Post-WWII Italian Migration from Veneto (Italy) to Australia and Transnational Houses in Queensland

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Abstract   This paper explores the phenomenon of post WWII Italian migration (from the Veneto region) to the State of Queensland in Australia. The exploration is linked with the topic of the accommodations where respondents resided since their arrival in Australia. The data was collected in Australia from semi-structured interviews conducted with ten families native to the Veneto region, who migrated to Australia after WWII. All interviews were conducted in the language preferred by participants, which corresponded to their regional dialect and the Italian language interpolated with some Austral-Italian[i] words. The interviews have been transcribed and subjected to the first level of analysis - thematic analysis - following orthodox practices (Kitchin & Tate, 2000; Seale, 2004). The analysis of the transcript material generated a number of themes, which, after being subjected to a second level of analysis using phenomenological hermeneutics, have been validated by the respondents. The themes have been ordered into two groups corresponding to first and last (or permanent) dwellings' migration experiences.

Keywords   Italo-Australian Immigration, Housing, History

1. Migration Experiences and First Dwellings

The discourses about migration experiences lived by migrants from the Veneto region provided insights, which have been structured into nine main themes: (1) the conditions in the native region prior to departure; (2) the influence of respondents' circumstances on their migration decision; (3/4/5) the manner in which they migrated - firstly men, then followed by wives - and their particular plan; (6) the accommodation where respondents, as single men, resided; and (7/8/9) the accommodations where respondents, as newlywed couples, resided. Figure 1 summarises the themes and the major arguments discussed in this section.

Situation in the Veneto region: "There was food but no work"

During the first interviews, while describing the circumstances in their native region prior to departure, respondents frequently used the term '*miseria*' (destitution or misery) and '*povertà*' (poverty). From their accounts, it emerged that at the time of departure from Italy, occurred between 1954 and 1964, there was an extreme scarcity of work, apart from random work on the farms belonging to the extended family (Furlan, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Furlan &

Faggion, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Furlan & L.Faggion, 2016).

In order to understand the shortage of food it has been necessary to investigate the diverse situation between Italian cities and the countryside during and after WWII, and also the difference between the countryside in the North and South of Italy. Firstly, as observed by Harper and Faccioli (2009), during and after WWII, the scarcity of food was perceived more in the Italian cities than in the countryside. In the former the cost of living had multiplied nearly twenty three times between 1938 and 1945 and basic foodstuffs were in very short supply (Ginsborg, 1990). Moreover, a system of ration cards was used to procure food, however those depending only on these cards could die of starvation. This condition persisted also after the end of WWII, during the reconstruction period (Harper & Faccioli, 2009). In the countryside instead, in same cases, during and after WWII, peasant families lived on the food produced on their farms, and staved off starvation (Harper & Faccioli, 2009). The situation was considered better in the northern regions of Italy than in the southern ones. In order to understand this claim, it has been necessary to explore and explain the two diverse agrarian structures that have existed in the north and in the south of Italy since the medieval period. In the northern regions there was in force an agricultural system called *mezzadria* (sharecropping), whereas in the southern there was the *latifondismo* (latifundism system). In the latter, nearly all land was held in *latifondi* estates owned by individuals or institutions where the land was worked almost entirely by day labourers. Thus, the peasants, landless labourers living in towns adjoining the estates, had to

congregate in the village squares to compete for work daily. These labourers had neither stake in the land they worked, nor plots for their small gardens, or common lands in which to graze a few animals. Conversely, in the rural northern regions of Italy where the *mezzadria* system was diffused, the situation was much different. Here, peasants lived on farming estates (*fattorie*), which were divided into peasant farms (*poderi*), each one with its own land, cottage and stable. Peasants produced crops, half of which were distributed to the landowner. They also had access to small plots on which they could grow their own subsistence crop. With this system, the peasant families of northern Italy were relatively secure as they had access to a variety of food from their own cultivation and livestock, as well as sharing the crops they grew for the landlord (Harper & Faccioli, 2009). These varying aspects help to explain the reasons why peasants from the north of Italy could endure more in hard times such as a bad harvest or war. However informants also spoke about the bleak situation of jobs in their homeland. Outside of their farms, there was great paucity of work, a circumstance that led to very low circulation of cash which, in turn, created a stagnant economic situation. This is confirmed by Padovani (1984) who asserts that the post WWII reconstruction was extremely slow and was located mainly in the urban areas of the Italian peninsula, whereas, in opposition, the rural areas were quite neglected. Their only way out of this static situation, according to the informants, was to try to find work outside their hometowns.

Respondents' memories of that period unveil the intrinsic link between the economic situation, expressed as lack of work in their hometowns and the choice to migrate, aiming at finding relief from the economic plight gripping their native region. As clarified by historical researchers, in the post WWII years, the migratory movements of the Italian inhabitants were internal: (1) from the countryside to the city and, especially, from Veneto towards the industrial triangle with vertex in the western cities of Turin, Milan and Genoa, which were witnessing a strong industrial development (Muscara, 1988, 1991; Pellegrini & Zerbi, 1983); and (2) also external, namely towards neighbouring European countries and, more distantly, towards Canada, North America, South America (Brazil, Argentina) and Australia (Baldassar, 2005; Castles, 1992). As expressed by interviewees, Australia corresponded with their choice of migration. However the question was: why Australia or why respondents decided to migrate to Australia rather than other countries? This will be discussed in the following section. Figure 2 summarises the Veneto's migrants' destinations.

Family background and network of information: "We knew where to go"

When asked why they chose to migrate to Australia instead of other countries, respondents discussed past migration's experiences within their families. Through the presence of family members scattered around the world, the family background could guarantee the informants a worldwide network of information about the state of the labour markets. This, in turn, gave the respondents a high degree of mobility to go precisely where job opportunities were available. This discourse on the information network of the family was consistent among informants. Besides explaining the network of information they were exposed to, respondents highlighted the particular idea they held about Australia. From the perspective of the informants, Australia was perceived as a land with abundant jobs opportunities, and/or a 'paradise' in terms of work. Thus, despite its remoteness from Italy, interviewees chose Australia rather than other countries. The dates of their departures from the Italian ports as well as the name of the ships that brought them to the New Country are still clearly engraved in their memories: 16th April 1952 on board the ship *Genoa*, 27th March 1956 on board *Oceania*, 18 of September 1957 on *Sydney* …

SECTION	THEMES AND MAJOR POINTS		
Experience of migration and	**1. Situation in the Veneto region** *"There was food but no job"* - City vs. countryside - North vs. south countryside - Non-existence of jobs, besides farming		
	2. Family background and network information: *We knew where to go= Australia*		
	3. First men alone … - No assisted passage but sponsored entries = jobs - Chain migration		
	4. The plan: Work in Australia, then return home		
	5. … then, the wives No assisted passage		
first dwellings (=temporary accommodation)	**6. Accommodation of men alone** = temporary solutions		
	7. Accommodation of newlyweds	**8. First house** - rent = waste of economic capital - sponsorship	
		9. Second house - family hygiene - Investment for the job.	

Figure 1.   Experience of Migration and first dwellings: themes and major points

Figure 2.   Map of Italy and the movements of people from the Veneto region

First men alone …

   All participants stated that, in travelling to Australia, they did not take advantage of the assisted passage offered to Italian migrants, as per the 1951 agreement between Australia and Italy. This agreement allowed selected Italians - male, young and healthy - to migrate to Australia with a free ticket on the condition that, once in the host country, they would accept whatever job and accommodation that was offered for a period of two years. Jobs were mainly located in New South Wales, the majority of which were on the Snowy Mountain Hydroelectric Scheme. Accommodation was in migrant camps often isolated from town centres, such as Bonegilla (Castles, 1992; Church, 2005). Instead, informants decided to rely on sponsored entries, a system that required a sponsor (a relative in the case of participants) to vouch for the employment of the incoming people. As reported by respondents, this system guaranteed the freedom to work where they pleased. They chose localities in Queensland, where their family members lived, thus avoiding the migrant camps and waiting for available employment.

   This pattern of migration is known as "chain migration" (Baldassar, 2005, p. 54), a pattern developed by Italians migrating to Australia, commencing early in the 20th century (Pascoe & Ronayne, 1998). For the respondents of this study, chain migration through sponsored entries via family members meant having a job at arrival in Australia. All interviewed men, in fact, left their hometowns to come to Australia following relatives who were already established in the host country, namely to rural towns in Queensland such as Texas (two respondents), Ayr (three cases), Brandon (one case), Townsville (one case), Stanthorpe (two cases) and Mackay (one case). Figure 3 shows the towns where the respondents lived upon arrival in Australia.

The migration plan

   Along with understanding why respondents migrated to Australia, informants also referred repeatedly and openly to a specific 'plan' they had thought out for the years spent abroad. Interviewed males reported that the original intention was to stay in Australia for a limited time ranging from two to three years, after which they would return to Italy. They had no intention of staying permanently in Australia. Their primary plan was to earn enough money so they could return home to materialise their dream, which was to purchase a piece of land where to build a house for their future family and/or to start a business in order to financially support their future family.

   All interviewed males shared the vision of this transitory staying in Australia. These young men who came to work in

the New Country with the aim of returning home, fit the description of migrant workers as 'birds of passage' (Piore, 1980). Instead, the reality was to be very different. In fact they stayed in Australia far longer than they had planned. The extended staying can be attributed to the fact that, according to respondents, saving the required or planned amount of money became harder than anticipated.

After five to six years of work in Australia, interviewees had reached marriageable age and decided to return to Italy to marry their fiancées. Immediately after the weddings, some respondents decided to return to Australia, to the same rural towns in Queensland with their wives. Others, before returning to Australia, migrated for one year to countries closer to Italy such as Switzerland, for Piero and Allegra, and/or Germany, for Liberto and Grazia, where they joined relatives working already there. These choices shed again light on the family migratory background and on the still difficult situation in the rural Veneto region almost ten years after the end of WWII. This experience contrasted with their compatriots from the central and southern parts of Italy who also migrated to Australia alone and were separated from

their wives and children for decades before re-embracing them again (Di Lorenzo, 2002). All the interviewed husbands in this study, once married, left Italy to come to Australia with their wives.

… then, the wives

Wives also had impressed on their memories the dates of their departure from Italy and the names of the ships that brought them to Australia. The women's knowledge about Australia was built indirectly through years of correspondence with their fiancées, and in some cases through letters exchanged between the women's families and other relatives living in Australia. When asked for their opinion about Australia, the wives were enthusiastic about coming to this country.

From women' memories of that period we get the impression that they had to leave. For them, the choice to temporarily immigrate to Australia was about the need to pursue a better life for themselves as much as for their new families.
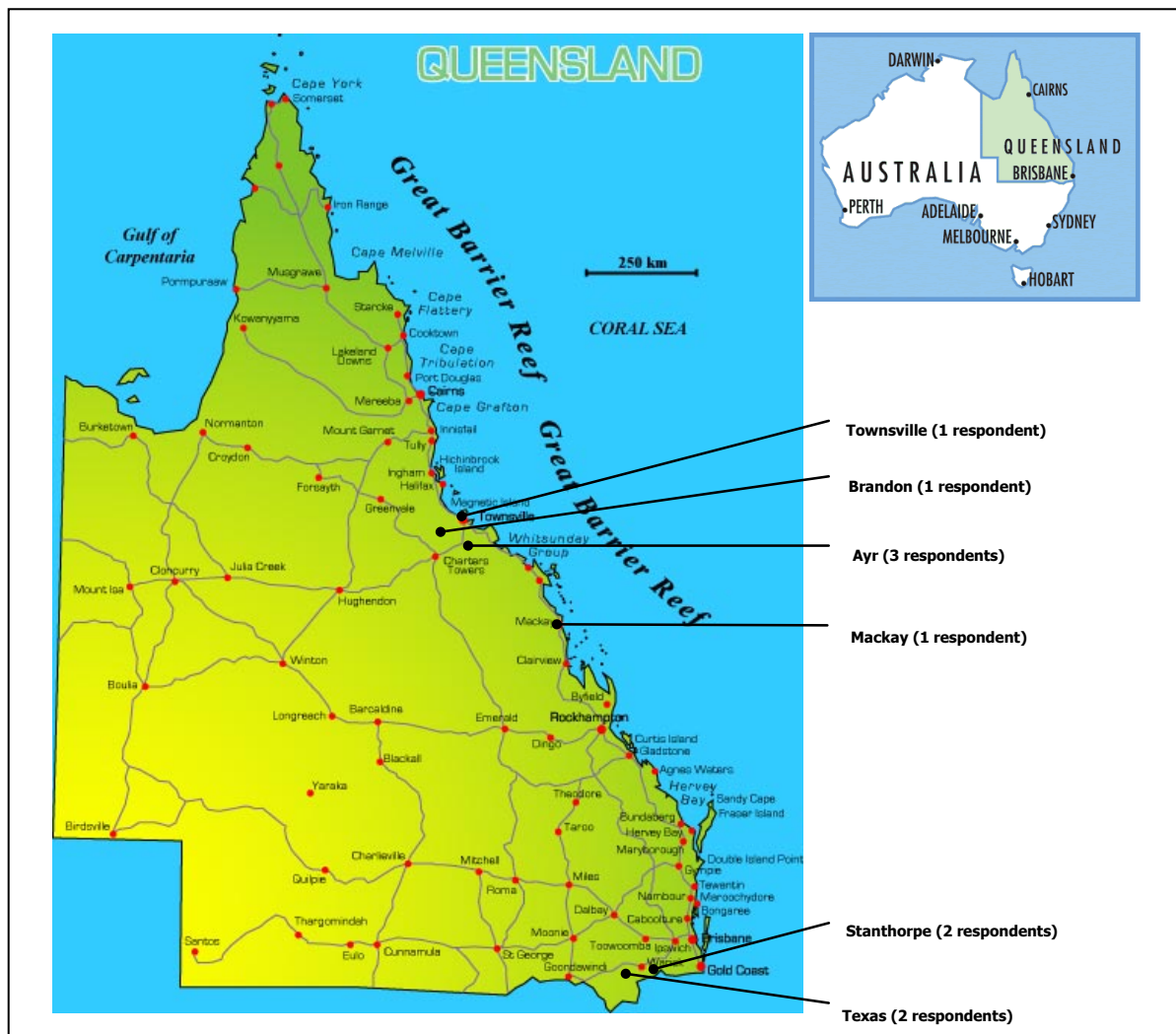

Figure 3.   Map of Queensland showing the localities chosen by the respondents of this study in which to live and work

Accommodation of single men

Mirroring the migration history of the respondents in this study and the manner in which they migrated to Australia (*men first,* wives later), the analysis below explains the accommodation arrangements adopted by the male informants during the first years in Queensland.

Once in Australia alone, men began their working activities in rural areas of Queensland (see Figure 3), labouring in farms, on tobacco and sugar cane plantations belonging to relatives and friends. Migrants recalled that, when working on the farms, they were hosted in the houses of their relatives, generally sleeping in a single room. If they were seasonally employed on the plantations, the interviewed men stayed in wooden barracks reserved for the cane cutters, sharing a small room with other co-workers, or in the tobacco warehouses.

Participants highlighted the transitory nature of their accommodation in Queensland. This type of accommodation diverges completely from the reality lived for example by Italian migrants who went to Victoria, where, once arrived, made extensive use of boarding houses (DiLorenzo, 2002). This difference in accommodation between the Italian migrants in Victoria and the respondents of this study, based in Queensland, shall be attributed to the dissimilarity of job types and the location where the subjects lived. In fact, the former worked in factories and lived in urban areas with boarding houses, whereas migrant men worked on farms or plantations and lived in rural areas where such accommodation were non-existent.

Accommodation of newlyweds

Mirroring again the way in which respondents migrated to Australia (men first, *women later*), this section examines newlywed accommodation on their arrival in Australia. These young couples chose two solutions, both provisional. First, having little money after spending most of their funds on the voyage to Italy, on the wedding and on the journey back to Australia, the couples chose to live with relatives, generally with the family of an uncle or brother of the husband in rural towns in Queensland. Certainly, the arrangements of living with Italian relatives brought benefits on a financial level. However, this option also brought advantages for the wives, since they were accustomed to living in a vibrant social context where it was common to have extended families close by. Thus, this arrangement meant that problems such as loneliness and isolation were less frequent and helped them in the transition to their new Australian life. These arrangements typically lasted for a period of approximately a year after which the newlywed couples opted for a more independent settlement, renting a single house in proximity of their Italian relatives. This second solution never exceeded two years.

Respondents' memories of their rented house highlighted the quality of the available accommodations. These two accommodation-choices made by the newlywed couples during their first years in Australia reflect again - like for the choices made by Italian migrant men alone - the transitory nature of their settlement in the new country. In particular, the initial choice of sharing a house with the husband's relatives align with Di Lorenzo's (2002) and Pulvirenti's (1996, 1997) notion that for the 1950-1960s migrants to Australia, the extended household was a common pattern amongst the Italian population. Moreover, the accounts of the respondents on their second choice of rental accommodation confirm that the renting market relative to what the respondents could afford was very poor. According to Pulvirenti (1996), the Italian migrants who rented in these conditions were driven more quickly to home ownership. This holds true also for the respondents in this study, who after a short period as tenants decided to purchase their own houses.

First houses

At the beginning of the 1960s, after several years of saving, the interviewed families found themselves in the position to afford to purchase a house. Some of these houses were located in rural areas where the breadwinners laboured on the sugar cane or tobacco plantations or on small crop farms and orchards belonging to their relatives and friends. Other houses were located in urban areas, where a couple of families moved to enable the husbands to work in the building industry. Several respondents explained how they arrived at the decision to purchase a house in a rural environment for the former, and in an urban context for the latter.

From most respondents' descriptions, it emerged that these houses, apart from being economically reasonable, were located nearby their families and the workplace. Two other characteristics common to all dwellings purchased by the respondents are their typology and back yards. All the purchased dwellings were wooden houses standing on stilts with a habitable area on the first level and storage space on the ground level (Figure 3).

Figure 3. First house of an interviewed couple

The second characteristic of these first dwellings was the treatment of the back yard. Migrants created Italian kitchen gardens and reared animals such as chickens, ducks, geese and rabbits. Many respondents stated that they had at some point, milking cows and plough horses utilised before buying the motor-plough. As a result, it was revealed that the back

yards of their Australian houses were treated like typical Italian mini-farms.

Figure 4. Kitchen garden in the back yard of Italian migrants' house

What also surfaced during the interview analysis was that, surprisingly, these houses were not considered 'home' and that, even after having purchased a dwelling, the desire to return to Italy persisted. Notwithstanding a certain degree of happiness attached to this first purchase, buying a house was seen as an investment - more profitable and more convenient than renting. Moreover, purchasing a house was also necessary in order to sponsor the relatives still in Italy. Buying a house aligns with Pulvirenti's theory about Italian-born people, as she attests that the Italian migrant group has the highest outright home-ownership rate in Australia (2000).

Second houses

Two out of ten families interviewed in this study purchased a second home in the same area as the previous one, between 1967 and 1972. This acquisition was justified by two factors: (1) new investments made by the husbands in their farming jobs; and (2) the necessity to have a more spacious house to host new-borns of different gender from the previous ones. While a respondent, Piero, emphasized his investments, his wife Regina stressed the necessity for her family to have enough space.

Figure 5. Example of house in brick veneer belonging to one migrant family

While some houses had a structure of timber on stilts, others had a structure of brick veneer on two levels, with four bedrooms, a large kitchen, a living room, lounge and garage (Figure 5). In most cases, there was a kitchen garden as well as chickens, ducks, rabbits, etc. in the back yard.

2. Experience of Migration that Led to the Last and Current Dwelling

The following section is concerned with investigating the migration experiences lived by the informants in this study that led to the construction of their current houses in Brisbane. This concerns two important themes: (1) the transformation of the informants from sojourners to settlers; and (2) new investments made by the informants in Australia, which include the construction of their current house in Brisbane.

From sojourners to settlers: Australia becoming 'home'

At the beginning of the 1980s, after years of saving, migrants finally faced the crucial moment of repatriation to Italy: a moment that had been postponed for almost three decades. According to Bolognari (1985) very often there is an implicit intention to return to the home country, as in the case of the respondents of this study. Moreover, as mentioned by participants, many of their friends, who also migrated to Australia for working purposes, returned to Italy with their families and savings in this period. However, participants in this study did not return. Why did they decide to stay in Australia and abandon their plan to return to Italy?

During the interviews the couples clearly recalled the time before making the decision to return to Italy and adhere to their initial plan, or to settle permanently in Australia and abandon their desire to go home. Respondents reported many sleepless nights were spent pondering on what to do. In most of the cases, the weight of this decision and the emotional tension experienced were evident during the interviews. Four male respondents reported that they went back to Italy to evaluate the situation with a view to return permanently. At the end of this stressful process, after months of discussions and deep thoughts, all of the interviewed families made the decision to remain in Australia. At this point participants were asked what pushed them towards this choice, given their intense desire to return to Italy. The reasons can be summarised in four key points: (1) children (education and work in Australia); (2) breadwinners employment; (3) presence of other family members; and (4) the Australian way of life.

The choice to call Australia home was made first and foremost because of their children: for their education and insertion into the world of work. According to the interviewees, for the younger children, ranging in age between 10 and 13, it would have been easy to go back to Italy and to be integrated within the Italian school system, however for the older children (16 to 20), this move would have been far more difficult. The latter had already

completed their compulsory education in English and, fearing that they would not have sufficient proficiency in Italian to take university courses in Italy, they opted to remain in Australia. From the point of view of the parents, the risk associated with the choice of the older children was to disunite the family between two countries: younger children and parents in Italy; and older children (at a critical age) in Australia. This is one aspect that affected the decision of the respondents to remain in Australia. The other relates to employment. The interviewed couples compared employment for children in Italy and Australia at the beginning of the 1980s, and considered that the job market was more favourable in Australia. Another reason the migrant couples put forth in various interviews as a justification for their choice of settling in Australia was the employment situation of the breadwinners. A few participants expressed their frustration at the impossibility of moving the family back to Italy because they could not find a job as profitable as the one they had in Australia. Several other respondents revealed the same disappointment, and acknowledged that the well paid positions they held in the host country were a sufficient motivation to remain. At this stage of their lives, in fact, the men had managed to establish their own business enterprises and were self-employed either in their sugar cane plantations and farms or in the construction industry. Other male respondents were employed by Australian construction companies and had gained enough experience in their jobs to reach supervisory and managing positions, thus securing a profitable salary. In both cases, the earnings obtained from such jobs could never have been matched in Italy and this, for them, was a sufficient reason to remain in Australia. A third motive advanced by respondents was the presence of family members who decided to settle permanently in Australia. From participants' descriptions, it was revealed that the social ties existing in the new country compared to the nuclear family lost in Italy or dispersed throughout the world had significance in motivating the respondents to settle in Australia.

Finally, among the reasons that convinced Italian migrants to remain in Australia, was the way of life, judged to be more relaxed compared to life style in Italy. This was, in part, based on the fact that there were far fewer people in Australia spread out over a vast territory.

At the beginning of the 1980s (corresponding to the time when the respondents were deciding where to live) Italy's population was 56 million inhabitants, distributed over a territory slightly bigger than New Zealand (ISTAT, 2011), compared with 15 million of inhabitants in Australia, a territory larger than Europe (ABS, 1996). Today Italy has 60 million people and Australia has 22 million inhabitants. This corresponds to a population density in Italy of over 201 people per square kilometre (ISTAT, 2011) compared to 2.9 people per square kilometre in Australia (ABS, 2011). These figures help to explain why the informants considered life style in Australia to be more relaxed than that in Italy. Therefore, for all the reasons explained in this section, the respondents relinquished the desire to return to their homeland. In this way, the interviewees transformed themselves from would-be returnees or ' sojourners' (Jacobs, 2004) to non-return migrants or settlers.

Permanent investments in Australia

As a result of the decision to settle permanently in Australia, the interviewed couples embarked on a series of investments with their accumulated funds formerly designated for Italy. These investments took place in the 1980s and early 1990s on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane, as shown on figure 6: an apartment block in Toombul (Toombul is a suburb, 8 km north-east of Brisbane CBD).

Figure 6.   Apartments blocks in Toombul (Brisbane)

These transactions include money given to the respondents' children in order to allow them to purchase their own houses in Brisbane; they also funded the construction of the last and current houses.

3. Conclusions

The focus of this paper was to explain the experiences of a limited and specific group of migrants, experiences linked to accommodation in Australia, which led respondents to the construction of their own homes in Australia. The first part of the paper examined the situation in the Veneto region during the post-WWII period and revealed the family background and information network, which contribute to the migration of the respondents to Australia. This was followed by describing how informants migrated and by highlighting their activities in the first years spent in Australia. Their plan was to work in Australia for a short period of time and then return home. The paper illustrated the various types of accommodation available for single men and for newlyweds and explained the reasons why the respondents bought their dwellings in Australia. The second part of the paper explored why informants decided to remain in Australia, which converted them from migrant workers to settlers. This led interviewees to make investments in Australia, which finally led them to construction of their current houses.

4. Discussion: Italian Migration and Dwellings in Queensland

Reflecting on the experience of migration from Veneto to Australia, it involved an understanding of the nine expounded themes, here reassumed in four key points: (1) the reasons behind their decision to leave the native country; (2) the liminal plan as thought out by the informants in regards to their migrant experience and the 'adjustments' shaping it; (3) the initial accommodation in the host country; and (4) the decision to settle permanently in Australia, a decision that led the respondents to construct their final and current accommodation in Brisbane. What follows is a discussion of the above four themes.

From the first interviews it emerged that two factors influenced Veneto's migrants decision to migrate to Australia in the post WWII period: the first was closely related to the economic conditions within the migrant's home country, while the second was concerned with the family background and the information network of the informants. Firstly, in describing the situation in the Veneto region during the post WWII period, informants made extensive use of words such as *'miseria'* (extreme poverty, misery) and *'povertà'* (poverty) and drew attention to the paucity of work in their region. This scarcity and precariousness of work allowed very low circulation of money in Italy, which, in turn, caused a stagnant economic situation (Padovani, 1984). Therefore, for the interviewed Veneto-migrants group, emigration was the only feasible strategy in order to improve their economic standing and to seek relief from the status of financial insecurity.

However, there is a second factor that had considerable impact on the decision to leave their hometown and to migrate to Australia. This corresponds with their peculiar background. All respondents had at least one member of the family who had previously migrated to countries such as Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Canada or Australia. For the interviewed Veneto people, on one hand this denotes that, "migration was an inherited and accepted way of life" as Baldassar argues (2005, p. 25). On the other hand, this long tradition of family migration, or "culture of migration", as Armstrong (2000) stresses, through the worldwide network of information available to the respondents, guaranteed them up to date news about the state of labour markets and work opportunities, that in turn allowed them a high degree of calculation in their decision making and the mobility to go precisely were these opportunities where available.

Australia, in the period after WWII, was perceived by the informants as a wondrous land with ample job opportunities. Thus, in the 1950s, they crossed the ocean to pursue these openings and through chain migration and sponsored entries, they joined uncles and brothers who were already established permanently in rural areas of Queensland. As soon as they disembarked, they started working, first in agricultural enterprises, and later on in the construction industry. By focusing attention not only on the stagnant economic situation in the Veneto region as a push factor, but also on the pull factor of having family already in Australia, this paper highlights the active role of migrants in deciding where and how to migrate. In doing so, this paper reinforces the critique advanced by Baldassar and Pesman (2005) on migration and on the representation of migrants as passive, unfortunate victims at the mercy of economic forces.

Significantly, the representation of migrants as passive victims is dismissed here by two other key-factors. First is the liminal plan as thought out by the interviewees regarding their experience in Australia, and second is the modification brought to this plan. The respondents initial plan was that they would stay and work in Australia only for a limited period of time, a maximum of two to three years, after which they would return to their hometowns, where with the earnings gained in the host country, they would marry, buy houses with a piece of agricultural land and start private enterprises to support their families. However, the reality turned out to be very different from what the respondents had planned.

In the late 1950s when migrants realised that they needed more time than expected to accumulate their savings, they decided to return to Italy to marry their fiancées and to return with them to Australia, not wanting to live separately and delay the conception of offspring. Sometimes re-emigration to Australia was preceded by a short emigration to other European countries such as Switzerland or Germany, where relatives or friends of the respondents worked. This pattern of returning home and re-emigration to Australia is characteristic of the families analysed in this paper and is confirmed in other studies of migrants from Veneto who came to New South Wales and Victoria (Baldassar & Pesman, 2005). The original plan conceived by respondents, and the modifications they made to it, confer an image of people in command of their lives - not victims.

The choices made by the respondents associated with their migration experience had an impact on accommodation in the host country. In fact, as consequence of the preferred migration method of sponsorship rather than the more conventional assisted passage scheme, those migrants were not given government supported housing. On their arrival, the male informants in this study were either hosted by family members already established in Queensland or by using the facilities available to them as seasonal migrant workers, such as shared accommodation in tobacco warehouses or barracks for cane cutters. Then, usually after marriage, they rented in the same areas nearby their relatives, and quite soon purchased their own houses. This initial accommodation excluded boarding houses and migrant hostels, a reality found more in the urban cities.

The first houses purchased by migrant families in the 1960s and 1970s were located in rural areas and in small urban contexts in Queensland where male migrants worked. What emerged from the interviews with the respondents to this study is their sentimental detachment from these habitations. In fact, the acquisition of these dwellings occurred when the informants still had the intention of returning to Italy, therefore in the majority of cases the

purchases were perceived as a necessity in order to be able to sponsor other family members and friends to come to work in Australia, and as being fruitful investments as renting was seen as being a waste of savings. In addition to that, in a minority of cases, these investments were also perceived as a necessity to provide suitable numbers of bedrooms for growing families or to enlarge the farms of the husbands. Built of wood or brick veneer, these dwellings were inconspicuous, in no way demonstrating the Italianess of their owners. During this time in Queensland then, the most conservative state in Australia (Waters, 2010), diversity was still hidden from the eyes of the dominant culture. This is in contrast with the treatment of the final and current houses the informants constructed in Brisbane.

The fourth topic: the decision taken by the Veneto migrants to settle permanently in Australia was taken at the beginning of the 1980s, after attentive consideration, and was influenced by a convergence of various factors including (1) the educational and working future of their English-speaking children; (2) the presence in Australia of other family members; (3) the achievement of good employment or success in their own business enterprises of the breadwinners; and (4) the quieter, more relaxed way of life in Australia due to the presence of less human capital compared to Italy. For these reasons, the original plan of the respondents to return to Italy and establish themselves in their hometowns was purposely relinquished and substituted with the idea of settling permanently in Australia. As a result of this choice, migrants decided to invest their accumulated capital destined for Italy into their adoptive country in medium and large real estate. What is significant for this research study is that these investments included the construction, in the 1980s and 1990s, of their last and current accommodations in Brisbane: accommodations which was supposed to be built in their Italian hometowns.

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[i] Austral-Italian is a linguistic hybrid developed by Italian migrants in Australia (Leoni, 1995). Although one can find examples of Austral-Italian in print, it was born, developed and was established as a predominately spoken language, a language dictated by necessity and as a consequence of mainly oral communications (Leoni, p xix). Examples are: 'carro' (from car), 'tichetta' (from ticket), 'farma' (from farm), 'tracco' (from track) (Leoni, 1995).