INTRODUCTION

This book deals with the fundamental historical problems of migration which, still today, remain unresolved and dominate social and political debates. It will be based on a very concrete case study of the historical migration of Flemish textile workers to England which touches upon essential aspects (social, political, economic and cultural factors) behind the complex process of emigration and immigration. This historical example is drawn from one of the first well-documented policies of the English crown to encourage the immigration of skilled artisans, during one of the most dramatic periods in the history of the former Low Countries and the British Isles, in particular the county of Flanders and England, namely the fourteenth century. The Black Death, warfare, mass devaluations and production crises created a period of fundamental social, political and economic upheaval. In this book, I will focus on Edward III's (1327–77) invitation to Flemish textile workers to settle in England in 1331, and their economic and social impact on its cities. This book will have two primary aims of analysis: the migration of Flemings and their settlement. The first will be to identify systems and build models of migratory movements within a long-term perspective, that is, understanding migration paths and causes, networks, strategies and migrants' personalities. The second will focus on what is commonly known as 'integration', that is, the immigrants' settlement, acculturation and acquisition of their social, economic and political position in the host country. In addition to a detailed treatment of these two aims, the book attempts to evaluate the economic impact of the immigrant community on a specific industry. I will argue that the success of immigrants was not solely reflected in the rise of their average earnings, but also in the fact that their skills and human capital acquired prior to emigration contributed to the development of the English textile industry in the fourteenth century.

Introduction

The topic of immigration has received much attention in the past three decades, and migration history has become one of the booming fields. Numerous studies focusing on the fortunes of immigrants and their interactions throughout various historical periods have come to light.[1] Some historians have pushed back the temporal boundaries of studies of this subject, and it is safe to say that our views of pre-modern societies as 'immobile' have proved to be to a large extent false.[2] However, in the ocean of studies that include 'migration', 'mobility' and other terms used to describe the movement of people, there is still no consensus amongst historians about definitions and typologies that can be used to measure and qualify migration.[3] This is certainly due to a lot of parameters related to the distance of migration and the period of stay that we must take into account in order to establish whether someone is a 'real' migrant or seasonal mover.[4] Although we might have a tendency to think that, in order to become an 'immigrant', one must travel a long distance (internationally, or intercontinentally) and have a long-term stay, migration can also be internal and include mobility between cities, regions and provinces within the same state. There are also various reasons for people to migrate, and we can distinguish between voluntary and forced migration. Labour migrants are usually associated with voluntary migration, and their mobility has economic motivations, while refugees are driven from their homes by war, natural disasters, persecution and other violence. Some historians have treated these two categories separately, but Jan and Leo Lucassen suggest that although the motivations of labour migrants and refugees differ in principle, the disparities become less obvious in practice.[5] This is especially true if we look into the economic

[1] J. Lucassen and L. Lucassen (eds), *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms, New Perspectives* (Bern, 1997).

[2] R. Reith, 'Circulation of skilled labour in late medieval and early modern central Europe', in S. R. Epstein and M. Prak (eds), *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy 1400–1800* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 114–42; C. Billot, 'L'Assimilation des étrangers dans le royaume de France aux XIVe et XVe siècles', *Revue Historique*, 270 (1983), 273–96. For England, see also edited volume, book and other articles arising from Mark Ormrod's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)–funded project, 'England's Immigrants 1330–1550' (University of York): N. McDonald, W. M. Ormrod and C. Tailor (eds), *Resident Aliens in Medieval England* (Turnhout, 2018); W. M. Ormrod, B. Lambert and J. Mackman, *Immigrant England 1300–1550* (Manchester, 2018); S. Cavaciocchi (ed.), *Le migrazioni in Europa, secc. XIII–XVIII. Atti della venticinquesima settimana di studi, Istituto internazionale di storia economica F. Datini, 1993* (Florence, 1994); D. Menjot and J.-L. Pinol (eds), *Les Immigrants et la ville: Insertion, intégration, discrimination (XIIe–XXe siècles)* (Paris, 1996); J. Bottin and D. Calabi (eds), *Les Étrangers dans la ville: Minorités et espace urbain du bas Moyen Âge à l'époque moderne* (Paris, 1999); M. Balard and A. Ducellier (eds), *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes (Xe–XVIe siècles)* (Paris, 2002).

[3] J. Lucassen and L. Lucassen (eds), *Globalising Migration History: The Eurasian Experience (16th–21st Centuries)* (Leiden, 2014), p. 3.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 5. [5] Lucassen and Lucassen (eds), *Migration, Migration History*, p. 14.

potential that highly skilled voluntary immigrants or exiles might have. Both groups are also likely to be attracted by the same places and settle in areas with higher economic possibilities.

As to the nature of the mechanisms under which migration operates as a phenomenon – where one country acts as the donor and the other as receiver – a variety of theoretical models for studying the causes of movement have inevitably imposed themselves as 'pull-and-push' factors. In order to determine why international migration happens, neoclassical economics has found an explanation in wage differentials and employment conditions between countries. It generally assumes that workers from a low-wage country will move to a high-wage country. On the macro level, the decline in the supply of labour in the low-wage country will lead to a decrease in the wage differential and the eventual elimination of movement. On the micro level, the individual migrant decides to move on the basis of a simple cost–benefit calculation.[6] The 'new economics of migration', in contrast, does not consider that decisions to migrate are taken by one individual, but rather collectively, most often as a household, in order to minimise risks that might occur to the existing family income from different market failures.[7] Such micro-level decision processes are generally ignored by the dual labor market theory, which links international immigration to the structural requirements of developed nations' industries.[8] Instead of focusing on the situation in the sending country, according to this approach, labour migration is completely driven by the permanent demand for workers intrinsic to the economies of advanced industrial societies. The world systems theory assumes that the movement of people is determined by the same principle, adding historical and cultural to economic factors as the main causes of migration.[9] It sees immigration as a natural consequence of economic globalisation and capitalist penetration into the developing world.[10]

[6] D. S. Massey, J. Arango, G. Hugo, A. Kouaouci, A. Pellegrino and J. E. Taylor, 'Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal', *Population and Development Review* 19:3 (1993), 431–66, at 433–6.

[7] O. Stark, 'Migration decision making: A review article', *Journal of Development Economics*, 14 (1984), 251–9.

[8] C. M. Tolbert, P. M. Horan and E. M. Beck, 'The structure of economic segmentation: A dual economy approach', *American Journal of Sociology*, 85 (1980), 1095–116; M. J. Piore, *Birds of Passage: Migrant Labor in Industrial Societies* (Cambridge, 1979).

[9] I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System, Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1974).

[10] A. Portes and J. Walton, *Labor, Class, and the International System* (New York, 1981); E. Morawska, 'The sociology and historiography of immigration', in V. Yans McLaughlin (ed.), *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics* (New York, 1990), pp. 187–240; S. Sassen, *The Mobility of Labor and Capital: A Study in International Investment and Labor Flow* (Cambridge, 1988).

Of course, since antiquity, cities have always represented centres of economic and administrative activity, as they are characterised by more employment opportunities, the hope of greater social mobility, and more freedom of thought and actions.[11] For these reasons they continue to attract people from outside their boundaries. The social backgrounds of people migrating to cities vary, according to the geographic distance and the duration of stay. Traditionally, unskilled labour came from the surrounding rural areas and tended to be only seasonal. Conversely, skilled artisans migrated from afar and established themselves for longer periods or permanently. They were generally part of more exclusive social networks, based on trade and administrative relations that connected different cities.[12] They were also a medium for the diffusion of new skills and thus more likely to make an impact on the development of the political, spatial, economic and cultural dimensions of the cities to which they migrated. Urban migration was mostly controlled by local authorities and to a lesser extent by supra-local governing bodies. They tended to restrict immigration in order to limit potentially destabilising effects for the native population, but sometimes institutions actively tried to attract immigrants, in particular, certain kinds of skilled artisan.[13] These active immigration policies to attract skilled labour were spurred on by high mortality rates. Until the eighteenth century, urban mortality rates were so high that the only way to maintain the increase in population and economic growth of cities was through immigration.[14] Such was the case in late medieval and early modern England, where foreign merchants and skilled artisans who contributed to economic development enjoyed legal and fiscal privileges from the government.[15]

However, once the migrants had entered the new town, several other issues arose, most notably the question of integration into the new community. The study of integration or assimilation as part of migration history finds its theoretical roots in the pioneering works produced by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sociologists such as Tönnies, Durkheim, Weber and Simmel. Although immigrants were

[11] P. Clark, *European Cities and Towns* (Oxford, 2009), p. 10.
[12] A. Winter, 'Population and migration: European and Chinese experiences compared', in P. Clark (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* (Oxford, 2013), p. 407.
[13] *Ibid*., p. 411.
[14] L. Lucassen and W. Willems (eds), *Living in the City: Urban Institutions in the Low Countries 1200–2010* (Routledge, 2012), p. 7; Winter, 'Population and migration', p. 403.
[15] There are numerous works that deal with the impact of alien merchants and Huguenots in England from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries: A. Beardwood, *Alien Merchants in England: Their Legal and Economic Position, 1350–77* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931); N. Goose and L. Luu (eds), *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Brighton, 2005); L. Luu, *Immigrants and Industries of London 1500–1700* (London, 2005).

not at the core of their work, it is important to highlight several ideas that influenced later studies and that remain integral to the main themes of this book. The notion of community as a category of analysis was originally developed by Ferdinand Tönnies, in his first book in 1887, in which he made a direct contrast between the medieval and modern periods by introducing concepts of community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*). The former supposedly represented the structure of the past, while the latter embodied the behaviour of modernity.[16] For Tönnies, community (*Gemeinschaft*) is realised in the bonds of kinship, of neighbourhood and of friendship. It is a form of social integration where the house, the village and the city, as well as the guild, the corporation and the parish, are the basis of a community with strong shared beliefs and values. Society (*Gesellschaft*), on the contrary, is based on impersonal ties and materialised through contractual relationships, rationality, production and the exchange of goods, commerce and the market. 'Society' therefore means a higher division of labour, and a predominance of rational goals, self-interest and interdependence. In most cases, an established community opens up to new members on the basis of an agreement and contract decided upon in mutual understanding and with the acceptance of actions offered for the future.[17] It is from this point that the term 'integration' enters the vocabulary of sociologists and gets further developed as a concept to fit different geographical areas and periods.

According to Émile Durkheim, the set of people's norms, beliefs and values common to the average member of the same society makes up what he called the collective consciousness, or a shared way of understanding and behaving in the world.[18] The collective consciousness (social integration) binds individuals together across the whole society, regardless of their personal situation in time and space in a given country. These social similarities create a form of solidarity that can appear in several shapes: domestic solidarity, professional solidarity, national solidarity etc.[19] For Durkheim, thus, every society integrates its members, or should do so. Behavioural models, values and norms are transmitted through family, school and professions. Inserting newcomers into society is only one special case in an overall process of integration. Nevertheless, he considered that assimilating strangers was a long and complex procedure, which cannot be done without the assent of all members of the host community.[20] His

[16] F. Tönnies, *Community and Association (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, trans. C. P. Loomis, (London, 1955), pp. 1–116.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[18] É. Durkheim, *De la Division du travail social: Livre I*, 8th edn (Paris, 1967), pp. 46, 105, 110–11.
[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 30–49. [20] *Ibid.*, pp. 140–1.

contemporary, Max Weber, in his *Economy and Society* confirmed Durkheim's assumptions that the integration of people on the move was complicated, adding the idea that conflict was inevitable. He claimed that the newcomers themselves can group around the same language and form their own group solidarity, and may thus be taken as a direct threat to the shared identity of the host community.[21] Weber, however, recognised that different communities can coexist with one another.[22]

At the same time, the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel was interested in the dynamics of social relations between individuals and groups in industrial societies. In 1908, he wrote a text called *The Stranger*, in which he suggested several contemporary interpretations of the stranger within the urban space. Simmel defines the stranger as an individual who decides to stay, but who is still a potential traveller with ties elsewhere. However, it is not the stranger's relationship to space that is decisive in Simmel's analysis, but rather the interactions between individuals and groups. The stranger is thus found in the paradoxical position of being both a member of the majority group and outside the group (being both 'close' and 'distant').[23] Simmel's reflections inspired the founding thinking of the Chicago School, renowned in the history of the social sciences, whose landmark work spanned 1915 to 1940. One of the school's intellectuals, Robert E. Park, posited that assimilation is the eventual outcome of 'all the incidental collision, conflict and fusions of peoples and cultures' resulting from migration.[24]

Most of these concepts are satisfactory when it comes to the study of the incorporation of migrants into the existing community. However, they do not tell us much about integration within the medieval context. In their analyses of urban society, Tönnies, Simmel and Durkheim all saw the Middle Ages as a period of a lower division of labour, where community is imposed on the individual. However, medieval society formed different groupings based on a feeling of common political, spatial, religious or professional identity, which sometimes had all the characteristics of *Gesellschaft*. Moreover, within the conceptual framework of medieval communities (urban, national or corporate), the

[21] M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, trans. G. Roth and C. Wittich (New York, 1968), p. 390.
[22] *Ibid*.
[23] G. Simmel, *Soziologie: Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschftung*, herausgegeben von Otthein Rammstedt (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), pp. 764–71.
[24] R. Park, 'Human migration and the marginal man', *American Journal of Sociology*, 33 (1928), 881–93.

inclusion or exclusion of new members remain central components of how they functioned. According to Miri Rubin,

> community is neither obvious nor natural, its boundaries are loose, and people in the present, as in the past will use the term to describe and construct worlds, to persuade and exclude. That our subject lived, worked and played in groups, that they trusted, depended on each other, mutually helped each other is beyond doubt – but they did so in a knowing and deliberating way, choosing communities when possible, or negotiating their places within groups when less freedom of choice was available.[25]

The hierarchical structure of the public sphere of the medieval town implies that various communities that controlled political and legal processes created boundaries around them in order to exclude those whom they considered not to be aligned with their values.[26] The people outside these boundaries would be marginal, whether they were elites or vagrants.[27] The creation of these communities relied heavily on the fact that their relationships were based upon trust.[28] In such a context, the case of strangers is distinctive. Their arrival is usually tolerated during the formation of urban centres, or to fulfil demographic shortages. However, this openness of urban structures in their initial period toward the influx of all kinds of new arrival becomes progressively limited, to grant access only to the rich and well-off kind of migrant.[29] This situation is one in which urban society was founded on trustworthy kin relationships between neighbours; strangers and migrants are automatically seen with suspicion and regarded as untrustworthy.[30]

The aforementioned sociological and historical works help us to delineate the key theoretical frameworks on integration to focus on in this study. However, they tend to neglect the experience of the emigrant prior to departure. The first one to highlight this lacuna in the social sciences was the Algerian sociologist, and Pierre Bourdieu's student, Abdelmalek Sayad in his pioneering work on Algerian immigrants in France in the second half of the twentieth century. For him,

> any study of migratory phenomena that neglects the conditions of origin of immigrants is condemned to give only a partial and ethnocentric view. On the

[25] M. Rubin, 'Small groups: Identity and solidarity in the late Middle Ages', in J. Kermode (ed.), *Enterprise and Individuals in Fifteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1991), pp. 132–50, at p. 134.
[26] B. Geremek, *Les Marginaux parisiens aux XIVe et XVe siècles* (Paris, 1976), p. 13.
[27] B. Hanawalt, *'Of Good and Ill Repute': Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1998), p. 18.
[28] G. Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages: Guilds in England 1200–1500* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 151–2.
[29] Geremek, *Les Marginaux parisiens*, p. 285. [30] *Ibid.*

one hand, such studies give consideration only to the immigrant, not to the emigrant, as if his existence began at the moment he arrived in France. On the other hand, the implicit and explicit problematic of such studies is always the immigrant's adaptation to the 'welcoming' society.[31]

This means that we are interested in the immigrant as a whole, that we are committed to defining the social group to which this individual originally belongs, with its practices and everyday behaviours, and the extent to which all of these are challenged by the fact of immigration. Sayad was able to do so through a qualitative study, by interviewing numerous Algerians resident in France and their families in the country of origin. Applying exactly the same approach in this study would of course not be possible, as we cannot speak directly to our subjects. Nor can the medieval evidence fit the modern criteria. However, the approach that follows the emigrants can still be useful, and I will make an attempt to compare the sources from the country of origin with the sources in the country of destination in order to obtain similar information.

Taken altogether, the conceptual frameworks and approaches laid down here will be useful in exploring the experiences of migrant communities in the medieval urban context. I shall argue that while there may have been conflict between immigrants and natives, which could involve explicit exclusion and physical violence, the eventual outcome was the integration of the newcomers and the adaptation of the host society to these realities. In order to achieve this outcome, the migrants had to negotiate their integration into the new community. Negotiations of social relationships after settlement are threefold: first, between the migrant and the government; then between migrant and native societies; and finally between migrants themselves. This would include the perception of integration both from a social and an administrative point of view. Administratively, the integration is straightforward, as one is considered 'assimilated' once all the technocratic procedures are fulfilled – the highest form of integration being naturalisation or citizenship, as it granted certain sets of privileged political and economic rights. Socially, however, this process of 'integration' becomes more difficult as other external factors (not only the immigrants' behaviour, but also their social environments) play an important role. That is to say, if the immigrant community faces rejection from the natives, intervention from the government in support of the migrants may help, as the natives would then be more likely to adapt to these realities.

[31] A. Sayad, *L'Immigration ou les paradoxes de l'altérité* (Brussels, 1991).

Cultural interaction and change through migration have been constituent features of human history. This paradigm, throughout history, might create the construction of Others, based on ethnicity or other, larger categories. As Dirk Hoerder defines it: 'on a cognitive level this process provided simple recognizable structures for the perplexing multiplicity of peoples. On the level of social relations it provided boundaries and permitted in-group solidarity. On the level of power relationships it denigrated the Other.'[32] Migrants have not only had to adapt to their new city, speak a different language or dialect, and adopt a new religion or religious culture, but have also transformed the demographic composition, legal framework and even the architectural perspective of the host city.[33] Often these changes, combined with other factors, would trigger a reaction from local communities in various forms – seeking an intervention from political elites to exclude the outsiders, discrimination or even physical violence. Outbreaks of confrontation have been way too easily attributed by historians to the expression of national sentiment and systematic xenophobia. In times of economic growth, migrants get little attention: it is only in times of crisis that they come to be at the centre of public debate. They are no longer only invisible workers, or heirs of immigration identified by their social affiliation: they are transformed into a separate social group, whose identity, their own culture, calls into question the host culture and national cohesion.[34] However, most immigrants spend almost the entirety of their lives peacefully in the host country, and the aforementioned forms of exclusion should rather be assigned to Pierre Bourdieu's notions of symbolic violence.[35] On the rare occasions when native populations reaffirm their exclusiveness and superiority by physical force, they do so in order to reestablish their perceived social and political hierarchies.[36]

Most of these aspects related to the phenomenon of migration or the mobility of peoples have been touched upon indirectly or directly in the historiography of medieval Europe. Many works that have appeared over the past forty years and adopt the perspective of an urban history dealing with social and economic developments make room for migrants in the chapter or chapters devoted to the urban population, a place that is often reduced, mainly due to a lack of sources. In his study of the Florentine

[32] D. Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millenium* (London, 2002), p. 3.
[33] D. Menjot, 'Introduction: Les gens venus d'ailleurs dans les villes médiévales: Quelques acquis de la recherche', in C. Quertier, R. Chilà and N. Pluchot (eds), *Arriver en ville: Les migrantes en milieu urbain au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2013), pp. 15–32.
[34] Sayad, *L'Immigration*.
[35] P. Bourdieu, *Langage et pouvoir symbolique* (Paris, 2001), pp. 79, 264–72, 307.
[36] Weber, *Economy and Society*, pp. 901–4.

textile industry in the fourteenth century, Franco Franceschi found a significant number of workers both from elsewhere in Italy and from northern Europe, including Brabantine and Flemish workers, and devotes a chapter of his book (*Migrazioni*) to their presence in the industry.[37] In Genoa in the fifteenth century, the textile industry recruited its workers in its *contado* and the villages on the coast or in the valleys of the interior.[38] This phenomenon was also a regular occurrence in late medieval Girona in Catalonia. The labour force, especially in the textile sector, came from the neighbouring countryside, but the further we go into the fifteenth century, the further the geographical distance becomes.[39] On the other hand, Catalan artisans can be found, along with mercenaries, royal ambassadors and consuls, merchants and ship-owners, living and working as far away as Dubrovnik in the fifteenth century.[40]

Venice, severely affected by epidemics and endemic wars at the end of the fourteenth century, went even further and loosened up her strict policies on unfree labour in order to attract Albanian and Dalmatian workers to fulfil the shortages.[41] Similar policies would be developed by Louis XI when he specifically gave privileges to foreign craftsmen to settle in the cities of Cherbourg, Dieppe, Toulouse and Bordeaux in order to repopulate them.[42] Although the amount of archival material would allow a more systematic study of the wider history of late medieval French immigrant communities, with the exception of a detailed study on Brittany,[43] work to date has focused more on the legal status and condition of foreigners vis-à-vis the government and on entry into

[37] F. Franceschi, *'Oltre il tumulto': I lavoratori fiorentini dell'arte della lana fra Tre et Quattrocento* (Florence, 1993), pp. 119–35. He looked into the alien presence in the Florentine textile industry in another chapter in the collection of essays: F. Franceschi, 'I tedeschi e l'arte della lana in Firenze fra Tre et Quattrocento', in G. Rossetti (ed.), *Dentro la città stranieri e realtà urbane nell'Europa dei secoli XII–XVI* (Naples, 1989), pp. 278–90.

[38] J. Heers, *Gênes au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1961).

[39] S. Victor, *La Construction et les métiers de la construction à Gérone au XVe siècle* (Toulouse, 2008), pp. 146–9.

[40] N. Fejic, 'Les Catalans à Dubrovnik et dans le Bassin adriatique à la fin du Moyen Âge', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 24 (1994), 429–52. The Spanish presence in Dubrovnik has been considered in more detail in Fejic's doctorate, published in Serbo-Croat, and in several other articles in French. N. Fejic, *Španci u Dubrovniku u srednjem veku* (Belgrade, 1988); N. Fejic, 'Les Espagnols à Dubrovnik', in Menjot and Pinol (eds), *Les Immigrants et la ville*, pp. 83–90.

[41] A. Ducellier, 'Les Albanais dans les Balkans et en Italie: Courants migratoires et connivences socio-culturelles', in Cavaciocchi (ed.), *Le migrazioni in Europa*, pp. 233–70; B. Doumerc, 'L'Immigration dalmate à Venise à la fin du Moyen Âge', in *ibid.*, pp. 325–34; P. Lanaro, 'Corporations et confréries: Les étrangers et le marché du travail à Venise (XVe–XVIIIe siècles)', *Histoire Urbaine*, 21 (2008), 31–48.

[42] Billot, 'L'Assimilation des étrangers', 274–5.

[43] L. Moal, *L'Étranger en Bretagne au Moyen Âge: Présence, attitudes, perceptions* (Rennes, 2008).