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**Immigrant Entrepreneurship's Socio-Economic Contribution to the Receiving Society.
A Case Study of Peruvian and Ecuadorian Businesses in the City of Rome**

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*“the intercourse of cities with one another is apt to create a confusion of manners;
strangers are always suggesting novelties to strangers”*

(Plato; 1873, pp. 338-339 – original work “Laws”, written in 348 BC)

Abstract

Migration and entrepreneurship are two of the most actual issues on the global scene. Supported by the specificity of a precise case study (Peruvian and Ecuadorian businesses in the city of Rome), this research will try to evaluate how and why the interrelation between them, in the form of migrant entrepreneurship, triggers a socio-economic impact in the host society. The investigation has been led by the Hypothesis that, in reason of the transnational features characterising migrant enterprises, migrant entrepreneurship catalyses immigrants' integration in the receiving socio-economic system, generating a simultaneous spill-over effect in the host country's social and economic spheres. Along the study, primary data related to the case study (in the forms of quantitative mapping, surveys and semi-structured interviews) have been gathered in person and complemented by secondary sources. This empirical material has been subsequently analysed through the perceptive lenses provided by the theoretical framework, namely: Theory of Immigrant Capital (and its combination between resources and opportunities) in the context of Ethnic Economies, followed by the concepts inherent to the Socio-Economic Impact. The analysis, later on, has been configured on the foundations provided by a multivariate hierarchical cluster analysis; as a matter of facts, theories have been applied to the results of this preliminary analysis.

Two groups emerged from this analysis, showing different entrepreneurial strategies and economic performances. Referring to them, theories have been gone through one by one and interesting finding emerged: one group has been acknowledged as economically more performing, while the other one showed stagnant or declining economic indicators. Moreover, the economically successful group has been furtherly divided in two sub-groups, according to the different strategies employed to achieve the flourishing entrepreneurial results. In light of this categorisation, applying the theoretical concepts to this results, most of the ideas expressed in the Hypothesis found fertile ground to be confirmed. Notably, at least for what concerns the case study, it appears to be mostly true that migrant entrepreneurship fosters a given immigrant community's integration in the receiving society; nonetheless, it does not happen only and exclusively in reason of the transnational features characterising the business. Consequently, transnationalism does not seem to be a binding element for economic success. Furthermore, it has been assessed a considerable positive socio-economic impact delivered under the form of employment contribution, innovation, integration and foreign trade and monetary capital mobility.

In reason of the ever-growing migration numbers and of entrepreneurship phenomenon's centrality in the capitalist system, the overall topic of immigrant entrepreneurship is estimated to acquire growing importance on the global scene. This is the reason why, as a whole, the research aims to add

a mainly qualitative specific contribution to the immigrant entrepreneurship existent literature about the case of Peruvian and Ecuadorian entrepreneurs in the city of Rome, furnishing at the same time, an insight of results' meaning in general terms.

Keywords: Migration, Entrepreneurship, Migrant Entrepreneurship, Peru, Ecuador, Rome, Immigrant Capital, Socio-Economic Impact

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1. Introduction

The global socio-economic system which is currently dominating the scene rests its incessant growth thirst on the capitalist model, whose aim is to stimulate, optimise, and maximise the efforts and the activities of all the stakeholders belonging to its chain. Exchanging, bargaining and trading are all activities belonging to this model, but these actions need appropriate venues and actors. Enterprises, entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in general, are some of these venues and actors and, most of all, one of the many necessary gearwheels in order for this system to keep spinning and to produce growth.

Moreover, this same global socio-economic system triggers (and at the same time has to deal with) new mobility patterns. Migration has always been one of humankind's peculiarities; nonetheless, the nowadays globalised metropolitan cities, together with the new media system's availability, gave rise to unprecedented numbers of individuals seeking fortune elsewhere on the globe than their birth-places. The urban-oriented migration which in the last couple of centuries pushed families and entire villages seeking fortune from the countryside to the surrounding cities, changed its connotations and proportions alongside globalisation. So, economic migration numbers are increasing and its scale is enlarging up to a transnational and transcontinental dimension. In response, societies are destined to cope with this phenomenon either willing or not.

In this landscape, the spontaneous phenomenon of migrant entrepreneurship has been looked at among scholars as one of the means for hosting societies and migrants to merge and make the economic migration phenomenon an opportunity rather than a burden.

After getting knowledge on the theoretical framework inherent to the topic, in order to get a concrete picture of the present days' transnational migrant entrepreneurship, the research has been set on a specific case study comprehending two national groups, namely Peruvians and Ecuadorians entrepreneurs, in a defined special scale: the city of Rome.

So as to analyse the two national groups, a three-levels data gathering has been carried on, structured as follows: a preliminary desk-based quantitative mapping of the Peruvian and Ecuadorian businesses in the city of Rome, a quantitative survey aimed to get information and statistics about the activities and a qualitative interviews section in which some relevant cases have been selected in order to deepen the knowledge about precise aspects.

Specifically, the question that led the investigation is:

“Does immigrant entrepreneurship trigger a socio-economic repercussion on the receiving society? Of which kind? Why?”

In order to answer to this question, a Hypothesis has been formulated in light of the preliminary information already in possession of the author, assuming:

“In function of the peculiar transnational features characterising migrant enterprises, especially when economically successful, immigrant entrepreneurship acts as a catalyst fostering a given immigrant community's economic integration in the host socio-economic fabric, generating at the same time a spill-over effect (social and economic) on the receiving country”.

The reasons behind the topic selection and case study definition are numerous and articulated. First and foremost, migrant enterprises are acknowledged as one of the most dynamic segment of the present socio-economic system. Framing this phenomenon in the case study, in fact, gives the perception of the aforementioned dynamism: migrant enterprises in Italy are one tenth of natives' ones and are growing between 3 and 4 times faster than the autochthonous. Moreover, they flourish especially in labour intensive sectors, which turn to be an important job source. Lastly, the choice of Rome gives particular resonance to the case study since it is the Italian province with the highest absolute number of foreign enterprises, while the choice of Peruvian and Ecuadorian entrepreneurs has been guided by the presence of the two national groups over the Italian and Roman territories: Peru and Ecuador are, in fact, respectively the first and the second Latin American nationalities both in Italy and in Rome (IDOS, 2018).

The academic pillars sustaining the investigation are set up by the notions contained in the Ethnic Economies Theories, with a specific focus on the Immigrant Capital Theory (Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B., 2015) and its relation with resources and opportunities. Alongside these concepts, a theoretical grounding about Socio-Economic Impact coming from a plural number of sources resulted to be helpful in the definition of the impact delivered by the case study analysed.

The intertwining of the theoretical grounds with the Problem Formulation and its relative Hypothesis crafted the blueprint of this research:

- Chapter 1 introduces the work, its Research Question and the inherent topic.
- Chapter 2 illustrates the methodology followed throughout the whole work, from the desk-based work to the first-person data gathering method, passing through what the case study consists of.
- Chapter 3 outlines the theories and parameters that have been gone through and which will be functionally applied to a concrete case study during the analysis.

- Chapter 4 provides an overview of the chosen case study, namely Peruvian and Ecuadorian enterprises in the city of Rome, enriched by the first-hand data collected on the field.
- Chapter 5 is devoted to the analysis of the data collected; specifically, the theories are explored one by one in their application to the case study in order to examine the migrant entrepreneurship phenomenon within the chosen scale (Rome) and the chosen target group, (Peruvian and Ecuadorian entrepreneurs).
- Lastly, Chapter 6 presents the results achieved throughout the investigation, trying to provide an answer to the Research Question.

This work aims to bring wide-ranging clarity on the migration issue, tackling a widespread and yet often misjudged topic such as migrant entrepreneurship, taking as an example Peruvian and Ecuadorian entrepreneurs in the city of Rome. The various chapters take in consideration, describe and eventually analyse a series of key-concepts collaterally influent in the migrant entrepreneurship phenomenon, such as: migratory flows, transnationalism, socio-economic integration and impact, migrant capital and others.

In the next chapter, the methodological aspects will be gone over thoroughly, with the purpose of giving the perception of the procedure followed throughout the investigation to the reader before starting delving in the core chapters of the research.

2. Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology adopted throughout the project will be presented and examined, in order to provide the readers with all the necessary tools for a systematic understanding and the limitations faced throughout the work.

Throughout the research, the final aim is to understand why immigrant entrepreneurship triggers a positive socio-economic impact in the receiving society. Particularly, the research aims to discover how immigrant entrepreneurs employ their transnational ties and, more in general, their migrant capital in order to be successful and how their success trigger a socio-economic impact in the host country.

In order to analyse the migrant entrepreneurship phenomenon, it has been deemed necessary to delineate a target group to be analysed through a case study: namely, Peruvian and Ecuadorian entrepreneurs in the city of Rome. The scale and the target group have been delineated in reason of an identified synergy among the two: being Rome the Italian capital, institutional and administrative centre of the country, the immigrant presence is the highest in terms of absolute numbers and among the highest in terms of relative presence (IDOS, 2018); for what concerns the target group, Peru and Ecuador are the two Latin American countries counting the largest presence over the Italian (and also Roman) territory.

Choosing a case study to meticulously describe the phenomenon gives the possibility of “understanding a real-life phenomenon in depth” (Yin, 2009) giving pragmatism to what would otherwise remain a theoretical study of the phenomenon. A case study is in fact a method which gives the possibility to encompass empirical sources, and combine them with theories and abstract approaches. Given the complexity of the general migrant entrepreneurship phenomenon, this work aims to produce causal explanation and awareness of this phenomenon applied to a circumscribed case study (ibid.).

The research has been carried on following an inductive investigation pattern, which allows to go from the understanding of the general phenomenon to the analysis of the specific case study. This feature, together with Problem Formulation and the foundations of Theories Chapter, crafted the structural design of the project. Specifically, two main discourses have been introduced in the theoretical framework: immigrant capital in the context of ethnic economies (taking into account resources and opportunities) and the concept of socio-economic impact.

As a result of the combination of quantitative and (mostly) qualitative research tools in the data collection process, an embedded case study has been generated. Pragmatically, an embedded case

design gives the chance of applying multiple units of analysis to a single case study. However, the embedded case study design will also result utilitarian to give the research a holistic perspective, bringing (when necessary) the results back to a general dimension (Yin, 2009).

For what concerns data gathering, it has been based both on desk literature (primary and secondary, qualitative and quantitative sources) and on-field primary data collection, which has been articulated in order to meet as much as possible both qualitative and quantitative criteria. To do so, the on-field investigation has been structured on three different levels: the first one has been an extensive mapping of the enterprises belonging to the chosen target group; later on, the enterprises that were satisfying the research criteria have been contacted in order to proceed with the second step, a semi-structured questionnaire; finally, the most representative cases have been interviewed in order to obtain purely qualitative data. The three steps followed each other in this order. Nonetheless, among all the steps it has been witnessed a predictable overlapping phase. This feature is due to the fluidity of the investigation: during the questionnaires' phase, the mapping phase kept going on since the entrepreneurs reported the researcher some enterprises missed from the initial outlining process. In the same manner, the interviews phase started while the second step was still ongoing. During the analysis phase, gathered data from the questionnaires have been categorised following a multivariate hierarchical cluster method: starting from one variable (namely economic success), two clusters have been identified (one of them has been furtherly divided into two sub-groups) and described keeping into account the other variables surveyed; this cluster analysis has been then complemented by the information collected during the interviews.

In light of what emerged by this preventive analysis, the theoretical notions exposed in Chapter 3 have been applied to the case study in order to assess how immigrant entrepreneurship delivers a socio-economic impact.

Throughout the work a systemic approach has been adopted: according to this approach, the multiple units of analysis have been taken into account in the whole research process. For this reason, even if the main target has been immigrant entrepreneurship, all the components of the entrepreneurial system (such as the institutional dimension, third sector, suppliers, customers, employees, juridical forms, competencies, etc.) inherent to migration (remittances, international trade, migratory project, motivations, etc.) have been, more or less peripherally, taken into account.

2.1 Limitations

During the work some limitations have been encountered, especially for what concerns the target group availability during the data-collection process, the linguistic transition from the original language data gathering to English, and the lack of precise information in some occasions.

Numbers regarding migratory and entrepreneurial presence over Rome's territory have been difficult to find in explicit or public form; data reported have been most of the time asked to the competent organisms and institutions or, if not entirely reliable, subjected to a double check.

Moreover, since the existent researches in this sector are mainly quantitative, it has been faced a shortage of qualitative data inherent to the specific case-study. This lack has been tried to be addressed with the first-hand data gathering.

Being the target group composed by entrepreneurs, contacting the single actors have been possible only during working hours; they have been contacted one by one in order to verify the information gotten by web sources. Establishing a link with the target group have been a long and gruelling process: beside the diffidence due to the sensitiveness of the topic in the current time and space, entrepreneurs were often not interested or not willing to spend time for being interviewed.

Once the first contact with the single entrepreneurs has been established, a meeting has been fixed to fill the quantitative survey with each of them who agreed to participate to the research project. Those who, by the end of the questionnaire, were willing to be eventually engaged for the last data gathering step, have been scanned and the most interesting cases have been contacted again for the qualitative interview.

Besides the difficulties in getting the meetings, the process of going in person by almost every enterprise mapped took longer than expected, especially because of meetings delays or cancellations. Notwithstanding all the limitations faced, the work proceeded and innovative solutions have been adopted when limitations couldn't be overcome.

Moreover, due to the geographical location and the Spanish linguistic predisposition of the target group, questionnaires and interviews have been carried on either in Italian or Spanish and later on translated in English. For this reason, even if the concepts and data reported did not undergo to any inconsistency of content, it deserves to be stated that primary data literal references have been subject to the author's translation from the original language to English.

Lastly, in reason of the small sample taken into account in the case study, especially in comparison with the magnitude of the general migrant entrepreneurship phenomenon, this research is far from claiming a universal representativeness of the inferred conclusions. It rather aims to shed light on this topic in this precise spatial and collective dimension.

Now that methodological aspects have been extensively gone through, in the next chapter the theoretical outline that will drive the analysis will be presented.

3. Theories

In order to provide an overall understanding of the immigrant entrepreneurship phenomenon, the theoretical notions rooted in the concept of ethnic economy and its multiple shades and declinations will be explored in this chapter. Referring to the paradigm proposed by Antoine Pécoud, the relationship between ethnic resources and opportunities will be unfolded, considering their roles and functions in the context of immigrant entrepreneurship. The theoretical considerations will not be limited to these two variables; other intrinsic aspects of the individual (status, gender, generational differences, institutional context, class/social mobility) will be examined and weighted according to the aim of the research.

Afterwards, in order to deepen the focus on what Pécoud calls “Ethnic Resources”, the research will rely on the “Immigrant Capital Model” framed by Sundararajan B. and Sundararajan M.; they break up what Pécoud defines ethnic resources into different types of capital (human, cultural, economic and social), phrasing each capital’s relation with opportunities’ recognition in the context of immigrant entrepreneurship. In so doing, they frame the all-encompassing concept of immigrant capital, which highlights the added values of immigrant entrepreneurs compared to natives.

Lastly, the theoretical framework will provide the notions and evaluation tools germane to entrepreneurial social impact. It will be described what socio-economic impact is in the migrant entrepreneurship’s field and which are the dimensions through which it is actually delivered.

3.1 Ethnic Economies

In the last decades, the mutual influence between economy and migration witnessed an increasing interest of researchers and scholars. This rising interest finds its roots in the growing global migratory trends, which consequently attracted the attention of the academic world about all the inherent approaches and theories that could help to clarify the matter from many different angles. The concept of ethnic economy itself, given the relative newness and the notable quantity of material about it, has not a uniform and standardised definition. Rather, as it is possible to observe exploring the literature dealing with this topic, there are a great number of distinguished definitions which differ for some aspects, and converge for many others (Pécoud, 2010).

There are definitions which characterise “ethnic entrepreneurs” highlighting their belonging to a given ethnic group, which can be framed by cultural, geographical or religious aspects (Menzies et al., 2003: 128; Zhou, 2004: 1040). Even if similar, some other definitions do not focus specifically on the entrepreneurs, they rather focus on the shared origin of all those individuals active in the “ethnic economy” in question (employers, workers and costumers themselves) (Light 1994, p. 650). Nonetheless, these kind of definitions target any kind of business run by, or grouping a particular

ethnic group, as ethnic enterprise, regardless of the nature of the business itself. A number of other definitions address this limitation stating that ethnic economies are “shaped by the specific socio-cultural features of the group they belong to and are likely to differ in their functioning, both from each other and from the non-ethnic economy”, implying that the economy is ethnic if and only if the entrepreneurs take advantage of their common ethnicity (Pécoud, 2010).

Theories relative to immigrant entrepreneurship in its broader sense embrace also concepts such as ethnic enclaves and niches. According to Portes (1981) ethnic enclaves are those specific geographic spaces where business run by a given ethnicity are concentrated and give employment to individuals from the same ethnicity. Differently, ethnic niches pertain to a disproportioned presence of a given ethnic group in a specific economic sector (Model, 1993).

3.1.1 Ethnic Resources and Opportunities

All these definitions, even if differing for their descriptive or analytical nature, focus on the positive and productive role of ethnicity, on the “ethnic resources” representing an asset for the immigrant entrepreneur. As Light and Bonacich (1988:18-19) state:” Ethnic resources are social features of a group which co-ethnic business owners utilise in business or from which their business passively benefits. Ethnic resources include values, knowledge, skills, information, attitudes, leadership, solidarity, an orientation to sojourning, and institutions”.

Especially in the globalisation era, ethnic resources are constituted also by those transnational ties connecting the migrant to the sending and the receiving country at the same time. This dual society knowledge gives the migrant the chance to use its transnationality to develop a business abroad (Portes et al. 2002). Nonetheless, also the concept of “ethnic resources” does not benefit of a universally agreed definition. Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) state that ethnic resources are not an intrinsic feature of immigrants; rather they are the response of the criticalities that immigrants face in the host society, which let them develop “group consciousness, bounded solidarity and enforceable trust”. In this sense, the British school is in line with the vision of immigrant entrepreneurship as the consequence of the migrant’ living and working condition (the adversities when looking for jobs, racial and economic discrimination). In such a situation, borrowing a keystone concept of Disadvantage Theory, self-employment becomes the most valuable opportunity (Pécoud, 2010). Other reasons for immigrants to open a business can be traced in immigrant-friendly/business-friendly policies or in contingent particular social, economic and historical conditions (Waldinger, Aldrich & Ward, 1990).

These approaches, respectively founded on ethnic resources on the one hand, and on contextual opportunities on the other hand, find complementarity in some models proposed by the academic

community in the last decades. One of these models is the so called “interactive model” proposed by Waldinger, Aldrich & Ward (1990); it states that immigrant entrepreneurship is the linear product of migrants’ ethnic resources combined with external opportunities in the receiving country. Nevertheless, this consideration finds a fertile ground for debate as well: there are scholars emphasising the role of ethnic resources (and particularly networks) in the process of opportunities creation; on the opposite side, those favouring a deterministic vision give a higher specific weight to opportunities, disregarding the importance of immigrants’ ethnic resources (Pécoud, 2010). Within the aforescribed ethnic resources can be also recognised the so-called social capital. This social capital constituted by the co-ethnic network acts as a safe nest in which the immigrant entrepreneur can surmount its disadvantages thanks to collective agency, consequently integrating in the receiving socio-economic fabric more gradually and effectively (Pécoud, 2010).

Nonetheless, when talking about the social capital of a given immigrant community, it should be avoided to think about social ties as clear and defined insuperable boundaries. Especially in the business world, social ties are important, but they can’t slow down the driving force behind every enterprise: the search for business opportunities. As it will be possible to notice in the chosen case study, this results in a considerable heterogeneity in the immigrant businesses’ world: while some enterprises are completely entrenched in the ethnic community network, some others gradually emerge, eventually loosening the contacts with their ethnic background. Of course, there is not a sharp division between these two business conditions: in the blurred zone separating enterprises embedded in their ethnic milieu and those emerged from it, there are the so called “mixed economies”, where entrepreneurs take advantage of both ethnic and non-ethnic resources (Pécoud, 2010). For this reason, when categorising ethnic business, and more in general when dealing with ethnic economy, attention must be paid to the hybrid cases testifying the fluidity of the categorisation (Nederveen Pieterse, 2003: 36).

In reason of these concepts, the research is expected to provide evidences showing how ethnic resources and contextual opportunities, influence migrants choices to start an entrepreneurial venture and its following management.

3.1.2 Other Variables

Together with ethnic resources and opportunities, when analysing the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship, intrinsic elements of the specific individual in consideration need to be taken into account as well. Among these, there are those resources termed as **status**, **gender**, **generational differences**, **institutional context** and **class/social mobility**. According to these variables, immigrants within a same community, have different potentialities and trajectories.

The **status** (namely legal status) is a fundamental prerequisite necessary to open a business in the majority of the receiving countries. All those migrants who are either undocumented or asylum seeker (in some countries) are not entitled to work and, consequently, to be self-employed. Nonetheless, a consistent number finds its way in the informal economy as undeclared employee or (rarely) as informal business-holder. For what concerns regular arrivals, the “ethnic economy” paradigm recognises a general pattern according to which newcomers find an occupation as employees by a co-ethnic entrepreneur. Later on, they will become themselves entrepreneurs, employing some other newcomer and thus perpetuating the chain. This model centres on the never-ending flow of new labour-force which find an occupation inside ethnic economies, and on the progressive integration of longstanding migrants (Pécoud, 2010).

Gender is another variable that deserves a mention when talking about ethnic economies. Women are often described as “silent contributors” to male-run businesses. Ethnic enterprises are indeed generally run by men, while women take care of the children (often providing free labour force to the family enterprise as well). In order to reach the self-employed status, immigrant women usually have to emancipate from the ethnic network of which they are part of, and draw their trajectory stepping back from their origin ethnic group (Pécoud, 2010). It will be interesting to detect if this archetype also recurs in the case of Peruvian and Ecuadorian businesses in Rome.

When it comes to the **generational differences** between immigrant entrepreneurs and the second generations, contrasting conceptualisations emerge. According to the “segmented assimilation” advocates, children of the migrant population benefit of the jobs and training opportunities available within the ethnic economy. This perspective is contrasted by the supporters of the “assimilation” perspective, according to which the ethnic economy would trap the second-generation into the respective ethnic niche. An intermediate and more moderate position postulates that ethnic entrepreneurship acts as a safety net in case of lack of alternative opportunities. At the same time, according to this position, it is common that, having a holistic experience of the host society, second generations can be driven by emancipation desires and be attracted by different career perspectives (Pécoud, 2010).

The **institutional context** also plays its role: contrarily to what often turns to be the general feeling of public opinion, as Pécoud (2010), clearly put into words: “migrant entrepreneurship does not take place in a legal/political/institutional vacuum, but in a regulatory framework determined and enforced by public authorities and other stakeholders (unions, employers’ associations, professional corporations, etc.). Immigrant businesses, therefore, even when located in ‘niches’ or ‘enclaves’, are integral parts of the economy and of the overall social and political dynamics that shape it”.

Nonetheless the debate is still vibrant about the dichotomous embeddedness in the political/institutional rather than the socio/cultural environment. Some scholars define this relation as a double embeddedness, while some others consider the socio/cultural as consequential to the political/ institutional (Pécoud, 2010).

The “ethnicity” of a business is often seen as a feature corresponding to the modesty of the business itself. So, when it comes to **class and social mobility**, it is rare to frame an upper-class immigrant entrepreneur in the ethnic business paradigm. This non-absolute rule can be explained by the fact that, as far as the business evolves, the entrepreneur relies less on ethnicity and ethnic resources and more on its human and financial capital (Pécoud, 2010).

Siding these factors to the combination of resources and opportunities, throughout the analysis the evidences characterising ethnic economies will be highlighted. Among the others, the internal solidarity in migrants’ networks, the relevance of transnational ties and other variables such as gender, institutional context and social mobility are expected to play a major role in the research. Thanks to the definitions provided by Pécoud’s paradigm, it is now possible to look at this research from a more precise angle. In the next section, in fact, the ethnic resources (and, more in general, the whole set of the immigrant individual’s resources) will be looked at from a different perspective. The resources of the immigrant will be presented and categorised as different capitals making up the what will be defined as “immigrant capital”. Moreover, some space has been given to the relation between immigrant capital and entrepreneurial opportunities.

3.2 Immigrant Capital and Entrepreneurial Opportunities

When analysing immigrant entrepreneurship, Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B. propose an interesting and all-encompassing model aimed to opportunities recognition. The entrepreneur’s ability to recognise opportunities and patterns is therefore provided by the combination of what the author calls **social, cultural, economic and human capital**. All these capitals, if analysed in function of the immigrant entrepreneurship concept, give rise to what has been defined as **immigrant capital**.

Starting from **human capital**, it can be defined as those individual’s characteristics contributing to its skills, abilities and knowledge. In an entrepreneurial perspective, the most important human capital feature is the prior knowledge and/or experience of the market in question (Shane 2000) and the educational level, acquired either in the home-country or in the host country. Moreover, notable

importance is covered by prior experiences of self-employment or by the knowledge of a specific sector (Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B., 2015).

In respect to **cultural capital**, it is considered as the set of individual features deriving from the national origin, national culture and religious precepts. Immigrant entrepreneurs have the transnational surplus value of a dual cultural capital, deriving both from their country of origin and from the cultural values and norms which are assimilated as a result of the host country's influence. In sum, the cultural capital that results from the cultural substratum is the product of the resources' mobilisation and usage according to the host culture; the union of culture and individual's agency resulting from different cultural practices enriches the immigrant entrepreneur's cultural capital (Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B., 2015).

Economic capital covers a decisive role in influencing the immigrant decision of starting a new venture. An initial large investment has a fundamental importance in the potential success of an enterprise; if the migrant comes from a high economic class or his trust network has an important financial access, the chances of entrepreneurial success are higher (Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B., 2015).

Last but not least, **social capital** is encountered. Immigrant's social capital is defined as the social connections that the individual has both in its host and home country (Zhou, 2004). Particularly, the figure of the migrant has been studied as emblematic of the transnationalism phenomenon: with transnational ties connect the society of origin and the receiving one, the immigrant acts as a bridge that gives rise to a transnational network. It is exactly through this network that new ideas emerge and new opportunities are pinpointed. Moreover, as it has been aforescribed, social ties become vital in the process of newcomers' approach to the new society: entrepreneurs often act as mentors, sharing knowledge and experience, providing contacts and support. This attitude results to be an asset for beginner entrepreneurs since they often are tutored in a trusted network before eventually undertaking their own venture (Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B., 2015).

All these forms of capital find their realisation in the fact that, relating to any of the aforescribed types of capital, the entrepreneur has the chance of taking advantage of its immigrant status. He can see the situation from the outside and thus recognise the "out of the box" opportunities (to name some of them: partners, customers and suppliers in -or coming from- their countries of origin). This ability, applicable to all the aforescribed types of capital, has been named by Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B. (2015) as **immigrant capital**, and it will be of notable interest to observe if and how it is employed in the target group taken in consideration.

Following this reasoning, immigrant entrepreneurs act as the “boundary spanners in multiple networks”. It means that “by virtue of their position in and across networks, have the ability to not only connect an organisation or group to the external environment, but also have the ability to influence the decisions, processes and information flowing between the internal and external networks” (Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B., 2015: 39). In addition to this exclusive social position, being in contact with a bigger and more variegated set of inputs and information, immigrant entrepreneurs have more probabilities of identifying business opportunities rather than non-transnational individuals. So, immigrant capital affords the entrepreneur to analyse both the realities he knows, processing a greater number of information and finally pinpointing the arising opportunities. In so doing, he can adapt the business to different social structures and has the potential of economically interacting with local and ethnic segments of the society. To the former he can sell products that are particularly new and attractive in view of their exotic origin, or he can lower the prices and being more competitive about local items and services; in respect to the latter, he can offer products of the country of provenience, or local products enriched with a service supporting new immigrants.

Therefore, to provide an all-encompassing definition of **immigrant capital**, it can be defined as “the ability of immigrants to actively seek and embed themselves in boundary spanner positions in cross-country networks in such a manner so as to facilitate the development of cross-country cognitive schemas that provides access to a greater number of network nodes, which provide access to diverse information that can be connected, enabling immigrant entrepreneurs to recognise opportunities better than the natives” (Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B., 2015).

In function of what just said, it can be summarised that the immigrant capital is the product deriving from the multiple boundary spanner position, the bridging and prominent role that the immigrant entrepreneur has in the society. These resources will be crucial in the assessment of how the immigrant entrepreneurs employ their different backgrounds in the entrepreneurial venture.

3.3 Socio-Economic Impact

Immigrant entrepreneurship, on the basis of what declared in the previous paragraph, has a weight in the receiving society since it delivers an impact from both a social and an economic perspective. The socio-economic product is evidenced by a plurality of different aspects and dimensions such as: the contribution to the general employment rates, the empowerment of the foreign segments of a given migrant community in the hosting society, the enhancement of foreign trade, the cosmopolitan innovation contribution physiologically entailed in cultural assimilation or the socio-cultural potential of foreigners’ integration in the host social texture. If the economic weight is often considered in the

existent field's literature, the social dimension (even if inextricably intertwined with the economic one) is rarely taken into account in order to be assessed and evaluated.

3.3.1 Contribution to employment

A plurality of studies testifies the importance of immigrant entrepreneurship in the creation of job opportunities. In OECD countries for example, since the vast majority of migrant enterprises are small firms (hiring less than 10 individuals), numbers regarding employment rates by those firms are not massively impacting from an individual point of view. Nonetheless, looking at the phenomenon in its overarching volume, the general trend gives quite interesting results: "a foreign-born entrepreneur in a small firm creates on average between 1.4 and 2.1 additional jobs" (OECD, 2010).

However, it needs to be said that there is a clear migrant entrepreneurs' tendency toward the employment of other migrants. There is more than one explanation supporting this fact. First of all, other migrants usually have lower monetary demands rather than natives; this characteristic well-matches with migrant entrepreneurs' low salary provision possibilities. Beside this, there is an elevated rate of "internal solidarity": even if the nationality is not the same, the convergence between offer and demand on features such as consumption and expenditures compression, long working shifts, low salaries and the paternalistic alignment between employee and employer (deriving from the employee's eventual intention of opening an autonomous activity later on), make it usual for this kind of enterprises to find an articulated equilibrium. This equilibrium relies on a low cost, collaborative labour-force which aims to emancipate and track its own groove in the host economic market (Ambrosini, 1995). Regarding this peculiarity, it is enlightening what Portes and Stepick (1985) affirm: "the first characteristic of ethnic economies is the usage of a common cultural tie aimed to the economic survival and social advancement". Nevertheless, the debate is open among the scholars supporting this enclave vision and those advocating assimilationist implications. A coherent and moderate perspective to tackle this issue is proposed by Light et al. (1994): even if ethnic economies provide employees with lower salaries than open economies, the average economic gain is still higher than if they were unemployed; an important remark, given the frequent unemployability outside the ethnic niche or enclave. This factor, in the context of what said also in the previous paragraph, is expected to provide the reader with the necessary analytical lenses to recognise how a given ethnic entrepreneurial contexts delivers a socio-economic contribution through the employment of precise segments of the population.

Leaving aside for a moment the debate regarding enclaves and integration, by filling those gaps left by autochthonous entrepreneurs (these vacuums generally consist in low-profitability and/or risky activities), it can be stated that migrant entrepreneurs are important in the process of creating new job opportunities (especially, but not only, for compatriots or other migrants) in the host country labour

market. In so doing, they compensate structural imbalances in the job market and consequently alleviate social tensions in the receiving country providing job opportunities to potentially unemployed and ostracised segment of the population (Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp, 2009).

3.3.2 Contribution to foreign trade enhancement and monetary capital mobility

Since the end of the WWII, globalisation saw its tentacles spreading in the global economy faster than ever. As the decades passed, most of the barriers have been overcome (and tariffs have been mitigated) thanks to technologies, transportation systems, multilateral and regional agreements, etc. Nonetheless, foreign trade and monetary capital mobility still require notable import/export skills and information about the foreign market in question (economic, social or political situation; laws and regulations; behavioural and cultural norms, language) (OECD, 2010).

In this context, immigrants appear to be the most suitable social group possessing a good knowledge of the contact network, business culture, politics, religion and language of their countries of origin. This feature allows them to trade in first person or to show the way to thirds in need to engage trade with a specific country. In fact, firms often lack the specific knowledge of a given foreign market and incur in higher trade costs due to an *ex ante* information shortage. These kind of information can be hard to obtain and belong to fields where an extensive degree of trust is needed. The access to these information is frequently obtained at the price of significantly boosted importing and exporting costs. Moreover, these barriers' specific weight is often exacerbated by weak institutions and corruptions. In this respect, again, foreign born entrepreneurs are the ones knowing the best where the leaks are and how to circumvent them or the endemic corruption of these grey areas (OECD, 2010). In this perspective, evidences presented in the Overview Chapter will try to complement these theoretical notions in order to enrich the analysis with coherent and relevant information.

3.3.3 Innovation

The inclusion of a segment of migrant entrepreneurs in the host socio-economic texture entails a significant degree of cosmopolitan change. This characteristic can be translated, among the others, as a degree of innovation in the respective reference sector. The economic development of migrant enterprises in a given sector is often accompanied with an increasing competitiveness in that same sector which, in turn, fosters creativity and innovation momentum (Figueira, C., Caselli, G., Theodorakopoulos, N., 2016).

Besides the direct innovation contribute, taken as a whole, migrant entrepreneurship can indirectly trigger an institutional change. As Lounsbury and Crumley point out (2007), this change at the institutional level might be the product of “unintended actions of ordinary actors who break with

institutionalised practices without being aware of doing so". This aspect looks at the intrinsic collective power of a social group (migrant entrepreneurs), who through a multitude of divergent actions indirectly promote "institutional change" conditioning with new, cosmopolitan inputs the traditional mind-set embedded in the established institutions (Figueira, C., Caselli, G., Theodorakopoulos, N., 2016). The degree of cosmopolitan social change also depends on the agents of change's level of capital (social, economic, etc..). Those entrepreneurs with a more solid base ground (especially, but not only, in terms of financial capital) are those who are more likely to be actual globalisation agents. Nonetheless, it has been observed that, at the same manner, there are many motives limiting migrant entrepreneurs' agency. The foremost reason preventing it is the difficult process of capital acquisition and accumulation, especially in the receiving country. In fact, structural causes common to many subjects trying to integrate in a foreign country make it difficult for migrant entrepreneurs to be agents of change; among these, the biggest challenges in terms of capital accumulation are to be found in the social and economic capitals (Figueira, C., Caselli, G., Theodorakopoulos, N., 2016).

3.3.4 Integration

Regarding the migrant integration process, in this paragraph an attempt will be done in order to explore its socio-economic implications with respect to the immigrant entrepreneurship phenomenon. In this perspective, especially those businesses activities falling within the definition of ethnic enterprises, are notably interesting since they appear to push for the overcoming of the evolutionistic approach of the relationship among socio-cultural integration, entrepreneurial spirit and economic success. In fact, those entrepreneurial ventures showing a marked ethnic connotation (and in some instances *de facto* belonging to actual enclaves) highlight the possibility that the economic and/or institutional integration within the host administrative-financial system do not always correspond to a correlative socio-cultural integration. Especially for what concerns Western societies, it has been observed that migrant businesses' holders, within the never ending interaction process which would customarily lead to the redefinition of their identity, assimilate mostly those aspects necessary to the promotion of their activity. In this situation, they are jeopardised by the risk of being conceived (and conceive themselves) as transitory and marginal subjects alien from societal acceptance. On the contrary, those emancipating from the essence of the purely ethnic economies are more likely to merge not only with the economic, but also with the social and cultural system they are part of (Ambrosini M., 1995). In terms of the sociological implications that this feature has in the economic processes, those businesses belonging to the ethnically characterised community networks show interesting peculiarities. The relation between the maintenance of ascribed ties and the incorporation in the competitive market, as much as the one between traditional belongings and the ability of

keeping efficient economic performances or the one between the socio-cultural exclusion and the competitive and original entrepreneurial attitude, is not always contradictory. In some instances, traditional identity factors, if on the one hand fuel segregation and separation of immigrant communities from the host society, on the other hand contribute to the possibility of building up enriching and unusual integration experiences which in some (rare) instances turn to be successful both on the economic and the social side (Ambrosini M., 1995). In view of these peculiarities, the eventual dichotomy between economic and socio-cultural integration will try to be observed in the continuation of the study.

Besides evolutionary schemes and dichotomies between closed communities and society in its integrity, immigrant entrepreneurship phenomenon invites to reconsider the incidence of social factors, relationship networks and reciprocity in the integration process of migrants. Pragmatically, as Corradi E., Emmi V., Villa M., (2018) state, integration is not only an ethical or political goal: it is a process entailing a clear economic repercussion; this is true because of many reasons. Migrants are usually younger and healthier than the average resident population and will generally use less health assistance services and be more active on the job market. Moreover, especially for economic migrants (at least until the integration will be well underway), social welfare benefits tend to be less than the ones gotten by the autochthonous population; this will result in an unbalanced taxes contribution in favour of the host country: the migrant will pay on averages more in taxes in comparison to the services of which he will benefit. Furthermore, successful socio-economic integration in general terms, would imply higher average salaries for the migrant worker, discouraging the access to the informal economy and in some instances to criminality. Higher salaries would consequently involve higher per-capita consumption sustaining national GDP, higher fiscal revenues for the State, besides the many immaterial benefits deriving from social cohesion. Another interesting feature can be traced in the intergenerational analysis of migratory actors: integration results achieved by the newcomers deeply affect also 2nd generations opportunities. (Corradi E., Emmi V., Villa M., 2018).

4. Overview

In the following chapter, the entrepreneurial propensity of migrants will be described. Starting from the general phenomenon, the study will be circumscribed up to the scale of Rome and to the delineated target group, namely Peruvian and Ecuadorian immigrant entrepreneurs.

It has been deemed functional to the research to standardise a definition for the immigrant entrepreneur as any individual with a foreign nationality, carrying on a long-term economic activity organised with the aim of exchanging a product and/or service in turn of monetary compensation. This definition naturally excludes the range of those independent contractors (freelancers) carrying on occasional independent private services in exchange of monetary compensation. In this perspective, it follows that immigrant enterprises comprehend all those businesses where the owner (or the majority of the shareholders) is a foreign born citizen. According to this definitions, it can be inferred that not all immigrant enterprises and entrepreneurs can be defined as ethnic; only those *de facto* offering ethnic products or services can be defined as ethnic enterprises and entrepreneurs. It follows that, when the adjective ethnic will be used hereinafter, it will not refer to a precise nation but rather to a larger set of individuals sharing characteristics such as cultural, linguistic societal and historical origins).

The target group has been identified and selected in name of the similar numerical presence over the Italian territory of the two communities analysed (the most populous Latin American presences in Italy), to be added to the geographic closeness of the two Andean countries.

In spite of the similarities, differences are not absent: the two communities seem to be rooted to a different extent within the civil society and show a different entrepreneurial propensity. Nonetheless, differences and similarities will be enlisted in the following section, and examined later on in the Analysis Chapter.

Simultaneously, in order to understand the target group's presence over the territory, it has been deemed necessary to provide an introductory overall picture of migratory outflows from Latin America and the Caribbean. Following an inductive methodology, the focus will gradually shift on Peruvian and Ecuadorian immigrants, and the scale of reference will be narrowed down to the city of Rome, where the first hand data gathering has been carried on.

4.1 Latin American Migration to Europe and Italy

Before exploring numbers and facts inherent to immigrant enterprises, it has been deemed preparatory for the aim of the research to provide a general panoramic of migration, specifically Latin American migration to Italy.

The figure of the international migrant is commonly defined in the global plethora as that individual who left his country of birth or citizenship for more than a year (Sasse and Thielemann, 2005). Global migration is nowadays a prominent and rooted characteristic of modern culture, affecting to a different extent every country of the globe (Gorter, Nijkamp, and Poot, 1998). According to the UN (2017) the total number of migrants in the world reaches almost 260 million people and has been observed increasing at notable speed in the last 30 years. Back in 1990, in fact, the international migrant stock was over 100 million people less than today (152,5 million). Moreover, the percentage growth rate evolution of this number reiterates the upward direction of this trend, suggesting that migration is becoming (and will become) more and more common in the current, globalised world (UN, 2017).

4.1.1 General Patterns

For what concerns Latin America and Caribbean's outflows, the role of geography surely has a pivotal specific weight in affecting migrants' destinations. In fact, of the 15,6 million people born in Latin America and emigrated in a OECD county, the 86,2% (13,5 million) resides in the near United States; for what concerns the 5,3 million of migrants coming from the Caribbean, a similar percentage (84,6%) has been detected residing in the U.S. (Peixoto, 2012).

Of the remaining share, almost the totality travels the routes connecting Latin America and Europe. Even if there is not geographic proximity between Latin America and Europe, factors such as colonial heritage, former labour recruitment, linguistic assonance, social connections, economic imbalances, ease of entry from the neighbouring countries, cultural and historical ties explain the consistence of the phenomenon (Stalker, 2012; Peixoto, 2012).

For example, when the global economic recession brake Latin American development in the 70s, coups and military dictatorship took the scene in many countries of the continent, triggering a first migratory wave. Nonetheless, until the new millennium came, the migratory movement was mainly directed toward the U.S., and immigrants landing to Europe, were largely students, intellectuals and highly qualified subjects, belonging to elites and fleeing political prosecutions. In proximity of the New Millennium, and especially after the increase in security and border restrictions in the U.S. after 9-11, Latin American and Caribbean (hereinafter LAC) migration to the States is still the dominant pattern, but the proportion of migrants seeking fortune in Europe rather than in the U.S. started rising and grew consistently in the next decades (Ciurlo A., Ricci, A., 2008).

Taking into account quantitative data, in Southern Europe (and namely in Spain, Portugal and Italy) there is the most consistent share of LAC migrants of the Old Continent. More precisely, talking about absolute numbers, data from 2005 showed that Spain was the first receiving country for LAC

migrations, with 1,1 million persons, followed by Italy (205,000), UK (113,000), Germany (94,000) and Portugal (56,000) (Peixoto, 2012).

Moreover, between 2010 and 2015, IOM¹ (2017) witnessed a general increase of LAC migrants in Europe: the total population grew by 8% (from 2,968,373 to 3,231,326), with the major hubs which, compared to 2015, almost doubled their share of LAC migrants: Italy beheld an increase from 205,000 up to around 500,000 and Spain from 1,1 million to almost 2 million individuals. Among the communities which experienced a major boost in these years there are the Venezuelan, the Brazilian and the Peruvian (IOM, 2017).

The net prevalence of Southern Europe (Spain, Italy and Portugal) emerges especially when looking at the shares of LAC immigrants relative to the total immigrants' number. In this ranking, Spain is still the first receiving country, with more than one third of its immigrants (35,2%) coming from LAC countries; the second one is Portugal with 15,3% and next is Italy, with 9,2% of its immigrants coming from LAC continent. Other countries such UK and Germany, which still have consistent absolute numbers, are historically receiving countries in the global migration panorama, and the share of LAC migrants does not stand particularly out compared to those of other communities (Peixoto, 2012).

4.1.2 LAC migration to Italy

Bringing the lens closer to Italy, compared to the other two aforementioned Southern European countries (Spain and Portugal), Italy's colonial past is far from being glorious. Particularly, for what concerns 16th century's Latin America colonisation, Italy did not take part to the partition of the continent and *de facto* never exercised its dominion over those lands and populations. Nonetheless, in the last two centuries a different phenomenon strengthened the ties between Latin America and Italy: after its two main migratory waves (the one between the end of the 19th century and the WWI and the one during and in the aftermath of the WWII) Italy always had the historical attitude of keeping solid cultural, economic and political ties with its emigrants and their descendants (regardless of how many generations passed since the emigration) (Choate, M.I., 2008).

This attitude practically resulted in the enforcement of the *jus sanguinis*, a law which guarantees the Italian citizenship to any descendant of a male Italian emigrant (or female if born after 1948) who did not renounce voluntarily to it in front of Italian authorities. This turned (and still turns) to be an opportunity to all those people having an ancestor coming from Italy, who emigrated between the late 19th and the early 20th century. This opportunity made it attractive, especially since the establishment of the Schengen agreement (which guarantees freedom of movement across the European continent),

¹ International Organisation for Migration: it is the leading intergovernmental organisation providing services and advice concerning migration to both governments and migrants, including internally displaced persons, refugees, and migrant workers. It is part of the United Nations from 2016

to apply for the Italian citizenship in order to get the chance of residing and working not only in Italy, but in the whole Europe. Thanks to its regulatory system, Italy is probably the easiest hub to reach for all those applicants with an Italian ancestor (Tintori, 2011).

This possibility led to the reception of a first “elitist” migratory wave during the 70s (mainly composed by political migrants), followed by a new, more consistent wave of migration started in the 90s. By 1991, the Latin American presence in Italy amounted to 50,073 persons, with an incidence on the whole migrant population of 7,7%. In those years, the biggest part of the Latin American community was embodied by Brazilians and Argentinians (around 10,000 each). During the 90s, the general number kept growing steadily, with isolated growth peaks coinciding with the regularisation programmes witnessed in 1990/1991, 1995, 1998 and 2002. By the start of the new millennium, the number had risen four times, and the Latin American community counted 204,826 individuals in 2003 and 235,885 in 2007 (Ciurlo A., Ricci, A., 2008).

This number has nowadays risen and counts almost half million individuals. The most numerous nationalities are Peru (97,379), Ecuador (80,377), Brazil (48,022), Dominican Republic (28,451), Colombia (17,956), Cuba (21,418), EL Salvador (14,626), Bolivia (13,955), Argentina (8,023) and Venezuela (7,347) (IDOS, 2018).

4.2 Migrant Entrepreneurship: from the general phenomenon to the case study

The afore-examined increasing global amount of international migrants, has undoubtedly had repercussions on the labour market. If the public opinion is quite controversial on the matter, data testify prevalently positive effects.

Doing a rough toll of general migratory flows, on the one hand there are positive sides such as rejuvenating the ageing populations, satisfying the needs for dedicated skills or reactivating stagnant economic sectors; on the other hand, the counterarguments (although in a smaller amount) are not absent: on the social side, it is objective that immigration is used as a political propaganda instrument in order to catalyse public discontent; on the mere economic side, the increase in the number of migrants can influence the average wage in some sectors of the labour market, negatively impacting (the actual impact is quantitatively low) native workers' wages (Levent, T. B., Nijkamp, P., 2009).

Nonetheless, the general impact of migrants on the host societies is broad and complex, and it is not the final aim of this research. In the next lines, a particular migrants' sector (namely migrant entrepreneurs) will be examined in order to analyse its socio-economic implications on the receiving territory.

The increase in the specific migrant communities all over the world, led to the need for satisfying the demands of those segments of the population which looked for typical products and services of their home countries which were not easily reachable in the state of destination. This phenomenon, baptised by Smith and Guarnizo (1998) as “transnationalism from below” has the peculiarity of counterpoising itself to the mainstream globalisation promoted by the big corporations and financial and political institutions. To be honest, this globalisation from below started long before than the globalisation phenomenon as the world knows it, together with any diaspora (especially commercial ones) witnessed by the world: in fact, “diasporas allow small and family businesses to adjust to a global scale and to assume a more rational, functional, productive and progressive character. A network of mutual trust of global proportions builds up as capital and credit flow freely between family, kin, fellow villagers and even more loosely associated co-ethnic members” (Cohen 1997, p. 160).

In the next paragraphs, the institutional dimension will lay the foundations preparatory for framing the entrepreneurial landscape in Italy and, successively, in the city of Rome.

4.2.1 Access to job-market for foreigners and migratory policies in Italy

The steady growth of foreign presence over the Italian soil lead to a parallel increase in the foreign workforce available in the Italian labour market. This phenomenon has different causes, such as the progressive globalization of labour, the need for low-cost workforce (the average yearly salary of non- EU workers is 35% lower than an EU native) and consequential implications, such as the specialisation in performing specific tasks, an anticyclical effect offsetting the employment reduction during the 2008’ financial global crisis or lower reservation wages and professional insulation of low-skilled employees. At first sight, these phenomena seem to make foreign work more convenient; such convenience nonetheless, is paid at the price of human capital loss. Being most vulnerable and adaptable, non-EU labour-force often ends up fulfilling tasks who do not enhance the skills possessed. This circumstance often takes place through the informal job-placement channels: almost 60% of non-EU and nearly 55% of EU employees found an occupation thanks to their personal network, compared to 27,5% of Italians. This peculiarity has the counterproductive effect of fostering the so called brain waste (Direzione dell’immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione, 2018).

Taking into account migration policies, it is interesting to denote how the Turco-Napolitano Law², in 1998, allowed the start-up of entrepreneurial activities to new nationalities of foreign citizens to whom it was previously precluded. This is one of the reasons why with the onset of the new century

² Legge 6/3/1998, n. 40, "Disciplina dell’immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero", Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 59, 12/3/1998

migrant enterprises started increasing. This progressive growth maintained a positive trend also during the full economic recession post 2008 crisis, contrasting the significant decline witnessed by Italian companies in the same period.

Nonetheless, the latest Italian legislation on immigration (the Decree Law n.113/2018) made the migration framework more complex than before, endangering the regularity of many foreign presences through the elimination of humanitarian protection, closing the legal entrance routes such as ports and accelerating international protection applications' examination procedures, and cancelling the chances of permits conversions into working permits. The sovereign drift of this decree law contrasts the EU foreign policy's economic approach to the migration subject: The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), in fact, is characterised by a strong component of conditionality: the cooperation with Third Countries in matter of readmission and borders control can be mitigated by visa liberalisation and/or major aid and investment grants.

In reason of what just said, it is evident that flows control has become (at least in the last three decades) an international currency itself, deeply influencing foreigners' patterns in the job-market. This feature can be traced, for example, in the Italian Article 21 of the Legislative Decree n° 286/1998, the "Consolidated Act on Immigration", which gave the possibility of enforcing bilateral agreements aimed at entry flows and readmission procedures regulation. States conducting such agreements may get reserved quotas within the scope of annual decrees for the programming of entry flows for work reasons. These kind of agreements have been made with many countries: Egypt, Albania, Morocco Sri Lanka, Moldova, Tunisia, Ghana, Bangladesh and Peru; their main aim has been to reinforce the legal entry channels for foreign workers and the mechanism for making labour supply and demand converge, as much as the "circular migration" patterns (intended both as short-term work paths and return programs).

All these aspects (matching supply and demand, monitoring and controlling flows, and specialising entry fluxes) have interesting repercussions on the foreign labour market and, to a larger extent, on the migrant entrepreneurship phenomenon that will be analysed throughout the rest of the research. (Direzione dell'immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione, 2018)

4.2.2 Immigrant enterprises in Italy

Considering that the majority (two thirds) of the immigrants is employed in those defined as the five Ps jobs: *precari, pesanti, penalizzati socialmente, pericolosi e poco pagati* (precarious, heavy, socially penalised, dangerous and low paid), the fact that a consistent percentage of them tries an entrepreneurial venture should not be a surprise (Long, 2012).

Moreover, the immigrant communities in Italy keep strong social, cultural and economic ties with the respective countries of origin, organising themselves in small cohesive and dynamic associative and

entrepreneurial structures. Especially among some particular groups there is a high propensity in enhancing their entrepreneurial skills, often through the commercial connection of the sending and the receiving country (Corvino 2010).

Nevertheless, in a national entrepreneurial landscape which is witnessing challenges due to factors such as the lacking generational turnover, the merciless globalisation commercial giants and a market which is in contraction since the 2008's international crisis, data about immigrant entrepreneurship are at least in contrast with the general trend of Italy.

The total number of enterprises run by a migrant is witnessing a rapid growth in these decades: from the 170,000 enterprises counted in 2004 up to the 309,000 registered in 2008 (with an increment of about 20,000 enterprises per year), it is esteemed that more than 500,000 jobs-places have been created. In the last years (precisely from 2011 to 2017), enterprises run by natives decreased of more than 153,000 units (2,7%), while immigrant entrepreneurs witnessed their ranks increasing of almost one third (29,4%, more than 133,000 units) reaching 590,000 (almost the 10% of the total enterprises' number registered by the Chamber of Commerce in Italy; at the end of 2011 the total number stood for the 7,4% of the total enterprises' number) (Corvino, 2010; IDOS, 2018; Long 2012).

The socio-economic difficulties often embedded in the general condition of the migrant population are reflected in the entrepreneurial form adopted by this social group: it is denotable a marked preference of entrepreneurial activities in sectors which do not require burdensome economic investments and under legal formats which are not particularly complex and costly. Individual firms, in fact, are the most common typology (78,6% of migrant enterprises), followed by joint stock companies (13,1%), partnerships (6,6%) and cooperatives, consortiums and other society forms (all together 1,7%). In the last decade, limited liabilities companies registered an overproportioned increase and are becoming the most common form of joint stock companies. (IDOS, 2018)

For what concerns the distribution for activity sector, commerce and constructions are still the dominant entrepreneurial fields. Nonetheless, data show a gradual but progressive turn toward different kinds of entrepreneurship: food and accommodation services registered a remarkable growth, followed by rent and travel agencies and entrepreneurial services. (IDOS, 2018)

Another interesting data about immigrant businesses in Italy is the proportion of immigrant entrepreneurs coming from the EU rather than from outside it: 8 out of 10 come from outside the EU. The most prominent nationalities in the immigrant self-employment landscape are Morocco (14%), China (11,3%), Romania (10,7%), Albania (6,9%), Bangladesh (6,7%), followed by the rest in lower percentages (IDOS, 2018).

LAC enterprises, and especially the Andean ones, follow this trend proportionally to their numerical weight.

4.2.3 Immigrant enterprises in Rome

In the city of Rome, the entrepreneurial landscape shows some singularities. For example, the percentage of entrepreneurs does not reflect (in terms of nationality) the percentages of the general migrant population. Even if the most present national groups are Romanians (91,226), Philippians (41,746), Bangladeshi (30,826) and Chinese (18,753), the record of foreign business owners is held by Bangladeshi entrepreneurs (12,290; almost half of this nationality's totality in Rome), followed by Romanians (3,717), Egyptians (2,758) and Moroccans (1,544). Moreover, it is interesting to denote that foreign-owned businesses follow the Italian trends for what concerns firms size. In Italy, firms' size general trend is highly sloping toward small and medium enterprises: 78,7% of enterprises' workers are employed in micro (1-9 employees) small (10-49 employees) and medium firms (50-249 employees) (Confartigianato, 2018). In this respect, immigrant enterprises in Rome accentuate the already disproportioned ratio: the 89,1 % of the foreign-owned business in the city of Rome belongs either to micro, small or medium enterprises' size group. A peak can be seen in the micro-enterprises which cover more than 75% of the total enterprises number in the city (OSSERVATORIO ROMANO SULLE MIGRAZIONI, 2018).

In the next paragraph, a specific overview of the case study (and the inherent data gathering) that will guide the investigation later in the analysis, will be presented.

4.3 Case Study: Peruvian and Ecuadorian businesses in the city of Rome

In this paragraph, the case study will be presented. Starting from the distribution over the territory of the two chosen nationalities in relation to the general reference numbers of the sector, the research will proceed with the description of the entrepreneurial panorama of the Peruvian and Ecuadorian communities. These elements will be functional to understand the scale of the chosen target and its relative but at the same time emblematic relevance.

This overview will be preparatory to the understanding of the evidences supplied by the data gathering, which will be gone through in the Analysis Chapter.

4.3.1 Peruvian and Ecuadorian presence in the city of Rome

The 5,1 million foreign citizens in Italy show an employment-based distribution over the territory: the most consistent percentages of immigrants can be found either in the biggest cities of the country, where the employment opportunities are higher, or in the northern, more industrialised regions. Being the capital of the country, the city of Rome is the second (after Milan) favourite metropolitan

destination for migrants arriving in Italy with 544.956 foreigners (the 10,8% of the total migrants' number in Italy) (IDOS, 2018).

Peruvian and Ecuadorian citizens indicatively follow this trend: of the 92,000 Peruvians and 77,000 Ecuadorians in Italy (IDOS, 2018), in the city of Rome the two national groups count respectively 13,455 and 8,182 individuals (OSSERVATORIO ROMANO SULLE MIGRAZIONI, 2018).

The most consistent migratory waves of these two nationalities coincide with the respective economic crises and political turmoil experienced in the last 30 years. Particularly, in Peru a situation of economic hyperinflation due to the deep economic crisis experienced between 1985 and 1987 had its effects on the 90s' political scene, which witnessed the rise of Fujimori and the militarisation of the state. In Ecuador, the most significant recent economic crises stroke the country in the late 90s, following the financial failure witnessed under Mahuad presidency and coinciding with the oil price fall, and lead to the dollarization and the disappearance of the previous monetary system (the Ecuadorian Sucre) in favour of the American dollar (Bulmer-Thomas, 2003).

In terms of distribution over the capital's territory Ecuadorians and Peruvians show a similar behaviour: the highest and lowest percentages of the two national groups can be found in the same districts (*municipi*). Specifically, the 14th and 15th in the North-West of the city and 2nd, the 5th and the 7th in the central/eastern part of the city host the most consistent number of Peruvians and Ecuadorians (*Figure 1*). Contrarily, the *municipi* counting the lowest concentration of the two nationalities are the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, in the South-Western part of the city. Comparing these statistics to the general distribution of migrant population in the city of Rome, the presence of the two examined nationalities follows the general trend of foreigners' distribution in the city, both in terms of absolute numbers and incidence over the total population (OSSERVATORIO ROMANO SULLE MIGRAZIONI, 2018).

4.4.1 Mapping

As a first step of the whole data gathering process, it has been deemed necessary to do a desk based work in order to collect as much information as possible about the presence and the distribution of the chosen target group (Peruvian and Ecuadorian businesses) over the city of Rome.

To do so, numerous sources have been consulted and actively approached. Among these, of vital importance have been sources such as *GuiaLatina*³, *TripAdvisor*, *Facebook*, *Registro Imprese*⁴, *Roma Multietnica*⁵, plus all the tips reported by the two countries' embassies in Rome, by organisations within the Peruvian and Ecuadorian community in Rome and by the entrepreneurs themselves as questionnaires were gradually submitted.

The total number of mapped enterprises is 76, of which 67 run by Peruvians and 9 run by Ecuadorian nationals. The most interesting data emerged during this phase is the enterprises' geolocation over the Roman territory. Since reporting each and every address would be endless as well as pointless, the position of the businesses has been reported in aggregate form in *Figure 2*.

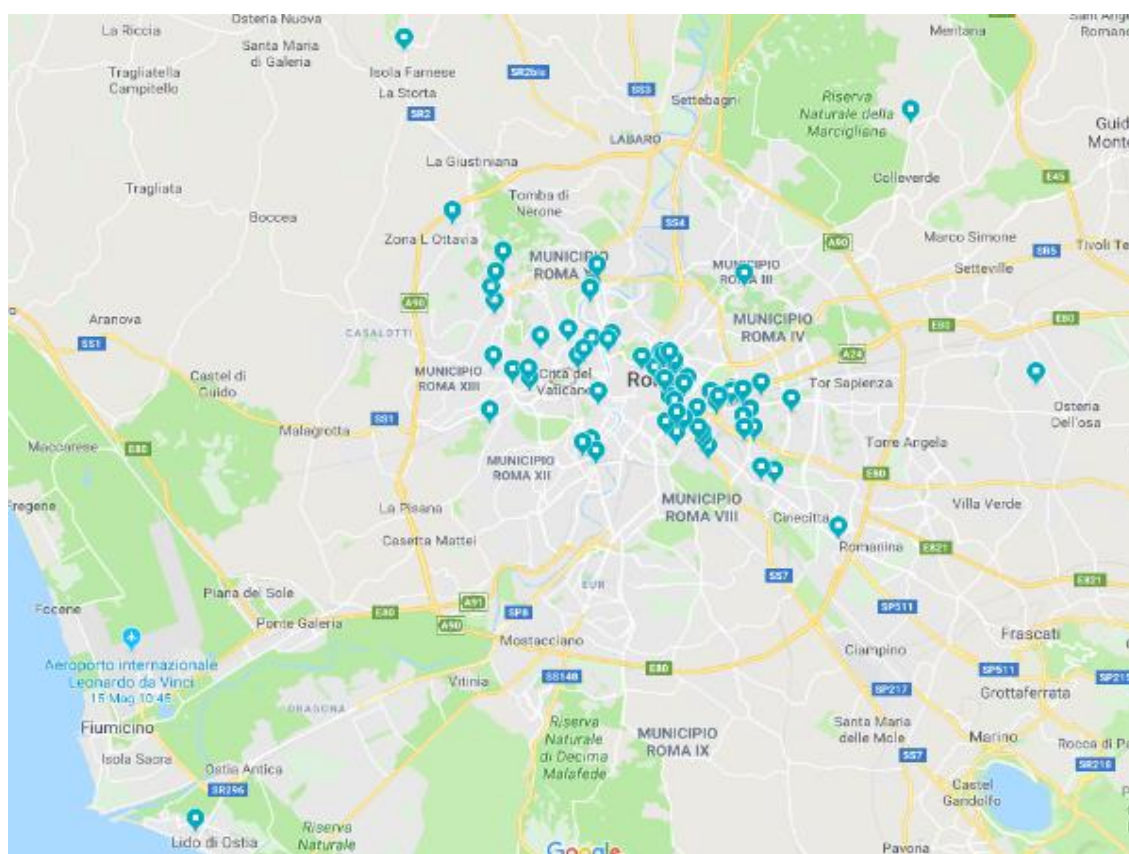


Figure 2. Peruvian and Ecuadorian enterprises' aggregate geolocation over the Roman territory (Source: Google Maps)

³ GuiaLatina is a free press guide cataloguing mainly Latin American business activities in Rome, Milan and Turin.

⁴ Registro Imprese is the internet portal with the official data from the Chamber of Commerce on which it is possible to ask for data regarding enterprises in Italy

⁵ Roma Multietnica is a municipal service aimed to provide knowledge and communication with the different cultures coexisting in the city of Rome

The discrepancy with the total number of these two nationalities enterprises in Rome is motivated by the final aim of the work itself: since the goal was not to carry on a quantitative census of the Peruvian and Ecuadorian entrepreneurial landscape, but rather a chart of qualitative verified contacts, the businesses mapped are those who were traceable according to the resources available in the investigation.

4.4.2 Questionnaires

Once a conspicuous number of businesses had been catalogued, the data gathering entered in its 2nd phase: surveys. In this paragraph, the results produced by the questionnaires will be reported in aggregate form. Nonetheless, for matters of space and coherence with the work, only data deemed most significant to the Research Question and Hypothesis will be transcribed.

Entrepreneurs have been met singularly and the questionnaire have been filled with the researcher's support, beneficial to avoid misunderstandings or partial completions.

This phase equipped the researcher with a significant amount of data, which will be complementary to the rest of the data gathered, during the Analysis Chapter.

During the survey phase, 35 entrepreneurs have been met and filled the questionnaires with their information. This information will follow divided in two sections: entrepreneurs' data and enterprises' ones.

4.4.2.1 Entrepreneurs' data

Regarding the aggregate entrepreneurs' data, the research sample comprehends 18 (51,4%) women and 17 men (48,6%). 18 (51,4%) of the business owners have an age in between 35 and 50 years old, 3 (8,6%) are less than and 14 (40%) are more than 50 years old. 6 (17,1%) of them come from Ecuador while 29 (82,9%) come from Peru.

An interesting data emerged concerns the qualifications recognised or achieved in Italy, and it is denotable that 11 out of 35 entrepreneurs (the 31,4%) got, or got recognised, a university degree in Italy.

In respect to the year of transfer to Italy, the arrival year of the interviewed people ranges from 1989 up to 2016, with the most considerable percentages in the late 90s. In almost half of the cases (48,6%), the migration choice was influenced by economic reasons, while slightly more than one out of three (31,4%) declared that migration was due to a family reunion. Related to this, is the decision of coming to Rome: 26 out of 35 (the 74,3% of the sample) preferred Rome to other Italian cities because of the presence of emotional ties.

Moreover, when it was asked what led them to opening an entrepreneurial activity, the majority of the answers have been: realisation of personal and professional skills, better earnings prospect and search for greater autonomy and independence in work. In regards to the choice of the business sector, the 37,1% (13 entrepreneurs) stated that the choice had been led by previous experience in the field, while the second most selected option have been, with the 22,9% of the votes (8 each), either the valorisation of professional skills or the possibility of offering an "ethnic" product / service.

4.4.2.2 Enterprises' data

Looking at enterprises' data, the establishment year ranges from 1996 until 2018 and show a mainly growing trend. The most common legal form is the individual company (71,4% of the sample), followed by partnerships (25,7%). Consequently, the most frequent role held by the entrepreneurs is the single holder one (71,4%), followed by the administrator role (22,9%). In partnerships and cooperatives cases, size never overcame 6 members which, in most of the cases (66,7%) were compatriots, while in the remaining cases (33,3%) were mixed, with foreign prevalence.

For what concerns the activity sector, the majority of enterprises (40%) is engaged in the broad ATECO⁶ group of housing and catering service activities, mostly in the restaurant sub-category.

The remaining enterprises distribution is very diverse, and ranges from manufacturing activities to rental, travel agencies, business support services, financial and insurance activities, etc.

The offer was characterised in almost half of the cases (48,6%) by products defined as ethnic (somehow linked to the home-country) by the entrepreneur, while the 14,3% was characterised by local products (from local markets). The 37,1%, finally, defined its offer as characterised by "other" products or services (not linked to the home-country nor to the local market).

Enterprises dimension is averagely small, giving work in 29 cases out of 35 to less than 4 employees. The employment trend is mainly stable, with the 57,1% of the firms affirming that the number of employees remained stable in the last year; 25,7% said it diminished, while the 17,1% declared that it increased.

The employees are in the majority of the cases either compatriots of the business owner (34,5%) or belonging to mixed nationality with a foreign prevalence (37,9%).

The reference market has most of the times a municipal/provincial (54,3%) or local/neighbourhood (31,4%) dimension, and the firms' costumers share comes from mixed nationalities with a foreign prevalence in the 42,9% of the cases, from mixed nationalities with Italian majority in the 20% of the

⁶ ATECO is an Italian acronym stated by the Chamber of Commerce standing for "ATtività ECONomica" (Economic activity). ATECO codex is an alphanumeric combination characterising the given economic activity. Letters identify the macro-sector, while numbers represent (with different specificity degrees) sub-categories of sectors themselves.

cases, from both Italians and foreigners in equal proportion in the 22,9% of the cases, from exclusively or almost exclusively Italians in the 11,4% of the cases and, rarely, by only compatriots (2,9 % of the cases).

Suppliers are to be found in the majority of the cases (55,9%) in the municipal/provincial area and in the 48,6% of the cases they are Italians, in the 23,5% are from mixed nationalities with foreign majority, in the 11,8% of cases are either compatriots or from mixed nationalities with Italian majority and in the 8,8% of the cases are both Italians and foreigners in equal proportion.

When it came to the perception of the main elements favouring the competitiveness of the companies with respect to the native market the most common answers have been: a good reputation among the costumers, the quality of the product or the prices competitiveness.

On the other hand, among the elements hindering the companies' competitiveness with respect to the native market, the most frequent answers have been: competition from other companies operating in the same sector, complexity of regulations and bureaucratic aspects, or no one.

Regarding profits, the vast majority (88,6%) of the entrepreneurs asserted to have had last year's turnover lower than € 100,000. In most of the cases it was either approximatively the same (40%) or bigger (37,1%) than the previous year's one; in the 22,9% of the cases it was lower.

4.4.3 Interviews

To complement the quantitative data collected during the first two steps of the data gathering, three interviews have been carried on, attempting to keep into account various coherence criteria. Among the others, the ones which mostly influenced the choice were: proportionality with the amount of surveyed entrepreneurs' nationality; the different ways in which the migrant capital has been employed; availability of the entrepreneur; representativeness of the whole sample.

Interviews have been carried on dealing with the topics already tackled in the questionnaires and have been complemented with further information considered potentially relevant. Namely, the macro-areas on which the interview focused its questions have been: entrepreneur profile (migratory project, instruction and previous job experiences and entrepreneurial project); employment contribution, economic growth, innovation and promotion of entrepreneurship; economic relations with the country of origin; relations with the local territory and communities; entrepreneurial socio-economic effects evidences; future perspectives and overall judgement of entrepreneurial experience.

The aim of this paragraph is not to report the whole interview, only the data deemed more relevant in each case will be retrieved. For matters of privacy, fictitious names will be given to the interviewed entrepreneurs.

- Interview n°1

Sofia, native to Ecuador, is the holder of a café in San Lorenzo (a university district in the city centre) came to Italy in 2000, during her childhood, for family reunification, after her parents left Ecuador (where they held a business activity) in the aftermath of the late 90's economic crisis. The migration that was meant to be temporary, turned to be permanent when she joined her parents and started her educational path in Rome.

Her entrepreneurial venture started within university, when she got to know of an opportunity financed by the public administration for a € 28,000 non-repayable grant announcement addressed to foreign-born students living in Italy. She could not miss this opportunity to start the own business project that she always dreamt of. She also told that during the construction works of the shop, necessary after the space selection, her family and her national community proved to be a great help in order to keep the budget low.

During the description of the employment contribution, she pointed out that she does not have any nationality limitation in the selection of her employees, but rather she looks at the creativity, pragmatism, good will and the intention of learning in order to remain for a long term. At the present moment she has one Ecuadorian employee, but she aims to hire more people as soon as she manages to expand her business. Moreover, when it comes to take a decision, she pointed out that she is always interested to hear ideas from her employee since she believes that it can be a great source of innovation.

In regards to innovation, she is proud of being part of the cultural enrichment she contributes to, thanks to the employment of South-American ideas and typical ingredients in her dishes such as quinoa, avocado and other fruits. There is this one sentence she told which is emblematic of this innovative aspect. Reporting a phrase that a woman told her once, she said:

“I remember of you and your café because of the quinoa salad. Since I tried it here, anytime I cook it I think about you”.

In order to spread the word about her activity she uses mainly social media. Complementarily, she also set some particular daily offers and promotions.

Economically speaking, she does not maintain any relationship with her country of origin; beside the maintenance of the fixed costs, profits are reinvested in esthetical innovations aimed to increase the attractiveness of the café and its dishes, always paying attention to sustainability.

For what concerns relations with the territory, she has not had any relation but the initial bureaucratic and administrative steps necessary to get all the licences and permits.

When it came to describe the evidences of the socio-economic effects, she stated:

“In my opinion there is no difference between a native enterprise and an enterprise run by migrants”.

For the future, she has the ambitious desire of turning her business into a replicable franchising in the next 5 years.

Her judgement about the fact of being an immigrant entrepreneur in Rome was mainly positive:

“There is no difference for me, running an enterprise it’s hard for me as much as it is for Italian entrepreneurs. When you run a business you always need to be a step ahead than your competitors. If I employ my origins in my business? I would not say it like that, I use everything I know, included what I know about my country of origin”.

- Interview n°2

Rosa, a Peruvian tailor’s shop owner based in San Giovanni (a central district in the city of Rome), reached Italy in 1990, after working for two years in her native country as military officer. She emigrated because she wanted to emancipate from the traditional women condition of those years’ Peru, she wanted to study and be independent as soon as possible.

Before the tailor’s shop she started as housekeeper, for 10 years. In those years she managed to study and graduated in journalism in 2005. After working few years (struggling to get a satisfying compensation) as a journalist, she started working in the tailor’s shop (owned by her husband by that time), helping him with the management of the business.

“The idea of the tailor’s shop started from my (now ex-) husband, which is a really good tailor, but he does not enhance his work. We got to know about this shop and we decided to start the activity here. The first years have been really hard, especially because of the prejudice of the Italians toward us foreigners. Moreover, it was really difficult at first, because the enterprise was not sustainable because my husband set excessively low prices. My ex-husband would have never wanted me to step-in this tailor’s shop. To fit in, it took me 5 or 6 years in which I brought him the food for lunch. I have been trying to counsel him about how to run the business but he could not bear it. One day I decided and I forced him to leave me alone here in the shop. Since then I never left. When I stepped in I fixed the prices, because prices have to be set by the enterprise holder, not by costumers. In the following years my husband gradually detached from the business and from me, and I cut all my ties with Peru, both here in Rome and there.”.

In order to open the business, they drew on their personal savings, accumulated throughout the previous years.

Regarding employment, she has been really clear:

“In these last years I have never chosen Italian employees, not because I am a foreigner. From my experience, the problem with the Italians is that they have excessive requests even before start working. From some years I turn to the Centro Astalli⁷ when I look for employees. When I started looking for employees there, refugees’ nationality was mainly Afghan. These employees for sure had linguistic barriers to overcome, but they were efficient from a practical point of view, especially when it came to sewing. Many of them at first were not happy of having a female boss, but I know what it means to be immigrants, and they learnt to respect me”.

In relation to this refugee service, she told that there is a project in which refugees are trained and then can put into practice their skills in the job market.

Moreover, she plans to expand her business:

“I don’t want to stop here, I am working on a project at home, I am following courses and I plan to grow. I already grew in the past with an atelier, but then I had to shut it down because of personal problems. I will try again anyways”.

Nonetheless, employees are not part of the decisional process. She said that they could be helpful with their suggestions, but she also said usually doesn’t involve them in the decision process.

Regarding innovation, she participates to fashion contests, from where she can get innovative ideas and cues; for what concerns marketing she feels to be behind with the other competitors because she still relies on the word of mouth, but she would like to land on social media.

In regards to economic relations with the home-country she said:

“I stopped sending remittances. Not even a cent anymore. I sent money for many years but I am fed up of sending money there”.

In general, about profits, she uses them to run the tailor’s shop and her parallel projects.

When talking about the contribution of migrant entrepreneurship she told:

“We are resources for Italy: we create jobs, we pay taxes and enrich the country with our culture. Here we are not considered as that, we are considered as burdens, as poor migrants; but we travelled the world, we lived in many different countries. This itself is a resource and yet is considered as a disadvantage”.

⁷ Centro Astalli is the Italian home of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). It is involved in many different sectors and activities form more than 30 years.

Interview n°3

Carmen, a Peruvian woman, is the owner of a service bureau in the central/eastern part of the city. She arrived in Rome in 1998, aiming to study and work at the same time. She started her professional path as housekeeper while undertaking, at the same time, a university degree in Economics. In 2008, she stopped the housekeeping and university studies (which concluded some years later, and started a new work experience as a secretary in an Italian legal firm. During that period, she learnt many things about bureaucracy, administration, etc., since she was the only one secretary for many persons and she had a heavy workload.

Regarding the entrepreneurial project, she said:

“Together with my boyfriend, I decided to start an entrepreneurial venture. At first we wanted to open a travel agency, but we trusted a tour operator which we did not know being on the brink of bankruptcy. So we lost the money, but not our determination. Successively, I considered that in those year I gained experience in the field of bureaucracy and administration and I had the possibility of doing something connecting both Italians who needed help with the digitalisation of paperwork and immigrants needing for a guide in the slippery bureaucratic world”.

The necessary resources to open it were mainly the ones Carmen raised throughout her experience as housekeeper.

In regards to economic relations with the country of origin, she periodically sends remittances to her home-country (approximately € 3000 per year) because she is restructuring a house there, but she chose not to have a savings plan there since she does not trust the Peruvian financial system.

For what concerns relations with the local territory and communities, as part of her job she is closely in touch with most of the entities in the public administration.

Moreover, she was closely involved with the Peruvian community in Rome from 2009 to 2012, because of the political ferment in the electoral scene in Peru. Nevertheless, during that period realised that many of those associations within the community were not aiming to the real impact they claimed to want, but rather were more interested in the economic subsidies and incentives entailed. For this reason, she completely broke away from both no-profit associations and the Peruvian community.

Regarding the effects of migrant entrepreneurship, she said:

“If it favours integration? In my opinion it depends: there are some activities that do exactly the opposite. Instead of interconnecting the two worlds, some activities become the chance for a national group to not integrate and not having relations with anyone but the components of its community. In some other cases it doesn't happen though; probably I see things from a different perspective since I

cut relations with my home country community. Anyways, those who run their business regularly for sure contribute to this country wellness paying taxes and creating job opportunities”.

5. Analysis

The research's Problem Formulation and Hypothesis physiologically divide the analysis in two parts: first, the entrepreneurs' employment of the various resources composing the immigrant capital in the business activity and secondly, the general impact assessment of the phenomenon.

Nonetheless, before going through these two analytical lenses, it has been deemed necessary to give an overall picture of what emerges from a preliminary analysis of gathered data.

Consequently, the Analysis Chapter will start with the evidences standing out from the mapping, followed by a multivariate hierarchical cluster analysis of the primary data collected in the survey phase (mainly qualitative), to be finally complemented with the purely qualitative data collected throughout the interviews phase. In the last two phases, information has been categorised in order to extrapolate two main groups according to common dissimilarities.

5.1 Evidences emerged from the mapping

The fundamental scope of this mapping phase has been to be preparatory for the following survey and interviews phases. Nevertheless, already during this step, interesting evidences have arisen. The distribution of the mapped enterprises over the territory (*Figure 3*) mirrors the distribution of

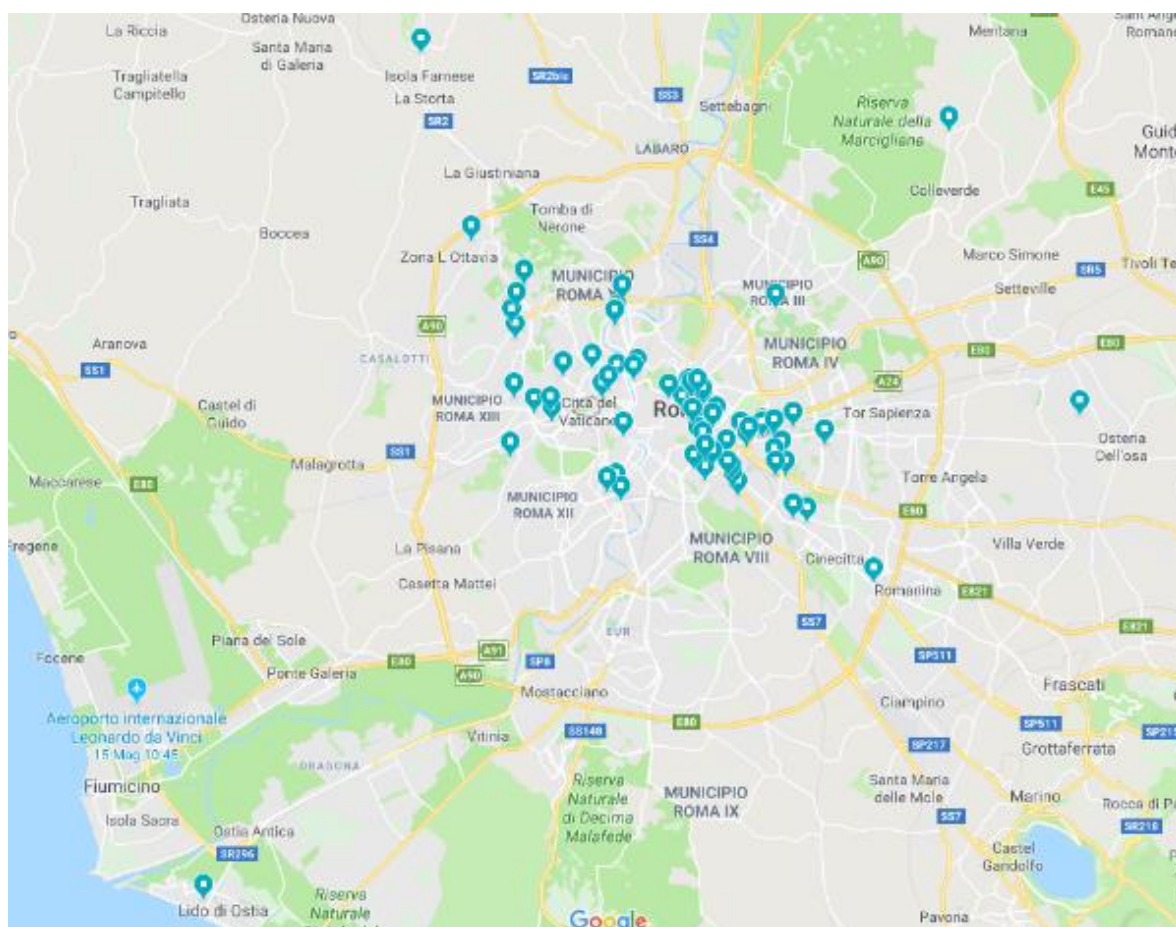


Figure 3. Peruvian and Ecuadorian enterprises' aggregate geolocation over the Roman territory (Source: Google Maps)

these two nationalities population, with higher enterprises concentration in the areas (*municipi* XIV, XV, I, II, V and VII) where there is a higher absolute number of compatriots (*Figure 4*).

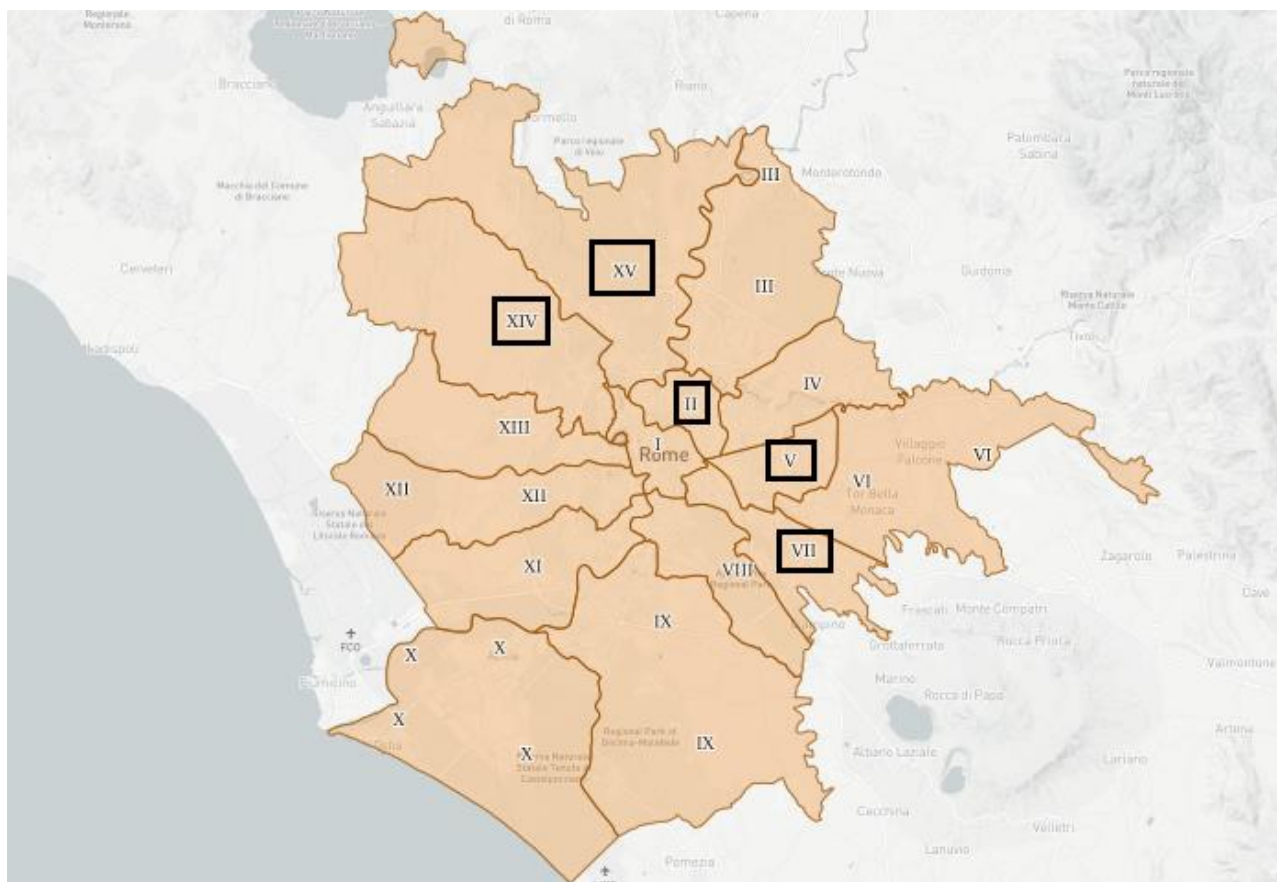


Figure 4. Peruvian and Ecuadorian distribution in the city of Rome per-district. (Source: personal elaboration of an image retrieved on <https://geonue.com/mappa-interattiva-municipi-di-roma/>)

Mapping results moreover confirmed and exacerbated the higher entrepreneurial propensity of Peruvians compared to Ecuadorians: 67 enterprises run by Peruvians have been identified against only 9 run by Ecuadorians. Even if the two national groups do not count such a disproportionate balance of these two nationalities over the Roman territory with 13,455 Peruvians and 8,182 Ecuadorians, registries count 463 Peruvian and only 173 Ecuadorian entrepreneurs (OSSERVATORIO ROMANO SULLE MIGRAZIONI, 2018).

Beside this dissimilarity, no major differences have been encountered between the two national groups.

5.2 Surveys' Hierarchical Cluster Analysis

As it has been anticipated, in order to analyse the information gathered, it has been judged appropriate to categorise data following a multivariate hierarchical cluster analysis. This categorisation yielded two groups, differentiated according to the divergent variable responses. The first and foremost variable from which this analysis started is the economic situation of the enterprises (income, yearly

turnover, employment rates and trends, etc.). From this variable, a drop-down list of other variables such as gender, age, migratory project, education and business typology consequentially followed, naturally characterising the clusters identified.

- Group n°1 – Stable or decreasing income and low employment creation.

The first group, composed of 18 (out of 35) enterprises, showed a notable general heterogeneity. Nonetheless, these businesses were all characterised either by stable or decreasing income dynamics and by low, inexistent or decreasing employment. These factors have led the main categorisation which inducted the researcher to classify this group as the one going through some economic difficulty, or in a stationary economic condition.

Regarding the other variables analysed, this group showed to be composed mostly by males who decided to migrate for economic reasons. All of them are above 35 years old and have a middle/low level of education, acquired either in Peru or Ecuador (only 3 cases in this group are graduated); the educational level did not increase after reaching Italy in 15 cases out of 18.

Business environment is composed in the majority of the cases by compatriots, on duty either as shareholders or as employees, while costumers and providers are well balanced among compatriots, foreigners and Italians. The set of activities is balanced also among the various business sectors.

The elements favouring businesses' competitiveness on the one hand, are either price competitiveness or quality/price ratio in more than half of the cases (10 out of 18); on the other hand, the elements hindering firms' competitiveness are mostly competition from companies which operate in the same sector (50%) or lack of qualified personnel (the 17% of the cases).

- Group n°2 – Good economic dynamics and businesses results

The second group, comprising 17 enterprises, is denoted by growing employment trends and yearly turnovers and, consequently income production. The elements making these enterprises competitive in respect to the native ones operating in the same sectors are well balanced among good reputation amid costumers, quality of the products, prices' competitiveness and the presence of few competitors in the sector. Furthermore, more than half of the surveyed entrepreneurs stated that they do not perceive any hindering element from the autochthonous enterprises operating in the same sector.

Set aside these common characteristics, it has been observed that pointing out educational features of this group it was possible to divide this group in two sub-groups showing an interesting variance, which will be named "Sub-Group n°2.1" and "Sub-Group n°2.2".

- Sub-Group n°2.1 – Higher educational level

The bigger sub-group, counting 10 records, is marked out by a substantial higher level of education. 9 out of 10 got a university degree in Italy and 8 of them got a degree in their country of origin as well.

Another differentiating characteristic is gender, since the majority of the group is composed by women which reached Italy for family reunification in the 60% of the cases and for studying in the 20% of the cases.

In 9 cases out of ten businesses have been founded 10 or less years ago, so the sub-group indicates a rather recent generation of entrepreneurs.

The sectorial distribution is quite varied and only few cases (30%) deals with products or services traditionally linked to the home country.

The employment creation answers show that these entrepreneurs employ a lower proportion of foreign workers, have a higher number of Italian suppliers and customer, and accomplish good economic performances.

- Sub-Group n°2.2 – Lower educational level

This sub-group is slightly smaller: it counts 7 enterprises. In terms of personal and entrepreneurial characteristics, such as low/medium education level, economic driving migration factors, higher propensity in collaborating with compatriots (as employees or suppliers), etc., it looks similar to the first group described (Group n°1 - Stable or decreasing income and low employment creation). Nonetheless besides the aforescribed better economic dynamics and businesses results, they show a higher female participation, younger age, clearer entrepreneurial reasons in the choice of starting the activity and a general trend indicating (not always) previous experience in the same working sector. Differently from the previous sub-group who showed a miscellaneous sectorial distribution, this sub-group shows a tendency in concentrating its work in the sector of catering activities, offering in 6 cases out of 7 ethnic products. This sub-group depicts the case of successful Latin American bars or restaurants.

5.2.1 Survey's Cluster Analysis' Results

From this categorisation, the groups and sub-groups standing out seems to give credit to the immigrant capital theory presented in the previous chapters relatively to the Peruvian and Ecuadorian entrepreneurial scene over the Roman territory. If on the one hand, there is a majority of low skilled, traditional and stagnant business activities employing mostly individuals belonging to the national community of reference and retracing the ethnic economies stereotypical patterns (Group n°1); on

the other hand, among the economically successful businesses (Group n°2) the two sub-groups attracted the researcher's attention: Sub-Group n°2.1, comprising a diversified cluster of flourishing enterprises oriented toward the local market and held by a generation of high skilled migrants; the Sub-Group n°2.2 made of thriving traditional ethnic enterprises run by young motivated entrepreneurs.

Taking into account the two successful models, the first one is characterised by a dynamic of socio-economic mobility of migrants who improve their skills and in many cases emancipated from their national community in the receiving country. The second case depicts a mainly younger generation of entrepreneurs who picked the most remunerative traditional ventures within their national community and got complete economic advantage of it.

Furthermore, taking into account the aggregate survey's results, it emerges that the majority of surveyed entrepreneurs emigrated in the time span ranging from the late '80s to the early 2000s (*Figure 5*), confirming the secondary data showed in the Overview Chapter recording the most consistent migratory waves in the two countries' harshest years in terms of political leadership and economic performances. Singularly analysing the answers inherent to this variable, data confirm the coherence with the respective political and economic crises: a majority of Peruvians for what concerns the first migratory wave across the late '80s and the early '90s, and a proportional majority of Ecuadorians migrated within the second flow of migration (late '90s/early 2000s).

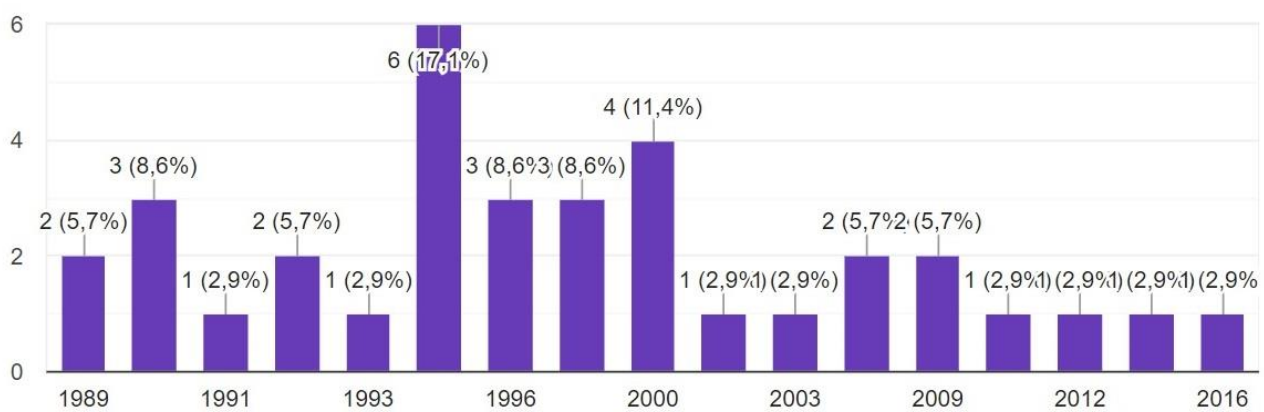


Figure 5. Surveyed entrepreneurs' migration year. (Source: aggregate survey's results elaborated on Google Forms)

Another interesting data (already noticed during the mapping phase) has been confirmed throughout the survey phase: since many enterprises were preliminary traced during the desk-based mapping phase for later on being discovered closed, information had been asked to the surveyed entrepreneurs about these enterprises. They confirmed that these activities were closed, nurturing one typical feature

of immigrant businesses: volatility. In fact, immigrant enterprises can be defined volatile taken in consideration singularly, but looking at the constant growth rate they managed to keep (also in the recession years following 2008 crisis) show a high degree of resilience taken as a whole. (Corradi E., Emmi V., Villa M., 2018).

5.3 Complementary Interviews' Results

Taking as a reference what emerged from the questionnaires analysis, this research section will be now complemented by the purely qualitative results obtained from the three specific cases interviewed.

As a starting point, it is important to denote that all the three interviewed cases have been classified as belonging to Group n°2 (Good economic dynamics and businesses results). Consequently, taking as a reference the two successful sub-groups identified in the previous paragraph, the information about the individual cases acquired during the interviews phase and described in Chapter 4 will try to provide specificity, pragmatisms and concreteness to the analysis.

- Interview n°1

Sofia, the Ecuadorian café holder (Interview n°1), can be positioned in broader terms within the Sub-Group n°2.2 (Good economic dynamics and businesses results – Lower educational level). Even if her entrepreneurial venture started within university, at the moment she is still studying to accomplish it, and therefore does not have a higher education. Beside this, she is under 35 years old and always had the aspiration of having her own entrepreneurial venture. Moreover, her business offers products typical of South America, such as the quinoa salad or exotic fruits.

Nonetheless, of course there are characteristics who do not match with the stereotyped Sub-Group n°2.2 entrepreneur: for example, her suppliers are not compatriots and her migration reasons were not economic reasons (she came here as a child to re-join her family, who however migrated for economic reasons).

Taken in consideration similarities and differences, with the proper precautions, it can be said that Sofia's case resembles the Sub-Group n°2.2's stereotypical scheme within the research sample. According to this scheme, Sofia belongs to a younger generation of entrepreneurs, who set up a remunerative entrepreneurial model which enhances her transnational capital through the ethnic products offered and the ability of finding partners and workers who shares her origins, getting an economic advantage from it and targeting costumers not necessarily belonging to her own national community. Emblematic are her words about her overall judgement about being an immigrant entrepreneur in Rome:

“There is no difference for me, running an enterprise it’s hard for me as much as it is for Italian entrepreneurs. When you run a business you always need to be a step ahead than your competitors. If I employ my Ecuadorian origins in my business? I would not say it like that, I use everything I know, included what I know about my country of origin. It is part of my education.”.

- Interview n°2 and Interview n°3

The second and third interviewed entrepreneurs, Rosa (the Peruvian tailor’s shop holder) and Carmen (the Peruvian owner of the service bureau), have been located in the 1st sub-group (n°2.1 - Good economic dynamics and businesses results – Higher educational level). Both of them are middle aged women, who moved because they wanted to study and look for independence away from Peru. Nevertheless, they had a similar path since their arrival in Rome: they both found a job as housekeepers for some years thanks to their compatriots’ network and during that period they started studying and accumulating some economic capital. After this time lapse, both of them detached themselves from their country of origin with different modalities. Regarding that, Rosa told us:

“I stopped sending remittances. Not even a cent anymore. I sent money for many years but I am fed up of sending money there”.

For what concerns Carmen, she realised that she was not matching anymore with the actions and the line of thought of the Peruvian community in Rome and completely broke away from it. At the same time though, Carmen still sends some remittances for restructuring a house in Peru.

Moreover, they both targeted local clientele and, also in reason of their activity sectors, they hardly offer ethnic products.

Once acknowledged the similarities with the stereotyped entrepreneur picture emerged in Sub-Group n° 2.1 (such as the higher education obtained in Italy or the emancipation from the home country network), it has been noticed that differences are not absent as well in these cases. They do not have Italian workers in their firms. Particularly, Carmen doesn’t have any employees, while Rosa, after having had an Italian employee started collaborating with a refugee centre and consequently hired refugees coming mainly from Afghanistan.

The division and description of the different groups composing the surveyed sample will now help the researcher in the analysis of the employment of ethnic resources, immigrant capital and the opportunities recognition ability analysed in the Theories Chapter.

5.4 Ethnic Resources, Immigrant Capital and Opportunities Recognition

In this section, the concepts inherent to the employment of the ethnic resources, the constitution of the immigrant capital and the opportunities recognition skills described in the Theories Chapter will be applied to the primary and secondary data gathered and reported in the Overview Chapter.

In respect to ethnic resources employment, following the theoretical guidance of the “interactive model” which states that immigrant entrepreneurship is the linear product of migrants’ ethnic resources combined with external opportunities in the receiving country (Waldinger, Aldrich & Ward, 1990), it can’t be avoided to interlink them with the contextual opportunities in the geographical scale analysed. In this sense, throughout the data collection there have been (rare) cases in which the entrepreneur stated that the opening of the business was consequent to a lack of alternatives, recalling Pécoud’s Disadvantage Theory and “Long’s (2012) five Ps jobs: *precari, pesanti, penalizzati socialmente, pericolosi e poco pagati* (precarious, heavy, socially penalised, dangerous and low paid) in which two thirds of migrants in Italy are segregated and which push them to seek fortune in the entrepreneurial venture. Anyways, there have been also cases (such as the one reported in the Interview n°1 with Sofia (the Ecuadorian café holder) where an opportunity has been recognised (namely the university call for applications) and caught in order to enhance the possessed ethnic resources. In this specific case Sofia, a second generation entrepreneur, who is in Italy since its childhood, took advantage of an immigrant business friendly policy within what Pécoud (2010) defines “the institutional context”. Keeping in consideration Pécoud “other variables”, in Sofia’s case the generational differences between her and their parents surely played a role: she embodies, with the due caution, a case of “segmented assimilation”. According to this kind of assimilation, she benefitted of the job, help and training opportunities within an ethnic economy; this emerged clearly when she said that during the construction works of the shop, necessary after the space selection, her family and her national community proved to be a great help in order to keep the budget low. Generally speaking, many cases of the Sub-Group n°2.1, in which Sofia has been positioned, are young entrepreneurs who employed some kind of previous experience and a who have a clear entrepreneurial plan in order to make their ethnic enterprise successful.

Another one of the aforementioned “other variables” is gender. It has been said that women are often “silent contributors” to male-run businesses; beside the fact that this detail has been personally witnessed in many cases throughout the survey phase (in more than one case there were women *de-*

facto working in a male-run enterprise, without being officially recognised as employees), it has been reported a direct witnessing of this feature in the Interview n°2 with Rosa, when she says:

“My ex-husband would have never wanted me to step-in this tailor’s shop. To fit in, it took me 5 or 6 years in which I brought him the food for lunch. I have been trying to counsel him about how to run the business but he could not bear it. One day I decided and I forced him to leave me alone here in the shop. Since then I never left. When I stepped in I fixed the prices, because prices have to be set by the enterprise holder, not by costumers. In the following years my husband gradually detached from the business and from me, and I cut all my ties with Peru, both here in Rome and there.”

Rosa’s words are emblematic of what Pécoud (2010) says in respect to emancipation: in order to reach the self-employed status, immigrant women usually have to enfranchise from the ethnic network of which they are part, and draw their trajectory stepping back from their origin ethnic group. Another demonstration of this fact can be inferred looking at the Sub-Group n° 2.1 (successful entrepreneurs characterised by higher education): this group has a women prevalence, its components rarely offer an ethnic product or service and the business environment shows fewer foreign workers and providers. All these characteristics can be seen as a symptom of a more or less explicit emancipation from the national roots. This pattern has been described, in a different form, also by Carmen (the service bureau holder) in the Interview n°3 when she stated to have cut all the bridges with her national community here in Rome. This detachment from the country of origin’s community does not lie in the factors composing what Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B. define as immigrant capital, nonetheless it is an alternative or complementary strategy which in some instances sides and in some others substitutes Immigrant Capital resources.

In this perspective it is interesting to denote how, bringing the migrant entrepreneurship phenomenon to a general dimension, female presence is increasing in this sector: almost one third of the immigrant enterprises in Italy is run by a woman. The general female presence growth is testified also by the growth of female employees in this entrepreneurial macro-sector: from 2003, when the share was 26,4% they witnessed a growth up to the 47% (Neodemos 2015).

Furthermore, the groups standing out in the Hierarchical Cluster Analysis appear to show interesting features in terms of ethnic community network entrenchment: Group n°1 and the Sub-Group n°2.2 appear to be the ones more entrenched within the ethnic network (employing more compatriot, having a costumers’ base mainly composed by compatriots and offering mostly ethnic products). Nonetheless this characteristic, at least for what concerns the research’s sample, does not seem to be a determinant of the economic condition, given that Group n°1 and the Sub-Group n°2.2 show some of the major differences precisely about economic performances.

Referring to the Immigrant Capital model proposed by Sundararajan M. and Sundararajan B. (2015), it and its sub-components (social, cultural, economic and human capitals) have been recognised in various instances throughout the data collection.

In order to ease the analytical process, the different sub-components composing immigrant capital will be applied one by one to the case study, with the aim of furnish an overall picture of the immigrant capital employment and its relation with opportunities recognition for what concerns Peruvian and Ecuadorian businesses in Rome.

Human capital, in the entrepreneurial perspective refers to the education, all the previous experiences and the knowledge the business owner has of the market of reference. In respect to it, in the surveyed target, 37% of the entrepreneurs declared to have had previous experience in the field; moreover, circumscribing the analysis to the groups identified, Sub-Group n°2.2 is characterised by previous experiences in the same field; for what concerns education, the Sub-Group n°2.1 is characterised by having a higher education. In the analysed sample, these two factors lead to the idea that either higher education and previous experience in the same field can be considered success inducers. Cultural capital, comprehending all the individual features which have been acquired from the country of origin, has a pivotal role especially in those defined as purely ethnic or mixed economies: in these cases, immigrant entrepreneurs employ their transnationalism in the enterprise management. Exemplificative of this is the case of Sofia (Interview n°1), and more in general both the Group n°1 and the Sub-Group n°2.2. All these cases (mostly catering activities such as bars or restaurants) employ somehow their dual cultural capital, either in the selection of the suppliers, in the reference market targeting or in the innovation and introduction of ethnic products, services and ideas. A concrete example of this attitude can be traced in Sofia's interview, when she says that she is proud of being part of the cultural enrichment she contributes to, thanks to the employment of South-American ideas and typical ingredients in her dishes such as quinoa, avocado and other fruits. In regards to economic capital, a vital element in the business world, there is a direct witnessing of both Carmen and Rosa, who worked for almost ten years as housekeepers in order to save some money preparatory to the entrepreneurial venture. The other interviewed entrepreneur, Sofia, raised her money thanks to her entrenchment in the host society, which afforded her to recognise an opportunity within the university. These examples confirm and exacerbate the importance of the financial resources at the onset of the entrepreneurial activity. Namely, this last case led the researcher to take into account social capital, which is defined as the social connection both in the host and home country (Zhou, 2004). Sofia was able to open her activity exactly thanks to the social ties in the receiving country, namely the university network in which she got to know the call for applications. Moreover, to a lesser extent, this factor is present in all the surveyed enterprises: in reason of the

nature of enterprises themselves, entrepreneurs have to interact with the host society. Those who manage to combine the social relations in the receiving country with the home country ties are the one taking full advantage of this capital.

All these factors make up what has been defined as Immigrant Capital, which can be summarised as the ability of seeing the situations from different perspectives than the autochthonous population. In the general case of Peruvian and Ecuadorian communities in Rome, the characterisation of the groups and the sub-groups appear to confirm and specify this theory. Specifically, both the sub-groups identified seems to employ their immigrant capital. Nonetheless, the subgroup that takes full advantage of it is the Sub-Group n°2.2, where young motivated ethnic entrepreneurs (often belonging to 2nd generations) managed to set an entrepreneurial model which enhance their transnationalism in the provision of a product or a service addressed to a variegated set of costumers.

Now that the employment of the ethnic resources and immigrant capital, together with opportunities recognition, have been tackled, the research will now shift on how these transnational features contribute to deliver a social impact.

5.5 Socio-Economic Impact

Following the theoretical framework set in Theories Chapter, the research will now shift on the socio-economic effects arising from the examined case study. This part of the analysis will consider four indicators in the first instance, namely: contribution to employment, contribution to foreign trade and capital mobility, contribution to innovation, and integration. In this part of the analysis, the multivariate hierarchical cluster analysis will be flanked by the usage of aggregate surveys' results and semi-structured interviews.

Starting from the contribution to employment, the results obtained in the survey phase stress what reported by the OECD data taken in consideration in Theories Chapter, namely: the vast majority of migrant enterprises are small firms hiring less than 10 individuals and, more specifically they create on average between 1.4 and 2.1 additional jobs. None of the questionnaires carried out, in fact, contradicts these statistics: more than half of the 35 enterprises surveyed employ either 2 or 3 additional employees, none of them more than 7.

Moreover, another interesting fact emerged from the surveys and confirming the theoretical framework proposed, is the tendency toward the employment of other migrants, often compatriots. In the surveys' aggregate results, it has been evinced that in the 72,4% of the cases employees are either compatriots (34,5%) or coming from mixed nationalities, with a foreign majority (37,9%). Of these, the majority is employed by groups identified as more entrenched in ethnic economies (either

Group n°1 or Sub-Group n°2.2). Particularly, it is interesting to denote how the entrepreneurs belonging to the Sub-Group n°2.2 consider the creation of job opportunities for friends, relatives or compatriots as a main motivation to start the business, as a sort of community solidarity. This can be explained by the typical high rate of internal solidarity among migrants (OECD, 2010). As Portes and Stepick (1985) state: “the first characteristic of ethnic economies is the usage of a common cultural tie aimed to the economic survival and social advancement”. Moreover, as it can be seen from the words of Light et al. (1994): even if salaries are lower in ethnic economies, the economic gain is higher than if they were unemployed. This factor can’t be neglected given the frequent unemployability of immigrants, often due to the linguistic barrier. A trace of this phenomenon can be found in the words of Rosa (Interview n°2):

“In these last years I have never chosen Italian employees, not because I am a foreigner. From my experience, the problem with the Italians is that they have excessive requests even before start working. From some years I turn to the Centro Astalli⁸ when I look for employees. When I started looking for employees there, refugees’ nationality was mainly Afghan. These employees for sure had linguistic barriers to overcome, but they were efficient from a practical point of view, especially when it came to sewing. Many of them at first were not happy of having a female boss, but I know what it means to be immigrants, and they learnt to respect me”.

In reason of Rosa’s word, it is possible to recall one concept already expressed in Theories Chapter: by filling the gaps left by autochthonous entrepreneurs (generally in low-profitability and/or dangerous sectors), migrant entrepreneurs create new job opportunities (especially, but not only, for compatriots or other migrants) in the host country labour market. In this way, they compensate structural imbalances in the job market, consequently alleviating social tensions in the receiving country, augmenting the economic capital of potentially unemployed and ostracised segments of the population (Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp, 2009).

Regarding the contribution to foreign trade enhancement and monetary capital mobility, gathered data do not provide information as clear as it has been in respect to the other factors. Among the interviewed cases, only Carmen (Interview n°3) sends remittances home and no one has a saving plan in the country of origin. In regards to this element, Carmen affirmed that she chose not to have a savings plan in Peru because she does not trust that financial system. This aspect seems to confirm OECD (2010) statement saying that foreign born entrepreneurs are the ones knowing the best where the leaks are and how to circumvent it and the endemic corruption of these grey areas. Nonetheless,

⁸ Centro Astalli is the Italian home of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). It is involved in many different sectors and activities form more than 30 years.

a central role in regard to this is covered by money transfer agencies which, in the examined case study, cover a respectable share of the total (11,4% of the total). Furthermore, surveys' aggregate results show that only 4 of the 35 cases have their main suppliers located abroad. All the other enterprises offering ethnic products either get it from the large distribution operators or from few compatriots wholesaling ethnic products to a given ethnic economy. This behaviour can be explained by the notable import/export skills necessary to efficiently manage to operate in the foreign trade sector.

In regards to the third factor taken into account, contribution to innovation, the sample analysed main innovation contribution can be traced in the gastronomic sector. A consistent share (the 40%) of the 35 enterprises surveyed operates in catering services activities and almost all of them declared to offer an ethnic service/product. This kind of offer characterisation consequentially implies the employment of products typical of other countries, which are rarely employed in the traditional enterprises. An example of this characteristic can be found in Sofia's words (Interview n°1). Besides being proudly part of a general cultural enrichment since she uses South-American ideas and typical ingredients (quinoa, avocado and others), she told the interviewer about something that had been said to her once:

"I remember of you and your café because of the quinoa salad. Since I tried it here, anytime I cook it I think about you".

As Ambrosini states (Neodemos, 2015), the discovery of new dishes and ingredients in Italy is tied on the one hand to international migrants' requests and especially by the immigrant entrepreneurs' resourcefulness, while on the other hand depends on the demand fuelled by Italian citizens looking for new tastes and culinary innovations.

This can be considered, borrowing Figueira, C., Caselli, G., Theodorakopoulos, N. (2016) words, one of those instances where immigrant enterprises foster creativity and innovation momentum.

Concerning socio-economic contribution of integration, in the case study evidences have been encountered confirming, in many instances, what had been expressed in Theories Chapter.

For example, regarding the cases where the integration within the economic system apparently did not correspond to the integration within the socio-cultural host environment, and therefore identity and traditional factors contributed to foster closure and segregation of immigrant groups, when asked about the possibility that migrant entrepreneurship could foster integration, Carmen (in the Interview n°3) said:

"If it favours integration? In my opinion it depends: there are some activities that do exactly the opposite. Instead of interconnecting the two worlds, some activities become the chance for a national

group to not integrate and not having relations with anyone but the components of its community. In some other cases it doesn't happen though; probably I see things from a different perspective since I cut relations with my home country community. Anyways, those who run their business regularly for sure contribute to this country wellness paying taxes and creating job opportunities”.

Her words are emblematic of this dual possibility: on the one hand, she confirms that in many cases the ethnic business provides the community of reference with the possibility of withdrawing into a “safe and comfortable zone”; on the other hand, considering herself as an emancipated entrepreneur, she feels that her business, for example, helps her not only in the economic integration process, but also in the socio-cultural one. Nevertheless, in the last lines she mentions something which leads the talk to another component of the topic: the economic impact of integration on the receiving country. When she says that regularly run enterprises contribute to Italy's wellness paying taxes and creating job opportunities, she recalls what had been described in Theories Chapter as the migrant's average taxes payment, superior to the services of which he will benefit. In fact, expanding the considerations to the whole foreign population, the 3,5 million foreign taxpayers contributed to state revenues for €7,6 billion, to be added to the € 8.9 billion destined to social protection and pension system (of which the vast majority of immigrants does not benefit if they move back to their country of origin) The final mere economic toll among costs (welfare, welcoming, contrast of the irregularity) and benefits (taxes paid) is positive for € 3,9 billion (Neodemos, 2015). In terms of employment contribution, successful socio-economic integration in general terms, seems to entail higher average salaries for the migrant worker, possibly discouraging their access to the informal or criminal economy.

This feature can be traced also in Sub-Group n°2.1, where economic success entailed growth in overall income and salaries. In this perspective, the growing financial turnover registered in both the economically successful sub-groups leads to higher per-capita consumes in the host country, contributing to national GDP and fiscal revenues growth, and to immaterial benefits deriving from the individual monetary empowerment. In this perspective, according to a calculation carried on by Fondazione Leone Moressa in 2013 and reported by Neodemos, (2015), the 2,4 million foreign employees in Italy (10% of the total employees' number) produce the 8,8% of national GDP (€ 123 billion).

Looking at the age distribution of the surveyed sample and its relation with the arrival year, most of the individuals composing the target group arrived in Italy in their 20s or 30s, contributing to the rejuvenation of the population. In fact, in the general phenomenon landscape, migrant entrepreneurs are generally younger than Italians, with the 67% of them belonging to an age range between 25 and 44 years old (Neodemos, 2015). This feature provides a good hint of what the integration of these

segment of immigrants involves in terms of future perspectives: successful integration of 1st generations also favours the opportunities creation for the 2nd generations.

6. Discussion

Throughout the research, the immigrant entrepreneurship topic has been examined from a quite precise perspective, defined and explained in the Problem Formulation. The whole work in fact, has tried to pursue the question that led the investigation:

“Does immigrant entrepreneurship trigger a socio-economic repercussion on the receiving society? Of which kind? Why?”

It tried to do so, always keeping into account the angle designated by the Hypothesis expressed in the Introduction Chapter:

“In function of the peculiar transnational features characterising migrant enterprises, especially when economically successful, immigrant entrepreneurship acts as a catalyst fostering a given immigrant community's economic integration in the host socio-economic fabric, generating at the same time a spill-over effect (social and economic) on the receiving country”.

In reason of what just said, a systemic approach has been adopted in order to recognise the specific weight of the many factors orbiting around the immigrant entrepreneur core concept. In so doing, multiple peripheral factors such as the country of origin, the receiving country's national community, the compatriots community in the host society and other collateral constituents played a role in the examination of the topic.

When assessing the phenomenon, secondary sources' notions have been complemented with primary data gathered in person, functional to give pragmatism and concreteness to the study. Retracing the Hypothesis statements, results achieved will be briefly described in this section.

For what concerns the transnational features of immigrant enterprises, it appears that they are not always the key for success. Transnationalism's degree has been in fact assessed as the entrepreneur's employment of Immigrant Capital (described in Theories Chapter); among the surveyed business owners, only one of the emerging economically successful sub-groups within Group n°2 (Sub-Group n°2.2) has been defined as economically successful and taking full advantage of the dual societal knowledge. The other sub-group (Sub-Group n°2.1) seems to be more focused on products/services who do not require the employment of transnational skills, but rather a higher educational level. Differently, Group n°1 uses its Immigrant Capital as well, nonetheless evidences show that it is not well economically performing. Referring also to the existing literature on the topic, it can be said that transnationalism it is for sure a resource in the entrepreneurial trail, but singularly does not necessarily entail economic success in the business world.

Coming back to the Hypothesis, the investigation moved on with the guesstimate of how, also in reason of the aforementioned transnational features, migrant entrepreneurship (especially when successful) catalyses immigrants' integration in the host socio-economic system. This section of the Hypothesis found fertile ground even if not complete uniformity throughout the research. It has been observed that most of the enterprises benefit of their transnational features, and of their entrepreneurial essence more in general, in the integration process within the host-country socio-economic texture. Nevertheless, a distinction needs to be made about social and economic integration. In fact, as it has been pointed out in Theories Chapter when referring to Pécoud words (2010) about the institutional context: "migrant entrepreneurship does not take place in a legal/political/institutional vacuum [...]. Immigrant businesses, therefore, even when located in 'niches' or 'enclaves', are integral parts of the economy and of the overall social and political dynamics that shape it". Evidences in this sense have been found in the survey phase too. Group n°1's enterprises, for example, resemble to confirm this phenomenon: their reference market is mainly composed by compatriots who see the given entrepreneurial reality as a possibility to having relations exclusively with other compatriots. So, even if the socio-cultural side of integration struggles to take off in some instances, being legally embedded within the host institutional system, entrepreneurs are well integrated in the economic framework. Moreover, it follows that economic integration provides the migrant entrepreneur and its worker with higher economic capital, which can act as an empowerment tool to seek also socio-cultural integration.

Last but not least, it has been probed how the just described entrepreneurial world can contribute to generate a spill-over effect on the receiving country. Four major components have been considered in this evaluation: employment, foreign trade and monetary capital mobility, innovation, and integration. All the variables taken into account proved to be, to some extent, confirming the initial Hypothesis.

Notably, employment's numbers found cues in this sense both in the general secondary data and in the collected data inherent to the target group analysed. Being most of the enterprises small-sized firms, their average job creation contribute coincides with the OECD (2011) numbers concerning this matter (between 1.4 and 2.1 additional jobs per firm, in the majority of the cases other migrants, often compatriots). This peculiarity has been explained either by the internal solidarity or by the higher adaptability of this population stratum to lower salaries and longer working schedules. Nonetheless, as it has been pointed out by Light et al. (1994), in these cases the economic gain is still higher than if they were unemployed; a feature impossible to ignore considering the frequent unemployability of migrants outside the ethnic economy.

Regarding foreign trade and monetary capital mobility, evidences are not as clear as they are in respect to other variables. Few cases of the surveyed sample (only 4 out of 35) have their main suppliers abroad, the vast majority of those offering an ethnic product still turns to local suppliers. Here, considering the proportions in the examined sample, it would make sense to assume that the impact on the host society that can be detected in the reduction of tariff barriers and corruption has a limited weight. Nonetheless, these data are not completely in line with what is reported by other sources such as OECD (2011), about the general trend for OECD countries. Also financially speaking, there is no direct evidence of consistent remittances patterns; at the same time, money transfer businesses cover a consistent share of the surveyed enterprises. They are of notable relevance since have been identified as those actors making it possible to transfer funds (usually under the form of remittances), without incurring in major transactional costs.

Differently, innovation contribution appeared to be particularly relevant to the case study analysed. Especially, but not only in restauration and catering service activities entrepreneurs offer ethnic products and/or services, introducing the autochthonous population to new dishes and tastes. This characteristic can also be seen as supported by the growing demand of exotic products triggered by the globalisation inputs of modern world. Innovation entailed in immigrant entrepreneurship processes can then be seen as creativity and innovation momentum promoter.

Ultimately, the socio-economic contribution of integration itself has been taken into account and assessed. Results produced testify a prevalently positive impact: secondary empirical data state that the general migrant population tends to pay more taxes compared to the services it benefits of, and that economically successful integration usually comport higher revenues for a given ethnic economy, besides discouraging access to informal and criminal economy. Evidences in this sense have been found also in the hierarchical cluster analysis of the surveyed target group: Group n°2 (comprehending Sub-Groups n°2.1 and n°2.2) is an example of economic success since the entrepreneurs composing it declared their employment numbers and yearly turnover to be growing. This entails higher per-capita consumes, higher fiscal contribution and individual economic empowerment.

Moreover, considering that often bars and restaurants turn to be points of social aggregation for the compatriots, an inward social impact is also likely to be made by these enterprises. Specifically, for example, especially the skilled integrated entrepreneurs composing Group n°2 are able to catch local opportunities and to open new paths in the host society that can indirectly benefit their community of migrants.

Similar investigations have been already made in the academic world and not only; nonetheless, the existent literature rarely proved to effectively combine qualitative and quantitative data. So, in light of what arose from this research, it would be propitious and beneficial to carry on further studies on this topic following a methodology which would benefit from quantitative sources, taking into account at the same time the specificity that can be provided by qualitative data. To be complementary to what has been disclosed in this thesis, it would be appropriate if done eventually choosing different nationalities or scales of reference, in order to contribute in the creation of an all-encompassing store of learning about this phenomenon.

7. Conclusions

Summing up what has been discovered throughout the whole investigation, results provided by the surveyed target group appears to be coherent with what emerged from the secondary data included.

After applying the chosen theories to data, they seem to confirm the Hypothesis:

“In function of the peculiar transnational features characterising migrant enterprises, especially when economically successful, immigrant entrepreneurship acts as a catalyst fostering a given immigrant community's economic integration in the host socio-economic fabric, generating at the same time a spill-over effect (social and economic) on the receiving country”

Specifically, it is finally possible to try responding to the question:

“Does immigrant entrepreneurship trigger a socio-economic repercussion on the receiving society? Of which kind? Why?”

From a socio-economic perspective, immigrant entrepreneurship surely delivers a socio-economic contribution to the receiving society. In a society where migration is witnessing an ever-increasing trend and where entrepreneurship historically demonstrated to be a key pillar of the global, capitalist system in its entirety, it would be naive to neglect it. More difficult is assessing which kind of impact is generated and why it happens.

Examining the general phenomenon from a case study perspective, gave the researcher the possibility of concretely being immersed in one immigrant entrepreneurship bi-national reality. Concerning the target group analysed, the potential impact seems to be positive and stimulating, especially for what concerns employment, innovation and integration. Nonetheless, keeping in consideration the case study and at the same time broadening the picture to general terms, immigrants' independent activities trigger an economic, socio-cultural, innovative push which can physiologically collide with the autochthonous political, cultural and identity's spheres. In view of what just said, the potential positive impact appears to be slowed down by the natural societies' unwillingness to merge, prompted by the fear of diversity and by a political narrative more the often ready to exacerbate it.

On a global perspective, migration numbers indicate that this phenomenon is expected to grow and be, within the macro-topic of migration, one of the crucial socio-economic nodes of development.

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