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MIGRATION, DIASPORA, ETHNICITY, AND NATIONALISM IN HISTORY

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« French » immigrants in Naples (1806-1860)

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1. From migrants...

In the dense network of French diplomatic delegations all over Europe and Mediterranean ports Naples represents since the end of the Sixteenth century a steady point: In the capital of Neapolitan Kingdom there are both an Embassy and a Consul, appointed by the king of France in order to take care the interests of his countrymen. Besides the presence of French people in Naples is largely attested since the Middle Age and during all the early modern age, though it is very difficult to precisely state how many people come from France to Naples in this period, both because of the lack of sources and the problems concerning the meaning itself of a national identification in the ancient régime.

Some years ago, studying French merchants in the eighteenth century Naples, Ruggiero Romano argued that the colonie française was composed by just 20-25 people, mostly because of the discriminations they had to suffer by Austrian administration between 1713 and 1734 and the consequences of the War of Polish Succession (1733-1738).

However, most recent studies have shown that such a little group represents neither the entire French business community working in Bourbon Naples nor the whole French presence in Southern Italy. Hundreds of French families live in the Kingdom capital already in the middle of the seventieth century and some others get to Naples since the beginning of the next century. These 4.000 French people settled between 1800 and 1860 make Naples one of the most important destination of French emigration in the Mediterranean area together with Cadix, the cosmopolite and “infirmé” Smyrna, the Maghreb, and Leghorn, which is considered by contemporaries as a “Levant rapproché.”

5 M. C. Smyrnelis, Smyrne, la ville oublié? 1830-1930, Paris, Autrement, 2006; M. C. Smyrnelis, Jeux d’identité à Smyrne au XVIIIe et au XIXe siècles, in H. Le Bras (a cura di), L’invention de populations. Biologie, idéologie et
Therefore, the French invasion in 1806 and the foundation in the continental Southern Italy of a ten years long filo-Napoleonic regime could actually strengthen the colony both in the capital and in other towns of the Kingdom but the *Decennio* is – as John Davis argues – neither the starting point nor the most relevant cause of a new era in the foreigners’ presence in the Mezzogiorno.

According to different sources (consular statistics, Neapolitan police records, and marriage certificates), a large number of the French subjects arrive in Naples before Joseph Bonaparte comes to the throne and even more move to Southern Italy in the Restoration era (Fig. 1).  

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**Fig. 1**

Arrivi a Napoli e matrimoni riportati nei registri di polizia, consolato e stato civile

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8 The Italian historiography calls *Decennio* the French occupation in Southern Italy between 1806 and 1815.

Of course, some of those coming in the Kingdom of Two Sicilies after 1815 have already been in Naples before\textsuperscript{10}, following to the pattern of multiple migrations as described by Bruno Ramirez\textsuperscript{11}. Some others, whose geographical mobility in the Euro-mediterranean area is actually surprising, consider Naples as just a leg in their wandering around port by port, town by town. In several cases, this behaviour is so constant that it looks like a diaspora\textsuperscript{12} like the Greek and Swiss ones\textsuperscript{13}

As other well-known diaspora-people, they settle in a place (in this case the Mezzogiorno) sometimes for long years, but they do not hesitate to migrate again if this choice seems to be profitable and even to come back to Naples, making their migration “even if definitive, never like as a migration de rupture”\textsuperscript{14}.

For instance, when Victor Auvillain (Fig. 2) comes to Naples from St. Cyr (a small town in the department of Seine et Oise) during the Decennio, he is the Earl de Grasset’s portier.

In January 1815, in a church in the centre of Naples, he marries Maria Antonia Corrado, who is from Salerno\textsuperscript{15}. However, some months later the Napoleonic regime of Murat falls and they escape the Bourbon’s anti-French reprisal by moving to Florence. Here – on 3\textsuperscript{rd} April 1816 - is born their first son: Ernest\textsuperscript{16}.

\textsuperscript{10} M. Rovinello e R. Zaugg, I francesi a Napoli tra Sette e Ottocento. Profili sociali e percorsi migratori, in A. Arru, D. L. Cagliotie altri (a cura di), Denaro, credito e lavoro. Migrazioni nazionali e internazionali di uomini e donne in Italia tra Settecento e Novecento, Roma, Donzelli, forthcoming.
\textsuperscript{15} ASN, Atti di stato civile, S. Ferdinando, Matrimoni, v. 141.
\textsuperscript{16} CGFN, Registres d’immatriculation des français à Naples, vol. 2.
Some years later, in the summer 1821, the Auvillains have a second son: Charles Pierre Antoine Michel\textsuperscript{17}. He comes into the world not in Florence but in Naples, where in the meantime his parents have moved. Victor works as salesclerk in an important French commercial firm and his wife – as usual in this period – takes care of their children. This time Victor’s stay in the Kingdom is actually definitive. In fact, before dying of old age in 1844\textsuperscript{18}, he can welcome into the family the young girl from Caserta that Ernest marries in 1843 and their son, Vittorio Vincenzo Alfonso Pasquale, born in Naples eleven months later.

The complexity and also the extraordinary variety of their migration patterns make very difficult to reconstruct the runs French migrants have made before getting to the

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\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
Mezzogiorno. When sources throw light on them, their migration project is mostly atomistic, extremely “segmented” and very often pluri-generational\(^{19}\).

Most of French - regardless of their social rank - move to Naples alone, implicitly confirming the predominance of work migrations. Others come to the Mezzogiorno with their wives and sometimes with children. Anyway, in both cases French do not exploit the previous presence of countrymen in order to make easier their arrival and settlement in the host country. When they land in the Naples seaport, most of them have no relative there. No link is evident among people coming from the same areas or villages, also because it is rare to find people coming from the same places in a short period (10-15 years)\(^{20}\).

Perhaps they have been able to get some information from countrymen settled in Naples before moving from France. However, they obtain no help from them when they arrive in the Kingdom of Two Sicilies: no hospitality, no subsidy, no help in finding job in their own shops or firms. While Swiss and British migrants find a strong helping hand in their own national and religious communities, French do not. Moving to Naples is a lone adventure for them.

Much more common among foreign migrants is another aspect of their migration. In the actual experiences of several French migrants conceptual dichotomies as internal migration/international migration and \emph{mobilité de longue distance}/\emph{micro-mobilité}\(^{21}\) lose any significance. Many people start moving to a near village/town and, through successive relocations (often made by more than a single generation), they finally get to a bigger city (not necessarily a metropolis like Paris or Marseilles). From there they leave directly to Naples (as in the case of Beranger family\(^{22}\)) or to other Italian cities (Turin, Florence, Leghorn, Rome, and Milan) as a further middle leg. In these places, sometimes more

\(^{19}\) P. A. Rosental, \emph{Les sentiers invisibles. Espace, familles et migrations dans la France du 19\textsuperscript{e} siècle}, Paris, EHESS, 1999.

\(^{20}\) The data are somewhat different for biggest cities like Paris, Marseilles, and Lyon. However, it is obvious that people moving form such big cities had much less chances of getting in touch before leaving France and planning their migration exploiting previous contacts with countrymen already in the Mezzogiorno.

\(^{21}\) About the category of \emph{micro-mobilité} see J. P. Pousou, \emph{Mobilité et migration}, in J. Dupâquier (a cura di), \emph{Histoire de la population française}, vol. 2, Paris, PUF, 1988, vol. 2, pp. 99-143. Some critical studies about the use of this category in classifying migrations are J. Bourdieu e altri, \emph{Migrations et transmissions intergénérationnelles dans la France du XIX\textsuperscript{e} siècle et du début du XX\textsuperscript{e} siècle} in "Annales HSS", 2000, pp. 749-786 and P. A. Rosental, \emph{La migration des femmes (et des hommes) en France au XIX\textsuperscript{e} siècle} in "Annales de Démographie Historique", 2004, pp. 107-135.

\(^{22}\) Rovinello e Zaugg, \emph{I francesi...} cit.
familiar and culturally closer than Naples for French natives\textsuperscript{23}, migrants stay for different periods (from some months to decades). Here they can probably collect material and immaterial resources (mostly human and social capital) which will turn out very useful when these people (mostly merchants) settle in Naples\textsuperscript{24}.

However, such an articulated migration pattern is not a prerogative of a restricted merchant-elite. Among people moving to Southern Italy through several steps there are street vendors and small \textit{boutiquiers} as well as craftsmen, teachers, civil servants, and households\textsuperscript{25}.

In fact, our sources enable us to analyze the "whole" French migration to Naples\textsuperscript{26}, not just a limited socio-professional group (elites, merchants, entrepreneurs, etc.) as other studies have done until now, mostly in order to weigh up the role played by foreigners in such a backward economic system\textsuperscript{27}.

It is actually very difficult to state the socio-professional status of French moving to Naples during the period under examination. Interpretive problems connected to the reliability of auto and etero-definitions provided by authorities and immigrants as they appear in the sources used for this research\textsuperscript{28}, and the extreme flexibility of migrants in

\textsuperscript{23} About the concept of « cultural distance » and its relevance in studying migrants' behaviours and strategies see A. Arru, F. Ramella e J. Ehmer, \textit{Premessa} in "Quaderni Storici", 106, 2001, pp. 3-23.

\textsuperscript{24} Some examples are in M. Rovinello, \textit{I "francesi" nella Napoli dell'Ottocento}, dottorato (XVIII ciclo) (rel. B. Salvemini e J. Boutier), Università degli Studi di Bari - EHESS de Marseille, a.a. 2006-2007.

\textsuperscript{25} ASN, \textit{Prefettura di Polizia, Movimento stranieri}, f. 2846.

\textsuperscript{26} Similar researches have been done about Swiss migrants to the post-Restoration Mezzogiorno and English living in the early nineteenth century Sicily M. Rovinello, “\textit{Gente meccaniche}” e \textit{idoneità nazionale. Artigiani, garzoni, militari e domestici svizzeri nella Napoli ottocentesca} in "Quaderni Storici", 121, 2006, pp. 255-287; M. D'Angelo, \textit{Inglesi in Sicilia nell'Ottocento} in "Archivi e Imprese", 17, 1998, pp. 5-32.


collocating themselves in the Neapolitan labour market, call for great prudence in classifying their occupations and socio-economic status.

However, it is possible to affirm that the French colony in the Bourbon Naples is characterized by a considerable socio-economic heterogeneity.

Together with a restricted minority composed by few hundreds of négociants, fabricants and propriétaires who can be considered as protagonists of an elite-migration\(^{29}\), a large number of French moving to Naples belong to inferior social ranks and come to the Mezzogiorno within a subsistence or betterment migration\(^{30}\) (Fig. 3).

They Actually do not significantly differ from their “advantaged”\(^{31}\) countrymen in the timing of their arrivals, migration pattern, place of birth, and sometimes even not even in material capital. Both elite members and common people get to the Neapolitan kingdom mostly after Murat falls\(^{32}\) and move mostly in an atomistic way, which is very far from the cooptation phenomena registered within other national elites in the nineteenth century Mezzogiorno\(^{33}\) and also very different from the migration chains which characterize the French emigration to America\(^{34}\).

Even if among elite members there is a slight overrepresentation of people from Mediterranean coast (Tab. 1 and 2), the geographical origins cannot be considered a

\(^{29}\) According to K. J. Bade elite-migration are “the spatial mobility of entrepreneurs, merchants and skilled people, the interregional or transnational extension of factories, and the capital movements which increase the work and profits opportunities in the area of destination”. K. J. Bade, \textit{L’Europa in movimento. Le migrazioni dal Settecento a oggi}, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2001, p. 129.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., p. 4.

\(^{31}\) Caglioti, \textit{Élites in movimento...} cit., p. 207.

\(^{32}\) Analysing the arrival trend of French merchants and entrepreneurs it is evident that most of them get to the Mezzogiorno after 1815. In fact, the average number of arrivals raises from about 10 in the period between 1807 and 1815 to more than 16 in the period between 1816 and 1825. CGFN, \textit{Registres d'immatriculation des français à Naples}, vol. 1-3.

\(^{33}\) Dawes, \textit{British merchants...} cit.; Caglioti, \textit{Vite parallele...} cit., pp. 51-55.

significant element of distinction between middle and upper classes coming to the Southern Italy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seine</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouches du Rhône</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhône</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corse</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isère</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hérault</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gard</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seine et Oise</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haut Rhin</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of birth</th>
<th>Migrants</th>
<th>Migrants to Naples/total inhabitants (1836) x 10.000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>2,88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marseille</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>13,49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyon</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>6,09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenoble</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10,34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nîmes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6,51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aix</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bordeaux</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2,42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toulon</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5,71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toulouse</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2,59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1,394</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 2

This closeness to the elite is sometimes strengthened by the lack of precise information: There is no balance sheet of their firms and we have no idea about the earnings of these people. Therefore, it is very problematic to sharply divide people having some capital and currying on an unpretentious commercial or entrepreneurial activity from the firms belonging to the most relevant French businessmen in the kingdom.

However, even if someone of them has some money to invest in the host country, what they lack is actually the social capital\(^{35}\), the international network and the wideness of business activity which characterize the most important French firms working in Naples, and enables us to distinguish them from “boutiquiers et autres marchands détaillleurs” […] classés avec les boutiquiers alors que d’autres figurent avec les petites gens”\(^{36}\).

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\(^{36}\) Ozanam, La colonie française… cit., pp. 265-266.
This socially composite group of about 4,000 people leaving their homeland mostly after the Revolution and often travelling around all over Europe contributes to enlarge over time the French presence in the Mezzogiorno. With this minority - a national minority - the second part of this contribute will actually deal.

Focusing briefly on the economic activities, social behaviour, and networks (both in France and in the Bourbon kingdom) of the French colony members and underlining how they integrate into the local society and labour market in comparison with other national, religious, and ethnic minorities living in Southern Italy, I intend to explain the reason why, at least in speaking of this national minority, the word “French” should be always placed in inverted commas.

2. ...to minority

2.1 Merchant and entrepreneurs: French elite in Naples

For skilled people wishing to “better themselves in material respects” the nineteenth century Naples offers ideal conditions: it is one of the largest consumer markets in Europe, it has a very active port, its government needs very often loans from foreign bankers in order to bear the considerable costs of the Bourbon court and Austrian military occupation after 1821, and it offers an immense reservoir of low-wage workforce available within a market where they actually face no competition by an almost inexistent local entrepreneur class.

Both French merchant and entrepreneurs are surely attracted by all these elements. Together with Swiss textile entrepreneurs settled in Salerno (Wenner, Aselmeyer, Egg, etc.) and bankers working in the capital (Appelt, Meuricoffre, etc.), British merchant-

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39 Even if the distinction between production and commercialisation in the Nineteenth-century firms is often very fine, those members of the elite of French origin, who manage or own an industrial plant based in the Neapolitan area can be considered “entrepreneurs” while people trading goods from/to the Mezzogiorno without proven interests in manufacturing them are considered “merchants”. Though the selection is arbitrary, this choice does allow us to study of a group of people, presumably homogeneous, due to their social-economic status, background and shared interests, as well as to compare the behaviour and the choices of these with other groups of foreign entrepreneurs already the subject of study over the last ten years.
bankers (William Turner and James Close), and the local branch of the Rothschild bank\textsuperscript{40}, they greatly contribute to create the post-Revolution Neapolitan commercial elite, which was “largely composed by foreigners”\textsuperscript{41} as remarked by John Davis.

While French \textit{maisons} and captains mostly managed the intensive dealings between the Mezzogiorno and Marseilles in the middle of eighteenth century\textsuperscript{42}, members of the French colony excel in several sectors of the nineteenth century Neapolitan economy: Degas\textsuperscript{43} and Duchaliot families, Charles Forquet\textsuperscript{44} and some others are at the top of financial market. Charles Antoine Beranger, Joseph Cartoux, and Joseph Tesseire are key figures of the industrialization process of the Kingdom\textsuperscript{45}. Maurice Dupont, Pierre and Victoire Cardon, Benoît Antoine Desarnaud, Henry Le Riche and dozens of other French important merchants carry on their international business by going everyday to the Naples seaport and to the Stock Exchange in order to buy and sell their products.

To make their migration to Naples a “success story”\textsuperscript{46} most of French businessmen adopt a strategy very different from those of colleagues from other countries. While Swiss and British show a “very strong sense of identity and of belonging to a self-contained and distinct community which had no interest at all in local integration”\textsuperscript{47} according to a

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{43} R. Raimondi, \textit{Degas e la sua famiglia in Napoli} 1793-1917, Napoli, SAV, 1958.
\bibitem{44} Davis, \textit{Società e imprenditori...} cit., p. 42
\bibitem{47} Dawes, \textit{British merchants...} cit., p. 106.
\end{thebibliography}
clearly “ethnocentric” behavioural model both in the private sphere and in the personal one, French do not.

They are Catholics in a country with a large Catholic majority. They share a much closer cultural affinity towards the locals in comparison with other foreigners coming from Northern Europe and speaking German or English. They actually hold themselves far removed from the customs and mental attitudes of their humbler fellow countrymen as are the local or foreign merchants, with whom they could at least share “a similar cultural and professional formation”.

Therefore, their behaviour is much less influenced by locals’ mistrust towards non-Catholic foreigners and it can be mostly dictated by the particular resources (material and above all immaterial) at their disposal. They do not use either the social capital associated with the membership of a national or religious community (i.e. the British colony leaded by British consul at the Bourbon court or the German-French Evangelical Society founded in Naples in 1826), nor the advantages in transaction costs and in collecting information coming from an “ethnic economy”. French merchants and entrepreneurs do not colonize a specific sector of industrial production/trading and actually do not refuse a priori a strong cooperation with Neapolitans as partners both in financing and managing firms.

Most of those who come to the Kingdom of Two Sicilies to become successful entrepreneurs/merchant do not possess everything they need to set up an enterprise and make it competitive. Therefore, instead of setting up firms only with countrymen or acting


49 Arru, Ramella e Ehmer, Premessa... cit.


51 For an example of the discriminations made by Neapolitan government against non-Catholics see A. Mercati, Raccolta di Concordati su Materie Ecclesiastiche tra la Santa Sede e le Autorità Civili, vol. I “1098-1914”, Roma, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1954 Some consequences of these discriminations on the Protestant Swiss’ behaviour are described in Caglioti, Vite parallele... cit.

as mere agency houses controlled from the homeland, the French establish partnerships mostly with Neapolitans.

Although among the immigrant entrepreneurs there are some partnerships that remained exclusively French (i.e. Bayle & Gasquet, Bourgeat & Petit, Giuseppe Girard) and also few cases of individual businesses following the pattern of the small and large eighteenth century entrepreneurial dynasties (Pascal or Frajssinet), in the period from 1810-1834, 10 out of 14 French entrepreneurs sign agreements with local businessmen. This trend is even more evident among merchants: About two third of the contracts signed by a French négociant and registered in the Neapolitan Court of Commerce between 1815 and 1860 ratify the foundation or the shutdown of a Franco-Neapolitan firm.

Their agreements are very different in several aspects. On one hand, French entrepreneurs bring into the Mezzogiorno their technical know how and their managerial expertise and they mostly need just a sponsor supplying machineries, the starting capital, and the contact within the local market (not to mention the ‘contacts’ in the local market). On the other hand, merchants do not need much money to set up their maisons in Naples and, in associating with local people, they mostly look for someone who can actively cooperate in managing current business and who posses a network which is complementary to their own.

Anyway, in so doing, both French entrepreneurs and merchants transform potentially competitive disadvantages such as the impossibility of doing everything on their own and not constructing an “an economic group with strong national-linguistic-

54 ASN, Tribunale di Commercio di Napoli, Atti di Società, f. 358, fogli 125-128; f. 1888, fogli 60-61 and f. 358, fogli 54-57.
56 ASN, Tribunale di Commercio di Napoli, Atti di Società, ff.1887-1889, 358, 515, 302. In the same period three French entrepreneurs have links with Swiss citizens and one with a businessman from Nice.
58 M. Rovinello, Mercanti francesi e “nazione” francese a Napoli nel primo Ottocento, in B. Salvemini (a cura di), Piazze mercantili, mercanti e poteri sulle rotte tirreniche. I traffici marittimi tra Francia e Italia nell’età della «grande trasformazione» (1700-1850), forthcoming.
religious connotations”59 based on their ethnic roots, in ways that reveal the possibilities offered by a partnership with local colleagues and southern capitalists, without losing for that reason their “strong ties”60 within the homeland.

This supranational and non-ethnocentric behaviour, based on a constant cooperation with locals, is the typical French response to the challenges posed by the Neapolitan market. But this is not just a cold economic strategy. In fact, the integration of French businessmen – at the same time precondition and consequence of this professional cooperation - is not limited to the economic sphere: Friendships and matrimones consolidate their relationships with local elite all over time, generation by generation.

The endogamy among French immigrants of the first generation is just 59.8%. This datum is much lower than the Protestant Swiss’ one (76.7%)61. Moreover, it is even lower because it includes a large number of endogamic marriages celebrated before getting to Naples but registered in the consular lists. The second generation even strengthen this trend: While only 22.4% of Swiss joins in marriage countrymen62, about 65% of French immigrants’ sons gets married with non-French, mostly Neapolitans partner63.

So “Frenchness” is not an embedding fact or when French elite members have to choose their partner. On the contrary, a much important criterion of selection is the partner’s socio-professional status. Among French merchants and entrepreneurs the social endogamy64 is 87.8%. The 9.7% of them marries members of aristocratic families ennobling themselves, and just a remaining 2.5% wed someone belonging to a lower rank65 (Tab. 3).

Such choices reveal a process of integration that is substantially accomplished by the first generation immigrants and that is also confirmed by their distribution and mobility

60 M. Granovetter, La forza dei legami deboli, in M. Follis (a cura di), La forza dei legami deboli e altri saggi, Napoli, Liguori, 1988, pp. 115-144.
61 Caglioti, Vite parallele... cit., p. 152.
63 CADN, Volume dattiloscritto riassuntivo degli atti di Stato Civile del Consolato e della Legazione francese a Napoli per gli anni 1801-1886; ASN, Atti di Stato Civile, Napoli, neighbourhood of Chiaia, San Ferdinando, San Giuseppe, Montecalvario and Porto.
64 With “social endogamy” I mean weddings between people belonging to the commercial/entrepreneurial elite, both French and local.
65 CADN, Volume dattiloscritto riassuntivo degli atti di Stato Civile del Consolato e della Legazione francese a Napoli per gli anni 1801-1886; ASN, Atti di Stato Civile, Napoli, neighbourhood of Chiaia, San Ferdinando, San Giuseppe, Montecalvario and Porto.
all across the city (Fig. 4), without the creation of any “ethnic island” as in countries where French cannot put themselves together with locals so quickly 66.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-professional endogamy</th>
<th>National endogamy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Endogamy</td>
<td>Endogamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descendent Exogamy</td>
<td>Weddings with Neapolitans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascendant Exogamy</td>
<td>Weddings with other foreigners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single/No information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 3

However, in interacting with the host society, French businessmen do not lose (in fact strengthen) the traditional conception of their identity based on their socio-professional rank and therefore they construct over time a close networks of contacts which are mostly limited to the members of local high society and business community components, both Neapolitans and foreigners.

They are constantly invited to parties, clubs, and salons where most gentlemen and businessmen periodically meet67. Among these influential friends they choose the witnesses for their wedding68. Among them they always find a helping hand when they need to appoint consiglieri di famiglia (family advisers) to oversee the affairs of widows or orphans69.

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67 44 out of about 100 French entrepreneurs are members of a Neapolitan club. 29 are members of the “Unione”, 7 are members of the “Filarmonica”, and others are members of the “Canottieri”, the “Nazionale”, the “Yacht”, and the “Partenopeo”. Someone - like Ernest Lefebvre – is even member of the exclusive circle called “Whist”, where most important Neapolitan gentlemen meet every evening playing cards, reading newspapers, and chatting. Caglioti, Associazionismo... cit.

68 From the official records of weddings, deaths or births of French entrepreneurs or their relatives, over 34% did not have a French signature, while about 50% have, as one of the witnesses, only a subject of the King of France. Archivio di Stato di Napoli (ASN), Atti di Stato Civile, Napoli, neighbourhood of Chiaia, San Ferdinando, San Giuseppe, Montecalvario and Porto.

69 Examining 48 meetings called to deal with minors or widows of French nationality between 1806 and 1860, 24.6% are without one Frenchman, 49.1% have a maximum of 2, and 18.8% have between 3 or more, and finally 7.5% have a French majority. Overall, the members of non-French nationality are 54.5%, of which about half are Neapolitans. ASN, Preture circondariali, neighbourhood of Chiaia, San Ferdinando, San Giuseppe, Montecalvario and Porto.
Regardless of the differences in national identity and sometimes in faith, these people form a very close circle, whose nature is largely corporative and not ethnic or national as well as in the eighteenth and seventeenth century *Nationes*.

Even in the middle of the nineteenth century the *Nation française*, which gather round the Consul after the expulsion of 1798, looks much more like the merchant group described in several ancient regime Neapolitan accounts than the “miniature homeland” as it should be according to both the Revolution principles and the instructions coming from Paris to French diplomats all around Europe.

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72 Baillou, Lucet e Vimont, *Les affaires...*
About 63% of people regularly registered in consular matriculation lists between 1806 and 1860 are members of the business elite: merchants, bankers, entrepreneurs (Fig. 5). Most of them own or manage important firms and maisons in the capital. Someone makes business both in Naples and in other towns of the kingdom, and most of humble people registered are in the lists because of their personal or professional relationships with their more influent countrymen (they are their households, private teachers of their sons, etc.).

Such a corporative idea of Nation and its elite sociality are largely backed by the French consul in Naples.

All these people - Neapolitans, Swiss, British, Austrian, etc. – are regularly invited to official celebrations and parties organized by French diplomats to celebrate the King’s birthday or any public national holiday⁷³, theoretically reserved to French subjects. Swiss, German, and even Neapolitan business community members do not just take part in French colony’s events.

Most of them live the everyday life of the community too: They sometimes marry French people in the Consul’s office (which is not allowed) and register their marriages in the consular registry office as they were French in every respect⁷⁴. French community’s lawyers do frequently support their interests and suits against colleagues and Neapolitan authorities⁷⁵. The consul himself issues sometimes them certificates and even passports to leave the kingdom⁷⁶.

⁷³ In the list of individus notables who are regularly invited to the parties organized by French Consulate there are several Protestants members of the German-French Evangelical Society, both French (Perret, Barendson, Im Thurn) and Swiss (Meuricoffre, Viollier, Bourguignon, Falconnet, et cetera). Among people invited to these events there are also some influent Neapolitan businessmen (Giusto, Sorvillo, Volpicelli) and foiegniers (Rogers, Carl Mayer Rothschild, Routh, Vallin, Turner, et cetera.). CADN, Postes diplomatiques et consulaires, Naples, Legation, vol. 49.
⁷⁴ MAE, C.C.C., Naples, vol. 54, f. 117.
For the members of French elite as well as for the diplomatic authorities “Frenchness” is not a decisive factor in drawing a sharp boundary between insiders and outsiders and in building their network in the host country. French merchants and entrepreneurs live their everyday life and make their choices in professional and private sphere within such a cosmopolite but rigorously rank-based environment. This context is very open to everyone could be considered “worthy” of being member of the Nation but – as we’ll show in the next paragraph – is almost inaccessible for more humble people even if they would have the right to be considered French subjects.

Even in the middle of the nineteenth century, while British and Swiss “proudly affirm their own identity” and let their lives run “parallel” with locals, in the French colony being “Merchant” is much more meaningful than being “French”.

2.2 Workers, soldiers, shopkeepers, and households: French common people in Naples

A huge “job centre”: this is how nineteenth century Naples must have looked like to those who, decide to move to the city in the hope of bettering their economic conditions. It is one of the biggest European cities with a population of about 400,000 inhabitants and it offers an indefinite number of job opportunities even to those coming without particular skills or economic resources.

Humbler French migrants (ex-soldiers, craftsmen, shopkeepers, etc.) have no problem in taking the occasions which arise from this enormous labour market. As their richer countrymen, they integrate themselves very quickly. And, as their countrymen, their sociality is strictly “horizontal”. They do not associate with other Frenchmen just because of linguistic/cultural proximity or common sense of national identity, but they get used to local people who share the same social rank, sometimes the same job, very often the same slums. Their sociality does not perform in clubs and salons, but mostly on the

77 Caglioti, Imprenditori evangelici... cit., p. 248.
78 Caglioti, Vite parallele... cit.
road, in taverns where they spend their spare time\textsuperscript{80}, and in alleys where most of them live.

As in Bari and other Italian towns already studied, much more than an abstract sense of national identity, the neighbourhood “produces affinity”\textsuperscript{81}. It strengthens over time the network among people (above all migrants) living in the same area regardless of their origin or native language.

Therefore, it is not surprising either that their neighbours are very often the witnesses of French migrants’ weddings\textsuperscript{82}, or that 66,5\% of them marries a partner belongs to the same neighbourhood, both locals (a great majority) and countrymen (in a few cases). This percentage even increases if we limit the analysis to specific professional categories: among shopkeepers it is about 70\%, among householders is 77,2\%.

Together with a spatial endogamy, French migrants’ marriages are characterised by a large social endogamy too. As their richer countrymen, bakers, booksellers, workmen, and other common people choose their partner mostly within their milieu: at least 60-65\% of their partners belongs to the same social status. Something more: even if “…on ne peut concevoir les unités macroscopiques telles que les catégories professionnelles comme nécessairement homogènes ou solidaires”\textsuperscript{83}, about 62\% of soldiers gets married with collegues’s daughters, 51,7\% of teachers and hommes de lettres does the same as well as 58,1\% of the French householders.

Once more these migrants build very dense networks which include both countrymen and locals with no apparent distinction. However, in comparison with those of elite members, these networks are much more localised and embedding. As Swiss craftsmen, salesclerks, and soldiers\textsuperscript{84}, when French migrants settle in a neighbourhood, they do not move across the city any more.

\textsuperscript{80} ASN, Ministero dell’Interno e Polizia della Luogotenenza delle province napoletane (“Alta polizia”), f. 56, fasc.io 800.
\textsuperscript{81} Carrino, I flussi migratori... cit., p. 69.
\textsuperscript{82} 62,5\% of the French weddings’ witnesses registered in the Neapolitan registry office between 1806 and 1860 live in the same neighbourhood of the French migrant getting married, and about 20\% live in the same street.
\textsuperscript{84} Rovinello, “Gente meccaniche”... cit.
It is not a specific area or a “ethnic island” as the Swiss’ one\textsuperscript{85} to embed them. French mostly settle according to their job needs and social status (Fig. 6)\textsuperscript{86}, regardless of the presence of countrymen (very often they even share apartments with Neapolitan colleagues). However, in this limited area they strike so deep roots that it is more likely that they leave Naples than they settle in another area of the capital.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig6.png}
\caption{Distribuzione dei francesi sul territorio napoletano}
\end{figure}

So this class-oriented sociality and this short interest in a communitarian sociality based on the common national identity, which were typical of old regime French poor

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., pp. 277-279.
\textsuperscript{86} The French migrants’ distribution on the Neapolitan territory is very similar to the locals’ one. Both French and Neapolitan elites prefer settling in the exclusive neighbourhoods of Chiaia, San Ferdinando, and San Giuseppe, while working classes settle in other neighbourhoods, next to the seaport and the official public market (mostly people working as porters, and small merchants), next to their shops in the city centre or elsewhere (i.e. booksellers in Via San Biagio dei Librai, the area traditionally occupied by this kind of sellers), and next to the factories where they are employed (mostly in Vicaria, Stella, and Avvocata).
migrants\textsuperscript{87}, is still the characteristic feature of French drifters’ sociality in the middle of nineteenth century. As their predecessors all over Mediterranean area, French diplomats in Bourbon Naples probably contribute to split the community that they should to create and make compact under the common flag of the king of France.

While during the whole period under analysis the British consul backs his countrymen’ struggle to have their own hospital and cemetery and the Protestant Swiss and German minorities fight against the Neapolitan government to obtain their own church and school, the French consul in Naples has no try to give his countrymen places and occasion where they could affirm and consolidate their own cultural/linguistic identity and their membership of a sharply distinct national community. French immigrants have neither school, nor cemetery, nor a national church\textsuperscript{88} as they had in the early modern age\textsuperscript{89}.

Even when consuls and ambassadors organize public ceremonies or parties to celebrate the “grandeur de Sa Majesté le Roi, du people et de toute la Nation française”\textsuperscript{90}, they are not interested in “nationalizing” these people involving them actively in the organization and the progress of such events. Besides, many migrants do not feel themselves part of this community and they have no will to take part in its activities. The “Nation” must seem to them something too vague and far away from their experience and everyday life.

While the most influent merchants and entrepreneurs of the community lead the parades, show off their paternalistic care towards their more humble countrymen by giving out them money or promising them protection, and hold public speeches as they were the only legitimate holders of the “Frenchness”, common people restrict themselves to be mere extras or even desert the public holidays. They can only compose the impressive framework which both French elite members and diplomats need to show others Nationes, Neapolitan authorities, and French Foreign Office in Paris the unity and the power of the French colony in the Kingdom of Two Sicilies.


\textsuperscript{90} MAE, C.C.C., Naples, vol. 170, ff. 198-199.
As in the previous centuries, “petits boutiquiers français [...] ne sont pas réputés de la nation à cause de la médiocrité de leur fortune et de leur commerce”\(^{91}\). So, excluded from the official colony’s life and sociality, and deeply integrated in the Neapolitan environment, most of French migrants accept and at the same time strengthen their condition of “denizens”. They gradually lose their juridical status of French and the right linked to the foreign condition in the Bourbon kingdom without formally acquiring the Neapolitan citizenship.

While merchants and entrepreneurs define themselves according to a corporative and supranational form of identity – while using sometimes a national identification in an opportunistic way according to their immediate needs and interests\(^{92}\) - lower class migrants can live in Naples almost without a national identity, something which is actually not necessary even in the middle of the “the Nation building century”\(^{93}\).

3. **Conclusions**

This paper has briefly analysed the patterns of the French migration to nineteenth century Naples and some aspects of French migrants’ presence in the Mezzogiorno.

French migration to Naples, which involves about 4.000 people during the whole period 1806-1860, is characterised by the absence of migration chains and the extraordinary mobility of its protagonists. French move to Southern Italy all over the first part of the century with no substantial difference between the *Decennio* and the Bourbon and they do it mostly alone, but they do not stay in the Mezzogiorno for ever. Although they strike roots in the city integrating themselves very quickly regardless of their social status (maybe thanks to the weakness of ethnic-based relationships in the host country), most of them do not hesitate to leave Naples when it could be favourable. As coming to the Mezzogiorno is often a gradual run composed by several legs, staying in Naples does not represent the final stop. Multiple migrations and even returns to homeland are very frequent in the French migrants’ experience.

\(^{91}\) Ozanam, *La colonie française*... cit., p. 267.


\(^{93}\) W. Bagehot, *Physics and politics: or thoughts on the application of the principles of “Natural Selection” and “inheritance” to political society*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1887 cit., p. 20.
However, in describing the French migrants in Naples, this paper has implicitly asked whether it makes sense to classify these people as « French » - that is according to a national conception of identity – already in the first half of nineteenth century.

The answer to this huge question is too complex to be briefly explained here and the sole case study I have analysed should be compared with others concerning other French colonies in the Mediterranean and European cities before drawing any conclusion.

However, it is evident that the Nation française settled in Naples and lead by the Consul looks much more like a corporative and restricted group of influent merchants regardless of their effective citizenship and sense of membership (as in the previous centuries) than a national minority in the post-Revolution meaning of the concept.

Although their everyday life in a host country should force them to think over their being foreigners, outsiders from the linguistic and cultural local community, constituting a national minority opposed to a national (or sub-national) majority, French migrants perceive other and more traditional identities (religious and above all professional) as prevalent in comparison with the national one. It can be occasionally used in an opportunistic-situational way\textsuperscript{94} by merchants and entrepreneurs, in order to get advantages from it\textsuperscript{95}, but neither elite members nor common people moving to Naples regard it as the exclusive and indelible brand it should already be according to the official rules on French citizenship\textsuperscript{96} and the massive process of mass nationalization started up by governments all over Europe.


\textsuperscript{95} Some examples of this instrumental use of the national identity made by merchants in the nineteenth century are available in Smyrnelis, Jeux d'identité... cit. In my contribute to the Historical Society’s 2008 Conference I will try to show that during the whole nineteenth century French people settled in Naples (whose migration and settlement patterns I have analysed in this paper) have the chance of re-defining and negotiating their membership/non-membership to their « National family », as well as their belonging to other groups based on a common faith or socio-economic status, pulling up and not substituting the early-modern rank division of the society with the forthcoming national one.

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