

Creative Adaptation in Intra-European Migrations: Retracing Dialogical Transition

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Abstract. A specific Intra-European migrant group, in this case, Italians in France, are analyzed. The article proposes a dialogical analysis combined with a temporal and spatial dimension to explore the developmental adaptation of Italian migrant workers. The methodology allows displaying the I-Positions to build a visual representation. Then, we will focus on the dynamic in the change of I-Position to analyze the adaptive process. The narratives reveal the active adaptive strategies of Italian workers in France.

Keywords: *dialogical self-theory; Italian immigrant; chronotope; resources; identity.*

Introduction

Intra-European migrations have increased from 2.5% ten years ago (Eurostat, 2018), becoming a quiet side of the actual challenge of migration (Verwiebe et al. 2014). Of European Union citizens of working age (20–64), 3.8% were residing in another Member State than that of their citizenship in 2017. This phenomena touch in particular Italians, Polish, Romanians (Fries-Tersch et al. 2018), mainly as consequences on a European crisis scale in terms of the labour market, social mixing, cultural exchanges, and international relations (Lafleur & Stanek, 2017). Emigration for working is becoming a spread experiences, other than the traditional path from South to Nord but also to South-South intra-European migration, like Italian workers moving to the South of France.

Intra-European migrations are less visible and mediatized, but not for this without implications on the well-being of the person living these experiences, with a specific process of adaptation. During the migration process, the person should seek to update his meanings to understand the new environment and lived experience, searching for a new adaptation between the person and the environment (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). To cope with these demands and challenges, individuals would need to mobilize their resources, develop skills, and collect knowledge (Zittoun, 2012). Also, the person in mobility entails identity alterations, learning processes, a

definition of new skills, and the construction of meaning that is driven by both external and internal forces. Different studies have used the Dialogical Self for the analysis of the immigration process (for an example, see Bhatia & Ram, 2009). Concerning immigrant experience, we should find proper ways to describe the dynamicity of changing positions throughout space and time.

A methodological proposal is presented to analyze the adaptation process of workers in mobility from a dialogical perspective (Hermans, 2013) combined with a temporal and spatial dimension. In the following sections, the theoretical approach is developed, followed by the study and the final discussion.

Migration Developing Adaptation

Individuals are pushed to adapt to continuous change. “Integration” and “assimilation” are critical notions in social science studies that focus on how immigrants and immigrant-origin groups adjust and participate in receiving societies (Alba & Duyvendak 2019). The term proculturation (Gamsakhurdia, 2018) emphasizes the constructive and subjective nature of human adaptation to any kind of novelties. Generally, this term stresses the reconstructive and imaginative dimension of personality and its developmental. During the mobility process, especially for young people looking for a professional occupation, the adaptation process is a tentative to adapt to new contexts, where the “possible” - of work and life opportunities - is hidden.

The proculturation concept follows sociocultural discussions and the adaptation process in light of the Dialogical Self (DS). Hermans (2013) considers the dimensions of discontinuity, diversity, and the social nature of identity. He proposed the idea of a flexible self that is composed of multiple positions encompassing different aspects of the self. Each I-position is driven by its intention, internal (marked by the expression “I am”) or external (marked by the term “my”). I-positions are dynamically relational and are defined at the intersection of personal and societal forces through tension (Grimell, 2018). I-positions are also social, in between persons and groups. The notions of uncertainty and discontinuity are useful to describe identity as a fluid feature, always continuously changing, shifting from context to context and from moment to moment. However, the I-Position, also if also evolving in the time and space, is already in some way crystalized (*I am a researcher; I am a mother*).

In the self-narrative about their migration, individuals re-examining how

they relate to the world and striving for biographical consistency (Ecclestone et al. 2009), expressing their position in spatial and temporal references. In the same time, a sense-making process is active to give meaning to confused and uncourtly situations. For this reason, we introduce the chronotope concept.

Chronotope in the self- narrative: Spatial and Temporal Mobility

In the narrative account, the positions are retraced in a temporal and unique dimension. Narration is a way to understand how people tell and construct their own story, according to the discursive constructionism (Potter & Hepburn, 2008). Not only narratives but meanings, in general, are always tied to chronotope: “Every entry into the sphere of meanings is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 258).

This concept, devised by Bakhtin (1981), examines the space-time patterns in literary genres, and it was used to develop a framework for the cultural analysis of space-time. Following this original perspective, recent literature assumes that space and time are interdependent social constructions rather than independent given realities (van Eijck & Roth, 2010). Also, the DS stresses special but also temporal transformations of I-Positions (Barresi, 2012; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). As Raggatt (2012) explained, the Dialogical Self is characterized by internal and external positions linked to the spatial dimension and by a succession of I-positions associated with the temporal dimension.

In this paper, the chronotope will be considered to analyze the temporal and spatial dimension in which I-positions are expressed in the narrative account. Even if a person narrates their stories about their specific perception of the experience, it is still possible to retrieve many references from past and future positions. Therefore, we consider the dialogical nature in the connections between past, present, and future.

Research method

Aim of the Study

The paper aims to analyze the spatial and temporal identity development by the Italian migrant high-skilled workers in the South of France. Our primary research questions can be summarized as follows:

- 1) How do Italian workers' immigrant constitute and reconstitute in their

narrative the spatially and temporally features that display their adaptation process?

2) Which I-positions dynamics is possible to identify in their narrative accounts?

In particular, we wanted to understand how the identity changes are displayed in the spatially and temporally features of the adaptation process in the new context of emigration. The study shed light on the adaptation of Italian high-skilled workers' migrant.

Context: Italian Workers Mobility Dynamics in South of France

The phenomena of migration from Italy to France have a consolidate past. The Italians constitute the first foreign nationality represented in France from the beginning of the 20th century until in the 1960s. A first wave was composed mainly of a non-qualified labour force for the industry, in the building and public works as well as agriculture.

Like other European countries, France has known for about 20 years a resumption of Italian migration. This new wave is particular strong recently since the mid-2000s. Indeed, between 1990 and 2005, the official entries of Italians into France oscillated around 3,000 individuals per year. Today, France is the fourth destination of this wave of migration behind Germany, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland, but ahead of the United States. More than the economic crisis and the search for a job, the mobility of young graduates of the middle class responds to Italian structural immobility.

This paper adopts a regional perspective with a focus on the PACA (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur) region, historically connected with Italian immigration (Impedovo & Ballatore, 2019). Indeed, only in Marseille, there are about 300,000 Italian immigrants, making them the largest foreign community in the city.

Participants and Data collection

To achieve the research aims, we will make a qualitative multiple case study. According Stake (2006), investigate phenomena which is shared by more than one case is a way to understand the adaptation process under investigation.

For the aim to have a first benchmarked of the phenomena of Italians in Marseille, we interviewed Italian migrants in Marseille. This first step gives us some first insight about identity development of this specific group (for more info,

Impedovo & Ballatore, 2019). They were contacted with a general message post in a large group on a topical Facebook called “*Italiani a Marsiglia*”. 12 different profiles of participants were invited to be an interview, selected with the criteria to have a good variability of gender, work, and social status. For details, see Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the 12 interviews with Italian migrant workers in Marseille

Age	25–30(4) 30–40(4); 40–50(4)
Sex	F(6); M(6)
From	Southern Italy (8); Northern Italy (4)
Level of education	PhD (2); Master’s (6); High School (4)
In Marseilles	More of 5 years (3); 1-5 years (6); Less of 1 year (3)

The participants agree volunteer be an interview in a quiet room of the university. The interviews, recorded and length in average 45 minutes, were carried out in the Italian language. The semi-structured interviews focus on these themes set: (1) education and professional background; (2) abroad mobilities experiences; (3) their real sense of belonging. Following this approach, we used the narrative interview in our study, since we believe that this qualitative method brings to the foreground how migrants’ perceptions, personal motivations, turning points, values, and relationships structured in their adaptive developing process. Indeed, narrative accounts are traditional tools to self-disclosure and identification of positions, as space to the reconstruction of meaning.

To answer the research question of this paper, we decide to in-depth analysis only one participant – called Elena. She is a woman of 40 years, with a PhD in Science, from the South of Italy, no married and without children, in Marseille since less of two years. The choice is justified by the intense feeling of “wandering somewhere else” in their personal and professional development, with a similar motivation to move to others profiles – the absence of fair working situation in Italy in rapport to one’s educational qualification. We believe that the combination of two elements – the sense of wandering and the motivation to move - would allow for a good understanding of Italian worker migrants adaptation process.

Data analysis

The accounts were analyzed qualitatively (Grimell, 2018; Riff, Lacy, & Fico, 2014). The aim was to find out the dialogical dimensions and the resources that are mobilized in the mobility process. Two researchers read them. The data were first

approached to obtain “an overview of the thematic range of the text, which is to be analyzed” (Flick, 2014, p. 394). Based on thematic content analysis (Neuendorf, 2016), the researchers agreed in singling out three dimensions through which to present the relevant results. These dimensions will be described in the next section, along with some clarifying excerpts.

As a complementary analysis, an in-depth analysis of one interview is proposed. The study was meant to display I-positions along the temporal and spatial axis of the narration. The following steps characterized the data analysis process:

(1) First, two independent researchers, familiarised with the aim of the research, were asked to read and re-read the transcription to grasp the general sense;

(2) Then a segmentation of the text is performed in complete sense sentences, with it will represent our unit of analysis;

(3) In each segment of the text an I-Position is identified - both internal positions, detected based on the use of personal pronoun (for example ‘I as 40 years,’ ‘I Italian,’ and so on), and external positions based on reference to third persons (for example ‘my friends’ ‘my family’). In the text, the internal or external distinction is merged to don’t introduce more complexity, with the general reference to the position.

(4) Finally, we also focus: ongoing or desiderate tensions towards a different position (ex. from job seeker to worker); and space-time references are searched inside the segment, directly and indirectly, regards to time and space.

For an example of categorization, see Table 2.

Table 2: Example of segmentation and categorization

Transcription	Positions identity	Space	Time
I am 40 years old	I-Woman	Marseilles	Now
I’m Italian	I- Italian	Italy	Now
I was born in the province of Cagliari	I- Italian	Italy	Past
And I’ve been here for a year	Transition position	Marseilles	Now
Ah yes, I’m a researcher in materials science	I- Researcher	Marseilles	Now
Although I am now trying to move, after training in renewable energy, into the renewable energy sector	Transition position	Marseilles	Now

A final agreement was reached by researchers involved, after some re-organization in the list.

The Developmental Adaptation Process

Global Cultural (Dis)fluency

Individuals are pushed to adapt to continuous change social and cultural conditions of the European work market. Semiotic dynamics of meaning-making processes are active in the adaptation process in a constant intersection of the person with the environment (Salvatore et al., 2018). During the migration, the person should seek to update meanings to the lived experience, searching for a new adaptation between the person and the environment (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). The fluency stresses the ability to navigate in the context, through active interaction between its internal and external resources. Here an extract of one interview (Extract 1) that show the rapid adaptation and the resources activated:

Extract 1: Mary, 40 years old, language teacher, from Sardinia, Italy

“I made the first stop in the northeast of England ... It was not a city that not suited my rhythms and needs. I had chosen Newcastle at the time because there was a friend of mine who had made me a bridge and told me that if you come here, I can help you both for accommodation for the first few months and all the bureaucracy. There, I found some English courses, and I was working. Marseille came at the suggestion of a new friend, who knew that an academic institute was looking for a language assistant. So I applied for that place that was not in Marseille. But after it was proposed in Marseille. I had only studied French in middle school. I set by myself the rent, the bank accounts, etc..”.

Her resources are mobilized, developing skills, and collect knowledge. It is possible to identify personal resources, symbolic resources, and social resources represented by people who can provide support like family and friends (Zittoun, 2012). Indeed, Mary, active personal friends to understand the context before her arrive and on the place (first in England and then in France), then her linguistic resources from middle school, shaping her professional and personal journey between Italy, England and then French. The past and future resources to be developed become the tools to transform and make the adaptation process possible, in a more or less fast way.

Extract 1: Marco, 36 years old, computer researcher, from Milan, Italy

“The only disorientation I have is on bureaucracy, on the bank, on social security, knowing nothing, there is this clash also in terms of terminology, I studied French, but the words and I found myself well immediately. I find the city, this became a

colleague of him, it is challenging to feel foreigners genuinely here, it is such a superb melange of cultures and ethnicities, and it is difficult to say no, they don't want me here. An Italian, half the people here have an Italian surname, so how to say, there is history in common “.

The adaptation is made by the linguistic competences, retracing familiarity and significant common history—the past experiences of mobility help to support the globalization-based acculturation (Ozer & Schwartz, 2016).

The moving toward an (in)definite interests

In the narrative account, immigrants rebuild her meaning-making processes contextualized in the space and in the time, socially situated approach to give space of the expression and affirmation of her identity. In the narrative, Italian workers also express their “wandering” attitude in space and in time, different attempt to express their interests and wishes, like in this second Extract of Mary (Extract 2).

Extract 2: Mary, 40 years old, language teacher, from Sardinia, Italy

“Sardine is a rather particular region as it often happens so, not finding work, we continue to study ... So I started working in a context completely disconnected from these studies because I started working for a telephone company ... Then, I have taken an Italian course at the University of Siena, and then the adventure started with this autonomic project as a part-time entrepreneur. I still had the desire to have a long experience abroad; I had already stopped these two activities for two months, taking a break to go to Argentina. It was an experience that I liked very much. And therefore this desire remained a little hanging. And one fine day I simply resigned. In the UK I worked in a company after I left, I went to work in a cafeteria. Still, after a month, it arrived the opportunity to get here in Marseille, and I got on the fly “(..) [in Sardinia] I had a house of my own, a permanent job, a normal life it wasn't an escape, it was just following a desire, to make a wish. Then after the first job I enrolled in the jobcentre. Now I am also a tourist guide. At the end of each academic year, I renew my teaching contract, and I tell myself that I will come back again here, but not sure after”.

Mary working experiences are mediated between necessity and concrete needs. The interests of Mary are the expression of her willing to the affirmation of internal positions. As proposed by Akkerman et Bakker (2019), the analysis of interests include potential:

- a) Multilinearity (for example, when Mary try to pursue the interests of teacher

- language while it is working in the call centre at the same time);
- b) Equi-finality (the possibility of pursuing a particular interest and direction as a follow-up and integration of various prior interests);
 - c) Multi-finality process (the opportunity to pursue one interest in different directions). In another case, like Marco, the wandering line is mediated to the willing to stay in academic life:

Extract 1: Marco, 36 years old, computer researcher, from Milan, Italy

"I did some competitions, so nothing never went. I also searched abroad. France, in particular, I have already seen it as a possible destination for a long time, the French I started studying in 2014. And also I did two competitions in Spain, as I already knew the environment and in Seville, in particular, I love it, and so I tried to come back."

Marco moves around Italy, France and Spain to fit his application as a researcher, that end up well in a stable position. The wandering line could be more or less varied to bridge the gap between interests and situations: "If the aim is to understand interest development, we should approach it not only as a lifelong but also a life-wide process, with the person as a significant and moving unit of analysis, and the one through which we can discover how multiple interests develop in multiple contexts" (Akkerman & Bakker, 2019, p. 19).

Past, present and future body in mobility

This category shows the underline dimension of the body, moving, bring past experiences and projected in the future. Here an extract concerning the body:

Extract 3: Mary, 40 years old, language teacher, from Sardinia, Italy

I was tired to be in the North. When I left Marseille metro, I remember very well that I said to myself "Welcome back to the Mediterranean Sea". The smells and the lights surrounded me. I can move everywhere. I don't feel uprooted because my roots are with me; it is paradoxical to think that the roots walk somehow. I believe it is so. I already start to look at where to move next.

Her future is connected with her past, using the metaphor of the roots that walks with her. She expresses her social identification to her territory, with deep affection as a psychological and cultural attachment (Mangum & Block, 2018) to the place where she grew up. Her cultural identity emerges abroad, and she finds a creative way to express it with interactions and spreading the values, traditions, and

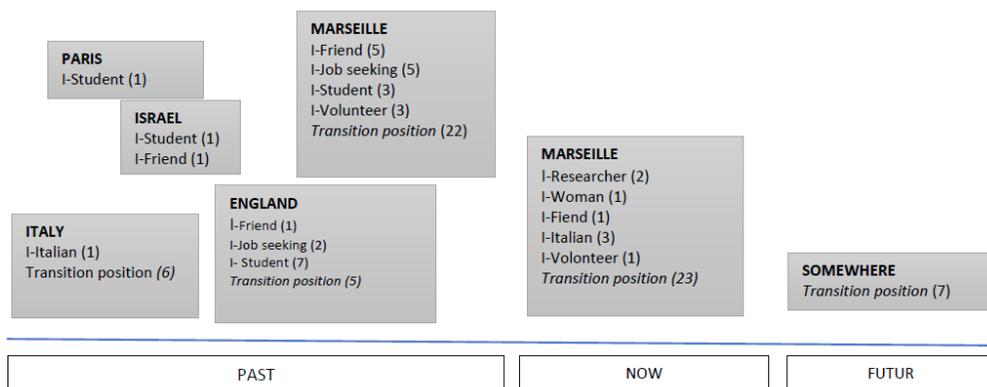
information about her former context, supported by her cultural group (Usborne & Taylor, 2010).

Temporal and Spatial Dialogical Transitions

In this section, we try to focus more in-depth on one profile to answer the research questions. This analysis aims to identify spatially and temporally features (chronotope) that display the I-Positions adaptation process located in the narrative accounts.

Different explicit I-positions emerged in Elena account, mainly as woman, Italian, student, researcher, friend, job-seeking, and volunteer. About the references to the place, in the past, England, Israel, Italy and Marseilles; with the connection to the actuality of the accounts, Italy and Marseille; about the future, the references evoked are Italy, France and a possible generic somewhere. More, we have identified mobility positions, as to the arrival, change, adaptation and integration in a new place. In Figure 1, the space and the time reference visual reconstruction of the Elena account positions

Figure 1 Visual reconstruction of the Elena account



In her account, Elena starts to present about her doctorate in Italy, then her experience abroad Paris and Israel; followed by the Master program in England for the specialization in Sustainable Energy. The mobility references are concentrating in line with the mobility done, especially in the arriving of Marseille. The future place is evoked two times: the first to show her decision not to come back to Italy and the second in references her doubts to live in France.

The I-Positions are moving in the space and in time. Some positions are dominant in a moment, and others are not anymore activated in other spatial and temporal situation. The position as a woman is expressed just one time, as her status of researcher and Italian. The past is dominated by the role of a PhD student and then as a specialist student. The I-position as a friend is related to the person resource that helps her in the migration process in England and France. She accepts a friend invitation to go in the UK and then in Marseille (*"I again accepted the invitation of Pina who was already here. So capable I would not be in Marseille if it weren't for Elena. Yes, Pina was a point of reference"*). Ethnic homogeneity is mainly well known in these processes of groups; mutual aid among people sharing similar migration experiences remains essential for adjusting to a foreign environment (Dahinden, 2005), especially as an already close friendship like in our case. The existence of similar characteristics and attitudes is at the basis of network structure and the sense of belonging.

About the position as a volunteer (*They do the things I would like to do for work. I became a volunteer in their projects*) show the role of networks as a form of social capital that the individual can exploit as a resource (Bourdieu, 1986), in link with the position a job seeking. In the narrative account, we interpret the liminal stage as a moment of transition between the surfacing I-position. Each liminal stage is "subsumed" in the successive one, becoming so a resource through which, the next change can be generated, as proposed in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Transformation of position

1. From being a researcher to be an expert in renewable materials (now in Marseille)
2. From the University position expectation to the decision to move (in the past in the UK)
3. From to be a job seeker to be a Master Student (in the past in the UK)
4. From being a specialist expert to a generic job-seeking (in the past in the UK)
5. From job seeker to be a migrant (past in Italy)
6. From to be a migrant to job seeker (past in Marseille)
7. From the expectation to the lack of answers (past in Marseille)
8. From job seeking to volunteer (past in Marseille)
9. From voluntary to the voluntary and precarious job (past in Marseille)
10. From the expectation to the lacking of answers (past in Marseille)
11. From the lacking of response to the lacking of expectations (now in Marseille)

12. From the lacking of expectation to the acceptance (now in Marseille)
13. From France to the willing to move again abroad (now in Marseille)

Here some extracts from her account to show the tension that transforms toward new position “I was waiting for answers that never arrived, so I started looking for work. I kept looking, but nothing arrived. So, I became a volunteer in an association. I also found a job as a travel agency secretary. I have never got any positive response. But yes, expectations are daily”.

The Elena account challenge with new demands, mobilizing her resources, developing skills, and collecting knowledge. These liminal passages represent well the evolution of Elena’s adaptation process in the “irreversible time” (Valsiner, 2017). Each liminal stage is a tension between a condition acquired or accepted to move in a new direction, moving in the time and space. The liminal position analysis gives an example of the role of agentic action of Elena– how she constructs her goals for and act (Somerville & Bernoth, 2001) in learning for and through work. The past became a resource to shape the new positioning and the future the projection to contain possibilities of action and self-affirmation.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, we have qualitatively analyzed workers’ intra-European mobility, focusing on a specific dynamic of migration from Italy to the southern region of France with the help of traces left on social networks. A first thematic analysis shows the orientation toward the fluidity to understanding a new culture, the moving of the interests and the body in the space and time. Qualitative research of the I-Position proposed a dialogic device within a space-time frame (chronotope) that allows displaying the I-Position to show the individual adaptation. The narratives reveal the adaptive processes during the migration. The spatial and temporal references of I-positions and stage becomes a device of the sense-making in the act during the narrative accounts.

The pushing to find a new job, following personal aspiration and the continue solicitation from the context engage the emerging of tensions toward new positions and the transformation of the multi-voiced self in space and time (Gillespie, 2012). The changing of I-position is the sum of the constant interchange between the person-environment. The past becomes a resource for the here-and-now activity, and the space-time structure constrains the possible action.

The reflections open some link to the concepts of liminality, considered as a phenomenon of being “betwixt and between” (Stenner, 2017; Turner, 1967). In educational literature, Meyer and Land (2005) suggested that liminal space is one in which someone is being transformed. The liminal experiences “are experiences that happen during occasions of significant transition, passage or disruption”, or “becomings” (Stenner, 2017, p. 14). In this paper, the liminal metaphor could be adopted to describe the mobility transformation, as a “between” the I-positions developing. The liminal dimensions show the middle space of tension where new or old position is re-shaped.

The methodology reveals the developmental perception of adaptation in the migration of this specific intra-European group. This research could be enriched by taking an interdisciplinary perspective (economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, etc.) and by taking into consideration reciprocal acculturation strategies and expectancies (Yakushko & Morgan-Consoli, 2014). It will be interesting to apply the same methodology in other contexts for a generalization process of results in different intra-European dynamics.

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