

Labor Insertion of Italian Professionals in Valencia: Between Emerging and Traditional Professions

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Abstract

This paper presents the first results of a case study of Italian professionals' mobility to the city of Valencia (Spain), highlighting the heterogeneity of the labor insertion paths within and between groups of emerging and traditional professionals. A qualitative method was used: 25 in-depth interviews and a two-year observation in virtual and real communities were carried out.

According to our analysis, the heterogeneity of the labor insertion itineraries, revealed by the migrants' narratives, can be understood by taking account of the various combinations of social, economic, and cultural capital with which the Italian professionals were endowed.

Keywords

Migrants, observation, labor insertion, Italy, Spain, social capital, cultural capital, segmented labor market

Introduction

The traditional professions enjoyed what was broadly recognized as a “golden age” in the middle of the 20th century (Gorman & Sandefur, 2011, p. 277), but in the last decades of that century, standard Fordist employment in general and the professional world in particular underwent transformational changes. The bursting onto the professional work scene of large companies as employers (Leicht & Fennell, 1997), the increasing transnationalization of professional labor markets (Harvey, 2011), and the occurrence of *emerging professionals* (EMps) (Maestriperi & Cucca, 2018) (e.g. in advanced digital services), based on expert knowledge but lacking the autonomy, service orientation, or prestige of *traditional professionals* (TRps), have deeply transformed professional work.

In short, as Bellini and Maestriperi (2018) argue, professional groups have had to deal with an increasing process of differentiation and heterogeneity, within and between professions, even more pronounced after the last economic crisis. The research presented in this article explores this process in a special group of professionals, namely migrants, through a case study: the labor market insertion of Italian professionals in the city of Valencia. The case of Valencia is particularly interesting because the city is characterized by its very extended secondary segment of labor market and few opportunities of good jobs in the primary sector (Casado-Diaz, 2000; Ingellis & Esteban, 2020). It does not offer the opportunities of global cities such as Madrid or Barcelona. This is the context with which the migrant professionals considered here have to deal to achieve their labor insertion.

The general objective of our research is to analyze the way in which Italian self-employed professionals overcome the social closure of the primary sector, highlighting the heterogeneity between and within the emerging and traditional professionals observed and the factors influencing that heterogeneity. The primary segment, comprising well-paid jobs with all social guarantees and permanent contracts, is characterized by exclusionary social closure processes, while the secondary, relatively open segment, is considerably more precarious. It is very difficult for migrants to enter the primary segment of the local labor market. Within this framework, the specific objective is to explore the impact on the labor insertion process of the three forms of capital identified by Bourdieu (1986): economic (EC), social (SC), and cultural capital (CC).

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on professions, its recent redefinition process, and theoretical perspectives on immigrants’ labor integration. Section 3 details the research methods used and the sample observed. Section 4 presents the research results organized by themes emerging from the analysis. Discussion and conclusions end the paper.

Theoretical framework

Redefining professionalism: From traditional to emerging professions

The traditional professions, such as medicine, law, architecture, and a handful of others, enjoyed what was broadly recognized as a “golden age” in the mid-20th century (Freidson, 2001, p. 182; Galanter & Palay, 1991, p. 20-36; Gorman & Sandefur, 2011, p. 277). In most cases, professional knowledge was certified by the state as qualifying its possessors, sometimes exclusively, to provide services within certain defined areas of need. In many professions, especially medicine and law, practitioners worked largely in private practice, alone or in relatively small partnerships, which afforded them considerable control over the content and economic conditions of their work. The local nature of most professional practice reinforced the growth and persistence of strong local professional communities. Finally, in this context, professionals had higher incomes and social status than those pursuing almost all other occupations.

The functionalist theoretical orientation that prevailed at the time gave prominence to professions as one of the institutions sustaining social order. Scholars devoted a great deal of effort to defining the concepts of profession and professionalism without achieving a clear consensus (Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1933; Cogan, 1953; Goode, 1969). Four central attributes of professionalism emerge from this body of scholarship: (a) expert knowledge, (b) technical autonomy, (c) a normative orientation toward the service of others, and (d) high status, income, and other rewards. Expert knowledge is the sine qua non of professional work. All professions draw on a body of knowledge composed of formal, abstract principles (Abbott, 1988; Goode, 1961), grounded either in science or in moral thought (Rueschemeyer, 1972).

Years later and from a neo-Weberian perspective, professions have come to be defined in the Anglo-American context in terms of exclusionary social closure in the market based on the establishment of legal boundaries creating ranks of insiders and outsiders, with associated privileges accruing to insiders in terms of income, status, and power through credentialism (Saks, 2010). As such, professionalization can be viewed as a strategy to limit and control the number of entrants to an occupation, thus preserving or increasing its market value (Parkin, 1979), to derive control by producers over consumers, including the manner in which their needs are to be addressed (Johnson, 1972), and to legitimize occupational independence over technical decisions and the organization of work (Freidson, 2001).

Furthermore, in the case of immigrants, the group of professionals considered in our study, many other factors can obstruct professionals' incorporation into the labor market but also contribute to achieving this incorporation. From a neo-Weberian perspective, we will

consider not only exclusionary social closure but the three “fundamental guises” of capital identified by Bourdieu (1986):

as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications and social capital, made up of social obligations (connections) which is convertible, in certain condition, into economic capital. (p.84)

More specifically, cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied, objectified, and institutionalized states. The accumulation of CC in the embodied state (i.e. what is called culture or cultivation) becomes an integral part of the person when converted into a habitus, in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state it takes the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.) and in the institutionalized state it is materialized as academic qualifications. It is a guaranteed competence; it is officially recognized.

Studies in recent decades have investigated the impact of social capital on the labor market insertion of foreign professionals (Portes, 1998). Also in the case of SC, the literature recognizes in Bourdieu the author who conducted the first systematic analysis and defined the concept as “the aggregate of the real or potential resources linked to the possession of a lasting network of more or less institutionalized relations of knowledge and mutual recognition” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.178).

The important roles that social networks and social capital have in the economic insertion of immigrants into the receiving societies have already been sufficiently contrasted. It is common for immigrants to accumulate social capital by belonging to personal networks (constituted by kinship bonds, friendship, etc.) and by their participation in diverse civil society organizations (ethnic, sport, religious, communitarian, etc.). When networks are well developed, they make available to most community members the possibilities of obtaining work and other resources (Choldin, 1973).

Coming back to professionals in general, the 1980s and 1990s were decades of profound changes in the professional world. Professional work became increasingly dominated by large organizations as employers, as clients, and (especially in medicine) in other roles involving the imposition of external controls over individual professionals (Leicht & Fennell, 1997). Markets for professional services and professional labor became increasingly transnational (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2008; Harvey, 2011). Professions also underwent a demographic transformation: as higher education expanded and legal changes mandated equal access to higher education for a variety of historically excluded groups, the membership of most professions began to include growing numbers of young people, ethnic

minorities, and women (Epstein, 1993). At the same time, professionals selling their services in open markets faced threats to their ability to limit competition among their members. Yet another source of change has been the emergence of new occupations (e.g. in advanced digital services) based on expert knowledge but lacking the autonomy, service orientation, or prestige of *traditional professions*; their different philosophical basis has challenged traditional understandings of the professional role (Gorman & Sandefur, 2011). These *emerging professionals* (Maestriperieri & Cucca, 2018) have assumed the market logic as naturally constituting their essence, while not perceiving the insecurity determined by exposure to the market as a problem (Murgia, Maestriperieri & Armano, 2016).

Bellini and Maestriperieri (2018) rightly argue that in today's global world and particularly after the last economic crisis, professional groups have had to deal with a pervasive process of differentiation and heterogeneity. Accordingly, the authors identify three dimensions of analysis. First, *differentiation within professions* implies the inclusion of previously excluded groups such as women, immigrants, and young people from the lower and middle classes. But "differentiation within" also refers to the positions in the labor market that each practitioner can access. There is increasing heterogeneity in the way professional work is contracted out, which also increases the degree of insecurity of expert labor. Additionally, neoliberal processes of deregulation have eroded the capacity of professional groups to secure their status.

The second dimension is of changes *between professional groups*. This is a typical neo-Weberian analytical perspective that focuses on the interactions between different occupational jurisdictions (Abbott 1988), especially the dynamics of professional power (Johnson, 1972) and the mechanisms of exclusionary social closure (Macdonald, 1995; Parkin, 1979) which determine the success of a "professional project" (Sarfatti Larson, 1977). This approach represents professions as hierarchically differentiated groups and the analysis focuses on inequalities between groups (Saks, 2015).

In this paper we focus on both of the above dimensions to explore how these categories apply to the special case of professionals who migrate. We seek to identify differences between TRp and EMp migrants and within each group, observing labor market insertion processes in the light of their endowment of capital in Bourdieu's perspective.

Method

The empirical research employed two ethnographic techniques: in-depth interviews and observation among the online and offline Italian communities in Valencia. The ethnographer was an Italian immigrant researcher, who had been a member of the community as an Italian for three to four years before the research started. She was thus a participant observer as member of the community, but not as a professional.

According to Lester (2020), it is possible when doing online observation to collect data either by reading texts produced by those being observed or by interacting online with people as a researcher. In our case, the majority of the material was collected by taking extracts of texts produced by the subjects as they discussed and interacted among themselves, without regard to the purposes of the research. Thus, the influence of the researcher as participant was very limited and the texts are not reactive to the research process. The fieldwork, which was ongoing at the time of writing, began in February 2017 with multisite virtual ethnography in two Facebook groups (“Italiani a Valencia” (Italians in Valencia) and “Italiani di Valencia” (Italians from Valencia)) and a WhatsApp group. Following Spradley’s (1980) classification, our observation was at degree 2 (passive observation), being covert during the first four to five months, rising to degree 3 (moderate overt participation) for the remaining time. The researchers used the covert phase to accurately formulate the research problem, taking into account the main issues emerging from the online community by adopting a bottom-up perspective. Observation was also useful as a way of verifying the information obtained in the in-depth interviews, to check its quality and to see at what extent were shared in the community.

According to the ethical guidelines of the Association of Internet Researchers (2012), such use of covert observation presents no ethical problems in this case, for two major reasons: the first related to the issue of consent and the second to the public/private nature of the contents. First, after the short covert phase, the subjects were able to withhold their consent to participating in the overt phase, lasting more than 2 years. Secondly, according to Jones (1997), one of the prerequisites for an online community is the existence of a common public place where members can meet and interact. The material from which our data was extracted was produced to be shared and discussed among more than 20,000 members of such a community. McKee and Porter (2009) offer a heuristic which is useful when making decisions about informed consent. They connect the issue of public/private distinction to the degree of interaction with the researcher and to the vulnerability of the subjects regarding the issues being analyzed. In our case the degree of interaction was very low, we analyzed no-sensitive issues, and no harm was done to subjects by making public the discussions that had appeared in the Facebook groups. Finally, the anonymity of the subjects was strictly respected.

The Facebook groups were very heterogenous, including an active population, aged 16-64 years, with very diverse migratory projects. Furthermore, some people had lived in Valencia for more than 15 years, some had arrived recently, and others still lived in Italy, planning to move to Valencia.

The majority of the 25 in-depth interviews were conducted intensively between May 2017 and spring 2018. The real-life observation began at the same time as the interviews and was still in progress at time of writing.

The interview sample comprised 16 males and 9 females, aged between 30 and 49 years. The great majority were highly educated, 17 having completed tertiary education and four having studied less than two years at university, while the remaining four had completed secondary education. As for employment, 8 were in traditional professions (lawyer, architect, medical doctors etc.), 7 were new-generation professionals with jobs related to the digital media, 4 were professionals in the field of wellness and beauty (physiotherapists, personal trainers), and 4 were chefs in Italian restaurants. Sixteen of the 25 interviewees had a partner and at least one child, the remainder being single. In the in-text quotations, each interviewee is identified with a code comprising their number in the list of interviews, their sex (M/F), and their age in years.

The interviews explored the following issues: sociodemographic characteristics, employment situation prior to migration, previous migration experience, the migration decision (how the idea originated, how they made the decision, how they found the information, etc.), motivation, the migration process, labor and social insertion in the hosting context, its satisfactory and unsatisfactory elements.

It is a known fact (Becker & Geer, 1957) that in research interviews and in everyday encounters (including social media), people tend to exaggerate their own agency in regard to positive achievements and to downplay their own agency in the face of failures. In this research, the focus on the process more than on the achievements, and the observation of the discussions among migrants has made it possible to control for this so-called attribution error (Gilbert & Malone, 1995).

In the analysis applied to the in-depth interviews and to the texts published in the online community, we addressed the following questions: 1. What were the main paths followed by Italian professionals entering the Valencian labor market? 2. Was there more heterogeneity within or between groups of professionals analyzed in terms of labor insertion paths? 3. What influence did the three forms of capital have on this heterogeneity? 4. Was there a transnational professional space in which these immigrants lived?

Findings

Traditional and emerging professions: Between barriers and facilities

Our observations of the online communities and during the meetings among Italian migrants allowed us to identify some professional profiles as significantly recurrent, which is why we included those professionals in our sample. All of the subjects included in our sample were self-employed at the time of the interview. The lack of data on the commercial and professional activities of Italians makes information from observation the closest to reality available.

According to the definition by Maestripietri and Cucca (2018) of emerging and traditional professionals, we can divide our sample into two groups: 14 EMps (web designers, digital freelancers, translators, well-being professionals, etc.) and 11 TRps (lawyers, medical doctors, architects, chefs in Italian restaurants, etc.).

The digital freelancers were experts in social media, marketing online, currently working in a global digital environment, who had chosen Valencia as a migration destination mainly for lifestyle reasons (Ingellis & Esteban, 2020) and low taxes. The well-being professionals were mainly personal trainers or beauticians with expert knowledge, targeting a high-spending clientele by providing high quality services and products, using Italian raw materials, considered the best quality in Spain, and branding their products and services as “Italian style” to make their clients feel special.

Something similar applies to the Italian chefs. They were not simply restaurant owners and chefs, but people with expertise in Italian cuisine, technical autonomy, and high status in their social and professional context. Italian restaurants included in our sample were considered exclusive places to have high quality meals. The literature considers that all of these elements are sine qua non of professional work and provide a sort of social closure for others trying to enter that market. This social closure was guaranteed by the nature of their product, Italian cuisine, distinct per se from Valencian cuisine. Furthermore, they offered regional, typical, and folk cuisine as a social distinguishing strategy to close that market to competitors such as Argentinians serving the massive tourist demand for Italian restaurants.

Finally, our sample included liberal professionals as the most traditional category, even though they were also involved in significant transformations such as the digitalization of many tasks, the progressive blurring of national frontiers, especially within Europe under the common European legal framework, and the progressive deregulation of the labor market, which introduced a novel element of insecurity into their status.

Labor trajectories and labor insertion paths: Heterogeneity within and between professional groups

In order to understand the migrant Italian professionals’ labor insertion, assuming a neo-Weberian perspective, we focused on two points: 1. continuity/discontinuity between the labor trajectory before migration and the occupational position in Valencia; 2. labor insertion steps taken in the local labor market, highlighting the heterogeneity both within and between the two groups (EMps and TRps).

Labor trajectories prior to migration

The pre-migration occupational positions of the interviewees were very diverse. We identified multiple typologies of labor trajectories prior to migration. The analysis revealed three particularly recurrent occupational backgrounds: those with a very fragmented

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itinerary, those who had a 'standard position', mainly self-employed, and those who began their working lives abroad.

First, our sample contained people who had had fragmented and intermittent trajectories in Italy, occupying various positions from helping in the family business to scholarships, to short work experience with temporary contracts

I worked on a cruise ship (salary 900 euros per month), as a football, swimming, basketball, and athletics instructor (salary 200 euros per month). In Naples, I worked as a steward at the Napoli football stadium. I always worked for someone else. I had never been self-employed until I set up my physiotherapy clinic in Valencia. 8_M_40

The second profile is that of people coming from the primary segment of the Italian labor market, with a linear and continuous trajectory. Some of them were liberal professionals in consolidated sectors such as medicine, architecture, or law, while others successfully ran their own businesses.

I have always worked in Milan. I worked as a pediatric optometrist in the private sector. I have always worked in the private sector. I usually go back to Milan to work because I have my patients there and I do my check-ups in a friend's office. 10_M_45

Finally, we found that some professionals in our sample had started their careers abroad, having never worked in Italy. Some began work in Valencia, while others had arrived there with experience of working in other countries, including Portugal, Germany, the United Kingdom, and France.

I spent a year on Erasmus in Brussels, because my specialization at the university, in philology, was French.... And then I worked for another year in Marseilles, at the Consulate as translator from French to Italian, and I also did some work, managing the cultural activity of the Italian Institute of Culture, which is like an organization attached to the Consulate, so I stayed there for 6 months. Then I spent a couple of months in Liverpool, where I met my ex-girlfriend, and then I've been here in Valencia for four to five years. 15_M_33

Exploring the differences between emerging and traditional professionals, we found that pre-migration fragmented, and precarious trajectories were more common among EMps than TRps. The TRps either had a consolidated business or standard professions in Italy or had begun their labor trajectory abroad, whether in Valencia or in another country.

Another difference is that among the EMps we found slightly more continuity with the prior trajectory in Italy than among TRps, while the latter tended to have changed occupation after migration. For example, it was common for digital freelancers to continue in Valencia the same occupation as in Italy, simply seeking to make it more sustainable and less

precarious by migrating from Italy to Spain for the more favorable regulatory framework and lower taxes.

While in terms of linearity of trajectory there was low heterogeneity within each group (EMps being more precarious and TRps more linear), the trajectories of the TRps were notably more heterogeneous than those of the EMps in terms of continuity between their previous trajectory and their occupational situation in Valencia: the former simply sought to make their businesses more viable and less precarious by changing location, whereas the pre-migration itineraries of the latter were more varied.

Labor insertion paths

As for labor insertion paths in Valencia, the analysis revealed two different itineraries: those who passed through a first stage as salaried workers and only afterwards started their own businesses, contrasted with those (the majority in both groups) who set up a business or began their professional activities immediately on arrival in Valencia.

In the former case, the migrants first worked in sectors with high labor demand and easy access, but with poor working conditions, that is to say in the secondary segment of the labor market. Many took jobs in restaurants, bars, or real state agencies or as office employees of other professionals. Their need to find work quickly, in order to earn enough to cover their basic needs, drove them to enter the secondary segment of the labor market, performing unaccustomed salaried work. When asked about their first salaried jobs, many spoke of poor working conditions, low wages, excessive overtime, very informal labor relations, and so on.

Time was an important consideration: either the length of the process for liberal professionals to obtain legal recognition of their qualifications, or the time it took to achieve the Spanish and/or Valencian language proficiency essential to practice their highly skilled work. Starting work as employees gave them an income while waiting for recognition, learning Spanish, and socializing themselves to the local working environment.

Well, actually when I had to get my degree approved, I obviously needed an income and started working as a commercial agent for an Italian company. I was working for 8 years and after I got my degree approved ... I decided that I had studied for too many years to give up my profession. I went to law school and gradually I started to practice in law office. 18_M_43

Among people on the second itinerary, not all had followed the same path. The discourse analysis revealed the existence of two typical trajectories. First, we found those, such as chefs or digital freelancers, who had moved their own (or their family's) business from Italy to Valencia.

We have always had restaurants or cafes in Naples and when I decided to move to

Valencia, I sold everything and bought one here. 20_M_42

I have always worked as a freelancer, ...I asked my existing clients: Would it be OK with you if I moved to Spain? I explained the reasons why I was moving to Spain, so they said it was fine, they were reassured. And moving my clients with me made it a smooth process. The good clients who earn me my bread are Italians, the ones I had before moving. 4_M_45

In the case of the digital freelancers, the difference in taxation between Spain and Italy was one of the reasons most often given for migrating. Many participants reported that before deciding where to move to, they had researched the fiscal conditions in European countries to identify the most favorable for the self-employed in terms of lower taxes, easy bureaucracy, and less paperwork. Spain had emerged as one of the best options.

In Italy if you earn more than 30,000 euros you must pay 60% tax, so you practically work for the state. Here it's around 30% and they also provide services that in some way compensate you for what you pay. 26_M_36

The migration project of these freelancers was also facilitated by the nature of their work as able to be done anywhere, which freed them of any territorial or customer-related restrictions.

An alternative self-employed trajectory was followed by those who, having decided to move to Valencia for reasons unrelated to labor (love or lifestyle, among others), had to think of or search for an opportunity to develop an economic project in order to make the migratory one viable and had chosen to create their own business because of the advantages of flexibility and autonomy offered by self-employment. Many started by taking advantage of depressed property prices in Spain to use the proceeds of the sale of their Italian homes to buy two or three flats in Valencia, which they rented to tourists, thus securing a modest income.

Eh, my economic project has been to invest in apartments, so now I'm in tourist rental, so I have my income naturally recorded, everything and, after that I invested, since anyway, being on my own with two children, I cannot yet return to my original work... as a midwife, I decided to cultivate my passion for aesthetics and nails, so I took courses... 25_F_45

Once they had successfully completed the labor socialization process (training, language learning, recognition of their qualifications, etc.), some years later they started their new businesses, using the economic capital accumulated by selling their second or third property at the new market prices in a real estate sector which had by now recovered.

In terms of heterogeneity between the emerging and traditional groups, we must emphasize that there were few differences in terms of the number of steps taken to enter the labor

market or to go straight into their permanent occupation. The complexity or simplicity of the labor insertion process was not determined by membership of the EMp or TRp groups, but much more influenced by other factors, such as the phase of their lifecycle at the moment of migration: the earlier in the cycle, the simpler it was. The major complicating factors were the need to retain local clients or to satisfy the Spanish regulatory framework, such as obtaining recognition of their qualifications for liberal professionals or fulfilling local health and safety requirements for beauticians.

More relevant is the extent of heterogeneity within the EMp and TRp groups. The main difference for the former concerned their clientele: the digital freelancers, having clients from all over the world or from Italy, were able to maintain a certain continuity and needed no time to create their own local market, while the beauty and well-being professionals had to certify their competence to do business in Spain and had to create local client networks. Among the TRps, the labor insertion process was much more complicated for liberal professionals than for chefs, who could buy a local restaurant as a going concern, with little need for paperwork. According to our observations, the liberal professionals tended to be older than the other migrants, probably because of the time it took to enter the primary segment of the labor market, which was very closed and where there were onerous entry requirements.

Factors influencing the different labor insertion strategies: Economic, cultural, and social capital

Another objective of our research was to explore the impact on the labor insertion process of Italian migrants to Valencia of the three forms of capital: economic (EC), social (SC) and cultural (CC). Their economic capital, derived from the sale of their homes and/or businesses in Italy, increased in value during the migration for two reasons: because housing prices in Italy (especially in the North of the country) were higher than post-recession prices in Spain and because of the higher value of a business in a context of lower taxation.

Economic capital seems to have been relevant for half of the members of both the EMp and TRp groups. The only significant difference between the two was in how they used this capital. Among the TRps, those who used EC for their labor insertion were the chefs of Italian restaurants, whereas the liberal professionals hardly did so. As for the EMps, almost all of those who used their EC did so to buy housing, because the very attractive property prices in Spain following the bursting of the real-estate bubble allowed them to reduce the current costs of the insertion phase of the migration.

However, the form of capital which was most frequently observed to have facilitated the labor insertion of migrants was not economic but cultural.

Furthermore, following Bourdieu's (1986) definition of the forms of CC, we can state that the key to labor insertion was not the institutionalized form of CC, on account of the long (3-4

years) and complicated process of recognition of qualifications, which acted as a formal and institutional closure of the primary segment of the labor market. The interviewees' discourses reveal that alongside a strong sense of autonomy, the skills on which they relied to insert themselves in the labor market were those of detecting and exploiting the opportunities offered by the local context, of managing complexity and change, and of solving problems.

I decided to migrate to Valencia because there was a business opportunity, it had an important port, and it was a growing city. Although the country was in crisis, its alcohol-related business was booming. 3_M_49

It was thus more a matter of embodied CC, accumulated and internalized during prior experience in the family business, or during the labor socialization process in the Italian context, where self-employment is twice as common as in Spain (Ingellis & Calvo, 2015).

As for the comparison between EMps and TRps in terms of heterogeneity, it is worth underlining that EMps were more homogeneously endowed with embodied CC than their counterparts in the traditional professions, where we found more internal heterogeneity. Embodied capital predominated in the case of chefs, institutionalized capital for the liberal professions, and mixed cultural capital among those with previous migration experience.

According to the migration literature (Portes, 1998), the third form of capital, SC, is a key asset in migrants' social and labor insertion. Ethnic communities, once organized through local ethnic associations, nowadays create "weak ties" (Granovetter, 1973), or trust links, through virtual communities. In our case, the virtual communities not only represented an ideal place for migrants to socialize (meet people, promote meetings, share hobbies, etc.) and to transfer the basic information needed to install themselves in Valencia, but also played a key role in providing labor opportunities. On one hand, many self-employed migrants advertised their business at little or no cost in virtual communities with more than 20,000 members, representing a very powerful 'shop window', and on the other hand, they facilitated the matching of labor demand to supply, with numerous postings of vacancies, mostly in hotels and Italian restaurants seeking Italian workers.

In terms of comparisons between traditional and emerging professionals, it is notable that while pre-existing social capital (often a friend or partner) was very important in the insertion process for the former, it was mostly irrelevant for the latter. Digital workers did not need contacts: they had clients from all over the world, being naturally immersed in a global market, and excluded local clients because the local prices of their services were very low.

Transnational professionalism: Living between two professional communities

Although the migration motive was not related to professional factors (Ingellis & Esteban, 2020), many interviewees explained that they had found a new sustainable equilibrium in costs and income of their professions by taking advantage of living between two professional

communities in two ways. On one hand, they enjoyed the benefits of living and working in Spain, where taxes and the cost of living were lower, the services were better, and the paperwork and bureaucracy were much easier and less time-consuming; on the other, they earned good incomes by maintaining clients in Italy or elsewhere in the world who were willing and able to pay more than most local clients. This was especially true for the digital freelancers. While technological changes were opening the door to global competition, they were also making possible new individual strategies to overcome the associated problems. By maximizing their incomes and reducing their costs, the EMps were ultimately able to continue practicing professions which, in their country of origin, were suffering a progressive worsening of working conditions that was making them unsustainable. Furthermore, for the TRps, migrating was a way to enter professions subject to a stricter social closure in Italy. Membership of professional associations in Spain is significantly easier for lawyers, architects, medical doctors, and so on, because they do not need to pass a difficult entrance exam. They found that the expenditure of time and effort required to overcome the language barrier and to obtain the recognition in Spain of their institutionalized cultural capital was much less onerous than passing an entrance exam for a traditional professional association in Italy, representing a classic insiders' protection strategy. Many self-employed Italian professionals remarked on the generally less rigid legal framework in Spain, which applies equally to well-being and Italian cuisine professionals. Migration had been used as a strategy of differentiation from the Italian professional community, because moving to Spain facilitated the surmounting of the severe problems they had faced before their migration. Intra-national professionalism represents a new frontier for professionals in a globalized world, where intra-national heterogeneity allows individuals to find their own strategies for building a sustainable balance in the long term, to overcome the deterioration of working conditions; in a word, their precarization.

Discussion and conclusion

In this paper we have presented the results of a study on a group of Italian professionals who migrated to the Spanish city of Valencia and inserted themselves in the local labor market as self-employed. Although these results are not representative of the entire population and were potentially influenced by the sample selection procedure, we have tried to draw attention to an emergent phenomenon that is sufficiently interesting and unexplored to be worth studying. Some theoretical insights come from this initial exploration. To make more visible the main results, we organized them in the following table.

Table 1. An overview about heterogeneity within and between EMps and TRps

Labor trajectory phases	Within		Between	
	<u>EMps</u>	<u>TRps</u>	<u>EMps</u>	<u>TRps</u>
Prior migration	Homogeneity: 1.Precariousness 2. Prevalent embodied capital accumulation 3. Continuity between the two phases	Homogeneity: 1.Standard work itineraries 2.Institutionalized capital accumulation 3.Discontinuity between the two phases	Heterogeneity	
Insertion itinerary in Valencia	Prevalent heterogeneity depending on the need to have local clients or not, and depending on having to adhere to the local regulatory framework or not	Prevalent heterogeneity. The homogeneity refers only to the long time required to get the formal recognition of their academic degree	Heterogeneity among all the cases. Being <u>EMp</u> or <u>TFp</u> appears not highly relevant to understand that heterogeneity between the two groups except for the more streamlined recognition of embodied versus institutionalized capital	

Source: Authors' elaboration

Applying the definitions of EMp and TRp to our sample, we compared the labor insertion itineraries of the emerging and traditional professionals and assessed the extent of heterogeneity existing within and between these two groups. We found that the most significant difference was that in Italy, the EMps were mostly precariously employed or self-employed and had faced some difficulties in practicing emerging and unregulated professions; migration to Valencia allowed them to consolidate their professional status because a better balance between costs and incomes in Valencia made their economic and social condition more sustainable. Among the TRps, we found people who had radically changed their labor trajectory or had begun their working life abroad. By contrast, membership of the EMp or TRp groups was not in itself very relevant in determining the immigrant labor insertion paths in the destination city. We can conclude that the EMp and TRp concepts are not powerful enough when applied to migratory trajectories, although they are able to capture the reduced social closure mechanisms for EMps compared with TRps.

Regardless of their emerging or traditional status, all professionals had to find ways to adapt and find opportunities in the new context.

The role of the several forms of capital that migrants brought with them seems to be more significant in accounting for the observed heterogeneity in labor insertion paths within and between groups of Italian professionals. This does not mean that membership of one or the other professional group was unrelated to the possession of relevant capitals, but merely that the relationship of this membership to professional capital endowment needs a specific analysis which could represent a new and very interesting issue to explore. Perhaps the only visible connection, at this time, is that having accumulated an institutionalized cultural capital or human capital before migration is more common among TRPs, while embodied capital is more often an attribute of EMps. The formal recognition of their degree in Spain makes more complicated and long their itinerary sometime obliging them to change radically their profession. At this stage of the work, we suggest that more than membership of one or the other group, what made the difference was a reliance on a local clientele, having to adhere to the local regulatory framework, and having to wait several years, in the case of some TRPs, for formal recognition of their qualifications. In this sense, belonging to traditional professions entails more difficulties in continuing the professional trajectories of the country of origin.

A further analysis focusing on the effect of lifecycle on the labor integration itineraries of the several professional groups, or second-generation insertion, might add significant evidence toward an understanding of the factors inhibiting or facilitating the intra-European immigration of professionals.

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