

Entrepreneurial migrations and diffusion of innovations: the case of Apulia in the first half of the 19th century

Entrepreneurial
migrations

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Abstract

Purpose – Through the reconstruction of the events of some foreign entrepreneurs who worked in the territory of the Italian city of Bari in the first half of the 19th century, this paper aims to analyze the role of entrepreneurial migration in the economic development of Apulia land in this period.

Design/methodology/approach – This study adopts a theoretical framework that combines the concept of mixed embeddedness in a multifocal perspective, with the model of the diffusion of innovation focusing on the role of the so-called agency of actors, and of the network, in the dissemination of innovation. The theoretical framework is applied to multiple case studies to compare the evidence that emerged from the simultaneous analysis of several situations.

Findings – By analyzing how innovations have spread within the network of entrepreneurs of that time, it is possible to identify some relevant aspects related to the mechanisms of dissemination of innovations in the context of entrepreneurial migration. Specifically, the opportunity structure is intended in an even broader sense than indicated in the classic approach to mixed embeddedness: it is considered as the result of the joint interaction of the political, institutional and economic context of several places, and the behavioral dynamics of several groups.

Research limitations/implications – Due to the specific method chosen, the outcomes of the research might apply to a narrow context. Therefore, the results need to be tested and confirmed in further empirical studies, and by applying multiple research methods.

Practical implications – Findings are useful and significant in the analysis of the link that exists between the diffusion of innovations and migrant entrepreneurship, and then the conclusions can be applied and extended to the current phenomenon of migration-related innovations, with specific reference to developing countries.

Social implications – Findings can be applied and extended to the current phenomenon of migration-related innovations and highly skilled migration, with specific reference to developing countries.

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Originality/value – This paper contributes to shed new light on the contextual and multifocal factors that influence the development of innovations in the networks of migrant entrepreneurship, in a specific historical period and a specific context. Combining social, human and financial capital with the wider opportunity structure, this study also provides a comprehensive understanding of the modalities through which migrant and high-skilled entrepreneurs could innovate.

Keywords Entrepreneurial migration, Multifocal mixed embeddedness, Diffusion of innovations, Apulia, 19th century, Developing countries

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

In preindustrial societies, entrepreneurial migration is often associated with the process of spreading innovations. Migration supports, in fact, the diffusion of innovations from countries of origin to host countries, but also in the opposite direction, as well as within and through host countries to reach other destinations. These are not only technical elements, but also the application of best practices useful for improving the exploitation of local resources and the approach to outlet markets.

Such a type of entrepreneurial migration can be traced back to the presence of foreign operators, in particular French and Germans, in Apulia [1] in the first half of the 19th century. These entrepreneurs from industrially more developed areas chose to settle in a territory whose economy was based, until then, on agricultural activity, with few entrepreneurial initiatives in the manufacturing sector with a still artisanal and preindustrial character. It was precisely the Apulian cultivation specializations – first of the olive tree, and then of the vine – and a service sector favored by agriculture with a strong propensity to export, that offered the foreign community opportunities for inclusion in the local economic system. These opportunities were strengthened by further growth prospects in the processing industry. In this context, the innovations introduced by foreign entrepreneurs deviated from the preindustrial model of craftsmanship and semi-craftsmanship. Using centralized processing systems, in some cases, gave rise to the first forms of innovative mechanization, and in other cases to a more rational exploitation of financial capital in commercial and manufacturing activities capable of using the region's resources more efficiently.

In recent years, in the field of migration studies, great attention has been given to the theme of innovation and migrant entrepreneurs (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001; Ozgen *et al.*, 2011; Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013; Jensen, 2014; Bosetti *et al.*, 2015; Zhang and Zhang, 2016; Lissoni, 2018) giving priority to aspects related to the individual characteristics of entrepreneurs. Less importance, however, was given to exploring the social context in which innovations were introduced, the channels used for dissemination and the latter's effects on the development of regional economies.

Through the reconstruction of the events of some foreign entrepreneurs who worked in the territory of Bari, this paper intends to analyze the role of entrepreneurial migration in the economic development of Apulia in the first half of the 19th century, using an approach that combines the concept of mixed embeddedness, in a "multifocal" perspective (Kloosterman *et al.*, 1999; Bagwell, 2018; Solano *et al.*, 2022) with Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 2003), recognizing the fundamental role of the so-called agency of actors (the migrant entrepreneurs) and the network (Dell'Osa and Lippolis, 2021). Migrant entrepreneurship in Apulia has been studied by the historical-economic literature (Salvemini, 1989; Bianchi, 2000; Carrino and Salvemini, 2003; Ritovato, 2009), but little importance has been given to the interpretation of the phenomenon from the socioeconomic

and business perspective and to the mechanisms of diffusion of innovations. In the perspective adopted in the present work, the opportunity to innovate and the ability to spread innovation of migrant entrepreneurs are strongly conditioned, not only by human and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), but also by the political-institutional context and the economic context of multiple places; the behavioral dynamics – habits and customs – of several groups; and by the network of relationships.

In the following paragraph, we describe the theoretical framework by stating the peculiarities of the approach based on multifocal mixed embeddedness and on the model of the diffusion of innovations. The interpretative framework thus outlined highlights four fundamental elements:

- (1) the role of innovation;
- (2) the reference context;
- (3) the methods of diffusion of innovations; and
- (4) the role played by the network in fostering the dissemination of innovations.

Section 3 outlines some aspects of entrepreneurial migration in the Southern Italian peninsula in the first half of the 19th century, highlighting the characteristics of the entrepreneurial networks of elite migrants from different European areas. Section 4 focuses in more detail on migrant entrepreneurship in Apulia in the first half of the 19th century analyzing some important cases of entrepreneurs who played a leading role in the dissemination of innovations in the territory. These entrepreneurs managed to excel in their respective fields of activity and, with their example, led their network and, subsequently, the local population toward the application of innovative methods of production and trade. Section 5 describes the aspects that emerge from the application of the framework of the diffusion of innovations to migrant entrepreneurs in Apulia and points out the peculiarities of this region and this historical era. The last section includes concluding remarks and limitations of the research.

2. The theoretical framework

As already said, the study adopts an approach that combines the concept of *mixed embeddedness* in a multifocal perspective (Kloosterman *et al.*, 1999; Bagwell, 2018; Solano *et al.*, 2022), with the model of diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 2003), highlighting the role of the network in the diffusion and adaptation of innovation (Alvarado, 2018; Dell’Osa and Lippolis, 2021).

Based on Polanyi’s intuition, the concept of *embeddedness* [2] has found in migratory networks a fruitful field of analysis (Polanyi, 1957; Granovetter, 1985; Elo and Dana, 2019). Precisely in this context, in fact, it is evident that the actions of individuals are socially rooted, and therefore do not simply refer to atomized individuals and their motivations (Granovetter, 1985, 1995; Vertovec, 2003). On the contrary, they appear to be structured by networks, institutions and principles that characterize a given context. Dutch scholars Kloosterman and Rath (Kloosterman, *et al.*, 1999; Kloosterman and Rath, 2001) broadening the perspective of analysis, have introduced the so-called mixed embeddedness approach, which today is one of the most used in the interpretation of migratory phenomena and migrant entrepreneurship (Rath and Schutjens, 2015; Ram *et al.*, 2017) [3]. This approach is based on the assumption that migrants’ entrepreneurial activities are influenced by:

- the structure (laws, rules, market characteristics, etc.) of the places where they live and carry out their activities (institutional or structural embeddedness);

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- social network (social or relational embeddedness); and
 - individual resources and capital in its three different dimensions (Bourdieu, 1986) [4].

According to this interpretation, mixed embeddedness – that is, the combination of structural and social embeddedness – interacting with the dimension of capital, influences the business models of migrant entrepreneurs (choice of sector, business performance, internationalization, etc.) [5].

Recent studies further deepen the concept of structural embeddedness, defining it as “the degree to which immigrants’ actions are influenced by their involvement in places and/or groups” (Solano, 2016, p. 179). Starting from this consideration, it is possible, therefore, to highlight the need to further expand the investigation on resources and opportunities to include the impact generated by multiple belongings. Reference is made to the possibility that immigrant entrepreneurs, in pursuit of business opportunities, relate to various places and social affiliations (the country of origin, the city of migration, relatives, compatriots and other third parties located in different countries), which influence their activities in a significant way (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003; Solano *et al.*, 2022). This “multifocality”, therefore, unfolds through the combined characteristics of various places and reference groups, which produce new conditions and business opportunities (*opportunity structure*) (Bagwell, 2015; Jones *et al.*, 2010).

If the concept of embeddedness has a “static” meaning, the concept of social capital expresses the dynamic aspect of the resources that are conveyed by the network, which makes them available: information, fiduciary ties, legitimation, know-how and material resources (Ambrosini, 2006; Portes, 1998).

Given these premises, it should be noted that, especially in developing societies, entrepreneurial migration must be considered in the light of interconnection with the process of diffusion of innovations. The latter are introduced in territories that, although far from the places of origin, have characteristics that can best be reconciled with the scope of the innovations themselves. To investigate this aspect related to transnational migrant entrepreneurship [6], it is useful to recall the *diffusion of innovation model*, a theory formulated by Everett Rogers (2003) to illustrate how innovation is adopted and disseminated among members of society, through different channels, over time. The theory describes how innovation – understood as any “idea, practice or object perceived as new” – spreads within society. This diffusion, as Rogers explains in his book, corresponds to the “process by which innovation is communicated through certain channels [mass media or interpersonal channels], over time, among members of a social system.” The framework focuses on the speed with which different individuals, within a social system, adopt an innovation (we speak of the adoption rate) [7]. According to Rogers’ diffusion of innovation framework, “in general, innovations that are perceived by receivers as having greater relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, observability, and less complexity will be adopted more rapidly than other innovations.”

The important points of this theoretical approach are related to the following elements:

- The *definition* of innovation: Schumpeter (1934) referred to innovation as an intrinsic quality of entrepreneurs because they contribute to the economic improvement of society by starting new businesses where customers are willing to pay for this novelty. “A novel combination of knowledge, resources, etc. subject to attempts at commercialization – it is essentially the process through which new ideas are generated and put into commercial practice –” (Shah *et al.*, 2014). Innovation is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon in which scientific

research, the continuous technological evolution of companies and the growth of demand interact. Thanks to innovations, the entrepreneur increases the company's competitiveness and conquers new markets. Innovations rarely remain isolated and often tend to crowd together into clusters and concentrate in specific sectors (e.g. textile, chemical and automotive) (Dosi *et al.*, 1992a).

- The *context* in which innovation is introduced. The introduction of innovation takes place within a system, which influences its diffusion in several ways. This context is also exposed to changes over time: opportunities for disruptive innovation or incremental adaptation can be better observed by framing the social context *ex ante* and *ex post* (Bruland and Mowery, 2006; Rogers, 2004).
- The *dissemination* of innovative business ideas among different actors, entrepreneurs, or consumers. Specifically, within this context, reference is made to the network and therefore to social connections. Particular emphasis has been placed on how each individual (change agent) can informally influence the attitudes or behaviors of other individuals "with relative frequency" [8].

In light of the above, combining the theoretical approaches it is possible to highlight that:

- at the institutional level (institutional embeddedness), migrant entrepreneurs are influenced by the practices and market conditions of many places;
- at the relational level (relational embeddedness), by social contacts, within the network and beyond, with different reference groups; and
- considering the concept of human capital, transnational entrepreneurs [9] are bearers of resources, knowledge, know-how, as well as relational capital (dynamic aspect linked to the transfer of resources and knowledge).

The networks represent, therefore, the channels through which the effects of diffusion of innovation flow and the contaminations are made possible by the action of individuals understood as social actors.

The dialectical relationship between static and dynamic dimensions – between *embeddedness* and social capital – contributes, in fact, to considering individuals within migratory networks as actors, embedded in fields that structure their vision of reality and influence their behavior. In this context, literature pays particular attention to the cognitive dimension of human capital, analyzing the dynamics of knowledge transfer within networks, especially for the critical role played by highly qualified immigrants. They can be defined as mediators of social capital in support of the development of their home country (Meyer, 2011, p. 159), and they are not only scientists and academics but also entrepreneurs (Discua Cruz and Cerrato Sabillon, 2019). In this regard, it is appropriate to specify how social capital can have both a dimension represented by "ties" – relationships between affinity groups that strengthen the bonds between the members of the network themselves – and a dimension of "bridging" that refers to relationships outside one's group that extend the relationships between individuals and networks (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998).

In the light of the perspective outlined, moreover, the dynamics of the transfer of resources and knowledge do not appear to be linear processes but are characterized by feedback and even circular mechanisms that involve, in the first place, the country of origin and the host country, but which can be extended, in a multifocal perspective, to groups and places different from these.

In the perspective analyzed, therefore, migrant entrepreneurs use a mix of local and transnational networks, links and bridges to acquire skills and resources (Solano, 2016;

Vacca *et al.*, 2018) and disseminate them within channels and networks. As will be highlighted, in the case of migrant entrepreneurs in the 19th-century Apulia region, the opportunity to innovate and the diffusion of innovation for migrant entrepreneurs are strongly conditioned, as well as by human capital (skills and experiences), also by the context factors of several places (from the opportunity structure: institutional and economic characteristics) and from the network of relationships (relational embeddedness and social capital). According to a circular dynamic, they, in turn, represent the actors, the subjects responsible for the transfer of knowledge, skills and know-how, within those same social fields that shape their way of thinking and influence their behavior.

3. Entrepreneurial migrations and elite migrations in the southern Italian peninsula

3.1 The historical background

The phenomenon of entrepreneurial migration in the territory that was once part of the Kingdom of Naples has been widely debated by the literature, which has highlighted the characteristics of the networks of relationships that linked foreign entrepreneurs operating in this area. The first surveys conducted on the foreign entrepreneurial presence in Italy were carried out immediately after the outbreak of the First World War (Nitti, 1915) when political needs related to the climate of war existing in Europe had suggested the need to reduce the extent of foreign investments in Italy. In later times, the literature that dealt with the theme of southern industrial development in the preunification era could not ignore the contribution made by foreign entrepreneurs to the development of some industrial sectors (Hertner, 1984), particularly in the wool and cotton sector and in textiles in general (De Matteo, 1984; de Majo, 1989) and the metalworking sector (De Rosa, 1968). These were still underdeveloped sectors in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, for which the Royal Court recognized entrepreneurs' important customs facilities that made it economically convenient to plant new factories in these territories.

In more recent times, the presence of foreign entrepreneurs in the South has aroused the interest of historiography, which has focused on the networks of entrepreneurs, who acquired different characteristics depending on their geographical origin. Caglioti (2008, 2009), in particular, has studied Swiss migration in Campania since the early decades of the 19th century, highlighting the attitude of elite Swiss migrants to integrate and interact with political power and the economic environment. The networks of relations between financiers, industrialists and merchants of the same ethnicity played a fundamental role in determining the success or failure of entrepreneurial activity, in the same way, the Protestant religion supported the creation of ethnically based business groups that involved Swiss and Germans, and which favored the economic success of entrepreneurial activities headed by foreign entrepreneurs (Caglioti, 2008, p. 220).

The Protestant creed had therefore played a role of primary importance in the creation of business groups restricted only to operators of Central European origin, on the contrary, in the case of the migrations of entrepreneurs of the Catholic faith in the southern Italian peninsula, the religious belief common to that of the local population constituted a factor of amalgam between different ethnic groups and, from the commercial point of view, it fostered the creation of mixed companies between foreigners and Italians. This is the case, for example, of the French, who interacted very well with the local elites thanks to a series of factors, including the following: common religious elements, a long tradition of relations with the French area and the fact that political and economic relations between the Kingdom of Naples and France had intensified a lot during the Napoleonic period. For these reasons, the French often participated in business companies involving wealthy members of the local

elite, provided that the latter had an initial capital to invest and a network of acquaintances and contacts with the community. While the first factor allowed transalpine entrepreneurs not to have to worry excessively about raising capital, being able instead to concentrate on innovation and industrial organization (Rovinello, 2008, p. 203), the second was useful in relating to the markets of supply of raw materials or with the outlet markets.

Mainly technical reasons are instead at the base of the establishment in the Neapolitan area of numerous entrepreneurs and technicians of British origin. It can be observed that the construction of the first nucleus of the Campania railway network, starting in 1839, has favored the arrival in Naples of technicians and engineers from England, and has given local impetus to the metalworking industry (De Rosa, 1968, p. 51). Only the British possessed, in those years, the technical skills for the installation of a new railway network.

It can be observed that the motivations for which many foreign entrepreneurs settled in Southern Italy during the 19th century can be attributed primarily to the following factors:

- a favorable protectionist policy practiced by the Bourbons;
- the availability of low-cost labor and low-cost raw materials;
- tax incentives and various privileges; and
- lack of competition (Caglioti, 2006).

Less importance in this context and during this historical period had the patent rights recognized by the Kingdom [10], contrary to what happened in the period following the Unification of Italy (Nuvolari and Vasta, 2015, 2017). The extreme difficulty with which entrepreneurs could obtain a patent and the short duration of the right, usually set at five years, were not sufficient incentives for the relocation of foreign manufacturers [11]. Finally, if we consider the economic conditions of the areas of origin of migrant entrepreneurs, it can be observed that these countries had a manufacturing system characterized by a high level of technological progress. This factor undoubtedly promoted the formation of human capital but also created some problems. The protectionist policies implemented in Europe in the early 19th century, in fact, limited the number of exportable products abroad, leading to an extremely competitive market characterized by an excess of supply and therefore low profitability. This, in turn, prompted entrepreneurs to seek better operating conditions abroad (Caglioti, 2006, p. 67 and 280; Lupo, 2017, p. 94).

These are therefore the common features of elite foreign migration to the South of the Italian peninsula in the first half of the 19th century. Beyond the personal stories and *modus operandi* of business groups, made up mainly of entrepreneurs belonging to the same nationality, in this paper we intend to study in more precise details the mechanisms through which elite migratory flow has favored the spread of innovations, in some cases coming to change the economic system of the host territory radically.

3.2 Main socioeconomic characteristics of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Apulia

In the first half of the 19th century, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies occupied the southern part of the land that, after 1861, would become Italy [12]. It adopted this name in 1816, absorbing the two preexisting kingdoms: the Kingdom of Naples, which occupied the mainland, and the Kingdom of Sicily, which occupied the homonymous island [13]. The economy of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was primarily based on agriculture characterized by precapitalistic agrarian structures, such as large estates, which featured extensive cultivation of cereals and pasture in a context of severe lack of productive investments. Some progress in agricultural production was recorded around the mid-19th century when regions like Apulia and Sicily specialized in crops such as olives, citrus fruits,

almonds and wine, and gained lucrative positions in major European markets (Bevilacqua, 1997). There were small-scale manufacturing activities concentrated in large cities, inheriting the tradition of Renaissance guilds [14]. By the early 19th century, they operated without guild protections in a market open to competition, undermining their development opportunities and preventing them from growing into large-scale industrial production. Except for the royal manufactures of San Leucio, a silk factory founded, financed and directly managed by the Bourbon Royal House, located near the Reggia di Caserta, there were no other significant industrial facilities in the continental area of the Kingdom by the end of the 18th century (Antonelli *et al.*, 2017).

The situation began to change with the Napoleonic Decade when some manufacturing activities characterized by a more complex production process were established. These were managed by foreign entrepreneurs using machinery and methods introduced from abroad (Mori, 1989, p. 615). Thus, the slow path of certain areas in Southern Italy toward initial industrialization began (Davis, 1979). The most modern industrial settlements in the continental area of the southern Italian peninsula were located in Campania and Apulia, in sectors typical of the first industrial revolution: wool and cotton textiles, metalworking and agroindustry (De Rosa, 1973; De Matteo, 2007; De Matteo, 2013).

Given the impracticality of overcoming the technical-scientific gap through independent training in these socioeconomic conditions, the process of disseminating industrial practices took the route of on-the-job learning in the factories of foreigners or the replication of successful industrial experiences. In the former case, the typical path for new southern industrialists involved working in partnership or under the employment of foreign entrepreneurs before gaining independence, establishing their businesses and founding similar industries. The imitative process, a typical means of catching up in industrial development (Gerschenkron, 1962), played a substantial role in the modernization of southern entrepreneurship, especially concerning the introduction of process innovations. In fact, for local operators, the choice to start similar production activities to those established by foreigners meant abandoning entrenched forms of preindustrial production to adopt organizational business models and, above all, technological innovations introduced by foreign industrialists (Mori, 1989; Lupo, 2017).

At the beginning of the 19th century, the majority of investments in the manufacturing sector were concentrated in Campania, where customs protection facilitated the settlement of foreign entrepreneurs, alongside investments made by local industrialists. It was precisely from the experience of the Campanian metalworking and manufacturing industry that some internal migration flows originated, leading to investments by foreign entrepreneurs in Apulia. The economic situation in Apulia described by De Cesare in the mid-19th century presents an image of a diverse production system in each of the three provinces that constituted this territory. The province of Foggia (Capitanata) had a predominantly agricultural and pastoral economy conducted with archaic techniques, making it less productive. The province of Bari (Terra di Bari), on the contrary, had a more productive agriculture conducted with more modern techniques, accompanied by a lively manufacturing system mostly based on small-scale production activities and larger industrial facilities that had benefited from the influx of foreign capital (De Cesare, 1853, p. 89). Finally, the province of Lecce (Terra d'Otranto) had an economy primarily based on pastoralism, cereal cultivation, and, above all, trade with significant commercial ports in Brindisi, Gallipoli and Taranto (De Cesare, 1853, p. 152).

4. Migrant entrepreneurs and the diffusion of innovations in Apulia: an analysis based on historical case studies

The presence of foreign operators in Apulia and, in particular, in the province of Terra di Bari, the most densely populated area of this region, is characterized as an example of elite

migration (Rovinello, 2006, p. 284), whether it represents the continuation of entrepreneurial initiatives already started previously in other areas of the South, or that it marks the beginning of new business activities. The arrival of foreign entrepreneurs in the province of Terra di Bari, starting from the early 19th century, activates a process of change in the general economic framework essentially based on agricultural activity and with few entrepreneurial initiatives in the manufacturing sector characterized by a modest productive activity (La Sorsa, 1913, p. 16; Ritrovato, 2009, p. 633).

Referring to the interpretative scheme outlined above, it is possible to investigate the methods of diffusion of the innovations introduced by foreign entrepreneurs in Apulia in the first half of the 19th century, using the approach of multiple case studies (Flynn *et al.*, 1990; Yin, 1994, 2018), through the analysis of emblematic examples of innovative entrepreneurs. In this way, it is possible to analyze the elements of the framework, comparing the evidence that emerged from the simultaneous analysis of several cases. Specifically, three examples of entrepreneurship are studied, to analyze factors of context, type of innovations and their dissemination, highlighting the contribution of human and relational capital, as well as the circular dynamics of knowledge transfer and know-how.

4.1 *French-speaking entrepreneurs*

Starting with the analysis of contextual factors, it should be noted, first of all, that in the Apulian territory the olive tree and the vine cultivation specializations, as well as the agriculture with a strong propensity to export, offered foreign migrant entrepreneurs many opportunities to enter the local economy, with good growth prospects in the processing industry (Davis, 1979, p. 45; Salvemini, 1989, p. 200; Ritrovato, 2009, p. 633). From the point of view of manufacturing production, one of the factors that created the conditions for the launch of production initiatives by migrant entrepreneurs was represented by the presence of large extensions of olive groves, the starting point of a production chain that included oil mills, plants for the extraction of oil from olive pomace and soap factories (Ritrovato, 2009, p. 634).

Among the first foreign entrepreneurs who worked in this production sector, we can consider the French Pierre Ravanas, who arrived from Aix-en-Provence in 1825 to exploit some important innovations in the olive oil production sector. Concerning the opportunity structure, it should be specified that in 1826 Ravanas obtained from the Neapolitan court a valid license to plant exclusively for the next five years the method of processing the olives with a hydraulic press already in use in France, also enjoying the exemption from customs duties on exported oil (Lupo, 2017, p. 86). Those benefits can be considered as some of the tools for regulating economic behavior, of an incentive type, which has made possible the establishment and subsequent diffusion of the method introduced by the French entrepreneur. The technique developed by Ravanas was a compromise between old methods and new experiments that he had observed in the Provençal circuit of table oil, in the Marseille factories, and during a journey to Flanders. After crushing the olives with a double mill, the pressing would take place in multiple stages. Initially, there would be two passes through wooden presses to extract higher-quality oil, and finally, through a final pressing with a hydraulic iron press, which was more powerful and capable of extracting additional oil of lower quality. The wooden presses would have depleted the olive paste, making it suitable for processing with hydraulic presses (Carrino and Salvemini, 2003, p. 511). Specifically, the revolutionary scope of Ravanas' innovations within the Apulian context was linked both to the reduction of grinding times, with the use of double millstone, and to the possibility of pressing olives with the hydraulic press. Before Ravanas, the processing of olives in Apulia was carried out in a traditional way, following archaic techniques, through

single millstones and presses operated by animal force or with the intervention of man. The olive harvest, which began in autumn and lasted throughout the winter, generated a continuous flow of olives in the mills. Here, the very long processing times required the storage of the olives in underground deposits or on the surface, with the consequence that oil production assumed flavor and consistency compatible exclusively with the industrial use of oil, and not with human nutrition. In addition to the common use for lighting, it was purchased by the English wool industry for the carding of wool and by the soap factories of Marseilles as a raw material, instead of animal fat (Chorley, 1965; Montaudou, 2005).

After the spread of the processing method introduced by Ravanas, however, it is possible to point out that not only the processing times of the olives were significantly reduced, but also the quality of the oil became better, so much so that large quantities could also be successfully exported for food use. After implementing the techniques of processing olives, the next step for Ravanas was to produce, and no longer import, the hydraulic presses patented by him, proposing himself as a supplier for the increasingly numerous “Provençal” mills that stood throughout the region. Following an imitative model, the new oil plants made by local producers in the following decades adopted all the technologies introduced by Ravanas and determined the definitive affirmation of olive oil in the Province of Bari.

In this way, therefore, the initial innovation has produced further consequences on the territory, spreading know-how and creating new job opportunities. Between 1830 and 1845, Pierre Ravanas became the most important oil industrialist in Apulia and the only foreign entrepreneur repeatedly reported in the industrial census carried out in the Province of Bari in 1840 by the Interior Ministry [15]. His work, however, must not be considered only in the light of the entrepreneurial result, but also in terms of the fact that he had led to an evolution in the region’s oil production, such as generating benefits not only for local farmers but also for traders and final consumers.

It is also necessary to record that he was originally from Provence, and it was precisely toward the Mediterranean ports of France that much of the flow of oil produced in those years in Apulia was directed. He had been the architect not only of the diffusion in the South of Italy of innovations typical of very distant areas, but he had worked to promote the rooting of his innovative processing methods throughout the Apulian area, from the territory of Bari to the hinterland of Taranto and Salento. Throughout his entrepreneurial activity, he maintained strong links with the territories of origin which, in the circular perspective mentioned above, also constituted the outlet markets of choice for his production.

With specific reference to relational dynamics, in the development of his business, he was able to rely on an already existing network around the Apulian olive production. It is no coincidence that the foreign presence in the region, until then, was mainly made up of French-speaking citizens including, in addition to Ravanas himself, the shopkeepers Sue, Avigdor, Durand and Felice Garibaldi from Nice. The presence of these French-speaking entrepreneurs constituted the legacy transmitted by the Napoleonic decade. To witness the multifocal nature of networks, represented by the simultaneous interrelation with several places and reference groups (Bagwell, 2018; Solano *et al.*, 2022), these traders were already active in the production and marketing of olive oil for export to Central Europe and in the production of sulfide oil for soap factories across the Alps (Ritrovato, 2009, p. 634; Tessari, 2008). The qualitative and quantitative increase, obtained as a result of Ravanas’ innovations, led to an improvement in exports that contributed to the economic development of the region. The French, in this context, were not yet classifiable as industrialists; the wide economic space reserved for marketing made them, in fact, shopkeepers capable of integrating production steps into their commercial activity. They had, however, already

passed a level of proto-industrial organization and looked with confidence to the outlet on international markets (Bianchi, 2000, p. 25).

Another factor that, without a doubt, connotes the relational dimension and, specifically, the degree of social embeddedness, was constituted by the common religious feeling. This circumstance favored the rapid integration of French entrepreneurs with the merchant bourgeoisie of the Bari territory, strengthening an already strong propensity for naturalization, through marriages or the establishment of commercial companies with the citizens of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Rovinello, 2008, p. 199; Ritrovato, 2009, p. 635).

4.2 German-speaking entrepreneurs

Although differently, the religious component assumed importance also in the experience of the community of German-speaking entrepreneurs who arrived in the city of Bari around the 1930s and 1940s of the 19th century. These entrepreneurs become within a few years the industrial leadership holders of the province and their common religious beliefs formed a link to facilitate business between the members of many families of Central European origin operating in the province of Terra di Bari. They were Swiss, Prussians and Austrians, all German-speaking and Protestant, united by a common entrepreneurial history that had seen them born textile or metalworking industrialists. They founded their entrepreneurial activities in the provinces of Campania, first, and then moved to Bari to found new companies.

Also, concerning these entrepreneurs, therefore, it is possible to focus attention on the weight that religious belief, family ties, friendships and relationships with compatriots, played in the start-up and development of the entrepreneurial activity. A high concentration of entrepreneurial activities managed by subjects belonging to the same community in the same sector represented an element that fostered the development of the activity, ensuring the necessary rooting in the fabric of the place of destination and the necessary social capital (Poettinger, 2012).

These entrepreneurs, as well as Ravanas, overcame the preindustrial model of artisanal and semi-artisanal manufacturing and produced with centralized processing for a market that included the entire Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, introducing the first forms of innovation in the mechanical sector. Although personal and entrepreneurial events led them to sectoral diversification with significant developments in trade and finance, in the mid-19th century they dedicated their activities mainly to industrial production, making use of important innovations in the textile and engineering sector (La Sorsa, 1913, p. 256; Bianchi, 1995, p. 203). These entrepreneurs acquired the technical knowledge and entrepreneurial skills in their places of origin and then successfully perfected them in the province of Salerno, where they participated in the process of industrialization of the territory through the establishment of textile industries and taking an interest in both the production process and maintenance services. When, at the end of the 1830s, the Salerno market showed signs of saturation because of the excess of supply and the consequent high competition between producers, some of them chose to replicate their entrepreneurial experience in another context, the province of Terra di Bari, that presented an opportunity structure of great attractiveness: a growing population, good availability of raw materials, an outlet market with promising demand and a port through which to convey exports.

It is also possible to highlight that the transfer to Bari from Naples or Salerno became the common denominator of all industrial initiatives by the Swiss, Austrians and Germans. Julius Züblin, a Swiss from St. Gallen, and Friedrich Marstaller, from Frankfurt, am Main, had since 1841 founded Marstaller, Züblin and C. in Bari, dedicated to the production and marketing of cotton fabrics (Ritrovato, 2009, p. 636). A few years later, in 1846, Giovanni

Nickmann, an Austrian from Hermannstadt, arrived in Bari and after two years he started the production of wool and cotton fabrics (Bianchi, 2000, p. 26).

The local context was therefore characterized by the possibility of having a large and low-cost workforce: this represents one of the most important location factors for the establishment of industrial initiatives by foreign operators [16]. The high population density, on the one hand, guaranteed cheap labor; on the other, it made this province and, more particularly its capital Bari, one of the most interesting outlet markets for textile production. The low wage levels, associated with the wide use of home processing, in this period favored labor-intensive production, such as cotton textiles in the first mechanization phase, and led Nickmann, Züblin and Marstaller to choose Bari for the company's expansion beyond the borders of Campania, in Apulian territory that, among other things, also offered good possibilities for on-site sourcing of the raw material. The cultivation of cotton, in fact, was a significant aspect of Apulian agriculture in the 19th century, providing about one-third of the production for the entire Southern Italy and fuelling a substantial domestic textile industry. In 1876, there were approximately 8,700 looms in operation throughout the province of Bari (Sada, 1991, p. 65). Among the factors of location, therefore, the opportunities offered by the modernization of outdated production techniques and the organization into large, centralized structures of activities already present in proto-industrial form should be included. The establishment of the first industrial spinning mills and weaving mills ensured, at the beginning of the 19th century, an oligopolistic position that, beyond Bourbon customs protection, was powered by economies of scale previously unknown in the sector, consolidated technical expertise and knowledge of market placement.

Similarly to what was recorded in the previous case, these entrepreneurs also implemented a process of spreading innovative business ideas through the use of cheap labor for the production of fabrics with modern machinery and at very competitive costs. The cotton textile sector was, however, only the starting point because they soon understood that local agricultural productions with high added value could be enhanced by their network of German entrepreneurs and Protestant faith, and therefore they subsequently started a process of despecialization. Drawing on Salerno's experience and understanding that the specialization of entrepreneurial activities could create problems in case of market saturation, they embarked on the path of horizontal diversification, first extending their interest to other agricultural productions, then integrating into their entrepreneurial activity services for which they previously turned to third parties. So, they started the production and export of oil, almonds, and dried fruit in Northern Europe, the production and export of wine, and they engaged also in the service sector, participating in shipping and insurance companies up to carrying out financial and credit activities.

The multifocal network also assumed great importance in this case: German entrepreneurs were supplied from German manufacturing circuits from which they purchased mechanical components, both in the motherland and from German artisans who already worked permanently in Southern Italy. The network of commercial relations that connected German traders operating in Italy with the motherland allowed them to send loads of oil and agricultural products to northern Europe, obtaining good profits. The experience recorded in the provinces of Campania, moreover, had allowed these entrepreneurs to understand the extent of the economic possibilities that a network of business partners could guarantee. It is no coincidence that the first German entrepreneurs who emigrated to Apulia attracted a substantial presence of compatriots capable of creating new entrepreneurial synergies in a territory with unexplored potential.

However, the Germans' experience in Salerno had also shown them what mistakes to avoid. The study of the events of Protestant entrepreneurs of German origin in the province

of Terra di Bari shows that, contrary to what happened previously in the area of Salerno, they decided not to concentrate their investments in a single productive sector (Caglioti, 1997, p. 247), but to diversify their investments in several areas of interest. Julius Züblin and Friedrich Marstaller, for example, who in Salerno invested in the cotton textile sector also in partnership with the Vonwillers (Caglioti, 2006, p. 302; Caglioti, 1997, p. 260), once in Bari chose to diversify their investments. With Marstaller, Züblin and C., they produced and exported oil, almonds and dried fruit, but also took on the representation of the Italian Insurance Company and the shipping companies Fred. Leyland and C. and Real Dutch Company (Ritrovato, 2009, p. 640).

It is possible to identify, also in this case, not only feedback dynamics, but even circular ones in the process of diffusion of innovation, concerning cultural aspects, business and commercial practices. Reference is made, in particular, to the process of dissemination of knowledge and transfer of skills induced not only in the places of origin but also in other places (e.g. Salerno, as a place of first immigration) and within various groups, by migrant entrepreneurs, in their function as mediators of social capital (Discua Cruz and Cerrato Sabillon, 2019, Dell'Osa and Lippolis, 2021).

4.3 *Wilhelm Friedrich Lindemann*

The same model of entrepreneurship recurred also in the metalworking sector, with the arrival from Salerno of Wilhelm Friedrich Lindemann, a mechanical engineer born in Glückstadt, in Prussia in 1809. Lindemann's case deserves a separate treatment because his entrepreneurial activity is strongly suited to engineering innovations. He had settled in 1836 in Salerno, where he established a workshop active in the field of repair of textile machinery of the surrounding industries. With the crisis of the Salerno textile sector, in 1850 Lindemann decided to move to Bari (Petroni, 1912, p. 252). Here he found that a context characterized by a booming agri-food industry required the presence of metalworking industries capable of supporting the production effort through the realization of process innovations and the maintenance of plants already in operation.

Lindemann is the most relevant example of how a broad opportunity structure – i.e. influenced by the political and institutional context, the economic context and the behavior of various target groups – can affect the possibilities of developing innovative business ideas and how they can be disseminated. He learned in Prussia the techniques of the mechanical industry, and as a young worker, he perfected his skills in the maintenance activities of the textile factories of Campania. He arrived in Salerno as an already mature entrepreneur and the final phase of his production activity took place in Bari, where he created the largest metalworking industry in Apulia. He initially worked in support of the German cotton mills that had already been active in the area for several years. The factory produced complete plants for industrial facilities, materials for the railway, boilers for commercial ships and the Royal Navy (Bianchi, 2000, p. 86). A section of the plant was capable of processing mechanical products to meet the diversified needs of the clientele. Gradually, Lindemann's activity shifted from local customers to supplying entrepreneurs in other areas of the Italian territory, focusing on products useful for the construction of urban service networks – such as water pipelines, lighting systems and transportation systems – which were experiencing a period of significant expansion at that time. In Apulia, he also played a fundamental role in the dissemination of know-how at the local level, through the training of new generations of Bari workers, who would later become entrepreneurs in the metalworking sector.

Also, in Lindemann's activity, the network assumed a very important role: at the time of the establishment of his industry in Bari he knew his main customers and knew the German circuits from which to buy the machinery and mechanical components to be used in his business. In the area of Bari, he also had strong ties with the German financial circuits from which he drew funding that allowed him to expand his production activity. With Lindemann, the metalworking production of Bari assumed for the first time the guise of a centralized industry of a modern type, animated by workers and steam engines, illuminated by electric lamps that used energy produced inside the plant. In the same way as the German entrepreneurs who preceded him in the province of Bari, Guglielmo Lindemann, while remaining in the field of industrial activity, implemented a process of progressive production despecialization. In 1864, he added to the initial production of steel and engineering works, always in the area of his factory, a soap factory that used oil extracted from the olive pomace, which he supplied outside. In 1875, he decided to produce it on his own, creating a sulfide oil factory attached to the soap factory and using a drying system of the pomace of his invention, protected by patent throughout the Kingdom. Also, for the energy needed to move the plants and to illuminate the premises, he became autonomous with a small power station inside the main plant. Thus, he developed technologies and knowledge that earned him the acquisition of orders for the construction of power plants on behalf of various municipal administrations in Apulia and Calabria (Ritrovato, 2009, p. 641).

5. Discussion

From what has been said, we can see that the first migrant entrepreneurs to have understood the potential of the Apulian territory were the French. During the first half of the century, the activity of French entrepreneurs was carried out above all in the agro-industrial chain and was rooted in an almost monopolistic form by the favorable Bourbon customs policy. Besides this, it is evident that they had a natural commercial hegemony on a fundamental outlet market, such as that of the Alps, where olive oil was indispensable for the conservation and canning of sardines (Bertolini, 1904, p. 3429) as well as for soap processing.

The example of Ravanos shows how an innovative entrepreneur – from an area where innovations in the olive oil supply chain were already very developed – could use a mix of local and transnational networks to develop his business. As a result of his initiative, the presence of French agents and entrepreneurs in Apulia increased considerably. Moreover, thanks to the work of the French entrepreneur, the population, indirectly benefiting from his innovations and from the work of the network of French-speaking traders, took great advantage greatly from the processing of olives in the Provençal mill. The experience of Ravanos legitimized, therefore, the use of new processing techniques and allowed the transmission of knowledge and know-how. Starting from 1831, in fact, at the end of the right, all local producers had adopted the Provençal mill and the techniques introduced by Ravanos, while the latter continued production, operating from a condition of advantage over competitors.

The abundance of raw materials undoubtedly played a fundamental role in attracting foreign investments and entrepreneurs, especially those operators who were mainly dedicated to export trade. In this perspective, therefore, we can speak of Pierre Ravanos as the first migrant entrepreneur and innovator in the Schumpeterian sense to have carried out his activity in the province of Terra di Bari. The latter must be credited with having seen in the abundant oil production and the antiquated techniques of processing olives, the ideal scenario for the exploitation of an industrial patent from which to draw competitive

advantages in terms of reduction of production costs, better product quality, increase in yields per quintal and expansion of the market.

Among the factors of localization, were the opportunities offered by the modernization of backward production techniques and by the organization, in large, centralized structures, of activities already present in the proto-industrial form. The creation of the first industrial spinning and weaving mills ensured, especially in the decades that preceded the unification of Italy [17], an oligopolistic position. This, beyond the Bourbon customs protection, was fueled by economies of scale, hitherto unknown in the industry, consolidated technical skills, knowledge of the placement markets, and, above all, operating spaces left free by the local bourgeoisie. The difficulty of having fixed assets and access to technological innovations, as well as the lack of aptitude to accept business risk, has slowed down local initiatives for a long time. These circumstances represented the elements that favored the rooting of foreign entrepreneurship in the area of Bari, playing a more important role than the Bourbon policy of customs protection. As observed by [Caglioti \(2006, p. 84\)](#), the latter cannot be considered the main cause, but only one of the many conditions of the opportunity structure that have contributed to determining the attraction exerted by the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies on foreign entrepreneurs. These conditions include technological and financial barriers to entry, abundant and cheap labor and the possibility of obtaining rights and licenses.

German entrepreneurs, unlike the French, have exploited a mix of local and transnational networks to develop their business in textiles and trade in agricultural products. The strength of their entrepreneurial network was the Protestant religious belief that bound the members of the network together. Exploiting the potential of a strong network, the Germans multiplied investment opportunities, by shifting from textile production to trade in agricultural products, and to services and credit system.

The example of migrant entrepreneurs, however, did not produce repercussions only on the operators of the network, but also on the population that came into contact with the network. With French and German investments in the area of Bari, the first signs appeared of industrialization which would lead to the transformation of the urban structure and its social composition, with the rise of an industrial periphery and an embryonic proletarian class ([Bianchi, 1995, p. 214](#)). For example, the spread of new types of fabrics made the Apulian textile market grow and mature and allowed local operators to appropriate the innovative methods originally introduced by migrant entrepreneurs. Thus, factories and fabric shops have multiplied in Bari, and the service system promoted and developed by the Germans improved the potential of the local economic structure. In particular, regarding Lindemann's example, it should be noted that the workers employed in his manufacturing activities learned the industrial techniques of metalworking production: his experience, therefore, allowed the transmission of knowledge and fostered the development of the Bari metalworking industry.

If the influence of the religious element generated obvious similarities with the resistance to integration made by the Protestant communities in Naples and Salerno, the closure of Swiss, Austrian or German industrialists settled in Bari toward forms of sociability that pertained to business relations, co-optation or participation in business associations, did not appear as clear-cut. In other words, it is true that Protestant entrepreneurs also maintained in Bari high rates of endogamy and forms of aversion to naturalization that translated into cultural associations and private schools with restricted access, in the use of the mother tongue within the group, in the construction of an evangelical church and cemetery ([Giannuli, 1983, p. 472](#)) and, finally, in social groups, closed to the entry of local investors. It is also true, however, that outside the walls of the home, religious practices, factories and warehouses, these entrepreneurs seemed somehow willing to get involved in activities and

tasks that formally attested to full inclusion in the city elite. In particular, foreign entrepreneurs were tempted by the prestige of an economic institution such as the Chamber of Commerce and in May 1863 William Lindemann and Frederick Marstaller were elected among the founding councilors [18]. The presence in the Chamber Council, in line with what happened in Naples (Caglioti, 1997, p. 275), was considered an important recognition of “status,” but it was also the way to protect specific interests on the occasion of regulatory changes, customs reforms and new tax regimes.

It was always economic considerations that pushed foreign industrialists to mitigate the approach of closure toward business proposals in companies with local operators. However, they never opened up to reciprocity that would have diluted the ethnic-religious peculiarities of their companies. For this reason, for example, Wilhelm Lindemann expanded his industrial activities, always keeping the property and management in the family [19], but participating with the leading exponents of his sector in the establishment of the Italian Association of Mechanical and Related Arts manufacturers, and joining the Italian National Committee for the International Congress in Paris for accidents at work and social insurance [20].

In the circumstances described above, it is possible, therefore, to find in the events of the migrant entrepreneurs who settled in Apulia in the first half of the 19th century those elements that define social capital, not only in terms of links between the members of the network themselves but also in terms of “bridges” and relationships that connect the network to groups outside it and that allow the flow of innovations and skills. Underlying this, the dynamic according to which migrant entrepreneurs – inserted in a precise institutional, economic and cultural context – suffer the conditioning and enhance the opportunities and, at the same time, contribute to changing the context itself and forging it with their action, contributing to the economic development of the places of settlement.

Similarly to what occurred in the industrialization paths of the most advanced countries (Amatori and Colli, 2011, pp. 107–108), in the province of Terra di Bari, the technology transfer originated by entrepreneurial migrations and the consequent embeddedness has taken different forms and effectiveness, depending on the sectors in which they took place. In the textile and agri-food sectors, which are still predominantly labor-intensive, there have been no process innovations of such importance as to radically change the organization of work and the size of the plants. Instead, in the typical sectors of the Second Industrial Revolution, such as metalworking, chemical and electrical, the advantages of the new technologies introduced by foreign entrepreneurs have taken the form of large production structures and substantial economies of scale. However, the interaction between the foreign entrepreneurial network and the host context also caused a transformation in the economic culture of Bari entrepreneurs, arousing a greater spirit of initiative and an unprecedented propensity toward business risk and industrial investments.

6. Conclusions

In light of what has been said so far, the concept of mixed embeddedness in a multifocal perspective allows us to study the elite migrants who settled in Apulia in the first half of the 19th century. Specifically, by analyzing how innovations have spread within the network of entrepreneurs of that time, it is possible to identify some relevant aspects related to the mechanisms of dissemination of innovations in the context of entrepreneurial migration. Combining the different dimensions of capital with the wider opportunity structure the study provides, also, a comprehensive understanding of the modalities through which migrant and high-skilled entrepreneurs could innovate. These peculiarities are useful and significant in the analysis of the link that exists between innovation and migrant

entrepreneurship, and then the conclusions can be applied and extended to the current phenomenon of migration-related innovations.

In particular, the study identifies some main blocks:

- the institutional level (institutional embeddedness): migrant entrepreneurs are influenced by the practices and market conditions of many places;
- the relational level (relational embeddedness): by social contacts, within the network and beyond, with different reference groups;
- individual sources and the concept of human, economic and social capital; and
- the characters of innovation.

These blocks represent dimensions that should be considered not separately but in an overlapping manner.

As highlighted in the previous paragraph, it is possible to point out, in the cases analyzed, that the entrepreneurs came from areas characterized by a high rate of innovation, but also by high market competition and unfavorable conditions in the markets for factors of production (in particular raw materials and labor). The choices made by these entrepreneurs were linked not only to the need to transfer human capital and innovations to places characterized by better conditions in terms of the supply of raw materials and labor but also to high prospects for market development. This circumstance explains in some cases the gradual adjustments and successive transfers to several places in the South of Italy.

As far as innovative practices, they have developed both based on the application of techniques already widespread in the areas of origin and based on the comparison with those used by entrepreneurs in other countries. It should also be noted that there was a privileged link with the territories of origin for the supply of machinery, for the necessary contribution of economic and social capital, and for the market for finished products. The supply of technologically advanced components and workers with particular skills initially took place in the motherland. Indeed, the market for finished products was also partly oriented toward the territories of origin. Migrant entrepreneurs established in Apulia were influenced by the practices and market conditions of many places, including those of the area of origin. They brought resources, skills and capital operating inside a multidimensional network that represented the channel through which the effects of diffusion of the innovation took place. Contamination was possible through the actions of individual entrepreneurs as social actors. Then, the cases of migrant entrepreneurs in Apulia in the first half of the 19th century allow us to study the dynamics of knowledge transfer within networks, especially for the critical role played by migrants of highly qualified elites. The cases here analyzed, in particular, show that innovative immigrant entrepreneurs, who develop successful activities, are those who had as prerequisites an endowment of human (education, skills and work experience), social ("bonding" between the members of the network and a dimension of "bridging" that refers to relationships outside one's group) and financial capital. The opportunity to innovate arises from differences in information, skills and financial and social capital among individuals with dissimilar levels of education, experience and social ties.

The implications of the study may be considered in academic and practical terms. First, the paper contributes to shed new light on the contextual and multifocal factors that influence the opportunity to innovate and the development of innovations in the networks of migrant entrepreneurs. In practical terms, it encourages policymakers to take measures to promote these flows of the human, social and financial capital of innovative migrant entrepreneurs across national borders to support growth processes in developing economies.

Concerning the limitations of this research, the results of the approach of multiple case studies (Flynn *et al.*, 1990; Yin, 1994, 2018), through the analysis of some emblematic cases of innovative entrepreneurs, as well as the use of a hybrid theoretical model (Alvarado, 2018) – which blends elements of multifocal mixed embeddedness and principles of the framework of the diffusion of innovation – need to be further tested and confirmed in other empirical studies, and by applying multiple research methods (Hoang and Antoncic, 2003).

Notes

1. Apulia, also known as Puglia in Italian, is a region located in the southeast part of Italy. In the first half of the 19th century, Apulia was divided into three provinces: Capitanata (about 274,000 inhabitants), Terra di Bari (about 403,500 inhabitants) and Terra D'Otranto (about 352,400 inhabitants) (data referring to the year 1828, Del Re, 1830, I, p. 16).
2. The concept starts from the belief that economic action is not guided only by individual and economic calculation, but it is strongly structured by social contexts such as networks, institutions, norms and values (Polanyi, 1957; Granovetter, 1985). North's use of the term is broader than Polanyi's but still refers to the possibility of connecting individual economic behavior with institutional structure and its constraining effect on that behavior (North, 2005, p. 24); "rules and norms, by themselves, are not self-sustaining; they must be embedded in a larger structure of organizations and beliefs" (North *et al.*, 2009, p. 260).
3. The search for a theoretical framing of the concepts of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship is still an open question and this circumstance reflects the different areas of research on the subject and expresses the different epistemological perspectives in which the topic has been addressed. The many contributions made have in fact led to the definition of the evolution of these concepts as "uncoordinated and asymmetrical" (Timmons, 1994; Hisrich, 1998). The literature has often associated the term "entrepreneur" with the individual capable of performing the functions of running a business. Entrepreneurship, on the contrary, refers to the way these functions are performed, the intensity with which attitudes and personality traits are manifested in the entrepreneur to ensure the good governance and development of the enterprise (Timmons, 1994; Stevenson *et al.*, 1999).
4. Bourdieu identifies three different dimensions of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. In his vision, "social capital is the aggregate of actual or potential resources that are linked to the possession of a lasting network of more or less institutionalized relationships of knowledge and mutual recognition – or in other words, to belonging to a group" (Bourdieu, 1986). Human capital is made up of explicit knowledge, gained in educational centers, and implicit knowledge, acquired thanks to individual experience in a specific field (Discua Cruz and Cerrato Sabillon, 2019; Polanyi, 1957).
5. Structural embeddedness refers, therefore, to the settlement of immigrants in the political, economic and social contexts in which they operate (Portes, 1995). Structural embeddedness, therefore, can play an important role in the start-up, growth and success of the entrepreneurial activity, allowing immigrants to recognize and exploit business opportunities (Sequeira *et al.*, 2009).
6. "Transnational entrepreneurship refers to business activities developed by migrants in the destination country with business links abroad, frequently but not exclusively with the country of origin" (Drori *et al.*, 2009; Portes *et al.*, 2002). According to Wai-Chung Yeung's interpretation, the transnational entrepreneur is "a social actor capable of bearing risks and taking strategic initiatives to establish, integrate, and sustain foreign operations. This transnational entrepreneur is more than a bearer of the mechanism of change at the abstract level," thus going beyond the Schumpeterian interpretation (Schumpeter, 1934).
7. The different users are thus divided into categories (innovators, early adopters, early and late majority and laggards), illustrated in the well-known Rogers curve.

8. On the diffusion of innovative technology from firm to enterprise, see the work of [Dosi et al. \(1992b\)](#).
9. The OECD defines human capital as “the knowledge, skills and competences and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity” ([OECD, 1998](#), p. 9). Human capital is made up of the set of explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge, acquired thanks to individual experience in a specific field. On this topic, see [Discua Cruz and Cerrato Sabillon \(2019\)](#).
10. A patent made research and development most attractive in industries where secrecy could effectively ensure exclusive rights for a duration sufficient to enable inventors to recoup their investments ([Moser, 2013](#)).
11. Between 1810 and 1860, a total of 364 patents were granted to 187 applicants, of which 88 were citizens of the Kingdom, 24 were originally from pre-unification states, and only 75 came from foreign nations ([Lupo, 2017](#), p. 85).
12. In 1861, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had a population of 9.2 million inhabitants – 6.8 million in the continental part and 2.4 million in Sicily – and was smaller than other European nations such as France (37.4 million), Great Britain (28.9 million) and Spain (15.7 million) ([Mitchell, 1980](#); [Mori, 1989](#); [Lepre and Villani, 1974](#), p. 346).
13. In the first half of the 19th century, the population of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies showed a tendency to increase; it was a sign of the beginning of an economic development process that would have its effects later on. In the continental territory, what was once called the Kingdom of Naples, the population grew from 4.8 million inhabitants in 1812 to 5.5 million in 1825, reaching 6.5 million in 1843, and ultimately reaching 6.8 million in 1861 ([Lepre and Villani, 1974](#), pp. 345–346).
14. These manufacturing activities absorbed a significant percentage of the population. According to Mori, in Southern Italy, by 1861, this percentage reached close to 40.8% of workers in the manufacturing sector residing in urban areas with more than 6,000 inhabitants. However, these were artisan-based activities, and Mori himself refers to them as “industries without industrialization” ([Mori, 1989](#), p. 611).
15. Cfr. State Archives of Bari (from now on SAB), *Fondo Intendenza-Prefettura (Agricoltura, Industria e Commercio) [Intendenza-Prefecture Fund (Agriculture, Industry and Commerce)]*, b. 15, f. 28.
16. If we consider the province of Bari, the most densely populated area of Apulia, we can observe how the demographic trend has remained constantly growing throughout the 19th century (Del Re, 1930, p. 16; [Poli, 2002](#), p. 65; [Russo, 1994](#), p. 9).
17. The unification of Italy, occurred in 1861, united in the Kingdom of Italy all the ancient Italian states. From the point of view of economic history, this led to profound changes linked to the elimination of some customs taxes that until then had protected many industries, especially in the southern regions.
18. SAB, *Registri delle Deliberazioni Camerali [Registers of Chamber of Commerce Resolutions]*, 5th June 1863.
19. SAB, *Atti della Camera di Commercio [Acts of the Chamber of Commerce]*, I v., b. 153; Historical Archive of the Bank of Italy, *Ispettorato Generale [General Inspectorate]*, pratt., n. 207, f. 1.
20. SAB, *Atti della Camera di Commercio [Acts of the Chamber of Commerce]*, I v., b. 153.

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