International Milan?
A global city in a country lagging behind

The view of transnational migrants

ACRE report 7.12

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ACRE is an acronym of the international research project ‘Accommodating Creative Knowledge – Competitiveness of European Metropolitan Regions within the Enlarged Union’.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present report aims to describe the attractiveness of the Italian region selected for this report: the Metropolitan Area of Milan. After a brief introduction about the region, and a short presentation of the research’s contents, the report continues by presenting the theoretical framework as well as describing the features of migration in Italy and in the Metropolitan Area of Milan. An analysis of trajectories and motivations of foreign talents in Milan then follows. The concluding chapter will shed a light upon a number of issues and raise new questions.

The main focus of the research is the attractiveness of Milan for migrants, and its capability to integrate new-comers, while the concluding remarks will deal with possible recommendations formulated according to problems and limits detected by the research.

Despite a transformation of the economy and a rather good-positioning within the creative and knowledge economy, Italian economy is still suffering from a low degree of innovation, especially if compared with other countries: the attractiveness of Italy for foreigners is with no doubts linked to the delay of the country’s economy. The city of Milan is the core of one of the richest Italian regions and the first one in terms of absolute values in the creative and knowledge economy. The industrial past of the Milanese Metropolitan Region has been radically changed by the post-fordism transformation, but its heritage is still visible in its strong industrial and economical power. In particular, Milan's productive system is in transformation, with regard to both the kind of activities and, above all, the kind of occupations. The changes of the Milanese area are in fact in line with the principal post-fordist transformations that are occurring in the main European capitals: crisis in the heavy manufacturing division, and growth in technical jobs with high intellectual content. Furthermore, Milan has proved to be the technological leader of the Italian transformation so far (OECD 2006).

Within the national scenario the Milan Metropolitan Area performs very well internationally. Many indicators agree when showing that the city’s economy has a good position in the global economy. Global network junction, gatekeeper, and many other definitions for the city tell us that Milan is well connected with other international cities and that it also connects Italy to the rest of the world.

Migrants in Italy have a central role in the labour market, and they contribute massively to the country’s economic wealth, both as employees and as entrepreneurs. The Milan Metropolitan Region is a strong pole of attraction for migrants. In 2007, resident foreigners in the municipality of Milan accounted for little more than 13% of all the residents, while in provincial municipalities they accounted for 5.7%. The relevance of foreigners in the Milan Metropolitan Region can be read in a twofold dimension: as a demographic balancing factor, especially in the core of the region, and as an economic and growth resource.
As far as highly skilled migration, Italy is affected more by a brain drain phenomenon than it is by a brain gain. The difficult working conditions of Italian young talents are very often forcing young workers to move away. That is even more so in some fields, like R&D, where the scarcity of funds and the difficult and sometimes unclear career mechanisms force bright workers to move to other countries with better working conditions.

In some fields such as business, finance, architecture and in general knowledge and creative industries, the brain drain is very often only temporary: it has been underlined in previous researches that the Italian labour market is marked by an increasing number of Italian professionals who had experienced a period abroad, particularly when high level positions are concerned. The phenomenon of an international professional elite is quickly helping to open up the labour market to the international scenario, and to the international exchange of creative and knowledge intensive workers.

The poles of attraction for high skilled migrants in Italy are not many. According to the interviewees, young international talents settle in Italy either in the big cities or in University towns. Nevertheless Milan and Rome seem to be major poles of attraction when the working career starts. Many are the reasons under this choice. It is first of all a matter of job opportunities. Rome and Milan offer the most international labour markets, hosting multinational firms and international Institutions (Embassies, Consulates, International NGOs etc.). Furthermore, for some sectors, such as design and fashion, the international recognition of Milan has a quite strong attraction effect. The relevance of high education in the process of internationalisation of Milan seems to be a key aspect. According to the interviewees, the attraction power of Milan in certain sectors is the combination of its international image, the educational offer, and a vibrant and accessible labour market. For several of the interviewees who work in the design or fashion sector, the decision to move to Milan was related to the city’s international image, and to the availability of international graduate and postgraduate courses. The decision to stay on is then in part related to the great job opportunities.

In terms of what the city offers, Milan is considered to be very well connected to the rest of Europe and to the world by air/ train and highways. Furthermore Milan, compared to the rest of Italy, offers also a great variety of services targeted to international people. As to the education, Milan has a great number of private or semi-private language schools (from primary to high schools) in different languages, such as French, German, and English. At the same time, international managers’ opinion about Milan is negative when it competes in the international context. Milan fails when compared to Paris, London, Madrid, Barcelona, etc. The city is not as international as the others. Being foreigner and not speaking Italian in Milan is not easy. Most of the services (post offices, Register offices, and so on) are only provided in Italian, and any procedure, from moving into a new house to buying and securing a car, need some bureaucracy skills. Lastly, there seem to be a mismatch between the international image of Milan and what Milan proves to be when experienced in reality: Milan has a very strong positive image, which is often an important concomitant cause of international talented people’s migration towards the city itself. Nevertheless, as often, in the eyes of the interviewees Milan is eventually not what they expected. As one of the international talent said: “It is only this!!”. Most of the people indeed, has found Milan quite small-compared to London and Paris!- and not very high-developed in terms of public transportation, bike lanes, cultural events, evening offer etc.
In other words, Milan is the Italian most international city, but the less international in the international scenario. Within this scenario, the question that this work has tried to answer is how much Milan is accommodating international the high-skilled professionals who enter the city both for living and for working. Milan offers a combination of soft and hard factors that attract a meagre number of international people.

In the light of the results of this research, a final question should be added as to the future prospectives of Milan: in the eyes of the interviewees Milan is in decline and it is not competing with the other European cities. The vibrant and positive atmosphere that has attracted them to Milan seems to be evaporated and this might be also related to the low level of tolerance that Italy and Milan are showing towards immigrants.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ACRE: General overview

Economic regions and cities or urban units are highly unstable entities. Changes and transformations are normal for them. Economic regions change in terms of their structure: they either grow or shrink; and urban units do the same. In this way, the dynamics are tightly linked to particular forms of urban development. In the 19th century it was the Industrial Revolution that gave birth to the typical factory town. In the 20th century, the rise of Fordist mass production was associated with the growth of the large industrial metropolis. Recently, urban economic structure has been undergoing another market shift, away from Fordist mass production regimes. The shift implied more flexible forms of production as well as the new principle of “just-in-time” and “production-on-demand” delivery of products (Harvey, 1987).

The ACRE project – acronym for Accommodating Creative Knowledge – Competitiveness of European Metropolitan Regions within the Enlarged Union – aims to assess the impact of the emerging ‘creative class’ and the rise of ‘creative industries’ on the competitiveness of EU metropolitan regions. While the traditional ‘hard’ location factors that firms use will remain important for international competitiveness, new ‘soft’ location factors that are mainly related to attracting the required ‘talent pool’ will deserve increasing attention.

The research central question is: what are the conditions required in order to create or stimulate ‘creative knowledge regions’ in the context of the extended European Union? We will compare the recent socio-economic development trends and strategies in several metropolitan regions across Europe to get a better idea of the extent to which creativity, innovation and knowledge are indeed the keys to a successful long-term economic development.

The study draws on city-regions in twelve European countries: Bulgaria, France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. The metropolitan regions are Amsterdam, Barcelona, Birmingham, Budapest, Dublin, Helsinki, Leipzig, Milan, Munich, Poznan, Riga, Sofia and Toulouse.

The main topic to consider is which metropolitan regions might develop as ‘creative knowledge regions’, and which regions might not. With the results of this study the EU might seriously consider strengthening the profile of metropolitan regions within the EU area as regards to creative knowledge branches and activities, in the face of increasing competition with other developing regions in the world.
The ACRE project focuses on six dimensions, investigating:

- The (potential) effectiveness of regional competitiveness policies that focus on a creativity-and knowledge–based metropolitan economy;

- The role of path dependency: do traditions in certain economic branches and certain local and regional historic spatial structures contribute to a more favourable starting point when trying to develop a ‘creative knowledge region’?

- The extent to which policies for competitive ‘creative knowledge regions’ not only aim to attract certain types of economic activities, but also to provide ‘soft location factors’ like an attractive residential environment, public spaces, and ‘meeting places’ for the ‘talent pool’ needed for these economic activities.

- The question why regional geographic and administrative scales are more relevant for regional competitiveness when aiming at ‘creative knowledge regions’.

- The differences and similarities between metropolitan regions in West, Central and Eastern Europe in their potentiality to become competitive centres of creativity, knowledge and innovation.

- The role of transnational migration of a skilled labour force towards centres of creativity and knowledge: to which extent are these trans–national migrants attracted by ‘soft’ location factors like an attractive residential environment, a diverse population and a tolerant atmosphere in the metropolitan regions they migrate to? How important are such factors when compared to job or career opportunities and costs of living? To what extent are migrants that move to ‘creative knowledge cities’ different from migrants that move to ‘global’ or ‘world cities’ in their reasons to migrate?
1.2 Introduction to the region

The present report aims to describe the attractiveness of the Italian region selected for this report: the Metropolitan Area of Milan. After a brief introduction about the region, and a short presentation of the research’s contents, the report continues by presenting the theoretical framework as well as describing the features of migration in Italy and in the Metropolitan Area of Milan. An analysis of trajectories and motivations of foreign talents in Milan then follows. The concluding chapter will shed a light upon a number of issues and raise new questions.

The Milanese Metropolitan Area is part of the Lombardy region, in the Northern of Italy. It is located in the central-western area of the Po Valley, and stretches in between Ticino and Adda rivers, and in between Po River and the pre-Alpines reliefs.

The Province of Milan has 3,906,726 inhabitants, and is composed by the city of Milan (1,299,633 inhabitants) and 188 municipalities. In recent years the population of the metropolitan area has slowly decreased, in particular in the municipality of Milan, which has passed from 1,732,000 inhabitants in 1971 to 1,299,633 in 2008.

The population of the Milanese Metropolitan Area is gender balanced: 48.5 percent of the inhabitants are males, and 51.5 percent are females. Data are pretty much the same for Milan (47 percent males and 53 percent females). 49 percent out of the total population of the Metropolitan Area are married and 2.3 percent are divorced, out of which 47 percent are located in Milan.

Milan Metropolitan Region is the Italian Area with the highest per capita income in Italy (30,468 Euros, against an average value for Lombardy of 27,371 Euros), and the Region is one of the leading pole as far as the Italian economy, employing 20 percent of the Italian workforce and producing more than 23 percent of the Italian Gross Domestic Product.

The educational level of the metropolitan area of Milan is higher than the Italian average, but it is still strongly lower than that of other high-developed European areas. The Area is hosting many important Universities which constitute, together with the successful economic activities, magnets for immigrants, both internal and external.

The migrant population of the Province of Milan is more than doubled in the last years, passing from 89,176 in 1995 to 201,150 in 2003 and 344,367 in 2008. It constitutes 5.3 percent of the resident population in the Province of Milan. 51 percent of immigrants are

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1 Demo Istat data, 1° January 2008.
2 Istat, Census of industries and commerce
3 Eurostat 2005
located in the city of Milan. The main flows are those from Asia (Philippines, China), South America (Peru), North-Africa (Morocco, Egypt) and Eastern- Europe (Albania, Romania, Ukraine).

**Graph 1.1- Percentages of foreigners from Countries with strong migration flows (PFPM) and Advanced Develop Countries (PSA)**

![Graph showing percentages of foreigners from developing and advanced countries from 1998 to 2006.]

*Source: Municipality of Milan, Statistic Sector*

**Box 1- The city of Milan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Italy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Lombardy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>181.76 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhabitants</td>
<td>1,299,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreigners</td>
<td>175,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>7,130 ab/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees (Region)</td>
<td>3,898,336 (20.08 percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita Income</td>
<td>30,468 Euros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP (Region)</td>
<td>298,285.20 millions Euros</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The definition of Developing Countries (named in Italy as Countries with high emigration fluxes) comprises of Countries from central-east Europe, from Africa, from Asia (except Israel and Japan), from Central-South America. The rest are classified as Developed Countries.*
1.3 Structure of the report

Within the ACRE project, this report aims at presenting the third empirical step of the project on the Milanese Metropolitan Region: after a general overview of the literature about the creative and knowledge economy (Mustered et al., 2006), three field studies follow.

The first focuses on an understanding of the current situation of the creative and knowledge workers in selected regions.

The second one focuses on the entrepreneurs in selected creative and knowledge based sectors: through qualitative interviews the research teams explored the reasons why certain kinds of firms are localised in the observed metropolitan areas.

The third and current field work, in the light of the previous finding, is focused on high-skilled migrants. The aim of the research is to study the reasons why foreign people specialised in creative and knowledge sectors decide to move to the Milan Metropolitan Region. The report will be organised into four main sections.

The first section frames the issue within a theoretical construct and debate (chapter 2). After a general theoretical framework, three overview chapters follow: chapter 3, an analysis of economic development of Italy and Milan Metropolitan region, and chapters 4 and 5, which will explore the migration issue both in the country and in the metropolitan area.

The second section focuses on the methodology used in the research. In order to explain how the local qualitative research has been organised, special attention will be given to the focus group organised with experts, to the structure of the sample and the selection of interviewees (chapter 6).

The third section is aimed at presenting the results of the research (chapter 7). The results will be analysed according to three main issues: first the reasons and the expectations of talented migrant when moving to Milan, second the type of life they lead in the city, and third their plans for the future. All these topics will be explored by looking at their job, business, quality of life and social life.

The last chapter (8) will present the conclusions and a discussion. The attention will be on the attractiveness of Milan for migrants, and the city’s capability to integrate new-comers; the concluding remarks will present possible recommendations formulated according to problems and limits detected by the research.

The fieldwork has been carried out by Carla Sedini, Silvia Mugnano and Marianna d’Ovidio. The report has been written by Marianna d’Ovidio (except chapter 6, written by Carla Sedini and § 7.1, written together by d’Ovidio and Sedini). Silvia Mugnano is the author of the conclusions. Chapter 2 has been provided by the ACRE team coordinator. The study was carried out under the supervision of the Scientific Committee, composed of Enzo Mingione, Francesca Zajczycy and Elena Dell’Agnese. A special thank-you to Giulia Tarantola, Chiara Labadini and Chiara Respi, whose work has been key to the accomplishment of this report.
For a better understanding of trans-national migration in creative and knowledge intensive industries in the city region of Milan it is important to have a look on recent international migration research and its theories. Migration to Europe in the past 20 to 25 years differs in form and consequences from earlier population movements across national borders. New types of migration and new forms of trans-national migration can be observed in most countries in the EU, including Italy. Older approaches of migration research do not seem to describe current migration processes properly. Especially the migration of highly skilled workers shows specific characteristics which require new descriptions.

There is no consistent theory of migration; on the contrary, migration research is characterised by a wide range of theories. Classical approaches basically deal with economic factors to explain migration processes on the macro-level or decisions to migrate on the micro-level. But the changes of migration processes since the 1990s cannot be described appropriately by classical theories. Hence new approaches try to explain contemporary migration structures. They point out the embeddedness of migrants in social networks and try to focus on the meso-level of migration in form of exchange processes between social spaces. In this chapter classical approaches of migration research and new theories will be described which focus on labour migration in general. Afterwards there will be a description of approaches which deal with migration of highly skilled in particular. This also includes Richard Florida’s account of the ‘creative class’ (Florida 2002). His perception of this ‘class’ as being ‘hyper-mobile’ is one of the most contested elements of his creative class thesis. Finally it will be discussed which approaches are appropriate to describe the movement of highly skilled migrants to Milan.

2.1 Classical theories of labour migration

Classical theories of migration interpret migration processes which are seen as unidirectional with definite countries of origin and destination areas. Migration processes are explained as a consequence of economic disparities and adverse conditions on which individuals react and decide to migrate.

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1 This section has been written by the ACRE Leipzig team (Bastian Lange, Juliane Schröder and Kornelia Ehrlich, Leibniz Institute of Regional Geography) and Amsterdam team (Marco Bontje and Heike Pethe, University of Amsterdam). The section is common to all ACRE reports within Work Package 7.
2.1.1 Push-pull-model

The emergence of international migration can be explained by correlations between countries of origin and host societies. Everett (see Lee, 1972), worked out a push-pull-model which states that there are push-factors in the regions of origin and pull-factors in the destination area, which encourage migration. There are also intervening factors like spatial distance or migration laws and personal facts which influence decisions to migrate. This approach considers not only economic factors like economic disparities but also social factors like conflicts or the attempt to escape from danger (Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 38; Haug, 2000, p. 8; Kneer, 1996).

2.1.2 Neoclassical theories

Neoclassical theories are based on the push-pull-model. Macro-economic approaches focus on economic factors like economic growth (see Lewis, 1954, see Todaro, 1976). It is assumed that disparities between places of production and labour markets – namely disparities of wage level as well as labour supply and demand for labour – lead to migration. Migration is seen as the attempt to reach a macro-economic equilibrium. Countries with work intensive sectors are characterised by low wages and countries with capital intensive sectors by high wages. These wage differentials cause migration to the areas where the income level is higher. Thus the labour supply lowers and wages increase in ‘poorer’ countries while labour supply increases and therefore wages lower in ‘richer’ countries. At the same time economic and human capital flows towards the ‘poorer’ regions, which are beginning to develop capital intensive sectors. Migration abates when economic disparities vanish. This disregards that there are other factors like the establishment of migrant communities in host societies which may encourage further migration (Haug, 2000, p. 2f, 11f; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 38f).

Macro-economic theory has its counterpart in micro-economic approaches. Here the focus is on the individual migrant. As individuals they opt for migration by rational cost-benefit calculations. Migration is interpreted as investment in order to maximise economic utilities. Individual features, social conditions or technologies which lower the costs of migration enhance the probability of migration. The amount of the expected benefits determines the extent of migration flows. The higher the income level in the destination area in comparison to the earning in the home region, the lower the costs of migration, and/or the longer the remaining years in professional life, the higher the probability of migration. This implicates that there is a higher incentive to migrate for workers with less human capital if the expected income level is low. By contrast highly skilled workers are encouraged to migrate if the expected income is high. Otherwise they tend to stay because they can take advantage of their human capital in their home country as well (Massey et al., 1993, p. 456; Haug, 2000, p. 5f, 13f).

But neoclassical theory disregards international political and economic contexts and decisions as well as social boundaries. Furthermore the implicated assumptions of homogeneous professional abilities in countries of origin and destination areas as well as the assumed trend to global macro-economic equation are controversial.
2.1.3 New migration economy

The new migration economy approach also focuses on an economic factor: the income. But it also considers the social embeddedness of individuals in households. Individuals are interpreted as acting collectively. Hence the approach focuses on families and households. According to this approach households try to maximise the expected income and to minimise risks for their economic wealth. The job migration of a household member is a form of reassurance because the migrant is independent of local economic conditions of the household. Furthermore international migration and the associated money transfer from abroad can be used as capital for an increase in productivity of the household. Usually it is a matter of temporary migration. It is claimed that adjustment of wages does not stop international migration. Even if there is no strong incentive, households try to diversify their economic risk by migration of family members. Migration is seen as a risk lowering strategy (Haug, 2000, p. 7f).

2.1.4 Dual labour market theory

Neoclassical migration theory as well as new migration economy assume that migration is a result of rational decisions of individuals or families. In contrast the Dual labour market theory suggests that migration is an effect of political and socioeconomic constellations. The reasons for labour migration are not seen in a trend to a labour market equation but in the segmentation of the labour market. Advanced industrial societies develop a dual economy with a capital-intensive primary segment and a labour-intensive secondary segment. The latter is characterised by insecurity and low wages. Native workers usually do not have any motivation to accept these jobs, which also mean less prestige and low promotion prospects (Lebhart, 2002, p. 13f). Hence advanced economies demand foreign workers for the secondary segment. This causes migration (Haug, 2000, p. 3f; Lebhart, 2002, p. 13ff).

2.1.5 World system theory

This migration approach deals with the idea of the clash between capitalistic industrial- and developing nations. It is assumed that the origin of migration lies in institutional and sectoral disparities which are evoked by the integration of nations into the worldwide capitalist system. This approach divides the world into three zones: core, semi-periphery and periphery. To explain the patterns of migration the reciprocal dependency of these zones as well as direction and constitution of flows of capital and goods are analysed. It is presumed that international labour migration follows the international flows of capital and goods in the opposite direction. This intends that first of all migration is detectable in Global Cities, which attract migrants from the periphery and not industrialised societies.

Therefore migration is seen as a logic consequence of the globalisation of the economy which causes the emergence of the capitalistic market in developing countries. This implicates that international migration primarily appears between former colonial powers and its colonies because of already existing relations in economy, transport, administration, culture and language (Lebhart, 2002, p. 16ff; Haug, 2000, p. 4f; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 40f).


2.2 New theories of labour migration

The 1990s confronted the migration research with new migration forms which cannot be described as unidirectional processes with definite countries of origin and definite destination areas. The classical micro- and macro-analytic migration theories failed to apply to these forms. There was a missing link: the connection between individuals and society. New approaches in migration research pointing out the importance of social networks as the missing link were required.

2.2.1 Theory of migration systems

The theory of migration systems assumes that the intensive exchange of information, goods, services, capital, ideas and persons between specific countries causes a stable system. Migration is one of these exchange processes. Thereby several countries of emigration can be connected with one region of immigration, just like one emigration country can be characterised by migration flows to several destination areas (multi-polarity). Migration systems are variable social arrangements (formal and informal) including individuals and institutions of both countries. The participation of social ethnic networks, multinational firms, educational institutions or other corporations - as mediations between macrostructures and individuals as well as between the different countries - in shaping the migration system plays a crucial role. Therefore this approach concentrates on macro-, meso- and micro-structures. It considers the economic, political, social, demographical and historical context of migration systems and focuses on both ends of the migration flow, on disparities and interdependencies. But it does not say much about the genesis of migration systems.

In contrast to other theories the relevance of spatial proximity is denied. Instead it points out the influence of political and economic relations on migration systems. As political, economic and communication relations are adjusted by feedback and modulation mechanisms, migration systems, although stable, are not static but dynamic. The processes in and between countries change. New migration systems emerge, countries drop out or join a system, interdependencies transform and migration flows alter in shape (Haug, 2000, p. 17ff; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 44f; Lebhart, 2002, p. 29 ff; Fawcett, 1989, p. 671ff).

2.2.2 Theory of migrant networks

As seen the migration system approach points out the very relevance of ethnic networks built by migrants and their family and friends. In contrast to old micro- and macro-analytic approaches, new migration theories focus on the meso-level of migration. The social network approach also stresses the influence of social networks on migration. Migration networks shape social and spatial paths of migration, provide new migrants with information and resources\(^2\) and therefore facilitate their migration. In short, they lower the costs and risks of

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\(^2\) For example supporting finding a residence and a job or providing financial security.
migration. On the other hand they smooth the process of keeping in touch with the home region and influence the integration process of the new migrants into the host societies.

Therefore it is assumed that personal relationships which connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in the home countries and host societies increase the probability of international migration and can lead to chain migration and sustained migration flows. That means there is no strong correlation between migration flows and wage and employment disparities because of the positive effects of migrant networks. These networks develop an own dynamic which can hardly be regulated.

The effects of social networks on migration are not clear yet. Surely, social relationships influence the decision to migrate by providing information and support or the opposite. Strong social ties in the home countries can inhibit migration. Less social ties can promote the movement. Migrant networks can produce security but also dependency, liability, little integration in the host society and therefore less freedom. This could frighten people. Thus respective contexts have to be considered in order to correctly interpret the relationships between social networks and migration (Haug, 2000, p. 20ff; Lebhart, 2002, p. 20ff; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 42ff).

2.2.3 Theory of migration and social capital

The network perspective can be specified by the term social capital. As already mentioned, personal contacts to friends, relatives and compatriots facilitate migrants to find jobs and housing and can offer financial support. The motives for providing resources might vary. While some act simply by ethical reasons (value orientated) or feel a group identity and therefore act by solidarity (bounded solidarity); others act strategic (reciprocal transfer) or in awareness of their position in the group (status orientated) (Haug, 2000, p. 22ff; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 45f).

That means that besides the benefits of social capital there are also restrictions like conformity pressure, obligation to share and limitation of contact with other persons which do not belong to the social network. Making contacts outside of the community could be seen as an assault to the group identity and cause punishment. So individual getting ahead could be inhibited.

In consequence it depends on the community in which the migrant is situated and its openness if social capital is next to economic capital a beneficial element in the migration process.
2.2.4 Trans-national migration

Migration systems and processes have changed since the 1980s. They can be described as circular movements with specific social structures and mobile lifestyles. This new patterns are called trans-national migration as a special form of international migration. New forms of communities emerge, producing specific social spaces by the socio-cultural practice of trans-national migrants. These spaces are neither bounded in the home country of the migrants nor in the host society but between and therefore are interpreted as being trans-national social spaces.

“[…] trans-national social spaces are pluri-local frames of reference which structure everyday practices, social positions, employment trajectories and biographies, and human identities, and simultaneously exist above and beyond the social contexts of national societies” (Pries, 2001, p. 65).

Trans-national migration is characterised by spatial movements that can be nomadic and pluri-local, but these movements are not de-territorialised. This leads to hybrid identities and practices. Trans-national migrants can benefit from opportunities of their home countries as well as of their current domicile. They are able to create flexible strategies of sojourn. The possibility of gaining power in their country of origin by i.e. transferring economic capital to their country of origin and simultaneously gaining more power in the host society as political actors, as “voices for the minorities”, is a specific feature of trans-national migrants (Bürkner, 2000, p. 302).³

Trans-nationalism is explained by the process of globalisation and it links modern communication, transport and labour forms. But as Bürkner points out, there were migration forms in history which showed trans-national characteristics before globalisation began.⁴ Furthermore economic and socio-cultural processes of globalisation as well as processes of transformation on a national level appear to be not more than framing conditions for a collectivisation around an individual or a little group. The relevance of economy for the emergence of trans-national spaces is disregarded (Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 46f; Bürkner, 2005, p. 113-122; Haug, 2000, p. 16ff; Pries, 2007, p. 20-22).

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³ Glick Schiller et al. (1992) showed the phenomena of trans-nationalism in the case of the migration of workers from Central America to the US.
⁴ Bürkner refers to the early shaping of migration paths by ethnic communities in the USA at the beginning of the 20th century (Bürkner 2000, p. 302).
2.3 Theories of highly skilled migration

Besides old and new migration theories which try to explain labour migration in general (see 2.1. and 2.2.) there are new approaches which focus on migration of highly skilled workers in particular. Besides the concept of Brain Drain where movement of highly skilled is interpreted as unidirectional, other theories think this migration form as circular and oscillating and connect them with the new shaping of capitalism.

2.3.1 Brain drain

The brain drain approach normally is applied on migration of highly skilled workers between different countries. Country of origin and destination area are seen as clearly defined containers with separated social systems. The embeddedness of migration processes into flows of capital, goods, communication and information is only of marginal interest.

The concept of brain drain assumes a unidirectional and permanent migration between ‘more’ and ‘less’ developed countries. Again economic factors like the higher income level in the destination area are claimed to be the main reason for migration. Seen from the perspective of dependency theory developing regions are characterised by a loss of human capital while highly industrialised societies benefit. In consequence it is said that the emigration of highly skilled obstructs the economic progress in developing regions and as a result keeps them in economic dependence (Meusburger, 2008, p. 31; Meusburger, 2008, p. 51f, Pethe, 2006, p. 5f). But this approach does not consider that emigrated highly skilled workers might return to their home countries. This would be brain gain since highly skilled workers improved their qualifications abroad and therefore could push the development in their home countries. Instead of speaking about brain drain, it is more likely that there is brain circulation (Pethe, 2006, p. 9). We will now discuss the gradual shift in migration literature from ‘brain drain’ to ‘brain circulation’ and the possible negative and positive impacts on the countries of origin in some more detail.

In the social science literature, three approaches are prominent which discuss the mobility of the highly skilled professionals. In the 1960s, the issue of brain drain discussed the negative outcomes of the emigration of talent of third world countries to industrialised countries. Often graduates originating from developing countries took advantage from the large income differences and better working conditions in Western states (Schipulle 1973; Adams 1968). Although many European countries refused to give labour permits to third world graduates, the US became the favourite destination for this group of mobile highly skilled migrants. As a result, more than 40 percent of the highly skilled persons in all OECD countries who are resident outside their home country lives in the US. Although the brain drain perspective is

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5 It is also possible to use this concept for different regions in one country. This is the case when migration processes between the old West German and the newly-formed German states are focused. There are not two separated social systems but yet the different history causes different economic and social conditions.

6 Dependency Theory assumes a stratification of countries in an international system and resulting power and dependency relations between dominant societies and countries in a lower position. Here migration is seen as a specific form of interaction between states, which is caused by structural disparities in dependent societies and provides a benefit to dominant countries (Bürkner & Heller 2008, p. 39).
still present in the political arena, it lost its prominence. Firstly, the geographical pattern of mobility changed in the 1980s due to the increasing trans-nationalisation of the companies and the economy (Findlay, 1988; Salt, 1988; Findlay and Gould, 1989; Beaverstock, 1990; Findlay and Garrick, 1990). Secondly, researchers like Annalee Saxenian pointed out that the emigration of highly skilled can lead to a return migration of highly skilled after several decades, which has a positive impact on the economies of the developing countries. In her book ‘Silicon Valley’s new immigrant entrepreneurs’ (1999), she explained how India, Taiwan and China profited from the economic activities of their ‘Diaspora’. In her latest book ‘The New Argonauts’ (2006) she describes also the positive effects of international mobility of highly skilled migrants for the regional development. She has observed the impact of foreign talent and entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley in the last decades also pointing out that the openness to foreign creative talent is also one of the key factors for the success of Silicon Valley and in the home countries of the migrants. Saxenian proposes that the successful development of the ICT industry in Israel, Taiwan and to a lesser extent in China and India is caused by the mobile talent who stimulates innovation, investment and trade between the countries. The exchange of knowledge, she concludes, is that the foreign experts ‘welcome the openness, diversity and initiative that have built Silicon Valley’. The connection which is constructed by the mobile ICT engineers is the basis of the economic success of these industries in their home and host countries.

Thirdly, country and regions in industrialised countries have become aware that highly skilled home nationals are also increasingly mobile and migrate to foreign destinations. Some of the earlier mentioned studies, like the work of Beaverstock, address expatriate communities from advanced capitalist countries to other advanced capitalist countries or to rapidly developing countries, like the British communities in New York City and Singapore.

2.3.2 ‘Brain circulation’: Circular migration

Since the 1980s labour migration changed. As empirical studies showed (i.e. Wolter, 1997) an increasing movement of highly skilled workers has emerged. Often this migration is temporary and can be described as circulation between industrialised societies as well as a migration from ‘more’ to ‘less’ developed countries. Circular migration implicates the return of the migrants to their home regions after one or more migration steps and is linked to trans-nationalism (Vertovec, 2007, p. 3f). Even though the region of origin firstly suffers a brain drain by losing highly skilled workers there is also a brain gain by foreign highly skilled or a brain re-gain by returning highly skilled, who might have improved their qualities. So we could speak of brain exchange between the different regions (Schultz, 2008, p. 52f; Pethe, 2006, p. 7ff).

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7 It has to be pointed out that circular migration is not only a phenomenon which describes the movements of highly skilled. It also applies to less or unskilled workers (Smith & Guarnizo 1998, p. 18).
8 As Fassmann points out that the distinction between circular and trans-national migration is problematic, if migrants keep up their social and functional relations to their home society on a large scale (Fassmann 2008, p. 23).
This new form of migration of highly skilled is attributed to internationalisation and economic interdependences. Therefore the perspective of research focuses primarily on the meso-level like firms and institutions. In the 1980s, the international financial market was deregulated and many industrial producers moved their production units outside their home markets. The world economy began to internationalise. Many trans-national production and service companies developed which lead to the ‘brain exchange’ of highly skilled professionals within these large international organisations. The expertise of the highly skilled employees was needed to control and supervise the new sales offices, production units and bank branches abroad (Boyle et al. 1994, Findlay 1995). These so called expats were typically seconded to a foreign branch for two to five years. Although they were privileged compared to those professionals who came from third world countries a decade earlier, and they were compensated for their international assignment with relocation service and a salary above the home level, the seconded professionals had little choice to select their country of destination. They are part of the international stream of investments and trade which was allocated due to the outcomes of international investment opportunities. I.e. the expats accompanied the foreign international direct investments streams and, in the case of newly erected production units, the trade of foreign goods and services. Wolter (1997) showed the interrelation between investment and international migration for the case of the European Union in the 1980s.

Beaverstock, who investigated the mobility of these professionals in the financial service sectors over two decades, points out that the geography of their mobility is often related to the geography of the global cities (Beaverstock 1994, 1996, 2002). Global cities are metropolitan regions with a large concentration of high range services and international headquarters which command and control international investment streams (cf. Friedman 1986; Sassen 1996). The Globalisation and World Cities Research Network in Loughborough mapped out the position of cities in this international urban system by looking at the connectivity of the international organisation in the urban regions (www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc). In addition to the circular movement within the industrialised countries, Beaverstock and others also describe a movement from the North to the South. Compared to the previous mobility which was described as brain drain, the brain exchange connected industrialised countries more strongly or describes mobility from industrialised countries to less industrialised countries. Due to its strong economic embeddedness, the brain exchange is influenced by economic circles with a large increase of international mobility in the period of economic upturn and a decrease of international migration in the period of the economic downturn.

The brain exchange perspective was criticised recently for approaching the international migration of the highly skilled mainly from an economic perspective and neglecting the agency of the individuals (Scott 2006). Before the role of the individual migrants will be discussed below, it should be mentioned that the economy has also changed in the last decade, and the organisation has also influence on intra-company mobility of employees. Large vertically integrated companies were typical for the Fordist age. These differentiated units did not only comprise various production and administrative units, they also began to allocate each function at the most suitable location. Due to the internationalisation of their organisations, highly skilled migrants were seconded between the different parts of the companies. Typically they were sent from the head quarter to peripheral locations. Due to the reorganisation of trans-national companies in post-fordism (Cormode, 1994; Koser and Salt,
1997; Wolter, 1999), hierarchies were reduced and activities were outsourced. Not only is the size of the companies reduced, but also the expensive international career opportunities for employees. The companies in the creative knowledge industries tend to be very small. A large share has less than 5 employees. On the one hand, this particular structure of the sector makes it less likely that intra-company mobility is a common feature in the creative knowledge sectors. On the other hand, the technological progress enabled small actors to be mobile internationally, because the international communication and transport become cheaper and easily available. Instead of being seconded within a large company, it appears to be more likely that highly skilled individual change between small and medium companies now on their own steam.

2.4 Florida’s conception of the international mobile creative class

“Regional economic growth is powered by creative people, who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant and open to new ideas”, writes Richard Florida in his book “The rise of the creative class” (Florida, 2002). The attractiveness of cities, its quality of life and its diversity of cities are pivotal for the future development of cities. A good people climate will draw new creative people to those places and will lever the economic success of regions. Using this imagination Florida describes conditions which are strongly related to the inward mobility of creative talent as a precondition and an effect for regional economic success of metropolitan regions. Diversity which is described as heterogeneity in terms of ethnicity, sexuality and lifestyles is seen as a precondition for the inflow of new talent. People from various backgrounds will be attracted to these spaces which will again lead to an even larger diversity of people. In the first texts, Florida does not distinguish between national or international migrants, but his later book ‘The flight of the creative class’ uses examples which indicate that he does not only have national migration, but also international migration in mind.

Florida mainly focuses on the ability of places to attract foreign creative, when he writes: “Today, the terms of competition revolve around a central axis: a nation’s ability to mobilise, attract, and retain human creative talent”. The attractiveness of regions is important, because the economic success will increase with the inflow of talent. This is the most important formula which Florida uses. A detailed description in which ways foreign migrants contribute to the host economy is difficult to decipher in his work. Several hints can be found: foreign creative workers “help build our scientific enterprises” (p. 95), account for “a disproportionate share of most influential scientists” (p. 101), relieve the “looming talent shortage” (p. 103), “take American ideas and American relationships back home” (p. 110) and contribute to the entertainment industry (p. 125).

Florida has a very broad conception of the creative class which comprises 30 percent of the American work force. Again it is unclear in which aspects the mobility of the creative class is different from other highly skilled persons. But not only Florida lacks a clear definition of what is meant by the mobility of the highly skilled. Scholars who want to investigate the international mobility of the highly skilled see themselves facing a jungle of definitions. The definition of their qualification and their migrant status can vary enormously. For instance, the term ‘highly skilled’ can indicate a formal educational credential, but ‘skill’ can also be
defined as the ability to solve certain task whether those ability was acquired with a ‘learning by doing’-approach or a formal education. The status as migrant can be related to certain forms of work permits for foreign employees, the status as a seconded employee within an international companies or simply mean non-national. In addition to that, Florida gives an account about the creative class which does not necessarily mean that other occupations such as physicians are not internationally mobile (cf. OECD, 2002), whereas other creative knowledge workers are certainly limited to perform their activity in different countries. One prominent example is lawyers whose main professional references are national laws. International law firms have only developed recently and mostly they are limited to certain field like international mergers and acquisitions. Although differences between the creative knowledge occupations seem to exist, their scope is still unclear and also how do they contribute to the different national economies?

Florida’s ideas might be one of the most prominent accounts of social scientists which emphasise the importance of the international migration for regional economies. In the political arena, the issue has been more strongly articulated since the labour shortages in several sectors appeared in industrialised countries (OECD). Since the creation of a common market, the individual member of the countries of the European Union received the right to move freely within the common space even earlier. At the time, the creation of a common space was not so much motivated by the attraction of foreign talent, but by the reduction of economic disparities between the various regions of the member states. Although several limitations exist, for examples for citizens of the new European member states, the member states and the European commission try to reduce the barriers, introduce a common migration policy and even support the mobility of certain groups actively. The Lisbon agenda, the agreement of a common migration policy in Tampere and the establishment of the student exchange programmes such as Socrates and Erasmus are examples which aim to promote the international mobility within Europe. The goal is to increase the competitiveness of the member states of the European Union by stimulating their ability for innovation and knowledge transfer. In other political arenas, other motivations to support the international mobility of highly skilled professionals are articulated. For example, on a global level, governments find mechanism to deregulate short term international mobility which is related to the international trade of goods and services (OECD, WTO). Apart from the attraction of talent, the reduction of disparities, the decrease of labour shortage, the stimulation of innovativeness and the lubrication of economic globalisation, various national statistical offices in central and eastern Europe point at the continuous decrease of their work force in the coming five decades. The political initiatives in Europe and the US are increasingly perceived as an international ‘war for talent’. Florida addresses in his recent book the increasing danger that the US American cities loose this ability to attract and to retain foreign talent. European countries are becoming increasingly successful competitors for creative talent, in his view.

All accounts use imaginations of international migrations which expect positive outcomes. This is a recent development. Since the oil crisis in the early 1970s, immigration was stopped in most European states, because the incoming labour was seen as a competitor for the home nationals. In many countries only transferees of trans-national companies were successfully able to apply for a labour permit. Although those negative threats are less articulated in the
public now, the mechanism of the international migration of highly skilled are not fully analysed. Who is internationally mobile? Why are trans-national migrations engaged in certain industries? How long do they typically stay? What effects does their presence have on the region, in particular on the economy and the housing market? Which cities and regions are attractive and what are the drivers behind their success?

2.5 The upcoming paradigm

The firm related perspective has been central in the study of international migration of the highly skilled, because many researchers assumed that this migration flow was largely demand driven. Apart from labour migration, other motives exist. Personal motives like family unification and marriage are the most prominent. Another important factor is education. But asylum seekers and refugees start a new life in other countries, too. In addition to that, an increasing number of cases are reported, when highly skilled migrants decide to live in a country because of the interesting cultural environment and the offered amenities as it was described by Florida too. Then, immigrants settle in the country first, and look for work later. In other words, the variety of reasons to settle in a certain country might be larger than the reasons which are found in the immigration legacy of the country in question.

In the Netherlands, for example, about one third of the immigrants entered the country due to employment related reasons, another third because of family related reasons and one sixth started with their studies in the Netherlands. Of course, these numbers needed to be treated with caution, because they are strongly related to the immigration categories which exist in the Dutch law. Firstly, immigrants use and tend to be classified in categories which gives them the best access to the host country. Research (Kanjanapan 1995) shows that immigrants tend to switch between the categories to a large extent. Secondly, important motives such as large differences in the house prices in border regions which are not relevant in the legal framework are not mentioned in the legal framework.

The heterogeneity of expats increases. Apart from the seconded transferees who work in large companies, an increasing share comes on their own steam. Due to the removal of immigration barriers for labour migration within the EU and the stronger support of student mobility in the EU, but also internationally, the socio-economic background and the motives of trans-national migrants diversify (Conradson and Latham, 2005; Scott, 2006a; Scott, 2006b). According to Scott, the group of expats is diversified. Young professionals who come in their early career or stay on as graduates, international Bohemians who enjoy the cultural amenities and assimilation-settlers who marry a partner in the host country are new groups that have not gained enough attention. An overview of the nationality of foreign highly skilled immigrants in the Netherlands shows that the immigration of highly skilled persons cannot always be related to economic linkages between the countries. Nearly 50 percent of the highly skilled foreign nationals who lived 2000 in the Netherlands come from countries which either had strong colonial ties to the Netherlands such as Indonesia or Suriname, or were the recruiting countries of the former guest workers such as Turkey and Morocco or where the home countries of a larger highly skilled refugee population such as Iraq, Iran or Afghanistan. Less than one third of the foreign highly skilled in the Netherlands, however, derive from Western
OECD countries. Using the nationality as an indicator of the migration motivation is, of course, problematic too. Firstly, this approach assumes that persons with a similar nationality share the same motive. Secondly, these immigrants are formally highly educated, but it is unclear, if they can use their educational credentials in their job. In addition to that, many foreign nationals are born in the Netherlands, although they hold a foreign passport. They cannot be considered as migrants.

The new heterogeneity of the skilled migrants leads also to a larger diversity of residential choice between the foreign highly skilled. The former orientation on the higher segments of the housing market in the suburban areas fades in favour of the increasingly popular and therewith more expensive inner city on the one hand, and lower priced flats on the other. Due to the strong urban orientation of creative workers, the overall preference for inner city location might also be emphasised by foreign creative workers. Furthermore, the duration of the stay appears to change to. Expats which typically live between two to five years abroad are accompanied by trans-national migrants who settle for a longer time frame or even permanent in the foreign country. In addition to that, the possibilities to access the labour market of creative knowledge workers might also vary with their demographic background. Kibbelaar (2007) points out that foreign migrants who are not part of the classic expat population in the Netherlands often struggle to find positions in the creative knowledge industries on the one hand. On the other hand, they are less likely to choose a creative knowledge profession, because they consider those occupations as less prestigious and economically less rewarding.

Therefore, an analysis which identifies how many persons work in the creative knowledge economy and are of foreign descent might give a more accurate number about the real inflow foreign creative knowledge workers than an approach which only identifies the formal education of immigrants. A comparison between the results of both approaches identifies the scope of the brain waste of immigrant human capital, because it will identify the scope of access of foreign highly qualified workers to these industries.

2.6 Settling and staying: highly skilled migrants in the host society

While the trans-national mobility of highly skilled migrants receives increasing interest and attention from academic researchers and policy-makers, much less attention has been given so far to their experiences after their move and their preferences in terms of residence, amenities and relations with the host society. Integration in the host society, for example, is generally hardly considered a problem since most highly skilled migrants are expected to stay a few years at most and since they are expected to have a well-paid job. Another generalizing assumption often made is that highly skilled migrants most often come from societies that are very close to the host society in terms of norms, values and behaviour, so they would hardly have adaptation problems. These assumptions might apply to most expatriates, but as we have seen in the sections above and will see again in our empirical analysis, this group is actually only a small part of the highly skilled migrants coming to and travelling within Europe. Highly skilled migrants quite often stay for more than a few years, they do not always come with the guarantee of a job, their job is not always well-paid, and they also come from non-
Western developing countries. While this heterogeneity in the broad category of highly skilled migrants is gradually acknowledged, we hardly find evidence of this in the international academic debate so far. As far as matters of settling and staying of highly skilled migrants are discussed, mostly the focus is strongly on the sub-category of expatriates, and most attention is given to the housing and real estate market.

Expatriates are often merely seen as affluent corporate movers that can rely on relocation services. Because of this view, they are often discussed in terms of dualisation of world cities. Several studies (Freund, 1998; Glebe, 1986; White, 1998; White and Hurdley, 2003) show that immigrants from OECD countries differ in their housing preferences strongly from other, often lower skilled migrant population. The residential pattern is often very similar to home nationals with the same socio-economic status. “[T]he settlement of migrants from North America, Australasia and other parts of Europe has tended to occur most strongly in those parts of London with the highest occupational status”, observes White. This pattern varies between different OECD nationals. Japanese corporate transferees and their families show the strongest segregation of all national groups in London, in Düsseldorf and Frankfurt/Main. They live more often in suburban locations, and share less often similar housing patterns with similar status groups. The high concentration is often ascribed to the activities of relocation services and Japanese real estate agencies, the important of public transport access to work, security of the residential environment, quality of the dwelling (cleanliness of kitchen) and proximity to school and other community institutions (Glebe, 1986; Glebe, 1997; White, 1998; White and Hurdley, 2003). In particular the proximity to schools is often stated as a pivotal point for all OECD nationals too, although this view is also contested. Generally, expatriates rent more often than home nationals due to their temporary status, although the rental sector is with some 10 percent of the dwellings relatively small in some of the investigated cities such as London. Rarely the flats of the transferees are owned by their companies. Instead White and Hurdley observe that other ethnic entrepreneurs who hold these flats as property investment let these high-priced dwellings to Japanese in London. This untypical demand in the rented sector leads to a rise of rent prices in those residential neighbourhoods. A similar connection between the rise of housing prices and immigration is described for Vancouver. This is properly the most prominent and extreme example which illustrates how activities of affluent immigrants lead to a significant increase of housing prices (Brosseau et al., 1996; Hiebert, 2000, 31ff; Ley and Tutchener, 2001; Olds, 1998; Olds and Yeung, 1999). Because of the transfer of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic China, wealthy Chinese immigrants and entrepreneurs fled to Canada. They acquired the Canadian citizenship by doing large investments. Often they spent large amounts of money in the regional housing market and transformed the suburban residential landscape, because they constructed houses which were conceived as monster-houses by the older population of English descent. Due to their acquisition of large suburban properties the prices in the higher housing market segment rose. In addition, entrepreneurs built malls and developed larger inner city housing projects (Ley and Tutchener, 2001; Olds, 1998; Olds, 2001).

The examples from London and Vancouver, however, show how the effects are firstly related to global flows which are linked to each city. Secondly, they show that the aims of the incoming educated population from the industrialised countries and the effects of their inflow can vary considerably. Recently, Scott underlined that an increasing heterogeneity of highly
skilled immigrants stream into European cities. Apart from the typical expatriate population, overstaying students, family migrants and international bohemians live in the metropolitan regions. Also Conradson and Latham point at the ‘middeling trans-nationalism’ in large European cities such as London which comprises an increasing number of mobile middle class individuals. Compared with the typical expat population, the residential preferences differ. They are more oriented towards inner city neighbourhoods. Due to their lower income, they are not able to afford a rented dwelling in the upper housing segments. Since they travel more often individually, they can also not rely on relocation services to find accommodation. On contrary, they are more likely to compete with the local middle class. In other words, the chances of trans-national migrants and expats to access the labour market and the effects of their presence are as much related to their socio-demographic background as to the local and national regulations.
3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ITALY AND IN MILAN METROPOLITAN AREA

As seen in the theoretical presentation, territories (cities, regions, nations) can be attractive for certain kinds of migrants, either talented workers, or low skilled ones. Increasingly, the globalisation and internationalisation forces are shaping the environment where people are moving. Migrants choose where to settle (or simply go) according to a number of factors, and the economic power of territory is surely one of the main ones. In the following pages the economic development and situation of Italy in general and Milan in particular will be presented, focusing on the internationalisation of the economies, and linking it with migration flows in the next chapters.

Data about the economic performances of Italy present the country as poorly innovative and even less international. Compared to the rest of the European and Western countries, the nation is not as competitive as many other countries are, and it suffers of a local mentality, poorly financed private and public research, and a heavy phenomenon of brain-drain. On the contrary, although still suffering from a delay in the international arena, the Milan Metropolitan Area can be considered a global pole, hosting well developed research activities and with a high degree of internationalisation. Many observers claim that the region is slowed down by the Italian bureaucracy and by national laws which impede the real innovative push to development.

3.1 Innovation and internationalisation in Italy

The transition from an industrial to a post industrial economy in Italy has fostered the creation of new productive sectors and the rise of new professions.

One of the major consequences of the post-fordist transition has been the emergence, in recent years, of the so-called creative and knowledge economy. This industry includes both services and industrial sectors, whose products (material or immaterial ones) are distinguishable for being highly creative, based on knowledge, and strongly innovative. From law to software, from accountancy to fashion design, the sectors in the creative and knowledge economy are organised in five groups:

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1 As the research is performed within the ACRE project, the definition used is the same as the larger project. For more information and discussion, visit the ACRE website: http://acre.socsci.uva.nl/
Referring to this definition, in 2001 the creative and knowledge economy in Italy employed more than 4.5 millions workers in 1.4 millions local units\(^2\). The industry constitutes more than 23 percent of total employment.

So far in Italy the creative sub-sector workers are more than 56 percent of the creative-knowledge workers, followed by employees in the law sector (16 percent) and the financial service (13 percent), while the ICT industry employs about 10 percent of the people working in the cultural economy; finally workers in research and development, together with higher education sector, correspond to 4 percent of the employees in the creative knowledge economy in Italy.

On the one hand Italy is facing the post-fordism transition and the development of the creative and knowledge economy, on the other, Italian economy is still suffering from a low degree of innovation and internationalisation. The attractiveness of Italy for talented foreigners is with no doubt linked to this general and deep delay of the economy, as shown in the report.

### 3.1.1 Innovation and education

Fondazione Rosselli, which every year carries out a comparative research about innovation in Italy, placing the country within the international scenario, ranks Italy in 16\(^{th}\) place in terms of innovation\(^3\), out of 19 nations\(^4\). Italy, therefore, is labelled as being scarcely innovative and still far (in terms of Innovation Index value) from the category of “moderately innovative”.

The report by Fondazione Rosselli shows that the country is in a particularly bad situation with respect to university education, which influences this data considerably. Accordingly, only 13 percent of the population aged between 25 and 64 have a university degree, a fairly distant percentage from those observed in the majority of industrialised countries, three times less than the USA (39 percent) and equivalent to approximately half of the Spanish (28

\(^2\) Data from Census industry and services – ISTAT 2001

\(^3\) The index is a cumulative index based on weighted average of different indicators, ranging from the number of patents, to the rate of highly educated people, from the rate of GDP devoted to research to the quality of infrastructures. (For more information http://www.fondazioneroscelli.it)

\(^4\) The nations taken into account in the research were (from the most innovative, to the least): Sweden, Finland, Denmark, USA, UK, Holland, Japan, Belgium, Canada, Norway, Germany, Austria, France, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Russia.
percent) and French (26 percent) rates. These proportions are confirmed even when the younger generation is considered separately (25-34 years old).

**Graph 3.1 Percentage of people with an advanced educational level**

![Graph 3.1 Percentage of people with an advanced educational level](image)

*Source: Fondazione Rosselli (2008)*

Despite this backward situation in the education level of the Italian population, in recent years the percentage of public investment in training (from primary school to university) in the GDP has been further reduced, going from a maximum of 5.1 percent reached in 2006, to 4.7 percent of today's GDP\(^5\). The result of the lack in financial support, is the worst score that Italy shows as far as the presence of researchers within the workforce is concerned: only 3.4 workers every thousand ones are employed as researchers, while in Spain they are almost 6, in France more than 8 and in the USA more than 9.

**Graph 3.2 Number of researchers every 1000 workers**

![Graph 3.2 Number of researchers every 1000 workers](image)

*Source: Fondazione Rosselli (2008)*

\(^5\) See table 3.1A in the Appendix
Furthermore, when analysing the break-down of public funding in education for training cycles according to the data of Eurostat 2007, Italy continues to devote less than half of its own resources (47 percent to secondary education, far lesser than countries like France, UK and Germany. But the main difference between the Italian system and other countries’, is the amount of resources dedicated to the university sector in Italy, equal to only 17 percent of total resources versus 25 percent in Germany, 24 percent in the USA and 21 percent in France.

Italian universities also show the lower presence of foreign students (only 2 percent) and a worrying and unceasing brain drain effect. This can have a dramatic influence towards Italy’s attractiveness for foreign talent, since universities are one of the main gates for talented expatriates to move to a foreign country. According to an estimate (IMD quoted by Fondazione Rosselli 2008) about the occurrence of the brain drain phenomenon, this year Italy is second only to Russia.

Similar results have been reached also looking at the urban level, by a research carried out in 2005 by R. Florida and I. Tinagli (Florida and Tinagli 2005), who compared different countries by their main cities’ performances. The research shows that Italian cities rank in one of the last positions according to a cumulative index based on percentage composition of talented professions, share of highly educated inhabitants (with laurea or master degree) and percentage of researchers on labour force. The same can be said about the higher education system in the Italian cities: poor investments, few foreign professors and a low number of foreign students cause Italian cities to fall to the last positions of the international classification in this research (ibid.)

3.1.2 The internationalisation of Italian economy

As shown in this report and in past works (Mingione at al. 2008a), the country seems to be in a rather contradictory situation as far as the global economy is concerned. Actually, although mature and in a good international position with regards to the creative and knowledge economy, Italy seems to be disregarded by the international finance, and data show that foreign investors do not fully trust Italian economy (OECD 2008).

First of all, it suffers from a very low level of Foreign Direct Investments compared to other OECD countries. As shown in the following graph (graph 3.3), the stocks of FDI, both directed to other countries (which are about 16 percent of the GDP) and coming from foreign countries (12.7 percent of the GDP) are rather scarce: among European countries only Greece performs worse than Italy, which ranks 30th out of 34 countries, even when only incoming FDI are considered.
Similarly, the share of the Italian employment in manufacturing and services sectors due to foreign companies in the country is rather low, and it accounts for 12.4 percent of the workforce in the manufacturing sectors and 6.1 percent in the service sectors.

Source: OECD Fact book 2008: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics
On the other hand, the country is ranked in a good position as far as the trade balance between exports and imports is concerned. In particular, Italy is rather well positioned in the export of some goods: textile, leather and apparel goods, food and also ICT equipment, as shown in the table and graph below (OECD 2008).

**Table 3.1 Trade balance: Exports of goods minus imports of good**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Trade balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>-805,7706989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>-135,4929792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>-96,42151436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>-43,28542038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>-39,2666407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>-37,65573399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>-37,37984437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>-22,01073836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU15 total</td>
<td>-18,22521588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>-14,25219922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>-13,25136597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>-10,51128438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>-7,521995654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Italy</strong></td>
<td><strong>-6,58165023</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>-5,117545056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>-3,784780472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>-3,783915667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>-2,171000644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>-1,596757469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>-1,57704447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>-0,921928818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>0,831610355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>5,872420359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>7,272928869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>8,409273967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>16,77244935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>20,65238042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>22,88134583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>36,17287228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>38,04967481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>38,48759509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>42,42581162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>46,65941498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>85,7459145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>103,8574047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>137,5143618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>200,2390214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Graph 3.5 Exports of ICT equipment (Million US dollars, 2006)**

3.2 Focus on Milan: A global city… in spite of everything!

The city of Milan is the core of one of the richest Italian regions and the first one in terms of absolute values of employees in the creative and knowledge economy. The industrial legacy of the Milanese Metropolitan Region has been radically transformed in the post-fordism era, but its heritage is still visible in its strong industrial and economical power. In particular, Milan's productive system is in transformation, with regard to both the kind of activities and, above all, the kind of occupations. The transformation of the Milanese area is in fact in line with the principal post-fordist transformations that are occurring in the main European capitals: crisis in the heavy manufacturing division, and growth in technical jobs with high intellectual content.

The Milanese economic system is gearing towards the development of innovative and technologically advanced activities, for which it finds a labour force and a good market, both nationally and internationally.

In the metropolitan area 553,969 workers are employed in 130,022 local units. 31 percent of the working population and 34 percent of the local units are employed in the creative knowledge sector; more than 9 percent of the Italian employees converge in this area.

Milan's economy is transforming following a model typical of contemporary economies. According to this model, activities that are innovative and have a high level of technological and intellectual content are increased and strengthened, as we can see for the chemical activities in the manufacturing sectors, or for the information and research industries in services. Milan proves to be the technological leader of the Italian transformation (OECD 2006). In fact, Milan's productivity is 4.3 percent higher than that of the other 78 metropolitan regions observed by the OECD. That is due to the region's specialisation in sectors with an extra high value: high-tech sectors and so called knowledge intensive activities (OECD 2006: 32). At least 30 percent of manufacturing activities are of medium or high technological level (20 percent and 10 percent respectively). This data are more interesting if compared to Italy as a whole, where medium or high level activities are less than 20 per cent. The Milan Metropolitan Region alone hosts at least 12 percent of Italian businesses with a high level of technology, and, in particular, with a high specialisation in pharmaceuticals (33 percent of Italian pharmaceuticals). As far as services are concerned, the situation is very similar: almost 11 percent of Italian services classified as knowledge intensive are located within the Region (OECD 2006). This data also reflects the high position of the Milan Metropolitan Region among Italian cities as far as educational level and number of researchers are concerned (Florida and Tinagli 2005).

As for the creative and knowledge economy, about 12 percent of the employees from these sectors are concentrated in the city. Specifically, the Milanese economy employs 19 percent of the Italian working population in the ICT sub-sector, 15 percent in the finance and in the law sector, and between 8 percent and 9 percent in the other industries.

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1 For more information see Mingione et al. 2008a
The importance of the creative and knowledge sector for the Milan Metropolitan Region’s economy stimulated in 2007 the Milanese Chamber of Commerce to carry out a research aimed to assess whether or not firms are expanding, and whether the local labour force (the focus is both the Province of Milan and Lombardy) has the qualities to fulfil the needs of the creative and knowledge economy. The data were used from the Sistema Excelsior (Unioncamere), which regularly collects data about firms’ recruitment estimates.

First of all, the forecasts show a slightly negative trend, due especially to big firms which plan to reduce their employees; nevertheless the small and medium firms (those on which the regional economic system is actually based) show a positive balance between entries and expulsions. As far as sector performances are concerned, the service sectors estimates in general a little growth, while the manufacture industry is planning a slight decline in the number of employees.

Concerning the kind of professionals employed, the most required are the high-level professionals (managers, intellectual or specialised employees), which account for 60 percent of the total planned recruitment. This data is particularly interesting if compared to the larger territory of Lombardy (the administrative region), where high-level professions are only 35.8 percent of the planned new employees. Even more important, the educational level of the planned employment in the creative sector seems to be particularly relevant: in the Province of Milan the planned employees in all sectors are composed of around 20 percent of people with a high degree (laurea or more); in the creative sector the share is more than doubled with little more than 40 percent, and the share is even higher (50 percent) if only the service sectors in the creative economy are considered (see table 3.2A in Appendix)

The labour market is therefore vibrant and innovative, looking for highly prepared workers. Actually, this reflects the high competition that is present in the global market in this kind of economy, and firms must be always at the edge in order to be truly competitive internationally.

If on the one hand the creative industry seems to plan a weak expansion and to look for highly educated and talented employees, on the other two main problems emerge from the workforce perspective. First of all, very often, firms claim that the educational background is not enough to prepare people for specialised jobs and they frequently have to organise refresher courses or specialisation courses for newly recruited people. On a previous ACRE work (Mingione 2009), the same problem had raised also through qualitative interviews with managers. This links to the second problem, which is the difficulty in finding the adequate person to insert in a given job, which emphasises a discrepancy between the educational system and the labour market. The problem is more present in the manufacturing sectors, in particular within the design sector, where highly specialised people are required.

Table 3.2 shows different reasons for why firms have difficulties in hiring the right person. 46 percent of all the problems related to the creative sectors in the Province of Milan, concern the

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2 In this research the focus has been on what they call Industry (fashion, textile, leather production; furniture production and wood processing; jewellery; press and related activities; advanced manufacture industry) and Services (research and development; consultancy; architecture and engineering; advertise; media and television)
lack of adequate education and experience of the labour force, followed by a shortage of professional figures. Other issues, such as scarce economic incentives or lack of educational structures, seem not to affect the creative sectors as much. Comparing the situation of the creative sectors with that of all sectors in the province of Milan and within the region, it’s noticeable that the creative sector requires very specialised people, because of the above mentioned need to be constantly competitive on the market.

Table 3.2 Reasons why firms have difficulties in hiring the right person in creative sectors of employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons of the recruitment difficulty</th>
<th>Creative sectors (Province of Milan)</th>
<th>All sectors (Province of Milan)</th>
<th>All sectors (Lombardy)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of qualification</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of educational institutions</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of professional figure</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient economic motivations</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The offered job requires tournaments/night/holidays</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Unioncamere- Labour Ministry, Sistema Informativo Excelsior, 2007

In some cases the search for such highly qualified professionals is carried out abroad: in the case of the fashion industry, for instance, there are many connections with English Fashion schools, and many designers are called from those schools to Milan right after graduation (d’Ovidio 2008). For foreign fashion designers coming in Italy has many advantages, besides that of having a job: learning from the precious craft-ability, which is typical of the Milanese fashion industry, working for an established and world-wide known fashion maison, being integrated into an international fashion system and so on. The fashion houses, on their side, need sometimes a “breath of fresh air”, and they tend to look for very innovative young designers who have been taught to be creative, such as those coming from England.

The internationalisation of a territory’s economy is a crucial elements in the attraction of talented workers, on this regard, despite the low performances of the Italian economy, the Milan Metropolitan Area performs very well internationally, although it is not able to attract a large amount of highly skilled foreigners. Many indicators agree when showing that the city’s economy has a good position in the global economy. Global network junction, gatekeeper, and many other definitions for the city tell us that Milan is well connected with other international cities, and that it also connects Italy with the rest of the world.

Milan has a mature international market, with export values of more than 35 billion euro, and import values of more than 66 billion, and where all the most relevant international economies exchange with the local economy. In terms of the service sector, around 30 percent of all the internationally traded services are exchanged in Milan, and this is growing both in import and in export trading (CCIA Milano 2006).

More than 40 percent of the Italian headquarters of foreign enterprises are located in Milan, and this share is larger if North American (47 percent) or Asian (51 percent) headquarters are
considered (ibid.). 35,000 firms are also located in the Region and are organised in networks which constitute 20 percent of the Italian firms-network. They produce about 80 percent of the Region’s total added value (Senn in Magatti et al. 2005).

These two indicators reflect the importance of the city as an international gateway for the Italian economy: Milan is the main actor in the Italian economy, and a place where one must be in order to enter the Italian market.

In the ranking of cities in the international economy, Milan is very well positioned: it is within the first 50 global cities which attract a large number of international investment projects, and the only Italian city to enter this ranking, where it occupies the 31\textsuperscript{st} position, and is placed 13\textsuperscript{th} within the European cities (see table 3.3A in the Appendix).

Finally, Milan has been positioned at a very high level in the well-known research performed by Taylor (2004). Milan, as it has been observed, has a high connectivity in strategic sectors, such as finance, advertising and consulting and has a very high networking power. In the ranking of cities according to connectivity, Taylor places Milan at the 8\textsuperscript{th} level, just after the very global cities. In his research the main engine of the economy are cities’ (and not nations’) connectivity, and networks: they are built through services enterprises (advertising agencies, law and finance consultants, assurance companies,...) that constitute the economic importance of Milan (see graph 3.6 below).

Graph 3.6 Cities and Globalisation

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Graph3.6.png}
\end{center}

\textit{Source: Taylor 2004}
Milan has a medium position if the attractive power of the city for foreign service enterprises is considered, ranking as Madrid, Brussels and Amsterdam in Europe.

Therefore, Milan has the capabilities to be the gatekeeper for Italy in the international network, but for many authors (Ciborra in Magatti et al. 2005) the real potentials are not completely developed yet: specific and integrated policies at both national and local levels should be implemented in order to build the real economic power of Milan and Italy as a whole.

In the following section (chapter 4 and 5) a specific discussion focuses on the attraction power of Italy and Milan for foreigners. As we will see, the vast majority of foreigners are low skilled, coming from developing countries, although there are interesting data regarding highly skilled immigrants.
4 MIGRATION TO ITALY

4.1 Migration flows in Italy

Migration in Italy is a pretty recent phenomenon, which is going to transform the whole society radically. Foreigners are to be seen as a resource for Italy. In fact, the current demographic transition is transforming Italy in one of the oldest countries in the world, while the market, in order to produce wealth, needs continuous injections in the workforce. Immigrants are a young population: 80 percent of them are less than 45 years old, while only very few of them are above the age of 55. What's more, the fertility rate of immigrant women is capable of ensuring the replacement of the population (1.26 children on average).

Assessing the weight of migrants or foreigners in Italy can be difficult. Data often do not match because of the high number of illegal immigrants and because of the long time (even more than one year) that can be required in order to regularise one’s position.

Moreover, and even more important in the light of the topic of this report, counting the numbers of highly skilled foreign workers can be particularly tricky because of their status: many of them actually do not take up residency in Italy. Often they are self-employed and work in collaboration with Italian firms, or they create special contracts that let them work in Italy keeping their nationality. Besides they are relatively a small number, especially if compared to low skilled migrants, and no specific inquiries are organised in order to assess their weight in Italy. Therefore, the vast majority of available data concerns permanent immigrants (who are in general medium-low skilled workers), although more data (mostly about educational level) will be taken into account in the second part of the chapter.

In 2006 in Italy foreigners were between 3,800,000 and 4,000,000 out of a total population of 59,619,290, with an impact of 6.7 percent (slightly above the average in the EU, 6 percent).

The biggest community, which has doubled in two years, is the Romanian one (625,000 residents and, according to estimates, almost one million present), followed by the Albanese (402,000) and the Moroccan community (366,000); slightly above and slightly below 150 thousand people are placed, respectively, the Chinese and Ukrainian communities. Resident foreigners from Developing Countries in 2006 account for 90 percent of the total number of foreigners. A very recent aspect of immigration in Italy is the tendency of foreigners to settle down and to start considering living in Italy permanently, or at least for a long period of time. This aspect is going to change more in depth the Italian social structure and its economic asset. Many sources emphasise the immigrants’ tendency towards stability, which can be shown by various indicators. The growing investment in real estate purchasing is also a strong

1 If not specified, data source is ISTAT – Italian Statistical Bureau
2 For a definition of Developing Countries see footnote 4 in chapter 1
indicator of stability. In Italy home ownership is spread all over the country and eight out of ten Italians are house owners, while only 1 out of 10 immigrants own his or her own home. The gap is continuously decreasing though: in 2007 purchases made by immigrants were 120,000. Also, with respect to mixed marriages, in 2006 one in ten marriages was between an Italian and a foreigner (24,020 out of 245,992 marriages), which was twice the number of marriages between foreigners (10,376). In nine regions in the north of Italy the number of mixed marriages reaches 25 percent of the total number of marriages. Mixed couples that last in time are evidence of a very promising reality of cultural exchange. Linked to this is the aspect of settlement, and the growing weight of minors of second generations.

The acquisition of the Italian citizenship is becoming more and more essential for a state of permanency and an equal settlement, which also shows recognition from our country. In 2007 there were 38,466 newly acquired citizenships, around twice the amount of three years ago. This number is still very low if compared to the 700 thousand cases of new citizenship recorded in Europe, (almost 2,000 per day), of which only a few hundred in Italy.

The immigrant stabilisation process can also be observed in the birth data: in 2007 64,000 babies were born from immigrant parents. Also, it becomes evident that the juvenile population in Italy increases by 100,000 units per year if we take into account the number of minors that come to reunite to their family. Resident foreign minors number 767,060, of whom 457,345 are second generation, in other words born in Italy and therefore foreigners from a legal point of view only.

The number of pupils whose parents are immigrants increases at the pace of 70,000 units per year. In the school year of 2007-2008 it reached almost 600,000 units (574,133), with an average presence of 6.4 percent, and a greater concentration in primary and secondary schools. The most common nationalities represented by minors are Romanian, Albanese, Moroccan, and Chinese.

Map 4.1 shows the rate of foreign pupils in primary schools in Italy: the darker the region is, the higher the percentage of foreign students will be.

Globalisation also concerns Italian universities, where 47,506 foreign students are registered, twice the number with respect to ten years ago but still a small amount: nonetheless, Italian system has still a low international ranking, and only the universities of Bologna and Rome (La Sapienza) are ranked among the 200 most prestigious ones (however, only at the 173rd and the 183rd place). A small number of universities has started to propose courses in English, in order both to respond to the need of present foreign students and, at the same time, to attract students from abroad. However, these programmes are still too recent to be assessed and to show valuable results. Foreign students are only 2.6 percent of the entire university population (1,809,186) and, therefore, a small share with respect to the average in OECD countries (7 percent). Newly registered foreign university students are annually 10,000 (of which 60 percent are women). Moreover, those who are registered in research doctorates are 2,136 out of 38,890 (5.9 percent), those in 1st and 2nd level master programs 2,385 out of 43,127 (5.5 percent) and there are 5,000 graduates per year (OECD 2008b).
4.2 Migration policy in Italy

Unlike countries with a long history of immigration (such as France or UK), Italy, like other countries undergoing recent migration, has not activated an actual block on the entry flow from foreign countries. Instead, it has adopted a system of imposition of which the goal is to gear the arrival of a new foreign workforce to the integration opportunities in the job industry and in society. Italy's immigration policies have always been handled mostly as emergency policies - frequently connected to “sensational” episodes such as the landing of foreigners on the Italian coast - without a clear long term plan, without any direct link to employment policies and through a periodic recourse to mass processes of regularisation. Starting from 1986, the Italian system of regularisation of the entry of immigrants for employment reasons foresaw a preventive check that no Italian worker had applied for the offered positions (except for domestic work), with a formal guarantee of the fact that the foreign workforce would not enter in competition with the Italian population that was in search of work (Ferro 2006).

In 1990 the government (centre-left wing) introduced the idea of a programmed entry flow, through interministerial decrees that had the purpose to plan the entries annually, and that cancelled the obligation to verify the non-availability of Italian workers. Moreover, a law
introduced in 1998 authorised the entry of a certain number of foreign citizens in search for work, provided the presence of an Italian citizen that would act as a guarantor for them in the form of a “sponsor”. This law was eliminated after two years and was never evaluated in terms of impact on the volume of entries and on the integration of the foreign workforce.

In the year 2000 the policy on immigration was modified by the new government (centre-right wing) which reduced the possibility of entry and made the entry procedure for foreign workers even more complex. The institution of the sponsor was abolished, a foreign citizen could now obtain a work permit - within the established quota - only if they were in contact with an employer who resides in Italy and who is willing to offer them a job and a home before they enter the Italian territory.

Both in 2006 and in 2007 the quotas were raised to meet forecasted demand: they were set at 170,000 immigrants (for each year), twice the 2005 figure. About 520,000 applications for permits were presented in 2006, and the government later decided to accept all applications. Nevertheless, due to administrative delays, most applications were not taken into consideration until the end of the year. By that time though, Romanian and Bulgarian citizens became exempt from this procedure and could enter freely into the country. Excluding Romanian and Bulgarian citizens, as well as incomplete and duplicate applications, the actual number of applications approved was about 253,000 (OECD 2008b).

As a result of this “policy-by-emergence”, regulations that let one come to the country in a legal way are very complex and often confuse. There are many personal conditions that must be kept into account, and on the basis of these conditions, different rules apply. For instance there are different regulations for European migrants and not European migrants; within the last group, a temporary residential permit can be obtained on the basis of the kind of job one wants to do and of the amount of established quota. Moreover, not European migrants can also come to Italy in order to join a relative or because he/she is a refugee: in these cases the amount of documents and declarations that one has to provide is massive and often too complicate that the foreigner cannot do it. Other different rules apply for migrants willing to start their own activities, depending from the kind of activities, the economic availability of the person, and the country of origin. To this it must be added very slow administrative Italian offices, populated by people with poor or inadequate language skills, and it is possible to understand how difficult and discouraging the process of becoming a regular foreigner in Italy is.
4.3 Migration and the labour market in Italy

Migrants in Italy have a central role in the labour market, and they contribute massively to the economic wealth of the country, both as employees and as entrepreneurs.

Between 2005 and 2007 approximately 1 million employment requests for foreign workers were presented by companies and Italian families: 251,000 in 2005, 520,000 in 2006 and 741,000 in 2007, accounting for firstly 10 percent, then 20 percent and then 25 percent in 2007 (but even 33 percent with respect to already employed foreign workers) of the whole resident foreign population (Caritas Migrantes 2008).

Despite the large number of undocumented or illegal workers, many official statistics (ISTAT, ISMU,...) show that the foreign workforce amounts to about 1.5 million workers, with an impact on the total which exceeds 10 percent of workers in various divisions. The highest concentration of immigrant workers, which is equal to two thirds of the total, is in Northern Italy.

Immigrants occupy job positions offered to them and an increasing number of them also set up activities on their own, especially after having gone through the difficult phase of initial integration. Independent work, especially artiginal work, counts for more than a tenth of the adult foreign population, with 165,114 business owners, 52,715 partners and 85,990 in other business roles. Foreigners contribute 9.2 percent of the GDP, with an absolute value of about 122,000 millions euro. The geography of the ethnic entrepreneurism in Italy shows Lombardy in first position in absolute numbers (41,064 companies); these statistics mostly comprise of small individual companies (although 2,500 of them have more than 10 employees). The owners are young (15 percent are under 30); and there are few women (18 percent of the total).

In terms of consumption, resident foreigners exceeded 25 billion euro in 2007, equal to 2.8 percent of Italian families. Only for food and beverages they spent, in 2007, nearly 5 billions euro, 3 percent of the total Italian expense.

Finally, foreigners in Italy contribute also to the wealth of their own countries: through remittances in 2007 they assured 6 billions euro to their home-countries, 20 percent more than the previous year.

As shown, many of this data concerns expatriates as a whole: very little data is available for Italy in regard to highly skilled expatriates (both leaving Italy and coming to the country). OECD (2008c) presents few facts and figures about the mobility and the impact of talented expatriates. In terms of departures: in 2001 in Italy around 6 percent of the total highly skilled Italians (such as tertiary-educated), that is nearly 300,000 people, left the country towards one of the OECD countries. They represent around 15 percent of the total Italian expatriates (of whom 45 percent are those with medium skills, and 40 percent are the lowest skilled). With respect to the brain-drain phenomenon, Italy is not part of the 7 major attracting countries, with a share of less than 3 percent of high-skilled immigrants (OECD 2008c), therefore producing a negative (although near to zero) net of talented people.
From the graph above, it is possible to see that Italy occupies a very low position within the OECD countries: the number of highly skilled expatriates that leave the country is lower than that of people coming into Italy, producing a negative balance. Among EU countries Italy is performing better than Ireland only, while many Eastern and Southern countries perform much better than Italy. When they are abroad, Italian talents seem to reach very high achievements: more than 60 percent of the most cited Italian researchers have spent some time abroad during their research careers.

Only recently Italy is putting in place a number of policies aimed at calling back the talented people who have left the country. These policies have not (yet) been able to solve the problem of the loss of people, but they are at least signs that this issue, ignored for a long time, has entered the political agenda. For example, the Ministry for Universities and Research is operating a *Rientro dei cervelli* (reverse brain drain) programme to ease the repatriation of Italian scholars and researchers abroad and to attract foreign researchers and scientists. This scheme allows universities to offer favourable two to four years contracts to foreign researchers or Italians who have been abroad for at least three years. Italy also offers tax incentives for non-resident researchers who return to Italy.

Italy also takes part in a number of international programmes aimed at exchanging scholars, students or young workers within Europe and with the rest of the world. The Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry manages bilateral agreements on scientific and technological co-operation between Italy and EU and non-EU countries (35 countries in 2006) to facilitate short-term mobility of researchers. For each approved research programme, the agreement promotes the exchange of researchers between the two countries, providing support for travel,
MIGRATION TO ITALY

accommodation and costs of living. (OECD 2008c: 135). The Italian university system is well connected to foreign educational institutes through the Erasmus programmes and the Leonardo project, which aims at building networks between Italian education institutions and international workplaces, giving opportunities to experience training programmes abroad. Thanks to Erasmus programmes more than 17,000 Italian students attended a foreign institute in the academic year 2006/07 (around 10 percent of moving students in that period) and nearly 15,000 students entered the country (slightly more than 9 percent of all students).

Of course the massive presence of foreigners in the country is not free from problems: first of all off-the-book work, which is particularly common in Italy, especially if compared with other Western country. The high percentage of illegal migrants in the country obviously becomes a pool for illegal work, especially in construction sites and building sectors. Worst of all, the sadly well rooted tradition of illegal work, functions as magnet for illegal migrants, who come to Italy even without documents knowing they will be able to find a job (Reyneri 2001, Ambrosini 2001). In 2006 more than 22,000 unauthorised immigrants were intercepted along the southern Italian coast, more than 90 percent around Lampedusa Island, halfway from Tunisia. However, most unauthorised migrants used other methods to enter, either with a visa (60 percent) or with false documents (25 percent) (OECD 2008).

The increasing number of illegal immigrants in the country has led to the creation of many regulation policies over the last 15 years: every few years the Ministry of Internal Affairs creates dispensations aimed at regularising illegal immigrants already living in Italy.

The second problematic area is that of education. The academic system in Italy is still not ready to educate foreign pupils. It is calculated (Italian Minister of Education) that in Italy more than 42 percent of foreign pupils do not have appropriate education, and show high difficulties in secondary school, where nearly 20 percent of foreign pupils are more than 18 years old. Another problem linked to the academic system is the strong and disproportionate presence of foreign students among technical schools.

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3 Many observers claim that the strict and severe rules needed in order to become a legal migrant, generate a vicious circle that increases the number of illegal foreigners
Box 2 – Migration in Italy

- Migration in Italy is a rather recent phenomenon
- Migrants represent about 6.7 percent of the total population
- Immigrants entering Italy mainly come from Developing Countries (90 percent of foreign residents) and they are mainly medium-low skilled
- Italy “needs” migrants both because they help re-balance the demographic growth (Italian population is one of the oldest in the world, and migrants in Italy are rather young) and because they represent an important contribution to the Italian workforce
- Migrants contribute to the Italian economy also because many of them are entrepreneurs
- Due to the high fertility rates of migrants, foreign pupils in schools start to be a significant number
- In contrast, only few foreigners are attracted by Italian universities, but there is a significant increase of foreign university students
- Policies towards migration in Italy are “defensive”, but unable to protect Italy from illegal migration (which is also encouraged by diffuse illegal jobs). On the other side, there are no policies aimed at the integration of foreigners
- No policies to promote and regulate the attraction of highly skilled migrants are implemented in Italy, although there are (few and poorly effective) measures for brain-gain of Italian researchers in the academic environment
- Bureaucracy is particularly complex for a foreigner who intends to come in Italy as a worker or as a student
- The net balance between highly skilled immigrants and emigrants is negative in Italy
- Two problematic areas: labour market (illegal jobs and few highly skilled) and education
As mentioned above and showed by national data, the Milan Metropolitan Region is a strong pole of attraction for migrants\(^1\). In 2007, resident foreigners in the municipality of Milan accounted for little more than 13 percent of all the residents, while in provincial municipalities they accounted for 5.7 percent. Other sources estimate that foreigners, with or without documents, coming from developing countries and from Eastern Europe, represent 16.3 percent of Milan's population and 8.12 percent of the population from the provincial municipalities\(^2\).

The relevance of foreigners in the Milan Metropolitan Region can be read in a twofold dimension: first of all it can be seen as a demographic balancing factor, especially in the core of the region, secondly foreigners can contribute to the economic growth. From the first reading point it emerges that the city of Milan is facing a particular situation, with birth-rates at their lowest and the ageing population consequently on the rise: in this respect many observers interpret the migration flow as a re-balancing factor, which brings to the city a young population with higher fertility rates. From an economic point of view, the importance that social mix and cultural diversity can have in fostering the urban economy has now been recognised by the literature, especially in terms of creativity and innovation (Hamnett 2004, Zukin 1995); nevertheless too often migrants simply are not put in the right conditions in order to perform as a resource for the city. The two dimensions (demography and economy) must be kept together in order to understand the performance of a territory, since the first is the soil where the second can grow.

### 5.1 The demographic weight of migrants in Milan

A reading of data on migration in Milan allows us to shed a light on some themes of particular importance about the link between economic development and demographic dynamics. The city of Milan is dramatically known to be one of the oldest cities in the world, with a very low fertility rate.

When observing the natural population change, interesting data come to light.

The core of the Milan Metropolitan Area has been showing negative values (although near to 0) in natural balance since the 1980s, while the rest of the area presents positive values (similarly near to 0); observing the data from 1951 (the first available census after the Second

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\(^1\) As we observed in the last chapter, the data assess the presence of all migrants, both low skilled (the vast majority) and highly skilled

\(^2\) Note that these percentages are methodically overestimated, in so far citizens without documents are excluded from the calculation of the resident population
World War), the city has been growing very little in terms of population, while the rest of the Region presents a positive growing rate. Moreover, data about external and internal migration, towards and from the city of Milan, reveal that in recent years the city has been gaining foreigners and, at the same time, loosing Italian population. To go into details, looking at the dynamic data about the changes of address it can be said that on the one side Milan has pushed many people out towards the municipalities in the metropolitan area, but, on the other, it has also attracted people from abroad.

Moreover, by looking at the age distribution among Italians and foreigners, it is evident that foreigners, unlike Italians, are mainly between the ages of 25 and 50, that is the working years; the share of very young foreigners is superior to that of Italians, while the retired population is almost none; the infant foreign population (0-5 years old) is considerable, a sign of foreigners’ propensity to have children. The natural balance in the city of Milan in the last few years has slightly grown (although remaining inferior to 0) due to the presence of immigrant women, since Italian fertility rate has not been changing.

As previously said, there are few data about highly skilled expatriates and they will be shown in next pages. As far as demographic structures are concerned, it is possible to build a proxy of the highly skilled foreigners by their native country: migrants from developed country have more possibility of being hired in the creative and knowledge sectors as talented people, than those from emerging countries. Of course, we want to stress that this is only an approximation, and that the contribution of many people from developing countries in the creative and knowledge economy is crucial (in our sample, in fact, there are many representatives of these countries). On the other hand though, it must be acknowledged that an expatriate from France or United States is likely to have more resources (economical, social and cultural) to be integrated in the workforce as a highly skilled worker. As reported above in this document, in 2004 foreigners from developing countries in Milan were more than 120,000 (about 10 percent of the population), while expatriates from developed countries were about 16,000 (little more than 1 percent of the population of the city).

### Table 5.1 Foreign residents in the core of the Metropolitan Area of Milan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a.v. (thousands)</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident population (2004)</td>
<td>1,299</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian residents</td>
<td>1,154</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign residents</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From developing countries</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From highly developed countries</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Istat, 2004

The social geography of migrants in Milan is very structured and follows a very precise pattern. Maps 5.1 and 5.2 present the density of foreigners in the city of Milan: the first one shows the location of expatriates born in developed countries, while the density of migrants

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3 The following analysis was carried out by Carla Sedini and Mario Boffi from UNIMIB and it takes into account the core of the Metropolitan Region.
4 Maps show the density area of the fourth quartile of density distribution (Boffi, 2004)
from developing countries is shown in the second one. A third map displays the territorial distribution (for both Italian and non-Italians) of a status index. This index is a complex one that synthesises information about education level, professional status and housing: dark and light red colours represent high and medium-high social status, while light and dark blue ones represent medium-low and low status respectively. As one can see, migrants from developed countries gather in the central part of the city, where also higher status residents are concentrated, while foreigners from developing countries are more likely to live in the second and third belt of the city: the further from the centre, the more the neighbourhood is characterised by the presence of lower status people or marginalised situations. Indeed, the highly skilled immigrants do not follow the traditional localisation of the other immigrants in Milan (who would normally go for the city’s outskirt). The foreigners who come from developed countries are mainly professionals, businessmen and managers and live in the city centre. The distribution of immigrants from developing countries is exactly complementary to the last one (Boffi and Sedini 2007).

Map 5.1 Residential location of foreigners born in developed countries (Red represents high density, white represents low-medium density. Poorly populated areas are represented with green)

Source: Mario Boffi, GisLab, University of Milan - Bicocca
Map 5.2 Residential locations of foreigners born in developing countries (Violet represents high density, white represents low-medium density. Poorly populated areas are represented with green)

Source: Mario Boffi, GisLab, University of Milan - Bicocca

Map 5.3 Social status (dark red and light red represent high and medium-high social status; blue and light blue represent low and medium-low social status)

Source: Mario Boffi, GisLab, University of Milan - Bicocca
5.2 Foreigners as a cultural and innovative resource in Milan

Starting from demographic data, we can affirm that foreigners represent an important form of wealth for the city: mostly, foreigners consist of youth or of young adults who are a resource for the city: they contribute to the current and future demographic equilibrium, which is very unbalanced due to young Italians’ behaviour when it comes to start a family and decide where to set up house (Ranci 2007).

However, the role of foreigners in the Milanese context is not only measurable in demographic terms: it is within the economy that foreigners have a fundamental role.

As Hamnett reminds us, “cities, like magnets, attract the ambitious, the hopeful and the desperate” (Hamnett 2003:103), and they become a workplace for foreigners that arrive for various reasons. As far as the job market, foreigners in Milan (both with and without documents\(^5\)) are characterised by being well integrated: approximately 45 percent of the foreigners hold documents, and occupy a permanent work position, or are independent and freelance professionals; to this data it is possible to add another 13 percent (12.8) of immigrants without documents with a stable job situation\(^6\). Almost 20 percent of immigrants have temporary or unstable contracts (part-time, temporary, seasonal,...), while 14 percent of foreigners are excluded from the job market (no documents, unstable and unemployed). Around 10 percent are out of the job market due to being either housewives or students\(^7\).

An even more interesting fact is represented by the entrepreneurship of foreigners, which is well developed and which represents for many of them an efficient instrument for social integration.

Almost 20,000 individual companies have a foreign owner, and they represent 16.3 percent of all the enterprises in the Metropolitan Area (in particular 2.2 percent of the entrepreneurs is from European countries, while 14.8 percent from a non European Country)\(^8\). Data about foreign entrepreneurs in all Italian regions show very positive growth rate, although Milan has a lower growth rate compared with other contexts, which may be the sign of a partial saturation of the sectors\(^9\).

As shown in previous pages, Milan is the Italian hub for high-tech and high-symbolic industries. Indeed, many foreigners contribute also to this sector of the economy: as Cappetta et al. (2005) observe, in 2004 1.86 percent of the high-tech and high-symbolic enterprises were owned by a foreigner in Milan, which counts for more than 8 percent of all the ethnic enterprises. These data are important in order to catch the presence of foreigners in the

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\(^5\) Estimate ISMU year 2007.
\(^6\) Of course, the condition of immigrants without documents is a serious problem that is frequently not handled by the employer who prefers to operate within the illegal realm. Moreover the operative regulations (in particular the absence of laws that permit the regularisation of an employee) do not permit the normalisation of even long term job situations.
\(^7\) See table 5.1A in the Appendix.
\(^8\) See table in the Appendix.
\(^9\) The percentage variation of individual factories with foreign owners is very high due to the entry of Romania in the European Community.
advanced economy of the city, notwithstanding their educational status or any other personal features, and to value their impact in the creative and knowledge economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage value</th>
<th>Impact value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>High-tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>9.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>10.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>10.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8.52</td>
<td>10.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cappetta – Salvemini 2005

Percentage: percent ethnic businesses in Milan out of total of ethnic businesses in Italy
Impact: percent ethnic businesses out of total businesses in Milan

Finally, foreigners are more and more attracted by universities. In the academic year 2004/05 almost 4 percent of students in Milan universities were foreigners. Many of them were enrolled in schools dedicated to arts as for example the Accademia di Brera and Naba. Looking at universities, post-university educational institutes, and vocational schools in the area of design in 2006, they collected 9.620 students, 3.843 of which were foreigners (Design Directory 2006, I focus). As we can see in table 5.3, the number of foreign students registered in Milan's universities from the academic years 1998/99 to 2004/05 are consistently around 30,000 with a slight increase. Even if the value does certainly not represent a fact in line with the main European countries, where the presence of foreign students is much higher\(^1\), it could represent an interesting sign, especially if compared to national data. In fact, in Italy the percentage of registered foreigners was equal to little more than 2.5 percent in the 2004/05 academic year, that means one point less than it was in the regional capital of Lombardy. Moreover, the growth trend implies a tendency to increase in the following years.

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\(^{10}\) The definition of innovative and high-symbolic industries is as follows. Definition of innovative sectors: The data used regarding the number of individual companies with a foreign owner registered at the House of Commerce according to the Ateco definitions for the high-tech sectors (DF23 coke fabrication, refineries, nuclear combustibles; DG24 fabrication of chemical products and synthetic fibers; DL30 fabrication of office and laboratory equipment; DL31 fabrication of machines and electric and electronic equipment; DL32 fabrication of radio and television and communication equipment; DL33 fabrication of medical, precision, and optical instruments; K 72 informatics and related activities; K 73 research and development) and for high-symbolic sectors (DN36 fabrication of furnishings and other manufacturing industries; DB18 packaging of clothing articles and fur preparation; DC19 leather works, fabrication of travelling articles; DE22 editorial, printing, and reproduction of registered support; K 74 other professional and business activities; O 92 recreational, cultural, and sporting activities) (Cappetta e Salvemini 2005: 35)

\(^{11}\) See Eurostat, that presents statistics on the number of registered foreigners in third level educational institutions (university diplomas, university, master programmes) in European countries. In 2006, Italy was the eight country, after the UK, Germany, France, Belgium, Austria, The Netherlands, and Sweden. (Eurostat – Education Statistics)
Table 5.3 Foreigners registered\textsuperscript{12} in Milan's universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>98/99</th>
<th>99/00</th>
<th>00/01</th>
<th>01/02</th>
<th>02/03</th>
<th>03/04</th>
<th>04/05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreigners</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>1.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of foreigners out of total registered</td>
<td>2,2</td>
<td>1,7</td>
<td>1,9</td>
<td>2,4</td>
<td>2,9</td>
<td>3,1</td>
<td>3,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Elaborations by CCIA 2008 on data from MIUR (Italian Minister of University)

5.3 Local policies and institutions for migrants in Milan

It is now acknowledged that attracting foreign people can be a crucial instrument for economic and cultural development of local economies: social mix, intercultures and multicultures, mutual exchanges and so on are all elements that are recognised as vital for local economies. We also showed how migration is a crucial factor of development for the city of Milan both in demographic and in economic terms.

Moreover cities are competing internationally and there are many platforms where they can build their own reputations, the focus is always on making a city attractive for foreign economies, foreign investors, foreign talents.

Nevertheless cities are attracting migrants, who wish either to try their fortune abroad, or to escape from difficult situations, or to experience different environments: in any cases cities are confronted with a growing amount of foreign population, who is at the same time source of richness and demand for new urban policies.

Both low and highly skilled immigrants have to face several problems, being strangers to the city. Obviously, highly skilled migrants can rely on their cultural and economical capital, which allow them to manage the situation better than low skilled migrants. Nevertheless issues such as understanding bureaucracy, finding a house or a job, are equally important and often expatriates need help to go through them.

we saw in the previous paragraph how migration in Milan is an important factor, which changes the city and which is going to transform it from a social, economic, demographic and also physical point of view. The city, through local and focused policies, has to face many issues linked to immigration: interaction and integration of foreigners in the local society, new kinds of social exclusion, new cultural or economic demands, and so forth.

Milan has been developing several programs, projects and organisations, within both public institutions, and private association and third sector.

We are going to present three of them, which are of course not be exhaustive of all the myriads of projects that are present on the territory, but which can be considered an example of local activities towards foreigners.

\textsuperscript{12} The table refers to students enrolled in university courses as full-students; students who attend an Italian university as part of Erasmus and other exchange programmes are not taken into consideration.
Asiim-Formaper

Asiim is an association for the development of immigrant entrepreneurs in Milan. Within the educational and training programs proposed by Asiim, Formaper offers informational, educational and assistance support to migrants willing to set up and manage their own business. Formaper organises courses and seminars for immigrants who want to become entrepreneurs and independent workers both in Milan and the province. It organises Italian and English courses as well. The experts of the Punto Imprenditoria (Entrepreneurship Point) office offer their services to foreigners without any charge. Besides that, Formaper also carries on studies and research on immigrants’ entrepreneurship.

La Casa delle culture del mondo

La Casa delle culture del mondo, is the first intercultural centre in the Milan Metropolitan Area: it is a place dedicated to arts and creativity of the foreigners who are settled in Milan. It was opened at the beginning of 2009, by the Province of Milan and by two third-sector associations (Centro Come and Arci Milano). The centre was opened in response to the need of integrating places for migrants and foreigners in the city. In the words of Assessor to Culture, Cultures and Integration of the Province of Milan, the city has lost its traditional welcoming attitude and its inhabitant are becoming almost bothered by the fact that it is a multicultural city, without recognising the richness that spread out of it. For this reason the Casa delle culture del mondo aims at being a model of cultural intervention, which has never been implemented in Milan before; therefore the centre has a very strong political connotation. Indeed, Milan lacks, in some way, of projects and spaces where it is possible to start the cultural integration of the foreigners. Among those new citizens there are also writers, composers, actors, artists in general. The Casa delle culture del mondo gives space to the urge of cultural integration. It is addressed to private and public cultural institutions, voluntary associations, immigrants, media and all the citizens both Italian and foreign. Several activities are organised in the centre: meetings and discussions, seminars and lectures, educational paths and laboratories, artistic events and so on.

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13 Associazione per lo Sviluppo dell’Imprenditorialità Immigrata a Milano: association for the development of immigrant entrepreneurship in Milan. http://www.imprenditorimmigrati.it
15 the Centro Come of the Cooperative Farsi Prossimo and Arci Milano (Centro Come is a service of the Cooperative Farsi Prossimo which is promoted by the Caritas Ambrosiana. It provides an introduction to education, social integration and guardianship of foreigners; Arci is an independent association of social and civil promotion. It is involved in developing associations as a factor of social cohesion, place of civil and democratic commitment, peace and human rights claims, and fight against every kind of exclusion or discrimination).
Caritas Ambrosiana

In Italy, Catholic associations have a very important role, both in the intervention of the emargined population and in the production of data and documents about those people. Of course, they are also very active in the inclusion and assistance of the foreigners and not citing one of these associations would represent a large gap. Within the many Catholic societies working together with migrants, Caritas Ambrosiana is one of the main: it is a Catholic association which operates on the territory in collaboration with local governments. As for immigration, the association is involved in three main actions: first of all, it proposes training, such as debates with private and public boards; secondly, it puts in place design and promotion of services and interventions, as well as reception centres for immigrants through the activation of social cooperatives, such as the Welcome Immigrants Service; third, it is part of several consulting and decision-making organisms, such as the National organism of coordination for the policies of social integration of foreigners. Caritas Ambrosiana provides the city with a permanent observatory in order to explore regularly and in an exhaustive way migrants’ conditions, their needs and possible public and private resources available to satisfy them (Salati, 2007).

After having offered few examples of different activities on the territory, we would like to raise some issues that emerged during our discussions with local experts (both from institutions and from the civil society) (nota: See chapter 6, in particular paragraph 6.2, for details about the focus group composed of local experts on migrations). First of all, many experts and local actors acknowledge the strong difficulties foreigners face when entering local networks. These difficulties may be the financial systems, as well as facilitating programmes or learning projects, which very often foreigners simply don’t know about. Clearly, the lack of information and contact between the institutions working for foreigners and the foreigners themselves is the main issue that, in experts’ opinion, Milan has to tackle. Secondly, but not less important, Italian bureaucracy is particularly tangled, even for a native: expatriates’ projects are often stuck for long time because of bureaucratic matters that they cannot solve by themselves. In this regard, there is a number of rising networks among foreigners, more or less formalised, which have the aim of helping migrants to orientate within Italian bureaucracy.

Moreover, cultural diversity is not fostered enough by cultural institutions, which are very often late on the international panorama. In terms of cultural offer, one of the problems of Milan is the absence of avant-garde, multiculturalism, and transculturalism. That is despite the public and cultural producers are ready for it, and often ask for this kind of art. Milan, once an international point of reference for contemporary art, is not investing anymore in this field, losing visibility and also expelling many artists, who move abroad for a more creative and inspiring environment. It is not by chance that Italian best-known artists, such as Maurizio Cattelan or Vanessa Beecroft (both Italian, despite their family names), live and work out of Italy.

Finally, it seems that although there are many projects aimed at integration (at all levels and all spheres) many of them are made in a sort of paternalistic way, always with a top-down approach and without any involvement of the real beneficiaries: foreigners in Milan. This is
due, according to the experts, to the lack of long-term plans and a short-sighted approach among the institutions of the city, which tend to work only for the next electoral campaign.

**Box 3 – Migration in Milan**

- Migration has an important role both in the demographic and in the economic re-balancing of the Milanese society.
- Migration is mainly from developing countries (as in the rest of Italy).
- In Milan Metropolitan Area foreigners give a significant contribution in the economy also because they are entrepreneurs. There are also a number of foreign entrepreneurs in the high-tech and high-symbolic economy.
- The segregation in Milan is based on social status, rather than on ethnic features.
- Milan has a significant number (although very inferior to the other EU countries) of foreign university students.
- Notwithstanding the importance of migrants in the society, very few policies are implemented locally.
- Italian bureaucracy is complex, and locally there are very few supporting initiatives for foreigners willing to enter the labour market in Milan.
- In particular, in the field of creativity or of knowledge economy, local governments are very contested by practitioners and observers.
As a part of the ACRE project, which has been presented in the first chapter of this report, this research focuses on highly skilled migrants in the Milan Metropolitan Area. In particular, the attention is drawn to those people who decided to move to Milan from foreign countries, and who work in creative and knowledge sectors. This chapter intends to be a presentation of the methodological framework of the research.

The fieldwork was carried out between October and December 2008 with a qualitative perspective: 22 semi-structured interviews were held with international highly skilled migrants, employed within the creative and knowledge based economy. The sample was built through the snowball sampling method, that is asking to the interviewees to recruit other people they know, who match the sample characteristics.

Moreover, in order to have a broader perspective, network actors and stakeholders operating in this field were involved: in this case a focus group was organised, so that people could have the chance to discuss and compare their different experiences.

The selected creative industries are: a) advertising; b) architecture; c) arts and antiques trade; d) computer games, software and electronic publishing; e) designer fashion; f) music, visual and performing arts; h) publishing; i) video, film, music, photography, radio and television.

Within the knowledge intensive category we chose: a) information and communication technologies; b) finance; c) law and other business services; d) R&D.

Those sectors have been chosen among all the international research units within the ACRE project, in order to have a comparable set of researches.

The definitive aim of the qualitative research is to understand the reasons why talented expatriates move to the Milanese metropolitan area and what factors influence their decision to move or to stay in Milan. In order to do that, we investigated the satisfaction of the interviewees with the quality of life, as well as their work and carriers. We also looked at their future plans of life and work.

Special attention was paid to the problems they encountered when they moved, as, for example, housing, bureaucracy, integration and intolerance.
6.1 The interviews

Qualitative research and semi-structured interviews were used in order to explore our topic. Long and in-depth conversations were made with talented expatriates working in the Milanese Region, focusing on different issues and giving the interviewees the chance to express their personal views and experiences.

Through interviews we explored hard and soft factors, which are important for foreign talents. “Important” means here a number of dimensions we took into consideration:

1. Attraction: determining the reasons underlying the decision to come to Milan.

   Why does a professional decide to move (for a brief or long period) to Milan? What makes the city attractive for a foreigner? How does it attract them on a practical level? What institutions, networks, and programs does it offer? From a practical point of view, what does the city offer?(in terms of informative sites, possibility to organise themselves before leaving,...)

2. Accommodation: living and working in Milan

   What does the city offer? How do foreigners share their work with others? How do they interact? What institutional projects exist for foreigners in Milan? (For example, do they get any help with practical and bureaucratic aspects, with creating networks, and so on, in order to facilitate the entry in the job market?)...

3. Expelling or not?

   What impression do foreigners have of Milan? Why do they decide to leave? Why do they decide to move permanently? What more should Milan have offered? What are they looking for (and do not find) in the city?

The interviews were thus built around five main topics:

- **Personal background**: origins, educational backgrounds and different residential and living places.
- **Reasons why they moved to Milan**: we asked to the interviewees to identify the main elements that influenced both their decision to move abroad and the process by which they chose Italy and Milan. We asked their opinion about the so-called hard factors, considered relevant in their move. In particular, we looked at factors such as the availability of houses and the cost of living. All those elements, together with the soft factors (such as the quality of life, the presence of relatives or partner, a satisfying social environment), could have contributed to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with Milan.
- **Description of careers**: we investigated career paths trying to understand in which moment of their working life interviewees decided to move. In particular, concerning this issue, it is very important to distinguish between those who came to Milan because they were sent by their companies and those who decided to move on their
own. The aim is to understand if they are satisfied with their work in Milan and what are the elements of criticisms in their sectors of work.

- **Social networks**: we investigated whether or not the interviewees knew anyone before moving to Milan and what role these people had had in their decision making. Besides this, we also asked them about their social networks.

- **Future plans**: another section of the interview collected the interviewees’ opinions about staying in Milan or coming back, or moving to any other countries. We also wanted to explore their working plans or their personal life and how much these influenced their decision of staying or not.

The interviews lasted 50 minutes on average. It is possible to say that the interviewees were all very open and willing to talk. The interviews were held in different kinds of places. Generally, people from the knowledge intensive industry were interviewed in their offices, while creative workers were generally met at their houses or in a bar, and in some cases also at their workspaces. However, since many of them have one space for both living and working, quite often the researcher met the interviewee at his/her place. The timetable for the interviews was very different from one case to the other. Indeed, interviews in the early morning were as frequent as those late in the evening. The interviewees seemed to have a pretty flexible agenda although they were very busy.

The interviews were generally recorded and fully transcribed except for 4 cases, in which the interviewer had to take notes either because of technical problems or because the interviewee refused to be recorded (just in one case). The interviews were mainly held in Italian, only in three cases they were in English. The interviews were totally transcribed, but, due to economic constrains, it was decided that only the more relevant statements would be translated into English. The language factor is rather interesting: in fact, Italian was spoken also by people who arrived in Italy only recently. The possible reasons of this openness to the Italian language will be explored in the next section, since it could be a crucial issue to take into consideration.

The sample’s composition is very diverse. In our sample we tried to balance the creative and the knowledge sectors. As mentioned previously, we interviewed 11 workers in the creative field and 11 workers in the knowledge field.

As to the industrial sector, it is possible to group the interviewees as follows. Within the creative sectors: 4 interviews in Architecture and Design; 3 interviews in Advertising, Photography, Web-design and 3D; 3 interviews in Performing Arts and Literature. Within the knowledge intensive: 4 interviews in Business services; 3 in academics R&D; 3 in engineering.

The sample is balanced between EU Countries and Extra-EU Countries. In particular, 8 cases are from Western-EU Countries, 4 from Eastern-EU Countries and 10 from Extra-EU countries.
Addressing the issue of the interviewees’ origins, we can also refer to the ISTAT\(^1\) definition, and accordingly divide the sample into two groups:

1. *Countries with strong migration flows* (PFPM);
2. *Advanced Developed Countries* (PSA).

The Strong Migration Countries are: Asia (except Israel and Japan), Africa, Eastern Europe, and Centre-South America. The Advance Developed Countries are: U.S.A., Western Europe, Israel and Japan.

The two categories of our sample are well balanced: 12 cases in PFPM and 10 cases in PSA.

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\(^1\) Italian Statistical Bureau
As to the age of respondents, they are all between 25 and 58 years of age (with an average age of 40 years). They have arrived in Milan between 0 and 20 years ago. Figure 6.3 compares this data, showing the different ages and years they have resided in Milan.

**Figure 6.3 Age of arrival, number of years in Italy and age**

Source: ACRE Research

The years of arrival in Milan are similarly showed in Figure 6.4, together with the years of birth of the interviewees. As the graph shows, despite the differences in the years of birth, the interviewees arrived in Milan either between the end of 1980s and the beginning of 1990s or after 2003. Only three respondents came to the city in the years between.

**Figure 6.4 Year of birth and year of arrival**

Source: ACRE Research
Another variable which could be useful for the analysis which will be presented in the next chapter is the household composition. We divided the sample into three main groups:

1. Couples;
2. Couples with Children;
3. Singles/Widows/Alone in Italy.

As it is possible to see in Figure 6.5, the sample is composed mainly by couples with children; the number of couples without children and singles (or people who live alone) is equal.

Finally, we looked at the interviewees’ location within the Metropolitan Area, grouping the respondents according to both their residence (in the city of Milan or in the municipalities of the Metropolitan Region) and that of their working sector (Creative or Knowledge).

It is evident that people who belong to the Creative sector chose to live mainly in Milan. Instead, Knowledge workers have a more balanced distribution.
The fieldwork was carried out without difficulties. The interviewees showed great interest in the topic. They were willing to share their experience, and to talk about the positive and the negative aspects of their life in Milan, and to discuss the difficulties and surprises they encountered arriving in the city.

We did not have any difficulties in the sampling process, and also the collection of the interviews proceeded without any problem.

In the following pages an analytical description of each interviewee is provided. The codes are the same as those used in the presentation of the results (following chapter) and they are useful to contextualise the answers. They are grouped in interviewees from Creative sectors (named C.i) and from Knowledge based industries (coded K.i)

Creative sectors:

1. C1: a junior art director from Brazil. He works in a Milanese creative lab (54 employees in total), which focuses on consultancy, branding, advertisement, packaging and label design. He has been living in Milan for about 5 years.
2. C2: an architect from Buenos Aires, Argentina, who has his own studio. He arrived in Milan in 1990.
3. C3: a designer from Taiwan. She arrived in Italy in 1995 and after only a few months in Perugia moved to Milan to study. She is now employed as a designer in a very important architecture studio in Milan.
4. C4: a designer from Denmark. She moved to Italy in 2001 but she has been living in Milan for 2 years. She is a partner in the design studio where she works together with about 20 people. She also teaches interaction design at NABA school.
5. C5: an architect from Germany. He has been living in Milan for more than 20 years. In 1990 he opened his own studio with a partner. They work on landscape and environment both on a national and international scale.
6. C6: a tout-court artist from China. He is a writer, he shoots short films and teaches Chinese in one of the Milanese public Universities. He arrived in Italy before the tragedy of Tienanmen square, and after that event he decided he would never go back to China.
7. C7: a 3D-designer, half Brazilian and half Ecuadorian. He started travelling very soon because of his career as a model. He arrived in Milan in 2000 and in 2003 he started learning 3D-graphic design. He is employed in a studio which works in the new media field (web-design, 3D, web-TV, post production).
8. C8: a fashion designer from the Netherlands. She arrived in Milan in 1989. For eight years she worked as papermodeller with an Austrian fashion designer who has a workshop in Milan. She is now looking for a part-time job in order to ease out and spend more time with her family.
9. C9: an Argentinean actor who arrived in Milan 17 years ago. He graduated in Economics but he decided to become an actor; after several experiences with different Italian companies he set up his own company with his partner.
10. C10: an actor from Romania. She has been living in Milan since 1999, where she studied at the Accademia di Arte Drammatica. Besides working as an actress in a little Milanese company, she also works as a cultural activist for the rights of gypsies.
11. C11: a Venezuelan photographer who has been living in Milan for 20 years. When she arrived she studied at the Bauer School of Photography, then worked as a freelance photographer and for several agencies of photography. She has now given up working for agencies and she freelances only, and has her works published in the main Milanese magazines.

Knowledge sectors:

1. K1: a responsible for the finance department of a big insurance company. He arrived from Scotland in 2006 and is in Milan only temporarily.
2. K2: He is from the UK and works in the same insurance company as K1. Like his colleague, he is in Milan temporarily. He
3. K3: a consultant from Sweden. He came to Milan in 1990 after having travelled for many years. His idea was to spend only one year in the city, but he eventually decided to stay, and after a while he opened his own consultancy agency.
4. K4: a marketing manager for a pharmaceutical industry from the UK. He left the UK in 2001 and he first spent 6 years in Chile and then moved to Brazil for working reasons. After those experiences he was proposed a job in Milan, and he accepted. He is in Italy temporarily.
5. K5: an English teacher from the U.S.A. She arrived in Italy 20 years ago and she lived in Perugia and in Sicily. Afterwards she moved to Milan. Now she teaches English in one of the public Milanese Universities and she also coordinates a Master in ICT management.
6. K6: a researcher in Information Technology. She arrived in Italy 10 years ago but she has been living in Milan for about 4 years. She is a researcher in one of the public Universities of Milan.
7. K7: born in the USA, she is working in Milan for an American ONG that has a headquarter in New York.
9. K9: an engineer from Argentina. He moved first to Turin in order to do a Master, and then he found a job in Milan (less than 1 year ago). He works in a big telecommunication company.
10. K10: a medical engineer from France. The first time she arrived in Milan was in 2000 for the Erasmus project. She went back to France but after 3 years she came back to Italy in order to work for a French consultancy agency, which works for several hospitals and clinics in Europe. Now she is project manager.
11. K11: a researcher in sociology. She arrived before the Ex-Yugoslavian conflict burst, and when it exploded she could not go back. Once the conflict was over she decided to stay in Milan. She is now a researcher in one of the public Universities of Milan. She works mainly on the nations and nationalism issues, theories of totalitarianism, political, social and cultural changes during periods of democratic transition.
6.2 The focus group

As mentioned above, network actors, local practitioners and migration experts were invited to discuss together, during a focus group about the issue of talented expatriates in Milan. The group was composed of five participants.

1. E1: a historian, curator and art critic. He/she is a member of the scientific commission for contemporary art of the Province of Milan
2. E2: a representative from the Extravaganti Project of the Province of Milan;
3. E3: a coordinator of the School of Design of the Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (NABA)\(^2\)
4. E4: the president of Impresa Etnica\(^3\).
5. E5: an academic expert in the migration issue, in particular in high-skilled migrants

We asked everyone to introduce him/herself and to talk about the projects which they were working on, accordingly with the topic of interest. After this short introduction, we tried to involve the participants in a sort of description of the path through which a foreigner 1) chooses Milan, 2) moves to Milan and 3) eventually decides to stay, or to go somewhere else.

To conclude, we discussed about the level of internationalisation of the city and the responsibilities of political interventions in the attraction and retention of foreign creative and knowledge workers. The participants were very involved and participate actively to the discussion.

The focus group lasted for about 2 hours. it was held in Italian despite of the two foreign guests, since they both can speak Italian.

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\(^2\) NABA is a private Academy which was born in 1980. NABA offers Bachelor and Master of Arts Degree Programs, Academic Master Programs, Diploma Program sand Semester Abroad Programs held in English that are accredited by the US University System in the fields of Visual Arts, Graphic Design, Design, Fashion, Media Design and Theatre Design. Over 1,000 students coming from all over Italy and 40 different countries are currently studying at NABA. The NABA premises are part of an industrial complex with notable architectural value that has recently been restored, and is located in the historical Navigli district, one of Milan's most attractive and lively areas from an artistic and cultural point of view. (http://www.naba.it/home_page.php)

\(^3\) Impresa etnica is a portal and is aimed at informing and giving voice to the immigrant entrepreneurs in order to favor their integration in the Italian life. (http://www.impresaetnica.it/default.asp)
In the present section of the report the core of the research is offered and discussed. In the theoretical chapter we presented the pool of theories about migration. In this chapter we focus on the results of our study, linking empirical observations with appropriate theories. The definitive purpose of the research is to assess the attractive and retaining power of the Milan Metropolitan Area for foreign talented workers in the creative and knowledge based economy. As discussed in the previous chapter, in order to pursue the study’s goal, we explored the path that talented migrants followed on their way to settling in the Milan Metropolitan Area (from their decision to come, to the practicalities they had to go through, to their decision about staying or moving away); moreover we investigated how they assess some distinctive elements of the city. Since there are two focuses of the research empirical stage, the main relevant theoretical framework will be twofold:

1. exploring the path and the story of the talented migrants requires referring to theories about reasons and patterns of migration. Yet, since the focus of the research is on highly skilled migrants, the most appropriate theories are those focused on nomadic behaviour of expatriates and those investigating brain circulation among territories. A further element that arose recently from theoretical investigation is the role of institutions, in a meso-level that crosses the micro-analysis of individuals, and that is able to capture many details (although remaining not as general as the macro analysis);

2. of course Florida’s ideas (2002) of soft and hard factors as determining elements of the living conditions (and eventually choices) of talented people have been considered in the analysis; nevertheless both theoretical and empirical results clash with the Florida model, which often proved too weak and simple. Other elements are thus to be taken into consideration in the analysis of the living conditions and opinions of foreign talented migrants, although not directly linked with the labour sphere.

In the following pages, we will present the interviews with highly skilled expatriates in Milan starting first of all by describing the hard and soft factors that have been highlighted during the interviews. This pattern, referring to the Florida model, helps us to give a broader vision of the experience of expats in Milan. After two paragraphs about attractive and retaining factors of the Milan Metropolitan Area, a third one will follow, where the study’s results will be analysed in order to understand what are the crucial elements determining highly skilled workers’ choice to move to Milan, and what are those which retain people in the Metropolitan Region. Finally we will propose a reflection about the relation between talented expatriates and the city according to a logic of mutual exchange: if we suppose, as Florida does, that those people represent a resource for the city, we then will investigate what the city gives them in return, in terms of social relations, working satisfaction and personal realisation.
In order to carry out the exploration, we have to take into account a number of variables, which have been dichotomised for clarity purposes. These categories are in reality much more blurred, and they must be considered as two poles of a continuum instead than two separate and opposite aspects.

The variables are the following ones:

1. kind of job: talented workers are either creative ones (designers; fashion designers; artists; musicians;...) or knowledge workers (software developers; lawyers; head hunters;...);
2. stage in life (with or without family and children)
3. attitude towards mobility and internationally oriented mind
4. country of origin (whether it is a developing or developed one)

The hypothesis that leads the analytical part underlines that other aspects, besides those highlighted in the Florida model, are needed in order to shed a light upon the moving patterns of creative and knowledge workers. Personal and working characteristics of talented foreigners interact with their perception of the city, with their needs, and eventually with their decisions about staying or moving away.

7.1 Hard factors

People’s decision to move to another country can be influenced by several factors. In particular, we will assess here which reasons have caused the interviewees to move to Milan. As announced in the theoretical chapter, at this step of the discussion we are going to present the so-called hard factors, while the soft ones will be presented in the next paragraph. In order to describe the hard factors, a number of issues have been highlighted: availability of jobs in the fields of interest; university and education; housing; institutions and bureaucracy; geographical characteristics and infrastructures and accessibility.

7.1.1 Labour market and job availability

As underlined by many of the theories addressing international migrations, job-related mobility should be one of the main causes of migration. In this regards, the economic role of Milan is an important element of attraction. Above all, Milan is one of the international capitals of Fashion and Design, and it has also a relevant position in the international financial market, therefore, it is not a surprise that many of the interviewees claim they have been coming to Milan for job-related reasons.

_Milan is the place where the biggest and most popular agencies are. As a foreigner, if I go in another country I would like to find something as “cool” as possible. You have to find a label, a name which were well known. (C4)_

_I arrived in Italy and I drew Rome or Milan. Rome, beautiful, but I couldn't schedule one appointment. I stayed there 2 months and I couldn't conclude anything. Then, from Rome, I called the Piccolo Teatro of Milan and they told me: “Yes, you can come Wednesday at_
9:00”. I took the train, I went there, I gave them my stuff and in 15 minutes I signed all the papers. And I said: “This is the city where I have to study”. So, Milan has this kind of thing: at the beginning is a city which works properly and for this reason is a city which is attractive (C9).

For my work (photography), Milan is the only city in Italy where I can live most of all for the contacts and the agencies, which are all here. Then, one could work in Sicily tank’s to Internet, as some of my colleagues do, but contacts are here. (C11)

Related to this issue, the income and the labour condition themes are often mentioned by the respondents. In general they are not completely satisfied with their job position and their income: they lament both the long period they have to spend in the same job position, without being allowed to work their way up, and the high level of flexibility that is demanded. Being the city very well known as an economic hub, the respondents are frequently disappointed by the fact that they have to work as interns, poorly paid or often not paid at all. The difference between the image expatriates had before moving, and the real life they encountered in Milan, is often quite big; a part of the next paragraph will analyse more in depth the “image of the city” issue.

Nevertheless they are quite satisfied with their job, especially because they keep looking constantly for the best for themselves. The respondents are very rational in this regard: they know what they want and they make a big effort in order to find it.

I got annoyed because I had unqualified jobs, therefore I looked on the yellow pages and I look for studios that could be interesting. I started from A to Z, but I found what I wanted on the letter C: it was a small technical planning studio and they offered me a good job. (K3).

Actually the Milanese job market is rather mobile and dynamic, and offers many opportunities to those who are ready to grasp them. In a previous research (Mingione et al. 2008b) the authors came to the same conclusions, exploring the job satisfaction in Milanese creative and knowledge workers1.

I think that Milan is the perfect city for my work (designer) because it offers many resources. Milan works perfectly in my field, if I did another work, I don’t think that Milan would have been the city for me (C3).

On the contrary, fields that are perceived as static and declining are that of Research and Development, and the University one. As we showed in the previous sections (chapter 3) Italian economy is characterised by a poor investment in research and by an even poorer expenditure in public university research. As a consequence, the (few) foreigners involved in the University area are less satisfied with their job.

1 The research has been carried out by proposing a questionnaire to a number of workers in the creative and knowledge field in the city of Milan. Among many, one of the results was that they were satisfied of their job position, especially as far as the content of the job is concerned. Also, they were ready to change the job if the conditions would change.
I am precarious. It would be very nice to have a fixed entrance every month and I know that many foreigners have the same problem. There is many precarious people here. And not only at the University; but those who have a salary earn few money. It has been several months that I haven't earned anything (K5).

There aren’t any expectations about the academicals carrier. I chose to do this job, there is some advantages and disadvantages. [...] It's clear that if you chose this field you don't dream about getting reach, but you can choose to do what you want in your life, what you like or are you interested in. And this is a big advantage. [...] But, for example, there are little money for research and so for sustain the work you are doing (K6).

The interviewees have also at times the feeling of being in danger, since they have to compete with many other workers, in a job market which is dynamic and constantly moving,. On the other hand this perception is a push to demonstrate their professional capacity performing at the top of their possibilities,.

There is 1,000 like me in Milan. So, the competition is very high and agencies are too small because there are too many people for too few jobs. [...] I was looking for a job and then I felt that Italy and Milan close the doors. First of all, because you are foreigner; it's ok if you have a passport, but if you don't, you're out! You have to be a super mega genius to have a job, otherwise it's hard because they prefer Italians. [...] If you are not European, it's very hard because the agency has to pay all the stuff about your contract, because they have to give you the residence permit and it costs a lot of money [...] in my opinion it's a matter of bureaucracy, of laws... (C1).

There are also some interviewees that arrived in Milan because they were sent by their companies. Milan, as illustrated in chapter 3, is an international city, well positioned within the global network and a good starting point for the exploration of new markets. Milan has been thus chosen because of its economic chances: rather often it has been said that, in Italy, Milan is the only feasible option. In those cases the interviewees did not choose to come to the city, but they chose to move to a foreign country and Milan was one of the options.

I've never really worked in Europe. So it would be interesting to work in Europe. At the time RBS group, or, RBS group is a big growing business. One of the things that they need to have is people with international experience, so i saw this as a way to get international experience[...] Italy was the opportunity that came along. I didn't have an option [...] but also inside Italy, Milano was the only location available, with Direct line (K2).
7.1.2 Universities

Another element that is always mentioned by the literature concerning migration is education. Although poorly financed by the local government and not attractive in terms of research, the Milanese universities are apparently a strong magnet for foreigners. The availability of good universities and post-university programmes is surely a relevant factor, able to attract people from other countries: universities have a great impact on the creation of innovative processes through the development of scientific research. They also have an influence on the enhancement of the future knowledge workers’ group. Therefore, post-secondary institutions are the places where knowledge is created, where young minds are trained and culture is transmitted. For these reasons they represent one important agent able both to influence local economical developments and to attract foreigners (Boffi & Sedini, 2008; Singh & Allen, 2006).

Among the interviewees many of them claim they first arrive in Italy for educational reasons: with an Erasmus exchange, or a semester abroad, for a master degree or for an entire university course. This is a bit in contrast with the data about educational financing in Italy, which is very scarce, nevertheless the attraction of Italian universities (in particular the Milanese ones) is connected with aspects other than the universities themselves.

In particular the Polytechnic University for engineering, architecture and design and the Bocconi University for finance are two main Milanese poles of attractions. The appealing of the education in Milan is also linked to its flourishing design and fashion industry: several post-secondary schools offer course and degree in design, fashion and art, with many English courses and they are a real magnet for many foreign students.

*I came here, I was working, I was studying this master in Turin... I was in Turin for nine months and then I started the internship in Milan (K9)*

*The specialisation I choose at the University, Biomedical Engineering, I didn't have many possibilities, Milan was the city, so I came here. (K10)*

Moreover, the decision of moving to the city is also linked to the presence of good primary or nursery schools. This is an important element which concurs to the decision of moving to Milan, although not really the main one, which does not probably depend on Milan, but is more linked to the general high quality of the social services in Italy. The interviewees stated that both infant and primary schools are attractive, and offer very good teachers.

*Italian public school is very good, in the US is not: so we decided to move in Italy to give a good education to our kids (K7)*

Nevertheless, if schools and university courses have been a reason to come to Italy, the perception that the respondents\(^2\) have now about education in Milan is fairly negative. They perceive the educational offer of the city as either “old”, or too expensive, or low quality in

\(^2\) We remind that, in line with the purposes of the research, the sample is composed only by people working in the creative and knowledge economy, and no one in the sample is still a student.
general. Moreover, several interviewees lament the impoverishment of the quality of the offer, although they are satisfied about their own education obtained in the city.

Often they complain that people are attending courses and masters only because of the qualification (the formal aspect), rather than the contents of the programme (the substantial element), and claim that the proliferation of such courses has been followed inevitably by a reduction of the quality.

*About education, where are masters? It's going to be lost what at the beginning I found here, masters, today are no longer there!* (C9)

Also, some interviewees happened to move to Milan while they were studying in another city, attracted by its economic power and the job market. In those cases the appreciated educational attractiveness is related to Italy in general; nonetheless the reasons they came to Milan is often linked to university networks: through post-secondary courses professionals were able to build their own network related to Milan, which was a crucial element for entering the city’s job market.

*One year before that I study in the Politecnico (from Turin) one friend, who is engineer too, was making another master in the Politecnico too. So he told me about the Politecnico and these kinds of things. [...] But here I can see that the universities are more and more without people* (K9).

*I went to Politecnico, maybe today I didn't do it. It was this image of Italy which they sold us as “super cool”; instead, in reality it was the same of what they taught in Brazil, maybe here there were more renowned teachers [...] but apart from that it was only advertising* (C1).

On the other side, university and education are also linked with research and development and with the issue of *brain drain*. In chapter 3 Italy and Milan have been positioned in the international scenario as far as research and development activities and public expenditure are concerned. They both rank very low, and foreigner researches are not really retained by this situation.

*We are not attractive for Italian people, this is the matter. I have a very good student, we proposed him to do the PhD here, last year he graduated and he told us: “No, I prefer to go to work”. Since October 2008 he's a PhD student in Berna, so it's not that he didn't want to do it, but he couldn't live with 850 or 1000 Euros per month. [...] This is a limit because I think that it's very important to have people who come from different cultures [...] create a group of research, have meritocracy and competition, because otherwise we cannot compete with the others.* (K6)

*There was something I did not perceive, how Milan is rich, I’m talking about the richness and the accessibility of the resources. This is not usual in Italy, think about Genoa, Venice or Sassari. The other thing is related to the discussion about the reforms. This path which is very hard in academy, I’m 45 years old and I am still considered a young academicals; this is a stereotype and such as all the stereotypes deprive from responsibility and status. This is not only difficult but is also serious* (K11).
7.1.3 Bureaucracy

Once a talented foreigner has arrived in Milan, whatever the reason of his/her move, he/she has to face a very difficult issue: Italian bureaucracy. As described in chapter 4, Italian bureaucracy links with migration and regularisation are very strict and limiting. Italy tends to “defend” itself from migrants, without acknowledging the crucial importance they have for the country. Moreover the high presence of illegal jobs on one hand attracts illegal migrants, and on the other pushes the government to strengthen the protective policies. Therefore it is very common, among the interviewees, that they faced difficulties in this respect. Bureaucracy problems are even worst for those who decide to start their own business.

The Italian market offers a negative environment for entrepreneurs, because there is much bureaucracy to create a start-up. Expenses are disproportionate compared to other countries and also timing has no reasons to be so long. (K3)

What I don’t see is a support which there is in Northern countries […] there are funding […] If you are a little business there are these masterships of bigger firms in order to help you (C4).

If you come to Italy as a foreigner you have to face with problems about nobody explain you the solution. For example when we arrived we needed the residence permit. If you were born outside the CEE it’s a mess (...) You waste time, go to the international police and you waste one day to take care about papers (K4).

Linked with the Italian law system, administrative problems are encountered also in other contexts: the bank system, for example, is hard to understand and to manage, especially for foreign people. Like the working life, everyday life is difficult to organise too. Recruiting information about what to do and where to go in order to regularise their presence in Milan is complicated and it takes a long time: from registering with the Municipality, to obtaining a phone and electricity connection. The experiences of foreigners with Italian bureaucracy are very similar, and generally cause frustration and misunderstandings.

[… Another aspect is the Italian banking system, which is ridiculous (K3)

I needed to move my residence [from an Italian municipality to another one] and it was an almost impossible process. To have a document you need the residence, to have the residence you need other things and no one explains you anything (K4).

I think the bureaucracy related to services is fairly awful. Probably because it took us about six months to get an Internet line working. Another example, which I quite like was that we got registered immediately for our gas connection, for our heating. So we were registered for gas…Yes, set up, registered, my name on the connection, and they did not send me a bill for one year. And then they did not send me a bill at all, they missed out a year and they charged me for three months after one year (K1).

In general, bureaucracy is an important element, able to influence the opinion of foreigners about the attitude of a country: a nation with bureaucratic barriers “at the entrance” is perceived as less friendly and welcoming than a country where all the procedures are easy to manage. Because of bureaucracy slowness the interviewees felt rejected and not welcomed.
Of course this is not a direct problem of the Milanese Region, since most of the laws in this regard are national, but there is a direct responsibility in the local administration, in the sense that they do not organise anything in order to facilitate or help foreigners to disentangle within myriad of laws and rules.

Probably, there is at the Municipality a window for foreign people where they can be helped. In my opinion, yes, maybe advertise more, something sexier, appealing to the foreigners, for example: “Do you want to come here, in Milan, this is what you have to do. Come here and we will help you to find a house (...), a work or Italian courses”. Instead, I didn't live like that. (K10)

In this respect, foreigners built networks, more or less formalised, where people in the same condition can help each other: business networks or simply groups of foreigners sharing the same experiences, are created in order to facilitate many duties, above all bureaucratic tasks.

For professionals women there are networks organising cocktails, conferences and simply letting people connect each other. [...] Everything is organised in this American style of networking where members of the club talk to each other about their jobs, their problems and their hobbies. These networks can be very helpful for changing job, improving your position and so on (K7).

7.1.4 Housing

Just like work, or even more important, the housing issue is itself a factor that can retain or expel people from a region. Housing market could be very influent on a newcomer’s decision about settling down or not in a new city. In this respect, Milan seems to be not very appealing for foreigners, since it is one of the cities with the most expensive real-estate market in Europe. Connected to this, the Milanese metropolitan area is very spread on the territory, and many researches claim that high housing prices are the main reasons why young families tend to escape from the city. Seemingly to the European cities, the Milan Metropolitan Region has an historical core with very high prices, and declining values as moving outwards in the outskirts of the city and in suburbs.

Most of the literature about creative and knowledge workers stresses the importance localisation has for these people, especially for the first group: as also shown in the previous chapter most of the creative workers in the sample are actually living in the core of the metropolitan area, while the knowledge workers are more located out of the cities, both in the outskirts and (more frequently) in suburbs.

Usually they are satisfied with their choice and they appreciate the quality of Milanese houses. It must be also said that most of the interviewees are quite wealthy, which partly mitigates the house prices. On the contrary they are often not happy with the transports, and with the amount of time it takes to travel by public transport. We will explore this issue later on.

Coming back to the housing issue, it seems that foreigners tend to recreate abroad the same residential pattern they had in their native countries: therefore couple with children prefer to
live in the suburbs in order to allow children to have larger spaces, while people used to an urban environment choose to live in the city centre, or as close to downtown as they can afford.

_We have two young children who were used to having a big big garden and we thought putting them in a small apartment in the middle of the city would be very difficult. So we toured the city and thought "no, probably wouldn't work". So we looked out of the city [...] a quite big ex-pat area near enough this side the city. [...] It's not that we didn't like Milan, it's that it's a different way of life, it's a different style of living and this was my decision, [...] It made the change much easier because we chose to start off in a life that actually was quite similar to our life in Scotland, in the sense that it's a house with a garden, and some space, and a garage, a box, and from that point of view it felt less strange, a little less new. [...] If it had just been my wife and myself I think we would have lived in the city centre because, with no children, with an easier life, in my point of view it would be more interesting._ (K1)

Moreover, according to our sample, it seems that the attitude towards housing among creative and knowledge workers are related to their profession: most of the creative workers tend to have large apartments, that they use also as place of business, while the knowledge workers separate their home from their working places. Mixing the residential with the working environment seems to be a typical feature of the way-of-working of Milanese people, who tend to fuse private and working life, especially in the creative sphere.

Besides the high costs, Milanese and in general Italian housing market is influenced by the high level of home-ownership: in Milan more than 78 percent of the dwelling places are owned by the occupier and for this reason places to rent are difficult to find, not only because they are very expensive, but also because there is only a few available in the city.

Nevertheless, despite the high prices and the small amount of available rented houses, for many interviewees finding an accommodation in Milan does not seem to be a problem and they do not seem to be worried about the housing issue. Actually, many of them are already at a rather high step in their careers, therefore they can afford to have a house where they prefer. Secondly, through informal channels and personal relations most of the interviewees could find an appropriate home. As we will see in the next paragraph, in Milan informal networks and relations are the key for almost every aspect of life. Therefore, thanks to their networks, foreigners can avoid extra expenses for real-estate agencies, and negotiate with the owner the price to pay.

_It's very easy to find a house if you have money [...] there's many houses, there's always something to rent, but it costs a lot of money and it's also hard to find a place that you like [...] The only thing I understood in order to find an accommodation is going through friends, contacts...it's like that that I found the houses where I lived._ (C4)

_To find a house is not easy but I had chance and I've always found very laid-back people; I've never had any problems [...] I found it through friends, people I knew, but I've always lived outside the city because of the prices_ (C7).
In some cases they simply occupied a house temporarily, waiting for the owner to come back, then found another temporary occupation and so on.

I am a lucky person [...] you know in Milan you never find a house. I met an Italian girl who was going to do the PhD in Cambridge and we get close [...] she told me that she would leave the house to me for few money (C9).

Clearly not all the foreigners are well connected with local people and can rely on their social networks to find an accommodation. In these cases they use traditional methods, as for instance real-estate agencies, newspaper and specialised press.

I found the first house thanks to “Secondamano” [a very used newspaper for private trades] Then, since I have been to Milan it is easier because people ask you “Do you want this house?”, there's an information exchange. So, I found a one room flat without looking at the magazine (C3).

Linked to the housing issue, the cost of life in Milan is a real issue for many of the interviewees. All of them stated that Milan is expensive. Nevertheless, interviewees react in a surprisingly positive way: first of all many of them have a rather good economic status and, although they lament the high cost of living, they can actually afford it. Secondly, those who are younger or with less availability of resources find their way to buy cheaper goods, and to discover the less-expensive Milan. It seems that if you know how to live and how to be satisfied with what you can afford, Milan could be an enjoyable city.

Very, very, very frequently we are paid with only the minimum union wage, because if you don't work you are blackmailed. Or you work for minimum union wage and without paid trials and you pull and drop it or you don't work. So everyone is obliged to do other jobs to survive because they aren't able to earn that much. The cost of living in this society is devastating, then the little work that you can find here you can't find where life is less expensive. Everyone does something else, everyone makes due, everyone looks for work somewhere else (C10).

I'm not worried about the cost of living. I know that Milan is expensive, but I've been always very organised, I'm not a consumer (C11).

Yes, it is expensive. [...] I don't miss money to eat, it could be better, for sure, but it is not bad! I've to be satisfied with what I can afford to buy. If I would have economical difficulties I would shoot me. But I do not need money to live, what is available is enough (C7).

Finally the perception about the cost of living depends on previous residence or other experiences abroad (for instance people who lived in London and in other northern European cities find Milan cheaper).

Life is expensive, but not too much. Maybe 1000 Euros rent is a lot, but it is not too expensive. (C1).
7.1.5 Accessibility and infrastructures

We will conclude the analysis of hard factors in the Milan Metropolitan Region assessing how infrastructures connect the city locally, nationally and internationally.

To begin with, the geographical position of Milan, both inside Italy and in Europe, is perceived as strategic by the interviewees: that is mainly because the city is very close to a number of nice places in the Northern part of the country, secondly because it is not too far from Central and Southern Europe.

I really like outside Milan [...] I enjoy to go to other small cities, such as Pavia, Gaggiano [...] so travel a little bit to the mountains, Lecco, these kinds of places that are a little far (C7).

[From Milan] there is a direct flight to Cyprus, therefore it is very easy for me; I have a colleague from Bologna who must fly to London and then to Cyprus (K3)

Moreover the city is neither big nor small, and this has positive consequences in the respondents’ opinions. The fact that the city is not too big allows them to travel around easily, with the feeling that they know the city and are not strangers. on the other hand Milan is a city where there is always something going on, and where it’s possible to meet people. In the following paragraph we will analyse the perception about the quality of life, and we will come back to this issue.

I lived in a huge city, Buenos Aires, so I like the size of Milan, the fact to live in a small-big-city would have been an advantage. (C9)

The demand for accessibility is one of the main issues: due to the nature of their jobs, creative and knowledge workers tend to have high mobility levels, and for this reason they strongly need the city to be well connected, both inside and towards the outside. Moreover they are usually linked with their countries of origin and are very used to travel. Therefore, the accessibility to transport from and to Milan is a key factor in their decision to move to the city or to go away. From this point of view the region seems to respond to their needs at an international level, although it is not always easy and comfortable to move within the region and different opinions have been collected concerning the local mobility.

Milan is a very easy city for the international communication, but very difficult for the local one. I think that it is the easiest city for the European communication. I have fewer problems to leave to Düsseldorf than to go to Cinisello Balsamo or Como. This is a drama. (C5)

There are places where you cannot go without a car (K3).

Many of them are very satisfied with public transport and with the fact that in Milan it is easy to travel by bicycle, and this is also linked to the relatively small size of the city. Others are less satisfied because of traffic problems and public transportations. In a previous ACRE research (Mingione at al. 2008b) we collected Italian managers’ opinions about infrastructures and the results were rather similar to those in the current research: judgments about
infrastructures are not completely negative, although infrastructures were considered rather obsolete, and this demonstrates a lack of economic investment in the city. Milan, on the contrary, proves inadequate if compared to other European cities: too many cars, lack of good infrastructures for biking, insufficient time coverage of public transportation and a tricky and very expensive taxi system. Unlike the Milanese people, highly skilled foreigners use public transportation quite often.

I don't like the public transportation. Living here in Cinisello, late at night there is nothing. When you go to Milan, and you want to return you have two hours, at twelve, or at five in the morning. (K9)

I can be from my house to my work in ten minutes by car or fifteen minutes on a bicycle so I have a very easy life. Going into the city, I think using a car is as terrible in Milan as it is in most big European cities. [...] The subway doesn't look very pretty but is actually a really good service. [...] Compared with the Netherlands...it's not well set up for bicycles. (K1)

What bothers me is that you cannot take a taxi on the street, you have to book it [...] and then the taxi arrives and it has already 12/13 Euros when it would cost 5 Euros to go to the Central Station. (K6)

7.2 Soft factors

In the previous part of the report we discussed the hard factors which can either make the city attractive and appealing for expatriates or which, on the contrary, can cause them to move away.

Most of the recent literature, moreover, stresses the increasingly growing importance of other factors, not easily tangible neither measurable, such as the quality of life, the cultural offer and the creative milieu of the urban environment. These elements of the city are said to be particularly significant for the creative and knowledge workers, more than they are for other kinds of professionals. Actually, if the hard factors are crucial elements for any kind of economic activities, the soft factors, as they are called, are particularly important for knowledge and creative workers.

A description of these elements will be presented in the next pages, followed by an analysis of the results according to the characteristics of the respondents.

7.2.1 The image of the city

It appears from the interviews that the image of Milan is very strong and it is one of the main reasons underlying the interviewees’ choice to come to the Milan Metropolitan Area. As presented in the pages above, two of the main attractive features of the city are the presence of advanced economic sectors and good universities for design and fashion. As the interviewees state, they were disappointed by the real university programmes and courses in the city, and the same happened for the job environment. Although the real presence of well performing
The city, actually, has a very positive image as home of the design and fashion industry, but also as a Mediterranean city, with a pinch of Northern atmosphere! In the view of the respondents, Milan seems to have everything: the sun of Italy, the professionalism of European capitals; it is a trendy place and an entertainment machine (Clark 2001), but at the same time it is a very good city for business; the cultural offer and the cultural production are pictured as an avant-garde, as well as people are imagined as having fun all day long. Of course foreigners are always disappointed when they come to Milan, because the city cannot keep up with their expectations.

Actually in the past (mostly in 60s and early 70s) the city has been a real European cultural capital, where art production (painting and sculpture, theatre, dance and music) were at their peak and avant-garde in the real sense of the word; it has been also a creative city for fashion and design and a city with an economic boom that in the 80s brought the city the appellation of Milano da bere: Milan, a city which can (or must) be drunk. These were also the years when most of the interviewees came to the city, and their disappointment probably originates from this. The current situation has changed very much from the past, and it's very different from the image that foreigners had.

I have to say that the first time I arrived I thought: “It's all here... It's so small!” it was fun because coming from Barcelona I felt myself to be in a much more comfortable situation. You could do everything in such a short time, the distances were so small. (C2)

The myth is there, don't touch the myth. In Germany there are bars, Milan cafe's, this myth of Milan exists, it outlives us. So many people want to work, but then they realize that it is difficult (C5)

I had images of Milan linked to clichés, I saw it as an elegant city, like a city... yes, the Piccolo Teatro was something..., I remember, in the school room there was a poster for the Piccolo Teatro. The idea was something like the “luxury” of theatre, after you have seen it though, it's more down to earth (C9).

We arrived in winter in a strange climate, without being able to speak the language very much, without knowing any Italian customs, without things for the house [...] it was a difficult five months because [...] the preconception that foreigners have about Italians is that they are lively, people that eat a lot, drink a lot, sing a lot, live life to the fullest, but maybe these are the people from Puglia, Sicilia, in Milan people are different (K4).
Nevertheless, there are people who are still happy with what they found in the city.

Why Milan? I think, if I'm honest, probably because that's where the opportunity was. I mean, rather than coming to Milan, or coming to Italy and finding a job, I found a job that was in Milan, and if it had been Berlin, quite honestly I wouldn't have taken it, it doesn't appeal, but because it was in Milan, and in Italy, and the background and culture appealed, that was why I took the job. It wasn't that I chose Milan, that's just where the job needs to be (K1).

Of course, very often, the clearer the image is, the more frustrated the interviewee will be. Very often people with a clear image are those less informed, but they turn out to be more upset if they based their choice on the image of the city.

The comparison between Milan, Europe and Italy offers an interesting view in order to analyse the image of the city: from time to time Milan is perceived as an European city, where everything is organised and perfect.

My wife isn't English, she is Chilean, and she thinks that the European Union is a uniform thing and she has lived in England and thought that Italy is in Europe and that things work more or less as they do in England; it was also difficult because things don't work well in Italy. I don't want to be too critical, but to have to wait two months for a phone line and to still maintain contact with family and with colleagues is very difficult. There are many aspects of life in which Italians have different customs compared to the English (K4)

Some other times it’s perceived as an Italian city, or even a grotesque Italian city, where nothing is working and where people are disorganised and lazy.

And as soon as we realized how the city worked, we understood that the image we have of Italy abroad is a caricature! It is a folkloristic image. (C2)

The public services don't work, from the post office to the public transport, you have to wait, I find everything absurd. We pay loads of taxes and we don't have a single service that we want, from the school to the public hospital. The first time I came to Italy I saw that it was a slower country. There is no efficiency in this country. This is only a nice place for a vacation (C3)

A final remark about the image of the city is linked with place-branding. The strong image of Milan in fashion and design, but also as a city hosting a well performing knowledge economy, is a positive sign that featured the products of the city, but also people working there. For professionals, especially abroad, Milan is a very good brand.

Milan, from my point of view, is not developing innovation, but is still living off the noble fathers, I mean it's as if we were good administrators of a glorious past, but sometimes not even that good. I have the feeling that, as it happened to me as well, but as it probably happens to so many other people, that we use Milan as a brand, because when we live in this city in reality we are not very happy, we love it with love and hate, we like it because it gives us so much, maybe we want to give more, but when we are here we are here only to go elsewhere. Milan is sort of like a stop where we can take a breath, but then we have
to leave, because we are continuously exporting, exporting, thanks to the Milan brand (C5).

7.2.2 Personal ties

Maybe the most cited reasons that caused foreigners to be in Milan (either as an attracting factor or as a retaining one), are part of the sphere of personal relations and ties. Actually, as stated in the theoretical chapter, new theories about migration underline the importance of reasons different from job-related ones. Actually, despite of coming to the region because of job or education, foreigners are embedded in the local environment and develop relations with local people, often they become engaged with people they know.

Among the different individual conditions, there are two main situations. Firstly, foreigners came to Italy because of personal ties, and then decided to stay. In these cases family and relations are really attracting factors, moving talented foreigners to the city.

[Question: why did you come back to Milan?] Well, I came back for her [his wife], then I was lucky, because I also found a good job. (C1)

In many other cases, the most common situations among the interviewees, personal ties represent the motives that retain talented people in Milan.

It is not easy to move, I cannot move; there are my children, my husband with his job here. [...] I also thought about coming back to the Netherlands, but it is difficult to find job for two people and be happy. (C8)

In the meanwhile I engaged with Annabella, who is a Milanese actress, and she was working in theatre and she founded a company, so I stayed and worked with her (C9).

When they talk about relations, the interviewees usually refer to family ties, but less often it can also be the case of close friendships.

[Question: have you ever thought about moving in another city?] Well, yes, I have, but here [in Milan] I felt at home, I had many friends [...] I had a network, then I met a girl [...] there was a nice feeling with them. (C7)

Moreover, the way the city is experienced is different when one is living with a family and children or has strong relations. Family is finally a lens through which professionals look at the job and job conditions, especially women.

I think it's a different experience from being twenty something and single or just married and that thing, when you would know the city, you would know the bars, you would know restaurants, compared with being old. Having kids your life is a different focus. It's not so much about that, it's more about weekends and going away and seeing more of the countryside (K1)

Then, at a certain point, I was less and less satisfied, and my life was more and more tiring. The studio was organised with people saying “OK, let’s go with the new collection
at the end of the month” and you work day and night, seven days a week. When children were going to sleep I started to work again, and when the deadline arrived, they would tell you “no, it’s not finished yet, we move the deadline”... therefore I could stand it anymore, and I quit the job, I took a long holiday with kids and I feel very well no (C8).

In the next paragraph the presence of the family will be used as one of four crucial variables in order to build an explicative model about talented migrants.

7.2.3 The city working atmosphere

Once they arrive in Milan, and start working and knowing the city, talented foreigners feel a particular atmosphere in the city. Actually, many respondents refer to a general working mood which is said to be typical of Milan. When asked to be more precise, they describe the Milanese attitude as very devoted to work, sometimes even too much. Many interviewees appreciate what has been called the Milanese practical attitude, a sort of methodological know-how expressed in everything they do.

In the end we you are always working, because... This is alright if you are very young and you want lots of experience, then when you reach a certain age, maybe you want to do other things as well (C4).

I think Italy in general has a great culture. I think Milan has a superb work ethic and a vibrancy determination, manufacturing. I think, I don't think Italy sells itself. It sells things. It manufactures, it creates, it builds and sells enormously successfully (K1).

From the work point of view above all, here there is male fashion, the know-how here is ten times what it is in the Netherlands (C8).

This workaholic attitude is expressed through a very keen capacity of develop relations, again a typical feature (in the foreign professionals words) of the Milanese way of working and living.

Everything in Milan is organised through the word of mouth, especially in those sectors where information and tacit knowledge are crucial, such as the creative and knowledge intensive occupations. In a previous report (Mingione 2008b) we analysed functions and roles of interactions within the knowledge and creative economy and we explained the importance of such elements in the local economy.

Most of the respondents are aware of this particular situation and they express it in many similar comments.

The studio we had was in Via Carrobio [very central area] and so, through a client that we had, in 1996 we found a house nearby. (C3)

How do people who are external to the network manage to get in and how do they profit (or not) from it?
First of all the interviewees claim that it is or it has been rather difficult to enter into the Milanese network, but they add that once in, the first network works as a generator of other relations.

Bit by bit you begin to meet people, at a certain point I met a whole group from the Domus Academy, all foreigners, I mean, in the beginning it is difficult to meet Italians because the Italians are very closed in their circles of friends.

After two years, maybe, I met a guy, he was a foreigner too, and he already lived with three other foreigners, he was Danish and the others were English or maybe there was an American. By that time it was a whole group of foreigners.

On the other hand, networks and relations are useful for many aspects of their own life, both personal and professional. In particular it’s possible to identify at least three ways in which, depending on the actors involved in the network, relations are used for foreign professionals.

First of all in order to go through all the practicalities one has face in a new country (from understanding the complex Italian bureaucracy, to finding a new home), creative professional often look for compatriots (being them university mates, friends of colleagues, or friends already in the country) in order to have a guide.

I found my house with the help of a French friend of mine with whom I went to live with (K10).

Secondly, the foreign professionals, well aware of the importance of local networks, develop relations with local people.

At first I didn't speak the language at all and then I met only one person who gave me information because he had to leave 3 months before me, so he arrived first to find out a bit and then he called me: “Yes, yes, I've found you a house” (C3).

In the beginning I led a student life. I didn't speak Italian and so I bought an Italian book to learn the language a bit. At that time in Milan there was a big Slavic community that lived a bit like that. We were all very young and our social life was to go to parties, to meet in the evening in one place or another (K8).

Many of them acknowledge that entering into local networks is very difficult, as clubs are pretty close and they accept new comers with difficulties. At a first sight Milanese people seem very close, but once one enters the network they become very open and friendly.

I mean, the people I work with are welcoming, friendly, easy-going, at the level of work. The real Milanese are northern, they're really busy....Faster, faster. So that's probably not as welcoming. when you meet somebody, come and be part of my friendship group...that doesn't happen. (K1)

In the beginning it's difficult to meet Italians, because the Italians are very closed in their circles of friends. I met foreigners [...] it's easy to speak right away with people, but I had a hard time becoming a friend [...] now we have lots of Italian friends (C8).
Also making friendships is not as easy as it seems, so it's not one of the easiest cities to live in, to create a network of people, to find a job. [...] now the group let's say that I have created in these last few years has expanded and let's say that I don't have lots of friends, but I have good friends, even good Italian friends with whom I get on very well with, but it's difficult. If it wasn't for this friend of mine who introduced me to so many people, he made me live Italy in an Italian way, it would be difficult, but now I have an Italian girlfriend... (C1).

In the sphere of the relations both the personal life and the working life can mix, like it happens for the residential behaviour, discussed above within the hard factors: the work environment is frequently used as a pool where to find friends. More often, personal relations become a useful tool for creating a working network or for expanding an existing one. In both cases interviewees emphasise the mixing between personal and working relations: this is regarded as positive by some interviewees and as negative by some others.

Everything here is very tied to work, you even make friends at work and there is always this way of exchanging contacts, of thinking of what projects we have to do together, and on the one side it is fantastic, from another point of view you never get away (C4)

But I then discovered that these friendships were purely opportunistic, not real friendships, so I ended those friendships as soon as I realize that they had interests [only for the person] that worked for the counselling and that could be advantageous to know. And this is a distinction that I have found different in a few other cities I have lived in. Maybe I have been unlucky, but there has been this tendency for opportunism among a few Milanese that I had felt for many years, but then, after a few years, I was more prepared to deal these delicate situations (K3).

Thirdly, much more than Italian workers do, foreign professionals share networks with other foreigners, who are not necessarily in their same working field or from the same country. What they share is the common experience of being abroad. In general foreigners are seen as more open, more willing to meet other people, more available in engaging in new relation. Very often these kinds of networks are also attended by local professionals with a particular life-style: they are used to travel and very mobile, were probably not born in the city, and have experienced life abroad. It has been coined the term net neo-bourgeoisie for this type of people, such as an international élite rooted in many places (global cities as Milan, London, Brussels, Tokyo, New York) at the same time, and acting as global players in the local economy (Bonomi 2008).

Then, after my first relationship, I was single for a few years, but I met a new circle of people that worked in advertising and they were people who I immediately connected with, because they were people that had a certain lifestyle to do with music, films, and social life that interested me and a few of these people had lived abroad when they were young, so we had things in common and with them I was able to create a real friendship and one of them helped me very much. All of a sudden I discovered another side of Milano that I didn’t know about with nice, lively people with whom you could share many things, journeys, etc. (K3).
7.2.4 Quality of life

According to a stream in the literature about the creative and knowledge economy, quality of life is a crucial element both for attracting and for retaining talented workers in a place. Opinions about the city’s quality of life are rather different among the interviewees: many of the respondents are dissatisfied with the general quality of life and liveability of the city, but, surprisingly, many of them, on the contrary, love the place and its features.

*In my opinion, Milan is very ugly. I mean, it is enormous, grey, there is no green space and to go out, if you don't have a car, it takes you hours and hours and hours, and if you do have a car, you are in a queue.* (C4)

*[The quality of life in Milan is] Terrible, it is schizophrenic, the city of design, the city of luxury [...] It's as if the Milanese are always waiting for the moment to travel (...) the streets are paved because its more convenient, full of dog excrement, the parks are dry and yellow, the air is unbreathable. It isn't a beautiful city in terms of the facades.* (C9)

*The quality of life here is good. If you speak of Italian things, like food, for me it is one of the best things here. Then there is the culture, and this is something that doesn't exist for us in Brazil, for example to go and see an exhibition in a museum, to go and see a photography show or to have events like the Salone del Mobile or any of the other events that take place.* (C1)

*Architecturally, Milan is very beautiful in the centre, but I don't like it so much because it is always full and I don't like places with lots of people. I like the parks very much. Parco Sempione is beautiful. There are also some very nice hidden areas. [...] Sometimes it seems to me that, not everyone obviously, but many people have forgotten a bit about education also due to the fact that the pace of life in the city is a bit heavy, because it is made of work and to go home late like everyone else. These are the few things, in reality it isn't bad.* (C7)

In terms of quality of life, when the interviewees were asked to be more specific about what they didn’t like about Milan, they mentioned the weather and the traffic congestion. They also believe the city is not suitable for kids. Of course this very last statement was expressed by those who have a family.

As to pollution and environmental issues, it has been shown that creative and knowledge workers pay special attention to this issue, due in particular to their cultural capital and their life-style (Florida 2002). Moreover many of them come from countries which have always been more sensitive about the living environment, and that have a positive tradition in sustainable ways of moving and travel (such as Germany and Denmark). This attention to the environment can be translated in alternative choices of consumption and mobility, due, again, to their cultural (and often economic) capital (Sedini and Zajczyk 2008).

The weather is very much cited, probably because of two main reasons: in our sample many interviewees are from Southern countries, or they lived in a Southern country; secondly as shown above, they came to Milan with a stereotyped idea of Italy, where weather is always beautiful and warm.
Winter in Milan it's cold, it's wet, it's miserable, like winter is everywhere. And it just felt very foreign, very strange (K1).

There isn't a good climate, it's humid in the summer, cold and humid in the winter; it is often grey. [...] it's terrible how little green there is, every once in a while I see the roundabouts with flowers and some parks with just a few trees. I miss the green space (K5)

I don't dream of spending the rest of my life in Milan, but for five years everything has depended on our only son. The city is not particularly favourable for children, with a life in the centre, behind Porta Venezia, due to the smog in general, the green spaces are very limited, we have Palestro which isn't bad, but all caged in. People complain, negativity, yes, this thing... I don't understand why, because there isn't a why, it's just the way it is. (K3)

**Tolerance and people’s attitude**

Another issue, linked to the general quality of life and the perception of daily life, is the attitude of people on the street. Milanese are known to be frantic and very busy, looking as they were always late, just because they are doing many things at a time. Milanese are also considered by few interviewees negative people, always in trouble. They complain continuously about anything, but they just don't do anything but moaning.

*People is lamenting all the time, they are negative on everything, yes, this very thing... I don't understand why, there's no why, it is like this. (C1)*

Worst, beside these ideas, there are many negative comments about Milanese people being close-minded, especially towards migrants, which are often perceived as “the stranger”.

*[as far as tolerance is concerned] I could say zero. There is no openness, there is no tolerance, there is no desire to mix, due to fear, because cities that are rich and old have a great vice: to always think that they have to defend themselves. Defence is not a nice story, defence is fear's terrible advisor, that's why in this city there is defence and fear, unfortunately that's why there is no openness (C5)*

Some of the interviewees happened to witness episodes of intolerance towards other foreigners. They reported to have had the feeling that foreigners were experienced as different, and therefore perceived as somehow dangerous.

*Yes, but one side is that I realize that I am a woman, I am blond and light skinned and I come from the North. I mean, people are very friendly towards me; I've seen others who maybe have a totally different skin colour or something that isn't... If we speak about foreigners like that, I believe not everyone is equal. (C4)*

*I think I've never felt rejected or any danger or in any way unwelcome in Italy at all, and it's always been very open and comfortable (K1)*

*In Italy it seems as if you come here and you occupy my land, you take my job. Now the immigrants as well [...] Either way, they look at you as if "you've come to steal*
something”. Maybe a doctor or a scientist, someone in a high position has a different face, isn’t a foreigner, eastern or Indian, but they look at you bad all the same. It is something that I find very negative about Italy […] Italians are very close minded (C3).

[…] it’s happened that we have friends that have children that are three and four years old and they had to take them to day care, they live near Bande Nere, and the teachers told them “Don’t bring them here because we have so many foreign children, like Arabs, who don’t know Italian, so we can’t do what we are supposed to do because we are not able to interact with them, so if you want your son to have an education you have to move”. […] pays double or triple for a private day care, it is ridiculous. And yet they did it, I was stupefied. So there are neighbourhoods where you don’t see any Italians (K3).

Other interviewees have the impression to represent a menace for Italian people, being seen as different, or strange. The city, it has been said, does not do anything for foreigners, although there are strong migration flows (see also chapter 4). An interviewee said that the city is suffering migration, without doing anything to promote integration. She underlined how Milanese people seem not to understand that in order to make the city less provincial and more international, different cultures should be welcomed.

There are many foreigners in Milan, but people don’t interact between themselves. I think it is evident that one should communicate with everyone to be more comfortable. It isn’t easy, obviously many foreigners come to steal, to do bad things and for this reason many people close up (C7).

I don’t find it welcoming enough to foreigners, even if I’ve noticed some African art exhibitions, but I don’t find it that evident (K10)

Actually many respondents reporting negative attitudes of Milanese people towards foreigners did not personally suffer the intolerance of the city, but they perceive it in the way people behave to other foreigners. On the contrary, there are other interviewees (fewer than the others) that appreciate the openness of Milanese people, and that have been helped a lot by their Milanese contacts, especially at the beginning of their permanence in the city.

If I have to give you an opinion as an Argentinean, I have always been treated very well in Italy, I think that Argentineans, with respect to integration problems, to racism, these things, they don’t exist in Italy. In general terms one can say that the Argentinean is always a lucky card, maybe being African is not the same thing (C9).

Yes, I think so. If there is a city in Italy that can welcome foreigners let’s say I think it is Milan. (K10)

Security and physical aspect of the city

Focusing on the feeling of fear, and generally the feeling of being secure or not on the street, a number of interviewees lament the presence of graffiti and the general lack of maintenance of the city: both elements, in their view, contribute to the rise in discomfort one can feel in the street, especially if you are foreigner and do not know the neighbourhood very well.
Moreover the city is said to be simply ugly, although with very nice courtyards, which are close to the public though. Even the nice part of the city (downtown), if is appreciated, is said to be very crowded and not well-maintained.

In general the lack of open spaces, green spaces and, broadly speaking, of public spaces, is something that is suffered by many of the respondents.

*K1: I think the graffiti is appalling. But you become used to it. When I arrived I thought it was very ill-kept. Wasn't well looked-after. It's almost something that is accepted in Italy. In other places it just isn't. It felt threatening at first because, but as you get used to it doesn't feel threatening, it just becomes part of the normal environment. But I still think that's strange.*

*K1: More green space. More open space. There's very little parkland within the city.*

As to the physical aspects of the city, there are also positive comments: the first one is only partly connected to the city itself and relates to the physical position of the city and the possibility to reach a number of good places easily, such as seaside, mountains or lakes. This reflects a very common attitude of Milanese people, which foreigners learn very quickly: the city is very good for business and working, but it is not for week-ends and the free time is spent at the seaside or in the mountains, where most of the professionals have a holiday house.

"It's one o'clock on a Friday afternoon when the silent yet fully perceived siren that signals the end of a working week sounds throughout the city centre. At that point, the city's rhythm, instead of slowing down, all of a sudden begins to accelerate. We run home, tired, breathless, cell phone at our ear to inform our wives to be ready, to prepare the luggage, to dress the children, to take the dog for its walk, because we are leaving. "Quickly! Come on, quickly!" Any destination will do [...] the important thing is to drop everything and leave" (Offeddu, Sansa 2007)

This quote, although being very colourful, is not exaggerating, and also in the words of the interviewees the only positive aspect of the city is often said to be the possibility of an easy escape from the city itself!

*Milan is a bit ugly but it is close to many beautiful, very beautiful things [...] to discover the food, the wines, where the trees are and in this way, little by little, we have seen a lot and travelled quite a bit and so we then discovered (K4).*

*I like Milan because I spend most of my free time outside of Milan. Milan is perfectly situated in between sea and mountains, On the other hand, when I'm in Milan I go to the park, the cinema, spend time with friends... the usual things (K8).*

* [...] even though, as soon as we have a chance, we escape for the weekend to Nice where we have a house. Therefore it's not as if we are happy to be here for the air pollution, it's just that we are here because there is work, because we have to work, not to live. As soon*
as we have some holidays we go to France. It's unfortunate to say, but we have the feeling, as soon as we leave with the car and we cross the border, that "it's so wonderful, we are in France", but we know that there is no work there, working in this sector, so we have to accept this reality and return here. It's not a place we hate, but it does have its negative side. Our jobs make us stay here (C3)

Services

Fortunately for the city, this is not the only positive feature of Milanese life, despite being the most mentioned. The city is perceived as full of entertainments, with enjoyable restaurants and good food. This statement is not very common among interviewees, although a number of them are enthusiastic about these qualities. Willing or not, the city is the core of the design and fashion industry, which are sustained, as we saw in the pages above, by a party culture4 typical of the city. Bars, parties, clubs and restaurants are a very important substratum of the knowledge and creative economy, because they are the places where interactions take places and sustain the creative communities and the professional networks in the city.

K1: Here you can go away for a day if you want, but certainly for a weekend, easily. It's a good life. [...] I think I enjoy, a little too much, the Italian obsession with good food and good wine, and probably enjoy more of that than I should. I like the fact that you go to a local restaurant and children are welcome and it's friendly. And it's not an expensive restaurant and the food is good quality, well made, and people bother about the quality of it.

A further element of the city, which is undoubtedly a strong retaining one, is the good welfare system, especially when educational environment for children is considered: in the interviewees' opinion, the city offers both high-quality and not expensive services. It must be said though that at the same time other respondents claim that in Italy (not referring to Milan in particular) public services are rather scarce and disorganised.

The schools are good, the health care is good, the cultural offer is great and if there's some time that's missing, I mean, if one likes this lifestyle, it's alright. I live in a city, it works well in this way (C5).

A positive thing, working in Milan, in Italy there are tones of holidays in comparison to the country where I come from. For the rest, a load of problems. The only thing, the government helped me when I was pregnant. I gave birth in hospital without having to pay anything. That was the one time that they gave me something. In the end it seems that they have resources, but that they aren't able to achieve anything (C3).

A nursery here is fantastic, it's beautiful, so many countries follow their example and the day care is beautiful as well. Both of the girls went to the same nursery, I always found space because this is a good area with more places than children. And that was fantastic. They went to two different daycares and I found both to my satisfaction, but above all with my youngest, it was also nice in how it was structured, how they do the projects. I

4 See also the Acre report 6.12 about managers and professionals of creative and knowledge industry in Milan (Mingione at al. 2009)
have some Dutch friends and they too are happy in other areas. The price is also good, public day-care (C8).

Culture in the city

Finally, related to the quality of life, are the cultural offer and the artistic scene of the city. Talking about creative and knowledge workers the issue appears very relevant: it has been shown by many researches how cultural stimuli are essential for these people (both for their jobs and for their spare time). Many of the respondents compare Milan with other international capitals such as Paris, London or New York, and find in comparison the cultural production and provision in the city very poor and limited. Other people, who have lower expectations have been positively surprised by the good quality and quantity of the cultural overview of the city.

Milan offers you so much, one of the things that I like about Milan is that there is always something to do, even if you are alone you can go to see a gallery, a museum, in terms of cultural activities there is so much, all you need to do is look (C1).

Florence and Rome as touristic cities are much more touristic than Milan, but to have tourists in your face every day is not the best situation in life. Well, there's la Scala, there are galleries, events, there are tones of theatres that I really like, they are a bit expensive, but you can choose, and there's also the Arcimboldi here (K6).

Yes, according to me it offers many things for those who want to go out and see things, or go out, clubs, things kinds of things here absolutely. When I did my Erasmus I thought it was a place where there are tones of places to go to, theatres, from what I understand there are quite a few, cinemas too, but, if I can give my opinion about the cinema, films in original language are lacking and this, according to me, is really too bad, to not say a shame (K10).

[in terms of cultural offer] there's a lot, for this yes. I still haven't gone out so much, I haven't seen so many galleries, I haven't moved around so much, but I think the city offers a lot, when I wanted to see something it was easy. In the centre, in our area, there is always something going on. After this, it is true that design, I don't go crazy for these kinds of things, but I have some friends who came from Paris specifically to Milan to see things related to design (K10).

I believe that, for a city that claims to be an important European city, the offer is mediocre. But then you also have to make an effort because you can't just spit in your own plate continuously. But in general a bit of attention, because an important city like Milan that is also the centre of design, fashion, maybe could a little bit more than what it already does (K3).

Nevertheless, many cultural operators complain about the very scarce cultural offer of Milan, and paradoxically find the audience much more open, avant-garde and provocative (or ready to be provoked) than the cultural offer itself.

You'll understand about culture, no one cares about it, so, because no one takes responsibility and no one does anything for the cities, I think the cities have changed..., I
am thinking about Torino, Torino has changed, it is said that everything falls and becomes stable, you take a bit of all these things, you gather them together and you create different things. Here on the other hand that isn't the case, there is not one cultural centre in Milan, not one (C9)

[As far as the cultural offer is concerned], there are a growing number of things at the theatre, in terms of galleries there is a lack of contemporary art, there is more in Torino, in Venice than in Milan. Maybe I'm out of the alternative loop (C8).

The city is also negatively perceived in this respect, because of the so called happening culture, that is to say how events are organised, and which features the cultural life of the city: each cultural event is organised by itself, without any continuity with past or future events and without any broader content, other than the event itself.

And then this tradition of the event that in Milan... I say: “Let's make sense of this”, it's not that I say: “Oh, not an event”, we have gone from the project to the event, alright, let's make sense of it. Let's have important events, no, instead there is always this attraction to the cocktail in a run down place and to the model who walks through the ruins with a bum from the Central Station, because it's chic and it doesn't produce new things (C9).

7.3 The analytical perspective

Having presented how the city is perceived by creative and knowledge foreign workers, we now intend to propose an analytical perspective, built on the basis of a number of dichotomies, as presented at the beginning of this chapter.

The investigation has a twofold aim:

1. building a model allowing to interpret the experience of talented foreigners in Milan

2. uncovering key variables in order to explore different aspects of the creative and knowledge economy of Milan, and especially in order to shed a light upon the links between creative and knowledge workers and the city.

The model is built on four dichotomic variables referring to the characteristics of the interviewees, and they help to explore retaining and attractive factors of the city.

7.3.1 Life course

In the pages above we showed that the presence (or the absence) of a family, and of children in particular, can have a significant impact on foreigners in Milan in two important aspects: family has an impact in the perception of the city, the use of the urban spaces and the residential choices; more importantly the presence of a family has a strong influence on the mobility of people, and it can be expressed in the dichotomy young/adult, or with or without children, or, again, with young or older children. In any case the more the life course is
“advanced” or “mature” (involving a partner, children and other strong relations), the more the choice of move or stay is linked to other people’s needs.

[when I move my wife follows me] and she is very happy, although at the beginning there are more difficulties (K4).

In particular, in presence of children, the mobility is valued only if it is favourable to the development of children (in terms of education or in terms of experience);

One of the things that I wanted to do was to have my children grow up being used to having other nationalities and other languages and other experiences and coming together in that kind of environment, and I think they're getting that (K1).

If mobility is not a good thing for children, but is compulsory, then the worker will move alone for a temporary project, or (s)he will not move at all.

The original plan was for my family to come with me, but because of my youngest son becoming scared of the situation and moving to a foreign country, [...] in the end we decided that I would come here on my own and my family would stay in the UK (K2).

This variable could be considered as banal and indeed it is, but it is as obvious as crucial and often it is omitted in analyses.

7.3.2 Knowledge or creative workers

This variable refers to the kind of job of the talent worker, whether he/she is a creative professional or a knowledge expert. Among these categories, it seems that the choice about the city is connected with their professions. In particular, creative workers seem to move on the base of the city specificity and identity. As many empirical and theoretical analyses demonstrated, the environment (and in particular the urban ones) in which creative professionals are embedded is extremely important in terms of nourishment of creativity and development of ideas, therefore the choice of the city where to move is as important (if not more important) as the choice or the opportunities linked with job.

Milan has that thing, that, at a first sight it is an efficient city, and this is appealing. Then, at that time, 17 years ago, there was a strong cultural pole of attraction, so I started working here, and, I must say, very beautiful projects, with a lot of people, good vibes... then both from the working point of view and from a personal perspective I started to create links (C9).

Besides job opportunities, knowledge workers choose also on the base of the city characteristic. Often they have very general needs in terms of cities and one city can be equal to the other if it respects their general needs (on the base of their tastes and needs: good schools for children, good climate, good job, proximity with family…).

The choice has been pretty spontaneous, in the sense that we wanted to go abroad and I saw this studio (K8)
Why I choose Italy, well... I was in Italy in 2007, in Europe travelling, and I know it. But why I come to Italy, because one year before that I study in the Politecnico one friend, who is engineer too, was making another master in the Politecnico too. So he told me about the Politecnico and these kinds of things. (K9)

[How did you choose Italy?] It was purely, this was the opportunity that came along, I didn't have an option of Italy over any other country, it was either this or stay in the UK. And I saw this was actually better than continuing to work in the UK (K2)

7.3.3 Hyper-mobile or “immobile”

The third dichotomy is the most blurred of the four, and it is connected with workers’ attitude to mobility. A recent stream of literature stresses the emergence of the so-called hyper-mobile bourgeoisies (Boltansky e Chiapello 2002, Bonomi 2008) referring to those people travelling around the world (very often around a portion of it) and dealing with knowledge and creative activities. Some creative or knowledge workers are more flexible than others. Of course the dichotomy mobile/not mobile is a strong simplification of the reality. Moving to Milan has proved that the interviewees are to a certain degree flexible, but those who are more flexible will probably move again, no matter what the city will do in order to keep them. There are chances that they will come back to Milan, in the future.

I’m from England, but since 2001 we’ve been abroad: in Chile for two years, then in Brazil for three years. It’s already 2 years that we’ve been in Italy. [question: are you staying here now?] No, I’m not. Probably we are going to stay here until 2010 and then we’re going else where, I don’t know yet, maybe in France, or in the Eastern European Countries, but my wife doesn’t like there (K4).

The less mobile ones are looking for a stable place and probably will stay.

So we came here, and once you are in a place is more and more difficult to move again (K7)

Very often this condition is linked with their life-course, and it is very likely, as we said above, that a talented expat with family is also less flexible than one without. Nevertheless, there are also many professionals with family that decide to move (and in this case the presence of family will interfere with the choice) or decide to stay in any case

I think, my life in Scotland, the intention was to come to Italy for three years and then to return to Scotland. I think now I'd be far more willing to go somewhere else because I think living abroad and experiencing the high points, the low points, the difficulties and the excitement is really enjoyable. It's a good challenge, it's an interesting thing to do and I've enjoyed it and I've been surprised how much I enjoy it (K1)

[you wouldn’t live elsewhere now?]. No, I wouldn’t, in this moment with children (K5)

and people without any family that are not willing to move anymore

You can see that the city wants to retain you, because it helps you... (Ferreira)
I’d go away [from Milan] because I think I finished my European experience, but no, it is not true, I feel I must stay here. (C 11)

Moreover, those who are more used to travel (the hyper-mobile ones) tend to demand more to the city, but also to appreciate more its peculiar features: they find for instance the cultural scene a little bit provincial and not international (because they compare Milan to London or New York), but they find the city not expensive, and they appreciate local food and the friendship of the inhabitants.

7.3.4 From developed or developing country

Finally the country of origin has a strong influence on one’s perception of a city and, on the other hand, on the way one is perceived by the local people. Therefore, creative or knowledge workers coming from developed countries feel more welcomed by the city, they have the feeling of being accepted by the people.

I have felt like a foreigner in the sense that I’ve been embarrassed I’m not able to communicate clearly, to have a chat, to have a discussion, and that, and the first months...that was very strange. But I think I've never felt rejected or any danger or in any way unwelcome in Italy at all, and it's always been very open and comfortable from that point of view and it's been more my embarrassment and my not being happy and not being able to talk, and being embarrassed that I can't speak or communicate or write better Italian (K1)

On the contrary, foreigners from developing countries feel hostility and intolerance spreading into the city, and they have the impression of being recognised as “the stranger” by the inhabitants.

I know they [Milanese people] don’t like the people who are from outside (K9)

In this respect it is important to stress that these groups of feelings represent a very thick and clear division, which works regardless of the kind of job or the economic availability of the interviewee, or the time he/she is has been the city for.

With these dichotomies we added further elements to our effort to understand the reasons why talented foreigners are coming to Milan, and why they are staying or moving away after a while. We showed how a simple model, which keeps into account only soft and hard factors, is not able to shed a light upon the complexity of the real situations.
Box 4 – Talented expats in Milan

– The Job market and the economic power of the city are very strong magnets for attracting people, in particular those working in the knowledge industry. The strength of the design and fashion industry is appealing also for creative workers in those sectors, in particular they came to the city for education purposes;
– The city has been a magnet for artists and creative workers in the past; today the situation has changed and many workers complain about the crisis within the cultural sectors;
– Those who have children judge very positively the education system of the city (and of the country in general);
– One of the most cited good quality of the city is its position, because it allows people to escape from the city itself in the direction of the mountains or the seaside;
– The city is also appreciated because of its fruitful working atmosphere, which expresses itself mainly through the thick set of networks which are easy to build among professionals
– The quality of life is said to be rather good, with medium-high quality cultural offer, although not really avant-garde.
In general terms Italy has been more used to emigration rather than immigration. Until the late 70s' Italy has offered low-skilled labour force to other countries such as Germany, Belgium etc. In recent years, since the early 80s’, Italy has become a new pole of attraction, and immigration is considered a great political and social issue. Regarding this aspect, two main considerations should be added. First of all, although the migration flow has drastically increased on a national level, in the European scenario Italy is used by the Non European migrants more as an illegal gate to get into Europe, rather than a final destination country where migrants can settle.

A second consideration, more related to the subject of our research, is that Italy is more affected by a brain drain phenomenon than it is by a brain gain. The difficult working conditions of Italian young talents is very often forcing young workers to move away. That is even more so in some field, like R&D, where the scarcity of funds and the difficult and sometime unclear carrier mechanisms force bright workers to move to the USA or other countries with better working conditions. In some fields such as business, finance, architecture, the brain drain is very often only temporary: As it has been underlined in previous reports (Mingione et al. 2008b and Mingione et al. 2009), the Italian labour market – is marked by an increasing number of Italian professionals who had experienced a period abroad, particularly when high level positions are concerned. The phenomenon of an international- Italian professional elite- is quickly helping to open up the labour market to the international scenario and to the international exchange of creative and knowledge intensive workers.

Another relevant aspect is the geographic distribution of highly skilled migrants. The poles of attraction for highly skilled migrants in Italy are not many. According to the interviewees, young international talents settle in Italy either in big cities or in University towns. It is recurrent in the story of the interviewees’ life a study experience in Perugia, which offers intensive courses of Italian language for foreigners. Another gateway into the Italian society is the Erasmus program. Many of the interviewees seem to have discovered Italy on occasion of a studying experience there. Although different university-town and medium cities are mentioned by the interviewees, Milan and Rome seem to be major poles of attraction when the working career starts. there are many reasons for this choice. It is first of all a matter of job opportunities. Rome and Milan offer the most international labour markets, hosting multinational firms, and international Institutions (Embassies, Consulates, International NGOs etc.). Furthermore, for some sectors, such as design and fashion, the international recognition of Milan has a quite strong attraction effect. In particular, these two sectors also offer high quality education systems. In Milan, the graduate and post graduate courses in design and fashion still attract several international students. Also, many private and public courses are offered in English, to make them more accessible to foreigner students. The relevance of the high education in the process of internationalisation of Milan seems to be a
key aspect. According to the interviewees, the attraction power of Milan in certain sectors is
the combination of its international image, the educational offer, and a vibrant and
accessible labour market. For several of the interviewees who work in the design or fashion
sector, the decision to move to Milan was related to the city’s international image and to the
opportunity of international graduate and postgraduate courses. The decision to stay on is in
part related to the great job opportunities.

In terms of what the city offers, Milan is considered to be very well connected to the rest of
Europe and to the world by air, train and highways. Furthermore, according to the
interviewees, Milan offers also a great variety of services targeted to international people if
compared to the rest of Italy. As to the education, Milan has a great number of private or
semi-private language schools (from primary to high schools) in different language, such as
French, German, English. As far as culture is concerned, the city offers a large number of
Cultural centres. The Goethe Institut, the British Council, the Centro Cervantes, the Centre
Culturel Français have an intensive cultural life offering Film festivals and book presentations
to promote international cultures in Milan. International bookshops and international libraries
are becoming more and more common.

At the same time, international managers’ opinions about Milan are negative when the city is
compared to other the international cities. Milan fails when compared to Paris, London,
Madrid, Barcelona, etc. The city is not as international as the others. Being foreigner and not
speaking Italian in Milan is not easy. Most of the services (such as post offices, Register
offices, etc) are only provided in Italian, and any procedure, from moving into a new house to
buying and securing a car need some bureaucracy skills. Milan is therefore quite contradictory
in terms of being international. According to socio-economic studies, Milan has quite a high
position in the international ranking. Although it is the second Italian city, it ranks first in
terms of multinational headquarters, international business etc. However, Milan is not so
much an international city in terms of international residents. The city’s process of
internationalisation seems to be mostly led by an internationally oriented local élite rather
than foreign managers living in Milan. Furthermore, also the international élite residing in the
city seems to have partially taken up the consumption habits of the “Milanese”. Compared to
the Milanese, foreigners have the same housing strategies (preferring home-ownership), use
the same services. The same can be said about leisure time (both foreigners and Milanese like
to have a holiday home and go away for the week end).

There seem to be a mismatch between the international image of Milan and what Milan
proves to be when experienced in reality. In the eyes of the interviewees Milan is not what
they expected. As one of the international talent said: “It is only this!!”. Most of the people
have actually found Milan quite small -compared to London and Paris!- and not very highly
developed in terms of public transport, bike lanes, cultural events, evening offer etc.

In other words, Milan is the most international city in Italy but the less international in the
international scenario. Within this scenario, the question that this work has tried to answer is
how much Milan is accommodating international highly skilled professionals who enter the
city both for living and working. In terms of classic hard and soft factors, in the previous
paragraphs we have highlighted that Milan is a combination of soft and hard factors that
attract a meagre number of international people.
However, according to the results of this research we can argue that the attraction power of a city should be evaluated by taking into consideration some dimensions. The following paragraphs will explore each dimension in details.

8.1 Space dimensions

Under this category we include the country of origin and the type of urban settlement the interviewee comes from.

- **Country of origin**: one’s perception of the city depends on where one comes from. The classic division between developing and non-developing countries doesn’t seem to be sufficient when international talents are involved. Some soft factors seem to be more or less important depending on the country of origin, which political, social and economic situations might affect strongly the opinion of the interviewees. For example the quality of the education and the health system might be considered as positive, depending to the level of service accessibility the interviewees experienced in their own county (level of welfare system, quality of public services etc.,) According to the interviews, Milan offers high quality public service. Although several language schools exist in Milan- of which most are private- in most of the cases our interviewees prefer to send their kids to public schools. as to the Italian welfare system, it is considered good, Especially by those international managers who come from a Country where the public system is scarce,

- **The urban context**: The opinion on the accessibility of the city might change with respect to whether the person comes from small/medium town, or an international city, or a metropolis. The opinion about the city facilities in terms of hard factors (such as public transportation, quality of the services) and soft factors (such as the cultural life of the city, the level of tolerance, the cosmopolite atmosphere) depends on the urban context from where the interviewee comes from. The prospective on Milan changes between migrants from a small/medium city or from a city or a metropolis. Our sample can be divided into three subgroups: those who come from a small town, those who come from a city, and those who have moved around constantly. For the last two groups of interviewees Milan cannot compete with to cities such as London, Paris and New York. For those who come from small urban contexts, Milan still represent part of a dream.

8.2 Working dimension

Under this dimension we include the reasons why the interviewees moved to Milan and how long they expect to stay. According to the interviews, we can say that three are the possible reasons for moving to Milan. International talent might move to a Milan because they are sent by their company, because the job offers in their country was not so interesting, and for reasons concerning their private life. In the case in which they have been sent by the company, an important variable is the length of time that the worker is supposed to spend in Milan. The opinion about the accessibility of the city in terms of hard or soft factors might
depend on the interviewees’ different priorities. In the case of a short period of stay the process of integration seems to be relatively slow. The opinion about the city is more related to the possibility of having an international school for their children, the residential location, and the facilities available. In other words are more related to a plug-in strategy: how easy and how quick the settling in process has occurred

In case in which the decision of living in Milan is job-related (such as due to good working opportunities and vibrant sectors) the priorities might change. In this case, as underlined before, the attraction power counts only for few sectors. When the decision of moving to Milan has been taken independently, the process of naturalisation becomes quite relevant. According to the words of many interviewees Milan seems to be a final destination (or at least they seem to have the same possibility of moving as any other manager). For those people both hard and soft factors are not questioned anymore. Milan is taken as it is. The high degree of integration might lead to a quite passive attitude. Even though some aspect might be criticised, in practice the negative aspect are not so strong to make them move to a better place.

8.3 Personal trajectory

The migrant talents’ personal life seems to affect strongly their choice of moving to Milan. In this case different dimensions seem to play an important role. First of all, the interviewees’ degree of mobility should be mentioned. There are two different categories of international highly skilled workers. The first one is that of the so called globe trotter manager, meaning those who are in Milan as a final or intermediate destination after an international long working career. The second category is that of international managers who have moved directly from their country to Milan. The working profile of these two categories is quite different. In the first case the position in the company is generally already medium-high, while in the second case the career is mostly built in Milan. In accordance to the work history, in most of the cases the career has been quite quick and Milan has been quite welcoming. For some of the interviewees the professional climbing has been quite spectacular: they started by doing low-skilled job and then switched to a brilliant carrier quite rapidly (according to the Italian standards). Looking at the group of people that we have interviewed, Milan seems to have more of the second type of international workers. However, we have to say that the globe trotter managers are more difficult to detect. The low degree of integration with Milan, their absence from the official register (they do not ask for residency), the lack of socialization with the Milanese might have made them more inaccessible to be interviewed.

The relationship that the international talents have with their own community in Milan is strongly related to this aspect. Especially for those who have moved alone and directly from their own country, the informal national networks work quite well at the beginning. Most of the interviewees belonging to this category have mentioned the importance of friends or relatives from home already living in Milan, who helped them to look for a house and collect information about work and living permit, as well as information on the labour market. However, the chain migration seems is for most of them to be left at the back of their life. In most of the cases, they are very rooted into the Milanese life. Their social/professional life
cannot be compared to that of expatriates': their children go to Italian schools, their partners are Italian, the company where they work might be a multinational but have predominantly Italian labour force. An interesting aspect is related to the attitude that they show in transmitting their home-culture to their children. Most of their children are bilingual, since the interviewees speak to them in their mother tongue. In doing so, they seem more interested in giving their children a useful multilingual background, rather than transmitting their own culture. In the case of globetrotter manager, the informal network seems not to have been useful in introducing them and their family into the Milanese life. On the contrary, the international community seems to be used to socialize.

The last but not least aspect related to their personal trajectories is the age that the international talents have moved to Milan. This aspect underlines the important role that the education system might have in making Milan an international city. The interviews have revealed a general tendency of the international managers to move to Milan when they are young. The age variable seems to be relevant when we consider what are Milan’s soft and hard factors that can be attractive: As an interviewee has underlined, since he first moved to Milan his priorities have changed several times. Milan seems to be quite welcoming to young international workers. The vibrant night life and quite good cultural life targeted to young people, combined to a quite active labour market seem to put Milan in a good position in the international competition and in first position within the national scenario. The options seem to be different when the age of the interviewees is higher. The change in the priorities shifts Milan in a lower position in the international hit-parade. The low quality of life (the pollution is mentioned quite often in the interviews) and the house prices are seen as relevant factors. The 40 and 50 year old international managers seem to be rather trapped in Milan. The process of integration has been completed and their mobility capacity seems to have decreased (the partners and the family do not want to move, his/ her working carrier is rather stable). In other words, Milan seems to be less glamorous than before.

In the light of the results of this research, the final question that should be added is related to the future prospective of Milan. The situation appears to be less positive than before. There is a general economic global recession and when the fieldwork was carried out the global economy was having one of its worst moments since the end of the Second World War. And this might have influenced the future perspectives. However, in the eyes of the interviewees Milan is in decline and it is not competing with the other European cities. The vibrant and positive atmosphere that has attracted them in Milan seems to be evaporated and this might be also related to the low level of tolerance that Italy and Milan are showing towards immigrants.

Although the focus of the research was to investigate the attractiveness of Milan for international managers, the relationship between the last aspect and the general issue of immigration can be underestimated. The issue of stigmatisation, ethic discrimination and the overlap of the security issues with immigration are reported by the highly skilled workers as a negative aspect that affects their daily life directly. All the interviews underlined that their process of integration, although quite rapid, has been marked by some events of racism. Especially for the Asian and the Black migrants, the physical difference has sometimes caused forms of discrimination and exclusion. Italy is not a melting pot of different cultures and migrants (both highly and low skilled) are still perceived as “different”. Several interviewees have underlined that the process of integration has been easier, and there has not
been the necessity of a support by their own national communities, because they can be mistaken for Italian. Some other interviewees (especially Asian people) described situations in which Italians have been aggressive with them on the street only for their ethnic features. In particular, some interviewees have stressed that these bad experiences have happened when the public opinion or the press were very focused on migration issues. Based on these considerations it seems that the migration of the highly skilled workers can not be completely disconnected from the more general migration issue. The fact that in Italy migration is a rather new phenomenon, that the Italian society is starting to experience second generations of migrants and that the access to high positions of the labour marker is rather limited, are all factors that should be taken into account. The multiculturalism is not yet a feature of the Italian society and this can be a limit.
REFERENCES


http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/ Homepage of Globalisation and World Cities Research Network (last accessed 25 February 2009).


Appendix 1: Tables

Table 3.1A Expenses (% on GDP)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<th>Research and development</th>
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Source: Fondazione Rosselli 2008

Graph 3.1A System Innovation Index

Source: Fondazione Rosselli 2008
Table 3.2A Estimated employments in 2007 by big professional groups (ISTAT classification): percentage distribution and territorial comparisons

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creative Sectors of the Province of Milan</th>
<th>Total employment*</th>
<th>Design industry</th>
<th>Other industrial sectors</th>
<th>Creative services</th>
<th>Province of Milan</th>
<th>Lombardy</th>
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<td>5,410</td>
<td>9,260</td>
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<td>7. System Managers, fix and mobile machines operators</td>
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*Values rounded off tens

Source: Unioncamere- Labour Ministry, Sistema Informativo Excelsior, 2007
Table 3.3A Ranking of cities attracting investments

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Source: CCIA elaborations on database OCO MonitorTM (CCIA 2008)
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*Source: Elaborations Chamber of Commerce (Servizio Studi della Camera di Commercio di Milano) on data produced by Infocamere (CCIA 2008)*
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<th>Years in Milan</th>
<th>Household composition</th>
<th>Localisation</th>
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### WP 7 Highly skilled Migrants: Interview Index

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<th>K3</th>
<th>C5</th>
<th>C3</th>
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<td>France, Italy (Padova)</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Florence and Rome</td>
<td>Italy, Perugia</td>
<td>Bucharest Torino</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highest educational qualification obtained</td>
<td>Degree in Engineering</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Degree in Engineering in China, IED in Milan</td>
<td>Doctorate in information technology in Torino</td>
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<tr>
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<td>In a relationship with children</td>
<td>In a relationship with children</td>
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<td>Place of residence</td>
<td>Sesto San Giovanni</td>
<td>Milan (center)</td>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>Milan, Largo la Foppa</td>
<td>Milan (V.le Sarca)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief background</td>
<td>First experience in Milan for an Erasmus, then decides to come and live here with partner (Italian). In Milan for love. Works for a French company, as an engineer she is in charge of consulting. Works from</td>
<td>Sent to Milan by a company because he spoke Italian, then decides to stay and open a consulting society, meets wife and has a child. At the beginning is in Milan for work reasons (the wife was willing to move), now is here also for family reasons (all of his</td>
<td>Wants to have an experience abroad and sends a CV to Milan but no one replies. Then arrives a bit by chance and succeeds in staying and working thanks to Italia Nostra (Bosco In Città); opens a partita IVA and starts working in Milan. Gets</td>
<td>Came to Italy to have an experience abroad, chooses Italy to do something different from the rest of people and to learn the language. First in Perugia, then in Milan registers at Ied. Meets future husband, returns to</td>
<td>Came to Italy with an Erasmus study grant, then they offered her a doctorate grant in Torino. In the meantime the husband worked in Milan, she moved to Milan where she was given a research assignment and then wins a position as a researcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan's positive aspects</td>
<td>Good universities: was the only choice for doing a year of university abroad for biomedical engineering. Infrastructure Cultural climate Open towards foreigners even if not particularly elevated number. Position: close to lakes, to Switzerland, to the mountains and to the sea. Good schools</td>
<td>Work; Infrastructure even if now with two airports it is more complicated to move around (better only Linate). Relational aspect: in the beginning no one believed in him, now he is very satisfied both with work and with friends. His work is based on relationships, has few incentives to change cities from this point of view. Maybe he could return to London Cost of living, especially if compared to London.</td>
<td>Working energy in Milan; Milan as a brand; very easy international connections; good quality of life in general: schools, services, culture; very tight relationships (also negative)</td>
<td>Work (most of all husband's) and family; it doesn't bother her that her children live in Milan, but thinks that it is good to have some experience abroad.</td>
<td>Work; culture; recreation; connections abroad better than in other Italian cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan's negative aspects</td>
<td>High cost of living (even if she has a French salary and therefore is not in difficulty) Good transportation where this is transport, but as soon as you leave</td>
<td>In the beginning no one believed in him, more difficulty in finding friends. Little culture, not made for children. Too much bureaucracy and a banking system that creates too many</td>
<td>Faced with a glorious past in Milan, now the city is still living off a surplus and misses the energy of the past; difficult internal connections with Italy (contrarily to those with those abroad);</td>
<td>Very unhappy with the Italian mentality in general; as soon as possible they go to Nice (also for relationship reasons); Milan is not tolerant</td>
<td>Traffic; closed mentality; very little funding for research; pollution; transportation infrastructure; cost of living; not a very international city, above all in the working world; the city is undergoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
uncovered areas it is there is no transportation. Open towards foreigners but there is a lack of structures capable of handling practical aspects. Housing is very expensive, idea of going outside the city to have a bigger house of children. Difficulty with Italian bureaucracy, not Milanese.

difficulties. If measured with Italian cities then Milan is an easy city, but seeing how Milan wants to compete with international cities, then it needs to keep up with these cities and Milan is not able; it is not tolerant nor open with “diversity” if they do not show to be a worker and to want to do business, only then does the city open up; very tight circles and relationships: positive on the one side, but also a negative aspect because these circles tend to be closed. Abroad these circles are more open and it is easier to participate (also for young people, who are encouraged to go abroad)

towards foreigners; Too much traffic, poorly connected with the sea

inmigration, lacks integration
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<td>1964</td>
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<td>UK, Singapore, USA</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<td><strong>Highest educational qualification obtained</strong></td>
<td>Art Theater Academy</td>
<td>Arts Academy and engineering</td>
<td>Design in Brazil and a masters in design at the politecnico of Milan</td>
<td>Computer Science (1991)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lives with partner</td>
<td>In relationship with children</td>
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<td><strong>Place of residence</strong></td>
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<td>Milan</td>
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<td>Milano 2</td>
<td>Milan (via San Calocero)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brief background</strong></td>
<td>Came to Milan to marry her boyfriend at the time, learned Italian, began to work as an actress in Milan and decided to stay (not clear whether or not she studied in Italy). Divorced but lives with another Italian, plans on staying in Milan.</td>
<td>Came to Milan (not clear why) once having graduated in engineering, does some work thanks to friends but doesn’t like it. Finds a real job (sending a CV) as an engineer and starts a career. Then he marries an Italian. Change of relations: first with Serbs and ex-Yugoslavians, then</td>
<td>Came to Milan to do a master in design, chose Milan for its fame in this field of study. Has a hard time finding work, once finished the master (which he didn’t find exciting); he insists and returns home out of pride. In the end he finds a job that is acceptable and a girl with whom he now lives. He is not very happy, neither with work nor with the city. He thinks he will change cities, he would have already done it if it</td>
<td>In Milan for work, sent by company, wants to do some experience abroad, in Europe and Milan is the only possible destination (based on what the company does). In the beginning he thought of transferring with the whole family but then decided to come alone and left his family behind in the UK (young child who goes to school). Will be in Italy for approximately 2 years, then will return to England, but maybe will go to the</td>
<td>In Milan to travel and for a chance to work (model?), then he liked the situation, finds small jobs as a model, but in the end succeeds in working in computer graphics, does a 3d school and finds it interesting. Has travelled a lot, mostly for work (model), and so he takes advantage of the situation to see new places and meet new people. In a distant future would like to</td>
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</table>
### The View of Transnational Migrants

<p>| Milan's positive aspects | Work, even if displeased with the Milanese and Italian theatre scene in general; transportation fairly good and also the connections abroad, even if nocturnal transport and Malpensa not so good | Work; family; comfortable set-up, because it is close to the mountains, lakes, sea | The image of the world of design (it also has a negative side: it is only image with little real substance); network: once you are part of a social circle (something which is not easy) you meet many people; Good quality of life, food and culture; excellent cultural offer; medium cost of living | United States In Europe he could also go to Berlin or Madrid. An important part of choosing a destination is the climate, the quality of life and the possibility of having ones family all together (or at least the wife) | live in Thailand. When he was in Hong Kong he really liked the technology and the activities promoted by the institutions to develop technology |
| Milan's negative aspects | Does not welcome foreigners, low wages in the theatre world; high cost of living; the funding for the theatre (very little) are not well managed; too much work under the table | Too much taking advantage of workers without adequate experience (only stages or money back); city closed to those who don’t know it; people have a negative mentality; climate; absence of the sea; bureaucracy | Taxi drivers took advantage of him because he didn’t speak (in the beginning) Italian. Apartment a bit expensive but very nice and safe neighborhood. High cost of living in general. Relations fairly satisfying even though for the most part with ex-pats rather than Italians: is not fully integrated. | Climate; too crowded; to find a house, but he was lucky because he always found places through acquaintances; cost of living; people don’t communicate much | Work; family; comfortable set-up, because it is close to the mountains, lakes, sea | The image of the world of design (it also has a negative side: it is only image with little real substance); network: once you are part of a social circle (something which is not easy) you meet many people; Good quality of life, food and culture; excellent cultural offer; medium cost of living | United States In Europe he could also go to Berlin or Madrid. An important part of choosing a destination is the climate, the quality of life and the possibility of having ones family all together (or at least the wife) | live in Thailand. When he was in Hong Kong he really liked the technology and the activities promoted by the institutions to develop technology |</p>
<table>
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<th><strong>Code</strong></th>
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<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Argentinian – Italian</td>
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<td>In Milan since 2006</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<td><strong>Place of residence</strong></td>
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<td>Milan (Porta Venezia)</td>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>Cinisello Balsamo?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brief background</strong></td>
<td>Came to Milan to help her husband who sold art and she spoke English; not clear if this husband then died and she re-married and then divorced, in any case she came to Milan to teach at the University for bachelor and master programs. Has children that study in Milan or close by and it seems that she will remain in the city, even if it she doesn’t like</td>
<td>Did an international master in design in Ivrea, then moved to Torino in order to start a private business with people from school, but then moves to Milan because Torino was not very international and was not able to create personal contacts. This happens in Milan.</td>
<td>Wanted to have some experience in Europe, wins a Spanish study grant to act as a listener in theatre courses and is accepted by the Piccolo theatre. Meets people at the theatre and begins to do shows, getting more and more work and making a name for himself. Starts a relationship with a Milanese actress that has her own company and, after much time, works in this company.</td>
<td>After having studied art and fashion design in Holland decides to come to Milan (thanks to the male fashion industry) to look for work. Gets a sort of Dutch study grant for the first period. Finds work as a male fashion designer. Then has problems with the designer and quits the job. Looks for other work but has difficulty, in the end finds work as a paper model designer and then becomes a sort of manager of production. Lives with a foreign man who works as a designer in Milan and they have two</td>
<td>Applies for a master at the politecnico in Torino and is asked to join an exchange program for Argentinians with Italian nationality. After having studied in the master program does a 3 month stage at Nokia/Siemens and will work as a consultant until January. Is thinking of</td>
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### Milan’s positive aspects

<table>
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<th>Details</th>
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<td>Work, family, relations;</td>
<td>Practical mentality of the city; one works and moves very well in Milan; good location with the sea and the mountains nearby; work and family; sometimes a very welcoming city; 15 years ago there was lots fermentation in the theatre industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural life, but it doesn’t</td>
<td>Image and fashion industry when she arrived, better than Paris or London for male fashion; bad relations with the people in Paris. Milan is an important place for fashion also because there is lots of tailoring. Services for children good in Milan. Good culture even if the avant guard is lacking. Cost of public transport is very low, the cost of living essentials was once very low.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest her</td>
<td>People who helped him in the beginning; social life; work and study opportunities: the politecnico offers study grants</td>
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### Milan’s negative aspects

<table>
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<td>Climate, location, traffic,</td>
<td>City that has stopped, that is still living on the fruits of the expansion of 1960’s and 70’s; there is no longer the liveliness of the past, a provincial city. Once there were laboratories made up of young actors where it was possible to create friendships and build a network: these things no longer exist. The institutions handle the funds very poorly, and they do not take responsibility for this: everything happens through the culture of the event, without any perspective. Cost of living; a lack of moments for true experimentation; creativity is missing in schools, in organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people closed and aggressive,</td>
<td>Traffic, difficulty in finding a home, interaction with people very easy if one wishes to remain on a superficial level, more difficult to become truly personal. Lack of the avant guard in the culture (but which is nonetheless very good). Work requires too much energy. Difficult to find a part-time job; there is no help for families with children, the mentality of Italian men. Cost of living and housing are now at European levels. The institutions should give more support to the youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not international, indifference</td>
<td>Public transport; the attitude of the Milanese towards foreigners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>among people</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ugly city; too much traffic;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>too much work; difficult to</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>find social relations not</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>based on work, little</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>institutional aid: all based</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>on competitions, there is no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open institutional action</td>
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it, due to her children, but also for work. Is also here for personal reasons.

daughters. The work becomes too much for her and she leaves it, now she is looking for a part-time job.

doing another master, but maybe wants to return to Argentina or even go to another country (seems a bit confused)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
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<th>Country of residence before arriving in Milan</th>
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<td>Argentina</td>
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<td>Degree in Chemistry (1990)</td>
<td>In a relationship</td>
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<td>Milan - center</td>
<td>Came to Milan for political reasons and because wanted to work as a designer/architect. Finds work right away and they by word of mouth succeeds in getting a job as an architect in a company. After a few years starts own design project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K4</td>
<td>Lyndhurst (UK)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>Degree in Marketing (1993)</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vimodrone</td>
<td>His job as a marketing director for an agro-pharmaceutical company allowed him to live in different countries. First in Chile, where he married, then in Brazil and finally in Italy (in Milan). The change from South American countries to Italy was a bit shocking. They live in Vimodrone and don’t spend much time in Milan and in general only come to go shopping. Will stay in Milan until 2010 and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K1</td>
<td>Glasgow (Scotland)</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>Degree in Law (1991)</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vimodrone</td>
<td>Was looking for something new and “challenging” for his job so, through the internal network of the Royal Bank of Scotland he got the opportunity to transfer to Milan for a few years. He chose Milan essentially because it is in Italy. They have chosen to live in Vimodrone because of their two children, because the living conditions are more similar to those in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C11</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Venezuelan, Italian</td>
<td>Scotland, U.K.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Degree in Accountancy (1994)</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Milan (Lambrate)</td>
<td>Came on vacation to Italy and met an Italian guy and decided to move. She got married and had two children and then divorced. She did the BAUER. Now she is a freelance photographer. She would like to return to Latin America because she thinks the real cultural fermentation is there now, but she is held back by her two children who are still young.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bauer (1992)</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gallarate (maybe)</td>
<td>Moved to Perugia to study in 1988, but after the massacre in Tiananmen square decided to not return to China. For some time worked in various Chinese restaurants, first in Perugia, then in Naples and then in Milan. However, since he was a teacher at the University of Beijing he began to look for work associated with his degree of specialty. In this way he began to teach in Milan and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Milan's positive aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Image of Milan; cultural offer; relations with people in Torino, privately, in schools and universities.</th>
<th>Good location, it is possible to reach so many beautiful locations.</th>
<th>Has never felt in danger or discriminated against as a foreigner. Milan is convenient, it is easy to get around without a car. Italy is not the place to be as an artist due to the present political mentality.</th>
<th>More work opportunities. Cultural Life. It is a big city but not chaotic. More organized with respect to Rome. Has many Italian friends and his wife is Italian.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milan isn’t what you imagine Italy as being like. The climate is rigid, the people in Milan are not very welcoming, slow bureaucracy.</td>
<td>Scotland. They don’t come to Milan very often. He is responsible for the financial sector of Direct Line. He will stay in Milan for another year.</td>
<td>Not difficult to involve people.</td>
<td>Cost of living. In Italy, in general, people are not used to foreigners. Immigrants are relegated to an inferior social position.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milan as a functional city because of it’s reduced size.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>K7</td>
<td>K11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Birth</td>
<td>American/Italian</td>
<td>Bosnian/Italian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of residence before arriving in Milan</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Sarajevo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of residence before arriving in Milan</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of arrival in Italy/Milan</td>
<td>1996 (for a year)</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of arrival in Italy/Milan</td>
<td>2002 (definitively)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest educational qualification obtained</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family status</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of residence</td>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>Milan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief background</td>
<td>Arrived in Milan with her husband (Milanese). For the first time in 1996 after a period of work in Guatemala. Came back from the USA after a year to attend a 2 year master in international affairs, human rights development. They then decide to move to Milan permanently and after a difficult period K7 begins to work for an American ONG that has a headquarters in New York.</td>
<td>Came to Milan to follow her husband who had moved for work reasons. With the explosion of war it became impossible to go back. After a first period of uncertainty (she had been attending a master in her country that she was unable to complete) she began to work translating political sociology texts from English to Bosnian-Serb-Croatian. Following this she came into contact with a few political science professors, she did her doctorate and became a researcher.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan's positive aspects</td>
<td>The presence of her family and husband's friends, availability of public services (day care, public schools). Good international connections. Very accessible.</td>
<td>Training opportunities. Funding for research.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan's negative aspects</td>
<td>Public transport is inefficient, ugly and dirty. The traffic is terrible. Even the airports are ugly. Environmental conditions are terrible. It is an “old” city.</td>
<td>There is a distinction between “type A” immigrants and “type B” immigrants. In Italy the people who have power are “old”. “Fixed” job applications. Non-existent welcoming system.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Topic guide interviews highly-skilled migrants

Start of the interview:
- Short introduction of ACRE
- Permission to record the interview

First question:
How did you come to live in the in xy region now?
- Did you study here?
- Are you here with your family?
- Where do you live? (city / region)
- For how long?
- Where did you live before?
- How much did you know about xy before you came here for your present stay?

Education:
Could you please tell me something about your education?
- Where (else) did you go to school / university?
- What did you study?
- From where did you obtain your degree?

Professional experience / Career:
Could you please tell me something about the main steps in your career after finishing study?

How did you find your first job in xy?
- Own search/I was offered the job
- Own internet search
- Sent by the company
- Advertisement (newspaper / internet)
- Open application
- Family/Friends
- Other, what?
Where do you work? Could you please describe your actual working situations?
- Position, job
- What do you like about your job situation / what do you not like?
- How satisfied are you with your situation?
- Would you like to change something?
Motivation to come to xy:

What was your main motivation to come to xy? (pull and push-factors)

- Role of hard factors:
  - study
  - job offer, career opportunities now and later in your home country, interesting work task, higher income, better working conditions (working hours, permanent and temporary contract, executive level, routine –project activities),
  - good international accessibility of the xy region, transport infrastructure and public transport facilities,
  - public social infrastructure (availability of kindergartens, (international) schools, higher education),
  - technical infrastructure,
  - price of housing
  - price of living
  - availability of subsidies (e.g. for artists),
  - tax incentives, other?

- Role of soft factors
  - followed partner
  - came here with my parents
  - tolerance, acceptance of diversity, equality, openness or too strong social cohesion, civil society
  - quality of life (spare time activities, subcultural scene
  - quality of the environment (landscape, culture and tourism sights etc.)
  - attractive residential environment, attractive architecture, housing conditions

Social networks

- What is your family background?
- What role have other family members played in the decision process? (wife / husband)
- How many people did you know in xy before?