, in 2009, the right-wing council took a controversial decision to ban ethnic restaurants from its historical centre.

⁴² According to Ambrosini (2014: 261), this kind of food is part of the “multiculturalism aesthetics”. This term includes music, arts, symbols, perfumes, colour, and sounds that can contribute to accept diversity.

the provision of food is not 100% authentic, since it is inevitably affected by paces, behaviour, and consume practices set in the local customs.

Nevertheless, during the last decades, this kind of food has become more and more attractive for Italian consumers and, though it is subjected to adjustments, it has a main symbolic characteristic: the ability to recall foreign worlds, that simply become accessible by buying, cooking and eating traditional dishes (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009).

Secondly, the presence of settled minorities in Italy is fundamental in this process. Food is for migrants an important element of connection between the current and the previous experience, with memories related to home, families, and country of origin, and a feature of unification among migrants' community (Nyman, 2014). Moreover, food also becomes a substantial mean to underline cultural and religious differences. Therefore, according to this point of view, food assumes a role of collective and individual identity negotiation, through the complex process of integration and interaction within the host society (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009).

The third innovation concerns the role of migrant entrepreneurs, who answer to these different demands. First of all, this sector offers the possibility of internal careers, starting from the bottom, as dishwashers or waiters. The restaurant sector is one of the first access of migrants in the labour market. It is characterised, on the one hand, by low wages and few mobility perspectives. On the other hand, this sector may also constitute the first step for constituting an activity. In addition, though it is difficult to find "transnational business" in the strict sense in the restaurant sector⁴³, since only a few businesses employed in this industry directly import, we can also find what Ambrosini (2010) calls "symbolic transnationalism" that aims at recreating the atmosphere, meanings and changes through food.

Increasing interest for "ethnic" cuisine has been spreading in Italy, especially in the great urban centres. Ambrosini and Castagnone (2009) evidence that migrants' restaurants addressed to Italian customers are different from those aimed at satisfying the needs of the co-nationals. In fact, the first ones are addressed to sophisticated consumers, often intellectuals, passionate for travels and far worlds, while the second ones have to care much more to the price and to transmit a sense of "home" to co-nationals.

⁴³ Specifically, Ambrosini (2010), identifies four types of transnational businesses. First, *circulatory transnationalism* concerns those activities whose owners often travel from the country of origin and that of destination, and vice versa. Second, *connective transnationalism* does not implicate travels, but a frequent exchange of money and messages. Third, *commercial transnationalism* includes the exchange of goods. The fourth type is *symbolic transnationalism*.

The "ethnic" restaurant sector also takes part in the process of urban change that has been developing in the last decades (Lombardo, 2018). Cristaldi (2014) underlines the role of Italian towns, where a high number of different migrants have to co-exist with autochthones, together with the various culinary traditions and food. Therefore, these spaces are characterised by different opportunities and set of problems, and they cannot be frozen in a unique picture (Cristaldi, 2014). For this purpose, it is interesting to analyse this phenomenon in different Italian cities further.

2.5 Differentiation of migrants' businesses and their performances

Many studies on migrant entrepreneurship in Italy construct a profile of migrant entrepreneurs, both at the national and at the local level (e.g., Chiesi *et al.*, 2011; CNEL, 2011), by outlining the dimensions of the phenomenon, its characteristics and the national, local and sectoral level, as we have seen in the first sections of this chapter. In addition, other works have analysed migrant businesses' survival across time (e.g., Lucchini and Riva, 2015).

Other works, conducted at the local level, analyse the role of the social capital of migrant entrepreneurs. Many authors mainly focus on the role of co-ethnic networks (e.g., Marra, 2011; Giaccone, 2014). However, it is important to examine the role of different kinds of ties, by focusing not only on strong linkages, but also on weak connections, and by going beyond the co-national group (Barberis, 2011; Rinaldini, 2011). The necessity to investigate ties beyond the co-national community emerges because mixed-national networks are relevant resources for migrant entrepreneurs (e.g., Chiesi and Zucchetti, 2003; Abbatecola, 2004), and they are also used as indicator of social and economic integration of migrants (Marini, 2002; Barberis, 2008; Berzano *et al.* 2010).

Also, the role of human capital is often considered in examining migrants' businesses, by examining education and work experiences (e.g., Chiesi and Zucchetti, 2003; Chiesi *et al.*, 2011; Arcidiacono, 2011) and also the role of courses of professional specialisation (Marra, 2011).

By tracing the complexity of this phenomenon, a first discussion should concern migrant activities in the informal economy. Portes and Sassen (1987: 32) define the activities in the informal sector as those "at the margins of the law precisely because it is the savings from tax and social security obligations that give these enterprises their principal competitive advantage." The informal economy is a long-standing trait of the Italian market, by constituting a much more complex phenomenon than in other countries (Quassoli, 1999). The informal economy is strongly widespread across the whole Italian territory (Schmoll, 2004). Specifically, Schmoll argues that the informal economy does not characterise only Southern Italy, but it has been developing all over the country as "an integration that occurs at the margins of new forms

of economic organisation” (Schmoll, 2004: 51)⁴⁴. At this purpose, many authors underline that, within the context of the global economy, the formal and informal sectors are often interdependent (Sassen, 1989; Schmoll, 2004). The informal economy is particularly important so far as international migrations are concerned. In fact, not only migrant workers have been more and more employed in the informal economy (Unioncamere, 2012; Rapporto immigrazione, 2014), but also a high number of migrants’ activities have been developed in this segment of the market (Chiesi *et al.*, 2011; Ambrosini, 2011; DeMaria Harney, 2006; Schmoll, 2006; Dei Ottati, 2013). This sector constitutes easy access for migrant entrepreneurs and, in some instances, entrepreneurship in the informal economy is seen as an alternative to unemployment and underemployment, as it is further discussed in the case of migrants’ businesses.

Ambrosini (2005) identifies six different kinds of businesses owned by migrants. First, “ethnic” enterprise sells “ethnic” goods, products and services at the aim of satisfying migrant population, such as in the cases of butcher shops that sell halal meat, butchered according to the Islamic religion. Second, intermediary businesses provide services that do not have an “ethnic” aspect, but they are aimed at satisfying the needs of migrants, such as phone centres. Third, the extended “ethnic” business provides “ethnic” goods and services to a mixed clientele, constituted not only by migrants but also by natives that look for products that are not available in the national market. An example of this situation is constituted by those minimarkets that sell products coming from all over the world. Fourth, close businesses are characterised by services for migrants but, at the same time, they can also attract autochthones, because of low prices or the high quality of the service. Fifth, the “exotic” business provides products that come from the tradition of the country of origin of the entrepreneur but aimed at attracting a native public, such as in the case of ethnic restaurants. Sixth, open businesses sell good that are not connected to the country of origin of the entrepreneur, such as in the case of clothing and leather businesses that operate in the industrial district of Prato.

Moreover, Musumeci (2006) introduces the role of “shelter enterprises”, that are marginal and not always easy to be identified. Their businesses are employed in different sectors, and they aim to achieve both co-nationals and natives. Many of these businesses are settled in the informal economy that is particularly accessible for migrant entrepreneurs. The role of “shelter enterprises” has also been considered by Lucchini and Riva (2015) who, in their study

⁴⁴ For instance, Palidda (2002) shows that the context of Milan is characterised by a combination among the formal, informal and illegal economy.

concerning migrant businesses' survival in the province of Milan, underline how the numerical growth of enterprises owned by migrants is not a sufficient indicator of performance, since increasing possibilities of survival can be connected to low profits and cutthroat competition. Therefore, so far as shelter enterprises are concerned, self-employment can be the only alternative to unemployment, underemployment, or irregular employment. These businesses are characterised by low growth potential, job creation, turnover, and margins. Thus, despite the difficulties in the maintenance of their business, the lack of alternative opportunities prevents migrant entrepreneurs from closing their businesses.

The 2015 ABI⁴⁵ Report has underlined two main aspects: first, the increasing appearance (+47% in the years 2011-2014) of bank account managed by migrant entrepreneurs, which underscores the increasing integration with the autochthones (see also Coscarelli *et al.*, 2010). Second, the ABI Report has emphasised the increasing role of “evolved businesses”. In four sample urban areas, almost 1500 businesses belong to the evolved category. Specifically, these businesses have more than 15 employees, invest in Research and Development, are mainly corporations, and cooperate with foreign enterprises, sometimes in partnership with Italian entrepreneurs. De Felice *et al.* (2015) have underlined how, during the period 2011-2013, foreign-owned businesses have realised sales volume that is slightly better than the Italian ones, also because of sacrifices on the unitary margin.

Moreover, the author underlines the important role of “winning migrants' businesses”, that have managed to increase their profitability, and their financial results. In addition, migrant entrepreneurs increasingly choose to assume charges in corporations, as it has already been shown in the first paragraph of this chapter. According to Andria *et al.* (2010), this choice could be analysed in two ways: on the one hand, it could represent a signal of successful integration in the local economic fabric and, on the other, it puts emphasis on a gradual and permanent spread on the Italian territory.

Furthermore, the conclusive article of CNEL report written by Mutti (2011) puts some brief considerations on successful migrant entrepreneurs, that have to be further explored, related to the starting conditions of migrant entrepreneurs, who often possess various forms of capital, their construction of reputation and their friendship and social life. This short article is based on interviews obtained through those nominated to Moneygram award. Moneygram award is an annual prize for successful migrant entrepreneurs in Italy. Moneygram award was instituted

⁴⁵ Italian Bank Association.

in 2009, and it rewards migrant entrepreneurs who distinguished themselves because of the good performance of their businesses.

Many studies on migrant businesses (e.g., CNEL, 2011; ABI, 2015; De Felice *et al.*, 2015) have underlined how migrants' businesses are increasingly evolving towards more complex forms of societies⁴⁶. Moreover, the economic performances of businesses owned by migrants are increasingly differentiating, and De Felice *et al.* (2015) underline the role of “winning enterprises”, that have managed to increase their profitability, and their financial results.

Arcidiacono (2015) investigates the success and the unsuccess of Senegalese entrepreneurs in Catania, by finding out a great differentiation of performances, that is connected both to their profile and resources and to the strategies. These reports and articles highlight that many migrants manage to conduct successful businesses and that the topic of the differentiation of performances among migrant entrepreneurs needs to be further investigated.

Therefore, among this phenomenon in constant change and evolution, a fragmented scenario emerges: on the one hand, this picture is composed by marginal activities, sometimes in the informal economy, often subjected to crisis, or “shelter enterprises” that are perceived as the only way to avoid unemployment or under-employment in the labour market. On the other hand, many entrepreneurs manage to conduct their business profitably by adopting complex strategies and by managing to reach positive performances.

⁴⁶ For instance, in the period 2011-2015, the number of corporations has increased of 44,5% (IDOS, 2016). This aspect will be further explored in chapter 3.2.

2.6 Conclusions

In this chapter, the increasing importance of migrant entrepreneurship and the evolution of the phenomenon emerge. Furthermore, data have indicated the importance of migrant entrepreneurship in the two Italian major cities, Rome and Milan, both from a numerical and from a dynamic point of view. In addition, the analysis of sectors has underlined the important role of migrant restaurants, which has been deepened by analysing the importance of food. Finally, the differentiation of performances has emerged. On the one hand, it is often underlined that many businesses have suffered during the economic crisis, and others are settled at the margins of the economy, with poor results, but they are maintained because many migrant entrepreneurs do not have an alternative.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of migrant entrepreneurship is deeply segmented, and many migrants manage to obtain good performances. Good performances do not always correspond to the definition of “evolved enterprises”, above all in the restaurant sector, which is not characterised by a high number of employees or huge sales volume, but mainly on the construction of reputation, of a large and trusted clientele and other characteristics that are shown in the second section of the fourth chapter, that is dedicated to the restaurant sector in Rome and Milan. Moreover, this section further deepens the differentiation of the phenomenon.

3. Research methods

3.1 Introduction and research questions

The analysis of migrants' entrepreneurial performances takes into consideration five main dimensions. First of all, the context plays an important role in shaping the opportunities and limits for migrant entrepreneurs, that are analysed at the national and the urban level. The Italian normative and institutional framework provides many constraints for entrepreneurial activities, especially in terms of high taxation and complicated bureaucratic procedures. So far as the urban dimensions are concerned, the study has been conducted in the two most important Italian cities, Milan, and Rome. Though the barriers to entrepreneurship presented by regulations and institutions are the same, the two markets, local institutions, urban economies, and structures present different characteristics and opportunities to migrant entrepreneurs who operate in the two cities.

Secondly, the different characteristics of the restaurants need to be examined, by focusing on the strategies adopted that concern every detail of the business, such as dimensions, furniture, employees, suppliers, types of cooking, customers and communication.

The third dimension of analysis concerns the social capital of migrant entrepreneurs. A particular focus needs to be undertaken on the role of the most important strong and weak ties, concerning family, kinship, co-national, and mixed national connections.

Fourthly, the human capital of migrant entrepreneurs is an important resource, that is composed by different elements: formal education, courses of professional specialisation in management, work experiences, and intergenerational transmissions of fundamental skills.

The fifth dimension concerns the individuals' life trajectories, with a focus on experiences, motivations and projects that have been undertaken during the migratory, personal, professional, and entrepreneurial path. Furthermore, to analyse the different stratification of resources and eventual paths of social mobility, also the class of origin needs to be taken into account.

Therefore, I recall that the aim of this study is to understand the main processes that have been relevant to achieve economic performances and social mobility, by answering the following questions:

- *Which are the opportunities and/or constraints encountered by migrants in Italy? How is migrant entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector, with its diverse range of performances, positioned and combined within Milan and Rome?*
- *How do individual trajectories, networks, and human capital combine with each other to characterise the diversification and range of business performances?*
- *How and at which point of their trajectory do migrant entrepreneurs manage to improve their previous social and economic conditions? Does the improvement of social and economic conditions correspond to the attainment of good business results?*

This study analyses both the economic performance of the business and the social mobility for the entrepreneurs, and this chapter presents the procedures that have been adopted to conduct the research. This chapter is composed by two main sections. The first one concerns the sample selection, the various means that I have adopted and the procedures in order to reach the entrepreneurs I have interviewed. The second section is dedicated to the biographical narratives, by presenting the profiles of the entrepreneurs interviewed, the choices adopted to facilitate the analysis, and the main topics of the interviews.

3.2 Sample selection

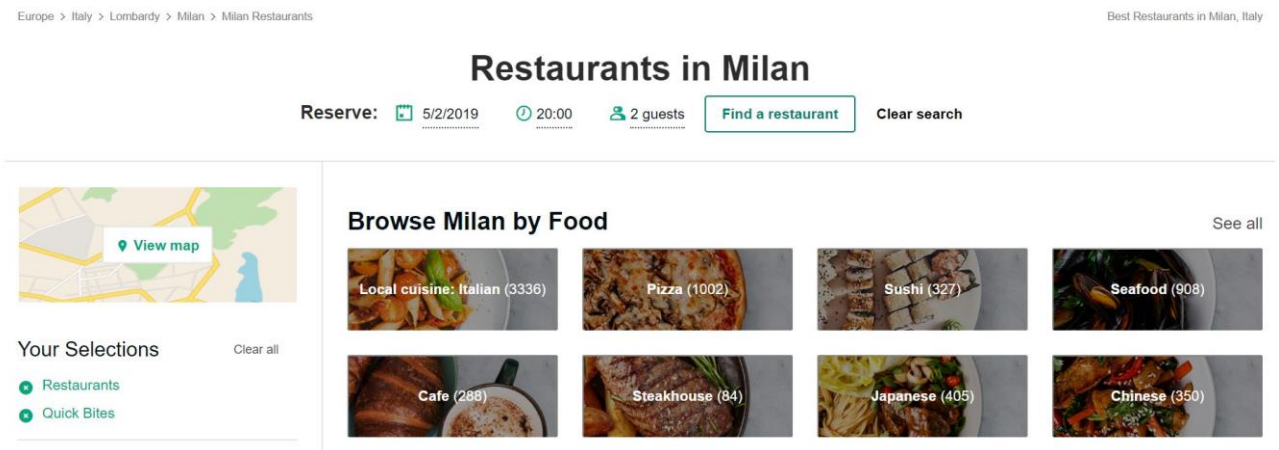
The present study has been conducted through fieldwork from April 2016 to May 2017. From April 2016 until September 2016, the research has been conducted in Milan. From October 2016 until May 2017, the research has taken place in Rome. Additional interviews have been carried out in Milan during June 2017 and December 2017.

As it has also been explained in the theoretical chapter, this study has not concerned a specific group of migrants, and the interviewees come from very different countries of origin. This choice has been adopted to understand better the great differentiation of performances concerning the five dimensions indicated in the previous section. Before starting the fieldwork, it has been decided to restrict the sample to those restaurants that provide dishes coming from the entrepreneurs' country of origin, or fusion cuisine. I adopted this choice to better understand the role of food both for the entrepreneurs and for the customers. In fact, the investigation of this kind of cuisine allows analysing the role of food for entrepreneurs with migrant background, its material and symbolic connections and, most of all, how all these elements are implemented throughout business strategies, their diversification adopted on the basis of the consumers, as it will be shown in the second section of the fifth chapter, dedicated to the restaurant sector in Milan and Rome. The analysis of a particular branch of the restaurant sector has been carried out to highlight the stratification between migrants' business.

The sample has been created throughout the use of different instruments. The first and most important mean that has been used is Tripadvisor⁴⁷. I identified the vast majority of the entrepreneurs interviewed through the use of this web portal because it involves a series of opportunities both from the restaurant owner and the customer point of view, that are described in this chapter.

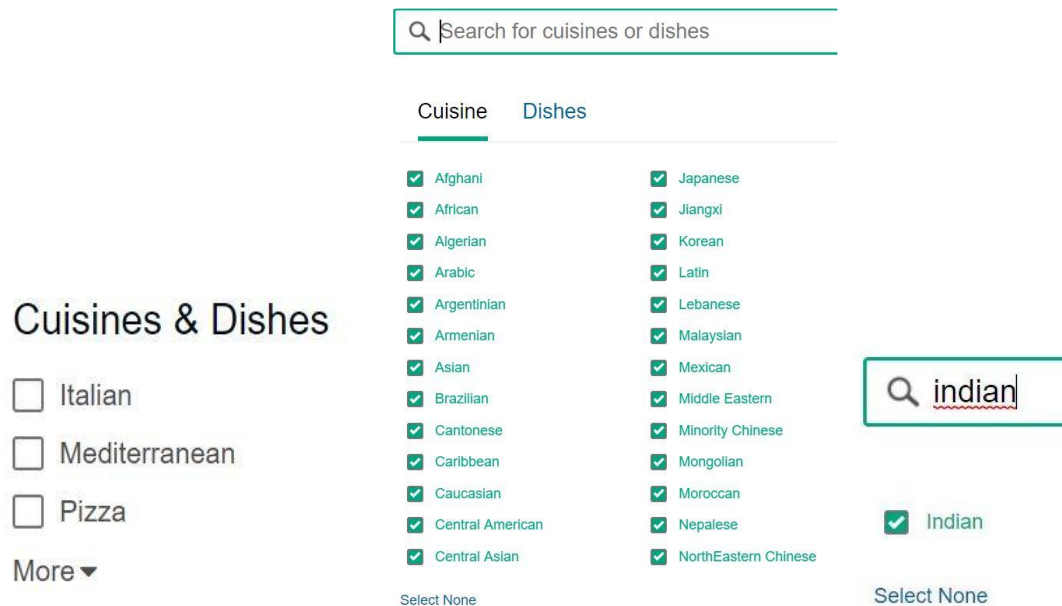
⁴⁷ Tripadvisor is a web portal, based on customers' reviews, that has been founded in 2000. The reviews do not concern only restaurants, but also hotels, B&B, apartments, touristic attractions.

Box.1 Starting page of Tripadvisor, by town and restaurants⁴⁸.



As it has been shown by Box 1, I could choose the two cities considered and the voice “restaurant”. At this point, I could filter the businesses by the type of cuisine.

Boxes 2. Filter by cuisines⁴⁹.





⁴⁸ Available at: https://www.tripadvisor.ie/Restaurants-g187849-Milan_Lombardy.html. Accessed 6 February 2019.

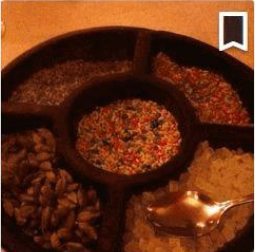
⁴⁹ Available at: https://www.tripadvisor.ie/Restaurants-g187849-Milan_Lombardy.html. Accessed 6 February 2019.


As it is shown by Boxes 2, I could select the type of cuisine and identify all ethnic restaurants in Milan and Rome, or I could also filter the businesses by the type of cuisine (e.g. Indian), in order to have a more limited number of restaurants and reviews to analyse every time.


Box 3. Example of Tripadvisor screen filtered by cuisine (in this case, Indian)⁵⁰.




 793 reviews
#1 of 58 Results
€€ - €€€, Indian, Asian, Sri Lankan, Vegetarian Friendly, Vegan Options, Gluten Fr...
"Best South **Indian**/ Sri Lankan Food in M..." 26/05/2018
"... some fabulous **curries** with a comple..." 10/12/2018



 488 reviews
#2 of 58 Results
€€ - €€€, Indian, Vegetarian Friendly, Vegan Options, Gluten Free Options
"The Hundred-Foot Journey restaurant" 06/01/2019
"Good food" 06/04/2018

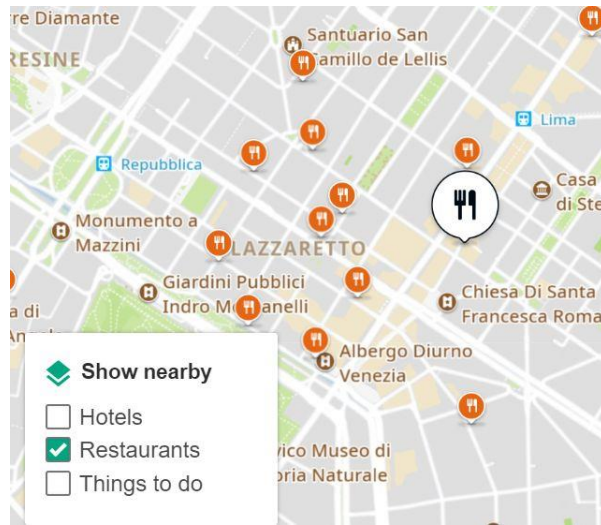


 271 reviews
#3 of 58 Results
€€ - €€€, Indian, Asian, Sri Lankan, Vegetarian Friendly, Vegan Options

As it is shown by box 3, if I select "Indian cuisine in Milan", I have the list of all the Indian restaurants in Milan, by order of ranking. Another important function of this website is constituted by the maps. I used to choose different kinds di cuisines, in order to not focus on a "group", but to obtain a diversified sample.

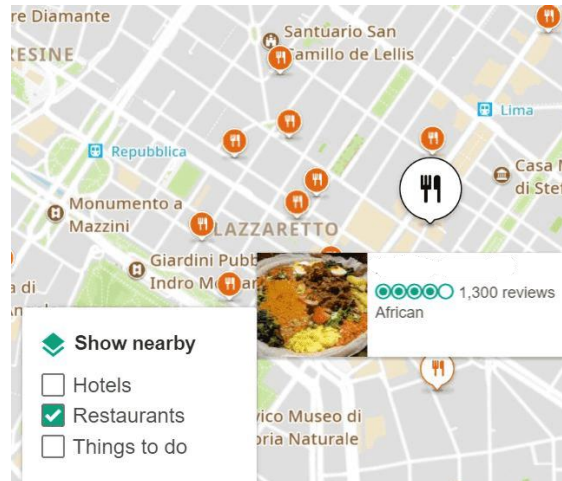
⁵⁰ Available at: https://www.tripadvisor.ie/Restaurants-g187849-Milan_Lombardy.html. Accessed 6 February 2019.

Box 4a. Tripadvisor maps and restaurants in the same area⁵¹.



As it is shown by box 4a, Tripadvisor gives the possibility to map restaurants, by presenting their precise location in the urban centre considered, and to visualise the restaurants in the same area.

Box 4b. Tripadvisor maps, restaurants in the same area, type of cuisine provided⁵².





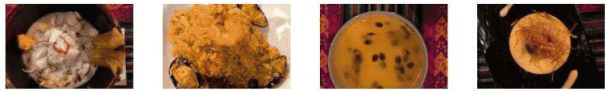





⁵¹ Available at: www.tripadvisor.it. The names of the restaurants selected have been hidden to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, Accessed 6 February 2019.

⁵² Available at: www.tripadvisor.it. The names of the restaurants selected have been hidden to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, Accessed 6 February 2019.

Furthermore, the mapping functionality gives the possibility to visualise the cooking provided by the restaurants in the same area. This option was essential to extending the number of nationalities that could be included in the sample. In fact, as we can see in Box 4a, I could track not only the restaurants that I had chosen, for instance, Middle-Eastern cuisine, but also those situated in the neighbourhood, even when they used to provide other culinary traditions, to construct a map of the restaurants that could be part of my research. When I was selecting one of them, I could visualise on the map its precise location, and every restaurant in its neighbourhood, with its cuisine. Therefore, I could quickly know that in the same area, there were Indian, Peruvian, and Eritrean restaurants.

Box 5. Tripadvisor reviews⁵³.

 Reviewed 1 September 2017
taste and quality, service, and reasonable price
 I was very curious about the Peruvian cuisine, so I tried . . . The surrounding area is not particularly classy, but the restaurant is very nice, with local staff and decorations. Live music available approx after 9:30 (at least the day I went, it was Wednesday). I tried fish and sea food dishes: the causa with tuna and potatoes (great), the sea bass ceviche (very interesting), the sea food rice (maybe not so different from a paella, but with different type of rice, good but not exceptional), and the maracuja cheesecake. Two local beers. I paid 50 euros, the service was attentive and quick. Tables were large enough, and many customers were from Perú. I would definitely get back for another try!
[Show less](#)
Date of visit: August 2017
 Value
  Service
 Food


 Reviewed 23 October 2016  via mobile
Beautiful authentic food and warm, cosy atmosphere
 My family and I visited . . . this week whilst on a trip to Rome. Since we have been living in Italy for the last 6 months, we wanted to venture away from Italian food whilst we had the opportunity in Rome. I found the restaurant through TripAdvisor and liked the look of it. It was also conveniently located close to our hotel. We arrived around 7:30pm and it was very quiet, but it soon busied up and I began to feel relieved we'd booked. The decor is quaint and full of Eritrean photos and memorabilia. The service we found to be friendly with just the right amount of attention. We had a mixed appetiser and 2 main courses which we shared between me, my husband and our 3 year old. We almost ordered an extra dish but the waitress advised it might be too much, so we followed her advise and the amount was perfect. The food was fresh and so tasty. We really enjoyed our experience and would recommend . . .
[Show less](#)
Date of visit: October 2016


⁵³ Available at: www.tripadvisor.it. The names of the restaurants selected have been hidden to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, Accessed 6 February 2019.

Box 5 shows two examples of Tripadvisor reviews. Tripadvisor reviews have been beneficial to have a general view of the entrepreneurs, the restaurants, and their strategies before contacting them for the interviews. Moreover, despite the limits connected with reviews on this portal⁵⁴, the ensemble of the reviews acted as the first indicator of performances, and these evaluations were particularly useful to have a differentiated sample. In fact, because I could select both those restaurants with high scores and those with low-medium scores. In addition, I had often selected some places where I could also eat and doing ethnographic observations, on the basis of the Tripadvisor reviews.

Though it has been very helpful for the sample selection for this study and to create differentiation among performances and cuisines, Tripadvisor is not always updated, and I sometimes reached restaurants that had been closed, or they were moved in other areas, or the opening times suggested on the platform were wrong. In addition, not all the “ethnic” restaurants in Milan and Rome are reviewed on Tripadvisor, and these activities are not always marginal or have negative performances. Some of them are good restaurants; they mainly have a trustworthy range of customers and their marketing strategies rely on the “word of mouth”, that is described in chapter 4.3, which deals with communication strategies. Therefore, the use of Tripadvisor has been integrated with other sampling procedures.

First of all, I used other web sources, especially reserving portals such as The Fork and Quandoo. Since these portals are primarily used to book tables at the restaurants, they allow overcoming one of the limits of Tripadvisor, that concern updates. In fact, the information in these portals was always updated. These portals have been useful since they have the same functions of Tripadvisor, which allows users to filter restaurants on the basis of the cooking proposed. However, the reserving portals did not allow to construct a map of the restaurants in the same geographical areas, and the number of reviews is often small, thus they were not sufficient to have the first idea of performances.

As far as good performances are concerned, I also read city guides, newspaper articles, and websites that suggested many ethnic restaurants in Rome and Milan, which were often present also in Tripadvisor, and I often integrated these descriptions with customer reviews.

⁵⁴ It has been emphasised the role of social influence bias (Krishnan *et al.* 2014; Muchnik *et al.* 2013; Wang *et al.* 2014; Ge and Li, 2015), as the situation when a consumer modifies his/her opinion, after having read other reviews. The second type of bias is dimensional bias (Liu *et al.* 2014), which occurs when a consumer only underlines his/her evaluation on a few product dimensions.

In addition, the reputational sample has been adopted during interviews. This sampling technique belongs to the network analysis tradition, and it has been applied in different kinds of research, which belong not only to migration studies (Inman *et al.*, 2007) but also to political studies (Rivera *et al.*, 2002), or to studies of complex organisation, where the population is rare (Johnsen *et al.*, 2009; MacLean *et al.*, 2011). The reputational sampling consists of conducting interviews with key informants or first interviewees as a starting point. During these interviews, the researcher asks the interviewee if he/she knows about other people that are in the same field. Specifically, I asked the interviewees to list some entrepreneurs in the ethnic restaurant sector that they knew and if they could supply any information about their performances. However, this method has remained marginal because entrepreneurs often did not know personally their competitors personally, or they were reluctant to list other names. Nevertheless, in some cases, this method has been helpful to reach the first entrepreneurs interviewed, and others that I had not noticed through the analysis of Tripadvisor.

The last technique was applied in the fieldwork. Specifically, the second step of my selection procedure consisted of the direct connection to the restaurants that I had identified through Tripadvisor and the other sampling instruments. In fact, it was almost impossible to reach the entrepreneurs by phone or email⁵⁵, because those entrepreneurs that I contacted without intermediaries (the vast majority of the interviewees) did not answer directly to the business phone or had a cautious behaviour. Therefore, the only efficient way to get in touch with the entrepreneurs was to reach every day a specific geographical area in the two cities explored, in which I had selected the restaurants through the sampling methods indicated before. By walking in this area, I sometimes noticed restaurants that were not indicated on the Tripadvisor map, that could be included in the sample, and I also asked these entrepreneurs to be interviewed.

During the fieldwork, I have faced many challenges. First of all, it was complicated to reach the entrepreneurs, since they were not always present in the restaurant. Therefore, I had often to go to the same restaurant three or four times to find the business owner. The second problem was related to the reluctance of the entrepreneurs to be interviewed. Sometimes, this behaviour was due to problems of fluency in the Italian language, and they misunderstood or mistrust the aims of the research.

⁵⁵ The only exceptions consisted of those few interviews obtained through the reputational sample because I could use intermediaries, and it was simpler to get in touch with entrepreneurs than in the other cases.

For this reason, many entrepreneurs that I had first selected refused to be interviewed. The third issue was related to time. In fact, also those who accepted to be interviewed had often problems in finding the right moment, so various meetings had been postponed many times, even at the last minute.

3.3 Biographical interviews

The main method that has been applied in my research consists of biographical interviews. Biographies play an essential role in understanding the differentiation of performances of migrant entrepreneurs since, by focusing on a specific social object, narratives will provide insights into not only the individual logics of actions but also the social and economic mechanisms which regulate these actions. In fact, as it has been argued by Bertaux (2003), the combination of many biographies concerning the same social object reduces the retrospective nuances and collects a common experiences' core which corresponds to the social dimension of the interviewees. Biographical narration is a representation of experiences that are constructed in the form of a narrative that provides a general framework within which everyday life experiences are ordered, represented and evaluated (Steinke, 2004). The biographical method in social science is useful for understanding, on the one hand, how individual biographies shape current social processes and, on the other, how social processes create individual biographies (Rosenthal, 1993; Alheit, 1994). In fact, individuals generate their biographies throughout a constant reconstruction and evaluation of social processes and mechanisms, similar to an “open window on the context” (Olagnero and Saraceno, 1993).

I have collected 50 biographical interviews, 25 in Milan and 25 in Rome. Each interview has been recorded^[1] and transcribed. The interviews were realised in the restaurants, generally during the afternoon or the mid-morning, when the entrepreneurs had some spare time. In addition, in 24 cases (12 in Milan and 12 in Rome), the interviews have been supplemented with participant observations: the majority of the ethnographies have been carried out before asking for the interviews, while two of them were realised after the first interview. As far as the 22 observations are concerned, I used to select the area in which every day I was developing my fieldwork, and I usually choose a restaurant that, by reading the reviews and articles, I considered interesting to analyse in detail, with the task of having a differentiated sample, not only in terms of performances but also so far as the strategies and types of cooking are concerned. Therefore, I used to eat at the restaurant selected. In the meanwhile, I was taking notes on the type of cooking, the perceived quality of food, customers, workers, the exterior aspect of the restaurants and furnishing, and I interacted with the business owners, by asking them the interviews. The observations were particularly useful to understand the atmosphere that had been recreated in the restaurant. The recreation of the atmosphere does not occur only

through the “ethnic” food, but also throughout the surrounding environment, as it is shown in Chapter 4.3.1.

The observations were useful not only to understand the previously listed elements and to have further indications of the business results but also to obtain the interview more easily. In fact, the interaction with the entrepreneur as a customer was the first way to create a mechanism of trust that is essential when developing biographical interviews. Nevertheless, trust was also created with those entrepreneurs whose I had not been a customer before a researcher, and I could also observe many characteristics of the business during the interview. However, in the latter case, it was easier to obtain refusals, because sometimes, the first interaction was not sufficient to establish trust. Therefore, the observations were useful support to the interviews, and in two cases they were also relevant to understand aspects related to the quality of food and to the strategies that were not clear in the first narratives.

The large part of my research has been constituted by biographical interviews, aimed at answering to the main research questions. Tab. 4 provides the main characteristics of the entrepreneurs interviewed⁵⁶, such as gender, age, the city in which they operate, the country of origin, year of migration, year of the constitution of the first business in Italy⁵⁷, educational level and group of performances.

Tab. 4 Characteristics of the entrepreneurs interviewed.

Name*	Gender	Age	City	Country of origin	Migration	Business	Educational level	Performance
1) <i>Rama</i>	Female	60	Milan	Mali	1985	1988	University degree	Good
2) <i>Nadim</i>	Male	57	Milan	India	1979	2010	University degree	Good
3) <i>Natalia</i>	Female	45	Milan	Ecuador	2000	2008	University degree	Good
4) Abigail	Female	45	Milan	Peru	1991	2006	High school degree	Good
5) Danny	Male	35	Milan	Peru	2001	2014	University degree	Good
6) <i>Valérie</i>	Female	50	Milan	Vietnam ⁵⁸	-	2006 ⁵⁹	University degree	Good
7) <i>Massimiliano</i>	Male	31	Milan	Italy ⁶⁰	-	2013	University degree ⁶¹	Good
8) <i>Melanie</i>	Female	58	Milan	Ecuador	2003	2013	High school degree	Good
9) Horatio	Male	47	Milan	Peru	2001	2006	High school degree	Good

⁵⁶ To preserve the anonymity of the entrepreneurs interviewed, I have changed their real names.

⁵⁷ For those who have more than one restaurant, the year of foundation of the second activity, or of the activity/activities settled abroad is indicated in footnotes.

⁵⁸ Second-generation, born in France.

⁵⁹ The second restaurant has been opened in 2013.

⁶⁰ 8 partners: 4 Italian and 4 second-generations. 3 of the latter group come from Eritrea, 1 is of Iranian origin.

⁶¹ All the partners are University graduated.

10) Oscar	Male	52	Milan	Italy ⁶²	-	2013	High school degree	Good
<u>11) Lea</u>	Female	43	Milan	Senegal	2001	2011	High school degree	Good
12) Emily	Female	50	Milan	Italy ⁶³	-	2005	High school degree	Good
13) Farooq	Male	53	Milan	Pakistan	1992	1998	High school degree	Good
<u>14) Tyler</u>	Male	47	Milan	U.S.	1997	2013	University degree	Good
<u>15) Simon</u>	Male	28	Milan	China	2014	2014	University degree	Good
16) Jonathan	Male	67	Milan	Eritrea	1973	2005	High school degree	Surviving
17) Flavia	Female	48	Milan	Bolivia	2006	2014	University degree	Surviving
<u>18) Henry</u>	Male	54	Milan	Egypt	1986	2008	High school degree	Surviving
19) Alexander	Male	55	Milan	Peru	1999	2005	High school degree	Surviving
20) Luis	Male	50	Milan	Peru	1992	2007	University degree	Surviving
21) Gloria	Female	47	Milan	Peru	2004	2011	Compulsory schooling	Crisis
22) Moreno	Male	41	Milan	Peru	1995	2014	Compulsory schooling	Crisis
23) Jemal	Male	46	Milan	Eritrea	2000	2006	High school degree	Crisis
<u>24) Aaron</u>	Male	64	Milan	Eritrea	1972	1993	High school degree	Crisis
<u>25) Decon</u>	Male	47	Milan	Bangladesh	1989	2001	Compulsory schooling	Crisis
<u>26) Anthony</u>	Male	54	Rome	Lebanon	1982	2011 ⁶⁴	University degree	Good
<u>27) Eduardo</u>	Male	38	Rome	Honduras	2008	2013	University degree	Good
28) Said	Male	37	Rome	Iran	2008	2013	University degree	Good
<u>29) Victor</u>	Male	53	Rome	Peru	1991	2003	High school degree	Good
<u>30) Hamir</u>	Male	42	Rome	India	1999	2006	High school degree	Good
31) Damian	Male	39	Rome	India	2003	2010 ⁶⁵	University degree	Good
<u>32) Fadi</u>	Male	40	Rome	India	2002	2002	University degree	Good
33) William	Male	44	Rome	Peru	2007	2013	High school degree	Good
34) Kabir	Male	32	Rome	Pakistan	2006	2014	High school degree	Good
<u>35) Fabio</u>	Male	65	Rome	China	1968	1978	University degree	Good
<u>36) Carlo</u>	Male	57	Rome	Italy ⁶⁶	-	2008	High school degree	Good
37) Pablo	Male	38	Rome	Peru	1994	2014	Compulsory schooling	Surviving
38) David	Male	64	Rome	Eritrea	1972	1976	University degree	Good
39) Vincenzo	Male	39	Rome	Italy ⁶⁷	-	1998	High school degree	Surviving
<u>40) Ikram</u>	Male	35	Rome	Afghanistan	2008	2014	High school degree	Surviving
<u>41) Oliver</u>	Male	33	Rome	India	2002	2005	High school degree	Surviving
42) Viviana	Female	55	Rome	Syria	1990	1997	High school degree	Surviving
43) Francisco	Male	41	Rome	Peru	1995	2012	Compulsory schooling	Surviving
44) Michael	Male	47	Rome	Eritrea	1991	2002	High school degree	Surviving
45) Angie	Female	44	Rome	Venezuela	2004	2014	Compulsory schooling	Surviving
<u>46) Divit</u>	Male	38	Rome	India	2000	2014	High school degree	Surviving
<u>47) Cristina</u>	Female	42	Rome	Peru	1996	2006	High school degree	Surviving

⁶² Emigrated in Venezuela, he had been living there from 1988 to 2006.

⁶³ Italian father, Japanese mother.

⁶⁴ The two restaurants in London have been opened, respectively, in 2002 and 2005.

⁶⁵ The second restaurant has been opened in 2013.

⁶⁶ His wife/business partner comes from Thailand.

⁶⁷ His father is Egyptian, his mother is Filipino.

48) Gabriela	Female	39	Rome	Peru	2009	2015	Compulsory schooling	Crisis
49) Raki	Male	45	Rome	Bangladesh	2000	2005	High school degree	Crisis
<u>50) Seok</u>	Male	56	Rome	Korean	1992	2000	High school degree	Crisis

*The entrepreneurs whose names are underlined and in italic are the ones who had been subjected to additional ethnographic observations.

In this table, I have indicated the most important characteristics of the entrepreneurs with migrant background that I have interviewed. First, the majority of interviewees is composed of men. In this sample, women are 13, 9 in Milan and 4 in Rome. Many of the interviewees manage the restaurant in partnership with their spouse. As we will see in chapter 6.3, dedicated to professional networks, most of the women interviewed conducts the restaurant in partnership with their husband, while not all married men own their activities with their wives, even when they work for their business.

Second, the age of most of the interviewees is included between 40 and 60 years old; only one entrepreneur is less than 30 years old. This aspect is connected to the choice to analyse the restaurants that have started opened at least from 2-3 years. This choice aims to have a better understanding of the trend of performances. Therefore, the interviewees have a quite long entrepreneurial and working experience, and they are not very young.

So far as the educational level is concerned, in this table, only the formal education received has been considered. It emerges how the vast majority of the interviewees (44) has at least obtained a high school degree, and 16 of them are University graduated. This topic will be deepened in chapter 7, concerning human capital, and we will see how human capital is composed by the combination of education with other elements, such as courses of professional training, working experiences and intergenerational transmissions.

To facilitate the analysis, I divided the entrepreneurs of migrant origin into three groups of performance. The first group is composed of those migrants who manage to obtain good performance and have positive results. Their enterprises have achieved specific growth targets, and/or they have a trustworthy clientele and reputation that put them in a good position in the restaurant sector of Rome and Milan, and/or they have opened more than one restaurant. The second group is that of self-employed migrants who manage to survive, the so-called shelter enterprises. Some of them were involved in the economic crisis, but they managed to prevent the risk of closure. However, these entrepreneurs do not have specific growth targets; they

conduct their restaurant in a sufficient way to carry on. The third group of entrepreneurs has been heavily hit by the crisis, and they are still facing huge problems concerning the essential functioning of their activity. Furthermore, they do not have positive future perspectives, and they think to close the business.

The performances were selected on the basis of two main criteria:

- As it is shown in chapter 4.3, reputation is fundamental in the restaurant sector. Since the main sampling technique has been Tripadvisor and I used this portal in order to diversify my sample, by considering not only high-rated restaurants, but also those that had medium-low scores. These reviews were the first indicators of the performances. I used to read them both before and after the interviews. Furthermore, I also searched for other sources in order to find additional information about the restaurants. I read articles, reviews on booking portals (e.g., The Fork, Quandoo), I visited the social media pages of the restaurants interviewed in order to have an idea of the reputation of the restaurants.
- So far as the results emerging from the interviews are concerned, I kept them into account, but I also considered the biases deriving from the self-evaluation of the interviewee.

Through the two main criteria, I tried to overcome biases arising from the self-evaluation of the entrepreneurs, who could complain about constraints such as bureaucracy and taxation, and underestimate their performances or, differently, overestimate their results, especially so far as the quality of products and dishes prepared are concerned. The reading of reviews, articles and social media pages, gave me an idea of the perception of the consumers, in order to have a complete framework. In addition, in some cases, I have utilised the reputational sample, and I used to ask my informants information about the restaurants suggested. Then I considered the interviews both of the informant and the entrepreneur suggested, and I integrated them with the reviews and the articles.

As Table 4 shows, the sample is composed of an over-representation of entrepreneurs who manage to achieve good performances. This choice has been adopted to understand the elements that allow self-employed migrants to make the difference, and to achieve good results despite the constraints presented in the Italian context. Nevertheless, many entrepreneurs who manage to survive or are in deep crisis have been interviewed, to better understand the differentiation.

These two latter groups of businesses have been identified mainly thanks to the negative reviews on Tripadvisor, or the sampling in the same neighbourhood.

The interviews were unstructured, and they have concerned the analysis of performances according to seven main topics.

The national and local contexts

I have examined the constraints and the possible opportunities that the entrepreneurs encounter at the national and the local level. From the first pilot interviews, it has soon emerged that the two main barriers are constituted by bureaucracy and taxation. I collected information in this sense in all the interviews. Furthermore, by analysing the differences between Milan and Rome, I have first investigated the different market opportunities and economies. Later, during my fieldwork in Rome, I have focused my attention on the different opportunities present in the two cities.

The restaurant

I have analysed every strategy adopted to make the restaurant work, in terms of partners, location, suppliers, type of cooking, human resources management (rise in the number of employees, the type of skills required and their role within the business), customer target, quality/price relation, marketing and communication throughout the eventual use and upgrading of technological instruments, and innovations in terms of quality of products or services, by exploring eventual changes during the time, the reasons which underlie these changes and their consequences.

Social capital

This analysis concerns networks, their combinations, shape and changes over time. In particular, I have explored the social and symbolic boundaries of the entrepreneurs, by investigating their relations with native people and native entrepreneurs, those with other immigrants coming from different countries or the same country, and the role of strong and weak ties. I have examined the role of professional connections and their possible combination or distance with personal ties. Furthermore, not only local networks have been considered, but

also the transnational ones, by investigating the role that is played by networks in the country of origin, and practices of “symbolic transnationalism”. In addition, I have taken into account norms and reciprocity practices, circuits of exchange, exchange directions, and solidarity constraints.

Human capital

Through the interviews, not only the educational level has been considered, but also other elements, starting from courses of professional specialisation, aimed at giving them useful management skills and knowledge to conduct their business by facing the main constraints present in the Italian context. Furthermore, the role of previous work experiences in the restaurant sector, and/or entrepreneurial experiences in other sectors have been taken into account. In addition, the analysis has concerned the transmission of abilities and knowledge through intergenerational patterns, by understanding not only the migrants’ previous experiences, but also those of their parents, and their eventual significance for their individuals’ entrepreneurial trajectories.

Life trajectory

I have in-depth analysed the trajectory of the entrepreneurs. First, I investigated their stories and experiences before migration and their migratory paths. Specifically, I focused on the motivations for migration and those for the choice of a specific country before emigrating. Family trajectories and history have been examined, in order to understand whether the immigrant came into the host country with his/her family or they opted for family reunification, whether they have married in the host country or they still have their family in the country of origin, the presence of children and eventual divorces. I have explored their life stories both in the personal and professional sphere, by understanding their previous work experiences (both in the country of origin and of destination) and motivations to entrepreneurship. Moreover, entrepreneurial paths have been considered, throughout the examination of experiences and motivations, and their intersection with strategies.

Self-evaluation and future perspectives

I asked entrepreneurs a self-evaluation of the performance, starting from the trend of the restaurant and the impact of the economic crisis. I have asked an evaluation of the various strategies adopted and the objectives achieved and possible changes in strategies and tasks. Furthermore, I have investigated on future potential changes that are planned to be developed, and eventual plan for further expansion. In the case of a crisis, both when it is overcome, and when it is still present, I have deepened the reasons for their negative situation.

Social mobility

I have investigated the dimension of social mobility. First of all, I have examined whether social mobility was the main reason to push migrants to entrepreneurship. I have focused on the interviewees' lifestyle and its change during time, by exploring the type of investments that they have made after having opened the activities, both for themselves (such as the purchase of their own home, of a car that could be in line with their wealthier life conditions, of technological instruments, or future investments) and for the whole family (such as sending sons to university, long term investments and purchases which are able to guarantee to the family a wealthy lifestyle). Moreover, through the intergenerational approach, I investigated connections between their class of origin and their social and economic position.

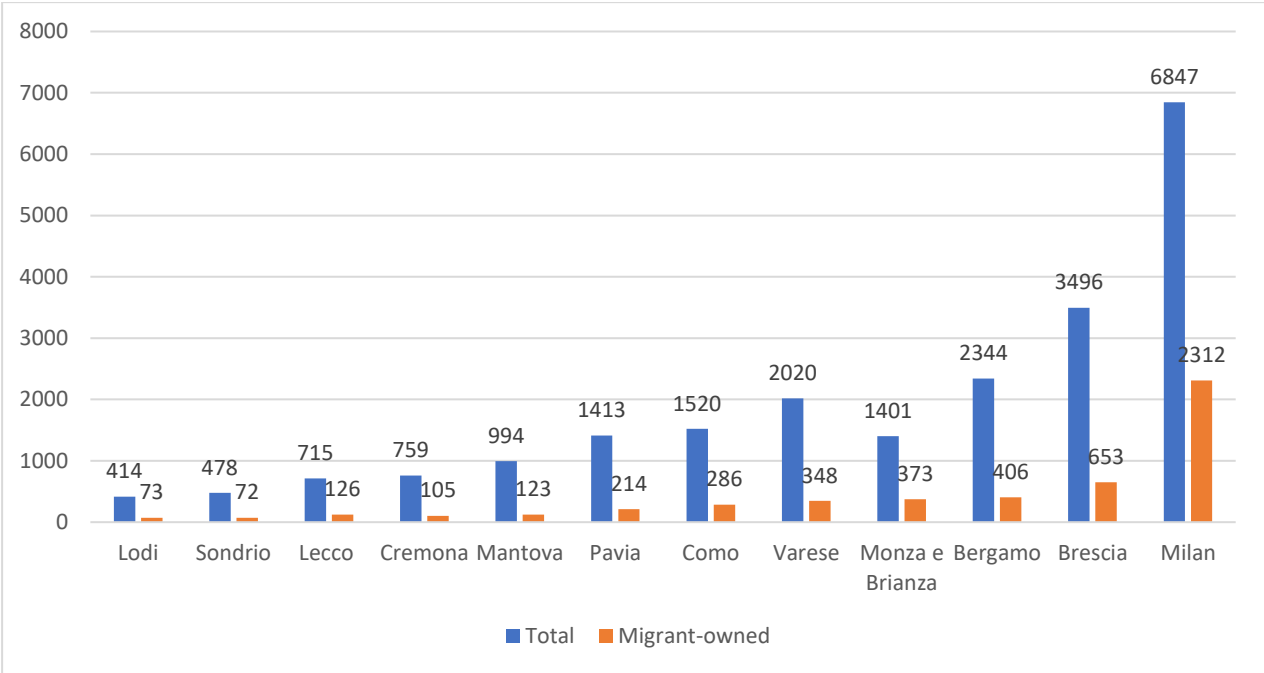
4. Migrants’ restaurants in Rome and Milan: how to sail in troubled waters

4.1 Introduction

This chapter has a twofold aim. First of all, I analyse the context in which migrants operate, at two levels: the national and the urban ones. Furthermore, I present the actors involved, throughout an examination of their businesses, their characteristics, the strategies and peculiarity of the “ethnic” restaurant sector.

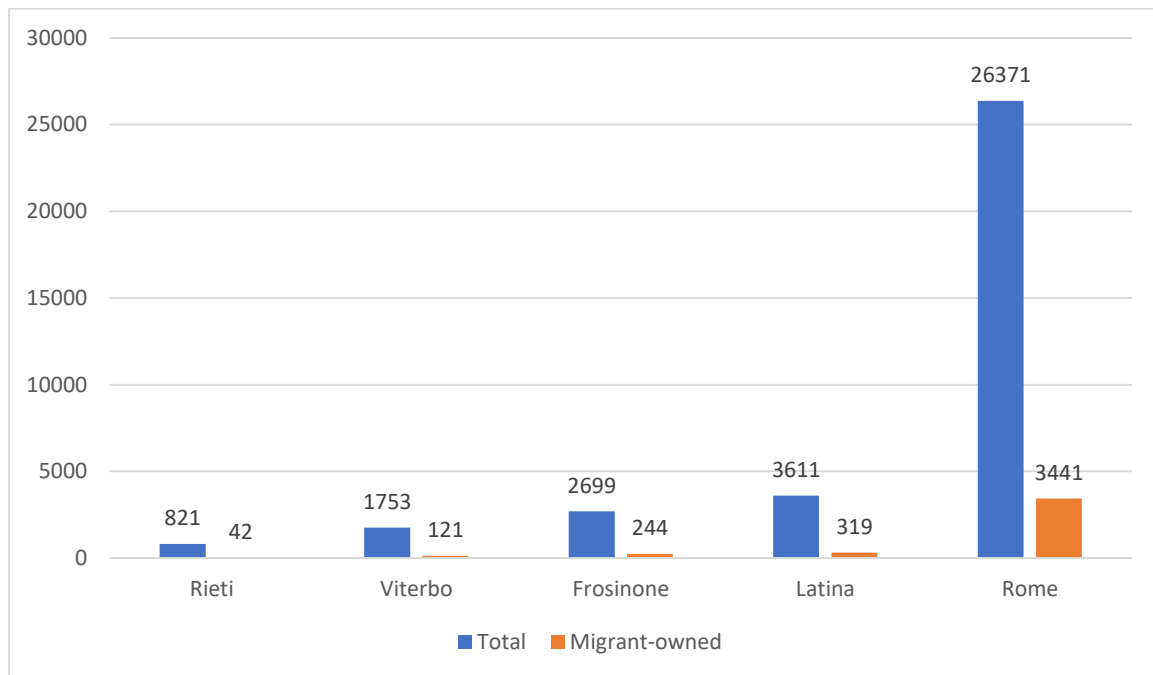
In chapter 2, we have seen that the restaurant sector is among the industries where migrant entrepreneurship is concentrated. Moreover, it has been shown that Lombardia and Lazio are the two regions where migrants’ restaurants are mostly spread.

Figure 10. Italian and migrant entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector, Lombardia provinces, 2011.



Sources: Elaborations on FIPE, 2011

Figure 11. Italian and migrant entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector, Lazio provinces, 2011.



Sources: Elaborations on FIPE, 2011

Figure 10 and 11 show the distribution of migrants' restaurants among the various provinces of Lombardia and Lazio. The relevance of the urban areas of Milan and Rome emerges. In the first case, almost half of the restaurants owned by migrants are located in the province of Milan. Moreover, in the province of Milan, 33.7% of restaurants are owned by migrants. In the second case, 82,5% of migrants' restaurants in Lazio are settled in Rome.

Furthermore, the number of restaurants owned by migrants in Rome (3441) is higher than that of Milan. Nevertheless, migrants' restaurants in Rome are 13% of the total number of restaurants in the Italian capital. These latter percentages present many implications that are analysed in the third section, related to the different characteristics of the markets between the two cities.

Before starting the analysis, I recall that, as it has already been shown in chapter 2.4, the term "ethnic restaurant" is not used to indicate a particular linkage with a national "group", but to identify the branch of the sector analysed, that is highly differentiated. In fact, every aspect of the restaurant is linked to a specific strategy. Additionally, the term "ethnic", with reference to food and cuisine, refers to culinary traditions that are different from the Italian one.

Therefore, this chapter aims at answering different questions:

- *Which are the characteristics of the restaurant sector in Milan and Rome? Which are the strategies adopted by the entrepreneurs concerning both the characteristics and the functioning of the restaurants?*
- *Which are the main constraints and opportunities that migrants face when opening their restaurant in Rome and Milan? Which are the main differences and similarities between the two cities?*

This chapter is divided into three main sections. Since the national context is the same, the first section of this chapter is dedicated to frame the general environment where migrant entrepreneurs have to operate. Specifically, the main barriers that migrant entrepreneurs have to face will be identified, such as, for instance, complicated bureaucracy, high taxation and perceived distance of institutions.

The second section of this chapter explores the differentiation of migrants' restaurants in terms of strategies adopted to face the barriers listed above. These strategies concern every detail of the restaurant, such as dimensions, employees, and suppliers, quality-price relation, marketing and the type of cooking provided by the restaurants.

At this point, the study focuses on the differences between the two urban areas considered, Milan and Rome. First of all, the market and the different structure of the restaurant sector will be investigated by starting with the differences among the markets of Rome and Milan, the different visions about migrant's restaurants and competition. Furthermore, I examined the urban structure.

4.2 Migrants' businesses and the Italian State laws

This section explores the role of the opportunity structure (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990; Waldinger *et al.*, 1990; Rath, 2000; Kloostermann and Rath, 2001) offered by the context where businesses are settled. I specifically refer to the mixed embeddedness theory, by considering the role of regulation and institutions at the national level; the urban dimension will be analysed in the third section of this chapter (Kloostermann and Rath, 2001). The national dimension is very important because, since the two cities examined are located in same nation, they have to follow the same legislation, rules, and taxation. For this reason, all the entrepreneurs, both the successful and unsuccessful ones, reveal almost unanimously the presence of strong constraints to entrepreneurship in Italy, especially constituted by huge bureaucracy and high taxation, and the acknowledgement that Italy offers more barriers than opportunities. Since the entrepreneurs have listed these limitations almost unanimously, in this first section the entrepreneurs' narratives are analysed without considering the performances.

The two major constraints for the entrepreneurs interviewed are taxation, which is unanimously considered very high, and bureaucracy. First of all, three different narratives introduce the limitations that high taxation provokes to their activities and, most of all, their budgets. Firstly, Farooq explains the impact of taxation on the management of his activity:

Taxation is pretty much higher than the European average. If we really want to belong to the EU, we should adequate to all the standards: not just wages, but also taxes should be at the European average. (...) It is a significant issue for Italy. It's not right that taxes paid in Italy are so high, while in other countries taxation is not like this. Theoretically, an entrepreneur should afford to invest in different sectors. In Italy, it doesn't work like that. In Italy, the entrepreneur is beaten; he can't invest; he can't give his contribution to improving the community. (...) I say these things because, in other States, entrepreneurs do not keep their earnings for themselves. Earnings are distributed and circulated within the community, for the benefits of every member. An entrepreneur keeps the money for himself just when the earning is barely sufficient to guarantee him and his family a decent life. With my earnings, first I pay taxes, I pay my employees, and I guarantee a good lifestyle to my family and me. With this high taxation, few extras remain. For instance, I have to choose whether I'm going to repair a broken object that is not fundamental, but anyway important for my cuisine, or whether I'm going to pay to

my chef a refresher course that he'd like to attend to learn more innovative cooking methods. I'm beaten. If I wouldn't have to pay so much taxes, I could do both things. Now, I have to choose between an object that guarantees a better presentation of dishes, or to allow my chef to learn innovative ways of cooking. I have to establish priorities, but I wouldn't like to do so. (...) I would desire to do both things.

Farooq, 53, Pakistani; Milan

Farooq underlines that high taxation is a constraint for him and his strategy since he has to establish priorities between the various necessities of the restaurant. Farooq clearly expresses that, if he did not have to give to the State so much money, he would invest more in his restaurant and his employees.

An even worse sense of frustration arises from the experience of Aaron, who has many troubles related to his activity, and he sharply criticises the authorities and consultants:

Once we pay our employees, anything remains to us. Bills always arrive. Taxes always arrive. We always have to pay. This isn't good, we always have to give money to the State, but the State doesn't give anything to us. The Italian finance police, the municipality always find you something that does not work. (...) They did that to me and (...) they have confiscated my house. (...) I had a lawyer, he should have been my friend, but he also contributed to the confiscation of my house. Luckily, I still live there, because they haven't put the order in practice yet. (...) Lawyers, judges and Equitalia make you miserable. (...) It's not right: when an honest man is working, he should be protected, but this doesn't happen, and it's awful.

Aaron, 54, Eritrean; Milan

Aaron has many problems concerning the management of his restaurant, and his house has been confiscated. According to Aaron, this problem is connected to the high taxation: if taxes were lower, he would have more margins and he wouldn't have had these problems.

All the interviewees underline that the fiscal pressure is unbearable. This mechanism is well explained by Anthony, who owns three Lebanese restaurants, two in London and one in Rome. Anthony compares the Italian situation to the British one:

I have two restaurants in London: it is a lot easier to hire employees in the UK, since fiscal pressure is not very high, and the first 800 pounds on a workers' wage are not subjected to taxes. Thus, I certainly offer a better service in London than here, because in Rome I can't hire other people, it would require too many costs, related to my daily earning. (...) In fact, I have ten workers here in Rome, while in London I have thirty employees for each restaurant. (...) The UK is a country that takes care of entrepreneurs, where an entrepreneur can offer an excellent service, and obtain high earnings. In Italy, the entrepreneur cannot offer a high-level service, because of the high fiscal pressure. Therefore, an entrepreneur can't increase his earning too much because customers are not satisfied with his service. The service is offered by people, by waiters, and if I can't hire many of them, I'm not able to reach that task. I pay 2000 Euro to give my employee 1000-1100 Euros. With 2000 Euro in London I can pay a more qualified worker, or almost hire two of them. The disadvantage is double: my employee is not satisfied because he doesn't earn much money, and I'm not satisfied because I pay too much money for his wage.

Anthony, 54, Lebanese; Rome

Anthony lingers on labour costs, by analysing the differences between Rome and London, since the cost of contribution for employees is considered as too high in Italy. For this reason, Anthony can have only a third of the number of workers that he has in his restaurants in the UK. From these narratives, it appears that the high taxation strongly constraints the budget of migrant entrepreneurs, with consequences that could be more or less serious for the businesses.

Secondly, bureaucracy is considered a great obstacle by the entrepreneurs, both in the starting phase and its maintenance. According to the entrepreneurs, bureaucracy acts as a limitation for the expansion of the activity itself. Before analysing the problems with bureaucratic procedures and the subsequently complicated relation with institutions, a brief excursus on the figure of professionals needs to be carried out. Many works have underlined that accountants are the key-figure that helps migrant entrepreneurs to deal with the Italian legislation and bureaucratic procedures (e.g. DaCol and De Luca, 2011).

Many entrepreneurs of migrant origin have declared to rely on accountants and consultants, to ease the situation with practices. In many cases, this relationship brings positive results, since

restaurant owners trust competent professionals who deal with practices that would be much more complicated for them. Natalia narrates this positive relationship:

At the beginning, it was challenging to deal with bureaucracy, but I soon understood that many Italian could tell me what I have to do, how I have to conduct procedures, what I have to prepare for authorities when control is coming. I have an Italian consultant that tells me everything. I have both an accountant and a consultant. The consultant has become my friend, he comes here at the restaurant, he eats, and he tells me how I have to follow the rules.

Natalia, 45, Ecuadorian; Milan

Also, Kabir, a Pakistani entrepreneur who manages an Indian restaurant, relies on accountants and consultants, who care about every practice, and payrolls, based on a trust relationship. Therefore, in certain situations, this reliance is useful, and the task of facilitating the dealing with bureaucratic practices is achieved.

However, this study underlines that not all the experiences are positive, as in the case of Seok, who has problems of fluency in the Italian language, and who underlines the lack of consultants coming from the Korean community:

I have an accountant and a lawyer. I call them when I have some problems because I never receive any kind of help from the Korean community. However, it is complicated, because I speak Italian, and I'm quite able to understand the language, but I cannot clearly understand that kind of documents and neither my accountant nor my lawyer knows the Korean language. Therefore, since the paper documentation in Italy is quite tough, it would be good to have Korean accountants and lawyers that could help me to understand documents. It is tough to communicate with my accountant and my lawyer, there isn't enough clarity, and clarity is necessary.

Seok, 54, Korean; Rome

This issue is further analysed in the chapters related to network and human capital since Seok emphasises the need of Korean professionals that could play as intermediaries with migrants.

The limits of trusting an accountant for all the bureaucratic procedures are explained by Valérie, a second-generation Vietnamese entrepreneur in Milan, who owns two Vietnamese restaurants in partnership with her husband:

The accountant is not specialised on registration and bureaucratic cavils in the restaurant sector. His work concerns income, not authorisation and bureaucratic procedures. This means that I should hire a professional that deals only with bureaucracy, so I do that. (...) The bureaucratic part is very complicated because we didn't buy the licence from another restaurant, we have deeply renovated these places. It's not about a simple enrolment into the registry of businesses; it's about a total restyling. It's much more complex, and I take care of that.

Valérie, 53, second generation Vietnamese; Milan

Therefore, it has been evidenced that the reliance on accountants and consultants is not always considered as a guarantee: on the one hand, many migrant entrepreneurs have a relationship of trust, and they manage to fulfil bureaucratic procedures without problems. On the other hand, in some cases, this trust relationship does not occur, mainly because of problems of understanding the language, or the professional is not entitled to deal with all the bureaucratic procedures, so the task of facilitation is not achieved.

An important element that causes huge constraints to entrepreneurs with migrant background is constituted by bureaucracy. This is a general problem, that affects both foreign and native entrepreneurs (e.g. Unioncamere, 2012; Bontadini and Segre, 2013). Nevertheless, this issue increases when combined with language problems that many migrants who decide to open their own business may have (Gasparetti, 2009; Avola and Cortese, 2011; Fabbri, 2011).

Almost all the interviewees have (or have had) issues and difficulties with bureaucratic procedures. Therefore, it is necessary to provide some examples of the main bureaucratic and institutional constraints, by starting from the access and authorisation to business procedures, narrated by Anthony and Massimiliano. In the case of Anthony, a problem with the authorisation has led to the closure of his second restaurant in Rome. In fact, the medium-long term task of Anthony was to open a restaurant every three years, and he almost managed to achieve that objective in London. He wanted to reach the same result in Rome and, after the starting of his first restaurant in 2011, he opened another one in the city centre in 2013.

However, he soon had to close the second restaurant because of problems of bad communication with the municipality. His problems were related to obtaining the authorisation since he had followed the instruction the Municipality employees as he had understood. However, that procedures were not sufficient since he should have applied for more authorisations because of the place of the city centre that he was occupying.

The problem of obtaining authorisations and scarce communication from the institutions has also been argued by Massimiliano, who owns a revisited kebab restaurant in Milan, together with other seven partners, four of whom belong to second generations of migrants. The partners opened the restaurant in 2013, by subscribing to an announcement of the Chamber of Commerce, for innovative juvenile start-ups, and they had to fulfil many bureaucratic steps. Massimiliano makes an example of one of his problems:

The bureaucratic part has been very demanding. (...) It was complicated to understand what we had to do, how to obtain authorisations, the requirements for the kitchen, how to pay taxes for the occupation of public land. However, the most serious problem was to have all the papers in order. We are a corporation, we'd like to become a chain in the future, and we want to follow the rules in every step of our professional activity. (...) When this place was still a take-away, we couldn't have seats by law. However, you find a table or a counter in every kebab or take-away pizzeria. We tried to understand the reasons of this presumed non-fulfilment from all the take-away restaurants in Italy, and we found out that, because of an unwritten rule, the municipality gives the authorisation to have stools and shelves. So, we decided to have a table with some stools. Moreover, we had to use only high tables because the low ones could recall a place where people could sit and eat. We have discovered this unwritten rule only after a month of research.

Massimiliano, 30, Italia; Milan

Therefore, bureaucracy is not only a matter of filling in forms or obtaining authorisations. Bureaucracy includes a series of regulations that are not always clear for the entrepreneurs, and the interviewees often perceive inefficiency of the information given by public officers. At this purpose, Simon, a 28 years-old young entrepreneur from Hong-Kong who owns a Thai restaurant, takes into exam the bureaucracy, and inaccuracy of public officers to provide the right information:

Bureaucracy is the reason why so many entrepreneurs do not invest in Italy. (...) There is too much bureaucracy, too many unnecessary procedures. I give you an example: if I want to apply for something, if I want to call and ask for information, (...) I call three times the same institution, and they give me three different answers. And this is the problem. For example, in Hong Kong, if you call ten times you always obtain the same answer. One of the problems is that people in the public offices are not sure of what they're doing, they just give you their interpretation, and this is a problem because, if you want to start a business, you must always be in contact with the local government, in order to obtain the correct information. Without this correct information, how can you work?

Simon, 28, Hong-Kong; Milan

Many interviewees have emphasised that the information given by officers is not always understood as correct, and often not the same given by the colleagues belonging to the same department. According to the entrepreneurs, this situation occurs because of the complicated regulation and sometimes inaccurate interpretation of the legislation. This aspect creates confusion in the communication between the entrepreneurs and the institutions.

Another bureaucratic obstacle consists of a long time to obtain authorisation. The most spread example in my interviews, concern the long time to have the authorisation for the *déhors*, that means to put tables in the space outside the restaurant. This authorisation is acquired after many months, and it is also connected to a tax for the occupation of public land. This problem is explained by Danny, who aims at putting some tables and chairs in the space outside the restaurant:

I went three times to the municipality, now I have to go to the Police and, if they decide that I have the right requirements to open that space outside, I have to wait for 90 days. I really wanted to have that place for the summer but, if everything will be fine, I will obtain the authorisation only in September, when it will become almost worthless for the following winter. (...) Bureaucracy is huge, (...) and it's totally different from Peru, since, when you decide to open your business there, you don't have to wait any kind of information, you just open your activity, and you just have to pay the workers and the taxes. (...) My mother used to have a shop in Peru, (...) and she did not have to fulfil this kind of bureaucratic procedures.

Danny, 35, Peruvian; Milan

Therefore, Danny underlines not only the role of long timing, but also the huge differences from the country in which he was born. This is related to another problem, that is connected to human capital. In the case of Danny, the young entrepreneur is highly educated, and he graduated in Italy⁶⁸. Therefore, he has studied how the Italian system works and he knows how to obtain information. A similar case is that of Abigail, who, before opening her restaurant, attended a course of professional specialisation in the restaurant sector:

Before starting the restaurant, I attended a vocational course, organised by the municipality of Milan, aimed at understanding the rules that concern feeding, the HACCP, and all those practical things that you need to have to obtain the licence to open your own restaurant. I didn't have particular difficulties with bureaucratic procedures since, thank to this course, I was already aware of all the steps that I needed to fill before and after the constitution of my activity. So, my path is different from the one of my co-nationals that simply bought the licence to have their own restaurant from someone else. I didn't buy the licence, I obtained that thanks to that course, so I didn't have problems. (...) The only problem that I had was about the regulation on music volume. We like music, and we love loud music, and the only thing that my teachers had not taught me at the course was that loud music is prosecutable. Nevertheless, I soon learned that with my experience, and now we have quieted down.

Abigail, Peruvian; Milan

This issue will be further deepened in the chapter dedicated to human capital. What is interesting in this matter is that it appears that in Milan there are more initiatives and courses of professional training for entrepreneurs. Related to this point, we will see in chapter 6.2.2 that human capital is a very important resource to face bureaucracy and the constraints present in the Italian context. While in Rome the successful entrepreneurs interviewed managed to acquire their human capital through University degree or private professional training, in Milan some migrant entrepreneurs have attended courses organised by the municipality or by the Chamber of Commerce, aimed at providing knowledge about the more important procedures to start and maintain the business. This does not mean that this kind of courses are not organised also in

⁶⁸ For information about Danny, see the Appendix, page 317.

Rome, but they are perceived as more distant for migrants, they are not seen as aimed at targeting them as possible apprentices for these courses.

4.3 “Ethnic” food, “ethnic” economy? Strategies to make the difference

As it has been shown in chapter 2.4, food is central in the migratory experience, by offering a symbolic and material connection with the country of origin (Mares, 2012; Pravettoni 2013; Zincone, 2009; Calvi, 2017; Di Renzo, 2006). Food is crucial in the process of longing home, and “preparing, eating and sharing meals that are resonant with one’s foodways – the eating habits or food practices of a community, region or time period – is a vital piece of maintaining a sense of self in a new environment” (Mares, 2012: 335). Nyman (2014) states that the culinary memory plays a role of identity-construction since it is connected both to private and public ambiances, to remembrance related to home and childhood. Furthermore, food also constitutes a way to connect the country of origin and the host country/countries, and it constitutes a field of negotiation between migrants and autochthones (Pravettoni, 2013; Zincone, 2009; Nyman, 2013). Within the continuous process of interaction between international migration and local integration of food, three innovative aspects emerge: the increasingly growth of Italian consumers’ demand for “ethnic” food, the importance of this element for migrants, and the role of migrant entrepreneurs who answer to these different demands (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009). According to Saint-Blancat *et al.* (2008), this kind of food can become an instrument to analyse how and at what extent migrant entrepreneurs choose to emphasise their diversity, how they share their cooking traditions with local community, the ways in which they attract local consumers, and the interaction with the local urban context. Ambrosini and Castagnone (2009) evidence that migrants’ restaurants addressed to Italian customers are different from those who are aimed at satisfying the needs of the co-nationals. In fact, the firsts are addressed to sophisticated consumers, often intellectuals, passionate for travels and far worlds, while the second ones have to care much more to the price and to transmit a sense of “home” to co-nationals. These elements are examined in detail in this chapter to present a specific picture of the differentiation within the ethnic restaurant sector in Milan and Rome.

The exterior aspects of the restaurants: dimensions, furniture, and recalls to the country of origin

Starting from the outward appearance, every aspect of the restaurant is part of a specific strategy, so far as those entrepreneurs who achieve good performances are concerned. Most of the restaurants are not very big, mainly composed of one or two small rooms, such as in the case of the restaurant owned by Rama, a 60 years old entrepreneur from Mali, whose activity is settled in Milan. Rama's restaurant is composed by two small rooms, one at the ground floor, and the other at the basement. Totally, the restaurant includes 35-40 places. The tables are small and round, surrounded by large wooden chairs. The tables are quite close to each other's, to favour eventual interactions between customers, and to create an intimate atmosphere. Some traditional African furniture decorates the walls, especially on the ground floor.

Picture 1. One of the two rooms of Rama's African restaurant in Milan⁶⁹.



⁶⁹ Source: www.zomato.com. Restaurant page hidden in order to preserve the anonymity of the subject interviewed.

Picture 1 shows the room in the basement, which is often used for meetings of African associations. For this reason, the tables are even closer than those on the ground floor:

I chose to open a small restaurant, with no more than 40 seats, since I wanted to create an intimate atmosphere. I didn't want one of those big restaurants, with confusion and noise. (...) I like to think at my restaurant as a great living room. Sometimes I like to make my customers communicate with each other. (...) This is what I wanted to construct, a small and comfortable place, so my customers will have the memory of a pleasing night, and not just a good dinner.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

According to Liu and Jang (2009: 340), “atmospherics is perceived as the quality of the surrounding space”. Throughout the aware designing of the space, specific emotional effects are produced in customers, in order to offer them a valuable experience (Kotler, 1973). This aspect is reflected in Rama's strategic choice, whose purpose is that of offering a high-quality experience, that takes place not only through food but also through the intimate atmosphere and the connections to Africa, that are re-created by the restaurant.

Other migrant entrepreneurs have adopted the opposite choice, by opening big restaurants, composed by a large room and exterior places, such as in the case of Anthony's Lebanese restaurant.

Picture 2. The internal room of Anthony's Lebanese restaurant in Rome⁷⁰.



As we can see from Picture 2, Anthony's restaurant is composed of a very large room, great tables, large spaces, architectonic elements and a *déhors* outside. The furniture is modern, with few but significant objects recalling the Lebanese origins of the restaurants, such as a collection of traditional hookahs.

Another similar case is that of Abigail. Abigail chose to have a big restaurant, with more than 100 seats. This choice is connected to the need of having more customers at the same moments and, therefore, higher earnings. However, Abigail's decision is not as easy as it appears at first glance, since a high number of seats also correspond to higher costs, especially on employees and food. This is a matter of analysis and calculation: on the one hand, Anthony, Abigail and other successful entrepreneurs combine the high number of seats to an analysis of costs and a well-reasoned quality-price relationship. On the other hand, other entrepreneurs that own big restaurants count on a high number of customers, but low prices and low quality of food. In the paragraph dedicated to the quality-price relationship, we will see the implications of this choice.

I have already introduced, with reference to Rama's strategy, the concept of the atmosphere. Liu and Jang (2009) state that atmosphere is constituted by many elements, such as music, lighting, colour and scent, which have a strong impact on customers' emotions, attitudes and behaviour. However, the definition of the atmosphere as the surrounding space of the restaurant is not exhaustive. In fact, the atmosphere is also recreated through the preparation of food (Chez, 2011) and by people, both customers and workers (Gaytan, 2017). So far as

⁷⁰ Source: www.google.com/maps. Restaurant page hidden in order to preserve the anonymity of the subject interviewed.

ethnic restaurants are concerned, the atmosphere constitutes an assessment of authenticity (Gaytan, 2017), and every aspect of the restaurant, starting from the furniture and the element that compose the exterior space, aims to recall “authenticity” and the country of origin of the entrepreneur (Chez, 2011). Therefore, every aspect of the restaurant aims at recreating a particular atmosphere, as it is shown in these paragraphs.

In fact, by analysing the interior design of the restaurant, we can see that some entrepreneurs with migrant background have decided to furnish their businesses with specific references to their country of origin. This aspect is often connected to the recreation of a particular atmosphere, to offer not only a dinner but also an experience, a sort of travel through food and ambience.

Picture 3. The Vietnamese atmosphere that characterises the restaurant of Valérie in Milan⁷¹.



Valérie explains the recreation of the atmosphere of the country of origin. As we can see in Picture 3, the restaurants aim to present a typical Vietnamese setting, not only with typical tables, chairs, table clothes and furniture, but also plants, umbrellas, music, and use of air-conditioned and vaporisers aimed to recreate a Vietnamese setting:

We wanted to recreate the Hanoi microclimate, similar to that of colonial houses in that city. My parents used to live in this kind of houses. (...) I based the furniture choice on

⁷¹ Source: restaurant website, hidden in order to preserve the anonymity of the subject interviewed.

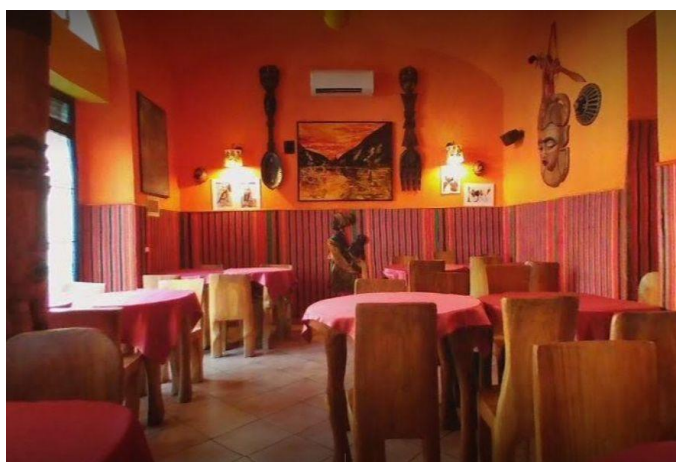
their recalls and these houses that I saw during my travels in Vietnam. (...) I want to provide to my customers a real Vietnamese experience, not only through food and beverage but also through the setting of this restaurant. Every detail has been thought at this purpose.

Valérie, 53, second-generation Vietnamese; Milan

Therefore, Valérie has carefully furnished her restaurant at the purpose of offering a real experience aimed at discovering the traditions of her country of origin. This experience does not include only food, but also the entire ambience, that has been carefully studied at this aim.

Other migrant entrepreneurs interviewed have decided to adopt the same strategy, that is recreated not only through the meal, but also by way of a real experience that recalls faraway countries, such as in the case of David.

Pic. 4. The African furniture that characterises the Eritrean restaurant of David in Rome⁷².



As we can see from Picture 4, also David has furnished his restaurant to recreate an Eritrean setting.

However, this style of furniture has not been adopted by all the successful restaurants interviewed. For instance, both in the cases previous analysed of Rama and Anthony, I have anticipated that the furniture is rather minimal, with few but significant references to the country

⁷² Source: <http://www.romamultiethnica.it>. Restaurant page hidden in order to preserve the anonymity of the subject interviewed.

of origin, because of the desire, on the one hand, of having a chic location that is not too exaggerated with ethnic objects and, on the other hand, of suggesting some recalls to the country or area of origin.

Pic. 5. The Indian restaurant of Nadim in Milan⁷³.



This necessity has been explained by Nadim, who owns a small Indian restaurant in Milan⁷⁴. Nadim has personally provided furniture for the restaurant, by attempting, on the one hand, to meet the demand of his Italian customers and, on the other to not exaggerate with Indian objects, as we can see in Picture 5:

I opened a smaller restaurant because it is better to work with restrained dimensions. I can control everything. (...) When I bought this restaurant, it was empty, nothing was there, and I provided some Indian objects. However, people still criticise me, because they think that it is not Indian; there isn't any kind of tapestry or statues. Nevertheless, I think that it is tacky to set tapestry (...). Furthermore, if you go to India, you'll not find such things. Medium-high level restaurants like this one have simple furniture. Just top restaurants have polished furniture, but they are made by architects, at very high costs. (...) So, it is better to have a

⁷³ Source: www.google.com/maps. Restaurant page hidden in order to preserve the anonymity of the subject interviewed.

⁷⁴ For information about Nadim, see the Appendix, page 315.

good location, with essential furniture, at low costs, to guarantee a better quality of the food.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

Therefore, the choices related to the visible aspect of the restaurants are connected to strategic choices linked to quality-price or to attract a specific target of customers, as it is shown in paragraph 4.3.1. Therefore, in the following paragraphs, I analyse the other elements of the atmosphere. I focus on the preparation of food and authenticity construction, recreated through food and the space surrounding the consumers.

Strategies concerning workers: numbers and nationalities

By dealing with the labour force, it immediately emerges that, also because of the generally small characteristics of the activities, few restaurants have more than ten employees. Those who overcome this number are among the most successful ones, such as in the case of Valérie, who has twelve employees with fixed-term or open-ended contracts, and three with job on-call contract⁷⁵. Furthermore, Valérie is the legal representative of the business, her husband is her partner, and they both work at the restaurant: she is the chef, while he is sommelier and waiter.

Despite these cases, most of the restaurants have less than ten employees and sometimes only the entrepreneur and his/her spouse or offspring work at the restaurant. This characteristics also concerns entrepreneurs who achieve good performances, such as in the case of Rama, whose son is her only employee:

My son is my only employee, and it's sufficient, we are enough. I cook during the afternoon, by caring about sauces, while we switch off during the evening, and he prepares vegetables and meat. (...) I am the waiter, but my son also helps me when he sees that I'm having difficulties. (...) When we are sick, we take medicine, so we can go to work. (...) I could call one of my "African brothers" as a waiter, but I don't like this idea, and my son doesn't like it either. It's just the two of us, we trust each other, and we wouldn't trust anyone else.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

⁷⁵ Through job-on-call contract (introduced by d.l. 276/2003), the employee declares himself available to occasional job.

In the case of Rama, working only with her son, without hiring other employees, is part of a specific strategy, though this decision also implicates some sacrifices, especially in cases of sickness.

However, in other cases, the reasons are different, such as for Jonathan, an entrepreneur who manages to survive. Only two people work at Jonathan's restaurant: his wife and himself. Jonathan explains the reasons for this decision:

My wife is the cook, while I'm the waiter and maître. Sometimes, we've paid people to help us for a few hours, but just in a few cases. (...) The situation is this: we can't afford to pay for employees: we already have lots of taxes to pay, the bills and the rent. So, we manage to do everything, because we couldn't do in another way.

Jonathan, 67, Eritrean; Milan

By comparing the situation of Jonathan to that of Rama, it appears that Jonathan's decision to not hire employees is a constrained choice, since he does not earn enough money to afford to hire other people. Therefore, the diversification of entrepreneurial strategy emerges. Rama and Jonathan adopt the same decision concerning the hiring of workers outside the family. However, in the case of Rama, this is a proper strategy, deeply evaluated, together with her son and co-worker, since she could afford that expense. On the other hand, Jonathan's decision is constrained by a limited budget: he would need an employee, but he cannot afford the expense of hiring another person in the restaurant.

As far as the decision of hiring of fewer than ten workers not belonging to the same family is concerned, I carry out an example of the logics beneath this kind of choice. These reasons are found in the narrative of Nadim, who has five employees. Nadim explains the reasons why he hires only Indian workers and the two main constraints that derive from this choice:

I think that problems are even more serious for me than for other kinds of entrepreneurs since I have a small activity, specialised in a specific cuisine. Thus, I need to hire just Indian workers, mainly because of communication reasons. For instance, when customers ask to modify something in the dishes, it is fundamental that an Indian waiter conducts the communication between the dining area and the kitchen, since there are more than 20 official languages within India, they use even different alphabet. Lots of Indian people often do not communicate in the national language. So, it's

already difficult to manage Indian workers who come from different areas, just think how an Italian waiter could be able to communicate with Indian cooks. (...) However, this necessity implicates many problems. First, most of my workers are men. It is almost impossible to find women who are available to work as waiters. When a girl gets married, her family inculcates her that she has only to care about her husband, her house and her children. Those women who manage to emancipate, or those who belong to second generations decide to study and to do skilled job. They don't want to be employed as waiters. (...) Second, and connected to the first one, there is a problem of lack of professional position: you can find the handsome waiter, or the smart one, but they're not professional. Many years ago, the waiters had studied at the catering high school. They could be friendly or not, but at least they were professional. Nowadays, you can find professional waiters only if you go to top restaurants, those who have a Michelin star.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

Nadim explains that this reasoned choice, based on the necessity of communication between waiters and cooks, implies several constraints, since the population that their restaurant owners have decided to hire employees who come from the same country of origin, while others have adopted other kind of strategies. This aspect is further analysed in chapter 6.3, dedicated to professional networks as a strategic choice.

As far as the employees' job contracts are concerned, most of the entrepreneurs declare to stipulate a regular contract, though many of them make large use of on-call jobs, one of the most precarious forms of job allowed by the Italian law. Nevertheless, irregular forms of jobs are presented, such as in the case of Luis. According to Luis, the only way to earn money is through irregular recruiting of workers:

When I have to hire employees, it's a pain. I already have to pay loan and bills. I can't also add contributions. I have five employees in this restaurant, but none of them has a regular full-time contract. Some of them, the two I trust most, are hired through part-time contracts, and the rest of their hours are paid off the books. The other three do not have any contracts. (...) It's the only way to earn money.

Luis, 50, Peruvian; Milan

As we have seen in the previous section of this chapter, the problem of high taxations is deeply felt by all migrant entrepreneurs. However, the irregularity of payments is not a solution. In fact, in chapter 4.3.2, I show that the strategy of Luis is only focused on keeping low prices, without any strategy concerning the quality of food and preparation of dishes. In chapter 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 I show that the most efficient strategies adopted by the interviewees have concerned every aspect of the activity and not only prices.

Suppliers: quality for fresh food and difficult import for spices and typical products

So far as suppliers are concerned, they are always Italian for fresh food (meat, vegetables, fruit and fish). The differences in quality tend to concern the price and the place where the product is acquired since some entrepreneurs tend to buy food characterised by lower prices at the nearest supplier, while others take much more care to quality and traceability, and they rely on specific butchers, shops, and greengrocers.

Suppliers present more differences when they sell spices and typical products of the country of origin. In fact, many restaurant owners buy these products to grocery, shops and minimarkets that are mostly managed by other migrant entrepreneurs, mainly coming from Southern America or Asia. Those who rely on this kind of suppliers are among entrepreneurs who are in crisis, those who manage to survive, and also among successful entrepreneurs, such as in the case of Lea, a Senegalese entrepreneur in Milan, whose suppliers of typical African products come from Bangladesh and China.

Other restaurant owners import products from their country of origin, but the mechanisms of import are quite complicated. These issues concern many successful entrepreneurs and some of the surviving. The latter case includes Cristina, a Peruvian entrepreneur in Rome, who imports her product from Peru and Spain. Many entrepreneurs do not import products directly from their country of origin, but they use a European State as an intermediary. Anthony explains this mechanism:

Lebanese products and beverage are not directly imported from Lebanon because it is a non-EU country. It is very complicated and expensive to make a container come from Lebanon. It is more convenient to make these products arrive from France or Germany or, as in my case, the UK, since products are sent by couriers, such as DHL or Bartolini. If I ordered these products from Lebanon, they would be subjected to duties and supervision. For instance,

a product which comes from Lebanon cannot enter to Italy without a label in Italian, while the one that comes from France is able to access the Italian territory even without labels in Italian. Moreover, Lebanese communities are numerous in countries like Germany, France and the UK, and it is very easy to find our products there. Here in Rome, there are no traders who buy Lebanese products. The Lebanese community in Rome is very small. We are less than one thousand. For this reason, we have to rely on other States.

Anthony, 54, Lebanese; Rome

Anthony illustrates the difficulties concerning the direct import of products from a non-EU country, because of high costs and rigid regulation, and it is more convenient to undertake exchanges within EU countries.

Nevertheless, other entrepreneurs directly import their products from their country of origin, such as in the case of Victor:

I have to guarantee that my Peruvian food is as much authentic as possible. (...) For instance, our chilli pepper is not Calabrian, though it would be much easier to buy. Our chilli pepper comes from Peru, and it arrives through Milan. A negative aspect is that food does not arrive directly to Rome, it has to go to Milan, and then they bring it here. It is complicated to make Peruvian food arrive at Fiumicino⁷⁶, you are asked to fill lots of bureaucratic procedures, and food risks to remain too much time in the boxes, rather than in the restaurant larder.

Victor, 53, Peruvian; Rome

According to Victor, direct import of food from the country of origin is difficult, since it does not arrive directly to Rome, but it has to pass through Milan. However, differently from Anthony and Cristina, Victor cares that his typical product come directly from Peru and not from Italy or other European countries.

From these three paragraphs, a first picture of the differentiation among restaurants emerges. This differentiation is more and more evident in the next paragraphs, related to the different kinds of cooking and preparation of dishes, quality-price and marketing strategies.

⁷⁶ Fiumicino is the most important airport in Rome.

4.3.1 Diversification of flavours and customer targets

The type of food provided is one of the most important elements of differentiation that constitutes migrants' restaurants because, though all the entrepreneurs interviewed provide "ethnic" dishes, there are different ways to serve it. This strategy is also linked to customer target, since how food is served can attract a different kind of customers, not only based on their nationality but also their social status (Ashley et al., 2004). Furthermore, through these strategies we can see that how ethnic restaurant represent tools not only for migrants' economic advancement, but also for understanding, reinterpreting, and sharing their cultures (Ray, 2011; 2016). For this reason, together with the food preparation, also customer target is analysed considered, to have a complete framework concerning the diversification among businesses. Since I have interviewed people belonging to many different nationalities, huge differences exist between cooking traditions. However, what I intend for differentiation concerns strategies and choices adopted by entrepreneurs. In fact, as it has been underlined by Bell and Valentine (2013), within the urban context, the differentiation of ethnic food and restaurants provides the consumers with an ample choice.

Moreover, Arvela (2013) identifies the different urban audiences for whom ethnic food is provided. On the one hand, food is seen as "a way of life" when it is targeted to co-national consumers, by reinforcing feelings of solidarity among the co-nationals (Arvela, 2013). On the other hand, ethnic food can be targeted to a sophisticated clientele, that search tastes that recall faraway countries and, through the exploration of new consume experience, express social distinction (Warde et al., 1999).

Stick to the tradition: ethnic cuisine for minorities vs. sophisticated cuisine

The atmosphere is constructed by the entrepreneur with migrant background on the basis of the "authenticity"⁷⁷ that they want to recreate in their restaurant (Chez, 2011). According to Mohring (2008), ethnic restaurants are seen as authentic when they offer genuine dishes, the

⁷⁷ According to Johnston and Baumann (2007; 2010), within the food discourses, five elements define ethnic food authenticity: 1) geographic specificity, or the connection of food to a specific location or geographic area; 2) simplicity, by transmitting meanings such as "honesty", "purity", or "rusticity" in food, that is often hand-made, in juxtaposition with the modern industrial food; 3) personal connection with the tradition of the food; 4) history/tradition, or association to a particular history or customs, conventions or food traditions that repeatedly take place through time or space; 5) the migratory background of the restaurant owner and/or the cook.

furniture recalls the country of origin, and many of the customers are co-nationals of the entrepreneur. Castagnone (2008) describes this way of serving food as the “strategy of tradition”, that is characterised by the provision of dishes throughout the more loyal reproduction of traditional recipes, mostly located in areas characterised by a vast population coming from the same country or area of origin and aimed at satisfying a co-national clientele⁷⁸.

I have selected three different narratives that allow explaining the strict relationship between how dishes are prepared and the presence of co-national customers. The first entrepreneur considered manages to obtain good performances, and it is the case of Natalia, an Ecuadorian entrepreneur in Milan. Natalia provides typical Ecuadorian food, and 90% of her customers come from Southern American. She thinks that this strategy is winning because a great Southern American community is widespread in Italy, but few Ecuadorian restaurants are present in Milan. Therefore, she answers to the demand of those who come from the same country or area of origin. In the chapter dedicated to network strategies (4.2), I show how Natalia manages to combine her connections at the aim of improving her business performances.

As for Natalia, also in the case of the second entrepreneur interviewed, the “tradition” strategy is not seen as a constraint. Francisco’s restaurant is classified among the surviving ones since he has faced a tough crisis and now, he manages to survive, though without achieving a good performance. His restaurant provides typical Peruvian dishes:

Peruvian typical cuisine is very rich. We have lots of ingredients, in Peru, almost nothing is imported, because we have sea and mountains, and also the tropical area. Seasons interchange, so we have lots of fruits, lots of vegetables, fish, meat, etc. For years, it has been difficult to export our products all over the world. Now it’s easier, thanks to the technological progress. Now we can create a typical cuisine, we can import spices that are not found here. My restaurant aims to create a typical cuisine, by importing spices and food that you don’t find here. to create a typical cuisine, by importing spices and food that you don’t find here. (...) For this reason, most of our customers come from Peru, though Italian people that are curious to taste our cuisine are increasing.

Francisco, 41, Peru; Rome

⁷⁸ This strategy typically belongs to the businesses identified by Ambrosini (2005) as “ethnic”, characterised by the provision of products aimed for a co-national clientele and that are not found in the mainstream Italian market.

The choice of Francisco is to guarantee the authenticity of traditional dishes as much as possible⁷⁹, even though he also would like to attract more Italian people.

The third interview considered is that of Seok, who is facing a deep crisis, and he often thinks to close his restaurant. According to the Korean entrepreneur, his problems are also caused by the strategy to serve traditional recipes to a clientele that is mainly composed of Korean customers:

I think that the most critical constraint of my restaurant is that 60% of my customers come from Korea, and most of them are tourists because the Korean community in Rome is very small. (...) Italian people are only 5-10% of my customers since most of them is of Asian origin. (...) For this reason, my business strategies are aimed at having a Korean or Asian clientele, (...) and Korean cuisine is really different from yours. For instance, we use rice as a side dish while you have bread. Thus, Italian people eat our vegetables and soups without rice, but this provokes stomach-ache, our food needs to be tasted with rice, because of the spices that we use. With Italian cuisine, if you don't eat bread, nothing happens, but with our food, if you don't eat rice, you risk feeling sick. (...) I also can't adapt my dishes to Italian people, because most of my customers are from Korea, and they wouldn't come anymore if I'd use that strategy. I really would like to do that, to have more Italian customers, to create a fusion cuisine, so I'm no more constrained to the touristic flows from Korea, but it's too risky. I can't afford such a thing. (...) If I change the dishes, I would also have to change prices, who have remained the same since the moment that I acquired this restaurant in the 2000s. I can't change it now.

Seok, 54, Korean; Rome

According to Seok, the “tradition” strategy is a necessity that he would like to avoid since he would like to attract more Italian consumers. However, to diversify his clientele, he would have

⁷⁹ The concept of authenticity has to be inserted within a context characterised by modernisation and contemporary forms of globalization, that have “encouraged the widespread movement of knowledge, people and commodities globally. Food lends itself well to considerations of origins and transformation due, on the one hand, to its materiality, and on the other, to its connection to social and cultural representation” (Oleschuk, 2017: 221). It has been stressed several times by the interviewees that it is almost impossible to recreate a 100% authentic cuisine, because of fresh products that cannot be imported, and they are different from the Italian ones, because of a different climate, cultivations, etc. Authenticity also assumes a relational character, since consumers and entrepreneurs define it on the basis of their own social experience.

to adapt his cuisine to the Italian taste, but he believes that he is not able to adopt such a radical change because he fears to lose all the Korean customers, that are the majority of his customers. Therefore, from the three narratives, we can see that, though the three entrepreneurs adopted the same strategies, their results are different. In the case of Seok, it is seen as a constraint, that he has chosen to adopt many years ago, he would like to change, but he considers that eventual transformations are too risky. In the second case, Francisco is convinced of his strategy, but he would also like to attract Italian people. In the third case, Natalia manages to obtain good performances through the tradition strategy. However, Natalia is one of the few successful restaurant owners that adopt the “tradition” strategy targeted to Southern American customers, since most of them are among surviving or entrepreneurs that are in crisis.

Nevertheless, during my fieldwork, I have noticed that the respect for traditional recipes is not always connected to those who aim at satisfying only the needs of the co-national customers. On the contrary, many high-level restaurants decide to stick to traditional dishes to attract sophisticated customers, who are generally used to travel, and they already know certain kind of dishes.

Pic. 6. The Thai restaurant of Simon in Milan⁸⁰.



⁸⁰ Source: www.thefork.it. Restaurant page hidden in order to preserve the anonymity of the subject interviewed.

This need is expressed by Simon, a young entrepreneur from Hong-Kong, who manages a Thai restaurant in Milan, shown in Pic. 6. The chef of Simon's restaurant comes from Thailand, he has been working for his family in the last 15 years, and he manages the kitchen in order to guarantee the authenticity of Thai recipes:

For sure, we guarantee our understanding of Thai food. The food is "almost" authentic; there is some part that we cannot guarantee because we cannot find the ingredients here. At the same time, some Italian people are not used to the real Thai taste, which, for instance, is based on a lot of garlic and spices. Many of them, for instance, ask us to use only curry and no other spices. We can do that, for sure, but this means to adapt to the Italian taste, that is not our task. We can make our clients happy, but we are aware that specific changes are distant to authentic Asian food. On the one hand, we want that customers are happy, while on the other we want to keep our food as authentic as possible. (...) Thus, we make this little adaptation only to those who ask us something in particular, but we want to maintain our food as authentic as possible. (...) Our customers are mostly Italian or foreign businessman; we don't have many tourists here.

Simon, 28, Hong Kong; Milan

"Authenticity" can also be provided to reach high-level customers, through food and the reproduction of an environment that aims at appearing at the same time "ethnic" and attractive.

Valérie also expresses this task. In the previous paragraphs, I have shown that the aim of her business is to create a real Vietnamese experience, through the recreation of Vietnamese atmosphere and, of course, through food:

Vietnam is near China, but our cuisine is different from the Chinese one. (...) I recognise the great innovation of Chinese cuisine, such as steam cook, fried cook, wok. (...) However, our cuisine is different, it's more spiced, more perfumed. They use lots of wheat, while we use only rice. For instance, their spring rolls are made of wheat, while ours contain only rice. (...) We want to maintain the Vietnamese tradition, with no Chinese influences. (...) Most of our customers are Italian, passionate about travels and exotic cuisines. There are also many foreign people, but they're businessmen who come here when they are in Milan.

Valérie, Vietnamese; Milan

The purpose of Valérie is to maintain the Vietnamese authenticity as a source of both attraction of high-level clientele and distinction from Chinese restaurants. Both strategies of tradition can be reconnected to what Ambrosini (2010) defines as “symbolic transnationalism”, which is the re-creation of ambiances, atmosphere, perfums, music and, of course, flavours, coming from the country of origin of the migrant entrepreneurs. In addition, both strategies can be associated to the definition “cultural entrepreneurs” (Lu et al., 2019), whose migrant background constitutes a “vital part of their stock in trade” (Palmer, 1984: 85). What distinguishes the two kinds of strategy is the target of consumers whom they address. In the first case, entrepreneurs of migrant origin adapt to the needs of their community of origin, by offering a connection with their country or geographic area; this kind of entrepreneurs generally apply low prices to their food, and they recreate the atmosphere with a constrained budget. The second strategy shows that high-level restaurant owners stick to their traditional recipes to distinguish themselves and to attract sophisticated customers. In this case, the concept of symbolic transnationalism is therefore used to identify “dining experience”, which does not include only the meal consumption, but also the atmosphere surrounding the restaurant (Girardelli, 2018; Kotler, 1973). The purpose is to appeal to high-level consumers, passionate of travels and curious of trying the tastes that recall faraway countries.

Hybridisation: adaptation to Italian taste or fusion cuisine?

Many successful ethnic restaurants choose another strategy: hybridisation (Castagnone, 2009). This strategy has been defined by Saint-Blancat *et al.* (2008: 71) as “conquest entrepreneurship”, characterised by “efforts of cooking syncretism and cultural mix”, that aim to attract customers, throughout the creation of new flavours, new approaches towards food, new combinations.

In my fieldwork, this kind of hybridisation assumes two forms: first, the adaptation to the Italian taste and, second, “fusion” between different foreign cooking traditions and ingredients. So far as adaptation to the Italian taste is concerned, Rama explains the reasons for her choice:

My dishes aren't authentic, because they have to be tastier for Italian and European people. I use lots of vegetables, and I always choose the best meat, chicken and African fresh fish. Though African cuisine is spicy, mine is not: chilli pepper is served separately: if people want to add it, they can do that, if they don't want, they don't do that. So, also little children can taste my dishes because I prepare

every dish with fresh vegetables. Also, this one is a sign of adaptation: African cuisine does not contain vegetables: we have condiments, but a limited number of vegetables, just one for every season. Instead, you have every kind of vegetables in every moment here in Italy. Vegetables are European style, not the African one. (...) Therefore, my customers are mostly Italian. That was my choice: I decided to modify dishes to make them like to Italian people, because (...) I want to make African traditions, food, habits and conditions known in Italy (...). As consequences, African people do not like my dishes. (...) My few African customers have been living in Italy from 30-40 years: they are doctors, accountants, and we like to talk about Africa with Italian people. They come from different countries, such as Cameroon, Congo and Ivory Coast. They came here a long time ago, (...) but they perfectly know the story of their countries, they talk about African culture, and that's beautiful. In addition, many second-generation guys come here. They are the customers that I want.

Rama, Mali; Milan

The strategy of Rama appears, since she aims at having Italian customers, so she provides African dishes that are rendered more attractive for Italian customers, with separated spices and lots of vegetables. She has managed to reach high-level customers, that are Italian, or wealth African long-time residents, or second generations. Nevertheless, her purpose is still connected to communicate traditions of the country or area of origin, through the recreation of the atmosphere. As it has been shown in Picture 1, Rama's restaurant is furnished with many African objects. Furthermore, when she works at the restaurant, she always wears the traditional gown of her country of origin. Though, as we have seen before, some restaurants have managed to reach a high segment of the market by sticking to the values and authenticity of the food provided, most of the successful entrepreneurs use the strategy of hybridisation to meet the taste of Italian customers.

This strategy has also been adopted by Abigail, who has gradually aimed at spreading Peruvian cooking within Italian people:

I opened this restaurant in 2008. (...) At the beginning, Peruvian cooking was not very widespread and, for this reason, most of my customers were Southern American. Nowadays, Peruvian cooking is widespread along the world, and it is often compared to the Brazilian, Mexican, Argentinian and Spanish cooking. Peruvian cooking is joining high levels among the world. In some country,

though not in Italy, not yet, some Peruvian restaurants have achieved a Michelin star. (...) So, as time was passing by, Italian customers have become more and more curious towards our cuisine, since it is not as the Indian one, it is based on delicate and fresh flavours, with lots of potatoes, fish, chicken and meat. (...) I wanted to have Italian customers, so I've adopted some changes to reach this task. I've learned many elements of Italian cuisine, and I've implemented these on Peruvian cuisine, which is the core of my activity. We use little quantities of spices; we care a lot about the presentation: we always pay attention to the presentation of dishes. We want to serve well-presented dishes, rather than copious portions, as the traditional Peruvian cuisine often demands.

Abigail, 45, Peruvian; Milan

Therefore, Abigail strategy is to use many elements which do not traditionally belong to Peruvian cooking into the preparation of dishes. These elements, in particular as far as the presentation of dishes is concerned, aim at attracting high-level customers, to distinguish her cuisine from one of the numerous Peruvian restaurants in Milan. Thus, hybridisation is often used as a strategy to increase the level of the restaurant, of performances and cuisine. In addition, in both narratives, another aspect arises: the willingness to transmit specific traditions and custom throughout the provision of a dining experience. Also in these cases, we can talk of cultural entrepreneurs, since they use their activity to transmit their values and customs, by recognising that, at this purpose, they have “altered” their tradition but, at the same time, they are “educating their customers” (Lu et al, 2019).

Hybridisation is also conceived as “fusion cuisine”, that is obtained by mixing a different kind of foreign cooking tradition, and elements of the Italian cuisine are not necessarily included. Nevertheless, in many cases this kind of mix also manages to reach Italian customers, as in the case of Lea, the successful Senegalese entrepreneur in Milan who owns a Senegalese restaurant in partnership with her husband:

My restaurant sells typical African food, coming of course from Senegal, but also Ivory Coast, Gambia and Guinea. I have many customers from the Gambia, and I prepare their traditional dishes. I also do lots of Ivory Coast dishes; some of them are similar to ours. (...) At lunch-time, my customers are mainly African, while during the evening, they are mainly Italian. I am delighted to have lots of Italian

customers. Before opening my restaurant, I would never have thought that they would have eaten our mafè, a beef stew with peanut sauce, or my soupe kandja, our national food based on rice and fish. Instead, they do not only come for meals, but they also want to attend my Senegalese cooking course. (...) I organise courses of Senegalese cooking tradition on Sundays, I accept at maximum ten people every time, and we prepare two dishes: a starter and a main dish. It is a perfect way to make them interested in Senegalese cuisine.

Lea, Senegalese; Milan

The idea of Lea involves fusion between cuisines that are very different from the Italian ones, with a double purpose: on the one hand, she wants to attract African customers that do not only come from Senegal, by preparing different traditional dishes of other African States. On the other hand, she also aims at attracting Italian people with her African dishes, by attracting loyal customers and providing them courses of Senegalese cuisine which are able to intrigue and, later, to make them faithful clients.

However, not all entrepreneurs who adopt this technique are among the successful ones. Angie is a 44 years-old Venezuelan entrepreneur in Rome, and she owns a Colombian-Venezuelan restaurant. She comes from Venezuela, while her husband is Colombian, and they manage their restaurant, together with their son-in-law, which manages to survive without reaching a good performance, by providing a mix between the Colombian and Venezuelan cuisine. However, they do not manage to attract Italian customers, and they also have problems to attract Southern American customers. This latter aspect will be shown in chapter 4.4.

Pic. 7. The revisited kebab restaurant of Massimiliano and his partners in Milan⁸¹.



Another fusion strategy needs to be examined, since some restaurant-owners manage to mix foreign cuisines with also Italian ingredients, as in the case of Massimiliano and his seven partners⁸². The restaurant provides a re-interpreted version of kebab:

Our activity was born as a takeaway re-interpreted kebab but, after a year, it became a real restaurant. (...) Our customers can compose their kebab, with a wide range of ingredients, which come both from the Mediterranean and the Middle East area. Specifically, our ingredients come from Italy, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Iran. Furthermore, we have a great offer for vegetarian products. Let's say that the only non-vegetarian ingredient is kebab, but it can be substituted by falafel or aubergines. We also use a few ingredients that contain milk or eggs, to offer a wide vegetarian and vegan offer. Furthermore, we also care about different religious customs, and we always buy halal products since, though none of us is practising Muslim, our cuisine is inspired to those of Muslim country, and we want to respect their traditions. (...) Within our menu, Iranian ingredients are abundant because of Sarah's background. We want to be as much open as possible, but Sarah and her family are experts of Iranian cuisine, so we have a vast knowledge of this kind of cooking tradition. (...) We aim is to attract customers with different backgrounds, with different nationalities and social origins.

⁸¹ Source: www.tripadvisor.it. Restaurant page hidden in order to preserve the anonymity of the subject interviewed.

⁸² For information about Massimiliano and his partners, see the Appendix, page 318.

Kebab is a cross-cutting product: people belonging to every social class appreciates it. Our task is to have a multi-cultural clientele, and we manage to do that: our kebab attire Italian people, second generations, migrants, and tourists. Furthermore, not just young people come here: we also attract adult and old people, and this is not obvious for the kebab.

Massimiliano, 31, Italian; Milan

In this latter case, fusion is a mix between the two strategies of hybridisation by combining the adaptation to the Italian taste through the adoption of many Italian ingredients to the mix of different cuisines. Specifically, by providing this wide range of ingredients, Massimiliano and his partners are able to conquer customers who come from many parts of the world. This feature is connected to the work of Pécoud (2007) concerning the cosmopolitanism of Turkish entrepreneurs in Berlin. According to Pécoud (2007: 9), in the shops, the atmosphere is kept as cosmopolitan as possible to “not give the impression that non-Turks are unwelcome”. A similar strategy has been adopted by Massimiliano, not only through the food, which is provided by using ingredients coming from the different Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries but also through the external surroundings. As we can see in Pic. 7, the furniture does not recall foreign countries, but it is settled to transmit the concept of street food restaurant. What emerges from my fieldwork is that the hybridisation strategy can lead to achieving good performances when the entrepreneur has a clear task of reaching Italian people and a multi-cultural clientele and, therefore, he/she adopts approaches and initiatives to achieve that task.

Therefore, the strategies of tradition and hybridisation are declined in very different ways. First, tradition is mostly seen as a way to attract co-national customers, in restaurants located in urban areas characterised by a high concentration of minorities. In this case, it is challenging to emerge and achieve good performances, because the competition is very high, though it is not impossible, specifically because of the combination of resources such as network and human capital, as we will see in the next chapters. Second, tradition is also a strategy adopted by high-level restaurants to attract a sophisticated clientele. In this case, the reproduction of an “exotic” atmosphere aims at reaching high-level clienteles through an experience that goes beyond the food by itself. Nevertheless, the most used strategy to attract sophisticated customers is hybridisation through adaptation to Italian taste. Moreover, another way through which customers can be attracted is the presence of different cooking traditions, that in some cases are

also conjugated to Italian ingredients or influences, while in other cases many foreign cuisines are mixed, at the aim of attracting a multi-cultural clientele.

This analysis has been carried out in the restaurant sector, by investigating those activities that provide typical dishes of their country of origin, the so-called “ethnic” restaurants. Even in the cases of kebabs and activities that adopt a street food format, I have chosen those that mainly provide ethnic food. Therefore, this choice implies that the strategies identified are constrained by the sample selection. However, migrant entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector also adopt other kinds of strategies. The first strategy is “mimesis” (Castagnone, 2009) and it is adopted by those restaurant owners that provide traditional dishes of other countries. A very spread example in Italy of this situation is that of entrepreneurs of Chinese origins who have differentiated their offer, by transforming their activity into Japanese restaurants and sushi bar (e.g. Castagnone, 2009; Gasparetti, 2009). This solution has represented a sort of lifeline for many Chinese restaurant owners, because of different reasons (Colombo et al., 2008; Gasparetti, 2009; Castagnone, 2009), such as the saturation of the market, because of high presence of Chinese restaurants and the transformation of taste, towards a rapidly increasing demand of Japanese food.

The second strategy is that of “assimilation” (e.g. Solano, 2007). This aspect concerns the choice of many migrant entrepreneurs to not open ethnic restaurants, mainly because of market saturation, and to start-up Italian restaurants (e.g. Ricucci, 2013; Zanfrini, 2014; Laj and Ribeiro-Corossacz, 2006). During the last decades, migrant entrepreneurs of many nationalities have been opening pizzerias and restaurants that provide pasta and typical Italian food (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009; Coccimiglio and Villosio, 2009).

The third choice is that of “banalisation” (Ambrosini, 2009; 2014), since many migrant entrepreneurs offer a product that does not respond to the need of sophistication and differentiation in consumes, but to “more banal requirements, such as saving money and time to eat” (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009: 16). This strategy involves “street food” and the increasing success of kebab, which has been gradually losing “his characteristics of exceptionality and diversity, and it has been becoming part of daily practices, such as lunch break” (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009: 17). Furthermore, kebab shops do not often provide this product exclusively, but they also sell street food and pizza by the slice. In fact, “pizza and kebab” shops have rapidly increased in the last decades, by inserting kebab within low-cost street food (Fiorio and Napolitano, 2006; Ambrosini, 2014).

4.3.2 *Quality-price relation*

In the restaurant sector, which is characterised by high levels of competition, the satisfaction of customers becomes a primary task of business activities (Johns and Tyas, 1996; Kivela et al., 1999; Sulek and Hensley, 2004; Namkung and Jang, 2007). Two main elements become central in achieving this task: price and quality. On the one hand, the establishment of effective pricing strategies is particularly critical for entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector, since the cost of dishes needs to be decided at the aim of obtaining customer loyalty, and not only short-term profit maximization (Shoemaker et al., 2006; Raab et al, 2009). On the other hand, food is an essential component of the restaurant experience, and it has a crucial impact on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and to obtain success in the restaurant sector (Namkung and Jang, 2007). Therefore, the equilibrium between quality and price is a fundamental element to make restaurant work, also on the basis of the experiences narrated by the entrepreneurs interviewed in my fieldwork.

Those entrepreneurs who aim at targeting a sophisticated clientele provide a high quality of food. However, this is not an easy task, because price and quality need to be attentively calculated, as three entrepreneurs explain.

First, Nadim has made a careful market analysis before opening his Indian restaurant in Milan: According to my experiences, it is fundamental that prices are established only after having considered the space, cleaning services, loans, customer target and marketing.

However, many entrepreneurs fix prices without considering any other element, and it is the first grave mistake that a restaurant owner can do. Furthermore, when you open this kind of activity, you also have to understand the market, by going to eat in other restaurants, by understanding what you expect from them, how you enjoy the service. (...) My restaurant focuses on quality, but it is complicated to put medium-high prices, (...) since Indian cuisine in Italy is considered as low-price. However, the most famous recipes require lots of manual skills, and our restaurants use only fresh food, we never serve ready-made food. (...) Therefore, to have a quality-price relation that is good for us and accepted by the customers, we focus on quality, but not on the presentation of the food, because it would require higher costs, and it wouldn't be understood by Italian customer, since they wouldn't stop thinking that Indian cuisine has to be low-costs. We arrange the

relationship quality-price by providing high quality at medium prices, with an acceptable presentation.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

According to Nadim, an attentive business and market analysis has to be undertaken before opening any kind of restaurant, but this phase is not faced by many migrant entrepreneurs, who tend to fix prices first, and to decide every aspect of the activity only as an afterthought⁸³. Nadim identifies as his major constraint is the common classification of Indian cuisine as "cheap". For this reason, to maintain a high quality of food and medium price, he decided to give up the idea of a perfect presentation of the dish, that would have required higher costs, which would not be understood by Italian customers.

Second, the adjustments of quality-price relation are even more evident in the case of Danny⁸⁴, whose initial task concerning the relation quality-price has changed:

My starting idea was to create a fancy restaurant by keeping low prices. However, we couldn't provide a good quality of food at low prices, because of all the costs of maintaining a restaurant. Thus, I've opened a fancy restaurant with fair prices, because I have to keep into consideration all the costs of having my activity. (...) Fair prices also serve to guarantee the quality of the food: if I demand too low prices, the customers could think that the quality of my food is not good. So, one of my tasks is to satisfy customers: some restaurants give them remains, but we never do that, I think that it is disrespectful. (...) I want my customers to leave this restaurant happy, with the desire of coming back as soon as possible.

Danny, 35, Peruvian; Milan

Danny has had to readjust his initial idea about the price since he would not have contained costs by keeping prices low and high quality. Therefore, he opted for a compromise: to provide a high quality of food at medium prices.

Third, the strategy adopted by Simon for his Thai restaurant involves a medium-high cost of the food, high quality and care about the presentation:

⁸³ This trait has also emerged from the biography of the Korean entrepreneur Seok in the previous paragraph, and from other stories of unsuccessful or surviving entrepreneurs.

⁸⁴ Danny is among successful entrepreneurs. See the Appendix, page 317.

Not too high, and of course not too cheap, but we want to keep our customers between a medium and a high level of restaurant proposal. We are not a pizzeria; we have opened in a new and fancy location also to transmit a message that we are at a medium-high level. For sure, our task is not to serve a considerable quantity of food. If you work with quantities, you open a fast food in the Loreto area. That would be easier. So, for the price, we cannot be too cheap, because it's a matter of class. Furthermore, our task is the satisfaction of the clients: if they pay 20 euros for lunch, they must be satisfied. They must enjoy what they eat. So, the quantity must not be too low, (...) and the presentation needs to be captivating. (...) This is a thing that is just normal in the restaurant business. The thing is: we are not Cracco, but of course we are not fast food and neither a chain such as Old Wild West. The restaurant must be unique, the menu must be unique, the food must be good, and yet the location must be enjoyable. I think that, with these tasks always in mind, these elements constitute a good business.

Simon, 28, Hong Kong; Milan

The majority of successful entrepreneurs interviewed reveal a general tendency towards providing a good quality of food at medium or medium-high prices. This tendency is typical for those restaurants that can be considered as "fine dining restaurants" (Parsa and Njite, 2004: 268), which put much attention not only on price, but also on "other factors such as product quality, service levels, ambience (atmospherics), tangible internal and external factors, location, types of services offered, degree of customization available, concept uniqueness, and so on". as it has also been shown in the previous paragraphs.

Slightly different, many of those entrepreneurs who have a business that is set up as street food providers manage to combine the high quality of ingredients to low prices, as in the case of Tyler, whose restaurant sells fried chicken and typical American dishes in Milan:

I want to let my customer understand that I'm not a McDonald's or another fast food. Thus, I buy only fresh ingredients, I never choose frozen food. Meat is always marinated 24 hours before being served. I like to call my restaurant a "quick-food": we are not as slow as usual restaurants, but also not as quick as McDonald's, because our ingredients are fresh and, when food is good, people don't care to wait some minutes more. My prices are very low, quite similar to those of McDonald's. It would be easier to raise prices, but I think that's right that people taste my

good fried chicken at low prices. (...) Maybe I could earn more on single quantity, but I would also have problems because maybe fewer customers would come here. (...) Therefore, I manage to earn also with this strategy.

Tyler, 47, Afro-American; Milan

The strategy adopted by Tyler is the same of entrepreneurs who have the same format of business, such as Massimiliano, whose story has been analysed in the previous paragraph, who has created a new format of kebab together with eight partners. Generally, in those restaurants based on a street-food format (such as fried chicken, kebab, arepas or burritos), prices are kept lower, despite particular attention on the high quality of food, because they often provide take-away services. Therefore, they can focus only on cuisine and not on the service, since there are no waiters in this kind of restaurants, and the budget constraints constituted by furniture and the recreation of the atmosphere is much lower than that of other kinds of restaurants. For this reason, the entrepreneurs are more able to contain costs and to focus only on cuisine. In the case of successful entrepreneurs that operate within these business formats, prior market research has been conducted, and all the business aspects have been carefully analysed, as in the cases of fine-dining restaurants.

However, this kind of format does not work for all the street-food restaurant owners interviewed, since many surviving and entrepreneurs who are in crisis have adopted a "kebab" or fast-food structure, but they apply very low prices, without focusing on quality. Furthermore, many of these structures are located in areas characterised by a high concentration of ethnic restaurants, high competitions and, therefore, many difficulties to emerge. This situation is explained by Raki, who owns an Indian fast food in the Esquilino neighbourhood in Rome:

Everything was going well until the 2008 economic crisis. (...) Many customers used to pay 20-30 Euros each time before 2008. Now they spend at most 10 Euros. (...) We used to have a tableful of 20. Now they are 10. Many customers used to come once a week. Now they come once a fortnight. (...) We have to work with trusted customers, and this creates a lot of problems because I'm not sure that customers will come back the day after because maybe they don't have enough money or (...) because they go to other places.

Raki, 45, Bangladeshi; Rome

Raki sells Indian dishes under the format of fast food. Raki's strategy is based on applying low prices in order to attract more customers. However, this kind of choice is highly constraining in certain situations, such as the economic crisis, as we will see in chapter 7.3. A similar strategy is also applied by some restaurants that are among surviving or entrepreneurs who are in crisis. This is the case of Luis ⁸⁵:

I have very low prices because I want a continuous earning, to have always a high number of seats. We have an offer: with 5 euros you have first course, second course, a bottle of water and a coffee. It's very low, but it allows us to serve 150-200 people. (...) If I had paid all the taxes, I would have already closed my restaurant.

Luis, 53, Peruvian; Italy

The business of Luis is able to survive because of his irregular status since he does not pay all the taxes, especially as far as the contributions for workers are concerned. Furthermore, those who apply the strategy low prices-low quality to have a high quantity of customers are generally among entrepreneurs who are in crisis or those who just manage to survive. Therefore, the relevance of quality and adjustment of prices on the basis of the task and the format of the restaurants are the main strategies used by successful entrepreneurs.

⁸⁵ Luis has been shown in the first section, he is the Peruvian entrepreneurs who hires workers without a regular job contract.

4.3.3 Marketing: technological instruments, word-of-mouth and the importance of reputation

As far as the restaurant owners interviewed are concerned, marketing and communication techniques are mostly divided into two groups: those techniques of communication-based on technological instruments (mostly web sites and social networks) and the more classic word-of-mouth. In this paragraph, four narratives are analysed, and they all belong to successful entrepreneurs since they have been more able to explain the aspects of these strategies and to show how they work. As far as unsuccessful and surviving entrepreneurs are considered, most of them use Facebook and word of mouth.

In the first case, Nadim explains the communication of his restaurant:

My marketing strategies mainly concern offers, events, presence on social networks, interaction with customers, questions and answers on curiosity about our cuisine, proposals and discounts. For instance, twice a year I organise the "spicy week" for all passionate for chilli pepper. Wine-producing firms promote this event, so wine is included in the price. I've been organising this event for 5-6 years. (...) I promote this event throughout word of mouth, Facebook or articles on local newspapers. (...)

Furthermore, I use social networks to promote Indian cuisine during the summer period, since fewer customers come to the restaurant. In fact, many people leave the city in this period, and they also think that spicy Indian food does not fit well with warm summer days. That's wrong. So, I use much more Facebook to debunk this myth, to recall that some Indian dishes can also be eaten during warm summer days.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

Therefore, Internet and social networks are used by Nadim as a way to attract more customers, especially in the periods when the restaurant is less visited, and to promote events and offers that his restaurant organise. He does not manage the Facebook page by himself, but he collaborates with a marketing manager that deals with communication.

In the case of Massimiliano, communication is managed by himself and his partners:

We don't pay any communication agency. We use social networks, mainly Facebook, but also Twitter, we have our web site, created and edited by ourselves. (...) The restaurant had a good impact immediately because, when we opened, an acquaintance of us wrote about our activity on a blog of a national newspaper, whose offices are in Milan, by presenting topics related to second generations of migrants. This article presented the story of us, especially of the four girls of second-generation. Thus, a restaurant reviewer (...) came to our restaurant and talked about our products. (...) Then, we were interviewed by national radio and tv programs.

Massimiliano, 31, Italian; Milan

Because of the innovative format of their revisited kebab, Massimiliano and his partners care about communication. Furthermore, they have also gained space on mass-media, both at the local and national level, because of their vast networks and their location in one of the two most important Italian cities.

Third, Eduardo owns a restaurant in Rome, which prepares traditional dishes of three countries: Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala. The communication part is managed by the boyfriend of Eduardo, who owns a communication agency, together with other partners. However, a few months before the interview, Eduardo wanted to see how word-of-mouth was working. Therefore, he asked his boyfriend to substantially reduce posts on Instagram by sharing on Instagram only one photo a week, and he soon realised that word-of-mouth is even more important than Instagram.

Another successful entrepreneur, Simon, has also stressed the importance of word-of-mouth:

It is the most efficient and straightforward strategy: the clients come one time: if your food and your service are not good, they don't come again, (...) but if they appreciate what you do, they will come, with new friends. (...) For this reason, in order to make marketing functioning, you have to be able to do your best every day. There's not too much need to do promotions. I mean, we do that, we do some Facebook strategies, we have a Facebook page, we have some followers, and at the same time, we collaborate with magazines, with national newspapers. I mean, these things are good, it good to gain exposure. However, after one year, if you do that, again and again, it is pointless. One time that you have promoted enough, in a long time, your marketing is whether your food is good, and your service is efficient.

On the one hand, marketing and communication strategies are important to attract customers. On the other hand, generally, restaurant owners do not use sophisticated means to attract customers, by using social networks and by counting on word-of-mouth. While many successful entrepreneurs invest their time and money in some marketing strategies, mainly throughout technological supports, others think that all the marketing instruments are just auxiliary to word-of-mouth. Thus, this reliance on word-of-mouth means that reputation is very important for migrant entrepreneurs, and it is always seen as the most efficient way to attract new customers. Moreover, reputation becomes even more important nowadays, where web sites for restaurant reviews, such as Tripadvisor, Zomato, etc. are increasing gaining relevance for customers.

4.4 Urban context: competition and attractiveness of urban areas

This third section analyses the local level, where some differences between the two cities emerge, starting from the markets and the role of restaurants that provide "ethnic" cuisine. Secondly, I examine the different opportunity structures: I underline the changes and evolutions of the two cities considered, and how the different markets and consumer's habit shape the opportunity structure.

After having analysed the barriers for entrepreneurs of migrant origin that characterises the Italian context, and the strategies adopted by business owners to face these constraints, it is important to move at the urban level, to analyse the different opportunity structure of the two Italian cities considered. First, an analysis of the role of migrant entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector is carried out. Second, I focus on the opportunities for obtaining good performances in the two different cities. Therefore, differently from the first part of this section, that was aimed at describing the main barriers, performances of entrepreneurs are taken into account.

Milan vs. Rome: business competition vs. food competition

In the paragraph 4.2.2, dedicated to the different types of cooking and strategies adopted by migrants, it has already been shown that spreading foreign cuisine in the Italian context is quite difficult, because the Italian consumers have been for a long time considered as unwilling to eat food which comes from foreign traditions (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009; Arvela, 2013) and this resistance is still present, as it is explained by Oscar ⁸⁶:

Italian people eat pizza or pasta, even when they go abroad. We're just discovering now that other cuisines exist, and that other cuisines are good because migrants are more and more opening their restaurants. However, we are generally very connected to our traditions.

Oscar, 52, Italian; Milan

Oscar has a double point of view: he is an Italian citizen who has lived in a Southern America country for a long time, and he is still very attached to the tradition of his country of former

⁸⁶ For information about Oscar, see the Appendix, page 321.

migration, at the point that he has decided to introduce these traditions in the Italian market. As in the case of Oscar, many other interviewees emphasise a general mistrust of Italian people towards the foreign cuisines and, as consequence, it is difficult to emerge in this market.

However, as it has been underlined in the previous section, the Italian public is increasingly opening up towards foreign cuisines. According to my fieldwork, the problematics underlined by the entrepreneurs interviewed are different in the two cities considered. On the one hand, the difficulties to achieve good performances in Milan are related to a market that is characterised by a strong competition between migrants' restaurants. On the other hand, the problem of attracting Italian consumers is stronger in Rome than in Milan and the perceived competitors are not other ethnic restaurants, but the Italian ones, because the difficulty of conquering a space in the market is a great issue for migrants' activities in this sector.

Starting from Milan, a problem of strong and sometimes unfair competition between "ethnic" restaurant arises: it is difficult to emerge in a city that, on the one hand, is located in a State with very important cooking traditions and, on the other, has seen a strong increase of restaurants that introduce "ethnic" cuisines. The aspects related to unfair competition between "ethnic" restaurants are evidenced by Nadim, with references to Indian restaurants:

n the beginning, we were just three Indian restaurants, and now there are more than twenty. However, we're just 5-6 Indian entrepreneurs, while the others come from Pakistan or Bangladesh. They constitute Indian restaurants by counting on their customers' ignorance. They constitute familiar businesses, with lower costs and prices. (...) For this reason, Italian customers do not expect higher costs or refined dishes, because you're seen like them and your price needs to be lower. (...) The first Bangladeshi restaurant owners used to go to an Italian restaurant like mine, they used to take a picture of the menu, and they started to make the same dishes in their restaurants, at lower prices. (...) All these tricks are bringing down the ethnic restaurant sector.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

One of the most crucial aspects that frighten the entrepreneur is constituted by downward competition, because of the increase of restaurants that sell the same dishes, at lower prices and lower quality. Since Italian consumers do not have an in-depth knowledge of the Indian cuisine, they often do not perceive the differences in quality of products and preparation of dishes, and thus they simply choose on the basis of the restaurants that apply lower prices.

Valérie also perceives this risk. For Valérie, the ownership of an ethnic restaurant always risks putting the restaurants among those of low levels, despite the higher standards and targets of the activity:

70% of Asian restaurants in Milan are owned by Chinese people (...) who provides cuisines coming from all Asia, such as the Japanese, Vietnamese and Thai cooking. Some of them even provide Peruvian or Filipino cuisine. They reproduce the same cuisine of settled minorities, (...) but the quality is really bad. Some of them buy ready-made food, at low price.

Valérie, 50, second-generation Vietnamese; Milan

Valérie explains that downward competition is a risk also for her restaurant, though her activity is the only Vietnamese restaurants in Milan. Nevertheless, Valérie thinks that the belongingness, both from a geographical but also a culinary point of view, to the vast Asian continent, creates associations between her cuisine and the Chinese one. According to Valérie, this association creates a problem for the high-level restaurants, which risk that consumers do not always perceive their strategy of providing a high quality of food. To avoid this problem, Cristianne uses the strategy of tradition to attract a sophisticated clientele, which is passionate of travels and curious towards food, to set her restaurant at a higher segment of the market, as we have seen in the previous section.

So far as Rome is concerned, the situation is one step behind. In fact, the main difficulty in Rome is to conquer a segment the market, because the main challenge for migrant entrepreneurs in the Italian capital appears to be the overcoming of “food conservatism” or “culinary conservatism”. Food conservatism or culinary conservatism is described by Gabaccia (1998), by acknowledging that people can show considerable conservatism in their food choices. Gabaccia considers this notion regarding the behaviour of European colons towards native food in America, and that of migrants⁸⁷.

As it is explained by Mudu (2007), until the second half of the 1980s few non-Italian restaurants were present in Rome, because of different reasons. First, since consistent migratory flows in

⁸⁷ Gabaccia (1998) underlines that the culinary conservatism which characterises the behaviour of many migrants is not strictly connected to religious rules. Rather, eating is considered by migrants as the moment of their life which they have full control.

Italy have started at the end of the 1970s, the no-traditional cuisine in Rome was constituted by the “regional cookery” (Mudu, 2007: 204), that was linked to internal migration, especially from Southern Italy. Second, the consumption of food outside the house before the 1950-1960 was quite rare. According to Mudu (2007: 204) significant changes affected “both the use and enjoyment of food, and also in its importance and position on the social scale, in relation to other goods”.

Despite the high number of migrants' owned restaurant in Rome, most of the entrepreneurs do not consider the competition between ethnic restaurants, but rather the competition between two different cuisines: the Italian one and those of their country of origin that is provided in their activities. To frame and describe this phenomenon, I draw on two interviews, those of Anthony and Eduardo, both already considered in the previous paragraph. I have chosen those narratives because they are complete in describing the situation, though they belong to a Lebanese restaurant owner and to an entrepreneur from Honduras who provides Central American cuisine. However, these aspects have also been evidenced by many Peruvian or Indian entrepreneurs, whose restaurants are more spread than the Lebanese and Mexican cuisine.

Generally, from the narratives of migrant entrepreneurs in Rome, aspects of inter-ethnic restaurant sector competition do not appear (except in the case of the Esquilino neighbourhood that is analysed in the next paragraph), or they are much more limited than in the Milanese context. What appears to be interesting from the narrative of Anthony is the notion of “food conservatism”:

Ethnic cooking is not widespread in Italy, not only because Italian people love their cuisine, but also because they are conservative. Italian people are conservative in their lifestyle, (...) they eat the kind of food that they know. When I'm talking about "conservative people", I'm not talking about politics or values. Their idea can be progressive, of course. *But even the most progressive Italian person is conservative in his way of living, clothing and, above all, eating at home and the restaurant. He will always prefer a slice of pizza to falafel, ceviche or sushi.* (...) Italian people become less conservative when they go abroad, they become curious, more attracted to different lifestyles and cuisine. (...) Thus, ethnic cuisine has to face a challenge: that of changing the Italian lifestyle also of those people who do not have the possibility of going abroad (...) The idea is to convince them to go to the restaurant to eat falafel, or Lebanese dishes they are not

used to, rather than go to an Italian restaurant to eat "pasta alla carbonara" or "pasta all'amatriciana", (...) and this is a very difficult thing to do. (...) This is why I prepare different dishes in Rome rather than in London. In the UK, I really care about presentation, to innovate my dishes, but I can't do that here. Here, we are just at the first phase of ethnic cuisine. We have to stick to the tradition; I need that people understand what the Lebanese cuisine is.

Anthony, 54, Lebanese; Rome

According to Anthony the main challenge to win for a migrant entrepreneur in the restaurant sector in Italy is to emerge in a market where "ethnic" food is often considered with diffidence and suspicion. Moreover, the Lebanese entrepreneur explains how this feature is mainly present in Rome, and his notion of competition:

As far as ethnic restaurants in Rome are concerned, I have to say that we are still in the stone age: we have to spread the idea of the ethnic restaurant, we have to spread another culture. Our competitors are not Lebanese or other activities owned by migrants. Our competitors are Italian restaurants. Italian people do not understand that having an ethnic restaurant near their business is wealth. A restaurant that sells something different from pasta and pizza enriches the area because it attracts different kind of people, whom today eat Lebanese food, and tomorrow they will eat some carbonara pasta at the trattoria that is just across the street. Unfortunately, Italian restaurant-owners see us as a threat.

Anthony, 54 Lebanese; Rome

Therefore, Anthony does not consider competition between Lebanese or ethnic restaurants, but he thinks that the main competition is between migrant entrepreneur and the Italian ones. Rather than a competition of businesses, it appears to be a competition of cuisines, where the Italian one is dominant, and the others have to conquer their space.

This kind of problem is also explained by Eduardo, a Honduran entrepreneur in Rome, who provides Mexican cuisine:

Rome is not the ideal city for the development of ethnic cuisine. Rome is the capital of Italy, but it isn't an international city, where people decide to have lunch or dinner in an ethnic restaurant. (...) My restaurant is the first burrito shop in Rome. We have no restaurants from Central American, no Cuban restaurants. (...) Lots of people would

like to eat Cuban food, but they can't. (...) I'd like to compete with restaurants that sell burrito or tortillas like me, but right now I just compete with pizza and pasta, and this is not good. (...) Roman people are always scared of spicy food, of the non-Mediterranean ingredients. Of course, the Mediterranean diet is a world heritage, but this notion also distinguishes Mexican food. Then, usually Italian people fool those who have an ethnic restaurant, I've always been fooled by Italian people, even by restaurant-owners. I live in the Roman context, which has one of the strongest cooking traditions in Italy. It's also stimulating because it pushes you always to do your best. However, I think that Rome should become more international. I think that this is what this city needs. (...) By looking at internationalisation, Milan is much better, there are lots of ethnic restaurants, and lots of new openings. (...) I've been asked to open this kind of restaurant in Milan. (...) I have to think about that in the future, and I'm sure that I would have much more clientele than the one that I have here. (...) I often go there to do some research in this sense.

Eduardo, 38, Honduran; Rome

From this latter narrative, many elements emerge: first, "food conservatism" appears again. Specifically, both Eduardo and Anthony underline how this aspect emerges from multiple sides. On the one hand, consumers express mistrust towards ethnic cuisine, and they tend to prefer Italian food. On the other, this diffidence is also spread amongst Italian entrepreneurs and public actors, since they perceive the development of ethnic cuisine as a threat.

The second element that arises is competition. Competition is again intended with Italian restaurants, and not with the co-national or other migrant-owned activities, differently from the Milanese case. Moreover, in the Milanese case the main challenge is to emerge in a very competitive segment of the market, where prices are often lowered to the detriment of quality, and the successful migrant entrepreneurs have to develop specific strategies to make their customer understand that ethnic restaurants do not always provide low-cost cuisine, but they are also able to increase quality together with prices, and their strategies are aimed at this purpose. Instead, in the case of Rome, migrant restaurant owners think that ethnic cuisines still have to conquer their space in the market, because of the resistances that have been explained before. Their strategies are intended at this purpose, to stand up in a market dominated by the autochthone culinary tradition. Nevertheless, as it is shown in the next paragraph, in some areas of Rome, such as the Esquilino, the competition among migrants' businesses is present.

However, this aspect arises because of the high concentration of restaurants owned by migrants in that area, and it adds up to the difficulty of spreading ethnic cuisines in Rome.

The third element, arising from the narrative of Eduardo is a comparison between the different "internationalisation" of Rome and Milan. Indeed, according to the entrepreneur, the two cities offer different opportunities also because of their different degree of internationalisation. On the other hand, according to Eduardo, Milan offers much more opportunities to restaurants like his own. This element brings us to the second point of this comparison between Milan and Rome: the urban structure, life and economy of the two cities.

Milan vs. Rome: evolution, tourism and infra-urban patterns

Food sector assumes a particular interest because of his influence on attitudes, daily exchanges and social practices connected to lifestyles, both for autochthones and migrants. Furthermore, it assumes a particular importance in urban space (Bell and Valentine, 2013; Ambrosini, 2009). Dansero et al. (2017: 5) highlight the important role of food as "a vehicle and a field of action for many of the material and symbolic transformation policies that characterise contemporary cities", such as the transformation of the historical centres occurred with gentrification⁸⁸ (Zukin, 2008) and the representation of the image and economy of the city through the use of local resources that are connected to the food sector (Vanolo, 2015; Dansero et al., 2017). According to Rath (2007), migrant entrepreneurship offers new economic and social opportunities to the urban economies, since in many cities urban diversity is becoming a resource to attract heterogeneous public and consumers (Castagnone, 2008). Therefore, it is important to understand the characteristics and evolution of the two urban areas considered, to analyse the specific opportunities that are present for migrant entrepreneurs of migrant origin.

Before proceeding with the analysis of the cities, two aspects need to be introduced. First, many scholars (e.g. Bruzzese, 2003; Maggioli, 2006; Schmoll, 2004; 2018) have multiple centralities have been spreading across cities, including Milan and Rome, by increasingly assuming characteristics of specialisation and diversification. Concerning the migrants' networks, Schmoll (2004) argues that other centralities take form, that is different from the local urban centralities or strategic places. These places have other characteristics than the local and historical centralities, though they sometimes correspond with each other. It is important to recall this aspect since, so far as Rome is concerned, I introduce the mechanisms of the emptying of the historical centre towards more peripheral areas. By acknowledging that many centralities and peripheries are spread across the cities, I do not intend to concentrate on this dualism. Rather, I focus on the policies that have fostered tourism in the Italian capital and on its consequences for the strategies adopted by entrepreneurs of migrant origin.

Second, consumes activate processes that are caught within the neighbourhoods as places, characterised by their specific story and residency and social aspects (Faravelli and Clerici, 2012). Faravelli and Clerici, in their analysis of the relationship of commerce and gentrification

⁸⁸ Though gentrification does not have a specific definition, it is considered by Semi as an "investment, concerning buildings and districts that have lost their value. Gentrification builds not only their capitals, but also their images. However, it privileges the economic and cultural capital, rather than social capital of traditional inhabitants: workers, small traders and migrants.

in the Garibaldi area of Milan, also point out that the neighbourhood should not be seen as a closed space. Rather, the neighbourhood is an open system, a place that creates processes that are reflected in the commercial landscape, because of its locational characteristics, functions, population and politics set up. Therefore, on the one hand, many differences are present between the opportunity structure of the two cities, on the other, it is also necessary to take into account the different intra-urban patterns, that show many variations (Annunziata, 2007), but also some similarities between the two cities. Furthermore, as many researchers have shown in the recent decades During my research, I have analysed business located in different areas of Milan and Rome, so it is possible to catch some differences or similarities between the infra-urban patterns of the two cities.

So far as Rome is concerned, during the second half of the XX century, this city represented a peculiar case with respect of both other European capitals and other Italian big urban areas, mostly because of an under-presence of manufacture industries (Lucciarini, 2018; Krumholtz, 1992). Many scholars have addressed this aspect to the policies for the city development undertaken after the II World War, aimed at sustaining the traditional service sector and, as consequence, decreasing the industrial growth (Seronde Babonaux, 1983; Costa et al., 1991; Insolera, 1993; Fratini, 2000; Gemmiti et al., 2012; Salvati, 2015). Nevertheless, during the last three decades, the local institutions of Rome⁸⁹ have been supporting new development policies based on tourism and cultural industries (Gemmiti, 2008; Montanari and Staniscia, 2019). Furthermore, so far as the urban structure is concerned, Semi (2015) evidences some changes that began in the second half of the XX century until nowadays. Roman urbanisation has been characterised by a mechanism of fast growth, with a chaotic and progressive spread towards the external perimeter. In this context of urban growth, an important aspect is the emptying of the historical centre⁹⁰. What is important for this study is that one of the main reasons of this latter process is connected to the sector of tourism and the transformation of buildings in structures dedicated to tourists, such as hotels and restaurants (Semi, 2015; Montanari and Staniscia, 2010; Lucciarini, 2018). Therefore, the restaurant sector plays an important role in this phenomenon.

In addition, as it has been shown in the previous paragraph, the development of "ethnic cuisine" in the Roman context has to challenge the culinary conservatism of Italian consumers. According to Mudu (2007: 206), "the development of 'ethnic' restaurants collides with the

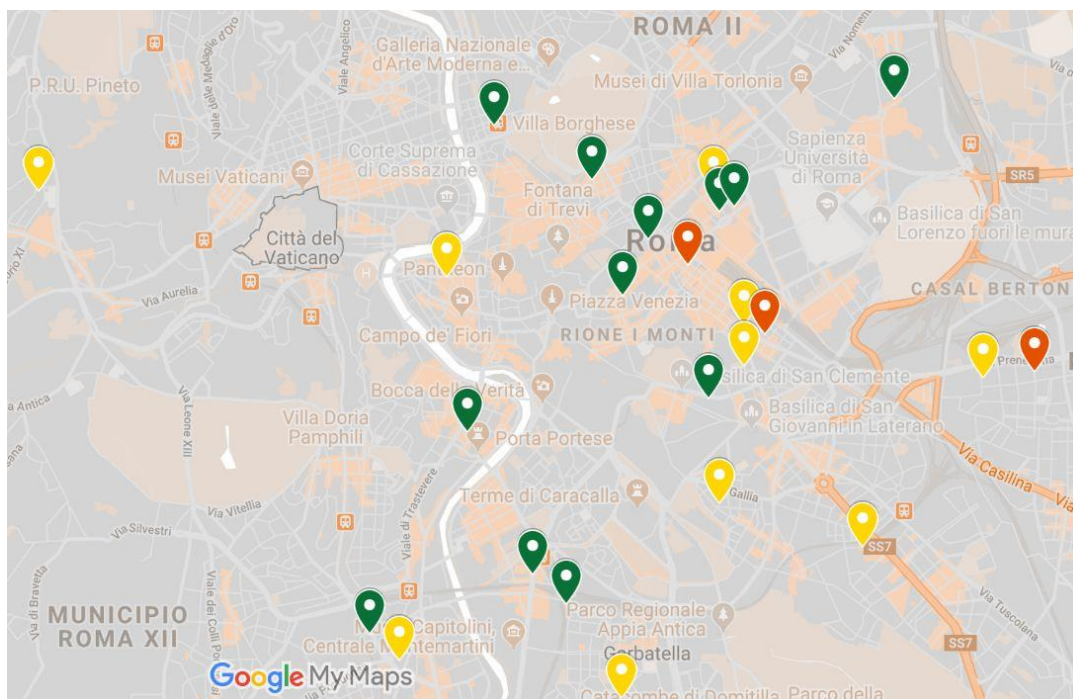
⁸⁹ In particular the Municipality of Rome.

⁹⁰ In 1931, 425000 residents were living in the historical centre, while in 2009 the number was reduced to 147000 (Barbagli and Pisati, 2012).

invention of 'tradition', not only from a symbolic point of view but also more materially concerning the physical spatial placement".

In this challenging context, tourists can become a target for the restaurant owners. In my fieldwork, many interviewees suggest that a further strategy for entrepreneurs with migrant background in Rome could be that of locating the restaurant near the most important touristic attractions. To show this phenomenon, I draw on the narratives of the entrepreneurs, and I also show the maps of the restaurants analysed.

Figure 12. Map of restaurants analysed in Rome, according to their performance⁹¹⁹².



*Map legend:



stands for successful restaurants;



stands for those restaurants that manage to survive;



stands for those restaurants who are in crisis.

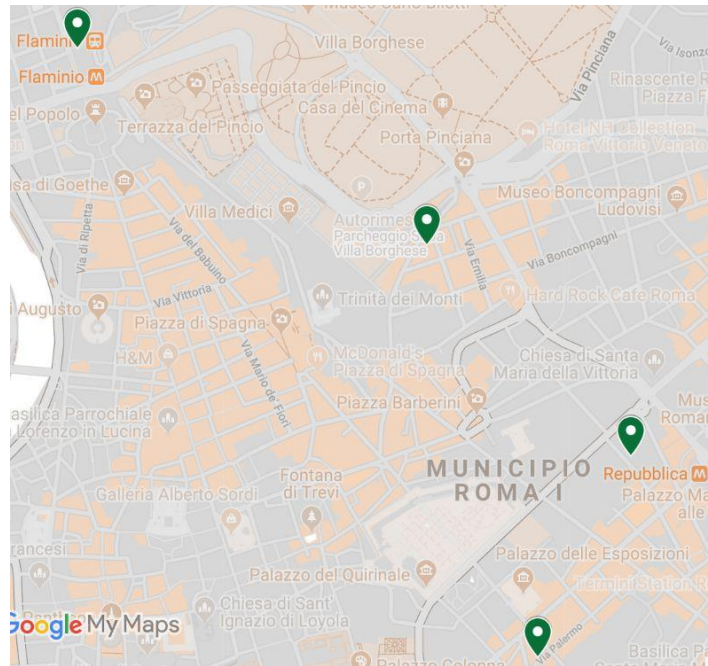
Figure 12 shows the map of the restaurants in Rome that I have analysed. Starting from those restaurants that manage to achieve good performances, most of them are located near the most important touristic attractions, such as Villa Borghese, Piazza del Popolo, Piazza di Spagna,

⁹¹ Map created through www.google.it/maps.

⁹² So far as the entrepreneurs who have two restaurants in the same cities are concerned, I have included in the maps only the first restaurant opened, in chronological order, to facilitate the understanding of the maps.

Fontana di Trevi, Circo Massimo, or the neighbourhoods of Trastevere, Testaccio and San Lorenzo.

Figure 14. Restaurants in the neighbourhood of Piazza del Popolo, Piazza di Spagna and Fontana di Trevi⁹³.



*Map legend:



stands for successful restaurants.

Figure 13 shows the presence of successful restaurant near the most famous touristic attractions. Specifically, I have selected the area near Fontana di Trevi, Piazza di Spagna and Piazza del Popolo. I have selected two narratives of two entrepreneurs whose restaurants are located in this area.

The first entrepreneur considered is Anthony⁹⁴. Before opening his restaurant in Rome, Anthony undertook many market analyses. Specifically, he chose a location near Fontana di Trevi and Piazza di Spagna, mainly because of a customer target:

The choice of the area of the restaurant has been strategical: it's a rich area, with lots of five stars hotels. Lots of rich, even famous people come here, such as politicians that have been in Lebanon, or common people that have already tasted our food. (...) It is important to have a restaurant in

⁹³ Map created through www.google.it/maps.

⁹⁴ Anthony owns two restaurants in London and one in Rome. For information, see the Appendix, page 324.

the city centre, because Rome attracts millions of tourists every year. Of course, those who stay in Rome just two or three days eat only Italian food. However, those who stay here for five days or a week soon become tired of pasta and pizza, and after the third day they start to look for ethnic cuisine. So, we decided to open in Rome and to attract most of all those tourists who stay in five stars hotels and the tourists in this area.

Anthony, 54, Lebanese; Rome

Anthony explains the main strategy of those migrant entrepreneurs who decide to settle their business near the most famous tourist sites of Rome: the aim is to attract visitors, especially those who stay in the Italian capital for more than three days. In fact, after having eaten Italian cuisine during the first days, tourists decide to change and to try different kinds of cooking. This aspect is deeply connected to the notion of food conservatism explained in the previous paragraph. In fact, since ethnic cuisine has still to gain against the food conservatism of Roman people and economic actors, Anthony and many other of his colleagues choose to settle their business in the city centre to attract a wide range of tourists. Nevertheless, I have to precise that most of the successful entrepreneurs interviewed do not target only tourists, but also Italian people in order to make their cuisine known in Italy, and they often adopt the hybridisation strategies presented in the previous section. However, the restaurant owners also perceive that in Rome, the target on Italian people should come along with the target on tourists. This aspect emerges from most of the narratives of the entrepreneurs.

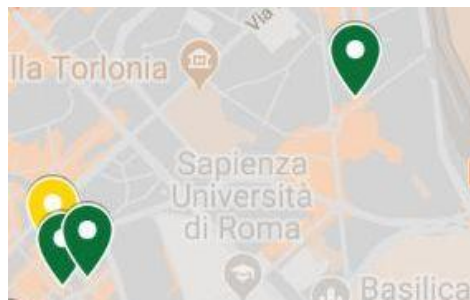
Another entrepreneur who adopted this kind of choice is William, whose restaurant is near Piazza del Popolo and Piazza di Spagna, and it attracts many Italian people and tourists coming from all over the world:

Our customers are Southern American, Cubans, Ecuadorian, from Guatemala, Mexican, Chinese, and Italian, of course. (...) It's really an advantage the position of our restaurant (...). However, you have also to consider that the rent is quite high. Nevertheless, we always manage to reach the task. When you open a restaurant, you need to do these considerations and calculations. On the basis of this, you decide where to settle.

William, 44, Peruvian; Rome

William underlines the advantage of this position, since he manages to attract many tourists from all the world and Southern America, and he has a great number of customers every day. However, he also underlines the negative side, that is the high rent that entrepreneurs must pay. According to William, it is a matter of calculation: entrepreneurs must be careful to the rent and to the expected earnings. Nevertheless, William considers that his choice has been positive because he manages to gain, thanks to touristic flows, despite the high rent. From these two narratives, a further element arises, that will be discussed in the following chapter of this dissertation: in the historic centres, where some of these businesses are located, rents are very high and entrepreneurs of migrant background should have a consistent financial capital, in order to conduct their activities. In the following chapters I will analyse this aspect, and its combinations with the other forms of capital.

Figure 14. Restaurants in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo⁹⁵.



*Map legend:



stands for successful restaurants;



stands for those restaurants that manage to survive;

⁹⁵ Map created through www.google.it/maps.

Figure 15. Restaurants in the two neighbourhoods of Trastevere and Testaccio⁹⁶.



*Map legend:


 stands for successful restaurants.

Figure 14 and 15 show the restaurants located in the neighbourhoods of San Lorenzo, Trastevere and Testaccio. San Lorenzo is located in the northern area of Termini central station, near the University "La Sapienza". Trastevere is on the Eastern side of Tevere river (it is not distant from the historic centre). Testaccio is located south of Colosseo and Circo Massimo, near the Piramide Cestia. Montanari and Staniscia (2010), in their analysis of the policies aimed at increasing tourists in Rome, argue the neighbourhood of Trastevere, Testaccio and San Lorenzo have been deeply transformed because of planning choice aimed at improving the touristic supply and the general image of the cities. Therefore, during the last decades these neighbourhoods, traditionally characterised by the location of commercial and artisanal businesses, have become the reference neighbourhoods with leisure activities. Many investments have been adopted in these neighbourhoods, that have become leisure places, for residents, tourists and, particularly in the case of San Lorenzo, students (Bonamici et al, 2011.

These neighbourhoods have thus become central in the cultural, touristic, and entertainment offer, especially by night. Therefore, some entrepreneurs of migrant background have located their restaurants in these neighbourhoods, to attract tourists. Specifically, in these neighbourhoods the double target on both Italian people and tourists appears, since also Italian people often attend these places for leisure activities, such as dining out. For instance, Fadi⁹⁷ owns an Indian restaurant in Trastevere, in partnership with his brothers. They choose to open their activity in the neighbourhood to attract the high flows of tourists. In fact, thanks to the location, the restaurant manages to attract many tourists. A similar strategy has been adopted

⁹⁶ Map created through www.google.it/maps.

⁹⁷ For information about Fadi, see the Appendix, page 327.

by Eduardo, the Honduran entrepreneur whose narrative was utilised in the previous paragraph to describe the concept of "food conservatism". To a high number of customers, he decided to position his restaurant (based on differentiated street food) in San Lorenzo. San Lorenzo has become a neighbourhood characterised by leisure activities, that are addressed not only to tourists but also to students (Bonamici et al, 2011). In fact, the area surrounds the most important university in Rome "La Sapienza". Therefore, the location strategy of Eduardo aims to attract mainly tourists and students, the latter, especially at lunch break, by providing them with a special menu.

Within the analysis of the infra-urban patterns, an important neighbourhood in Rome, the Esquilino, needs to be examined. The Esquilino is located south of Termini central station. The Esquilino neighbourhood was developed at the end of the XIX century to host public employees (Barbagli and Pisati, 2012), and middle classes have inhabited it for a long time. This neighbourhood was subjected to relevant population decreases during the 1970s and the 1980s (Alexander, 2017). Its adjacency to the central station and the high number of empty houses and shops has started to attract migrants during the 1990s. According to Alexander (2017: 64), migrant entrepreneurship played an active role in the transformation of Esquilino into Rome first "international quarter"⁹⁸. During the 1990s, the main "ethnic" market in Rome had been constituted in Piazza Vittorio, the most important place of Esquilino. This market was at the core of a controversial debate. In fact, the public opinion was divided, since many residents campaigned against this market, claiming that most of the stands did not have a regular license, while others claimed its inclusive and multicultural characteristics, that favour positive processes of negotiation and interaction (Alexander, 2017; Bortoloni and Ricatti, 2016). In 2002 the Roman municipality relocated the market in another area near the Termini station. Alexander (2017: 64) shows the ambiguity of the behaviour of the city hall that avoided the issue for many years until it moved the market, pushed by the resistances of residents, though claiming that the decision should satisfy the needs of all residents, including migrants (for a discussion, see Alexander, 2017). Therefore, during the last twenty years, Esquilino has been a neighbourhood characterised by the strong emergence of small businesses owned by migrants, social spaces and also significant social conflicts (Alexander, 2017).

⁹⁸ Accorinti (1998: 36) describes the presence of "side-by-side shops of Filipinos and Bengalese, Eritrean cafes, Chinese restaurants, Indian and Pakistani video stores, small African import-exports and various other businesses of East European and EC citizens".

Figure 16. Restaurants in the Esquilino neighbourhood⁹⁹.



*Map legend:



stands for those restaurants that manage to survive;



stands for those restaurants who are in crisis.

During my fieldwork, I have analysed four entrepreneurs whose restaurants are located in the Esquilino neighbourhood. As we can see in Figure 16, the entrepreneurs interviewed in this area do not manage to achieve good performances. Raki highlights the main issues related to the ownership of a restaurant in the Esquilino:

We are located in the proximity of the main station of Rome, but we are not in the centre, there are no attractions here to visit, (...), and therefore we are in a situation of crisis. For the restaurants that are located in Piazza di Spagna, Vaticano or Trevi's fountain, the crisis is not so strong, because there are lots of tourists, there's always people there, a great number of people. They can always count on a high number of customers. (...) This is not our case, we have to work with trusted customers, and this creates a lot of problems because I'm not certain that customers will come back the day after. (...) The problem is this: in this area, there are some tourists, we are near the station. However, they sleep in hotels nearby, but then they go away, they visit the historical part of Rome. (...) Those restaurants that are located there are fortunate.

Raki, 34, Bangladeshi; Rome

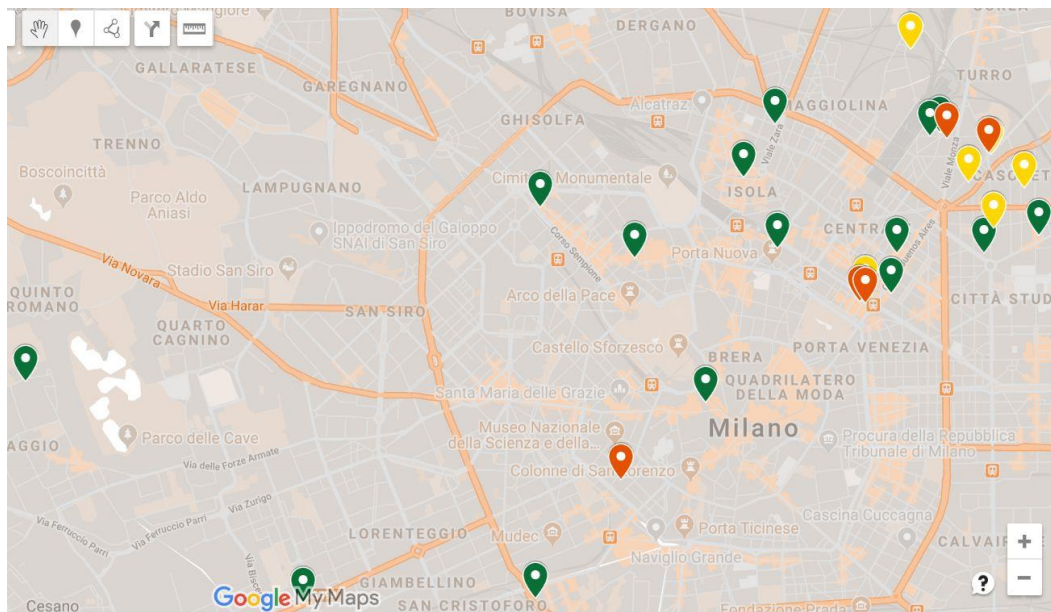
⁹⁹ Map created through www.google.it/maps.

According to Raki, the more efficient way to always have a high number of customers for an "ethnic" restaurant is to intercept the flow of tourists, and the Bangladeshi entrepreneur perceives that the only way to achieve this task is to locate the business, near the main attractions of Rome. Another problem concerns competition in the Esquilino neighbourhood between businesses owned by migrants. Three of the four entrepreneurs interviewed own restaurants that can be included in the category of "traditional street food", and this kind of format is largely spread across the area. These businesses provide similar products and have a similar target, including co-nationals, or those Italian people that want to buy cheap and fast meals. So far as these kinds of businesses are concerned, it is difficult to emerge in a neighbourhood characterised by many activities that sell the same type of product, at similar prices. Therefore, in this neighbourhood that is characterised by a high number of the same type of migrant's businesses, a double challenge is present. Firstly, strong competition among these restaurants characterises the neighbourhood. Secondly, since they provide fast food products, by targeting not only co-ethnic but also Italian people, they also have to emerge within the challenging Roman context.

Milan is defined by Caponio (2014) as the financial and economic capital of Italy ¹⁰⁰. Furthermore, Milan can be defined as a "global city" (Sassen, 2001), because of its progressive tertiarization, economic fortune and internationalisation (Semi, 2015). Milan has been strongly gentrified since the end of the 1960s until today. During the decades, this phenomenon has involved more and more areas of the Northern city. On the one hand, these processes of gentrification, connected to the development of business tourism and the birth of the so-called service society, have led to an increase of low-skilled services, especially in the restaurant sector, that are mainly satisfied by migrants (Unioncamere, 2012). On the other hand, the dynamism and internationalisation of the city has also led to the creation of new opportunities for migrants. As it has emerged from my fieldwork, these chances are spread in many areas of the city, though they assume different patterns.

¹⁰⁰ The stock market, the Italian headquarters of 2000 corporations, especially in the ITC sector (45% of those present in Italy), and those of the main national firms are located in Milan (Caponio, 2014). In addition, more than 1,000 small and medium firms operating in various sectors in various sectors are settled in Milan. Because of the multi-sectorial and international characteristics of its economic system, Milan is recognised as one of the first ten world city networks (Taylor 2003).

Figure 17. Map of restaurants analysed in Milan, according to their performance¹⁰¹¹⁰².



*Map legend:



stands for successful restaurants;



stands for those restaurants that manage to survive;



stands for those restaurants who are in crisis.

Figure 17 shows, on the one hand, that many successful entrepreneurs have been interviewed in different areas of the city. On the other, two main neighbourhoods need to be analysed: the area surrounding Porta Venezia, and the one that includes Piazzale Loreto, Via Padova and Viale Monza, where most of the restaurants that do not manage to reach good performances are located.

The first element that arises from my fieldwork is connected to the spread of migrants' restaurants across different areas of Milan. Bovone (2005) underlines that gentrification influences both the residents and the local economy, since these neighbourhoods lose its rooted aspects connected to the working classes, and they become more and more specialised in the consumption-production of culture (Butler, 1997; Palen and London, 1984). Within this production of culture, food assumes a central role. Especially, Bovone underlines that, in many of these cosmopolite neighbourhoods, the restaurants are highly differentiated, by

¹⁰¹ Map created through www.google.it/maps.

¹⁰² So far as the entrepreneurs who have two restaurants in the same cities are concerned, I have included in the maps only the first restaurant opened, in chronological order, to facilitate the understanding of the maps.

encompassing the Lombard gastronomic tradition, Italian regional cookery, and "global ethnic cuisine". This aspect is connected to the processes of enhancement the diversification of consumes and aesthetics (Zukin, 2008; 2010), and to those studies (e.g. Warde et al., 1999), which emphasise that different experiences of dining out, which include the "ethnic" cuisine, represent a symbol of high social and economic position. From my fieldwork, it emerges that the spreading of ethnic cuisine and the attraction of sophisticated consumers do not concern the most gentrified neighbourhoods such as Isola or the Ticinese, but also other areas of Milan. In fact, differently from Rome, the target on tourists and, as a consequence, the choice of location as a business strategy does not emerge in the narrative of entrepreneurs with migrant background in Milan. To show this feature, I draw on the interviews of two women entrepreneurs, Valérie and Abigail.

First, Valérie owns two Vietnamese restaurants in Milan. The first one was started in 2006, and it is located near the station of Lambrate. The second restaurant of Valérie was opened in 2013, and it is located in the neighbourhood of Isola. Valérie explains her position and the customer target:

Most of our customers are Italian. We have lots of foreign customers, some of them are loyal, but they usually come here when they're here for work, they're businessmen. (...) We are not in Piazza Duomo, we don't attract every kind of customer, we are a niche restaurant, because of our choice. (...) We have a high-level clientele.

Valérie, 50, second generation Vietnamese; Milan

In the case of Valérie, the choice of the location is part of a strategy, that is totally different from the entrepreneurs whose restaurants is located in Rome. In fact, Valérie explains how the location of the restaurant has been carefully chosen to attract high-level customers: the main aim of the business has always been that of attracting a sophisticated clientele and, for this reason, she decided to locate her activities in neighbourhoods that are not characterised by high numbers of ethnic restaurants, to avoid the strict competition, and the touristic flows.

Second, Abigail owns a Peruvian restaurant in the Baggio neighbourhood, a peripheral area of Milan. Abigail acknowledges that the vast majority of Peruvian restaurants in Milan are settled in the same area, near Piazzale Loreto, Via Padova and Viale Monza:

So many restaurants have been opened in that area during last twenty years. Instead, there are few Peruvian

restaurants in periphery, and mine is one of them. At the beginning, I didn't even realise that I was in periphery. I've seen the area, with garden, a little park, and I liked that. Customers come here, both Peruvian and Italian people. I think that this position is an advantage for me, far away from the mechanisms of competition between Peruvian restaurants.

Abigail, 45, Peruvian; Milan

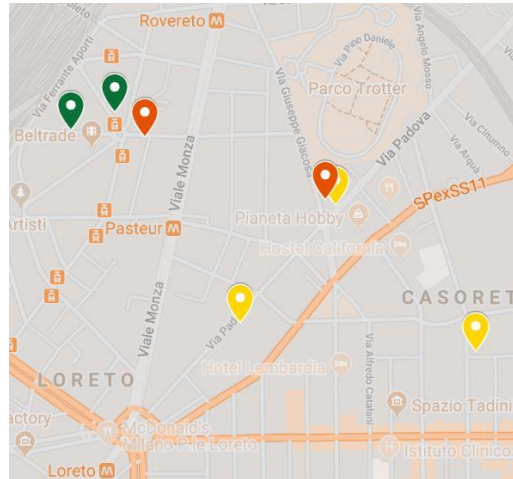
According to Abigail, the distance from the neighbourhood of Via Padova is an advantage, because she avoids the high-level of competition that is present among Peruvian restaurants that are all located in the same area. Therefore, Abigail manages to attract a great number of Italian and Peruvian customers despite her peripheral location. The narratives of Abigail and Valérie also suggest that, though “food conservatism” characterise the whole Italian restaurant sector, in Milan it is less perceived than Rome, and the ethnic cuisine is gaining much more space also within Italian people.

The narrative of Abigail has introduced the neighbourhoods of Via Padova and Viale Monza in Milan. During the last decades, this neighbourhood has been one of the main area of arrival and settlement of migrants' communities, which have added a substantial contribution to the redefinition of the social and economic fabric (Verga, 2015; Calvi, 2017). In fact, a high number of businesses owned by migrants have been opened in the area. Such as in the case of Piazza Vittorio, this neighbourhood has been at the core of controversial debates concerning migration and neighbourhoods characterised by a consistent presence of migrants and migrants' businesses. These resistances have been carried out not only at the neighbourhood and at the urban level, but they have also represented at the national level as a central case in the debate on multicultural areas in Italy, with a focus on insecurity and urban decay by gaining broad appeal throughout the mass-media (Arrigoni, 2010; Verga, 2015). The Milan municipality intervened in this matter with the ordinance 14/2010¹⁰³, that provided special closing time for the businesses located in Via Padova (Bonfigli, 2011; Verga, 2015). In fact, while the general closing time for businesses in Milan is 2 a.m., the businesses located in the Via Padova area were obliged to close at midnight. Bonfigli argues that this measure was aimed at

¹⁰³ The object of the ordinance was: “misura relative ad attività economiche atte a prevenire e contrastare il degrado urbano nonché a tutelare la sicurezza urbana e l'incolumità pubblica nell'ambito territoriale denominato ‘Padova – Parco Trotter’”.

disadvantaging the businesses owned by migrants, which were 59% of all the businesses in the neighbourhood.

Figure 18. Restaurant in the neighbourhoods of Via Padova and Viale Monza¹⁰⁴.



*Map legend:



stands for successful restaurants;



stands for those restaurants that manage to survive;



stands for those restaurants who are in crisis.

During my fieldwork, I interviewed many entrepreneurs whose restaurants are located in this particular neighbourhood. Figure 18 shows the presence of two successful restaurants, but the majority of the activities analysed, but the majority of them does not manage to reach good performances. Southern American entrepreneurs own most of the restaurants analysed in the area and they mainly provide Peruvian cuisine. Therefore, a great competition is present among these restaurants, as it is explained by Flavia:

In this area, there are a lot of restaurants owned by foreign entrepreneurs. Within these 300 square metres, you can find six Peruvian restaurants. (...) The competition is both good and bad. (...) Disloyal competition is quite annoying. (...) Many restaurants aim at lowering prices. For instance, a menu costs 7 Euros in our restaurant. (...) Other restaurants

¹⁰⁴ Map created through www.google.it/maps.

provide the same menu at 5 Euros. I don't know how they manage to survive.

Flavia, 47, Bolivian; Milan.

Flavia explains that in the neighbourhood, mechanisms of downward competition are often present, that lower the prices at the detriment of the quality of food. Within this landscape, it is quite challenging to stand out, and many entrepreneurs only manage to survive.

Nevertheless, figure 18 shows that two entrepreneurs manage to obtain good performance in this neighbourhood. Specifically, they manage to combine the high quality of food to medium prices and, though they are more subjected to competition with other ethnic restaurants, they manage to expand their clientele not only to Peruvian consumers, and they have a trusted base of customers. Danny explains these mechanisms:

Only in this area, there are 5 Peruvian restaurants. In the next neighbourhood, you find ten Peruvian restaurants. (...) They are really different from each other. You can find gourmet Peruvian restaurants, where every dish cost 25-30 Euros, but also really bad restaurants. In Spanish, we call them “cantinas”: you go there to drink, but not like a pub: you go there to get drunk and to raise hell. And then, there are places like mine, that offer good quality of food, but not at a too high price.

Danny, 35, Peruvian; Milan

Danny mentions the difficulties of emerging in a strongly competitive market, that is characterised by high differentiation and segmentation. Therefore, the interviewees who operate in Milan argue that the main issues for migrant entrepreneurs are connected to the difficulties to stand out in a very competitive market, which often presents high risk of downward competition.

Therefore, despite touristic flows are present in Milan, they do not constitute the majority of consumers of “ethnic” food. In fact, successful restaurants manage to attract Italian people, businessmen who are in Milan for work, or migrant communities. As far as the latter are concerned, it is more difficult to emerge, as we have seen in the paragraph dedicated to the strategy of tradition aimed at serving a co-national clientele, because of the strong competition that characterise the Milanese ethnic restaurant sector. Nevertheless, though difficult, it is

possible to stand out with this strategy, especially by relying on a strong combination of networks and human capital.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has examined the context in which migrant entrepreneurs have to operate, starting from an analysis of the restaurant sector and the differentiation between the businesses. It is difficult to give a description of the restaurants' differentiation without taking into consideration strategies since, especially for successful entrepreneurs, every detail, from location and dimensions to quality-price relationship and communication, is often the result of specific analyses carried out before starting the business and during the maintenance, to provide eventual changes. As far as those entrepreneurs who do not manage to reach a good performance are concerned, these details are less handled, they often start by fixing price and to decide later all the other characteristics. This aspect brings them to constrain every cost of the activity to price.

As far as the quality-price relation is concerned, it has emerged that those entrepreneurs that manage to achieve good performance have as first task that of providing high quality of food, and to adjust the prices on the basis of a calculation of costs. This aspect is connected with marketing strategies. Since the most efficient communication techniques in the restaurant sector is considered word-of-mouth, it is very important to have a good reputation that is first gained with a good quality-price equilibrium. Therefore, on the one hand, the entrepreneurs who provide high quality of food are generally amongst the successful ones, also because they have gained a good reputation. On the other hand, most of those who do not manage to achieve positive performances apply low prices to low quality of food. This strategy could help entrepreneurs to gain customers because of the low costs of the dishes provided but, in the long run, it is not advantageous for reputation.

From the analysis of the restaurant sector, a variegated picture emerges, with different food preparation, dimensions, customers, suppliers, flavours and strategies arises. Specifically, the restaurants owned by entrepreneurs of migrant origin show different strategies concerning the atmosphere. Starting from those who stick to their traditional cuisine, two different strategies take place, based on a different customer target. We have seen that many entrepreneurs stick to the traditional recipes to attract co-nationals or migrants coming from their same area of origin. In this case, food acts as a connection with the country of origin, with memories connected to home, families, and country of origin, and a feature of unification among migrants' community (Vaillantos and Raine, 2008). Therefore, food is the main element of the atmosphere.

Nevertheless, the surrounding environment strongly recalls the country of origin, though constrained by limited budget. In the second case, entrepreneurs with migrant background stick to tradition to attract a sophisticated clientele, passionate of travels and exotic countries. In this case, the task of the restaurant is to offer a dining experience, that takes place not only through food consumption, but also through the atmosphere, that is reconstructed throughout luxury furniture at the aim of reproducing the country of origin of the entrepreneur.

The second strategy is “hybridisation”, that is distinguished in the adaptation to the Italian taste, and fusion cuisine. So far as the adaptation to the Italian taste is concerned, also in this case the aim is to attract a sophisticated clientele and to offer a dining experience. The atmosphere is reconstructed throughout few, but strategic elements that recall the country of origin of the entrepreneur (such as luxury furniture or the entrepreneur wearing its traditional gown). So far as “fusion cuisine” between different culinary traditions is concerned, the picture is much more variegated, because they can target co-nationals, migrants coming from other areas of origin, or Italian customers. Furthermore, also their market positioning is differentiated (to deepen this topic, see Table 5 in the conclusive paragraph).

A third category can be identified, as those restaurants which adopt a street food format. Also in this cases, this strategy is declined in two different ways: diversified street food and traditional ethnic street food. On the one hand, diversified street food restaurants are generally owned by cosmopolite entrepreneurs, who aim to attract a multicultural clientele. Therefore, they often use ingredients that come from their country of origin, from Italy and from other geographical areas. On the other hand, traditional “ethnic” street food (for instance, Indian street food) targets both co-nationals and Italian people. In both cases, the atmosphere is kept more neutral than in other types of restaurants.

The picture becomes even more diversified once that the context is analysed, especially at the urban level. Indeed, different problems distinguish the two cities, such as the strong competition between ethnic restaurants in Milan, and the “food conservatism” in Rome. Therefore, because of the urban characteristics, policies adopted by the Roman municipality that aim at increasing tourists and economy, on the one hand, and the diffidence of the autochthone clientele on the other, many entrepreneurs adopt a real strategy that aims to attract tourists and to have a restaurant near the most important attractions, or in the main “leisure neighbourhoods”. However, also in Milan many entrepreneurs have adopted a strategy concerning location. In fact, many migrant entrepreneurs have located their restaurants in

neighbourhood that are not characterised by a high presence of businesses owned by migrants and the strong competition that characterises that areas.

From the analysis of the national framework, it has been underlined that regulation, bureaucratic procedures and high taxation create huge constraints for migrant entrepreneurs. Furthermore, a perceived institutional distance and inefficiency increases the distances between entrepreneurs and public actors. In the following chapters, I analyse how migrant entrepreneurs use their resources, based on social and human capital to overcome these constraints.

5. The circumstantial role of social capital

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at analysing the role that social capital plays in intersecting the performances of migrant entrepreneurs. Since social capital is a fundamental resource to migrant entrepreneurs in every phase of their activity, it is necessary to recall (see chapter 1.5) the different kinds of social capital and ties. Bonding social capital refers to the resources that are present in social networks within social groups, acquired by mobilising solidarity within families or co-national groups (Putnam, 2000:22–24). These types of groups are characterised by “strong ties”, that are relationships with high levels of emotional commitment and high frequency of contact, characterised by mutual trust and reciprocity (Granovetter, 1973). For migrant entrepreneur, the role of bonding social capital plays a relevant role, especially in the initial phase of a business (Davidsson and Honig, 2003; Greve and Salaff, 2003), by constituting a significant resource to those businesses managed by owners of migrant origin (e.g. Deakins et al., 2007; Sanders and Nee, 1996).

Bridging social capital concerns networks between groups and connections towards external actors, by encompassing people across diverse social connections (Putnam, 2000: 22–24). Weak ties are the basis of bridging social capital. Bridging social capital is highly important in obtaining a wider range of information (Davidsson and Honig, 2003).

The present chapter aims at answering to the following question:

- *In which ways do migrant entrepreneurs use social capital? On which kind of ties have they relied to start and maintain their businesses? How do these networks change, combine and gather with time? How do networks intersect with business performances?*

This chapter is divided in four sections. The first section illustrates the different kinds of networks that are used by migrant entrepreneurs. I analyse family and kinship network, and

co-national community and mixed national networks. An important role in the performances of migrant entrepreneurs will be played by the combination among these networks.

The second section is dedicated to professional networks, such as partners and employees. These choices can reflect the ambition and, as consequences, the outcomes obtained by migrant entrepreneurs.

The third section concerns networks with countries of origin. These networks are for the most part linked to personal ties, even though some entrepreneurs have professional networks also in the country of origin.

The fourth section deals with solidarity linkages, by showing, first of all, how solidarity is a way to keep in touch with the co-national community, also for those entrepreneurs that do not have strong linkages with co-nationals. Moreover, solidarity mechanisms intervene when the business has been stabilised.

5.2 The different networks of migrants

This section aims at presenting and examining the most important ties for migrant entrepreneurs, and how entrepreneurs combine these ties during their entrepreneurial path. First, strong family ties are presented, along with kinship relationships. These ties are particularly important from a professional point of view, since family is often a source of financial sustaining and family labour is often implemented by migrant entrepreneurs. Moreover, the role of kinship is also of crucial importance, since relatives tend to sustain each other and to create mechanisms of solidarity and reciprocity. On the one hand, kinship networks create many opportunities both as network at the arrival and during the entrepreneurial path. On the other hand, kinship networks might present some pitfalls, that are presented.

The second paragraph concerns those networks that go beyond family and kinship. Specifically, co-national community networks are analysed, by underlining their importance at the moment of the arrival and of the starting of the business but, during the maintenance of the business, the exclusive or almost exclusive reliance on co-national community networks can present many constraints. Indeed, I emphasise how those entrepreneurs who managed to achieve better performances have been able to combine their family, kinship, co-national and mixed national networks to take advantage of them during their professional life in Italy.

5.2.1 Family and kinship networks

The importance of the reliance on family networks in migrant firms has been underlined by various scholars (e.g. Ram 1994; Azmat and Fujimoto 2016; Villares-Varela et al., 2017; Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2019). Sanders and Nee (1996: 233) provide a definition of the relevance of family for migrant entrepreneurs:

“Family is an institution that embodies an important form of social capital that immigrants draw on in their pursuit of economic advancement. As a social organization of production, the family's chief advantages are not simply tangible products, such as unpaid labour, but also involve the mutual obligation and trust characteristic of solidaristic small groups. The family supports self-employment by furnishing labour and enabling the pooling of financial resources.”

Specifically, family networks are important for almost all the entrepreneurs with migrant background interviewed. In fact, in this paragraph I aim at illustrating the role of family networks and their characteristics, with few references to performances, that are again considered in the second part of the section, dedicated to other kinds of networks and ties, which go beyond family and kinship.

During my fieldwork, the important role of the family, both as labour furnisher and pool of financial resources, has often emerged. The cases of Victor and Said are able to clarify the intersection of the mechanisms that have been introduced by Sanders and Nee (1997).

First, Victor is a Peruvian man, he is 53 years old and he owns two Peruvian restaurants in Rome. He arrived in Italy in 1991, when he was 26. The year before, his wife had migrated in Rome and, later, he made possible to come to Italy to many of his family members, who have been acting as important resources in the two senses explained by Sanders and Nee:

The year before my arrival, my wife came to Italy, she was undocumented, like me. We were regularised after the 1995 immigration amnesty. (...) Many years later, my brother, my sister and my sister in law arrived. I was working to save

money and to allow them to have new opportunities in Italy. (...) My brother soon started to work and to save money. (...) We collected our savings, and we managed to open a business in the construction sector, in 2004. We started as a co-partnership society, and later we became an ltd. However, our dream was to open a restaurant. Therefore, in 2012, we managed to open our restaurant and, in 2015, we opened the second one. The members of my family that are in Italy work in our restaurants and my brother is my business partner. (...) This is important because I can trust them, I can delegate many tasks to one of the members of my family and I can go to Peru more often than before, I can travel more and I can explore more ways to make my business succeed.

Victor, 53 Peruvian; Rome

This story shows the mechanisms of solidarity and reciprocity that operate in the family: Victor allowed his family member to arrive in Italy and, later, the strong connection with his brother allowed him to start a business in co-partnership with him. They changed the sector in which they were operating to fulfil their dream, and they soon managed to expand themselves. Furthermore, we can see the first combination among “forms of capital” (Bourdieu, 1987; Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2019; Ram et al., 2008), in this case between social and economic capital.

Even though the background story is completely different, the same functions of labour furnisher and pool of financial resources attributed to family networks are evident in the narrative of Said. Said arrived in Italy in 2008, to study music at the conservatory of Rome. One year later, his brothers and his girlfriend came to Italy, to study the same subject:

I live in Italy with my two brothers and my girlfriend. We are artist, all of us. Before starting the restaurant, we tried to live with music, we did some concerts around Italy, but we soon realise that it is almost impossible to sustain themselves only by playing an instrument around the world, it doesn't matter how good you are. Thus, we put together our resources and we decided to open a business. (...) My girlfriend is a very good cook, so we decided to open a restaurant. (...) We are four partners, and we are family, we trust each other. Moreover, we have the same passion: we are all artists, and this restaurant is based on art: we provide live music, book presentations, this kind of things.

Said, 37, Iranian; Rome

Both interviewees underscore that strong family ties play an important role for the business evolution, by emphasising the role of trust. These concepts are further stressed in the third section of this chapter, which is dedicated to illustrating how networks are utilised as part of the business strategies by many of the entrepreneurs interviewed.

In addition, even in the case of the most independent entrepreneurs, strong linkages with family are present in their entrepreneurial path, such as in the case of Simon and Emily. First, Simon relies on family networks to open his own business activity. Simon migrated to the UK when he was 14, to attend high school and university in London. After this period, he went back to Hong Kong and he later decided to join the family business. His family owns a chain of Thai restaurants, and he decided to open a restaurant, belonging to this chain, in Milan. In the analysis of the story of Simon, we can understand that he belongs to a high class of origin: he had been studying in London for ten years, he graduated at the London School of Economics, and his family own a restaurant chain in Shanghai. In this situation, it is also possible to see a conversion among different forms of capital. In fact, the family of Seok belongs to high classes of origin, and they have been able to let him study in a prestigious University in the UK. Therefore, the family's financial resources have been converted into the acquisition of financial capital.

On the other hand, Emily has a Japanese mother and an Italian father, and she owns a restaurant, that is part of her hotel in Milan. She had worked for many years in the financial sector, for a firm that she co-owned with her father. Specifically, the foundation of her own hotel/restaurant is a way to pursue a dream that she had with her deceased father:

I left the world of finance in which I was working until that moment, to open my hotel, which has always been my long-cherished dream. This dream took life after the attendance with my father in a small hotel in London. It was a unique hotel that I had always liked. Thus, I took the idea. I think that my father would have opened a similar hotel, but then he died, so I decided to realise this project.

Emily, 49, Italian Japanese; Milan

Family linkages transmit not only trust and reciprocity resources, but also material and immaterial competences, by increasing human capital. This mechanism is further debated in the chapter dedicated to human capital.

At this point, it is important to present another relevant form of ties on which migrant entrepreneurs often rely, kinship networks (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001; Portes and Sensebrenner, 1993; Panayiotopolous, 2008; Dallalfar 1994; Deakins et al., 2007). Kinship connection are able to foster social capital throughout solidarity, trust, and reciprocal obligations (Kim and Hurh 1985; Sanders and Nee 1996; Valdez, 2017).

As it has been shown by Masurel et al. (2002), it is necessary to underscore the opportunities and the limitations offered by kinship linkages in the networks of migrant entrepreneurs. Opportunities and limitations of kinship networks clearly emerge from my fieldwork. Starting from opportunities, for some entrepreneurs, kinship networks have been important since the moment of the arrival in Italy. Many entrepreneurs interviewed have revealed that they had been hosted by relatives already settled in this country, who created job opportunities. Two examples of this situation are represented by the cases of Jonathan and Fadi.

First, Jonathan owns an Eritrean restaurant in Milan that manages to survive, without reaching good performances. Jonathan is 67 and he arrived in Italy when he was 22. When he arrived, he relied on his relatives, who were living in Varese, a small town near Milan. His relatives guested him and soon found him a job as dishwasher in a hotel. During the interview, Jonathan underlines how these networks have been fundamental to his arrival in Italy and the introduction in the hotel and restaurant sector, the industry where he started to work and, decades later, he constructed his own business.

Second, Fadi explains that kinship networks do not only represent the way to begin his life in Italy, but they also signed the beginning of his entrepreneurial path:

My brother-in-law opened this restaurant in 1999, when he was 51. (...) In 2002, I was 24 and I had just graduated in Economics in Italy. He called me and asked me to join him in Rome and, later, (...) to become his business partner. (...) As the years went by, he asked to many members of the family to join us and only members of my family work at this restaurant. (...) At this very moment, eight members of my family are working at the restaurant. Four of them are employees, while my brother in law, my two brothers and I are partners.

Fadi, Indian; Rome

Kinship networks have been of particular importance for Jonathan and Fadi. In the case of Jonathan, their relevance has characterised his arrival in Italy and the search of his first job

in the host country. So far as Fadi is concerned, kinship networks are even more relevant, since they do not characterise only his migratory path, but also the entrepreneurial one since he became one of the main partners of the restaurant of his brother-in-law. Furthermore, we can see that Fadi belongs to a medium-high social class. In fact, his brother-in-law opened his restaurant in Rome, in Trastevere, in 1999. In 2002, his brother-in-law called his family to work with him, and he asked Fadi to be his business partner.

Other entrepreneurs have experienced the opposite situation, since they put their previous entrepreneurial experience in the country of origin at the disposal of the relatives who were already living in Italy. This is the case of Melanie:

My nephew had been living in Italy for 10 years. (...) In 2003, he decided to open a restaurant in Milan, and he asked me to come here to help him (...) because I owned a small shop in Ecuador, a drugstore. He wanted to take advantage of my advices and he asked me to help him to manage his own restaurant. (...) That restaurant was owned by my nephew and my sister. I was helping them to manage the business, but I wasn't a partner. A year later, my sister sold that restaurant and bought this one, but I still wasn't a partner. Three years ago, my sister sold this restaurant to me and now I am the main partner.

Melanie, 59, Ecuadorian; Milan

These narratives have underlined the positive aspects of kinship networks. However, sometimes kinship networks reveal many pitfalls, which are illustrated in two cases of my fieldwork, with two different conclusions: the cases of Flavia and Danny. Flavia came to Italy in 2006, fostered by her stepbrother:

My children had to attend the university in Bolivia, but I feared to not be able to afford the expenses. I asked an advice to my stepbrother, who was living in Italy, and he told me: *<You're lucky! My wife is going to go back to Bolivia. Come here, and you'll take her place, by doing her job. She cares an old woman, she earns many moneys. If you come here, you'll live at my home, you won't have to pay room and board, your wage will be clean.>* I didn't have any job perspective in Bolivia, so I accepted his offer. (...) However, when I arrived in Italy, I found an unwanted surprise, since the old woman that I would have had to take care had been sent to a hospice. Furthermore, I had left all my money to my mum in Bolivia, to look after my children. Therefore, I had neither money, nor job. In addition, my

stepbrother's wife didn't go back to Bolivia, and she didn't like me as their guest, so they sent me away. I was alone, and I didn't have a home anymore.

Flavia, 47, Bolivian; Milan

After this bad experience, Flavia abandoned the connection with her stepbrother, and she started to rely on other ties, specifically on migrants that belong to the same area of origin, managed to find a job and, later, to open her own business.

As it has appeared from the case of Flavia, sometimes the complete reliance on relatives create problems because migrants have to completely trust people that they do not know very well. These cases underline that trust is important not only during the entrepreneurial path (which I show in the section 5.3 dedicated to professional networks) but also during every phase of the migratory trajectory. This aspect also emerges from the experience of Danny. Danny arrived in Italy when he was 18, to stay with the partner of his mother:

When I decided to migrate, my mother told me: *<you have to go to Italy, because there lives a man who can help you.>* She was talking about her partner. (...) This situation was the only solution to solve my problems in Peru, since I had to go away, but it created further problems to me, because that man was almost a stranger to me. Furthermore, (...) I had to share my room with at least two or three people, since it was really difficult to rent a flat. This experience was really disturbing for me, since I was used to have my own room in Peru. The third day, I just wanted to come back, since my mother's partner dictated me what to do, but he wasn't my father, he was just my step-father. (...) Nevertheless, this man had been good with me because, when I left my first job because my employer did not pay, my step-father found me a job for his brother's business, which operated in the construction sector. (...) I didn't like to work as bricklayer and, thanks to the people that I met while I was living with my step-father, I found a job as salesperson. Later, I met some people that were working as bartenders, they introduced me to this sector (...) and I found the job that I liked, (...) and the industry in which I later discover that I wanted to create my own business.

Danny, 35, Peruvian; Milan

The two cases led to two different conclusions, that are, for Flavia, the abandon of the kinship connections, while Danny continued to rely on them and to benefit from this kind of ties.

Therefore, the use of kinship network implicates an element of great risk, as it has been shown in the case of Flavia. Nevertheless, kinship networks can also contribute to potential growth, as in the case of Danny. Indeed, through the tie with the brother of his stepfather acted as bridging tie, by allowing to Danny to have different job experiences in different sectors and, later, to understand which was the sector where he would have established his business.

Therefore, family connections are largely used by migrant entrepreneurs, along with kinship networks. We have seen that the latter have ambivalent characteristics, since they can bring to potential growth, but they also have risky aspects. Furthermore, the first combinations of different forms of capital have been shown, and in the next sections and chapter I show how they can play a role in migrants' entrepreneurial performances.

5.2.2 Co-national community networks, mixed national ties and their combinations

In this paragraph, I analyse the role of those connections that go beyond family and kinship, and the combinations between the various ties. The first kind of ties concerns the co-national community. Many scholars stress that social capital of migrant entrepreneurs often concerns the social relations among members of the same national group (Zhou, 2014; Salaff et al., 2003; Salaff and Greve, 2005; Yuniarto, 2015). For many entrepreneurs interviewed, these kinds of networks are very important, while for others they are marginal.

At the moment of their arrival in Italy, many migrant entrepreneurs interviewed have underlined that it was easier to meet and be helped just by co-nationals or same community members, rather than by natives. This process is explained by Danny¹⁰⁵:

At the beginning, I met only Peruvian people. A Peruvian girl helped me to find my first job, and my friends were only from Peru. (...) Peruvians help each other. For instance, a family had a three-room apartment: the parents were sleeping in a room, the children were in the second room and the third room was rent to two-three co-nationals. This was also a way to better afford living costs.

Danny, 31, Peruvian; Milan

This condition often characterises networks at the arrival in the host country. In fact, a similar situation has been underlined by another Peruvian entrepreneur in Milan, Abigail.

Abigail introduces another reason that explains the initial ease to establish relationships with people of her same nationality, rather than Italian people. This reason is linked to prejudices and mistrust towards foreign people:

When you arrive in Italy, you can do a few jobs. You have limited offers in the labour market. You become a caregiver. That's my experience. (...) Italian people had many prejudices. It was also difficult to find a home. Sometimes, Italian people told me that they were not renting a home to Southern or foreign people (...) Now it's different, many second-generation guys are well integrated, they are born here, and it's another thing. I arrived during

¹⁰⁵ For information about Danny, see the Appendix, page 317.

the first years in which Italian people were dealing with migration. (...) At the beginning, it was very difficult to deal with their prejudices.

Abigail, 45, Peruvian; Milan

The two narratives of Danny and Abigail concern their network at the arrival. As time went by, they have managed to diversify their network. Danny used bridging social capital, when he was working first in the construction sector and, later, as barman, an important working experience that allowed him to find his way in the restaurant sector. Bridging social capital allowed him to gain useful information and ties to fulfil his tasks. Abigail, on the other hand, attended a business management class before starting her business, and she also found many ties that allowed her to expand her customer network and, later, to open a second activity in the network marketing sector. Therefore, their network is composed of relationships with co-nationals, but also with

Among the entrepreneurs interviewed, those who rely only or almost exclusively on their co-national community networks are often in crisis, or they just manage to survive, without reaching good performances. An example is represented by the story of Seok¹⁰⁶. His ties are almost exclusively linked to the Korean community, thanks to whom he acquired the restaurant:

I had been working in this restaurant during my first stay in Rome in 1993. The former owner was my friend. During the Asian economic crisis, he decided to leave the restaurant to someone else, because he thought that he would have earned more by doing something else. He told me about his decision. At that very moment, I had come back to Korea. Therefore, I came back to Italy and bought this restaurant in 2000.

Seok, 56, Korean; Rome

The case of Seok shows that co-national connections can be very useful to start a business. However, the lack of useful ties for the business can be negative for his performance. In fact, the majority of Seok's customers come from Korea. Nevertheless, the Korean community in Rome is quite small and, for this reason, the restaurant counts on a clientele composed pretty much by Korean tourists. Therefore, the flows of Korean tourist in Rome is not predictable by Seok and, in addition, these flows are often not sufficient to create a satisfactory base of

¹⁰⁶ For information about Seok, see the Appendix, page 331.

clientele. This kind of situation, according to Seok, depends on his lack of useful connections in the Korean community:

It would be very useful to create an association of Korean entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector. Unfortunately, this association does not exist yet. We need to communicate between restaurant owners, and this need is not satisfied. It's very difficult to support this situation. For instance, this support works within the Chinese community. They have a very active community, and communication between them works. Communication allows them to help each other, they are able to lend money. It could be useful to communicate with other restaurant owners, to receive information, to access to loans. However, this system is not present within the Korean community. Everyone thinks to himself. (...) Korean people are always independent. When you have a problem, you have to face it by yourself.

Seok, 56, Korean; Rome

The issue related to the scarce presence of a co-national group is further analysed in this paragraph, by showing how other entrepreneurs react to this problem in a different way than Seok. Moreover, Seok has another problem, that is connected to the limited information, since he does not have proficiency of Italian language. The experience of Seok emphasises the disadvantage that many migrant entrepreneurs have to face, when they lack knowledge in the Italian language. Therefore, he asks for more intermediaries within the Korean community, that could help him to fully understand the practices that he has to fulfil to carry on his restaurant:

When I have a problem, I communicate just with my accountant or my lawyer (whether it's a legal matter). Otherwise, I have to solve my problems by myself. This causes many difficulties, since I don't speak Italian very well. I should have support to understand clearly what I have to do. I should have Korean accountants and lawyers, because I don't understand Italian clearly, and I'm always afraid to sign documents that I don't fully understand. This is a great issue for me. Sometimes I have signed documents that I didn't totally understand. This is not right. We need a support association for us, for Korean restaurant owners. We need an association that could grant us help when we have understanding problem. (...) This situation occurs also in Milan. This problem of Korean community concerns every part of Italy. (...) For instance, In France and in the UK it is different. Many Korean communities manage to constitute cohesive groups.

A similar situation of crisis is faced by Aaron. Aaron has been owning his Eritrean restaurant for 20 years but, as in the case of Seok, Aaron is facing a long and persistent crisis. Aaron is strongly connected to the Eritrean community and he does not have many contacts with native entrepreneurs or consultants. Therefore, he has limited information about the market in which he operates. Furthermore, as in the case of Seok, he is not able to take advantage of his network to increase his clientele because, in his case, most of customers are Italian. However, on the one hand, he does not have useful Italian connections that can be able to help him, for instance, with marketing strategies. On the other hand, he does not manage to attract customers from his community.

The second kind of ties concerns mixed-national networks. From the interviews, three different kinds of mixed national networks emerge. The first two kind of mixed national networks have similar mechanisms to co-national community networks, and they consist of people who belong to the same geographical area, such as Southern America, as in the case of Flavia, or to the same religious community, as in the case of Henry and Anthony.

The story of Flavia has been analysed in the previous paragraph, by exploring the failure of the ties with her stepbrother. Since then, Flavia has been developing a strong connection with the Southern American community, she was helped by a Peruvian woman, who helped her to find a job and, later, she met her Peruvian life-partner, who is also her business partner. The restaurant of Flavia is among the surviving ones, since she's not facing a crisis, but she does not have expansion or improvement projects, she just wants to provide a good service and to work to live. The restaurant operates in the via Padova neighbourhood in Milan, characterised by a high presence of restaurants owned by Peruvian entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the majority of connections of Flavia are Southern American, and also her customers usually come from the same area of origin. This characteristic, on the one hand, secures to Flavia a set of trusted customers, who often go to her restaurant. In her case, bonding social capital is able to guarantee to Flavia a good way to carry on. On the other hand, in the same neighbour there are many other Peruvian restaurants, and this means that competition is very high and, therefore, the possibilities to attract Italian customers and diversify the clientele are low.

So far as the narratives of Henry and Anthony are concerned, for both entrepreneurs the religious community was the network that allowed their arrival in Italy. Henry came to Italy in 1986, helped by his religious community:

I am a Coptic Christian. I wasn't able to find a job in Egypt, because of my religion: nobody wanted to hire me when they acknowledged my religious faith. Therefore, I had no other choice than leaving my country. I had many contacts with my religion community here in Milan, and they helped me, they gusted me, they helped me to find a job here in Milan, and to find a place where I could stay. (...) Later, I met my wife. She is Greek, but she was attending the same religious community that I have. Even now, I'm still very connected to my religious community, I don't have contact with Egyptian community, but only with my religion.

Henry, 54, Egyptian; Milan

Therefore, the contact of Henry with his community of origin is related to the religious group. From Henry's narrative, we can see that a linkage with his religious group is still present. This is the element that distinguishes the two narratives.

Anthony also managed to come to Italy thanks to his ties linked to his religious community¹⁰⁷. Anthony came to Italy in 1982, when he was 18, and he was fostered by members of his religious community:

I wanted to attend university, but I couldn't stay in Lebanon, since there was a war and future was uncertain. (...) I met some Italian priests, through my religious community. (...) They were coming back to Italy and they told me that here it was easy to subscribe to universities. Thus, I decided to come to Italy with them. They helped me to have documents, they gusted me for a period here in Rome.

Anthony, 54 Lebanese; Rome

However, Anthony did not strictly rely on his networks of arrival: he attended the university, and then he opened a household appliance shop. In the meanwhile, he married an Italian woman, and established himself in Italy. At the end of the 1990s Anthony closed his shop of household appliance, and he decided to move to London, where his brother was living, to attend a master's

¹⁰⁷ For information about Anthony in the Appendix, page 324.

in business management there and to open a Lebanese restaurant with his brother. Therefore, it appears evident that this entrepreneur relies on different networks with the change of time, as it happens to most of the successful entrepreneurs, as we have also seen in the cases of Abigail and Danny. Furthermore, Anthony detached from the religious group, that allowed him to arrive in Rome, since the beginning of his study path in Italy.

The last aspect discussed is linked to the third mixed nationality group, where networks are not based on a specific community, but they are shaped on the necessity of entrepreneurs, and they change over time, on the basis of their professional activities.

For successful entrepreneurs, family and their individual path have been more important than their national community network, as the experience of Valérie shows. She has developed a rather individual trajectory, supported by her family and by her husband, who is her business partner:

I see that many groups of migrants have great networks. Chinese entrepreneurs are very organised, and so are Peruvians. In my case, I do not have any connection. (...) We have always to do with what we've got, we have to understand, to inquire. Every time that we have opened a restaurant, I spent a lot of time to get information about rules. Otherwise, I had to go to a professional office, spending lots of money to obtain authorisations. There's always a cost. We have always preferred to invest our money in our priorities, such as place renovation or quality of food, but not on things that we are also able to do. Thus, we do not depend from anybody. I've constructed my business with my husband, without any other connection.

Valérie, 50, second generation Vietnamese; Milan

Therefore, Valérie has not relied on help from her community of origin, and she has set up her business with her husband, who is Italian. Furthermore, the Vietnamese community in Milan is very small, and Valérie does not have any linkages.

At this point, it is important to analyse the stories of those entrepreneurs whose co-national community is very small in Italy. Previously, it has been analysed the case of Seok, who complained about the scarce presence of the Korean community in Italy, and the scarce involvement of Korean entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector. This issue is perceived by other migrants, but they have a different way to rely on their networks than Seok. Indeed, Kabir and Ismail are two Pakistani entrepreneurs who co-own an Indian restaurant in Rome. The

restaurant had been opened in 2002 by Ismail. Kabir came to Italy in 2006 and he soon started to work at that restaurant. Later, since he was passionate with his job and he had learned how to manage a restaurant on the field, Ismail asked him to become his partner. They do not have strong linkages with the Pakistani community, and they have a more individual trajectory or network with Indian and Italian people, that allow them to fruitfully manage the restaurant. One of the reasons of this choice is the scarce presence of Pakistani in Rome:

First of all, few Pakistani citizens live in Rome. The majority of us is always at the job, and we rarely spend time with each other. Sometimes there are some parties at the embassy, but there are few. Everyone is doing his own businesses.

Kabir, 31, Pakistani; Rome

The same situation concerning the Pakistani community is explained by Farooq¹⁰⁸, who operates in Milan. Farooq does not have significant relationship with Pakistani people:

I am not really connected to the Pakistani community. (...) Few Pakistani people are here in Milan, and there is not a Pakistani community. (...) I work here, all day, every day. (...) My duties concern only my employees, and they come from many countries.

Farooq, 53, Pakistani; Milan

A similar situation is lived by Carlo. Carlo is an Italian man, who married a Thai chef. They co-own a Thai restaurant in Rome. The employees are all members of the family of Carlo's wife, and he recognises that his family is the only Thai community that he knows in Rome:

My partners are my wife and another Thai relative. Furthermore, my sister-in-law and her children work here, and also my daughter used to work here. But there are not many Thai people in Rome, and there is not a Thai community.

Carlo, 55, Italian; Rome

By examining the story of Seok, on the one hand, and those of Kabir, Ismail, Farooq and Carlo, on the other, it emerges that the absence (actual or perceived) of a strong community can act

¹⁰⁸ For the story of Farooq see the Appendix, page 319.

both as constraint and as opportunity. In the case of Seok, this issue constitutes a problem because of language barriers and, therefore, the difficulty of constructing ties that go beyond the community network. Indeed, the use of bonding social capital, for Seok, is not sufficient, since his community is not enough expanded in his sector to guarantee him the help that he would like to receive.

In the other cases analysed, the entrepreneurs managed to overcome this constraint by relying on strong ties, such as family, but also on weak ties, such as consultants, and former employers. Indeed, they combine different linkages to achieve their task.

The positive outcomes of this combination of different kind of networks, even for those people who continue to have strong linkages with their community of origin, appears from the narrative of Natalia. Natalia explains how her combination of networks, between strong ties with family and weak ties with consultants, have been useful for the maintenance of her restaurant:

I came here in Italy with my aunt, she had been living here for 10 years, and she guested me. However, she went back to Ecuador few years later. (...) Now, I live here with my cousin, (...) who is also my employee. (...) I have many contacts with Ecuadorian community, (...) and the majority of my customers come from Ecuador and Latin American. (...) However, I think that my accountant is among my useful connections: he is Italian, and he has been giving me business advices since many years. (...) With time, we've become friends: he comes here, he dines, and he tells me what I have to do to respect Italian legislation.

Natalia, 45, Ecuadorian; Milan

From this narrative, the role of key-bridging ties clearly emerges. A similar situation, concerning business, has been faced by Rama. When Rama's husband died, in 1995, she had been convinced to not close the restaurant by her Italian connections. However, the experience shows that also successful entrepreneurs are able to maintain linkages with their community:

I will always be thankful to Italian people, because they have been close to me in the most difficult moment of my life: my husband died when he was only 55, (...) in 1995 (...), and my son was just a little boy, he was only 9. My life hasn't been simple: the child was spending every afternoon at the restaurant, and he did his homework there, while I was cooking. Then, when the evening was coming, I used to put him in a cab that brought him home, where one

of my African brothers was expecting him, he put the boy to bed and he cared for him until I went home, later.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

The experience of Rama shows how she managed to conduct alone her business, with the moral and material help provided by her connections, both Italian and African, which she clearly distinguishes:

I rely on my African brothers to do the grocery shopping. They are my cousins or co-national. However, they are only acquaintances to me: they're younger than me, they do some favours to me, and I do favours to them, but they are not my friends. I call them <brothers> and they call me <aunt>. I pay them petrol, and they bring me to do grocery shopping. On the other hand, my Italian friends had been friends of my husband, because I don't know lots of people, save my customers. I hang out with the same people that I was seeing while he was still alive. They often come to restaurant to dine, and they provide me support.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

As it has been showed, bonding social capital with co-national community network is very useful at the moment of the arrival in Italy and when the activity is opened, but it can present many limits for the maintenance and expansion of the business. Indeed, the strict reliance on a clientele which comes from the same country of origin as the owners, can create many problems concerning the maintenance of that clientele. These problems are first related to competition, since many restaurants, which sell same or similar dishes, operate in the same neighbourhood. Furthermore, the information obtained through informal sources could be more biased, rather than accessing advices from professionals or from different kind of sources (Deakins et al., 2017). This lack of information is related to language barriers or scarce knowledge of the Italian bureaucratical procedures and rules. Furthermore, the absence of ties or useful ties with the community of origin is often linked to the scarce presence of the community of origin in the context in which migrant entrepreneurs operate.

Most of successful entrepreneurs tend to combine their networks in order to rely on those which are more useful to their business. Furthermore, they are always ready to change their networks over time, on the basis of the needs of their professional life. The following sections show the mechanisms of choice of the networks to rely on, by analysing their professional networks.

5.3 Professional networks: between strategies and necessity

This section is dedicated to the professional networks of migrant entrepreneurs, and I analyse the main strategies and combinations in the choice of partners and employees. Specifically, during my fieldwork, I have noticed that those migrant entrepreneurs who manage to achieve a good performance tend to rely on their family, kinship, community or mixed national networks on the basis of a specific business strategy, aimed at improving productivity and quality of work and products, rather than lowering costs.

Firstly, some of the migrant entrepreneurs interviewed manage their restaurant with one or more partners. The majority of them chooses their partners on the basis of strong ties, that usually belongs to their family members. Specifically, many of the interviewees manage their businesses in partnership with their spouse. A discussion on this topic is carried out in chapter 7.2, in the paragraph concerning the trajectories of women entrepreneurs.

Many successful entrepreneurs have their family members as partners, as in the cases of Victor and Said. Victor owns two Peruvian restaurants in Rome, in partnership with his brother. Said owns a Persian restaurant, together with his brothers and his girlfriend. The main element of this choice is linked to trust, because entrepreneurs reveal the need to fully trust on their partner.

On the other hand, other migrants choose their partners on the basis of weaker ties, but they do not always manage to achieve good performances, as in the case of Gabriela. In 2015, Gabriela met two Bangladeshi entrepreneurs that asked her to join their Peruvian restaurant, that had been started-up two years before. Therefore, she became partner in that restaurant. However, the restaurant just manages to survive, and they do not have project of expansion, also because of limited information due to barrier languages that characterise both Gabriela and her two partners. Therefore, in these cases, the key element is not the kind of tie that is used, but the strategy, the vision of enterprise that underlies beneath the choice of the partner.

This sort of mechanism emerges even more clearly so far as the choice of workers is concerned. In fact, those migrant entrepreneurs who manage to achieve good performances do not hire co-nationals only because their cost is lower, or because it is easier to find them, but as a specific business strategy. Ndofor and Priem (2011: 795) have emphasised that “prospective immigrant entrepreneurs with relatively higher human capital are more likely to develop social and business networks that extend beyond their ethnic communities”.

This trait has emerged in my fieldwork, and these “prospective entrepreneur” rely to their community networks on the basis of specific strategies and business necessity. This is the case of Nadim. Before becoming entrepreneur, Nadim had worked in a bank for 12 years. During that period, he developed many ties with Italian people, and he has many Italian connections. However, all the employees that work in his restaurant are Indian, because of communication reasons:

It is essential for me to hire just Indian workers, in particular for communication reasons. (...) For instance, when customers ask to modify something in the dishes, it is fundamental that the communication between the dining area and the kitchen is played by an Indian waiter. (...) In fact, an Italian person wouldn't be able to communicate with cooks. (...) Moreover, there are more than 20 official languages within India, they use even different alphabets. Lots of Indian people often do not communicate in the national language. So, it's already difficult to manage Indian workers who come from different areas, just think how an Italian waiter could be able to communicate to Indian cooks.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

Since Nadim only hires Indian cooks, it is important that also waiters come from the same country, in order to render the communication between kitchen and dining room as simple as possible.

A similar strategy has been adopted by David. His entrepreneurial decision is related to the traditional dishes and recipes prepared in his restaurant:

My restaurant prepares Eritrean traditional dishes, and we really care to the maintaining of traditional recipes. (...) Thus, I can't hire an Italian cook, because he doesn't know the recipes. Also, the waiters are Eritrean, because they are able to better explain our customs, since you have to eat with your hands, and the Eritrean culture in general. (...) The transmission of the Eritrean cultures and values has always been one of the main tasks of my restaurant.

David, 64, Eritrean; Rome

The choice of David is not only related to communication reasons, but also to his concept of the figure of the waiter. According to David, the waiter is not only the person that serves tables, but he/she has also to explain the dishes and Eritrean customs to the clients. Therefore, David

underlines the importance of understanding and belonging to this custom in order to better introduce them to Italian people.

The strategic choice to only hire co-national employees has not been undertaken by all the entrepreneurs interviewed. In fact, other strategies have been adopted by other entrepreneurs, such as Valérie. The strategy of the Vietnamese entrepreneur is always connected to communication reasons, but the choice adopted is completely different:

I have Asian cooks (...) specialised in Vietnamese cuisine (...), but my waiters are Italian, or they are Asian people that are proficient in the Italian language. (...) In fact, we have a great problem, that is linked to communication. We think that it's not a good choice to have a waiter someone who has difficulties in communication with customers. Therefore, we avoid hiring waiters who are not able to speak Italian at a good level.

Valérie, 50, second-generation Vietnamese; Milan

While Nadim considered as priority the communication between cooks and waiters, Valérie focuses on the communication between the staff in the dining room and customers. Therefore, she underlines the importance of having dining room personnel which is fluent in the Italian language.

Other entrepreneurs have chosen to hire both Italian and migrant workers, by keeping a cosmopolite strategy line, such as Massimiliano and his part¹⁰⁹. The restaurant is managed by eight partners. Four of them are of Italian origin, while the other four belong to second generations of migrants. Their strategies on hiring workers reflects their own composition:

Even our employees are of mixed provenience. It could appear as a coincidence, but we like to have this kind of environment, that is composed by Italian people, second generations and people who were born abroad. At the moment, we have an Iranian guy, a Moroccan second generation, two Peruvian second generation, and previously there were an Iranian girl and Congolese boy. We like to maintain this variety, we think that multiculturalism enriches us, and it gives us a further incentive to work well.

Massimiliano, 30, Italian; Milan

¹⁰⁹ For information about of Massimiliano and his partners, see the Appendix, page 318.

The strategy of Massimiliano and his partners is connected to the constitution and mission of the restaurant himself, that aims to promote multi-culturalism in every aspect of the business, such as the partners of different origins, the workers that have various nationalities, and the food and ingredients, that comes from many countries across Europe, Africa and Middle-East. This aspect is connected to the creation of a culturally “mixed” atmospheres (Pécoud, 2007). The context is characterised by the “interpenetration of different cultural milieu”. This aspect includes the interactions within the business, concerning entrepreneurs, workers, suppliers, and customers that have different backgrounds.

Since we have seen in the previous paragraphs the importance of family ties, it is well known that migrant entrepreneurs often rely on family labour (Valdez, 2011; Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2019). Valdez (2016: 1621) evidences that “family labour is based on reciprocal obligations and trust between family members who perceive their labour as contributing to the collective good of the household” (see also Light and Bonacich 1988; Sanders and Nee 1997; Tienda and Raijman 2004). Therefore, a crucial role in choosing family members as employees is played by trust. As it has been underlined by Sanders and Nee (1997), a family member gains high levels of trust to manage responsive transactions, which are at high risk of opportunism and misconduct. Furthermore, family grants many advantages to migrant entrepreneurs, since they are thus enabled to cut production and transaction costs (Sanders and Nee, 1997). The importance of trust in choosing relatives as employees is introduced by Melanie:

It's good to have employees that belong to my family. (...) It's a familiar environment: my employees are my nephew, my niece and my sister. We work in family. (...) If I hire a stranger, I don't trust him, and I work in a worst way. I don't want to have the suspect that my employees do something wrong. For this reason, I rely on family.

Melanie, 58, Ecuador; Milan

Melanie clearly shows the trust mechanisms that underlies her choice in selecting only workers who belong to her family. This mechanism of trust is further explained by Rama:

My son is my only employee, and it's sufficient, we are enough. After my husband's death, I tried to hire many African men, but it was difficult, they want facilitation, without offering me a precise and clean job. (...) I had many negative experiences in this sense. Therefore, when my son grew up and asked me to be a cook in my restaurant, I

realised that it was all I needed. We are enough. We don't need anyone else.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

Trust is a very important feature that characterise family businesses. Indeed, the lifelong participation in the family activity creates mechanisms of mutual dependence, expectations and trust (e.g. Jones and Ram, 2010; Katila and Wahlbeck, 2012; Kloosterman et al., 1999; Phizacklea and Ram, 1996; Ram and Holliday, 1993; Sanders and Nee, 1996; Stewart, 2003).

In addition, the mechanism of trust does not concern only the choice of family members as employees, as it is witnessed by Simon:

My chef is from Thailand to guarantee the quality of Thai dishes. He was working for the restaurant of my family in Shanghai. We were working together since the beginning, in the last 15 years. (...) I really wanted to have him in my restaurant, because I know that he's good and he is from Thailand, and (...) this is perfect for my Thai restaurant. (...) The crucial aspect is this: I trust him, and I really need somebody who I can trust, to pursue my entrepreneurial goals.

Simon, 28, Hong Kong; Milan

Therefore, trust is the mechanism that governs the relationship between Simon and his chef, who had been working in Simon's family restaurant in Shanghai for 15 years.

By looking at the professional networks, migrant entrepreneurs who reach good performances are more likely rely on their networks, by following a precise strategy. This kind of strategies is not related to lowering costs. On the contrary, those entrepreneurs who manage to reach a good performance chose their workers and eventual partners to fulfil a strategy aimed at improving quality of service and products.

This specific strategy appears even more evident by examining the stories of surviving or entrepreneurs who are in crisis. An example is constituted by the case of Seok, the Korean entrepreneur in Rome who is facing a great crisis because of his lack of fluency in the Italian language, and his strong reliance on the small Korean community. Therefore, Seok's workers are all Korean, because he does not have often important ties that allow him to go beyond his community. In this case, the employment of co-national workers is not a strategic choice, as in the cases of Nadim or David, but it is a necessity, because for Seok it is easier to find Korean

workers, but he has limited choices because of the constraints of the Korean community that have been explained in the previous section.

This necessity distinguishes also those entrepreneurs who hire workers of different nationality, and this happens in the case of Flavia. Even though Flavia is strongly connected to the Southern American community, not all her employees come from that area of origin. In fact, four of them are Peruvian, whilst two dishwashers come from India, and they had been hired because of their lower costs.

Another surviving entrepreneur, Vincenzo, adopts the same strategy. The restaurant of Vincenzo and his father has faced a deep crisis after 2008, they have managed to survive, but they do not reach positive performances. Their employees are of mixed nationality: two workers are from Bangladesh; one is from Tunisia and the other one is from Poland. This choice is aimed at lowering costs, that can be helpful in order to maintain the business, but it does not increase quality and productivity, by limiting the possibilities of these kinds of businesses to achieve a better performance.

5.4 Relationship with the country of origin and transnational networks

This third section concerns the relationship of the entrepreneurs with their country of origin, and their transnational networks. Transnational networks are related both to personal and to business connections, and these linkages have been examined in the life stories of migrant entrepreneurs.

First of all, some of the entrepreneurs interviewed often come back to their country of origin. The reasons are pretty much linked to personal connections, specifically to see member of their families and their friends, such as in the case of Flavia, who goes back to her country of origin once or twice a year. In fact, her small daughter still lives in Bolivia, and the mother of Flavia takes care of her:

I often go back to Bolivia, once or twice a year, but just to visit my child, the youngest one. Only for her. And for my mum. That's because my life is here, in my restaurant.

Flavia, 47, Bolivian, Milan

Other entrepreneurs, who represent the majority of the interviewees, manage to go home more rarely, such as every 5-10 years. The most common reasons are because of lack of time, as in the two cases of Angie and Gabriela. Angie is a Venezuelan woman. She did not go back to Venezuela in the past five years, because her time is almost completely employed in the restaurant. She lives in Italy with her husband, her daughter and her son-in-law, but her mother, her sister and her brothers are still in Venezuela, and she has not seen her for many years.

Also in the case of Gabriela, time and the economic cost of the travel represent also for the main obstacles to go back to her country:

I came back just once, five years ago. The point is this: I would like to go back, I would really like to go to Peru. However, I don't have a chance to do that, because I don't have time and I don't have money. I hope that the restaurant succeeds, so I can save the money and go to Peru as soon as possible.

Gabriela, 39, Peruvian; Rome

Many migrant entrepreneurs do not go to their country because they have lost or reduced the connections with the country of origin. This kind of behaviour is adopted by many successful entrepreneurs who managed to construct their life in Italy and lose their connection in the country of origin, as it is shown by the cases of Rama and Eduardo.

First, Rama explains also how her connections with Mali have been weakened during the decades that she has been spending in Italy:

I have spent 6-7 years without going to Mali. However, when I don't go back for a while, I miss my country very much. So, I can go there for five days. However, I can't go there when I want to go, because of my job, I have always something to do here in Milan. Also, my friends that have remained in Africa have become acquaintances. When you spent 7 years without seeing each other, your connection becomes weak. They are no friends, not anymore, you haven't got anything in common, you just call them sometimes, they ask you something, you give them something, but you don't tell them about your private life. We live in places that are too different. Friends are in the place where you live. Friends are people you meet, with whom you go to the cinema or to the theatre, if you have some free time. My friends are here. I have been living in this country for 31 years, it's a lot of time.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

Therefore, Rama maintains her connection with her country of origin throughout solidarity mechanisms, that are further examined in the next section.

Second, Eduardo he explains that, in his opinion and according to his experience, integration in the host country also consists on weakening the ties with the country of origin:

I could go back to Honduras more often. (...) However, in my opinion, it's awesome to identify yourself with a people, to feel that you are part of that people. I'm here, while mum, dad and my childhood friends live in Honduras. But I think that this thing is also part of what I mean with "success". You have to break through, you have to separate yourself from the relationship that you left in your country. You need to be selfish to survive. You need to be selfish with your family. Selfishness is not meant to have necessarily a negative sense. It's meant as independence. If you want a new life, you need to block your past. If you keep thinking to nostalgia, you don't succeed. I'm fine here, I've got lots of friends and an Italian boyfriend, we'll do civil

partnership this year. Lots of people do not adapt themselves, they say that they don't like Italian food, that Italian people talk too loudly, etc. For me integration is fundamental if you want to live in a new country. Usually, Latin-American people get along with Italian ones, but many migrants are not able to adapt themselves.

Eduardo, 38, Honduran; Rome

The characteristics of integration that are illustrated by Eduardo are often present within the life stories of most successful entrepreneurs. Specifically, in these cases transnational behaviour is not present, since those migrants relies on network in the host country, by reducing the ties with the country of origin.

However, this does not happen for all the entrepreneurs who achieve good performance, as it is shown by the experience of Lea. Lea is a successful entrepreneur who wants, in the future, to come back to Senegal, her country of origin, and to implement what she has been learning in Italy as restaurant-owner:

My project is to come back to Senegal. I know that it will be harsh, but I'll be in my country, I'd feel more at ease. It is important for me to not forget what we've learned here in Italy, but to put that in practice in our country, to help the development of Senegal. I would like to open a restaurant in Senegal. I would like that my government, the Senegalese one, would give me a help to come back, to open a restaurant. My government should check that I respect the rules, because this is my project. I'm working to improve and to put in practice my project. The Senegalese government should not only let see to the world that Africa is poor and to receive food provisions by rich countries. My country should also allow that their citizens who had migrated abroad should be able to come back, to construct their own businesses and to enrich the country. (...) My country is not allowing us to come back. The government does not follow us in the industry in which we have invested. The former president gave loans to Senegalese women who opened a business in Senegal. This isn't happening anymore. They give you loans only if you belong to their political party.

Lea, 43, Senegalese; Milan

Lea shows a strong attachment to her country of origin and she considers her return only matter of time. The declaration of Lea is connected to the work of De Haas about migration and

development (2010). Specifically, De Haas (2010: 258) underlines the need of public policies, aimed at improving “the functioning of social, legal, economic and political institutions, the access of ordinary people to basic amenities and markets”. These characteristics are fundamental not only to create a solid basis for development in general, but also to drive more migrants to invest or return in countries of origin.

Speaking of transnationalism in the strict sense, I have found that transnational business activities are rare to be found in the restaurant sector, because of the kind of industry in which migrant entrepreneurs work, since fresh food, such as meat, fish, vegetables, etc. is acquired in Italy, and even many of the spices are found in Italy or imported throughout EU countries. However, the few migrants interviewed that have transnational business connections are successful entrepreneurs. This aspect is illustrated by the experience of Damian, a successful entrepreneur who owns two restaurants in Rome. Damian has contracts of collaborations with tour operators in India; these tour operators often organise travels in Rome and they have an agreement with Damian to eat at his restaurants. For this reason, he often goes back to India:

I go back to India every two-three month. First of all, I go back for work reasons, because I have contacts with tour operators in India and I go there to define contracts and to establish relationships with new groups, at least twice a year. Secondly, I also come back to visit my family, during Indian feast days.

Damian, 39, Indian; Rome

In the case of Damian, the transnational professional networks are the main reasons why he often goes back to his country, though he also refers to personal reasons and to visit the family. However, we can see the priority given the professional network.

The strong linkage with the country of origin also distinguishes a second-generation entrepreneur, such as Valérie:

I’m a second generation, because I was born in France and I had been living there until I was 30. However, I had a strong Vietnamese education, since my mother really cared about that. My parents are Vietnamese refugees, who escaped in France after the rise of communism in Vietnam. (...) My connection with Vietnam started as I grew up. Because there are my origin and, when you grow up, you have to deal with your roots. You have to deal with what you are, your and your parents’ origin, your cultural and even biological background. I had to discover my country,

in order to better know myself. For these reasons, I started entrepreneurial activities that involved Vietnam. Before having started to work in the restaurant sector, I opened a high-quality Vietnamese craftsmanship shop. I was drawing a clothing brand, with Vietnamese lacquer and typical Vietnamese products. I was going to Vietnam and do a clothing brand, by working and cooperating with Vietnamese artisans. Then, I managed the import and I let everything come here. Now, with restaurant, obviously production and the majority of products are here. However, I often go to Vietnam to take particular products, that I'm not able to find here in Italy.

Valérie, 50, Vietnamese; Milan

Though Valérie was born in France, she has a strong connection with Vietnam, so much that her first entrepreneurial activity was a shop of Vietnamese high-quality craftsmanship, and she was responsible of the import of product. Since Valérie has acquired the restaurants, she has been using to go to Vietnam to buy particular food, products and spices that she does not find in Italy.

Therefore, few entrepreneurs have “transnational connections” in the strict sense in the restaurant sector. Nevertheless, these few transnational entrepreneurs are among those who achieve a better performance. However, transnationalism in the restaurant sector can assume another form, the symbolic transnationalism that we have seen in chapter 4.3.1 through the identification and transmission of the culture of the country of origin throughout food.

Furthermore, we have seen in the first and second section that personal networks intersect with the professional connections when the first ones can be useful to achieve business results. From this paragraph, it emerges that, on the other hand, when personal relationships are not useful to fulfil business tasks, as in the case of family members and friends that have remained in the country of origin, they have been separated.

5.5 Solidarity linkages

In the literature dedicated to migrant entrepreneurs, solidarity is often intended as “ethnic solidarity”, which is defined by Min (1996:5) as “using collective action to protect ethnic interests”. It has been showed that members of the migrant group search for support within the group, by intensifying strong ties of mutual solidarity and enforceable trust (Bonacich and Modell 1980). Bounded solidarity is therefore strongly linked to the “identification with one's own group, sect, or community can be a powerful motivational force” (Portes, 1998). Furthermore, Putnam (1995) underlines the importance and need of a collective social capital that is composed by "features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit." (Putnam, 1993).

In my fieldwork, many interviewees declare to have solidarity linkages. These connections are sometimes linked to the national community, but this is not the only way in which solidarity linkages moves, since many entrepreneurs have strongly diversified their network, rather than their national community. Therefore, many of the interviewed declared that they have solidarity and reciprocity linkages, but these connections are not restricted within their community, rather they are expanded through their ties, as in the cases of Henry, an Egyptian entrepreneur in Milan who manages a Greek restaurant, and David, an Eritrean entrepreneur. The entrepreneurs declare to have helped both people that belong to the same co-national network and people who have different nationality, since solidarity does not only concern the co-national community.

Nevertheless, it has to be said that solidarity is often see a way to keep a linkage with the community of the country of origin, in particular for successful entrepreneurs, and it is showed in different ways. First, the help can be sent directly in the country of origin, such as in the case of Rama:

I often send money to Africa: what you earn is shared between you and your relatives in Africa, because many of them (...) are poor, they always need money. Those relatives related to my mother does not need help, but, on the part of my father, my cousin doesn't work, and she has to raise four children alone. I feel so sorry for her. How can I live my life in Italy without giving her anything? Another cousin sometimes calls me, because she doesn't have money to send her son to school. They don't ask me a lot of money. My money is divided between me and my family. I can live anyway. And I have a clear conscience. I always

have to send something to Africa, it's mandatory. Not only to my family, but also my distant relatives and my acquaintances need to be helped.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

According to Rama, sending money to her family is a sort of "moral duty". She sends some of her earning directly to her relatives and acquaintances in Mali.

Another way through which migrant entrepreneurs show solidarity to their community members is through information to new arrivals, as it is explained by Jonathan:

I don't talk about help. I talk about cooperation. My way of cooperating is throughout information. Lots of Eritrean people lack information, they lack knowledge, they don't know where they have to go, where they can find useful stuff. If a co-national needs help, we give him/her some rice, some food, and we tell him/her where he/she has to go.

Jonathan, 67, Eritrean; Milan

Therefore, the exchange of information on the Italian system to new arrivals is a way through which migrant entrepreneurs can show their solidarity.

Furthermore, when it is affordable, entrepreneurs are willing to hire unemployed people, who belong to their community, such as in the case of Anthony:

If I can help someone, I do that willingly. Lebanese people often ask me help. For instance, a girl called me just yesterday and she told me that she's desperate, she doesn't have a job, she doesn't have anything. Thus, I decided to hire her for a part-time job to allow her to make some money and to understand which her way is. When people are really in need, it is our duty to help them.

Anthony, 54, Lebanese; Rome

Finally, many migrant entrepreneurs cooperate with humanitarian associations of their country of origin, such as in the case of Rama, who is very active in helping volunteering action for African people:

In the basement room of my restaurant, I often organise meetings with African associations that want to make known the African culture and food in Italy, or to fund raising for children in Kenia, through selling African

original utensils. I've bought furniture and utensils for my restaurants, throughout this last association.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

Solidarity is thus a mean for migrant entrepreneurs to keep the connection with their community, both in the host country and in the country of origin. Furthermore, it appears that solidarity mechanisms activate themselves in trajectories where the stabilisation has been achieved, and they are not used as ways to achieve the consolidation of the business.

5.6 Conclusions

This chapter has shown that migrant entrepreneurs shape their network on the basis of their business activity. Indeed, most of them combine different kinds of networks. For this reason, the connections are constructed and maintained in a subordinate position to the functioning of the business. As consequences, personal relationships and professional linkages are overlapped when the first element manages to contribute to the second one positively. When this contribution does not take place, the two kinds of relationships remain separated. On the one hand, an example of this positive contribution consists in the use of family and kinship networks in professional activity. On the other hand, most of the entrepreneurs do not use transnational networks for their business activity, and they keep separated their linkages with people that have remained in the country of origin from their professional business networks; in addition, many entrepreneurs have reduced those connections after having remained in Italy for a long time.

Furthermore, by analysing the professional networks, it emerges how the professional network is constructed on the basis of logics of acquiring entrepreneurial advantage, whose economic utility corresponds to its quality and productivity, rather than low labour cost.

Finally, solidarity linkages are important for many entrepreneurs who have already achieved their stabilisation. Indeed, these linkages are not used in the opposite sense, that is to achieve stabilisation. Therefore, these active solidarity ties can be adopted as an indicator of good performance.

6. Human capital: between education, skills and intergenerational transmissions

6.1 Introduction

Human capital has been considered by Becker (1964) as an individual characteristic, constituted by education, work experiences, and skills, that are valued in the labour market (Becker, 1964). Specifically, human capital assets for entrepreneurs include both formal and informal skills, that are constituted by family transmissions, individual learning, knowledge, leadership style and life experiences, which include abilities and motivational incentives (Moon *et al.*, 2014; Sanders and Nee, 1996). The construction of human capital requires time, effort, and personal investment. Human capital is very important in building entrepreneurial capacity (Ndofor and Priem, 2011) and it affects many of entrepreneurs' crucial choices and strategies (Gompers *et al.*, 2005; Nee and Sanders, 2001; Klepper and Sleeper, 2005).

Traditionally, those scholars that are connected to the disadvantage theory have revealed that the majority of migrants can count on few amounts of human capital and, for this reason, many of them choose self-employment as the only alternative to low wage, low skilled, labour-intensive jobs, or to unemployment (e.g. Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990). Whereas this situation is still real for many migrant entrepreneurs, others do not fit this description. Indeed, highly skilled and professional migrants have also been engaging in entrepreneurship. In this sense, many scholars (Kim and Hurh, 1985; Yoon, 1991; Sanders and Nee, 1997; Bates, 1994) found out that human capital plays a significant role in the performance of migrant entrepreneurs.

By considering the previous theoretical framework, this chapter aims at answering to the following research questions:

- *How does human capital intersect with entrepreneurial performance? Which elements of human capital are able to make the difference? How do they make the difference?*
- *Which is the role of the intergenerational transmissions of human capital? Which kind of intergenerational transmissions are relevant?*
- *How do the various elements combine each other?*

Human capital plays an important role in the trajectories of migrant entrepreneurs, especially considering the human capital in its broader sense (including intergenerational transmissions). Therefore, before taking into exam the role of human capital in the trajectories, it is important to identify the main elements of human capital, their combinations and combinations with other forms of capital.

In the first section, the role of education and skills are examined, in terms of educational level, courses of specialisation in management and entrepreneurship and previous job or entrepreneurial experiences.

The second section analyses the role of the intergenerational transmissions of human capital by dealing with the background of migrant entrepreneurs.

The third section examines the narratives of those entrepreneurs who do not manage to obtain good performances, by analysing whether and at what extent it is a matter of lack of human capital.

The conclusions analyse the combination between the various elements of human capital and the role played in the performances of migrant entrepreneurs.

6.2 Education and skills

Many scholars highlight that education, the experience accumulated, specific skills and managerial knowledge, positively contribute to enhancing entrepreneurial attitudes (e.g. Lundström and Stevenson 2005; Reynolds 1997; Shane 2003; Timmons 1990; Zapalska 1997). According to Minniti and Bygrave (2001), efficient academic and professional education, and prior experience as business owners allow self-employed migrants to gather a type of knowledge that can increase the level of self-confidence and therefore, favour a positive entrepreneurial behaviour.

This section aims to examine how education and skills combine themselves with entrepreneurial performance. First, the role of the educational level is explored by underlining the relevance of many aspects that are related to University education. The second paragraph concerns the courses of specialisation that have been undertaken by migrants at the purpose of acquiring useful knowledge for the opening of their own business. Finally, the third paragraph analyses the role of job experiences, that is relevant in combination with other elements of human or social capital.

6.2.1 *The educational level*

Many scholars stress that human capital, in terms of education and language proficiency, facilitates migrants to confront a range of challenges and, therefore, this resource can favour the success of entrepreneurs (Sanders and Nee 1996; Borjas 1990; Bates, 1994). In other words, migrant entrepreneurs with a higher educational qualification seem to have greater chances of obtaining good performances than those who have a lower educational level (Basu 1998; Bates 1994; Birley and Ghaie 1992). In this sense, low levels of human capital could restrain the ability of migrant entrepreneurs to successfully manage their businesses (Sahin *et al.*, 2011).

During my fieldwork, the relevance of human capital has often emerged, and it is declined according to different features. First, the educational level of the entrepreneurs interviewed is particularly diversified, since many of them are university graduated, some have a high school degree, and others have only attended the primary school. However, the latter group is composed of six entrepreneurs. Therefore, the vast majority of the interviewees owns at least a high school degree. Most successful entrepreneurs are university graduated, and most of university graduated entrepreneurs are among those who achieve better performances. At the same time, this is not a rule, since few graduated entrepreneurs are among the surviving category, and some successful entrepreneurs have only a high school degree. In these latter cases, the elements of human capital that are useful for entrepreneurship are analysed in the following paragraphs and sections.

So far as education is concerned, some important aspects make the difference in the performances of migrant entrepreneurs. The following paragraphs examine the country of graduation, the study of the Italian language before the migration and the subject of studies.

Global mobility, national degrees: circulating and not circulating human capital

The first aspect that needs to be considered is related to the country where the University degree has been achieved. This aspect is relevant since university degrees obtained in the country of origin are not often recognised in the host countries. Among the interviewees, some entrepreneurs got their educational level in Italy, or another European State, or the US. Those who have followed this kind of path are among successful entrepreneurs, because they do not

only have acquired important skills during their educational path, but they could also spend their degree in the local labour market.

For instance, the case of Simon¹¹⁰ shows that a University degree obtained in a prestigious institution can play a relevant role in the access to a high-skilled job, and to have a satisfying entrepreneurial path. His restaurant is very well recognised, and it provides a good quality of dishes and service:

I moved to the UK alone when I was only 14. (...) I didn't have any kin or friend there. I met someone from Hong Kong like me, but not much people, since the very point to go to study abroad is to meet new people. (...) It has been difficult, but it has allowed me to grow up, (...) both from a personal and a professional point of view. (...) I studied in London during high school and the University. I graduated in Economics from the London School of Economics. I think that it has been very important to have studied at this prestigious University because I received a lot of job offers in a very skilled position. (...) However, I didn't want to work in a bank, so I moved back to Hong-Kong to work in the fashion industry. (...) Two years later, I decided to use my degree in Economics and Management, and I opened my own business in Milan.

Simon, 28 Hong-Kong; Milan

As it has also been discussed in the previous chapter, Simon comes from a high social class, since his parents could afford to pay him prestigious schools and University in the UK, and they owned a Thai restaurant in Shanghai.

However, the achievement of a degree in Italy is also important for those entrepreneurs whose family did not have enough financial capital to support the investment in the education of their children. This point emerges from the story of Danny. Danny owns a Peruvian restaurant in Milan, well started and recognised. He migrated when he was 18, and he immediately started to work. His high school degree was not recognised in Italy and he could not ask his family to pay the school. Therefore, he decided to work and study at the same time. The attendance of school and University in Italy has been particularly helpful for his entrepreneurial path, together with the field of study, that is analysed in the next paragraph:

When I was 17, I was studying law in my country. (...) Then, when I came here, I discovered that my high school

¹¹⁰ For information about Simon, see the Appendix, page 317.

degree was not recognised in Italy. In fact, in Peru we attend school for 11 years, then we go to the University, while in Italy you have to attend school for 13 years. Thus, I had to attend high school again, I enrolled in evening courses, (...) and I obtained a chartered accountant qualification. At that point, I decided to enrol in University. (...) I chose the Economics faculty, at the Bicocca University in Milan, because I had a dream, which was to open my bar (...). After many years, since I was still working full-time (...) as a barman (...), I got my bachelor graduation. Now I'm enrolled to the master's degree program, even though I know that I will get my graduation after a long time since with the opening of my restaurant, it is even more complicated to study for exams. It has been very difficult to work and study together, but also very useful since it has allowed me to understand the mechanisms of opening a business in Italy.

Danny, Perù; Milan

Danny managed to study and work in the meantime. Even though this situation has been very stressful and difficult, both from a physical and mental point of view, Danny achieved his task he obtained his bachelor's degree and acquired important skills. Indeed, his experience as barman helped him to confront this sector. In the meantime, the study of Economics gave him important skills to manage a business in Italy.

Neupert and Baugh (2013) have underlined that many entrepreneurs had migrated in order to get an education. For some of the interviewees, the main task was to come to Italy to study. This objective emerges, for instance, from the narrative of Said. Said arrived in Italy in 2008, to study music at a conservatory in Rome:

Before coming to Italy, I had attended an Italian school in Teheran. I did that to obtain a visa and to enrol to the conservatory. (...) I've been studying music since I was a child, I play the transverse flute. (...) Finally, ten years ago I managed to enrol at the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia, here in Rome. (...) This experience has been very helpful, though we are aware that we cannot live with only music. (...) However, music is an essential element of our restaurant, because we often organise live music events here (...) and sometimes we also play music ourselves.

Said, 37, Iranian; Rome

Though Said and his family decided to open the restaurant in order to have a more profitable activity, they decided not to abandon music. In fact, they managed to conjugate the restaurant and the cuisine of their country of origin to their passion, by organising live music events at their place. From this story, a combination of different forms of capital emerges: Said relied on his family network, they put together both their financial and their human capital. In fact, the interviewee and his family manage to keep music as an essential element of their restaurant, and they relied on the helpful experience of Said's girlfriend as a cook.

Sanders and Nee (1997) also recognise the important role of human capital in terms of proficiency in the language of the host countries. In fact, language proficiency allows communicating with customers and suppliers who are not co-nationals and to better understand the bureaucratic procedures. During my fieldwork, I underscored that the University experience in Italy is very important since it provides migrants with proficiency in the Italian language and acquisition of knowledge of the country in which, later, they would have set their own business. This aspect is present in the narrative of Tyler. Five years before the migration, Tyler went to study in Italy for one year, and he underlines the relevance of this experience:

I studied lyrical music at Boston University. I learned the Italian language there, because, when you study lyrical music, you have to know the phonetics of three languages: English, French and Italian. In addition, I had to learn one of these languages by living for a year in that country. I chose Italy because I liked that, and it was a challenge. The Italian language is not a language that African-American people usually speak, differently from French and Spanish. Therefore, I chose a course named "Disciplinary studies in Italian", and I moved to Padua in 1992. That summer, I also lived in Calabria as an entertainer in a touristic resort. (...) That year was determinant in helping me not only to choose the country of living but also to learn how to live and work in Italy.

Tyler, 47, US-citizen; Milan

These three narratives underline the main advantages of having achieved the University degree in Italy, or in a Western country. Specifically, the achievement of the degree in Italy allows not only to acquire important skills, which become relevant when migrants opened their own business, but also to acquire fluency in the language of the host country.

However, many entrepreneurs interviewed have achieved their University degree in their country of origin or in a country in the same geographical area. Nevertheless, most of them are

among successful entrepreneurs. Therefore, even when degrees are not recognised, many migrants manage to acquire skills that become particularly useful when they decide to open their own business. Furthermore, another relevant aspect concerns the field in which the entrepreneurs are graduated, that is considered in the next paragraph.

The subject of study

Entrepreneurs of migrant origin interviewed have undertaken different courses of studies. However, many of them graduated in Economics. Specifically, those who are graduated in Economics and Management are successful entrepreneurs. The skills acquired during this course of study have been able to facilitate the entrepreneurs' management decisions and the set of a business plan. Furthermore, these studies foster their knowledge of the necessary steps to open and maintain a business.

To better understand this process, I have selected four narratives: those of Nadim, Eduardo, Danny and Massimiliano. The first two entrepreneurs highlight the importance of the degree in Economy for people that graduated in their country of origin.

Firstly, Nadim migrated to Italy when he was 20, and he had just achieved his degree in Economics:

I had already achieved my Bachelor graduation in Economics: three years of University had been restricted to 15 months, so I graduated when I was 20 (...). I belong to a family of entrepreneurs, so my dream has always been that of opening my business. (...) Therefore, it was easy to choose my study path. Soon after my graduation, I came to Italy with my uncle that had decided to expand his business in this country. (...) I decided to come here to help him and to learn things that could be useful for my future enterprise.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

From the analysis of this story, we can see that many entrepreneurs had already planned their path when they chose their field of study, and this project acts not only as a provider of useful knowledge for the future enterprise but also as an important motivation (this aspect is further deepened in the discussion concerning migrants' trajectories).

Secondly, before becoming an entrepreneur, Eduardo came to Italy to work at the embassy of Honduras. However, he did not like that job, and after many years, he decided to pursue what he had previously studied in his country:

After high school, I graduated in Honduras. I obtained my bachelor's degree in business management, and I continued that path during my master courses, with a specialisation in Tourism. After graduation, I attended a master's in economics. However, I came to Italy to work at the Honduras embassy, even though I hadn't studied political sciences. After many years, I realised that I wanted to do something else, something that was pertinent to my studies. So, I decided to open my restaurant. I had to learn all the bureaucratic procedures to open an enterprise in Italy, but at least I had adequate knowledge of strategies and business management.

Eduardo, 38, Honduras; Milan

The story of Eduardo underscores the importance of graduation in Economic subject, even when the working experiences before entrepreneurship have been undertaken in other fields. In fact, for Eduardo entrepreneurship was more pertinent to his studies than the job at the embassy. Furthermore, despite the particular Italian bureaucratic procedures that Eduardo had to learn, his study path has been helpful both for the adoption of strategies and the management of his activity.

Thirdly, concerning the entrepreneurs who graduated in Economics in Italy, we have already seen that Danny decided to work and study at the same time. Furthermore, he chose to study Economic subjects:

I had to attend high school again, and I enrolled in evening courses because I was working at the same time. (...) I was working 10 hours a day, and then I was going to school. (...) It was tough, but I had decided to improve my knowledge of Economics, and I obtained a chartered accountant qualification. At that point, I decided to enrol to University. First, I wanted to study Law, as I was doing in Peru before my migration. However, in the meanwhile, I was working in a bar as a waiter. I liked my job very much, and I had a dream: to open my own bar. Thus, I decided to try to achieve my dream, and I chose the Economics faculty at the Bicocca University in Milan. After many years, since I was still working full-time, I got my bachelor graduation. (...) It is very difficult to work and study together, but also

very useful since it allows me to understand the mechanisms of opening a business in Italy.

Danny, 35, Peruvian; Milan

Fourthly, the story of Massimiliano and his partners attended the University and all of them obtained their University degree:

We met during the period of the University. We had attended very different educational paths: one of us studied Engineering, one Chemistry, another studied Law, I studied Architecture, and four of us studied Economics. (...) Specifically, Giulio, the founder of our business, had graduated in Economics, he had some job experiences abroad, and in Italy and, later, (...) he had this idea of opening a new kind of kebab, according to a new formula (...). His study of Economics helped us to start-up this business.

Massimiliano, 31, Italian; Milan

From these narratives, what turns out to be relevant is the knowledge of Economics and Business Management they have been able to get through the university courses, rather than the country where the degree has been obtained. For instance, in the previous paragraph, we have seen the story of Simon, who achieved his graduation in Economics at a prestigious University in the UK. However, even in this case, the important feature is not the high level of education, or the high recognition of the University attended. Rather, the significant aspect is represented by the skills that Simon has acquired throughout the graduation in an Economic subject.

Nevertheless, many successful entrepreneurs did not graduate in Economics. Instead, they attended University courses in other fields, which are not directly related to business management. However, but also these paths have been able to provide them with useful skills. Anthony explains this process. Anthony came to Italy in 1982, when he was 18, to study:

I wanted to attend university, but I couldn't stay in Lebanon since there was a war and the future was uncertain. (...) So, I came to Rome and I enrolled at the University of Rome. (...) I graduated in Engineering, but I hadn't been able to become an engineer since the organisation of the course of studies was too theoretical and less practical. This aspect is a problem of Italian Universities: you study just a theoretical framework, without any practical exercise, that should be essential in a field like Engineering. For this reason, those guys who graduate in Engineering in Italy do

know lots of concepts, but they have no experience in the field. I would have liked to work for a construction enterprise as an engineer, but I had neither experience nor basic knowledge to do that. (...) Therefore, I decided to open a shop for the electrical appliance (...), so I should have studied Economics and Management to have better skills. (...) However, I do not regret to have studied Engineering; it has been positive because it has taught me to reflect. The engineer reflects by looking at the logic aspect of things. This characteristic helps in every field, also in business management. The engineer has a very logical attitude, that is very important for a manager, to understand the accounting and to provide accurate analysis. I think that study always helps to reason, in every field.

Anthony, 54, Lebanese; Rome

The experience of Anthony helps us to understand that high level of education can be helpful also in fields which are different from Economics. In fact, Anthony graduated in Engineering, and he explains how his course of study was helpful for the development of a logical mindset. His experience shows that study at the university can be important also in fields that are different from Economics.

Nonetheless, not all the successful entrepreneurs interviewed have obtained a University degree. At this point, it is necessary to analyse which elements of human capital are also able to give a positive contribution to the performances. Specifically, the next paragraphs take into exam the attendance of courses of specialisation and the working experiences of migrant entrepreneurs.

6.2.2 Professional training courses

As we have seen in the previous paragraph, high educational levels play an important contribution to the skills of migrant entrepreneurs. However, from my fieldwork, it appears that another key element is the attendance of courses of specialisation. First, I examine the intersection between formal education and courses of specialisation, by taking into exam two narratives of graduated entrepreneurs that attended courses of specialisation to acquire specific knowledge in the management sector or to have a qualification that is recognised in the host country. Second, I analyse those entrepreneurs who do not have a University degree, by underlining the relevance of having attended this kind of courses in the country in which they have set their business.

First, Anthony is an important example of an entrepreneur that achieved a University degree, and he also attended courses of professional specialisation. Anthony closed his electrical appliance shop¹¹¹ during the second half of the 1990s. At that point, Anthony decided to face a new challenge:

I was 40, and I was facing both a personal and professional crisis. (...) Therefore, I decided to enrol in a course of specialisation in Management in London. At this point, I had put aside Engineering. I was 40, and I had decided to take a new challenge. I had the opportunity to acquire a restaurant in London with my brother, but I wanted to be prepared, I wanted to study management. (...) It has been a very good choice. (...) By studying again, I could acquire knowledge, I could measure my potentiality. It has been a way to restore myself.

Anthony, 54, Lebanese; Rome

The choice of Anthony was really important to improve his managerial abilities, and to acquire skills that have been particularly helpful during his entrepreneurial path since he opened two restaurants in London in partnership with his brother. Furthermore, in 2011, he went back to Rome to open his new restaurant in Italy. In the case of Anthony, the courses of specialisation

¹¹¹ For information about Anthony, see the Appendix page 324.

have been undertaken to improve the knowledge of management and to acquire important entrepreneurial skills.

The second case of graduated entrepreneur that attended courses of specialisation is that of Rama¹¹². In 1995, when her husband died, she decided to continue to manage her restaurant alone, and also to acquire a qualification that could be recognised in Italy:

I graduated in Financial Economics in Mali. (...) However, my University degree was not recognised in Italy. (...) For this reason, (...) when my husband died, (...) I felt the need to improve my knowledge about management in Italy, and to obtain a qualification that was recognised in this country. Thus, I enrolled in two courses of specialisation organised by the Region Lombardia. In 1999, I attended a course related to business management for cooperatives. In 2000, I participated in a course that concerned agritourism management. These courses were funded by European funds aimed at giving qualifications to those migrants whose degree was not recognised. I decided to attend these courses (...), to have a European qualification. I was going to those courses during the day, and I was working at the restaurant during the night. I was very tired. It has been very stressful for me, but at least, now I have two qualifications that are recognised by the European Union.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

Both stories present an intersection between university and professional training courses, and they show that these opportunities are also caught by those entrepreneurs that already have a high educational level, to improve their skills in the managerial field, or to have a qualification that is recognised in the European Union.

The following narratives aim to understand the role of the participation in professional training courses for those entrepreneurs who did not achieve a University degree. First, Abigail briefly explains the educational system in Peru, the reasons why she did not graduate from University in Peru, her working experience in Italy, and the achievement of qualification in Italy:

In Peru, people finish high school when they are 16-17. The high-school graduated guys often attend a course of

¹¹²For information about Rama, see the Appendix, page 314.

preparation to the university, because there are few available positions, and there's a lot of competition. It is very difficult to begin University in Peru; you have to attend a course from January to March and take an exam in April. If you don't pass the exam, you have to try the following year again. I passed the exam in the second try, but I attended courses only for six months because I came here. (...) I started to work as a caregiver and, since 1994 to 2005, I worked in a hospice. In 2002, I bought a van and I open a small activity in the sector of road transports. For three years, I worked both at the hospice and as self-employed in the road transports' sector. In 2005, I left the job at the hospice to dedicate myself to my business. (...) After the experience in the sector of road transports, I acknowledge that people really need to know the bureaucracy to open a business in Italy. Furthermore, since I wanted to open a restaurant, I also realised that it's even more complicated, because of the hygienical regulation, that needs to be applied meticulously. (...) Therefore, before starting the restaurant, I attended a vocational course aimed at understanding the rules that concern feeding, the HACCP, and all those practical things that you need to have to obtain the licence to open your restaurant. (...) Thanks to this course, I did not have any difficulty with the bureaucratic procedures, and I am very happy to have attended those classes, they have been really useful.

Abigail, 45, Peruvian; Milan

The story of Abigail shows how the attendance to the vocational course has been of fundamental importance to learn all the bureaucratic procedures and to acquire useful skills to maintain her restaurant. Furthermore, this narrative shows that sometimes courses of specialisation are more important for the entrepreneurial path than the business owner's previous experience.

The next story shows another combination of previous entrepreneurial experience and courses of specialisation. Emily had worked for many years in the financial sector, for a firm that she co-owned with her father:

I graduated from a high school specialised in sciences. I enrolled at the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Milan. However, I did not graduate because I had opened a financial business in Switzerland with my father, and I wanted to get a specialisation in the financial sector. Therefore, I attended a course in Switzerland in Finance and Management, that has been very useful to conduct my business in the financial sector. (...) After many years, I realised that Finance was not my world, and

I realised a dream, (...) to open a hotel in Milan. (...) I think that this experience and my educational background are still very useful for what I am doing now.

Emily, 49, Italian-Japanese; Milan

In the case of Emily, the added value was the intersection between the course in Finance and Management and the related entrepreneurial experiences.

So far as the subject of the courses of specialisation is concerned, the majority of the entrepreneurs interviewed has attended courses concerning economic topics. Nevertheless, some successful restaurant owners enrolled in courses of cuisine, that has been fundamental for their entrepreneurial path. The case of Lea shows an example. Lea is Senegalese, she is 43, and she owns a Senegalese restaurant in Milan since 2011, which is well known and manages to obtain a good performance. Lea came to Italy in 2001, when she was 26:

I attended the high school, and I graduated as a chartered accountant in Senegal, I had opened a small shop there. (...) When I came to Italy, (...) I realised that I really like to cook, (...) and I thought: <I really could attend a school to work in the restaurant sector!> So I enrolled in a course of Italian cuisine, organised by the Region Piemonte, at the Maggiore Lake. After this course, I had the opportunity to undertake an internship in a hotel. They asked me to remain to work for them, but I rejected the proposal because I wanted to do other experiences. First, I worked in a restaurant in Cesenatico as a seasonal chef, only for summer. Then, I moved to Germany, to Stuttgart, to work for the restaurant of a five stars hotel. (...) After that period, I came back to Italy, and I decided to open my restaurant with my husband. (...) I think that learning Italian cuisine has allowed me to understand how to work in a kitchen, and it has been easier for me to open a restaurant by applying the rules of Italian cuisine to traditional Senegalese recipes.

Lea, 43, Senegalese; Milan

The case of Lea shows that the cooking course has represented a means to access the branch of professional cuisine. She accumulated an impressive working experience as a chef, before deciding to open her restaurant. Lea has often pointed out, during the interview, that her professional path has started with the course of cuisine.

Carlo narrates a similar situation. Carlo is 55 years old, he is an Italian man who married a Thai chef. They co-own a Thai restaurant in Rome, which obtains good performances. Carlo's wife

had always worked as a cook in her country of origin, and she is very talented. When she came to Italy, and she married Carlo, she managed to enrol in a Master at Gambero Rosso, a famous and prestigious Italian publisher, specialised in the food and wine sector. Through this Master, she managed to achieve high-level culinary competences, and she became the chef in her restaurant.

From the analysis, the importance of courses of specialisation arises. These courses are mainly attended at the aim of increasing the skills and abilities of migrant entrepreneurs, and also to achieve a qualification in Italy, that could also be spent in the European Union. The majority of entrepreneurs that have enrolled in courses of specialisation has undertaken economic classes, that are often combined with high levels of education or previous entrepreneurial experiences. Other entrepreneurs have attended courses in cuisine. In these cases, these courses have been of crucial importance, since they have signed the beginning of professional experience as a chef, by giving migrants some adequate skills to prepare Italian dishes. These abilities have been particularly helpful for them when they started their restaurant by preparing the traditional recipes that they have been knowing since they were children.

As we have seen, for some entrepreneurs, the attendance of courses of specialisation has been intersected to useful working experiences, that helped them to acquire important skills for their future entrepreneurial paths.

6.2.3 Working experiences

This section aims at investigating the working experiences of migrant entrepreneurs. The analysis of the interviews suggests that previous working or entrepreneurial experiences are useful, but mostly when they are combined to other forms of capital.

Starting from education, many migrant entrepreneurs have obtained their University degree in Italy, or in another European State, and managed to find a high skilled job, and later start their own activity, such as in the case of Valérie. Valérie was born in France, and she came to Italy after her graduation in History from the Sorbonne University of Paris. She did different high skilled jobs, and she had another entrepreneurial experience before opening the restaurant:

When I was studying in Paris, I chose to take some exams in History of Arts. I wanted to continue to study History of Arts, (...) and I wanted to do that in Italy, and I came here for this reason. I wanted to do my PhD here in Italy, but I took another way. I received a job offer as a journalist in the fashion sector. Thus, I have worked as a fashion journalist in Milan for eight years. Later, I became a History teacher at the faculty of Political Sciences in Milan. However, I wasn't totally satisfied since the linkage with Vietnam was still arising. (...) Thus, I decided to reconnect with Vietnam by opening a high-quality Vietnamese craftsmanship shop. I was drawing a clothing brand, with Vietnamese lacquer and typical Vietnamese products. I was going to Vietnam and creating a clothing brand, by working and cooperating with Vietnamese artisans. Then, I managed the import by organising the arrival of the goods here in Italy.

Valérie, 50, Vietnamese; Milan

The first entrepreneurial experience of Valérie allowed her to acquire the linkages with the country of origin of her parents, and it has been fundamental also in deciding on opening her restaurant. Furthermore, this experience is combined with a high level of education attained by Valérie.

Another example of an important entrepreneurial experience is represented by the narrative of a successful entrepreneur, Anthony. As we have seen in the previous paragraph, Anthony graduated in Rome at the faculty of Engineering, but he soon realised that he did not have the suitable practical experience to work in that field:

When I realised that I couldn't work as Engineer, I had to choose between two alternatives: go back to Lebanon, that was a country in war, or stay in Italy by working in a sector that required different knowledge from those that I studied. (...) Obviously, I didn't want to go to a country that was at war, so I decided to change the sector. For a Lebanese, it is easy to be entrepreneurs. We are traditionally merchants. We come from the Phoenicians. It was easier because my father was an entrepreneur, it was something that I had experienced, while Engineering was still an abstract concept. (...) Thus, the desire to be business-owner prevailed over the dream of being an Engineer. (...) I had managed my electrical appliance shop for a decade, until the second half of the 1990s, when I realised that this sector was no more profitable, and I had to change something.

Anthony. Lebanese; Rome

Therefore, the first entrepreneurial experience as an electrical appliance shop owner was very important for Anthony, but it was combined to a high level of education, professional training courses and, as I show in the next paragraph and session, and intergenerational transmissions of human capital.

In this paragraph, until this moment, only the graduated and successful entrepreneurs have been analysed. However, as it has been already anticipated, many successful entrepreneurs did not achieve university graduation, but they had working experiences in the restaurant sector or previous entrepreneurial experiences in other fields. Furthermore, as it is shown in the following section dedicated to the unsuccessful and surviving cases (6.4), this kind of working and entrepreneurial experiences has also been undertaken by people who do not manage to achieve good performances. Thus, working experiences as a waiter or cook have been useful for many entrepreneurs, but they have been less helpful for others.

In the previous paragraph, we have seen that the attendance of courses of specialisation for successful entrepreneurs has been combined to relevant working or entrepreneurial experiences, as in the cases of Abigail, Emily and Lea, in three different ways. First, in the case of Lea, the course of specialisation in Italian cuisine has been the starting point of a fruitful professional career as a cook. Later, Lea's job experiences have pushed the Senegalese woman to open a restaurant in partnership with her husband.

Second, Emily attended a course in Finance and Management when she had been starting her activity with her father. The combination of the course and the entrepreneurial experience in the Financial field gave Emily valuable skills that helped her when she decided to open a hotel and a restaurant.

Third, Abigail started an activity in the road transport sector and, three years later, she left the job in the hospice to pursue her entrepreneurial path. At that point, she followed a course of specialisation in management in the restaurant sector, which had been very important for her. In this case, the previous path of self-employment played the role of orienting the choice of Abigail towards the opening of her own business.

Two cases of my fieldwork show the relevance of previous entrepreneurial or working experience without a combination of other elements of human capital: those of Melanie and Kabir. First, Melanie is 59, and she owns a well-recognised Ecuadorian restaurant in Milan. She attended the University at the faculty of Psychology in her country, but she did not graduate. Instead, she opened her own drugstore, that constituted a fundamental entrepreneurial experience:

I have studied for three years. In my country, you have to attend University for four years, and then you have two years of internship and specialisation. Only at that point, you get your graduation. However, I received an offer to open my own drugstore, and I left the University to start this activity. I had managed this shop for 15 years, I was very stressed, and it had become very difficult for me to remain in the same place for 15 years. (...) I needed new incentives, I wanted to change and to apply what I had learned in those years to other sectors. (...) Therefore, when my nephew asked me to join him in Italy and (...) to help him with the managing of the restaurant that he was going to open (...), I immediately accepted. (...) My nephew and my sister owned that restaurant. I was helping them to manage the business, but I wasn't a partner. A year later, my sister sold that restaurant and bought this one, but I still wasn't a partner. Three years ago, my sister sold this restaurant to me, and now I am the owner. (...) This kind of experience is what I had been looking for, I really put my knowledge at the disposal of a new experience. It has been really challenging and incentivising.

Melanie, 58, Ecuador; Milan

Melanie's previous entrepreneurial experience has been strongly useful to the entrepreneur, at first, to help her nephew and her sister with their restaurant and, later, to successfully manage her restaurant. In this case, working experience is not combined with other elements of human capital. However, as it has been shown in the chapter dedicated to networks (see 5.2.1; 5.3), Melanie has strongly relied on her family and kin network and, in her case, the combination between skills obtained through her previous entrepreneurial experiences and strong family and kinship networks.

The relevance of the working experience also appears in the narrative of Kabir. Kabir owns an Indian restaurant in Rome, in partnership with Ismail, another Pakistani entrepreneur. The restaurant had been opened in 2002 by Ismail, it is well recognised and provides a good quality of food. Kabir came to Italy in 2006, and he soon started to work at that restaurant, and he became a partner after many years of working experience:

I obtained my high school degree in Pakistan, and I migrated to Italy when I was 20. I have soon started to work at this restaurant. I have always worked, (...) I never stopped. I was working as a waiter, but I have a clear dream: I wanted to become an entrepreneur. I started to save money, and I learned how to manage a restaurant: quality of food, prices, I started to understand what people want. (...) So, I worked for almost ten years, and I never stopped learning. I used my experience to realise my dream. Now, when a customer comes back to the restaurant, I know what to do to make him come back. (...) My partner Ismail has helped me in this path, because he has always appreciated my efforts and, two years ago, he asked me to become his business partner. Now I own this restaurant, and I'd do anything to make things work out.

Kabir, 31, Pakistani; Rome

Melanie and Kabir managed to have successful entrepreneurial paths, thanks to their previous entrepreneurial (in the case of Melanie) and working experience in the restaurant sector (in the case of Kabir). In both cases, working experiences have not been combined with other elements of human capital. However, Melanie has strongly relied on her family and kinship networks as a strategy. Kabir has relied on his relationship with his employer, and this connection has been more and more based on trust as time was going by until Kabir became a partner of the restaurant in which he has been working. For this reason, it appears that, even when working experiences are not combined with other elements of the human capital, they are combined with

an advantageous reliance on professional and family networks. Therefore, also in this case, a combination between different forms of capital has emerged.

Finally, relevant entrepreneurial and working experiences are combined with intergenerational transmissions. Two examples of these combinations are shown by the experiences of Victor and Pablo. First, when Victor arrived in Italy, he started working in the construction sector:

I arrived in Italy in 1991. (...) I started to work in the construction sector and, as time was passing by, I opened a small business with my brother in that industry. We started as a co-partnership society, and later we became an ltd. However, our dream was to open a restaurant. (...) Nevertheless, I think that the experience in the construction sector has been very useful from two points of view. First, it has provided me with the essential knowledge to run a business here in Italy. (...) Second, every time we need handwork, I handle that. This is an advantage: we can lower the costs by doing handworks by ourselves. (...) I think that I owe everything to my mother (...): she was a farmer (...) and a merchant (...). She taught me that you have to put your heart in everything you do, while, you work. (...) Every day I think about her advice, and I try to put them in practice.

Victor, 53, Peruvian; Rome

Victor emphasises that his previous entrepreneurial experience contributed to increasing his entrepreneurial skills. At the same time, his entrepreneurial experience is intersected to intergenerational transmissions of “entrepreneurial capital”, that is shown in the next section.

The second case is that of Pablo. Pablo’s mother had opened a restaurant in Italy, and he decided to work for her as soon as he finished his compulsory education:

I studied in Italy, but I achieved only compulsory education because, at that point, I had to leave school since my mother could no more afford to sustain me. (...) First, I did many jobs in the construction sector or as a baker. (...) However, two years after I had left school, my mother opened a restaurant. She was a cook in Peru, and she decided to open her restaurant. So, I have worked for her for many years. I was both an employee and support with the management of the activity. I learned how to manage a restaurant, and I realised that I really liked this kind of job. (...) For this

reason, when my mother retired and sold her restaurant, I decided to open my own business.

Pablo, 38, Peruvian; Rome

The example of Pablo clearly shows how working experience intersect with intergenerational transmissions of human capital. This aspect is examined in the following section of this chapter. Indeed, at this point, it is important to analyse the background of migrant entrepreneurs, because from the interviews, the role of intergenerational transmissions of human capital has emerged.

6.3 Intergenerational transmissions of human capital

The intergenerational transmissions of education play a fundamental role in migrant entrepreneurs' trajectories by fostering the educational attainment (Patacchini, Zenou, 2010), the earning and professional career of migrants (Borjas, 1993).

During the analysis of the interviews, I have often noticed that family plays an important role in the transmission of human capital. The first element that emerges is that the majority of successful entrepreneurs come from families of business owners. Aldrich *et al.*, (1998: 291) argue that a family of entrepreneurs constitutes a resource, called "entrepreneurial capital", that is able to increase the possibilities to become business-owner. Entrepreneurial capital is defined by Valdez (2016: 1622) as the "experience derived from a family history of business ownership, which facilitates the reproduction of business ownership through a process of socialization wherein the children of entrepreneurs come to recognize self-employment as a career and see self-employment as a realistic alternative to conventional employment". Entrepreneurial capital is particularly important because migrant entrepreneurs have always seen their parents while they were operating in their businesses, they had often helped them in management, and they have learnt and acquired relevant skills for their future business.

I have selected three stories aimed at explaining how this process of learning and the acquisition of important abilities can occur. The first story is that of Nadim, who migrated to Italy with his uncle:

I come from a family of entrepreneurs, that operated in a context which is totally different from the European one: the Indian context. My family owned different kinds of activities: my father had a cinema and a factory, specialised in quantum mechanics. My uncles owned a great factory, specialised in the extraction of steel or drawn steel. (...) I grew up by seeing the adult members of my family managing their businesses. (...) For me, it was natural to choose the faculty of Economics. (...) My dream was to be an entrepreneur (...). Therefore, when my uncle migrated to Italy (...) to expand his business, I came with him, to help him and (...) to learn from him. (...) However, my uncle did not manage to obtain success in Italy, so he migrated in America and he left me here. (...) At that point, I decided to attend a master course at the Bocconi University in Management, and then I worked in a bank for 12 years. Nevertheless, I always had my dream of becoming an

entrepreneur, that became a reality after the experience in a bank.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

The story of Nadim shows how the intergenerational transmission of human capital did not only foster the acquisition of important skills, but it also affected his choices concerning the field of study and contributed to the creation of his project to become an entrepreneur himself.

A similar aspect arises from the narrative of Emily, that has been analysed in the paragraph concerning courses of specialisation. When she was very young, her parents sent her in the UK to study for a year:

I have studied mostly in Italy, even though, when I was 11, I had studied for a year in the UK, because my parents thought that it was essential for me to be fluent in the English language, and so I am. (...) I have also lived in Japan (...) and in Switzerland. (...) When I was in Switzerland, I learned a lot about business management, (...) thanks to the course of financial and management that I attend after having left the University, (...) thanks to the experience in the financial business, (...) and thanks to my father. (...) During the same period, I have started to have a dream, to leave the financial world and to open my hotel. This dream arose thank to the attendance of a small hotel in London with my father. (...) It was a very nice hotel, and I had the idea. This dream was shared with my father. (...) I think that he would have opened this hotel by himself, but he passed away. (...) I think that this is something that I want to transmit to my children, I hope that at least one of them would keep this restaurant.

Emily, 50, Italo-Japanese; Milan

Emily's parents fostered her to learn the English language when she was very young, and her father transmitted her entrepreneurial skills, by motivating her when she left the sector in which she was operating, pursuing her project of opening a hotel. From this narrative, another element arises, that is connected to cosmopolitanism: Emily is Italo-Japanese, and she has been travelling across in different countries (Italy, the UK, Japan, and Switzerland) since she was very young. During the interviews, she underlines that every place in which she has lived has, at some extent, influenced how she manages her business. Third, from both the narratives of Emily and Nadim, their high social class of origin arises.

Nevertheless, intergenerational transmission of entrepreneurial capital takes place also when the social class and the financial capital of the family is lower, as it is shown from the story of Victor. Differently from Emily and Nadim, the migratory path of Victor was much more complicated, since he arrived in Italy without regular visas and was regularised in 1995, after having spent four years as undocumented¹¹³. Despite the initial disadvantage, Victor owns two restaurants in Rome in partnership with his brother, that are well recognised and manage to achieve good performances. According to Victor, those values that allowed him to construct a new life in Italy have been transmitted by his mother, who was a farmer, and a merchant, because she used to sell the food that she had gathered or produced:

My mother always used to say: <When you're working, you have to put your heart into your job.>. (...) I think at this value every day, I try to do that in every moment of my professional activity, it is a strong motivation always to do my best, to improve every day. (...) Even when I was a bricklayer, I always saw my colleagues that had left the wheelbarrow and the lime. I gathered everything! My boss saw me, and he appreciated my behaviour, but I was not doing that for him. I was doing that because I knew that it was the right thing to do.

Victor, 53, Peruvian; Rome

Though the initial amount of financial capital of Victor was lower with respect to Nadim or Emily, he and his brother managed to open and expand their businesses, first, in the construction sector, and, lately, in the restaurant sector. From the narratives of Victor, the values transmitted within the family emerge. These values are considered by the entrepreneur interviewed as a strong motivator and a central element for his and his brothers' entrepreneurial positive performance.

Another element that has often emerged by exploring the intergenerational transmissions of entrepreneurs with migrant background, concerns not only the entrepreneurial experience, but also the passion for cooking. At this point, I present two narratives. First, the case of Sarah provides an intersection between the entrepreneurial and the cooking transmissions. Sarah is one of the seven partners of Massimiliano¹¹⁴. Sarah is one of the partners of second generation:

¹¹³ For information about Victor, see the Appendix, page 325.

¹¹⁴ For information about Massimiliano, see the Appendix, page 318.

Sarah is of Iranian origins. Her parents own a business that deals with import-export with Iran. (...) She has worked for many years with her parents before our decision to open the restaurant. Her experience has been useful because she had many managerial skills. (...) Moreover, her mother is a great cook. When we had decided to open the restaurant, Sarah used to invite us at dinner at her home, and her mother was always cooking for us. She transmitted us many Iranian recipes. For this reason, though our selection of ingredients for our kind of kebab comprehend food coming from all the Middle East, the majority of our food is of Iranian origin.

Massimiliano, 31, Italian; Milan

The story of Sarah shows two kinds of intergenerational transmissions. The first transmission is in terms of entrepreneurial skills: she had worked for her parents' business and she has acquired many managerial skills. Secondly, her mother has transmitted to her and her friends (and business partners) all the traditional Iranian recipes, by helping them to provide an almost authentic taste to the dishes that they sell.

Intergenerational transmissions do not only concern entrepreneurial capital. In fact, among the interviewees, some successful entrepreneurs do not have self-employed parents. However, in many cases, one of their parents was a cook, or they come from wealthy families. In the latter case, we could speak of "intergenerational transmission of wealth" (Valdez, 2016: 1622), which support entrepreneurship within middle-class families. This is the case of the second narrative, that belongs to Valérie:

My father was a Vietnamese army official, before the communist took power. After this event, my parents decided to definitely leave Vietnam. (...) Therefore, they migrated to France. (...) When they were still in Vietnam, my parents were really wealthy. However, I was born in a totally different condition, since we weren't rich no more, actually, we were very poor. We were refugees. However, I was born in a totally different condition, since we weren't rich no more, actually, we were very poor. We were refugees. However, my parents have transmitted us a great Vietnamese cooking tradition. For them, food was very important, and we did not save money on the basis of food quality: we ate amazing dishes, mum was a formidable cook.

Valérie, 50, Vietnamese; Milan

The parents of Valérie have always pushed and motivated her to study and to improve her position. Furthermore, her mother has been able to transmit her love and passion for Vietnamese cuisine, that she always seeks to reproduce in the dishes of her restaurant, which aspire to provide great quality of food, at a medium-high price.

These narratives have been selected because they are able to show the main mechanisms of the intergenerational transmission of education. Specifically, from the interviews, it emerges that the vast majority of successful entrepreneurs come from families of business owners, or chefs, or wealthy families. This kind of background is very important because migrants had helped their parents in their own businesses, they had received suggestions and support that have been very valuable when they decided to open their own business in Italy. This mechanism also worked out for those entrepreneurs whose parents were not self-employed, but they were wealthy and highly educated. This situation has pushed them always to search to improve their position and to choose educational paths or courses of specialisation, that are very important to acquire useful knowledge and skills, at the purpose of opening and maintaining their businesses. Therefore, these intergenerational transmissions do not only act as simple ways to acquire knowledge but also as important motivators that help entrepreneurs to obtain positive results in conducting their own businesses.

6.4 Unsuccessful and surviving cases: lack of human capital?

So far, successful cases have been examined, to analyse the main elements of human capital and their combinations. However, many of the entrepreneurs interviewed have been unable to reach good performance. This section examines these cases, which comprehend both categories of surviving entrepreneurs and those who are facing a deep crisis. Specifically, this section aims at exploring whether, and at what extent, the lack of human and/or social capital plays a role in running into entrepreneurial difficulties. Starting from the educational level, most of the entrepreneurs in this group have a high school degree. Many of them have started to study at the university, but the majority of left before obtaining the degree. However, as we have seen in the previous section, the educational level is important, but also many successful entrepreneurs did not achieve university degree. Moreover, not all graduated entrepreneurs obtain good performances.

Specifically, two of them are, respectively, among the surviving or among those who are in crisis: Flavia and Luis. Flavia is a Bolivian entrepreneur that owns a Peruvian restaurant with her current life partner. Before the migration, she graduated in journalism in Argentina. Flavia had worked as journalist in Bolivia, but then she migrated to Italy because she could no more afford to sustain her family with her wage as journalist. Therefore, she migrated to Italy and she did many low skilled jobs and, at the same time, she started to work as a journalist with the man who soon became her Peruvian partner. They soon realised that they could not afford to live in Italy only with their job as journalists, so they decided to open a restaurant. They manage to survive with their restaurant, since they have a mainly Southern American trusted clientele, but they are not recognised beyond their usual customer entourage. Furthermore, they do not adopt strategies aimed at providing good quality of service and food. Rather, they implement strategies aimed at lowering costs that, as we have seen in the chapter related to networks, are not connected with good performances.

A similar situation concerns Luis. Luis is Peruvian, he is 50 years old, and he owns a Peruvian restaurant in Italy. Before migrating to Italy in 1993, he graduated in Law in Peru. Luis struggles to survive since he has adopted a strategy aimed at lowering costs rather than having a good quality of food. Furthermore, he is the only entrepreneur in my sample who admitted to hiring workers without a regular contract. According to him, this is the only reason why his business is still surviving. In the case of Luis, his structure of network is limited to Peruvian people, and

he does not want to attract Italian customers. In both cases, the lack of success does not concern human capital, but it regards network: the story of Flavia has been analysed in the chapter related to social capital (see 5.2.2), while Luis openly displays a closure towards opening to Italian people. Furthermore, in both cases, language barriers and network limited to their community create a problem of limited access to information that is necessary to deal with bureaucratic procedures and market in Italy. Finally, both Flavia and Luis graduated in two fields that are different from Economics, and they did not try to obtain other qualifications in Italy. Therefore, the human capital obtained with the achievement of a university degree is not combined with the attendance of courses of specialisation or professional working experience.

As it has been anticipated in the previous sections, many migrant entrepreneurs did not achieve good performances, even though they had relevant previous entrepreneurial experiences or working experience in the restaurant sector. To show these paths, and to try to understand the reasons why these entrepreneurs did not manage to succeed, I have selected three narratives: two of them concern working experiences in the restaurant sector, while the third regards a previous entrepreneurial experience. The first case is that of Jonathan. Jonathan faced a bad period during the economic crisis of 2008, he managed to overcome the crisis, but he just manages to survive, without project of expansion or improvement. Since his arrival in Italy, he has always worked in the restaurant sector:

I started to work soon after my migration, 5-6 days later. My first experience was as dishwasher in a restaurant in Varese. As time went by, I became a chef's assistant. I did this job until 2005 when I opened my restaurant. I first worked for a restaurant that provided Tuscan dishes. In 1982 I started to prepare ready meals for the canteen of a factory. (...) In that period, I also had worked as a butcher. Then, I worked in a pizzeria. During that time, I started to dream of opening my restaurant. (...) I have always cooked Italian dishes. It has been useful. I learned the rules of cooking, of preparing dishes. Obviously, they weren't the same dishes that I prepare now at my restaurant, but I understood the rules.

Jonathan, 67, Eritrean; Milan

The story of Jonathan is similar to that of Lea, the Senegalese entrepreneur whose narrative has been discussed in the section dedicated to courses of specialisation. However, Lea attended a cooking course, which helped her to gain useful experiences. Furthermore, Lea comes from a middle-class family; her father was a good cook, who taught her to prepare Senegalese dishes

when she was in her country of origin. Jonathan, differently from Lea, did not attend any course of specialisation, and he did not receive any intergenerational transmission of human capital.

The second case is that of Seok¹¹⁵. He has owned a Korean restaurant in Rome since 2000, but he is facing a deep crisis, and he often thinks to close his restaurant. He arrived in Italy to study at the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Perugia, but he soon left his studies:

After having left the University, I moved to Rome, and I worked a waiter at the same restaurant that I would have owned some years later. (...) At the end of the 1990s, I went back to Korea for a short period. (...) When I was in Korea, my former employer (who was still my friend) at the restaurant in Rome called me, and he told me that he was going to sell the restaurant. He asked me if I was interested in buying the restaurant and I accepted. (...) At that time, I couldn't imagine how difficult it was to manage your own Korean restaurant in Italy.

Seok, 56, Korean; Rome

The experience of Seok shows is similar to that of Kabir, that has been analysed in the paragraph dedicated to the working experiences. Both the entrepreneurs have worked as waiters, and then they became owners of the same restaurant in which they had worked many years. However, Kabir was the partner of his mentor, while Seok was alone. Furthermore, the case of Seok has been extensively debated in the chapter related to networks, since he is strictly linked to his co-national community, but he does not have useful professional network. Moreover, he is not fluent in the Italian language, so he does not fully understand the bureaucratic practices. In addition, the majority of his restaurant's customers are Korean but, since the Korean community in Rome is not very numerous, he counts mostly on tourists. This aspect provides great uncertainty because the flows of Korean tourists in Rome are particularly variable.

The third narrative concern a previous entrepreneurial experience, that of Henry. Henry is among those entrepreneurs who manage to survive: he faced a sharp crisis in 2008, but he has managed to overcome the crisis. He has no project of changes or expansion; he just wants to maintain his restaurant:

I came to Italy in 1986. I worked in many sectors, starting from the construction sector, the restaurant sector as a dishwasher, and then for a cleaning enterprise. In 1990, I decided to acquire the cleaning enterprise in which I was

¹¹⁵ For information about Seok, see the Appendix, page 331.

working, and I started my entrepreneurial path. I kept that business until I bought this restaurant (...). I choose to change the industry, since I preferred the restaurant sector to the cleaning one. It was my dream. Anyway, the experience in the cleaning sector has been really useful, also for the restaurant, since cleaning is fundamental, and my former activity has been helpful for my actual business.

Henry, 56, Egyptian, Milan

The story of Henry shows how a previous and relevant entrepreneurial experience is not always sufficient for a positive performance. The entrepreneurial experience is not combined with other elements of human capital, such as courses of specialisation or intergenerational transmission. As it has been shown in the paragraph concerning the working experiences, only in two cases, migrant entrepreneurs manage to achieve positive performances with working experience alone, without any combination with other elements of human capital.

6.5 Conclusions

This chapter has analysed the role played by human capital in the performance of migrant entrepreneurs. In order to do so, the main elements of human capital have been explored, starting from formal education, working experiences, courses of specialisation and intergenerational transmissions. I have shown that successful entrepreneurs try to deepen their knowledge and to improve their skills throughout formal education and courses of specialisation, in addition to the value of their working experiences. Specifically, most successful entrepreneurs tend to combine different elements of human capital, starting from education and courses of specialisation in management and in cooking. Previous entrepreneurial experience or working experiences are valuable when they are combined with other elements of human capital, such as high levels of education, attendance of courses of specialisation, and intergenerational transmissions, or a fruitful reliance on networks. Furthermore, the role of family background is particularly important, since it does not only act as intergenerational transmission of human capital but also as strong motivation that helps entrepreneurs to have as main task that of always improving their managerial abilities. The majority of intergenerational transmissions of human capital occur within the family of entrepreneurs. However, the cuisine has its relevance, since many families had transmitted to their offspring traditional recipes of their country of origin, that have been adopted decades later in the restaurant opened in the host countries. Moreover, as far as those entrepreneurs who do not achieve good performances are concerned, a lack of human capital can be observed or, more often, a lack of combination of the various human capital elements occurs. In addition, intergenerational transmissions are not present for this group of entrepreneurs, and this aspect does not push them to try always to improve themselves, they tend to settle for survive, and they do not feel the need to acquire further human capital.

In the previous chapter, that concerns social capital, it has been shown how successful migrant entrepreneurs shape their networks on the basis of their business activity and, in the present chapter, the importance of human capital has emerged. Specifically, those entrepreneurs who reach good performances tend to combine different elements of human capital, at the aim of acquiring useful skills to run the business. Therefore, human capital plays an important role mainly before the entrepreneurial path in the restaurant sector, to acquire valuable skills that are developed in managerial competences and abilities to implement successful strategies. It

appears more clearly that migrant entrepreneurs tend to combine different forms of capital, and this combination plays an important role in performances.

7. Life course, social mobility and the translocational horizon

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, the performance of migrant entrepreneurs has been examined by analysing the context in which they operate, and their social and human capital. From the conclusions that have been carried out in each chapter, two considerations arise. First, migrant entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector of Milan and Rome is particularly variegated and diversified, under many features that have been analysed in the fourth chapter. Second, from the chapter dedicated to human and social capital, it appears that the keyword is “combination”. Indeed, we have seen that those Indeed, those entrepreneurs of migrant origin who obtain good performances tend to combine their networks on the basis of the strategies and opportunities connected to their business. who obtain good performances tend to combine their networks on the basis of the strategies and opportunities connected to their business. Furthermore, successful entrepreneurs combine different forms of human capital on the basis of the knowledge that they consider necessary to start and, above all, manage their business. In addition, migrant entrepreneurs also combine different forms of capital (social, human and financial).

At this point, it is necessary to explore the life courses by considering the intersection of the trajectories with the biographical resources constituted by experiences and motivation (Apitzsch, 2003; Kontos and Apitzsch, 2003; Brettel and Alstatt, 2007; Slavnic, 2003), and with the combination of the different forms of capital. Furthermore, to better understand the stratification of migrant entrepreneurship, trajectories and resources play an even more important role during the economic crisis (Arcidiacono, 2015). Specifically, the following questions arise:

- *How do the trajectories of migrant entrepreneurs intersect themselves with their performances? How do the different resources and trajectories shape the stratification of performances?*

Moreover, I have often underlined that migrant entrepreneurship is a highly stratified phenomenon. In addition, chapter 6.3 dedicated to intergenerational transmissions of human capital has shown that successful migrant business owners often come from wealthy and/or entrepreneurial families, and the following question emerges:

- *How does the class of origin play a role in shaping and stratifying the performance of migrant entrepreneurs?*

At this point, social mobility is explored, aiming at answering the following questions:

- *How can we analyse social mobility from a “translocational” point of view, by taking into account their class of origin? Is social mobility strictly connected to the performances?*

The first section of this chapter is dedicated to the analysis of trajectories, and it is divided into two parts. First, I analyse the role of pre-migration experiences, motivations and projects aimed at reaching particular educational, professional and entrepreneurial objectives. Second, I examine the role of important personal life events, such as marriage with Italian people.

The second section is dedicated to the examination of social mobility of entrepreneurs, by analysing of the class of origin of self-employed migrants, and its role in their performances. At this point, the phase of achievement of social mobility and the perception of stability are investigated. By taking into account the concept of translocational positionality (Anthias, 2008; 2013), I consider the relationship between the class of origin and the position achieved, by exploring the presence of upward or downward mobility.

7.2 Turning point moments: the role of professional and personal experiences, and motivations

This first part of the section analyses the main events that have characterised the entrepreneurs' path towards reaching good performances. In the examination of the experiences and motivations that play a role in the trajectories of those entrepreneurs who manage to reach good performances, three main topics need to be stressed: firstly, pre-migration educational or professional experiences; secondly, the presence and creation of a specific project, connected to migration, to professional or entrepreneurial plans, that present a strong interrelation between experiences and motivations; thirdly, the personal life events that are more relevant in this sense: marriages with Italian people and early regularisation. A conclusive paragraph concerns the trajectories of women entrepreneurs of migrant origin. In this study, I have analysed the narratives of many women entrepreneurs with migrant background so far as performances, trajectories, accumulation of resources and entrepreneurial strategies are concerned. However, it is important to deepen this aspect, by analysing not only their performances, but also the different roles that they play within the businesses, the constraints that they have to face, especially so far as reconciling work and family is concerned, and the resources that they use to overcome these obstacles.

Pre-migration experiences

Gold (2014), in his work concerning women migrant entrepreneurs, evidences the relevant played by pre-migration experiences in shaping the entrepreneurial strategies of migrant women. During my fieldwork, many of the successful entrepreneurs interviewed have underlined the importance of study or work experiences that they had undertaken in their country of origin. I have selected three narratives, which show three different experiences or a combination of experiences, belonging to entrepreneurs that manage to achieve good performances.

The first case is that of Nadim, whose trajectory had always been aimed at becoming an entrepreneur:

I come from a family of entrepreneurs, that used to operate in a different context: the Indian one. (...) I had always

dreamt of opening my business (...) and, for this reason, I graduated in India when I was 19, since my bachelor's degree had been compressed in 15 months. (...) At that point, I came to Italy to help my uncle, who was opening his business in this country.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

However, the uncle's business did not obtain the success the man had hoped for, and he left for the US, while Nadim decided to remain in Italy. After the leaving of his uncle, Nadim took a master's degree in Economics and Management in Italy, and he set aside the idea of opening a business to work as a broker in a bank. After 12 years, Nadim had the occasion of opening an Indian restaurant and decided to pursue the old dream that he had since he was a boy and that influences his choice of studying Economics in his country of origin.

The second case concerns Melanie, who migrated to Italy to put her entrepreneurial experience at the disposal of her family members:

I had been managing my drugstore for 15 years, (...) I loved my shop but, in the end, I was very stressed, and it had become very difficult for me to remain in the same place for 15 years. (...) I needed new incentives, I wanted to change and to apply what I had learned in those years to other sectors. (...) Therefore, when my nephew asked me to join him in Italy and (...) to help him with the managing of the restaurant that he was going to open (...), I immediately accepted. (...) My nephew and my sister owned that restaurant. I was helping them to manage the business, but I wasn't a partner. A year later, my sister sold that restaurant and bought this one, but I still wasn't a partner. Three years ago, my sister sold this restaurant to me, and now I am the owner. (...) This kind of experience is what I had been looking for, I really put my knowledge at the disposal of a new experience, it has been really challenging and incentivising.

Melanie, 58, Ecuadorian; Milan

As it has been shown in chapter 6.2.3, the pre-migration experience of Melanie was relevant in two different phases of her trajectory: in a first moment, she could help her nephew and sister, and later she put the basis of her new business in Italy.

The third case presents a pre-migration experience as a mix of study and work, despite Danny arrived in Italy when he was very young, at 18:

When I was 17, I was studying Law in my country. (...) In fact, in Peru we attend school for 11 years, then we go to the University, while here you attend school for 13 years. (...) For this reason, my high school degree was not recognised. (...) However, I knew that I had to study to improve my working conditions, so I enrolled in the evening course of accounting, (...) and later I obtained a bachelor's degree in Economics. (...) I choose the economic sector because my mother had a shop in Peru, and I had been helping her since I was 12, because her partner was living in Italy and she needed some help to manage her own activity. (...) Thus, I decided to use this experience to study things that could have been useful one day, (...) when I would have opened my own activity.

Danny, 35, Peruvian; Milan

Danny decided to combine the study and the experience undertaken by helping his mother with her shop by studying Economics in Italy to reach his task of opening his own business. However, pre-migration experiences do not always play a role in the achievement of good performances, for two reasons: first, many entrepreneurs migrated when they were very young, and their study or work experiences were not as relevant as in the case of Danny and Nadim. Second, many migrant entrepreneurs have other kinds of work and study experiences in the country of origin, that did not have any connection with their future as entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, pre-migration experiences have been very important for many interviewees, not only in terms of acquiring fundamental human capital, but also because they set the basis for their migratory and, later, entrepreneurial project. This latter element is connected to the second point developed in this paragraph: the presence of specific projects and objectives, connected to migration and to entrepreneurship.

Projects, experiences and motivations

The motivations and experiences presented in the other studies that apply the biographical approach to migrant entrepreneurs are inextricably related, and they constitute fundamental resources for the starting and the maintenance phases of migrant entrepreneurs' businesses (Apitzsch, 2003; Kontos and Apitzsch, 2003; Brettel and Alstatt, 2007; Slavnic, 2003).

During my fieldwork I noticed that those trajectories aimed at acquiring further human capital, or at being employed in a specific high skilled job position, or at developing a precise entrepreneurial project are more likely to obtain good performances, compared with those aimed at achieving a better economic and social position, without an educational, working or educational plan.

The first example of this kind of trajectory is a project of study that arises from the narrative of Simon, who owns a luxurious Thai restaurant in Milan. The first migration of Simon was to the UK since he went to London when he was 14 to study in prestigious schools:

I was born in Hong Kong, but I moved to the UK when I was 14 to start high school in London. (...) I decided to attend also University in the UK, (...) and I enrolled in the London School of Economics. (...) Therefore, I stayed there for 9-10 years, (...) until my graduation. (...) After my graduation day, I moved back to Hong-Kong and worked in the fashion industry for a couple of years. (...) Then, I realised that I really wanted to become an entrepreneur, because it was the subject that I studied in London. (...) My family has a chain of Thai restaurants in Shanghai, (...) and I decided to join the family business and to open my own restaurant in Milan. I chose Milan because I've been here many times, (...) and I had realised that the offer of Thai restaurant was very poor, there wasn't a fancy restaurant offering Thai dishes. (...) So, I realised that Milan was the perfect challenge for my business.

Simon, 28, Hong-Kong; Milan

From the narrative of Simon, two distinct tasks arise in two different phases of his life: the first was a study project that pushed him to migrate to the UK when he was 14, while the second was an entrepreneurial project that drove him to open his restaurant in Milan in more recent years. Therefore, the task established for the second migration of Simon is related to entrepreneurship. The second plan is linked to the former project of acquisition of human capital in a prestigious University in London.

The second example concerns Nadim, which shows a similar mix of educational and entrepreneurial project. In addition, from this story, an entrepreneurial project connected to the migration path arises, along with a great dynamism of the planning, since Nadim did not follow a linear path such as Simon, but he often adjusted his educational, job or entrepreneurial tasks on the basis of his changing life trajectory. As we have seen before, Nadim decided to study

Economics in India because he had the dream of opening his own business, and, to reach his goal, he migrated to Italy to help his uncle with his activity. Though the situation changed, since his uncle soon left for the US, Nadim decided to remain in Italy, to acquire further human capital by attending a Master course at a prestigious University in Milan. Later, after having obtained a qualification recognised in Italy, Nadim temporarily changed his plans by working in a bank for 12 years. Therefore, the story of Nadim shows how the continuous adjustment of working and studying objectives to the life trajectory has been useful to the achievement of his aims, as it is shown in his narrative concerning the passage from dependent job to self-employment:

After having worked in a bank for 12 years, I asked to an Indian friend of mine (...) to open a business to reconnect with India. I wanted to become an entrepreneur to have new incentives, (...) because my job in a bank was bringing me a lot of stress and few satisfactions. (...) I was looking for something that could render me happy about my job. (...) My friend proposed me to open a restaurant with him. I didn't know almost anything about the restaurant sector, but I soon realised that it was precisely what I was looking for. Therefore, I accepted the proposal and I (...) acquired knowledge, day by day, of the Indian cuisine and of its provision in Italy.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

Nadim shows a story of adjustment of the motivations and projects on the basis of experience and life trajectories in the host country. In this sense, a similar story is that of Eduardo. As in the case of Nadim, also Eduardo studied economic subjects in his country:

When I was in Honduras, I obtained my bachelor's degree in business management, and I continued that path during my Master courses, with a specialisation in Tourism. After my graduation, I attended a Master's in economics. (...) I found a job as a diplomat, and I migrated to Italy to work at the embassy of Honduras in Rome. (...) However, I did not like that job, so I decided to do something that was more connected to what I studied. (...) Furthermore, my father had a shop in Honduras, and I already knew that I like to be an entrepreneur. (...) I have a really good memory of that shop. (...) I didn't want to have bosses anymore, I didn't want to depend on someone. (...) I wanted to deal with something that I like, which is connected to my country of origin but also apt to Italy, that I love. (...) At the beginning, I've had many difficulties, I've committed mistakes, but I've also learned how to manage a business. (...) I would never go back to my previous job.

Eduardo, 38, Honduras; Rome

The story of Eduardo shows a migration path that was linked to a specific work project, constituted by his job at the embassy. This project has totally changed as the years were passing by. In fact, he decided to rely on his pre-migration acquisition of human capital (both through University education and through intergenerational transmission, thanks to the shop of his father) and to open his own business. Therefore, both in the cases of Eduardo and Nadim, the first professional motivation of their migratory path has been set aside and substituted by other tasks. Furthermore, in both cases the decision to become self-employed was not related to economic motivations or disadvantage status, since both entrepreneurs have a high-wage and stable job (Abada *et al.*, 2014). From these narratives, the importance of projects for migrant entrepreneurs arises. In the previous life-stories, these projects were mainly connected to educational and/or professional objectives. Nevertheless, non-economic projects often emerge in the narrative of successful migrant entrepreneurs.

Specifically, the following two narratives belong to entrepreneurs whose entrepreneurial plan has become part of their trajectories during their life experience in Italy, while professional or educational tasks were absent during their migratory path. The first example is shown by Rama, who came to Italy for family unification:

I came to Italy three months after my marriage. (...) My husband had been living in Italy since 1961. He came here to study at the school of fine arts in Florence. Later, he went to Milan, since he wasn't able to find a job in Florence, he started to work in the fashion industry, and he was the first black male model in Italy. (...) He earned very well when he was a model so, during the first years that I had been spending in Italy, I was a housewife, and I had been going with him at the runway shows. (...) However, I wasn't completely satisfied, and I started to think about ways to have a professional life in Italy.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

Therefore, the migratory path of Rama was distinguished by a non-professional reason, that of family unification. In fact, her husband was living in Italy, so she left her previous job and her family to follow him. However, during the first years of her life in Italy, Rama's entrepreneurial project arose, since she was not satisfied with being a housewife and just follow her husband:

During that period, we were often going to eat at the restaurants. I soon realised that in Milan, at that time, there wasn't any African restaurant. There were only a few Eritrean restaurants, which prepared "zighini", their typical dish with (...) spicy sauces. There wasn't any other kind of African restaurant, and I told my husband: *<I'd like to open an African restaurant>* and he answered: *<it's really difficult, you have to work a lot in a restaurant>*. However, I replied: *<you have to work a lot to live, I can't stay at home and doing nothing anymore!>*. (...) This is still my thought: of course, I was his wife, but I really needed to have my own professional life. (...) My husband soon realised that I was getting serious; it wasn't just a passing fancy. (...) He decided to support me, and we opened this restaurant together in 1988. (...) My husband had been fundamental for my restaurant, (...) but I decided to keep on alone after his death, in 1995.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

The decision of Rama of opening her restaurant arose because of the need to have her professional life, connected to a strategical observation that she had made, related to the absence of African restaurants in Italy. Therefore, she soon transformed her necessity into a successful entrepreneurial project. Rama became an entrepreneur because of specific project development and non-economic reasons, related to the perspective of independence and to have her professional life.

The second narrative belongs to Farooq, who is 53, and came from Pakistan to Italy in 1992. He opened an Indian restaurant in 1998. The story of Farooq shows a migratory path that, on the one hand, was not distinguished by a precise project but, on the other, the reasons for migration were not strictly economic:

When I finished high school, I realised that I wanted to live in another country. I chose Italy because my father was often going there for his business. He had always said that Italy was a beautiful country and that Italian people were really friendly. He was entrepreneur, (...) he produced electrical appliances in Pakistan (...), many of his suppliers were Italian, and he had often been going to Italy to acquire spare parts or useful components for electrical appliances. In 1992, when I was 27, I came here with my father. (...) We didn't have a precise destination. First, we went to Rome, then we went to Milan, and I decided to follow my personal path, separated by my father's one, by working

first at Lido di Jesolo, and later again in Milan, where I settled.

Farooq, 53, Pakistani; Milan

Farooq's reasons to migrate are connected to the willingness to live in another country, and to the network, represented by the father of Farooq, who had many business linkages in Italy. Once that Farooq settled in Italy, he separated his path from that of his father, by starting to work and to have career advancements at McDonald's. At that point, the entrepreneurial objective arose:

After having spent a summer at Lido di Jesolo to work in a hotel, (...) I started to work at McDonald's, here in Milan. (...) I started to work as a waiter and check-out assistant. However, I soon have promotions, and I became the manager of the store. (...) During the years spent at McDonald's, I also met my wife, who is Italian. (...) The restaurant was our project. (...) The starting idea was mine, but she has soon supported me. (...) Thus, in 1998, we opened our restaurant.

Farooq, 53, Pakistani; Milan

Farooq constructed his project to have his restaurant in Italy, together with his wife. Even in this case, the motivation of Farooq's entrepreneurship was linked to independence and the need for having his family business. These two narratives show that the trajectory could be characterised by important projects after the migratory path, since the experiences lived by migrants in Italy (the experience as consumer in the case of Rama, and the professional experience as manager in a fast-food chain in the case of Farooq) have played an important role in the setting up the entrepreneurial motivations, objectives and, therefore, strategies and business plan.

Marriage with Italian people, mixed couples and cosmopolitanism

At this point, by examining the role of life events that are not strictly connected with the educational and professional sphere, we can see that a very important role is played by marriage with Italian people. This aspect is strongly connected to the concept of "cosmopolitanism". In

fact, the advantage of marriage with Italian people is not only intended as an easier and faster way to achieve citizenship, but it also constitutes a turning point for both the life in the host country and professional opportunities. In fact, these advantages are also perceived by the entrepreneurs that are in mixed couples (but not married).

The narratives of Farooq and Nadim help us to understand how a marriage with an Italian citizen can play a relevant role in both the personal and the entrepreneurial life trajectory of migrant entrepreneurs. Starting from Farooq, he opened his Indian restaurant in 1998, in co-partnership with his wife, who is Italian:

I met my wife when I was working at McDonald's, she was my colleague. She supported me in my career advancement since I soon became the store manager. (...) While we were working together, we developed both life and professional plans. (...) We had the idea of opening the restaurant, and we decided to unite, (...) on the one hand, my Pakistani origin and my knowledge of Indian recipes and, (...) on the other, my wife's knowledge of Italy, of Italian people, of their taste, (...) and of the restaurant sector in Milan.

Farooq, 53, Pakistani; Milan

Farooq and his wife developed an entrepreneurial project together, and this partnership has represented a great advantage for Farooq, since he avoided any problems in understanding the language or the bureaucratic procedures.

Marriage with an Italian person can represent an advantage also when the spouse is not involved in the entrepreneurial project. This characteristic appears in the narrative of Nadim. He came to Italy in 1980 with his uncle, to help him with his business:

A few years later, my uncle's business in Italy didn't go as he had forecast, (...) and he left for the US. (...) I stayed in Italy because I had met my girlfriend and future wife. (...) I soon obtained Italian citizenship. (...) I've never suffered the condition of being foreigner, because my wife is Italian, and my children are Italian. (...) This condition has helped me (...) to choose to have an Italian qualification, and I attended a master's course in Economics. (...) I have always been integrated.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

Even though Nadim and his wife have never worked together, the marriage with an Italian woman has helped him in the integration in the host country, and the advice of his wife have also fostered him to acquire further human capital, that could have been more valuable in Italy. Thanks to the recognised qualification, he found a high skilled job in a bank, which he left 12 years later to open his own restaurant.

This mechanism associated with marriage with an Italian person is even more evident when these two stories are compared to the narrative of Rama¹¹⁶. Even though she has been living in Italy for more than thirty years, she considers Milan as her home, and she has many Italian friends who supported her in the most difficult periods of her life, she speaks about the sensation of being a “foreigner”:

Migration is not easy. When you arrive in a country, people always look at you as a foreigner, even 100 years later. You have to adapt yourself to the new country, to let people understand that you are a good person. (...) People come from Africa to Europe to look for a better life. (...) However, I have always been considered a foreigner. In 1996 I asked for citizenship, because I’m Italian, and my son is also Italian, he was born here. (...) The first time, my application was rejected. (...) Many years later, supported by a lawyer friend of mine, I asked for the appeal. Now, I am Italian, and (...) I managed to obtain citizenship in 2014. (...) However, I will always be considered a foreigner.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

By comparing the narrative of Rama to that of Nadim, we can see a different perception of the relationship with Italian society. In fact, the African entrepreneur perceives that people often consider her as a foreigner. Furthermore, Rama narrates of a very long and difficult bureaucratic path to the attainment of citizenship, while those who married Italian women obtained citizenship throughout a more automatic procedure.

The advantage of a long-term relationship (with a marriage perspective) with an Italian person also emerges from the story of Eduardo, whose story has been already shown as far as professional experiences were concerned. Eduardo has an Italian boyfriend, and they are planning to do civil partnership:

I will obtain the Italian citizenship around two years after the civil partnership: it works out like in the case of

¹¹⁶ For information about Rama, see the Appendix, page 314.

marriage with an Italian person. (...) We haven't still chosen the date, but I think that we'll do that in July. I really think that integration has been easy for me. (...) It's awesome to identify yourself with a community, to feel that you are part of that community. I'm here, while mum, dad and my childhood friends live in Honduras. But I think that this thing is also part of what I mean with "success". You have to break through; you have to separate yourself from the relationship that you left in your country. You need to be selfish to survive. You need to be selfish with your family. Selfishness is not necessarily meant as a negative behaviour. It's meant as independence. If you want a new life, you need to block your past. If you keep thinking to nostalgia, you don't succeed. I'm fine here, I've got lots of friend and an Italian boyfriend. I think that my integration has been easier since I've met him. (...) He's also helping me with the restaurant communication since he owns a communication society. (...) We cooperate, as far as communication is concerned.

Eduardo, Honduras; Rome

The story of Eduardo explains how the long-term relationship and the perspective of the civil union have facilitated his integration in the host country. Furthermore, his boyfriend cooperates with Eduardo in the communication of the restaurant. Therefore, also in this case, the advantage is both from a personal and an entrepreneurial life perspective.

From this analysis, we can see that marriage with an Italian person is an event that is able to "facilitate" the life trajectory, and later the construction of a business and the achievement of a good performance in the host country. According to Pécoud (2007), cosmopolitan competencies are fundamental to achieve good business results. Furthermore, cosmopolitan characteristics imply that "cultures are not distinct entities (...) rather constitute fluid separations" (Pécoud, 2007: 14). The advantages connected to cosmopolitanism can be perceived directly when the business is shared with the partner, or he/she is a collaborator of the business. In this case, the project is shared together, by mixing the different skills, competences and cultures of the couple.

Furthermore, the advantages can also be perceived in a more indirect way, when the personal network is kept separate from the professional life¹¹⁷: in this case the mixed couple can help the

¹¹⁷ This event has been discussed in the conclusions of chapter 6, dedicated to network. It has been considered that personal relationships and the professional linkages are overlapped when the first element manages to positively contribute to the second one. When this contribution does not take place, the two kinds of relationships remain separated.

migrant in terms of integration, of understanding the mechanisms of the complex Italian context, bureaucracy, market, and the necessary resources and means to face this situation. Therefore, cosmopolitanism plays an important role for migrant entrepreneurs when it directly involves the entrepreneurial activity, such as business partnership within mixed couples. Furthermore, the role of cosmopolitanism also emerges when the private life is kept separated from the professional one. In fact, life within a multicultural environment allows acquiring knowledge and skills that can be useful for the business activity.

Early regularisation

Another element that needs to be discussed in this paragraph concerns the regularisation. Generally speaking, many entrepreneurs have arrived in Italy with study permits or family unification. Nevertheless, some of the restaurant owners interviewed have declared to have arrived without regular documents. The previous undocumented status is often linked to many disadvantages, such as exploitation, limited network mostly connected to the co-national community, without opportunities of combining network for their professional strategies because they could not stipulate a regular job contract. In fact, undocumented migration is a disadvantage, but it appears to be a secondary disadvantage because of two reasons: first, a relatively small number of entrepreneurs have declared to have migrated without documents. Second, constraints such as the limited network and the opening of a business without having acquired the necessary human capital to manage a business are common traits to most of the unsuccessful or surviving entrepreneurs interviewed, also among those who had regular visas. Nevertheless, among those who admitted to having migrated as undocumented, there are also two successful stories, that need to be discussed, in order to understand the advantages of early regularisation. The term “early regularisation” acquires two meanings. The first one is related to the brief duration of the irregular period, as it is narrated by Danny. Danny came to Italy in 2001, when he was 18:

I could no more remain in my country because of problems with a baby gang. (...) My mother sent me to Italy because her partner was living there. (...) I had fake documents, so basically, I was undocumented. (...) The first months were a nightmare, I didn't want to stay here, I got a job that was not paid, (...) and I didn't get along with my step-father, (...) who was like a stranger to me. However, he really cared about my situation. He found me a job in the

construction sector with his friend, who was willing to stipulate a job contract with me and, thanks to him and my step-father, I was regularised with the 2002 amnesty.

Danny, 35, Peruvian; Milan

As long as the case of Danny is concerned, it emerges that the undocumented status did not last for a long time. In fact, he managed to be regularised a year after the migration. He soon found a job in the bar and restaurant sector, which he liked. At the same time, he also chose to continue his studies, first by attending evening school course and by obtaining a high school diploma and, later, by enrolling to the university and obtaining his bachelor's degree. After graduation, Danny used the knowledge learned at the university to construct his entrepreneurial project, based on the realisation of his dream of having his restaurant.

The second case of successful entrepreneur shows an undocumented status that has lasted for a longer time than that of Danny. Victor arrived in Italy in 1991, when he was 26:

I came to Italy in 1991. (...) My wife had come to Italy the previous year, (...) and we were both undocumented. (...) Since I had arrived, I immediately started to work, and I suffered every kind of exploitation and blackmail. I had been regularised through the migration amnesty of 1995. Those four years had been a nightmare for me. I was working, and my employers did not pay me, they threatened me that, if I dared to report them, they would have sent me back to my country. (...) After the regularisation, things have started to improve.

Victor, 53, Peruvian; Rome

Victor underlines the sense of exploitation and disadvantage connected to the undocumented status that was presented before. One of the main differences between the story of Victor and those of other surviving and unsuccessful entrepreneurs consists in the years of migration and regularisation: Victor migrated to Italy in 1991, and he was regularised throughout the migration amnesty of 1995, whilst the other entrepreneurs who migrated irregularly arrived during the 2000s and were regularised in 2009 or 2012. Moreover, Victor did not immediately access to entrepreneurship as a reaction to the exploitation that he had suffered in the previous years. Instead, Victor started to work in the construction sector, to save money, and later he opened a business with his brother in the construction sector. In the meanwhile, they had the dream of opening their restaurant, and they started to work at this project.

The presence of an entrepreneurial project supported by important previous entrepreneurial (in the case of Victor) and educational and working experiences (in the case of Danny) plays a very important role in the precision of strategies and all the details that need to be taken into account to make the restaurant functioning. Therefore, the early regularisation (in terms of duration, in the case of Danny, and year of the amnesty, as concerns Victor) represents an advantage with respect to the other migrant entrepreneurs who had arrived as undocumented. The relevance of their advantage emerges more evidently by looking at the experience of Gloria, a Peruvian entrepreneur who does not manage to achieve good performances. Gloria is 46, and she came to Italy in 2004, without a regular visa:

I came to Italy in 2004, since Peru was at crisis and I could no more maintain my children. (...) I was a single mother, and my father told me: *<Go to Italy, your sister lives there, I'll take care of your children here in Peru. (...) I can give you 6000 euros, or you can pretend to be your sister.>* (...) I really look like my sister, so I cut and coloured my hair, and I used her visa. I'm aware that I did something bad, but it was a necessity, I did not have any alternatives. (...) I used her visa just to come here, then I spent eight years as an undocumented migrant. In 2005, my father died, and I did not manage to go back to Peru for his funeral because I did not have legal documents to go back to Peru. (...) I have always worked, but none stipulated a work contract with me. In 2007, I was also a victim of a scam by a family composed by an Italian wife and a Moroccan husband. They told me: *<give me 4000 Euro, and we'll stipulate a regular contract with you, so you can apply for a regular visa.>* (...) I trusted them, but they stole me my money, and I didn't see them anymore. Thank God, in 2011, I managed to obtain the residence permit.

Gloria, 47, Peruvian; Milan

After one year, Gloria opened the Peruvian restaurant with her boyfriend. However, the restaurant was at crisis, and the crisis even worsened after the death of her partner. The problem of Gloria is first connected to her networks, which largely belong to the Peruvian community because, during the long period of irregularity, she did not manage to acquire other kinds of networks. Furthermore, Gloria had been undocumented for many years and, after the regularisation, she felt the immediate need to improve her economic and social condition, without having acquired further human capital and having developed efficient strategies for her business. Therefore, by comparing this latter story with the former two ones, it emerges how,

on the one hand, the early regularisation in terms of duration has allowed Danny to to have a regular job contract soon, to find a job in the sector that he preferred, and to acquire further human capital, to develop his business. As far as the story of Victor is concerned, the regularisation with the 1995 amnesty gave him a long time to look for a job, save money, settle a first business in the construction sector with his brother and, in the meanwhile, constructing his project for the restaurant.

Migrant women entrepreneurs: entrepreneurial roles and reconcile work and family

This paragraph is aimed at exploring the trajectories of women entrepreneurs of migrant origin. Until this moment, I have shown different narratives of women entrepreneurs. On the one hand, we have seen that many women are successful entrepreneurs, they manage to combine the different forms of capital, and to develop efficient strategies for their restaurant. On the other hand, other women conduct businesses that are in crisis or manage to survive. This paragraph allows understanding first of all the different roles of women within family businesses and, secondly, to understand the constraints that they had to face while running their businesses, in particular so far as reconciling work and family is concerned.

From the narratives of women, a first major point needs to be discussed, concerning the roles within family businesses. Secondly, I have also found some evidence regarding reconcile work and family.

In chapter 5.3, dedicated to the role of professional networks, I had introduced the argument of partnership with the spouses. The first evidence is that most of women interviewed are in a society with their husbands or partners, whereas fewer men are in partnership with their wives. Many of the men interviewed have their wives as employees, but not as partners. Smith-Hunter (2004) claims that women have been employed for a long time in their husbands' businesses. This kind of situation is particularly likely to occur in international contexts, where women have limited possibilities to find other jobs (Smith-Hunter, 2004). This situation emerges, for instance, in the cases of Seok and Divit. Seok explains that he chose at the starting phase of the business to have his wife only as an employee, and he never changed his decision. Divit's wife works with him in his Indian vegetarian fast food, she is always present at the restaurant, but she is not his partner. According to Divit, this choice is merely related to is necessity to establish an individual business, and for this reason his wife has been included in the list of employees.

In other cases where both spouses manage the restaurants, the wife is considered or sometimes she also considers herself as playing a subordinate role in respect of the husband. This is shown in the cases of Henry and Lea. Henry owns a Greek restaurant in Milan, together with his Greek wife:

For my wife, this is her first experience in the Italian labour market. (...) Until the moment I opened the restaurant, her only occupation was to care about our home. Our children were still very young, so she was a housewife. (...) She just cared about our children and our home. (...) However, since I decided to open a Greek restaurant, she was really enthusiastic. For this reason, she is my partner, but she is also my worker. (...) I manage the business, and she works as a waiter and as a cook.

Henry, 54, Egyptian; Milan

Henry shows that, though his wife appears as his business partner, she has a role that is subordinate to him. This concept of subordination also emerges from the biography of a female entrepreneur, Lea. Lea owns a Senegalese restaurant in partnership with her husband, which manages to achieve good results and she considers herself in a subordinate role, although she takes care of the management and organisation procedures:

I had the idea of opening this restaurant, since I had attended many kitchen classes. (...) The idea was mine, but the founder is my husband. I am able to organise; I manage everything concerning the organisation and the business. (...) However, when the restaurant is opened, he is the entrepreneur, and I am a simple cook, (...). I work in the kitchen.

Lea, 43, Senegalese; Milan

Though Lea is the creator of the restaurant and the main organiser, she considers herself as subordinate to the role of her husband. This kind of profile corresponds to the what Gonzales-Gonzales et al. (2011) define as “traditional family businesses”: the priority in the business initiative is up to the husband and women, who are considered in the same way as co-owners, play a secondary role, by helping in the business as other family member or employee do, and by obeying to the decisions and the authority of their husband.

However, this process does not take place for all the women entrepreneurs, since many of them have the same authority as their husband in managing their restaurant. In fact, the majority of

the women interviewed manages their restaurant in partnership with their husband, but they share their managerial roles. For instance, in the case of Valérie¹¹⁸, she is the manager, while her husband is the chief of waiters and sommelier.

A different story is narrated by Melanie, an Ecuadorian entrepreneur in Milan that manages to achieve good performances. Melanie does not manage the restaurant in partnership with her husband, but rather her life-partner is also her employee. However, this case is the only situation where the male partner is a worker since, in the other few cases of women that are not in partnership with their husband, they own the business alone.

An important narrative in this sense is that of Rama. For Rama, the opening of the restaurant is also seen as a way to gain her independence:

After my wedding and my arrival in Italy, three months later, I wasn't working, and I was just following my husband, who was a fashion model, during the runway shows. (...) It was funny, but it was not sufficient since I used to have my job in Mali. (...) I really wanted to have a job outside the home, so I told my husband: <I want to open an African restaurant>. He answered me: <It's difficult, you have to work a lot>. But I told him that I wanted to work, it was important for me. Therefore, we opened this restaurant (...) in 1988.

Rama, Mali; Milan

This narrative can be included in the perspectives on “new femininities” (Budgeon, 2014; Villares-Varela, 2018). According to Villares-Varela (2018), “migrant entrepreneurs comply with traditional feminine roles, whilst at the same time also engaging with values of independence, and discourses of feminine empowerment”. Concerning the story of Rama, the need of independence and empowerment still remained after the death of her husband, in 1995. In fact, she not only continued to manage the restaurant, without looking for other partners, but she also acquired further human capital:

When my husband died, (...) I felt the need to improve my knowledge about management in Italy, and to obtain a qualification that was recognised in this country. Thus, I enrolled in two courses of specialisation organised by the Region Lombardia. In 1999, I attended a course related to business management for cooperatives. In 2000, I participated to a course that concerned agritourism

¹¹⁸ For information about Valérie, see the Appendix, page 316.

management. (...) I decided to attend these courses (...), to have a European qualification. (...) I was very tired. It has been very stressful for me, but at least, now I have two qualifications that are recognised by the European Union.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

When Rama's husband died, her son was 9. To reconcile her work with the care of her son, she used to rely on her African acquaintances:

My husband died when he was only 55, (...) in 1995 (...), and my son was just a little boy, he was only 9. My life hasn't been simple: the child was spending every afternoon at the restaurant, and he did his homework there, while I was cooking. Then, when the evening was coming, I used to put him in a cab that brought him home, where one of my African brothers was expecting him, he put the boy to bed and he cared for him until I went home, later.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

Though with sacrifices, Rama managed to reconcile her life as a widow with a small boy and an entrepreneur.

From the narrative of women entrepreneurs interviewed, reconciling work and business often represents a challenge. For instance, Cristina admits that it is not easy, and for many years she has focused most of her time on her activity, at the expense of her family:

I feel that I've lost all the beautiful moments in my daughter's life. When she was a little girl, I used to work at the call centre, and then I came here. (...) Actually, here it's worse, according to that point of view. I work every weekend, also during festivities.

Cristina, 42, Peruvian; Rome

Cristina's narrative shows that, for her, it has been really complicated to dedicate to her daughter with the activity to manage. Cristina used to rely on her family and friends to take care of her daughter when she was at work, but she regrets not to have spent more time with her.

From the narrative of women entrepreneurs interviewed, reconciling work and business often represents a challenge. For instance, Emily left her business in the financial sector in

Switzerland, to open her hotel and restaurant in Milan, to better reconcile her work with the care of her three children:

When I had my third son, I decided to sell the business in the financial sector, to open a more “female” activity in the hotel and restaurant sector. (...) I did that to spend more time with my children. They live in this hotel with me. The tourism and hotel world offers a lot to women, and I can stay with my children.

Emily, 50, Italo-Japanese; Milan

Many authors (e.g. Villares-Varela, 2018; Gonzales-Gonzales, 2011) highlight that self-employment is seen as a strategy to reconcile work and family activities. However, from the narratives of the entrepreneurs interviewed, the task of conciliation between family and work is perceived as difficult to achieve. As it is suggested in the narrative of Cristina, this aspect could depend on the restaurant sector, since entrepreneurs have to work during the weekends and the festivities. Both Rama and Cristina have relied on their networks in order to reconcile work with family activities. In the case of Emily, she undertook another kind of choice, by leaving her previous activity in the financial sector, to open a hotel/restaurant that allows her to spend more time with their children.

7.3 The role of the crisis in migrant entrepreneurs' life story

This second part of the section is dedicated to the crisis and how it has negatively affected the activities of entrepreneurs who do not reach good performances. What appears to be relevant from the stories of these entrepreneurs is that they often migrate because of economic reasons, connected to the need of finding a job or escaping from wars, religious persecutions, or conditions of poverty. Therefore, these migrants did not have any plan and they accepted every kind of job that had been offered them, generally low skilled, low paid and sometimes also in the irregular economy. Thus, their trajectory in Italy is aimed at improving their situation, and the motivation to become entrepreneurs is often related to the perspective of gaining a better economic and social position. However, this decision is not accompanied to the acquisition of further human capital or by an aware combination of networks. Hence, the entrepreneurs are more likely to encounter difficulties, and they have fewer resources with which they can face the crisis (Arcidiacono, 2015), compared with their colleagues who had a consistent project and more powerful supports in terms of human and social capital.

A phenomenon that has deeply hit the restaurant sector is the economic crisis of 2008. This section aims to understand the role of the crisis in the trajectory of migrant entrepreneurs. Though the crisis has represented a great challenge for those self-employed who do not manage to achieve a good performance, also successful entrepreneurs have perceived the negative effects of this phenomenon, because it has deeply affected the consumes. What makes the differences are the behaviour and the resources that the entrepreneurs dispose at the aim of finding a solution. In this sense, I have selected two cases of successful entrepreneurs, that explain how they managed to overcome the crisis.

The first case selected is that of Nadim, who had opened his first Indian restaurant in Milan with a co-national partner:

In 1997, we started our Indian restaurant, and everything was going great until the 2008 economic crisis. Consumes started to decrease, routines changed, people were eating out less frequently, and our sales volume rapidly lowered. I separated the route from my partner. (...) We had different perspectives, and we split up. (...) However, I didn't want to give up the restaurant sector, so I soon decided to open my own small restaurant. (...) It's easier to make things work out if the restaurant is small. (...) This was the

winning choice. (...) I can control everything: the cooks, waiters, food, I'm always here.

Nadim, 57, Indian; Milan

The activity of Nadim and his partner had been heavily hit by the crisis, at the point that he closed the restaurant that he owned with his Indian business partner, because of different opinions concerning the management of the critical situation. Nevertheless, Nadim had the resources in terms of finances, experience in the sector, human capital and networks. Therefore, he combined these different forms of capital to start again with a new restaurant. On the basis of the previous experience, he decided to open a small restaurant, with five employees (the previous one had 11 workers), to easily manage the business. Nadim's new activity has soon obtained positive results, by gaining a good reputation, and by acquiring a vast base of trusted customers.

What appears to be relevant in these cases consists of the ability to analyse the situation, and to figure out the solution. The story of David is able to show changes, that are not as radical as those of Nadim, but they concern strategies regarding the type of food prepared. David is an Eritrean entrepreneur in Rome. He came to Italy in 1972, when he was 18, to study Economics at the University of Rome. In 1976, after his graduation, he opened his Eritrean restaurant. At the beginning, it was difficult because his business was one of the first ethnic restaurants in the Italian capital. Nevertheless, after 3-4 years, the restaurant got off to a good start, and it soon gained a very good reputation both at the national and at the international level. When asked about the crisis, David explains the strategies adopted to face the temporary decrease in earnings and customers:

Of course, during the last years, we have perceived the crisis: one of the first things that people do to save money is to go less frequently to dine out. (...) But we have changed some strategy, adding more varieties to the food, by constructing vegetarian dishes, at the aim to attract more Italian people, and even vegetarian and vegan customers, and earnings have started to increase again.

David, 64, Eritrean; Rome

Therefore, David adopted strategical changes to attract a segment of customers to which he had not addressed before since until 2008 all the dishes provided by his restaurant used to include meat or fish. Moreover, the segment of vegetarian and vegan customer has been expanding

during the last decade, and this kind of customers are more willing to pay higher prices for the high quality of food. In addition, he also changed other dishes, by adopting the “hybridisation strategy” discussed in chapter 4, to attract Italian customers, together with tourists, and he managed to overcome the crisis. David has mostly relied on his multi-decade experience in the restaurant sector, and on the great amount of human capital acquired in Italy before opening the business. Both in the case of Nadim and David, the experiences that they had accumulated in previous years had been fundamental, in the first case, to start again with a new entrepreneurial project and, in the second one, to adopt decisive and new strategies to diversify and increase the clientele. It has to be taken in account that, in both cases, the entrepreneurs did not rely only on their entrepreneurial experience, but it has also been combined with other elements of human capital that they had acquired in Italy many years before. This combination has been important to make the entrepreneurs understand the solutions to overcome the crisis.

To understand how the crisis has more deeply affected those entrepreneurs who do not achieve good performances, I have selected four narratives, that connect the trajectories of migrant entrepreneurs with the lack of adoption of winning strategies. Specifically, the first two narratives deal directly with the strategy adopted, while the last two are more focused on disadvantages. The first case is that of Divit, an Indian entrepreneur in Rome, who just manages to survive. Divit migrated to Italy because of the hostility against his religious belief in his country of origin:

I am of Indian origins, but, until the time of my migration, I had been living in Bangladesh. (...) Indeed, when I was a little boy, my mother and my father went to live in Bangladesh. I had been spending there my childhood and my adolescence. However, the last years that I had spent there were very difficult for us, (...) since we were Hindu. (...) We had many problems connected to our religion since in Bangladesh there are a lot of religious fundamentalists. (...) My family left Bangladesh to go back to Calcutta, our city of origin. However, I wanted to live in a totally different context, (...) and I decided to go to Italy. (...) When I arrived here, I accepted every kind of job that was offered to me. I worked in hotels, restaurants, and market stall. As my employers saw that I was undocumented, they exploited me, they did not stipulate a contract with me, I could only work in the illegal economy. (...) As a result, I've been working in Italy for 16 years, but few contributions have been deposited at INPS. For most of my

time in Italy, I had been working illegally, none wanted to stipulate a legal job contract, (...) and I couldn't be regularised. To make me accept the job, my employers said that they would have paid me lot of money. Working hours were very long, sometimes I had to work 15-16 hours a day, and my wage was around 800-1000 Euros for months. It was difficult. I started to work at the early morning, and I finished at the evening. I was really tired of my life. (...) I had been undocumented for 12 years, until the 2012 amnesty. (...) I started to save money, and I was helped by an Afghani friend of mine, who helped me to open this restaurant. (...) I would have liked to study, once I had arrived in Italy, but I couldn't, I had to work, and I was working 10-12 hours a day, I didn't have time to study, I wanted to learn some managerial concept, but I couldn't.

Divit, 38, Indian; Rome

Religious beliefs rendered impossible for Divit to continue to live in Bangladesh, and he decided to go to Italy. In Italy, he did not have any project, and he just wanted to work, to maintain himself and to send money to his family in India. For this reason, he accepted every job offer that he received, and he decided to not acquire further human capital, neither through education nor through courses of professional specialisation, because of his undocumented status that lasted for more than a decade, since he was regularised in 2012. After the regularisation, he soon decided to open his own business, without having acquired further human capital that could have helped him in choosing strategies:

It is not easy to work for someone else, it's really heavy and difficult. I'm sure that somewhere there are nice employers, and who works for them is really lucky. Unluckily, I've never had nice employers. (...) It was really difficult to be an employee. As they saw that I was an undocumented migrant; they exploited me; they did not stipulate a contract with me, I could only work in the illegal economy. (...) It was difficult. I started to work in the early morning, and I finished in the evening. I was really tired of my life. (...) When I had been regularised, in 2012, I realised that I couldn't work no more in that way, I wanted to do something on my own, I wanted to be free. (...) So, I asked my friends to help me open my own business. (...) Since I've also worked for restaurants, I decided to open this place with my traditional cuisine. This is not a real restaurant, it is more similar to healthy fast food. (...) Now, I am free, but I always have economic difficulties, it is very hard to gain lots of money with this restaurant.

Divit opened a vegetarian Indian restaurant in Rome, which follows the rules of the ayurvedic cuisine. The idea by itself was quite innovative and creative since it allowed him to diversify both from traditional Indian restaurants, and from Italian vegan restaurants. However, he had neither the knowledge to understand the type of strategy to adopt, nor the type of marketing to let the restaurant known, nor did he receive the useful information to deal with bureaucratic practices in Italy. Divit saw entrepreneurship as the only alternative to have a better life, both from the economical and from the social status point of view. He decided to use his savings and to accept the help offer of his friend. However, since his motivations were aimed at improving his social and economic situation, without acquiring resources, in this case, connected to human capital, that could have helped him to evaluate more carefully his business and marketing strategies. Indeed, the use of biological ingredients, the attention to healthy food and to vegetarian cuisine throughout the use of ancient ayurvedic recipes do not emerge from the fast-food format of the restaurant, since this kind of format is usually associated to junk and fried food. By looking at the strategy adopted by David, the difference emerged: David chose to create vegetarian dishes, by addressing to the same consumer target as Divit. However, David put a great attention to the association with healthy food, and to the communication of his restaurant, because of his combination of many human capital elements. On the other hand, Divit chose a fast-food format from which the association with healthy nutrition is not visible to the consumers.

The second narrative belongs to Seok, a Korean restaurant owner who has been facing a deep crisis. His story has been analysed in the chapter related to the context, since he is one of the restaurant owners who has first settled the prices, and later the quality of food, strategies, workers, and suppliers. As it has been shown in chapter 4.4, this kind of decision is not winning in the long term, because every strategy and every cost is always constrained by prices. This trait emerges in the description of the trend of Seok's restaurant during the years of the crisis:

During the first year and a half, the restaurant was going quite well, since the crisis in Korea had ended, so the tourism had gone further. There were lots of customers. However, tourism has again decreased after 11 September 2001, since people were scared to travel. Nevertheless, we kept on until the deep economic crisis. We kept on until 2007-2008, when the economic crisis arrived. Those had been really dark years. In 2009, I thought to close the

restaurant. The year later, things have improved a bit, because many Chinese tourists, who like Korean cuisine, arrived here. However, things are now worsening again. (...) With the restaurant, I can't construct a great business, but just living. Unfortunately, living costs have increased since the restaurant had opened, but the prices have remained the same. (...) I can't do more than this. I can't raise prices. (...) I also can't adapt my dishes to Italian people, because most of my customers are from Korea, and they wouldn't come anymore if I'd use that strategy. I really would like to do that, to have more Italian customers, to create a fusion cuisine, so I'm no more constrained to the touristic flows from Korea, but it's too risky. I can't afford such a thing. (...) If I change the dishes, I would also have to change prices, who have remained the same since the moment that I acquired this restaurant in the 2000s. I can't change now.

Seok, 56, Korean; Rome

According to Seok, his problem consists on constrained strategies. In fact, he would want to adopt hybridisation strategy, in order to attract Italian customers. However, he considers this decision as a leap in the dark, and he prefers to live in a situation of uncertainty. The problems of Seok has also been examined in chapter 5, with reference to his network that is limited to the Korean community, which is quite small. Moreover, Seok only relies on his previous experience as waiter in the same restaurant, that was not combined with other elements of human capital and, therefore, it was not sufficient to allow him to deal with Italian bureaucratic practices, worsened by the entrepreneur's lack of fluency in the Italian language, that creates problems of communication with his accountant and his consultant.

The third case concerns Aaron, an Eritrean entrepreneur in Milan, whose restaurant has been facing a long and persistent crisis from many years. He has been living in Italy since 1972:

I came to Italy (...) when I was 18. I escaped because, during the 1970s, the independence war against Ethiopia was going to explode. That situation rendered Eritrea very dangerous for young people. (...) I had been studying at the Italian school in Eritrea and, for this reason, my parents sent me to Italy. (...) I came here alone, with a regular visa (...) and, during the first months, I had been gusted by my cousin, that was living here.

Aaron, 64, Eritrean; Milan

Once Aaron arrived in Italy, he wanted to work as a singer for lyrical concerts, but he soon realised that he could not achieve his dream of being a lyrical singer, and all he could do consisted in low skilled jobs. Therefore, he decided to avoid that condition, to choose self-employment, and he had worked for 18 years as peddler:

I did not want to be exploited by someone in the construction or restaurant sector, (...) so I decide to have my own stand and to sell goods that I had imported from Africa. (...) I was going all around Lombardia and Italy as a whole. (...) After 18 years, I was very tired of that job, I need something more stable, (...) both from an economic and a geographical point of view (...) and I caught the occasion in 1993, when I heard that this restaurant, that was already belonging to the Eritrean community, was available. (...) Therefore, I acquired the license. (...) Now, we are in crisis. (...) Our crisis started before 2008, with the arrival of Euro. (...) Since the Euro has arrived, we are working for free. (...) We barely manage to cover costs, and my house has been confiscated. (...) This prevents us from giving our contribution, as traders to this country. (...) We resist, but I don't know until when we will endure. It's not nice, not at all. Success is a utopia. We don't earn anything, and we cannot do anything.

Aaron, Eritrean; Milan

Aaron decided to work in the restaurant sector because he was attracted by the perspective of a more stable and profitable job. However, he only relied on his first experience as a peddler, without acquiring further human capital to deal with the new activity. As consequences, Aaron faced some problems with strategies, since the majority of his customers are Italian, but the majority of his professional connections belong to the Eritrean community, and he has difficulties in attracting Italian people. The problems of Aaron are connected to the professional connection, that he does not manage to combine in a profitable way to improve the management of his business.

From these first three narratives and those of the majority of the entrepreneurs who do not reach good performances, economic reasons to entrepreneurship prevail, and they are often not connected to market analysis and business plan.

The fourth narrative is slightly different from the others under this point of view, and it belongs to Henry, who has been owning a Greek restaurant in Milan since 2008. Henry is among those entrepreneurs who manage to survive, he has faced a sharp crisis during the first years of

starting-up, that corresponded to the first period of the economic crisis, but he has managed to overcome this phase. Nevertheless, he has no project of changes or expansion. He just wants to maintain his restaurant and to earn the necessary to allow him and his family to live a decent life. He came to Italy in 1986:

I came here when I was 22, to find a job. In Egypt, I was desperate because I wasn't able to find any kind of job (...), although I had just obtained a chartered accountant qualification. (...) I couldn't find a job in Egypt because of my religion: I am a Coptic Christian and any employer did not want to hire me when they found out about faith. (...) I was discriminated for my religion, and the only thing I could do was to look for a job in another country. (...) Therefore, I migrated to Italy and I settled in Milan. I had been helped by members of the Coptic community here in Milan. I have worked in the construction and cleaning sector. In 1990 I wanted to gain more money, and I acquired the cleaning business where I had been working. I kept that enterprise until 2008, when I opened my Greek restaurant, with my wife as a partner. (...) I chose to change sector since I preferred to have a restaurant rather than a cleaning activity. (...) For many years I had wanted to open my own restaurant (...) and, at the end, I managed to do that. (...) The experience in the cleaning sector was fundamental to the management of the restaurant, (...) since cleaning is really important, and my previous activity facilitated me in that sense. Right now, I don't see any positive aspect of being an entrepreneur: you just have to pay. With the crisis, costs have increased, and earnings have decreased. It could be better to be employees, but just with a permanent job. Otherwise, also a dependent worker position is risky.

Henry, Egyptian; Milan

Economic reasons for entrepreneurship appear only as far as the first experience of Henry in the cleaning sector is concerned. In fact, Henry decided to acquire the cleaning activity to improve his economic position. As far as the starting business in the restaurant sector is concerned, Henry had wanted to establish a project with his wife, that is Greek. Therefore, the motivation to access the restaurant sector is quite similar to those that, until now have distinguished successful entrepreneurs. However, this project has not corresponded to further acquisition of human capital in Italy, that has never happened in the trajectory of Henry, and he set the basis of the business only on his experience as entrepreneurs. Moreover, he opened the restaurant during the years of crisis, and he did not have the necessary resources to adopt strategies that could allow him to overcome the crisis. The relevant role of resources to face the

economic crisis (Arcidiacono, 2015) emerges by comparing these last narratives to the first two analysed in this paragraph. As we have seen in the first two narratives of Nadim and David, they have managed to combine the formal education that they had received in Italy with their business experience. Therefore, they adopted strategies which allow them not only to overcome the crisis, but also to gain a good position in the market again.

From this section, it has emerged how different resources, experiences and motivations can shape and stratify the life trajectory of migrant entrepreneurs. At this point, it is important to adopt translocational positionality (Anthias, 2008; 2013) to analyse the origins of these migrant entrepreneurs, their trajectories, and their current social position, to understand whether positive performance coincide with ascending mobility.

7.4 Class of origin

This last section considers the class of origin and social mobility throughout the concept of translocational positionality (Anthias, 2008; 2013). The concept of translocational positionality aims to take into account identity by avoiding some of the problems identified with the concept, such as the treatment of identity as a specific feature owned by individuals or groups (Brubaker 2004; Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Anthias 2002). Specifically, this concept “addresses issues of identity in terms of locations which are not fixed but are context, meaning and time-related and which therefore involve shifts and contradictions” (Anthias, 2008:5). Translocational positionality is useful to the debate on migrant entrepreneurship stratification since it provides an interpretation “of narratives, identities, practices and outcomes by considering both the simultaneously experienced complexities of different social hierarchies and the role of multiple locations in time and space” (Villares-Varela, 2017a:110). Therefore, throughout translocational positionality, it is possible to understand migrants’ class positions across different spaces, for instance by taking into account both the country of origin and that of destination, and occupational transitions, such as from being employees to become entrepreneurs.

In paragraph 6.3, a part of the background of migrant entrepreneurs has been examined throughout intergenerational transmissions of human capital, and it has emerged that most of successful self-employed interviewed come from entrepreneurial families or wealthy families in general.

Specifically, only two successful entrepreneurs do not belong to a family of high class of origin. This section aims to explore the social stratification of migrant entrepreneurs, throughout the analysis of two of the three dimensions of social stratification indicated by Weber (1947)¹¹⁹: economic class and social status¹²⁰. In fact, not only the economic position has to be taken into

¹¹⁹ According to Weber, social stratification has to be analysed with reference to three main dimensions: economic class, social status and political power. The economic class is constituted by income and goods and services possessed by an individual, social status is the honour and prestige that he holds, while the political dimension is represented by the power exercised. This section will not analyse the political power, since from the interviews it does not emerge to play a role, differently from the other two dimensions.

¹²⁰ Social status is applied to social prestige that is based on one or more of the following elements: (1) lifestyle, (2) a formal process of education, or (3) on the prestige of birth or of an occupation (Lasswell, 1965).

account, but also their social status, both in this paragraph and in the next one, dedicated to migrant entrepreneurs' social mobility.

So far as the class of origin of migrant entrepreneurs is concerned, Yoon (1991) underlines that, though many scholars (Light, 1972; Lyman, 1977; Kitano 1980; Bonacich and Modell, 1980) have emphasised the role of ethnic solidarity as strengthening migrants who from lower class and have low levels of human capital, migrant entrepreneurs often come from middle classes and have high levels of human capital. As it has been underlined by Sanders and Nee (1997), human capital and class of origin are strictly connected, since higher education and fluent knowledge of the host country language is strongly interrelated with the class of origin. Gold (2014), in his work concerning migrant women entrepreneurs, found out that refugee and migrant women belonging to relatively high classes are more likely to run relatively large and/or professionally based businesses.

In his research on Korean migrants in the US, Yoon (1991) underlines that limited job opportunities consistent with their class background seem to be the main force that drives Korean migrants toward self-employment in small businesses. However, as I have underlined in the previous section, during my fieldwork, I have underscored that limited job opportunities are not often the main reasons that pushes migrant entrepreneurs to open their own business. Furthermore, as it has already been stressed, most of successful entrepreneurs come from high classes of origin.

This paragraph is dedicated to the analyses of the stories of successful entrepreneurs, by examining the role of the high class of origin and the few exceptions of “self-made men/women”; also, stories of those entrepreneurs that did not manage to reach high performances will be examined, before starting the section dedicated to social mobility.

First of all, I analyse the narratives those interviewees who come from wealthy families, but not entrepreneurial, with three stories of women: those of Rama, Valerie and Lea. Valdez (2016: 1622) stresses that “inherited wealth is generally tied to class background because middle-class families are more likely than working-class families to possess assets that can be transferred to descendants from one generation to the next.”

First, Rama, comes from a wealthy family in Mali, that allowed her to attend University, and to graduate in Economics and finance:

My family was wealthy in Mali. My father was the President of the Chamber of Commerce in my town. He was

often going to Rome. My mother, Marie Madeleine, was a bank manager. (...) Now my mother is dead. Her father was French, while her mother was from Mali. She studied in France. Then she came back to Mali with her mother. (...) Back up there, she met my father. (...) Also, part of the family of my father was very rich. (...) My father's uncle had been Prime Minister of Mali many years ago, and some members of my family are still part of the ruling class of my country. (...) However, I don't have any privilege. I'm living my life here in Italy, far from them. (...) When they come to Rome, they call me and tell me: *<How are you? Come back home!>* But I answer them: *<No, it doesn't work out in this way. I'm not coming back to Mali. Just for holidays. I'm Italian.>*. (...) I have two brothers. They migrated too, and they live in France. The only member of my family that lives here in Italy is my son.

Rama, 60, Mali; Milan

Rama came to Italy to follow her husband, and she gained her independence, she constructed her project of the African restaurant, in partnership with her husband, and she managed to keep it going on even after the death of her spouse. Therefore, she is proud of her family, especially of her parents, who taught her to study and to work hard, to gain things with her job. At the same time, she wants to keep the distances from that part of her family who is rich and is part of the ruling class in Mali. In fact, Rama cares about her independence, her life and her restaurant in Italy. Rama's story is relevant for two reasons: first, thanks to her family she managed to study and to graduate, she managed to formulate her entrepreneurial project in Italy and to acquire further human capital in the host country, through courses of specialisation in management. Second, once she settled in the host country, and she opened her own business, she asked for independence from her family, with interesting implications for her social mobility. This aspect will be further discussed in the next paragraph, dedicated to social mobility.

Second, Valerie comes from a wealthy family, forced to escape from Vietnam when the communist party took power:

My mother comes from Ha Noi, while my father comes from Haiphong, two cities in the North of Vietnam. When they were thirty years old, they had to escape from Vietnam, since communists had taken power. They were very rich, and Communists had started to expropriate goods to people, such as houses and plots of land, the main sources of maintenance for wealthy families. (...) My father was an

official in the Vietnamese army. He had worked in the communication between the French and the Vietnamese government. As a sign of gratitude for his services, the French government gave passports for him and for all the members of my family that wanted to escape. Thus, in 1959 the majority of my family escaped from Vietnam. My parents went to France, (...) and I was born there. (...) I was born in a totally different condition, since we weren't rich no more, actually, we were very poor. We were refugees. (...) However, my parents made lots of sacrifices to grant me and my brother a wealthy future, they subscribed us to prestigious schools and prestigious Universities in Paris. (...) I've always been motivated to work hard to conquer well-being

Valérie, 50, Vietnamese; Milan

The story of Valérie shows that parents who belong to a middle-high class of origin have transmitted certain values to their children, even after an event that had impoverished them. For this reason, Valérie has always tried to do the best to reach a high social status, together with economic enrichment. This has led her to always demand the best of herself, and she tries to pursue this objective also with the entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector.

The third story is that of Lea, who owns a Senegalese restaurant in Milan which is well known and manages to obtain a good performance. She also comes from a middle-class family in the country of origin:

My father was a policeman, and my mother had always worked in the communication sector. We weren't rich, but we were in a good economic situation. We owned a nice house, a television and a car. (...) It was much more than what the majority of my peers had for their own. (...) I think that I've the same passion for cooking as my father did, (...) and I brought this passion in Italy.

Lea, 43, Senegalese; Milan

Lea had always been taught values connected to work hard to reach her objectives and, when she came to Italy, she soon started to attend courses of cuisine, she worked for a while as a cook until she decided to reach independence and a higher social status by becoming an entrepreneur.

The narratives of the three women show three different stories, since Rama grew up in a rich family with high social status but, with the migration, she has built up the restaurant by herself, and she does not have the slightest intention to renounce to her business, her independence and

her life in Italy to live in Mali with her wealthy family. Valérie was not raised in a rich situation, but the high social class of origin of her parents was transmitted throughout sacrifices for her human capital investment and to foster her to work hard to reach both status and economic security. This transmission of values is also present within the story of Lea. Thus, from these three different stories, a common trait appears as evident: the values transmitted by the entrepreneurs' high-class family have been very important for their experiences after the migration and, most of all, for their entrepreneurial path.

Valdez (2016) underline that entrepreneurial capital plays an important role to ease middle-classes' entrepreneurial path. The transmission of values by high-class family of origin appears evident also for those successful restaurant-owners who come from a family of entrepreneurs. Many narratives, related to this group of interviewees, have already been analysed in the chapter 6.3, concerning intergenerational transmissions of human capital. Therefore, in this part of the section dedicated to the class of origin, I analyse and somehow recall the three most relevant cases, starting from that of Nadim, whose trajectory has been debated in the previous sections. Nadim comes from a family of entrepreneurs, who were operating in a totally different context, the Indian one. His father owned a cinema and a factory, specialised in quantum mechanics, while his uncles owned a great factory, specialised in the extraction of steel or drawn steel. He came to Italy with his uncle to help him with his business, and later he settled in Italy, by marrying an Italian woman, by acquiring further human capital, finding a high skilled job in a bank and, 12 years later, by opening his own business. The high class of origin had always led him to open his own business, and he managed to do that in Italy. Such as in the case of Rama, his social mobility will be further examined in the next paragraph.

Second, Danny came to Italy fostered by his mother. The mother of Danny was an entrepreneur in Peru:

She had a great wholesale store. In our country, supermarkets weren't present at that time, so grocery stores were very important to buy and sell food. My mother used to sell food to grocery stores, (...) but also to individuals. (...) She used to sell candies, milk, rice, sugar, but also soap, detergent, and so on. (...) She was an entrepreneur, and we had never had economic problems. She could afford to send my sister and I to private schools. (...) Thanks to her, I learned to be an entrepreneur, (...) and to study and work hard to reach my tasks.

Danny, Peruvian; Milan

The transmission of values emerges from all the narratives of those people who belong to a high class of origin. Furthermore, the mother of Danny had invested in his human capital to help him maintain his social and economic position. The transmission of values and the education received have happened to be very important to the working, studying and entrepreneurial path of Danny in the host country.

As far as the entrepreneurial class of origin and the investment on human capital is concerned, the case of Simon is similar to that of Danny. Simon migrated to the UK when he was 14, to attend high school and university in London. After this period, he went back to Hong Kong, and he later decided to join the family business. His family owns a chain of Thai restaurants, and he decided to open an activity, belonging to his family chain, in Milan. Simon attended prestigious school and universities in London. Furthermore, he decided to follow his parents' footsteps and to open a restaurant in Milan. The path of Simon has been more facilitated from that of Danny, since his parents paid for all his university path in London, whilst Danny, once arrived in Italy, his mother followed him too, and he could only count on himself to pursue his studies.

These narratives underline that belonging to a high class of origin represents a great advantage for migrant entrepreneurs. At this point, it is important to analyse the narratives of the two entrepreneurs who do not belong to a high class of origin, to better understand their path. These two stories belong to two Southern American entrepreneurs. First, Melanie does not belong to a high class of origin. Her father died when she was two years, and her mother had to raise six children alone:

She was alone; she had six children; she could only be a housewife. My grandparents helped her economically, and my older brothers soon started working to help the family. (...) We were poor (...) and I wanted to improve my situation, so I decided to study and working at the same time. (...) I found a job in a drugstore, and at the same time, I enrolled in the University, I attended three of the four years that are necessary to graduate. (...) At the end of the third year, my employer in the drugstore asked him to join him in partnership, and a few years later, I became the only owner of the pharmacy. (...) I had owned that shop for 15 years.

Melanie, Ecuadorian; Milan

As it has already been stated in the chapter dedicated to human capital, Melanie managed to combine different forms of capital, specifically her previous entrepreneurial experience in her country to her family and kinship networks (see chapter 6.2.4).

Second, Victor, the Peruvian entrepreneur who has already represented an exception in the paragraph dedicated to those who entered in Italy without a regular visa, since he was one of the two entrepreneurs who managed to reach good performances, despite his past as undocumented migrant. Victor grew up with his mother, his brother and his sister. The mother of Victor was a farmer, and a merchant, because she used to sell the food that she had gathered or produced. They were quite poor, and for this reason, Victor migrated when he had the occasion, to live a better life, and to grant better opportunities to his family. Though he did not belong to a high class of origin, intergenerational transmissions have been very important for him, since he always thinks at the values transmitted by his mother, who used to sell the food (see chapter 6.3). Therefore, Melanie and Victor managed to achieve good performances, despite their low class of origin, because they managed to combine, in the case of Melanie, entrepreneurial experience and useful reliance on family and kinship network and, in the case of Victor, intergenerational transmission of human capital, previous entrepreneurial experience and strategic combination of family networks.

As far as surviving and unsuccessful entrepreneurs are concerned, they come from low classes of origin, and they did not have further resources such as in the cases of Jonathan, Michael and Gloria.

Jonathan is an Eritrean entrepreneur in Milan. He came to Italy in 1973 and he spent most of his life in Italy, he has been owning his restaurant since 2005. Jonathan faced a deep crisis in 2008, but he managed to overcome that period and now he manages to survive. His father was a blue collar in Eritrea, and his mother was housewife, so he did not belong to a high class of origin, and he did not have intergenerational transmissions of human capital. In Italy, before becoming self-employed, he had been working as cook in the restaurant sector for many decades. However, as we have seen in the chapter 6.2.4 dedicated to working experience, previous jobs in the restaurant sector are relevant when they are combined to other elements of human capital or to useful combination of networks, and the trajectory of Jonathan does not show these traits.

A similar story is that of Michael, who also comes from Eritrea, and he has been owning a restaurant in Rome since 1998. As in the case of his co-national presented before, also Michael faced a deep crisis in 2008, which he managed to overcome, and he manages to survive. The father of Michael was a supplier of medicines, and his mother was housewife. His parents could not allow him to study, and he felt not to have a future in Eritrea, so he migrated to Italy, where he started working as dishwasher in restaurants and, many years later, he opened his own activity. However, he did not have any kind of intergenerational transmission, he did not acquire further human capital in Italy, and he did not usefully combine his networks.

Third, Gloria is a Peruvian entrepreneur in Milan, she is 46, and she came to Italy in 2004. Gloria came to Italy as undocumented, she was regularised in 2012, and the same year she opened a Peruvian restaurant with her co-national life and business partner. Gloria grew up with her father since her mother died when she was a little girl. Her father was a shoemaker, but he was an employee, he did not own the shop. Since Gloria had three children, respectively, when she was 16, 17, and 19, the father used to work while she was taking care of the babies. When her children grew up, and the first one had to go to the University, she migrated to Italy because her father could no more sustain them alone. So, she came from a low class of origin and did not manage to acquire further resources.

Therefore, from this paragraph, the great social stratification of migrant entrepreneurship clearly emerges. On the one hand, the provenience from a high class of origin plays a very important role in the performances of migrant entrepreneurs, both from an economic point of view, since many of the entrepreneurs managed to enrol to prestigious school and universities, and from a perspective related to the intergenerational transmission of human capital and values. On the other hand, it is really difficult to achieve good performances for those who come from low classes of origin. Specifically, the few entrepreneurs who achieve good performances, despite the provenience from a low class of origin, managed to combine their resources in terms of human capital and networks. However, these entrepreneurs represent exceptions, since the majority of those who come from low classes of origin do not manage to obtain good performances.

7.4 Social mobility: a translocational perspective

This section aims at examining the social mobility of migrant entrepreneurs and its relationship with performances. Many scholars have underlined that upward social mobility can be one of the main reasons that push migrants towards entrepreneurship (Pang, 2002; Storti, 2014; Waldinger 2011). However, social mobility is not granted to all migrants that decide to become entrepreneurs, because of the diversification of this phenomenon and of mechanisms of social stratification, that can negatively influence the entrepreneurial path for those who have a lower status (Robinson, 2007). This paragraph is divided into three parts. The first part analyses the combination of social mobility and entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector. This topic is further explored in the second part, which examines the perception of the stability of social mobility. Thirdly, I draw on the concept of translocational positionality, by investigating the family of origin and the social mobility of migrants interviewed, with some surprising aspects that concern both some successful and some surviving entrepreneurs. In fact, in this paragraph, I show that the upward social mobility concerns not only successful entrepreneurs, but also many of the surviving ones.

Social mobility and entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector

The first aspect that emerges from my fieldwork concerns the moment when entrepreneurs improve their social conditions. Specifically, I was wondering whether they reach upward social mobility with the access to entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector, or in different moments of their trajectory in Italy. Four narratives are analysed: those of Lea, Natalia, Henry and Jonathan. Specifically, Lea and Natalia belong to the group of successful entrepreneurs, while Henry and Jonathan are among the surviving ones.

First, we have seen in the previous paragraphs that Lea belongs to a middle-class family, her father was a policeman and her mother had always worked as an employee in the communication sector. When Lea came to Italy, she decided to start from the bottom and to attend cuisine courses. Lea started to work as a cook, and she worked in famous restaurants in Germany. Lea reached her social mobility, from an economic point of view, while she was working as a cook for famous restaurants, and she opened her restaurant to be independent and to promote the Senegalese cuisine:

I didn't do that to become richer. (...) Entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector does not guarantee you to become richer. (...) Most of time at the end of the month, once that we have calculated costs and taxes, my earning is just a little bit higher than the wage that I had when I was just an employee. (...) You don't become rich in the restaurant sector. (...) You can just consolidate the position that you've already achieved.

Lea, 43, Senegalese; Milan

Lea constructed her restaurant to reach independence and to transmit the Senegalese culture in the host country. However, she acknowledges that it is difficult to gain a great amount of money by managing a business in the restaurant sector.

The second narrative examined is that of Natalia. Natalia opened a small bar in 2005. In 2008, she decided to expand herself and to open an Ecuadorian restaurant. Natalia identifies the moment of achievement of social mobility with migration:

I think that migration is the process that has allowed me to have a better economic position. If I had remained in Ecuador, I would have gained much less money. This does not regard just entrepreneurship. (...) Even when I was working as a domestic worker, I was gaining much more than what I would have gained in Ecuador. However, it was important to me to do something by myself, to open, first, my own bar and, then my restaurant. (...) I was a domestic worker, and now I am an entrepreneur.

Natalia, 45, Ecuador; Milan

Natalia distinguishes between the moment of achievement of a better economic position and the enhancement of her social status. For Natalia, a better economic position has come with migration, while the entrepreneurship has allowed her to obtain a better social status in Italy.

By analysing those entrepreneurs who manage to survive, we can see that Jonathan declares to have reached a better economic position during his working experience in the restaurant sector:

At the beginning, I was just a dishwasher. After a few years, I started to work as a chef assistant. Then, during the 1990s, I became a chef, and at that point, I decided to open my restaurant. (...) This choice was not connected to higher earnings, but to the willingness to transmit something of my country here in Italy, throughout the cuisine.

Jonathan started from the bottom, and he managed to achieve social and economic mobility before becoming an entrepreneur. Even though his restaurant is not among the most successful ones, he has managed to survive for many years and to overcome the 2008 crisis.

Fourth, Henry opened his own cleaning business in 1992, after having worked in the cleaning sector for many years. The opening of this first business allowed him to reach both social and economic mobility. In 2008, Henry decided to open his Greek restaurant. Entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector was a way of consolidating the social and economic position that Henry had achieved through business ownership in the cleaning sector. However, the restaurant had been opened during the years of the economic crisis, so Henry faced many difficulties at the beginning. Nevertheless, Henry managed to overcome the crisis, and his restaurant manages to survive.

Therefore, it is difficult to achieve social and economic mobility through entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector. In fact, in most of cases, migrants achieve social mobility throughout previous working or entrepreneurial experiences, and they consolidate and maintain their social and economic position once they become restaurant owners.

Social mobility: perception of stability

At this point, it is necessary to understand whether the achievement of a higher social and economic position is perceived as stable by entrepreneurs. From the interviews, it seems that, for successful entrepreneurs, the position that they have achieved is not meant to change. This perception is also connected to the economic crisis, which could also have affected them, as we have seen in the previous section, but this kind of migrant entrepreneurs managed to come out on top.

On the contrary, from the stories of those surviving entrepreneurs, it seems that social mobility is perceived as unstable. Starting from Henry he introduces his view concerning the stability of the position achieved:

When I had opened the cleaning business, I managed to achieve a better economic and social position. (...) It was easy to maintain this position. (...) I opened the restaurant with my wife (...) because it was our dream. (...) However,

the starting phase had been very difficult. It was 2008, there was the economic crisis, and people were not going to dine out as often as they did before. (...) At the beginning, I had thought of having bitten off more than I could chew. (...) Luckily, after 2-3 years, we managed to overcome the crisis. Now, I think that I've achieved my task to consolidate my position, (...) but I don't know what it could be happening in the future. (...) This sector is really unstable.

Henry, 54, Egyptian; Milan

The perception of instability also appears from the narrative of Jonathan, since he also suffered the crisis, and he managed to overcome the bad economic situation. Jonathan perceives that he has achieved his objective to consolidate his social mobility, but he does not know whether this situation can last for a long time.

The point of view also emerges from the narrative of Cristina. Cristina is 44, and she came to Italy in 1996, with a job contract as a domestic worker for the mother of an Italian member of Parliament. In 2001, she opened a call centre. However, four years later, the call centre dealt with a big crisis, so she closed this business and opened a restaurant in partnership with her husband. The restaurant has also suffered a deep crisis at the end of the 2000s, but the couple of entrepreneurs also managed to overcome this period:

Entrepreneurship has allowed me to improve my lifestyle, in respect to the life that I was conducting in Peru or during my first years in Italy, when I was working as domestic worker. However, this situation can also get worst: I had closed the call centre. (...) At this moment, we have managed to overcome the crisis, and now things are going better, (...) but I don't know what will happen tomorrow.

Cristina, 42, Peruvian, Rome

From these narratives, two observations arise: on the one hand, many of those entrepreneurs who manage to survive, without having good performances, have improved their economic and social position, compared to their origin. On the other hand, the social mobility of this group of entrepreneurs is perceived as precarious, whilst from the stories of successful entrepreneurs, the position achieved appears more stable.

Social mobility: a translocational perspective

The third and last part of this paragraph is dedicated to the analysis of the intersection between the social and economic position of family of origin and the social and economic status of migrant entrepreneurs. To do that, I adopt the conceptual framework of “translocational positionality”. In fact, throughout translocational positionality, it is possible to understand migrants’ class positions across different spaces, for instance, by taking into account both the country of origin and that of destination, and occupational transitions.

We could expect that, for those entrepreneurs who come from a high class of origin, it is easier to reach social mobility, while this kind of achievement is more difficult for those who come from lower classes. While many interviewees respect this expectation, others reveal surprising results.

Starting from the successful entrepreneurs, I have selected three narratives, those of Danny, Valérie, and Tyler. First, Danny’s mother was an entrepreneur in Peru and, when he came in Italy, he started to do low skilled jobs, but at the same time he was attending evening school and, later, he enrolled in the University and obtained his bachelor’s degree. He realised to have conquered social mobility when he started to think about opening a business in Italy:

After having worked in Italy for ten years, I was starting to think to open my own business. (...) I bought a house, and I took out a mortgage. (...) I fixed myself up: I bought a car, and nice clothes. Now, with entrepreneurship, I could also afford other things, but at the moment I prefer to save money.

Danny, 35, Peruvian; Milan

Danny left from Peru, where he had a privileged position, and he had been attending private schools and University, to Italy where, at the beginning, he did many low skilled jobs. At the beginning, downward mobility was characterising his path. However, as time was passing by, Danny managed to reach upward mobility, first, through hard work and, later, he further improved his situation by becoming an entrepreneur. However, according to Danny, the most positive aspect of being an entrepreneur is connected to the achievement of independence:

The most positive aspect of entrepreneurship is independence. Being an employee was fine, I used to get along with my bosses. But independence is great. For instance, I can take control over my salary: if I want to earn

more money, I close my restaurant a bit later, I increase the marketing, I organise events and parties to gain more money. I can adjust the strategies on the basis of my tasks. This is great.

Danny, 35, Peruvian; Milan

Such as in the cases of many other successful entrepreneurs, also Danny underlines the importance of independence for migrant entrepreneurs. This point is very important because, for many successful entrepreneurs, the need of independence and to conduct their own business assumes the priority. Furthermore, for many entrepreneurs, independence is not only intended as self-employment, but assumes a more broader sense, connected to the family of origin.

Second, Valérie comes from a very rich Vietnamese family, who impoverished after that communist party took power, and they were forced to escape in France. However, her parents made many sacrifices to allow their children to achieve social mobility:

They have done everything for us. (...) I studied at the Sorbonne University of Paris, (...) because my parents wanted that I could have a better life than the one that I had. (...) I think that I reached this task. (...) I own two fancy restaurants here in Milan. (...) I am able to grant to my children a better life than the one that I had lived as a little girl. (...) We enrolled them in public high school because in Italy they are good, but I have always insisted that they travel a lot. (...) For instance, my daughter has studied between Paris, Beijing and Shanghai, while my son is studying medicine here in Italy, but he will ask for Erasmus next year.

Valérie, 50, Vietnamese; Milan

Such as in many other cases, Valérie managed to reach social mobility before becoming an entrepreneur in the restaurant sector: she had worked as a journalist in the fashion industry, she has been a History Professor at the University of Milan and, later, she opened a business dedicated to high-quality Vietnamese craftsmanship.

Third, social mobility emerges from the narrative of Tyler, who arrived in Italy in 1996. Tyler owns a restaurant that sells fried chicken and typical American dishes in Milan, and he manages to reach positive performances:

I'm from Kentucky, I was born in a small town, but I spent most of my teens in Louisville, the biggest city in Kentucky.

My father was an entrepreneur, (...) so we had a discrete lifestyle, (...) we did not have a great house, (...) but I have always studied in prestigious schools. (...) However, my grandmother worked as a housecleaner. I remember when I was a little boy, I remember all the fancy houses that my grandmother used to clean. I said: <*When I grow up, I want to own a big fancy house, too!*> (...) Actually, I managed to do that.

Tyler, 47, US-citizen; Milan

Before becoming an entrepreneur, Tyler had worked as a male model for ten years, and then he was a personal trainer in a gym. Even in this case, he reached social mobility before becoming an entrepreneur in the restaurant sector, and business-ownership allows him to consolidate his position. Therefore, many successful entrepreneurs managed to achieve upward social mobility, or to maintain their original position, though this situation has required fatigue and sacrifices for them.

At this point, it is interesting to notice that the initial belonging to a high class, and the achievement of positive entrepreneurial results do not always correspond to the achievement of upward mobility by considering social mobility throughout the concept of translocational positionality. In fact, in many cases, migrant entrepreneurs come from wealthy family, and they barely maintain their previous economic and social position, and, in some cases, they even experience downward mobility.

This aspect particularly emerges from the story of Rama and Nadim. Rama is a successful entrepreneur who has been owning her African restaurant for 30 years and reaches good performances. In the section dedicated to the class of origin, Rama declares that she belongs to a wealthy family and some of her relatives are part of the ruling class in Mali. However, she cares about her restaurant and her independence, and she would never return to Mali to stay with them:

It does not matter how rich they are. (...) With the restaurant, you don't become a millionaire, but you have a good life. For instance, I don't have a car. I don't need it. (...) The only thing I care about is the future of my son. He wants to become a great chef. He wants to study at the Cordon Bleu culinary school in Paris. (...) He needs practice, and he does that every day at my restaurant. Our money is at the disposal of my son. (...) I did what I wanted in my life, through my restaurant, now it's his turn.

Therefore, Rama renounces to have a well-fixed life in Mali, to grant herself independence and because of her passion for her activity as an entrepreneur in the restaurant sector. In Rama's narrative, independence is a key element for her entrepreneurial path. She opened the restaurant in 1988 because she wanted to have her restaurant, an activity outside the home, and she maintained this independence even after the death of her husband.

As far as the case of Nadim is concerned, it has been underlined many times that he comes from a family of great entrepreneurs, his family owned a great business in the steel sector, and he is now managing a small Indian restaurant in Milan, which grant him to have a good life for him and his family, but it does not allow Nadim to have the leisured life that he had when he was still in India as boy. Therefore, in these two cases, we can paradoxically talk about downward social mobility. It has to be taken into account that they both came from particularly wealthy situations. Nevertheless, their actual condition in Italy, despite their good performances as entrepreneurs, is not as comfortable as the one that they had in their country of origin. From these narratives, the need for independence particularly arises. In fact, independence is intended in a broader sense: first of all, many successful entrepreneurs, consider their independence in their job as particularly valuable. In addition, in some cases, independence is not only intended according to its professional meaning. In fact, these entrepreneurs aim at being independent also from a personal point of view, specifically from the families of origin.

At the same time, some entrepreneurs who belong to low classes of origin and to the group of surviving entrepreneurs manage to reach upward mobility. In this sense, the cases of Henry and Jonathan are relevant. Both of them come from families of blue-collars. Moreover, their migration was connected to persistent unemployment because of discrimination in the case of Henry, and the war that was exploiting in Eritrea in the case of Jonathan. They both accepted any kind of low skilled jobs that was offered to them without a precise plan. They started from a disadvantageous situation, but they managed to improve both their economic and social position and, even though with difficulties, they are consolidating their status with entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector.

A narrative of an entrepreneur who belong to low classes of origin and does not manage to reach upward social mobility needs to be analysed. This is the case of Aaron. The father of

Aaron worked as blue-collar in a fabric. When Aaron came to Italy, he soon started to work as peddler:

When I was working as peddler (...) I was in a better social and economic position, rather than in my country. (...) However, it was not a stable job, so I decided to open my restaurant (...) because I needed stability. The first years were great. With the arrival of Euro, things have worsened. I have lots of debts and (...) recently, my house has been seized by the bank. (...) If things don't get better, I'll have to close the restaurant.

Aaron, Eritrean; Milan

From this section, it emerges that social mobility is generally achieved by migrants before their access to entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector, throughout previous working or entrepreneurial experiences in other industries. Therefore, entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector represents rather a way to consolidate the social mobility that has already been achieved. Furthermore, the perception of the stability of social mobility is connected to the performance of entrepreneurs with migrant background, since the social and economic position achieved by “surviving” entrepreneurs is perceived as more unstable than their colleagues who have always managed to achieve good performances.

Finally, by analysing the class of origin, the life trajectory and the actual position, some surprising results appear. In fact, some of those who come from high classes of origin experience upward mobility. However, this situation does not always take place, since in some cases, successful entrepreneurs, belonging to high classes of origin, barely maintain their position or even experience downward mobility. At the same time, many surviving entrepreneurs, who come from low classes and disadvantaged situation, manage to reach upward mobility.

7.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, we have seen the stratification of migration trajectories. First, by analysing the combination between experiences, projects and motivations, it has emerged that those trajectories aimed at satisfying educational, professional and entrepreneurial objectives are more likely to achieve good results in their business rather than those focused at improving their social and economic position. Moreover, the biographical resources constituted by experiences, motivations and projects continue to intersect themselves with those analysed in the previous chapters: the different forms and combinations of social and human capital. These combinations between resources do not only occur in the professional life of entrepreneurs, but they also appear in important events concerning personal life, as it is shown by the marriage with Italian people. In fact, on the one hand, when the spouse is also a business partner, this event is able to combine different networks and human capital attainments to achieve positive results in the business. Moreover, when the personal networks are kept separated from the professional ones, the advantages consist in easier integration and understanding of ways through which acquire further elements of human capital, that will be important for the conducting of the business.

Second, the relevance of the resources acquired during the trajectories emerges even more clearly by analysing the path of the entrepreneurs during and after the economic crisis of 2008, that has heavily hit the restaurant sector. We have seen that, on the one hand, the entrepreneurs whose trajectory has been characterised by the combination of the different kind of resources. These entrepreneurs have been able to adopt strategies that have allowed them to manage their business better, and to attract new segments of consumers. On the other hand, I have also analysed the entrepreneurs whose trajectories have been aimed at reaching better economic and social position, since they have often been previously employed in low skilled, low-paid, precarious and sometimes irregular jobs. According to these entrepreneurs, self-employment is perceived as a way to escape from their disadvantaged situation, and they soon start their business, without acquiring further human capital and by mostly relying on co-national networks. For these reasons, these entrepreneurs have been more vulnerable during the economic crisis, because they did not have the biographical, educational, and social resources to adopt efficient strategy to limit the negative effects of the phenomenon.

Third, the vast majority of successful entrepreneurs belong to high classes of origin. Through the biographical approach, it has been possible to understand the importance of the entrepreneurs' background, by analysing the role of the investment in human capital and the intergenerational transmissions. In addition, a form of transmission could also consist in the transference of values that are not strictly related to entrepreneurship or cuisine, but they are really useful to increase migrant entrepreneurs' motivation always to try to achieve their tasks.

Fourthly, social mobility has been analysed throughout the lens of translocational positionality. Before examining the implications, it has to be underlined the relevant role of the "shelter business", those who do not have any ambition to change, expand or improve, but they just manage to survive. In fact, many of these business owners are comprised within those who managed to improve their social and economic position. The first evidence emerged is that upward social mobility is likely to be reached before becoming entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector. Self-employment in this industry is often considered as a consolidation of an already achieved position. Second, it has been possible to understand the different perception of stability between successful and surviving entrepreneurs. Surviving entrepreneurs have a more unstable perception of the economic and social position that they had achieved. Third, by analysing social mobility through the concept of translocational positionality, with a focus on the origins of migrant entrepreneurs, some surprising and even counterintuitive results have emerged, since some successful self-employed belonging to high class of origin have experienced downward mobility, while surviving entrepreneurs belonging to low class of origin have achieved upward mobility. In fact, shelter businesses assume an important role, since they constitute important social and economic achievements for business owners. At the same time, many entrepreneurs who reach good performances barely manage to maintain their high social and economic status and, sometimes they even experience a decline in this sense. In the entrepreneurs' narratives, the need for independence, of having their activity without depending on the family emerges as more important than maintaining their high status. Therefore, social mobility and business performance are not always connected, and sometimes a great distance between the two achievements emerge. From this perspective, shelter enterprises can assume an important social role for those who came from disadvantaged positions. Instead, the social role of successful enterprises can be scaled down, since many entrepreneurs who come from a high-status family and just maintain, or even declined their position.

Conclusions

The debate on migrants' entrepreneurial performances is wide and complex. Many scholars¹²¹ stress that migrant-owned businesses have been acquiring an important role in urban spaces across global cities throughout, on the one hand, the high concentration of these kinds of activities across specific neighbourhoods. On the other hand, migrant entrepreneurship has been acquiring relevance in the creation of social and economic opportunities, since tourism and entertainment industry in specific urban areas are increasingly counting on diversity as a way to attract heterogeneous public and consumers (Rath, 2007). Within this context, those migrant-owned businesses operating in the food and restaurant sector have been playing a key role in shaping the urban public space, by introducing new economic and social dynamics (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009).

The restaurant sector and its relevance for migrant entrepreneurs

I have analysed the performance of migrant entrepreneurs who operate in the restaurant sector in the two most important Italian cities, Rome and Milan. The study is based on biographical interviews with migrant entrepreneurs, focusing on those businesses that provide the cuisine of their country of origin. The restaurant sector plays a key role in migrant entrepreneurship, because of multiple reasons, that have been analysed in this study. The first element to recall is food, which plays a double role for migratory experience, by becoming not only an element of material and symbolic connection with the country of origin, but also a field of individual and collective identities' negotiation between migrants and autochthones (Zincone, 2009). These characteristics are often recalled in migrants' restaurants since, on the one hand, an increasing number of consumers is attracted to "ethnic" food. On the other hand, the presence of settled minorities gives the possibility to migrant entrepreneurs to attract customers from the same area of origin in order to implement the symbolic and material connections explained before. However, these processes are not always seen as enrichment for the urban space but, on the contrary, they can meet some resistances, implemented through

¹²¹ Volery, 2007; Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp, 2009; Barrett *et al.*, 1996; Kloosterman and Rath, 2010.

restrictive policies for these kinds of activities (e.g. Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009; Arvela, 2013; Abarca, 2004; Arrigoni, 2010; Bonfigli, 2011).

This study has shown a differentiated range of strategies, formats and food preparation that has been contributing to create a more and more diversified supply of the ethnic restaurant sector during the last decades, that goes from fast-food and kebabs, to sophisticated medium-high level restaurants. With reference to the “ethnic” restaurant sector, I have identified different typologies of business owned by entrepreneurs with migrant background, based on three main strategies, that are declined in various ways, as it is showed in Tab. 5.

Tab. 5. Typology of migrant entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector and the strategies adopted.

<p>Restaurants that stick to tradition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dishes are prepared throughout the more loyal reproduction of traditional recipes. ➤ The surrounding atmosphere strongly recalls the country of origin. 	<p>Food as connection to the country of origin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Customer target: co-nationals or migrants of the same geographic area. ➤ Often located in neighbourhood characterised by a high presence of migrants. ➤ Prices generally low. ➤ Recreation of the atmosphere though furniture, with constrained budget. <p>Creation of a dining experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Customer target: sophisticated clientele, generally belonging to medium-high classes. ➤ High quality of food, medium-high prices. ➤ Recreation of the atmosphere throughout luxury furniture coming from the country of origin. ➤ Provision of a “dining experience”, involving not only the meal consumption, but also the surrounding atmosphere.
<p>Restaurants that adopt hybridisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Traditional recipes are modified, throughout the creation of the new flavours, approaches towards food, and combinations. ➤ The surrounding atmosphere is composed by some elements that recall the country of origin. 	<p>Adaptation to the Italian taste:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adaptation of the traditional recipes to the Italian taste, throughout ingredients or influences. ➤ Customer target: sophisticated clientele, generally belonging to medium-high classes. ➤ High quality of food, medium-high prices. ➤ Atmosphere: introduction of significant elements that recall the country of origin. <p>Fusion cuisines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mix between different culinary traditions. ➤ Customer target: co-nationals, migrants of different national communities, Italian people. ➤ The relationship between quality and price varies. Generally based on medium-low prices and medium-low quality. However,.
<p>Street food format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lower prices than restaurants, because of minor costs (e.g., service). 	<p>Diversified street food:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Generally owned by cosmopolite entrepreneurs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The atmosphere is kept more neutral than in ethnic restaurants. ➤ Answer to the needs of saving money and time to eat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Based on the diversification of a classic format (e.g., revisited kebab) or on the introduction of dishes that are still not very widespread in Italy (e.g., areperias). ➤ Customer target: multicultural clientele. ➤ Hybridisation: dishes are prepared with traditional ingredients abreast of products coming from other areas of origin and from Italy. ➤ Medium-high quality of food, quite low prices. <hr/> <p>Traditional “ethnic” street food:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Street food based on a specific culinary tradition (e.g., Indian street food). ➤ Customer target: co-nationals and Italian people. ➤ Very low prices.
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Furthermore, this study has evidenced that Italian consumers do not always experience “ethnic” food with curiosity and interest. In certain cases, consumers adopt a sort of “food conservatism behaviour”, by preferring to stick to the Italian culinary tradition. Therefore, “ethnic” cuisines are often perceived by the public as “cheap”. Nevertheless, food practices have been changing and, despite the resistances, restaurants that provide foreign cuisines have been rapidly increasing in the Italian towns.

Moreover, this study has analysed the Italian context at two different levels. At the national level, I have identified the main constraints that migrant entrepreneurs generally have to face to open and maintain their own businesses: high taxation and extremely complicated bureaucratic procedures. At the local level, many differences among opportunities and limitations for migrant entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector of Milan and Rome have emerged. In fact, migrants’ restaurants are inserted within the urban economies and structure, and they have to operate in these two different markets, by encountering diverse obstacles or opportunities. Therefore, through the analysis of the two cities, we can see that the important role of migrants’ restaurants in shaping the urban public space has to be analysed by taking into account the different urban social and economic scenarios.

In addition, migrant entrepreneurship in the restaurant sector is often considered as a way to gain a better economic and social position (Ambrosini and Castagnone, 2009; Gasparetti, 2009; Ceccagno, 2003). In this study, I have underlined that upward social mobility is likely to be achieved before opening a business in the restaurant sector. In fact, the access to self-employment in this branch is often perceived as the consolidation of an already achieved position.

Resources and forms of capital

By analysing the differentiation of migrant entrepreneurs' performances, I have focused on the role of resources used by migrant entrepreneurs to make their business work. A first resource that has been largely considered in the literature (e.g. Light and Gold, 2000; Sanders and Nee, 1996; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Light *et al.*, 1993) is social capital. Studies on migrants' businesses have often focused on the role of strong co-ethnic and family ties by paying less consideration to bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000). In this study, I propose an analysis of the different linkages (namely family and kinship, co-national and mixed national connections). Furthermore, I highlight that entrepreneurs combine their different ties on the basis of their business activity. A relevant role in achieving good performances is played by the differentiation and combination of different networks, rather than only relying on co-national ties, which can be useful in the first opening phase of the business, but they can also constrain opportunities, changes and strategies, during the phase of maintenance. Nevertheless, as argued by Ram *et al.* (2008), social capital is not the only resource that is able to play a role in the entrepreneurial path.

This study highlights that a fundamental role is played by human capital, in its wider definition, that includes education, courses of specialisation in management, and intergenerational transmissions. Many scholars have stressed that entrepreneurs with high levels of human capital encounter fewer constraints not only in accessing to entrepreneurship, but also in the following phases of survival and growth (Clark & Drinkwater, 2000; Hjerm, 2004; Carbonell *et al.*, 2011; Moon *et al.*, 2014; Yazdanfar *et al.*, 2015). My study has analysed different elements of human capital, by underlining the role of university education, professional courses of specialisation, and intergenerational transmission of skills. Previous entrepreneurial or working experiences are valuable when they are combined to other elements of human capital, such as high levels of education, attendance of courses of specialisation, and intergenerational transmissions, or a fruitful reliance on networks. Furthermore, my study has underscored that the entrepreneurs who do not acquire further human capital, by attending courses of professional specialisation, have more difficulties in dealing with the constraints present in the context where they operate and to adopt efficient strategies for the business.

A further element that has gained relevance in the study of migrant entrepreneurs' trajectory is constituted by the role of biographical resources of experiences and motivation (Kontos, 2003; Brettell and Alstatt, 2007; Apitzsch, 2003), and specific professional and/or entrepreneurial

projects. In fact, through the analysis of life trajectory, it has emerged that those trajectories aimed at satisfying educational, professional and entrepreneurial objectives are more likely to achieve good results in their business rather than those only focused at improving their social and economic position.

Moreover, a branch of research on migrant entrepreneurship emphasises the role of different “forms of capital”, that combine themselves in migrants’ entrepreneurial experiences (Ram *et al.*, 2008, Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2019; Vershinina *et al.*, 2011). In this study, I often underline that migrant entrepreneurs combine their social, human and economic capital at the aim to make their business grow. When they manage to combine these elements, together with their biographical resources, a virtuous cycle is created, and entrepreneurs manage to adopt successful strategies for their businesses and achieve good performances. On the other hand, when this combination does not take place, migrants encounter more difficulties in conducting their activities. In fact, in a period of economic crisis, entrepreneurs’ resources and strategies have become more and more relevant for the achievement of good business results (Arcidiacono, 2015). The theoretical framework that considers the different “forms of capital” is connected to the conceptualisation carried out by Bourdieu (1987), who retains that individuals are endowed with different forms and amounts of capital, that could be accumulated, transferred, and converted (Bourdieu, 1987; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Furthermore, the different forms of capital are unequally distributed among individuals. This aspect is connected to the debate on migration, migrant entrepreneurship and class.

Migrant entrepreneurship: performances, class and social mobility

The debate on migration and class considers that also international migration requires the mobilisation of a specific amount of resources, based on the different forms of capital (Van Hear, 2014). Specifically, Van Hear (2014: 111) underlines the presence of “a hierarchy of destinations that can be reached by migrants, according to the resources – economic and network-based – that they can call upon”. Therefore, as it has been stressed in this work, to analyse international migration and the phenomenon of migrant entrepreneurship, the role of class and social stratification has to be considered. In fact, class plays an important role in shaping the trajectory and entrepreneurial path of migrant entrepreneurs (Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2019). This trait has particularly emerged in this study. I have already evidenced the forms of capital constituted by the social, human and economic capital. Valdez

(2016) underlines two elements deriving from intergenerational transmissions: the “entrepreneurial capital”, transmitted in families of entrepreneurs, and the “intergenerational transmission of wealth”, that is able to ease the entrepreneurial path of those entrepreneurs that belong to middle/high-class families.

Both aspects have emerged from my study, and they are also connected to the performance of migrant entrepreneurs. So far as the entrepreneurial capital is concerned, those migrants who belong to entrepreneurial family, use to acquire, combine and mix their different forms of capital, by accumulating human and financial capital, by relying on important and different networks and, during the entrepreneurial path, to develop proper strategies to make their business work.

By considering the intergenerational transmissions of wealth, class of origin is important also for those who come from middle/high-class family, though their parents are not entrepreneurs, since the high amount of resources in terms of forms of capital gives to these self-employed migrants similar advantages of those who come from entrepreneurial families.

This study also underlines that the entrepreneurs who come from families of modest origin do not have these advantages, they have small amounts of financial capital, they do not acquire many elements of human capital, they do not combine their networks in a useful way for the businesses, but rather they often rely on bonding social capital, usually characterised by family and co-national strong ties. Therefore, those entrepreneurs who come from low classes of origin have fewer instruments and resources to deal with complicated bureaucratic procedures, in a period of economic crisis, and to adopt efficient strategies. As a consequence, the class of origin assumes a relevant role in shaping and stratifying the performance of entrepreneurs of migrant origin.

Finally, this study addresses the social mobility of migrant entrepreneurs. In this sense, a useful concept is that of “translocational positionality”, which aims at taking into account identity by avoiding some of the problems identified with the concept, such as the treatment of identity as a specific feature owned by individuals or groups (Brubaker 2004; Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Anthias 2002). The concept of translocational positionality “addresses issues of identity in terms of locations which are not fixed but are context, meaning and time related and which therefore involve shifts and contradictions” (Anthias, 2008:5). This concept is useful to the debate on migrant entrepreneurship stratification, since it provides an interpretation “of narratives, identities, practices and outcomes by considering both the simultaneously

experienced complexities of different social hierarchies and the role of multiple locations in time and space” (Villares-Varela, 2017a:110). Therefore, throughout translocational positionality, it is possible to understand migrants’ class positions across different spaces, for instance by taking into account both the country of origin and that of destination, and the occupational transitions experienced during the life trajectory.

Throughout the concept translocational positionality, an analysis of social mobility of migrant entrepreneurs has been carried out, by taking into account their origins and also their transitions. Some surprising and even counterintuitive considerations have emerged. In fact, many of the entrepreneurs who reach good performances barely manage to maintain their high social and economic status and, in some cases, they even experienced downward mobility. For these entrepreneurs, the need for independence, of having their own activity without depending on the family of origin seems to be more important than maintaining their high status. In fact, the motivation underlying their choice to become self-employed are not connected to the improvement of their economic and social position, but rather to achieve professional realisation, their desire of independence, or the fulfilment of a specific project. The need for independence assumes a key role because it is not only one of the main reasons for choosing to open an activity. Independence also assumes a personal significance, referred to the family of origin. Therefore, these entrepreneurs prefer to give up a more luxurious lifestyle, rather than renounce to their independence.

This paradoxical observation does not concern only those who achieve good performances, but also the owners of the “shelter business”, those who do not have any ambition to change, expand or improve, but just manage to survive. From the present study, the owners of this kind of businesses come from low classes of origins, and they have left their countries because of unemployment or poverty. Once in Italy, these migrants mainly found low skilled jobs, and they started their business to improve their economic and social position, and many of them managed to achieve this task. Therefore, shelter businesses assume an important role, since they constitute important social and economic achievements for business owners.

Social mobility and business performance of migrant entrepreneurs are not always connected, and sometimes a great distance between the two achievements emerge. From this perspective, shelter enterprises can assume an important social role for those who came from disadvantaged positions. Instead, not all entrepreneurs who achieve good performances have also acquired

social mobility. In this sense, the social role of successful enterprise could be scaled down, when the entrepreneurs come from a high-status family and their position is just maintained, or even declined. This last aspect connected to social mobility could be further developed in future research, by trying to understand, for instance, the characteristics of shelter enterprises that assume this important social role.

Policy suggestions

By analysing the policy aspects of this study, it is necessary to consider the importance of social class positions and aspirations in the trajectories of entrepreneurs (Villares-Varela 2017a), and they have to be taken into account in planning support programmes. The programs aimed at supporting migrant entrepreneurs haven't often focused on individual characteristics, mainly connected to the country of origin, entailing the risk to fall into the "ethnic exceptionalism" (Jones and Ram 2007; Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2019) and not considering the importance of the social position of entrepreneurs.. However, when developing these programs, the wide range of social position of migrants has to be considered (Rath and Swagermann, 2015). Therefore, support program to favour migrant entrepreneurship should fully consider both the migration aspirations of migrant entrepreneurs, their life trajectories and resources.

An example can be represented by the courses of professional specialisation. This study has highlighted that courses of professional specialisation in the host country can be particularly important for migrant entrepreneurs, since they are able to provide both managerial knowledge, and information concerning bureaucratic procedures. The issue consists of the public that participates to these courses. On the one hand, the migrant entrepreneurs who attend this kind of courses already have university graduation, and/or they belong to middle-high classes origin and they already have a considerable amount of "entrepreneurial capital" or "intergenerational transmissions of wealth". On the other hand, this research has underscored those restaurant-owners who come from low classes of origin, have a limited amount of human capital and mainly rely on co-national and family bonding social capital, they do not participate to these courses, mainly because of lack of information. Thus, support programs should aim at "bridging the gap", by involving those migrant entrepreneurs who are usually excluded from these projects, not only because of their "ethnicity", but mainly because of their disadvantaged position and scarce amount of resources. These projects should involve multiple ranges of

actors, for instance, trade unions, charitable and migrants' associations, to target a broader public and to include those entrepreneurs/ aspiring entrepreneurs who belong to lower social classes.

Future directions of research

This study has given several contributions to understand the diversification and stratification of migrant entrepreneurship. The methodological choice to not focus on a specific group of migrants has allowed having a better focus on the diversification of performances among migrant entrepreneurs, and to analyse the role of different resources and trajectories. However, the choice to differentiate the sample could have underscored some networks and economic dynamics within specific communities. A potential line of research could focus on specific communities that play a relevant role in the restaurant sector, such as in the case of entrepreneurs of Chinese nationality, who are under-represented in the sample. Since these mechanisms are particularly complex, a potential line of research could analyse the performances and social mobility of Chinese entrepreneurs, by analysing economic dynamics, networks mechanisms, life trajectories and forms of capital.

Another important choice of this study concerns the examination of Milan and Rome. Many differences have been highlighted, concerning the different markets, and urban evolution and changes. Furthermore, with references to my sample, I have analysed the role of migrant businesses in different neighbourhoods, namely the Esquilino (Roma) and Via Padova (Milano). Future research could conduct this kind of investigation across other areas of the city, in order to have a complete framework. In addition, future studies could also focus on the role of the informal economy in the two cities.

With reference to the context, though significant differences emerge among the two cities, migrant entrepreneurs in both urban contexts have to respect the Italian law, that imposes several constraints, especially in terms of bureaucracy and high taxation. Other studies could compare these results with other cities, located in countries characterised by simpler bureaucratic procedures.

This study has analysed the restaurant sector. By adopting a biographical approach, future investigations could explore the trajectories of those entrepreneurs who change the sector of activity, by analysing the movement of economic and financial capital, and the role played by

the other forms of capital within these paths. This potential line of research could trace the circuit of re-investments of migrant entrepreneurs among different sectors, and the way in which they implement their strategies. In addition, the role of second generations could be explored, by analysing their performances, social mobility and forms of capital, by understanding the differences with first generations.

This study has often highlighted the importance of food for the migratory experience. In fact, according to many migrant entrepreneurs, the activity in the “ethnic” restaurant sector does not only have an economic significance, but it also represents a way to reconstruct and make known atmospheres, traditions and meanings, throughout the provision of food. A potential line of research could investigate the symbolic dimension of food in the “ethnic” restaurant sector, by involving not only the entrepreneurs but also the consumers. Specifically, other studies could analyse how the product is prepared, how consumes change in space and time, and how taste is constructed.

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Appendix: Interviewees data

In this Appendix, I have concentrated and synthesised the most relevant data of the entrepreneurs of migrant origin interviewed, whose narratives have been analysed in this dissertation. This Appendix aims at supporting reading by providing data concerning the most relevant aspects emerged during the interviews of the entrepreneurs considered. Data about the interviewees are divided among the two cities analysed and the three groups of performances.

Fieldwork in Milan

Entrepreneurs who reach good performances

Rama

60 years old, Mali.

Rama graduated in Financial Economics in Mali. She came to Milan in 1985, after her marriage. Therefore, Rama came to Italy for family unification, since her husband had been living in Italy since 1961. She left her previous job (as receptionist in a luxurious hotel) and her family to follow him. However, during the first years of her life in Italy, Rama's entrepreneurial project arose, since she was not satisfied with being a housewife and she decided to open an African restaurant. The decision of Rama of opening her restaurant arose because of the need to have her professional life, connected to a strategical observation that she had made, related to the absence of African restaurants in Italy. In 1988, she founded an African restaurant in co-partnership with her husband. This restaurant is well quoted in Milan and has a trusted base of customers. When her husband died, in 1995, she had been convinced to not close the restaurant by her Italian connections. Her African connections helped her with the care of her son.

After the death of her husband, she kept the restaurant open, and she decided to acquire a degree that could be recognised in Italy. She attended two courses of specialisation in Business Management for Cooperatives, and Agritourism Management, organised by the Lombardia Region. However, the experience shows that also successful entrepreneurs are able to maintain linkages with their community. Rama thinks that she has the moral duty to send money to her country of origin. In addition, Rama cooperates with humanitarian associations of their country of origin.

Rama's restaurant is composed by two small rooms, one at the ground floor, and the other at the basement. Totally, the restaurant includes 35-40 places. The tables are small and round, surrounded by large wooden chairs. The tables are quite close to each other's, to favour eventual interactions between customers, and to create an intimate atmosphere. Some traditional African furniture decorates the walls, especially on the ground floor. Rama's son is her only employee.

The strategy of Rama appears, since she aims at having Italian customers, so she provides African dishes that are rendered more attractive for Italian customers, with separated spices and lots of vegetables. She has managed to reach high-level customers, that are Italian, or wealth African long-time residents, or second generations. Nevertheless, her purpose is still connected to communicate traditions of the country or area of origin, through the recreation of the atmosphere. Rama's restaurant is furnished with many African objects. Furthermore, when she works at the restaurant, she always wears the traditional gown of her country of origin.

Nadim

57 years old, India

Nadim comes from a family of entrepreneurs in India: his father had a cinema and a factory, while his uncle was in the steel sector. Nadim migrated to Italy when he was 20, and he had just achieved his degree in Economics. In Italy, he attended a Master's at the Bocconi University. He came to Italy in 1980 with his uncle, to help him with his business. Few years later, his uncle's business in Italy didn't go as he had forecast, and he left for the US. Nadim remained in Italy with his Italian wife. After the Master in Bocconi, Nadim had worked in a bank for 12 years. Before buying his actual restaurant, he had co-owned an Indian restaurant in Milan from 1995 to 2008. In 2008, he argued with his partner, they closed that restaurant, and Nadim opened his own place in 2009, in another area of Milan. Nadim has made a careful

market analysis before opening his Indian restaurant in Milan. Nadim decided to open a smaller restaurant than the one that he was owning before, and he has personally provided furniture for the restaurant, by attempting, on the one hand, to meet the demand of his Italian customers and, on the other to not exaggerate with Indian objects. Nadim has five Indian employees. Internet and social networks are used by Nadim as a way to attract more customers, especially in the periods when the restaurant is less visited, and to promote events and offers that his restaurant organise. He does not manage the Facebook page by himself, but he collaborates with a marketing manager that deals with communication.

Valérie

53 years old, second generation France-Vietnam.

Valérie owns two Vietnamese restaurants. Her father was a Vietnamese army official, before the communist took power. After this event, her parents decided to definitely leave Vietnam, and they migrated to France. When they were still in Vietnam, Valérie parents were really wealthy. However, they left in a poor condition, as refugees. Nevertheless, her parents transmitted her a great Vietnamese cooking tradition. Valérie was born in France, and she came to Italy after her graduation at the Sorbonne university, to start a post-graduated path in History of Arts. However, she found a job as fashion journalist and, later, she opened a shop dedicated to Vietnamese craftsmanship. Though Valérie was born in France, she has a strong connection with Vietnam, so much that her first entrepreneurial activity was a shop of Vietnamese high-quality craftsmanship, and she was responsible of the import of product. Since Valérie has acquired the restaurants, she has been using to go to Vietnam to buy particular food, products and spices that she does not find in Italy. In the meanwhile, she married an Italian man, who supported her in the choice of opening a restaurant, after the closure of the craftsmanship shop. She has developed a rather individual trajectory, supported by her family and by her husband, who is her business partner. Valérie focuses on the communication between the staff in the dining room and customers. Therefore, she underlines the importance of having dining room personnel which is fluent in the Italian language. Valérie has carefully furnished her restaurant at the purpose of offering a real experience aimed at discovering the traditions of her country of origin. This experience does not include only food, but also the entire ambience, that has been carefully studied at this aim.

Danny

35 years old, Peru

When Danny was 17, he was studying Law in Peru. Since he was 13, he had been helping his mother in her shop. Danny came to Italy in 2001, when he was 18, because of problems with a baby gang. His mother sent him to Italy because her partner was living there. He had fake documents, so he has been undocumented for a year. His high school degree was not recognised in Italy and he could not ask his family to pay the school. Therefore, he decided to work and study at the same time. First, he attended high school evening courses and he gained a chartered account qualification. Later, he enrolled to the Faculty of Economics at the Università Bicocca, and he obtained a bachelor's degree. Now he's also attending the master courses in Economic's. Danny owns a Peruvian restaurant in Milan, well started and recognised. Danny has two Peruvian employees, and he and his sister also work at the restaurant. Danny aims at diversifying his clientele, by attracting not only Peruvians, but also Italian people. Therefore, he uses social medias to promote his restaurants, and he organise events and parties.

Simon

28 years old, Hong-Kong

Simon owns a Thai restaurant in a luxurious area in Milan. He comes from Hong Kong, and he migrated to the UK when he was 14, to attend high school and university in London. He graduated at the London School of Economics. After this period, he went back to Hong Kong, he worked for two years in the fashion industry, and he later decided to join the family business. His family owns a chain of Thai restaurants, and he decided to open a restaurant, belonging to this chain, in Milan. The restaurant belongs to his family's chain who owns another restaurant in Shanghai. Simon has 50 employees. Many of them work part-time. The chef of Simon's restaurant comes from Thailand, he has been working for his family in the last 15 years, and he manages the kitchen in order to guarantee the authenticity of Thai recipes. Simon relies on family networks to open his own business activity.

Massimiliano

31 years old, Italy

Massimiliano owns a revisited kebab restaurant in Milan, together with other 7 partners, four of whom belong to second generations of migrants. Specifically, three of them are of Eritrean origins, while the fourth is Iranian. The partners are all University graduated. All of them have studied or worked abroad, and they have seen revisited formats of kebab, that was not present in Italy. Therefore, they decided to apply this kind of format. The partners opened the restaurant in 2013, by subscribing to an announcement of the Chamber of Commerce, for innovative juvenile start-ups. Because of the innovative format of the kebab that is sold by Massimiliano and his partners, they care about communication, but they have also gained space on mass-media, both at local and at national level, because of their vast networks and their location in one the two most important Italian cities. The customers can compose their kebab, with a wide range of ingredients, which come both from the Mediterranean and the Middle East area. Specifically, their ingredients come from Italy, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Iran. The restaurant aims at offering a multicultural environment, throughout food, partners and workers.

Lea

43 years old, Senegal

Lea owns a Senegalese restaurant in Milan since 2011, which is well known and manages to obtain a good performance. Lea comes from a middle-class family; her father was a police officer, and he was a good cook, who taught her to prepare Senegalese dishes when she was in her country of origin. Lea attended the high school in Senegal, and she graduated as a chartered accountant. She had opened a small shop there. Lea came to Italy in 2001, when she was 26. Lea attended a course of specialisation in Italian cuisine, and she had massive experiences as a cook, before opening her own restaurant, in partnership with her husband. Lea manages the restaurants in partnership with her husband. Lea is a successful entrepreneur who wants, in the future, to go back to Senegal, her country of origin, and to implement what she has been learning in Italy as restaurant-owner.

Abigail

45 years old, Peru

Before opening her restaurant, Abigail attended a course of professional specialisation in management in the restaurant sector. These courses provided her knowledge about the bureaucratic practices to manage a restaurant in Italy. Furthermore, she also learned some managerial strategies that were helpful in projecting her business plan. She has been living in Italy since 1991, and when she arrived in Italy, she worked as caregiver. In 2001, she became self-employed in the transport sector. She has been owning a Peruvian restaurant in Milan since 2008, in partnership with her husband.

Melanie

59 years old, Ecuador

Melanie attended the University at the faculty of Psychology in her country, but she did not graduate. Instead, she opened her own drugstore, that she had managed for 15 years. Melanie moved to Italy in 2003. Her nephew had been living in Italy for 10 years. In 2003, he decided to open a restaurant in Milan, and he asked Melanie to go to Milan to help him, because she used to own a small shop in Ecuador, a drugstore. Her nephew wanted to take advantage of Melanie's advices and he asked her to help him to manage his own restaurant. That restaurant was owned by Melanie's nephew and sister. A year later, her sister sold that restaurant and bought the actual one, but she still was not a partner. Three years before, her sister sold this restaurant to Melanie and now she is the main partner. Melanie does not manage the restaurant in partnership with her husband, but rather her life-partner is also her employee.

Farooq

53 years old, Pakistan

Farooq came to Italy in 1992. He opened an Indian restaurant in 1998, in co-partnership with his wife, who is Italian. Their restaurant is well known, and it has a positive trend. The story of Farooq shows a migratory path that, on the one hand, was not distinguished by a precise project but, on the other, the reasons of migration were not strictly economic. Farooq's reasons to migrate are connected to the willingness to live in another country, and to the network,

represented by the father of Farooq, who had many business linkages in Italy. Once that Farooq settled in Italy, he separated his path from that of his father, by starting to work and to have career advancements at McDonald's, where he met his wife. At that point, the entrepreneurial objective arose, and he decided to start-up a business with his wife. Farooq has 7 employees, plus him and his wife.

Natalia

45 years old, Ecuador

Natalia arrived in Italy in 2000. Sandra was a nurse in Ecuador. She would have liked to keep doing that job, but her degree was not recognised. Therefore, after the migration, she worked as baby-sitter or domestic worker. In 2005, she opened a small bar. In 2008, she decided to expand herself and to open an Ecuadorian restaurant. She provides typical Ecuadorian food, and 90% of her customers come from Southern American. She explains how her combination of networks, between strong ties with family and weak ties with consultants, have been useful for the maintenance of her restaurant.

Tyler

47 years old, Kentucky

Tyler is an Afro-American entrepreneur in Milan. His father was an entrepreneur, but they did not have a great house, and his grandmother was a housecleaner. Tyler studied lyrical music at the Boston University. Five years before the migration, Tyler went to study in Italy for one year in 1991, six months in Padua and six months in Calabria, to learn the Italian language. He arrived in Italy in 1997. He started to work at the hotel Four Season in Milan, then he worked for 6 years as a male model for Valentino. In the meantime, he started to work in a gym, but he experienced a discrimination episode and he decided to do something else. In that period he started to think about opening his own restaurant in Milan. He owns a restaurant that sells fried chicken and typical American dishes in Milan. Corey has three employees.

Emily

49 years old, Italy-Japan

Emily owns a restaurant, that is part of her own hotel in Milan. Her mother is Japanese, while her father is Italian. When Emily was very young, she studied in the UK for a year. She enrolled in the Faculty of Political Sciences in Milan, but she did not graduate because she received the offer from her father to open a business in the financial sector in Switzerland. She had worked for many years in the financial sector, for a firm that she co-owned with her father. She has three children that live with her in the hotel. She attended a course of specialisation in financial and management, before starting her activity with her father in Switzerland.

Oscar

52 years old, Italy-Venezuela

Oscar has worked for 15 years in Venezuela, for the business of his Venezuelan uncle, by helping him to manage his import-export activity. Once he came back to Italy, in 2006, he decided to open an activity that was in connection with his Venezuelan experiences. Therefore, in 2013, he opened his own restaurant, aimed at selling arepas, a typical Venezuelan dish, with Venezuelan and Southern American employees and consultants, at the aim of rendering the dishes as more authentic as possible. Oscar explains the difficulties of introducing “ethnic” food in the Italian market.

Entrepreneurs who manage to survive

Jonathan

67 years old, Eritrean

Jonathan owns an Eritrean restaurant in Milan, his restaurant is among the surviving ones, since he has faced a deep crisis, that he managed to face, and now his business tasks concern only

survival. Jonathan arrived in Italy when he was 22, in 1973. When he arrived, he relied on his relatives, who were living in Varese, a small town near Milan. His relatives guested him and soon found him a job as dishwasher in a hotel. During the interview, Jonathan underlines how these networks have been fundamental to his arrival in Italy and to the introduction in the hotel and restaurant sector, the industry where he started to work and, decades later, he constructed his own business. Jonathan shares solidarity to their community members through information to new arrivals.

Luis

50 years old, Peru

Luis arrived in Italy in 1992, when he was 25. Before migrating to Italy in 1993, he graduated in Law in Peru. He manages to survive because he hires workers without regular contract. He has adopted a strategy aimed at lowering costs rather than having a good quality of food, but he is thinking to close his business and to migrate to another country. His structure of network is limited to Peruvian people, and he does not want to attract Italian customers.

Flavia

47 years old, Bolivia

Flavia arrived in Italy in 2006, fostered by her stepbrother. Before the migration, she graduated in journalism in Argentina. Flavia had worked as journalist in Bolivia, but then she migrated to Italy because she could no more afford to sustain her family with her wage as journalist. However, when she arrived in Italy, she did not find a job, and could also not live with her brother and his wife. She did many low skilled jobs and, at the same time, she started to work as a journalist with the man who soon became her Peruvian partner. They soon realised that they could not afford to live in Italy only with their job as journalists, so they decided to open a restaurant. They manage to survive with their restaurant, since they have a mainly Southern American trusted clientele, but they are not recognised beyond their usual customer entourage. Furthermore, they do not adopt strategies aimed at providing good quality of service and food. Rather, they implement strategies aimed at lowering costs. Flavia goes back to her country of origin once or twice a year. In fact, her small daughter still lives in Bolivia, and the mother of Flavia takes care of her.

Henry

54 years old, Egypt

Henry is Egyptian, he is 54, and he couldn't find a job in Egypt because of his religion: he is a Coptic Christian and any employer did not want to hire him when they found out about faith. Therefore, he migrated to Italy in 1986, when he was 22, and he settled in Milan. He was helped by members of the Coptic community here in Milan. He has worked in the construction and cleaning sector and, in 1990 he wanted to gain more money, and he acquired the cleaning business where he had been working. He kept that enterprise until 2008, when I opened my Greek restaurant, with his Greek wife as a partner. He owns a Greek restaurant in Milan; he is among those entrepreneurs who manage to survive. He has faced a sharp crisis in 2008, but he has managed to overcome the crisis. Henry has no project of changes or expansion; he just wants to maintain his restaurant.

Entrepreneurs who are in crisis

Aaron

64 years old, Eritrea

Aaron has many troubles related to his activity. Aaron owns an Eritrean restaurant in Milan. Once Aaron arrived in Italy, he wanted to work as singer for lyrical concerts, but he soon realised that he could not achieve his dream of being a lyrical singer, and all he could do consisted in low skilled jobs. Therefore, he decided to avoid that condition, to choose self-employment, and he had worked for 18 years as peddler. Aaron decided to work in the restaurant sector because he was attracted by the perspective of a more stable and profitable job. However, he only relied on his first experience as a peddler, without acquiring further human capital to deal with the new activity. As consequences, Aaron faced some problems with strategies, since the majority of his customers are Italian, but the majority of his professional connections belong to the Eritrean community, and he has difficulties in attracting Italian

people. He has been owning his restaurant for 20 years but, as in the case of Seok, who has been managing his business for more than 15 years, Aaron is facing a long and persistent crisis.

Gloria

46 years old, Peru

Gloria came to Italy in 2004, without a regular visa, to find a job in order to maintain her children, that stayed in Peru with her father. Gloria spent 8 years as undocumented migrant. In 2005, her father died, and she did not manage to go back to Peru for his funeral, because she did not have legal documents to go back to Peru. She managed to obtain the residence permit in 2011. During those 8 years, she always worked, but she had always been subjected to exploitation, because of her undocumented status.

Fieldwork in Rome

Entrepreneurs who reach good performances

Anthony

54 years old, Lebanon

Anthony came to Italy in 1982, when he was 18, to study. He graduated in engineering at the University of Rome. After the University, he opened an electrical appliance shop in Rome, which was closed during the second half of the 1990s. At that point, Anthony decided to face a new challenge, by enrolling in courses of specialisation in London. He owns three Lebanese restaurants, two in London and one in Rome. The two restaurants in London had been opened during the first decade of 2000s, while the one in Rome had been started up in 2011. He tried to open another one in the city centre in 2013. However, he soon had to close the second restaurant because of problems of bad communication with the municipality. According to

Anthony the main challenge to win for a migrant entrepreneur in the restaurant sector in Italy is to emerge in a market where “ethnic” food is often considered with diffidence and suspicion. When it is affordable, Anthony is willing to hire unemployed people, who belong to his community.

Victor

53 years old, Peru

Victor owns two restaurants in Rome. He arrived in Italy in 1991, when he was 26. The year before, his wife had migrated in Rome and, later, he made possible to come to Italy to many of his family members. He arrived in Italy as undocumented, and he was regularised in 1995. Victor allowed his family member to arrive in Italy and, later, the strong connection with his brother allowed him to start a business in co-partnership with him. They changed the sector in which they were operating to fulfil their dream, and they soon managed to expand themselves. They opened their first restaurant in 2012, and the second one was started in 2014.

Eduardo

38 years old, Honduras

Eduardo came to Italy in 2008. Eduardo graduated in Honduras in Business Economy, with a specialisation in tourism. Before becoming entrepreneur, Eduardo came to Rome to work at the embassy of Honduras. However, he did not like that job, and after many years, he decided to pursue what he had previously studied in his country. In 2013, he opened his restaurant in Rome, which prepares traditional dishes of three countries: Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala. The restaurant is well known, and it has soon gained a good reputation. The communication part is managed by the boyfriend of Eduardo, who owns a communication agency, together with other partners. However, few months before the interview, Eduardo wanted to see how word-of-mouth was working. Therefore, he asked to his boyfriend to substantially reduce posts on Instagram, by sharing on Instagram only one photo a week, and he soon realised that word-of-mouth is even more important than Instagram. In his opinion and according to his experience, integration in the host country also consists on weakening the ties with the country of origin.

David

64 years old, Eritrea

David is an Eritrean restaurant-owner in Rome. David arrived in Italy in 1972. He opened his Eritrean restaurant in Rome in 1976, after his graduation in Economics, and he has been managing this restaurant for more than 40 years, by gaining a very good reputation, as years were passing. Since he has been living in Italy for many decades, he has many Italian connections and friends. However, David hires only Eritrean employees.

Kabir

31 years old, Pakistan.

Kabir manages an Indian restaurant, relies on an accountant and a consultant, who cares about every practice, and payrolls, on the basis of a trust relationship. Kabir and Ismail are two Pakistani entrepreneurs who co-own an Indian restaurant in Rome. The restaurant had been opened in 2002 by Ismail. Kabir came to Italy in 2006 and he soon started to work at that restaurant. Later, since he was passionate with his job and he had learned how to manage a restaurant on the field, Ismail asked him to become his partner. They do not have strong linkages with the Pakistani community, and they have a more individual trajectory or network with Indian and Italian people, that allow them to fruitfully manage the restaurant.

William

44 years old, Peru

William's father was a public employee. In Peru he did the path to become a policeman, but he did not finish, because he decided to migrate. William arrived in Italy in 2007. He worked as dishwasher and as warehouse workers, before opening his restaurant. William's restaurant is located near Piazza del Popolo, and it attracts many Italian people and tourists coming from all over the world.

Fadi

40 years old, India

Fadi is a partner of his family's restaurant in Rome. For him, kinship networks do not only represent the way to begin his life in Italy, but they also signed the beginning of his entrepreneurial path. His brother-in-law opened this restaurant in 1999, when he was 51. In 2002, Fadi was 24 and he had just graduated in Economics in India. His brother in law called Fadi and asked him to go to Rome and, later, to become his business partner. As the years went by, he asked to many members of the family to join us and only members of my family work at this restaurant. At this very moment, eight members of the family are working at the restaurant. Four of them are employees, while Fadi's brother in law, his two brothers and himself are partners.

Said

37 years old, Iran

Said arrived in Italy in 2008, to study music at the conservatory of Rome. One year later, his brothers and his girlfriend came to Italy, to study the same subject. However, they soon realised that it was difficult to maintain themselves with music only. Therefore, they put together their savings to open a Persian restaurant in Rome, to create a business where they could also introduce their passion: music.

Carlo

57 years old, Italy

Carlo is an Italian man, who married a Thai chef. They co-own a Thai restaurant in Rome, which has a positive performance. The employees are all members of the family of Carlo's wife, and he recognises that his family is the only Thai community that he knows in Rome. Carlo's wife had always worked as a cook in her country of origin, and she is very talented. When she came to Italy, and she married Carlo, she managed to enrol in a Master at Gambero Rosso, a famous and prestigious Italian publisher, specialised in the food and wine sector. Through this Master, she managed to achieve high-level culinary competences, and she became the chef in her restaurant.

Damian

39 years old, Indian.

Damian owns two Indian restaurants in Rome. The first restaurant had been opened in 2010, while the second one started-up three years later, in 2013. Both restaurants are well known, and they have a good reputation. Damian has contracts of collaborations with tour operators in India; these tour operators often organise travels in Rome and they have an agreement with Damian to eat at his restaurants. For this reason, he often goes back to India

Pablo

38 years old, Peru

Pablo came to Italy with his mother, when he was 14. His mother opened a restaurant in Italy, and he decided to work for her as soon as he finished his compulsory education.

Entrepreneurs who manage to survive

Francisco

41 years-old, Peru

The restaurant of Francisco is classified among the surviving businesses, since he has faced a tough crisis and now, he manages to survive, though without achieving a good performance. The choice of Francisco is to guarantee the authenticity of traditional dishes as much as possible, even though he also would like to attract Italian people. Francisco arrived in Italy in 1998, to join his family, that was already living here. Before entrepreneurship, he had worked in a bar in Piazza di Spagna for 17 years. Francisco opened the restaurant in 2012. Francisco has three Peruvian employees.

Cristina

42 years old, Peru

Cristina arrived in Italy in 1996, with a job contract as caregiver for the mother of an Italian member of Parliament. She had been working as caregiver and waiter until 2001, when she opened a call centre in partnership with her husband. At the beginning, the activity was going strong. However, when mobile phones and Internet connections started to widespread across all the houses, their earnings decreased and they closed the activity, to open a restaurant in 2006. The restaurant has faced a great crisis after 2008, and now they manage to survive.

Angie

50 years old, Venezuela

Angie has been owning a restaurant in Rome with her Italian son-in-law, since 2014. The restaurant prepares both Venezuelan and Colombian traditional dishes, since Angie's husband comes from Colombia. She did not go back to Venezuela in the past five years, because her time is almost completely employed in the restaurant. She lives in Italy with her husband, her daughter and her son-in-law, but her mother, her sister and her brothers are still in Venezuela, and she has not seen her for many years.

Divit

38 years old, India

Divit was living in Bangladesh, and he migrated to Italy in 2000, because of the hostility against his religious belief in his country of origin. He arrived without regular visas and he remained undocumented until 2012. In 2013 he started up his restaurant. He owns a vegetarian Indian restaurant in Rome, that follows the rules of the ayurvedic cuisine. Despite the quite original idea, that could have allowed him to diversify his restaurant both from traditional Indian restaurants and from Italian vegan restaurants, he is among the surviving entrepreneurs, since his strategy is not sufficient to help him to achieve a good performance. Divit opened a vegetarian Indian restaurant in Rome, which follows the rules of the ayurvedic cuisine. The idea by itself was quite innovative and creative, since it allowed him to diversify both from traditional Indian restaurants, and from Italian vegan restaurants. However, he did not have

neither the knowledge to understand the type of strategy to adopt, nor the type of marketing to let the restaurant known, nor did he receive the useful information to deal with bureaucratic practices in Italy. Divit saw entrepreneurship as the only alternative to have a better life, both from the economical and from the social status point of view. He decided to use his savings and to accept the help offer of his friend. However, since his motivations were aimed at improving his social and economic situation, without acquiring resources, in this case connected to human capital, that could have helped him to evaluate more carefully his business and marketing strategies. Indeed, the use of biological ingredients, the attention to healthy food and to vegetarian cuisine throughout the use of ancient ayurvedical recipes do not emerge from the fast-food format of the restaurant, since this kind of format is usually associated to junk and fried food. Divit's wife works with him and she is always present at the restaurant, but she is not his partner. According to Divit, this choice is merely related to is necessity to establish an individual business, and for this reason his wife has been included in the list of employees.

Gabriela

39 years old, Peru

Gabriela came to Italy in 2009. During her life in Italy, she has always worked as cook in Peruvian restaurant. In 2015, she met two Bangladeshi that asked her to join their Peruvian restaurant, that had been started-up two years before. Therefore, she became partner in that restaurant. However, the restaurant just manages to survive, and they do not have project of expansion, also because of limited information due to barrier languages that characterise both Gabriela and her two partners.

Vincenzo

40 years old, Egypt-Philippines

Vincenzo's father is Egyptian, and his mother is Filipino. He co-owns a restaurant in Rome with his father. The restaurant had been opened by his father in 1990, Vincenzo has been working there since he was 14 and, later, he became a partner. The restaurant has faced a deep crisis after 2008, they have managed to survive, but they do not reach positive performances. Their employees are of mixed nationality: two workers are from Bangladesh; one is from Tunisia and the other one is from Poland. This choice is aimed at lowering costs, that can be

helpful in order to maintain the business, but it does not increase quality and productivity, by limiting the possibilities of these kinds of businesses to achieve a better performance.

Michael

47 years old, Eritrea

Michael arrived in 1991, and he has been owning a restaurant in Rome since 1998. As in the case of his co-national presented before, also Michael faced a deep crisis in 2008, which he managed to overcome, and now he manages to survive. The father of Michael was a supplier of medicines, and his mother was housewife. His parents could not allow him to study, and he felt to not have a future in Eritrea, so he migrated to Italy, where he started working and dishwasher in restaurants and, many years later, he opened his own activity. However, he did not have any kind of intergenerational transmission, he did not acquire further human capital in Italy, and he did not usefully combine his networks.

Entrepreneurs who are in crisis

Seok

54 years-old, Korea

Seok has problems of fluency in the Italian language, and he underlines the lack of consultants coming from the Korean community. He came to Italy in 1992. He has been owning a Korean restaurant in Rome since 2000, but he is facing a deep crisis and he often thinks to close his restaurant. His ties are almost exclusively linked to the Korean community, thanks to whom he acquired the restaurant. The case of Seok shows that co-national connections can be very useful to start a business. However, the lack of useful ties for the business can be negative for his performance. In fact, the majority of Seok's customers come from Korea. However, the Korean community in Rome is quite small and, for this reason, the restaurant counts on a clientele composed pretty much by Korean tourists. Therefore, the flows of Korean tourist in Rome is

not something that Seok can predict, and, in addition, these flows are often not sufficient to create a satisfactory base of clientele. This kind of situation, according to Seok, depends on his lack of useful connections in the Korean community. Moreover, Seok has another problem, that is connected to the limited information, since he does not have proficiency of Italian language. The experience of Seok emphasises the disadvantage that many migrant entrepreneurs have to face, when they lack knowledge in the Italian language. Therefore, he asks for more intermediaries within the Korean community, that could help him to fully understand the practices that he has to fulfil to carry on his restaurant.

Raki

45 years old, Bangladesh

Raki owns an Indian fast food in the Esquilino area in Rome. Before opening his restaurant, Raki was working as waiter in a disco. Raki arrived in Italy in 2000, when he was 18. He opened his restaurant in 2005. He faced a deep crisis after 2008, and he has not fully managed to overcome the crisis. His restaurant is an Indian street food. Raki has four employees, and they are all Indian.