“Moving Forward, Heading North: Post-Crisis Migration of Young South Europeans to Berlin”

Stefania Animento*

(*) Bicocca University of Milan, Dept. of Sociology and Social Research

Via Bicocca degli Arcimboldi 8, 20126 Milano, Italy

s.animento@campus.unimib.it

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1. Introduction

"I would like to move to Berlin, Italy has become a country for rich people

and I can´t – as many other young people like me – find a job that allows me to live a decent life. I earn 1000, I spend 550 for a one-single-flat in Milan. [...]

And what is left for having fun? Nothing! [...]

they always told me that Berlin is the city for young people,

it´s cheap, rent prices are low [...]is it true?"

(Italiansonline, section Berlin, 9.9.2012)

The quotation comes from Isabella[1],a 22 years old woman from Milan, Italy. She might have fulfilled her dream and be living in Berlin today. She is one of the hundreds of thousands of young south Europeans who have suffered from massive unemploment and precariousness dictated by austerity politics and seeked an alternative by moving abroad.

The Euro-crisis seems today still far from coming to an end. Differentials between growth rates, interests on domestic debt and austerity politics are widening the gap between North and South of Europe. While Germany´s economy is performing relatively well, the South of Europe is stuck in dramatically increasing unemployment rates of the young (Hadjimichalis 2011; Lapavitsas et al. 2012). This divide is affecting mobility patterns within the European migration space. Young people looking for jobs are strongly re-populating old migration routes from the South to the North.

Which spatial re-configurations is the crisis producing at the European scale? How is the crisis shaping mobility patterns within the European Union (EU)?

My contribution focuses on such mobility processes. The entry point of the analysis is the city of Berlin, increasingly targeted by the strategies of spatial mobilities of young mobile south Europeans. Between 2008 and 2014 the number of south Europeans (including Spaniards, Italians, Greeks and Portuguese) registered in Berlin has grown by 39%, amounting now to 55.957.[2] This group is young: it is composed mainly by people

1 All authors of posts quoted in this paper have been made anonymous.

2 Registration data are taken from the Einwohnerregisterstatistik Berlin. People have to register in Citizen Offices in order to do a number of things in Berlin (from renting a flat to opening a bank accuout). However, many newcomers might take some time to register, as well as they might not cancel the registration once they move away. Nonetheless, registrations build the most reliable available source of demographic data for the city of Berlin.

at the age between 20 and 40 (57%). In particular, young Italian and Spaniards living in Berlin have increased by around 48%. In the same span of time, the rest of young EU15 non-German citizens grew by only 30,3%. Moreover, data show that the level of institutionalized cultural capital of young European citizens living in Berlin is very high. In 2012 52,3% of them possessed a university degree, while only 12,1% of them were poorly educated.[3]

The migration of young educated individuals to Berlin takes place at the same time as processes of urban re-structuring of the city, whose population and economy are now growing, after almost 20 years of stagnation after the Fall of the Wall. Such dynamics put pressure on the housing market. Rent prices are rising on a fast tempo in the "poor but sexy" city.[4] Between 2003 and 2013 they increased by +29% (Holm 2014b) and since 2012 they have been risingby 3,5% ca. on average every year (IBB 2014: 63). Real estate investors have bought more and more properties and land in the city, often converting entire blocks from rental to occupier-owned housing (ibid.). If we consider that Berlin is a tenant city, with ca. 80% of residents renting their homes, major changes and in particular the commodification of housing, are taking place. Research is bringing evidence of housing scarcity, displacement and increasing evictions (Berner et al. 2015; Holm 2013).

In such a tense competition over housing, the debate over the "housing crisis" in Berlin has become mainstream. At the same time, the level of protest around this issue rises (Holm 2014a). While organized activist groups aim demands for affordable housing to landlords and policy-makers, at the street level young newcomers are often targeted as gentrifiers and marked as "hipsters" or "yuppies" (Novy 2013). The public debate about gentrification and displacement becomes thus more complex and contradictory (Füller/Michel 2014). Nonetheless, it reproduces some dynamics typical of upgrading neighbourhoods, such as the process of identifying specific groups responsible for gentrification (Rose 1984). However, the Berlin case is an interesting one with regard to such process. While young newcomers living in inner city districts mostly come from the so-called privileged Global North, a large part of them come from countries which nonetheless have been dramatically hit by the crisis. The term PIIGS was coniated to refer to these countries and define the boundaries of the group of the losers of the European integration. One could call them the "South of the Global North".[5] Analogously, young migrants who have left these countries and headed North are often framed as economic migrants (Becker et al. 2013). Young south European now living in

3 Data are taken from the Mikrozensus (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg), and based on ISCED 1997, which measures institutionalized cultural capital. Unfortunately more recent data are not provided.

4 "Poor but sexy" has been the official brand of the city of Berlin, coniated by former mayor Klaus Wowereit (Colomb 2012).

5 By this term I do not mean the geographical category, but rather, in analogy with the concept of Global South, its contingent power-related connotation.

Berlin are seen on one hand as part of the "hipster" gentrifiers and on the other hand as the "new seasonal workers" escaping the crisis and chasing the "German dream".[6]

In this paper I explore therefore the uncomfortable connection between the crisis-related migration of young South Europeans and processes of urban re-structuring in the city of Berlin. What role do young newcomers play in the process of commodification of housing currently taking place in Berlin? Although more empirical research is needed to answer this question, I suggest some hypotheses about how newcomers endowed with a high level of cultural capital might willy-nilly contribute to processes of social upgrading just by dwelling in the city.

However, the analysis of such processes cannot leave aside the causes and patterns of migration of these newcomers. I argue that only from a relational viewpoint we can avoid the two equally fallacious positions of making some groups the scapegoats for or the victims of wide and complex processes. Further, I suggest that only from a multi-scalar perspective which takes into account social and economic inequalities taking place at several scales we can grasp and possibly reduce the complexity of such mobility flows.

Building on these theoretical premises, I propose to understand circulation of capital and of people (as "bearers" of capital) within the European migration space as intertwined phenomena. I suggest that the engine which sets both capital and people in motion is constituted by the uneven development which underlie the formation of the European Union (Hadjimichalis 2011; Agnew 2001).

By analyzing how young Italians talk about their reasons to move to Berlin, I investigate how these narratives might be re-negotiating the "scaffolding" of socio-spatial scales such as the urban and the European scale (Brenner 2009). By looking at the spatial distribution of young south European newcomers in Berlin, I then highlight how flows of cultural capital carried by these migrants´ mobility interact with dynamics of capital accumulation taking place in the local housing market. Finally, I ask whether such mobility flows might operate a re-scaling of the city from a peripheral European capital to a core center (Glick-Schiller/Çaglar 2010).

2. Literature Review

People all over the world are increasingly on the move. Thanks to transportation, communication and informatic technologies, it gets easier for people to travel and to build roots in more places, as transnationality theorists illustrate (Faist et al. 2013; Glick-Schiller/Caglar 2010; Smith 2001). However, while privileged forms of mobility

6 "Deutschland: die neuen Gastarbeiter", 2012(http://www.arte.tv/de/deutschland-die-neuen-gastarbeiter/7105294,CmC=7105300.html, accessed 30.6.2015).

may become safer, others are still life-endangering. In other words, migration regimes become increasingly differentiated (Smith/King 2012; Castles 2007). If we look at migration routes within and at the borders of the European Union, we get a dramatic account of such contrast.

Migration research has a hard time trying to encompass such diversity under one theoretical framework. While tackling this issue goes far beyond the scope of this paper, I outline some theoretical milestones here.

A recent stream of research initiated mainly by John Urry advocates for a "mobility turn" in social sciences (Sheller/Urry 2006). According to this turn, social research should question sedentarism as the "normal" condition for sociability (Büscher/Urry 2009) and challenge conceptions of place as "spatially fixed geographical container for social processes" (Sheller/Urry 2006). From this viewpoint, migration is defined as a "specific form of mobility", characterised by "the implication of permanent settlement" (Amelina 2014). Thus, what the most various forms of human mobility share is their capacity to experience at the same time fixity and mobility, or, using Tuan´s concepts, "hearth" and "cosmos" (Tuan 2001). All types of migrants build both globe-spanning social relations and localised practices of "homing" (Novicka 2012; Easthope 2004). They also show us that the act of moving across barriers is an intrinsecally human thing just as the act of constructing them is.

By moving in space and crossing barriers, people intersect and connect different spatial categories, such as scales, territories and networks. These spatial categories and in particular the boundaries which fix them structure people´s mobility and social inequalities as well. However, the relevance of such spatial boundaries for structuring social inequalities is not given, but rather socially constructed and therefore prone to change (Amelina 2012). For instance, nation-states have constituted for centuries the most relevant framework for the creation and reproduction of social inequality. However, as more and more people build cross-national strategies of social reproduction, other spatial scales, from the urban to the transnational one, gain on relevance (Berger/Weiß 2008). In other words, considering mobility as the "normal" condition of human beings enables us to tackle the mutual constitution of mobility and social inequalities. To do this, we must question spatial categories as purely geographical ones and re-define them "as particular sets of social boundaries", as Amelina suggests (Amelina 2012).

Such theoretical observations have emerged especially in the field of transnational studies, which challenge methodological nationalism and reject migration theories which focus only on the context of destination of migration (ibid.). Instead, transnational studies approach migration as a relational phenomenon. Therefore, they often investigate social networks and flows of knowledge which criss-cross spatial boundaries (Castles 2007).

Nonetheless, while research agrees that we should question the national state as a container, the risk of treating space and spatial categories as fixed is always "around the corner". Most studies on transnationality delimit their focus to the transnational scale, and thus fail to recognize "how scales interact in migration processes" (Amelina 2012: 280).

In this paper I suggest therefore that we should go further than reifying the transnational as just one more scale and focus on the "hierarchical, but often tangled, scaffolding of sociospatial forms", i.e. on the connections between scales (Brenner 2009). I refuse to assume a "normative dominance" of one scale over the other, and try instead to explore how they relate to and mutually constitute one another (Amelina 2012: 281).

In light of such theoretical premises, I do not delimit the analysis of crisis-related patterns of mobility within the EU to one scale, but adopt a multi-scalar viewpoint. Firstly, I consider both contexts of origin and of destination and investigate the web of power relations, i.e. the "geometries of power" (Massey 1993) in which they are embedded. My aim is to highlight the relationality of migration and to explore how people address inequalities through geographical mobility. I adopt the theoretical framework of uneven development to this scope (see section 4). Secondly, I focus on the European, i.e. the supra-national, and the urban scale and suggest that they are most relevant to the decisions of young south Europeans to migrate (see section 5 and 6). Finally, I take on the invitation made by Glick-Schiller and Çaglar (2010) to develop research questions about whether and how migrants are agents of urban processes of re-scaling (see section 7).

3. Methods

The issue of defining forms of mobility is strictly connected to the analysis of the individuals´ decisional process to stay or to move. Starting with Lee´s work, the push-pull approach established itself as a mainstream framework which understands the reasons to migrate as mainly economical and the decisional process as a rational one (Lee 1964). This theoretical model has been declared as outdated and reductionist, as it ignores the cultural and symbolic dimensions as well contradictions and multiplicity as inherent components of decisional processes (Halfacree 2004). Further, perfect information, the prerequisite for rational action, is not given in conditions of economic precarity, unemployment and uncertainty about the future which are often connected to the migration project.

However, the distinction between pushing and pulling forces provided by Lee´s model is useful to grasp how relational decisions to move are, as both contexts of origin and of destination matter for the decision to move. Indeed, migrants decide to move

because they want to leave their place of origin for some reasons (or push-factors) and they believe somehow that the place where they are heading to offer better opportunities to them (or pull-factors). Although I reject the push-pull model as a theory to understand migration, I accept it as a methodological tool to analyze narratives of migration.

To observe how people from crisis-hit countries motivate their strategies of spatial mobility, I conducted a discourse analysis on posts written by young Italians willing to move to North European metropolises and in particular to Berlin between 2008 and 2015.[7] I scrutinized these posts searching for motivations expressed by the aspirant migrants and for different framings of their dream to move abroad. To operationalize the analysis I distinguished between motivations linked to so called "push" and "pull" factors of migration (Lee 1964).

On the basis of the discourse analysis I then identified the economic crisis as a push factor and the recent hype around Berlin as a pull-factor. More specifically, I consider the crisis as a factor, which has lead thousands of young south Europeans to develop strategies of international mobility, as economical literature has already illustrated (Neubecker et al. 2014). The crisis is indeed re-defining Europe-spanning axes of inequality (Hadjimichalis 2011). Therefore I included in the analysis of these mobility processes the European scale.

On the other hand, I focus on the urban scale of Berlin, as people project their hopes and aspiration for a better life on this city. According to their knowledge, Berlin epitomizes dynamism, youth and creativity. Also much of contemporary literature about inter-urban competition focus on such urban features. These are seen as fundamental to attract high-skilled workers (Florida 2002). According to such literature, cities should connect themselves to global flows of information to up-scale in the neoliberal competition between cities. While social researchers have made great efforts to discard Florida´s theses (Krätke 2011, Markusen 2006, Peck 2005), they have paid less attention to how the "creative city" discourses affect the way how people think about cities and relate to them. Therefore, I explore later on how popular narratives about the creative city Berlin emerge in the motivations given by young Italian willing to move there.

7 “Italiansonline” is an online forum for Italians living abroad or willing to move abroad (http://www.italiansonline.net/). People can create an account and join one or more sections. The forum entails several sections, according to the city of destination and to several issues, such as jobs, housing etc. While having collected posts on more sections, in this paper I focus on those included in the Berlin one.

4. The European Scale: From Fordist Fo Post-Fordist Patterns of Migrations Within an Unevenly Developed Context

Mobility within European countries has historically been one of the goals of the integration process. The political project of enlarging mobility rights and of extending them to a growing number of citizens belongs to the first of the three "pillars" of the EU, i.e. the European communities (Favell/Recchi 2009).[8] In economics, geographical mobility of labor force is considered as a way to re-balancing economic failures and market inefficiencies related to local and regional development dynamics (Hadjimichalis 2011: 259). Promoting mobility of workers among European countries represents thus a macro-economic tool for coping with economic crises and structural inequalities.

The institutional framework implemented in Europe, and in particular after the Maastricht Treaty, has created a "specific migration space shaped by its own institutional and legal regulations", which reduce mobility constraints to a minimum (Verwiebe 2011: 210). In this paper I address the European Union as a specific scale, which has been socially constructed and politically enacted.

However, the European scale is a continuous work-in-progress: its geo-political boundaries and its institutional fix have shifted over time. Moreover, macro-economic dynamics strongly affect the way how European citizens perceive the EU. This has lead to the proliferation of ideologies and practices of "Europe-making" (Agnew 2001, Buckel et al. 2013). Mobility patterns are included in this multiplicity as well. Consequently, the European scale is an instable and unfixed entity, because it is the outcome, rather than the origin, of continuously changing power relations (Amelina 2014). Indeed, while the European regime of free mobility might represent an equalizing principle which applies for all EU-citizens, the mobility routes which have emerged over time reflect the specific "geometries of power" within the EU (Massey 1993; Carmel 2014).

In order to understand how geometries of power are related to practices of spatial mobility at the European scale, we need to locate such patterns of migration within the specific capitalist system in which these inequalities are generated. I propose the framework of uneven development to do this (Harvey 1982, Smith 1982, Slater 2015).

Firstly elaborated by Marx to explain inequalities of growth rates in separate economic sectors (Marx 1976), since the 1970s the concept of uneven development has been re-worked. The work of radical geographers such as David Harvey and Neil Smith has introduced the notion of space into the concept, opening the possibility to explain the production of spatial inequalities under modern capitalism (Brenner 2009). According

8 The pillar structure of the EU was introduced with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The three pillars are: the European Communities, the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Police and Judicial Co-Operation in Criminal Matters.

to this perspective, the production of space is uneven, as capitalism rests on continuous circulation and seesawing of capital in order to reproduce itself (Harvey 1982; Smith 1984). Brenner (2009) highlights a further key aspect of the historical development of capitalism: inequalities and asymmetries are created along spatial axes such as the urban/rural and the core/periphery ones. These are to a certain degree fixed, at least until broad socio-economic changes modify the spatial scaffolding of uneven development. Such "scaffolding" is conceptually linked to the concept of scale, which enable us to think of uneven development in terms of both geographical horizontality (unevenness between places at one scale etc.) and of hierarchical verticality (unevenness between different scales).

Using the lenses of uneven development to analyze patterns of mobility within the European migration space, we can follow socio-economic processes across scales, without losing sight of the complexity inherent in the phenomena under investigation. Which axes of inequality have emerged over time within the EU? How are they related with patterns of spatial mobility?

Research on intra-European mobility shows the presence of a North-South axis over the last decades (Recchi/Favell 2009). In particular, Germany has been attracting migrants mainly from Turkey and from the South of Europe. This process was promoted and institutionally sanctioned through the agreements on seasonal recruitment stipulated in the 1950s and 1960s, which gave rise to the so called Gastarbeiter migrations.[9]

These were forms of mobility typical of the Fordist mode of production for several reasons. Firstly, the labor force hired from poorer countries functioned as a "reserve army of labor" (Marx 1976) in the expanding industrial economies of the North. People hired through these contracts were mainly uneducated and stemmed from lower classes. Secondly, their labour force was exploited under institutionally fixed conditions, which determined both the temporality as well as the spatiality of work. The sphere of reproduction was strictly controlled and eventually repressed by the combined intervention of the state and the market. Workers, who came largely from rural areas, lived concentrated in deprived urban areas of the arrival cities (Münch 2010). In other words, the Gastarbeiter migrations can be considered as the mobility of manual labour force from an agriculture economy to the lowest segment of an industrial economy under Fordist state regulation.

The ban on recrutiment (Anwerbestopp), giving an end in 1973 to the Gastarbeiter era, coincides with the oil crisis and more generally with the crisis of the Fordist regime of accumulation (Harvey 1994). Since then, migrations from the South to German cities haven´t stopped, but rather changed with regard to some socio-demographic aspects

9 The first bilateral agreement of this kind was signed with Italy 1955. It was followed five years later by the agreements with Spain and Greece and six years later by the one with Turkey.

of migrants. In particular, the educational level of migrants has increased consistently since the end of the 70es (Braun/Arsene 2009). Moreover, mobility patterns at the European scale are much more diverse today. While "Fordist" mobility flows of low-skilled workers still exist (Karakayali 2008), new forms of mobility of highly educated young professionals have emerged (Buckel 2012). The latter are more fluid, firstly because of the previously mentioned freedom of movement within the EU. Factors like the destination and duration of the stay are less determined by institutional arrangements and more influenced by the individual project of migration (ibid.). Secondly, contemporary migrations within Europe are embedded in a post-Fordist international division of labour, characterised by de-localization of production to the so-called Global South and accentration of cognitive, command and control functions within the so-called Global North (Harvey 1994).

In such a productive system, which rests on more flexible regimes of capital accumulation, cultural capital acquires an increasingly central role in the international (as well as inter-urban) competition (Krätke 2011: 34). Through concentration of cultural capital, cities can re-scale and enter the inter-urban competition at global scale. Consequently, migrations of the skilled and educated labor force become more relevant for understanding the dynamics of value creation in the contemporary capitalist system. Mobility of the high skilled is commonly denominated as "brain drain" or as "human capital flight" (Patrutiu-Baltes 2014). In light of this, I suggest to view the increased flows of young educated people moving from southern European countries in the aftermath of the crisis as a flight of cultural capital. This capital escapes collapsing or stagnating economies and pours into more stable economies in the North of Europe.

5. Escaping Stagnation: The Impact of the Eurocrisis on Intra-European Mobility

Economic crises both necessitate and provide the opportunity to activate processes of restructuring of social and economic space (Smith 1996: 84). From the theoretical perspective of uneven development, the systematic occurrence of economic crises is connected to the rythm of unevenness and thus of capital see-sawing. Spatial restructuring follows to re-adapt space to changing economic conditions (Brenner 2009). It is thus in the current aftermath of the crisis that we should expect re-scaling processes of the European geo-political space, and thus the emergence and/or reinforcement of geometries of power within it (Castells 2012).

When the global financial crisis turned into a sovereign debt crisis at the end of 2008, labor markets as well as migration dynamics within the EU began to change dramatically. The crisis affect unevenly the EU, boosting the economic inequalities

along the South-North axis which were already increasing before 2008 (Hadjimichalis 2011). Populations in working age faced with unemployment, hopeless economic perspectives and austerity measures implemented by the Troika reacted by increasingly emigrating abroad (Neubecker et al. 2014). While flows from new-member countries like Romania and Bulgaria have started to divert from Spain, Italy and Greece to Germany and other Northern countries (ibid.), south Europeans have begun to massively re-populate older migration routes (see figure 1).

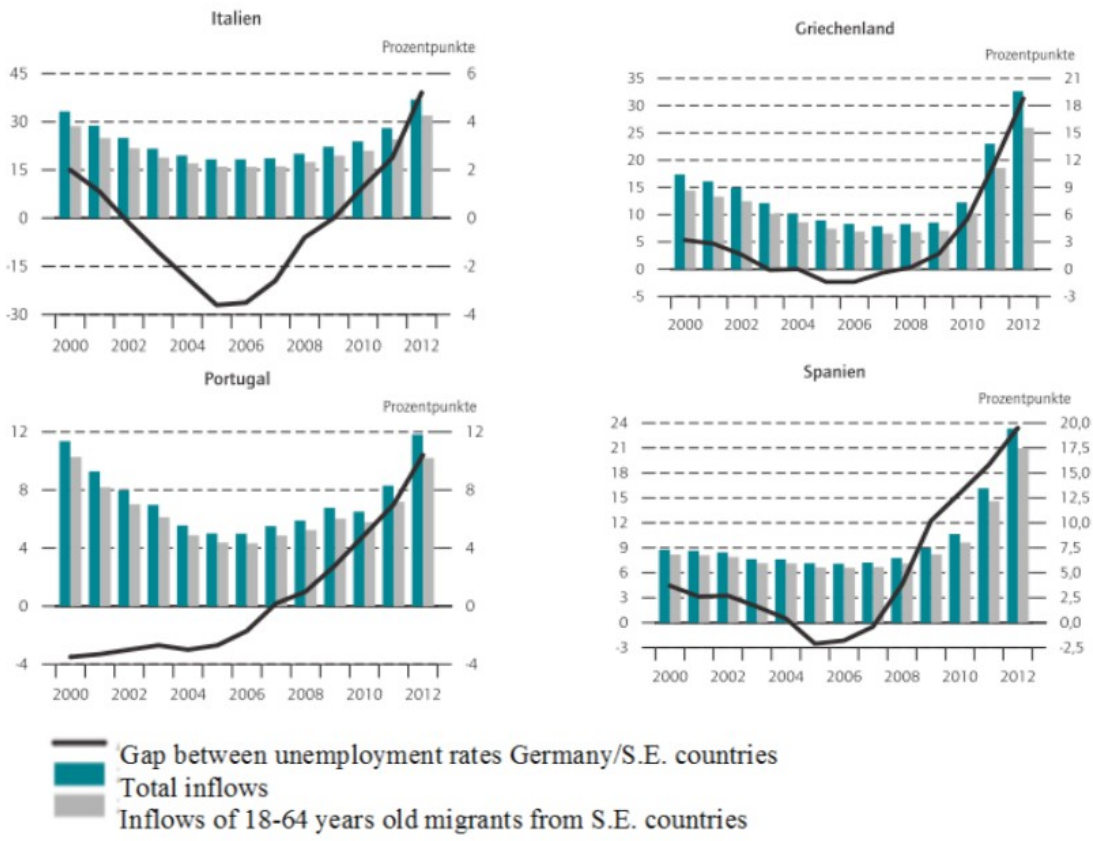

Fig. 1 The migration rates of these groups to Germany developed in parallel with the gap between the unemployment rates in the country of origin and of Germany (Source: Neubecker et al. 2014:715).

The crisis seems to have set in motion strategies of spatial mobility to enhance social reproduction. While such strategies are potentially globe-spanning, it is reasonable to think that the regime of free mobility have channelled them into and within the European migration space.

Elisa, 20 years old, university student, writes in 2013:

> "Hi, I´m finishing my first year of university, but I don´t want to end up staying in Italy for other 4 years, so I am evaluating several cities where I could go to and "counterattack" and look for a job, possibly not a job on the black market and that allows me to live with. All my thoughts lead me to think of Berlin, a city where I have already been and that fascinated me for its organisation, education and level of civilization..."

Here, precariousness ("jobbing on the black market" and being unable to make a living) is what the young girl wants to leave behind. She explains her negotiation of the strategy of spatial mobility as a rational process, based on "evaluating", an conomical term. However, such calculations are based on stereotypes about the "civilized", "educated" and "well organized" city of the North, similarly to Isabella, who writes :

> "I love the anglo-saxon mentality, Berlin inspires me a lot..."

The dimension of desire and fascination is relevant for the decision. In other words, the evaluation of costs and benefits made by the young woman is influenced by the dominant narratives embedded within the geometries of power which shape economic relations within the EU.

As Smith (1982) remarks, uneven development drives towards equalization and differentiation, as the circulation of capital tends to activate opposite dynamics in different places although it follows the same logic of production of value. From this perspective, the crisis might have fostered the creation of a common European space of mobility for flows of cultural capital. Such capital stagnate in the crisis-hit countries, as people cannot convert it into economic capital in these failing economies.

To this regard, Giorgio, 28 years old, writes in 2013:

> "...I lived in Berlin 6 months long between 2009 and 2010, when I attended the Humboldt University thanks to the Erasmus fund. (...) I decided to try to come

> back to look for a job (as here in Italy, in the province of Venice, you cannot find absolutely nothing)."

The feeling of stagnation and slowing down in the province is well expressed by Marco ´s words, too:

> Hi! I am Marco, by now an ex-graduated (...)[sic] and I would like to go to Berlin for a study holiday. Frankly, two years after I came back to the most damn paranoid province and lived at my parent´s home, I feel a bit rusty though, the idea of leaving and navigating alone is scaring me a bit..."

Young people move along more or less established routes, composing and re-working the geometry of power within the EU. Their cultural capital becomes spatially mobile and follows the dynamic of equalization inherent in capitalism, in order to be converted into economic capital. At the same time, dynamics of differentiations become stronger as the crisis goes on, further accentuated by austerity politics (Hadjimichalis 2011). Out-migrations from the European South contribute to drain ressources from weak economies and thus to deepen the divide between North and South.

Vradis has defined such increasing unevenness as a form of "gentrination", i.e. "the equivalent process of gentrification at the [inter-]national, instead of the neighbourhood level" (Vradis 2014). This includes the depreciation and desinvestment through austerity politics in the southern countries and the relative flight of private capital from their economies (ibid.). Accordingly, as much as in gentrification both capital and people flow into the city center, so in "gentrination" not only financial, but also cultural capital flows into the core economies of Europe. However, the boundaries between gentrification and uneven development get blurred here. Further, the gentrification concept has been already watered by theoretical over-stretching (Rose 1984). Hence, I propose to distinguish the terms and talk about gentrification only with regard to the urban scale. I propose to tackle uneven development as an encompassing and multi-scalar theoretical umbrella, under which several one-scale processes, such as

the gentrification one, take place. However, as gentrification always couple with (class-based) spatial mobility of people, I argue that we should investigate it under the light of the mobility turn mentioned earlier (Sheller/Urry 2006). Consequently, we should take into account both where people move from and where they arrive too also when analyzing gentrification (Bondi 1999).

6. Speeding Up in Berlin: A City for Young People

Some places are more important nodes in the global informational network than others. Within the European context, many cities have turned over time into the current "place to be", from London to Paris to Barcelona (Scott 2006). After 1989 and increasingly in the last decade, also Berlin has become a craved pole of attraction for young people (Füller/Michel 2014). Feeling and declaring to "be a Berliner" without being it anagraphically is now much more common than in the past. Indeed, I found plently of narratives of desire and affect related to Berlin in the posts I analyzed.

Giorgio, for instance, is writing three years after he came back from the city, that:

"I loved Berlin sfrom the first day to the last one and my love for this city endures since then"

The Berlin hype seems however to compromise exclusive forms of belonging. Maria explains her attachment to Berlin in this way:

"Hi!! I am a 21 years old girl who dreams of living in Berlin since before this started to be hip...I wanted to try to find a job this summer, just to start...any kind of job, and I don´t know where to start from...can you help me??"

However, while authors studied how people develop such elective belonging to global cities like London (Butler/Robson 2003) or to provincial cities (Savage et al. 2005), similar processes are yet unexplored with regard to the city of Berlin, which might lie somewhere in the middle between these two extremes. In this section I explore how

young people in Italy talk about Berlin as a vibrant center for quality of life, as the current "place to be" in Europe and as the "poor but sexy" capital of Germany, thus "buying" the branding strategy developed by the city government since the 2000s (Colomb 2012).

Giacomo12, 29 years old, who holds a degree in marketing and communication, writes in April 2012:

> "as many young people in Italy, I have a time-determined contract. ...I have been collecting many of such contracts here, so I want now to end up definitely with Italy and move to Germany...I am thinking about moving to Berlin, because, besides being much cheaper in relation to other [German] cities, it has the advantage of being very dynamic, international...it could be a good context, a good springboard..."

Giacomo explains his strategy of socio-spatial mobility. He aims at a good context to start a brilliant career, a place where upward social mobility can work. This place must be dynamic, a place where to freely "jump" from. In contrast, the heteronomous temporality of work contracts he has experienced until now delimits the available range of strategies of social mobility.

Isabella, 22 years old, writes at the end of 2012:

> "i would like to move to Berlin ... Well, they always told me that Berlin is the city for young people, it´s cheap, rent prices are low, not to speak of shopping...is it true?

The generic "they always told me" hints at the presence of a shared and recurring discourse which fixes Berlin as the young and funny city. Further, in such discourses Berlin is mostly viewed as the cheap city, in particular with regard to housing. While it is true that Berlin´s rent price level is lower than other European capitals, such discourses establish fixed images of a city which is changing very fast. A temporal mismatch arises between the perception of the city and the real experience of the city.

The less people abroad are embedded into global flows of knowledge about the city, the broader this mismatch will be. Further, similarly to the "Chinese whisper" game, discourses about the city change and acquire an onyrical dimension as the word of mouth keeps being spread.

The post written in November 2011 by Martina, tourism operator, illustrates an example of comparing cities and places to evaluate the best suitable spatial strategy:

> "In december I will be in Berlin and try to settle there for around 6 months....Unfortunately I don´t speak German, but I want to study it once there, so the language is a con, but I speak both English and French well, and of course Italian ... Yes I know this choice might look absurd, but decision fell on Berlin above all because of economic and logistical reasons...London is not to think of because of the huge costs and France generally speaking is a bureaucratic mish-mash of guarantors, guarantees, documents...and at least in the opinion of the Italian Cultural Institute in Lion it is not so easy to find a job if you´re a foreigner there"

Here, Martina is constructing a logic to prove that her move is rational, although she admits that deploying another logic – which assumes that knowing the language of the city of destination facilitates the integration in the labour market – this move is not rational at all. Her argumentation rests once again both on verifiable and on generic and stereotypical information.

But again, the main argument relies on the pull factor Berlin:

> ...and then, I would enjoy trying a bit to live in a city who´s looking FORWARD [sic] and which is giving so much space to arts and to young people! So thanks for the suggestion...I´ll look for jobs here and there in Berliner bars and I´ll start checking all the websites for jobs in Berlin!"

Berlin is once more depicted as a dynamic city, projected into the future and open for young people. As we saw through all posts, time is a recurring theme in the words of

young people willing to move. Time must move fast as people want to change fast, and space is a surface where to project expectations about the future.

7. The Urban Scale: Intercepting Cultural Capital into Urban Circuits of Valorization

Young mobile south Europeans, just like migrants worldwide, move mostly to bigger cities. Indeed, both in Global North and South, recent migrations involve largely cities as places of destination (Glick-Schiller/Caglar 2010). However, while we know much about "migrations to cities" as well as on the "life of migrants in cities", we know very little about "migrations and cities", namely the impact of migratory flows on the production of the arrival cities (ibid.: 2).

Social researchers, starting with the Chicago School, studied such processes almost only in relation to segregation and concentration of poverty. In such accounts class overlapped with and was downplayed by ethnicity, as the analyzed migrant communities were generally also the poorest groups. Already in the 70es Castells criticized the social ecology approach for ignoring the specific capitalist mode of social organization in their understanding of migratory processes in the city (Castells 1979: 81). Further, migration flows to the city in Post-Fordism are more diverse: both high- and low-skilled people move to big cities, however following different patterns of incorporation. As research on global cities suggests, both profiles of city-dwellers are nonetheless necessary for the particular combination of production and consumption required by strategies of urban competition (Atkinson/Bridge 2005). However, only few studies addressed the question about the role which both groups of migrants play in these and other strategies of urban regeneration (Glick-Schiller/Caglar 2010; Smith 2001).

In this paragraph I sketch the spatial distribution of south European newcomers in Berlin and explore how flows of cultural capital carried by these migrants´ mobility

interact with dynamics of capital accumulation taking place in the local housing market. The case illustrates the research gap mentioned above, as these migrants move mostly to gentrifying neighbourhoods of Berlin. Such phenomenon blurs the boundaries between accounts of gentrification and ethnic segregation. In such flows class and ethnicity configure multiple intersections (Anthias 2004). Therefore, we must go beyond the "ethnic lens" (Glick Schiller/Caglar 2010) to understand how migrants interact with such urban restructuring and re-scaling processes (ibd.).

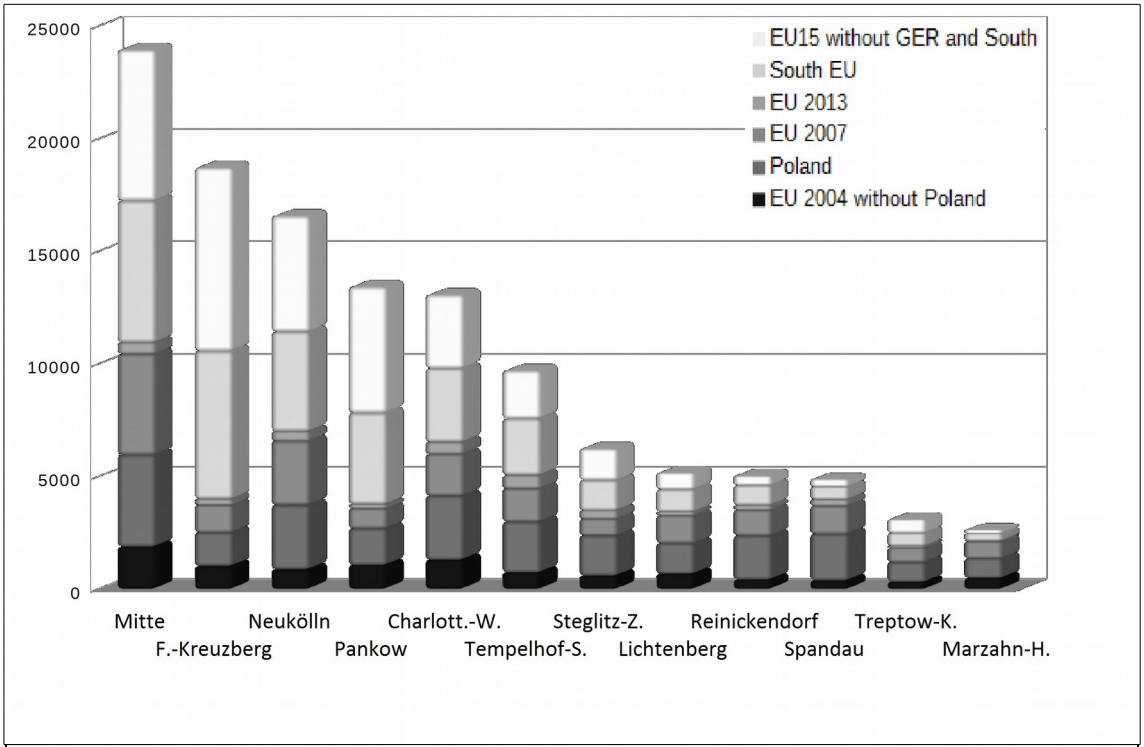

Figure 2. Spatial distribution of European citizens (age 20-40, nationalities divided by year of entry in free mobility regime) in Berliner districts by 31 December 2014 (Source: Einwohnerregisterstatistik Berlin, author´s elaboration).

As illustrated in figure 2, south Europeans between 20 and 40 years old are present mostly in inner city districts. The pattern of their spatial incorporation is not very different from other young Eu15 citizens´ one. The latter move mainly to districts such as Mitte, Neukölln and Kreuzberg too. Besides, many young (south) European citizens register in "traditional" middle class districts like Charlottenburg, Steglitz and Tempelhof. Instead, in the working-class districts in the outskirts such as Spandau,

Marzahn and Reinickendorf, the share of these newcomers hasn´t changed substantially. While EU15 citizens distribute very unevenly in the city, other European groups, such as those who entered the regime of free mobility in 2004[10], 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria) and 2013 (Croatia), are less spatially concentrated.

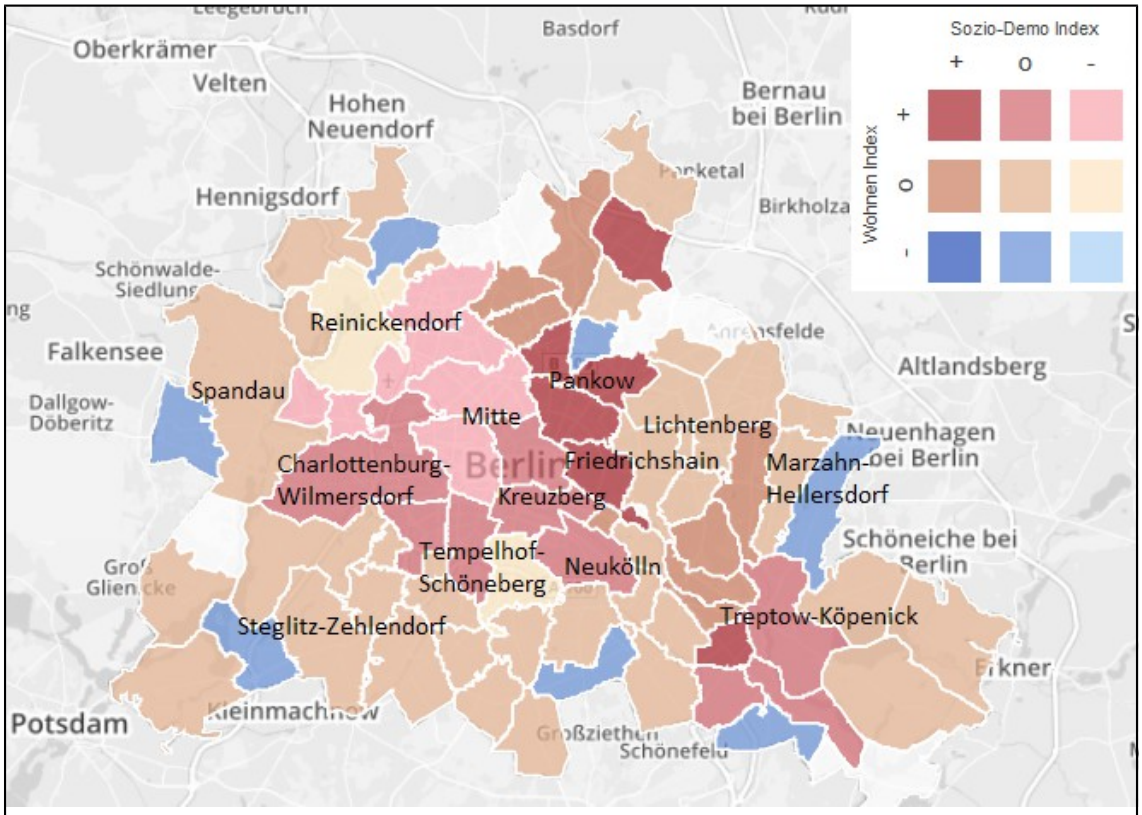

Figure 3. Gentrification and uneven development in Berlin: the red areas are characterised by social upgrading and increasing rent prices. Source: Gentrimap (for information on the map and the indices see URL: gentrima.lepus.uberspace.de, accessed 4 June 2015).

Figure 3 shows that EU15 citizens live in those districts where steepest rent prices increases and social upgrading are taking place. The dynamics underlying such relationship are unexplored, as researchers have until now ignored the phenomenon (with the exception of Nikolaus 2014). While we need empirical studies to investigate the connection between residential distribution of newcomers and gentrification, I briefly sketch here some hypotheses.

10 Poland, Baltics, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slowakia, Hungary, Cyprus, Malta.

Firstly, while young migrants might need some time to find the right job for which they are qualified, they all have to dwell somehow. They have to rent a flat, a room or any other form of housing before they start looking for a job (except those who already found a job in the city before moving to it). Additionally, registratio (the Anmeldung) is necessary to do a number of things in Berlin, and to have it everyone requires to show a contract at the Citizen office (Bürgeramt). Thus, newcomers have to mobilize the capital they bear within the housing field before than in the labour market.

Giorgio explains this in his post:

> "The first problem I will face will be of course the registration (...) then, the real search for job will start, but I will have time to think about that...!"

Secondly, rent prices in Berlin are much lower than in other European metropolises. Newcomers might be inclined to pay more than the average price of the city and still be saving money in comparison to the price they were paying in the city of origin, as we have seen in Isabella´s quotation. Research should investigate whether landlords are inclined to rent flats to newcomers, because they are more inclined to pay higher prices. Such dynamics might contribute to increase the rent price level in some inner city districts in which housing is becoming scarce because of increased demand.

Gentrification is the physical and social upgrading of former lower class inner city districts. Landlords upgrade housing when the expected rent gap is wide enough to make profitable investments (Smith 1982). However, in times of austerity social upgrading of a deprived district can also be obtained through a wide range of low-budget policies (Färber 2014).

A good example for Berlin is the Quartiersmanagement, a program for neighborhood requalification which enhances the goal of social mixing through low-cost projects such as artistic regeneration of public space and provision of atelier space for artists (Animento 2014). Such policies foster the creation and concentration of cultural capital, which contributes to the social upgrading of neighbourhoods like Neukölln,

Wedding and Kreuzberg. Such policies contribute thus to channel the local collective cultural capital into circuits of capital whose end is to increase the value of land, built environment and housing. However, the role of young newcomers in up-scaling deprived neighbourhoods is not limited to the participation to artistic and cultural activity. The extraction of value from cultural capital takes places 24/7 as people dwell, consume and produce the neighborhood according to their educated ("bildungsnahe") habitus (Rose 1984).

Finally, these newcomers might contribute to up-scale not only the neighborhoods where they live, but also the whole city of Berlin, as they are connected to various transnational networks, through which they spread knowledge about the city, as we have briefly seen through the analysis of online forums. In light of these dynamics, which belong to the regime of flexible capital accumulation typical of the Post-Fordist city (Harvey 1994), newcomers endowed with high cultural capital such as the south European ones can become agents of processes of urban restructuring and housing commodification which are taking place in Berlin (Caglar/Glick-Schiller). However, we need more research to verify empirically the hypotheses I briefly sketched.

8. Conclusions

In this paper I tried to develop a framework to study post-crisis mobility processes along the South-North axis within the European migration space (Verwiebe 2014). Starting from considerations on the "mobility turn" proposed by Sheller and Urry (2006) I questioned the idea of spatial categories such as scales as fixed entities, assuming that they are instead social constructs (Amelina 2012; Ward 2010). I adopted therefore a multi-scalar and relational approach to migration research and tried to explore how different scales interact with migration processes (Glick-Schiller/Caglar 2010). For this reason I asked which spatial re-configurations the current crisis has produced at the European scale and how mobility patterns are embedded in such re-

configurations. Moreover, I explored how intra-European mobility flows interact with processes of urban-restructuring in Berlin.

To tackle these questions, I focused on both contexts of origin (Southern Europe and in particular Italy) and destination (Berlin) of migration as well as on different scales, i.e. the European and the urban one. Additionally, I adopted the framework of uneven development to highlight the "geometries of power" in which such mobilities are embedded (Massey 1993). Through a brief literature review on intra-European mobility processes, I identified the South-North axis as a relevant pattern on which uneven development at European scale occurs. Further, I drew parallels between the seasonal workers migrations of the 1950s and 1960s and contemporary migrations of young and educated European citizens. I defined the former as Fordist and the latter as Post-fordist types of migration. The main difference between them lies in the specific regimes of accumulation of capital through extraction of value from the labour force (fixed in Fordism vs. flexible in Post-Fordism, Harvey 1996). From this viewpoint, mobilities of young people endowed with high cultural capital are more relevant to contemporary processes of capital accumulation in the cities of the Global North.

On the basis of the analysis of online forums, in which young Italians write about their strategies of spatial mobility to Berlin, I then distinguished between the crisis as a main push factor and the recent Berlin hype as a pull factor (Lee 1964). I sketched some qualitative considerations on how these factors affect the decision to move of young Italians. The analysis shows how different scales such as the national, the macro-regional and the urban one converge on the same discoursive level when young people talk about their project to migrate. Through their discourses, these movers operate a re-scaling which elevates the urban context to the same level of relevance as the (supra-)national scale for their decisions.

These movers generate a "flight of cultural capital" – commonly denominated as "brain drain" – to North European cities such as Berlin. The newcomers live mainly in the central neighborhoods. Their cultural capital interacts with dynamics of urban re-

structuring in the Post-Fordist city. Here, the spillover of cultural capital into circuits of valorization of housing might contribute to processes of social upgrading, which finally result in the increase of land value then appropriated by landlords. We need therefore empirical research to explore these dynamics of spatial concentration in the city. In particular, research should focus on the role of different forms of capital in explaining them. While cultural capital seems to be a revealing variable, the influence of other lines of social inequality, such as ethnicity and class, should be investigated too. A deeper understanding of these dynamics would allow us to explore extant and emerging spatial axes of inequality not only at the urban scale, but also in the wider uneven developed context of the European Union.

Concluding, the paper has shown not only that migration is relational and multi-scalar, but also a multi-dimensional, as it involves the movement of many physical and non physical instances: with the body also the brain moves, and with it cultures, practices, knowledge, forms of sociability and capital. Since I focused on European wide circuits of capital and on the production of inequalities connected to them, I stressed a view of migrants as "bearers" of different forms of capital, and in particular of cultural capital.

Moreover, migration is always a work-in-progress, as the temporal boundaries of the concrete experience of migration do not delimit the cognitive experience of migration. The latter starts before the person physically enters the new place for the first time. The way how the decision to move comes into being is constitutive for the migration itself. As we saw in sections 6 and 7, people willing to move ponderate their decision through a mix of economic rationality and stereotypical assumptions. Their knowledge of Berlin affects their strategies of spatial mobility. Thus, we could learn more about the ways how cities attract young educated people by investigating the networks and flows of knowledge through which people experience and feel attached to these cities even before moving physically to them.

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Bio

Stefania Animento is a PhD candidate in Urban Studies at the University of Milan-Bicocca and at the Humboldt University of Berlin. She holds a BA in International Relations from the University of Florence and an MA in Sociology from the Humboldt University of Berlin. Her research interest focuses on urban theory, migration and housing. In her PhD research she investigates how contemporary migrations interact with local housing markets and processes of urban restructuring through the case study of young Europeans in Berlin.