

18 – Analysis of migration from Sicily

The decision, to migrate from one's homeland in order to go and live somewhere else reflects a specific choice, either voluntary or forced, on the part of the migrant. World-wide, word-of-mouth guidelines signpost clearly to thousands of people migratory routes from dangerous or economically underdeveloped areas towards destinations considered richer and more prosperous. In a highly volatile global framework Sicily represents an area of fascinating transformation. It was originally a point of departure for countless individuals for almost a century, but has since the 1990s become a point of arrival for migratory fluxes from the south, albeit often remaining a mere stepping-stone on the way to areas further north. This emigration of our fellow-Sicilians is still the most extensive, but has been inflated by foreign transmigration. However, although the overall figures, in absolute terms, are certainly much lower than those of the resettlement during the last century, this mass departure from Sicily remains a significant indicator of the difficulties the Region is facing.

This in-depth study will be analyzing one area of this relocation, focusing on actual deletions in Sicily for those individuals who are emigrating from the island. The significance of this relocation lies in the break with one's own country of origin, rather than mere transfer from one Region to another. Before beginning with the analysis it is necessary to provide a clarification as regards the data utilized. The statistical analysis of migratory movement can be carried out thanks to the existence of local municipal registry offices, in which there are processes for individuating residents, recording demographic details (gender, age and civil status) and a contact address. Official statistics operate a form of registration characteristic of Italian administration, enabling one to highlight and measure this phenomenon very precisely. At the same time this survey mode does not allow one to estimate movement that is not shown in the anagraphic transfer, i.e. inclusion in a register of residents. In assessing the information gathered here it is worth bearing in mind this indefinite number due to mobility. On the other hand the extent of documented anagraphic movement, along with the checks that public offices (municipalities and police-stations) carry out in this regard, and the territorial dissection of the data, mean that great confidence can be bestowed on the use of the information produced to describe the phenomenon under examination.

In the period 2006-2010, there were more than 100,000 anagraphic deletions in all registry offices in Sicily, with a maximum at the beginning of the period of 108,000 and a minimum, in the last year available, of 101,200 (Tab. 18. 1). In contrast to these residential annulments, Sicily had a greater number of registrations, leading to average annual growth of 5,500 units,

resulting in the Region being transformed, however slightly, into a land of immigration. Most of the movement observed by ISTAT concerned internal relocations in Sicily, whilst relocation beyond the borders accounted for a little under a third, with a figure of 29.9% in 2010. The Italian component is by far the most prevalent among these; on the one hand, this is a sign of the (as yet) small number of foreigners living in the Region, and on the other hand, the Region's difficulty in keeping its native sons on the island.

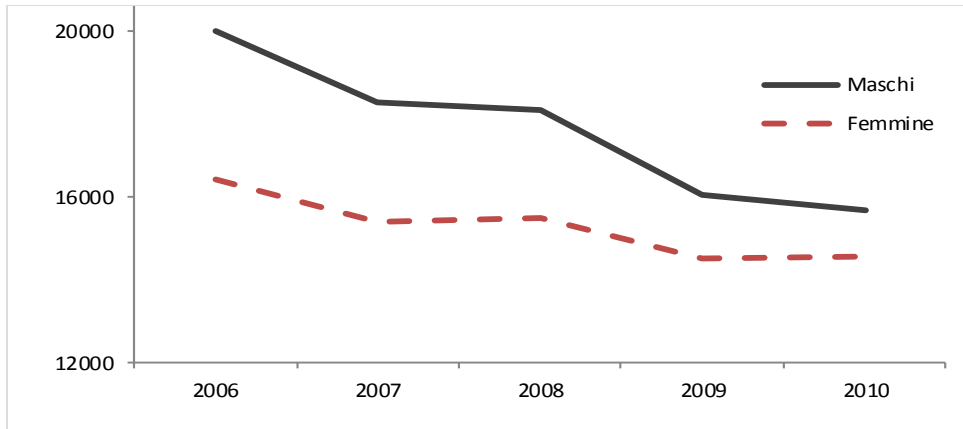
Tab. 18. 1 Deletions from Sicilian anagraphic lists

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<i>Overall deletions</i>					
Males	55.839	53.777	55.481	52.253	51.557
Females	52.170	50.172	52.380	49.902	49.650
Total	108.009	103.949	107.861	102.155	101.207
<i>Destinations outside Sicily</i>					
Males					
	20.016	18.275	18.117	16.078	15.684
Females					
	16.409	15.406	15.499	14.534	14.580
Total					
	36.425	33.681	33.616	30.612	30.264
<i>Italian nationals</i>					
Males	18.434	16.665	16.315	16.078	14.433
Females	15.359	14.251	14.069	14.534	13.290
Total	33.793	30.916	30.384	30.612	27.723
<i>% of anagraphic deletions outside Sicily</i>					
Males	35,8	34,0	32,7	30,8	30,4
Females	31,5	30,7	29,6	29,1	29,4
Total	33,7	32,4	31,2	30,0	29,9

Source: Istat data-processing

The five-year trend seems to be a falling trend; this profile is valid for both genders but affects the male component slightly more (Fig. 18. 1).

Fig. 18. 1 Deletions for migration from Sicily, per gender.



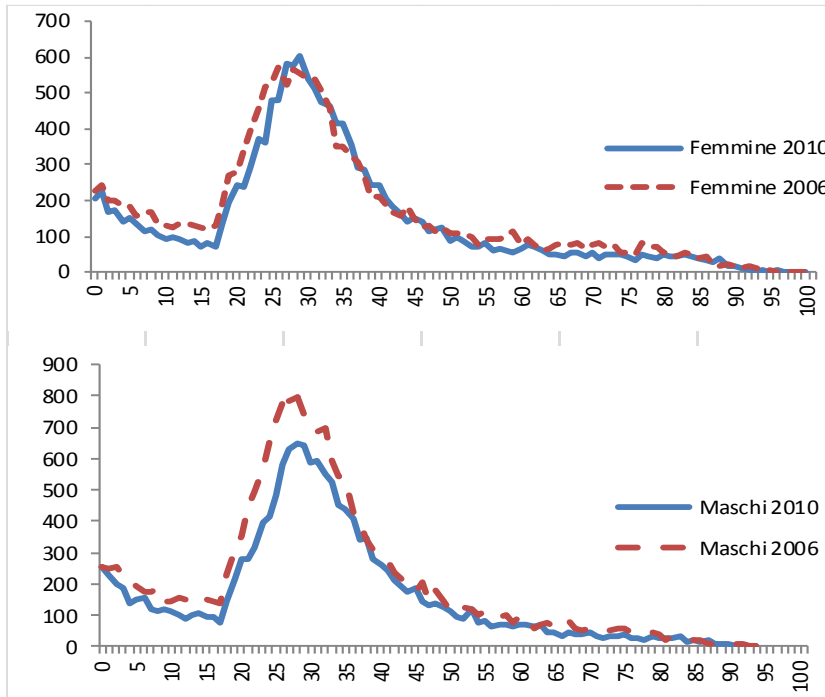
Source: Istat data-processing

The make-up of the deletions for migration from Sicily went from a 10% gap in 2006 (55% males, 45% females) to a difference of 3.6% in 2010. The difficulties in emigrating (permanently) had begun before the onset of the economic crisis in 2008 and presumably because of the gloomy outlook in a job market ever more oriented towards temporary contracts; the perseverance of females seems to point to a stronger desire to succeed, perhaps allied to a greater drive towards fulfillment and employment (as we shall try to describe subsequently) of better cultural resources.

As regards deletions the average age does not present particular variations in the period being studied, with a figure of 31.5 years for males in 2010, and 33.1 for females. However, if we consider the median age, which is probably more indicative of the “typical” age of the deletions, this rises from 28 to 29 for both sexes, in the five-year period.

Shifting our attention from the synthesis data to distribution by age, as represented in Fig.18.2, the curve initially follows a downward trend that highlights the greater movement of the very young (as members of young families that have moved) from that of adolescents; the curve subsequently follows a sharp upward path reaching its peak at about 30 years of age, and then drops quickly, thereafter declining more gradually with adult ages. The proclivity to emigrate is confirmed as being linked to an active age, mainly between 20 and 40.

Fig. 18. 2 Deletions by age – females and males



Source: Istat data-processing

The decrease in deletions from anagraphic registers in the five-year period is demonstrated by the distance between the continuous curve and the broken-line. In the lower part of Fig. 18. 2, for the male component, this is clear with regard to infancy and around the peak. On the other hand, the area between the two curves is rather different for the female component; whilst there is confirmation of the decrease for infancy (which is an indication of lesser mobility of young families), there is a certain stability in the majority classes. As already seen from the slighter reduction of the curve in Fig.18.1, this is a sign of a general perseverance on the part of females to emigrate.

There is a reduced percentage in the movement of the foreigner component towards destinations outside the Region, albeit with an increased percentage over the long term (Tab.18.2). Again restricting the analysis to the extreme years in the period under examination, their percentage rises from 7.2% to 8.4%, with a proportionally greater increase for the female component, which rose from 6.4% in 2006 to 8.8% of deletions in 2010. The foreign component present a slightly lower average age than the Italian component throughout the period, due to both the greater number of youngsters in the foreign group and because the Italians, before making a definitive move, undergo a longer period of study. Data for 2010 shows an average

(arithmetical) age of 28.8 years for males in the foreign component and 31.7 for females (compared with 31.7 and 33.2 respectively for the Italian components).

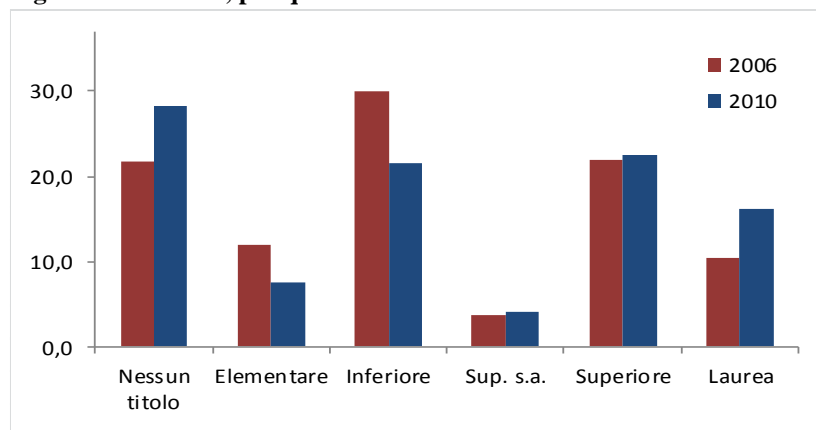
Tab. 18. 2 deletions from Sicilian anagraphic lists, by nationality (%)

	2006			2010		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
Italians	92,1	93,6	92,8	92,0	91,2	91,6
Foreigners	7,9	6,4	7,2	8,0	8,8	8,4
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Istat data-processing

A variable that is deemed critical for describing the process of long-distance emigration is the migrant subject's educational level. In the last five-year period the percentages of anagraphic deletions consisted of a limited series, but still showed a significant transformation with a greater concentration at the extremes of the scale of educational qualifications. Between 2006 and 2010 therefore, albeit faced by the afore-mentioned overall reduction, there was a clearer shift between those lacking an adequate education and those possessing a university degree.

Fig. 18. 3 Deletions, per qualification

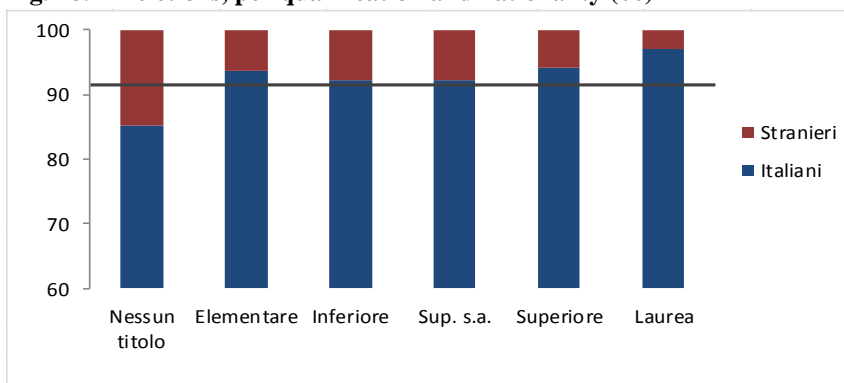


Source: Istat data-processing

An interpretation of this phenomenon might be hypothesized by considering as the main driving force behind migration the wish for a better life, achieved either through having a job or greater hope of obtaining one. Whoever has an educational qualification will have a better chance of a job and migration is therefore directly correlated to this aspect. This is true for Italians, who have a greater possibility (not only economically but also through family support) of devoting more time to education and, after obtaining a qualification, using it in

a more distant but more attractive job market. Fig. 18.4 highlights the high percentage of graduates among deleted compatriots, as compared to the average number of deleted Italians (represented by a dark line).

Fig. 18. 4 Deletions, per qualification and nationality (%)



Source: Istat data-processing

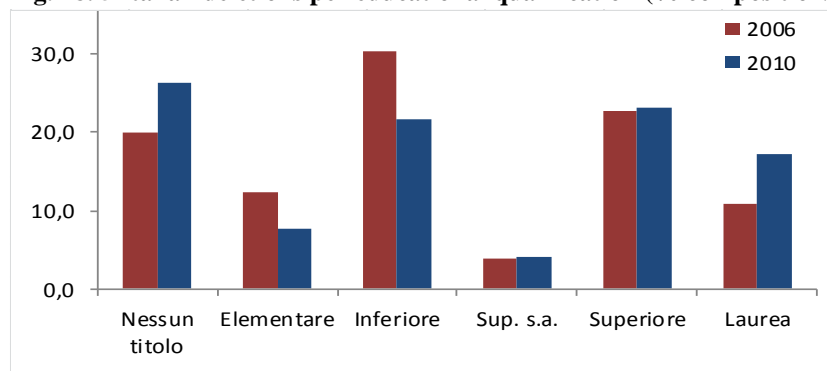
The same figure might offer an explanation as to the reason for the growth in the number of those without any educational qualifications. Considering that foreigners are more inclined to migrate, their presence in larger numbers in the resident population then leads to their increased percentage among emigrants, as already shown in Tab.18.2. However, they are more often classed contextually with those lacking educational qualifications either because they have had no education or there is difficulty in recognizing certificates awarded by countries with different educational systems to Italy. This last point probably means that these persons are registered as lacking educational qualifications at the municipal registry offices, resulting in many educated foreign individuals being underrated. This greater propensity to migrate and categorization at the lowest academic levels is shown in Fig.18.4, with the distance between the number of foreigners in that class being compared to the average numbers among the deletions, i.e. the part between the horizontal line and the peak of the histograms.

Therefore one can clearly distinguish emigration characterized by a stronger presence of Sicilians among the more educated emigrants and a greater presence of foreigners in the class of the educationally unqualified.

In endeavouring to identify a possible trend for the statistical information, only data regarding deletions of Italians is isolated, distinguished firstly by educational qualification and then by gender and age-group. This detailed examination of the overall deletions of Italian nationals demands a more complex interpretation than the one provided. In fact, the component of those without educational qualifications shows a rising trend (also for Italians), suppressing the simple causal explanation linked to the foreign component.

Data regarding educational qualifications is information that is difficult to retrieve (though one is aware that the problem persists); without trivializing the result as a problem of statistical inference, deciphering the phenomenon could be linked to the greater obstacles that those lacking educational qualifications might encounter, in trying to find work in an economic context that is already of crisis proportions. The fading of already limited hopes of finding employment, exacerbated by the on-going economic crisis, might well have encouraged emigration on the part of those lacking negotiating means (such as an educational qualification) in the job-market. In the same way as Fig. 3, but limited to deletions possessing Italian citizenship, Fig. 18.5 shows the concentration of migration at the two ends of the scale of educational qualifications. Compared to the previous scale the lower height of the bar for the unqualified shows up, along with the increased height of the bar for school-leaving certificates and degrees.

Fig. 18. 5 Italian deletions per educational qualification (% compositions)

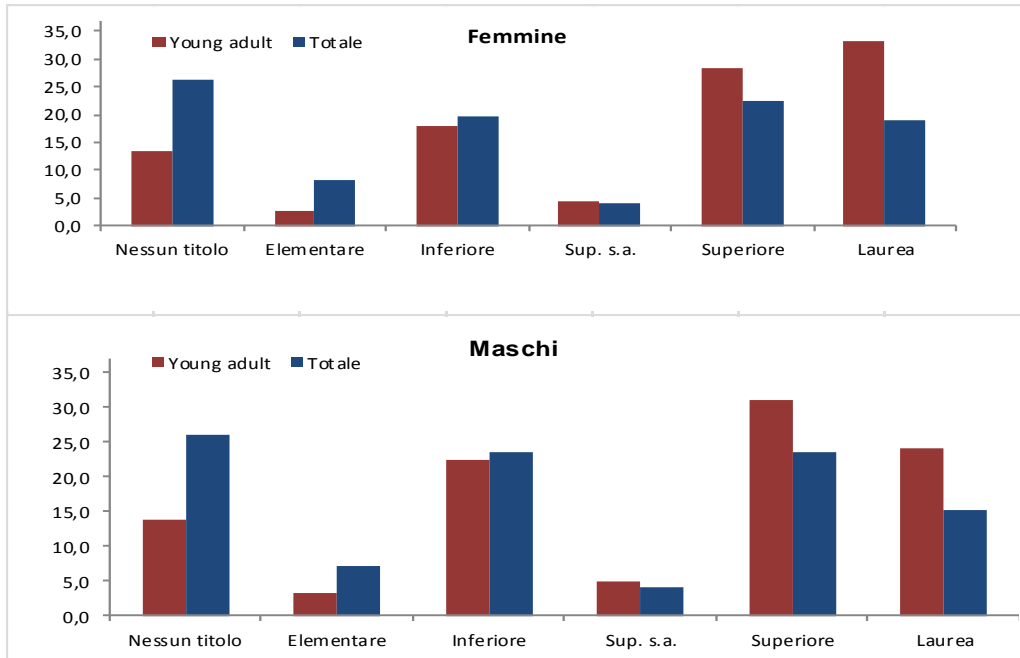


Source: Istat data-processing

Emigration of persons possessing higher skills represents a clear loss of human capital for the land of emigration. The high costs involved in continuous education and training represent an investment that, at the moment of ultimate emigration, destroys any opportunity for regeneration of wealth for the land being abandoned. The gravity of the problem manifests itself more clearly when considering the youth component of the work-force, entailing a further detailed analysis and concentrating on the so-called class of “young adults”. This is restricted by demographers to the population aged between 25 and 35, which, in the family structure of the Region, may be considered the class of young people; this is in contrast to other continental European contexts where the presence of a thirty-year-old living with his parents is considered an anomaly.

For this population-class taken as a whole, which includes those more willing to move away, the phenomenon of what has been defined as intellectual emigration clearly emerges. (Fig. 18. 6).

Fig. 18. 6 Italian deletions per educational qualification, gender and age-group - 2010 (% comp.)



Source: Istat data-processing

Restricting our comparison to the most recent data (for both males and females) the presence of citizens with a high level of education is evident. The figure conveys the strong presence of girls with school-leaving certificates and degrees among females when compared to overall female deletions. As previously mentioned, females seem to be more persevering in their desire to emigrate and the conspicuous presence of females with high educational qualifications might underline this wish for liberation on their part. In the wake of the latter result, it would seem necessary to carry out further in-depth studies, and not solely on the basis of data regarding population movement, in order to better decipher this important new social phenomenon: the stable and distinctive presence of women in the job-market.

The complexity of this phenomenon goes well beyond the objectives of this study and the information analyzed here, and is probably tracing out and portending a longer process of structural transformation in gender-relations.