

## Silent mobility: Molisans on global routes

by Oliviero Casacchia and Massimiliano Crisci<sup>1</sup>

Studying the geographical mobility of a population can help to shed light on social and economic dynamics, to assess the impact of this mobility on citizens—both those who move and those who stay—and to develop more adequate policies to address any imbalances.

In theory, a systemic approach is best suited to the study of mobility.<sup>2</sup> More specifically, an exhaustive overview of the phenomenon allowing the formulation of mobility models should simultaneously take account of the different types of migratory flows, which are extremely variable in their motivations, durations, frequency, and periodicity.<sup>3</sup> In other words, we should simultaneously correlate and assess both international migrations and intra-urban mobility, because it is difficult to univocally categorize very kind of migratory flow and to provide correct statistic measurements of every type of relocation. While definitive relocations leave traces and can be measured, to a certain extent, on the basis of residence office registrations and deregistrations, this source of information is not available when the move is temporary and hence not officially registered. A vast and heterogeneous range of relocations fall within this category, which, while not involving a change of domicile—as in the case of the daily route from home to work—may nevertheless lead to more or less long absences from one's habitual residence. These forms of relocation include short trips undertaken for business, tourism or health reasons, as well as weekly or monthly moves for work or study reasons.

<sup>1</sup> This essay is the result of a collaboration between the authors, but Oliviero Casacchia wrote section 2 and Massimiliano Crisci section 3. The introduction and conclusions were written jointly.

<sup>2</sup> Akin L.Mabogunje, *System approach to a theory of rural-urban migration*, «Geographical Analysis» 1970, 2, pp. 1-18.

<sup>3</sup> Antonio Golini, *Population Movements. Typology and Data Collection, Trends, Policies*, in *Plenaries of the European Population Conference 1987*, Eaps and Central Statistical Office of Finland, Helsinki 1987; Id., *I movimenti di popolazione nel mondo contemporaneo*, in *Migrazioni: scenari per il XXI secolo*, *Convegno internazionale Roma, 12-14 luglio 2000*, Agenzia romana per la preparazione del Giubileo, Roma 2000.

In this article we consider two different types of mobility: definitive or “long-term” migrations, and long-distance temporary mobility for work reasons.

The first part of the present essay provides an up-to-date overview of domestic and international migratory dynamics involving Molise using official residence office statistics. In the second part, we deal with temporary moves of residents of southern Italy, and especially Molise, to work in northern or central Italy. For these we draw on several Istat reports, and notably the “Forze di lavoro” investigation.

### *1. Residential mobility from the Nineties to the present day*

In its migratory behavior, Molise has confirmed its role as a “bridge” region between southern areas that have again been showing negative migratory balances and the regions of northern and central Italy, which are the main poles of attraction in the country.<sup>4</sup>

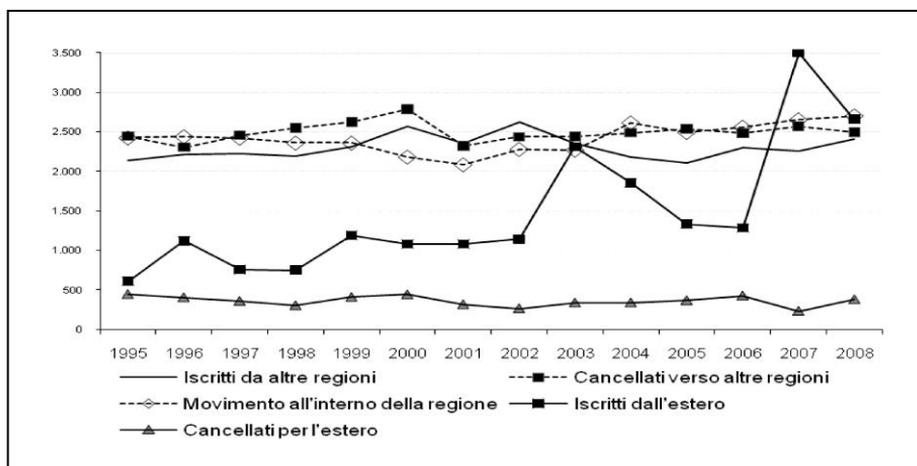
Residence registrations and deregistrations recorded by Istat over the last fifteen years display an essential stability as far as domestic mobility is concerned (Figure 1). The incoming flow from other regions ranges between 2,000 and 2,600 units (the latter figure was recorded in 2002, the peak year). Values for the last five years are slightly higher than in the first observation period. This slight increase, given the exceptional stability of the resident population of Molise over the last decade,<sup>5</sup> apparently depends from actual slight changes in interregional migratory patterns. As to emigration towards other regions, it appears to oscillate around slightly higher values, with a peak of 2,800 in the year 2000.

This difference in the dynamics of incoming and outgoing flows of course resulted in a generally—although only slightly—negative balance, with the exception of 2002 and 2003. As to mobility within the region, there appear to be two clearly different subperiods: a first phase, from 1995 to 2001, when it declined (from 2,500 to just over 2,000 in 2001, the low year), followed by years of systematic increment until it equaled the value of 1995 (in 2005) and then exceeded it, peaking at 2,700.

<sup>4</sup> On this subject, see the Svimez reports, and, with special reference to Molise, Oliviero Casacchia and Massimiliano Crisci, *Migrazioni oggi: tra emigrazione persistente e immigrazione straniera*, in Gino Massullo (ed.), *Storia del Molise in età contemporanea*, Donzelli Editore, Roma 2006, pp. 651-676.

<sup>5</sup> Over the last few decades the region has had a population of about 320-330 thousand.

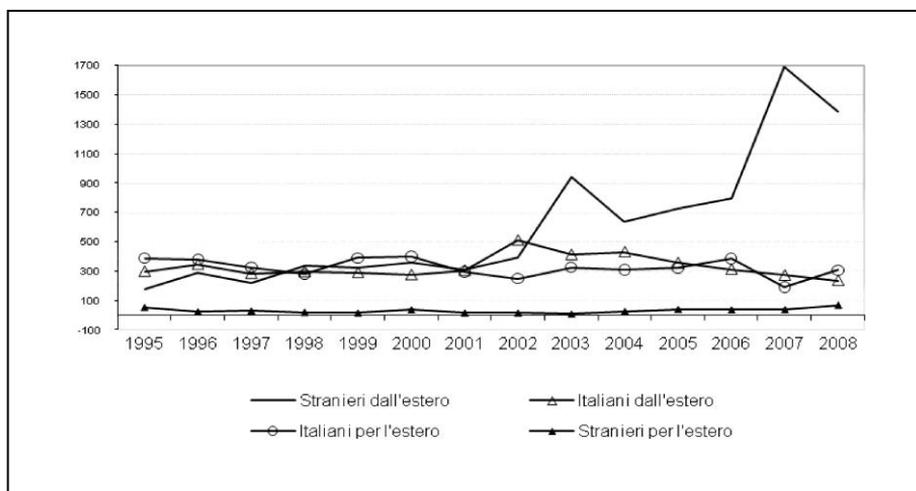
Figure 1 – residence office registrations and deregistrations relative to mobility to and from domestic and foreign destinations.  
 Molise, 1995-2008. Absolute values.



Source: Istat, records of residence office registrations and deregistrations..

As regards mobility to and from foreign countries, Molise has been affected, like the rest of Italy, by the deep changes our country has been going through lately. Notably, it has seen significant incoming flows of foreign citizens coming from abroad. This trend coexists with the well-known dynamics whereby in many regions of the Italian South there is still considerable mobility of Italian citizens to and from foreign countries. These two flows, the outgoing and incoming one, of Italians and foreigners generate a substantial turnover that contributes significantly to the overall mobility of the population of Molise. An especially large incoming flow has been recorded most recently, as a result of the coming into force of immigrant regularization under the provisions of the Bossi-Fini Act. While in the Nineties the flow of immigrants from abroad—which, incidentally, also included a significant quota of Italian citizens—amounted to about a 1,000 units a year, from 2003 onward a new phase began, marked by a trebling of the flow, with significant surges and ebbs (Figure 2). This phenomenon is an effect not only of the Bossi-Fini Act (issued in 2002, so that its impact in terms of flow increase began the following year) but also of the expansion of the borders of the European Union to include Bulgaria and Rumania; the latter country in particular, as is well-known, contributed markedly to the increase of immigration into our country, and into Molise as well.

Figure 2 – residence office registrations and deregistrations relative to mobility to and from foreign destinations: breakdown by nationality. Molise, 1995-2008. Absolute values.



Source: same as for Figure 1.

Such statistics are also available for the mobility of our fellow citizens. Returns to Molise appear to be essentially stable. This means that there is a sort of “frictional” threshold in a region that, as is well known, was one of those that were most affected by the phenomenon of emigration.<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that the period when Italians accounted for a large number of entries and exits from and to foreign countries can be said to be over. Since 2003, returns home of Molisans living abroad account for an increasingly small percentage of overall entries. More in general, foreigners account for a significant quota of overall mobility in Molise, also as regards mobility within the region. In 2008, as expected, foreigners accounted for the largest quota of registered arrivals from abroad (85.5%,<sup>7</sup> see Table 1), and these statistics largely correspond with those for the sectors of the Italian South. Foreigners also contribute significantly to inner mobility: 9 relocations within Molise out of 100 were of foreign nationals. Foreign nationals also accounted for between 6 and 9 out of 100 interregional relocations.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> There is a rich literature on this subject. See especially Norberto Lombardi, *Il Molise fuori dal Molise*, in G. Massullo, *Storia del Molise*, cit., pp. 535-640, and the series “Quaderni sulle Migrazioni”, directed, again, by Norberto Lombardi, which is devoted to migration in Molise and is published by Cosmo Iannone in Isernia.

<sup>7</sup> The 2002 percentage is 44%: cf. O.Casacchia and M. Crisci, *Migrazioni oggi ...*, in G. Massullo (ed.), *Storia del Molise*, cit., p. 662.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*. In the same year of 2002 these percentages were respectively 3.1 (movements within the region), 3.5 and 5.9.

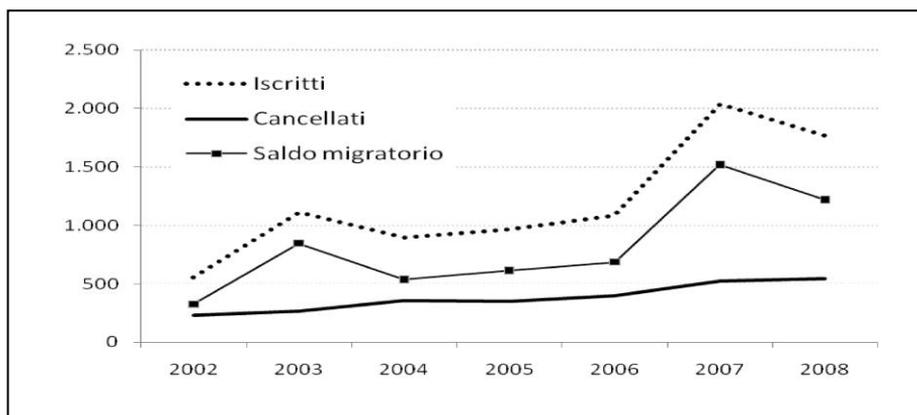
Table 1 – Percentages of foreigners broken down by destination Year 2008.

Regions, sectors	Within the region	From one region to another		From and to foreign countries	
		Registered	Unregistered	Registered	Unregistered
Molise	9.0	5.7	9.4	85.5	18.4
Italy	15.6	14.4	14.4	93.5	35.9
Northwest	18.4	17.3	15.3	94.7	35.7
Northeast	22.2	20.8	20.7	95.6	49.0
Center	16.9	12.9	20.0	95.1	38.8
South	5.6	6.5	9.3	87.9	22.8

Source: same as for Figure 1.

This increase is obviously related both to the considerable numbers of foreign immigrants in Molise and to their higher mobility than autochthones. This has resulted in a robust positive migration dynamics in both directions (Figure 3).

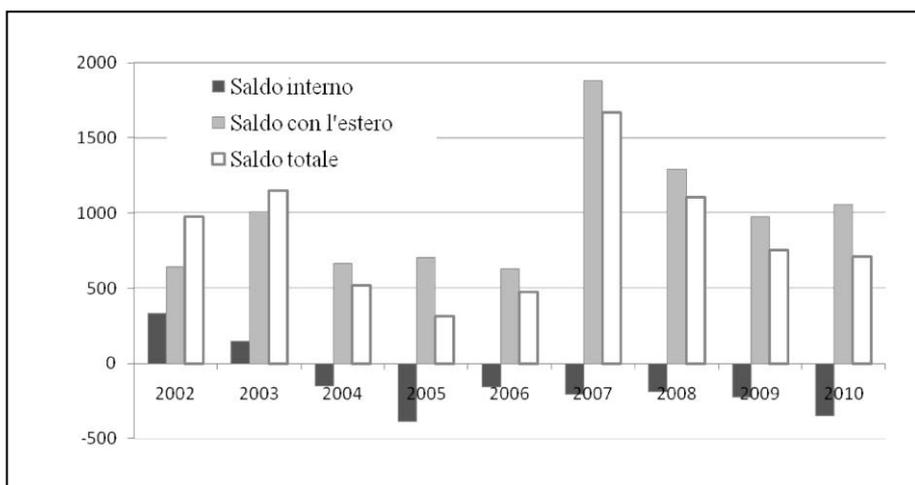
Figure 3 – Foreign citizens registered or deregistered as residents in Molise as a result of intraprovincial, interprovincial or foreign mobility. 2002-2008 period. Absolute values.



Source: same as for Figure 1.

Having analyzed the incoming and outgoing migratory flows in Molise, it is of course important to look at the resulting balances. In this case, we preferred to the year-by-year calculations provided by Istat, which, unlike the statistics about flows sorted by citizenship, are more regularly updated (the last update refers to 2010). The differences between these two sources are minor. We hence deem that one can go from one to the other without compromising analysis,<sup>9</sup> at least as far as Molise is concerned, and have therefore opted for the one offering the most up-to-date picture—in this case, migratory balance records.

Figure 4 – Domestic, foreign and total migratory balances. Molise, 2002-2010. Absolute values.



Source: Istat. Statistics on resident population.

Figure 4 clearly highlights the Molisan model for the new millennium, which is no different from the one observable all over the Italian South. At least as early as 2004,<sup>10</sup> the region's positive migratory balance was the

<sup>9</sup> The differences compared to the 2002-2008 period appear limited and declining as regards migration within Italy. The differences appear more striking, instead, when we look at foreign migration, especially as regards residence office deregistrations of Molisani directed abroad. These are systematically higher in the balance statistics compared to those provided by Istat. Overall, the two sources agree in indicating a positive foreign migratory balance, although the figures diverge slightly (in the seven years under consideration, the former source indicates a positive balance of 6,822, the latter one of 6,762).

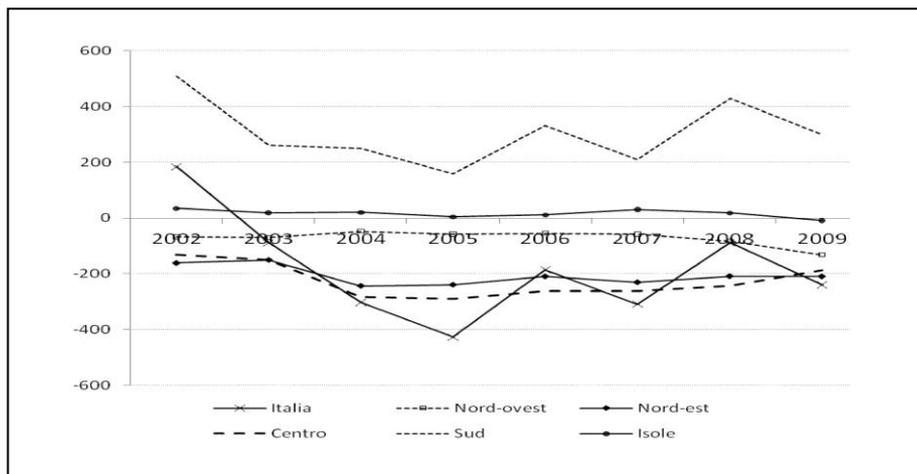
<sup>10</sup> Residence office registrations and deregistrations document a negative domestic migratory balance as early as 2003, as is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

result of the sum of a slight negative domestic mobility rate and a significant positive foreign migratory balance.

The dynamics of mobility in Molise and its exchanges with other Italian regions thus hold special interest, especially in the light of the rise of innovative aspects—the arrival and stabilization of foreign immigrants—along with traditional ones, most notably a strong trend to migration to other Italian regions. We now intend to take a closer look at the latter feature—which clearly (re)surfaced in the early years of the first decade of the 2000s—to attempt to shed further light on the recent characteristics of Molisan mobility compared to the rest of the country.

It is not surprising that migration to central and northern Italy largely accounted for Molise’s negative interregional migratory balance (starting from 2003, based on statistics on residence office registrations and deregistrations). In the eight years under examination, the migratory balance of Molise with the rest of Italy has been persistently negative, especially that with the regions of the Center and Northeast of the country, which until recently have shown a strong capability to attract migratory flows from the rest of the country (Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Interregional migratory balances by sector. Molise. Absolute values.



Source: same as for Figure 1.

Molise, instead, shows a clear positive balance with other areas in the Italian South, especially with the regions of the continental South. In this case, it is noteworthy that the balance shows strong oscillations. Since the trends of the other series are stationary, it is these oscillations that

determine the curve of the overall migratory balance of Molise with the rest of Italy (Figure 5).

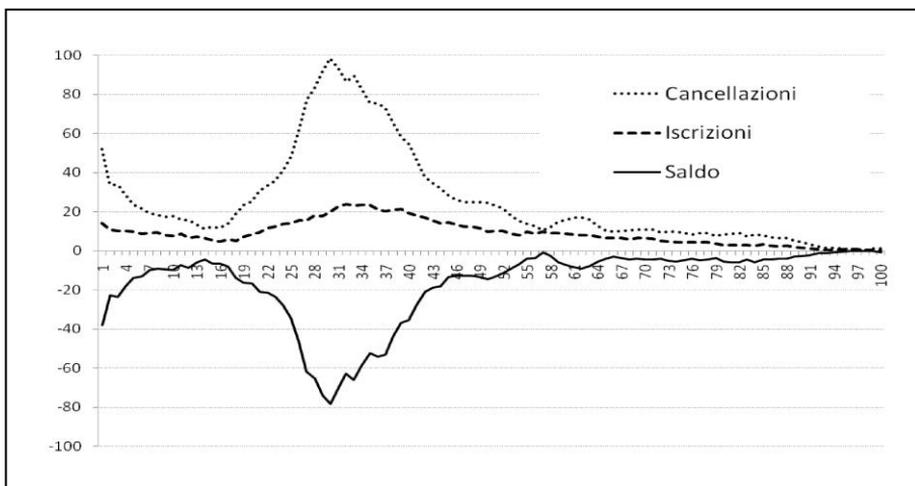
The age-related interregional migratory pattern shows a typical pattern, as regards both registrations and deregistrations. There is a surge for very young age groups, depending on the high mobility of parents, with a peak coinciding with the achievement of significant professional mobility for men, and with women's leaving of the family home to start conjugal life. This is followed by progressive reductions as the age groups get older. The age-related migratory balance trend helps to shade light on migratory mobility within the region. The overall balance in 2009, as we mentioned, was negative, but essentially breaks even for the adult and the elderly (it is actually negative by just a few units, see Figure 6). The portion of the curve below zero concerns the central ages, bearing witness to the region's incapability of holding on to its residents aged 19 to 45, that is, of college or work mobility ages. Thus, to be initiated into the working world or consolidate one's professional situation, the trend is to move from Molise to other regions.

These data allow a breakdown by both age and area of origin and destination, considerably fleshing out the picture we have just outlined. Notably, breaking down mobility flows between regions by age, distinguishing between areas in the South and those in the Center-North of Italy, yields interesting results. In the case of migration to other southern regions, Molise appears to have had a completely different role: not only is the overall balance positive, but it is positive precisely in the central ages. Thus, in its relations with the rest of the Italian South, Molise appears to have a central role (Figure 7).

This may be a result both of the attractiveness of Molisan universities—which also draw students from neighboring areas outside the regional boundaries, notably from provincial areas in Puglia and Campania<sup>11</sup>—and of the pull exerted by the Molisan labor market on professional residing outside of Molise. This documentation, while rich in geographical detail, sheds little light on what motivates individuals to relocate, making it difficult to put forward reasonably reliable hypotheses.

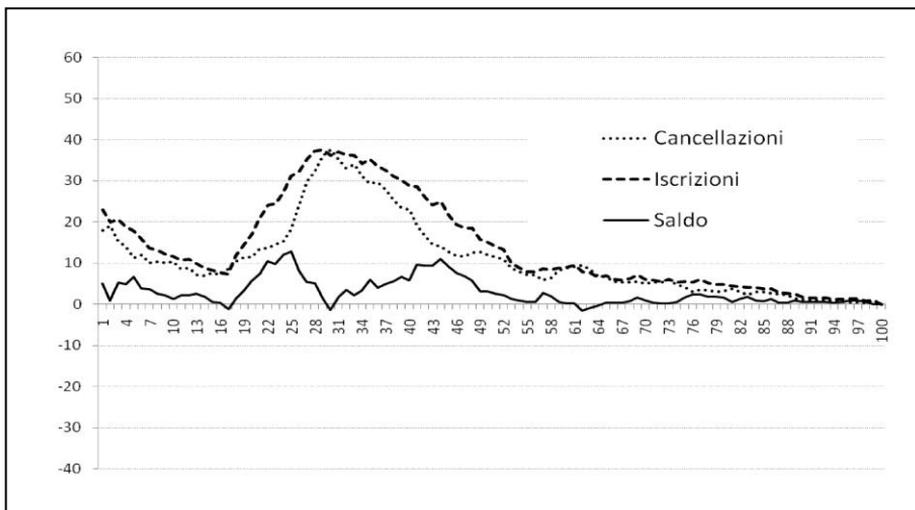
<sup>11</sup> The migratory balance of Molise with both Campania and Puglia in the period under examination was positive significantly high: about +300 with the former, +160 with the latter. The other southern Italian regions contribute minimally or not at all to the overall migratory interchange. It is worth remarking that the migratory interchange with Abruzzo, which is also significant, is systematically negative.

Figure 6 – Residence office registrations and deregistrations of migrants from and to other regions, broken down by age group. Molise, 2009. Absolute values.



Source: same as for Figure 1.

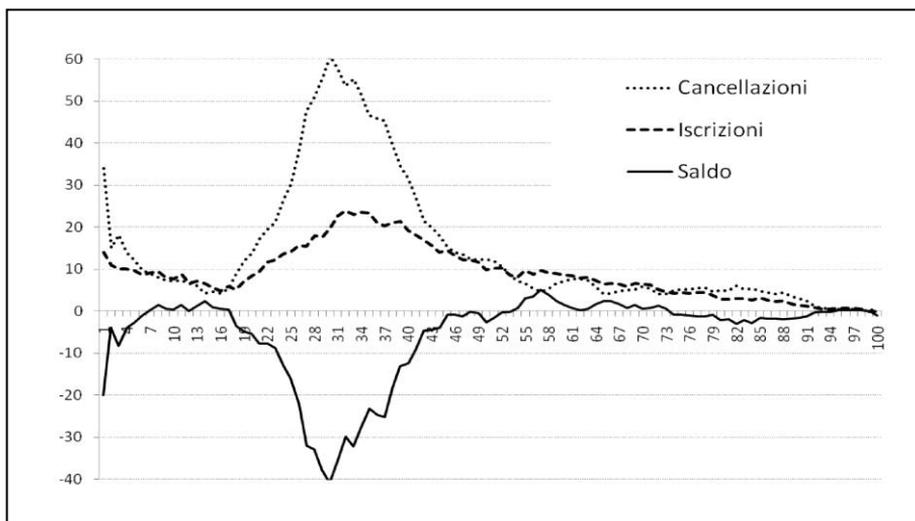
Figure 7 – Residence office registrations and deregistrations of migrants from and to other southern regions, and balance broken down by age group. Molise, 2009. Absolute values.



Source: same as for Figure 1.

The situation is the opposite when we look at the age distribution of migration to and from the regions of north-central Italy (Figure 8).<sup>12</sup> These statistics confirm our hypothesis regarding moves within Italy as a whole. It is indeed striking that the age distribution of national mobility is almost exactly the same as that of mobility between Molise and the Center-North.

Figure 8 – Registrations and deregistrations of migrants from and to the regions of the Center-North, and balance broken down by age. Molise, 2009. Absolute values.



Source: same as for Figure 1.

## 2. The concept and sources of temporary working mobility

Over the last few decades, the mobility of people within our country has diversified, and become more complex and unstable. The crisis of the Fordist model of work organization has brought deep changes to our economic development model, in the form of a decline in labor demand and a significant slowdown of migrations from the Italian South. At the same time, the drive to emigration has weakened as a result of a better quality of life, a more effective welfare system,<sup>13</sup> and people's increasing

<sup>12</sup> Especially Emilia Romagna and, to a lesser degree, Lombardy. The picture has not changed substantially compared to the one outlined in the present essay: cf. O.Casacchia and M. Crisci, in G. Massullo (ed.), *Storia del Molise*, cit., p. 664.

<sup>13</sup> Enrico Pugliese, *L'Italia tra migrazioni internazionali e migrazioni interne*, Bologna, Il Mulino 2002.

awareness of their rights. The need to leave for a long period, usually officialized by a registered transfer of residence, has diminished, partly thanks to the spread of private vehicles and the creation of a faster, more flexible, and sometimes inexpensive public transportation system, which have intensified daily and periodic commuting for work reasons.

It is not easy to assess the complementarity of long-period migrations and temporary mobility. It is plausible that part of the “permanent” migrations of yore have currently morphed into temporary mobility, partly as a consequence of current job market dynamics, not the least the flexibilization of contracts in Italy since the late Nineties as a result of the introduction of the "pacchetto Treu" and the passing of the "Biagi Act". The instability of the jobs offered in the regions of the Center-North to so many young people from the South often contributes to the transitory character of both the work and the migratory experience. Temporary migrations may thus be defined as a form of *flexible mobility for unstable workers*.

Workers' mobility is thus increasingly taking the form of temporary migrations leaving no administrative traces, a sort of *long-distance commuting* on a weekly, seasonal or intermittent basis<sup>14</sup> involving a *multiplicity* of actual places of residence<sup>15</sup> and the development of strategies aimed at extending the living space and reconciling the needs of the workplace with those of the family.<sup>16</sup> In substance, the resuming of “traditional” migration towards the northern regions has been going hand in hand with the spread of new migratory behaviors that are largely submerged in character. As we have seen in the previous section, residence office registrations and deregistrations help us to quantify the stable component of migrations and identify the directions of flows and the profiles of migrants. The same is not true of more transitory forms of mobility, which leave no trace in town registers.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Massimo Livi Bacci, *Ma c'è davvero una ripresa delle migrazioni sud-nord?*, in <http://www.neodemos.it>, published on 19 December 2007; Sauro Mocetti, Carmine Porello, *La mobilità per lavoro in Italia: nuove evidenze sulle dinamiche migratorie*, «Questioni di Economia e Finanza. Occasional papers», 2010, 61; SVIMEZ, *Rapporto SVIMEZ 2007 sull'economia del Mezzogiorno*, Roma 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Gustavo De Santis, *Mobilità a corto e a lungo raggio e pendolarismo*, in Massimo Livi Bacci, *Demografia del capitale umano*, il Mulino Editore, Bologna 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Giuseppe Gesano, Mrek Olkolski (eds), *European Populations. Unity in diversity*, Kluwer academic publishers, Dordrecht/ Doston/ London 1999; Barbara Baldazzi, Maria Clelia Romano, *Tipologie e forme del pendolarismo familiare*, paper presented at the *Giornate di studio sulla popolazione*, fourth edition, Milano, February 2001.

<sup>17</sup> In our country, most statistics refer to the officially registered population, whose geographical mobility is manifested by the administrative act of residence transfer from one

An issue that needs to be addressed first, before that of quantitative assessment, is that of the very concept of temporary migration. A broad definition, put together by drawing on several authors,<sup>18</sup> designates temporary mobility as a transitory form of relocation including at least one overnight, which does not involve a lasting change of the subject's habitual place of residence. In substance, the minimum requirement is one overnight without a change of domicile. Even if we restrict its field of application to mobility for work reasons, such a definition usually covers many different types of migrations, ranging from business trips with overnights a few hours from home to six-months relocations a thousand kilometers away from one's habitual residence. On the other hand, the concept of temporary migration includes multiple dimensions reflecting multiple forms of mobility. Duration, distance, frequency (how often does the subject move?), periodicity (for how long?) and seasonality (in what period of the year?) are some of the characteristics that make one temporary flow different from the other and highlight the complex spatial and temporal dynamics informing this kind of mobility.<sup>19</sup> And we should not forget the importance of data on the overall intensity and spatial connectivity of migrations, that is, the functional connection between departure areas and destination areas.

Our ability to accurately assess the magnitude of temporary migration for work in Italy and the characteristics of the moving population is limited by the absence of an *ad hoc* investigation. The official statistical information obtainable from Istat reports are only marginal components of much broader investigations informed by different definitions of the phenomenon and providing data that are only partially complementary and do not allow us to form a thorough picture of temporary mobility. The available sources for statistics on temporary migrations for work in Italy are the "Forze di lavoro" investigation, the "Famiglia e soggetti sociali" investigation and, since 2001 the General Census of the Population.

Traditionally, population movements are classified according to the dimensions of *time* and *space*, referring to the administrative areas of origin and destination to determine the distance traveled by the migrants, and to temporal intervals to define the length of the move. Unfortunately,

town to another, and can thus become an object of study. Temporary migrations are not equally manifest and much harder to quantify and analyze.

<sup>18</sup> Wilbur Zelinsky, *The hypothesis of the mobility transition*, «Geographical review», 1971, 61, pp. 219-249; Stanley K. Smith, *Toward a methodology for estimating temporary residents*, «Journal of the American Statistical Association», 1989, 84, pp. 430-436; Martin Bell, Dominic Brown, *Measuring Temporary Mobility: Dimensions and Issues*, paper prepared for the 25<sup>th</sup> Iussp Conference, Tours, July 2005.

<sup>19</sup> M. Bell, D. Brown, *Measuring Temporary Mobility: Dimensions and Issues*, cit.

none of the three above-mentioned sources provides information on both dimensions. Only the “Forze di lavoro” investigation, conducted annually since 1993, gives accurate information about destinations, specifying not just the place of residence, but also the region and province. However, while it thus allows us to distinguish South-to-North flows, it provides no information about the duration of the moves. Consequently, these statistics shed no light on the real purpose of the workers’ migrations. Theoretically they could be daily, that is, involving no overnighiting outside of the worker’s town of residence. If so, they would not be classifiable as temporary migration. So as not to lose the informational potential of the source, some studies have suggested that migrations between towns in non-adjointing provinces are classifiable as long-distance commuting, not involving a daily return to the town of residence, as the distance between the place of residence and the workplace makes at least one overnight likely.<sup>20</sup>

The 2001 Census and the “Famiglia e soggetti sociali” investigation (1998 and 2003, respectively), while rather generic as regards the spatial dimensions of migrations,<sup>21</sup> provide some information on their chronological dimension, as they indicate the total length of stays away from the town of residence during the previous year. We are thus certain that we are speaking of temporary migrations. As these are aggregate statistics, however, they do not indicate the frequency (how many times a year, how much time between moves). of relocations. If, for example, a subject declared having worked for three months in another Italian region, this does not tell us if we are speaking of a whole three-month *seasonal* relocation, or of many short stays, as in the case of so-called “long commuting,” involving returns home every weekend.

Unlike “definitive” migration, which usually involves a single move and long-lasting residence in the place of destination, temporary mobility is characterized by a circularity of transfers, which are *repeated* and of *variable duration*, but always involve periodic returns home. The absence

<sup>20</sup> Sauro Mocetti, Carmine Porello, *La mobilità per lavoro in Italia: nuove evidenze sulle dinamiche migratorie*, cit.; SVIMEZ, *Rapporto SVIMEZ 2007 sull’economia del Mezzogiorno*, cit.

<sup>21</sup> The 2001 census only provides three options to indicate the destination of a move (within the town of residence, to another Italian town, to a foreign country), while the “Famiglia e soggetti sociali” investigation gives some additional indications (to another province or region than that of residence). When the province or region of destination is not indicated, an interpretive effort is required to assess the geographical dimension of temporary migrations. For example, it can be assumed that if individuals leave their place of residence for work reasons for a long period of time, they will probably have moved far enough from their habitual place of residence to make daily commuting impracticable.

of any information on frequency and periodicity constitutes a strong limitation to our understanding of this phenomenon.

### 3. *Temporary migration for work reasons*

Any study of temporary mobility is thus complicated by the variety of modes of migration and the scarcity of data, which are mostly derived from broader investigations carried out for different ends. In spite of difficulties in measuring the phenomenon and the essential absence of “historical” information, the data seem to confirm what Zelinsky foresaw in the early Seventies in his theory of the transition of mobility, that is, a growth of circular mobility that has gone hand in hand with the modernization of society.<sup>22</sup> It is indeed likely that in past decades temporary mobility was much lower than today.<sup>23</sup>

A research conducted by Buccico for Fiom-Cgil in some factories in Emilia Romagna provides an approximate order of magnitude for the “invisible” quota of temporary migrations from southern Italy: about a third of the moves of workers from southern Italy are not officially recorded, as they did not involve a registered change of domicile.<sup>24</sup> This datum is especially significant, as it refers to workers in the metalworker sector, where the trade unions guarantee continuity of employment more than in other sectors. In other productive sectors, in which work is not equally protected, or not at all, we can thus expect “submerged” emigration to be at least equal, if not higher.

According to the “Rilevazione sulle forze di lavoro” statistics, southern Italian residents habitually working in the Center-North were about 140,000 in 2007<sup>25</sup> and 147,000 in 2009.<sup>26</sup> These figures are significant in the light of the fact that in 2007 there were 118,000 changes of domicile from the South to the Center-North.

A study based on the Istat “forze di lavoro” investigations allows us to reconstruct the evolution of long-distance commuting from the South to the Center-North of Italy from the early Nineties to the present day (Figure

<sup>22</sup> W. Zelinsky, *The hypothesis of the mobility transition*, cit.

<sup>23</sup> G. De Santis, *Mobilità a corto e a lungo raggio e pendolarismo*, cit.

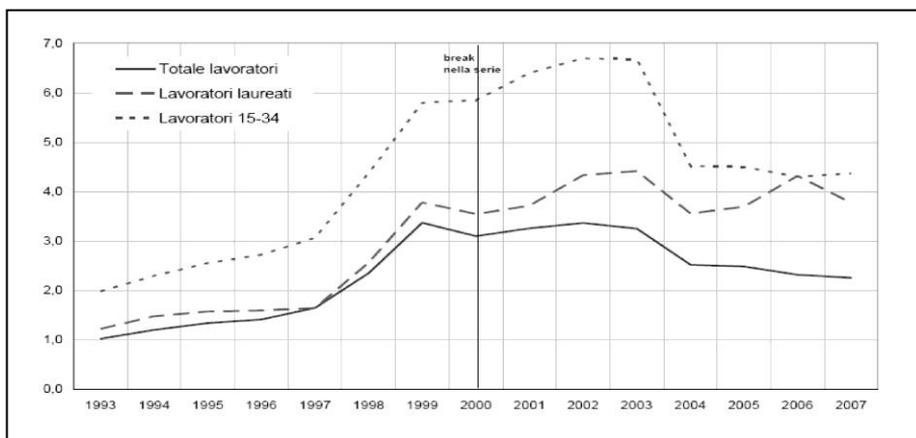
<sup>24</sup> David Bubbico, *Da Sud a Nord: I nuovi flussi migratori interni. Una ricerca della Fiom Cgil Emilia-Romagna tra i lavoratori delle aziende meccaniche*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Sauro Mocetti, Carmine Porello, *La mobilità per lavoro in Italia: nuove evidenze sulle dinamiche migratorie*, Questioni di Economia e Finanza, occasional paper, 2010, 61, <http://www.bancaditalia.it>.

<sup>26</sup> The 2009 SVIMEZ statistics include moves to foreign countries for work reasons: SVIMEZ, *Rapporto SVIMEZ 2007 sull'economia del Mezzogiorno*, Roma, 10 July 2007.

9).<sup>27</sup> From 1993 to 1999, the percentage of southern Italian workers traveling long distances has more than trebled, from 1 per cent to over 3 per cent, due to an especially intense growth in 1998-99. Since 2000, this growth has slowed down. In 2007 the percentage stood at around 2.3 per cent, which is still a lot more than fifteen years earlier. Long distance commuting is especially high among workers under 35 and graduates. The quota for both of these categories is around 4 per cent in 2007 (respectively, 4.4 and 3.8 per cent). The increasing mobility of university graduates is especially remarkable, although it has been oscillating since 2000. It is likely that the reformulation of multiple-choice answers to questions about interviewees' workplace introduced into the Istat investigation from 2000 onward caused mobility compared to the previous years to be underestimated.<sup>28</sup>

Figure 9 – Long-distance commuting from southern to north-central Italy, 1993-2007, broken down by education and age.



Source: the graph is from Mocetti, Porello, *La mobilità ...*, cit., 2010; statistics from Istat, “Rilevazione forze di lavoro.” Introduction of a new mode of answering the question in the Istat investigation.

Temporary emigrants from the Italian South are mainly male, young, well-educated, and in a precarious job situation.<sup>29</sup> Long-distance

<sup>27</sup> S. Mocetti, C. Porello, *La mobilità per lavoro in Italia: nuove evidenze sulle dinamiche migratorie*, cit.

<sup>28</sup> Beginning in 2000, the answer “[the interviewee] lacks a habitual work place” was added. According to Mocetti and Porello, “in the previous years, the absence of this answer may have induced interviewees to indicate their region of residence as their workplace, or one of the regions they had moved to,” *ibid.*, p. 20. From 2009 onward, this answer is no longer included in the questionnaire.

<sup>29</sup> S. Mocetti S., C. Porello, *La mobilità per lavoro in Italia: nuove evidenze sulle dinamiche migratorie*, cit.; SVIMEZ, *Rapporto 2010*, cit.

commuting usually marks a transitory phase in people's working lives, a period when they make their entry in the job market and stabilize their position in it. This is proved by the fact that 68.4% of southern Italian long-distance commuters had started their job less than three years before.<sup>30</sup>

As we have seen in the previous paragraph, the internal migratory balance of Molise is especially negative for young adults (aged 20 to 40). However, residence office statistics can only reflect part of this phenomenon. Many of those who move have no interest in officially recording their change of residence, as in the case of those who have a short-term migratory project, having signed a flexible and temporary contract.<sup>31</sup>

The long-distance commuting of the Molisans is among the most intense in our country. 3.3% of job-holders residing in Molise work in a region of the Center-North, a higher percentage than in the South as a whole (2.3%), and only lower than that of Basilicata (3.4%).<sup>32</sup>

The mobility of Molisans is characterized by a dual use-of-space model. On the one hand, there are the short daily moves of those who work close to their place of residence, on the other, the long-distance moves of those who migrate to other regions in the Center-North, definitively or periodically, to look for better job opportunities or gain a university education adequate to the needs of the market.<sup>33</sup> The percentage of university graduates among young Molisans is one of the highest in the Italian South. In spite of this, they still encounter many difficulties in entering the job market. Over the last fifteen years, the employment rate among Molisan university graduates has declined markedly, and the time it takes them to find a job has increased.<sup>34</sup> Since the encounter between the demand and supply of work in their own region is hard to achieve, migration is a viable option for many highly qualified young Molisans. It is certainly a decision that pays back, since 60% of Molisans who stayed in southern Italy after graduating from university is still unemployed, versus

<sup>30</sup> SVIMEZ, *Rapporto SVIMEZ 2007 sull'economia del Mezzogiorno*, cit.

<sup>31</sup> O. Casacchia, M. Crisci, *Recenti tendenze della mobilità territoriale*, cit.

<sup>32</sup> SVIMEZ, *Rapporto SVIMEZ 2007 sull'economia del Mezzogiorno*, cit.

<sup>33</sup> Oliviero Casacchia Massimiliano Crisci, *Recenti tendenze della mobilità territoriale*, in Renato Lalli, Norberto Lombardi, Giorgio Palmieri, (eds), *Campobasso, Capoluogo del Molise*, Palladino Editore, Campobasso 2008, vol. III, pp. 283-304; Massimiliano Crisci, *La popolazione molisana negli anni duemila: malessere demografico e migrazioni internazionali*, «Glocale», Campobasso, 2010, 1 *Identità locali*, pp. 309-322.

<sup>34</sup> Riccardo Gatto, Andrea Spizzichino, *Titoli di studio e mercato del lavoro: nuovi dati storici dalla Rilevazione Istat sulle Forze di Lavoro*, in *Atti del XXI convegno nazionale di economia del lavoro. AIEL, Associazione Italiana Economisti del Lavoro*, Udine, 14-15 Settembre 2006.

only 2% of those who moved to the Center-North.<sup>35</sup> In no other southern region is there such a gap between the unemployment rate of graduate students who leave and those who stay.<sup>36</sup> There is thus a strong drive to emigrate among young Molisans. Molise is the Italian region where there is the highest probability among university graduates to move to north-central Italy within three years after graduation (41%), and their propensity to emigrate has grown over the last few years.

The data of the last census also highlight the remarkable mobility of young Molisans. In 2001, one young job-holder out of eight residing in the Province of Campobasso had to move away from his or her town for work reasons for at least three months during the year. This is a much higher percentage than the national average. In Italy as a whole, only one young worker out of twenty is forced to temporarily migrate for such a long time.<sup>37</sup>

In substance, the divergence between the expectations of young Molisans and the kinds of jobs offered by the local market continues to make geographical mobility a necessity. At the same time, an increasingly flexible job market is stimulating the rise of new forms of transitory and intermittent mobility that are impossible to detect using traditional administrative sources. The long-distance commuting of young Molisans is a silent and submerged phenomenon, which has a strong impact on the economy and social cohesion of Molise,<sup>38</sup> besides weighing heavily on the quality of life of the emigrants and their families. Compared to earlier times, when the remittances of emigrants contributed to the support of family members who stayed at home, the cost of current migrations of young people seems to weigh more heavily on the family budget. Today, to afford to emigrate one needs a family capable of sustaining the costs of the move, as well as providing support during job-searching or underemployment periods. To shed light on the phenomenon of temporary migration for work reasons, we also need to assess the quantity of jobs Molise is actually able to offer its residents, not counting those who move periodically out of the region to work. Part of the decrease of the unemployment rate over the last fifteen years could be due to a higher willingness of residents to migrate temporarily.

<sup>35</sup> Mariano D'Antonio, Margherita Scarlato, *I laureati del Mezzogiorno: una risorsa sottoutilizzata o dispersa*, Quaderno SVIMEZ n. 10, 2007, [http://www.svimez.it/Quaderni/Quaderno10\\_2007.pdf](http://www.svimez.it/Quaderni/Quaderno10_2007.pdf).

<sup>36</sup> M. D'Antonio M., Scarlato M, *I laureati del Mezzogiorno: una risorsa sottoutilizzata o dispersa*, cit.

<sup>37</sup> O. Casacchia, M. Crisci, *Recenti tendenze della mobilità territoriale*, cit.

<sup>38</sup> Norberto Lombardi, *Il Molise fuori del Molise*, in Gino Massullo (ed.), *Storia del Molise in età contemporanea*, Donzelli Editore, 2006, pp. 535-640.

With their migrations, Molisans continue to contribute to the economic growth of the regions of north-central Italy. This process could turn into an opportunity for economic development for Molise, too, but only if the competences acquired by its emigrated workers are eventually used within the region.

#### 4. *Some conclusions*

Although migration from southern to northern Italy has declined strongly compared to the exodus of the Fifties and Sixties, the persistent economic backwardness of the South has caused it to continue over the years, with a growing trend during the last decade.<sup>39</sup>

The resuming of traditional “definitive” migration towards the northern Italian regions has been going hand in hand with the spread of new migratory behaviors with largely submerged characteristics. These are temporary migrations that leave no administrative traces, as they do not involve a registered change of residence. They take the form of long-distance commuting on a weekly, seasonal, or intermittent basis, with multiple actual places of residence, that is, of a deployment of strategies aimed at extending the life space and harmonizing the needs of the working place with those of the family. Over the last few decades, temporary mobility from the South to the North for reasons of work has expanded remarkably in our country. It has principally involved and weighed on the weaker subjects on the job market, that is, workers with atypical and fixed-term contracts.

Molise is one of the Italian regions that has been most affected by this form of migration, which is especially widespread among young people with a high level of instruction who are often forced to look for a job meeting their expectations far away from their town of residence. Incidentally, the silent emigration of young Molisans who go to live in other Italian regions without changing their official domicile implies that the phenomenon of the aging of the regional work force is even more significant than official statistics suggest.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Corrado Bonifazi (ed.), *Mezzogiorno e migrazioni interne*, Irip-Cnr, Roma 1999; O. Casacchia, M. Crisci, *Migrazioni oggi: tra emigrazione persistente e immigrazione straniera*, cit.; Corrado Bonifazi, Frank Heins, *Ancora migranti: la nuova mobilità degli italiani*, in Paola Corti, Matteo Sanfilippo, *Storia d'Italia. Annali 24. Migrazioni*, Torino, Einaudi 2009.

<sup>40</sup> M. Crisci, *La popolazione molisana negli anni duemila: malessere demografico e migrazioni internazionali*, cit.

Information provided by official sources on the temporary mobility of workers is scarce and fragmentary. Little is known about the exact magnitudes of the relocations, their degree of complementarity with traditional migration, the spread of different types of temporary migration, and the mechanisms underlying specific migratory routes. Our inadequate knowledge of the phenomenon obscures the real social and economic costs for southern Italian society and families.