Received: 22 July 2022 | Accepted: 1 November 2023

DOI: 10.1002/psp.2728

RESEARCH ARTICLE

WILEY

Introducing the role of the municipality of residence in studying the secondary migration of international migrants. Evidence from Lombardy (Italy)

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Funding information

Research project "Geography and Social Inequality in Italy. Opportunities and Constraints in Marginal and Central Areas (GESI)" supported by Fondazione Cariplo, rif. 2021-1315

Abstract

Secondary internal and international movements of migrants are receiving increasing attention in Europe while research has so far focused on the characteristics of individuals who remigrate or plan to re-emigrate, the attributes of the place that secondary migrants aim to leave have been less studied compared to other personal characteristics. This knowledge gap is primarily due to the fact that detailed information on the municipality of residence is largely unavailable in nationwide sample surveys. To fill this gap, after considering the time since migrants' arrival in Italy and previous internal mobility, we analyse the relationship between the characteristics of the municipality where migrants live and short-term migration intentions of return, onward and internal migration in a competing risk framework. We focus on ethnic concentration (community hotspots and coldspots) and classification into central and marginal areas as critical characteristics of municipalities. We used a unique pooled data set that includes seven cross-sectional surveys conducted between 2010 and 2016 by the Regional Observatory for Integration and Multiethnicity in the Northern Italian region of Lombardy. Municipal characteristics are strongly related to migrants' intentions: migrants who intend to move internally or to a third country are more likely live in urban, suburban, intermediate and peripheral areas and in the mountains. In contrast, the intention to return is not correlated with the characteristics of the municipality. The concentration of co-nationals is also uncorrelated with short-term migration intentions. We discuss the limitations of using a concentration indicator to study the relationship with secondary mobility.

KEYWORDS

ethnic clustering, geographic inequalities, inner areas, internal migration, onward migration, return migration

1 | INTRODUCTION

Research on secondary migration movements of migrants in Europe has recently gained momentum as migration is increasingly conceptualised as a dynamic and complex process potentially involving multiple internal (Bonifazi et al., 2021; Casacchia et al., 2022; Cremaschi et al., 2020; Fromentin, 2021) and international movements such as onward (international migration to a third country different from the country of birth) and return (to the country of birth) migration (Bonifazi & Paparusso, 2018; Castles et al., 2009; Jeffery & Murison, 2011; Montagna et al., 2021; Monti, 2019; Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018). Research on the patterns and drivers of secondary migration has primarily focused on the characteristics of individuals who remigrate or plan to re-emigrate. Moreover, internal and international migration have often been studied as separate phenomena despite being strongly intertwined (King & Skelton, 2010) and competing strategies for foreign-born migrants (Bernard & Perales, 2021; Impicciatore & Strozza, 2016). Within this framework, the characteristics of the place that secondary migrants leave, or aim to leave, and the role of social networks in the place of residence in emigration have been less studied compared to other personal characteristics (Kritz et al., 2013; Manchin & Orazbayev, 2018). This knowledge gap is mainly due to the fact that the information related to the municipality of residence is largely unavailable in nationwide sample surveys. Moreover, international mobility is hard to track using register data, with studies on Swedish register data as a prominent exception (Monti, 2021). As a result, comparable and comprehensive data sources and studies combining migration and urbanisation data are even harder to find (IOM, 2021). Our analysis starts from the assumption that the type of place that migrants aim to leave is potentially highly relevant in shaping secondary migration. Indeed, at the meso level, the place of residence has a range of crucial resources and constraints that depend, among other things, on the degree of urbanisation, the accessibility of essential services, the housing costs, prevalent labour market activities in the area, and the network of co-nationals. As for the latter, researchers unanimously recognise that the choice of the first place for emigration is strongly determined by the presence of immigrants from the same country of origin in that area (Reher & Silvestre, 2009; Silvestre & Reher, 2014). The current place where migrants live, therefore, also reflects selection processes: indeed, evidence shows that upon arrival in a new host country, migrants tend to cluster in the ethnic neighbourhoods of large gateway cities (Cremaschi et al., 2020; Saunders, 2010; Tammaru & Kontuly, 2011). However, for many migrants, mobility does not end in the country of destination (Silvestre & Reher, 2014). Newly arrived migrants frequently leave the place of their first settlement and show higher internal mobility rates than natives (Bonifazi et al., 2021). While mobility in the form of suburbanisation and ruralisation is relevant (Cremaschi et al., 2020; Fromentin, 2021), long-distance internal migration is increasingly evident (Bonifazi et al., 2021; Finney & Simpson, 2008) as well as international onward and return migration (Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018; Bonifazi & Paparusso, 2018).

The relationship between internal and international secondary migrations is complex. The residence of migrants in emigration is determined by various factors, including initial choices based on family or ethnic ties, changes in circumstances after arrival and future migration plans. Internal and international migration can generally be seen as alternative responses to the same stimuli, allowing migrants to fulfil personal aspirations and improve their economic and integration opportunities (Bernard & Perales, 2021; King & Skeldon, 2010). However, 'internal migration is a lower risk strategy' (Bernard & Perales, 2021: 661) since it requires fewer resources especially compared to international migration. Therefore, the choice between internal and international migration seems to be related to the available resources, the presence of location-specific capital (Da Vanzo, 1976; Thomassen et al., 2023) and the presence of social networks, especially close social networks in the place of origin, destination or third countries (Manchin & Orazbayev, 2018). As highlighted by King and Skeldon (2010), there are different migration pathways. Sometimes internal migration to a town or city is a necessary step to accumulate the financial resources to migrate internationally ('Internal Migration Leading to International Migration'). In this case, migrants' mobility may follow an 'escalator hierarchy', in which migrants move up from rural areas or small towns due to the better occupational and living standards offered by big cities (Clark & Maas, 2015; Wang et al., 2023). Similarly, after international migration, migrants may decide to move internally ('International Migration Leading to Internal Migration'). As integration in big cities is more difficult compared to other areas, migrants who previously migrated from their country of origin to a big city may decide to move down the urban hierarchy by moving to smaller cities (Wang & Mai, 2003). This is because international onward migration is likely to be more costly compared to internal and return migration (Bijwaard & Wahba, 2023).

Studies of the internal migration patterns of the foreign-born are inconclusive as to the ultimate reasons for their dispersal from their original urban centres. Several theories have been put forward, including the desire to improve social, economic, and psychological support from their ethnic community (segmented assimilation theory or ethnic enclave perspective; e.g., Zhou, 1999), or to seek better integration into the host society by moving away from their initial community (Spatial assimilation theory; e.g., Alba & Nee, 2003; Iceland & Scopilliti, 2008). However, research indicates that improved socioeconomic status and strong connections with the host country do not always result in spatial assimilation.[1] Cultural drivers of ethnic concentration (e.g., the search for peers who share language, traditions, or religion) have been considered a crucial explanation, along with many structural mechanisms also at play (e.g., chain migration and ethnic networks, endogamous marriages and family relations, and ethnic businesses; Rathelot & Safi, 2014). The persistence of high moving costs or discriminatory practices

[1]To learn more, please refer to the works of Rimoldi et al., 2019 or Silvestre & Reher, 2014 for a detailed review of the evidence.

(e.g., in the housing market) can also significantly hamper assimilation (ethnic disadvantage model; e.g., Charles, 2003).

Geographical inequalities along a continuum between municipalities in 'central' and 'marginal' areas may also play a role in secondary mobility, as is the case for natives. Traditional geographical inequalities persist in developed countries (e.g., in Italy between northern and southern areas), and the dichotomy between central areas offering better job opportunities and life chances and marginal regions characterised by depopulation, limited economic and life opportunities and social services is becoming more pronounced (OECD, 2020). Despite evidence that interregional disparities in Europe started to increase from 2008 (Capello & Cerisola, 2022), spatial inequalities have been less explored in studying the secondary migration of international migrants compared to other personal characteristics (Manchin & Orazbayev, 2018). Existing empirical evidence suggests that locally available amenities, services and local characteristics (quality of life, including the climate and pollution) play a crucial role in the decision to stay or re-migrate (Bernard & Perales, 2021; Manchin and Orazbayev, 2018; Thomassen et al., 2023; Maza et al., 2018; Viñuela, 2021). Nevertheless, the role of geographical characteristics and inequalities in driving migrant mobility is crucial to guiding the local integration processes that are receiving increasing attention at the European level through the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 (European Commission, 2020).

In our study, we focus on the northern Italian region of Lombardy as a case study to shed light on the complex relationships between the characteristics of the municipality of residence, the spatial concentration of communities and the secondary mobility of migrants. We analyse short-term (i.e., in the 12 months after the survey) internal, onward and return migration intentions among the most relevant 10 communities in Lombardy. We aim to advance the literature in two ways. First, we consider the impact of geographical inequalities, using classifications accounting for degree of urbanisation, accessibility to essential public services, and altimetric zone. Second, we reflect on ethnic clustering or co-national concentration as a relevant aspect potentially impacting mobility. Following Rathelot and Safi's (2014) definition of ethnic 'clustering', we consider the higher or lower concentration of co-nationals (measured in this study in terms of community[2] 'hotspots' and 'coldspots') to be the result of complex processes that may be linked to the residential strategies of these populations, the availability of community-specific bonding social capital, and structural constraining mechanisms. At the same time, we acknowledge that such an indicator does not necessarily imply a segregation pattern but simply an increased proportion of migrants from a specific country in some areas (Rathelot & Safi, 2014). We also control for the proportion of foreign residents on the total population to account for the overall attractiveness of the municipality to the population with a migrant background.

After describing the geography of ethnic concentration in terms of hotspots and coldspots in Lombardy, we focus on the following research questions:

(RQ1) *Is the concentration of migrants from the same country of origin at the municipality level correlated with short-term mobility intentions? and*

(RQ2) *Are municipality characteristics correlated with the short-term mobility intentions of migrants?*

To carry out the analysis, we build on a unique pooled data set that includes seven regional cross-sectional surveys on migrants carried out between 2010 and 2016 in the framework of the Observatory for Integration and Multiethnicity of Lombardy (ORIM).

2 | EVIDENCE ON MIGRANT CONCENTRATION

There are mixed findings on whether migrants in migrant-dense communities (or hotspots; Celata et al., 2018b) are better off compared to those living in areas with fewer co-nationals (Bevelander, 2011). A recent report from the European Union shows that relocation to small cities can offer some advantages to migrants, such as a lower risk of structural segregation in schools, a tighter safety net, and a more significant role for local organisations and community leaders (Gauci, 2020). Proximity to members of the same community may entail some benefits: ethnic neighbourhoods facilitate access to social capital bounded by co-ethnicity, such as interpersonal relationships and community-based associations that enable access to information, employment and social mobility, while fostering intracommunity solidarity that may be relevant for the integration process and protect immigrants from social alienation (Bécares et al., 2009; Celata & Touré, 2022; Rathelot & Safi, 2014; Zhou, 2005). However, segregation and labour-intensive occupational ethnic niches confine immigrants to low-skilled positions, limiting opportunities for contact and participation in host societies worsened by spatial segregation and concentration (Bolíbar, 2020; Celata et al., 2018a). Moreover, the spatial concentration of foreigners is associated with the tendency of migrants to create social and economic spaces that are geographically and functionally isolated (Celata et al., 2018b).

Research typically analyses foreign citizens as a uniform group with respect to internal movements and clustering (Casacchia et al., 2022). Celata et al. (2018a, 2018b), who analysed the clustering of migrants in the form of urban hotspots (i.e. within a city), found the presence of several hotspots in Italy, taking into account the overall concentration of migrants. As for Lombardy, they found eight different hotspots within the city of Milan. Hotspots identified according to the general presence of migrants do not seem

[2]While we are aware that a 'community' can be understood as a group of persons linked by strong ties, we want to clarify to the readers that here we use this term to indicate a group sharing the same country of birth.

to be driven by attraction between co-nationals, as they are often very diverse, mixed, and multiethnic (Celata & Touré, 2022). Consistently with these previous findings, Casacchia et al., (2022) recently stressed the importance of community-specific patterns. They showed how Ukrainian citizens tend to follow a process of spatial assimilation while, in contrast, Chinese citizens tend to cluster following the network of co-nationals. They also observed that internal migration by Indians and Albanians tends to involve long distances, while Romanians and Ukrainians often opt for relocations involving shorter distances. The literature shows that migrants may use secondary internal or international migration to adjust the balance between the characteristics of the municipality in which they settle and the advantages and disadvantages associated with a high or low concentration of co-nationals and other migrants. In Italy, the growing role of the foreign population is in fact the main novelty of internal mobility in the last 30 years (Bonifazi et al., 2021). In the previous two decades, the internal migration of foreigners in Italy has been higher than that of Italians. Research has shown that newly arriving immigrants have higher migration intensities than foreigners already established in Italian society as migrants have increasingly 'found their way' into the Italian society (Bonifazi et al., 2021; Casacchia et al., 2022). Onward and return migration has also increased, mainly as a reaction to the economic crisis and subsequent stagnation that characterised the second half of the 2010s (Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018).

While the characteristics of secondary migrants or people intending to move have been thoroughly studied (Bonifazi & Paparusso, 2018; Castles et al., 2009; Jeffery & Murison, 2011; Monti, 2019; Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018), a spatial perspective that also takes into account the concentration of co-nationals in a given area is far less used in recent research. To our best knowledge, this is the first Italian study to analyse short-term internal and international migration intentions using a geographical perspective and a competing risk framework that integrates international and internal migration.

3 | THE CENTRAL-MARGINAL DIVIDE AND AN OUTLINE OF LOMBARDY

In most countries, significant inequalities between cities and regions result in substantial differences in economic opportunities, average wages, and earnings (OECD, 2020). Unemployment and nonemployment rates also vary enormously across cities and regions. In Italy, for example, the unemployment rates in the South have been three to four times higher than in the North for the past three decades (Moretti, 2022). Italy's well-known North–South socioeconomic divide has historical roots (Felice, 2018); more recently, geographical inequality has also spread throughout the country along a continuum between 'central' and 'marginal' areas (Ballarino & Panichella, 2021; Bertolini et al., 2008; Pastorelli & Stocchiero, 2019). People living in marginal areas have less access to basic services (e.g., education, health and mobility) and have a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than in urban areas (Gallo & Pagliacci, 2020; Pastorelli & Stocchiero, 2019).

The impact of geographical inequalities on migrants' internal and, above all, international mobility trajectories is still poorly understood in Italy. Even if the large metropolitan areas are indeed poles of attraction for migrants, the highest levels of residential concentration are recorded in the smaller urban areas. Moreover, the patterns of residential concentration of migrants vary significantly according to the country of origin: communities adopt different patterns of internal migration, some mainly attributable to the process of spatial assimilation and others to the call of migration networks (Benassi et al., 2020; Casacchia et al., 2022). Indeed, the intertwining of economic opportunities and local ethnic occupational niches leads some communities to cluster far from the main cities. Aside from agricultural activities that are highly economically relevant for some communities, many migrants benefited from job opportunities outside big cities that the native-born population has not been able to take up (Kasimis, 2005). Migrants are in dynamic relationships with their place of residence, and their experiences at the local level will define their (economic) opportunities (Papademetriou, 2003) and eventual secondary migration intentions.

Lombardy,[3] the context of our study, is one of the wealthiest and most economically developed regions in Italy and Europe. It is in the northern part of Italy and encompasses major cities with a high presence of migrants such as Milan, the region's capital, as well as Bergamo and Brescia. Lombardy has a highly diversified and robust economy, contributing significantly to Italy's overall GDP. It is known as a financial and industrial hub, with sectors such as manufacturing, finance, fashion, design, and services playing a prominent role. It is important to note that socioeconomic disparities exist within the region. Some areas within Lombardy experience relatively higher levels of poverty or unemployment compared to others, particularly in certain neighbourhoods. These disparities are often associated with factors such as urban-rural divides, access to education, and social inequality (Eupolis, 2018). According to Eurostat's Degree of urbanisation classification (DEGURBA; European Commission, 2022), which categorises areas according to their degree of urbanisation based on the 2011 census, out of the 1528 municipalities of Lombardy, 6.8% are cities, 50.3% are towns or suburbs, and 42.9% are rural areas (Figure 1a). According to the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI; Barca et al., 2014)—a classification promoted by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion in 2013—that instead defines inner areas according to access to essential public services and infrastructures, 3.2% of Lombardy's municipalities are poles or intermunicipal poles, 64.2% urban belt areas, 19.2% intermediate areas, and 13.4% peripheric or ultra-peripheric areas (Figure 1b). Finally, considering altimetric zones, 30.4% of the municipalities are in the mountains, 20.6% in the hills, and 49% on flat land (Figure 1c).

[3]NUTS ITC4 in Eurostat nomenclature.

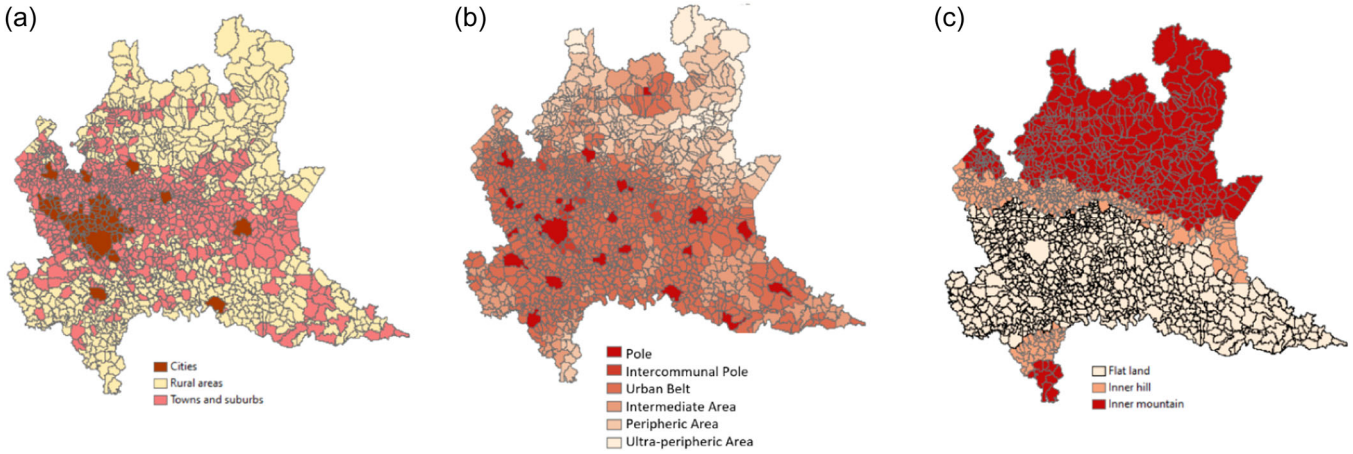

FIGURE 1 Classification of Lombardy's municipalities according to the DEGURBA classification (a), the SNAI classification (b) and altimetric classification (c). *Source*: Authors' elaboration on ISTAT municipality classifications https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/156224 and the Agency for Territorial Cohesion classifications https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/strategia-nazionale-aree-interne/la-selezione-delle-aree/.

4 | DATA AND METHODS

4.1 | Data

We used a pooled data set of seven cross-sectional repeated surveys conducted between 2010 and 2016 by the Regional Observatory for Integration and Multiethnicity (ORIM) in the northern Italian region of Lombardy. Since 2001, ORIM has conducted a cross-sectional, face-to-face, retrospective multipurpose survey on foreigners living in Lombardy. The design of this survey, based on the centre sampling technique (Baio et al., 2011), guarantees representativeness at the regional level and the inclusion of undocumented and naturalised migrants, as it is specifically designed to collect information on a representative sample of immigrants. The survey focuses on migrants aged 18 and over living in Lombardy from all countries except the former EU15 and EFTA countries, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The ORIM survey collects information on demographic, social, and economic events, as well as the opinions, values, and attitudes of interviewees (Open Data Regione Lombardia, 2014).[4]

Despite their regional scope, the ORIM surveys are a unique data source for our analysis. ORIM surveys are the most up-to-date sources on migrants living in Italy; for this reason, researchers have repeatedly used these data in ground-breaking studies on migrants when nationwide survey data were unavailable (e.g., Roca & Puga, 2017; Fasani, 2015). Furthermore, information on the municipality where migrants live is collected and available, while this detail is often not available in national surveys. We limited the analysis to 2010–2016, as the information on migrants' short-term migration intentions is only available from 2010. At the same time, due to a gradual reduction of sample sizes in the most recent ORIM surveys, surveys conducted after 2016 do not guarantee the representativeness of ultra-peripheral and mountain areas. The full pooled data set from 2010 to 2016 includes 37,813 migrants.[5] From this data set, we selected migrants from the most numerous communities in Italy on 1 January 2010,[6] to capture the possible existence of country-specific patterns (Romania, Albania, Ukraine, Egypt, Morocco, China, India, the Philippines, Peru, and Ecuador). Furthermore, given our focus on migration intentions, we excluded interviewees who were economically dependent on their family of origin, second-generation migrants and those who did not declare their future intent. The final subsample for our analysis includes 17,277 records. Descriptive statistics of the sample are provided in Table A1 in the Online Appendix.

To assess the settlement pattern of each municipality, we used data on the distribution of foreign-born residents by citizenship and municipality for 2010–2016 produced by ISTAT (2022a). To evaluate the characteristics of municipalities, we took into account the Eurostat DEGURBA classification (European Commission, 2022), the SNAI classification of internal areas based on the accessibility of essential public services and infrastructure (Barca et al., 2014), and the altimetric zone provided by ISTAT (2022b).

Data at the municipal level are taken from the 2011 census and are provided by ISTAT through the site 8000 Census (ISTAT, 2023).

4.2 | Methods

4.2.1 | Scan analysis

We performed scan analysis (also called hotspot analysis),[7] a method mainly used for health studies to determine whether cases are randomly

[4]Further details about the survey for English readers can be found in Morales et al. (2020)

[5]The number of cases for each year is not fixed, it was higher at the beginning and then decreased.

[6]The bottom of the ranking changed over the decade in observation, but the most numerous countries of origin remained the same until 2016.

[7]We used the software SatScan available at https://www.satscan.org/

distributed between locations or clustered (Kulldorff, 1997). We used this method to describe the concentration/dispersion of migrants in Lombardy. In our study, the locations are the municipalities of the Lombardy region[8]; the number of cases is the number of migrants living in the municipality *i* coming from the country of origin *j* at time *t*. The population size is the number of migrants coming from the country of origin *j* living in the Lombardy Region at the time *t*. We applied spatial scan statistics separately for each country of origin and each year using a Poisson model. SatScan imposes circular windows on the map, changing the size and position of the windows, and compares the number of observed cases with the number of expected ones in case of random distribution (null hypothesis). The window with the maximum likelihood is the most likely cluster, that is, the number of cases in this cluster is higher (hotspot) or lower (coldspot) than expected. A *p value* is estimated using the Monte Carlo method. This allows us to assign each municipality - separately by country of origin and year - one of the following labels: 'coldspot' (municipality grouped in a cluster with a relative risk significantly lower than one, indicating a lower concentration of migrants from the country of origin *j* compared to the average level); 'hotspot' (municipality grouped in a cluster with relative risk significantly greater than one indicating a higher concentration of migrants from the country of origin *j* compared to the average level) and 'average' (municipality with nonsignificant risk ratio indicating an average concentration of migrants from the country of origin *j*). We included this variable ('concentration of co-nationals') in the pooled data set. We assigned each record the value 'coldspot', 'hotspot' or 'average' based on the country of origin, year of the survey and the municipality of residence.

4.3 | Random-effects multinomial logit models

We used random-effects multilevel multinomial logit regression considering four possible secondary migration intentions as the dependent variable to implement the competing-risk framework including all the opportunities available to potential migrants (King & Skeldon, 2010; Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018; DaVanzo, 1976; Impicciatore & Strozza, 2016; Toma et al., 2015; Bernand & Perales, 2022).

Our dependent variable *migrants' short-term intention* (i.e., in the following 12 months) is coded as: 'stay in the same municipality' (reference category), 'onward migration to a third country', 'return to the country of origin', and 'internal migration'. The use of short-term migration intentions when data on actual migration are unavailable is considered a valid research approach (for a discussion, see Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018).

The model includes random effects at the municipality level (level-2) to allow for unobserved heterogeneity across municipalities that cannot be fully explained by the measured covariates.

As independent variables, we used three variables at the municipality level:

1. *Concentration of co-nationals*, described before, using 'Average' as the reference category and a variable measuring the characteristics of the municipality.
2. *Characteristics of the municipality*: different and partially overlapping classifications exist. The first and second classifications represent the availability of local amenities and services and the size of the labour market, both of which are considered crucial elements in the decision to move (e.g. Bernard & Perales, 2021; Clark & Maas, 2015; Thomassen et al., 2023; Viñuela, 2021), while the third classification could measure the quality of life including the climate (Manchin and Orazbayev, 2018; Maza et al., 2018). We, therefore, used them separately in the models to test the consistency of this dimension's relevance:
   2.1. The *degree of* urbanisation[9] (DEGURBA) that distinguishes three categories: 'cities' (densely populated areas - reference category), 'towns and suburbs' (intermediate populated areas), 'rural areas' (sparsely populated areas);
   2.2. The *accessibility indicator*, developed by SNAI,[10] which classifies municipalities according to the distance from the pole where the essential services are located: 'pole', 'intercommunal pole', 'urban belt', 'intermediate area', 'peripheric area and ultra-peripheric area'[11];
   2.3. The *altimetric classification* according to ISTAT criteria: 'internal mountain', 'internal hill', 'flat land' (reference category).

   And two at the individual level (level-1)
3. *Previous internal movement*: this variable measures where a migrant has moved at least once from the Italian province of arrival. Thus, it is 'yes' for migrants who, at the time of the survey, live in a different province compared to that of their first arrival, and 'no' otherwise.
4. *Length of stay in Italy (in years, including a squared term)*: this variable measures the number of years since the (last) migration to Italy and proxies the national-specific capital (knowledge of the language, laws, rules).

As control variables at the individual level, we include personal and family characteristics of migrants, including proxy variables of location-specific capital (assets that are more valuable in their current location than elsewhere; da Vanzo, 1976), such as legal status and time since arrival in Italy.

- *Gender* ('male' as reference category);
- *Children* ('childless' - reference category, 'all cohabitants', 'all abroad', 'some cohabitants and some abroad');
- *Partner* ('single'-reference category, 'cohabitant partner', 'partner abroad');
- *Educational level* ('tertiary', 'other' –reference category);

[8]As coordinates file, we used the file provided by ISTAT with the coordinates of each municipality.

[9]ISTAT provides the classification of the municipalities according to EUROSTAT definition.

[10]*Source*: 'Le aree interne: di quali territori parliamo? Nota esplicativa sul metodo di classificazione delle aree' https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Nota_metodologica_Aree_interne-2-1.pdf

[11]We grouped these categories due to the small number of cases defined as 'ultra-peripheral'.

- *Legal status* ('citizen, long-term permit and EU citizen' –reference category-, 'short-term permit', 'undocumented');
- *Occupational status at the time of the survey* ('regularly employed' -reference category-, inactive' (i.e., household and retired) and 'unemployed or irregularly employed');
- *Year of the survey*.

We do not explicitly control for the community of belonging because this information is directly related to the municipality in terms of ethnic concentration.

At the municipality level we control for:

- The *unemployment rate of all residents* as of 2011.
- The *employment rate of foreign residents* as of 2011.
- The *percentage of foreign citizens on total residents* (percentage) as of 2011.

4.4 | Robustness checks

First, we tested the combined effect of hotspots and coldspots and the proportion of the total population that is foreign in our models. As the patterns of municipalities are differentiated, it is possible for a given municipality to be a hotspot in municipalities with a low proportion of foreign residents and vice versa. Using each variable independently does not change the results.

We also fit simple multinomial regression models to test the consistency with random effects multinomial logit models and to assess the stability of our result while overcoming the computational burden of the main models. To check the applicability of a multinomial logistic regression to our data, we tested the independence of the irrelevant alternatives to verify that introducing another alternative does not change the selected option. The test results indicated that we could not reject the equality of the coefficients across the models.

5 | RESULTS

5.1 | Ethnic concentration in Lombardy for the primary 10 nationalities

The primary 10 nationalities settled in Lombardy have very different settlement models; in particular the hotspots are not necessarily based in the capital city of Milan (Figures 2 and 3). These patterns

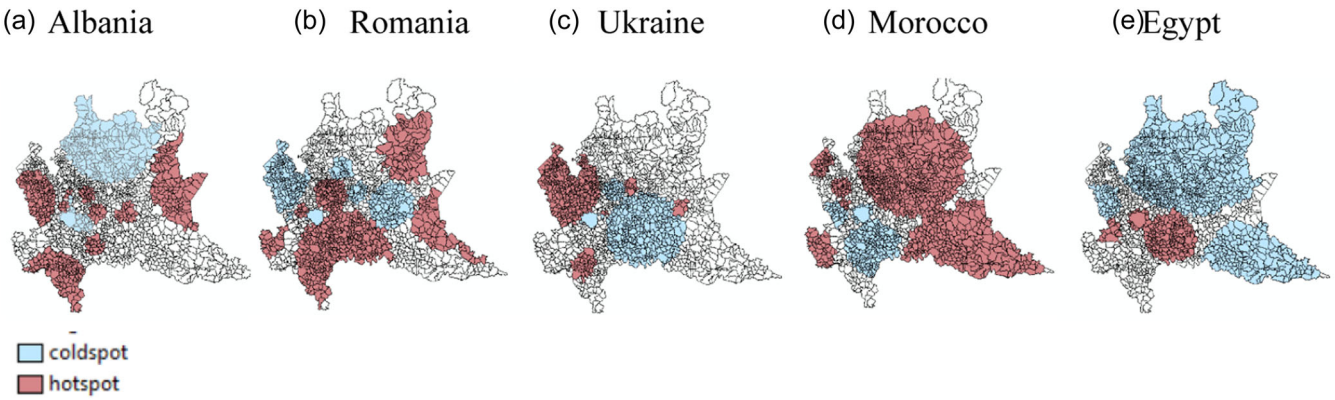

FIGURE 2 Hotspots and coldspots for Albanians (a), Romanians (b), Ukrainians (c), Moroccans (d) and Egyptians (e) settled in Lombardy, year 2013.

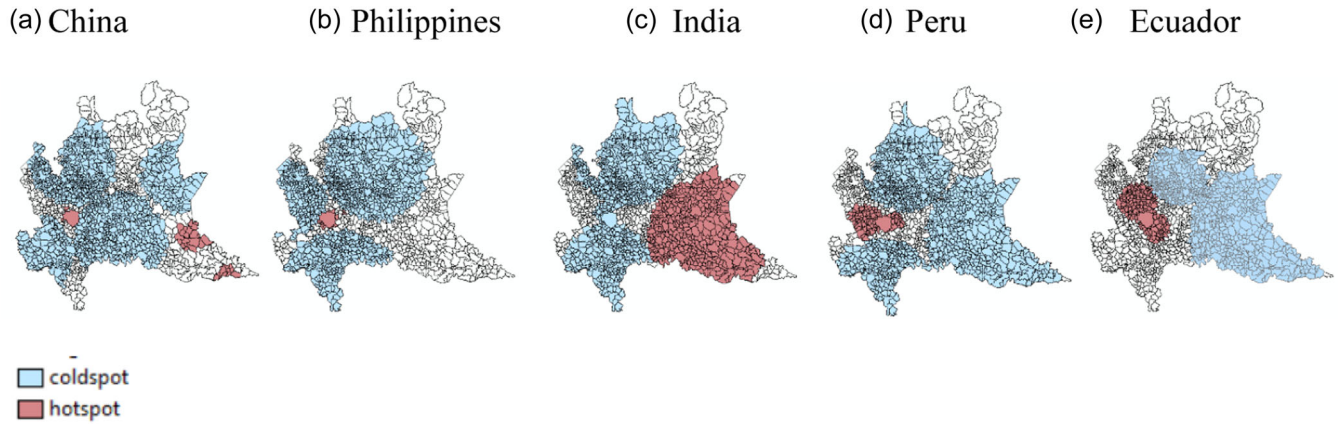

FIGURE 3 Hotspots and coldspots for Chinese (a), Filipinos (b), Indians (c), Peruvian (d) and Ecuadorians (e) settled in Lombardy, year 2013.

TABLE 1 Migrants' short-term intentions and settlement patterns by country of origin 2010–2016.

Variable	Albania	Romania	Ukraine	China	The Philippines	India	Egypt	Morocco	Ecuador	Peru	Total
Short-term migration intention											
Stay in the same municipality	88.80	82.92	85.43	91.45	91.74	87.46	81.95	79.67	88.92	88.80	85.61
Onward migration	3.83	6.11	2.30	1.77	3.86	6.33	5.12	8.27	1.88	2.85	4.84
Return migration	4.57	6.46	8.66	2.00	2.71	3.54	9.27	6.88	6.50	5.89	5.88
Internal migration	2.80	4.51	3.61	4.78	1.69	2.66	3.67	5.18	2.70	2.46	3.67
Migrants' concentration											
Coldspot	14.75	35.50	28.06	25.55	17.86	14.43	14.86	14.58	7.06	14.16	19.60
Average	47.66	30.28	36.52	26.97	19.25	17.20	20.60	28.61	23.72	26.69	29.28
Hotspot	37.59	34.21	35.42	47.48	62.89	68.37	64.54	56.81	69.22	59.15	51.12
Previous internal mobility											
No	67.11	70.51	68.19	61.34	82.40	70.89	78.61	68.48	80.61	81.40	71.92
Yes	32.89	29.49	31.81	38.66	17.60	29.11	21.39	31.52	19.39	18.60	28.08
Degree of urbanisation											
City	34.20	43.91	51.09	64.10	87.69	15.97	71.17	32.83	79.88	81.16	51.07
Town/suburb	61.40	50.33	45.57	33.00	11.80	72.79	26.14	61.04	19.21	18.14	44.59
Rural area	4.40	5.76	3.34	2.90	0.52	11.25	2.69	6.14	0.91	0.70	4.34
Time since arrival in Italy, Mean (SE)	10.9 (5.7)	8.9 (5.6)	7.9 (4.2)	10.1 (6.4)	12.1 (7.6)	9.2 (5.7)	11.6 (7.4)	11.7 (6.8)	11.3 (4.8)	11.1 (6.0)	10.5 (6.3)
N (unweighted)	1970	1845	1239	1291	666	1357	1972	4950	898	1089	17,277

Source: Own elaboration on ORIM data.

TABLE 2 Relative risks and significance, multilevel multinomial logistic regression model with dependent variable migrant's short-term intention (reference 'stay in the same municipality').[a]

Model	Variable	Onward migration	Return migration	Internal migration
Model 1	Migrants' concentration (ref. Average)			
	Coldspot	1.168	1.097	1.010
	Hotspot	1.110	1.040	0.986
	Percentage of foreign residents over the total population	1.002	1.001	0.996
	Degree of Urbanisation (DEGURBA) (ref. Cities or densely populated areas)			
	Towns and suburbs or intermediate density areas	1.331	0.893	1.991***
	Rural areas or thinly populated areas	1.840**	0.753	1.817**
	Previous internal movement (ref. No)	1.264**	1.286**	1.465***
	Time since the arrival in Italy (in years)	1.000	0.967	0.963
	Time since the arrival in Italy (in years, squared term)	1.000	1.000	1.000
	AIC	18089.28		
Model 2	Migrants' concentration (ref. Average)			
	Coldspot	1.137	1.086	1.026
	Hotspot	1.083	1.030	0.866
	Percentage of foreign residents over the total population	1.001	1.001	0.997*
	SNAI classification (ref. pole)	0.999		
	Intercommunal pole	1.107	0.811	0.872
	Belt areas	0.752	0.734*	1.212
	Intermediate areas	1.235	0.724	2.005**
	Peripheral and ultra-peripheral areas	1.275	0.976	1.823*
	Time since the arrival in Italy (in years)	1.003	0.967	0.963
	Time since the arrival in Italy (in years, squared term)	1.000	1.001	1.000
	Previous internal movement (ref. No)	1.291**	1.287**	1.479***
	AIC	18096.71		
Model 3	Migrants' concentration (ref. Average)			
	Coldspot	1.142	1.106	0.986
	Hotspot	1.093	0.859	0.959
	Percentage of foreign resident over total population	1.002	1.001	0.998
	Altimetric zone (ref. Plain)			
	Mountain	1.446*	1.224	2.195***
	Hill	1.004	0.859	1.192
	Time since the arrival in Italy (in years)	1.003	0.967	0.964
	Time since the arrival in Italy (in years, squared term)	1.003	1.001	1.000
	Previous internal movement (ref. No)	1.293**	1.281**	1.510***
	AIC	18089.79		
All models	*N*	16,555		

Note: The models control for age, years since migration, gender, educational level, occupational status, legal status, children, partner and year of the survey, unemployment rate at the municipality level, foreigners' employment rate at the municipality level.

[a]Completed models are in the Appendix (see Table A2.1-A2.3).

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

are closely related to ethnic job niches in Lombardy (Bertolani, 2019; Cela et al., 2021; Riva and Zanfrini, 2013). In Milan, only Egyptians, Chinese, Filipinos, Peruvians and Ecuadorians are clustered due to a concentration of jobs in the domestic and care sector (Filipinos, Peruvians and Ecuadorians) and in food services and trade (Egyptians and Chinese). Notably, Indians are highly concentrated in the rural areas of Cremona and Mantua (South-Eastern areas of the Lombardy region) due to their employment concentration in agriculture and farming. Rural areas are also hotspots for Moroccans and Romanians, who are also concentrated in mountain municipalities.

5.2 | Descriptive results

After visualising the ethnic concentration of the nationalities under study and Lombardy's municipality characteristics in the first section of the paper, we combine this information with short-term migration intentions. Due to its relevance, the percentage of foreign residents at the municipality level is also shown in Table 1. Overall, 85.61% of migrants do not intend to move in the 12 months following the interview. Among migrants who want to leave Italy, return migration is the most common option (5.88%), followed by onward migration (4.84%) and internal migration (3.67%). Half of the population live in a hotspot or a densely populated area and seven out of ten have not moved internally since arriving in Italy.

Mobility and settlement patterns vary considerably by country of origin. Migrants from the Philippines, Egypt, Ecuador and Peru tend to live in densely populated areas and community hotspots, especially in Milan and its urban belt (see Figures 2 and 3), and show limited previous internal migration. Albanians have a different strategy, with a third having moved internally before reaching their current municipality. They are less spatially concentrated and tend to live in towns or suburbs with an average concentration of co-nationals. Romanians and Ukrainians are evenly distributed across the region, living in cities, towns or suburbs outside the provincial capital. Indians usually live in hotspot municipalities, but mostly live in villages and suburbs of densely populated areas; due to their concentration of farming activities (Bertolani, 2019) a high proportion of them (11.25%) live in rural areas, mostly Cremona and Mantua. The Chinese are the most mobile on the Italian peninsula, but at the time of the survey, nine out of ten confirm their choice of last place of residence; they live in densely populated areas especially in hotspot municipalities. They are primarily settled in Milan and its urban belt. Moroccans have the lowest propensity to stay in the same municipality and overall live in towns and suburbs.

Overall, migrants from these 10 countries of origin have an average length of stay of nearly 10.5 years. Romanians, Ukrainians and Indians arrived more recently while migrants from the Philippines have a longer length of stay in Italy compared to the others.

5.3 | Multivariate results

Confirming the findings of previous literature results (e.g., Bernard et al., 2022; Da Vanzo, 1976), the short-term intention to move is strongly related to previous internal mobility in Italy: migrants who have already moved within the Italian peninsula have a higher propensity to move again either internally or internationally. This result highlights the importance of analysing internal and international migration as a continuum (Impicciatore & Strozza, 2016; King & Skeldon, 2010). At the same time, the number of years since migration is not relevant for defining short-term migration intentions. Moreover, our results show that the concentration of co-nationals is uncorrelated with short-term migration intentions (Table 2; **RQ1**), while the characteristics of the settlement area are significantly related to onward migration intentions (**RQ2**).

Compared to those who stay, migrants living in rural or sparsely populated areas are more likely to express the intention to move to a third country. The same is true for migrants living in mountainous areas if we use the altimetric classification. Consistently, the odds ratio for migrants living in peripheral and ultra-peripheral areas is greater than one when using the SNAI definition, although the *p* value is 0.383, possibly due to the limited sample size.

Return migration intentions, on the other hand, are not significantly related to the presence of co-nationals or to the characteristics of the place of residence, but rather to economic conditions or to the fulfilment of a temporary migration project. Finally, internal migration is the mobility intention that is most strongly correlated with the other characteristics of the municipality: migrants living in towns or suburbs in intermediate density areas as well as in rural or sparsely populated areas are more likely to move internally. The results are essentially stable across models with different municipality classifications, showing a higher intention of short-term internal mobility for migrants living in intermediate, peripheric and ultra-peripheric areas (model 2) or in mountain areas (model 3).

6 | CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The disparities between central and peripheral areas have recently become a relevant research topic and have also attracted the attention of European policymakers (Moretti, 2022). Many countries have adopted 'place-based policies' to reduce geographical disparities, including Italy with the Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne (Barca et al., 2014). In the Italian framework, the main novelty of internal and international mobility in the last 30 years has been the growing role of the foreign population (Bonifazi et al., 2021), and international migrants are also often regarded as a solution to the ever-increasing depopulation of inland and mountainous areas. However, how the secondary mobility of foreign-born migrants relates to geographical inequalities and ethnic concentration is still understudied due to data gaps. Our paper aims to fill this gap within

the geographical scope of the Italian region of Lombardy. To overcome data gaps, we focused on data collected by the Regional Observatory for Integration and Multiethnicity.

Although our focus is not on the individual level, we show that previous internal mobility is positively correlated with secondary mobility, while the variable measuring years since migration is not.

First, by reconstructing the geography of municipalities that constitutes hotspots and coldspots for the most relevant 10 communities settled in Lombardy between 2010 and 2016, we show community-specific patterns of settlement and concentration. However, our data suggest that the concentration of co-nationals is not correlated with short-term mobility intentions once previous internal migration is accounted for (**RQ1**). This result adds to previously mixed findings in the literature regarding the nexus between integration mechanisms and relocation choices towards areas with a higher or lower ethnic concentration, suggesting the need for local community-based studies. We do not believe that our result can be conclusive on the relationship between ethnic concentration and secondary mobility. Rather, we believe that our findings should be understood in light of the limitations of the measures we used. Ethnic concentration measured through hotspots and coldspots only measures a potential in terms of network size available in an area. We expect that detailed information, not available in our data, about access to different types and strength of co-national networks (e.g., extended family, friends, co-workers or weaker ties) can be more relevant, if explicitly analysed, to explain the rationale of relocation choices (Manchin & Orazbayev, 2018; Tabuga, 2022). Our paper shows that geographically referenced measures of concentration may not fully function as proxies for ethnic social capital, and may not be suitable for exploring the relationship with mobility. Better data are needed to explore this relationship.

As a second point, our work shows a significant relationship between the type of municipality and different forms of intended mobility (**RQ2**). By utilising three distinct variables at the municipal level, we can support the argument that geographical variables remain significant, even with varying definitions. The evidence is strengthened through this approach. For the 10 communities under study, internal mobility intentions are higher outside cities/poles. Migrants who aim to remain in Italy are more likely to plan a relocation if they live in towns, suburbs, intermediate and peripheral areas and if they are settled in mountainous areas. Therefore, migrants settling in less connected or less populated areas are more likely to have an intention to move and possibly leave these areas, rather than being a solution to de-population. Onward migration intentions show a similar pattern, and are higher in rural areas, hills, and intermediate areas than those expressed by migrants living in cities, poles or plains.

A relevant finding of our study is that return migration intentions, which are likely to be driven more by life course events and temporary migration (Bettin et al., 2018), are not correlated with the characteristics of the municipality of settlement. Migrants who return home country are ending their experience abroad, and in this case the geography of the place they leave is not relevant in shaping their intention. Instead, migrants that move onward internationally or internally are choosing between different emigration settings and therefore are more likely to value the characteristics of the place where they live as an alternative to those of other possible emigration destinations.

Other limitations have to be considered when interpreting the results of our study. First, the analysis is limited to Lombardy, one of the wealthiest regions of Europe, where geographical inequalities in terms of economic opportunities across areas may be less evident compared to other, less developed areas. Second, we only consider the ten most relevant municipalities in Lombardy, so the results cannot be extended to members of small, sparse communities, which may be more likely to be understood in terms of the overall presence of migrants than of co-nationals. Moreover, we do not know where migrants declaring a mobility intention intend to relocate or where they first arrived if they moved internally before the interview. Analysing the place of first arrival would entail a more in depth understanding of mobility patterns. We also miss information on possible internal mobility before international migration that could provide a more comprehensive description of migrants' mobility patterns.

Finally, although our data remarkably allow us to study internal, return and onward migration intentions in a competing risk framework, including information on previous mobility, we can only analyse short-term intentions using cross-sectional data. Panel data, including details on the municipality of residence, would be more appropriate to fully understand migrants' mobility decisions.

Despite these limitations, our paper suggests that migrants' secondary mobility is significantly related to geographical disparities and, moreover, that the type of intended secondary movement interacts with the characteristics of the municipalities where migrants live. This relationship should be the subject of systematic studies in light of the objectives of the Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 of the European Commission and the growing attention paid to integration processes at the local level in EU Member states.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors acknowledge the support provided by the project 'Geography and Social Inequality in Italy. Opportunities and Constraints in Margina Areas (GESI)' supported by Fondazione Cariplo, rif. 2021-1315.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare they have no conflicts of interest to declare.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in Open Data Regione Lombardia at https://dati.lombardia.it/.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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How to cite this article: Ortensi, L. E., & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, E. (2024). Introducing the role of the municipality of residence in studying the secondary migration of international migrants. Evidence from Lombardy (Italy). *Population, Space and Place*, *30*, e2728. https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2728