

Université de Montréal

**Activism and Participation Among People of Migrant
Background:
Discourses and Practices of Inclusiveness in Four Italian Cities**

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Juillet 2015

Thèse présentée à la Faculté des arts et des sciences
en vue de l'obtention du grade de PhD
en science politique

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Université de Montréal
Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales

Cette thèse intitulée:

Activism and Participation Among People of Migrant Background:
Discourses and Practices of Inclusiveness in Four Italian Cities

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Abstract

As interest in the processes of integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities grows among European scholars, the role of multiple actors in shaping civic and political participation by people of migrant background needs to be further examined. Building on the literature on migration, this study addresses the following research question: What accounts for differences in forms of civic and political participation by activists of migrant background at the local level? In order to answer this question, I have mapped the forms of participation by activists of migrant background in four Italian cities, and examined the discourses and practices of multiple actors involved in the sphere of immigration under an increasingly hostile national environment.

To understand differences in participation, I argue that it is important to go beyond an exclusive consideration of the state and institutional actors, to look at both institutional and non-institutional actors, and to examine how, through their interaction, they shape opportunities and constraints for participation. This work investigate both conventional and non-conventional channels in four Italian cities and considers immigrant activists as relevant political actors, who are able to mobilize and shape participation through their interaction and alliances with the organizations of the receiving society.

This research presents three main findings. The first is that approaches to integration adopted by local actors matter. This study identified three main approaches to integration: 1) *assistance*, based on the idea that immigrants are in need and thus focuses on the promotion of delivery of services and advocacy; 2) *intercultural*, founded on the idea that immigrants are would-be citizens and that integration is reciprocal; and 3) *political rights promotion*, which focuses on the idea that immigrants are entitled to basic political rights, and thus encourages the opening of channels of participation to immigrants who are denied local voting rights. The empirical analysis shows that while the assistance approach does not encourage participation because it conceives immigrants as passive subjects, the other two approaches encourage civic and political participation respectively. Second, this study demonstrates that left-wing actors matter. It shows that the actors who contribute to opening channels for participation are not only moderate and institutional left-wing actors, such as local authorities, main political parties, and trade unions, but also radical and non-institutional left-wing organizations. Left-wing actors interpret and act differently with respect to immigration and participation and this affects how immigrant activists mobilize. Third, this study underlines the role of perception of the opportunities for participation and shows how activists of migrant background appropriate the discourses and practices of left-wing actors. It documents how immigrant activists respond to the opportunities offered by other actors and how they contribute to the opening of channels for participation by creating alliances with the left-wing organizations and by challenging the discourses and practices of local actors.

Key words: Immigrants' civic and political participation; Local configurations of power; Institutional and non-institutional actors; Conventional and non-conventional channels; Approaches to integration; Alliances with left-wing actors; Bottom-up approaches; Italy.

Résumé

Alors que l'intérêt pour les processus d'intégration des immigrants et des minorités ethniques est en pleine croissance parmi les chercheurs européens, les facteurs qui expliquent les différentes formes de participation civique et politique doivent être examinés plus en profondeur. Prenant pour base la littérature sur l'immigration, cette étude examine la question de recherche suivante: Comment peut-on expliquer les variations des formes de participation civique et politique des activistes issus de l'immigration au niveau local? Afin de répondre à cette question, cette étude identifie les formes de participation de la part d'activistes issus de l'immigration dans quatre villes Italiennes et examine les discours et les pratiques de multiples acteurs impliqués dans le domaine de l'immigration dans un contexte national d'hostilité croissante.

Cette thèse soutient que pour comprendre différentes formes de participation, il est important de considérer non seulement l'État et les acteurs institutionnels, mais aussi les acteurs non-institutionnels et examiner comment ces derniers influencent les opportunités ainsi que les restrictions à la participation. Par ailleurs, cette recherche examine les canaux conventionnels et non-conventionnels dans quatre villes italiennes et étudie les activistes issus de l'immigration comme des acteurs politiques pertinents, capables de se mobiliser et d'influencer la participation à travers leur interaction et alliances avec les acteurs de la société d'accueil.

Cette recherche a permis de produire trois résultats. Le premier montre que les approches d'intégration adoptées par les acteurs sont importantes. Cette étude a identifié trois approches d'intégration: 1) « *welfariste* », basée sur l'idée que les immigrants sont dans le besoin et doivent donc recevoir des services; 2) *interculturelle*, basée sur l'idée que les immigrants sont de futurs citoyens et que l'intégration est réciproque; 3) *promotion des droits politiques*, basée sur l'idée que les immigrants ont des droits politiques fondamentaux ; et qui encourage l'ouverture des canaux de participation politique, surtout aux immigrants privés du droit de vote local. L'analyse empirique démontre que, alors que l'approche welfariste n'encourage pas la participation parce qu'elle conçoit les immigrants comme des acteurs passifs, les autres deux approches ont respectivement un impact sur les formes de participation civique et politique. La deuxième conclusion souligne le rôle des acteurs de gauche. En particulier, cette étude montre que les acteurs qui ouvrent de canaux pour la participation ne sont pas uniquement les acteurs de gauche modérée, comme les autorités locales, les partis politiques et les syndicats, mais aussi les groupes de gauche radicale et non-institutionnelle. Chaque acteur de gauche comprend et agit différemment par rapport aux sujets de l'immigration et de la participation et ce fait influence comment les activistes issues de l'immigration se mobilisent. La troisième conclusion met en évidence le rôle de la perception des opportunités par les activistes issus de l'immigration et la façon avec laquelle ils s'approprient les discours et les pratiques des acteurs de gauche. Ce travail démontre que l'ouverture de canaux est possible grâce à l'engagement de personnes issues de l'immigration qui agissent à travers les opportunités qui leurs sont offertes, créent des alliances avec la gauche et défient les discours et pratiques des acteurs locaux.

Mots-clés: Participation civique et politique de personnes issues de l'immigration ; Configurations de pouvoir locales ; Acteurs institutionnels and non-institutionnels ; Canaux conventionnels et non-conventionnels ; Approches d'intégration ; Alliances avec la gauche ; Approches par le bas ; Italie.

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Map of Italy



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Acronyms

ACLI: Association of Italian Christian Workers (*Associazione Cristiana Lavoratori Italiani*)

CGIL: Italian General Confederation of Labor (*Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro*)

CGIL-FIOM: Metalworkers' Federation (*Federati Impiegati Operai Metallurgici della CGIL*)

CISL: Italian Confederation of Trade Unions (*Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori*)

CNEL: National Council for the Economy and Labor (*Consiglio Nazionale Economia e Lavoro*)

CUB: Unitary Base Confederation (*Confederazione Unitaria di Base*)

DC: Christian Democrats (*Democrazia Cristiana*)

DS: Democrats of the left (*Democratici di Sinistra*)

PCI: Italian Communist Party (*Partito Comunista Italiano*)

PD: Democratic Party (*Partito Democratico*)

PDL: People of Liberty (*Popolo della Libertà*)

PRC: Communist Refoundation Party (*Partito di Rifondazione Comunista*)

UDC: Union of the Center (*Unione di Centro*)

UIL: Italian Labor Union (*Unione Italiana del Lavoro*)

USB: Base United Unions (*Unione Sindacale di Base*)

*To my parents,
Giovanna and Gianni*

*And to my dear relative,
Mario, Enrica and Monique*

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my immense gratitude for the love and support I have received during my PhD in Canada. The generosity and true commitment to academic excellence of the many people who accompanied me on this journey made me a better academic and a better person.

My dissertation would never have come to completion without the support of two wonderful teachers and mentors: my supervisor, Jane Jenson, and my co-supervisor, Pascale Dufour. Pr. Jenson's patience and tireless encouragement have been a constant source of support. What seemed an impossible task, and an overly ambitious project, became surprisingly feasible. Pr. Jenson is an excellent supervisor, and I couldn't have found a more suitable person for the task. I am also grateful to Pr. Dufour, who helped me orient my thoughts towards a more sociological approach. I owe her a great deal for many aspects of this work, and I am really happy she helped me to develop aspects of my research that are very important to me. I thank you both for believing in me.

I would like to express a special thanks to professor Éléonore Lépinard, who pushed me to go forward, who believed in me, and helped me refine my sociological inclinations. I followed Pr. Lépinard's insightful advice at the beginning of my PhD and I ended up working on something I was really passionate about. My overall development as a researcher has been influenced by her passion for what she does so well. I am so glad to have her support.

I am greatly indebted to professor Jeffrey Reitz, who has offered wonderful support during my visiting fellowship at the University of Toronto. Pr. Reitz is not only a great teacher, but also an inspiring human being. I would like to thank him for believing in me and my research. His support has been crucial in the final part of my PhD.

A special thanks goes to Bob and Rose, my two editors. Their dedication to the work I do, and relevant sharp advice, have helped me think my thesis through, and become more systematic and aware of the process of writing. This thesis owes them a great deal.

I want to thank the wonderful people in the Department of Political Science of the Université de Montréal, who welcomed me in the first place, and who made this journey possible and extremely pleasant. A special thanks goes to professors Andre Blais, Jean-Francois Godbout, and Christine Rothmayer, who gave the PhD students good advice and encouraged them in many invaluable ways. I will never forget your kindness and professional support. I also thank all the Faculty in the Department of Political Science for standing up for tolerance and respect for diversity, and for believing in meritocracy and hard work.

I am thankful to all the members of the IRTG-diversity who offered me financial, intellectual, and moral support in the last two years of my PhD. Thanks to professors Laurence McFalls and Ursula Lehmkuhl, and all the professors and PhD students in this wonderful team. A special thanks goes to Elisabeth, for her support and tireless effort. I would especially like to greet my bowling buddies—Lucio, Alice, and Phil—and my other sweet friends—Rebecca, Stephanie, and Bertrand—. I will never forget our wonderful trainings and leisure trips at Otzenhausen. I will miss you all very much.

My PhD was a chance to grow in an inspiring environment, made so by the presence of funny and loving colleagues. I have made some of the most beautiful friendships in the world. I want to thank my good friends, Kaisa Vuoristo and Şule Tomkinson. I am also grateful to two very special friends, Martin Beddeleem and Benoit Morissette. I hope I will have other opportunities to spend time with both of you, imagining and creating our own political space of freedom. And I want to greet four very good friends, who are very special to me: Khalid, Mona, Waeza, and Johanna. Thank you for being in my life.

I am grateful beyond all possible imagination for having a wonderful man in my life: Merouan Mekouar. You are my beloved one and my best friend. You were by my side during the most difficult, as well as the most joyful moments of this journey. Thank you very much.

Finally, a special thanks goes to all the wonderful people I met in Italy during my fieldwork in 2013 and 2014. I am grateful to have met with so many inspiring social workers, NGOs members, and activists, who dedicate their lives to protecting immigrants' human basic rights. A special thanks goes to all the immigrants I interviewed, who gave me some of their precious time. I admire them for their resilience, and for finding the strength to mobilize in a very hostile environment in order to guarantee a better future for their children. I thank all of them for attempting to make my homeland and their country of settlement, Italy, a more tolerant society. It breaks my heart to know that while I was welcomed and given the possibility to thrive in Canada, they faced discrimination and violation of your basic human rights in the country where I was born. I hope that my understanding of this structural injustice will help me contribute to making our world a better place. I thank you for this wonderful lesson. I hope to always find the strength and courage to follow in your footsteps.

Introduction

As interest in the processes of integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities grows among European scholars, the role of multiple actors in shaping civic and political participation by people of migrant background in hostile national environments needs to be examined. A growing literature in migration studies shows that hostile national environments can raise structural barriers to the inclusion of people of migrant background, and make their participation in the receiving society extremely difficult. At the same time, a hostile environment can trigger reactions and mobilizations by various immigrant advocacy groups, including people of migrant background who are the target of these practices, and encourage the development of new alliances and forms of participation (Massey & Sanchez 2010; d'Appollonia 2015).¹

The literature shows that cities are the place where integration is negotiated (Good 1009; Price & Benton-Short 2007; Caponio & Borkert 2010). It also describes important variations in forms of participation at the local level, across states and within states (Koopmans 2004; Penninx & al. 2004). Building on this literature, in this dissertation I have focused on the following question: What accounts for differences in forms of civic and political participation at the local level by activists of migrant background? In order to answer this question, I have mapped the forms of participation by activists of migrant background in four Italian cities, and examined the discourses and practices of multiple actors involved in the sphere of immigration under an increasingly hostile national environment. I argue that if we want to account for variations in participation, we need to shift our attention away from the role of the state and other institutional actors, and examine how both institutional and non-institutional actors, including immigrant activists, get involved and compete in the local arena over the issue of immigration, and how they may create alliances for the greater recognition of people of migrant background. Most existing studies of participation have concentrated on cities in Northern Europe. This dissertation seeks to address gaps in the study of Southern European cities and

¹ In this dissertation, I will use the general term “people of migrant background” to refer to immigrants with different legal statuses, included new citizens who have formal citizenship. Additionally, I will use the terms “immigrant activists” and “activists of migrant background” interchangeably to refer to the people of migrant background who are activists, including new citizens. I will use more distinct words, such as “new citizens,” “first-, second- and third- generation immigrants,” “undocumented immigrants,” “refugees,” etc. when needed to specify their status. In many countries, European citizens of migrant background are externalized by the continuous definition of them as “migrants” (El-Tayeb 2011). I am aware of the limitations of this terminology and its contribution to the construction of new members of the European communities as “others.” In my work, I do not intend to contribute to this externalization. I hope that my acknowledgement will prevent the reader from thinking otherwise.

participation by examining the case of Italy, and by focusing in particular on the complex relationship between people of migrant background and other actors in four cities.

In this Introduction I will offer a brief overview of my dissertation. I will explain why we need to shift our attention from the state and state institutions, and look at multiple actors and alliances at the local level. I will explain why we need to see immigrant activists as relevant actors, capable of shaping alliances. I will introduce my theoretical approach, the key concepts, the case selection, and the methodology of this study. I will conclude with a brief summary of my contribution to the study of participation, the relevance of studying the case of Italy, and the outline of my dissertation.

Beyond the state and state institutions: multiple local actors and participation

In Western Democracies, we have observed what scholars have called a “retreat from multiculturalism” (Joppke 2004; Kymlicka 2010) or a “return to assimilation” (Brubaker 2001; Vasta 2007). These expressions have been used to describe a new era of more restrictive official policies of integration, and increased practices of exclusion of immigrants and ethnic minorities (d’Appollonia 2015). European scholars argue that this shift, combined with the rise of anti-immigrant parties and widespread xenophobia, leads to the construction of people of migrant background as a “social threat,” and to state-supported practices of criminalization and disqualification (El-Tayeb 2011). In addition, the financial crisis that started in Europe in 2008 has worsened the situation by reinforcing hostilities. Raissiguier (2010, 4) observes that, “global economic transformations, the construction of Europe, increasing national anxieties and the economic crisis” have all contributed to the emergence of a “hegemonic discursive and material practice” which defines immigrants and ethnic minorities as outsiders, and some groups of immigrants as “impossible subjects” of the nation-state (see also Nicholls 2013b). Powerful processes of exclusion and marginalization on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, and class are also widespread (Dal Lago 2006; El-Tayeb 2011; d’Appollonia 2015).

In the face of increasing discriminatory practices and forms of exclusion, and in contexts where anti-immigration right-wing parties have monopolized the national public debate on migration, such as Italy (Ambrosini 2012), France (Raissiguier 2010), Greece (Triandafyllidou 2001), the Netherlands (Vasta 2007), England (Péro 2007), Switzerland

(Wessendorf 2008) and Denmark,² lay- and church-based organizations, political parties, trade unions, non-profit and radical left organization have been key challengers of the state, and have mobilized to promote greater recognition of immigrants' basic rights (Mantovan 2007).

The strength of valuable "allies" (Myers 2008) can be crucial in understanding participation and mobilization (De Graauw 2008; Hamlin 2008; Nicholls 2013a). The literature on migration suggests that alliances with "native" organizations can encourage mobilizations by immigrant communities and shape how they mobilize, by choosing to get involved in conventional channels, such as electoral politics, and in non-conventional channels, such as the contentious politics of the *sans-papiers* (Siméant 1998). However, alliances among "native" organizations and immigrant activists can also be complex and conflictual. Immigrant allies frequently adopt opportunistic approaches, and appropriate the cause of immigrant activists, overshadowing immigrants' claims and demands (Nicholls 2013a). Also, as the literature on migrant leadership suggests, allies can obstruct immigrants' participation by adopting processes of tokenism and neutralization (Martiniello 1993). In order to assess the extent to which allies are able and willing to promote "substantial" participation it is important to look at how immigrant activists are allowed to speak for themselves and express their points of view, and whether their position can diverge from that of their allies.

Ideology and competition play important roles in shaping approaches to integration by local actors. While church-based organizations, for instance, tend to mobilize in favor of immigrants' protection, by resorting to legal devices to fight discrimination and by offering assistance to the most vulnerable (Ambrosini 2013b), moderate left-wing actors often prefer to mobilize in favor of the greater inclusion of all immigrants and minorities by promoting a vision of the receiving society as multi-ethnic, focusing on the value of sharing ethnic and cultural differences, and defining immigrants as would-be citizens and a resource (Campomori & Caponio 2014).³ Additionally, other actors, mainly of political left-wing orientations (political parties, trade unions and grassroots movements) tend to

² According to the BBC: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/Europe/4276963.stm> (Accessed June 20, 2015) in 2005 the far-right Danish People's Party (DPP) increased its support from 12% to 13.3% of the vote, moving from 22 to 24 seats in the country's 179-member parliament, the Folketing.

³ This is, for instance, the case of those cities that have adhered to the "Network of the Intercultural Cities," a joint project of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The project aims to foster a network of European cities, which share ideas and practices for the integration of migrants and minorities http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/Default_en.asp (Accessed June 20, 2015). Some of the cities involved in the project are: Reggio Emilia (Italy), Lyon (France), Patras (Greece), Amsterdam (The Netherlands), London, borough of Lewisham (UK), Copenhagen (Denmark).

mobilize in favor of immigrant mobilizations and self-determination, supporting political forms of participation (Cosseron 2007, 158-259).⁴ Finally, radical left-wing organizations and grassroots unions of Marxist, socialist, or anarchist orientation, such the “No One is Illegal!” or “No Border” movements tend to support mobilization in non-conventional politics of immigrants in vulnerable conditions (for instance, *sans-papiers*, refugee-status claimants, and irregular workers). These non-institutional actors have been critical in challenging the legitimacy of the state's role in ruling on citizenship and legal status. Moreover, by criticizing the role of the Church in treating immigrants as people in need of assistance, and the more moderate left-wing actors for neglecting issues of class and marginalization, they have been the main challengers of other non-state actors (Cosseron 2007, 158-259).

In contrast to the widespread assumption of the literature that sees immigrants as passive subjects, immigrant activists can be crucial in promoting greater recognition (Però & Solomos 2010, 7). A growing literature shows that through their mobilizations at the individual and collective level, immigrants have engaged in multiple forms of civic and political participation, fighting for their basic rights and for the improvement of their economic and legal condition, struggling against discrimination and racism, and, more generally, making their voices and claims heard in the places where they settle (Però & Solomos 2010). In recent years, scholars have showed that people of migrant background with different statuses have been resilient in their efforts to bring about greater recognition by challenging exclusionary views that construct them as outsiders and force them into narrowly defined societal roles (see in particular Siméant 1998; Nicholls 2014; Però 2008a; Zepeda-Millán Forthcoming 2015).⁵ Activists of migrant background are a minority

⁴ This is, for instance, the case of many regions in Italy (Campomori & Caponio 2014). After the right majority had approved a new immigration law in 2002, with rather discriminatory articles, the Region of Emilia-Romagna governed by a left-wing majority approved the regional law in 2004 to contrast and challenge the national government in place. The Law 5/ 2004 establishes “the Rules for integration of foreign immigrants” and has the merit of recognizing that immigration is a structural phenomenon, and that plans for integration in different sectors of governance need to be implemented. This law also allowed the region to implement policies for integration that promote a vision of Italy as a multi-ethnic society and to develop an approach that Campomori & Caponio (2014) call culture-friendly and that treat immigrants as would-be citizens.

⁵ A pioneering work on the subject is Siméant (1998), *La cause des sans-papiers*. In the last few years, other authors have addressed the issue of migrants’ agency more systematically. See for instance Anderson 2010; Brettell 2011; El-Tayeb 2011; Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2011; Hearn 2009; Koopmans & al. 2005; Però 2007a; 2008a; Stasiulis & Bakan 2005; Gardiner Barber & Lem 2008; Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad 2008; Ramakrishnan & Espenshade 2001; Rassieguier 2010; Reed-Danahay & Brettell 2008; Zontini 2008; Zinn 2009; Back & al. 2004. On the role of agency, see in particular the *Special Issue of Ethnic and Racial Studies*: “The impact of migrants and minorities political mobilization” edited by Davide Però & John Solomos in 2010. The authors examine the question of the changing forms of immigrants’ politics and mobilization in contemporary societies and the impact of these actions and mobilizations on processes of

within migrant communities. Nonetheless, because of their social and personal skills they can serve as important mediators between their communities and the receiving society. They can promote change, and shape alliances by challenging other actors, including their allies.⁶

The increasing importance of multiple actors in promoting inclusion in hostile national environments requires more detailed account of their role in creating alliances between “native” organizations and immigrant activists and the role of these alliances in structuring the opportunities for participation. In this dissertation I will show how different relations of power and competition in the city, combined with approaches to integration by local actors, affect alliances and the type of participation by immigrant activists. In the following section I will present my theoretical approach to the study of these dynamics.

A sociological approach to the study of participation

The dominant approach in the migration literature on participation, the institutional approach, explains participation by looking at the state and other institutional actors at the national and local levels (Ireland 1994; Soysal 1994). This literature suggests that participation is shaped by key institutional actors, and sees it as a top-down phenomenon. Scholars who take this approach focus on some forms of participation, particularly civic participation, by looking at the levels and types of involvement in immigrant associations, and the levels of involvement in conventional politics, such as voting, and running for election. Scholars who focus on cities show how the configurations of power, and the role of institutional actors, such as local administrations (Caponio 2006a) and political parties (Garbaye 2006), affect participation. Administrations and political parties on the Left are assumed to be the most open to inclusion, and most willing to offer channels of participation for newcomers (Monforte & Dufour 2011).

In this study, I acknowledge the contribution of this literature. However, I argue that if we want to explain participation, we need to adopt a sociological, bottom-up approach, and look at how *de facto* participation is shaped by complex interactions among multiple actors. To this purpose, I have adopted an inductive approach, and through a long

inclusion and integration. See also the documentary on migrant youth activists in Sweden Consumedmind. 2012. “Do not treat us like animals.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=LCmAdyilI60 (Accessed June 30, 2015).

⁶ Martiniello (2005) observes that the literature has been particularly slow to recognize people of migrant background as political actors. This was because migration scholars considered political inclusion as a final achievement of integration, attained only after social and economic integration (Martiniello 2006) and because there was a resistance to considering immigrants and migration as phenomena with strong political implications (Miller 1981; Siméant 1998).

fieldwork in Italy, I have mapped the multiple forms of participation by activists of migrant background in four cities and explored the role of multiple actors, institutional and non-institutional, involved in the inclusion of immigrants. My study enlarges the political arena to include all the actors involved in the sphere of immigration, including local authorities, the Church, trade unions, and lay and church-based organizations and non-institutional actors, such as informal lay-organizations, grassroots trade unions and social movements. I propose looking at immigrant activists as relevant political actors, and consider their part in interactions with other actors involved in the processes of integration. Studying the discourses and practices of immigrant activists, I look at the ways they perceive and act upon the opportunities available to them, and why and how they create alliances with local actors.

I adopt a broad definition of participation, considering multiple forms of participation as a continuum, and observing how they are linked. I include in my definition participation in *civic* channels, such as involvement in “native” and “immigrant” associations, and examine whether such involvement has implications for political participation. I consider *political* participation in multiple conventional channels, for instance, in consultative bodies, and trade unions, and in non-conventional channels, such as protests, and consider how immigrant activists combine them. This broad definition of participation allows me to make a distinction between my understanding of “participation” and “political incorporation,” used by scholars who adopt the institutional approach. The term political incorporation (or integration) is assumed to be linked to formal citizenship and it identifies integration mainly in formal terms. Scholars who use this definition focus on the levels of naturalization and formal participation in conventional politics (See for instance Bloemraad 2006), mainly in the electoral system, through voting and running for election. My understanding of participation goes beyond this limited definition of political inclusion. I concentrate instead on “citizenship in practice,” and to the meaning immigrant activists give to inclusion and participation, independent of their status. As barriers to citizenship and formal participation are growing in European countries, I argue that we need to have a more articulated grasp of multiple forms of participation and how immigrant activists redefine the meaning of incorporation from below through mobilization.

Conceptual apparatus and research question

I have created a new conceptual apparatus that allows me to move beyond the limitations of the institutional approach. I have used it to develop the main argument of this dissertation, and answer its main research question. My first key concept is *local realm of immigration*. As I will explain in detail in Chapter 1, I developed this concept through my reading of the social movement literature, and Claudia Mantovan's (2007) study on three Italian cities. The concept of "realm" refers to a structured space of relations created by the interaction of local actors around the issue of immigration. This concept makes it possible to get past the idea that the context is a given, and to identify which actors matter, and how, in different local arenas. For this reason, it does not focus on the configurations of power and local actors in general, but rather at how actors in specific local contexts mobilize around the issue of immigration and interact with each other. Beyond simply identifying actors, it offers a particular way of thinking about their role in structuring opportunities for participation through their discourses and practices. Overall, this concept allows us to consider the role of agency from a dynamic, actor-oriented perspective and is compatible with my attempt to overcome an overly structural approach to the role of contextual factors.

The second key concept is *approaches to integration*. As stated earlier in this Introduction, local actors adopt different approaches to integration, and this affects how they mobilize. In this dissertation, using an inductive approach, and supported by the existing Italian literature, I have identified three main approaches, or ideal-types, and laid out the implications of each for participation. The first approach to integration is *assistance*. It is based on the idea that immigrants are in need, and thus focuses on the delivery of services and advocacy. This approach has traditionally been promoted by the lay and church-based organizations and trade unions that have worked closely with poor and vulnerable people (Campomori 2008). In addition, over the years, the growing vulnerability of migrants, caused by restrictive immigration laws and the financial crisis, pushed many other actors in the realm of immigration to emphasize assistance over other approaches. The assistance approach is the dominant approach to integration in Italy, going hand in hand with Italy's continued treatment of immigration as a temporary phenomenon (Campomori 2008, 32). A clear example of the predominance of this approach is the direct association of integration policies with the "social services" (see Chapter 2). This approach has significant implications for participation by people of migrant background. In most cases, it represents an obstacle to both civic and political participation because it treats

immigrants as passive subjects. Practices of tokenism and subordination are often widespread. The second approach, *intercultural*, is founded on the idea that immigrants are would-be citizens and that integration is reciprocal. This approach encourages cultural exchanges and interactions among immigrants and the receiving society, mainly through the support of civil society organizations. In Italy, it has been promoted mainly by left-wing institutional actors, including local authorities, political parties and lay-organizations (Caponio 2006a; Campomori & Caponio 2014). More recently, as Campomori and Caponio (2013, 172) show in their study of Italian regions, there has been an evolution of local (and regional) policies towards a “would-be citizens frame,” that is, an approach that “looks at immigrants as permanent settlers and would-be citizens” instead of temporary workers. This approach results in the opening of civic channels for participation at the individual and collective levels. The third approach, *political rights promotion*, points to the necessity of opening up alternative channels of political participation for people of migrant background without local voting rights (Kosic & Traindafilidou 2005). This approach is directly linked to the opening of political channels of participation. Actors who promote this approach see political rights as fundamental to guarantee immigrants’ full inclusion in society, and instead of depicting them as passive subjects, they believe they are to be included in the receiving society with full rights. They challenge the assumptions of the assistance approach, according to which immigrants are passive subjects. Instead of speaking on behalf of immigrants, they promote immigrants’ self-determination and the idea that they must speak for themselves (see Cobbe & Grappi 2011).

This study will show that in Italy, the local actors who contribute the most to the opening of channels of political participation at the local level are left-wing actors (local authorities, left-wing parties and radical left-wing organizations), as well as migrant social movements. Through the creation of platforms (such as consultative bodies, forums, or co-ordination organizations) in which migrants can “take the floor,” and by promoting the involvement of people of migrant background in these platforms, these organizations can be pivotal in promoting political participation. It has been argued that left-wing actors use the issue of immigration to legitimize their presence in the local arena, and thus adopt complex processes of tokenism and co-optation, yet they have nonetheless contributed in a relevant way to opening up the space of political participation (Mantovan 2007).

The reasons actors decide to adopt one approach to integration rather than another can be affected by ideological and practical considerations. While church-based organizations tend to depict migrants as poor and in need of specific services, left-wing

actors, such trade unions and antiracist movements, tend to promote empowerment and self-determination in addition to delivering services (Campomori 2008; see also Mantovan 2007, 147). It has been observed that various actors, including left-wing trade unions, have promoted integration through the assistance approach. However, the literature suggests that left-wing actors play a major role in promoting integration in terms of intercultural dialogue (Caponio 2006a) and political rights promotion (Mantovan 2007, 169-197).⁷ Mottura & al. (2010) discuss the important role of well-established trade unions, both as the first “managers of integration” in Italy in the absence of prompt state interventions in the 1980s and 1990s, and in their support of unionization and political participation of migrants within their organizations. Thus, Mantovan (2007) suggests that left-wing administrations, political parties, trade unions and social movements can be crucial in shifting attention from the assistance approach, dominant in the Italian system, to a political rights promotion approach, which considers people as proactive subjects rather than passive ones (see also Pero 2007).⁸ Informed by these studies, my research question is: what are the factors that account for variations in civic and political participation at the local level by people of migrant background? The answer I have found is that multiple actors, including immigrant activists, shape both the local realm of immigration and the character of participation through their interaction and alliances. In particular, the approach to integration adopted by different actors shapes the availability of channels of participation, whether civic channels or conventional and non-conventional political channels.

The use of my theoretical framework and my conceptual apparatus has three advantages. First, it makes it possible to study actors and actions and to go beyond the dichotomy of structure and agency implied by the institutional approach, which suggests that opportunities are shaped solely by configurations of powers and the political orientation of local actors. Second, it allows us to study the role of immigrant activists, and

⁷ While Campomori (2008) and Campomori and Caponio (2014) show that trade unions, church-based organizations and other non-profit organizations can play a crucial role by promoting and contributing to the implementation of policies of inclusion for immigrants in the receiving society, other scholars point out that other actors, such as traditional trade unions (Mottura & Pinto 1996; Mottura 2000; Mottura & al. 2010), political parties, and radical and anti-racist organizations (Mantovan 2007, 170-173) can also play a crucial role through the creation of specific platforms for participation (see also Kotic & Triandafyllidou 2005).

⁸ Mantovan (2007, 170) focuses her empirical research on the Region of Veneto in Northern Italy and compares three cities: Venice, Treviso and Vicenza. She explains the importance of multiple actors in opening channels of political participation for immigrants. In particular, she examines the interaction between left-wing actors and immigrants active in immigrant associations. She shows that these organizations have played an important (though sometimes ambiguous) role in promoting immigrants’ participation.

to break with the idea that they are external to the dynamic of power. Finally, my inductive approach is coherent with my postulate that the role of local actors in shaping participation is an open question that must be assessed empirically, case by case.

In the following section I will explain my case selection, and how my methodology allows me to answer my research question.

Case selection

This study is based on a comparison of four Italian cities in Northern Italy. I selected two “red,” or Communist, cities (Reggio Emilia and Bologna), and two “white,” Christian Democrat or Catholic cities (Brescia and Bergamo), in two regions (Emilia Romagna and Lombardy). While the choice to make a comparison in one country stemmed from the idea of controlling for variations at the national level, the choice of comparing cities in Northern Italy was justified by my desire to control for regional and local variables. The selection of regions was based on the control of several similar factors, including number of immigrants, capability of welfare, economic performance, and social capital (for further details see Chapter 3). The selection of cities within regions was based on the need to control for regional variations and compare differences in political cultures.

Migration literature suggests that configurations of power at the local level matter (Garbaye 2005; Caponio 2006a). The literature on Italian cities describes important differences between “red” and “white” cities with respect to the configurations of power (Campomori 2008; Caponio & Campomori 2013; Mantovan 2007). In a “red,” or Communist, political culture, one can expect to find an interventionist administrative style, coordination of the third sector by local authorities, and the predominance of lay cooperatives and volunteer organizations in the third sector. What prevails here is a model of co-operation between administrations and the third sector in the area of immigration. In these territories we also find a prevalence of “red” actors, such as trade unions and grassroots organizations rather than “white” actors (Mantovan 2007). In territories with a “white,” or Catholic, culture, one can find a laissez-faire administrative style and a tendency to devolve most social policies to third-sector organizations. In “white” territories, the Church plays a crucial role in the third sector. In this case, instead of a co-operative model, we find a non-co-operative model (Caponio 2006a).

The color of the city also defines in part the presence of other local actors. While in “red” cities we can expect the strong presence of left-wing actors, including political parties, trade unions, and lay-organizations, in “white” cities we are more likely to find

strong actors of the center-right and of the Church, including political parties of center-right, Church and Catholic organizations. In my selection of cities, there was another critical variation in the configuration of power: the strong presence of non-institutional actors of the radical left-wing organizations in “red” Bologna and “white” Brescia.

The selection of cities in the North needs to be justified more in detail. The literature on Italian cities sometimes points to a need to study cities from the North, the Center and the South of Italy, to control for variations within the country (see for instance Caponio 2006a; Campomori 2008). However, scholars also point out that regional variations should be taken into account (Mantovan 2007; Campomori & Caponio 2014). For my research, by selecting four cities in two regions with very similar characteristics, I opted for a design that lets me control for regional variations (for a more detailed description of the methodology see Chapter 3). This research design allowed me to control for similarities and differences based on the configuration of powers of the city and thus deepen my analysis of the role of local actors in shaping participation. The results of my study can be applied to other cities in Italy, and, to a certain extent, to other European cities.

Methodology

This study focuses on the analysis of the discourses and practices of multiple actors involved in the realm of immigration. Following the literature on sociology and on social movements, I adopted an inductive approach and conducted extensive fieldwork in Italy. My empirical research is mainly based on first-hand data collected between 2013 and 2014, for a total of 14 months (around 2 and a half months in each city). Using a snowball method, I collected 111 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with local authorities, members of key third-sector organizations, trade unions, political parties, grassroots organizations, and immigrant activists. I triangulated the interviews with participant observation of 80 key events, and archival research of national and local newspapers, and official and unofficial documents produced by local organizations. I supported my analysis with second-hand sources, including pamphlets and books produced by the organizations in question. My analysis concentrates on the years between 2010 and 2013. However, I use a timeframe of 15 years to look at the background of how local actors have mobilized around the issue of immigration, and their impact on shaping participation in more recent years. In 1998, with the Turco-Napolitano law, the Italian government recognized for the first time that immigration was a structural phenomenon, and gave local actors power over the implementation of local policies (Caponio 2006a; Campomori 2008). Thus, 1998 is an

important year for reconstructing what local actors have done over time in favor of immigrants' inclusion, and their promotion of participation.

Contribution of empirical research

The findings of this study show that there are important variations in forms of civic and political participation in the two “red” and “white” cities. In the empirical chapters of this dissertation (Chapters 4-7), I show how local actors shape participation in each city by structuring the local realm of immigration through the adoption of three approaches to integration. I show that approaches to integration by local actors vary, not only with respect to their political orientation and the local political culture, but also as a result of their interaction around a particular approach to integration in each city.

The main contribution of this study resides in the identification factors overlooked by the dominant approach in the field, the institutional approach. I have identified four factors that explain variations in the four cities: first, the role of dominant actors and their interaction; second, the role of approaches to integration in opening channels of participation; third, the role of alliances between immigrant activists and local actors; and fourth, the appropriation by immigrant activists of the approaches to integration used by their allies. In particular, the empirical chapters and the conclusion (Chapter 8) present evidence of how these factors work together and produce different patterns in the four cities. Overall, my dissertation contributes to the study of participation by showing the need to deepen our analysis of actions and actors and investigate the role of approaches to integration by these actors in specific configurations of power. Further empirical analysis will show how these findings can be generalized and adapted to other Italian and European cities.

Relevance to study of the case of Italy

Two reasons are at the heart of my choice to study Italy. As stated earlier in this Introduction, studies of participation of migrant and ethnic minorities in Southern European countries are still limited in number. Additionally, the theoretical models we have developed are drawn from empirical studies of countries and cities in Northern Europe, in which the state and state institutions are particularly relevant. This also may explain in part the success of the institutional approach. However, Southern European countries, such as Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece, have gone through processes of devolution in recent years, and this fact makes bottom-up approaches by local actors more

relevant. Therefore, we need to do more research to assess whether the institutional approach works for these countries. Through the study of participation from below, we can assess whether we need to develop new theoretical models for Southern European countries and beyond. My study of Italy represents a critical opportunity to examine and push beyond existing literature on forms of civic and political participation.

The second reason to look at Italy is the presence of serious lacunae in the study of participation. Our knowledge of the mechanisms involved in the processes of civic and political participation of people of migrant background is insufficient.⁹ The problem with most of the literature is that it is descriptive, rather than explanatory. Most of the research is limited in scope because it does not link theoretical approaches developed in the field of migration with the study of the integration of people of migrant background in Italy (Mantovan 2007, 96). With the exception of the work done by Gaia Danese (1998), Tiziana Caponio (2005; 2006a), Claudia Mantovan (2007), Francesca Campomori (2008), and Katia Pilati (2010), who use an institutional approach to make theoretical links between the forms of participation by people of migrant background and the role of context in shaping these trajectories, very little research exists on the subject.¹⁰ Additionally, there is a lack of research on the influence of the third sector on the political involvement of people of migrant background at the individual and collective level. So far, no one has given systematic attention to the complex relationships between the *advocacy coalitions* (Zincone & De Gregori 2001)—composed of trade unions, humanitarian and anti-racist organizations, church-based organizations and institutions— that shape immigration policies and immigrants' chances to get involved in politics.

In addition to the lack of attention given to contextual factors, even less attention has been given to the role of people of migrant background themselves, and their capacity to engage with the multiple pathways of mobilization available to them (an exception is represented by the work of Mantovan 2007). Scholars have documented how trade unions manage diversity in their organizations (Basso 2004; Rinaldini 2012), and how they advocate for the improvement of labour rights and living conditions for people of migrant background (Mottura & Pinto 1996; Mottura 2000; Mottura & al. 2010). However, scant attention has been given to the ways immigrant activists interact within these organizations,

⁹ Most of the literature concentrates on immigrant associations (Vincentini & Fava 2001; Carchedi & Mottura 2010; Caselli 2006; 2008; Caselli & Grandi 2010; 2011) and participation in consultative bodies (Caritas 2005). For an overview of studies on immigrant associations see Mantovan 2007.

¹⁰ For a list of the civic and political channels of participation available to third-country nationals in Italy, see Kosic and Triandafyllidou (2005).

and how they develop relationships with them. The few scholars who have focused on the participation of people of migrant background in contentious politics, such as Sandro Mezzadra and Maurizio Ricciardi (2013a), Raffaele Sciortino (2003), Pietro Basso and Fabio Perocco (2003) and Federico Oliveri (2012), have rarely explored the meaning of participation for people of foreign origin themselves, and their interactions with their allies. Major lacunae exist on the complex and often conflictual relationships that people of migrant background entertain with the radical-left collective organizations that claim to mobilize on their behalf.¹¹

Outline of the thesis

I have divided my dissertation into two parts. Part One presents the contribution of this study to the existing literature, the Italian context and my methodology. Part Two focuses on my empirical research, and presents four chapter-length empirical studies of the cities of Reggio Emilia, Bologna, Brescia, and Bergamo. Each empirical chapter is divided into three parts. I first introduce a phase of mobilization in each city between 2010 and 2011 and identify the local actors, including immigrant activists, involved in the organization of the event. Second, I describe the links between the involvement of actors in the local realm of migration, their approaches to integration, alliances with immigrant activists, and forms of participation. Finally, I show how immigrant activists perceive and act upon the opportunities for participation opened by other local actors. I show which actors they create their alliances with, and which conditions allow them to promote participation and inclusion. In my concluding chapter, drawing on my comparison of the four cities, I present the implications of my research for understanding the roles played by multiple local actors, including immigrant activists, in accounting for different forms of participation. I end the chapter by presenting the contributions of this study to the migration literature in Europe and beyond, and by suggesting new avenues for future research.

¹¹ Però's (2007) work has explored the ambiguous relation between the Italian Left and incorporation of immigrants in the city of Bologna. He concentrates on the discrepancy between the inclusionary discourses and the exclusionary practices of the institutional left wing. However, his research does not combine the discourses and practices of the institutional left actors with non-institutional left-wing organizations, such as the radical Left, and has not paid sufficient attention to how immigrants interact with and challenge these organizations.

PART ONE: Theory, context and methodology

Chapter 1. Beyond an Institutional Approach Studying Agency and Participation Through the Local Realm of Immigration

The main goal of this chapter is to show how my study relates to the existing literature on migration and participation, and especially how my theoretical approach moves beyond the limitations of the dominant approach in the field, the institutional approach. In the first section, I present my critique of the institutional approach. In the second section, I introduce the literature on social movements, and explain how it helps me address the limitations of the institutional approach. I explain how it has expanded my conceptualization of the political arena to include the roles of both institutional and non-institutional actors in offering opportunities for participation. This section also points to the importance of the concept of “space” for studying how actors mobilize around a specific *enjeu* (Dufour 2012). This concept moves beyond an overly structural understanding of configurations of power, and shows the relevance of actions and interactions. I use the definition of “space” to develop my concept “local realm of immigration.” The third section introduces the literature on models of integration, and shows its failure to address the issue that a several approaches to integration have been adopted by different actors. My work responds to this literature by showing the role of a bottom-up approach by multiple actors in explaining participation. In the fourth section, I explain that participation is best negotiated in the local arena. At the same time, I show that the literature on cities and participation tends to reproduce an institutional, top-down approach, by assuming that local authorities are the main actors involved in participation. I explain that the contribution of my bottom-up approach is to show that local authorities cannot be assumed to be the main actors involved in immigration, but that their relevance depends on how and to what extent they mobilize and shape the local realm of immigration. In the fifth and sixth sections, I present a brief overview of the literature in Europe and North America that examines different channels of participation. I explain that my study contributes to this literature by looking at formal and informal channels as a continuum. By doing so, it breaks with the assumption that forms of participation are linked to immigrants’ status in the receiving society. My approach makes it possible to look at the link between opportunities and constraints in a given context, and grasp how immigrant activists perceive them or act upon them to mobilize and to change the local environment,

1.1. Strengths and limitations of the institutional approach in explaining participation

Until recently, migration scholars held that immigrant characteristics (including patterns of migration and cultural, religious, economic, social, and political background) accounted for the success or failure of newcomers' involvement in the receiving society.¹² Since the 1990s, however, scholars have begun to study the role of the state and of institutional actors in shaping civic and political participation and integration through legislative and political discourses and practices (Hochschild & Mollenkopf 2009; Hochschild 2013). Authors like Patrick Ireland (1994), Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal (1994), Ruud Koopmans (2004), Romain Garbaye (2005) and Irene Bloemraad (2006) document the role of the state and institutions in shaping immigrants' ethnic politics. They argue that the legal and political context matter, and affect immigrants' ethnic politics, by shaping both opportunities for and constraints on participation (Ireland 1994, 18).

According to Koopmans, citizenship and integration policies shape both national and local forms of participation (2004, 467). Koopmans notes that, "Citizenship and integration regimes play a crucial role in shaping political contention, debates, and outcomes in the area of immigration and ethnic relations. Citizenship and integration regimes act as a field-specific political opportunity structure that shapes immigrant identities and their patterns of organization and political participation" (Koopmans 2004, 451-452).¹³

In addition to its influence on the study citizenship and integration policies, the institutional approach, as other authors define it, shows how "institutional channeling" directly promotes participation. For instance, Ireland (1994) points out that political actors matter, and that they account for the opening of channels of participation. Ireland asks how and why political participation takes certain forms (e.g. homeland-oriented or oriented to the receiving country, conventional or non-conventional, confrontational or non-confrontational, etc.) and finds that "institutional factors act upon [immigrants]" and shape ethnic politics (1994, 75). According to him, in addition to "immigrants' legal situation; their social and political rights; and host-society citizenship laws, naturalization procedures, and policies [...] in such areas as education, housing, the labor market, and

¹² Examples of this literature are represented for instance by Abadan-Unat 1985; Brouwer & Priester (1983); Hoffmann-Nowotny (1992). This latter has been criticized by Castles (1994) as 'culturalism.'

¹³ For instance, in "Migrant mobilization between political institutions and citizenship regimes: A comparison of France and Switzerland," Marco Giugni and Florence Passy (2004, 52) follow a similar approach and examine how institutional opportunities and national models of citizenship affect "immigrants and ethnic minorities in the national public space, and the forms and content of their claims." In addition to structural variables they also focus on "collective frames and public discourses."

social assistance that shape conditions and immigrants' responses," political actors, such as "indigenous trade unions, political parties, and religious and humanitarian 'solidarity groups' have acted as institutional gatekeepers, controlling access to avenues of political participation available to the immigrants" (1994, 10).

Soysal (1994) compares the incorporation regimes of five European countries (Sweden, the Netherlands, England, Switzerland and France) to explain the collective organization of people of migrant background. She defines the incorporation regime as the laws, policy discourses, and political organization of the receiving society. According to her, "every state develops a set of legal rules, discursive practices, and organizational structures that define the status of foreigners *vis-a-vis* the host state," and "incorporation styles bear the imprint of collective paradigms of membership that persist over time" (1994, 36). She shows that resources and channels of participation of immigrants, including immigrant ties and associations, are shaped by historically determined "structural configurations," that is, by long-standing established state-civic society relations. She also describes specific incentives granted to immigrant communities, and explains how the collective organization of immigrants is shaped "by granting or not granting resources for their assembly" (1994, 86), and by immigrant organizations' response, and by defining "their goals, strategies, functions and level of operation in relation to the existing policies and resources" (Soysal 1994, 84-85).

After Ireland and Soysal's work, migration scholars who use the institutional approach have mainly used a top-down approach to explain participation by focusing on 1) the degree to which full and equal citizenship is accessible to immigrants (Koopmans 2004), and 2) the laws that grant different statuses and rights to various groups of immigrants (Bloemraad 2006).

In addition to documenting the role of the state and state institutions in shaping immigrant politics, the literature shows that explicitly "inclusive" policies can diminish the negative outcomes of the process of integration. When immigrants are excluded from citizenship, and thus from full political rights, they are discouraged from investing in the receiving communities and creating new life opportunities. By contrast, a state policy that provides "symbolic and material resources" and "recognition of diversity" avoids the treatment of immigrants as aliens and can result in greater participation in the host society (Bloemraad 2006, 106 and 139). On this point, Koopmans argues: "In more inclusive political contexts, immigrants play a more important role in the public debate on issues concerning them, they are less oriented toward the politics of their homelands, and focus

more strongly on issues pertaining to their integration and rights in the receiving society” (2004, 467). Bloemraad’s (2006) comparison of Canada and the U.S. is one of the most valuable contribution to this literature. She examines “how government policies affect newcomers’ interest and ability to pursue full citizenship” and identifies “mechanisms that link individuals and immigrant communities to the political system” (2006, 9). She finds that “U.S. and Canadian policies toward newcomer settlement and ethno-racial diversity shape the building blocks of political mobilization: organizations, community leadership, and effective political discourses” (Bloemraad 2006, 9), and she observes that the Canadian incorporation regime, which is more inclined to offer “material and symbolic recognition” to immigrants’ communities and associations, is able to support a greater sense of belonging to the nation-state than the incorporation regime of the U.S..

The migration literature presented above offers significant insight into the role of the state and institutions in shaping opportunities for and constraints on the political participation of people of migrant background in the receiving society. It also shows that inclusive policies matter. In this study, I recognize the contribution of this stream of research. However, I also attempt to address its limitations. First, it assumes that the state and state institutions are the main sources of power, and that their allocation of resources makes them the main actors in shaping opportunities for participation. In this way, scholars overlook other key institutional actors, such as the Church, trade unions, civil society organizations, and non-institutional actors, such as grassroots trade unions and social movements, who may affect participation. Second, this approach has an overly structural understanding of the opportunities offered to immigrants and tends to overlook the agency of actors in the receiving society and of immigrants themselves. From a theoretical point of view, it fails to consider the role of bottom-up approaches to integration by multiple actors that may affect participation. Third, this literature links participation to “political incorporation” or formal participation in the democratic process (such as voting, or participating in civil society organizations), and thus focuses on two forms of participation: civic participation in immigrant associations by non-citizens and formal political participation by new citizens. In this respect, it is difficult to evaluate how different forms of participation are linked. It tells us very little about how civic participation is linked to political participation, and how conventional and non-conventional forms of participation are linked to each other. Such a narrow definition of participation does not help us study the multiple forms that are *de facto* adopted by immigrants and ethnic minorities, independent of their status. Finally, this literature tends to essentialize and racialize

immigrant groups, by defining them on the basis of assumed cultural homogeneity (Bousetta 2000). Even though these groups often mobilize on categories of race and ethnicity, we ought to consider them as a social construction that is often subjectively perceived as such by the migrant population itself. In this study, I argue that the institutional approach, with all its limitations, is insufficient to account for many forms of participation. For this reason, I depart from this approach.

In the following section, I introduce the literature on social movements, and explain how it allows me to overcome some of the limitations of the institutional approach.

1.2. Expanding the political arena: multiple actors and the concept of space

In the last twenty years, the literature on social movements has criticized the prominent role accorded to state institutions by scholars, such as Charles Tilly (1978), Sydney Tarrow (1998) and Douglas McAdam & al. (2001). The main criticism is that this approach assumes that the state is the dominant, or only, source of power, and thus the central target of protests.¹⁴ Authors such as Elisabeth Armstrong & Mary Bernstein (2008, 74) and Marco Ancelovici & Stéphanie Rousseau (2009, 5) argue that this approach is reductionist, and offers a very narrow understanding of the political arena and the possibilities for collective action. We ought to use a decentralized approach, and widen our understanding of social movements to include the contestation of different social institutions, not all of which are linked to the state. These authors suggest looking at “multi-institutional politics” (Armstrong & Bernstein 2008, 74) and the “institutional complexity” of the political arena (Ancelovici & Rousseau 2009, 6) in order to understand how mobilization takes place and how collective actors frame their claims.¹⁵

Armstrong and Bernstein (2008, 82) suggest a conceptualization of society as composed of multiple actors, potentially in conflict with one another. Beyond state institutions, other actors (such as the Catholic Church, the family, and the market) shape the organizing principles of society, and can be the target of collective action (Armstrong & Bernstein 2008, 79). The positioning of one actor at the intersection of multiple actors will have an effect on other actors’ capacity to mobilize and take action (Armstrong & Bernstein 2008, 83). Collective actors who mobilize can make claims and challenge other actors in different ways, using different discourses and practices depending on the actors

¹⁴ See also Fillieule (2005).

¹⁵ For a review of these critiques, see the special issue of the peer-reviewed journal *Sociologie et Société*, 2009, volume 41. In particular, see Ancelovici & Rousseau (2009) for a summary of the debate.

they want to challenge. This approach is based on an acknowledgment of the institutional complexity of contemporary society, in which different fields of social life, constituted by symbolic and material elements, intersect in complex ways (Armstrong & Bernstein 2008, 87). These authors explain that this approach allows us to study those social movements that question systems of classification, cultural codes and other modes of symbolic and material domination. Social movements are no longer considered solely on the basis of their target, because this fails to explain the conditions of their emergence and the social meaning of their mobilization (Armstrong & Bernstein 2008, 87).

In line with Armstrong & Bernstein's approach, Ancelovici & Rousseau (2009, 10) focus on both institutional and non-institutional actors, and on the competing discourses of power in the political arena and how they can be challenged by social movements (2009, 10). They show that a de-centralization of the state allows us to think about how different systems of authority—public and private, national and supranational—are intertwined, and nourish conflict while simultaneously offering new avenues of action. It allows us to understand how different multi-organizational fields are formed and transformed by competing actors. This perspective questions the distinction between institutional and non-institutional politics that simplistically divides actors into challengers/outside and policy members/insiders (Ancelovici & Rousseau 2009, 10).

There is another body of literature on social movement that is useful for moving beyond looking at actors as such, and instead examining at the ways they interact and structure a system of interactions. This literature has introduced the notion of "space" to analyze the relationships among actors mobilized around a specific *enjeu* (Dufour 2012). Eric Agrikoliansky, Olivier Fillieule and Nonna Mayer (2005, 20) define a "space of protestation" as "systems of alliances and conflicts," which allows us to observe "the birth, the success and the failure of a movement." Following these authors, Pascale Dufour points out that the concept of "space" is not only useful for studying how social movements target the State, but that it also allows us "to ask the empirical question of the dynamic relationships among social and political actors" (Dufour 2012, 18). This author adds that this "space" is not confined to the national level, but there can be multiple scales of mobilization (2012, 19). What matters is not the nature of the actors (i.e. political parties, trade unions, or other social actors). The "space" is shaped by the way actors promote their different goals and how they relate to the *enjeu* around which they have mobilized (2012, 19; *my translation*). Dufour explains: "From this perspective, the social

and political dynamics [...] are not part of the context, but the elements that belong directly to the ‘fabrication’ of the space [of protestation]” (2012, 19; *my translation*).

The literature on social movement presented above allows me to enlarge on my conceptualization of the political arena, and to think about the interactions and conflicts of institutional and non-institutional actors. The concept of “space” makes it possible to move beyond an overly structural understanding of the field of contestation, and to look at how involvement by multiple actors defines the specific context in which it occurs. In this respect, it is not the mere presence of actors in a specific configuration of power that matters, but the way they compete and interact around a specific *enjeu*. As I anticipated in the Introduction, I have used the concept of “space” for my construction of the concept “local realm of immigration.” I consider this latter as a concept that identify the “space” around the issue of immigration at the local level. I distinguish the concept of “realm” from “space” because I am considering involvement of actors in general and not necessarily a space a contestation.

In the following section, I explain how my theoretical approach speaks to the migration literature on national and local models of integration. Building on this literature, I point out that approaches to integration matter. While the literature focuses on approaches from above, my work shows how approaches from below affect participation.

1.3. The literature on models of integration and the role of approaches to integration for participation

Migration scholars have long focused on national models of integration to explain processes of inclusion and exclusion, and have developed national typologies to better understand the different characteristics of the incorporation regimes in Western countries (Freeman 1995; Castles & Davidson 2000). In the first half of the 1990s, using a comparative sociological perspective, migration scholars examined the historical, cultural and socio-political roots of national models of citizenship, and asked how these factors shaped the way receiving nation-state frame access to citizenship for people of migrant background (Brubaker 1992; Joppke 1999a; Joppke & Morawska 2003).¹⁶ Since then,

¹⁶ A pioneering work on the subject was Rogers Brubaker’s 1992 *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, which shows that France’s “civic” and Germany’s “ethnic” understanding of belonging and nationhood is at the origin of their different incorporation regimes. According to the author, socio-cultural variables explain why policies on citizenship in France are mostly based on the *jus soli* (from Latin, ‘right of soil’)—that is, the granting of citizenship by place of birth—and why in Germany they are based on the *jus sanguinis* (from Latin, ‘right of blood’) and thus emphasize the fact that an individual has German “blood,” that is, one or two parents who are German citizens.

scholars on both sides of the Atlantic have examined the link between national models of citizenship and incorporation regimes—that is, the practices and policies by which the state attempts to include immigrants and their offspring (Favell 2001). This literature’s main contribution is to demonstrate that national socio-cultural factors matter, and that they account for distinct approaches to integration of people of migrant background.

Generally speaking, the pluralistic model—represented by Canada’s multiculturalism (Kymlicka 1995), Quebec’s interculturalism (Bouchard 2011), and the Netherlands’ (Entzinger 2003) and the United Kingdom’s (Favell 1998) interethnic relation system—is more likely to recognize minorities’ rights, and has long been viewed as a more open and more inclusive model than the assimilationist one. Represented by countries as diverse as the U.S. (Bloemraad 2006), France (Favell 1998), and Germany (Brubaker 1992), the assimilationist model is more inclined to recognize individual rights than group rights, and to demand that newcomers and ethnic minorities blend into society without the mediation of their communities. These models have been useful for studying how different approaches to integration and access to citizenship make an impact on the trajectories of inclusion of newcomers and their offspring (Koopmans & Statham 2000).¹⁷

Migration scholars point out that since the beginning of the 2000s, Western countries have been retreating from more inclusive policies of integration (Joppke 2004), and a wave of more restrictive policies and a focus on security have developed in both North America and Europe (Goodman 2014), resulting in the blurring of previous national distinctions (Joppke 2007), and in bringing about a greater convergence toward what scholars have called the “return to assimilation” (Brubaker 2001), or the neo-assimilationist turn (Kofman 2005, 453; Però 2007, 142-143; Vasta 2007; Entzinger 2006).

In recent years, a growing literature has shown that there are local variations within a national model, and thus suggests applying the idea of “models of integration” at the local level (Alexander 2004). This literature highlights that in some cases, local models of integration can diverge from the national one, be more inclusive, and can even challenge national models (see Garbaye 2005; Caponio & Borket 2010). A few scholars have criticized the use of models of integration for being too simplistic and abstract (Favell 2001), yet this literature shows the role of national and local approaches in shaping integration.

¹⁷ For the study of a model of integration in Italy see Grillo and Pratt (2002).

The literature on models of integration has the advantage of showing the role of approaches to integration by institutional actors in explaining inclusion in the receiving society. However, it suffers from the same limitation I identified above with respect to the institutional approach: most scholars focus on integration policies and top-down processes, and fail to explain bottom-up processes by multiple actors. What is more, there is very little research on the link between approaches and participation. To make up for this lacuna, my study, using an inductive approach and the migration literature on Italian, identifies three approaches to integration and suggests how they affect participation (see Introduction). In the following section, I will explain how the three approaches speak to the migration literature more in general.

1.3.1. Approaches to integration by multiple actors and participation

An emerging literature suggests that approaches to integration adopted by multiple actors matter (Campomori 2008; Mantovan 2007, 170). Working through this literature, I have been able to identify three approaches that have implications for participation. The first approach is assistance. It refers to intervention by state and non-state actors to promote “social protection,” through delivery of services and advocacy for immigrants in vulnerable conditions. While the study of the link between social policies and welfare and access to immigrants’ social rights, such as housing, healthcare, education, etc. have been widely explored (Banting & Kymlicka 2005; Sainsbury 2006; Bosswick & al. 2007; Spencer 2008), there is less research on the ways this approach affects participation. Yet a large literature on social policies, as well as development policies, shows the problematic link between assistance and the participation of those who receive services, precisely because this approach tends to depict its users as mere receivers, and thus creates their dependence on welfare (Torrese 2010). Furthermore, for immigrants, a construction of cultural otherness is at work through differentiated delivery of services on the base of race and culture (Eliassi 2015). This approach tends to victimize those to whom services are delivered (Cobbe & Grappi 2011), and to create subordination rather than equal partnerships (Torrese 2010). In the Introduction, I suggested that the assistance approach affects participation because it tends to assume that immigrants are “poor” and in need of assistance, and are thus passive rather than active subjects. For this reason, actors who adopt this approach tend to act on behalf of immigrants rather than offering them the space to speak for themselves, and fail to promote the opening of channels of participation.

The second approach, the Intercultural, is founded on the idea that diversity must be valorized as a resource in a growing and multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society, thus encouraging exchanges between the native population and immigrants. As Gérard Bouchard (2011, 438) put it, interculturalism refers to an understanding of integration “based on the principle of reciprocity” by newcomers and the receiving society, and also on the idea that “collective integration is a global process affecting all the citizens and constituents of a society, not only immigrants.” This approach depicts immigrants as would-be citizens of a future multi-ethnic society, and sees intercultural policies as a strategy of governance to promote greater interaction between the receiving society and the immigrants (Campomori & Caponio 2014). In my study, I show that this approach directly affects participation because it encourages exchanges between the receiving society and the immigrant population through *civic* participation at the individual and collective level. First, it promotes the participation of individual immigrants in the volunteer sector of the receiving society by taking into account their specific needs. Second, it encourages the development of immigrant associations in a pluralistic environment. To this purpose, actors create intercultural centers and “neutral spaces” where immigrant associations can meet and develop their own activities (Caponio 2006a; 2006b).

The third approach, the political rights promotion, points to the necessity of opening up alternative channels of political participation for people of migrant background without local voting rights (Kosic & Traindafillydou 2005). Actors who promote this approach see political rights as fundamental to guarantee immigrants’ full inclusion in society, and instead of depicting them as passive subjects, they believe they should be included in the receiving society with full rights. The literature suggests that left-wing local actors have been pivotal in promoting this approach (Kosic & Traindafillydou 2005; Penninx & al. 2004), by opening channels of participation, including parallel channels (such as consultative bodies), platforms in existing organizations (for instance, in political parties and trade unions), and non-conventional or informal channels, such as protests and mobilizations. However, it is necessary to examine further how this approach is linked to the other two and it affects the way alliances among multiple actors are made.

Overall, allowing to examine how discourses and practices by multiple actors over the issue of immigration affect participation, my conceptualization of approaches to integration contributes to the study of models of integration from below. Now I will turn to the literature on cities.

1.4. The local turn in immigration studies

Migration scholars in North America have long argued that cities are the place where civic and political inclusion of people of migrant background is *de facto* negotiated (Jones-Correa 2001). Following this insight, migration scholars in Europe have recently promoted a “local turn” in the study of migration (Rogers & Tillie 2001; Penninx & al. 2004; Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2011a).¹⁸ In particular, the book, *Citizenship in European Cities* (2004), edited by Rinus Penninx, Karen Kraal, Marco Martiniello & Steven Vertovec offers empirical and theoretical insights into the role of local context in shaping civic and political participation of people of migrant background in European cities. This book examines the relationship between local government policies and the participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities from a comparative perspective. The authors explain that a focus on local contexts helps us to go beyond the mainstream political system (barred to most non-nationals) and look at the “practices of citizenship.” Because “many immigrants or ethnic groups in European cities do not enjoy the legal status of national citizenship and are thus excluded from the formal political system,” Penninx & al. suggest that we look at local governments, which “may have granted alternative opportunities to influence the politics and policies that affect them” (Penninx & al. 2004, 7). They add that “the concept of local-level citizenship” allows us to examine “formal, informal, and parallel channels” (Penninx & al. 2004, 7) and to see how “mobilization” by people of migrant background takes place in practice (Penninx & al. 2004, 8).

Penninx & al. (2004) identify two bodies of literature: the top-down, and the bottom-up approaches. The first concentrates on how European, national and regional policies are implemented at the local level, and observes that local governments can be more inclined than national ones to respond to the needs of immigrants, and may be better situated to provide opportunities for immigrant participation and inclusion. Researchers using this perspective investigate the implementation of policies and legislative provisions,

¹⁸ In addition to the local turn, more recent studies in Southern Europe have focused on the influence of *regions* over localities and their importance for framing and implementing policies of integration in a highly decentralized state or “multilevel states” (Hepburn & Zapata-Barrero 2014). Authors using this approach examine the approaches to integration by local actors within the regional framework and attempt to explain how regions mediate integration when the state is absent or slow on matters of integration laws (see for instance Campomori & Caponio 2014; Zapata-Barrero & Barker 2014). In particular, a book co-authored in 2014 by migration scholars in Europe who have recently promoted the local turn surveys the role of regional context in shaping the local context and shows that *regions matter* (Hepburn & Zapata-Barrero 2014; see in particular the important work by Campomori and Caponio 2014 and by Zaslove and Schmidtke 2014 on the case of Italy). This emerging literature is particularly relevant to this dissertation, because it complements the literature on cities and localities and helps to explain how the regional context affects local actors in a decentralized state.

emphasize the roles played by various agents at all levels of governance, and conceptualize the local political arena as the sum of converging and overlapping levels of power, where multiple levels intersect and influence the decision-making of local authorities (see also Marques & Santos 2004; Caponio & Borkert 2010, 18; Fauser 2012, 22).

The bottom-up perspective, on the other hand, focuses on local actors and networks. It examines policy-making processes, and stresses the importance of local governments in promoting institutional arrangements. Local administrative decisions, administrative culture, and civil servant behavior can be determining factors that account for deviation from expected national goals (see also Caponio & Borkert 2010, 22).

From a bottom-up perspective, empirical studies on the emerging model of local governance in Southern Europe show the ongoing expansion of the role of local civic actors in policy implementation, consultation, and decision-making. In the sphere of migration, for instance, in many localities this has meant the inclusion of church-based groups, traditional trade unions, neighborhood associations and other non-governmental organizations, and (more recently) immigrant organizations in the system of service provision, consultation, and decision-making (Caponio 2006a).¹⁹

In addition to shifting attention from national to local actors, Penninx & al. propose a research agenda that takes into account the role of people of migrant background as agents (see in particular Penninx & Martiniello 2004). They suggest an expansion of research on the interaction of two crucial dimensions. The first dimension concerns activation processes, that is, the incentives or the “parallel institutions and policies [...] launched by local governments alongside the formal political system” (Penninx & al. 2004, 9). Research on this dimension includes an examination of the ways local governments have responded to the challenges of immigration and created structures that offer administrative operations, social services, and funding systems to deal with immigrants’ needs, sometimes even encouraging immigrants’ participation in public-decision making. The local activating or “participatory” institutions include consultative bodies, working groups, coordination groups, parliaments, forums for immigrant workers or ethnic minorities, advisory councils, and committees on immigrant and ethnic minority affairs (Penninx & al. 2004, 9). The second dimension concerns mobilization processes, that is, “initiatives taken by the immigrants, ethnic minorities and their own organizations to assert their political,

¹⁹ See also Danese 2001; Morén-Alegret 2002; Campomori 2008; Fauser 2012; Zincone & Caponio 2006; Zapata-Barrero 2010

social, or cultural interests, irrespective of institutional structures, and whether they acted alone in this or in coalition with other actors” (Penninx & al. 2004, 8).

The literature on North American and European cities is critical to the study of civic and political participation by people of migrant background, because it allows us not only to grasp divergent and convergent patterns of inclusion within and across nation-states, but also to capture “citizenship in practice,” that is, how inclusion and political participation *de facto* take place at the local level through the interaction of multiple actors. It also suggests that civic and political participation is the result of the interaction between local contextual factors (activation processes) and immigrants’ initiatives (mobilization processes), a conceptualization that emphasizes the role of agency by actors involved in these processes. Nonetheless, this literature presents some limitations. Migration scholars who promote the local turn in Europe still tend to rely mainly on local policies and thus fail to address the theoretical problems of the institutional approach, as presented earlier in this chapter (see, for instance, the works by Garbaye 2005; Caponio 2006a; Scholten 2013). Additionally, this literature fails to elaborate a conceptual apparatus able to move beyond a structural approach. In this respect, my study represents an important contribution to study of participation in cities in two ways. First, I take into account systematically the discourses and practices of multiple actors, and show the role of their interaction. Second, through the use of the concept of “local realm of immigration,” I offer a theoretical approach that presents the context not as a given, but as a “space” of integration of multiple actors, in which activists of migrant background can also play key roles.

Below I will present a brief review of the few Italian studies on participation and cities.

1.4.1. The literature on Italian localities

To date, relatively few scholars have contributed to the study of civic and political participation by people of migrant background in Italy. The migration literature on participation in Italy is often incomplete and merely descriptive. Nonetheless, few authors have studied variations in participation at the local level through the use of an institutional approach. In particular, the work by Tiziana Caponio is extremely important. In her article, “Policy networks and immigrants’ associations in Italy: the cases of Milan, Bologna, and Naples,” Caponio (2005, 932) examines the role of different institutional actors in promoting civic participation. She shows the differences in approaches to integration

between left-wing and right-wing administrations. While administrations with left-wing majorities are usually more responsive to the needs of immigrants, and more inclined to create “measures aimed at opening the institutional opportunity structure to immigrants’ associations,” right-wing majorities tend to do the opposite, avoiding the issue of integration, presenting “immigration as a problem of public security, and completely ignor(ing) questions regarding the participation of immigrants’ associations” (2005, 947-948). Thus, left-wing local governments are more likely to provide institutional resources for immigrant organizations. Caponio notes that center-left majorities’ policies have been “contradictory,” and have never really succeeded in consolidating immigrants’ associations (Caponio 2005, 948).

In her book, *Italian cities and immigration (Città Italiane e Immigrazione)*, Caponio (2006a) further develops her study in Milan, Bologna, and Naples. She confirms that politics matter, and documents how the political orientation of local governments affects local models of integration (2006a, 93). The author identifies two local models: a co-operative model typical of left-wing administrations and a non-co-operative model typical of right-wing administrations. The co-operative model tends towards a *logic of governance* and thus adopts a role of coordination and support of third-sector organizations (Caponio 2006a, 248). This model is oriented towards collective recognition of immigrant communities, often through immigrant associations (Caponio 2006a, 209 and 248-249). Caponio explains that left-wing administrations “favor policies oriented towards cultural recognition” and encourage immigrants’ participation by working towards the “construction of a multiethnic and multicultural society, based on pacific cohabitation and solidarity” (Caponio 2006a, 249; *my translation*). Overall, in line with their definition of immigration as “a resource for society,” left-wing administrations tend to promote a discourse that depicts “immigrants as new citizens” and “people entitled to rights, who must be welcomed” (Caponio 2006a, 249; *my translation*).

In contrast with left-wing administrations, the non-co-operative model typical of right-wing administrations tends to 1) limit public interventions and devolve the management of integration to the third sector, and 2) implement “policies directed to support processes of integration of individuals and/or assist them in particularly difficult situations” (Caponio 2006a, 249-253).²⁰ This approach to integration is more fragmented, and is oriented towards individual insertion rather than collective recognition (Caponio

²⁰ See the tables describing the models in Caponio (2006a, 249, 253).

2006a, 252-253). Caponio (2006a, 91) also observes that immigration and integration issues tend to divide political actors by creating “cross-cutting cleavages” within the same political spectrum. In this context, a major role is played by the increasing power of the anti-immigrant party, the Northern League, which has resulted in the strong politicization of the discourse on migration (Caponio 2006a, 247). This has been accompanied by growing anxieties over “the electoral cost” of pro-immigrant policies for parties on both sides of the political divide (2006a, 104).²¹

Francesca Campomori further develops Caponio’s study on Italian cities by examining the relationship between local governments and the governance of immigration. In her book, *Immigration and local citizenship: the governance of integration in Italy (Immigrazione e cittadinanza locale: la governance dell’integrazione in Italia)* (2008), she argues that the relationship between the public and the private sectors is particularly important in explaining variations in the approach to integration adopted by local actors. She observes that long-established patterns, developed before the arrival of immigrants in Italy in the 1980s, affect the integration policies in Italy independent of the current political orientation of particular cities.

The author explores the reasons behind territorial differences in Italy and the different ways public-private relationships have developed in different cities. To do so, she compares three Italian cities representative of different parts of Italy (Vicenza in the North, Prato in the Center, and Caserta in the South), selecting two cities in the North and Center with different political subcultures: the “white,” or Catholic, Vicenza, and the “red,” or communist, Prato. In a section titled “The dimension of *governance*: Political subcultures

²¹ In the conclusion of her study, Caponio suggests going beyond an overly simplistic dichotomy between right-wing and left-wing administrations, and considering whether official attitudes towards integration are also affected by 1) “cross-cutting cleavages” and the numerous actors involved in the political arena, 2) the high politicization of the discourse on migration (2006a, 247), and 3) the increased “electoral cost” (2006a, 104) and the “logic oriented toward consensus” (2006a, 107) that goes hand-in-hand with the growth of anti-immigrant political parties (2006a, 104). The three factors listed above account for important variations between cities with superficially similar political orientations, because they influence the general approach towards immigrants’ social integration in ways that transcend a simple left/right division. In addition to Caponio’s analysis, studies on left-wing administrations uncover major conflicts between stated aims and the reality of practical governance. Però’s *Inclusionary Rhetoric, Exclusionary Practices: Left-wing Politics and Migrants in Italy* (2007) focuses on the case of left-wing administrations in Bologna. It points out that there can be critical discrepancies between left-wing actors’ inclusive discourses and their exclusionary practices (see also Caponio 2005, 948). In the book *Onions for Breakfast (Cipolle a Colazione)*, Paola Bordandini & Roberto Cartocci (2009) focus on the shortcomings of certain left-wing administrations that underestimated the impact of immigration on the Italian population. They argue that in order to reinforce viable cohabitation, left-wing local administrations should have found an equilibrium between “open” policies of integration on the one hand, and “reassuring” policies on the other. They note that a lack of “reassuring” policies has fed Italians’ perception of increasing “insecurity,” and has resulted in high tensions between Italian and immigrant groups.

and characteristics of the third sector in Italy,” Campomori (2008, 76) points out that the “white” and “red” subcultures of the territory account for different *administrative styles* and forms of local governance.

The institutional arrangements linked to specific political subcultures can in fact solidify over time, with a long-term effect on the way public and private interests are articulated. Table 1.1. shows the differences between the “white” and “red” local administrations.²²

TABLE 1.1. Difference between “red” and “white” administrations

Political subculture	“Red” or Communist	“White” or Catholic
Administrative style	<i>Interventionist or co-operative model</i> Top-down coordination of the third sector and co-operation	<i>Laissez-faire or non-co-operative model</i> Devolution to the third sector
Main third-sector actors	Lay organizations	Catholic organizations

Sources: Campomori 2008.

Campomori’s findings on the effects of different Italian political subcultures can be juxtaposed with Caponio’s findings on the political orientations of local administrations. Both demonstrate that cities with a “red” political culture and/or left-wing political orientations tend to adopt an interventionist approach to integration through the active coordination of the third sector. “Red” cities are more likely to recognize cultural diversity and participation, in line with their objective of constructing a multiethnic and multicultural society. On the other hand, cities with a “white” political culture and/or right-wing political orientation tend to adopt a non-interventionist approach to integration and to devolve power to the third sector, and in particular to the Church. By contrast to the collective orientation of left-wing governments, they tend to adopt policies to support processes of integration at the individual level, rather than encouraging organized, active participation in the receiving society.

A third author, Mantovan, adopts a more sociological approach centered on multiple local actors. In order to study the role of these actors in participation, in her book *Immigration and Citizenship. Self-organizations and participation of migrants in Italy (Immigrazione e cittadinanza. Auto-organizzazione e partecipazione dei migranti in Italia)*

²² Campomori notes that the “red” city of Prato and the “white” city of Vicenza have developed different local approaches to general issues and approaches to integration despite similar models of economic growth (small or medium entrepreneurship) and social capital (medium or high) (see also Messina 2002).

(2007), she elaborates the concept of the “local field of immigration” referring to the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “field.” Mantovan defines the local field of immigration as follows:

a *transversal domain* that includes subjects belonging to different spheres [...] that is, people (Italian and migrants) who, with different roles and interests, are invested in the area of immigration [...] and who thus have an interest in influencing what is happening in that domain (Mantovan 2007, 145; *my translation*).

This concept is extremely useful for my theoretical approach because it identifies the role of multiple actors, including people of migrant background, and grasps how they affect the domain of immigration through their interaction.

In her book, Mantovan (2007) refers back to Hassan Bousetta, who in his article of 1997, “Citizenship and political participation in France and the Netherlands: reflection on two local cases,” introduces the concept of “local integration field” for studying the political participation of people of migrant background at the local level (1997, 221). Bousetta explains that, “the concept of a local integration field is a freely adapted interpretation of the concept of ‘field’ developed by Bourdieu in several contexts (see Bourdieu 1981, 1992) and of the policy domain proposed by Laumann & Knoke (1987, 10).” However, while Bousetta is more interested in multiple institutional actors, Mantovan looks at both institutional and non-institutional actors.

In this study, I use the concept of “local realm of immigration” to look at how local actors get involved in the sphere of migration, and how they affect participation. The concept of “field” used by Mantovan refers directly to Bourdieu’s sociological approach, however, in this dissertation, I do not draw directly from Bourdieu. For this reason, to avoid confusion, I borrow Mantovan’s concept, and replace the word “field” with “realm.” As I explained earlier in this chapter, the word “realm” refers to the idea of a structured space shaped by actors mobilized around the *enjeu* of immigration (see Dufour 2012). In this view, the word “realm” suggests not simply the presence of local actors, but a way of thinking about their interaction, and how they promote participation. Finally, the concept allows us to place immigrant activists as part of this interaction, and as the main contributors to the structuration of this space, through their involvement in the sphere of immigration and alliances.

In the following section I will present an overview of the literature that focuses on civic and political channels of participation.

1.5. Studying civic and political participation as a continuum

While in Europe research on civic and political participation has concentrated on non-citizens' participation in non-conventional or informal channels, such as protests and demonstrations (Koopmans & Statham 2000; Nicholls 2014; Siméant 1998), in North America, migration scholars have focused on conventional or formal channels by looking at the political behavior of new citizens (e.g. voting) (Jones-Correa 2001a; 2001b; Bloemraad 2006; Reed-Danahay & Brettell 2008a; Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad 2008).²³ These differences can be explained in part by the fact that, in North America, newcomers usually acquire political rights relatively quickly because access to citizenship is easier (Voss and Bloemraad 2011, 18). By contrast, in Europe, in many countries, access to formal political rights has been delayed by more restrictive laws on citizenship for new migrants and their offspring. More importantly, the right of migrants to participate, for instance, in trade unions and consultative bodies (see the European Council's Convention of 1992), and the great mass mobilizations by undocumented migrants over the years (e.g. the *sans-papiers* movement in France) have compelled European scholars to concentrate on these forms of participation.²⁴

Differences between immigration regimes, and the characteristics of the migrant populations in North American and European countries have diminished significantly in recent years as a result of 1) a convergence towards more restrictive laws regarding access to citizenship and regular status on both sides of the Atlantic, and 2) the ongoing history of immigration in Europe that has resulted in a considerable increase in citizenship among people of migrant background. It is for this reason that Voss and Bloemraad (2011, 19), in their recent study on the 2006 mass mobilizations by Latinos in the US, highlight the need for a "European" turn in American scholarship, particularly the necessity of complementing research on conventional channels with research on non-conventional ones. Marco Martiniello (2009, 39) expresses the same point of view when he criticizes the literature for focusing on formal or state politics (such electoral politics), and overlooks non-state politics, such as the involvement of migrants in trade unions, pressure groups, environmental movements, neighborhood committees, and so on.

²³ For an attempt to fill this gap in the European literature see recent research by Cinalli & al. (2014).

²⁴ While an older European literature from the 1970s and early 1980s focused on immigrants' social movement activism and class alliances (see Bloemraad and Vermeulen 2014), this orientation largely disappeared until making a comeback more recently (see for instance Chauvin's work, in addition to Nicholls, in France). For the most significant work on the *sans-papiers* movement in France, see Johanna Siméant's work in 1998. See also Castles & Kosack (1973).

In my Introduction, I argued for a study of participation as a continuum, and suggested that we avoid assuming that participation is rigidly associated with the status of immigrants in the receiving society. There are different reasons that activists of migrant background participate, and in order to understand participation from their point of view we need to study how they perceive and seize the opportunities offered to them. For this reason, I suggest we avoid focusing on one specific form of participation, and instead examine how immigrant activists *de facto* participate. Time is ripe to start building a new theory of political participation by people of migrant background from a comparative perspective, giving equal consideration to conventional and non-conventional channels within an empirical continuum (see also Bloemraad & Vermeulen 2014; Martiniello & Rath 2014).

1.5.1. Literature on civic participation

In North America, the study of civic participation by people of migrant background is widely developed. One can identify two streams of research. The first focuses on the study of civic ties, the second seeks to understand the implications of civic participation for political participation. Strictly speaking, the term “civic” refers to participation in civil society organizations, at the individual level, through participation, for instance, in volunteering organizations in the receiving society, or at the collective level, through participation in immigrant associations. To support this form of participation, local authorities and third sector organizations can create specific platforms and intercultural centers to allow immigrant associations to interact with local institutions and civil society organizations, and to interact with each other.

The degree to which civic participation represents a vector for greater inclusion is an empirical question. The literature examines whether “ethnic ties,” for instance, can pave the way towards greater inclusion in the receiving society (Bloemraad 2006, 66-67). Drawing an explicit link with the literature on social capital, scholars explain that ethnic ties can have a positive impact on immigrants’ integration in the receiving society (Fauser 2012; see the special issue of JEMS 2004). For example Berger and al. (2004), Fauser (2012), Fennema and Tillie (1999; 2001; 2004) and Schrover and Vermeulen (2005) examine how participation in self-help organizations, “ethnic” associations, and community-based organizations affect social, economic, and political integration as well as a sense of belonging in the receiving society. Students of this approach have documented

how multiple networks can be correlated with successful educational careers, and aid insertion into the labor market (Brettell 2011).

Within this literature, scholars have examined the link between participation in immigrant associations and political engagement. Bloemraad (2006, 67) and Fauser (2012, 3), for instance, argue that “ethnic” ties can channel political participation in the host society. For this reason, scholars have more recently examined to what extent immigrant organizations are linked with the formation of political activities and political self-awareness among people of foreign origin (see in particular, Brettell & Reed-Danahay 2008; Berger & al. 2004; Fennema & Tillie 2004; Torgeby 2004). Fennema and Tillie’s (1999, 706) endeavor, for example, points out that “dense networks” among immigrants create engagement and civic competence, which facilitate participation and trust (see also the work to which they refer on “social capital” by Putnam 1993, 90; Schrover & Vermeulen 2005). Furthermore, Bloemraad (2006, 65) argues that immigrant associations create basic conditions for political participation. According to her, “involvement with voluntary associations, workplaces, and religious institutions can teach civic and political skills, build interpersonal trust, and foster feelings of citizenship.” She adds that different networks, such as families, ethnic businesses, and religious or civic organizations offer newcomers concrete assistance during the immigration process, and may teach them how politics work in the adopted country and encourage political engagement (Bloemraad 2006; see also Brettell 2011).

A variation of this literature is the research that focuses on transnational ties. This literature challenges the assimilationist argument that transnational ethnic ties undermine migrants’ greater inclusion in the receiving society and their greater insertion into the larger society, and argues that in some cases transnational ties help immigrants’ participation in the receiving society (Portes & Radford, 2007; Portes & al. 2008; Salih & Riccio 2011; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003). What emerges from this literature is the recognition that the involvement of people of migrant background in the receiving society is fostered by ethnic or migrant organizations. With the help of their organizations and networks, immigrants develop *civic virtues* that in turn promote insertion into the receiving society and foster democratic participation (see Fennema & Tillie 1999; 2001).

However, competing hypothesis suggest that ethnic, religious, and cultural networks can be detrimental to integration, and encourage “communitarian” affiliations. Some authors claim that such networks reinforce links with the sending society, and eventually within the newly established “ethnic community,” holding immigrants back from

establishing strong ties in the society of settlement (for further analysis on this point see Fauser 2012). Authors show that in some cases, policies' promotion of immigrant associations can have the goal of social control (Berti 2000), or can simply fail to promote inclusion by supporting these organizations as separate entities, thereby "reinforcing exclusion" (Salih 2002) and undermining immigrant associations' potential as agents of integration.

1.5.2. Literature on political participation

Martiniello (2005, 3) defines political participation as "the active dimension of citizenship. It refers to various ways in which individuals take in the management of the collective affairs of a given political community." Following Martiniello, in my research, I define political participation in an inclusive sense, to refer to both conventional and non-conventional channels.²⁵ I use the term "political channels" to refer to the opening of opportunities for the exercise of political rights by people of migrant background. Channels of political participation here are intended broadly, and refer to three dimensions:

- 1) Conventional or formal participation (i.e. voting and standing for election, volunteering for political campaigns, signing petitions, belonging to activist groups, and serving in public office);
- 2) Non-conventional or informal participation (i.e. strikes, supporting boycotts, and protests)
- 3) Illegal participation (i.e. activities that break the law, such as the illegal occupation of a public space).

For conventional politics, the most important literature is on the political behavior approach, which focuses mainly on electoral politics. The goal of this scholarship is to understand *why* and *how* individuals vote. An assumption of this literature is that we need to explain why individuals choose to take on the cost of participating. This need for an explanation is especially pressing when it comes to new citizens of migrant background, because research shows that they are less likely than the "native population" to participate. Many studies have concentrated on this striking "turnout gap" (Voss & Bloemraad 2011). Another aspect that emerges within this literature is the existence an "ethnic vote." As Martiniello notes, this behavior has often been taken as obvious. But it is not obvious, and we can explain it by looking at the contextual factors that have contributed to its development (2005, 8-9). In non-conventional politics, a growing subfield of migration

²⁵ It is important to note that scholars do not agree on how we should distinguish between conventional and non-conventional politics. In this reconstruction, I follow closely Martiniello's typology of forms of political participation (2005).

scholarship has been exploring *why* and *how* migrants in vulnerable conditions (such as undocumented migrants and asylum seekers) participate in strikes, protests, and mass mobilizations (Nicholls 2014, 24; Voss & Bloemraad 2011, 22; Zepeda-Millán forthcoming 2015).²⁶

In extremely penalizing conditions, political participation by migrants in vulnerable conditions is puzzling. In his article “From political opportunities to niche-openings: the dilemmas of mobilizing for migrant rights in inhospitable environments,” Nicholls (2014, 24) says:

[S]ocial movement scholars would predict that the prevalence of hostile discourses, the lack of political opportunities, and enhanced repression would dissuade undocumented immigrants from engaging in contentious mobilizations to make rights claims (Giugni & Passy 2004; 2006; Koopmans & al. 2005). The risk of deportation would be too high and the prospects of a successful outcome too low to entice these immigrants to engage in high profile public protest. However, rather than turn away from politics and the public sphere, we find that undocumented immigrants in many countries have engaged in public mobilizations to advance their rights claims since the 1990s.

Nicholls adds that participation is possible because “even the most hostile contexts produce countless cracks and fissures that can serve as narrow niche-openings” (2014, 26) for “stigmatized groups” (2014, 25) (see also Zepeda-Millán forthcoming 2015). He explains that the presence of allies, and in particular their material and symbolic support, can be crucial to transforming political grievances into political action, and can allow immigrants to become “visible” and represent themselves as *legitimate political subjects* within the host society (Nicholls 2013b, 84).

Allies can play an important role in shaping the type of political participation in which migrants engage. On this point, Nicholls (2013a) notes that the cultural and symbolic capital of migrants’ allies “allows them to assume control over how representations of immigrants are constructed and articulated in the public sphere” (2013a, 86). Nicholls shows the complexity of the relationships between undocumented migrants and their allies, arguing that these alliances are “prone to divisions and splits, opening possibilities for alternative visions and discourses of citizenship” (2013a, 86).²⁷

²⁶ See also Nicholls 2013b; Siméant 1998; Anderson 2010; Voss & Bloemraad 2011; Raissiguier 2010; Chauvin & al. 2003; Chauvin & al. 2014

²⁷ Nicholls (2013a, 86) explains that struggle for “legitimacy is contradictory.” By mobilizing a discourse that represents undocumented immigrants as *deserving* of legitimation, the movement reproduces the

The main contribution of the migrant social movement literature is to show that immigrants in vulnerable conditions can engage in politics through non-conventional channels when all other opportunities are barred. Additionally, it shows that alliances with other political actors can be crucial for their mobilization and rights claims. In this dissertation, it will be shown that many migrants with different status participate in non-conventional politics.

1.5.3. The literature on citizenship from below

The literature on citizenship from below draws from postcolonial and poststructuralist literatures, and from the fields of transnational migration, anthropology, and feminism.²⁸ In *Citizenship, Political Engagement, and Belonging*, Deborah Reed-Danahay and Caroline Brettell (2008a) explain that the anthropology of immigration and ethnographic studies can contribute to the literature on citizenship and immigration because they shed light on the *processes* of immigration, political behavior, and citizenship, and promote “an approach to political incorporation that looks not only at naturalization and the rights and duties of legal citizenship, but also at political and civic engagement (or forms of ‘participatory citizenship’)” (2008a, 2).²⁹ They add:

There are formal legal and juridical frameworks that determine possibilities for immigrant belonging or exclusion, and there are formal practices such as naturalization and voting. At the same time, there are “on the ground” vernacular practices employed by immigrants and those who come into contact with them [...]

Although nations define individuals in terms of discrete citizenship categories, the

“exclusionary discourse of the national citizenship regime” of the state. Yet, notwithstanding the caveats and challenges that go along with the fight for recognition in a very hostile environment, the struggles to transform undocumented immigrants “from stigmatized outcasts into legitimate political subjects” show that these groups of people are able to mobilize, lay claims, and challenge mainstream views that depict them as undeserving through their discourses and practices.

²⁸ Examples of this literature are : Das Gupta 2006; Waite 2012; Silverstein 2005; 2008; El-Tayeb 2003.

²⁹ The emergence of discussions of citizenship dates back to the 1990s (Kymlicka & Norman 1994; Jenson & D. Philipps. 1999), as a result of the challenges that immigration posed to the receiving society (Guiraudon 1999; Joppke 1999b). This literature distinguishes “formal citizenship,” that is the legal status recognized by the nation-state, from “substantial citizenship,” defined as 1) practices of citizenship by actors through civic and political activities and 2) access to substantial rights (Kymlicka & Norman 1994; Castles & Davidson 2008; Stewart 1995). Kymlicka & Norman (1994, 353) point to the distinction between “citizenship-as-legal-status” and “citizenship-as-desirable-activity.” Castles & Davidson (2008, 84) talk about access to citizenship (“becoming a citizen”) and substantial citizenship (“being a citizen”). Angus Stewart (1995, 64) distinguishes between “state citizenship,” or the legal status recognized by a nation-state, and “democratic citizenship,” or community participation of citizens as “political actors constituting political spheres.” For in-depth theoretical discussions on the changing meaning of citizenship in the contemporary era see Benhabib & al. (2010): *Identities, Affiliations, and Allegiances*. See also Balibar & Wallerstein’s (1991) *Race, Nation, and Class: Ambiguous Identity*. For a reflection on citizenship and political rights see Bauböck (2003; 2006), Bauböck & al. (2006).

ways in which citizenship is enacted, understood, and expressed may vary considerably (2008a, 2).

The literature on citizenship from below investigates the interrelation between uneven power dynamics in the receiving society, the discourses and practices of exclusion and inclusion, and the construction of specific groups as “outsiders” or “others.” It examines how migrants resist these systems by combining different forms of participation (including alternative channels such as music and art). In addition to its analysis of uneven power relations and the political mechanisms of exclusion that construct *otherness* within the nation-state, the literature on citizenship from below is particularly useful for understanding the role of migrants’ agency. It shows that, notwithstanding the powerful discourses and practices that construct a given population as “others” in given “hierarchies of belonging” (El-Tayeb 2011, 23), people of migrant background can indeed challenge and resist the multiple forms of exclusion imposed upon them through political participation and the creation of alternative narratives, as well as by mobilizing the categories that are often used to construct them as “others,” such as “ethnicity,” “race,” “class” and “gender” (Rosaldo 1996; Raissiguier 2010; El-Tayeb 2003; 2011). It suggests that political participation by people of migrant background can be a transformative or subversive process in contemporary society that challenges taken-for-granted meanings of citizenship, belonging, and social boundaries (Bash & al. 1995; Reed-Danahay & Brettell 2008b).

An outstanding example of this literature is Fatima El-Tayeb’s *European Others: Queering ethnicity in post-national Europe* (2011). The author focuses on the process through which European ideas of race construct a “fictive identity” for minority communities originally from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Her work sheds light on the ways youth of migrant origin are constructed as a “racialized subclass” at the periphery of European cities, and how they can nevertheless challenge dominant narratives by inventing innovative modes of participation from below that redefine the categories of belonging imposed on them. She explains that the dominant European discourse conveys the idea that Europe is “raceless,” and that those who are identified as “others” are externalized as non-Europeans (El-Tayeb 2011, xv). She shows how youths of migrant origin challenge the rigid construction of Europe as White and (post) Christian by performing (“queering”) “ethnicity” through music, literature, video art, etc. Through their art performances, these youths subvert dominant European narratives and show that their

spatial, social, and symbolic externalization at the periphery of European cities results in their construction as a “racialized subclass.” As El-Tayeb explains: “One central aim of these groups is to uncover a different history of race in Europe, one in which people of color appear as insiders and agents” (El-Tayeb 2011, xxxix).³⁰

In line with El-Tayeb’s analysis, Raissiguier’s monograph, *Reinventing the Republic: Gender, Migration and Citizenship in France* (2010), examines the role of women in the *sans-papiers* movement in France and emphasizes their self-determination within a larger movement that was deprived of a conceptualization of gender issues. Her work is at the crossroads of the literature on migrant social movements and post-colonial and feminist theories. The author argues that undocumented migrants’ choice to *become visible* by directly confronting French authorities, despite the risk of deportation, is a radical form of politics (Raissiguier 2010, 1-2). Within the larger movement of the *sans-papiers*, women activists use the language of human and civil rights to position themselves as *legitimate subjects* under French law, while at the same time calling attention to the contradictions at the heart of the French republican model, which claims to be color-blind and gender-blind (2010,34). The social, political, and economic vulnerabilities of the *sans-papiers* challenge the universalist claims of French politicians and jurists who depict France as an exemplary promoter of human rights (2010, 130). Within the movement, the mobilization of women challenges the dominance of a male leadership that attempts to speak for and about them. Women’s activism expands and diversifies the *sans-papiers* movement in order to attract public support, to gain powerful French allies (particularly on the Left), and most importantly, to obtain the legalization of thousands of *sans-papiers* (2010, 148). Raissiguier’s work shows how women activists contest the official narratives of the legal establishment that construct them as “impossible subjects” with their own counter-narratives, and speak back to power in their own voices (Raissiguier 2010, 33).

To summarize, the bodies of literature on citizenship from below shed light on the interaction between the social and political construction of “otherness” (Reed-Danahay & Brettell 2008a), and challenge these constructions, through the mobilization of the categories of “race,” “ethnicity,” and “gender,” for greater recognition (El-Tayeb 2011;

³⁰ El-Tayeb’s main goal is to expose the role played by concepts widely used by migration scholars and politicians. For instance, the use of the word “migrants” for second- and third-generations contributes to depict minorities as non-European, as “eternal newcomers, forever suspended in time, forever ‘just arriving’” (El-Tayeb 2011, xxv). In other words, the word activates and reproduces the notion that a given group of people does not belong to Europe and are from “elsewhere.” This is paradoxical, the author explains, precisely because these so-called “migrants” in most cases were born in the country where they reside and have probably never moved from their poor neighborhoods at the peripheries of European metropolises (2011, xxv).

Raissiguier 2010). The literature shows the role played by citizenship from below in reshaping the contours of politics from above in a context of uneven power relationships. This literature is useful because it allows us to think about participation within these power relations, and to examine the conditions under which immigrant activists can question the role ascribed to them by other actors.

In my Introduction, I presented the theoretical approach of this dissertation, arguing that in order to understand variations in forms of civic and political participation at the local level we need to look at the effects of the approaches to integration by multiple local actors. By presenting an overview of the existing literature on immigration and participation in North America and Europe, in this chapter, I have shown how my theoretical approach represents an advancement for our study of participation and how it allows us to identify and combine various factors overlooked by the literature.

Chapter 2. The Hostile National Context: Italy's Exclusionary System, Multiple Actors and the Realm of Immigration

Question: "What does it mean to live in Italy as an immigrant?"

Answer by an immigrant: "To live with denial!"

Perocco 2003, 218

In this chapter, I will present the Italian national context in order to offer an overview of the conditions under which the realm of immigration is shaped by the multiple actors that have mobilized in the sphere of immigration in Italy. Scholars have underscored that Italy's governmental institutions fail to facilitate migrants' integration and political participation at both the national and local levels. As Candia & Carchedi (2012) indicate, with the new legislation of the last ten years, we have witnessed the worsening of the already precarious conditions of people of migrant background in Italy. They note a significant decrease in the protection of labor conditions as well as public services, increasing migrants' economic and social exclusion (see also Mantovan 2007; Caritas/Migrantes 2012). For this reason, it has been argued that the Italian immigration system pushes migrants to the margins of Italian society (Calavita 2005a), reinforces their juridical and labor precariousness (Amnesty International 2012, 12; See also IOM 2010), and exposes them to extensive racialization, criminalization, and exploitation (Calavita 2005b, 414; Basso & Perocco 2003, 7; Perocco 2003, 220). Furthermore, the financial crisis that started in 2008 has contributed to a rise in xenophobic discourses, anti-immigrant attitudes and public racist declarations, thus increasing exclusionary practices and discourses towards people of migrant background (Mottura 2010). In this general context, it becomes crucial to understand *who* the actors who mobilize are and *how* they act in the area of immigration. It is only by looking at the responses of these actors in this extremely "hostile environment" (Nicholls 2014) that we can assess under what conditions people of migrant background can mobilize and make rights claims.

This chapter is divided as follows: Section 2.1 presents the main characteristics of the migration phenomenon in Italy, Section 2.2 Italy's exclusionary legal regime, Section 2.3 the exclusionary public discourses and practices on immigration, and Section 2.4 the actors involved in the area of immigration and the implications of the Italian context for the participation of people of migrant background in Italy. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks (Section 2.5).

2.1. Main characteristics of the migration phenomenon

Like other Southern European countries such as Spain, Greece and Portugal, Italy unexpectedly became an immigration country in the first half of the 1980s, after having been almost exclusively an emigration country since the beginning of the century (Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2005, 5). The transformation of Italy into an immigration country was the result of different factors. The oil crisis of 1973 affected this transformation, when Northern European countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom and France “closed their borders to immigration” and “introduced zero immigration policies” (Zincone 2011, 247). Pulling factors also played a major role: Italy started to experience a labor shortage and thus needed a labor force in the agricultural, industrial, and service sectors (Zincone 2011, 247). What is more, “low fertility rates led to an aging population, which, combined with scant social services devoted to elderly care, attracted caregivers from emigration countries” (Zincone 2011, 247; see also Einaudi 2007). Only thirty years later, Italy has become home to one of the largest migrant populations in the EU (Ministry of Labor and social policies 2014). According to official sources, in 2013, Italy had the fourth highest number of migrants in absolute numbers (more than 4 million), and had a relatively high percentage of migrants on a per capita basis (7.4%) (Ministry of Labor and Social Policies 2014, 13).³¹

In the following pages I present a brief summary of the main characteristics of immigration in Italy.

Rapid inflow, substantial volume and stabilization of the migrant population

According to Giovanna Zincone (2011, 247), two main factors have characterized the immigration phenomenon in Italy: sudden inflow and substantial volume. When immigration in Italy started in the mid-70s, it included students and refugees from different countries. Yet the first significant increase in immigration took place in the 1980s and 1990s, when migrants and refugees arrived mainly from the Balkan and Eastern European regions. In the 2000s the influx accelerated tremendously as migrants began to arrive from Asia and Africa as well (Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2005, 7). The entry of new countries to

³¹ The first three countries were Spain, with 10.9%, Germany, with 9.4 %, and the United Kingdom with 7.7 % of the immigrant population. This data are a re-elaboration of the EUROSTAT data.

the European Union—Poland in 2004 and Romania and Bulgaria in 2007—contributed significantly to the increase of migrants from Eastern Europe (OECD 2014, 45).³²

Recent statistics on the characteristics of the migrant population suggest that, notwithstanding the financial crisis, the migrant population is heading toward greater stabilization in Italy (Caritas/Migrantes 2012, 443). In 2011, the total population of Italy was 60,820,764 and the proportion of migrants (EU and non-EU citizens) was about 8.2 % of the total population. Of the total foreign population, non-EU citizens were around 68% and EU around 29%. In addition to the migrant population, 546,340 foreigners became new Italian citizens from 2003 to 2013. Also the presence of migrants who were minors was 23.9 % of the migrant population. Finally, the number of people holding a long-term permit amounted to more than 52.1 %.

Great diversity of the migrant population

The migrant population of Italy is highly diverse. Though the five largest migrant communities—Romanians, Albanians, Moroccans, Chinese, and Ukrainians—represent more than 50% of the total number, the total migrant population includes people from four continents (ISTAT 2013). The table below presents an overview of the main migrant groups.

³² It is also important to note that the economic crisis is presently impacting Italy's immigrant population and there is an important number of people who are also leaving the country (ISTAT 2013).

TABLE 2.1. Main immigrant communities in Italy (2011)

ORIGIN	TOTAL (approximate)	%
Foreign population	5,011,000	100.0
Non-EU citizens	3,637,800	73.4
EU residents	1,334,800	26.6
1. Romania (EU)	951,100	21.7
2. Morocco	437,500	10.0
3. Albania	412,700	9.4
4. China	213,600	4.9
5. Ukraine	192,300	4.4
6. Philippines	139,800	3.2
7. Moldavia	130,800	3.0
8. India	123,700	2.8
9. Peru	97,600	2.2
10. Poland	95,900	2.2
11. Tunisia	93,200	2.1
12. Egypt	91,900	2.1
13. Bangladesh	88,500	2.0
14. Ecuador	84,400	1.9
15. Sri Lanka	83,700	1.9
16. Senegal	79,000	1.8
17. Pakistan	77,500	1.8
18. Macedonia	74,400	1.7
19. Nigeria	56,600	1.3
20. Bulgaria	50,000	1.1
Other Countries	813,300	18.4

Source: Ministry of Labor and Social Policies 2014, 35.

Youth of the migrant population

The migrant population in Italy is very young compared with the Italian population, and is thus helping to counteract the demographic challenges posed by Italy's aging population and low birth rate. A study of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies of Italy (2014, 29) compares the structure of the Italian and migrant population by age in 2013 and shows that the migrant population is larger than the Italian population in the age ranges 0-14 (19.5 % compared to 13.5%) and 15-34 (34.8% compared to 20.5%). Between the ages of 35 and 64, the two populations are very similar with 34.1% of the migrant population

and 34.3% of the Italian population. Finally, among people of the age of 65 and older, the study shows that the migrant population is only 2.7% while the Italian population is 22.7%.

Concentration in the richest regions of the North

More than three out of five people of foreign origin working in Italy in 2012 were employed in the Northern regions (66%). What is more, almost 37% of the migrant population is concentrated in the North-West alone, and 29% in the North-East. The region of Lombardy alone hosts almost 20% of the foreign population in Italy. Additionally, the central regions host around 23% and the South and the Islands (Sicily and Sardinia) host 13% of the migrant population in Italy (ISTAT 2013).³³

Low-skilled jobs, exploitation, and discrimination

Migrants are mainly employed in low-skilled and low-paid jobs, often in the underground economy, and suffer from exploitation and discrimination. Ambrosini (2005) explains that migrants' jobs can be characterized by the "five Ps": *pesanti* (heavy), *precari* (precarious), *pericolosi* (dangerous), *poco pagati* (low paid), *penalizzanti socialmente* (socially penalizing). According to the OECD (2014, 20), 44% of the "regular" migrant population working in Italy in 2010 were employed in non-qualified or semi-qualified jobs, in contrast to only 15% of native Italians (see also Mottura & al. 2010; Megale 2010, 19).

Migrant laborers with valid work permits mainly work in the service sector (57%) and industrial sector (29.6%). In the service sector, they are mainly employed by private citizens as caregivers and domestic servants, and by enterprises such as restaurants and hotels. In the industrial sector, they are mostly employed in construction and manufacturing (OECD 2014, 20). Also 8.5% are employed in the agricultural sector. Some migrants are also self-employed in small enterprises, which represent the 7.8% of the total enterprises in Italy (Ministry of Labor and Social Policies 2013).

A huge number of "regular" migrants are also employed in the underground economy. Like all southern European countries, "the underground economy has long been well-rooted in Italy" (Reyneri 1998b, 86) and both documented and undocumented migrants participate in it extensively. Already in the 1980s and 1990s, Reyneri noted that, "all local surveys of immigrants show a huge proportion of irregular employment, even among those who could have a regular labor contract, since they hold residence and work

³³ These percentages would change if one included the undocumented immigrants, who are mostly concentrated in the Southern regions.

permits” (1998b, 87).³⁴ Recent research also shows that this is the case not only for non-EU citizens, but for EU citizens as well, such as the Romanians working in the construction sector (OECD 2014).³⁵ The IOM has denounced the high level of exploitation linked to the underground economy in Italy, especially in the agricultural sector in the southern regions of Campania, Apulia and Sicily (IOM 2010). Amnesty International (2012) also points out that exploitation in the agricultural sector is widespread in the rest of Italy. Finally, the journalist Ragusa (2011) documents the situation of extreme exploitation in the regions of the North, such as Veneto, Lombardy, Emilia Romagna and Tuscany.

High proportion of undocumented migrants³⁶

Another major characteristic of migration in Italy is the huge number of undocumented migrants living in the country (Fasani 2009, 13; Triandafyllidou & Ambrosini 2011). In Italy the phenomenon is widespread and is deeply linked to the underground economy (Calavita 2005a; Reyneri 1998a; 2003). Research has shown that the underground economy and demand for labor are crucial pull factors (Reyneri 1998a; Mottura 2010). Reyneri also has underscored that rather than being the cause of the underground economy in Italy (and elsewhere in Southern Europe), irregular immigration is one of its results (Reyneri 1998a).³⁷ People are considered “irregular” (or “illegal”) when they enter without documents, or when they reside in the country after the expiration of their visa (Fasani 2009, 13)

Since the 1980s, left-wing and right-wing governments in Italy have approved seven amnesties to legalize undocumented migrants (Table 2.2). These amnesties have been one of the main instruments of Italian immigration policies (Carfagna 2002; Mantovan 2007,

³⁴ Reyneri (1998b, 87) notes that “From 1991 to 1996 the proportion of irregular Non-EU wage-earners at the national level was never lower than 31 percent,” that is, more than twice as much as Italian workers. What is more, contrary to the belief that the percentage of irregular immigrants working in the underground economy was larger in the agricultural sector of the South, Reyneri notes that in addition to the South, Latium and Lombardy (the regions with the highest number of immigrants) and the de-industrialized regions of the North-West were “above the national average” (1998b, 87). He adds: “The proportion of irregular immigrant wage-earners is generally higher in hotels and catering, cleaning, housekeeping and the retail trade, whereas it is lower in the transport and industry” (1998b, 87). Not all irregular immigrant wage earners are without documents. According to the Ministry of Labor inspections, they are generally divisible into two almost equal groups: those who hold a permit of stay for work reasons and those who do not (Reyneri 2003).

³⁵ Giovanni Tizian. 2013. “Chi specula sugli schiavi Rumeni.” *L'Espresso*. May 6, 2013. <http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/cronaca/2013/05/06/news/chi-specula-sugli-schiavi-romeni-1.54097> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³⁶ For a recent comprehensive analysis on the subject see Fasani (2009). Fasani also explains the difficulty to calculate this numbers. A method that he uses is the calculation of the number of undocumented immigrants who applied for mass regularizations.

³⁷ In his breakthrough study, Reyneri argues that undocumented labor is attracted by the underground economy (1998a).

43; Kotic & Triandafyllidou 2005) (see below). Research shows that “More than a half of the documented migrants currently residing in Italy have obtained legal status through one of the[se] mass regularizations” (Fasani 2009, 13). In total, around 1,760,200 migrants have been regularized with the amnesties, making Italy the country in Europe with the highest number of people regularized through this method (Fasani 2009, 13; see also Carfagna 2002).

TABLE 2.2. Amnesties for undocumented workers

		Year of amnesty	Number of non-EU immigrants	Requests for regularization	Number accepted	% accepted
Law 943/1986	Known as..	1986	450,227	113,349	105,000	92.9
Law 416/1990	Law Martelli	1990	490,338	234,841	222,000	94.9
Decree 489/1995	Decree Dini	1995	729,159	258,761	246,000	95.0
Law 286/1998	Turco-Napolitano	1998	1,090,820	250,747	217,000	86.8
Law 189/2002	Bossi-Fini	2002	1,512,324	704,000	650,000	92.3
Law 94/2009	Security Package	2009	N.A.	294,744	215,255	73.0
Decree 109/2012	--	2012	3,637,000	N.A.	105,200	78.8

Source: Carfagna 2002, 59; ISTAT 2013.

As I explain below (Section 2.2.3), the phenomenon of undocumented migrants is not only structurally linked to the underground economy, but it is also produced and reinforced by the current legislation (Colombo 2009). As Francesco Fasani (2009, 16-17) and Kitty Calavita (2005a, 74) explain, migration policy (interacting with economic factors) produces irregularity. Calavita (2005a, 74) adds that the legislation, by producing “illegality,” constructs migrants’ marginalization, and this nourishes a circle of exclusion through the confinement of this vulnerable population to the margins of the Italian economy. What is more, “their location in the economy *reproduces* [...] otherness from within, as immigrants’ status as an underclass of workers with substandard wages and working conditions impedes their full membership in the national community” (Calavita 2005a, 74).

The impact of the financial crisis

The migrant population in Italy is greatly affected by the financial crisis and has been set back several steps in the process of social and economic integration. In Italy, the economic crisis has hit migrants the hardest, as it has in most EU countries (OECD 2014). According to the report of the Italian Ministry of Labor and Social Policies (2013, 13), among the sectors most affected by the economic crisis are those in which migrants often work, such as the construction and the manufacturing sectors.

Concluding remarks

This section has offered an overview of the main characteristics of the migration phenomenon in Italy. It has shown that, given the stabilization of the migrant population and its great diversity, Italy has become *de facto* a multiethnic society. It also has shown that migrants are mainly employed in low skilled, low paid and precarious jobs. A huge proportion of migrants are hired in the underground economy and many are victims of exploitation. Italy became an immigration country relatively recently and almost unexpectedly in the 1980s, and in the 1990s and the 2000s the country experienced a massive increase and diversification of its foreign population (Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2005, 5). As Triandafyllidou (2000, 374) explains, Italy was unprepared for the sudden growth of its foreign population, and therefore confronted “socio-economic and political issues that... governments were not ready to tackle” (Triandafyllidou 2000, 374; see also Ambrosini 2013b, 314). Additionally, Kosic and Triandafyllidou (2005, 23) observe that “the lack of political stability deeply affected immigration policy and the political opportunity structure,” by impeding policies that would have addressed the phenomenon in a pragmatic and coherent way. In the following section I will examine the state’s responses to the phenomenon of immigration since the end of the 1990s.

2.2. Italy’s exclusionary system and the construction of otherness

As I suggested in the introduction to this chapter, since the beginning of the 2000s, like many other countries in Europe that have experienced “the return to assimilation” (Brubaker 2001), Italy has moved toward an incorporation regime based on exclusion and “institutional racism” (Basso 2010, 391). In this section I will briefly explain how legal and political factors have contributed to the construction of migrants as second-class citizens, excluding them as “others” from the mainstream of Italian society.

2.2.1. Citizenship law

Key to understanding the receiving society's mechanisms of inclusion is an assessment of its process of citizenship acquisition (Brubaker 1992; Bloemraad 2006). The Italian citizenship regime is particularly exclusionary when it comes to citizenship acquisition for non-EU nationals and has been noted for its extraordinary slowness (Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2005, 20). Italian legislation on citizenship is regulated by the Law 91/1992. As in many European countries, the Law is mainly based on *jus sanguinis*, which favors the acquisition of Italian citizenship for citizens who have Italian "blood," rather than those who are born in the country (*jus soli*) (Brubaker 1992).³⁸ Migrants who want to naturalize may do it in one of the following ways: (1) They may be naturalized automatically, if they have at least one Italian parent, regardless of their place of birth, or if one of the parents of a minor becomes an Italian citizen; (2) They may request citizenship under certain conditions, such as having been born in Italy or continuously residing in Italy until they are 18 years of age. The citizenship application must be submitted within a year after the 18th birthday; (3) They can apply for citizenship if they are married to an Italian. Before the foreign spouse can apply for naturalization, the couple must have been married for three years if they reside abroad or six months if they live in Italy; (4) Individuals can request Italian citizenship if they have lived in Italy for at least 10 years (4 years for EU citizens), and have no penal precedents and adequate economic resources.

It has been argued that the Law is exclusionary in at least three main ways: (1) Individuals have to wait a very long time to apply for citizenship—10 years—and this is aggravated by the slow bureaucratic process: it can take up to three or four years to receive an answer from the institutions, which extends the waiting time to 13 or 14 years (Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2005, 22-23). (2) Based on the principle of the *jus sanguinis*, the Law slows down the processes of inclusion of migrant children, who are considered migrants until they can apply for citizenship at the age of 18, unless their parents acquire Italian citizenship when they are still minors. Finally, (3) "Children born in Italy to undocumented immigrants are themselves undocumented" (Calavita 2005b, 413).

In addition to these difficulties, the current restrictiveness of the legislation on immigration makes it more and more complicated to comply with the criteria. As Kitty Calavita (2005b, 413) explains, "Permanent resident status and eventually citizenship are

³⁸ There are very limited cases in which one can acquire citizenship on the basis of the *jus soli* principle. One such exception is if an individual born in Italy has no parents or the parents are stateless or unknown (Art. 1, comma 1, letter B law 91/1992).

available for immigrants who can patch together years of uninterrupted legal residency, but achieving this is almost impossible.” The stringent legal conditions under which migrants can naturalize explain why Italy has experienced a low rate of naturalization. Between 2003 and 2013, only 546,340 migrants naturalized (ISTAT 2013). This number is very small and most naturalizations were obtained by marrying an Italian citizen (Fasani 2009, 10).

2.2.2. Laws on immigration and integration

In addition to the law on citizenship, two other laws enhance the exclusionary nature of the immigration process: Law 189/2002, also known as the Bossi-Fini Law, and Laws 125/2008 and 94/2009, also known as *Security Package* (“Pacchetto Sicurezza”) (Zanrosso 2012). These two laws reflect the increasing influence of the anti-immigrant party, the Northern League, in shaping Italy’s immigration policies (Zaslove 2011). Approved by right-wing majorities in the Parliament, both laws significantly modified the first comprehensive law on migration in Italy: Law 40/1998, also known as the *Turco-Napolitano*, approved by the left-wing government in power at that time (Zanrosso 2012, 102). In addition, it is worth noting that Italy is the only EU state lacking laws that guarantee protection for asylum seekers (Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2005, 14). Kosic & Triandafyllidou (2005, 14) note that political asylum is regulated by Article 1 of Law 39/1989 and by a few articles of the Bossi-Fini Law. Under the Bossi-Fini Law, recognized refugees receive a two-year residence permit that allows them to work and access public assistance, and then, after 5 years, to apply for citizenship.

In this section I will describe the three main laws and explain their consequences for migrants’ integration in Italy.

The Turco-Napolitano (Law 40/1998): Beyond emergency, towards an inclusionary model. Even though there were two previous attempts to regulate the phenomenon of migration since the 1980s (Law 943/1986 and Law 90/1990), *the first comprehensive law* on immigration in Italy, known as the Single Text (*Testo Unico*) or the Turco-Napolitano, was approved only in 1998 by a left-wing majority in parliament. It remains the main law on immigration in Italy (Zanrosso 2012).³⁹

³⁹ The Law 943/1986 addressed the phenomenon of migration as “a limited and transitory phenomenon. Immigrants were considered mostly as temporary workers, without foreseeing regulations for their integration” (Mantovan 2007, 38; see also Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2005, 7). The law 90/1990, best known

Anna Meli and Udo Enwereuzor (2003) explain that the Turco-Napolitano Law represented the first opening towards immigrants' inclusion in Italy, because the state acknowledged the necessity of going beyond a "state of emergency" and creating effective measures that would respond to the "structural" presence of immigrants in the country. For the first time in Italian history, public authorities explicitly recognized that immigration was an unavoidable phenomenon and that Italy needed immigrants, in particular to address labor force scarcities (Campomori & Caponio 2014). The Law introduced three main areas of intervention: planning of inflows, economic and social integration of immigrants, and prevention of irregular immigration (Campomori 2008, 28-29; Caponio 2006a, 68-69).⁴⁰ For the first time, inflows were planned in advance to regulate the arrival of immigrants and allow legal channels for entrance into the country. The Law introduced a system of annual quotas updated every three years. Additionally, every year (beginning on 30 November), the Ministry of Labor publishes the positions available for the following year through the Flow Decree (*Decreto Flussi*). These quotas are defined by the local and regional labor offices of the Ministry and employers' associations in each province (Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2005, 8).⁴¹

An important aspect of this legislation was its explicit recognition of the role of regions and localities as well as non-state actors in the implementation of integration policies (Campomori & Caponio 2014). For instance, regions and local authorities were expected to internally distribute the resources of the National Fund (*Fondo Nazionale*) (Art. 50 of the regulation of actualization D.P.R. 31 August 1999, n. 394). Additionally, the Law explicitly addresses the role of the third sector, encouraging collaboration among local authorities and immigrant associations (Art. 36 on intercultural education; Art. 38 on centers of welcoming; Art. 40 and 42 on measures for social integration, such as providing information on rights, duties and opportunities, training for social workers and use of social mediators) (Campomori 2008, 29).⁴²

as the Martelli Law, started considering the phenomenon in the long-run: "It introduced an annual planning of the migration flows and norms to regulate rights, duties and conditions of stay of immigrants, as well as family reunification and other aspects of social integration" (Mantovan 2007, 38).

⁴⁰ For a complete reconstruction and analysis of the Turco-Napolitano see Einaudi (2007).

⁴¹ Family reunifications are exempt from the planned quota. Immigrants who have held a permit to stay for work-related, study or religious reasons for at least one year, or who hold a residency card (Art. 29, issued for a five-year period), can apply for reunification with: (a) a husband or wife; (b) dependent children; or (c) dependent parents (Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2005, 9).

⁴² The Law also established the annual regional plans, that indicate the goal to pursue, the intervention to realize, in what way and in what time to realize them, the costs and resources to deploy (Art. 59) (Campomori 2008, 29). It also indicates that the municipalities and the provinces have to contribute in the formulation and implementation of the policies of integration. Additionally, it foresaw a strong collaboration

The Law also mandated measures to bring temporary status immigrants who had lived in the country for a long time and held permits of stay to a more stable status by issuing them resident permits. The Law also improved the processes of family reunification (Zanrosso 2012, 100). In Parliament, the left-wing coalition discussed the possibility of introducing more inclusive rules for the acquisition of formal citizenship—still based on the *jus sanguinis* principle as well as greater forms of civic and political participation at the local level, including the right to vote—but some of these changes to the legislation were postponed (Meli & Enwereuzor 2003).

Though encouraging regular migration and progressive inclusion, the Law also mandated the expulsion of undocumented immigrants. For the first time in the history of the Republic, the Turco-Napolitano Law created the Centers of Temporary Detention (CPT-*Centri di Permanenza Temporanea*) for all foreign citizens who could not be expelled immediately for various reasons (Art. 11 and 12). As Livia Turco, the Minister who promoted the legislation in 1998, admitted, the Turco-Napolitano law was an incomplete attempt to tackle the challenges of migration, including planned entry and the underground economy (Turco 2005). Other modifications would have been necessary to better integrate immigrants and keep up with the transformation of Italy into a multiethnic society (see also Calavita 2005b, 413).⁴³ In particular, the Law was not able to solve the large-scale problems associated with the growing numbers of undocumented immigrants working in Italy. This meant that it could not avoid producing irregularity and pushing immigrants into the underground economy. Additionally, the Law could not be put into effect when the government was replaced by the right-wing majority of Berlusconi in 2002.

The Bossi-Fini (Law 189/2002): securitization, institutional discrimination, and “zero tolerance” for irregular immigration. The Bossi-Fini Law marks the exclusionary turn

between regions and municipalities: the first were expected to assume the role of planning the areas of interventions and the second the role of formulating and implementing specific services and projects following the areas of interventions indicated by the regions. The Law also created an instrument of coordination at the local level between public and private actors: the Territorial Councils for Immigration (Art. 3). It is an organization coordinated by the prefects with the task of analyzing needs and promoting interventions at the local level. The members of the councils include the local administration, the associations that work in favor of immigrants, such as Church-based organizations and trade unions, non-profit organizations, and immigrant associations, as well as organizations of employers (see Mantovan 2007, 173).

⁴³ On June 6, 2013 in Rome, during the National Forum on migration organized by Livia Turco as the representative of migration policies from the main center-left-wing party, the Democratic Party, she argued that the Turco-Napolitano Law, which she developed with Napolitano, was in reality the result of an uncompleted process, since by the end of the 1990s, they were not yet prepared to “manage” the challenges of immigration (documents collected during the fieldwork).

of the Italian immigration system. The Law takes its name from the two members of the parliament who were most influential in its construction: Umberto Bossi, the then-leader of the Northern League, and Gianfranco Fini, the then-leader of the National Alliance, a successor of the post-fascist party (Zaslove 2006).⁴⁴ The Law introduced some important regulations on immigration policies and formally left “unchanged the norms related to the integration policies” (Zanrosso 2012, 102). *De facto*, however, it not only annulled many initiatives proposed in the Turco-Napolitano law to facilitate “regular” entrance, but it also obscured some of the crucial issues of integration addressed in that law (Zanrosso 2012, 102). Additionally, it focused on issues of “public security” rather than integration, and prioritized the fight against irregular migration (Colombo 2012; Colombo & Sciortino 2004; Meli & Enwereuzor 2003, 23). Overall, the Law made the juridical status of both regular and irregular immigrants more precarious than before, and had very negative consequences on immigrants’ processes of integration (Caponio & al. 2012, 4).

The main points of the Law are the following:

- Work permits can be granted only if the person has a job and a place of residence and if the employer can guarantee return passage if the person loses that job.
- Non-EU citizens can no longer get a visa to come to Italy to seek jobs, but have to already have a job before their arrival.
- Migrants can enter the country only if an employer has made a specific request for workers in one of the newly created local immigration centers (Zaslove 2006, 31).
- The Law reduces the permit of stay from two years to one year for the first issue and from four to two for its renewal.
- When the working permit expires, immigrants have six months to find a job. If they do not find one, they must leave the country immediately.
- The time in Italy required before applying for a long-term permit (Resident Permit) was extended from five to six years (Art. 9).
- The sponsorship of people without a job contract before their arrival is no longer possible (Art.14), nor are family reunifications (Art. 23 and 24).

As far as integration policies are concerned, the Bossi-Fini Law confirmed the major role of regional and local actors foreseen in the Turco-Napolitano law and promoted welfare actions (Campomori 2008, 30; Caponio 2006a, 72-77). This last point is significant. Several scholars have found that this service-oriented approach fails to

⁴⁴ For a reconstruction of the debate in Parliament in 1998 see Zaslove (2006) and for a reconstruction of the rise of the Northern League see Zaslove (2011).

promote real integration, because it treats immigrants as people in need of assistance, and does not empower them or consider them as would-be citizens at any stage of their integration (Campomori 2008; Mantovan 2007; Torrese 2010). In addition to the already difficult processes of naturalization based on *jus sanguinis* still present, the Bossi-Fini Law added new bureaucratic measures making these processes even more complicated (Caponio & al. 2012). The precarious juridical status created by the Bossi-Fini Law also undermined immigrants' ability to apply for citizenship (Calavita 2005b, 413). Finally, the Bossi-Fini Law made the life of undocumented immigrants in Italy more difficult (Cannella 2010). It focused on the penalization of irregular immigrants, reflecting Bossi's idea of applying a "zero tolerance" policy to those who break Italian laws by entering or staying in the country "illegally" (Zaslove 2006, 32). The Law mandated the navy to tighten control of the coast to prevent illegal immigration to the South of Italy, and required each immigrant entering the country to be fingerprinted (Zaslove 2006). It also increased control over Italian territory by reinforcing the power of the prefecture and the police (Ambrosini 2013b). Additionally, the Law increased sanctions against undocumented immigrants who had been expelled from the country: it extended the prohibition to enter the country after expulsion (already present in the Turco-Napolitano) from 5 to 10 years (Art. 14).

The Security Package: the felony of "illegal" immigration. Further restrictive measures were added to the Bossi-Fini in 2008 and in 2009, when the Northern League was in its most powerful position in Italian history (Ambrosini 2013a; Zaslove 2011).⁴⁵ Roberto Maroni, at that time the Minister of the Interior and a main leader of the Northern League Party, pushed for additional modifications of the Turco-Napolitano law by introducing the so-called "Security Package" (Law 125/2008 and Law 94/2009) (Cannella 2010). As Ambrosini (2013a, 5) documents, during the national elections in 2008, "issues of security and the struggle against illegal immigration dominated the campaign and contributed considerably to the overwhelming victory of the Center-Right, which promised 'no more illegal immigration on the doorstep!'"

⁴⁵ The Northern League was part of several Berlusconi governments: in 1994-1995, in 2001-2005, in 2005-2006 and in 2008-2011. In the elections of 2008, the Northern League doubled its position in parliament and increased its influence at the local level (Ambrosini 2013a). At the national level it received 8.3% of votes, that is 4.2% more than the previous elections in 2006 and obtained 60 deputies (+37) and 26 senators (+13). See article "Vince il PDL. Le Lega raddoppia." *Corriere della Sera*. April 14, 2008. http://www.corriere.it/Politica/2008/elezioni08/elezioni_dati_8868a4f4-0a1e-11dd-bdc8-00144f486ba6.shtml (Accessed June 25, 2015).

The most relevant modification to the Law was the introduction of the felony of illegal entry and stay, punishable with a fine of 5,000 to 10,000 euros (Art. 1 comma 16, inserted in the Law 286/1998 in the article 10-bis) (Cannella 2010, 41). The Law also reinforced measures for the expulsion of those found in an “irregular” situation (Zanrosso 2012, 111). Since immigrants are expected to show their permit of stay or resident permit on all occasions (Zanrosso 2012, 117-118), irregular immigrants are prevented from accessing public services (e.g. healthcare, schools, transportation, electricity and gas, water, etc.) and are kept under constant surveillance (Cannella 2010, 52). Triandafyllidou and Ambrosini (2011, 263-264) note:

The new laws [...] provided the introduction of irregular stay status as an aggravating circumstance in trials concerning immigrants prosecuted for other crimes; the definition of unauthorized presence in the country as a crime; the prohibition of all administrative acts, including marriage, for undocumented immigrants and the introduction of the possibility of territorial surveillance by citizens’ associations (the so-called citizens patrols, *ronde* in Italian). In addition, the new laws extended the detention period of irregular immigrants in “identification and expulsion centers” to a maximum of six months.⁴⁶

The current legal and political framework in Italy has important repercussions for both “regular” and “irregular” immigrants in Italy. In the following section I will present an analysis of how this exclusionary regime affects immigrants’ living and working conditions.

2.2.3. Implication of the Italian exclusionary system for inclusion

Scholarly research has increasingly been examining the negative effects of the current Italian incorporation regime, which according to several authors is creating a new form of “Italian apartheid” (Perocco 2003, 221) and is supporting “the economics of alterité in Italy” (Calavita 2005b, 415). As I noted in the Introduction of this dissertation, Raissiguier (2010, 4) explains that, “global economic transformations, the construction of Europe, increasing national anxieties and the economic crisis” have all contributed to the

⁴⁶ The authors also note that “some of these new policies were later annulled by the Constitutional Court, including the so-called citizen patrols, the introduction of irregular stay status as an aggravating circumstance for other crimes, and the obligation to leave the country for apprehended irregular immigrants even if these did not have the financial means to pay their trip” (Triandafyllidou & Ambrosini 2011, 264).

emergence of a “hegemonic discursive and material practice” which constructs immigrants as outsiders or “impossible subjects” of the nation-state. In the case of Italy, through similar hegemonic legal and political arrangements, the state has created what Calavita calls an “economy of otherness” in which immigrants are subordinated to a system that benefits from their work while conceding them very limited rights (Calavita 2005a). The effects of the exclusionary regime fall into four broad categories.

First of all, the current legislation creates *juridical precariousness* for immigrants. By shortening the permit of stay and by requiring greater documentation for work permits, the Law redoubles the “bureaucratic burden,” thereby making immigrants “subjects of the administration” (Caponio & al. 2012, 3). Caponio and al. (2012, 4) identify some major problems with the current system. For instance, the delay (up to one year) of the release of the permit of stay for one year creates “the paradoxical situation of the release of permits that need to be renewed again,” because they have expired (or soon will). This means that immigrants are at the mercy of bureaucracy to keep a regular status in the country. In turn, this has socio-economic repercussions. Even though immigrants have a receipt that shows that they have applied for the documents, many doors are closed to them. Without a permit, one cannot be hired or ask for a subsidy or social benefit. What is more, while waiting for the permit of stay, immigrants are suspended: they are not allowed to work in the Schengen area (which is their right for up to three months) and cannot go to their country of origin to see family and friends (Caponio & al. 2012, 4). Caponio and al. also point out that the Law makes it more difficult for “regular” immigrants to access basic services because social workers are not well prepared and kept up-to-date, and thus are not able to give basic information on this matter. The real problem is that it is impossible for those who work in the public administration in Italy “to keep up with the incredible number of norms, circulars, and explicative notes that are used to govern a structural element [...] with a perspective of temporariness and planning exclusively connected to the execution of a job” (Caponio & al. 2012, 5)

Second, the closer link between residence and work established by the Bossi-Fini Law produces “*institutionalized irregularity*” (Calavita 2005b, 413). As I explained above, the management of foreign labor flows in Italy is based on an annual quota system that establishes the number of workers needed each year (Turco-Napolitano Law). However, authors have noted that there is a mismatch between the quotas and labor demands and this results in the production of irregularity, because with the current immigration laws it is difficult to obtain permanent legal status (Zincone 2011).

Kosic and Triandafyllidou (2005) point out: “The gap between the planned legal quotas, the demand for foreign labor and the immigration pressure from non-EU countries continuously reproduce large numbers of undocumented immigrants” (12). The problems date back to the Turco-Napolitano Law (Zincone 1998). Quoting Zincone, Fasani (2009, 16-17) explains, “the lack of adequate possibilities for legally accessing the Italian labor market—‘... the policy of *closing the front door of legal entry, while keeping the back door of illegal entry half open...*’ (Zincone 1998)—has played a major role in increasing undocumented stocks and flows.” In spite of its attempt to end “irregularity,” the Bossi-Fini Law has not been able to solve this problem. On the contrary, it has visibly increased the production of irregularity. Triandafyllidou and Ambrosini (2011, 264) explain,

The Bossi-Fini Law had introduced [...] a closer link between residence and work (demanding that immigrants have, among other things, job stability that contrasts with the flexibility that the labor market imposes on them), while fighting irregular immigration in a more emphatic and vigorous manner. The law requires that the immigrant has a long term work contract to be able to renew her/his stay permit for a 2-year period. This provision is in contrast with the reality of the labor market, which offers temporary work contracts especially in the sectors where immigrants are predominantly employed such as construction, agriculture, tourism, catering, and cleaning services. In the domestic work sector in particular immigrants cannot ‘prove’ that they have worked the required amount of hours/days as work is largely informal and with lower welfare contributions than the hours/day actually worked. Thus, when the day of the stay permit renewal comes near immigrants have to look for an employer that is willing to comply with the requirements of the law. If they fail, they are likely to lose their permit.

Since the legislation in Italy has made the regulation of inflow very difficult, immigrants attempt to regularize once in the country through amnesties. Kosic and Triandafyllidou (2005, 9) note:

Although annual quotas are to be used for immigrants entering Italy through legal procedures for employment purposes, they have often been used by undocumented immigrants who resided and worked in Italy to obtain legal status. Indeed, the initial legal provision was adapted to reality through a circular that allowed for undocumented immigrants workers to apply for a [...] permit from within Italy,

provided their employer was willing to undertake the complicated bureaucratic procedures.

However, as Calavita (2005b, 413) stresses, these mass regularizations do not solve the problem of irregular migration. For this reason, the high presence of irregular immigrants has led to repeated regularization programs.

Legalization programs are periodically launched for those who enter illegally, stay past the period of their initial employment on [...] quotas, or do a stint in the underground economy. But these programs offer only temporary legal status, and renewals are contingent on being employed in the formal economy—an almost impossible obstacle for most non-EU immigrants. Anchored by temporary and contingent permit systems, Italian immigration law thus builds in illegality.

Thirdly, the current legislation has repercussions on *labor precariousness* and *economic marginalization*. According to Calavita, in Italy, “Economic Marginality is [...] institutionalized through law” (Calavita 2005b, 415). In line with Calavita’s statement, Giovanni Cannella (2010, 41-45) underscores that the precarious juridical status of non-EU workers in Italy has effects not only on the irregular immigrants, but on regular immigrants as well. While the strong link between the permit of stay and permit of work established by the Bossi-Fini Law had already contributed to the vulnerability of immigrant workers who could be easily blackmailed, the Security Package’s introduction of the *felony of clandestinity* further aggravated the situation. Cannella explains that, “The greater the vulnerability, the greater the probability that immigrants will accept the worst working conditions, low paid jobs, work in very bad conditions and in impossible hours, and in places where there is lack of security” (Cannella 2010, 45). He adds:

With the new felony of illegal immigration, rebellion will become even more rare and the will of the worker to hide the exploitation will become even stronger, because denouncing the employer will mean exposing him – because he or she could at any time be denounced by the police, and possibly deported (Cannella 2010, 46; *my translation*).

Fourth, through the current legislation, both regular and irregular immigrants are *criminalized, inferiorized, and constructed as people with no rights and as “outsiders”* (Basso & Perocco 2003, 7). The Law constructs “regular” immigrants in Italy “only and exclusively” in economic-utilitarian terms under the principle of the *Jus Laboris*, “that is,

being subordinated to being active” and productive in the labor force (Perocco 2003, 219; *my translation*; see also Sciortino & Colombo 2004, 204-210; Basso & Perocco 2003, 18-19). Immigrants’ presence in the country is ambiguously justified only for some categories of workers, in particular domestic workers (the so-called “colf e badanti”), and thus most other immigrant workers are not considered worthy of staying in Italy (Meli & Enwereuzor 2003, 23). In line with this approach, the Law restricts family reunifications and limits the conditions under which immigrants can reside in the country or ask for a long-stay permit (Pastore 2010, 66). This idea was expressed very straightforwardly by one of my interviewees of Senegalese origin in Bergamo:

The Bossi-Fini Law has only one rationale: to squeeze the immigrant as much as possible. Then it throws him away. To link the permit of stay to the job means squeezing them without giving anything in exchange.⁴⁷

Triandafyllidou and Ambrosini (2011, 264) also point that with the Bossi-Fini Law and the Security Package,

Immigration is [...] framed as a question of security and public order. Immigrants are presented as a population that is potentially dangerous and that needs to be under surveillance. Immigration is tolerated so long as it responds to the needs of the labor market, in particular the needs of Italian families for caregivers and cleaners.

Thus, through their construction as a “threat” and as “criminals,” irregular immigrants are exposed by the legislation to extensive *racialization*, *criminalization* and *inferiorization* (Ambrosini 2013a). This context makes immigrants with different statuses very vulnerable and exposes them to similar forms of stigmatization.

Finally, the financial crisis has added a further burden to the already-difficult situation faced by immigrants due to the exclusionary model. Not only are they the first to lose their jobs and with them their housing and their permit to stay, but more than ever they are considered a problem and threat to Italian society and thus are exposed to many forms of institutional discrimination, racism and exploitation.

⁴⁷ Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013.

Before I turn to the responses of multiple actors to the Italian exclusionary model, I will briefly introduce how Italy has been developing a climate of intolerance towards foreigners.

2.3. The public discourse on immigration, discrimination and the construction of otherness

Public discourse on security issues has brought about a “racist wave” in Italy, which, in addition to the exclusionary legal framework, has made the life of immigrants difficult.⁴⁸ Increasingly discriminatory discourses and practices have been put in place by institutions, representatives of political parties, the police, and private citizens (Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2005). Research shows that discrimination has also been experienced in the housing market (Baldini & Federici 2011) and in the workplace (OECD 2014, 32). The mass media have also played a major role by “promoting a negative and stereotyped image of immigrants” (Mantovan 2007, 42). Italy has not yet adopted adequate measures to counteract these trends, making it difficult to assess their scope and effect (OECD 2014, 108-109).

The Northern League has contributed to the spread of discriminatory discourses and practices towards immigrants at both the national and local level (Ambrosini 2013b). Instead of responsibly addressing the challenges of immigration and the anxieties of the Italian population provoked by the growing immigrant population, they have encouraged increasing racism and xenophobia (Ambrosini 2013a). In particular, they chose to politicize the discourse on migration, reinforcing Islamophobia and openly suggesting a link between irregular immigration and criminality (Mantovan 2007).⁴⁹

⁴⁸ “Italy condemned for ‘racist wave’.” *BBC*, May 28, 2008 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7423165.stm> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

⁴⁹The most emblematic examples of this racism have been the multiple attacks on a member of the Democratic Party, Cécile Kyenge, a Congolese-born Italian. Right after her nomination as Minister of Integration during the government of Enrico Letta (2013-2014), she became the object of several racist attacks by members of the Northern League. One of the most blatant examples was when Roberto Calderoli, the then-European senator and member of the Northern League, in July 2013, claimed that Minister Kyenge reminded him of an Orangutan. A few days after Calderoli’s slur, during a speech in a meeting of the Democratic Party, members of the far-right neo-fascist party, the New Force (*Forza Nuova*) threw bananas at Minister Kyenge. See the articles: Adam Whitnall. 2013. “Defamation case opened against racist Italian senator Roberto Carderoli as abuse of black minister continues.” *The Independent*. July 18, 2013 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/defamation-case-opened-against-racist-italian-senator-roberto-calderoli-as-abuse-of-black-minister-continues-8717391.html> (Accessed June 25, 2015); Steve Scherer. 2013. “Roberto Calderoli, Italian Politician, Compares First Black Minister Cecile Kyenge To Orangutan.” *The Huffington Post*. July 14, 2013 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/11058867/Italian-politician-claims-he-has-been-cursed-after-orang-utan-remark.html> (Accessed June 25, 2015); Gianluca Mezzofiore. “Italian Court Opens Investigation into Roberto Calderoli’s Orangutan Slur.” *International Business Times*. July 17, 2013 <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/italy-opens-investigation-calderoli-s->

At the local level (especially in the North), the Northern League was able to implement local policies of social, economic, and cultural exclusion that were unprecedented in the history of the Italian Republic (Ambrosini 2013a). One of the most blatant expressions of racism by local authorities came from a member of the Northern League: the mayor of Treviso (Veneto Region), Giancarlo Gentilini, nicknamed “the Sheriff” because of his policies against Roma immigrants, etc. Gentilini was the mayor of Treviso between 1994 and 2003 and then between 2003 and 2013. In Italy, he was famous for his open expressions of racism. Among his most famous sentences was the following: “The *extra-comunitari*? One should dress them as hares and do ‘pim pim pim’ with the rifle!”⁵⁰

This climate of intolerance has also affected other institutions, including the police, and members of political parties, including the main left-wing party (Bellinvia 2013). Expressions of racism have also been increasing among the Italian population. As Kosic and Trindafyllidou (2005, 16) observe, since the 1990s, “Italian public attitudes, initially characterized by ‘social tolerance’ towards immigrants, have given way to hostile and xenophobic behavior.” The emergence of a “public anxiety” over the issue of immigration has resulted in the perception of immigrants as suitable “scapegoats” for the problems of Italy, and they are characterized as threats in at least three ways: 1) as security threats, 2) as threats to Italians’ access to jobs, and 3) as threats to Italy’s cultural and religious identity (Kosic & Trindafyllidou 2005, 16). Anxiety about immigrants was already rising by the end of the 1990s (Diamanti & Borbignon 2001) and increased throughout the 2000s (Ambrosini 2013a). Ambrosini (2013a, 5) highlights that just before the 2008 elections, when the Northern League achieved its highest electoral success, “the share of Italian citizens who considered immigrants a threat to security exceeded the threshold of 50 per cent.” These anxieties were further fueled by the media: “Italian media discourse on

[racist-orangutan-491340](#) (Accessed June 25, 2015). Catherine Hornby. 2013. “Bananas Thrown at Black Italian Minister, Cécile Kyenge, During Speech.” *The Huffington Post*. July 27, 2013 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/27/bananas-thrown-at-black-i_n_3662860.html (Accessed June 25, 2015); Rob William. 2013. “Fury after Banana Thrown at Italy’s First Black Minister Cécile Kyenge in latest racist attack.” *The Independent*. July 28, 2013 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/fury-after-banana-thrown-at-italys-first-black-minister-cecile-kyenge-in-latest-racist-attack-8735282.html> (Accessed June 25, 2015). This recent episode has stimulated an intense national debate and the Left in power has unsuccessfully asked the Senator to leave the Senate. See the article: <http://www.stranieriinitalia.it/attualita-calderoli-kyenge-orango-il-ministro-basta-offese-lega-rifletta-17474.html> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

⁵⁰ Raul Franceschi. 2009. “Delirio razzista di Gentilini (Lega Nord).” March 2, 2009 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA-f9i8DYmk> (Accessed June 25, 2015). “Leprotti, vagoni piombati e gay. Le ‘frasi celebri’ dello Sceriffo.” *Corriere del Veneto*. June 10, 2013. <http://corrieredelveneto.corriere.it/veneto/notizie/politica/2013/10-giugno-2013/leprotti-vagoni-piombati-gay-frasi-celebri-sceriffo-2221580964729.shtml> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

migration concentrates mainly on issues of criminality and illegal entry and reproduces images of ‘threat’ to the national public order” (Kosic & Trindafyllidou 2005, 18).

Finally, the current legal and political climate exposes immigrants to all forms of extortion by institutions and private citizens alike (e.g. lawyers, employers). Recent research done by international organizations such as the IOM and Amnesty International indicates that while immigration laws are “ineffective and open to abuse” (Amnesty international 2012, 13), they expose immigrants to exploitation and institutional discrimination (IOM 2010, 3). The mass regularizations of recent years have demonstrated this clearly. The right-wing coalitions in power in the 2000s, while attempting to crack down on “irregular immigration,” introduced major mass regularizations of this “irregular” population. These amnesties have been strongly criticized by the civil society, and in particular radical left-organizations, composed by Italian and immigrant activists, which has called them “Swindle amnesties.”⁵¹ There are two main reasons why these amnesties are believed to swindle immigrants: first, the state clearly uses them to “make money back from immigrants” by asking them for an enormous fee; second, the amnesties have opened a “market for permits” and thus are criticized for paradoxically “creating illegality.”⁵² These fraudulent and extortionate amnesties have been one of the reasons for mass mobilizations in Italy in recent years.

2.4. Multiple actors, approaches to integration and channels of participation

Like other countries in Southern Europe, multiple actors in Italy—including regional and local administrations, lay organizations, church-based organizations, trade unions, and grassroots organizations—have been crucial “managers of integration” of immigrants (Mottura & Pinto 1996; Campomori & Caponio 2014; Mantovan 2007). At the outset of immigration in Italy in the 1980s, in the absence of a coherent and prompt national approach to integration (Ambrosini 2001), these actors dealt with immigration in a very informal and pragmatic way as the phenomenon evolved. However, by the end of 1998, thanks to the Turco-Napolitano Law, the left-wing government in power introduced

⁵¹Ilaria Sesana. 2011. “Sanatoria Truffa.” *Magazine Terre di Mezzo*.

<http://magazine.terre.it/notizie/rubrica/0/articolo/1615/Sanatoria-truffa>-(Accessed June 25, 2015).

⁵²“Sanatoria. Quando la truffa non è l’eccezione, ma un mercato organizzato dalla legge.” March 12, 2011. http://www.meltingpot.org/Sanatoria-Quando-la-truffa-non-e-l-eccezione-ma-un-mercato.html#.VKSrOGTF_ns (Accessed June 25, 2015).

Pasca, Elvio. 2011. “Domande false a peso d’oro: la grande truffa della sanatoria.” *StranieriinItalia.it* June 30, 2011. <http://www.stranieriinitalia.it/attualita-domande-false-a-peso-d-oro-la-grande-truffa-della-sanatoria-13361.html> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

“Truffasi. Quando la legge crea illegalità: Osservatorio sulla sanatoria ‘Colf e Badanti’ del 2009.” June 30, 2011. <http://www.stranieriinitalia.it/images/naga30giugno2011.pdf> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

measures to reinforce the role of regional and local authorities as well as non-state actors and disbursed funding for integration measures through the so-called Zoning Plans (*Piani di Zona*) (Caponio 2006a).

Among other things, the Turco-Napolitano Law aimed to formalize and reinforce the networks and collaborations between the state and stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels by introducing the Territorial Councils of Immigration (*Consigli Territoriali Immigrazione*) (see Section 2.2).⁵³ These bodies worked at the provincial level and brought together representatives of the state (the prefecture), the mayor of the city and representatives of the Church, the main trade unions and other organizations of the third sector. There were also attempts to involve immigrant associations active in the territory, although often with little success (Mantovan 2007; Ambrosini 2013b).

Between the beginning of the 2000s and the beginning of the 2010s, the Italian exclusionary model described above provoked reactions and resistance from political actors who were traditionally the main allies of the migration population. Left-wing regional and local authorities, the Church (the diocese and Caritas), church-based and lay organizations, traditional trade unions (CISL and CGIL), left-wing parties (Democratic Party), and other local stakeholders such as radical left-wing organizations mobilized at the national and local level in an attempt to improve the situation (Ambrosini 2013b).⁵⁴

Overall, since the first arrival of immigrants, multiple actors have mobilized in the realm of immigration and have contributed to shape it by adopting three main approaches: assistance (A), intercultural (I), political rights promotion (PRP).

⁵³ The organisms still exist but they have a very marginal role. See the page on the official site of the Italian Ministry of the Interior: <http://www.prefettura.it/roma/contenuti/4927.htm> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

⁵⁴ Ambrosini (2013b, 315) explains that even though these non-state organizations “start from very different ideological and political assumptions, they all agree on the moral principle that immigrants should be welcomed with no distinction based on race, nationality, religious belief, or status.” It is for this reason that on several occasions these multiple actors, despite different political orientations, have created advocacy coalitions in support of improving immigrants’ living and working conditions in Italy (see also Zincone 2011; Mantovan 2007, 170-186).

TABLE 2.3. Multiple actors that contribute to shaping the realm of immigration in Italy

POLITICAL ORIENTATION	ACTORS	APPROACHES
State authorities		
Left-wing	Regional governments	A, I, PRP
Left-wing	Local administrations	A, I, PRP
Third-sector organizations		
“White”	Church-based organizations	A
“White”	Lay organizations (Catholic orientation)	A
“Red”	Lay organizations (non-Catholic orientation)	A, I, PRP
Trade unions		
“White”	Traditional trade union: CISL	A, I
“Red”	Traditional trade union: CGIL	A, PRP
Radical Left	Grassroots unions: USB and CUB	A, I, PRP
Political parties and organizations		
Moderate left	Democratic Party (PD)	PRP
Radical Left	Communist Refoundation Party (PRC)	
Radical Left	Grassroots movements and anti-racist organizations	PRP
Various	Immigrant associations and political organizations	A, I, PRP

In this section I will describe these actors and how they have helped to shape the realm of immigration and to open the channels of participation in Italy.

Left-wing regional and local actors

Campomori and Caponio (2014, 165) explain how the Turco-Napolitano Law gave formal responsibility to the Regions in the policy areas, and how over the years their involvement “has been constantly increased and reception policy became an entirely regional matter.”⁵⁵ What is more, in the 2000s, regional actors played a major role in responding to the exclusionary model developed by the right-wing national government, through the creation of regional laws of integration (Mantovan 2007, 67; Campomori & Caponio 2014). The first example of these responses was the Regional Law n. 5, approved on March 24, 2004 by the left-wing government of the Emilia-Romagna Region to promote social integration.⁵⁶ The Regional Law challenges the Bossi-Fini Law and its restrictive measures and promotes assistance for both irregular and regular immigrants

⁵⁵ Campomori & Caponio (2013, 165) highlight that by 2001 the Regions were assigned “complete autonomy” in the field of social policy by a federalist reform approved by the Italian state.

⁵⁶ For the Regional Law see the official site of the Emilia-Romagna Region: <http://sociale.regione.emilia-romagna.it/immigrati-e-stranieri/norme/legge-5-2004> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

(assistance approach). The Law also defines Italy as a multi-ethnic society and makes explicit the need for adequate interventions by Regional authorities to support intercultural exchanges and integration, including measures against discrimination (intercultural approach). Thanks to the legislation, the Emilia-Romagna Region moved towards what Campomori and Caponio (2014) define as a cultural-friendly model. Finally, the Region recognized the importance of promoting immigrants' political rights at the local level and encouraged the debate in this direction (political rights promotion approach).⁵⁷

In 2005, the Berlusconi government tried to stop the implementation of the regional law of Emilia-Romagna by defining it “unconstitutional.” However, in 2005 the Italian Constitutional Court decided in favor of the region Emilia-Romagna. The approval of the regional law in Emilia-Romagna encouraged other regions to do the same: Abruzzi (13/12/2004, Law n. 46), Friuli (4/3/2005, Law n. 5. suppressed in 2008), Liguria (20/2/2007, Law n. 7), Latium (Law 10/2008), Tuscany (law 29/2009), Marche (law 13/2009), Apulia (4/12/2009, Law n. 32), Campania (law 6/2010) (Rossi & al. 2013; OECD 2014).

In addition to these regional interventions, some authorities at the local level also responded to the climate of racism and exclusion. In the Emilia-Romagna Region, favored by the regional context, there were some of the most progressive experiments by left-wing local authorities (Campomori 2008; Caponio 2006a; Mantovan 2007). The cities of Modena and Reggio Emilia, for instance, stood out for their assistance to irregular immigrants and were also known for their extremely welcoming environment (Turco 2005). In these cities, efforts were made in the direction of interculturalism, by encouraging cultural exchanges in schools, hospitals, etc., and through the encouragement of the development of mixed and immigrant associations. Elsewhere in Emilia-Romagna, some cities also invested in the direction of political rights promotion through the creation of parallel institutions, such as the consultative bodies (e.g. Bologna).

The third-sector organizations: “white” organizations vs. “red” organizations

In Italy, the third sector is composed of a complex world of associations with different political backgrounds. While in “white” territories, the Church and church-based organizations tend to have more power than non-Catholic lay organizations, in “red” territories it is the networks of lay organizations and left-wing organizations and co-

⁵⁷ At the time of the formulation of the law, during the regional debate, the possibility of introducing the right to vote for immigrants without citizenship was discussed.

operatives that occupy the space of the third sector. Among the “white” organizations, the Church (diocese and Caritas), church-based organizations (parishes) and lay organizations of Catholic orientation (e.g. ACLI) have been very important in replacing the state during the first phase of immigration to Italy and promoting an assistance approach by providing social services and shelter to immigrants, by advocating for the improvement of immigrants’ conditions, and by lobbying for the improvement of immigrants conditions through participation in the local tables of negotiations and campaigns of sensitization. (See the “Italy is me, too!” campaign in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.) (CNEL 1991; Ambrosini 2013b).

As Zaslove (2006, 19) highlights: “They provided help to immigrants before there was adequate legislation and they lobbied the government to increase the legal status and to grant the social and civil rights to immigrants.” Over the years, “white” third-sector organizations have also been crucial in fighting against discrimination, particularly in those territories where the Northern League had a strong influence (such as Lombardy and Veneto), and in lobbying for greater inclusion of people of migrant background in the receiving society. They also responded vigorously to the increasing vulnerability caused by the financial crisis (Ambrosini 2013b, 5).

At the national level, Caritas has been the major expression of the involvement of the Catholic Church in the realm of immigration. Among other things, in 1991, through the Center of Study and Research/Immigration Statistic Dossier (*Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS/Immigrazione Dossier Statistico*), the director of Caritas of Rome promoted the creation of an annual statistical study of the phenomenon of immigration in the Lazio Region in order to fill the statistical lacuna left by the public authorities. In 2004, the Dossier became a national project. At the territorial level, there is a Caritas in virtually every diocese.⁵⁸ Since the 1980s, through the territorial Caritas, the Dioceses created new helpdesks to answer the specific needs of immigrants. These were commonly attached to the existing Center of Listening (*Centri di Ascolto*). In territories where the diocese was very influential, it created specific centralized offices to offer services.⁵⁹

Like the “white” Catholic organizations, “red” lay organizations are stronger in territories where they belong to the dominant political culture. For this reason, one can

⁵⁸ The diocese is an administrative district under the supervision of the bishop. In Italy, the diocese usually corresponds more or less to the territory of the provinces.

⁵⁹ Even though there is a great territorial variety in the level of investment of Caritas in the realm of immigration, due to different political positions of the main representatives, there is a common interest among all the local Caritas organizations in assisting migrants in the receiving society.

observe different roles by similar local actors across Italian territories (Campomori 2008; Mantovan 2007). In some territories where they are particularly strong, “red” third-sector organizations have been able to create strong networks of solidarity and collaborate with each other to better provide services in the city (assistance approach), promote intercultural dialogue (intercultural approach), and (sometimes) to promote political participation through a political rights promotion approach (see Chapters 4 and 5 on the “red” cities of Reggio Emilia and Bologna).

Traditional trade unions: the CISL and the CGIL

The main trade unions in Italy are the “red” or communist CGIL (Italian General Confederation of Labor—*Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro*—) and the “white” or Catholic CISL (Italian Confederation of Trade Unions— *Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori*).⁶⁰ These organizations have played an important role since the first arrival of immigrant workers in the 1980s (Mottura & Pinto 1996; Mantovan 2007). In contrast to the attitudes of trade unions in other European countries, which were unwelcoming if not hostile during the first phase of immigration (Penninx & Roosblad 2000, 5), traditional trade unions in Italy offered assistance and support to the newcomers almost immediately (Mantovan 2007, 90).⁶¹ This particularity can be traced back to the history of universalistic solidarism of the Italian unions, whether of socialist or Catholic orientation, and also the specific qualities of the first immigration in Italy, which was considered a spontaneous inflow, not an organized one, and thus not in competition with the Italian work force (Mantovan 2007, 90).⁶²

It has been observed that the successful work done by traditional trade unions is reflected in the high level of unionization of the immigrant population (Zaslove 2006, 19). Table 2.4 shows the high number of immigrant workers enrolled in traditional trade unions.

⁶⁰ There is also a third main traditional trade union of left-wing orientation, the UIL (Italian Union of Labor—*Unione Italiana del Lavoro*), but its work is more marginal than the other organizations (Mantovan 2007). For this reason, in this research I focus on the two major unions, the CGIL and the CISL.

⁶¹ For the role of trade unions in integration see also Penninx (2011).

⁶² Zaslove (2006, 19) confirms this point when he states: “[...] trade unions [and left-wing activists] within civil society were instrumental in assisting immigrants with housing, employment, and education. This position stems from both ideology and from a general pragmatism. The Italian Labor Unions have always held a progressive position vis-à-vis the so-called Third World, while they also recognized that, due to a decline in industrial employment and an aging population, the future of unions will depend upon immigrant labor.”

TABLE 2.4. Enrollment in the main traditional trade unions in 2011

Union	Total enrolled	Active workers	% of the total traditional union enrollment	Immigrants enrolled	% of the total immigrant enrollment	% of immigrants in total enrollment	% of immigrants among active workers
CGIL	5,775,962	2,650,528	39.9	410,127	35.4	7.1	15.5
CISL	4,485,383	2,300,654	31.0	384,237	33.2	8.6	16.7
Others	4,199,574	2,873,683	29.1	364,688	31.4	N.A.	N.A.
Total	14,460,919	7,824,865	100.0	1,159,052	100.0	8.0	14.8

Sources: Caritas/Migrantes 2012, 273.

As the numbers above suggest, the CGIL is the strongest trade union in Italy, with the highest number of people enrolled (39.9%). Also, the number of immigrant workers in the organization is very high (410,127), representing 15.5% of the total active workers enrolled in the Union. The CISL is also very powerful with 31% of the number of people enrolled. Also, the number of immigrant workers enrolled in the organization is very high (384,237), representing an even higher percentage of the CGIL's active workers (16.7 %). The rest of the union members listed above are distributed among the third main left-wing trade union in Italy (the UIL) and other minor unions.⁶³

The political orientation of the trade unions has had an impact on their approach to integration. The CGIL has a communist background and its *modus operandi* is more radical, political, and confrontational than that of the other unions. On the other hand, the CISL is more conciliatory and tends to lean more towards approaches to integration based on assistance (Mottura & Pinto 1996).⁶⁴ While the “white” CISL has invested more in the assistance approach, protection (e.g. fighting against discrimination and getting involved at the negotiation table) (Mantovan 2007, 90-95), and to a certain extent interculturalism, the “red” and quite radicalized CGIL, though still an important provider of services, has been greatly concerned with promoting the political rights of immigrant workers in its organization. These organizations created specific structures that followed from the approaches to integration they chose to adopt.⁶⁵

⁶³ It is also important to note that more recently these organizations have been losing numbers of people enrolled, also because of the financial crisis. See Matteo Trebecchi. 2015. La crisi taglia le tessere sindacali. Giù gli iscritti fra edili e meccanici.” *Il Corriere della Sera*, January 29, 2015. http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2015/gennaio/29/crisi_taglia_tessere_sindacali_Giu_co_0_20150129_9a9d89d0-a780-11e4-a7b9-6f886246d65e.shtml (Accessed June 20, 2015).

⁶⁴ See also the official page of the CISL : <http://www.cisl.it/Sito.nsf?OpenDatabase&CNt=HOME;Mnt=Migratorie;PT=PaginaDip;DOC=HOME^Ape rtura;DB=Sito-Migratorie> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

⁶⁵ Mottura & Pinto (1996) point out that once the first immigration law was approved, in 1986, unions could cease concentrating exclusively on offering services and assistance and thus turned to the unionization of

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the CISL created the first structures to promote inclusion of immigrants at the territorial level. Issues related to the work activities of immigrants were dealt with through the working sectors called Federations of Category (*Federazioni di categoria*) and issues concerned with specific problems of foreign people were managed by the CISL-ANOLF (National Association beyond the Frontiers— *Associazione Nazionale oltre le frontiere*), an autonomous association instituted by the CISL in 1989 to deal with immigration issues and in particular to promote international cooperation and interculturalism. In 2000, the CISL had around 100 representatives in the workplace, one immigrant representative in the federal council (the highest organism of the Union) and one secretary of the federations (the category Fist of Modena) (Mantovan 2007).⁶⁶

By the end of the 1980s, the CGIL created specific Offices for Migrants or Offices for Foreigners (*Uffici immigrati* or *Uffici per stranieri*) within each territorial unit of the organization, the so-called Chambers of Labor (*Camere del Lavoro*). These offices aimed not only to offer services to the immigrant workers, but were created with the idea of encouraging their political participation.⁶⁷ In order to do so, the CGIL instituted the Migrant Coordination Organization (*Coordinamento Migranti*), a platform at the national level that aimed at encouraging immigrants' participation and self-determination in the organization at the decisional level and attempted to promote greater inclusion of immigrants in the organization (Marino 2010, 346-348). Additionally, depending on the choice of the territorial branches, some Migrant Coordination Organizations (*Coordinamento Migranti*) were also created at the local level. Stefania Marino describes these organizations as follows:

Composed of immigrants, union delegates, functionaries and workers [...] the Migrant Coordination Organizations aim to favor the participation of immigrants. Their

new comers. By the end of the 1980s, traditional unions had organized the first assemblies and meetings for immigrant workers with the aim of easing the entrance of these workers into their organizations. At first, they encouraged enrollment by lowering the cost of the membership or by offering it for free. These practices favored immigrants' unionization and the increase in the number of immigrant members at the beginning of the 1990s. In the 1990s, immigrants have responded very positively to unions' attempt to unionize them (Mottura 2000). The level of unionization is even higher than that of Italians in relative terms. In 2012, around 45% of immigrant workers in Italy were enrolled in a union, compared to around 27% of the Italian population (Caritas/Migrantes 2013, 273). Moreover, progressively more immigrant workers have started to go beyond merely using the union for assistance, and have penetrated more and more into the union, by joining the federation of their sphere of work and by engaging in political activities (Basso & Perocco 2003, 46; Mottura 2010).

⁶⁶See the official site: www.anolf.it (Accessed June 25, 2015).

⁶⁷See official site: www.cgil.it (Accessed June 25, 2015).

composition guarantees a close contact with the workplace through the union delegates elected by the workers (migrants and not). This figure is central in the relationship between immigrant workers and the union, because it functions as an active link between the union organization and the workplace (2010, 349; *my translation*).⁶⁸

The CGIL has also provided specific units for the defense of immigrant rights in the workplace, which were managed by the federations of categories.⁶⁹ What has more, it has worked to enhance the level of representation of the immigrant workers in its organization. Already in 2000, the CGIL had 160 immigrant representatives in the workplace (delegates—*delegati*), 3 national directors (*dirigenti*) and two secretaries of category (the CGIL-FIOM (metalworkers) of Biella, in Piedmont (North of Italy), and the FILLEA (construction workers) of La Spezia in Liguria (North of Italy) (Mantovan 2007). However, by the time of my fieldwork in 2013, the organization was struggling with fundamental barriers to the representation of immigrants in the organization.⁷⁰

As for the representation of immigrant workers in the CGIL, it is worthwhile to mention the distinctiveness of the category of metalworkers, the CGIL-FIOM. This is the most structured branch of the CGIL, and has a high level of autonomy. Also, it is the most radicalized branch of the CGIL. The strength and radicalization of the CGIL-FIOM resulted in the development of a strong investment in the political rights promotion approach. Among other things, the CGIL-FIOM has created its own Migrant Coordination Organization (*Coordinamento migranti*), which is usually present even in those territories in which the CGIL has not created its own Migrant Coordination Organization. On this point, Marino (2010, 349) highlights that in the CGIL-FIOM, the Migrant Coordination Organizations “have a more lively and dynamic development.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ Marino (2010, 348) explains that the need to create a Migrant Coordination Organization at the regional and local level was officially expressed in 1991 during the XXII Congress of the CGIL and was formalized in 1992.

⁶⁹ Mottura & Pinto (1996) underscore that the CGIL was the first union in Italy to organize meetings with foreigners to discuss their specific problems. Moreover, the CGIL is also the only union to organize meetings with more continuity.

⁷⁰ The low number of immigrant workers in position of responsibility in the CGIL was at the center of a debate within the CGIL, after a research done by Matteo Rinaldini and published in 2010 on the Region Emilia-Romagna. The data were presented during the conference “Lavoro, Diritti and rappresentanza: gli impegni della CGIL Emilia-Romagna nella conferenza regionale sull’immigrazione,” organized in Bologna on June 10, 2013. The data on representation are found in the documents of the conference and in particular in CGIL. 2013. “Conferenza Regionale CGIL Emilia-Romagna sull’immigrazione. Rappresentanza e migranti”

⁷¹ Marino (2010) explains that in the CGIL-FIOM, the debate on the Migrant Coordination Organizations started in the 2000s along with the creation of these organisms. These organizations developed where the presence of the immigrant metalworkers was centered, that is, in Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy, Piedmont and Veneto.

The emergence of the radical left-wing grassroots unions in times of crisis

Just like radical left organizations, radical left grassroots trade unions in Italy make up a complex and varied world, which reflects the Italian radical Left's political richness and also its fragmentation. In some occasions these "base unions" collaborate with radical left organizations. The term "base unions" refers to a great number of organizations with very different structures. It encompasses all the *conflicting unions* that present themselves as alternatives to the major traditional confederations in Italy (the CGIL and the CISL). Since the financial crisis that started in 2008, grassroots unions have been gaining ground and have been mobilizing in opposition to the prevailing approaches to integration adopted by other left-wing actors.⁷²

The two main grassroots or base trade unions in Italy are the USB (Base United Unions—*Unione Sindacale di Base*) and the CUB (Unitary Base Confederation—*Confederazione Unitaria di Base*), two unions created in 2010 through the unification of several base unions, right in the middle of the economic and financial crisis that hit Europe in 2009.⁷³ The CUB has a regular national structure with some full-time staff, and in 2014 enrolled approximately 500,000 people. The USB also has a regular national structure, with an enrollment in 2014 of around 250,000.⁷⁴ These organizations are active in the public and private sectors and in some important struggles for the rights of housing—through the Union of Tenants (*Unione Inquilini*) of the CUB and the A.S.I.A., or Associations Tenants and Inhabitants (*Associazione Inquilini e Abitanti*) of the USB. Thanks to these organizations, the trade unions have been able to mobilize a great number of immigrants in Italy who were losing their houses as a consequence of the financial

⁷² The birth of the base trade unions in Italy dates back to 1969-70, during the Hot Autumn ("*Autunno Caldo*") when masses of workers supported by the radical Left opposed decisions taken by the traditional unions. At that time, workers struggled to gain more rights and pressured traditional trade unions to push for the improvement of working conditions. During the struggles, workers organized themselves into Factory Councils (*Consigli di fabbrica*), which were democratic bodies made up of representatives elected by workers in the workplace, independent of their union membership. The factory councils were strongly criticized by groups of the extra-parliamentary left who accused them of wanting to restrain activism by workers. However, workers themselves wanted the councils to exist and took part in them. It was in this general atmosphere that base trade unions began to develop as autonomous organizations. They developed as a mass organization, able to stand as an alternative to the traditional unions and as a place where those discontented with traditional unions could encounter political militants with an experience of the revolutionary left.

⁷³ The USB and the CUB are the most structured base organizations. However, base unionism encompasses many other organizations, such as the Confererazione Cobas, CUB, USI-AIT, SLAI Cobas and SI Cobas. Some of these organizations also engage with immigrants' struggles in the workplace. However, only the USB has created a more structured branch which is exclusively engaged with immigrants.

⁷⁴ See official site: <http://www.usb.it> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

crisis. In line with the most radical actors in Italy, these unions have put the accent on self-determination and political rights promotion.⁷⁵

Since its first Congress in 2010, the USB has presented itself as the only trade union willing to fight in defense of the most vulnerable in society and denounced vigorously the social injustice strengthened by the economic and financial crisis and made possible by the compliance of traditional unions. To combat this situation, these unions extended their sphere of action beyond the workplace to advocate for the need for protection by unions in spheres such as housing, health care, and other basic rights. When it comes to migration, the USB challenged the nation-state and the European Union regime in support of immigrants' and refugees' human rights and claimed the right of free movement for all. The specific framework deployed by the USB has been able to mobilize a great number of immigrants and refugees in the fight for recognition for their basic rights. The USB's members claim that they are not only reacting to the challenges brought about by the economic crisis and filling the gaps left by traditional unions and the withdrawal of the state, but that they are also putting forward a new vision of society in which the most vulnerable are given voice.

The main left-wing political party: the Democratic Party

The PD (Democratic Party— *Partito Democratico*) is the main moderate social-democratic left-wing party in Italy. It was founded on October 14, 2007, after the dissolution of the DS (Democrats of the Left—*Democratici di Sinistra*). It was created thanks to the fusion of various left-wing and centrist parties. During the election on February 24-25, 2013, it was the main political party, followed by the People of Freedom (*Popolo della Libertà*) and the Five Star Movement (*Movimento Cinque Stelle*) (Mosca 2013).⁷⁶

Since 1998, the moderate Left has been working on the subject of immigration thanks to the great interest in the subject of one of the key figures of the party, Livia Turco. One can identify three main phases of the emergence of the theme of immigration within the main left-wing party.⁷⁷ The first phase took place between 1996 and 1999, when the DS pushed for the approval of the first comprehensive law on immigration, the Turco-

⁷⁵ See official site: <http://www.cub.it> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

⁷⁶ Mosca (2013) also indicates the presence of other minor parties, including the Northern League, Left Ecology Freedom, and Civic Choice.

⁷⁷ I owe the reconstruction of these phases to Cesare F., the Assessor of Cohesion and Security of the municipality of Reggio Emilia. See appendices: Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 March 2013 and Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013.

Napolitano Law (see Zaslove 2006).⁷⁸ The second phase started in 2001. Livia Turco was elected again as a member of the opposition, and she promoted the creation of Brothers of Italy (*Fratelli d'Italia*), a structure of the party that aimed to favor inclusion of immigrants in the party. With this organization, in 2002, in response to the approval of the Bossi-Fini Law, she launched a campaign, “Brothers of Italy: Immigration is a richness for you, too!” (*“Fratelli d'Italia. L'immigrazione è una ricchezza anche per te”*), at the national level to sensitize the Italian population to the importance of seeing immigration in a positive light.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the campaign was not able to influence public opinion and most of the people involved and interested in the campaign were indeed insiders and experts on immigration. What is more, the DS was silent on the theme, because at the time immigration was not its priority.⁸⁰

The third phase of the Democratic Party's approach to immigration developed between 2009 and 2013. At that time, the political party realized that it was important to talk about the theme and to raise public awareness.⁸¹ To this purpose, in 2010 the Democratic Party encouraged the creation of the National Forum of Immigration, a platform aiming to promote the participation of citizens (Italian and immigrants) interested in the theme of immigration. Through the Forum, the Party also engaged in many campaigns to enhance the awareness of the Italian population. Gradually, at the regional and local level and through the Forum, the Democratic Party supported the creation of Provincial Forums of Immigration.⁸² Particularly in regions where the party was particularly strong (such as Lazio and Emilia Romagna), it was able to create strong networks of Forums. Within three years, the Party in the Emilia-Romagna Region created a Forum in almost every province. Additionally, it developed one of the most solid networks with a great level of coordination, thanks to the creation of a Regional Forum. Among the results of the work done by the Forum in Emilia-Romagna was the promotion of a leadership of migrant background in the party. During the national election of 2013, when

⁷⁸ In her book, *I nuovi Italiani. L'immigrazione, i pregiudizi, la convivenza [The New Italians. Immigration, Prejudice, and Cohabitation]*, Livia Turco (2005) reconstructs the debate around the Law and explains that it was a step ahead but still an incomplete work. According to her, the Law needs to be further developed to accompany the fast-evolving social processes.

⁷⁹ See Iervasi, Maristella. “‘Fratelli d'Italia,’ ds al fianco degli immigrati. Lo slogan della campagna contro il ddl Bossi-Fini diventerà il nome di una struttura del partito per tutti gli stranieri.” *L'Unità*. January 31, 2002. <http://cerca.unita.it/ARCHIVE/xml/40000/36114.xml?key=Maristella+Iervasi&first=1101&orderby=0&f=fir> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

⁸⁰ See interview with Cesare F, Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013.

⁸¹ Cesare F. told me, “the Party acknowledged that ‘if it does not talk about the theme, then it is the others who will do it’ ” [this means the Right and the anti-immigrants parties].

⁸² See the official document of the Democratic Party approved on February 26, 2008, on the Forums: article 24, Chapter VI, p.15. <http://www.partitodemocratico.it/allegatidef/Statuto%20PD44883.pdf>

the left-wing coalition won the elections, two main members of the Forum in Emilia Romagna were elected in the Parliament: Cécile Kyenge (at the time, the person in charge of the Regional Forum and a municipal councilor of the city of Modena) and Khalid Chaouchi, the president of the association GMI (Young Muslims of Italy—*Giovani Mussulmani d'Italia*), and one of the key members of the Forum of Reggio Emilia.

The radical Left and the anti-racist movement⁸³

The radical left organizations represent a complex world of grassroots organizations that are further Left than mainstream political parties. In Italy, some radical left organizations are historically associated with the Communist Refoundation Party (PRC, *Partito Rifondazione Comunista*), while other organizations are dissociated from any party and claim extra-parliamentary trajectories of political action (Cosseron 2007).⁸⁴ In the election of 2006, there was an attempt to create a large coalition of the Left and the radical Left through the Party L'Ulivo, led by Romano Prodi (Cosseron 2007, 10). However, as Fabio De Nardis (2011, 36) explained, with the fall of the Prodi government in 2008 and the ejection of the communists from the Italian Parliament, there was a radical de-structuration of the “close bond between the movement of global justice and the Communist Refoundation Party.”

The radical Left organizations mobilized early on the issue of immigration (Sciortino 2003). Yet, a *more structured anti-racist movement* in Italy was organized only in the 2000s during the G8 of Genoa, when the Social Forum created a Table for Migrants to discuss issues linked to immigration. This was the first attempt to organize the movement at the national level.⁸⁵ However, soon ideological conflicts began to surface between the PRC and the radical organizations, and among radical left actors themselves. These conflicts reflected major differences in the ways these organizations interpreted the phenomenon of immigration and the actions that went with it (Cobbe & Grappi 2011). Additionally, because the left-wing government in power since 1998 established the link between the permit to stay and the work permit with the Turco-Napolitano Law and

⁸³ European scholars who have focused on the study of the *sans-papiers* movements have highlighted the crucial role of the radical Left in supporting undocumented immigrants in their struggle for recognition both at the national (Siméant 1998; Nicholls 2013b) and the local level (Burchianti 2013). Although almost completely overlooked by the literature on migration in Italy, like in many other European countries, the radical left-wing organizations are crucial allies of immigrants and refugees in vulnerable conditions in Italy (Mantovan 2007, 179-180).

⁸⁴ For a definition of the radical Left see Cosseron (2007).

⁸⁵ This reconstruction is mainly based on first-hand sources, that is, interviews with main members of the anti-racist movement (Italians and immigrants) at the national and local level.

introduced the CIE, or the Centers of Identification and Expulsion (*Centri di identificazione e espulsione*) and the control of borders, an open conflict emerged in those years between the radical and the moderate left on the issue of immigration. Among other things, the radical left supported the idea of “no borders” and “free movement” and challenged the legitimacy of the state in controlling the movement of people through legal means.

In 2006, when a left-wing coalition won the elections again for the first time since the last defeat in 1999, the hope that the left-wing government led by Romano Prodi would help to re-launch the anti-racist movement was soon dissolved with the fall of the government and the success of the right-wing parties (with a strong presence of the Northern League) in the elections of 2008. However, some radical left organizations in Italy have been able to mobilize over the years. At the national level, one of the main organizations is the Project Melting Pot Europe: For the Promotion of the Rights of Citizenship (*Progetto Melting Pot Europa. Per la promozione dei diritti di cittadinanza*), based in one of the strongholds of the radical Left in Italy (Padua) and associated with the political area of the disobedient ones (see Cosseron 2007).⁸⁶ At the local level, there are also some radical left-wing organizations that have developed their own unique trajectories, and even though they are considered a reference for the Italian movement, they are not national organizations. Two organizations are particularly strong: the Migrant Coordination Organization of the Province and City of Bologna (*Coordinamento Migranti della Provincia e città di Bologna*) (see Chapter 5) and the association Rights for All (*Diritti per Tutti*) in Brescia (see Chapter 6).

Immigrants associations and self-organization

The self-organization of immigrants in Italy is made particularly difficult not only because of the hostile environment but also because of the dominant assistance approach (*Assistenzialismo*) and paternalistic approaches adopted by other powerful political organizations in Italy, including their moderate and radical left-wing allies (Cobbe & Grappi 2011). There have been several attempts, however, by people of immigrant background to mobilize in order to offer assistance, to promote intercultural dialogue, and encourage political participation (Mantovan 2007).⁸⁷ Authors have highlighted the weakness of these associations and their difficulty in becoming visible and making a

⁸⁶ See the page, “Chi siamo” (Who we are) http://www.meltingpot.org/Progetto-Melting-Pot-Europa.html#_VUN4bUsqWWho (Accessed June 20, 2015).

⁸⁷ For a list of research on immigrant associations in Italy see Mantovan 2007. For a list of some of the key immigrant associations that have developed at the national level see Kosic & Triandafillydou 2005.

difference in the realm of immigration (Caselli 2008; Caponio 2005; Mantovan 2007). Caponio (2005, 940), in particular, identifies the presence of a “crowding-out effect,” a process by which Italian associations leave little space for the development of immigrant associations and thus do not allow their development.

In terms of immigrant mobilization, immigrants’ autonomy and self-determination is often challenged by the strong presence of grassroots movements, including radical left organizations, that have the tendency to talk on behalf of immigrants rather than letting them develop their own trajectories (Mantovan 2007; Cobbe & Grappi 2011). In response to the barriers of participation within the radical left organizations, in 2001, a group of immigrant activists met to create a national organization, the *Comitato Immigrati d’Italia* (*Immigrant Committee of Italy*), in opposition to the Table of Migrants of the Social Forum (Sciortino 2003, 376). The reason for the creation of the Committee was that these immigrant activists had had enough of non-immigrant activists talking on their behalf and wanted to take the floor and speak for themselves.⁸⁸ The experience of the Migrant Committee was unique in Italy and it testified to the need by immigrant activists to define their own trajectories. However, the organization lasted only two years, reflecting the general fragmentation of the radical left in Italy.

2.5. Channels of participation available to immigrants in Italy

As in any other European country, most formal political rights in Italy are attached to citizenship (Kosic & Tryandafillidou 2005, 26). As part of the European Union, Italy grants different political rights to EU and non-EU immigrants. As for European citizens, according to the Maastricht Treaty (in force since 1993), members of other EU members enjoy the following rights: they are free to move, reside and work in other EU countries without restrictions (Art. 21) and to work (Art. 45). As far as political rights are concerned, EU citizens have the right to vote and stand in elections either 1) in the EU parliament or in any EU member state (Art. 22), or 2) in the local election in any EU country other than their own, under the same conditions as the nationals of that state (Art. 22).⁸⁹

⁸⁸ I owe this insight to two important immigrant activists in Italy who created the *Comitato Immigrati d’Italia*: Edda Pando (Peru) and Aboubakar Soumahoro (Cote d’Ivoire).

⁸⁹ The disposition has been reiterated with the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 (Art. 19) and by the Charter of the fundamental rights of the European Union (Art. 39 and 40) (Mantovan 2007, 53).

In opposition to EU citizens, virtually all non-EU citizens have no local voting rights in Italy (Groenendijk 2008).⁹⁰ In order to guarantee the promotion of some basic civic and political rights, in 1992, the Council of Europe adopted the *Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at the Local Level* (Council of Europe 1992) with the aim of encouraging the active participation of foreign residents in the life of the local community and the development of its prosperity by enhancing their opportunities to participate in local public affairs. As can be read in the official document, “The Convention aims to improve integration of foreign residents into the life of the community. It applies to all persons who are not nationals of the Party and who are lawfully resident on its territory” (Council of Europe 1992). The Convention is made up of three fundamental parts. First, foreign residents should be granted the right of “freedom of expression, assembly and association,” including the right to form trade unions (Chapter A). Second, the Convention opens the possibility for the creation of Consultative Bodies at the local level (Article 5), elected by the foreign residents in the local authority area or appointed by individual associations of foreign residents (Chapter B). Third, Article 6 invites national authorities to grant foreign residents the right to vote in local elections and stand for election in local authority elections after five years of lawful and habitual residence in the host country.⁹¹ Moreover, the state is also encouraged to inform foreign residents about their rights and obligations in relation to local public life.⁹²

National governments show great resistance to delegate to the European Union their prerogatives on matters related to naturalization and voting rights for third-country nationals residing in their territories (Mantovan 2007, 53; see also Asgi-Fieri 2005; Groenendijk 2008). In 1994, Italy ratified the Convention of Strasbourg with the Law 8 March 1994, n. 203 (Mantovan 2007, 56), and in 1998, the so-called *Turco-Napolitano Law* pushed for a greater recognition of the political rights of Non-EU citizens (Meli & Enwereuzor 2003). With respect to the political participation of immigrants, the *Turco-Napolitano Law* recognized most aspects of the Convention of 1992, except for the right to

⁹⁰ Some European countries that have allowed some categories of Non-EU residents to participate in local elections under different conditions are the following countries: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom. The other twelve EU countries did not grant rights to vote to Non-EU residents: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania (Groenendijk 2008, 3).

⁹¹ However, this latter article is optional and countries that ratify the Convention can choose to drop it. As it can be read in Article 7, it is at the discretion of the Member States to grant or not to grant “the right to vote”.

⁹² Currently, out of 44 Members of the Council of Europe, only 11 Member States have signed and 8 have ratified this Convention. Italy ratified the Convention in 1998 with the *Turco-Napolitano Law* (Italy, Parlamento Italiano 1998).

vote for immigrants at the local level (that is, Chapter C). With its Article 38, the Turco-Napolitano Law (1998) had foreseen the possibility of conceding the right to vote at the local level to those third-country nationals who had the resident permit (or “*Carta di soggiorno*”), which could be acquired after 5 years of residence in Italy. However, because of the strong resistance of both the left-wing majority and the right-wing opposition, the article had to be abandoned (Zaslove 2006). Notwithstanding the absence of the right to vote, thanks to the 1992 Convention, Non-EU citizens in Italy enjoy some important civic and political rights. Kosic & Trindafillydou (2005) and Mantovan (2007) identify the main channels that have been opened over the years by multiple actors. In the table below, I present my re-elaboration of their data with a focus on the channels created at the local level.

TABLE 2.5. Political channels of participation at the local level

Political orientation	Actors	Political channels
Moderate “red” actors	Local administrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultative bodies (by appointment or elections) • Councilors of foreign origin • Support of Forums of immigrant associations
	Democratic party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platforms for discussion on issue of immigration (Forum Immigration of the Democratic Party) • Vote during the primary elections • For new citizens: candidacy of new citizens
“White” actors	CISL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation workplace (active and passive vote)—delegates • Representative of a category of workers—functionaries • Participation in the executive, decision making
Institutional “red” actors	CGIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation workplace (active and passive vote)- delegates • Representative of a category of workers – functionaries • Participation in executive decision making • Organizations <i>ad hoc</i> (e.g. <i>Migrant Coordination Organism</i>) • Support of immigrant workers’ political claims
Radical “red” actors	Radical Left and non-racist movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of immigrant mobilization in non-conventional channels • Mobilization in favor of immigrants (e.g. “First May, one day without us!”)
	USB and CUB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of immigrant mobilization in non-conventional channels • Mobilization in favor of immigrants

2.6. Concluding remarks

Since the first arrival of immigrants in the 1980s, Italy has been struggling to acknowledge that immigration is no longer a temporary phenomenon. In 1998, the left-wing government in power approved the first comprehensive law on immigration, the Turco-Napolitano Law, adopted as a measure to regulate immigration and to favor integration, thereby openly recognizing the structural dimension of the phenomenon. However, the exclusionary legal structure that developed in the 2000s significantly constrains the possibilities for immigrants to integrate in Italy, let alone participate in the receiving society as citizens. The current Italian incorporation regime has undermined immigrants' working and living conditions in a very consistent way, contributing to their juridical and economic precariousness, increasing their vulnerability, and exposing them to marginalization, exploitation and discrimination. These precarious juridical and working conditions put immigrants in a situation of vulnerability to extortion by the state and employers because of the constant threat of expulsion.

Furthermore, public and political debate has been increasingly pervaded by xenophobic discourses, anti-immigrant attitudes, and racist public declarations (Mottura 2010). This situation exacerbates material and symbolic exclusion and leaves very little opportunities in Italy for the recognition of immigrants as social and political actors (Perocco 2003, 218). Finally, the financial crisis has increasingly worsened the living and working conditions of immigrants in Italy, already made vulnerable by the legal and political context (Carchedi & al. 2010). As far as political participation is concerned, the extreme difficulty of accessing citizenship makes electoral participation almost impossible to achieve for many immigrants working and living in Italy. What is more, the vulnerable condition of immigrants greatly discourages participation in all the other forms of participation available to them, such as participation in trade unions and social movements.

In the empirical chapters of this dissertation, by comparing the case of two "red" and two "white" cities, I examine how, in this extremely exclusive national context, local actors have been able to promote participation of people of migrant background at the local level.

Chapter 3. Research Design and Methodology

In this chapter, I present how my research design and methodology helps to answer the research question of this dissertation. As I anticipated in the Introduction, in order to control for local variations within the same political culture, I have selected two “red” cities (Reggio Emilia and Bologna) in the “red” Region Emilia-Romagna and two “white” cities (Brescia and Bergamo) in the “white” Region Lombardy. By making both cross-regional and intraregional comparisons between these cities from 1998 to 2013, I can address divergent and convergent patterns of incorporation among cities with similar and different political orientations. As far as I know, Mantovan (2007) is the only scholar who has previously attempted to control for intraregional variations in Italy, by comparing two “white” cities (Verona and Vicenza) and one “red” city (Venezia) in the “white” Region of Veneto.

This chapter is divided as follows: Section 3.1 introduces the research design, describing the necessity of recognizing subnational variations and explaining the rationale for the case-selection of the four cities. Section 3.2 introduces the methodology. I argue for the usefulness of ethnography and explain how my approach allowed me to address the main research question of this study. The chapter concludes by highlighting the strengths and limitations of my approach to empirical research (Section 3.3).

3.1. Research design: Case selection

Recent literature shows that the regional and local dimensions are increasingly relevant for the implementation of integration policies. While the formulation of immigration policy occurs at the national level, integration policies are *de facto* implemented at the regional and local level (Campomori & Caponio 2014; Hepburn & Zapata-Barrero 2014; Caponio & Borkert 2010; Fauser 2012; Penninx & al. 2004). This observation is even more relevant for new immigration countries in Southern Europe, such as Spain, Italy, Greece, and Portugal, where regional and local actors have responded to the prodigious immigration flow in order to accommodate the increasingly diverse population (Hepburn & Zapata-Barrero 2014; Campomori & Caponio 2014).

As anticipated in the Introduction and in Chapter 1, the existing Italian literature considers political culture (“red” or Communist vs. “white” or Catholic) as a major factor determining integration policies, because it affects the administrative style of regions and municipalities and their interaction with the third sector (Campomori 2008; see also

Messina 2002). While “red” administrations tend to develop an interventionist or cooperative model and to coordinate the third-sector organizations, “white” administrations tend to favor a laissez-faire or non-cooperative model and to devolve policies of integration almost entirely to the third sector, and in particular to the Church. Within a political culture, one can expect to find similar strength of trade unions, political parties, and grassroots movements. In a “red” territory, for instance, one can expect to find strong “red” actors, such as the “red” trade union, the CGIL, and left-wing political parties. In a “white” territory, on the other hand, one can expect to find strong “white” actors, such as the “white” trade union, the CISL, and the Catholic Church (e.g. Caritas) and weaker “red” actors (Mantovan 2007).

In addition to the political culture, a second factor that shapes the responses of multiple actors in the realm of immigration is the political orientation of a locality. As set out in Chapter 2, Italy was faced with the failure of adequate structured responses during the first two decades of immigration inflow (in the 1980s and 1990s) and the increasingly harsh measures against “outsiders” by right-wing national governments in the 2000s. Some regional and local authorities together with traditional stakeholders—the Church-based organizations, traditional trade unions (CGIL and CISL), non-profit organizations, political parties, and anti-racist movements—have reacted against increasing national anti-immigrant attitudes and, in contrast with the national government, have promoted policies of integration. However, scholars observe that not every regional and local actor has reacted similarly (Ambrosini 2013a). In particular, the different political orientations of state and non-state actors have resulted in very different approaches to integration by regional and local municipalities as well as stakeholders across Italy (Campomori & Caponio 2013; Campomori 2008; Caponio 2006a). In the 1990s, while some regions and municipalities (mainly left-wing) attempted to promote inclusive policies of integration at different levels (economic, social, cultural and political) and encourage immigrants’ autonomy from the welfare, through intercultural and political rights promotion approaches, other regions and municipalities (mainly right-wing) avoided addressing the major issues linked to integration and limited their measures to merely assisting immigrants in their first insertion (assistance approach).

The increase in power of the Northern League in the 2000s has enhanced the “electoral cost” of the issue of immigration and thus has affected both left-wing and right-wing politicians. As one might expect, in regions and municipalities governed by right-wing coalitions with an increasing presence of the Northern League, local authorities

turned away from previous integration policies and explicitly promoted security measures and policies of exclusion, if not outright discriminatory measures (Ambrosini 2013a, 2). However, most left-wing regions and municipalities have also been affected, as local authorities have been hesitant to address the issue of immigration for fear of the electorate (Caponio 2006a). In this general context of a political void in integration policy, multiple actors involved in the realm of immigration have tried to fill the gaps left by local authorities. Their different reactions depend on both ideological and pragmatic considerations, as well as their role in the political arena and their political orientation. The result has been a great variety of responses at the local level, which my research documents.

3.1.1. A comparison of two “red” cities in Emilia Romagna and two “white” cities in Lombardy

In order to control for local variations and assess how local actors shape the local realm of immigration and how they open the channels of participation, this research uses a comparison of four cities in two regions of Northern Italy with two different political cultures and political orientations: the cities Reggio Emilia and Bologna in the “red” or communist region of Emilia-Romagna, and the cities Brescia and Bergamo in the “white” or Christian democrat region of Lombardy. The choice of regions and of a small-N comparison of cities is designed to allow both cross-regional and intraregional comparisons between cities, making possible the examination of the effects of both overall political culture and the role of multiple local actors. Small-N qualitative comparisons can be divided into two bodies of research. On one hand, this method is used to assess the role played by characteristics attached to immigrants, such as their background, their migratory trajectories, cultural factors, and so on. Scholars thus select a few groups on the basis of ethnicity and compare them in a given context, that is, by keeping the context invariable. On the other hand, most studies today aim to explain how structural constraints and opportunities shape the insertion of immigrants into their new society. Scholars of this perspective usually select one or a few ethnic groups across different contexts. This approach is called *divergent comparison*, and assesses variations with respect to context, within a country or across countries (see, for example, Caponio 2005 and Fauser 2012 for cross-local analysis; Koopmans 2004; Moore 2004; Garbaye 2004; 2005; for a combination of cross-local and cross-national analysis). My research design uses a divergent comparison, but make sure to avoid selecting immigrants on the basis of their

assumed ethnic belonging (see Bousetta 2000 and Però 2008b on the problem of ethnicization present in most migration literature).

Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy: the “most similar” regions in Italy

The selection of the two regions was based on the assumption that different political cultures and political orientations at the regional level affect different local power configurations and thus different attitudes by local actors towards the incorporation of people of foreign origin. I chose the regions Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy because, while radically differing in terms of political culture and political orientation, they represent the “most similar cases” in Italy in terms of 1) immigration characteristics, 2) regional economic performance, 3) immigrants’ insertion into the economy, and 4) integration capacity.

It is important here to explain why I have not selected a region from the South or from the Center of Italy for my comparison. Unlike Caponio (2006a), Campomori (2008), and Campomori & Caponio (2013) who tried to represent the “main three areas of Italy” by selecting three cities on the basis of their geographic position, for the sake of a systematic comparison, I chose to select my cases on the basis of general similarities and also on the stability of the regions’ political orientation. This selection allows me to isolate factors which could not be controlled in the Center and South of Italy, where more unstable economies, little industrialization, little unionization, and an immense number of irregular workers (just to name a few aspects) would have affected the reliability of my comparison. With respect to immigration characteristics, in 2013, Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy were the regions with the highest number of immigrants in relation to the local population in Italy, and also were among the regions that experienced the highest rate of increase of the immigrant population during the 2000s. Table 3.1 shows that in 2013 Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy had both the largest immigrant population (non-EU citizens) in absolute numbers in Italy (respectively 488,489 and 1,028,633) and the highest percentage of immigrants in comparison to the total regional population (respectively 11.2% and 10.5%).

TABLE 3.1. Third-country nationals per region (2001 and 2013)

REGIONS	2001		2013		Growth rate 2012-2013 (%)	Growth rate 2001-2013 (%)
	Total	% of the total population	Total	% of the total population		
Italia	1,334,889	2.3	4,387,721	7.4	8.3	228.7
1. Emilia-Romagna	135,453	3.4	488,489	11.2	7.4	260.6
2. Lombardy	319,564	3.5	1,028,663	10.5	8.0	221.9
3. Veneto	153,074	3.4	487,030	10.0	6.1	218.2
4. Umbria	27,266	3.3	92,794	10.5	5.4	240.3
5. Tuscany	108,702	3.1	350,761	9.5	8.7	222.7
6. Trento	15,990	3.4	48,710	9.2	6.2	204.6
7. Marche	45,668	3.1	139,800	9.0	4.3	206.1
8. Piedmont	110,402	2.6	384,996	8.8	6.7	248.7
9. Lazio	151,567	3.0	477,544	8.6	11.5	215.1
10. Friuli-Venezia Giulia	38,122	3.2	102,568	8.4	5.4	169.1
11. Bolzano/Bozen	14,336	3.1	42,337	8.3	6.8	195.3
12. Aosta Valley	2,630	2.2	9,148	7.2	8.0	247.8
13. Liguria	35,950	2.3	119,946	7.7	7.1	233.6
14. Abruzzo	21,399	1.7	74,939	5.7	9.0	250.2
15. Calabria	18,017	0.9	74,069	3.8	10.7	311.1
16. Campania	40,430	0.7	170,938	3.0	13.7	322.8
17. Molise	2,588	0.8	9,110	2.9	11.8	252.0
18. Sicily	49,399	1.0	139,410	2.8	10.0	182.2
19. Basilicata	3,416	0.6	14,728	2.6	11.6	331.1
20. Apulia	30,161	0.8	96,131	2.4	14.9	218.7
21. Sardinia	10,755	0.7	35,610	2.2	14.5	231.1

Source: ISTAT 2013.

Table 3.2 presents a list of the largest 15 immigrant groups in Italy and the two regions (EU and non-EU).

TABLE 3.2. The first 15 largest immigrant communities in 2012 (January 1, 2013)

Italy	Emilia-Romagna	Lombardy
Romania 933,354	Romania 67,360	Romania 136,233
Albania 464,962	Morocco 66,360	Morocco 103,115
Morocco 426,791	Albania 59,393	Albania 98,318
China 223,367	Moldavia 30,281	Egypt 54,443
Ukraine 191,725	Ukraine 26,728	China 50,653
Philippines 139,835	China 24,615	Philippines 49,338
Moldavia 139,734	Pakistan 18,498	India 48,383
India 128,903	Tunisia 17,490	Peru 43,128
Peru 99,173	India 16,762	Ukraine 42,352
Bangladesh 92,695	Philippines 13,024	Ecuador 37,232
Poland 88,839	Ghana 11,444	Pakistan 34,237
Tunisia 88,291	Poland 10,988	Senegal 30,848
Ecuador 82,791	Senegal 9,566	Sri Lanka 24,902
Pakistan 80,658	Nigeria 9,304	Moldavia 22,004
Senegal 80,325	Macedonia 9,253	Tunisia 18,185

Sources: ISTAT 2013.

In terms of regional economic performance, Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy are among the richest regions in Italy. In 2008 (before the economic crisis), Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy had the second and third highest regional GDP per capita in Italy, after South Tyrol, an average of 31,900 and 33,500 euros per capita respectively. By comparison, the national average in 2008 was 27,000 euros per capita (Eurostat 2011).⁹³ With reference to the economic insertion of immigrants, the two regions are very similar in their high levels of employment (at least before the economic crisis) and the types of occupation of the immigrant population. The two regions have been able to attract a great number of immigrants precisely because of their high job availability. The two regions offer similar job opportunities to immigrants. In 2012, immigrants were mainly occupied in the service sector (mostly hotel, restaurants and household)—51% in Emilia-Romagna and 60% in Lombardy—and in industry (mostly construction and metalwork)—37.1% in Emilia-Romagna and 34.1% in Lombardy. The remaining immigrant population worked in the agricultural sector—9.9% in Emilia-Romagna and 3% in Lombardy—or were unemployed—2% in Emilia-Romagna and 2.4% in Lombardy (Caritas/Migrantes 2012, 313 and 362).

Finally, during the second half of the 2000s, the annual reports by the CNEL (National Council for the Economy and Labor—*Consiglio Nazionale Economia e Lavoro*), the national organization for the coordination of the policies of social integration for foreigners, indicated Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy as the regions in Italy with the highest integration capacity. This means that they were capable of absorbing immigrants in the economic sector and of assuring social inclusion, thanks to the strength and efficiency of the welfare system (CNEL 2009, 28).

Different regional political cultures and political orientations

Despite their overall similarities, the selection of Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy is particularly relevant precisely because the two regions represent two opposite political cultures and political orientations that have not been challenged since WWII. While Emilia-Romagna was the unchallenged stronghold of the Communist Party from 1945 until its decline at the beginning of the 1990s and of the Social Democrats from the 1990s until 2013, Lombardy has been one of the undisputed “white” regions of Italy, governed without interruption by the Christian Democrats until the 1990s (when the political party was

⁹³ EUROSTAT. 2011. “Regional GDP per inhabitant in 2008.” February 24, 2011. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-11-28_en.htm (Accessed June 15, 2015).

dissolved) and by the Right from the beginning of the 1990s until 2013.⁹⁴ What is more, the Northern League became increasingly powerful in Lombardy in the 2000s, and the leader of the party, Roberto Maroni, became the president of the Region in 2013. Table 3.3 shows the main differences between the two regions in terms of political culture and orientation and their responses to immigration and integration.

TABLE 3.3. Comparison of Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy (1998-2013)⁹⁵

Characteristics	Emilia-Romagna	Lombardy
Political culture since 1945	“Red” or communist	“White” or Christian democrat
Political orientation from 1998 to 2012	Center-Left	Center-Right (PDL)
Main Party in Power in 2013	Democratic Party	Northern League
Administrative style	Interventionist and coordinative	Laissez-faire and devolutionist
Main third-sector organizations	Lay non-profit organizations	Church-based organizations
Main traditional trade unions	CGIL and CISL	CGIL and CISL
Regional law on integration	Since 2004	No
Approach to integration in the 2000s	Assistance approach Intercultural approach	Assistance approach
Areas of interventions in the 2000s	Social Economic Cultural Political	Social Economic
Approach to integration in the 2010s	Toward a culture-friendly and intercultural approach	Toward securitization and policies of exclusion

Table 3.3 indicates that the two regions have been developing two different approaches to integration. Thanks to the continuity of the left-wing parties in Emilia-Romagna in the 2000s, the region had developed an intercultural approach to integration in addition to an assistance approach, and was moving toward what Campomori & Caponio (2014) call a “culture-friendly approach.” On the other hand, Lombardy had adopted mainly an assistance approach, and in the 2000s, because of the increase in power of the Northern League, moved progressively from assistance toward securitization and policies of exclusion (Ambrosini 2013b). What is more, there has been a visible attempt to decrease interventions to encourage immigrant integration into the receiving society. For this purpose, in 2013, the regional government dismantled some of the structures that had been

⁹⁴ For a reconstruction of the left-wing and right-wing divide until the 1990s, see Pelmutter 1995.

⁹⁵ See Campomori & Caponio 2013, Ambrosini 2013a, and primary sources.

created to study the phenomenon of immigration and develop adequate interventions.⁹⁶ Political culture and orientation also affect the government's relationship with the third sector. While in Emilia-Romagna, the regional authorities have enlarged the public sector, bestowed a large amount of funding, and developed a welfare system with the collaboration of lay cooperatives, in Lombardy, the strong presence of the Church has not allowed this process. On the contrary, in Lombardy the Church and church-based organizations manage 99% of public services. This has resulted in a process of devolution without collaboration between the public and the private sector.

Overall, the table shows that, as predicted by the literature, different political cultures and political orientations have resulted in very different approaches to integration by the two regions.

3.1.2. Selection of cities

My comparison of four cities aims to grasp not only differences between cities with different political cultures and political orientations, but also differences between cities with similar political cultures and political orientations. As will be shown in the empirical chapters of this dissertation and in the concluding chapter, the research design of this study has made possible an important contribution to the comparison of cities with similar political cultures by showing the crucial role of local actors and how they shape the local realm of immigration and participation through their interaction and their approaches to integration. What is more, it shows how the approaches of local actors are affected not only by ideology (left vs. right) but also by pragmatic considerations that are linked to the competition of local actors over the issue of immigration.

The four cities I have selected can be considered as particular cases of the regional context. With the exception of their political culture (which varies by region), they are all very similar in terms of 1) immigration characteristics, 2) local economic performance, and 3) integration capacity. In 2013, the four cities had some of the highest percentages of immigrant population in relation to the total population in Italy, with Brescia the highest in the country (see ISTAT 2013) (Table 3.4.).

⁹⁶ I owe this insight to one of my interviewees, who worked for the regional administration of Lombardy from 1998 to 2013. During our interview, this interviewee explained: "The political orientation of the region matters. Until 2010, the ORIM (the Regional Observatory for the Integration and Multi-ethnicity—*Osservatorio Regionale per l'Integrazione e la Multiethnicità*) was able to entertain a relationship with the region of Lombardy through a convention that could be renewed every five years. Today there is lot of confusion. There is a visible political will to destroy what exists already. This new political management reduces the tasks and the impact of the ORIM" (Interview in Milan, 9 June 2014). See the official site of the ORIM <http://www.orimregionelombardia.it> (Accessed June 30, 2015).

TABLE 3.4. Immigrant population in 2012

	Reggio Emilia	Bologna	Brescia	Bergamo
Total city population	163,928	380,635	188,520	115,072
Immigrant population and percentage of immigrants in the total population	25,687 (15.7%)	51,771 (13.6%)	31,888 (16.9%)	15,833 (13.8%)
The first ten largest immigrant communities in 2012	China (3,437) Albania (3,149) Morocco (2,626) Ghana (1,984) Ukraine (1,795) Romania (1,531) Moldavia (1,512) Nigeria (1,108) Egypt (927) Sri Lanka (801)	Romania (6,856) Philippines (5,133) Bangladesh (4,935) Moldavia (4,558) Morocco (3,792) Ukraine (3,163) China (3,032) Pakistan (2,803) Albania (2,509) Sri Lanka (1,355)	Pakistan (3,296) Moldavia (2,923) Ukraine (2,633) Romania (2,626) Albania (2,146) India (2,027) China (2,016) Egypt (1,803) Bangladesh (1,753) Philippines (1,390)	Bolivia (3,001) Morocco (1,440) Ukraine (1,390) Romania (1,360) Albania (1,060) China (919) Bangladesh (866) Senegal (462) Ecuador (418) Philippines (398)

Sources: ISTAT 2013.

What is more, before the financial crisis, in the years 2006-2008, the four cities all had a very high economic performance and their capacity to integrate immigrants at the socioeconomic level was among the highest in Italy (CNEL 2009, 23).

Differences in political cultures

Despite these similarities, the four cities differ with respect to the role of local actors, which is to a certain extent linked to the political culture. Table 3.5 presents the main differences between the “two” red cities and the two “white” cities from 1998 to 2013. In the table, one can observe that what distinguishes the two “red” cities from each other and the “white” cities is their political orientation. While the “red” Reggio Emilia was always governed by the Center-Left between 1998 and 2013, the “red” Bologna experienced an alternation of power between 1999 and 2004, when it was governed by a center-right coalition. On the other hand, while the “white” city of Brescia was governed by the Center-Left from 1998 to 2008 and then by a right coalition with a strong Northern League presence between 2008 and 2013, the “white” Bergamo experienced the alternation of power between left-wing and right-wing administrations earlier. In the empirical chapters, the impact of these differences on the local realm of immigration and the channels of participation in the four cities will be shown.

TABLE 3.5. Main differences between the two “red” cities and the two “white” cities (1998-2013)

	Reggio Emilia	Bologna	Brescia	Bergamo
Political culture	Red	Red	White	White
Administrative style	Interventionist or cooperative model	From an interventionist or cooperative model to a laissez-faire or non-cooperative model	Laissez-faire or non-cooperative model	Laissez-faire or non-cooperative model
Political orientation from 1998 to 2014	Center-Left: 1998-2014	Center-Left: 1994-1999 Center-Right: 1999-2004 Center-Left: 2002-2014	Center-Left: 1998-2008 Center-Right and League North: 2008-2013 Center-Left: 2013-	Center-Left: 1994-1999 Center-Right: 1999-2004 Center-Left: 2004-2009 Center-Right: 2009-2014
Main stakeholders	Lay non-profit organizations	Lay non-profit organizations	Church-based organizations and “white” trade union (CISL)	Church-based organizations and “white” trade union (CISL)
Strongest traditional trade unions	“Red” CIGL “White” CISL	“Red” CIGL	“Red” CIGL “White” CISL	“Red” CIGL “White” CISL
Strong radical left-wing organizations	No	Yes	Yes	No

Source: Caritas/Migrantes 2012; www.comuni-italiani.it; www.regione.emilia-romagna.it; www.regione.lombardia.it; www.comunediblogna.it; see also Campomori 2008.

3.2. Methodology: Fieldwork and approach to data collection

My empirical research centered on ethnography in each city under observation, for a total of 14 months between February-November 2013 and May-June 2014. I spent about two months in each city, enough time to interview the main regional and local actors and people of migrant background who were engaged in politics, to do participant observation of some of the main events linked to the integration and political participation of immigrant activists such as meetings, assemblies, demonstrations, etc., and to gather important archival sources (e.g. local newspapers, pamphlets, reports, documents, visual material published on the internet, etc.) produced by local authorities, the Church (and in particular Caritas), lay and church-based organizations, trade unions, and grassroots organizations.⁹⁷ I also travelled to other cities (such as Rome, Turin and Milan) to meet

⁹⁷ For a similar empirical research approach, see Mantovan (2007, 151-153).

with key individuals (Italian and immigrant activists and experts, who gave me additional information on the subject of my research) and to participate in events and demonstrations relevant for my research.⁹⁸

During my fieldwork, I used an ethnographic approach, which means that I started analyzing and interpreting the data while I was in the field in order to generate new research questions and new themes to explore (see Aiello 2010; Lichterman 2002; O'Reilly 2008). Thus, the research relied heavily on induction, through the analysis of the data during collection. In order to contact my interviewees, I used snowball sampling. In total, I performed 111 interviews (57 with immigrant activists) and participated in more than 40 formal and informal meetings. These meetings were occasions to observe the role of the main local actors and the place of people of migrant background active in the city, and to assess what roles they occupied in the local realm of immigration. Table 3.6 presents a summary of all the interviews.

⁹⁸ I was in Reggio Emilia between February and April, in Bologna between April and June, in Brescia between June and September and in Bergamo between September and November 2013. Due to health reasons, I spent less time in Bergamo, the last city I visited, compared to the other cities (a little less than 2 months) and interviewed fewer people there than in any other city. Between May and June 2014 I travelled to the four cities to collect additional data to complete my research.

TABLE 3.6. Summary of interviews

Who?	Number of interviews	Organizational affiliations of interviewees
National-level stakeholders	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of traditional trade unions (CGIL) • Members of the anti-racist movement • Members of grassroots trade unions (USB)
Regional-level administrators and stakeholders	8 (4 in each region)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators • Members of traditional trade unions (CGIL)
Representatives of key local organizations involved in the realm of immigration	Reggio Emilia, 10 Bologna, 10 Brescia, 12 Bergamo, 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local administrators • Church-based organizations (e.g. Caritas and parish priests and ACLI) • Non-profit organizations • Traditional trade unions (CGIL, CGIL–FIOM and CISL) • Key institutions (e.g. Intercultural center or forums) • Cultural mediators • Anti-racist associations and the radical Left organizations • Grassroots trade unions (USB)
People of migrant background, active in civic and political channels in the city	National level, 3 Regional level, 1 Reggio Emilia, 13 Bologna, 19 Brescia, 14 Bergamo, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local administrations (e.g. councilors or members of the executive) • Traditional trade unions (e.g. delegates and functionaries) • Social movement and grassroots unions (e.g. key member activists and other participants) • (Inter-) cultural centers • Immigrant associations

The interviews with local actors were the main primary sources I used in this research. I first interviewed key actors in the city, such as regional and local administrators, members of the Catholic Church, lay and church-based organizations, traditional trade unions (CGIL and CISL), political parties, militant groups and members of emerging grassroots unions (such as USB). Thanks to my first contacts with these organizations, I was also able to reach people of migrant background active in civic and political channels in each city. The relatively small size of the cities (with the exception of Bologna) allowed me to identify and contact a large proportion of those people of migrant background “visible” in the city who had been and/or still were active. While the interviews with Italians were useful to identify which actors were involved in the realm of immigration and what their approaches to integration were, the interviews with activists of migrant background were useful to examine their perception and reaction to the opportunities opened to them by other local actors, as well as their will and ability to shape

the local realm of immigration and open the channels of participation by getting involved and interacting with local actors.

In addition to the interviews and participant observation of main events, I made substantial use of archival research to make historical reconstructions of the trajectories of local actors in the city. Many documents (written, auditory and visual) were given to me during the interviews and many others were accessible on the official sites of the organizations. During my visit in each city, I also collected pamphlets and took pictures of the places I was visiting: in particular posters and flyers on the walls of the different organizations. I also used local newspapers to reconstruct main events in the city. Finally, I combined the data collected above with daily field-notes, which allowed me to reflect on what was happening during the fieldwork and to develop new questions based on what I was observing. By using the suggestions of Russell Bernard, I collected descriptive, methodological, and analytical notes (Bernard 2006, 387; see also White 2007; Emerson & al. 1995), which became very useful sources while I was analyzing the data at the end of the fieldwork.

3.2.1. Stages of the research

In this section, I present a brief summary of the main stages of my research, which were analytically but not always chronologically distinct. It will appear clear that this study is highly interpretative and based on the analysis of contextualized practices and discourses by local actors and individuals of migrant background interacting with those actors (Eliasoph 2001; Geertz 1973). The first stage of my research in each city consisted of a reconstruction of the local context through archival research, participant observation, and explorative in-depth interviews with key local actors. In this phase, I constructed a cartography of the main actors (individuals and organizations of both immigrant and Italian origin) involved with the realm of immigration in the city and assessed the links among them and the migrant communities. My goal was to gather material in order to contextualize the discourses and practices deployed by main local actors in each city since 1998.⁹⁹ This reconstruction was a necessary step to identify the actors involved in the local

⁹⁹ In my research I was not doing an exact reconstruction of all the organizations present in the four cities. I limited my analysis to the most important organizations in the city mobilized around the issue of immigration.

realm of immigration, their approaches to integration, and how they contributed to opening the channels of participation for people of migrant background in the city.¹⁰⁰

In the second stage of my fieldwork I focused on the discourses and practices of people of migrant background active in different civic and political channels in each local context. I explored individual and collective trajectories and investigated *why* people of migrant background engaged in politics, through *which* specific channels they acted, and *how* they used and appropriated the discourses and practices of other powerful actors in the city. Without making this point explicit during the interviews, I also explored the ways these people used the mainstream discourses and practices of left-wing organizations and eventually challenged the discourses of their allies and other local actors through their *own* discourses and practices. This phase consisted mainly of collecting semi-structured in-depth interviews with people of migrant background and participant observation of people of migrant background's activities in the main left-wing party (the Democratic Party), trade unions (in particular, the CGIL and the CISL), and in non-institutionalized political organizations such as social movements and other Italian and immigrant organizations.

The interviews with people of migrant background were useful tools to explore their perception of the local context and the ways they acted upon opportunities to participate in the city. During the interviews, I also tried to gather as much biographical information as possible in order to identify *who* my interviewees were so as to better explain how their social and economic background, their education, their personal immigration experience and their ideology could have shaped their trajectories of civic and political participation in each city.¹⁰¹ In order to protect the identity of my interviewees, I have used pseudonyms (a full first name followed by a last name initial) for both Italian and immigrant interviewees. Each interviewee quoted in this dissertation has read and signed a document in which they consented to the use of the information shared during the interview.¹⁰² Most of them also agreed to be identified. However, in order to avoid their exposure, I have chosen not to use their names.

¹⁰⁰ The interviews with local actors lasted from an hour and a half to two hours and they were conducted in Italian. They were all tape-recorded and fully transcribed. They were guided by a questionnaire of wide-ranging open questions. For a guideline of the general questions asked during the interviews with main local actors, see APPENDIX n. 1.

¹⁰¹ The interviews with immigrant activists lasted from an hour and a half to two hours. They were conducted at the workplace, in cafes, or other informal places, including private houses. The interviews were mostly conducted in Italian and in French. These interviews were also tape-recorded and fully transcribed. For a detailed list of the questions I asked during the interviews with people of migrant background, see APPENDIX n. 2.

¹⁰² Before I left for the fieldwork, the document was previously approved by the ethical committee of the Université de Montréal.

Most of the individuals of migrant background active in civic and political channels that I was able to identify and/or interview were male, first-generation immigrants in their thirties, forties, or fifties, and most of them were from North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt), the Sub-Saharan region (Nigeria, Cameroun, and especially Senegal), and Central Asia (in particular from the Indian Subcontinent: India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). I also met with many individuals who were particularly active in immigrant associations. I contacted and interviewed some of these people to ask them why they did not participate in political channels.¹⁰³ It was difficult to find interviewees from the larger communities of immigrants from EU countries, such as Romanians, and from non-EU countries, such as Albanians, Chinese, and Ukrainians. It was particularly arduous to contact second-generation individuals and women of all origins, and male and female individuals from Central and Eastern Europe or from South America. Among these people, it was surprising to discover that EU citizens, who had the right to vote and to be elected at the local elections, were little involved in either civic or political channels in the four cities. As will be shown in the empirical chapters, left-wing actors who were concerned with opening the channels of participation gave most of their attention to non-EU citizens, and showed very little interest in the participation of EU citizens.

Some interviewees and people I contacted informally during the fieldwork offered explanations of lack of participation by people belonging to certain nationalities. According to my informants, people of some origins were less likely to be involved in politics due to various factors. According to some interviews, certain communities were less likely to get involved in politics because of the lack of democratic culture in the countries of origin. These communities included some of the largest immigrant groups, such as Albanians, Chinese, and Romanians. Yet, as the migration literature suggests, this factor needs to be combined with other factors such as status in the country of arrival (Bloemraad 2006) and the political orientation of the immigrants (Siméant 1998). An additional factor must be considered in the specific case of Italy: some people were less likely to get involved in politics because most of the channels available were controlled by left-wing organizations, and certain groups did not identify with the values of the Left for personal inclinations or because of their experience with communism in their country, as in the case of Albanians, Ukrainians and Romanians. Another factor highlighted by my

¹⁰³ For a complete list of the interviews with people of migrant background in each city and a classification by national origin, gender, generation, status, and the type of organization in which they were active during the time of the interview see APPENDIX n. 3.

interviewees was that many people would have been interested in participating in mainstream politics in conservative parties for ideological reasons, but declined this possibility because the right-wing party had been greatly hostile towards people of foreign origin and had not created viable channels for them to participate.¹⁰⁴

Finally, additional reasons for the limited presence of people of foreign origin in conventional channels are to be found in the Italian context. There is a general mistrust toward politics in general, and people of foreign origin who have acquired formal citizenship and can vote do not trust mainstream politics any more than native Italians. Also, the vulnerability of women and foreign people who have arrived more recently and face precarious working and living conditions makes them reticent to any kind of public exposition or political claims. Above all, the restrictive immigration laws, the exponential growth of racism in the public discourse, and discrimination in the workplace and public places are strong deterrents to participation by people of migrant background in the receiving society (Carchedi & al. 2010).¹⁰⁵ In this second phase of my research, I also combined the interviews with intense *participant observation* of main events. By observing *how* my interviewees interacted and socialized in each setting, and by participating in their activities, I was able to identify and reconstruct their *practices* and thus the various strategies of self-determination, political participation and mobilization they developed in specific contexts. This method was also useful to explore whether and how people of foreign origin redefine the contours of participation by performing specific political actions within the main Italian organizations. By combining interviews with participant observation of the various channels of participation in which people of migrant background took part, I was able to critically connect their personal motivations and discourses to their effective interaction with the environment in which they interact (Lichterman 2002).

The third stage of my empirical research consisted of an attempt to *confirm* my findings through some *ad hoc* interviews. After a first analysis of my data, I contacted crucial actors (some of whom I had already interviewed) and asked for clarifications or further explanations of the main issues in their cities. In this phase, I also focused on the

¹⁰⁴ I will go back to this important aspect of people of migrant background's mistrust or disinterest towards politics in the empirical chapters.

¹⁰⁵ I attempted to avoid the limitations of an overly restricted sample by trying to enlarge as much as possible the national origin of my interviewees and to have at least a few interviews with second-generation youth. However, it was not always possible to achieve this goal. Henceforth, the reader should acknowledge that if in this research some nationalities are under-represented or not represented at all, it is mainly because they are not represented in the civic and political channels present in the city.

reconstruction of a highly contentious moment in each city during which the political involvement of people of foreign origin became particularly visible. Thanks to previous fieldwork, I discovered that between 2010 and 2012 in the four cities under observation, there were particular moments of great mobilization by local actors and in some cases people of foreign origin. During this final phase of my research, I asked my interviewees to express their point of view on these particular events, on their effects, and their meaning for people of migrant background's inclusion in the receiving society. This was an occasion to deepen my analysis of why and how involvement in the sphere of immigration by local actors took place in each context, what role people of migrant background played, and *how* local actors interacted and made an impact on forms of civic and political participation by people of migrant background.

To summarize, the three phases of my ethnographic research aimed to reconstruct the dynamics at play between local actors and people of foreign origin's individual and collective forms of mobilization. The comparison of different power configurations in each city was essential to grasp *why* and *how* people of foreign origin mobilized in different ways depending on the context.

3.2.2. Data Analysis

At the end of the fieldwork I did a selective analysis of the great amount of material gathered during the fieldwork. I used the software NVIVO to upload and analyze the data. The software allowed me to gather in the same program all the visual, auditory and textual documents (including the interviews and the field notes) collected during the fieldwork, as well as websites and other important electronic documents connected to the subject I was exploring. It also facilitated the management of the material in a simple and powerful way. It was particularly helpful to: 1) organize and explore the material, 2) reconstruct each case under observation (within-case analysis), and 3) perform systematic comparisons of different cases. It was also extremely valuable to 4) crosscheck the results and 5) compare the final results of the research (see Eisenhardt 1989, 533).

During the analysis, I followed the following steps. I first focused on the within-case studies. For each city, mainly through the help of local newspapers and interviews, I described a contentious moment in the city between 2010 and 2011 and identified the main local actors, including people of migrant background, involved in the mobilization. Then, through the support of official documents, interviews, and surveys of the official sites of the local organizations, I reconstructed the local realm of immigration in 2013 and

explained the role of local actors by looking at their historical trajectory in the city since 1998. When possible, I combined primary sources with secondary sources. I focused on *why* and *how* local actors contributed to shaping the realm of immigration the way they did and asked whether they were opening channels of participation for people of migrant background in the city. Furthermore, I concentrated on the discourses and practices of people of migrant background active in the city and assessed their role in the local realm of immigration and whether and how they were contributing to shape that realm through their civic and political activities. Finally, once I analyzed each context, I drew general conclusions by comparing the four cities (see Chapter 8).

3.3. Strengths and limitations of the research

An important literature in Europe and North America focuses on the local context to explain integration and political participation of people of migrant background from a comparative perspective. This growing body of research combines quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the conditions under which people of migrant background participate at the local level both within and across states (see for instance Morales & Giugni 2011). However, as I pointed out in the Introduction and Chapter 1, most migration literature mainly focuses on institutions and institutional channeling and thus concentrates on state actors and national and local policies, rather than the multiplicity of actors actually involved in the realm of immigration. For this reason, I have suggested complementing the migration literature with literature on social movements to move from a state-centered perspective to one that includes an analysis of actors and actions. Following my theoretical framework, I opted for a small-N research strategy and the use of multiple ethnographic methods.

In my research strategy, I prioritize a small-N over a large-N comparison for two main reasons. First of all, the literature shows that small-N comparisons have the advantage of exposing the interplay between official local policy priorities and the role played by various actors involved in the realm of immigration (Caponio & Borkert 2010, 28). Thus, a small-N comparison appeared to be the best approach to grasp the phenomena I am seeking to explain, that is, the interplay between local actors, including people of migrant background, in the local political arena.

A few authors have used large-N analyses to compare European cities. For instance, Alexander (2004) makes one of the first attempts to construct a typology of European cities while giving priority to the local-level migrant policy models. Small-N qualitative

comparisons can be divided into two bodies of research. On the one hand, this method is used to assess the role played by characteristics attached to immigrants, such as their background, their migratory trajectories, cultural factors, and so on. Scholars thus select a few groups on the basis of ethnicity and compare them in a given context. On the other hand, most studies today aim to explain how structural constraints and opportunities shape the insertion of immigrants into their new society. Scholars of this perspective usually select one or a few ethnic groups across different contexts. This approach is called divergent comparison, and assesses variations with respect to context, within a country or across countries (see, for example, Caponio 2005 and Fauser 2012 for cross-local analysis, and Koopmans 2004; Moore 2004; Garbaye 2004; 2005 for a combination of cross-local and cross-national analysis).

Second, given the little knowledge we have on the role of multiple local actors in shaping participation, I assumed that a small-N comparison would offer the opportunity to make advances in in-depth analysis and theory-building on the subject. As Glaser & Strauss (1967) underscore, a close knowledge of the empirical reality allows the development of testable, relevant, and valid theory. The comparison of a relatively small number of cities allows me to establish a deep knowledge of each case (within-case research) and at the same time to explore similar and diverging patterns of inclusion among the four cases and advance new suggestions for further research (see Alexander & Bennett 2005, 149).

The literature on social movements has shown the importance of ethnography and the combination of different qualitative methods to study actors and their actions (Smith 1995; Della Porta 2014; see also Bray 2008). In this study, I combined various qualitative research methods and accorded great importance to semi-structured interviews, because they are considered the most useful way to grasp individuals' perspectives on their actions and how they relate with material and symbolic resources offered by other actors (Blee & Taylor 2002). Kathleen Blee and Verta Taylor (2002, 92-93) explain:

Semi-structures interviews are particularly useful for understanding [social movements] mobilizations from the perspective of [movement] actors or audiences. They provide greater breadth and depth of information, the opportunity to discover the respondent's

experience and interpretation of reality, and access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the word of the researcher.¹⁰⁶

In my research, I applied Blee and Taylor's suggestions on the study of social movements to look at the involvement of multiple local actors in the realm of immigration at the local level.

In addition to the interviews, other methods used in ethnographic research are particularly useful because they are highly inductive and privilege an actor-oriented analysis. Critics of the POS structure in the migration literature, such as Margit Fauser (2012, 181), have underscored that "Institutional approaches generally start with a strong and rigid concept of institutional structure and this consequently affects the conceptualization of immigrants' agency." For this reason, Fauser suggests that one's theory and concepts should rely on a framework which is flexible and procedural in nature and which makes it possible to go back and forth from deductive research design to empirical findings (Glaser & Strauss 1967, quotes in Fauser 2012). As Fauser explains, this approach is particularly useful for the study of immigrant actions in recent migration cities "where little research has been done so far" (Fauser 2012, 181). All things considered, the research I conducted in Italy aimed to understand the actors' motivations and their intended scope of action. My immersion in the field allowed me to assess the effective role played by multiple actors, including people of migrant background active in the city, in the local realm of immigration (see also Bayard de Volo 2009 for the importance of "participant observation").

In addition to the strengths of my chosen research methods outlined above, I also faced some methodological challenges. First, notwithstanding the small-N comparison, the research included the examination of a great number of actors, for which it was not always easy to find the necessary material. What is more, the cities examined in this study have not previously been objects of systematic analysis by migration scholars. Thus I had to rely almost exclusively on primary source material. I encountered difficulties gathering

¹⁰⁶ Blee & Taylor also add that semi-structured interviews are useful to: 1) gain access to the motivations and perspectives of a *broader* and *more diverse* group of social movement participants than would be represented in most documentary sources; 2) generate new categories and themes of analysis; 3) "scrutinize the semantic context of statements by [social movement] participants and leaders" (2002, 94); 4) assess the context of motivations, beliefs, and attitudes; 5) "allow scrutiny of meaning, both how activists regard their participation and how social movement participants make sense of and justify their actions" (2002, 94); 6) "access [to such] nuanced understandings of social movement outcomes as the construction of collective and individual identities" (2002, 95); 7) "bring *human agency* to the center of movement analysis" and, finally, 8) scrutinize the ways in which messages of social movements are *received* by members, targeted recruits, intended audiences, and others.

material in some cities where the official sites of local actors were not well organized or updated. For this reason, in some cases I had to rely almost exclusively on the combination of different interviews without the support of other consistent material to reconstruct facts. Finally, the explorative nature of inductive research, while it allows the discovery of new information during the fieldwork, also results in the collection of different types of material, which are not always easy to compare systematically. To overcome this difficulty, I had to do a great deal of interpretation and to double-check different first-hand documents and interviews to make sure that the information I used in each city was comparable with the other cases.

Overall, my methodological approach and the explorative nature of this study seemed best apt to address the main research question of this dissertation. In particular, I was able work through the conceptual apparatus I developed in the Introduction and in Chapter 1 and to bring important results I would not have been able to find otherwise. The following chapters will present the analysis of the four cities.

PART TWO: Empirical research

Chapter 4. Reggio Emilia

Civic Participation in the City of the Intercultural Dialogue

4.1. The “Italy is me, too!” campaign

On September 9, 2011, Graziano Delrio, the mayor of Reggio Emilia and head of the left-wing administration, launched the national campaign “Italy is me, too! For the rights of citizenship” (*L’Italia sono anch’io! Per i diritti alla cittadinanza*). The campaign’s goal was to collect enough signatures to present two popular legislative propositions in Parliament. The first proposition asked for a change in the citizenship law based on *jus sanguinis*, which would instead apply the *jus soli* principle to children of immigrant parents born in Italy. The second focused on granting non-EU citizens the right to vote in local elections.¹⁰⁷ The national campaign was supported by many civil society organizations (including Caritas and lay organizations), traditional trade unions (including the CGIL) and second-generation immigrant organizations, such as Network G2 – Second Generation (*Rete G2 – Seconde Generazioni*).¹⁰⁸

Mayor Delrio was the president of the national committee of the “Italy is me, too!” campaign. In Reggio Emilia, thanks to his incentives, the left-wing administration and the main left-wing party, the Democratic Party (through the Provincial Forum of Immigration), were deeply involved during the entire campaign and promoted various initiatives to sensitize public opinion and to encourage public debate on the campaign’s central themes.¹⁰⁹ The campaign saw also the involvement and the collaboration of the main local actors involved in the city’s domain of immigration: the Church-based organizations (including Caritas and Abram’s Home—*Dimora d’Abramo*), the two main traditional trade unions (CISL and CGIL) and the Mondinsieme Intercultural Center (*Centro Interculturale Mondinsieme*, from now on the Mondinsieme Center).¹¹⁰

Among the promoters of the campaign there were also immigrant associations, in particular two established second-generation immigrant organizations: Young Muslims of Italy (*Giovani Musulmani d’Italia*) and Network TogethER (*Rete TogethER*), a network of associations of young people of Italian and migrant background in the Emilia-Romagna

¹⁰⁷ See official site: <http://www.litaliasonoanchio.it> (Accessed June 20, 2015). See also the campaign’s channel on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/litaliasonoanchio> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹⁰⁸ At the national level, the campaign was promoted by twenty-two civil society organizations. For a list of the main organizations involved in the campaign, see the page “Who we are” (*Chi siamo*) on the official site: <http://www.litaliasonoanchio.it/index.php?id=521> (Accessed June 10, 2015).

¹⁰⁹ See the official site of the municipality: <http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/0/5326756FDCFCA76EC1257919003CE7A8?opendocument&FROM=LtIsnnch2> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹¹⁰ “Mondinsieme” is a combination of two words: “world” and “together.”

region. Thanks to the support of the Mondinsieme Center and these two immigrant associations, it was possible to encourage great participation among young people of foreign origin, who helped to organize events and create videos and documents to sensitize the Italian and immigrant population to the themes of the campaign.¹¹¹

A remarkable aspect of the campaign was the explicit link drawn by the organizers between respecting the universality of rights (as established in the third article of the Italian Constitution) and a vision of Italy as a multi-ethnic society, which would respect the rights of immigrants in Italy, including the right to vote at the local level. According to the third article: “All citizens have equal social status and are equal before the law, without regard to their sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, and personal or social conditions.”¹¹² By making a link to the article of the Italian Constitution, the organizers promoted the view that people of migrant background who live in Italy are entitled to fundamental rights independent of their status. In the official site of the campaign one can read: “Immigrants must enjoy the same rights as nationals and as citizens of the countries of residence in all fundamental spheres of economic, political, cultural, social and educational life.”¹¹³

The themes addressed during the campaign were in line with the general approach adopted by the two left-wing administrations led by Mayor Delrio from 2004 to 2008 and from 2008 to 2014. The administration had distinguished itself in the Italian landscape for its promotion of an innovative intercultural approach to integration, the *intercultural dialogue*, which encouraged the idea of Italy as a multi-ethnic society and argued that diversity is a resource that needs to be valorized. At the heart of the local administration’s approach was the idea that second-generation immigrants are the future. For the administration, the campaign was an occasion to move beyond the local context and open a completely new national debate about political rights and the future of Italy as a multi-ethnic society.

In many parts of the country, the campaign was well received and exceeded its main goal of collecting 50,000 signatures for each proposition at the national level. At the end of the campaign, the committee had collected 109,268 signatures for the change in citizenship

¹¹¹ For a complete list of the members of the committee as well as some of the initiatives promoted by the administration of Reggio Emilia and the other local organizations, see [http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/PESIdDoc/0D761E7B331DC137C1257C2B002E167B/\\$file/Comunicato%20stampa.pdf](http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/PESIdDoc/0D761E7B331DC137C1257C2B002E167B/$file/Comunicato%20stampa.pdf) (Accessed June 10, 2015).

¹¹² See the official site of the campaign: <http://www.litaliasonoanchio.it/index.php?id=584> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹¹³ *ibid.*

law and 106,329 signatures for the right to vote. The city of Reggio Emilia alone obtained the highest number of signatures in Emilia Romagna, more than 5,400 signatures for each proposition. On March 6, 2012, the organizing committee deposited the two propositions at the Chamber of Deputies.¹¹⁴

While the campaign did not succeed in convincing the parliament to transform the propositions into laws, the leaders of the initiative in Reggio Emilia believed that the campaign was successful in raising the awareness of the population about the issue of immigrants' rights in Italy. When presenting the results of the campaign to the press, Delrio declared himself greatly satisfied:

Today we celebrate a great result, which we have believed in since the beginning, when there were only few people who believed in it. The duty of politics is exactly this: to say things that are uncomfortable and that do not build consent. Politics must say the truth in difficult moments. With this campaign we have been able to stimulate cultural debate on the issues of citizenship and rights. And this is probably the biggest result [...]. The delivery of the signatures represents only the first step of a long and demanding path.¹¹⁵

During my interview, a longtime-worker at the Mondinsieme Center of Reggio Emilia told me:

More than a political battle it was a cultural battle. We knew that most likely things would not have evolved very fast in parliament. Our extraordinary result has been imposing a debate at the cultural level. The campaign has succeeded in raising attention to these themes. Before, there was zero interest on the subject! (Rinaldo D., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013).

¹¹⁴ The numbers in Reggio Emilia were exactly 5,423 signatures for the Law on citizenship and 5,634 signatures for the right to vote. The campaign collected more than 18,000 signatures for each proposition in Lombardy, more than 15,000 in Emilia-Romagna, more than 11,000 in Piedmont, around 6,000 in Lazio, and 1,700 in Campania. See the official site of the municipality of Reggio Emilia : <http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/0/5326756FDCFCA76EC1257919003CE7A8?opendocument&FROM=LtIsnnch2> (Accessed June 20, 2015). See also Vladimiro Polchi. "L'Italia sono anch'io": 110 mila firme. Consegnati alla camera due ddl popolari." *Repubblica.it*, March 6, 2012 www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/immigrazione/2012/03/06/news/italia_sono_anch_io_firme-31025368/ (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹¹⁵ See official site of the municipality of Reggio Emilia: <http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/0/5326756FDCFCA76EC1257919003CE7A8?opendocument&FROM=LtIsnnch2> (Accessed June 10, 2015).

The director of Caritas of Reggio Emilia expressed a similar point of view:

At the local level, our bishop supported the campaign with a formal endorsement. We have collaborated on some events. The campaign created more awareness on the subject. Also, it was the first time local actors worked together. As Caritas, we were encouraged to launch the project Grain of Mustard [*Granello di Senape*], which aims to sensitize the youth at school to the rights of immigrants (Roberto I., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 19 February 2013).

Persuaded of the importance of this cultural battle, the administration of Reggio Emilia continued its communication campaign after the deposition of the signatures with various initiatives, with the support of the Mondinsieme Center, the Democratic Party's Provincial Forum of Immigration and the association Network TogetHER.¹¹⁶

The "Italy is me, too!" campaign provides a revealing window on the local realm of immigration and the approaches to integration adopted by local actors in the city and shows how they shape the realm of immigration and the channels of participation for the immigrant population. The organization of the campaign illustrates the strong involvement of the left-wing local authorities of Reggio Emilia in the sphere of immigration and a great deal of collaboration among local actors in the city, including the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party, the two main traditional trade unions, the CGIL and the CISL, and Caritas and other third-sector organizations. The organization of the campaign also highlights the involvement of second-generation immigrant organizations, such as the Young Muslims of Italy and Network TogetHER. The Mondinsieme Center, directly connected to the administration, was also greatly involved and supported the participation of the immigrant associations affiliated with the Mondinsieme Center.

Among other things, the campaign testified to the long-lasting commitment by local actors to promoting greater awareness of the issue of integration and encouraging an intercultural approach, including alliances with immigrant activists in the city. The Assessor of Cohesion and Security was one key figure in the promotion of inclusion in the city. During one of our interviews, he explained:

While the Catholic culture tends to focus on social enterprise, the Communist culture is more concerned with cultural enterprise. For us, this means giving dignity back to

¹¹⁶ See in particular the project with second-generation immigrants, "Inside out," <http://www.spaziogerra.it/2012/09/08/inside-out-litalia-sono-anchio/> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

immigrants. Here in Reggio Emilia we want to propose a “qualitative leap” in the approach to integration developed by local actors: We want all our citizens to participate and feel responsible for the history of this city! (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013).

Thus, he suggested that being a citizen of the multi-ethnic city of Reggio Emilia means taking part in the initiatives that concern the residents of the city and promoting respect for diversity and inclusion. In this view, people of migrant background willing to collaborate with the administration were likely to be included in its projects.

A young woman born in Reggio Emilia to immigrant parents was a worker at the Mondinsieme Center since 2009. She told me:

In Reggio Emilia, the attention of the administration is very important. Their involvement is indisputable, as the campaign “Italy is me, too!” shows very clearly. In addition to the campaign, there are many other initiatives that show their interest, such as the Intercultural Cities project, a platform used to exchange good practices of integration with other cities. Recently, we have launched also new initiatives to exchange with cities outside Europe. We want to learn from the experience of other cities (Morgan M., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013).

Thus, according to her, the campaign was not a superficial or isolated initiative, but an example of the long-lasting and serious commitment by the administration of Reggio Emilia to developing new tools for greater inclusion.

In this chapter, through the support of my key concepts introduced in the Introduction—the local realm of immigration and the approaches to integration—I will document the role of local actors in shaping participation. The next section (4.2) presents the local realm of immigration in Reggio Emilia in 2013 and describes how local actors have contributed to open up channels of participation since the end of the 1990s. Section 4.3 examines the forms and the extent of participation by people of migrant background and describes selected individual trajectories of immigrants active in various local channels of participation. I analyze how these individuals have perceived and acted upon the opportunities for participation available to them in the city and ask whether they have been able to shape the local realm of immigration and the opportunities to participation through their engagement. It will be shown that when immigrant activists were given support and

autonomy in the city, they were able to contribute to shaping the context in which they interacted by appropriating the main discourses and practices of their left-wing allies.

4.2. The local realm of immigration in Reggio Emilia

The city of Reggio Emilia is known not only as the unquestioned stronghold of the Communist Party in Italy until its dissolution in the 1990s, but also as a symbol of the Italian resistance against fascism. The identity of the city is shaped by pride in being a place that has struggled against discrimination and injustice, which has made local actors in the city particularly welcoming to immigrants since their first arrival in the 1980s. Local authorities in Reggio Emilia were open to the idea of welcoming new immigrants, and by the 1990s it was already considered a model and experimental city for the rest of Italy and one of the best models in Emilia-Romagna (Turco 2005). One of my key informants, a member of the Democratic Party since the 1990s, explained that long before the rest of Italy made its first steps toward integration, Reggio Emilia was already experimenting with its first inclusive intervention in the area of immigration (Francesca F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013).

In accordance with the political culture of the city outlined in Chapter 3, at the time of my fieldwork in 2013 the local realm of immigration in Reggio Emilia was characterized by the great strength of the main “red” actors. In continuity with my observations on the “Italy is me, too!” campaign, the main local actor in the sphere of immigration was the left-wing administration, which promoted a co-operative model and collaborated closely with lay organizations of both Italians and immigrants. An additional key actor linked to the administration was the Mondinsieme Center, created in 2001 to promote interculturalism in the city. The “red” trade union, the CGIL, and the main left-wing party, the Democratic Party (working closely with the administration) were also very powerful actors. A radical left organization, the Migrant City (*Città Migrante*), was also present in the city, but was marginal compared to other left-wing actors. Finally, the main “white” actors, Caritas and CISL, though less strong than “red” actors, invested a great deal in the area of immigration and made a difference in the city. In particular, their approach was influenced by the powerful “red” actors in the direction of interculturalism.

Table 4.1 offers a glimpse of the local realm of immigration and the main local actors in Reggio Emilia in 2013. It indicates the types of approaches they adopted: assistance (A), intercultural (I) and political rights promotion (PRP). The table suggests the level of investment of each actor. The number of stars represents the strength of each

approach: one star indicates a weak investment in the approach, two stars a moderate one and three stars a strong one. The level of intervention depends primarily on the combination of two main factors: (1) the importance given to a specific approach by the local actor, and (2) the strength of that actor in the political arena and thus its ability to successfully promote that approach.

TABLE 4.1. Approaches to integration by local actors in Reggio Emilia in 2013

Political orientation	Actors	A	I	PRP
Institutional “red” actors	Left-wing administration	**	***	*
	Democratic Party	-	-	*
	CGIL	**	-	*
Radical “red” actors	Radical left organization (Migrant City)	*	-	*
“White” actors	Caritas and Church-based organizations	**	*	-
	CISL	*	*	-
Others	Lay organizations	***	***	*
	Immigrant associations	*	**	*

The table presents an overview of the approaches adopted by local actors in Reggio Emilia and suggests the prevalence of the assistance and intercultural approaches over the political rights promotion approach. Among moderate “red” actors, the left-wing administration was the dominant actor in the city promoting an assistance and intercultural approach. Through the collaboration with lay organizations in the city (including immigrant organizations), the administration adopted a visible interventionist strategy and attempted to promote the involvement of most actors in the city, including Caritas and the main trade unions. The second most significant moderate “red” actor, the Democratic Party, collaborated with the local administration while promoting a political rights promotion approach, through the Provincial Forum of Immigration created in 2010. However, the Provincial Forum was still a marginal actor in the city and within the political party itself, which in general showed little investment in the area of immigration.

In 2013, the “red” trade union, CGIL, known in the past for being particularly radical and playing a crucial role in the promotion of political participation, had been investing mainly in services (assistance) in more recent years. Even the radical left-wing organization, the Migrant City—a very weak actor—was mainly concentrating in offering services. This was in contrast with other cities in Italy such as Bologna and Brescia, where,

as will be shown in Chapter 6, some radical left organizations concentrated mainly on promoting political participation and were able to open up non-conventional channels by supporting mobilization of people of migrant background in the city.

The two main “white” actors, Caritas and the CISL, also focused mainly in the offering of assistance to immigrants. Like many other branches of the CISL in Italy, the CISL in Reggio Emilia additionally supported intercultural dialogue through the CISL-ANOLF. Stimulated by the other main local actors, especially after the “Italy is me, too!” campaign, Caritas was encouraged to promote interculturalism in at least two ways. First, it invested resources and time to promote an intercultural approach in the territory of Reggio Emilia through pilot projects in the schools. Second, it encouraged the civic participation of people of migrant background (particularly second-generation) in its organization, and, by adhering to a project with the Emilia-Romagna region, it accepted the involvement people of migrant background in the civil service. Just like during the “Italy is me, too!” campaign of 2011, there was a high level of collaboration in 2013 between most of the local actors involved in the sphere of immigration, thanks largely to the work done by the local administration in keeping all these organizations together. This collaboration also included the “white” actors, which in most cases were able to create networks with other actors in the city.

As for civic and political participation, Table 4.2 presents a list of the conventional and non-conventional channels of participation opened by local actors and shows the correlation between the presence of specific local actors and the type of participation developed in the city.

TABLE 4.2. Opening of channels of participation by local actors and their relevance (1–weak to 3–strong) in Reggio Emilia in 2013

Local actors	Civic channels	Conventional political channels	Non-conventional political channels
Local left-wing administration	Promotion of initiatives and projects (3)		
Democratic Party	--	Provincial Forum of Immigration (1)	
CGIL	--	Inclusion at the individual level (functionaries) (1)	
Radical left organization (Migrant City)	--		Promotion of mobilizations and occupations (1)
Caritas and Church-based organizations	Workshops of interculturalism and civil service (1)		
CISL	Promotion activities by the CISL-ANOLF (1)	Inclusion at the individual level (functionaries) (1)	
Lay organizations	Mondinsieme Center (3)		Promotion of mobilizations and occupations with the radical Left (1)
Immigrant associations	First- and second-generation associations, work with Mondinsieme Center (2)	The Provincial Forum Immigration of the Democratic Party (1)	

The table shows how the actors shaping the local realm of immigration in Reggio Emilia affect the opening of channels of participation in the direction of conventional participation, mainly through the opening of civic channels and a few political channels. The limited channels of participation opened by radical “red” actors resulted in a lack of support for non-conventional forms of participation in the city. As will be shown in Chapters 5 and 6, this situation is in sharp contrast with the cases of Bologna and Brescia, where a strong presence of radical actors resulted in greater participation in non-conventional channels among parts of migrant activists in the city.

In the following section I will more closely the role of local actors in shaping the local realm of immigration between 1998 and 2013.

4.2.1. *The role of local administrations*

A peculiarity of the city of Reggio Emilia is the continuity of its political orientation (Table 4.3). When the campaign “Italy is me, too!” took place in 2011, the left-wing administration led by Mayor Delrio had been in power since 2004 and was in its second mandate. Before Delrio’s administration, Antonella Spaggiari governed the city as mayor in 1994-1999 and 1999-2004 with a left-wing coalition.¹¹⁷

TABLE 4.3. Political orientation of the local administrations in Reggio Emilia since 1998

Dates	1998-1999	1999-2004	2004-2009	2009-2014
Political orientation	Center-Left (in power since 1994)	Center-Left	Center-Left	Center-Left
Main political party	DS	DS	DS since 2007 and then PD	PD
Mayor	Antonella Spaggiari	Antonella Spaggiari	Graziano Del Rio	Graziano Del Rio

In the 2000s, the increasing power of the Northern League at the national, regional and local levels discouraged most local left-wing authorities’ involvement in the sphere of immigration (as in the case of the left-wing administrations in Bologna between 2004 and 2014). As the Northern League gained even more power in the elections of 2008 and the politicization of the discourse of immigration raised the “electoral cost” (Caponio 2006a, 92), both moderate right-wing and left-wing politicians were less likely to speak out in favor of immigrants’ integration, and in some cases they adopted the security discourses of the Northern League (see Chapter 2). In cities where right-wing coalitions won the elections with a strong presence of the Northern League (as in Brescia between 2008 and 2013 and Bergamo between 2009 and 2014), local administrations shifted their attention to security measures rather than integration policies. For left-wing administrations, there was a great fear of talking about the subject of immigration, and in some cases local administrations turned to issues of public order for fear of the electorate (Bellinvia 2013).

Even in the Italian stronghold of the left, the Emilia-Romagna region, the withdrawal of left-wing local actors also took place, though less visibly than elsewhere. However, in Emilia-Romagna, the rise of the Northern League also became an opportunity for a few local authorities to raise their voices and stand up against the rise of xenophobia and

¹¹⁷ The dates represent different elected periods but the same election winners and administration.

exclusion. The region adopted an approach to integration that was visibly designed to contrast with the increased hostility towards immigrants at the national level. It adopted instead a culture-friendly model, introducing (among other things) a law on integration in 2004, as described in Chapter 2.

In addition to this favorable regional context, the political continuity of the administrations of Reggio Emilia allowed local authorities to develop an approach very different from any other city in Italy. During Delrio's second mandate (2008-2013), the administration pushed toward a more comprehensive approach to integration by promoting what administrators called "a qualitative leap" in the approach to integration, transforming Reggio Emilia into "the city of the intercultural dialogue." As proclaimed by Delrio in his promotion of the "Italy is me, too!" campaign, local authorities in Reggio Emilia believed that "the duty of politics" is to say truthful things, even if they "are uncomfortable" and "do not build consent."

Left-wing administrations from 1994 to 2004

In keeping with the prevailing "red" political culture (Campomori 2008) and left-wing political orientation (Caponio 2006a), the left-wing administrations of Reggio Emilia guided by Antonella Spaggiari from 1994 to 1999 and from 1999 to 2004 adopted an interventionist administrative approach to integration and attempted to coordinate the third sector in order to promote co-operation with other actors in the area of immigration. This collaboration with the third sector allowed the administration to move in the direction of assistance and interculturalism (Francesca F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013). The local administration's investment in assistance was favored by the strong welfare system present in the Emilia-Romagna region (Bonora & Giardini, 2004). As most of my interviewees acknowledged, the public services and dense network of third-sector organizations covered most of the needs of immigrants (Francesca F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013). Reggio Emilia was among the first cities (together with Modena) to offer a comprehensive set of services for "undocumented" immigrants (Clara A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013).

During its second mandate in 1997, the Spaggiari administration created a Municipal Office to help immigrants orient themselves in the city. It also paid great attention to the accommodation of cultural and religious diversity, developing one of the first intercultural approaches in Italy at the level of services (Francesca F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013). This included the production of pamphlets in different languages to

introduce people of foreign origin to the use of local services and the use of several intercultural mediators in hospitals, schools, etc. (Clara A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013). There was also an emphasis on the training of intercultural mediators and the creation of workshops of interculturalism in schools (Mohamed A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 11 June 2013).

Over the years, the administration—in collaboration with other local actors, in particular the CGIL—created innovative courses to talk about the importance of encouraging inclusion through the respect of diversity in the workplace and elsewhere (Teresa E., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 29 October 2013). These organizations worked toward the creation of pamphlets in different languages to help immigrants understand basic notions linked to the workplace and above all workplace safety (Clara A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013).¹¹⁸ Furthermore, because the administration wanted to avoid an exclusively assistance-based approach to integration, it encouraged participation in civic life through the support of immigrant associations (Cesare F. Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013). To this end, it created the Mondinsieme Center in 2001 to offer a space where immigrant associations could meet and entertain cultural exchanges (see below).

Like many other local administrations in Emilia-Romagna in the 1990s (Caritas 2005), the administration did not invest in a political rights promotion approach by creating a Consultative Body or other parallel channels of participation. There was one at the provincial level, but it was not a relevant actor in the city. Francesca F. of the Democratic Party was very active in politics during Spaggiari's administration. She explained that the debate on the political rights of immigrants was a central issue at that time, and that attempts were made to promote the participation of immigrants in mainstream politics through the political party, rather than through the creation of consultative bodies. She said, "The administration at the time did not believe in this 'surrogate' of participation, so it did not support the creation of parallel channels of participation" (Francesca F. Interview in Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013). The role of the Democratic Party is discussed in more detail in Section 4.2.4 below.

¹¹⁸ See the pamphlet, Reggio Emilia. *Vivere a Reggio Emilia. Vademecum per i cittadini immigrati*. <http://www.provincia.re.it/page.asp?IDCategoria=701&IDSezione=4245&ID=92947> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

Left-wing administrations from 2004 to 2013

From 2004 to 2013, with the arrival of the left-wing local governments led by Graziano Delrio, the initiatives already begun during Spaggiari's administration gradually moved toward a more coherent strategy of inclusion. By building on the work of the previous administration, the Delrio administration moved toward a new approach, the *intercultural dialogue*.¹¹⁹

On the official website of the municipality, one can find an explanation of the intercultural approach specific to the city of Reggio Emilia.¹²⁰ In the document one can read that this approach is not a mere “valorization of diversity,” but a strategy of governance, able to address major challenges linked to the phenomenon of immigration.

The first step toward intercultural dialogue is the recognition that immigration is a structural phenomenon and that Italy has become *de facto* a multi-ethnic society. In response to the massive change in the structure of Italian society, the document states:

[...] the intercultural dialogue carries out a crucial role in constructing together new identities and a sense of citizenship, precisely because it explores the benefits of our rich cultural heritage and the opportunities to learn from different cultural traditions. [...] The intercultural dialogue is indispensable for the construction of a new social and cultural model, because it offers the possibility to adopt an approach of governance that makes possible the involvement of all of the sectors (the public administration and the economic, social and cultural actors of the city) and the valorization of the different cultures present in the context based on respect of the rules.

During one of our interviews, Cesare F., the Assessor of Cohesion and Security and the main promoter of integration policies in the city during the two Delrio administrations helped me to reconstruct the trajectory of the administration and to understand the meaning of “intercultural dialogue” in Reggio Emilia.¹²¹ He explained that the distinct approach of Reggio Emilia was developed at the beginning of the 2000s, made “a qualitative leap” in

¹¹⁹In 2004, the Council of Europe launched a project to create networks and exchanges among cities who were experimenting with “good practices” of integration. See the official site of the Council of Europe dedicated to the program of the Intercultural Cities: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/origin_en.asp (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹²⁰See document of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. “Reggio Città del Dialogo Interculturale- Le politiche del comune” <http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/PESDocumentID/4B91F3CC51106CADC12578BD0034B0D6?opendocument&FROM=Pltchmblt2> (Accessed June 20, 2015)

¹²¹ Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013.

2006, and continued to develop progressively until 2013. While the promotion of integration through assistance was never questioned by the local administrations over the years (“precisely because it is assumed as the basis for all other forms of integration”), since 2006, local authorities have clearly distinguished between the dimension of assistance and that of interculturalism. Assessor Cesare F. explained:

The most structured initiatives started in the 2000s. In 2001, the administration of the time created the Mondinsieme Center, an office of the municipality that was transformed progressively into a center dedicated to the intercultural dialogue. There had already been a municipal office in the city since 1997, but with the Mondinsieme Center the administration of the time wanted to bypass the viewpoint centered on offering services and assistance. The Mondinsieme Center was created to reunite the associative realities present in the city and to foster participation and active citizenship by people of migrant background, without having to rely on local consultative bodies. There was already a consultative body at the provincial level. The Mondinsieme Center wanted to be a center for a dialogue with the citizens at the local level (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013).

In addition to the creation of the Mondinsieme Center, over the years the local administration continued to invest in intercultural dialogue as a strategy of governance. Assessor Cesare F. explained that the major change brought about by this approach was that policies of integration were no longer limited exclusively to social policies (as in the rest of Italy), but were extended to other fields as well, including security and education. This marked a substantial move by the administration to go beyond the assistance approach widespread in Italy:

The major change was the mentality of governance. The key to the change has been the adoption of an integrated approach. The embryos were there, but the alliances were missing. Until 2004, the approach was mainly assistance-oriented. It said: “Oh! Poor immigrant!” People from Reggio Emilia did not appreciate this kind of approach, precisely because there were also people from Reggio who needed assistance and they did not like the distinctions between them and the immigrant population. From 2004 to today, considerable efforts have been made to go beyond this approach. We have decided to detach the “issue of integration” from the dimension of “social exclusion.” For this reason, we have tried to involve other assessors, coming from fields such as

culture, commerce and urbanism. Before, we were more protected, because “the social” [welfare] has been always very powerful in Reggio Emilia and it has many functionaries who work in the field. However, if we had remained in that domain, we would have been locked into that framework without a way out, and without the possibility to stretch our influence in other fields and thus to create new possibilities of action toward integration. So, in 2004, we said: “Enough!” Thus, between 2004 and 2007, the intercultural approach received a theoretical infusion by breaking with the approaches of the past (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013).

In 2004 the Delrio administration decided to participate in a project launched by the Council of Europe, a creation of the “Network of European Cities” designed to promote the exchange of intercultural practices of integration.¹²² Thanks to its experimental approach to integration, Reggio Emilia was selected in 2008 by the Council of Europe to take part in a project called “Intercultural cities: governance and policies for diverse communities.” By 2014, twelve cities of the EU had participated in the program.

During our interview, the Assessor explained what it meant to be an intercultural city according to the Council of Europe, and how this was perfectly in line with the approach already developed in Reggio Emilia:

The Council of Europe indicates the general approach to follow. The idea is an integrated approach to governance by the municipality. Governance is to be brought forth from the collaboration between local authorities and the third-sector organizations, the trade unions, and the non-profit organizations. In 2008, the Council of Europe distributed the “white book” and encouraged local governments to create the conditions for a “true dialogue” in their cities. The book promotes the idea that diversity, if valorized, can bring many advantages to the community. On page 9 of the book, you can find the main philosophy. You can see that in the last column they talk about the intercultural strategy. It is called “community building.”... We are proud to be the only Italian city taking part in this project. The project with the Council of Europe allows us to exchange good practices with other cities all across Europe and to encourage the intercultural dialogue in other Italian cities. We know, of course, that it is an ambitious project, which is still far from being realized (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013).

¹²² See page http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/cities/default_en.asp (Accessed June 20, 2015).

Through the lens of the “intercultural dialogue” and thanks to the Council of Europe’s incentives, the interventions of the local authorities became very consistent in the last half of the 2000s. In the document, “Guidance for city policy-makers with good practice examples,” by the Intercultural Cities group of the Council of Europe, Reggio Emilia is openly recognized as an “example of best practices” thanks to the following initiatives: (1) “Mondo tra i fornelli: intercultural cooking workshops,” a “meeting of Italian and Foreign Women around an oven” (16); (2) “The centro per la mediazione dei conflitti,” an intercultural center of conflict mediation “with a variety of ethnic and language backgrounds” (22); (3) “Learn Arabic!” an Arabic-language school for non-Arabic speakers promoted by the Mondinsieme Center” (23); (4) “The Mondinsieme Center: together with the world,” an initiative to support “diaspora groups through active intercultural policy” (26); (5) “Neighborhood Pact: mutual obligations for the city and the citizens,” an initiative with a “strong emphasis on civic values” that proposes a pact outlining obligations for the city and citizens in order to diminish conflicts and to build trust and social cohesion among residents (32).¹²³

In continuity with this project, in May 2010 the city of Reggio Emilia became the promoter (in collaboration with the Council of Europe) of “The Italian Network of Intercultural Cities.” Composed of 23 cities, the network aims to create collaborations on the themes of integration and governance and to share “good practices” of integration in Italy.¹²⁴ Assessor Cesare F. emphasized the fact that above all,

It was possible to put at the center of the debate the importance of individual self-determination. I think that the most important change can be seen in the way we seek to frame the theme of immigration. It is no longer something that concerns just migrants and receiving institutions, but all citizens and thus the entire society as a whole. Thus in these last years, the debate has reawakened and regained vitality. The

¹²³ See the page of the Council of Europe “Intercultural cities: examples of good practices” http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/cities/guidance_en.asp (Accessed June 20, 2015). See also the page “*The cities of the dialogue*” (“*Le città del dialogo*”): (Accessed June 20, 2015). Others initiatives brought forth by the municipality in the neighborhood included “Reggians for example” (*Reggiani per esempio*). The municipality financed the 60 percent, while the Mondinsieme Center provided the remaining 40 percent. The project was based on five actions aiming at doing intercultural mediation in a neighborhood with the highest concentration of migrants in the city (Teresa E., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 29 October 2013). See link: “Se sei straniero” <http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/pes.nsf/web/dlscnt8?opendocument> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹²⁴ See the official site: “The Italian Network of Intercultural Cities” http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/Italy_en.asp (Accessed June 10, 2015).

initiative of “the cities of the dialogue” is important because it re-launches the debate in Italy (Cesare F. Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013).

The intercultural dialogue and implications for participation

The intercultural dialogue implies a change of perspective in the way the administration conceives of integration, and this fact has implications for participation. Cesare F. explained:

We understood we had to talk with all the citizens and to move away from the viewpoint that we had to talk only with immigrants. Thus when we talk about “intercultural dialogue,” we have to understand that it is, indeed, a strategy, a political project. It is a strategy that aims to create an alliance between all the Reggian citizens and the local authority (Cesare F. Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013).

Following this reasoning, Cesare F. explained that the promotion of the intercultural dialogue starts from the hospitals, schools, and neighborhoods. The idea is to open spaces for dialogue in all the main meeting places. A particular role is attributed to the intercultural mediators, that is, professional figures whose role is to “mediate” and create the conditions for a true dialogue between Italians and immigrants. This approach tries to go beyond a dichotomy between “us” and “them” and to use language more appropriate for the city of today, which has been transformed by the interaction between the “old” and “new” Reggians. As observed above, for this reason, Assessor Cesare F. told me that the goals of the administration is “to encourage participation of all citizens and make them feel responsible for the history of this city.” This last point is very important because it has implications for the forms of participation developed in the city through the support of the administration. The intercultural dialogue in Reggio Emilia is not seen as a naïve valorization of diversity. On the contrary, this approach encourages a form of active citizenship by investing in new alliances through the volunteer sector. This approach is rooted in the context of the city and it emerges from the idea that, above all, institutions should “intercept needs and resources” and “redistribute their richness” throughout the territory.

As will appear more clearly below, the administration has supported civic participation in two directions. The first is done through the support of individual participation, by including, for instance, intercultural mediators of migrant background in

its innovative projects. The second is done by involving migrant groups in volunteer activities and encouraging them to promote the intercultural dialogue.

Strengths and limitations of the local administration's approach

As suggested by the promotion by the left-wing administration of the “Italy is me, too!” campaign, Reggio Emilia stood out in the national context for its capacity to get involved in the area of immigration in a unique way. It developed an innovative approach to promote integration involving all the sectors of society, and also created networks at the Italian and European levels to promote the exchange of good practices and stimulate a broader debate. Virtually all my key informants recognized the important role of the administration in the city. The head of the Communications Office of the Mondinsieme Center, explained how the local administration had encouraged cooperation with the third sector through a top-down approach:

The local administration believes in the relevance of networks because it realizes that it cannot be everywhere. Because of the state's lack of direction, the local administrations have no other choice but to fill this vacuum through collaboration. If there is a model of integration in Reggio Emilia, I would call it an interaction-cooperation model. It is linked to the history of Reggio, which has always had a high awareness of community relations. Here there is a great presence of the cooperatives, which means proximity and solidarity and which appeals to the third sector (Rinaldo D. Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013).

Reda B. (originally from Tunisia), the person in charge of the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party, explained:

Since 2006, there has been an important change in the local policies. Thanks to Assessor Cesare F., Reggio Emilia has opened a dialogue that did not exist before... a dialogue that scared previous administrations. Before 2006, the dialogue already existed, of course, but it was overshadowed. There was no emphasis on this theme, because there was the fear of political repercussions. It is a very delicate issue. Whoever works on immigration issues today has no political advantage, because immigrants do not vote. In Reggio Emilia things were different (Reda B. Interview in Reggio Emilia, 20 February 2013).

One key informant, Teresa E., an intercultural mediator who had worked for the municipality for more than ten years, confirmed this point:

What is pretty remarkable about Reggio Emilia is that we have been able to redefine the issue of ‘security’ through the ‘social.’ Usually, in Italy, the public administrations tend to be very slow. The advantage of Reggio Emilia is that in 1996, people were already talking about *interculturalism*. From 1998 until 2006, when there was the boom of interculturalism, there were many people who worked towards building a more open approach to the issue of integration. The efficiency depends on the extent to which the social workers have contacts with people and services. Reggio Emilia is a small city and those who work in the social realm know each other very well. For this reason it is easier to discuss certain issues together. What is more, Reggio Emilia has good social structures and thus is able to welcome immigrants, and it has a certain amount of services that can support the initiatives (Teresa E., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 29 October 2013).

She added:

In 2005 a course of training for cultural mediators was organized in the city. It lasted one year. The course was *particularly progressive* for the time. The idea was that one needs to take people for what they are, that is, “individuals.” That course taught us how to work with people and not with “immigrants.” The accent was on the intercultural dialogue understood not as “ethnic,” but as “cultural” in a very wide sense. They used to talk about mediators and not educators. The mediator is someone who translates the cultural codes. However, as I told you before, the course was *too* progressive and the territory was not able to seize all the potential of our profession and the kind of work we could do (Teresa E., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 29 October 2013).

In 2005, another course was organized:

It was a course *on social conflicts*. The course was financed by the Emilia-Romagna region. This course was better received, because the concept of “conflict” is easier to understand. Thus our work is more easily recognized. The conflict is perceived as a conflict between “Italians” and “foreigners.” The methodology was similar to the other course. It put the accent on the centrality of individuals and their needs. It

taught us how to develop a neutral attitude and how to welcome the other person without prejudice. The idea is to put people in contact rather than to “educate.” The idea is to find resources in the people of the territory themselves and then redistribute them in the territory. This is an idea drawn somehow from the volunteer sector typical of this territory (Teresa E., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 29 October 2013).

Alongside the successes of this approach, local authorities in Reggio Emilia were also facing some major challenges. First, notwithstanding their great efforts to create co-operation among local actors, the Delrio administrations struggled to bring together all the institutions in the city, including the prefecture, police headquarters, etc. (Carmela R. Interview in Reggio Emilia, 20 October 2013). Second, the intercultural approach encouraged highly conventional or formal participation by immigrant associations at the expense of non-conventional or informal participation. In particular, some more radical actors explained that in the city there was a tension between the governance of diversity and the management of conflicts, which resulted in the overshadowing of other relevant issues linked to worker rights and protection of undocumented immigrants (Clara A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013). Third, as a member of the Democratic Party highlighted, “Reggio Emilia is one of the most advanced models in Italy, yet there is not even one person of foreign origin within the administration. When it comes to representation, we are still far behind” (Francesca F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013). Fourth among the problems raised by my interviewees was the fear that the model of Reggio Emilia was soon going to crash as an effect of the financial crisis and the economic restructuring. My interviewees noted that in a time of crisis, it was more and more difficult to manage social conflicts and guarantee social cohesion. As Teresa E. explained: “Today we don’t have the social system we used to have. There is no money anymore. We are missing the resources to create the professional figures able to promote the structures that can answer to the needs of a changing society” (Teresa E., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 29 October 2013). Finally, as Assessor Cesare F. highlighted,

The weakness in the city is the problem of documents. [...] The police headquarters has a police approach. They are not flexible enough to do office service. They have not been trained to do office service. They have had a cultural mediator for three years. This experience ended one or two years ago. Some protests by more radicalized groups [Città

Migrante] occupied their offices and at that point they restructured their space (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013).

In this respect, the Assessor recognized that there were limits to the ability of the administration to do more in the direction of integration, due to the barriers posed by other local actors.

4.2.2. The role of the third-sector organizations

To understand how the left-wing administrations of Reggio Emilia shaped the local realm of immigration in the direction of the intercultural approach, one needs to look at the specific characteristics of the third-sector organizations and their relationship with the local authorities. In accordance with the “red” political culture (Campomori 2008), the third sector in Reggio Emilia is composed of a *dense web* of lay organizations, in particular autonomous cooperatives that provide assistance and promote activities to better welcome newcomers to the city. Some of these organizations are also directly involved in the promotion of the intercultural dialogue. In the official site of the local administration, one can find a list of the main organizations and cooperatives in the city that offer assistance and/or promote the intercultural dialogue. Together with these organizations, the public authorities attempt to construct a system of co-planning, which promotes the entrepreneurial ability of these organizations and their ability to improve the approach over time.¹²⁵

Under the heading “immigration,” one can find all the cooperatives and volunteer organizations that are linked with the social policies of the local administration and address issues of assistance.¹²⁶ Together with the lay cooperatives, the site lists the Diocese (in particular Caritas and the parishes) and church-based organizations (such as the Abram’s Home) as part of the network in the city.¹²⁷ Thanks in large part to the incentives of the

¹²⁵ In recent years, the territory of Reggio Emilia has been characterized by a wider development of the private sector and an increased emphasis on issues of integration by many associations and volunteering. Reggio Emilia, together with Modena, has been one of the first cities in Italy where the third sector, with the help of trade unions, has provided services for undocumented immigrants with the support of local administrations.

¹²⁶ For a list of these organizations, see the official site of the municipality under the main item, “if you are a foreigner” (“*se sei straniero*”) <http://www.municipio.re.it/retcevica/urp/pes.nsf/web/dlscnt8?opendocument> (Accessed June 25, 2015). See also the official site “Migrare: dialogo interculturale a Reggio Emilia” <http://www.migrare.it> (Accessed June 10, 2015).

¹²⁷ For a list of the services offered by Caritas, see the official site: <http://www.caritasreggiana.it/index.php?prec=34> (Accessed June 20, 2015). The Cooperative Dimora d’Abramo was created in 1988 and was the first cooperative in Italy to invest in the sphere of immigration. See the official page: http://www.consorziomero.org/dimora_abramo.html (Accessed June 20, 2015).

administrations, these organizations cooperate with each other in the provision of basic services for more vulnerable groups and promote Italian language courses. Some associations, such as Passa-Parola and Migrant City (the radical left organization in the city) offer Italian language courses to undocumented immigrants. Additionally, influenced by the emphasis of the administration on interculturalism, Caritas promotes the intercultural dialogue in the city through the creation of intercultural workshops in schools and the involvement of immigrant youth in initiatives that address themes related to understanding cultural diversity. Among other things, Caritas encouraged the individual participation of a few people of migrant background in its organization, by adhering to an initiative of the Emilia-Romagna region that allowed immigrant youth to do social service (which is usually open only to citizens).

Mondinsieme Center

In addition to these organizations, which focus mainly on assistance approaches to the process of inclusion, one can also find a link on the local administration's site to the Mondinsieme Center and a list (with contact information) of the immigrant associations in the city, all under the heading "Intercultural dialogue."¹²⁸ The center is considered by the administration to be the symbol and the strong suit of the city of the intercultural dialogue. As Assessor Cesare F. explained, "Today the Mondinsieme Center fulfills the crucial role of diffusing the intercultural approach within the territory of Reggio Emilia and beyond" (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013).

As noted above, the Center was created in 2001 by the Spaggiari administration to promote intercultural policies and the participation of immigrant associations in the city. Over the years, together with the development of the approach to integration by the Delrio administration, the Mondinsieme Center has expanded its work and activities in the city. In the official site of the Center, on the page "Mission" ("Missione"), one can read:

The Mondinsieme Center focuses on the life experiences of the individual, experiences that, when shared and re-elaborated together, become a common value. In this perspective, those who emigrate or immigrate are not people who need assistance, but have something to offer to society. For this reason [the Mondinsieme

¹²⁸ See official site: <http://www.mondinsieme.org/en/> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

Center] deals with integration as a bidirectional process in a cross-cultural perspective.¹²⁹

The Mondinsieme Center develops projects on intercultural communication to allow a better understanding by the population of the social processes of integration at work. To this end it has created “intercultural workshops” in all the high schools of the province of Reggio Emilia, “to develop students’ in-depth analysis and dialogue ability as far as cultural diversity is concerned.” These workshops “aim to make students understand the social and psychological mechanisms of prejudice formation and the risks of xenophobic attitudes.”¹³⁰ The evolution of the work of the Mondinsieme Center in the schools exemplifies how the Center, together with the left-wing administration, moved towards the expansion of its projects: “The Mondinsieme Center in the past used to do workshops in some classes, now it talks with all the high schools in the province of Reggio Emilia” (Rinaldo D. Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013).

As far as participation is concerned, the Mondinsieme Center contributes to the promotion of channels of civic participation in several ways. First, like many other Intercultural Centers in Emilia Romagna (Bonora & Giardini, 2004), the Center offers a space for immigrant associations to meet and organize their activities. In 2013, there were around 40 immigrant associations that collaborated with the Center or simply held their activities in the Center.¹³¹ These organizations were of different sizes and included both first- and second-generations groups. They promoted a large range of activities, ranging from providing assistance to their compatriots or the immigrant community in general in support of interculturalism, to involvement with the activities organized by Mondinsieme Center or the administration (see also the study by Mottura & al. 2012, on the associations in Reggio Emilia).¹³²

¹²⁹ See page: <http://www.mondinsieme.org/en/who-we-are/mission-e-metodo> (Accessed June 20, 2015). As noted above, from 2001 to 2003, on behalf of the Spaggiari administration, the Mondinsieme Center organized different initiatives, such as “il mondo tra i fornelli” [The world in the cooker], “Donne d’altrove” [Women of elsewhere], “Spazio donne” [Women space]. Then, from 2004 to 2005, it organized the initiative “Mondinsieme in Piazza” [Mondinsieme in the square]. According to Cesare F., “these initiatives were the first embryos of the intercultural dialogue” (Cesare F. Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013).

¹³⁰ See the page “Laborotori.edu” of the official site of the Mondinsieme Center: <http://www.mondinsieme.org/servizi/laboratoriedu> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹³¹ See the page <http://www.mondinsieme.org/chi-siamo/associazioni> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹³² See document “L’associazionismo degli immigrati a Reggio Emilia. Caratteristiche e sviluppi,” produced in 2012 by the administration with the collaboration of three researchers: Giovanni Mottura, Matteo Rinaldini, and Andrea Pintus. <http://migrare.it/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/ricerca-completa1.pdf> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

The strong presence of second-generation associations is particularly remarkable and testifies to the work done by the Center to promote the participation of the immigrant youth and their involvement in the intercultural dialogue (Morgan M., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013). In the official site of the Center one can read:

The Mondinsieme Center is engaged in searching for and experimenting with innovative strategies toward the real involvement of second generation immigrants in social and preventive activities, aiming to overcome the dangerous “banlieu effects” that all too easily attract those who feel themselves excluded. Our approach is constructivist and aims to value youths’ belonging in two cultures. Mondinsieme becomes an open opportunity to second-generation youths, a place to develop projects and activities focused on supporting youths’ cultural *métissage*. Through the activities realized in the Center, the intercultural education programs in schools, and the measures developed to reduce scholastic dropout, the Mondinsieme Center wants to represent the place where cultural isolation and social loneliness are defeated and where the melting pot is valued.¹³³

Network TogethER

With its work on second-generation issues, the Mondinsieme Center attempts to empower youth and to promote the emergence of second-generation immigrant leaders in the city. Assessor Cesare F. explained, “The Mondinsieme Center is very precious for us, because it encourages the emergence of a young elite of foreign origin” (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013).¹³⁴ It is also for this reason that, along with the Region Emilia-Romagna, the Center has been encouraging the project *Giovani in Rete: Protagonismo, contrasto al razzismo e alle discriminazioni* (Youth in the Net: protagonism, countering racism and discrimination) in order to promote the emergence of mixed youth organizations such as Network TogethER (a regional intercultural network of associations of young people of Italian and migrant background of the Region Emilia-Romagna). In the official page one can read that the project aims “to valorize the knowledge and the sensitivity of the new generation of the youth with migrant background,

¹³³ See the heading “Second Generations” on the official site of the Mondinsieme Center: <http://www.mondinsieme.org/en/services/second-generations> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹³⁴ One remarkable example was the election of Khalid Cauchi (a young man originally from Morocco) as a member of the House of Deputies in 2013. He started his trajectory in the city with the Young Muslims of Italy (Giovani Musulmani d’Italia), which he founded along with other second-generation immigrants (Frisina 2005). The association had strong relationships with the Mondinsieme Center and was very active during the “Italy is me, too!” campaign.

toward their self-determination and participatory integration into society” (*my translation*). For this reason, together with the Emilia-Romagna region and the Regional Observatory Against Discrimination, the Center supports Network TogethER’s activities, in particular the intercultural projects they promote in high schools, in order to encourage its work toward consolidation.¹³⁵

Network TogethER is a network of six autonomous associations in Emilia-Romagna. It was created in 2008 and has been trying to consolidate its trajectories in the Region, with the objectives of promoting the intercultural dialogue, empowering youth, and fighting against racism in Italy.¹³⁶ During our interview, Sahid A., the coordinator of Network TogethER, explained that Network TogethER was an autonomous organization and that it did not depend on the Emilia-Romagna Region or the Mondinsieme Center. He added, however, that it relied on the guidance of the Mondinsieme Center, because the Center had more experience. The Mondinsieme Center was particularly helpful in the organization of the intercultural workshops in the schools. However, while the Mondinsieme Center concentrated on the province of Reggio Emilia, Network TogethER organized the workshops in the rest of the region. Between March 18 and 23, 2013, Network TogethER organized workshops in schools for an entire week during the “Week against Racism” (*Settimana contro il razzismo*).

All things considered, the dense and cooperative network of third-sector organizations in Reggio Emilia is crucial in shaping the local realm of immigration in the direction of assistance and interculturalism. The analysis above also shows that the specific nature of the third sector made possible the “qualitative leap” promoted by the administration, because it worked both toward protecting people in vulnerable conditions (assistance approach) and investing in exchanges between the receiving society and people of migrant background (intercultural approach). In particular, the Mondinsieme Center’s intercultural approach moved beyond a simplistic valorization of diversity towards a more comprehensive approach to the construction of a multi-ethnic society. Its work with youth and second-generation immigrants in particular helps to promote a better understanding of the processes involved in living in a changing society. Mohamed A., the director of the Mondinsieme Center, explained:

¹³⁵ See page <http://www.mondinsieme.org/2012/progetti/giovani-in-rete> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹³⁶ See also the official site of Network TogethER: <http://www.retetogether.it> (Accessed June 20, 2015). The network was one of the promoters of the “Italy is me, too!” campaign in 2011. See the official site of the association: <http://www.retetogether.it/blog/comunicato-stampa-litalia-sono-anchio/> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

We propose a *change of viewpoint*, that is, we say that *integration concerns everyone*. This is our most important contribution to the city. We have been mostly working on this approach and for this reason we are more advanced than other intercultural centers in other territories, including in Emilia-Romagna (Mohamed A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 11 June 2013).

He added:

The Mondinsieme Center actively contributes to the growth of the regional, Italian and European networks involved in the field of cultural diversity. The municipalities are devolving more and more to the this sector. We opted for a *new strategy*. We created a Center to support participation. I am happy to do the things I do in collaboration with the administration. The Mondinsieme Center is a place to develop projects that work from below. It is also a great promoter of intercultural education in all the high schools of the province. We do this even in those high schools where there are no people of foreign origin. We want to make the youth aware. We create networks with other cities and among other groups in the city. The Mondinsieme Center is not a migration association in the classical sense. It is an evolution in the world of immigrant associations. When the Mondinsieme Center refers to the world of associations, it is talking about a very important change. It is a cultural enterprise! (Mohamed A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 11 June 2013).

As illustrated above by the examples of second-generation immigrants and the organization Network TogthER, the approach of the Mondinsieme Center has major implications for the participation of people of migrant background in the city. Together with the administration, it promotes a form of participation that is coherent with the idea of active citizenship historically rooted in the city. Rinaldo D., in charge of the Communications Office of the Mondinsieme Center expressed this point very well:

The Mondinsieme Center is the child of the cultural, economic and social habitus of the social tissue of Reggio Emilia. It is about active citizenship by citizens in terms of volunteer work and other aspects of civic participation, which, in turn, can also be applied to the question of integration. At the local level, there are no other similar experiments in Italy. Immigration is seen either through the lens of needs—the delivery of services, health care, and housing—and thus strictly linked to welfare (and in this

case, people of foreign origin are seen exclusively as in need of welfare)... or from the point of view of the militants, and then the accent is on the rights of asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants (the “*clandestini*”). But if you can look through the lenses of the diversity advantage, you will realize that integration crosses all spheres of society and that it affects the sphere of economic performance, for instance, as well as the urban dimension. Thus, attention to rights is important, but the question of the cultural process is also crucial. This is also a bet, right?! One day someone will grasp the meaning of the work we are doing (Rinaldo D., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013).

This approach also explains why the Mondinsieme Center has moved away from the classical understanding of participation by immigrant associations (often conceived as separate entities—see for instance Chapter 7, on the case of Brescia). On the contrary, just like the administration, what it encourages is the participation of people of migrant background in existing or new organizations that support the idea of Reggio Emilia as a multi-ethnic society. This explains the major investment of the Mondinsieme Center in the associations that promote this vision of Italian society, an attitude that moves beyond the *ethnicization* of the immigrant community (Mohamed A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 11 June 201

Limitations

Along with the strengths of the third sector outlined above, some interviewees in the city also highlighted problems. The first problem was that all the organizations in the city, including immigrant associations, have to formalize in order to have a voice, and “this fact undermines the vitality of other expressions that do not fit in the order of things” (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). The Mondinsieme Center, like the local administration, promotes a management of diversity at the expense of a more adequate understanding of conflict. It is important to note that, with the exception of a few initiatives organized by more radical political organizations (such as the Association GA3 and or the Network Security Package—*Network Pacchetto Sicurezza*), there are very few organizations in the city that focus on political claims and conflicting aspects of integration. In recent years, the Mondinsieme Center has accepted funding from Morocco to promote its initiatives, such as Arabic courses and activities for youth in Morocco. Many people of migrant background (mainly Moroccans) that I interviewed were very

critical of this development. One undocumented immigrant who left Morocco for political reasons told me:

Morocco is trying to occupy space in Reggio Emilia. It finances projects and it increases its influence. Italian local communities have less money and Morocco is financing. Many immigrants still vote from abroad. So this is a way for Morocco to make propaganda. I am convinced that people should vote for good politics and not for the financial benefits that one can receive from one's country of origin (Salim S., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 11 June 2013).

This last criticism shows that in recent years the Mondinsieme Center has turned to Moroccan funding to be able to finance its initiatives. This situation creates conflicts within the Moroccan community in Reggio Emilia and suggests that there are diverging perceptions on the role of the Center in the city.

4.2.3. *The role of the traditional “red” trade union: the CGIL*

Favored by its political orientation, the CGIL is the most important union in Reggio Emilia. In 2012, around 117,600 people were enrolled in the CGIL of the province, compared with around 37,000 workers enrolled in the CISL. Of the total number of people enrolled in the CGIL, 49,190 were active workers and 11,100 were immigrants.¹³⁷ Since the 1980s and 1990s, the union has played a crucial role in the sphere of immigration, by promoting two main approaches: assistance and political rights promotion. It has been recognized as particularly radical in working toward greater participation of its workers, Italians and people of foreign origin alike. The Reggio Emilia branch of the CGIL, along with the CGIL of Brescia, is considered one of the most radical branches in Italy.

This radical political orientation has implications for the approach to integration adopted by the organization and its capacity to open channels of participation. Usually a more radical approach by the CGIL goes hand in hand with more investment in the area of immigration and a greater focus on political participation. According to one of my key informants, the CGIL started to invest in immigration in Reggio Emilia before any other

¹³⁷ I collected these data during the regional conference of the CGIL, titled “Lavoro, Diritti and rappresentanza: gli impegni della CGIL Emilia-Romagna nella conferenza regionale sull’immigrazione” [“Work, Rights and Representation: The proposals of the CGIL Emilia-Romagna in the Regional Conference on Immigration”], organized in Bologna on June 10, 2013.

organization. In 1989, the trade union pushed the local administration to open an Office for Foreigners to help the first immigrants arriving in the city. At about the same time, the CGIL opened its own Office for Foreigners to offer services to immigrant workers. With the support of the Office for Foreigners, the CGIL created a Migrants Coordination Organization in 1995 to give voice to immigrants within its own organization and throughout the territory of Reggio Emilia. My interviewees agreed the organization was very relevant in the city and was able to promote political participation by immigrants. Farooq M., a functionary of the CGIL from Pakistan working for the Office for Foreigners, explained:

In the past, our Office was a pilot office in Italy. At one point, immigrant delegates got together and created the Migrants Coordination Organization. It was a very important space to talk and discuss our issues. It was not about bureaucracy and services. At the time the CGIL was very visible, was present during the negotiations with institutions and during the organization of mobilizations (Farooq M., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 October 2013).

However, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, the CGIL had been doing very little in the direction of political rights promotion since the second half of the 2000s, and the situation worsened during the financial crisis. As Farooq M. explained: “The CGIL does only service now and has stopped doing politics!” Many other members of the CGIL that I interviewed complained about this fact, because they believed the CGIL had “lost its vocation” (Sarah K., Interview in Guastalla, province of Reggio Emilia, 28 October 2013).

The first change happened at the beginning of the 2000s. Mohamed A., the current director of the Mondinsieme Center and head of the Office for Foreigners of the CGIL from 1989 to 2001, explained that he decided to leave the Office because the political situation had changed and there was a new secretary. At that point he decided to leave because he felt that the CGIL “wanted to exercise lots of control on immigrants” and leave them little space to grow in the union. He added, “The unionist is a militant. However, the CGIL was using their best immigrants—including myself—to do services [for other immigrants], instead of activism and union work. There were processes of ethnicization and co-optation and I could not accept that, so I left” (Mohamed A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 11 June 2013).

Between 2001 and 2010, Clara A. was the person in charge of the Office for Foreigners (succeeding Mohamed A.) and the person who promoted the activities of the Migrant Coordination Organization. During our interview, Clara A. explained that it was not easy to work toward promoting participation of immigrant workers because the Secretary of the CGIL of the time “did not want to expose himself on the issue of immigration and often discouraged the political initiatives of the Office” (Clara A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013). However, she explained that it was still possible at the time to promote immigrant militancy in the organization: “The Migrant Coordination Organization used to work very well and was extremely active. The Office used to do bureaucratic practices and the Migrant Coordination Organization did politics” (Clara A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013). She added: “The organization used to organize meetings with the municipalities present in the province of Reggio Emilia and training assemblies of the delegates. The Migrant Coordination used to explain the basis of the union to immigrant workers” (Clara A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013). Clara A. continued:

There were many immigrants in the Office. There were people from all over the world and this encouraged the enrollment of immigrants in the CGIL. We used to do mediation, training, and political activities. We used to organize courses for the training of immigrants inside and outside the factories to help people of foreign origin understand how our legal system works. We used to mobilize a lot too. We used to go to the police headquarters and then to the prefecture. We used to do sit-ins and occupations when necessary. We used to organize events of various types. The unions have always been a place to practice participation. In the workplace, thanks to the trade unions, they can exercise the active and passive vote. In a country in which immigrants cannot vote this is a very important accomplishment. When people in the workplace vote for an immigrant, he or she has to represent everyone. In order to make people understand this point, there is a huge amount of work to do. Sometimes it is hard to make the delegates of migrant origin understand that they represent everyone and not only those of the same origin. We went into the workplace and explained to people how they had to vote and that they could be voted for by all workers, including Italians. These are very important trajectories of democratic growth (Clara A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013).

Clara A. complained that the Migrant Coordination Organization was no longer working and this was a great problem “because immigrants are not coming to the CGIL anymore” (Clara A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013). As Farooq M pointed out, the major problem was that, in more recent years, the CGIL “had dropped its political concerns and limited its activities exclusively to service delivery” (Farooq M., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 October 2013). Clara A. explained that this lack of attention to political issues around migration was also reflected in the low level of representation of people of migrant background in the organization. “With the exception of Farooq M., there are no people of foreign origin in the Office and this is not a good sign” (Clara A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013). Farooq M. confirmed this point: “When Clara A was in charge of the Office, there were many things for immigrants. In particular, they used to take part in many activities of mediation and politics. In the last few years, *de facto* no one is doing anything in this direction” (Farooq M., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 October 2013). Both Clara A. and Farooq M. explained that the CGIL had not made the necessary efforts to recognize the structural characteristics of immigration, and that it had thus failed to evolve towards a more comprehensive approach. What is more, opportunism and mistrust (when not outright racism) towards immigrants impeded main members of the organization from treating immigrant members as equal. It was also for these reasons, according to Farooq M., that most Migrant Coordination Organizations across the country had disappeared from the CGIL. “The immigrant is considered in relation to bureaucratic procedures and no one really cares anymore about their real situation!” (Farooq M., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 October 2013).

Carmela R., in charge of the immigration policies of the CGIL since 2012, shared the idea of the other two interviewees that the CGIL had not made the necessary effort to make a qualitative leap in the organization. Instead it had reversed its path. She explained, “The CGIL should no longer be a provider of services and should instead concentrate on serious issues linked to the immigrant workers’ situation and its implication for labor in general” (Carmela R., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 October 2013). Carmela R. added that the metalworkers sector, the CGIL-FIOM, was the one that worked the best. “They are the only ones who really work on immigration, but regrettably they are extremely isolated. They are the only ones who talk about hot political issues” (Carmela R., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 October 2013). According to Carmela R., it was necessary to close the Office for Foreigners and to go beyond the distinction between immigrants

and the other workers, in order to address the challenges ahead” (Carmela R., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 October 2013).

Another problem was the limited representation of immigrants in the union. Immigrant workers were visibly one reason for the increase in numbers of the members of the CGIL. In 2012, in Reggio Emilia, they represented 15.7 percent of the total population in the city, 9.4 percent of the total people enrolled in the CGIL and 22.6 per cent of the active workers. However, in terms of their responsibilities in the union, in 2012 there were 50 delegates of foreign origin in the whole province of Reggio Emilia. At the decisional level there were only two people: Sarah K.—a woman of Algerian origin and one functionary of the metalworkers, the CGIL-FIOM—, and Farooq M.—a Muslim man of Pakistani origin and a functionary of the Office for Foreigners—. There was also a Muslim woman from Morocco, who worked at the reception desk.¹³⁸ The CGIL played an important role during the 1990s in promoting the participation of people of foreign origin in the organization and in the city, by supporting a political rights promotion approach thanks to the work of the Migrant Coordination Organization. In the 2000s, the CGIL continued to promote a political rights promotion approach, even though there was no longer the complete support of the main members of the organization. However, by the beginning of the 2010s, things changed completely: the organization concentrated exclusively on the delivery of services. Once the head of the Office for Foreigners, Clara A., left her position, no one was willing to promote greater representation and participation of immigrants within the organization. According to Farooq M., this was a big problem for participation in the city. The Migrant Coordination Organization had been able to mobilize a great number of migrant workers, and because of the crucial role of the organization in the past years, “no other actor in the city was able to mobilize immigrants the way we did!” (Farooq M., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 October 2013). For this reason, the loss of the Organization “has left a hole in the city at the level of immigrants’ mobilization” (Farooq M., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 October 2013).

¹³⁸ As noted already in Chapter 2, in 2013 the low number of immigrant workers in positions of responsibility in the CGIL was at the center of a debate within the CGIL. The data indicated here were presented during the conference “Lavoro, Diritti and rappresentanza: gli impegni della CGIL Emilia-Romagna nella conferenza regionale sull’immigrazione,” organized in Bologna on June 10, 2013. The data on representation are found in the documents of the conference and in particular in CGIL. 2013. “Conferenza Regionale CGIL Emilia-Romagna sull’immigrazione. Rappresentanza e migranti”

4.2.4. The role of the traditional “white” trade union: the CISL

The CISL is also a strong actor in the city. In order to compete with the CGIL, it has worked hard in the city to offer services to immigrants and promote participation in the workplace, and for this reason it has been able to attract a great number of people of foreign origin to its organization.¹³⁹ During our interview, the secretary of the CISL of Reggio Emilia, Sandra M., pointed out: “For us the presence of people of foreign origin is a strategic presence. It is strategic because it is useful to change things. This presence is useful to understand and interpret the times we are living in” (Sandra M., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 18 June 2013). Sandra M. explained that in her opinion, it was necessary to make a qualitative leap and to move in the direction of greater recognition of pluralism within the organization.

In addition to service delivery, the CISL promotes an intercultural approach through the CISL-ANOLF. But according to Sandra M., like other CISL branches in the rest of Italy, the CISL in Reggio Emilia had been making a great effort to valorize diversity in the organization and in the city by giving space and voice to the multiplicity of viewpoints within its organization (Sandra M., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 18 June 2013). One example of this effort was the responsibility given to Sahid A.—a Muslim man from Morocco also very active with Network Together (see below, Section 4.3)—who was in charge of the CISL-ANOLF and one of the main people in charge of the organization’s migration policies. As Sahid A. himself put it: “It shouldn’t be taken for granted that a young Muslim of Moroccan origin is at the head of an office of an organization of Catholic background. You won’t see this often. This testifies to the openness of the CISL in this territory” (Sahid A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013).

Sahid A. was also a good example of the approach of the organization. He was given space and opportunity to grow in the organization. However, as Sahid A. himself admitted during the interview, he was the only person of migrant background with a role of responsibility in the organization. This situation had implications for immigrants’ participation in the city. Even though the CISL invested in the workplace to encourage the participation of immigrant workers, there was little visibility of immigrants in their own organization.

¹³⁹

See <http://www.cislreggioemilia.it/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=893> official page: (Accessed June 20, 2015).

In addition to their specific problems, the two main trade unions in the city both faced two major challenges. Reda B. (of Tunisian origin, active with the Democratic Party) explained that one major problem was that traditional trade unions had grown too old and were now unable to offer adequate responses to a changing society. The second problem was the financial crisis, which was having an enormous impact on immigrants' working and juridical conditions, and was affecting the ability of the unions to offer adequate responses. Carmela R. of the CGIL told me:

The crisis is hitting immigrants a great deal because they work in the mechanical and construction sectors. Many of the firms in this sector have failed (Carmela R., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 20 October 2013).

Sahid A. from the CISL-ANOLF explained:

Today it is very hard to be a unionist, because all the instruments we used to have before do not work anymore. Industrial relations are changing very quickly. However, this does not mean that the union does not have to be there. The union is necessary to protect people and mediate in the workplace (Sahid A., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013).

4.2.5. The role of the Democratic Party

The main political party in Reggio Emilia, the Democratic Party, is a very strong actor. In collaboration with the administration, it was one of the main local actors promoting the "Italy is me, too!" campaign, through the Provincial Forum of Immigration. At the time of our interview, Reda B. was a local councilor in Quattro Castella (in the province of Reggio Emilia), and had been in charge of the Provincial Forum since 2010 (see Section 4.3). He explained that the Provincial Forum was developing quickly because it benefitted from the work done by the regional and local branch of the party. At the regional level, the Democratic Party of the Region Emilia-Romagna had created a Regional Forum, which was coordinated by Cecile Kyenge from 2010 to 2013, when she became Minister of Integration. The Forum in Emilia-Romagna was the only one in Italy, and it "allowed the creation of an adequate space to coordinate the work of the Provincial Forums and share the 'good practices'" (Reda B., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 27 November 2013). Reda B. added:

This coordination of the Forum is specific to Emilia-Romagna. This very fact depends on people at the local level. There was no one at the national level who would say: “it has to be done this way.” In Emilia Romagna, this theme is taken very seriously. For this reason, we have tried to create a better system in order to have better performance and we achieved this goal (Reda B., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 27 November 2013).

At the local level, the collaboration with the local administration also encouraged the creation of the Provincial Forum and its political rights promotion between 2010 and 2012 (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4). It was notable that Assessor Cesare F. was a member of the executive. The executive was directed by Reda B. (from Tunisia and an Italian citizen) and was composed of other three people: an Italian woman, a woman from Albania and one man from Ghana who was also an Italian citizen. I asked Reda B. why the Provincial Forum was so strongly linked to the administration. He explained:

The reason is that it helps us to coordinate better and to give voice to the political experience of the territory. Since the administration is very active in the field, we thought it was better to collaborate instead of creating two completely separate entities. The Forum would compete with the administration if it did more than the administration. So we thought that it was better to unite our strengths than to waste them (Reda B., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 20 February 2013).

Reda B. helped me to reconstruct the activities of the Forum in the territory in order to offer a sense of its areas of intervention. At the national level, the Provincial Forum focuses on issues related to immigration policies (such as resident permits, family reunifications, etc.) and on the universal values expressed in the Italian Constitution. He added, “A subject we have discussed recently is the third article of the Constitution. We have called national representatives to inform and to debate with us” (Reda B., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 20 February 2013). Furthermore, the Provincial Forum discusses the line of the Democratic Party on a whole range of immigration issues, including the right to vote and the *jus soli* (which were the focus of the “Italy is me, too!” campaign in 2011), the situation of detention centers and refugees, and immigration policies.

At the local level, the Provincial Forum of Reggio Emilia is guided by a pragmatic approach and is mainly concerned with the themes that are particularly relevant for the territory. As Reda B. explained: “The Forum discusses relevant themes as they emerge.

Then we think of solutions to deal with the issues we have discussed. We organize events and public debates with experts and try to move forward in the debate” (Reda B., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 20 February 2013).¹⁴⁰ I asked Reda B. what the role of the Provincial Forum was in Reggio Emilia. He answered:

If there are problems, usually people address the administrations and not the Provincial Forum. When it comes to problems related to immigration, we have dialogues with the prefecture and the police headquarters. In Guastalla (in the province of Reggio Emilia), the Democratic Party does not have the majority. In this case, the Forum works with the Pakistani association, which is very strong in the territory (Reda B., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 20 February 2013).

As for the role of the Democratic Party in supporting political participation by people of foreign origin, Reda B. explained that “Overall, I think that our contribution is to go toward the new generations. Our goal is to encourage the development of political abilities for new leaders” (Reda B., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 27 November 2013). However he also explained that there were major problems:

We try to encourage participation among the “new citizens.” On these occasions we go beyond immigration issues and we address themes of interest for the Democratic Party as a whole. Many new Italians recognize the Forum, but they struggle to recognize the Democratic Party. They come to the meetings organized by the Forum, but not to those organized by the Party. Very recently we organized different events in a coffee bar and tried to involve various organizations of immigrants, young and not. They shared music, culture, traditions and food. However interesting these initiatives can be, it doesn’t mean that these people will get closer to our political party or that they would vote for us at all (Reda B., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 27 November 2013).

Francesca F., a member of the Democrats of the Left before its dissolution in 2007 and a member of the new left-wing party, the Democratic Party, since then, admitted that the Reggio Emilia was a very inclusive city and that the political party

¹⁴⁰ By the time I was doing the fieldwork in Italy, the Forum had stopped working for 4 or 5 months (in the summer 2013). During the time it was operative, the Forum on Migration of the Democratic Party of Reggio Emilia used to meet once per month and discuss issues of national and local relevance. The reason why the Forum had not met for 4 or 5 months, according to the person in charge of the Forum, was that they had been quite busy in organizing the feast for the party that took place during the summer.

had done more there than in other places in Italy. However, she also told me that there were important barriers at the level of representation in the political party.

The real and most powerful obstacle to political participation is that there is not a real opening at the level of representation. The result is little or no representation at all. In a city like Reggio Emilia, so progressive and inclusive, it is unacceptable that there has not been a councilor [of immigrant origin] in the city yet (Francesca F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013).

During our interview, Francesca F. explained that in 2005, the Democrats of the Left had worked to propose an immigrant candidate in the administration.

They decided to run Minaui, a Palestinian artist, very active in the city. A minority in the Party supported his candidacy and he also worked very hard for his campaign. However, it was not sufficiently supported by the whole Party of Reggio Emilia. For this reason, Minaui was not elected. They didn't support him all the way. He knew it and he decided to leave the party. This is how we lost him! (Francesca F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013).

Francesca F. continued: "This year we need to put forward a person of foreign origin and I will take on this task" (Francesca F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013).

That was the big step to make in 2005 and it still is today. In our city, people from Reggio Emilia will have to vote for their representatives. It is of paramount importance to make a qualitative leap in this direction. Reggio Emilia: the city of the intercultural dialogue and the city of the people! Now, we need to let them go where decisions are made. Let them represent who they are, their ideas and their points of view (Francesca F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013).

With respect to the initiatives of the administration, the Democratic Party did not seem supportive. As Francesca F. highlighted, until 2013 there had not been people of migrant background in the administration of Reggio Emilia and this was something that needed to be overcome. During our interview, Assessor Cesare F. also complained that many members of the political party in Reggio Emilia "were not doing much. They do not support us as much as we need" (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 March 2013).

As most of my interviewees involved in the sphere of immigration, as well as main members of the political party, explained, the Democratic Party did some things to encourage participation in the city, and its work was favored by the regional and local context. The Provincial Forum was building its own trajectory of participation in the city, thanks to its work with the administration. However, there was also great resistance in the Democratic Party to really investing in the area of immigration and pushing for substantial immigrant participation in the party.

4.3.6. *The role of the radical left-wing organizations*

The main radical left-wing organization in Reggio Emilia that has invested in the sphere of immigration is Migrant City (*Città Migrante*), a local organization closely linked to the Social Center AQ and affiliated with the national Melting Pot, a network working on immigration with close ties to the politics of the “disobedient” ones born from the “white overalls” movement (for more details on the radical Left see Chapter 2).¹⁴¹ The organization is not a key actor in the city, but like many other grassroots organizations, it contributes to the promotion of greater inclusion in the city. Its role in the realm of assistance and advocacy is recognized by main local actors and there is some collaboration with local authorities. For instance, Assessor Cesare F. told me:

They have a very positive role in the city. They know very well the bureaucratic practices and how to move. One positive thing is that we are not disputing with each other. They come to talk with me in my office and I receive them (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 March 2013).

In the official site of the organization, Migrant City presents itself as a mixed association of Italians and immigrants, who want to promote a culture of welcoming and favor interaction. The association focuses on “access to rights for the most vulnerable subjects.” Finally, the association believes that there shouldn’t be hierarchical differences between people and that everyone should have equal opportunities independent of his or her status. This is the basis of the “political action” of the association.¹⁴² Consistent with the philosophy of the association, most of the initiatives of Migrant City concentrate on the support of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants in vulnerable conditions, through

¹⁴¹ See official site: <http://cittamigrante.noblogs.org> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

¹⁴² See page: <http://cittamigrante.noblogs.org/chi-siamo/> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

offering Italian language courses and advocacy *vis-à-vis* local institutions such as the administration, the prefecture, and the police headquarters in favor of the improvement of their conditions. The association also organizes protests and mobilizations to further its claims. By the time of my fieldwork, it had helped three refugees who arrived from North Africa in 2011 find shelter through the occupation of an abandoned building to find shelter.

As far as the promotion of the political rights promotion approach is concerned, Migrant City faces two main difficulties. The first is that, notwithstanding the fact that it is willing to promote greater inclusion in its organization, there are very few people of migrant background who have contacts with the association. What is more, this organization was not able to mobilize immigrants in the city (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 March 2013). According to some interviewees, this was because most immigrants mobilized in non-conventional channels in the city had already created alliances with the CGIL in the past. In particular, the Migrant Coordination Organization of CGIL was able to mobilize a great number of immigrants, making it extremely difficult for Migrant City to build alliances with immigrants during the 2000s.

4.2.7. Concluding remarks on the local realm of immigration, approaches to integration, and implications for participation

In Section 4.1, I described the role of various local actors in Reggio Emilia in promoting the “Italy is me, too!” campaign in Italy in 2011. The organization of the event illustrated the key role of the local left-wing administration in the area of immigration and its capacity to encourage the involvement of other local actors. The overall picture suggested a strong level of cooperation among local actors involved in the sphere of immigration and a good level of participation among people of migrant background, particularly the second-generation, in a campaign that concerned them.

In Section 4.2, I have presented the local realm of immigration in the city through the identification of the main local shaping the participation of people of migrant background through their adoption of their approaches to integration. I tried to answer the question of what explains the conventional forms of civic participation by people of migrant background and in particular second-generation immigrants. My analysis showed that the administration adopted a co-operative administrative strategy, and supported the involvement of lay organizations (including immigrant organizations) through a top-down approach. It also encouraged the empowerment of the Mondinsieme Center (created by a left-wing administration in 2001). This actor worked closely with the administration, and

was pivotal in promoting the intercultural approach in the territory of Reggio Emilia. What is more, the Center supported the participation of mixed associations of young people and second-generation immigrants, such as Network TogetherER. I also highlighted that the intercultural approach adopted by the administration was closely linked to the established philosophy of the volunteer sector, based on the belief that human resources present in the territory must be valorized and used to the benefit of the territory. When translated into the area of immigration, this means that diversity not only needs to be valorized in itself, but should be recognized as a resource to be used proactively for the benefit of the Reggian community at both the individual level (by encouraging participation in the existing organizations) and the collective level (by creating opportunities to create immigrant and mixed associations).

While civic participation (mainly in formal channels) was strongly encouraged by these initiatives, in terms of political participation local actors invested only in a limited way in the political rights promotion approach. First of all, the administration did not create platforms of participation, such as consultative bodies (see Kosic & Triandafillydou 2005, 31). However, thanks to the strong link between the local administration and the main left-wing party, the Democratic Party, local authorities did encourage political participation through the Party's Provincial Forum of Immigration, created in 2010. The strong presence of Italy's main left-wing trade union, the CGIL, also encouraged the promotion of a political rights promotion approach. The CGIL supported the participation of immigrant unionists in the Migrant Coordination Organization, and promoted greater inclusion in the organization at the individual level until very recently. However, during my fieldwork in 2013, the Migrant Coordination Organization of the CGIL had become inactive. Some interviewees observed that the CGIL had lost interest in the promotion of political participation. This resulted in the recent reduction of mobilization in the city by immigrant workers associated with the CGIL, who had been very active throughout the previous decade (2000–2010). The radical left organization, Migrant City, was a very weak actor in the local context. They launched many initiatives to encourage local institutions to do more to improve immigrants' conditions in the city and were very active on refugee issues. However, these actors were not able to open up channels of political participation for people of migrant background in the city. The presence of strong left-wing institutional actors and their dominant intercultural approach have had an impact on the forms of participation of people of migrant background in Reggio Emilia: it has encouraged

conventional forms of civic participation (individual and collective) over political participation.

In the following section, I will examine the role of immigrant activists in shaping the local realm of immigration and opening the channels of participation by looking at the way they perceive and seize the opportunities of participation opened in the city.

4.3. Channels of participation and immigrant activists in Reggio Emilia

This section focuses on selected interviews with people of migrant background active in the city. I selected individuals with roles of responsibilities in the main local actors in the city, including both first- and second-generation immigrants: (1) Mohamed A. (first-generation from Morocco), the director of the Mondinsieme Center since 2001;(2) Sahid A. (second-generation from Morocco), president of Network TogetHER since 2008 and in charge of the CISL-ANOLF since 2010; (3) Farooq M. (first-generation from Pakistan), functionary of the CGIL working in the Office for Foreigners between 2006 and 2014; (4) Reda B. (second-generation from Tunisia), councilor of the municipality of Quattro Castella (province of Reggio Emilia) and in charge of the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party since 2010; (5) Dhakirah S. (second-generation from Ghana), a member of the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party since 2013. I selected these interviewees because they allow me to examine how people of migrant background in the city can develop trajectories of participation by creating alliances with left-wing actors who support them. By looking at their perception of the opportunities of participation opened in the city and their interaction with local actors in the city, I assess their role as agents in the city. Among other things, what emerges is the role of ideological affiliation and appropriation of the discourses of the Left, rather than ethnic affiliation.

4.3.1. Perceiving and acting upon opportunities for participation: immigrant activists working in collaboration with the local administration and the third-sector organizations

Mohamed A. is a first generation immigrant.¹⁴³ He is originally from Morocco. He arrived in Bologna in 1985, in his 20s, to study at the University of Bologna. While studying in Bologna, he decided to live in Reggio Emilia because it was cheaper. At the time of the interview, he had been the director of the Mondinsieme Center for more than

¹⁴³ Interview in Reggio Emilia, 11 June 2013.

12 years. He explained that, in Morocco, he was a political activist when he was at university. With other students, he wanted to change the world. In the 1970s, there was a great desire to be emancipated in the developing world and many young activists left to study abroad for this reason. Mohamed A. added that he went to Bologna because he was attracted by the figure of Antonio Gramsci, his understanding of the struggle of classes, and the role of the Communist Party in Bologna. Mohamed A. was very proud of being in Reggio Emilia. He told me:

Reggio Emilia is the city of the people. For me it exists as a model. Here, everyone participates and takes part in the activities of the city. People think about the social. This context contaminates you and this contamination has also touched immigrant leaders like Cecile Kyenge, the Minister of Integration, and Khalid Chaouchi, the new member of parliament.

Before he became the director of the Mondinsieme Center, Mohamed A. had a strong political engagement in the territory of Reggio Emilia, with the Italian Communist Party (PCI) from 1985 to 1989 and with the CGIL from 1989 to 2001. He told me that for him it was natural to get involved: “I was born with the idea that it was my right to go in the streets and make rights claims.” His ideological affiliation and the significant presence of different left-wing organizations investing in the area of immigration worked favorably for his trajectory of participation in Reggio Emilia. He explained:

In 1989, I participated in the last congress of the Communist Party before it was dissolved. That year, the CGIL of Reggio Emilia asked me to open their office for immigrants. I accepted. I was the first unionist from Casablanca. I liked it because at the time the CGIL used to do lots of politics rather than services. I worked with them for eleven years. In 2001, I left to work with the administration for the Mondinsieme Center.¹⁴⁴

Mohamed A. continued to describe his personal trajectory and the problems he faced in his interactions with the left-wing organizations he worked with in the past. He explained:

¹⁴⁴ As I pointed out on the section on the CGIL of Reggio Emilia, Mohamed A. left the CGIL, because according to him, the organization was exercising too much control on him and he resisted these practices until he was given the opportunity to leave.

My idea was always that of creating a *pedagogy of discontinuity*. I tried to do it by coming into Italy and interacting with the left-wing organizations. It is a matter of breaking with the idea that immigrants represent immigrants. Today many immigrants who have a role of responsibility do this thing: they play the game the Left wants them to play, that is, they talk as immigrants for other immigrants. I tried to break with this mechanism when I was working with the CGIL. For me, it was crucial to break with the ethnicization imposed on people of migrant background by Italians. It doesn't have to be the others (the Italians) to decide the terms of the debate. The problem with left-wing trade unions and political parties is that they do not create the conditions to make people grow and become leaders. The best expression of the Left in Italy is the CGIL. However, they continue to do service for immigrants. You cannot use the best immigrants you have to provide services to immigrants! Personally, I wanted to be a unionist, not a person who works with immigrants. I refused to accommodate this approach, and at the end I left. What is more, the Office for People of Foreign Origin is outside the Chamber of Labor. This is a form of ghettoization. Why don't they include them in the union?

For Mohamed A., the Left was “guilty of many mistakes.” He explained that “all the organizations of the Left transformed the issue of immigration just to create divisions between each other.” For this reason, Mohamed A. explained that he was very supportive of the “Italy is me, too!” campaign because he was convinced that “the administrative vote would change everything.” Mohamed A. recognized that notwithstanding these limitations, the cultural and political context of the Emilia-Romagna region and Reggio Emilia was favorable to a new migrant political leadership. With respect to his personal trajectory, Mohamed A. considered himself lucky to be the director of the Mondinsieme Center and to be able to actively work towards change. “We propose a change of horizon: We say that ‘integration concerns everybody.’ This is the biggest thing we have done. We have worked a great deal on these approaches. We have a greater visibility than any other organization. Now we are working to transform the Center into a think tank.” The work done by Mohamed A. through the Mondinsieme Center was widely recognized in the city, and illustrated the opportunity Mohamed A. had seized to use the resources and competences he had gained over the years in the service of the city.

Sahid A. is a second-generation immigrant.¹⁴⁵ He was born in Morocco in 1985 and moved to Reggio Emilia with his parents at the age of six. He married an Italian woman, with whom he had a child. In 2008, he founded the association Network TogethER, and he has been its coordinator since then. He was also a functionary of the CISL and in charge of the CISL-ANOLF since 2010. At the CISL, in addition to offering assistance to immigrants and doing unionist work in the surrounding territory of Reggio Emilia, he was also in charge of political administrative decisions on matters of immigration, a role that very few immigrants working in traditional trade unions have held in Italy (Mottura 2010).

At the beginning of our interview, I asked Sahid A. if he agreed with other actors in the city who claimed that Reggio Emilia was a “happy island” in the Italian context. He answered:

When we move from one region to another, the other people tell us that *they can't put in practice what we do*. And this is not only with respect to interculturalism. This year, Emilia-Romagna has produced three ministers, including Cecile Kyenge, the Minister of integration. This region is a point of reference for all the other regions of Italy. With respect to the other regions, we are faring pretty well...and Reggio Emilia represents a model in many respects.

As was the case with Mohamed A., for Sahid A. being active in the city was something obvious. He told me: “I am a unionist. It is a sacrifice, because you deliberately take time from yourself to give it to other people. I do it with great pleasure. I always want to give my time to other people whenever I can.”

Just like Mohamed A., Sahid A. was a key actor in the city with great visibility. Assessor Cesare F. gave me his contact information the first time I met him. He had been very active in the world of associations for many years, which is why the CISL gave him an important role of responsibility in the CISL-ANOLF. Sahid A. was really active with Network TogethER. He described the network as follows:

It is a network of youth and intercultural associations. I don't like to specify more. I don't like to make distinctions [between second-generation immigrants and Italians] and I think the term “integration” is meaningless, because it does not reflect pluralism. It is all about young people who bring with them experiences and cultures, religions,

¹⁴⁵ Interview in Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013.

traditions. This is the strength of Network TogethER. It is about young people who want to question themselves and deal with hot issues like discrimination. The cohabitation of different identities challenges our organization. We are aware that the things we are doing are not only for one category of people, but for all citizens. We are not always able to make the right compromises. We are able to overcome the difficulties through our everyday effort, by focusing on some central themes.

Sahid A. explained the reason why he created Network TogethER:

We are in a society that is starting to close... people fear others. We want to be a group of young people and of associations that deal with the issues that will concern the society of tomorrow. Italy will have to deal with a world that is more and more plural. We are not living in homogenous societies anymore. We must start imagining this society... because a state can formulate the laws, but if those laws are not supported by a culture, then that law has no foundation. We want to help people have the tools to face the challenges of a plural society.

Sahid A. also explained that the associations in the network were not running at the same pace, because not everyone understood the intercultural themes in the same way. For this reason, they were meeting once a month in order to create more cohesion. Thanks to the financial support of the Emilia-Romagna Region, the organization was able to promote important activities such as the Week against Racism (see above). Sahid A. added that the organization of a full week of events was the proof that the work they were doing to grow in the territory was bearing fruit. "You need many human and material resources to achieve such goals!"

I asked Sahid A. why he chose to work for the CISL. He answered: "The choice was simple. I decided to enter the CISL because the organization asked me if I wanted to. I was working in a factory back then and I was very active in the workplace." He explained that he was lucky because the organization valued his individual skills and also treated him as an equal. This allowed him to grow in the organization. He explained that in Reggio Emilia,

there is the idea that, if your political orientation is left wing, then you have to work with the CGIL. In the CISL, I feel freer, because I don't have to express my political point of view. With my approach, I would like to unhinge the well-established ways of

dealing with things. I would like to demonstrate that an individual is crucial within an organization beyond the name and the orientation of the organization. What counts for me are individuals. The CISL does not have a clear political line. I believe that time is ripe to make a new synthesis. The old ways of working and thinking do not work anymore. There is a pluralism of ideas within a single organization and this fact must be recognized. We must make a synthesis and write a new page together. I am convinced that we could do more for people if we weren't sheltering behind our old ways of doing things and our beliefs. Our goal must be building networks with other realities to give space and voice to immigrants.

I asked Sahid A. if the CISL was succeeding in encouraging pluralism within the organization and going beyond ideological divides. He answered that the organization was making many steps and that, even though it was hard, he was working for it to happen. He explained:

For me participation doesn't mean going to immigrants with a paper already written and saying: "This is the program!" Rather it means going to them with a draft and allowing them to contribute to it. It must be a work in progress. For a trade union to "give voice" means listening to what people have to say and representing them according to their demands and needs. Personally, at the CISL, I have had the possibility to act and to advance in this direction. The current Secretary, Sandra M., recognizes my role and supports me in what I do. It is an equal relationship and she always asks my advice before she takes any decision. She is able to recognize the unique capacities of individuals.

Sahid A. was very critical of the ideological divisions between organizations in the city, especially the left-wing actors.

We need ask ourselves what our battles are. If our goal is the well-being of people, of all people, then we should not nourish ideological conflicts. The economic crisis now has become also a socio-cultural crisis as well. People are getting stuck. We need to figure out new approaches that allow us to understand the processes at work and transform them for the good of the community.

He added that it was for this reason that he worked hard with Network Together: to create the pluralistic society of tomorrow that he was hoping for. Following this reasoning, Sahid

A. expressed his criticism of the radical Left. Above all, he was critical of the tendency of these organizations to mobilize only immigrants and to reinforce conflicts. He explained:

For me it is important to move beyond a distinction between immigrants and Italians.
We need to work with everyone, not only with immigrants. This is my philosophy.
Today everyone needs everyone. The radical Left needs us and we need them.

To sum up, Mohamed A. and Sahid A. spent many years in Reggio Emilia and were both very proud of being part of the city. They felt lucky to be living in a territory that they considered very open towards immigrants. They acknowledged that it was in part for this reason they had been able to develop their skills over the years, thanks to the multiple channels of participation opened up in the territory by local actors. Thanks to the local context, they were able to share their individual capital and put it at the service of the community. As director of the Mondinsieme Center, through his hard work and experience, Mohamed A. was able to strengthen the Center and transform it into an important think tank in the territory of Emilia-Romagna. Thanks to his work, the Center gained great visibility in the city and was able to support a “qualitative leap” toward the intercultural dialogue proposed by the administration. Among other things, his role has been crucial in encouraging participation by the youth of the city (both Italians and immigrants) in the direction of the intercultural dialogue. Similarly to Mohamed A., Sahid A. was a key figure in promoting the intercultural approach. He described Reggio Emilia as a multi-ethnic society in which each individual could contribute actively to improve interaction. Through collaborations between Network TogethER and the Mondinsieme Center, he promoted anti-racist campaigns and intercultural workshops in the schools of the territory of Reggio Emilia, and advanced the idea that Italy was changing so fast that new analytical tools were necessary to understand society. In particular, he argued that it was time to move beyond the distinction “us vs. them” and start talking about society as a whole. The perspective promoted in Reggio Emilia was for him the right way to go, and he worked hard to support youth participation in the improvement of the intercultural dialogue.

4.3.2. Perceiving and acting upon the opportunities for participation: immigrant activists in the CGIL

Unlike Mohamed A. and Sahid A., who worked with the local administration and third-sector organizations, immigrants active in the city who allied with more radical actors such as the CGIL experienced significant difficulties in becoming agents of change in the city. One of the main immigrant activists in the CGIL exemplifies this point.

Farooq M. was a first-generation immigrant.¹⁴⁶ He was born in Pakistan in 1975 and moved to Reggio Emilia at the age of 21 in 1996. He had earned a university degree in Mathematics in Pakistan. In Italy, he married a woman from Pakistan. He moved to Italy because it was a gateway into Europe, but he would have preferred to go where his degree could have been valorized. He arrived without documents and was regularized thanks to an amnesty launched in 1996. In 2013, he was very active in the world of associations and he had been president of the Pakistani association at the provincial level for seven years. He was also active in the volunteer sector and participated in events that promoted cohabitation between Italians and migrants. Farooq M. believed in civic activism as a means to create the conditions for a dialogue between the Italian and the immigrant community. He said that, “Sadly, the media never emphasize the role of immigrants as active citizens.”

Between 1996 and 1999, he worked as a metalworker, and between 1999 and 2006 he worked in a factory that did injection molding. He was very active in the workplace and he was a delegate of the CGIL. Since 2002, he volunteered for the CGIL’s Office for Foreigners. In 2006, the CGIL asked him to become a functionary of the Office. “My role was to be a bridge between immigrants and the CGIL. We would organize assemblies to explain what the trade union was.” In describing his participation in the CGIL, Farooq M. explained that in the past, he had been proud to be an immigrant activist in the Migration Coordination Organization of the CGIL, because it was extremely active and visible. He explained:

Our organization was able to make immigrant workers aware of the meaning of representation in the workplace. It was a key actor in making them understand participation. We were able to mobilize immigrant workers and to exert pressure to change things in the city. The strength of the Migration Coordination Organization

¹⁴⁶ Interview in Reggio Emilia, 15 October 2013.

was that it was managed by immigrants and was able to give them the space they needed to frame their rights claims.

Unlike other similar organizations, the Migration Coordination Organization in Reggio Emilia was not managed by Italians but by immigrants and this, according to Farooq M., made it special: “Where there are Italians, the Migration Coordination Organization is weak. Where it is managed by immigrants, then it is strong. This is a fact!” However, he also explained that everything had changed in the second half of the 2000s, when the CGIL agreed to work with the government and stopped encouraging participation and political activities. He explained: “In my opinion there was a will to fly low when it concerned immigrants’ rights! Migrant Coordination Organizations have disappeared from the territorial branches of the CGIL. This means that this was something intentional.”

According to Farooq M., the end of the Migration Coordination Organization was also the end of true political participation in the city of Reggio Emilia, and he was not sure how things would evolve in the future. As far as his personal trajectory was concerned, he planned to leave the country and join his family in England. A year later, when he moved to Great Britain, he wrote me: “Unfortunately, the anti-immigrant politics of the Office for Foreigners of the CGIL forced me to leave a role that had become only bureaucratic and non-political.”

4.3.3. Perceiving and acting upon the opportunities for participation: immigrant activists in the Democratic Party

Immigrants active in the Democratic Party were a bit more positive than Farooq M. The Party in Reggio Emilia encouraged participation through the Provincial Forum of Immigration and attracted some people of migrant background. However, at least one of the selected interviewees points out some fundamental problems in the political party, such as cooptation, racism and lack of equal treatment.

Reda B. is a second-generation immigrant.¹⁴⁷ He was born in Tunisia in 1985 and moved to Reggio Emilia at the age of 13, in 2000, thanks to a family reunification. His parents had been living in Italy since the 1980s. After he gained his degree in a technical school, he worked as a metalworker. He has been married to a woman from Tunisia since 2011, is a Muslim, and has had Italian citizenship since 2006. He told me that three months after he received his Italian citizenship, he decided to run for elections with the Democratic

¹⁴⁷ Interview in Reggio Emilia, 20 February 2013.

Party, and in 2006 he became councilor in Quattro Castella (province of Reggio Emilia). He adhered to the political orientation of the Democratic Party and also its political position on immigration. This is why he decided to become more and more involved over the years at the national level as well. In 2010, he became the promoter of the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party of Reggio Emilia, and since then he has been the person in charge. He explained that, before the Forum, there were other attempts to create strong networks but it was often hard to create a platform for participation. He promoted the idea of the Provincial Forum in Reggio Emilia because he wanted “to open up a space, hoping that the confrontation would allow the development of discussions on immigration issues.”

Reda B. believed in the work of the Forum. He explained that the achievements of the Forum at the national level (and of the Forum of Emilia Romagna in particular) brought about two important results at the level of representation: the election of two members of parliament of migrant background in Emilia Romagna (Khalid Chauchi, from Reggio Emilia, and Cecile Kyenge, from Modena) both of whom were involved in the Forum. Cecile was in charge of the Regional Forum, and she became the Minister of Integration in 2003.

Like many other interviewees in the city, Reda B. was very grateful to live in Reggio Emilia. He said that he faced prejudice in the workplace, but not racism. “With a racist person, you can’t talk, but with someone who is prejudiced there is a chance she or he changes his mind.” I asked him if he faced racism or prejudice in the world of politics. He admitted that he saw racism from both the opposition and the Democratic Party. He was often attacked politically because he was Muslim. He added:

I believe we [immigrants] can overcome these difficulties with our added value! We are people who have lived in different countries and this allows us to see things differently, with a more detached eye. This added value is the fact that we live things first-hand, including racism and negative things. As an immigrant, I have come to realize that Italian people know very little about the phenomenon of immigration, even politicians. There is lots of ignorance that needs to be overcome through our contributions.

Reda B. explained that he was lucky because he had been able to overcome difficulties:

When one arrives, one experiences a very strong and hard pressure. When a person is attacked, she can lose clarity of thought. It is then that people can take advantage of you. I am convinced that one's achievements depend to a great extent on one's personal experience and one's capacity to bypass difficulties.

I asked Reda B. about his experience in the Democratic Party. He was very critical of the Party.

Teresa C.: Can you describe the Party's treatment of people of foreign origin? Would you say that it is an equal treatment?

Reda B.: I am afraid there is no equal treatment! The reason is that the party puts meritocracy into the background. What matters for the party are your contacts and networks. When you think of it, it is obvious that a person of Italian origin has more networks and an immigrant is disadvantaged.

Teresa C.: When you think about Cecile Kyenge (the Minister of Integration), how would you define the Party's treatment of her? Equal treatment?

Reda B.: I call the treatment by the PD "Democratic racism"! They recognize you have difficulty adapting in the country and they want to lend a hand. However their mistrust and their culture of prejudice remain. No one in the PD dares to counter and openly challenge the general mistrust of the population and hostility towards immigrants.

Teresa C.: In practice, what does this mean?

Reda B.: Within the Democratic Party, there are people who think: "I support you for the battle, I encourage you during the campaign, but in the end it is always the Moroccan people who steal."

Teresa C.: Is it only about national origin, or does class play a role as well?

Reda B.: Italy struggles to imagine a person of foreign origin in a responsible position or as a director of a hospital for instance. So yes, it is about both class and national origin.

I asked Reda B. to tell me more about the resistance by the party to support greater immigrants' inclusion.

To take up the theme of inclusion, in the specific case of Italy, means first of all to be accused of defending the thieves, the clandestines, the *badanti*.... Moreover, why should one try to eradicate a cultural inheritance if there is no gain in doing it! Immigrants do not vote. To eradicate cultural prejudice takes an enormous amount of

time and energy, but politics does not have time. Moreover, the work doesn't pay you back. Unfortunately if we continue in this direction the cultural prejudices will never be overcome.

I also asked Reda B. about the impact of the financial crisis:

Teresa C.: How does it affect the themes we are addressing?

Reda B.: The Democratic Party can't define its own political orientation. It seems like a political current without political goals. The most critical aspect is that the crisis opens up the path to other parties, such as fascist parties, which are apt to use the effects of the crisis instrumentally. In politics, if you are not efficient and do not occupy the political space, the empty space will be occupied by someone else.

Teresa C.: What is your political line?

Reda B.: The Democratic Party has disappointed me a great deal. In my view, we should combine left-wing values with right-wing determination. Left-wing values are the rights of housing, of work, welfare, etc. The limit of the right wing is that they say: this is white and this is black, and for them there is no in-between. However, what I really appreciate about the Right is its incisiveness in politics. I believe that we should recuperate our anti-fascist history, the history of resistance. The partisans were very incisive.

As for the radical Left, such as Migrant City, Reda B. explained that he did not agree with their positions, because he believed that they did not consider the processes of integration in all their complexity. In this respect, he gave a view of integration that was very close to most other actors in the city promoting the intercultural approach, including Mohamed A. and Sahid A. He explained:

The process of integration must be supported. The fascist culture is still very much present. We need to build the basis of cohabitation beyond ideological conflicts. Integration concerns neighborhoods, work, schools and social life. It is of paramount importance to create a harmony with the local society, beyond the workplace. If you want a person to give the best of him/herself, you have to support pathways of openness among people who live in the territory. Also, we need to use lots of pragmatism and start from the concrete realities of a territory and build from that.

Dhakirah S. was born in Ghana in 1984 and arrived in Reggio Emilia at the age of three with his parents in 1988.¹⁴⁸ When I interviewed him in October 2013, he had just received his Italian citizenship. After high school, he didn't go to university because he needed to work right away. "As a foreigner," he explained, "it was necessary to bring home the bread." Like other interviewees of migrant background active in the city, *Dhakirah S.* recognized that the city had many well-structured organizations in the sphere of immigration and that it was easy to understand where to go. He also explained that by becoming active, one was more likely to become aware of all these organizations. I asked *Dhakirah S.* why he decided to become active. He exclaimed, "I received my Italian citizenship this year, *after living in Italy for 25 years!*" He continued: "When I received my Italian citizenship, people (Italians and immigrants) congratulated me because I made it. After that, there were other immigrants who asked me how I did it and I started helping them." He went on:

Once I received my citizenship, I became active in the volunteer sector for the first time in my life, because I felt grateful. I got involved in the project promoted by the municipality called 'Among the school desks in the summer' [*Tra i banchi d'estate*]. It was a project organized to promote the learning of the Italian language among adolescents between 13 and 17 years old, recently arrived in Italy.¹⁴⁹

During the interview, we discussed the meaning of participation and how one could bring forth change.

To be an active citizen means "to feel useful." Thanks to the volunteer work, I understood that immigrants can be an example to follow. Also, other paths can open up by becoming active. Activism makes you grow and become more self-confident and hopeful. You can make people understand that there are other people like them who have won the challenges they are facing. I also believe that what I have learned is that one can be an example not only for immigrants, but for everyone.

In the same period, during the summer of 2013, *Dhakirah S.* decided to get involved with the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party. He got involved

¹⁴⁸ Interview in Reggio Emilia, 24 October 2013.

¹⁴⁹ See the page of the project in the official site of the municipality : <http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/0/DB38B91CA5E4D6C4C12578B900289E27?opendocument> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

because he understood “the importance of politics for everyday life problems.” Dhakirah S. decided to become a member of the Democratic Party because he shared its general attitude toward immigration. He said that he was ready to run for elections later on, but that for now he wanted to get ready, to learn things. He explained that he hoped the Provincial Forum would offer him the opportunities to become an example for other people in the city. He decided to join it to better know the reality of Reggio Emilia, and to become more informed:

I am an active citizen because I want to contribute to the decisions of my city. I want to be useful to my neighbor and for the common good. The Forum favors processes of inclusion because it favors encounters and knowledge, and it is a very useful thing in the city because it helps to fill the distance between citizens and politics.

Notwithstanding the difficult conditions of immigrants in Italy, all the interviewees listed above (except for Farooq M.) claimed they were very proud to be part of Reggio Emilia and to contribute to its improvement. These interviewees acknowledged that they were able to see themselves as part of the territory and to advance the intercultural dialogue in the direction promoted by the main local actors in the territory. In particular, it was precisely because they appropriated the dominant intercultural approach in the city that they were able to shape the local realm of immigration and promote civic participation in the city in collaboration with other actors.¹⁵⁰

4.4. Concluding remarks

In this first empirical chapter, I showed that in Reggio Emilia there were opportunities to participate in civic channels of participation at the individual and collective level. At the same time there were very weak channels of political participation in conventional politics and a lack of non-conventional channels for participation. I traced back the presence of these channels to the role of key local actors in the realm of immigration. While the left-wing administration, with the help of lay-organizations, was key to opening channels of civic participation for people of migrant background by supporting an intercultural approach, there were very limited incentives to support political participation. I explained that while the Democratic Party did make some advances towards political participation through the Provincial Forum, with the exception

¹⁵⁰For the methodology used, see Chapter 3; for a list of the interviews, see APPENDIX 3.

of a few immigrant activists, this latter organization was still very weak and unable to become a relevant actor for immigrants mobilized in the city. Also, as the interview with Reda B. suggests, the political party was unable to encourage participation of immigrants in the city and to build alliances with the immigrant population. Among other things, the Party never supported in a significant way the election of one person of migrant background in the administration. At the same time, more radical actors, such as the CGIL and the radical Left, were unable or unwilling to promote political participation in the city, and this prevented immigrant activists from mobilizing in non-conventional channels of participation. The CGIL has supported mobilizations of immigrant workers in the past, but its incapacity to treat immigrants as equal and its unwillingness to make a political leap in the direction of its immigration policies has resulted in a loss of trust by immigrant workers who mobilized with the organization in the past.

The role of local organizations and their approach to integration need to be combined with a consideration of the role of people of migrant background active in the city. Section 4.3 showed that depending on the channels opened and the alliances they were able to make with left-wing allies, immigrant activists could play a role in shaping the realm of immigration and opening channels of participation in the city. Immigrant activists who were able to create strong alliances with the left-wing administration, such as Mohamed A. (the director of the Mondinsieme Center) and Sahid A. (the president of Network Together and in charge of the CISL-ANOLF), and to a certain extent, Reda B. (a member of the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party), were able to shape their own trajectory of participation independent of the dynamics of co-optation, clientelism and unequal treatment *vis-à-vis* left-wing actors in the city. What is more, by appropriating the discourses and practices of the intercultural dialogue promoted by the local administration and the third sector, they contributed to shaping the local realm of immigration in the direction of interculturalism and to encouraging participation by other people of migrant background (as well as Italians) in the area of immigration. The interview with Dhakirah S., who had joined the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party only in 2013, exemplified the ability of the administration and the Forum to recruit some “new citizens” who were willing to contribute to the good of the city. Overall, these examples also show that successful alliances with moderate local actors represent a combination of ideological affiliations and pragmatic considerations by immigrant activists, closely associated with the capacity of local actors to open up channels of participation for these individuals.

Finally, the interview with Farooq M. (Office for Foreigners of the CGIL) showed a very different type of interaction with a left-wing organization, as well as the impossibility for people of migrant backgrounds active in the CGIL to interact with the organization in a meaningful way. Farooq M. explained that while during the first half of the 2000s, the CGIL had encouraged more participation and mobilization by immigrants, by the second half of the 2000s it was focused more on service than on politics. Farooq M. recognized that this limited in a very significant way the ability of immigrant activists to participate in the organization and to open up channels of political participation for themselves and others. Farooq M.'s experience exemplifies the presence of barriers to participation of immigrants in the city and indicates the unwillingness by left-wing actors to support alliances with immigrant activists in the city.

Chapter 5. Bologna

Civic and Political Participation in the City of the Multiple Channels

5.1. The organization of “A Day Without Us”: the strike vs. demonstration dilemma

“What would happen if the four and a half million immigrants who live in Italy decided to cross their arms for one day?” This was the provocation launched on Facebook by the anti-racist movement (composed of various groups of the civil society who share their commitment to protect immigrants rights) in the blog entry, “The Strike of Migrants: A Day Without Us,” posted on November 29, 2009. The organizers of the event (like others across Europe) were inspired by the French movement that launched “The Day Without Immigrants: 24 Hours Without Us” (“*La journée sans immigrés: 24h sans nous*”) in France. On March 1, 2010, many cities in Italy participated in the initiative to remind Italians of the importance of immigrant workers for the country’s economy and also to protest against the institutional racism imposed by the Bossi-Fini Law and the Security Package.¹⁵¹ The initiative was organized by civil society organizations composed of Italian and immigrant activists. Two days before the event, the President of the National Committee of the First of March, 2010 (*Comitato Nazionale Primo Marzo 2010*), the journalist Stefania Ragusa, declared that the organization of the march was already a success in itself, because it achieved two fundamental goals. First, it saw the mobilization of thousands of people and the creation of a network of anti-racist organizations, immigrant associations and common people, giving “centrality to the issue of immigrant rights” and showing the “link with collective rights.” Second, it was able to avoid the appropriation of the mobilization by mainstream actors (political parties and trade unions) for political purposes.¹⁵²

Two main conflicts emerged during the organization of the event. The first began when traditional trade unions refused to take part in the strike, arguing that a strike of immigrants could become a divisive element in Italian society, and instead of sensitizing the

¹⁵¹ “Sciopero dei lavoratori stranieri: primo marzo 2010 – un giorno senza di noi.” *Corriere informazione*, March 1, 2010. <http://www.corriereinformazione.it/201003011237/lavoro/sciopero-dei-lavoratori-stranieri-primo-marzo-2010-un-giorno-senza-di-noi.html> (Accessed June 15, 2015). Giuliano Cazzola, Vice President of the Labor Commission of the Italian Parliament, demonstrated his solidarity: “I find the motivations of the initiative very convincing: immigrants want to demonstrate not only that they exist, but that they are indispensable, through their presence and their work, to the social and economic activities of the country.” In 2010, this presence represented around 9.7% of the Italian GDP, equivalent to 112 billion euros.

¹⁵² Stefania Ragusa. “Il primo marzo è già un successo.” February 28, 2010. <http://primomarzo2010.blogspot.ca/2010/02/il-primo-marzo-e-gia-un-successo.html> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

Italian population to the conditions of immigrants would have the opposite effect. In particular, conflicts emerged between the National Committee of the First of March, 2010 and the main left-wing trade union, the CGIL, which labeled the strike of immigrants an “ethnic strike” in opposition to the unity of all workers. As the spokesperson of the Office of Foreign Workers of the CGIL of Bologna declared:

We have not joined because we think that we need more than a slogan and a strike that involves only immigrants to overcome the problems of immigrant workers. What we need is to involve all workers and sensitize them (Member Office of Foreign Workers, CGIL, quoted in Galeotti 2010/2011, 141; *my translation*).¹⁵³

Ragusa, the president of the National Committee, expressed her regret for the position taken by trade unions, especially because without their support the impact of the event would be diminished.¹⁵⁴

The second main conflict that emerged during the organization of the First of March 2010 was linked to the first. Given the lack of support of the trade unions, the organizers were divided on whether to risk organizing a strike instead of a demonstration. A demonstration was considered safer in terms of success, while a strike was less likely to succeed without the participation of the main traditional trade unions. Since the trade unions were the actors best able to reach workers in their workplace, their absence in the organization made the success of a strike significantly less likely (Galeotti 2010/2011, 80-84).

The *strike vs. demonstration* dilemma created conflicts among the members of the National Committee of the First of March, 2010 and exposed visible ideological conflicts among members of the anti-racist movement in Italy, and in particular between moderate left-wing actors and more radical left-wing actors.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ It is important to make a methodological remark. The dissertation by Francesca Giancola is useful because one can find relevant documents produced during the organization of “A Day Without Us” as well as interviews with key local actors in Bologna. I make substantial use of first-hand material presented by Giancola. However, I do not rely on her study to draw conclusions from my analysis of Bologna. The thesis was never published and the author has a clear positive bias towards the MCO at the expense of a more objective consideration of all the other actors involved in the organization of the event.

¹⁵⁴ “Sciopero dei lavoratori stranieri: primo marzo 2010—un giorno senza di noi.” *Corriere informazione*, March 1, 2010. <http://www.corriereinformazione.it/201003011237/lavoro/sciopero-dei-lavoratori-stranieri-primo-marzo-2010-un-giorno-senza-di-noi.html> (Accessed June 15, 2015). Ragusa also highlighted the importance of the fact that the political parties and trade unions could not make claims on the event and thus appropriate it.

¹⁵⁵ For a reconstruction of this conflict, see Cobbe & Grappi (2011).

Within the National Committee, a group of collectives and networks linked to the radical Left supporting the strike created the Coordination for the Strike of Migrant Labor (*Coordinamento per lo Sciopero del Lavoro Migrante*) (Cobbe & Grappi 2011, 55). The group included radical left organizations such as the Migrant Coordination Organization of the Province and City of Bologna (*Coordinamento Migranti della Provincia e città di Bologna*, from now on MCO), which was a key actor in the national debate.¹⁵⁶

Two months before the event on January 1, 2010, the Coordination for the Strike of Migrant Labor published a document titled, “For the Strike of Migrant Labor,” arguing that a strike was the only adequate response to the situation of migrants in the country.¹⁵⁷ In the text, three main points were noted. First, the group focused on the centrality of “migrant labor,” that is, a political category developed by members of the radical Left in Bologna that emphasizes how immigrant labor is used to create precariousness and labor exploitation across Europe. Second, the document argued for the need to move beyond anti-racist demonstrations and solidarity, and to join forces with other groups in Europe to promote a general strike. Finally, the manifesto states the necessity of considering immigrants as protagonists of their struggle. In opposition to the demonstrations and solidarism expressed by the civil society in Italy, they advanced the idea that the struggle must be organized not on behalf of immigrants, but with immigrants.

Before the day of the protest, the outcome of the event was “uncertain” (Cobbe & Grappi 2011, 55). Yet in the aftermath of the “A Day Without Us,” the event was welcomed as a success by the main organizers, because there had been great participation by the civil society and immigrants themselves. According to the organizers, the event saw the presence of around 300,000 people in dozens of Italian cities, showing a growing awareness of the existence of institutional racism in Italy. In cities where a strike was not organized because

¹⁵⁶ This national debate was also happening at the local level in many cities in Italy, including Bologna, where the radical left movement was particularly strong.

The makeup of the group was never publicly revealed, but through my fieldwork I was able to identify the members. In particular, the radical left groups of Bologna were key to the organization of the National Coordination. In the official document, they make clear their link with the Table of Migrants of the Social Forum. They declared: “Within the experience of the Table of Migrants [of the Social Forum], some of us have already contributed to organizing and supporting the strike of immigrant work that on May 15, 2002 involved the entire industrial district of Vicenza [Veneto], and that has marked one of the highest moments of the struggle of immigrants in Italy and Europe. In these years, we have supported the political proposition of the strike of immigrant labor against racism and the Bossi-Fini Law, within trajectories that brought about the big May Day of May 1, 2008 and the national demonstrations of Milan (“Da che parte stare” [“Which side to take”]) of June 23, 2009 and of Rome last October [2010].” See the document “For the strike of migrant labor” produced by the Coordination for the Strike of Migrant Labor, quoted in Galeotti (2009/2010, 74).

¹⁵⁷ For the complete document see Galeotti 2009/2010, 156-157.

of the lack of the support of the trade unions, the civil society organized sit-ins, processions, and permanent occupation.¹⁵⁸

The Coordination for the Strike of Migrant Labor also proclaimed the event a success (Galeotti 2010/2011, 81; Cobbe & Grappi 2011, 55). In a provocative document, “How to recount the First of March” (“*Come si racconta il primo marzo*”), the Coordination declared that “the protests in public squares have to be read as the effect of the practice of migrants and Italians of denying—of saying no!—to the exploitation of migrant labor” which had been made possible by the existing legislation on immigration (in Galeotti 2010/2011, 85).¹⁵⁹ The second key point that emerged in the document has to do with the presence of immigrants, their self-determination, and also their role as a transformative force due to the “strategic position” of immigrant labor within the labor force:

The strike [...] has propagated a force: it has allowed many anti-racists to descend into the streets, not in solidarity for once, but together with migrants. This marks a step ahead with respect to the self-determination of migrants [...] and shows the political potential of this self-determination (in Galeotti 2010/2011, 85).

In line with the Coordination for the Strike of Migrant Labor, during the organization of the second strike of immigrants in 2011, the CGIL-FIOM, the more radical branch of the left-wing union CGIL—and the only one that supported the strike of immigrants in 2010 (at the last minute) and again during the strike of 2011—recognized the strong link between the work permit and the permit of stay as a visible form of institutional racism, an observation supported by the Coordination for the Strike of Migrant Labor in general and by the MCO of Bologna.¹⁶⁰

5.1.1. The strike for immigrants with immigrants in Bologna

The Bologna branch of the First of March Committee was composed of three main actors: a group from the civil society guided by a member of the Democratic Party, Cécile Kyenge (acting on her own behalf without the involvement of the Party), and the two main

¹⁵⁸ See the page: <https://triskel182.wordpress.com/2011/02/28/24-ore-senza-di-noi-domani-gli-immigrati-ci-riprovano/> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

¹⁵⁹ The declaration was added in the blog “First of March 2010.” For the complete document see: <http://primomarzo2010.blogspot.ca/2010/03/come-si-racconta-il-primo-marzo.html> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

¹⁶⁰ See the document: CGIL-FIOM. 2011. “Ordine del Giorno: Primo Marzo 2011.” National Assembly of the delegates CGIL-FIOM, Cervia, February 3-4, 2011.

radical left-wing organizations of the city, the association Ya Basta! Bologna, linked to the social center TPO (Occupied Multipurpose Theatre—*Teatro Polivalente Occupato*) and the MCO (Migrant Coordination Organization of the Province and the City of Bologna—*Coordinamento Migranti della Provincia e della Città di Bologna*), linked to the social center MX24.

Bologna was one of the few cities in Italy to organize a strike of immigrants without the support of trade unions. As Galeotti spotlights, “The sensitization started from below by word of mouth through informal networks, excluding the usual logic of proclaiming the strike from above, by the traditional union organizations” (Galeotti 2010/2011, 80). The strike was possible thanks to two main factors: first, the involvement of the radical left-wing organization MCO, a key member of the Coordination for the Strike of Migrant Labor, and second, the great participation by immigrants. One of the key members of the MCO explained that while the other members of the Committee of the First of March focused on advertising the event, the MCO concentrated on mobilizing workers for the strike, with the partial support of delegates of the most radical branches of the left-wing trade union, the CGIL-FIOM (Galeotti 2010/2011, 80).¹⁶¹ He also explained how the organization of the strike was favored by the “double militancy of immigrant activists,” who were both members of the MCO and delegates of trade unions, mainly but not exclusively of the CGIL-FIOM (see Galeotti 2010/2011, 80). The informant also added:

The initiative started from some migrants who used to do political activities with us [the MCO] and who had been part of the MCO for several years. These people were also union delegates and they involved other union delegates... we organized a day [an assembly], on February the 14th [2010], to discuss these things. That day, many union delegates intervened and at that point the strike became something real, because in the workplace people started to launch this idea (Member of the MCO, Interview by Galeotti 2010/2011, 151-152).

The informant also explained that, precisely because the event was organized entirely from below, the outcomes were uncertain until the very end of the strike.

¹⁶¹ I would like to introduce a methodological note. G. is most likely one of my interviewees: Corrado G., a key member of the MCO, and also the author of different articles and chapters on the approach of the MCO to the issue of immigrant political rights promotion.

In the morning [of the first of March 2010] we were in contact with workers. We experienced it as something that was growing, with situations in which migrants were calling and asking us what to do [...] they were at the door of the workplace [...] they were in little groups of 10, 15, or 20 and did not want to go to work, but because they were deprived of union coverage, they did not know what to do and in certain cases we did not know what to do either. In some situations we were able to find available comrades or people who we knew and thus guarantee the union coverage, while in other cases they took their own responsibility [...] the First of March was a situation in which workers themselves conquered what they wanted [...] in Bologna at least this was the case... (Member of the MCO, Interview by Galeotti 2010/2011, 152).

Thus, according to this informant, the first remarkable aspect of the event was the fact that in Bologna, the strike was entirely organized from below with migrants, without the official support of the trade unions as in other cities (such as Brescia and Reggio Emilia) where the union took up the call and mobilized their own workers (Galeotti 2010/2011, 81). While the MCO was able to replace the union by supporting the strike through their networks, the double affiliation of many immigrants with both the MCO and the union made the strike possible. In some cases, immigrants were not covered and went on strike against their organization.

In addition to the informant's observation, I identified three other main aspects linked to the involvement of local actors in the sphere of immigration. First, "A Day Without Us" in Bologna was organized with the complete absence of involvement of the main moderate left-wing actors, the Democratic Party. Second, as in many other cities in Italy, the organization of the First of March 2010 in Bologna made visible the existence of a conflict between the organizers of the event and the main left-wing union, the CGIL. In Bologna, the conflict was stronger given the strength of the radical Left, in particular the MCO as an organizer of the event with which immigrant workers were willing to mobilize side by side. Third, a strong ideological conflict emerged among radical left-wing organizations over the issue of immigration. As things evolved after the first strike toward the organization of a second strike in 2011, major ideological tensions, already present in March 2010, became more obvious among the two radical left-wing organizations in the city: the TPO and the MCO. Galeotti describes this ideological conflict. She explains that, "The divergences among the various components of the Committee of the First of March 2010 [of Bologna] were born precisely from the choice to adopt "the strike as an instrument of struggle" instead of an anti-racist demonstration (Galeotti 2010/2011, 81). G. of the MCO explained:

[...] notwithstanding the evocation of the strike, the strike was not a taken-for-granted itinerary. Even during the meetings of this committee there was someone who would answer immediately that this was impossible... so [people would say] let's organize an anti-racist demonstration instead. What we said at that point was: No! There have been already many demonstrations... The discourse of the strike has floored everyone... it floored not only trade unions, but also the collectives and the realities of movements that used to do politics on these issues... and this is how we arrived at it [i.e. the strike] (G. of the MCO, Interview by Galeotti 2010/2011, 152).

A member of the MCO added: “The problem of most radical left movements is that they represent immigrants as the weakest link among the workers and thus they depict them as substantially unable to strike” (Member of the MCO, Interview by Galeotti 2010/2011, 152). For this reason, G. lamented that, apart from the MCO, there were very few organizations able to recognize the role of immigration law in producing institutional racism through the control of immigrant labor. Also, few were ready to acknowledge “the strategic position” of immigrants in the workforce and “to bet on the self-determination of migrants” (G. of the MCO, Interview by Galeotti 2010/2011, 152).¹⁶² According to G., the MCO had done all these things, but most radical left actors in Italy were stuck in an inadequate understanding of the processes at work and thus were not able to recognize the self-determination of immigrants, which he argued came into full light during the organization of the First of March 2010.

5.1.2. Background to “A Day Without Us” and mobilization by people of immigrant background in Bologna

The organization of “A Day Without Us” in Bologna represents a very useful case for understanding the local realm of immigration, alliances and conflicts among local actors, and for surveying the role of multiple local actors in shaping the participation of people of migrant background through their competing approaches to integration. The event illustrates the strong presence in Bologna of left-wing actors and important conflicts

¹⁶² The conflict between the two main radical left-wing organizations in Bologna, the TPO and the MCO, over the potential of immigrants to mobilize emerged in the declarations expressed in the aftermath of “A Day Without Us” in the Blog of the MCO. The MCO made the same criticism of the anti-racist groups that they made in the case of the Coordination for the Strike of Migrant Labour.

over the issue of immigration, between mainstream left-wing actors (in particular the CGIL) as well as among radical left actors. Also, it indicates a strong alliance between many immigrants active in the city and one major radical left-wing actor, the MCO.

In this chapter, by using my conceptual tools of the approaches to integration, the local realm of immigration and the channels of participation, I will illustrate the relevance of multiple actors in promoting participation by people of migrant background in Bologna, and at the same time highlight the role of people of migrant background active in the city.

The following section (5.2) will present the local realm of immigration in Bologna in 2013 and explain the evolution that took place in the city since the end of the 1990s. It will become clear that the case of Bologna is pivotal for examining the role of both moderate and radical left-wing actors in shaping the local realm of immigration and the channels of participation. The political homogeneity of local left-wing actors (as in Reggio Emilia), along with the strong presence of both moderate and radical actors, resulted in the promotion of both intercultural and political rights promotion approaches and led to the opening of channels for civic and political participation. Given its importance in the city, this section will also examine the conditions of the emergence of a key radical left-wing actor, the MCO. Composed of both Italians and immigrants, the MCO mobilized immigrants around issues linked to institutional racism and workers' exploitation. In recent years, the organization also created collaborations with new radical left-wing actors that emerged during the financial crisis and mobilized immigrant workers - in particular the grassroots unions SiCobas and USB. Section 5.3 explores how people of migrant background active in the city perceive and seize opportunities for participation and their ability to shape an itinerary of participation from below. This section will also assess how these actors appropriate the discourses and practices of their allies and whether they have been able to open channels of civic and political participation in the city.

5.2. The local realm of immigration in Bologna

Like Reggio Emilia, the city of Bologna is known for being the second unquestioned stronghold of the Communist Party, the PCI, in Italy (until its dissolution in the 1990s), but also as a city in which left-wing actors (including trade unions and radical left organizations) are hegemonic. After the first arrival of immigrants in the city in the 1980s and the 1990s, left-wing local actors in Bologna soon became involved in promoting inclusion and presented themselves as the vanguard of progressiveness in the country (Però 2007, 35). In the 1990s, explicit declarations by the administration presented new

immigrants not only as people in need of aid and protection (assistance approach), but also as people able to enrich the city because of their cultural heritage (intercultural approach) and as subjects entitled to basic political rights (political rights promotion approach) (Però 2007; Caponio 2006a). The left-wing heritage of Bologna and its fame as a welcoming city (in addition to its rich economy) has, since the 1980s, encouraged the arrival of many immigrants searching for a better future, including asylum seekers and refugees, students from developing countries and many immigrants of communist and socialist political orientation who left their countries for political reasons (Però 2007; Caponio 2006a).

Table 5.1 presents a summary of the main actors shaping the local realm of immigration in Bologna in 2013, and indicates the approaches to integration they adopted: assistance (A), intercultural (I), or political rights promotion (PRP). The number of stars represent the strength of each approach: one star indicates a weak investment in the approach, two stars a moderate one and three stars a strong one. The level of intervention depends primarily on the combination of two main factors: (1) the importance given to a specific approach by the local actor, and (2) the strength of that actor in the political arena and thus its ability to successfully promote that approach.

TABLE 5.1. Approaches to integration by local actors in Reggio Emilia in 2013

Political orientation	Local actors	A	I	PRP
Institutional “red” actors	Left-wing local administration	*	*	*
	Democratic Party	-	-	*
Radical “red” actors	CGIL	**	-	*
	TPO	*	-	*
	MCO	-	-	***
“White” actors	Caritas	*	-	-
	CISL	*	*	-
Others	Lay organizations	***	***	**
	Immigrant organizations	**	***	**

The table shows that, at the time of my fieldwork in 2013, the local realm of migration in Bologna was shaped by the adoption of three main approaches. In addition to the assistance approach, adopted by almost all local actors (except the Democratic Party and the MCO), several local actors including the administration, lay organizations, the

CISL and the TPO, promoted an intercultural approach. Additionally, all local actors in the city except Caritas and the CISL (the only non left-wing actors) took a political rights promotion approach.

The presence of main left-wing actors in Bologna and their adoption of intercultural and political rights promotion approaches resulted in the opening of both civic and political channels of participation in the city. Table 5.2 presents the channels of participation opened in the city and also indicates the relevance of the channels of participation in the city. Numbers 1 to 3 represent the strength of each approach: 1 indicates a weak investment in the approach, 2 a moderate one and 3 a strong one.

TABLE 5.2. Opening of channels of participation by local actors and their relevance (1–weak to 3–strong) in Bologna in 2013

Local actors	Civic channels	Conventional political channels	Non-conventional political channels
Left-wing local administration	Formal support of the immigrant associations and intercultural activities of the third sector Metropolitan Forum (1)	Provincial Council for third-country nationals (1)	
Democratic Party	--	Provincial Forum of Immigration (1)	
CGIL	--	Individual inclusion of immigrant representatives (1)	
TPO	---		Individual inclusion and mobilization (1)
MCO	--		Platforms Mobilizations of immigrant workers (3)
Lay organizations	Zonarelli Center (2) Promotion of intercultural activities (1)	Activities linked to raise awareness of immigrants' political rights (2)	
Immigrant organizations	Promotion of intercultural activities (3)		Immigrant associations linked to the radical left-wing organizations (1) Mobilizations for political reasons more in general (1)
CISL	CISL-ANOLF (1)		

In the remainder of this section, I will analyze the role of different actors in Bologna in shaping the local realm of immigration since the end of the 1990s and describe how they contributed to opening the channels of participation in the city in 2013.

5.2.1. The role of local administrations

Teresa C.: What do you think about Reggio Emilia and Bologna?
 Marco G.: Compared to Reggio Emilia, Bologna is Byzantine!¹⁶³

Comparing the role of Bologna’s local administration in the sphere of immigration in 2013 to Reggio Emilia’s, one of my key informants described Bologna as “Byzantine,” meaning that it was backward. In this section, I will explain why local authorities in Bologna were so far behind.

First of all, in contrast with Reggio Emilia, Bologna lacked political continuity at the level of local administrations as well as the presence of administrators with a particular interest in the subject of immigration. Table 5.3 shows that Bologna was governed by a left-wing majority between 1994 and 1999 and by a right-wing majority between 1999 and 2004. Then the city was governed by two different left-wing majorities from 2004 to 2014, with a political void between 2009 and 2010 caused by a corruption scandal.

TABLE 5.3.: Political orientation of the local administration in Bologna since the 1990s

Dates	1994-1999	1999-2004	2004-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2015
Political orientation	Center-Left	Center-Right	Center-Left	Center-Left	Prefectural commissionaire	Center-Left
Political Party	DS	PDL	DS and then PD	PD	---	PD
Mayor	Walter Vitali	Giorgio Guazzaloca	Sergio Cofferati	Flavio Delbono	Anna Maria Cancellieri	Virginio Merola

Between 1994 and 1999, Bologna was considered among the most inclusive cities in Italy (Però 2007). However, things changed in 1999, when a right-wing majority won the elections. From 2004 to 2011, the left-wing administrations were increasingly disinterested in the subject of integration. The increase in power of the Northern League and fear of the “electoral cost” (Caponio 2006a, 92) of promoting the rights of immigrants resulted in a shift of attention from integration policies to security measures. Finally, at the beginning of the 2010s, the financial crisis and the legacy of more than ten years of political disinterest left the new left-wing administration in Bologna unprepared to tackle the challenges of integration.

In the paragraphs below I present a quick reconstruction of the evolution of interventions in the realm of immigration by local administrations since the end of the

¹⁶³ Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014.

1990s. Throughout this period of change of political orientation at the local level, the political continuity of the left-wing parties at the provincial level represented an important factor in the promotion of initiatives of inclusion and political participation in the city of Bologna.

The left-wing administration from 1994 to 1999

The left-wing local administration guided by the Mayor Walter Vitali (1994-1999) encouraged inclusion by addressing all three key dimensions of the approaches to integration: assistance, intercultural and political rights promotion.¹⁶⁴ Caponio (2006a, 159) explains that the administration acted mainly at the level of social policies (particularly housing), focusing on “access to rights and citizenship, for those residents in Bologna who held regular documents” (2006a, 159). However, she adds that local authorities also worked for the production of a larger change toward “a multiethnic city in which conflicts and lacerations can be avoided” (2006a, 159). In this view, the administration showed a willingness to recognize cultural differences.¹⁶⁵ At the time, innovative courses for the formation of cultural mediators were organized, encouraging the collaboration of the administration with immigrants who participated in the courses (Adelina Y. Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). As Caponio explains (2006a, 160), there was also an emphasis on the importance of involving immigrants in the local institutions by supporting the participation of immigrant associations in the territory.

Finally, and Però has highlighted immigration was also seen as a possible resource of enrichment for the local community. He explains that the administration sought “to promote an image of serious engagement with the improvement of the conditions of immigrants on fronts that include recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity, the promotion of immigrants’ rights and the participatory management of migration” (2007, 60). He also points out that in order to guarantee pacific cohabitation, Vitali declared it was necessary to promote “the full involvement of the immigrants in the administrative decisions and the progressive affirmation of social, civil, and political rights of the new citizens” (Però 2007, 89).

¹⁶⁴ On an analysis of the management of housing between 1990 and 1999 see Bernadotti & Mottura (1999).

¹⁶⁵ By quoting the documents of the Municipality of Bologna, Però (2007, 59) also explains that the city presented itself as a protector of diversity: “The Council promotes the solidarity of the local community particularly towards the most disadvantaged strata of the population, also through the development of services. It appreciates the diverse cultures which coexist in the city” (see document Municipality of Bologna, Title I, Article 2).

In line with its inclusive discourse of interculturalism and political rights promotion, the left-wing administration of Bologna launched an experimental initiative in 1996 in order to foster participation of people of foreign origin: the ISI, or the Institute of Services for Immigrants (*Istituto Servizi Immigrazione*). The ISI was launched at the provincial level but very soon it became an instrument operating at the municipal level. It was an autonomous body, with its own council of administration, composed of a number of immigration experts and appointed by the mayor.¹⁶⁶ The administration assigned responsibility for social services to immigrants to ISI (Caponio 2003). The ISI offered some services—e.g. a helpdesk, legal counseling, healthcare, help finding jobs, and courses in literacy—as well as projects to help with access to housing.

During our interview in 2014, Marco G., the former director of the center and one of the main experts on immigration in Italy, explained that the explicit goal of the center was to move beyond a service-delivery approach and promote a political rights promotion approach in order “to create the conditions for a full social, economic, and cultural integration that would allow the effective participation of people of foreign origin in the democratic life of the local community” (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014).¹⁶⁷ The ISI was pivotal in the organization of the network of services in the city. It was within this network of services that it was possible to promote the participation of people of foreign origin in public life. In October 1997, through the ISI, the administration created a second organization in the city: the Metropolitan Forum of the Associations of Non-EU Countries of Bologna and its Province (*Forum Metropolitanamente delle associazioni dei cittadini non comunitari a Bologna e Provincia*, from now on the Metropolitan Forum) (Caponio 2006a, 195; Però 2002).¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶Però highlights that, through the ISI, the administration continued promoting its image of an open city: “Welcome to the multiethnic city... we do believe that differences (individual, social, cultural, ethnical) are great values and resources to society and that humankind becomes enriched rather than threatened by them” (Municipality of Bologna-ISI 1998, quoted in Però 2007, 59).

¹⁶⁷Mottura explained, “The ISI aimed [...] to move beyond the level of assistance through the promotion of the involvement of immigrants themselves and thus fight against the approach that creates dependence by those who are excluded from the decision-making processes. Our motto was expressed by Gandhi’s famous quote: “If someone does something for me, without me, he is doing it against me” (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). Marco G. added that the work of the ISI was facilitated by the openness of other institutions in the cities as well by the European Union’s financial support: “At that time there was a great openness by other institutions as well, like the police headquarters. We were also lucky because while all the money of the administration was spent to fill the holes of the welcoming centers, the project of the ISI was financed by Brussels” (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). See also Valeria Vivarelli. “È l’integrazione che fa il cittadino. L’integrazione dello straniero comincia con la sua partecipazione alla vita pubblica.” *Vita.it* January 09, 1998. <http://www.vita.it/societa/e-lintegrazione-che-fa-il-cittadino.html> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

¹⁶⁸Però (2007, 91) explains that the Metropolitan Forum was created thanks to a European project presented by the Municipality of Bologna in collaboration with other European cities.

At the beginning, the Metropolitan Forum was composed of 38 immigrant associations. During our interview, Marco G. told me that, “The Metropolitan Forum was thought of as a counterpart of the ISI, to support participation and the political maturation of immigrant associations independently from the ISI” (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). Donald R., an immigrant leader in the city who met with the Metropolitan Forum in 2000, became associated with it in 2002, and served as its president between 2005 and 2007, explained that the Council of Europe was trying to encourage local authorities to promote the participation of non-EU citizens and Bologna embarked on these initiatives. “The Forum was born with its own offices. These offices were within the offices of the municipal administration” (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013).¹⁶⁹

During my fieldwork in 2013 and 2014, the Metropolitan Forum was still working. However, my interviewees explained that it was now just a ghost of itself (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013). The Metropolitan Forum was born with some problems. Donald R. explained that the first problem was created from above rather than below (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013).¹⁷⁰ He also explained that, following a misguided understanding of ethnicity and belonging, the left-wing administration became very creative:

They said, “the associations can’t be of the same geographic area.” This is very interesting reasoning, because they defined these geographic areas...Africa, Orient, etc... Whatever criteria they chose, they forced people into cohabitation according to these criteria. There were seven main members, including the president (elected by the members) and other people in charge, and then the delegates, elected by their

¹⁶⁹ Donald R. pointed out that, “Together with other European cities, Bologna presented a project to promote a representative body of immigrants in the territory and won. The question was whether to elect the councilors or to create a collegial body of immigrants, a mini-parliament, of immigrant associations. The municipality opted for the latter. A federation of immigrant associations was created for this purpose” (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013).

¹⁷⁰ Donald R. made clear that, “One could participate in the Metropolitan Forum only as an association. One of the main problems was that the Metropolitan Forum was not born from below, from the need of immigrant associations to get together, but from above. The immigrant associations at the time were organized mainly on a national basis. There were the associations of people from Cameroon, China, Ghana... each country had its own. After a little bit, this system based on nations failed, because each group used to create three or four associations of the same nationality. Then conflicts started to emerge. The Forum was born with this anomaly. It was composed of around forty associations, with weird tasks. A federation of associations that have signed a statute. However, a weird statute, because it gives them a role of political representation. Associations are surely ‘representative,’ but they are mainly operative places to offer services to their associates” (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013).

associations. It was very complicated to coordinate all these entities together (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013).

In addition to the problems of bringing together the immigrant associations in the city, the main reason for the failure of the Metropolitan Forum according to my interviewees was the fact that main local left-wing actors were not willing to empower immigrants and created many obstacles to the empowerment of the Metropolitan Forum. Donald R. explained that, between 1997 and 2007, the associations of the Metropolitan Forum attempted to create trajectories of participation in the city by empowering themselves *vis-à-vis* other political actors in the city. He acknowledged the role of internal conflicts among associations in contributing to the failure of the Metropolitan Forum. However, he also spotlighted the critical role of left-wing actors in the city, including political parties and trade unions. The pressure of these actors contributed to the failure of the Metropolitan Forum. As Donald R. put it, these actors did not like the fact that immigrants were “becoming subjects able to talk for themselves” (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013).

Thanks to the support of the ISI, a third body was created in 1999 in support of the Forum: the Intercultural Center “Massimo Zonarelli” (from now on, the Zonarelli Center), created by a protocol of agreement with the Metropolitan Forum and the neighborhood San Donato (Caponio 2006a, 196). The Zonarelli Center was created to offer a space for immigrant associations that could support their initiatives in the city and encourage greater participation of immigrants in general. At the time of my fieldwork, the Zonarelli Center was still a very important institution in the city, working with the world of immigrant associations (see below).

To sum up, the left-wing administration led by Vitali showed an explicit interest in promoting the inclusion of immigrants in the city at the level of assistance, interculturalism and political rights promotion. The creation of the ISI together with the Metropolitan Forum stood out as particularly innovative in Italy. The creation of the Zonarelli Center was also crucial in the creation of a space for the associations to meet and thrive in the city. However, and as Però (2007) also observed during his research in the 1990s, my research confirmed that notwithstanding the proclaimed will to empower immigrant associations, there was a visible resistance by the main left-wing organizations (in particular left-wing political parties and the CGIL) to empower immigrant associations and allow their emergence as relevant political actors. As will be shown below, despite these criticisms, in

hindsight one can acknowledge that this was essentially the most open phase towards immigrant inclusion by local administrations in Bologna.

The right-wing administration from 1999 to 2004

Between 1999 and 2004 Bologna was governed by a right-wing administration (the People of Freedom) led by Mayor Giorgio Guazzaloca. This change came as a surprise in one of the main strongholds of the Italian Left (Barbagli 2000). Among the reasons highlighted by researchers for the change in political orientation, it appears that while in 1999, left-wing parties were not able to move beyond their internal conflicts and organize a coherent electoral campaign, the People of Freedom coalition led by Guazzaloca was able to appeal to some of the main fears of the citizens of Bologna, who were mainly concerned with issues of security (Caponio 2006a, 154-155).¹⁷¹

Caponio (2006a) explains that the change of the political orientation of the city represented a first step back for inclusion in general and interculturalism and political rights promotion in particular. During the electoral campaign of 1999, members of the right-wing parties emphasized the themes of security and the degradation of the city (Barbagli 2000; Caponio 2006a, 155). Additionally, they “defined immigration essentially as a question of public security” (Caponio 2006a, 155) and they increased hostilities towards immigration and immigrants in the city (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014).

The first visible sign of the opening of a new era on matters of immigration in the city was the closure of the ISI in the aftermath of the elections. During our interview, Marco G. explained that the new administration gave them six months to close the office, which was “the time needed to finish the projects we had already started” (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). He explained that he told the Guazzaloca administration that the office should have been kept open. “However, the mayor was unmovable. He answered that he had to give a political sign to the city” (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014).¹⁷² Thus, the ISI closed six months after the change in administrations and was replaced by the Immigration Service (*Servizio Immigrazione*),

¹⁷¹ For a reconstruction of this phase see Baldini & Legnante (2000). Caponio (2006a, 155) also observes that, at the time of the elections, two surveys showed that “security” was one of the main concerns of Italian citizens in Bologna. The first survey was conducted in March 1999 by Cattaneo Institute (Istituto Cattaneo) and the second one in June 2000 by Swg (see also Corbetta 2000, 111).

¹⁷² On the closure of the office see Magdi Allam, 1999. “Bologna, passo indietro sugli immigrati. La giunta Guazzaloca ha decretato la chiusura dell’ISI, l’Istituto che lavorava all’integrazione” *La Repubblica.it*, December 24, 1999. <http://www.repubblica.it/online/cronaca/bologna/immigra/immigra.html> (Accessed June 25, 2014).

which offered services to immigrants in the city, but did not promote participation by the ISI. Caponio (2006a, 194) points out that, during the period of Guazzaloca the interventions at the level of assistance continued to represent an important part of the local policies. However, she also notes that these were primarily continuations of the previous activities launched by the left-wing administration (Caponio 2006a, 194).¹⁷³ In general, the closure of the ISI represented a shift of attention toward an assistance approach. During our interview, Marco G. raised the point that the Assessor of Social Policies at the time (in charge of immigration), Pannutti, was not interested in the issue of integration and for five years “nothing was done to create new answers to the challenges of integration” (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). Initiatives to promote intercultural dialogue were also abandoned and there was a visible decline in terms of participation. As Donald R. explained, in addition to the closure of the ISI, the Metropolitan Forum was also significantly downsized. In 1999, the Metropolitan Forum was composed of more than 100 immigrant associations. However, over the years this number diminished in a remarkable way. What is more, what changed was their presence as relevant collective actors in the city. The right-wing administration sent the Metropolitan Forum to the Zonarelli Center where they had lower visibility (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013).

The left-wing administration from 2004 to 2009

In 2004, the Left came back to power under the guidance of Mayor Sergio Cofferati, the national secretary of the CGIL from 1994 to 2002. One of my interviewees, Francesca L., pointed out that, “After five years of the right-wing government, the new administration had to start from scratch” (Francesca L., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). Nonetheless, what was lacking the most was a real interest in promoting interventions towards greater inclusion. From the beginning of its mandate, the administration Cofferati showed concern about the electoral cost of addressing the issue of immigration in an open way, which resulted in the adoption of the discourses of security of the right-wing parties. This was an emerging phenomenon in Italy among left-wing cities, where at the beginning of the 2000s, a greater emphasis was put on the need for security over integration (Bellinvia 2013). The security turn of the left-wing administration of Bologna was answered by reactions of the civil society and grassroots movements against the dominant

¹⁷³It is also important to note that the left-wing government at the provincial level, led by Vittorio Prodi, in power between 2004 and 2009, took over some initiatives, introducing a help desk and filling some of the gaps left by the right-wing administration. In collaboration with the Emilia-Romagna region, it also created an Observatory against Discrimination.

focus on security in Bologna.¹⁷⁴ The phenomenon was so remarkable that a journalist of *La Repubblica* pointed out that the left-wing administration of Bologna was becoming a model for other left-wing cities, calling it the “Cofferati Effect.”¹⁷⁵

In 2013 and 2014, I interviewed an expert on immigration, Francesca L., who had worked for the administration when Cofferati was in power. She highlighted that “the administration was very closed and self-referential in many respects, and they showed a great disinterest in the issues of immigration” (Francesca L., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). As far as assistance was concerned, the Cofferati administration devolved most tasks to the third sector. In terms of intercultural dialogue, the administration took charge of the Zonarelli Center, which had been created in 1999. However, little planning was done to encourage intercultural dialogue in the city, particularly in key institutions such as schools. Finally, at the level of participation and political rights promotion, the Cofferati administration was silent (Francesca L., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). Francesca L. also told me that it was in order to bypass the stalemate of the left-wing municipal administration that the provincial government of Bologna, guided by Vittorio Prodi, created the Council of Foreign Citizens and Stateless People in the Province of Bologna (*Consiglio dei cittadini stranieri e apolidi della Provincia di Bologna*) in 2007.

The Council was a consultative body composed of 30 councilors, elected by immigrants resident in the city. It was believed that this consultative body was going to be more representative and more democratic. The idea was that every five years, at each provincial election, immigrants would vote for the representatives of their Council. At the time of the first elections in 2007, out of about 43,000 non-EU immigrants officially resident in the province who could vote, only 9,200 (about 21%) went to the polls. In the electoral competition there were 32 lists and 275 candidates. According to the official statute, the Council “can express points of view and give advice on all the subjects of

¹⁷⁴ See for instance the mobilization by the three main organizations of the radical Left in the city: Ya Basta! Bologna, the Social Center TPO, and Passpartout. “Immigrazione e casa: La ricotta di Cofferati. Comunicato stampa e foto di Ya Basta! TPO and Passpartout” *Meltingpot.org* March 21, 2005. <http://www.meltingpot.org/Immigrazione-e-casa-la-ricotta-di-Cofferati.html#.VM-uCcY5D0p> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

¹⁷⁵ See Enrico Bonerandi. “Effetto Cofferati, sindaci di sinistra più ‘sceriffi’.” *Bologna Repubblica.it*, July 9, 2007. <http://bologna.repubblica.it/dettaglio/effetto-cofferati-sindaci-di-sinistra-piu-sceriffi/1337067> (Accessed June 15, 2015). The journalist Bonerandi pointed out that, following the example of Cofferati, many other left-wing mayors in Italy were becoming “more sheriffs.” At the beginning of the 2000s, the term “sheriff” became popular in Italy and it was used to talk about the local administrators of the Northern League who were particularly tough towards immigrants and other vulnerable groups such as the Roma (see Chapter 2).

competence of the provincial council. The propositions are obligatory on issues linked to the balance sheet and all the expenses concerning policies for foreigners.”¹⁷⁶

My interviewees in the city of Bologna highlighted the strengths and limitations of the Council. They all acknowledged that it was one of the most advanced and democratic of the consultative bodies in Italy. From this point of view, it was seen as an opportunity for immigrants resident in the city to be represented at the provincial council. It was also an opportunity for those who were elected to get visibility and promote the interests of the immigrant communities they were supposed to represent. Irene A. (Philippines), one of the councilors of the Council, explained that for her it also an opportunity to gain some experience. However, most interviewees, both Italians and immigrants, were also very critical of this body. They explained that one problem was that the Council encouraged the affiliation to ethnic groups (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). Instead of being an organization that represented migrants in the city as a whole, it was considered by some of my interviewees as a body in which one voted for one’s own compatriots in order to obtain privileges (Irene A., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013).

Additionally, all the interviewees highlighted that Council faced the same main problems as the Metropolitan Forum: it was never empowered and the immigrant community was never given voice. Irene A., for instance, stated that she had never believed that the Council was going to make any difference in the city. As proof of its uselessness, she said that many had left the Council (Irene A., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013). I asked her if she was also disappointed, and she answered, “Yes, because we have not achieved any result: the province created the Council and left us on our own” (Irene A., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013). Irene A. continued:

Immigrants were supposed to vote every 5 years, together with the administrative elections. In reality, at the end of the mandate in 2012, the elections were not done again. The administration wants to keep it alive because it does not want to admit that it has been a failure. The truth is that the Council is useless. (Irene A., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013).¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ See the official document: “Delibera di Consiglio Provinciale di Bologna n. 39/2007 di approvazione del Regolamento del Consiglio degli stranieri” <http://www.cittametropolitana.bo.it/storia/Engine/RAServePG.php/P/258411410405/T/Consiglio-dei-cittadini-stranieri-e-apolidi-della-Provincia-di-Bologna> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

¹⁷⁷ During our interview, Marco G., explained: “On paper, it is an outstanding body. It is one of the most advanced consultative bodies made by the local authorities in Italy. It was also based on past experiences. It was done by trying to avoid the past errors. However, what was lacking was the people able to make it work. The real problem is that it was never conceived as a political organization as an instrument of negotiation

Most of my interviewees explained that the problem was that the Provincial Forum had not been really empowered. Donald R. highlighted:

The path of the Provincial Council for foreign people was not an easy one. Every organization (the administration, the CGIL, the CISL) wanted to place its own representative of foreign origin. There was little space for freedom of expression and for immigrants' autonomy and self-determination. The Council has remained the kind of body the administration wanted it to be. The administration wanted a steered council, rather than an autonomous one. Today the Council is a ghost of itself. The administration keeps it as a symbol. The budget is derisory. If one does not work to fulfill the aims of the administration, then no one really cares (Donald R. Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013).¹⁷⁸

To sum up, the left-wing administration between 2004 and 2009 appropriated the discourses of the right-wing parties and put the accent on security rather than inclusion. Thus, no consistent investment was made in the direction of interculturalism and political rights promotion. In 2007, the province of Bologna did create the Provincial Council to promote the political participation of immigrants in the province. However, there was no real initiative to empower the Council, which until 2013 was a façade rather than a body able to advance immigrants' interests and needs in the city.

After the Metropolitan Forum, the Council was the second and last initiative by local authorities in the direction of political rights promotion and the promotion of participation through consultative bodies. During my fieldwork in 2013, the Council, like the

between (1) the different national components through their associations and (2) the executives of the consultative body and the executive of the province" (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014).

¹⁷⁸ Alessandro F., the director of the Center Zanorelli, was even more critical of the Council, emphasizing the role of social control. He told me, "The Consultative Bodies have clearly a role of social control [of the immigrant community]. As you might know, they are based on communities and associations. It is the paradigmatic example of a form of social control applied by the local administration of Bologna. The idea of the Council of Foreign Citizens of the Province of Bologna was to compensate for a right that does not exist. Participation through vote is precluded to immigrants. The representatives of the Council were elected, which made it more representative than those bodies in which the representatives are appointed by the local authorities. However, the elections themselves were full of contradictions. People were grouped by ethnic origin or politico-geographic areas. This distinction does not work because it does not correspond to social dynamics. If we want to offer representation—whatever it means! —we should keep in mind the reality of things" (Alessandro F., Interview in Bologna, 5 May 2013).

Metropolitan Forum, was still in place (see Table 5.1.), but its future was unclear (Irene A., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013).¹⁷⁹

The left-wing administration from 2011 to 2015

In 2009, the newly elected mayor of Bologna, Flavio Delbono, was found guilty of a corruption scandal and the city experienced a political void of two years. In 2011, a new elected left-wing administration guided by Virginio Merola came to power. Fresa, one of my interviewees who worked for the administrations of Bologna since the Cofferati administration (2004-2009), explained that the new left-wing administration showed a greater interest towards integration than the previous one, especially because of the young age of the executive members. However, she also expressed regret that “too many years were lost by then” (Francesca L., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). She added that the administration was willing to support the world of the volunteer organizations, and thus also immigrant associations. However, she explained that this was more out of necessity than a will to create greater inclusion. She explained: “With the great lack of money, the administration has no other choice but to open up to the city” (Francesca L., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). However, there was no political will to coordinate the initiatives of the third sector, and processes of devolution rather than cooperation were in place (Francesca L., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). Thus, during the most recent administration, the city of Bologna has experienced increasing processes of devolution to the third sector. As far as intercultural dialogue was concerned, the administration was doing very little. Roberta A., the person in charge of the Office of Foreign Workers of the CGIL, told me:

In this respect, I would say that things have never been done. The truth is that when it comes to integration, planning is what is lacking the most. At the beginning no one really understood that there was a need for planning in the city. They thought that it was not

¹⁷⁹ It is also important to note that, in 2004, with the creation of the Regional Law on integration, the Emilia-Romagna region also introduced the Regional Consultative Body for the Social Integration of the Foreign Citizens (*Consulta Regionale per l'integrazione sociale dei cittadini stranieri*). The goal of this Consultative Body was to coordinate events related to immigration by putting together all the regional actors involved in the field of immigration (including third-sector organizations and trade unions). The body also included eighteen appointed representatives of the immigrant communities. For this reason, it was considered an opportunity to establish closer relationships between the region and the immigrant communities. See the Law 5/2004 at the following page: <http://sociale.regione.emilia-romagna.it/immigrati-e-stranieri/temi/norme/legge-5-2004> (Accessed June 15, 2015). See also the page on the consultative body: <http://sociale.regione.emilia-romagna.it/immigrati-e-stranieri/temi/consulta-regionale-per-l2019integrazione-sociale-dei-cittadini-stranieri> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

necessary. In the last ten years the population has grown exponentially, but at the beginning integration would happen spontaneously. Cultural mediators were present and they are still there. The problem is that there has been a great cut in resources. This is not only true for immigrants, but for all the vulnerable groups (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013).

Concluding remarks on the local administrations

In the introduction of this section, I quoted one of my interviewees who suggested that, compared to Reggio Emilia, the city Bologna was “Byzantine.” In the past fifteen years, the interventionist administrative style of the administration in Bologna has been being progressively replaced by a laissez-faire style. After a first attempt by the left-wing administration that governed the city between 1994 and 1999 to promote integration by combining assistance, intercultural and political rights promotion approaches, things did not evolve in the direction of improving these approaches. After the disinterest in the area of immigration by the right-wing administration (1999-2004), a security-focused left-wing administration (2004-2009), and a political void of two years (2010-2011) due to a corruption scandal, there were very few initiatives promoted by the local administration in the area of immigration in general and in the area of participation in particular.

The left-wing administration in power since 2011 has seemed more interested in these subjects. Even though it did not get involved directly, it has supported the bottom-up initiatives promoted by the third-sector organizations. However, the absence of previous structured interventions and the increasing downsizing of resources have left many of my interviewees skeptical about the administration’s ability to address the major challenges of integration ahead. The administration has opted for a laissez-faire administrative style and little coordination of the third sector. In this general context, very few things have been done in the direction of assistance, interculturalism and political rights promotion. Most of the structures that existed, such as the Metropolitan Forum, the Provincial Council and the Zonarelli Center were created by other local actors in the past. What is more, except for the Zonarelli Center, which has been able to develop its activities autonomously (see below), the other two organizations had very little relevance in the city. In contrast with the work done in Reggio Emilia, one can observe that local authorities did not make the necessary efforts to include people of migrant background in the administration. One cultural mediator in the city of Bologna, Adelina Y. (from Albania) made this fundamental point: “What is impressive in the city is that there are more than 17% of immigrants. Yet, there is

no representation in the local administration. We work in the third sector but we are a separate entity from the administration and there is no will to create solid collaboration” (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014).

5.2.2. The role of the third-sector organizations

The literature tells us that in a territory with a “red” political culture one should expect a close and cooperative relationship between the local administrations and the third sector, and also a strong presence of lay organizations with a densely developed network (Campomori 2008). As in Reggio Emilia, in accordance with the “red” political culture, the administrations in Bologna have historically assumed the role of coordination of the third sector and trajectories of collaboration have been developed. In the 1990s and the early 2000s, a remarkable aspect of the third-sector organizations involved in the area of immigration in the city of Bologna was a certain degree of collaboration with the local administration and an interconnection with each other (Caponio 2006a). However, as I noted in the section above, in the 2000s the administration’s interest in integration policies diminished consistently and processes of devolution replaced coordination and collaboration strategies. Most of my interviewees in Bologna lamented this fact and highlighted that the consequence of this process of devolution was that, even though there was still an extremely rich volunteer sector, the network in Bologna was less organized than it could have been with the intervention and coordination of the administration, leaving some gaps that could not be overcome easily (Francesca L., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014). Moreover, the shrinking of resources was creating problems for the third-sector organizations, because it was more difficult to develop projects and respond to the increasing vulnerability of Italians and immigrants caused by the financial crisis. Notwithstanding these limitations, in recent years the networks of the third sector in Bologna were still a key element in the local realm of migration, and to a certain point were able to compensate for the lacunae left by the local administrations and promote social participation of people of Italian and foreign origin.¹⁸⁰

As in Reggio Emilia, the third sector is mainly represented by lay organizations. There are also a few Catholic associations and parishes active in the territory. However, as

¹⁸⁰ This was the case, at least, before the financial crisis that started in 2008.

Caponio (2006a, 133) highlights, in Bologna the diocese does not play a strong role, and the majority of initiatives are confined to the parishes or small groups of volunteers.¹⁸¹

Third-sector organizations play a crucial role in the direction of assistance, interculturalism and political rights promotion. Through a survey of the different websites of the municipality and the province of Bologna focusing on the volunteer sector, one can observe a wide range of pages dedicated to the area of immigration. In the official page of the municipality of Bologna, *World of Associations in the Realm of Themes linked to Immigration (Associazione nell'ambito delle tematiche legate all'immigrazione)*, one can read: “There are many organizations of the third sector that work in the sphere of immigration: many of these organizations are directly promoted by immigrants and others are organizations already active in the city in other domains. The realms in which these organizations intervene are: defense of rights, interculturalism, activities of socio-sanitary assistance, etc.” Additionally, the site refers to two types of associations: the *associations of immigrants*—that is, associations composed of immigrants— and *associations for immigrants*—that is, Italian associations which work on immigration—. In the official site, there are 112 associations *of* immigrants present on the list, 75 in the city of Bologna and the rest in the province. Among the 42 associations *for* immigrants, 33 are in the city and the others are in the province.¹⁸²

During my fieldwork I was also able to observe that, unlike any other city I was studying, the city of Bologna allowed the creation of both formal and informal types of collaboration among organizations, and important overlaps between people participating in these organizations could be observed. It is also important that the nature of the third sector

¹⁸¹ For a description of the first phase of immigration and the role of the Church in Bologna in the 1980s and 1990s, see Caponio 2006a, 134-137. My interviewees in Bologna observed that, like in Reggio Emilia, Caritas in Bologna offers services to immigrants through the Center of Listening (*Centro di Ascolto*). Also, it works in collaboration with the parishes in the city and with other organizations (including trade unions) to offer services. However, it does not expose itself politically on the issue of immigration. For instance, it did not join the campaign “Italy is me, too!” (Veronica P., Interview in Bologna, 4 June 2013).

¹⁸² For a list of the associations working at the provincial level see: <http://www.cittametropolitana.bo.it/sanitasociale/Engine/RAServePG.php/P/256611180706/T/Le-associazioni> (Accessed June 15, 2015). For a list of the associations working at the municipal level see the page “Associations” of the official site of the the Zonarelli Center: http://zonagidue.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=144&Itemid=61 (Accessed June 15, 2015). See also the page: <http://informa.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/sportellosociale/servizi/2709/2689> (Accessed June 15, 2015). For more detail see the official report by the province of Bologna, 2011. “L’associazionismo degli immigrati a Bologna: tra identità e integrazione?” http://www.cittametropolitana.bo.it/sanitasociale/Engine/RAServeFile.php/f/Documenti/Report_ricerca_associazioni3.pdf (Accessed June 15, 2015). On the associations that promote cooperation and development and that are concerned with immigration, social marginalization and education, see the page of the volunteer sector of the municipality of Bologna: <http://www.flashgiovani.it/volontariato/associazioni/pagina/331> (Accessed June 15, 2015). It includes about 23 associations.

in Bologna encourages the creation of mixed associations, which makes it harder to distinguish clearly between Italian and immigrant associations.

An important example of how different third-sector organizations promote a bottom-up approach and collaborate with each other in the sphere of immigration is the project *Amitié*, launched by the employees of the municipality of Bologna during the political void that took place between 2009 and 2011. The project *Amitié* represents an example of good practices from below, in the absence of consistent intervention by the local administration. Since 2011, the new left-wing administration in power led by Mayor Merola has taken charge of the project. In the official site of *Amitié* of Bologna, one can read that the project aims to raise “Awareness on Migration, Development and Human Rights through local partnerships.” The project was done in collaboration with other European cities.¹⁸³ One can also read that

Amitié is a project [...] that wants to create new spaces of communication, encounter and exchange about migration, development and human rights through research, educational programs, communication and local participation.¹⁸⁴

During our interview, Francesca L., an employee of the local administration and one of the main promoters of the project, explained,

Amitié is a European project of cooperation and development. It was launched in March 2011 and ended in May 2013 with the involvement of Italian and foreign citizens, including immigrant associations. The goal was to better communicate what we used to do in the domain of immigration and cooperation. We thought that coordination was necessary: because work in this direction was never done at the political level, we decided to do it at the technical level (Francesca L., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014).

The project *Amitié* was able to involve a great number of people of migrant background and immigrant associations active in the city, including *Universe* (see below) and groups of young people associated with the radical left-wing organization of MCO, or On the Move (see below). *Amitié* involved the youth group On the Move in the workshops

¹⁸³ See the link of the Municipality of Bologna <http://www.comune.bologna.it/amitie/> (Accessed June 15, 2015) and the official European site: <http://amitie-community.eu/> (Accessed June 15, 2015)

¹⁸⁴ See official site: <http://www.comune.bologna.it/amitie/> (Accessed June 15, 2015)

they organized in the schools of Bologna to sensitize students and professors (Farid M., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2013). In the official site one can read that, with other associations, Amitié organized campaigns of sensitization and various activities to raise awareness, including projections of movies and a human rights festival. It also created visual material in collaboration with other cities involved in the project, including a documentary titled “This is my story,” which tells the stories of many immigrants residing in European cities and the challenges they have to face.

In addition to Amitié, it is important to mention two major “immigrant” associations as examples of the work done by the third sector in the area of immigration: *AMISS*, Association of Intercultural Mediators for Social and Health Services (*Associazione Mediatrici Interculturali Sociali e Sanitari*) and the Association Universe (*Associazione Universo*). AMISS was founded in 1999 by women intercultural mediators of different immigrant origins in Bologna. The president Adelina Y. explained that the organization responded to the need for well-prepared intercultural mediations for women in the hospitals (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014).¹⁸⁵ Later on, AMISS developed its activities in other spheres, such as schools and prisons. The association is now composed of 160 women and a few men. Later, the association founded a cooperative of 18 associates in order to distinguish work from volunteer activity. AMISS is mainly self-financed and participates in European projects. In 2013, because of the shrinking of funding at the municipal level, most of its efforts were dedicated to finding money to support the cooperative (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014).

Adelina Y. explained the attempts by AMISS to encourage an intercultural approach in the city. Since the creation of AMISS, she explained that its members said, “that mediation does not mean translation, but cultural mediation” (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). In addition to cultural mediation, the association gets involved in other projects throughout the city including preventive healthcare for women, cooking courses, and care for old people and children. Finally, AMISS promotes political activities by working to fight against institutional discrimination at the local level with the collaboration of other actors. I asked Adelina Y. about AMISS’s relationships with other actors in the city. She explained that AMISS “collaborates with everyone: the institutions (region, province, municipality), the third sector, including immigrant associations of the

¹⁸⁵See the official site of the organization: <http://amissbologna.org/> (Accessed June 15, 2015) and also the site of the Region Emilia-Romagna: http://www.informafamiglie.it/emiliaromagna/bologna/famiglia-e-associazioni/associazioni-per-famiglie-straniere/amiss-associazione-mediatrici-interculturali-sociali-e-sanitarie/user_view (Accessed June 15, 2015)

city” (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). She also explained that most of the initiatives with other immigrant associations were done in an informal way: “We contact immigrant associations directly, without the help of institutions” (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014).¹⁸⁶

The Association Universe (*Associazione Universo*, from now on Universe) was founded in 1998 by Lionel F. (originally from Cameroon).¹⁸⁷ Lionel F. explained that at first the idea was to support immigrants’ inclusion in the local community, by helping them find houses and jobs and teaching Italian. The association helps both Italians and people of foreign origin who are in need. At the beginning the association was self-financed. Then from 2000 it won funding from the municipality for specific projects and, in more recent years, has been mostly financed by private organizations.

In addition to offering assistance, Universe wanted to promote intercultural exchanges and encourage “active citizenship” and participation through various activities in the city (Lionel F., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). Lionel F. explained:

At the moment we are working on the recuperation of a park that was abandoned. This is also an occasion for us to present the person of foreign origin as someone who collaborates in the growth of the city. We collaborate with the administration to do that. We decide the place and the municipality approves the place and the project. We have 40 volunteers and more than 100 people enrolled.

Lionel F. added that the organization also promotes “political participation, through cultural activities, participation in the demonstrations, and solicitation of the local authorities.” In general, the association is open to all initiatives that can encourage the “promotion of human rights” (Lionel F., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). Lionel F. also explained that the association participates in the demonstrations organized by the radical Left (in particular the MCO) and other associations at the local level. He explained that Universe was recognized by other associations in the city and that it was active in many channels (including the Metropolitan Forum when Donald R. was its president between 2002 and 2007). Universe also participated in the elaboration of the project of the

¹⁸⁶ Adelina Y. explained that this was the case, for instance, with the Multiethnic Feast of the Peoples, a feast that AMISS had been organizing every year since 2010. “It is not about an exchange of different cultures, but an occasion for people of foreign origin to come out and become visible. In the last two years [June 2013 and June 2014], more than 3,000 people were present. There were more than 32 associations of people of foreign origin and 15 Italian associations” (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014).

¹⁸⁷ See the official site of the association: <http://www.universointerculturale.it> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

Provincial Council in 2007. AMISS and Universe are two useful examples of the role of third-sector organizations in shaping the local realm of migration in three directions: assistance, intercultural and political rights promotion approaches. Together with other organizations in the city, the investment of these organizations in the direction of interculturalism and political rights promotion results in the opening of the channels of participation for people of migrant background in the city.

The description of the third sector would be incomplete without a description of the crucial role of the Zonarelli Center for the promotion of itineraries of participation through the support of an intercultural approach. In the official site of the municipality of Bologna, the Zonarelli Center is presented as a key organization for the promotion of participation in the territory of Bologna, which offers associations spaces to meet and develop activities.¹⁸⁸ Created in 1998 by the left-wing provincial administration (a few months after the creation of the Metropolitan Forum), in 2007 the Zonarelli Center was managed by the municipality of Bologna's Division of Social Services. In 2013, the center hosted around 120 immigrant associations.¹⁸⁹ On the official site, one can read that the Zonarelli Center promotes itineraries of exchange and valorization of diversity through various activities, including training and workshops in languages of different countries, celebrations of festivities, public demonstrations and debates, and institutional activities. On the official site of the municipality, one can read that the Center:

[...] is the historical place where Italians and immigrants can meet. Its actions aim to support, promote and multiply the opportunities of encounter, reciprocal knowledge, exchange and intercultural dialogue. [...] The Center is a space to express, act and build the mosaic of individual and collective identities.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸See the official site of the municipality: <http://comune.bologna.it/sportellosociale/servizi/2709/45973/> (Accessed June 15, 2015). See also the official site of the Center Zonarelli (<http://zonagidue.it/>) and their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/zonapagina>), which is the most frequently updated page, to find the main activities promoted by the associations of the Center. The director Alessandro F. is in charge of the Facebook page.

¹⁸⁹ The associations that belong to the center are divided as follows: 1) associations created in the second half of the 1990s (49%); 2) associations interested in the promotion of relationship between the homeland and Italy, usually older than the first ones (15%); 3) associations interested in the promotion of the intercultural dialogue (15%); and 4) new associations interested in the cultural or artistic promotion of the intercultural dialogue (21%) <http://www.comune.bologna.it/sportellosociale/servizi/2709/45973/> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

¹⁹⁰ See page: <http://www.comune.bologna.it/sportellosociale/servizi/2709/45973/> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

During our interview, I asked the director of the Center Zonarelli, Alessandro F., to further explain the approach of the Center and its contribution to the support of participation from below in the city:

We [in the Center] consider “citizenship” as a social process. We believe that we need to invest in cultural resources [...]. It is about a change of perception: we want to show that immigration is not a problem but a resource. We should convey this idea adequately and give information in an honest way [...] (Alessandro F., Interview in Bologna, 5 May 2013).¹⁹¹

Alessandro F. was very critical of the reliance over the years by politicians on a false idea of immigrant associations as representative of the immigrant communities. He explained that politics was disconnected from reality and that the local authorities of Bologna, through the creation of consultative bodies, had created “representation without a mandate and thus without legitimation from below” (Alessandro F., Interview in Bologna, 30 May 2013).

It is very hard to work today for integration, precisely because for twenty years politics has done everything but favor processes of integration. There is a discrepancy between the practices of citizenship and politics. This is a huge problem because this situation does not make it possible to deal with the processes of integration in the right way (Alessandro F., Interview in Bologna, 5 May 2013).

In order to promote the intercultural approach of the center, Alessandro F. promoted the realization of two documentaries with the collaboration of the Emilia-Romagna region and other partners: “Citizenship” in 2009 and “Beyond Islam’s door” (*Oltre le Porte dell'Islam*) in 2013. While the first documentary aimed to stimulate reflection on active citizenship and the meaning of belonging for people of migrant background in Bologna, the second tried to encourage an understanding of the plural reality of the Muslim presence in the territory of Bologna.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹In the section “values,” one can read that the Zonarelli Center follows the definition of “the Universal Declaration of the UNESCO on the Cultural Diversity.” The Center acknowledges that “cultural diversity is a patrimony of the collectivity, a democratic value and a factor of social, civil and cultural development” http://zonagidue.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=181&Itemid=74 (Accessed June 15, 2015).

¹⁹² See Municipality of Bologna. 2009. *Citizenship*. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvOtp7dNV_Q (Accessed June 15, 2015) and the official site: *Beyond Islam’s door*

During my fieldwork, I asked my immigrant interviewees how they viewed the role of the Zonarelli Center in the city. All of my interviewees who were active in the world of associations told me that they had close relations with the center and that they considered it a great opportunity to promote the activities of their associations. Most importantly, the Center was considered by all my interviewees a place to meet with other organizations, enlarge their networks and create initiatives together. The space also offered the opportunity to reach out to other people and involve people of migrant background who otherwise would not get involved.

A remarkable example of this positive role of the Zonarelli Center in the city was given to me by Yana L., a woman from the Ukraine. In 2010, Yana L. created an association called Association Italy-Ukraine Bologna (*Associazione Italia-Ucraina Bologna*). She created the association to help women caregivers from her country. She acknowledged that the Association Italy-Ukraine Bologna helped the women to open up socially, and in only three years the membership grew from 20 to 300, of which 120 women were very active. She added that the organization planned activities to invite the women from Ukraine to come out of their houses “in which they are too often isolated and become depressed.” One year after the creation of the Association Italy-Ukraine Bologna, Italian young people joined the association to learn about Ukrainian culture and to take classes on cooking, singing and Russian language (Yana L., Interview in Bologna, 3 April 2013). Yana L. explained that without the Zonarelli Center, her association could not have evolved the way it did. The Center offered a space in which cultural exchanges were possible and diversity was valorized. She told me, “At the Zonarelli Center one is encouraged to go towards others and to establish new friendships. We organize events in which we include other associations. There is no hate or fear of other peoples.” Additionally, the Center encouraged the participation of people who otherwise would not have gotten involved (Yana L., Interview in Bologna, 3 April 2013).

To sum up, in the city of Bologna, the third sector represents a significant opportunity to develop itineraries of participation from below by Italians and immigrants active in the local realm of immigration. What is more, the world of immigrant associations is particularly developed. Overall, it both offers assistance and encourages the intercultural dialogue and itinerary of participation from below. In this context, the

Zonarelli Center is critical as a meeting place and site for mutual exchange. The network of associations makes it possible to rely on previous itineraries and build on existing formal and informal networks through collaborations on projects and initiatives.

It is also important to note that immigrant associations in the city face some challenges. First of all, though they acknowledged that local authorities did not discourage the initiatives of the third sector, at the same time they criticized the administrations for ongoing processes of devolution. They argued that bottom-up processes without the support of top-down approaches created holes in the network and also made the initiatives more difficult to identify. Second, people of migrant background active in the world of associations highlighted the “disinterest in the subject of integration” by local authorities (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). Adelina Y., for instance, made two main points. The first was about the spaces in the city. According to her, the Zonarelli Center was “a good thing, but not enough. It is good for the associations, but no one goes to the Center to sit there and read about interculturalism” (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). A second point highlighted by Adelina Y. to emphasize the disinterest of local authorities was the difficulty immigrant organizations faced in creating a place in the city. She used the example of the difficulties of her organization, AMISS:

Regrettably, the association has never had a real institutional recognition. It took us more than eleven years just to become formalized. In 1999 we created the group. Between 2003 and 2004 we were finally able to have a final draft of the statutes. In 2005 the Emilia-Romagna region approved it, and in 2010 the province accepted it. Eleven years to give a meaning to our trajectory. The truth is that there is a disinterest in the subject (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014).

According to Adelina Y., the slowness of the formalization of her organization was an example of the general disinterest of local institutions in the greater inclusion of immigrant associations: “It was not a priority before and it is not a priority today” (Adelina Y., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014).

In Section 5.3.1, I will return to the world of associations to present few individual trajectories that exemplify how people of migrant background active in the city have found a way to speak for themselves and create trajectories of participation from below through these networks. I will also explain some of the difficulties facing immigrant associations in the city.

5.2.3. The role of the traditional “red” trade union: the CGIL

Given the ideological and historical context of Bologna, the CGIL is the most powerful trade union in the city and has great influence. In 2013, the total number of people enrolled in the CGIL of the province of Bologna was around 172,000, of which 75,377 were active workers and 11,551 were immigrants. Immigrants in the organization represented 15.3 percent of the active workers.¹⁹³ At the time the number of workers enrolled in the second main union, the CISL, was around 43,000.¹⁹⁴ The CGIL is also strongly linked with politics in the city. An example of this link is that the left-wing administration that governed Bologna between 2004 and 2009 was led by Mayor Cofferati, the National Secretary of the CGIL from 1994 to 2002. This fact suggests that the trade union is not independent from the politics of the city. In the 1980s and 1990s, the CGIL did very important work welcoming immigrants, playing a major role as a manager of integration in the territory of Bologna. In order to answer to the needs of immigrant workers, in 1989, the CGIL of Bologna opened the Center for Foreign Workers (*Centro Lavoratori Stranieri*) to give information and offer assistance to immigrant workers (Cozzi & Mottura 2010).

In 2013, on the official page of the Center for Foreign Workers, one could read about the commitment by the CGIL in the city to offer services. On the page of the CGIL of Bologna dedicated to the Center for Foreign Workers of Bologna, one can read that the Center offers “a first place of welcome, showing foreigners how to exercise their rights, and how to access information on issues related to citizenship, visas, permits of stay, family reunification and Italian language courses.” Finally, with the CIR, or the Italian Council of Refugees (*Consiglio Italiano Rifugiati*), the CGIL of Bologna offers help for the applications of asylum seekers.

One can observe the political position of the CGIL and its open contrast to the Bossi-Fini Law and the Security Package:

The Center for Foreign Workers is the place in the CGIL where foreigners can go to exercise their civil, social and labor rights. The Center lobbies the government in favor of better integration policies and asks for equal rights and equal dignity for all, starting with

¹⁹³ See documents of the conference “Lavoro, Diritti and rappresentanza: gli impegni della CGIL Emilia-Romagna nella conferenza regionale sull’immigrazione,” quoted above.

¹⁹⁴ I could not find the number of immigrants enrolled in the CISL in any official site or document.

the abolition of the Bossi-Fini Law and the Security Package (Center for Foreign Workers).¹⁹⁵

In order to carry out its activities, the CGIL creates networks with other organizations in the city both at the level of services and at the level of advocacy and political rights promotion. The person in charge of the Center for Foreign Workers since 2010, Roberta A., explained that as far as delivery of services is concerned, “the CGIL works closely with Caritas and Lawyers of the Streets.... We want to make sure that no one is left behind” (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013).¹⁹⁶ Roberta A. also highlighted that, “unfortunately, because of the financial crisis, Bologna has been regressing in terms of welcoming. The problem is that we would need three times more resources” (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013).¹⁹⁷

As far as advocacy is concerned, the CGIL offers legal services and is particularly involved in the struggle against the detention center of Bologna, the CIE, the Center of Identification and Expulsion (*Centro d’Identificazione and Espulsione*).¹⁹⁸ For this purpose, it collaborates with the Social Center TPO and the association Ya Basta! Bologna (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013). I asked Roberta A. about the level of representation of immigrants in the organization. She answered:

We have eight people [of immigrant background] working for the organization. In the office there are two people. The FILLEA [construction sector] has two functionaries, one from Albania and one from Morocco; the Fiom [metalworkers] has one functionary from Morocco; the FILCAMS [service sector] does not have functionaries anymore, but it has many delegates. In the Center for Foreign Workers, there are three volunteers: a Moroccan person, another from Albania [Patronage Inca] and another from Pakistan (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013).

¹⁹⁵ See official page of the Center: <http://www.cgilbo.it/centro-lavoratori-stranieri> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

¹⁹⁶ For the association Lawyers of the Streets, see the site: <http://www.avvocatodistrada.it/chi-siamo/> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

¹⁹⁷ Roberta A. noted: “In Bologna it is very hard to see people under international protection on the streets. There are many associations that work for a minimum of dignity. On the issue of welcoming, Bologna has made many steps backward. If you consider that the needs are growing and that the resources are diminishing you understand that the problem is enormous and that no one is thinking about integration anymore” (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013).

¹⁹⁸ See the document in the official site of the CGIL of Bologna: “Il Cie Bologna deve chiudere: Comunicato stampa CGIL e FP” <http://www.cgilbo.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/268> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

The immigrant workers' representation in the organization was better than in many other territories of Italy, but Roberta A. admitted that it was "still too low" (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013). She admitted that the CGIL was not able to give enough space to immigrants' voices: "In some sectors of the CGIL the immigrant enrollment is between 20 and 35 percent. If you look at the level of representation you will see that it is extremely low. They have to have voice and space!" (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013). She added, "It is an unbearable gap that the CGIL Emilia-Romagna [...] intends to deal with this by making adequate choices at the political level, by investing in new policies and assuming the multiethnic character of its own organization" (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013).

At this point, while talking about participation and drawing comparisons between the approaches of the CGIL and the radical left organization, the MCO, Roberta A. admitted that the MCO was right on at least two points. First, it was right about the fact that the CGIL continued to consider immigration as a marginal phenomenon: "The error of the CGIL is that the organization still considers the theme of immigration as a marginal one. We have great inattention with respect to this issue. The theme of immigration is still considered a problem of the Center for Foreign Workers of the CGIL" (Roberta A. Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013). Corrado G. of the MCO expressed similar concerns:

At the assemblies that the trade unions organize today concerning the theme of immigration, they say the same things they used to say ten years ago. Ten years ago, actually, they used to be more critical than today (Corrado G., Interview in Bologna, 19 July 2013).

Second, Roberta A. acknowledged that the CGIL failed to protect some sectors of workers, in particular the logistics sector:

There is a lack of attention by the organization to the question of representation. The FIOM has the most solid structure. Certainly, they pay great attention to the domain of migration and participation of immigrants. On the contrary, the situation at the FILT, the category of transports and logistics, got out of hand. There are many immigrants in the sector and the CGIL has underestimated the situation. The work has not diminished in this sector, but it has diminished in prestige. They are very low paid jobs. The grassroots unions have started working in this sector. They have done what every union

should do. If I don't have the minimum of rights, as a unionist I am not doing my job. In that sector, grassroots unions have intervened and have improved the conditions of those workers (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013).

On this point, she recognized that the metalworkers' branch CGIL-FIOM had been more attentive to these issues because it had understood in a clearer way the challenges at stake and had created the conditions for greater participation. For this reason, it expanded its work by creating and empowering political channels of participation for immigrants, through the creation of the Migrant Coordination Organization of the CGIL-FIOM. Roberta A.'s comment on the lack of space in the organization to give voice to immigrants was a particularly sensitive issue at the time of my fieldwork in 2013. The territorial CGIL in the Region of Emilia-Romagna had just released a study on the low levels of representation of immigrants in the organization and was organizing meetings to discuss ways to overcome this problem.¹⁹⁹

In many ways, the category of metalworkers, the CGIL-FIOM, represented an exception. Many people of migrant background active in the Left recognized the role of this category in the city. Corrado G. of the MCO expresses very well a viewpoint that was shared among most people active in the city:

The FIOM-CGIL fought many important battles in these last years... many political and union battles against the anti-labor laws. Their struggles are very close to those of immigrants. Among the trade unions, this category is the only one that understands the centrality of immigrant labor. For trade unions, labourers are all the same. The MCO says that the condition of immigrants is different because of the different political and working conditions (Corrado G., Interview in Bologna, 19 July 2013).

During my fieldwork in Bologna and Reggio Emilia, other criticisms emerged of the role of the CGIL in the 2000s and 2010s. In 2013, most of my interviewees in Bologna, in particular people of foreign origin active in politics, made the point that the CGIL offered services, but did not do politics (Ben S., Interview in Bologna, 15 May 2013). Most interviewees acknowledged that, in the past, the CGIL of Bologna had gained some ground as a promoter of participation and access to rights in Bologna, and as a territorial union willing to advocate for the recognition of immigrants' rights. However, in the 2000s things

¹⁹⁹ The data on representation are found in the document of the CGIL. 2013. "Conferenza Regionale CGIL Emilia-Romagna sull'immigrazione."

faded away. One of my interviewees originally from Senegal, who had worked as a volunteer for the Office of the CGIL between 1999 and 2003 and was a key member of the MCO since 2004, told me:

I was a volunteer for the Center for Foreign Workers for years when I was a CGIL delegate. It was useful to understand the geography of the city. However, contrary to what they claimed, the activity did not help in any way the self-determination and participation of immigrants. There was no preoccupation with promoting the political growth of immigrants. The result is that they do not have immigrants in their institutions (Ben S., Interview in Bologna, 15 May 2013).

This fact was considered a big problem by many immigrant activists in the city. As one of my immigrant interviewees mobilizing with the MCO explained: “The real role of a trade union is to promote participation of immigrants in its organization and in the city” (Abou B., Interview in Bologna, 17 May 2013).

5.2.4. The role of the traditional “white” trade union: the CISL

In contrast to the CGIL, the “white” trade union, the CISL, is a relatively weak actor in the city of Bologna. All my interviewees agreed that the CISL has less weight than the CGIL, and it is very rare that these two trade unions organize things together. As one of the persons in charge of the CISL-ANOLF, Pietro M., told me, the CISL in Bologna “has to compete with the CGIL at all levels. In any case, it is a healthy rivalry. We do alliances with the CGIL when we cannot do otherwise” (Pietro M., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). In line with the main approach adopted by the national organization, the CISL of Bologna concentrates mainly on assistance and the promotion of interculturalism through the CISL-ANOLF (see Chapter 2). As stated in the official site, the trade union’s goal through the CISL-ANOLF is “to create a society open to diversity in a world more and more multiethnic and multicultural, through the respect and valorization of ethnic, cultural and religious specificities.” The organization also wants to fight against racism and xenophobia through the creation of itineraries of reciprocal acquaintance among “different social groups.”²⁰⁰

Among the activities promoted by the CISL-ANOLF are the following: training courses for the acquisition of basic skills (language, culture, legal topics); initiatives to

²⁰⁰ See the official site: <http://www.cislmetropolitana.bo.it/associazioni/anolf.html> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

protect the cultural patrimony of the countries of origin; campaigns and meetings of information and sensitization addressed to the Italian population; cooperation with European organizations to promote initiatives that aim to overcome the inequalities between the North and the South; complete investment by the CISL in the protection of the legal rights of immigrant workers.²⁰¹ I asked Pietro M. to tell me about the work of the CISL toward the promotion of political participation by immigrant workers. He explained that in line with the approach of the CISL at the national level, the CISL in Bologna had not created specific places in the organization to promote greater political participation for workers. The idea is that distinctions should not be made between immigrants and Italian workers. For this reason, he explained that the organization never addressed the question of the training of immigrant workers alone, as in the case of the CGIL: “There are no specific training initiatives. They always address all workers and all unionists” (Pietro M., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014).

As far as representation in the organization is concerned, the interviewee told me that the CISL had some delegates of foreign origin, but “no functionaries in the organization, let alone in the direction, where decisions are taken” (Pietro M., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). I asked Pietro M. with whom the CISL created alliances and collaborations in the city. He answered:

The CISL is particularly isolated in the city with respect to all left-wing actors. It has never created alliances with other organizations, except with the CGIL on some sporadic occasions. The other organizations never let the CISL in and the CISL never wanted to be involved anyhow (Pietro M., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014).

Pietro M. explained that he wished his organization would develop more collaborations with other organizations in the city, including the MCO, but according to him it was unlikely, because of ideological reasons.

5.2.5. The role of the Democratic Party

In 2013, the main left-wing political party in Bologna was the Democratic Party. For many years the party had been lacerated by very powerful internal conflicts. What is more, over the years it showed very little involvement in the sphere of immigration and thus became a marginal actor with respect to participation and the promotion of migrants’

²⁰¹ *ibid.*

political rights (Donald R. Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013). Between 2009 and 2010, the Democratic Party advanced two main initiatives to promote participation of people of migrant background in Bologna. The first initiative was the support of candidates of foreign origin in the province of Bologna during the municipal elections of 2009. In order to be elected, people of migrant background needed the support of the political party. This is why one can consider the election of candidates of migrant background as the result in part of the attempts by the party to promote greater inclusion.²⁰²

The second initiative was the creation of the Provincial Forum of Immigration of Bologna (full name: Provincial Forum of Rights, Cultures and Immigration of Bologna of the Democratic Party—*Forum Provinciale Diritti, Culture, Immigration del Partito Democratico*). The Provincial Forum was created in 2010 to support the discussion of immigration in the territory. Donald R. was the person in charge of the Provincial Forum since 2012. During our interview, he stressed the fact that the Forum was meant to create trajectories of participation from below.

It is a space where Italians and people of foreign origin (new citizens and migrants) discuss subjects linked to immigration and create documents linked to immigration. The Forum is open to everyone, even to citizens who are not members of the Party. It also opens important itineraries of participation and political militancy within the Democratic Party. What is also important from the point of view of political participation is that these platforms must be coordinated not by the Democratic Party, but by ordinary citizens (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013).

Donald R. made me realize that, just like in Reggio Emilia, it was noticeable that the person in charge of the Provincial Forum was himself a person of foreign origin. This fact is important because as Donald R. explained, “it gives a sense of the work done in Bologna and in the Emilia-Romagna region in terms of political participation of people of migrant background” (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013).²⁰³ My interviewees in Bologna (mostly people of migrant background) recognized that the two initiatives

²⁰² As I pointed out in Chapter 4, this was the case in other municipalities in Emilia-Romagna, where two people of migrant background were elected in the province of Reggio Emilia—in Quattro Castella (the Municipal Councilor Reda B.) and in Novellara (the Municipal Assessor of Social Policies Yossef Salmi)—and one in the province of Modena (Provincial Councilor Cécile Kyenge).

²⁰³ As noted in Chapter 4, in 2013 Reda B. and Cécile Kyenge were respectively in charge of the Provincial Forum of Immigration of Reggio Emilia and the Regional Forum of Emilia-Romagna. As noted in Chapter 4, it is important to recall that the Democratic Party of Emilia-Romagna was the only one that was able to create a network of Provincial Forums with a high level coordination at the regional level. Many of my interviews in Reggio Emilia and Bologna recognized the role of Kyenge in the creation of a solid network in the Region.

described above were important, but commented that they were far from making a significant difference in the city of Bologna, because the political party had been silent on these issues for too many years. As the decisions taken at the municipal level in the 2000s demonstrate, the Democratic Party long ago lost a real interest in the issue of immigration, and when it was in power it was a marginal actor in opening the channels of political participation. Many interviewees highlighted that, apart from the Provincial Forum, there was a real resistance in the Party to accept change, to give voice to migrants, to open a real debate in the city capable of moving beyond a distinction between “us” and “them,” and also to offer places beyond the Forum where migrants’ claims could be given voice. What is more, as highlighted in Section 5.1 the political party was completely absent during the organization of “A Day Without Us,” which was, according to many interviewees, a visible sign of the disengagement of the left-wing party on key issues that concerned the conditions of migrants in Italy.

5.2.6. The role of the radical left-wing organizations

As I anticipated in the first section of this chapter, the radical left organizations have a significant political weight in the city of Bologna. The withdrawal by more moderate left-wing organizations (including the CGIL) over the 2000s has opened the way for the greater intervention and increase in power of these organizations. Two radical left-wing organizations were very active in area of immigration: the TPO and the MCO. Of the two organizations, the MCO was particularly successful in gaining legitimacy among migrants in the city and the province, and was well known for its capacity to open up channels of political participation and provide platforms for the mobilization of a great number of migrants in the city. The organization of “A Day Without Us” exemplified the ability of the MCO to substantially support participation from below.

The TPO

The TPO is a self-managed social center that was created in 1995 when the first building was occupied by a radical left group in the city. The name is also used to refer to the radical left organization that works on the social center. In the official site of the organization, one can read about its long struggle for recognition and how the center was finally approved by the City Council at the end of the 1990s. The TPO social center is described as a space that distinguishes itself for its “everyday political action, in the creation of debate and conflict, creating an open, diffuse and participatory social context.”

The site continues: “The TPO is anti-fascism, anti-sexism, and anti-racism [...]. The TPO is an artisan dedicated to shaping practices of rights and freedom.”²⁰⁴

In the area of immigration, the TPO’s main partners at the Italian and international level are respectively Project Melting Pot and Global Project. This political area of the radical left claims affiliation to the “disobedient ones.” These organizations make claims for the free movement of people. They mobilize for the abolition of the Bossi-Fini Law, an end to institutional racism, the closure of detentions centers and the protection of refugees. Among other things, they organize mobilizations with migrants, including undocumented migrants and refugees.²⁰⁵ In 1996, the TPO created an association very active in the city, the Association Ya Basta! Bologna. Ya Basta! was created during the First Intercontinental Meeting for Humanity against Neoliberalism in Chiapas, Mexico, organized by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.²⁰⁶ On the official site one can read:

Since then, Ya Basta! has grown in Italy through a network that includes social centers and collectives, local groups and individuals in different cities. [...] At the heart of each activity there is a vision of cooperation and solidarity, which cannot disregard an engagement in the construction of a world able to contain many worlds, in Italy as in the rest of the world. Today this means a commitment to removing the deep inequalities that hit the people in our country, and to overcoming the material and cultural boundaries that divide privileged and oppressed individuals, forcing the wretched people to invisibility and deprivation of rights. For this reason the association Ya Basta! Bologna realizes activities and projects for the promotion of rights of citizenship of migrants in Italy, for the affirmation of the freedom movement, and against the exclusionary devices and criminalization of foreign citizens, with the certainty that no one can be considered “clandestine.”²⁰⁷

Among the activities organized by the Ya Basta! Bologna at the social center TPO, and in collaboration with university collectives and other organizations of the non-profit

²⁰⁴ See the section “Who we are” in the new official site: <http://www.tpo.bo.it/chi-siamo> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²⁰⁵ For a list of the types of interventions of these groups in Italy see the official site of Melting Pot: www.meltingPot.org (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²⁰⁶ On the list of activities of the association see the sites: <http://beta.tpo.bo.it/AssociazioneYaBasta> (Accessed June 15, 2015) and <http://www.yabasta.it> (Accessed June 15, 2015). For a description of this political area and the link with the association Ya Basta! See the interview with Gianmarco De Pieri in the article Maria Dorigatta. 2003. “Ya Basta! E disobbedienti: La parte arrabbiata del movimento.” *Bandiera Gialla*. July 9, 2003. <http://www.bandieragialla.it/node/2417> (Accessed June 15, 2015). The official sites of the two organizations are <http://www.meltingpot.org> and <http://www.globalproject.info> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²⁰⁷ See page: <http://beta.tpo.bo.it/AssociazioneYaBasta> (Accessed June 15, 2015)

world, there are debates, discussions, training sessions on immigration legislation. Ya Basta! also produces documents for information and sensitization purposes and organizes Italian language courses for migrants. There is also the Migrant Desk (*Sportello Migranti*) available to immigrants seeking information regarding protection of their rights.²⁰⁸

As far as networking is concerned, even though the association Ya Basta! Bologna has been formalized, its action is mainly linked to informal networks. On some occasions the association works in collaboration with other organizations, including the CGIL. As Roberta A. (CGIL) explained, “the TPO have worked for the project Emergency of North Africa and we have collaborated with them” (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013). The TPO collaborated sporadically with the MCO during the 2000s and, as I noted in Section 5.1, during the organization of the First of March 2010, when their ideological differences emerged in a more visible way. Since then, the relationship between these organizations has been very limited if not nonexistent.

The MCO

The second major organization of the radical Left that works with migrants in the city is the MCO. This organization (or collective, as they prefer to define themselves) was created in 2004 and has never been formalized. The organization is linked to the social center XM24, which was created in 2002, following the occupation of an abandoned market in the center of the city.²⁰⁹ The center is affiliated with the political area of the radical Left known as the “autonomous ones,” for whom the intellectual Toni Negri is the main referent (Cosseron 2007).

At the international level the MCO is affiliated with the groups of the NoBorders Network, though it is important to note that the ideologies of these two organizations do not match completely.²¹⁰ At the national level, the MCO is not attached to any other organizations and it proclaims its autonomy and uniqueness in the Italian landscape. During the years, the collective has attempted to create alliances with other actors, but “always from the viewpoint of creating satellite organizations with groups that are willing

²⁰⁸ Additionally: “Ya Basta! in Emilia-Romagna promotes the project Melting Pot Europe, which offers a multilingual service of information and juridical support through the radio and internet at www.meltingpot.org, addressed to immigrants, workers in the sector and everyone who is interested in knowing and deepening the thousand aspects of the immigrant experience,” in: <http://beta.tpo.bo.it/AssociazioneYaBasta> (Accessed June 15, 2015)

²⁰⁹ See the official site of the Social Center XM24: <http://www.ecn.org/xm24/> (Accessed June 15, 2015). For a complete list of the collectives linked to the Center, see the link <http://www.ecn.org/xm24/progetticollettivi/> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²¹⁰ See the official site of the NoBorder Network: <http://www.noborder.org> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

to adhere to the key points of the MCO” (Sorana M., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013). One of the main members of the organization, Corrado G., told me:

The specificity of our collective is that it combines political action and immigration. There is nothing like that in the rest of Italy. It is a very specific reality of Bologna. First, because there is no other reality that has worked with such a continuity, for more than ten years. Second, no one took the gamble that we did: to believe that migrants are a strategic force in the labor force and that they can act to transform things (Corrado G., Interview in Bologna, 19 July 2013).

As suggested in Section 5.1, these last two points—the strategic position of migrants in the labor force and the self-determination of migrants—were the two key aspects that created conflicts among the anti-racist movement organizing “A Day Without Us” and brought about the creation of the Coordination for the Strike of Migrant Labor in Italy and in Bologna. By looking at the history of the creation of the MCO in Bologna, it is possible to understand the distinctive ideology of the MCO in the city and in the Italian landscape. As Corrado G. told me:

The MCO was born in the post-Genoa Period [after 2001] from the thematic tables of the Social Forum. On that occasion, a Migrant Table [of the Social Forum] was created. It was a group of radical left activists, who were fighting for the rights of migrants. At one point, we thought that it was possible to get out of the logic of the Social Forum [that used to talk *for migrants*] and do something *with migrants*. It was at that point that there was a break with various mediations (Corrado G., Interview in Bologna, 19 July 2013).²¹¹

During our interview, Corrado G. suggested that at the beginning of the 2000s, a few mobilizations by immigrant workers created greater awareness among activists about the emergence of a new perspective: “migrants’ self-determination and the necessity for the movement to work with migrants, rather than on their behalf” (Corrado G., Interview in Bologna, 19 July 2013). This aspect emerged more clearly later on, in particular during the

²¹¹The break with the anti-racist movement in the beginning of the 2000s was theorized by Fabio Raimondi (Professor of Political Philosophy at University of Salerno) and Maurizio Ricciardi (Professor of Political Science at University of Bologna) in the Introduction to the book *Lavoro Migrante. Esperienze and prospettiva*, published in 2004. These authors introduced the key concept of immigrant labor and a theoretical interpretation of the role of immigrants in the Italian labor force that would be critical for the development of the MCO of Bologna.

organization of “A Day Without Us.” At the time, protests of migrants across Italy had encouraged activists and intellectuals of the movement to further develop their reflection on migrant self-determination. Corrado G. highlighted that at that point, the link they had been making for years between immigration laws and exploitation became visible among the civil society, as “A Day Without Us” demonstrated. At that point, the key concept of “institutional discrimination became also a key element of the movement” (Corrado G., Interview in Bologna, 19 July 2013).

During my fieldwork, thanks to interviews with key members of the MCO, informal conversations, participant observation in meetings and events as well as active examination of the activities published on the MCO’s website, I was able to assess the specificity of the organization in the city by observing its structure, its discourses and its actions. Abou B. (of Senegalese origin), a key member of the organization who contributed to its creation in 2004, helped me to reconstruct the development of the MCO. He explained how the collective was founded and emphasized the presence of some intellectuals mentioned above:

The collective was created around nine years ago [2004]. I had met with young Italian people who were studying Political Science at the University of Bologna. At that point, we decided to create a group. It was a group composed of both Italians and migrants. There were four or five founders. Maurizio Ricciardi and Corrado G. were two main members of the founding group. Those five people who founded the organization are still there. Today the nucleus of the collective is composed of fifteen people, and it is linked to many other networks in the city and beyond, mainly migrant networks of Senegalese, Pakistanis, Bengalese, Tunisians, Moroccans, Peruvians, and Albanians (Abou B., Interview in Bologna, 17 May 2013).

Abou B. explained that the MCO was not a hierarchical organization and did not have a president like the immigrant associations in the city. They decided to call themselves a collective to emphasize this difference. As Abou B. illustrated to me:

This structure has a strategic value as well as a political one. As far as the strategic dimension is concerned, if someone denounces us for our political claims, no one can find us because “we do not exist” [formally]. There is no representation. This is our strategy to exist and to continue to exist. In this way they cannot attack us. This facilitates our political struggle because we can say what we want without being

attacked. The political value is that I believe that we are free to discuss anything. For us, it is important to listen to what one has to say, as long as this is reasonable. There are no hierarchies (Abou B., Interview in Bologna, 17 May 2013).

The MCO has been extremely active in the territory of Bologna and its province since its creation in 2004. It meets once a week, and on some occasions it organizes activities in other places in Italy. Over the years it has been able to organize demonstrations with up to a few thousand people of migrant background. At the local level, it works to put pressure on institutions to improve the life conditions of migrants in the city. In particular, it has protested against the police headquarters and the prefecture for slowness in releasing the permit of stay and other documents.²¹² The organization also produces a newsletter—“Without Asking for the Permit” (*Senza chiedere permesso*)—since 2004. Since then, it has published 25 issues with a bit of discontinuity between the years.²¹³

On the home page of the official site of the organization, one can find a list of its activities. On the home page, the collective presents itself as a “Movement of migrants against racism and exploitation.” On the top of the page, one can read: “Abolition of the Bossi-Fini Law, enough pay to stay, citizenship immediately for the new generation, close the CIE (Detention Centers).” In particular, the MCO fights against the strict link between the permit of work and permit of stay—established in Italian legislation since the Turco-Napolitano Law and reinforced with the Bossi-Fini Law—which is at the heart of what they believe to be “institutional racism” that creates the conditions for differentiated treatment between Italian and immigrant workers.²¹⁴

To counter political clandestinity, the organization makes explicit its goal to support claims and self-determination of migrants wherever they arise. For this reason, in 2013, they mobilized to support the workers of the transport and logistics sector (along with the grassroots union, the SiCobas), who had been left without the protection of traditional trade unions. To give a clear signal to all the organizations in the city that promote a service-delivery approach, the MCO makes clear its will to avoid any form of welfarism.

²¹² The organization has kept archives since its creation in 2004. For the historical archive of the MCO between 2004 and 2011, see the official site: <http://comibo.altervista.org/nuovo-sito-del-coordinamento-migranti/> (Accessed June 15, 2015). For the more recent archive (from 2011 to 2015), see the new official site: <http://coordinamentomigranti.org> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²¹³ See the page: <http://coordinamentomigranti.org/senza-chiedere-il-permesso-2/> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²¹⁴ See the link: <http://comibo.altervista.org/nuovo-sito-del-coordinamento-migranti/> (Accessed June 15, 2015)

On this point, one of the members of the organization made clear that, “We decided not to create a helpdesk, because we are against any form of assistance” (Sorana M., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013).

She added: “the difference between the MCO and all the other organizations in the city is that we don’t wait for migrants to come to us, but we go toward them” (Sorana M., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013):

The MCO has built the trust of migrants over years. We go towards migrants. Personally I have gone to Umbria and the Abruzzi to talk with migrants who are paid 2.5 euros per hour. At first they hesitate, they are fearful and they feel vulnerable. Over time we have built a relationship of trust (Sorana M., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013).

In more recent years, the MCO has enlarged its structure in order to be more inclusive towards women and second-generation migrants. On the home page one can find links to two organizations: Project On the Move—New Generations in Movement (*Laboratorio On the Move—Nuove generazioni in movimento*) and *Migranda*.²¹⁵

On the Move was created by the MCO in 2010, right after the First of March 2010.²¹⁶ In 2013, it was composed of around 30 young people of whom 10 are hip-hop musicians. They were between sixteen and eighteen years old.

On the official site, the group presents itself as follows:

Everyone asks us “What is On the Move?” Is it a political collective? Is it a hip-hop crew? Is it a musical label? Is it a group of people who organize events and cultural initiatives? We are all this. We are politically active in uprooting the assigned labels, because we don’t want to let someone else tell us what we are. We use hip-hop music as a weapon. A weapon of self-determination, it narrates our individual and collective stories. A weapon of visibility, because sometimes we feel invisible but we have something to say. Through rap music, hip-hop culture, sports and social relationships we try to build, day after day, spaces of confrontation, of reflection and action that produce changes in the

²¹⁵ The sites are respectively: <https://labonthemove.wordpress.com> (Accessed June 15, 2015) and <http://migranda.org> (Accessed June 15, 2015). In addition to these organizations, there is also a third collective linked to the MCO: Precarious Connections (*Connessioni Precarie*). While Precarious Connections is an organization composed mainly of Italian students and researchers in political science of Bologna and it focuses on the problems of precariousness of students in Italy (Abou B., Interview in Bologna, 17 May 2013), the other two organizations are concerned with immigrant mobilizations.

²¹⁶ See the official site: <https://labonthemove.wordpress.com> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

city in which we live, work and study. We organize events and political, social and cultural initiatives.²¹⁷

During our interview, Farid M. (Morocco, 17), one of the main members of the collective, explained how the organization was created:

On the Move is a mixture of music and politics. We are a project of the MCO. Some of them follow us. The MCO organizes the tournaments of street basketball in Piazza Unità, with the second-generation youth. The tournament is in the summer and it is called “Crush Racism” [*Schiaccia il razzismo*] as a form of protest of the general situation in Italy. In 2010, we decided to create a music project at the social center XM24. In addition to music, we also engage in politics. We, the youth, have criticized the label “second-generation,” because it comes from an ignorant vision. Most of us were born here and we are not “immigrants.” For this reason we call ourselves the “generation in movement,” because we are not “second” to anybody (Farid M., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2013).

On the Move organizes concerts in Bologna to sensitize youth to issues of the second generation. Also, they participate actively in the organization of events and demonstrations promoted by the MCO. From 2011 and 2014, the collective has participated actively in the organization of “A Day Without Us” and the mobilization of the youth in Bologna.²¹⁸ On the occasion of the organization of the second strike of migrants, “A Day Without Us” in 2011, On the Move wrote a song titled “First of March.”²¹⁹ Also as I suggested before, some of the members of On the Move collaborated with the project Amitié by organizing events in the schools to sensitize teenagers to the consequences of the Bossi-Fini Law.

In 2011, the MCO created Migranda during the organization of the second “First of March.”²²⁰ As one of my key informants described, the organization was created to support women workers and offer them a space to respect and give voice to their specific needs. My interviewees explained that the organization had been experiencing many challenges. Like the MCO, “Migranda goes towards migrants. However, to go toward

²¹⁷ See the page “who we are ?” <https://labonthemove.wordpress.com/progetto-2/> (Accessed June15, 2015).

²¹⁸ See for instance the publication on “A Day Without Us” in 2014 in the official site of On the Move: <https://labonthemove.wordpress.com/2014/02/21/primomarzo-in-piazza-per-il-nostro-futuro-2/> (Accessed June15, 2015).

²¹⁹ For the official video of the song “First of March” see page <https://labonthemove.wordpress.com/> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

²²⁰ See official site: <http://migranda.org/about/> (Accessed June15, 2015).

migrant women is much harder, because they are more vulnerable. What is more, the crisis has worsened their lives” (Claudia E., Interview in Bologna, 8 May 2013). Another member of the MCO explained:

The relationship with women is very complicated and delicate. Some of them have very different understandings of the role of women in society. Often during our meeting they unload, then when it’s time to act they are not ready to change their situation. In many cases, they are in situations that are very difficult to escape, because often their permit depends on that of their husbands. Thus many are tied down to their husbands. Thus they live in extreme fear and under extortion. We made many errors in the past. Now we are reconsidering our previous approach to see if there are other ways to reach out to them. At this moment there are very few women who participate (Claudia E., Interview in Bologna, 8 May 2013).

I asked the members of the MCO about their relationships with the other organizations in the city. All of them confirmed that they had agreed as members to avoid any collaboration with local institutions. Among the reasons was that the collective wanted to guarantee its autonomy with respect to institutions in order to remain independent and critical. As Claudia E. explained: “We do not collaborate with these actors, because we want to stay autonomous and free” (Claudia E., Interview in Bologna, 8 May 2013). Abou B. said: “The organization is not looking for any institutional recognition, because it doesn’t want to compromise” (Abou B., Interview in Bologna, 17 May 2013).

The MCO’s major conflict in the city was with one of the most powerful organizations: the CGIL. One interviewee explained: “According to us, trade unions have failed to protect migrants” (Sorana M., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013). Another interviewee told me: “We have the interests of workers at heart (women and men). The trade unions have failed to give voice to migrants. At our meetings there are often 300 migrants, who talk and intervene freely. They can express their point of view” (Claudia E., Interview in Bologna, 8 May 2013). Corrado G. explained that there were no relationships with the CISL because of major ideological differences. Abou B. confirmed this point when he said that, “the CISL is in favor of the Detention Centers. For us it is unacceptable” (Abou B., Interview in Bologna, 17 May 2013). As far as the relationship with the CGIL is concerned, Corrado G. made the following point:

At the beginning we used to do things together with the CGIL and there was never a direct clash. Unfortunately, the goal of all trade unions is to make their organization work. With the Bossi-Fini Law, when trade unions compromised with the right-wing government when they agreed to be in charge of the bureaucratic practices [in 2006], the relationship has stiffened a great deal.²²¹ This was the time of the first direct clash. The trade unions criticized the Bossi-Fini Law, but when it was time to react, they did not do anything concrete. They should have mobilized (Corrado G., Interview in Bologna, 19 July 2013).

The second organization with which the MCO has major conflicts is the TPO. Corrado G. told me:

At the beginning of the 2000s, before ideological differences arose, the TPO and the XM24 used to be very close. In 2004, the MCO was created as a response to what the group considered the limitations of the anti-racist movement in Italy. The criticism we address to Melting Pot and thus to the TPO is that they have not bet on migrants and their work as a possible way to transform things. There are very few people ready to make a comprehensive and radical bet on the migrant question. For us this is about a comprehensive political perspective, it is about a wider political transformation that concerns Italy and beyond. (Corrado G., Interview in Bologna, 19 July 2013).

Another informant told me:

Our major conflict with them is that they have never engaged with the discourse on the self-determination of migrants. They give more importance to the humanitarian aspect of immigration. They concentrate on human rights. They fight against the CIE and the disembarkation in Lampedusa. We have decided to deal with other things. We believe that these issues are minimal compared with the migratory phenomenon in its entirety. We are more concerned with institutional racism. For us, immigrants are not the pariah or the outcasts of the earth. The MCO focuses on the side of the struggle. In the past we started together [TPO and MCO]. In 2002, we occupied XM24 together. The disagreement started back then. We were all together and then we created the MCO (Sorana M., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013).

²²¹The interviewee is referring to when the CGIL assisted the state in the renewal of immigrants' permits of stay and more in general with bureaucratic practices related to their residence of immigrants in Italy. This was considered by many immigrant workers as a betrayal by the CGIL.

A member of the MCO confirmed the importance of the concept of migrant labor: “The most important difference between us and most of the movement No Borders is that we concentrate on migrant labor” (Claudia E., Interview in Bologna, 8 May 2013). Corrado G. further clarified this point:

We argue that “migrant labor” is a mechanism to control the labor market within the state. Trade unions and social movements have two different and mirror-image visions. Trade unions are caught in the national horizon. Social movements are couched in the universalistic dimension of human rights and the idea that we are all the same. They talk about the global proletariat. This means denying the important differences that exist between migrants and non-migrants. In the past, people used to talk about equality for all and then they forgot that women and slaves were excluded from a more general struggle for equality. The truth is that trade unions and social movements do not talk about migrants. Trade unions talk only about workers and social movements only about migrants. Thus no one makes the political investment we do (Corrado G., Interview in Bologna, 19 July 2013).

Corrado G. went on to say that the “new perspective” opened by the MCO bothers the existing organizations in the city, trade unions and social movements, because it “questions traditional consolidated ways of political action” (Corrado G., Interview in Bologna, 19 July 2013).

Abou B. expressed a similar point of view when he stated that trade unions and social movements were victims of “political opportunism.” “They all talk about the Bossi-Fini Law. However, the one that really contacted migrants was the MCO. The existing organizations have not changed their approach or their conception of participation of migrants” (Abou B., Interview in Bologna, 17 May 2013). Abou B. went on to explain:

We want to detach ourselves from all the groups that use migrants for their purposes. For instance, during “A Day Without Us,” we asked trade unions to strike with us. They refused with the excuse that it was an “ethnic” strike. For us, this was just an excuse for the traditional trade unions, the CGIL and CISL. They didn’t take a position because they wouldn’t gain from it (Abou B., Interview in Bologna, 17 May 2013).

Several local actors I interviewed in Bologna expressed their concerns regarding the MCO in the city. I asked Roberta A. from the Center for Foreign Workers of the CGIL of

Bologna about the relationship between the CGIL and the radical Left in the city. She answered that the MCO was not willing to collaborate with them. She tried several times since she arrived in the office in 2009, but it did not work (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013).

At this point I asked Roberta A. about one of the main points made by the MCO, the importance of promoting migrants' self-determination. She answered: "The MCO is right on this. It is about time to stop talking *for them*: *It is necessary to give voice to them*. The CGIL has many people [of migrant origin] enrolled in the organization. The number of people enrolled in the CGIL Emilia-Romagna increases because migrants increase" (Roberta A., Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013).

When I asked Nnkeme N., the president of the Nigerian Association, about the MCO, he told me:

The greatest strength of the association is raising the political consciousness of migrants. Their goal is to allow migrants to achieve a certain level of political awareness so that they can become active subjects of this territory (Nnkeme N., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013).

Criticism also emerged among people of migrant background active in the territory of Bologna. Most interviewees who were not part of the MCO criticized the two main radical left organizations in the city, the TPO and the MCO, for two main reasons: first, that they were both *using migrants*, and second, that they were talking for migrants rather than with them.

5.2.7. Concluding remarks on the local realm of immigration, approaches to integration, and implications for participation

In Section 5.1 I described the organization of "A Day Without Us" in Italy and in Bologna. The organization of the event raised conflicts among different organizations in Italy, including civil society associations, traditional trade unions, and radical left-wing actors. Two main disputes emerged: 1) the lack of support from traditional trade unions, including the radicalized CGIL, and 2) the conflict over whether to organize a demonstration or a strike. In most local contexts, where the trade unions did not support the strike, the organizers opted for a demonstration. In Bologna, however, the lack of support from the CGIL did not prevent radical left organizations in the city from

organizing a strike from below with the great involvement of people of migrant background in the city. In Section 5.2 I have described the particularity of Bologna in the national landscape by showing the role of both moderate and radical left-wing actors since the 1990s in promoting participation of people of migrant background in the city, through the adoption of both an intercultural and a political rights promotion approach. Compared to Reggio Emilia, the local realm of immigration in Bologna was different in a few major ways. First of all, there was a lack of involvement by the local administration in the realm of immigration. However, the third sector and the radical left-wing organizations were particularly active and thus encouraged, respectively, civic participation and non-institutional forms of political participation. Also, as in Reggio Emilia, a small number of people were active in the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party. However, their participation was favored mainly by the overall local context and their will to participate rather than by any promotion of participation by the Democratic Party. Overall, Bologna was a place where multiple channels of participation allowed great flexibility for migrants active in the city to participate and to open up in turn channels of participation for other migrants. In the following section, I will analyze selected individual trajectories of immigrant activists in Bologna to illustrate how they shaped the realm of immigration by acting upon the different channels opened in the city by left-wing actors and third-sector organizations (including migrant organizations). I will also assess how they contributed opening up the channels of participation in the city, and how, through their alliances with certain local actors, they challenge the practices of other actors.

5.3. Channels of participation and immigrant activists in Bologna

During my fieldwork in Bologna in 2013 I participated in several events organized by the Emilia-Romagna region, local authorities, the Democratic Party, the third-sector organizations, the CGIL and the MCO. I also met with members of the TPO and went to official meetings of the Provincial Council. While in Brescia during a demonstration, I met with the MCO again, and could observe dynamics at work between the MCO and the movement in Brescia, and establish closer relationships with members of the MCO.²²²

²²²Before I arrived in Bologna, thanks to some informants in Reggio Emilia, I already had the main names of the people of migrant background active in the city of Bologna. I also knew that the MCO was one of the main organizations in the city able to mobilize a great number of immigrants. In order to contact people of migrant background active in the city of Bologna I used a snowball method, thanks to my contacts with main actors in the city. In Reggio Emilia (the first city where I carried out my fieldwork), key informal informants and interviewees were crucial for assessing a preliminary map of the main actors in the city of Bologna and the role of the informal actors, in particular the MCO, in promoting participation in the city. In Bologna,

The most unique aspect of Bologna with respect to the other three cities was that the activities of people of migrant background in the city often overlapped and, as I realized during the interviews, many of these immigrant activists were affiliated with more than one organization in the city. Unlike any other city I was studying, the city of Bologna stood out for the great participation by people of migrant background in numerous channels. All my interviewees of migrant background admitted that, notwithstanding the great reticence by local actors to truly empower migrants in the city, it was undeniable that in the Italian landscape Bologna stood out as an open city (Nnkeme N., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013). It was remarkable that most of the people of migrant background active in the city were or had been part of a migrant or a mixed association. This was the case of people active in the Provincial Council or the Provincial Forum of the Democratic Party as well as in the CGIL or the MCO. This fact revealed the great importance attributed to civic participation in the city, as a means toward greater inclusion.

My interviewees involved with associations can be divided in two main groups. On the one hand, there were those who had a broad understanding of political participation and believed that participating in the world of associations was the best form of participation. For many, this focus on the associations was because they had been disappointed by mainstream left-wing actors (mainly the Democratic Party and the CGIL). However, many others simply believed that participation in the world of associations was the best way to contribute to the good of the city and to promote greater inclusion of the immigrant community in Bologna.

Another group of migrants was convinced that a direct political action was also crucial. Among those active in politics strictly defined, there were migrants very active in the Democratic Party and its Provincial Forum of Immigration, in the CGIL and in the MCO. All these left-wing organizations promoted different forms of political participation, and individuals decided to mobilize with them for different reasons. For example, the participation of migrants in the MCO was mainly due to a sense of the failure of the political parties and the trade unions to adequately respond and give voice to the interests of migrants. Irene A., for instance, highlighted that in 2013 there was a great lack of funding and thus of initiatives in the world of associations. However, “in the past there was no need to participate in public competitions for external funding. One would go to

Alessandro F. from the Center Zonarelli was crucially helpful in identifying people of migrant background active in the world of associations.

politicians or to the public authority and they would give you a hand” (Irene A., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013). Nnkeme N. expressed the same point of view:

Bologna is an open city. It always gives one the opportunity to organize initiatives and to support the creativity of individuals and associations, in the sense that it presents the opportunity to carry on one’s projects. It doesn’t give you too much, but it gives you what’s necessary. Above all, what are valorized are the projects with a socio-cultural value. These associations are widely recognized in the city and see great participation by individuals and groups. Italian associations are usually able to secure more funding because they are more used to bureaucracy (Nnkeme N., Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013).

Some people admitted that many years before, Bologna was a model of integration and that this legacy was still present in the city. The problem arrived after the Prodi government, when the Right erased the ministry for migrants and eliminated funding. The consequence was that municipalities do not have money anymore (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013). While these interviewees highlighted the promotion of participation from below through the world of associations, others highlighted the role of institutional actors in promoting democratic participation. The distinctiveness of Bologna in the Italian landscape was expressed very openly by one of the most critical interviewees in the city, Donald R. He told me:

Like Reggio Emilia, Bologna is in the Emilian territory. This is a marvelous territory for immigration. It is not by chance that the Minister of Integration Cécile Kyenge and myself, an Assessor of Integration, emerged in these territories [Emilia-Romagna]. Also, the Metropolitan Forum of the immigrant associations in Bologna that was created in the 1990s, with all its limitations, is politically and socially strategic. As far as I know few places in Italy have done what Bologna and Reggio Emilia did (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013).

Given the richness of the city of Bologna, the great number of people of migrant background involved in the city and the trajectories of participation of these actors, I will focus in this section on seven interviewees who were considered by other actors in the city as among the most active actors and also part of the history of the city. I selected individuals with roles of responsibilities in the main local actors in the city, including both

first- and second-generation migrants. In the world of the third-sector associations, I selected the interviews of: (1) Irene A. (second-generation, from Philippines), Councilor of the Provincial Consultative Body and President of the Filipino Federation of Bologna since 2007; (2) Nnkeme N. (first-generation, from Nigeria), president of the Nigerian Association and very active in different formal and informal organizations since the end of the 1990s; (2) Lionel F. (first-generation, Italian originally from Cameroon), president of the Association Universe and very active in different formal and informal organizations since the end of the 1990s.

Among migrants mobilized mostly in conventional political channels, I selected the following interviewees: (1) Donald R. (first-generation, Italian originally from Cameroon), councilor of the municipality of San Lazzaro (province of Bologna) and in charge of the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party since 2012; (2) Makham M. (from Senegal) active in the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party since 2012 and Councilor of the Provincial Consultative Body since 2007. Finally, among the immigrant activists mobilized in non-conventional political channels I selected the following interviewees: (1) Tariq I. (first-generation, from Pakistan), main member of the MCO and president of the Pakistan association since 2004; (2) Farid M. (second-generation, from Morocco) from the MCO and main singer of the hip-hop group and main member of On The Move since 2011.

I selected these interviewees because they allow me to clarify how immigrant activists in Bologna have developed articulated trajectories of participation thanks to the multiple channels of participation open in the city.

5.3.1. Perceiving and acting upon opportunities of participation: immigrant activists in the world of associations

Irene A. was born in the Philippines in 1978 and moved to Bologna in 1989 at the age of 11 to join her mother.²²³ She married a Filipino man and had two children. At the time of the interview she was very active in the world of associations. She was the president of the federation of the Filipino associations in the city and she was very active in a Christian Protestant church run by Filipinos in the city. She had also been a councilor of the Provincial Council for non-EU migrants since its creation in 2007. I asked her why she was so active, and she answered that it was because of her faith: “A Christian should

²²³ Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013.

fight for the rights of other people. As a Christian it is my duty.” She added that often people asked her: “Why do you do it?” To this question she always answers: “I do it because I believe in it and because I hope that my kids will have a better future in this country.” Irene A. was very critical of local institutions, trade unions and political parties and she expressed a clear sentiment of disappointment. She emphasized that these actors were guided by economic interests, and though they said many things, including that they wanted to encourage inclusion, in the final analysis they were not really willing to include people of migrant background in the political arena. When talking about the Provincial Council, she said that she was disappointed, because there were very few results. The administration created the Council, but then it did not encourage its empowerment. She added that somehow she expected this outcome because, as far as she could tell, the organizations in the city did not really want to change things, and left-wing political parties and trade unions were mostly worried about conflicts with each other rather than dealing directly with issues.

I asked Irene A. if she thought that the Italian associations in Bologna were more visible and stronger than the immigrant associations, and if this had consequences for immigrant associations in the city. She answered:

To me, there are immigrant associations that are able to carry on the responsibilities that are given to the Italian associations. Many migrants like me believe that the immigrant associations can do a lot, in some cases better than the Italian associations. I am convinced that this is the case. Immigrant associations are not always as weak as they are described. The real problem is that the Italian associations and main trade unions have important interests to defend. It is mainly about economic interests. Some of them believe in what they do, but then they lose themselves because of their interests. Often what they want is visibility. The emergence of immigrant associations creates problems for them.

She admitted that the city was not completely closed to migrants’ participation, in particular when channeled through associations, and that when it was possible, everyone would give a little support. At this point, I asked her why she decided to participate in the Provincial Council, since she was so skeptical from the beginning. She answered:

In 2007, it was the first time that migrants were voting in Bologna. At that time the Filipino community was the biggest in the city. It was the first time that Filipinos voted. They were all there. We took that opportunity to create a federation of Filipino

associations. We already had eleven associations: religious associations (Catholic and not), associations of women and of workers, associations based on regional areas. I worked with them to write the deed of incorporation. Our objective was to have an honorary consulate in Bologna but we never achieved that goal.

She also added that, notwithstanding its limitations, from her own personal point of view, the Provincial Council was a very positive opportunity for participation: “The Council was crucial from the point of view of formative experience, to discuss and debate. For me it has been useful from the point of view of active citizenship.”

Irene A. also said that she was not interested in politics. I asked her why and if she had taken part in political parties or trade unions in the city. She said that she had not, and she had no intention to do so. According to her, politics was very far behind, and as far as she understood, political participation was about debating and getting involved, something that she had already been doing for a while. Following this reasoning, Irene A. explained that, from her perspective, integration, citizenship, and participation went in hand in hand. We discussed these concepts together and I invited her to comment on the fact that the Emilia-Romagna region and Minister Kyenge in the recent months had been talking about “interaction” instead of “integration,” to support the idea that exchange between the receiving society and migrants was a two-way process based on reciprocal respect. She answered:

“Integration” means to “feel part of something.” Before I thought that integration meant “to be recognized by others as integrated.” Now my feeling of being integrated does not depend on others anymore. I feel I am part of the city of Bologna. Here I have my life and have lived for more than 23 years. Even though recognition by others is often not there. To my kids, I always say you are Filipino-Bolognese. I don’t say Filipino-Italian because I don’t have Italian citizenship. “Interaction” means that one doesn’t have to renounce one’s own identity. It means respect for the other person. I say no to closure and yes to respect. Today the crisis is bringing to closure among the migrant communities towards the receiving society. I have also understood that Italians are the ones who need to be informed.

Irene A. concluded by noting that process of inclusion were possible through active citizenship and that her contribution to the city and the Bolognese community was possible thanks to her activism. “Active citizenship” for her meant to “care for [others]” and she

was doing that by giving her contribution in an active way to improve the city and for the good of others.

Nnkeme N. was born in Nigeria in the 1970s and arrived in Italy in 1996.²²⁴ When describing himself he said that in the last years he had become more and more active and that his main concern was to develop socio-politico-cultural participation. His key idea is to “create a bridge between two cultures.” As he emphasized, “I don’t believe in closure but in dialogue.” Nnkeme N. explained that religious motivations push him to be active. In the Koran one can read: “The best of them is he who can help others to see the light. It means leaving the world better than how he found it.” During our interview Nnkeme N. explained what this idea meant in practice:

I am extremely active at the level of the neighborhood because it is the level that touches me the most. My idea is that I have to be useful above all for my neighbors. Participation and awareness are keys. They are two aspects that make you understand your presence in the garden. For me it is crucial to be a bridge between different entities in which I am active.

Nnkeme N. was very active at the time of the interview. Among the activities in which Nnkeme N. was involved were: 1) the Nigerian Association, of which he was the president; 2) the Islamic community, which he explained was a multicultural, multiethnic and multinational community; 3) the association *The Other Babel (L’Altra Babele)*, an association of “civic, institutional and technical value” and 4) the MCO.²²⁵ Nnkeme N. explained that in recent years he had been working with many associations and that through the Nigerian Association he has been collaborating in a network with other associations in the city. He was also greatly involved in the Project Amitié (for a description of Amitié see Section 5.2.2.). From a personal point of view, all the channels in which he was involved were extremely useful because he could learn things that he was able to transform for the benefit of his community and the neighborhood in which he worked. As far as political participation was concerned, Nnkeme N. explained that the radical left-wing organization, the MCO, was the only non-conventional or informal

²²⁴ Interview in Bologna, 2 July 2013.

²²⁵ *L’Altra Babele* was founded as an association for the representation of students within the academic body and it organized cultural and social initiatives. In particular the association is involved in projects for the city of Bologna, concerning the area of the university district San Donato. See site flash giovani.it http://www.flashgiovani.it/en_info/pagina/357/539/ (Accessed June 15, 2015). For further information see the official site of the association: <http://altrababele.it> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

organization in which he participated. Of the MCO, above all, he appreciated that the organization has “the goal of making migrants politically aware. It works to encourage them to become active subjects of this territory.” That was something very important to him, which he saw as directly linked to the work he was doing in the world of associations.

Like Irene A. and Makham M. (see below), Nnkeme N. drew a link between “integration” and active participation in the city:

“Integration,” “interaction”.... for me they all mean to let someone share with full rights.... to have the opportunity to be an active citizen at the social and cultural level. Culture is a tree with many branches. “Intercultural dialogue” expresses the idea that one doesn’t have to fear exchange, learning and listening. It means being free to talk, to listen and to learn.

I asked him what he thought about political participation. He answered:

It is welcome when it is supported by a civic and social background, for the good of the community. When this is missing, political participation is insidious. If it exists, it has very little to offer. I believe in the transversality of civic virtues. Action is linked to good practices. Our identity is shaped by our virtues, our habitus.

Lionel F. was born in Cameroon in 1970 and arrived in Bologna in 1994.²²⁶ At the time of the interview he was waiting for his Italian citizenship. He left his country in part for political reasons. He was active in Cameroon while at university, where he promoted democracy in his country. He went to Italy to study at university and he always had his documents. He did many jobs in Italy and he also worked for ten years as a bouncer in the four social centers in Bologna, including the TPO. He clarified that his political orientation was very close to that of the radical Left and that if he could vote, he would vote for them.

Lionel F. started our interview by saying: “I am interested in politics out of politics!” For this reason, he explained that he was very active in the world of associations, because it allowed him to make a link between active citizenship and political engagement without being active directly in politics. He told me that 50 percent of his life was devoted to work and 50 percent to volunteer work. He elucidated that he had been volunteering in prisons for more than twelve years. Every Friday he would go into the prisons to do meditation and

²²⁶ Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014.

read about moral philosophy with detainees, following the teachings of the German philosopher Albert Schweitzer who won the Nobel Prize in 1952. He explained that in the first two years of his arrival (between 1994 and 1996), he had participated in training on cultural mediation funded by the municipality of Bologna, hoping to find a job. The attempt didn't work and in 1996 he decided to create an association *Di Mondi*: "During the course [for cultural mediators] they taught us the theatre of the oppressed, and they made it clear to us what the conditions of immigrants were and how to intervene to help those who needed some help. So after the course we created the association Di Mondi."²²⁷ The association *Di Mondi* was composed of Italians and migrants and had the goal of facilitating the integration of migrants and presenting the beauty of other cultures. In 1997 he left the association. In the following years he founded and was the president of two other associations: *Universe*, created in 1998 and formalized in 2000, and *Harambe* in 2004. As noted above, the association Universe is composed of 100 members and has a very active role in the city, promoting active citizenship and the "idea that immigrants contribute to the growth of the city." The association Harambe is composed of 50 members and organizes projects for the camps of Roma and collaborates with students from the University of Bologna. During an interview released in 2010, Lionel F. said:

Each year I go to the University to talk with the students of the first and second year. I give them a class on "the translation of theory into practice," because to be able to change the world one needs to look around and try to do something in the world around him.

During our interview, Lionel F. added: "The students create projects to promote opportunities for the Roma to express themselves and I attempt to support these processes." When I asked Lionel F. why he got so involved in the world of associations, he answered that, in the 1990s, he had "the opportunity to get a sense of the associative and political world." His contacts with different realities in the city made him think about "the importance of the encounter, of the exchange between cultures." Additionally, he had personally benefitted from his relationship with the world of associations and social centers, two types of organizations that welcomed him "as a man" at the beginning of his journey in Italy. In those years he was able to "develop awareness of the political world as

²²⁷See interview with Lionel F. in "Essere straniero a Bologna: L.F e la sua storia." *Bandiera Gialla.it* July 19, 2010. <http://www.bandieragialla.it/node/10502> (Accessed April 15, 2015).

well as the world of associations.” Lionel F. went on to explain his understanding of politics:

Politics is not abstract. On the contrary *we* do it. I understood that the system works because you are in it and the system is in you. One individual can change things from within. When I first arrived in 1994 I was lost. I was welcomed by the associations and the social centers in the city and that made the entire difference. Now I want to take part in it myself.

He clarified how he saw his role as promoter of participation and change in the city: “I am not the one who does things. I am the one who allows others to do things. For me the most important things are people. For me it is crucial to be a unifying element.”

The three interviewees above show that people of migrant background active in the world of associations were contributing to opening up the channels of civic and political participation in the city. Through their mobilization, these interviewees have been able to engage in the city and to create opportunities for participation of other people of both Italian and migrant background. They are also promoting a discourse of active citizenship linked to the world of associations of Bologna, which gives civic participation a political meaning. The interviewees also expressed their concerns about major obstacles to participation. Nonetheless, my analysis of the interviews showed that the development of networks of lay organizations in the city not only offered these individuals opportunities for participation, but also allowed them to shape the realm of immigration by creating new spaces for participation, through the promotion of practices and discourses of the third sector in the city.

5.3.2. Perceiving and acting upon opportunities of participation: immigrant activists in the Democratic Party

Makham M. was born in Senegal in 1965.²²⁸ He decided to migrate to improve his economic situation. He arrived in Bologna in 1998 at the age of 33, and married an Italian woman. He was waiting for his Italian citizenship at the time of the interview. Makham M. was very active in various channels. He became active in Bologna almost immediately after his arrival. He explained that in his country he used to be involved in political

²²⁸ Interview in Bologna, 30 October 2013.

activities because his uncle was the mayor of his city with a left-wing party. In Italy, he became active in the schools by organizing musical workshops. He soon started teaching music to disabled children. He did this activity from 1998 to 2006, and from 2008 to 2013 kept himself busy with music through collaborations with other associations. Like Irene A., in 2007 he was elected as a councilor of the Provincial Council. Additionally, since 2010 he has been involved in the activities of the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party. I asked him what were the reasons for participating in the world of associations, in the Provincial Council and then in the Provincial Forum of the Democratic Party. He answered straightforwardly: “because each field is a good opportunity to become representatives, ambassadors, of ourselves.” He believed that Italians and people of migrant background needed to work together to bring about results. Neither Italians nor migrants alone could change things.

To solve problems we need to start from those who are experiencing them. The Forum, the Council, associations... each body has its own function, which is very useful for bringing them together and producing results. With the Provincial Forum we worked with Cécile Kyenge, who was the person in charge of the Forum of Immigration at the regional level. Now she is a minister of the Republic. This is a great result. The regional context also matters and the uniqueness of this region in the national landscape is visible. There have been some results at the national, regional and local level, but they are not enough. We need to work hard to change things. The first three things we need to fight for are: the abolition of the Bossi-Fini Law, the right to vote at the administrative level for migrants, and the *jus soli*. These three things would change everything. The abolition of the Bossi-Fini Law will be the true change that will give respect and value to all individuals. The rest would follow.

Makham M. added that participation meant “to talk for oneself,” “to be active in changing and improving things.” He also complained that the organizations in the city were not promoting participation enough, because of the lack of substantial channels of participation:

The truth is that there is a real fear that people will become autonomous. In this context it is obvious that immigrants do not participate and do not trust anybody. The Democratic Party in particular pretends it is doing something, but it is not doing anything at all. The principle is *divide et impera* (divide and rule). The left-wing party knows that the right to

vote can change everything, but since the fall of Prodi in 2008 there is no majority in Italy that acts in favor of immigrants.

Notwithstanding these limitations, Makhham M. was convinced that, though slow to arrive, there had been results, and he was ready to make all the necessary efforts to get involved and create the conditions for greater inclusion of migrants in Italy.

Like Lionel F., *Donald R.* was born in Cameroon in the 1970s and arrived in Bologna around the same time, in 1996.²²⁹ Donald R. married an Italian woman in 2001 and at the time of the interview was working as an employee of the Emilia-Romagna region and was Assessor of Integration of San Lazzaro. Like Lionel F., he arrived with a student permit and worked many different jobs to pay for his studies. He graduated from the University of Bologna in 2001 in communication science. He explained that these communicative skills were very useful for both his work and political career. At the time of the interview, he was also doing a PhD in Montreal on communication. However, unlike Lionel F., Donald R. was interested in politics in a strict sense, and since 2007 had been active with the main left-wing political party, the Democratic Party.

Donald R.'s trajectory of participation in the city is crucial for understanding the emergence of migrant leaders in the city, which could have not been possible in more closed contexts than Bologna. Donald R.'s trajectory of participation in the city can illustrate the conflict-filled relationship that emerged between left-wing actors and migrants active in the city, on the one hand, and the possibility of people of migrant origin emerging as independent actors, on the other. When he was studying at the University of Bologna, Donald R. wanted to get involved. In 2000, he met with the Metropolitan Forum and started volunteering by helping associations with bureaucratic issues and writing their statutes. In 2002, he enrolled with an association and in 2005 became President of the Forum. Then, in 2006, he became very active with the DS, and in 2007 with the new left-wing party, the Democratic Party. In 2008 he was a candidate for the Italian Parliament, but he was not elected. In 2009 he was elected councilor of the city of San Lazzaro in the province of Bologna, and since 2011 he has been in charge of the Provincial Forum of the Party.

Recalling the experience of the Forum, Donald R. told me that at the time of his presidency between 2005 and 2007, the Forum was constructing its itinerary in the city by building relationships with the general population in the city and also with institutions. The

²²⁹ Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013.

Forum also organized political struggles, by denouncing, for instance, the conditions of migrants' children in the schools and the increasing racism by Italian parents who did not want foreign people in the same class as their own children. Donald R. commented:

This of course bothered some organizations in the city and in particular [the] trade unions.... They want to have the exclusive discourse on migration issues and when they found some other protagonists who talked about things that concerned them, this situation floored the powerful left-wing actors in the city.

He added that, at the time the CGIL, the Communist Refounding Party, and the Democrats of the Left (DS) did not get along well and, since he “had been starting to militate with the Democrats of the Left, the CGIL was not very happy.”

The CGIL saw me and said: “Who is he? All immigrants have to come to do the documents in our offices, but we haven't seen him before!” They didn't see me because I used to do my documents alone, and since they are used to thinking that migrants are people who are not able to do anything, they were sorrowful.

Donald R. admitted that there were many conflicts among associations within the Forum and this brought it to its end. It is for this reason he left in 2007. However, he added:

I believe that trade unions of the territory contributed to the defeat of the Forum. The Forum died because of the people of the Forum, who were fighting all the time. But it died also thanks to the trade union that worked in the territory. They could not put up with the fact that people who were the *objects of their discourses were becoming political subjects*, able to carry out their own aspirations and requests. This obviously created some problem among them: they could not tolerate the requests of migrants who could alone present their own problems. They thought it was better for them to represent us. They wanted us to become obedient objects of their discourses. The hardest shots that I received in the world of politics—and I must say that politics is the realm of the fight—did not come from migrants or from the xenophobic Right, but from the extreme Left and from the labor unions which by definition (and also by their own definition) are said to be close to migrants. Each one of our public appearances had to be organized by them, in support of greater visibility for their work on immigration, as this was their exclusive subject.

It was precisely to fight against this system that Donald R. got involved in politics in 2007 and became an active member of the political party. He added:

In my view, to assume even a minimal role within the political party is the beginning of a proactive participation. This is the threshold, to move beyond the world of associations. The migrants who enter in Italy are represented as users, consumers, as those who are served. And the political discourse of the Right and of the Left reinforces this approach. I believe that true participation of immigrants in Italy will be possible by affirming the opposite of this representation. And this must be done not only in words, but with concrete facts.

Donald R. went on to explain that being elected as a representative of the municipality was the first step, but was still not enough:

The concrete fact to which I refer here is that the role occupied by migrants in Italy and in any organization cannot be based on compliance. If one of us is a Ministry of Integration, like Kyenge, or Assessor of Integration—as in my case—unfortunately we are not doing anything else but answering to the consumer paradigm of migrants. We are still consumers. Because the mayor, when he appointed me, thought he was doing a favor to the cause, instead of thinking that I am actually competent. This is why instead of working on communication, which is my specialty, I am given the role of Assessor of Integration, which reminds me that this is supposed to be my role.

Donald R. noted that he has invested a great deal in overcoming the limitations of this Italian paradigm based on compliance:

Our *true* political participation will consist in saying that we are those who serve, that is, the citizens legitimized to occupy with full rights the roles of those who administrate and take decisions and not only of those who receive. There is a saying, “The hand that gives is always above the one that receives.” We want to affirm that today participation for us means being on the side of the hand that gives and not always on the side of the hand that takes.

I asked him if he saw changes coming up soon in the direction of a greater self-determination of migrants on the side of those who made decisions. He answered:

Absolutely yes! Things go so fast that the actors in the city don't even realize that Donald R. can become mayor of San Lazzaro in a few years. If Donald R. ran for election with the support of the community, the community would vote for him. The Party was not expecting my election in 2009. They put me on the list to say: "Hey, look how good I am!" Donald R. corresponded to a cosmetic function. But the party was floored because they didn't know where I took the votes from since they had made already their calculation without taking me into account. I took 100 out of 1200 preferences among Italians and people of migrant background and I became the first Assessor of foreign origin of Emilia Romagna and the fourth in Italy. I was in all the newspapers.

5.3.3. Perceiving and acting upon opportunities of participation: immigrant activists in the radical left-wing organization MCO

Tariq I. was born in Pakistan in the 1970s and arrived in Bologna in 1998.²³⁰ He graduated in Political Science in his country of origin and left to find more security abroad. When he arrived in Italy he did all kinds of non-skilled jobs before he bought a boutique and started working for himself. Tariq I. was a very active member of the immigrant community, a main representative of the Pakistani community, and a key member of the MCO. Before the interview, I met with him during the meetings and assemblies of the MCO. He was one of the people who would intervene the most during the meetings, and we had several informal conversations. During our interview, he told me that in Pakistan he was politically very active and that when he arrived in Italy, he collaborated as a journalist with a newspaper founded by his brother, a politician in Spain, to give information to the Pakistani community living abroad. I asked him the reasons why he was so active. He answered:

It is something natural for me to help others. I help fellow Pakistanis and other immigrants. I want to express the voice of immigrants through my activities! Since the beginning, I always told myself that an immigrant is not someone who arrives in a place and that is it. In reality, the immigrant brings all his person and he needs to express himself. My question is then: How can a migrant express his project of life? How can he give voice to his needs? We need to go toward Italians and tell them who we are and what we do.

²³⁰Interview in Bologna, 3 June 2013.

At this point, I asked him why he decided to be a key member of the MCO and what distinguished this organization from other organizations and channels of participation in the city. He answered:

The MCO is the voice *of immigrants, for immigrants*. It starts from the real problems of migrants. It is unique in the landscape of Bologna. In other places, such as the Provincial Council, people of migrant background can talk and listen, but cannot make decisions. Since my arrival I tried to find a way to get involved and give voice to the needs of people. Most of the places where I went, migrants were supposed to listen and stay quiet. In 2004, with the creation of the MCO, we decided to create the conditions for migrants to express their voices starting from their problems and conditions in complete autonomy. The trade unions have political affiliations and do not act in our interests.

This response was in accordance with what he had said during an assembly, which I went to with the MCO in May 2013 in a social center in Milan. Addressing the assembly, Tariq I. said:

I want to say something: the MCO is my life. For many years we had one main thought: that of being the voice of migrants. In Italy I have found many tables, many trade unions. I have understood that trade unions... only want to *use migrants*. The MCO has offered all the possibilities. It has shown that migrants in Italy are very important. I have seen many groups. They organize assemblies and meetings and they are all linked to the political parties. They never act in our interest, the interest of migrants, but in their own interest. Five or six years ago they called me and asked me: "Are you coming to our event? How many are you?" I asked them: "What projects do you have for migrants? What projects for workers?" and they made me understand that they had not thought about it... then I told them: "Then, why should I come to you? I am not coming! This is a very important day for migrants, for workers and you don't do anything for them?!" They said: "We can discuss it later," but I answered: "No! Before not after! We have to think about immigrants long before. Now migrants have woken up!" With this point I want to say: "The Migrant Coordination Organization is you. Each one of you is responsible! Each worker! Each one is responsible because we can go ahead together, shoulder to shoulder. We have always been used. The message I want to send to everyone is that: the MCO goes ahead with us. You are the MCO and

thanks to you all the MCO goes ahead (Field notes, Assembly MCO in Milan 19 May 2013).

Farid M. was originally from Morocco.²³¹ He arrived in Italy with his family when he was very young. When I interviewed him, he was 17 years old and one of the main members of On the Move, the youth organization of the MCO. He was one of the main artists of the hip-hop group. At the time of the interview he was present at all the events organized by the MCO in which I participated, and in most occasions he intervened as a spokesman of On the Move. His commitment to the cause of improving the conditions of migrants in Italy was very clear in all the meetings in which I participated. I asked him: “Have you thought about leaving?” He answered: “To leave would mean to go and look for a better place, but this doesn’t work because if you think of leaving you assume that you can’t change the place where you are!” For Farid M. political action was necessary to change things and his way of doing so was through the interpretative lens offered by the MCO.

Teresa C.: Why did you decide to be active with the MCO?

Farid M.: Because I share its goals: the MCO fights for the creation of a global and complete struggle against the Bossi-Fini Law and tells migrants that they have to raise up their heads.

During the meeting in a social center of Milan in May 2013, he addressed the assembly:

I am here to say that we, the youth, struggle for our rights as our parents do. What makes me sad is that there are very few young people here. But one day I hope there will be a greater involvement. [...] I am here to say that the Bossi-Fini Law hits us. It doesn’t give us freedom to choose our future, it stresses us, because we fear that when we turn 18 we will have to leave the country. I am here to say that for this reason too the Bossi-Fini Law must be abolished. I am very happy today to see something very rare: migrants who are taking charge of their condition. It is not something that happens every day. It is something that has been happening very recently and I am glad that my parents are rising up... They are saying no to all constraints and exploitation possible. For this reason I am happy and hope that this will bring something new for the future (Field notes, Assembly MCO in Milan 19 May 2013).

²³¹ Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2013.

I asked Farid M. why he chose hip-hop music as a form of expression. He answered:

It is a unique music style that historically was used to make claims and to protest. Since its creation it has been a style characterized by contextualizing difficult situations through music. It was created by African-Americans who were living in situations very similar to ours today. What is more, many young people today listen to this music style, so it is easier to reach them. In my lyrics I talk about many critical social situations. I talk a lot about the city in which I live. Not only about migrants, but about everyone.

We concluded the interview by talking about the meanings of some concepts, such as participation and integration:

“Participation” means to talk for oneself. No one can talk about something if he doesn’t live it. Participation is synonymous with self-determination. It is you that knows your situation and can bring a change to that situation. “Integration” is a weird word for us, the young people, because we are already integrated with each other. Our only constraint is institutional discrimination. The legislation is far behind with respect to the development of society.

All things considered, the individual trajectories of the seven interviewees in this chapter have shown that, through their activism, people of migrant background have been able to contribute to opening up the channels of political participation in the city of Bologna, either: 1) by allowing other people to participate (as in the cases of Irene A., Nnkeme N., and Lionel F. who consider themselves as mediators or “bridges”); 2) by supporting their individual self-determination, as in the cases of Ibrahim M. and Donald R. (who thinks that his own achievement in the political party is able to change relationships of power); or, finally 3) by mobilizing with non-institutional actors to make claims for a radical transformation of society (as in the case of Tariq I. and Farid M. of the MCO).

My migrant interviewees recognized that the city of Bologna was an open city compared to most in Italy. However, they were also very critical of most left-wing organizations in the city, which in their opinion used the issue of immigration for political purposes. However, they also acknowledged that left-wing organizations (though often with ambiguous motivations) have also supported intercultural dialogue and political rights for migrants in the city, and thus favored their individual trajectories of participation in the

city, allowing them to put their contributions at the disposal of the Italian and migrant communities.

This was, for instance, the case of Irene A. and Lionel F., who were both very active in the world of the third sector. Over the years, they had contributed to the promotion of participation in the city by getting involved in channels opened for migrants such as the Provincial Council (as in the case of Irene A.) and also opening new channels of participation through the creation of associations devoted to promote civic and political participation (as in the case of Lionel F.). Both Irene A. and Lionel F. clarified that their experiences of participation in the city were key to acquiring new competencies to be put at the service of the city, and to building “bridges” between the Italian and the migrant communities. They made remarkable contributions in opening the channels of civic participation of the Filipino community (Irene A.) and promoting active citizenship and political engagement of the Italian and migrant communities through the Association Universe (Lionel F.). Additionally, Donald R. was convinced that political transformation for migrants could be effected by taking positions of responsibility in the political party, by being elected and thus changing the power relationship that represented migrants as “consumers of services.”

Finally, people of migrant background active in the radical left organizations were key in promoting mobilizations of migrants around issues of institutional racism and worker exploitation. The MCO, composed of Italian and immigrant activists, offered an important platform for mobilization for migrants thanks to the links that the members established with the migrant communities in the city. Through constant work over more than ten years, the MCO became one of the main actors able to mobilize migrants and give voice to their claims in the city. Within the MCO, migrants promote a discourse of inclusion in Italian society by transforming the relationship of power that confines them into a very small space and does not leave them opportunities to express themselves. Through the MCO, they believe they can make a difference, by giving voice to their claims without compromising with the political interests of other powerful left-wing actors in the city.

5.4. Concluding remarks

In Bologna, the presence of both moderate and left-wing actors and the promotion of both intercultural and political rights promotion approaches has resulted in the opening of channels of both civic and political participation. In the chapter on Reggio Emilia, I

showed that the strong presence and investment of moderate left-wing actors (in particular the administration and the third-sector organizations) in the sphere of immigration, through an intercultural approach and the weakness and lack of investment by radical left-wing actors (the CGIL and the grassroots organizations), resulted mainly in the promotion of civic participation in very conventional channels and an almost complete absence of political participation by people of migrant background in the city. In Bologna, the local realm of immigration allowed a great flexibility of participation by immigrant activists and encouraged the overlapping of their activities in the city. In the case of the third sector, immigrant activists promoted both interculturalism (by presenting themselves as bridges between the Italian and the immigrant community) and the political rights promotion approach (by mobilizing for the recognition of migrant rights in Italy). Mobilizations with radical left actors were frequent. As for the radical left-wing organization the MCO (composed of Italians and migrants alike), immigrant activists were helping to open the channels of political participation in non-conventional channels. Overall, Bologna was a place where multiple channels of participation opened by left-wing actors and lay organizations allowed intense participation by immigrant activists and allowed them to take on a role as active political subjects and contribute by encouraging participation for other migrants.

Chapter 6. Brescia

An Intense Form of Participation in the City of Non-Conventional Channels

In Brescia, we are always active!
We voice our claims through demonstrations, occupations, and protests.
We can't keep still. If one stops being active, he is finished!
Mohamed A.²³²

6.1. The “Struggle of the Crane”: An extreme form of protest by undocumented immigrants against the 2009 amnesty

From September 28 to November 16, 2010, Brescia was at the center of a movement that showed the despair of undocumented immigrants and their will to fight against their treatment by the state. The action, later known as the Struggle of the Crane (*Lotta della Gru*), started the morning of September 28 in the center of Brescia, with a protest of around two hundred people of migrant background (mostly undocumented male Egyptians) and some Italian supporters (Piancentini 2011). The organizers of the event were undocumented immigrants who had applied to regularize their status in Italy through the amnesty “for housemaids and caregivers,” which was launched in September 2009 (Law 102/2009) by the right-wing Berlusconi government. After one year, they had not received any answer. Protesters stigmatized the mass regularization as a “fraudulent amnesty” organized by the state in order to: 1) take money from immigrant workers; and 2) identify irregular immigrants on Italian soil to expel them. To add to the tensions, protesters were particularly tired of the unjust treatment and “institutional racism” of the local right-wing administration in power since 2008.

There were several reasons why they were protesting. After waiting a full year, most of the people who had submitted an amnesty application had not received an answer because of the slowness of the Italian bureaucracy. Also, since the amnesty aimed at regularizing only housemaids and caregivers, it was considered discriminatory by the protesters, given that many undocumented immigrants working in the underground economy in Italy were also industrial workers, masons, farmers, etc. This meant that in order to regularize, many workers had no choice but to declare that they were working as housemaids and caregivers. Furthermore, since the permit depended on the employer, many immigrants had to pay additional money to their supposed employers in order to

²³² A key member of the migrant social movement in Brescia: Interview in Brescia, 21 October 2013.

have their application submitted. This of course exposed immigrants to opportunism by those who wanted to take advantage of their vulnerable situation and make money out of the amnesty.²³³

In addition to the general motivations described above, the undocumented immigrants were demonstrating against the fact that, in 2010, the prefecture of Brescia, following a circular launched by the right-wing government in March 2010 (the so-called Circular Manganelli), had agreed to exclude retroactively from the amnesty all those who had received a paper for expulsion before the submission, even if they had a job and had paid for and submitted a regular application. The circular was in accord with the Security Package (Law 94/2009), which was launched by the Minister Roberto Maroni (the then principal exponent of the Northern League) in July 2009 and introduced the controversial “crime of illegal immigration” (clandestinity) into Italian law. In September 2010, faced with the choice whether or not to accept the circular and thus exclude the “clandestines” from the amnesty, the right-wing administration of Brescia decided to support it and thus agreed to deny the permit of stay to all undocumented immigrants with “criminal records.”

The first day of protest, September 28, was marked by an occupation, which was violently attacked by the police the morning of the following day. A second demonstration on the 29th attracted around three hundred people of migrant background of different origins. By the end of the second day, protesters decided to establish a *permanent occupation* in front of the prefecture (which would last one month) to demand a table of negotiation with public authorities.²³⁴ The organizers asked for the support of the Italian radical left association Rights for All (*Diritti per Tutti*) and the Radio Collision Wave (*Radio Onda d’Urto*). Rights for All was well-known among immigrants in the city because of their long-standing support for immigrants’ struggles in the face of governmental opposition both at the national and local level since the 1990s (Giancola 2008/2009). Additionally, the left-wing trade union CGIL backed protesters’ demands by giving them two large shelters to sleep in throughout the occupation. Members of the Indian, Pakistani, Senegalese and Moroccan communities—mostly men—also joined the first group of Egyptians.²³⁵

Throughout the occupation, the other major local actors in the city, including the Church, the CISL (the second main trade union) and the Democratic Party, did not

²³³ For the reason of the protest see also Anno Zero. 2010. Anno Zero. 2010. “La protesta degli immigrati di Brescia” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4-INr6AX_g (Accessed June 30, 2015).

²³⁴ Giuseppe Spatola, “Sgomberati gli immigrati in sciopero.” *Corriere della Sera*. September 30, 2010.

²³⁵ Ramzi J., Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013.

intervene or support the movement. Local governmental institutions adopted a hard line by refusing to negotiate with the immigrants. This was consistent with the approach they had taken towards immigrants over the course of the previous two years and their characterization of immigration as a “problem of public order” and undocumented immigrants as “people with no rights.”²³⁶ Nevertheless, the protesters maintained the occupation and organized several initiatives at the national and local level for almost one month. Then, on October 30, the protest was marked by a turning point.

Another demonstration was organized by immigrants and their allies in the radical Left. The protesters had notified the local administration of the demonstration fifteen days in advance. However, a few days prior to the demonstration, authorities denied legal permission for the rally, claiming that it would interfere with another event in the city.²³⁷ But organizers decided to carry on with the unauthorized demonstration. One of the organizers of the event, Ramzi J., an undocumented immigrant from Egypt, told me during our interview:

[...] we decided to go ahead. We were determined! In order to impede our demonstration, there were barriers and policemen everywhere. Despite that, we were able to bring in the vans from a breach at the market. The policemen blocked everyone... Once [we were] in the square we started our demonstration... we continued shouting ‘demonstration!’ *No one can stop the right to demonstrate!* We brought the van and the megaphones. Our banners said: “For the right to stay, against *clandestinità* and exploitation!” and “For the rights and freedom of immigrants, against precariousness and poverty!” (Ramzi J. Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013).

Given the hostility of the police, some protesters opted for a radical strategy. As Yusuf A., an undocumented immigrant from Pakistan and one of the leaders of the protest, told me:

[...] the policemen showed their batons, to indicate that they were ready to beat us...At that point, seven of us left the demonstration. We took the banner on which

²³⁶ Spatola, “Sgomberati gli immigrati in sciopero.” *Corriere della Sera*. September 30, 2010.

²³⁷ During our interview, one of the young undocumented immigrants involved in the protest told me: “It was a time of really intense activities. We distributed more than 20,000 flyers in the province of Brescia for a few weeks. There were publications in many languages. We prepared the demonstration a long time before and then on the day of the demonstration we were told that our demonstration was not authorized. We were angry. We decided to go ahead anyway. We decided to do it at any cost” (Ibrahim M., Interview in Brescia, 8 September 2013).

there was written ‘AMNESTY!’ ...*we wanted to be visible...* we decided to go in the highest point of the city... we climbed up on a crane in the construction site at the center of the city (Yusuf A., Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013).

The young men who climbed onto the crane were undocumented immigrants, all males from different countries of origin who had spent between three and seven years in Italy and had applied for amnesty and felt “swindled by the state”: R. (35, from Morocco, four years in Italy), A. (24, from Pakistan, four years), J. (25, from Egypt, five years), S. (27, from Pakistan, three years), S. (26, from India, five years), P. (24, from Senegal, seven years).²³⁸ Hanging on a crane at 35 meters of altitude, they demanded five things: 1) to talk with the Minister of the Interior, the leader of the Northern League, Roberto Maroni; 2) a negotiation with local institutions (the local administration and the prefecture); 3) authorization for a permanent occupation in a visible place in the city; 4) the amnesty for all who had applied for it; and 5) guarantees that they would not face charges after the protest.²³⁹

To challenge the “unsatisfactory” negotiations with the prefecture and local authorities after being on the crane for three days, the spokesman of the protesters on the crane took the megaphone and shouted:

We won't come down! What do we have to lose? There are people here who have not been able to go back home for ten years, who are sick and cannot go to the doctor, who cannot have a decent job because they do not have a permit of stay. If this silence continues, we are ready to go further. We will start a hunger strike. Many under the crane would follow us. We don't care if we are getting sick. We know that we are risking our lives, but we want to fight. *We know we are right. We only want to be able to live. Are we asking too much? We won't come down until we receive acceptable answers.*²⁴⁰

He added that, “the sacrifice we are ready to make on the crane is not for us, but on behalf of thousands of people who have been swindled by the state.”²⁴¹ And he concluded, “Until today we have been always invisible... people who supply labor, at low cost. Now we are

²³⁸ A flyer distributed during the occupation under the crane read: “Who are our brothers on the crane?” Brescia, October 6, 2010. See also the article: “I protagonista della lotta” *Bresciaoggi*. November 4, 2010.

²³⁹ Stefano Galieni. “Se non ci danno risposte positive noi da qui non scendiamo.” *Liberazione*. November 3, 2010.

²⁴⁰ Spatola. “Sgomberati gli immigrati in sciopero.” *Corriere della Sera*. September 30, 2010.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

persons!”²⁴² Facing the complete stonewalling and repression by local authorities, the immigrants who were protesting on the crane and their supporters under the crane sustained their struggle for 17 days, until a decision to climb down was taken after long negotiations with the support of the Church and the local trade unions CGIL and CISL. The undocumented immigrants decided to climb down even though they had not received any answer by the authorities. But they did so on one condition: that they would be defended by the lawyers of Rights for All, the only ones they “really trusted” and who remained at the crane during the long days of resistance.²⁴³

6.1.1. Background to the “Struggle of the Crane” and protests by people of migrant background in Brescia

The Struggle of the Crane marked a very contentious and polarized moment in Brescia. It did not bring about the results protesters were hoping for. They did not succeed in meeting with Minister of the Interior, Roberto Maroni. They did not open a negotiation with the local authorities and the prefecture or receive authorization for a permanent occupation in the city. What is more, they did not obtain a “permit for all” for the undocumented immigrants who applied for the amnesty. Finally, they experienced repression and increased violence by local authorities. However, according to the people involved in the struggle, the protest was not a complete failure. The action did achieve a number of things: 1) it drew the attention of the media and public discourse toward the issues faced by undocumented immigrants; 2) it demonstrated the capacity of immigrants in Italy to fight injustice and endure very difficult conditions; and 3) it built greater solidarity between the mobilized immigrants and their allies, the radical left organizations. According to Ibrahim M. (an undocumented immigrant from Senegal): “The local government tried to intimidate those people who were very active in the movement. But they did not succeed. The more they tried to repress us, the stronger we would become” (Ibrahim M. Interview in Brescia, 8 September 2013). This situation resulted in the reinforcement of the migrant social movement in Brescia.

Yusuf A. explained that after the Struggle of the Crane ended in November 2010,

²⁴² Stefano Galieni. “Se non ci danno risposte positive noi da qui non scendiamo.” *Liberazione*. November 3, 2010.

²⁴³ Tiziano Zubani. “Ore 22.30: Il dialogo si riapre. Oggi la risposta dei 4 sulla gru.” *Bresciaoggi*, November 15, 2010. Paola Bonatelli. “I migranti giù dall gru, stremati dopo 17 giorni.” *Manifesto*. November 16, 2010. Paolo Berizzi, Tiziana de Giorgio. “Brescia, gli immigrati scendono dalla gru. ‘Ora un tavolo sulle truffe per i permessi.’” *La Repubblica*. November 16, 2010. Two of the protesters had already climbed down. The first was Kulib Singh, on the 10th of November and the second was Papa, on the 12th of November.

we left Brescia and we went everywhere in the rest of Italy. We went to talk with people. We talked about the Bossi-Fini Law, about how unfair and racist it was. We emphasized the importance of human value. And we talked about the enormous sufferings that immigrants have to go through. We told them about our comrades who were deported. We told them that they wanted to come back with a regular temporary permit of stay. We explained that we came to work and to improve our lives and not to steal jobs. We explained that the law didn't give us any alternative. We tried to make them understand that the fight has to continue ... the fight is necessary not only for immigrants, but for Italians themselves. It is a fight, as our organizations made clear, for the Rights for *All*, that is, for Italians as well. The states are rescinding the rights. The government, our governments, have to think of the rights of all, because the crisis is hitting everyone and we are all in the same situation. We have to fight to *give back* dignity and humanity to all people in this country. For this reason it is necessary to fight against an unjust law like the Bossi-Fini Law. It is a struggle for the Italian society as whole (Yusuf A., Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013).

The Struggle of the Crane represents a very interesting case to look at the alliances and conflicts in the city of Brescia and examine the role of multiple local actors in shaping participation of people of migrant background through their competing approaches to integration. The Struggle of the Crane in Brescia clearly caused major divisions in the city among organizations involved in the area of immigration. The first visible conflict emerged between two powerful “white” actors (the Church and the CISL) and two powerful “red” actors (the CGIL and the radical left-wing organizations). Additionally, the struggle illustrates the weak presence of the Democratic Party and its small impact in the local realm of immigration. Finally, the struggle suggests the presence of a migrant social movement and a strong alliance between people of migrant background active in the city with one main radical left-wing actor, the association Rights for All.

The following section (6.2) will identify the main actors shaping the local realm of immigration in Brescia in 2013 and describe how their approaches to integration allow the opening of channels of participation in the city. I will reconstruct the evolution that took place in the city since the end of the 1990s. In Section 6.3, I will introduce a selection of interviews with people of migrant background active in the city in different channels of participation. I will examine their perception of the opportunities of participation in the city and their ability to act upon the opportunities offered to them.

The chapter on Reggio Emilia was key to examining the role of more moderate and institutionalized left-wing actors (the administration and lay organizations) in opening the channels of civic participation in the city. It also showed the role of immigrant activists' mobilizations and alliances with these actors in contributing to shaping the realm of immigration in the directions opened by their allies. The chapter on Bologna was pivotal for investigating the role of both left-wing moderate lay organizations and radical actors (in particular the MCO) in supporting both civic and political participation in the city, and for assessing the role of immigrant activists in acting upon and contributing to shaping the channels of participation opened in the city. This chapter's study of the city of Brescia will examine the role of radical left-wing actors (and to a certain measure the radicalized left-wing union, the CGIL) in opening non-conventional channels of political participation in a context of complete institutional closure and the absence of relevant actors on the more moderate left. It will also assess how immigrant activists have appropriated the discourses and practices of these radical allies and have contributed to opening the channels of participation through radical forms of action.

6.2. The local realm of immigration in Brescia

At the time of my fieldwork in 2013, the local realm of immigration in Brescia was shaped by two main forces: on the one hand, two main "white" actors, the Church and the CISL, and on the other, more radicalized "red" actors, the CGIL and the radical left-wing organizations. At the time, the left-wing administration that had been in power since 2013 and the Democratic Party were a very marginal force in the local realm of immigration. Table 6.1 presents a schematic view of the main local actors shaping the local realm of immigration and their approaches to integration in 2013: assistance (A), intercultural (I) and political rights promotion (PRP) (see also Introduction of this dissertation). The number of stars represents the strength of each approach: one star indicates a weak investment in the approach, two stars a moderate one and three stars a strong one. The level of intervention depends primarily on the combination of two main factors: (1) the importance given to a specific approach by the local actor, and (2) the strength of that actor in the political arena and thus its ability to successfully promote that approach.

TABLE 6.1. Approaches to integration by local actors in Brescia in 2013

Political orientation	Local actors	A	I	PRP
	Right-wing administration (until May 2013)	-	-	-
“White” actors	Diocese and church-based organizations	***	-	-
	CISL	*	*	*
Institutional “red” actors	Democratic Party	-	-	*
	CGIL	***	-	**
Radical “red” actors	Radical left actors (Rights for all and Cross-point)	*	--	***
	Migrant social movement	-	-	***
Others	Immigrant associations	*	*	*

The table indicates the prevalence of two main approaches in the city. On the one hand, the assistance approach was promoted by the diocese, church-based organizations, the CISL and the CGIL. At the same time, the CGIL, the main radical left organization, Rights for All, and the migrant social movement, were promoting an approach based on political rights promotion. The table also indicates that, with the exception of the CISL and a few immigrant associations, local actors were not actively promoting an intercultural approach in the city. Additionally, a new radical left organization, Cross-point, was emerging as a relevant actor willing to empower immigrants in the city. This organization emerged during the Struggle of the Crane, following ideological conflicts within the radical Left. However, even though they were creating a new itinerary of participation from below in the city, they remained strongly linked to Rights for All in their activities and thus only a marginally autonomous actor (see below). Finally, the table suggests that the Democratic Party also adopted an approach based on political rights promotion, though a relatively weak one. In 2010, the Democratic Party created the Provincial Forum of Immigration, but as will be shown below, the Forum was very marginal within the Democratic Party and in the city in general. Overall, the table shows how the relevant channels of political participation opened in the city were promoted by radicalized left-wing actors: the CGIL, the radical left-wing organizations, and the migrant social movement. These actors promoted a political rights promotion approach and offered platforms for immigrants to convey their claims in non-conventional channels. While the

CGIL had lost some legitimacy *vis-à-vis* the migrant social movement in the city, the radical left organization Rights for All gained more influence since the Struggle of the Crane in 2010.

Table 6.2 offers a detailed list of the channels of participation opened by local actors, and indicates the most relevant channels of participation were non-conventional channels opened up by radical local actors. There was only a weak development of civic channels of participation.

Table 6.2. Opening of channels of participation by local actors and their relevance (1–weak to 3–strong) in Brescia in 2013

Local actors	Civic channels	Conventional political channels	Non-conventional political channels
Third-sector organizations	Promotion Immigrant associations (1)		Promotion immigrant associations linked to the radical left organizations (1)
CISL	CISL-ANOLF (1)	Inclusion at the individual level (functionaries) (1)	
Democratic Party	--	Provincial Forum of Immigration (1)	
CGIL	--	Inclusion at the individual level (functionaries) (1) Migrant Coordination Organization (1)	
Radical left actors	--		Mobilization of immigrants and occupations (3)
Migrant social movement	--		Mobilization of immigrants and occupation (3)

In the following section I will present the key local actors shaping the realm of immigration since 1998 and describe why and how they were opening channels of participation as they did in 2013.

6.2.1. *The role of local administrations*

From 1998 to 2008, the city of Brescia was governed by Mayor Paolo Corsini from the main left-wing party (the Democratic Party) for two mandates.²⁴⁴ A right-wing coalition government led by Mayor Adriano Paroli with a strong presence of the Northern League took power from 2008 until a left-wing government won the elections again in 2013 (Table 6.3). When the Struggle of the Crane took place in Brescia, the right-wing government had been in power for more than two years. Before 2008, the left-wing administrations had made some efforts in the area of immigration. However by 2013, five years of right-wing government had wiped out the few achievements of the previous left-wing administrations and left a major political void.

TABLE 6.3. Political orientation of the local administration in Brescia since 1998

Dates	1998-2003	2003-2008	2008-2013	2013-
Political orientation	Center-Left	Center-Left	Center-Right	Center-Left
Political Party	DS	DS and then PD since 2007	PDL	PD
Mayor	Paolo Corsini	Paolo Corsini	Adriano Paroli	Emilio del Bono

The left-wing administrations from 1998 to 2008

Aided by a high level of employment that guaranteed a good degree of economic integration for immigrants in the city as well as in the province of Brescia (CNEL 2009, 30; see also Chapter 2 for a detailed analysis),²⁴⁵ the Corsini administration promoted integration policies for immigrant workers. In order to go beyond the *laissez-faire* administrative style typical of “white” cities in Italy (Campomori 2008), the administration in Brescia attempted to adopt an interventionist administrative style in line with other left-wing administrations in Italy at that time (Caponio 2006a), and tried to avoid devolving integration policies to the third sector. However, unlike the left-wing governments of the two “red” cities of Reggio Emilia and Bologna in the 1990s, the administration of Brescia focused mainly on an assistance approach and gave little attention to the intercultural and political rights promotion approaches.

²⁴⁴ The Democratic Party was the Left-wing Democrats since 2007 (see Chapter 2).

²⁴⁵ Before the economic crisis at the end of 2000s, for many years the province of Brescia was not only the territory with the highest percentage of immigrants in Italy in relation to the local population, but also the province with the lowest rate of unemployment.

One of the most relevant initiatives carried out by the administration was the development of a centralized office, the Municipal Office for Foreigners (*Ufficio Municipale per Stranieri*), already in existence since 1989. The office was empowered by the Corsini administration with the intention of supporting new arrivals and enabling them to orient themselves in the city and have an easy access to services (Vittorio F., Interview in Brescia, 12 July 2013). I interviewed Vittorio F., the director of the Municipal Office for Foreigners during the Corsini administration. He explained that since 1998 the administration had intended to work with the idea that the public has to be actively involved in political decision-making. Housing and employment were considered foundational, because “they are the basis for the stabilization of formal democratic structures in the territory” (Vittorio F., Interview in Brescia, 12 July 2013).²⁴⁶ The concrete measures to promote people of foreign origin’s integration into Brescia were: 1) strengthening the centralized Municipal Office with the goal of reducing the problems in renewing documents for residency;²⁴⁷ 2) *diminishing conflicts* by helping individuals to enter into the area’s economy (mainly in the three sectors of agriculture, service, and factories) and by encouraging entrepreneurship “in order to give foreigners the possibility to make it while respecting basic rules”; 3) supporting the process of integration through social work in migrants’ neighborhoods (Vittorio F., Interview in Brescia, 12 July 2013); and 4) *monitoring the phenomenon of migration*, through the creation of an observatory within the municipality of Brescia, which focused on the examination of the labor market and housing (Fondazione ISMU 2010).

Vittorio F. explained that in 2006, during the last years of the Corsini administration, there was an attempt to promote a project meant to increase the political participation of people of foreign origin in the city. He explained that the administration wanted to avoid the “naive approach” supported by other left-wing administrations in Italy (between the end of the 1990s and of the 2000s) which created “parallel channels of participation like the Consultative Bodies” and promoted an alternative channel of participation through the project Civic Network: Brescia Open and Supportive (*Rete civica: Brescia aperta e*

²⁴⁶ On the role of the administration on these issues see document Fondazione ISMU (2010).

²⁴⁷ My key informants confirmed that the Corsini administration worked well by assisting people of foreign origin and by simplifying bureaucratic procedures, thanks to the work of the Municipal Office. “Together with Arezzo [Tuscany], we were the only city in Italy that launched this experiment in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior” (Carlo L., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

solidale) (Vittorio F., Interview in Brescia, 12 July 2013).²⁴⁸ Vittorio F. explained that goal of the project was “to promote *active citizenship*.”²⁴⁹ The idea of the project was that every neighborhood would have its own representative council. One main goal was to allow immigrants to participate by encouraging the election of two immigrants and two Italians, who would also be two women and two men. These representatives would speak for the neighborhood at the central level (of the municipal council), where they would deliberate about issues that concerned the city and in particular their own communities.²⁵⁰ Despite these good intentions, the project was still just beginning when the right-wing administration came to power in 2008 and canceled the program entirely.²⁵¹

The role of the Corsini administration in promoting integration at the level of services was widely recognized by my interviewees in the city. The director of the Migrants Center Association (*Associazione Centro Migranti*) of the diocese of Brescia, Benedetto G., expressed the point of view of many interviewees in the city that “in the 1990s, Brescia was an experimental-city” (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013). Furthermore, among the local institutions, the police headquarters and prefectures were relatively open in this period, which aided the work of the administration. One of my key informants from the city of Bergamo pointed out that, “before the right-wing administration with a strong presence of the Northern League arrived to destroy the work that had been done by the left-wing administration, Brescia was considered a *model* for other cities in Northern Italy on the subject of integration” (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013).

²⁴⁸ Paolo Attanasio. See “Progetto: ‘Rete civica: Brescia aperta e Solidale’” June 2008. <http://retedeidirittiedintegrazione-document.blogspot.ca/2009/06/progetto-rete-civica-brescia-aperta-e.html> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

²⁴⁹ He continued, “The project was called ‘civic network,’ because it operated in the public sphere in order to enforce processes of citizenship, and ‘open and supportive,’ because it was meant to be open to interculturalism and diversity. It was a project that intended to create trajectories of active participation by people of foreign origin and Italians alike at the level of neighborhoods” (Vittorio F., Interview in Brescia, 12 July 2013).

²⁵⁰ See the official site: <http://www.comune.brescia.it/servizi/servizisociali/servizistranieri/Pagine/bresciaApertaESolidale.aspx> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

See also Paolo Attanasio, “Progetto ‘Rete civica: Brescia aperta e solidale.’” *Rete dei diritti di integrazione*. June 3, 2009. <http://retedeidirittiedintegrazione-document.blogspot.it/2009/06/progetto-rete-civica-brescia-aperta-e.html> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

²⁵¹ Before 2008, sixteen groups had been formed and the way toward the construction of the central apparatus had been paved. With the right-wing administration, the project lost its support by local authorities and its funding, and thus its initial *élan* (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013).

Limited interventions in the realm of assistance

Notwithstanding some praiseworthy initiatives in the direction of assistance, most of my interviewees in Brescia acknowledged that the Corsini administration faced some major problems in this regard. The first set of challenges concerned the administrative style. Despite its will to adopt a more interventionist approach to integration, the administration was not able to move away from a *laissez-faire* approach and instead devolved many programs related to service-delivery and socialization to the third sector and in particular to the Church, thereby disempowering the public in favor of the private sector and failing to coordinate the third sector. As a representative of the Provincial Forum on Immigration of the Democratic Party told me during a meeting of the Forum: “At that time, different entities of the civil society were working on integration in the city and the Catholic world was very strongly present. However, what was missing was a link between all these entities. Everyone in the city talked with their own fellows. Among other things, the institutions did not provide the city with an institutional headquarters where the main associations could meet. In the past (1996-1999), at the provincial level there was a consultative body for immigrants. Everyone was represented: the immigrant associations, the Church, the trade unions, the prefecture and the police headquarters. Then the consultative body ceased to exist and it was never replaced with something else” (Field notes, Provincial Forum on Immigration PD Brescia, 10 September 2013).

The second problem was the lack of planning. One of my key informants told me that the left-wing administrations failed to “govern the process.” According to him, when the left-wing administration of Corsini was in power (1998-2003 and 2003-2008), there were many problems that “were not properly solved.” He explained:

The municipality of Brescia spent a large amount of money over ten years for social services, summer camps, etc. Yet, the real problem was the lack of an organic planning of the phenomenon as *a whole*. In the long run, instead of governing the processes, the Left watched them happen. Behind this attitude there was the assumption typical of the Center-Left of Catholic background: The motto is ‘one must welcome’ (Carlo L., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

Benedetto G., the director of the diocese’s Migrants Center Association, confirmed this point by saying: “The Left lacked the courage to develop enduring projects. The Municipal Office for Foreigners has never dealt with all it could. Some initiatives could

have developed more, but instead they have been slowed down by indecision and prudence by the Left. All they built was grounded on precariousness” (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013). What is more, one of the main negative consequences of the lack of planning was the creation of precarious public structures to support integration. My key informant offered an example of this point: “The current precariousness of the structures created to welcome people of foreign origin in the neighborhoods is the direct result of the lack of planning and vision by left-wing administrations. Today, these structures are facing the holes created by the short-sighted policies of the left-wing administration” (Carlo L., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). According to Benedetto G., it is also for this reason that when the new right-wing administration won in 2008, the municipal office was dismantled in no time. “Vittorio F. was the first to be bumped off. He was invited to leave the office the day after the elections.” For Benedetto G. this event is relevant because “it tells us a great deal about the responsibilities of the Center-Left. If the office had been created on more solid ground, if the work of the people had been based on something less precarious, maybe this would have not happened” (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013). Benedetto G. also suggested an explanation of why the left-wing authorities adopted their particular approach to integration: “The vision of politics is to work to give answers to people. But if the responses one gives do not contemplate a vision of the whole, then it becomes very complicated. Politics does not exist to satisfy a need, but for the interests of all. The fear felt by politicians today is due to a political culture that is not linked to the general interest” (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013).

Limited interventions in the realm of interculturalism and political rights promotion

In addition to their limited and problematic intervention in the realm of assistance, my research showed that the Corsini administration did not promote interventions in the direction of interculturalism and political rights promotion. While a lack of attention to interculturalism prevented the opening of viable civic channels of participation for the migrant population, the almost total lack of interest at the level of political rights promotion resulted in the absence of political channels of participation. As suggested above, interest in participation and the greater involvement of immigrants in the receiving society emerged very late in the administration’s mandate (only in 2006, with the Civic Network: Project Brescia Open and Supportive) and was not combined with other initiatives, such as the promotion of participation in local and immigrant associations or

projects addressing the issue of immigrant participation in schools and the public services. This lack of intervention toward an intercultural approach was visible in the absence of intercultural centers for immigrant associations and programs in schools, where the number of students with immigrant parents was growing. As for the Intercultural Centers, one member of the Provincial Forum on Immigration of the Democratic Party told me, “there was a lack of public space for immigrant associations. This was a problem because it prevented us [immigrants] from gaining more visibility in the city” (Field notes, Provincial Forum on Immigration PD Brescia, 10 September 2013). One of my key interviewees added that there were other lacunae in the domain of interculturalism. He said:

People of migrant background who used to collaborate with the left-wing administrations did mostly linguistic rather than intercultural mediation. With the exception of the introduction of cultural mediators in the hospitals and schools, very few initiatives were made on the issues of interculturalism. Additionally, in the past, there were a few cultural mediators who used to work with the left-wing administration, but now they are gone. As for the schools, there have been very few initiatives in the past, but now they are even more limited and sporadic. [...] A lot is left to the initiatives of individuals. Today, there is no planning and discrimination is very widespread. The real problem is that there has been a lack of an organic planning of the phenomenon as a whole (Carlo L., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

The right-wing administration from 2008 to 2013

Before they won the local elections in April 2008, the right-wing coalition led by Adriano Paroli (People of Freedom) and Fabio Rolfi (Northern League) launched a ferocious electoral campaign centered almost exclusively on the fight against “illegal immigration” and on the need for “more severe security” in the city.²⁵² Rolfi, the future deputy mayor of the city, gave several openly racist speeches and promised to reduce the number of immigrants, to eliminate the presence of irregular immigrants, and to increase safety in the city during his mandate. Among other things, he promised to close the

²⁵² The right-wing coalition entered into power in April 2008. The People of Freedom got 28.31% of the vote (14 seats out of 40) and the Northern League 15.83% (8 seats). The coalition won a total of 61,061 votes or 51.4% (24 seats). The left-wing coalition gained 42,483 votes or 35.76% (13 seats), of which 27.92% (11 seats) were for the Democratic Party. http://tg24.sky.it/tg24/speciale_elezioni/comunali/2008/lombardia/risultati_brescia.html (Accessed June 20, 2015).

Municipal Office for Migrants created by the left-wing administration in order to create a deterrent for immigrants who intended to move to Brescia during his mandate. As promised, the day after it won the elections, “the right-wing coalition closed the office with a phone call and dismantled it in no time” (Carlo L., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013).²⁵³

In addition to the closure of the Municipal Office for Foreigners, the approach to integration changed in Brescia since 2008. There was an explicit shift from economic and social integration policies to security policies. While policies of integration were abandoned, increasing money was spent to reinforce surveillance and the deputy major, Rolfi, acquired more control over the security force.²⁵⁴

What is more, during the right-wing administration, “a war against immigrants was launched” and manifestations of symbolic and material exclusion became more and more widespread in the city (Marta G., Interview in Brescia, 17 May 2013).²⁵⁵ As far as symbolic exclusion is concerned, the leader of the Northern League, Rolfi, issued several openly racist statements and was denounced on several occasions by the left-wing trade union, the CGIL.²⁵⁶ Yet, even more striking were the forms of discrimination and “differential treatment” towards immigrants in hospitals, in schools, and public spaces (Guariso 2013; Ambrosini 2013a). In his article, “‘We are against a multi-ethnic society!’ Policies of exclusion at the urban level in Italy,” Maurizio Ambrosini presents an overview of the practices of exclusion of right-wing administrations. These “discriminatory

²⁵³ On the closure of the office, see the article by Claudio Del Frate, 2008. “Brescia chiude l’ufficio migranti.” *Corriere della Sera*. October 9, 2008. http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2008/ottobre/09/Brescia_chiude_ufficio_immigrati_co_7_081009018.shtml (Accessed June 20, 2015).

²⁵⁴ It is emblematic that the project *Brescia Open and Supportive* that meant to create “spaces of cohabitation between Italians and immigrants” was replaced by a new project called *Brescia Città Sicura (Brescia Safe City)*. See in particular the document: Minister of the Interior, 2008. “Patto per Brescia Sicura” (Pact for Brescia Secure) http://www.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/15/0419_Patto_per_Brescia_Sicura.pdf

The document was signed in Brescia on July 28, 2008 by the prefect Francesco Paolo Tronca, the Mayor of Brescia Adriano Paroli and the Minister of the Interior Roberto Maroni, the then-chief of the Northern League. The latter individual defined Brescia on many occasions as a “model for the politics of security,” praising the initiatives of the right-wing administration. The city of Brescia was the first city in Italy to establish a collaboration with the central government on the urban struggle against criminality and to adopt measures to reinforce the power of the administration over the security forces.

²⁵⁵ Ambrosini (2013a) notes how “measures of local policies take form in various ways to combat the settlement, integration or expression of specific requirements on the part of immigrants. This resulted in 788 by-laws, issued between the summer of 2008 and that of 2009 by the 445 municipalities involved, mostly concentrated in Lombardy, Veneto and Friuli, but also with examples in a region ruled by a center-left party such as Emilia-Romagna” (Ambrosini 2013a, 142).

²⁵⁶ Italia Brontesi. “‘Razzista’: la CGIL denuncia Rolfi” *Corriere della Sera*, June 13, 2012. http://brescia.corriere.it/brescia/notizie/cronaca/12_giugno_13/20120613BRE02_16-201582224807.shtml (Accessed June 20, 2015)

measures” directly or indirectly targeted the immigrant population in the Lombardy Region and the province of Brescia between 2008 and 2010 (Ambrosini 2013a, 138).²⁵⁷

Ambrosini’s research shows that in the city of Brescia some of the most blatant discriminatory ordinances concerned: 1) cultural exclusion, such as the prohibition on playing cricket in the parks or using public spaces; 2) social exclusion, for example, limiting access by the migrant population to specific services; and 3) security exclusion, by reinforcing surveillance and by banning gatherings in public spaces.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, influenced by the local political context, supposedly “neutral” local institutions like the police headquarters and the prefecture became increasingly closed to people of foreign origin and also adopted discriminatory practices. As one member of the CGIL in charge of the office against discrimination told me:

[...] since 2008 there was lots of physical and psychological violence towards immigrants. Since immigrants were considered a “threat” to public security [by the right-wing administration], they were observed more and more and thus they experienced continuous violence and control by the police. The hostility of the local administration had an impact on other local institutions... They were much more controlled than the others... (Carmine E., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013).

In addition to the factors quoted above, the presence of the Northern League contributed “to widespread ignorance in the territory of Brescia.” One of my key informants, Luciano F., a priest and member of a church-based organization, acknowledged that:

With the Northern League in power, we have lost many opportunities. The climate has changed completely... let me give you an example. Last year [2012], there was an event organized by a member of the Northern League, the Assessor of Culture. There was the projection of a movie... there were 8 protagonists: four Italians and four immigrants. Among the people present at the event, there were many immigrants. Contrary to the evidence, the Assessor praised the initiative by highlighting how the

²⁵⁷ For an analysis of these ordinances see Ambrosini 2013a. The author identifies five types of exclusion in the city of Brescia: civil, social, cultural, security and economic (Ambrosini 2013a, 142).

²⁵⁸ Ambrosini (2013a, 147) argues that the prohibition on playing team games in the park is an example of “[O]pposition to the expression of other cultural features: this includes the prohibition of playing the game of cricket in public parks (Brescia), according to a new regulation that prohibits all team games and other activities, but whose main goal was to suppress an activity that is very popular among Pakistani and Indian immigrants, which produced substantial gatherings on public holidays.”

movie was representative of the *Brescian* identity. As you can see, there is a huge *ideological disconnect from reality* (Luciano F., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013).

According to the interviewee quoted above, the right-wing local authorities spread ignorance and misunderstanding in the city, thus encouraging a more exclusionary attitude among the Italian population. The example of the event described above suggests that the Northern League would practice forms of exclusion by denying the role of the immigrant population in contributing to shape the *Brescian* identity. According to Luciano F., the general hostility resulted in “a growth of social conflict” and undermined the “basic conditions for viable cohabitation and the positive insertion of people of foreign origin into the receiving society” (Luciano F., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013).

Taking everything into account, the right-wing administration that ruled the city from 2008 to 2013 not only wiped out the few initiatives that had been put in place by previous left-wing administrations, thereby destroying work that had already begun to yield clear benefits. They also adopted extreme forms of symbolic and material exclusion and contributed to the marginalization of the immigrant population and to the widening of the distance between the *Brescian* and immigrant communities (Luciano F., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013).

As far as the Struggle of the Crane is concerned, the hostile attitude adopted by the right-wing administration was at the heart of immigrants’ frustrations in the city. By institutionally discriminating against immigrants for more than two years, the administration contributed to their anger and perceptions of injustice (see below, Section 6.3). What is more, the attitude of the right-wing administration explains in great part why the protest started in the first place and why it was so long and mainly through non-conventional means. First of all, by adopting the Circular Manganelli during the amnesty, local authorities triggered the protest that started in September 2010 (see Section 6.1.1 of this chapter) and enhanced the perception of immigrants that they had been swindled by the state. Second, it contributed to the protest’s prolongation and radicalization by adopting an extremely hostile response favoring repression and violence over dialogue and negotiation.²⁵⁹ A few days after the event on the crane, the spokesman on the crane, Yusuf A. declared that the repression by the police had only reinforced their determination:

²⁵⁹ The mayor Paroli defined the requests by undocumented immigrants as “unacceptable blackmail,” while the deputy mayor, Rolfi, declared: “They can stay on the crane forever. They will never have the permit of stay, because they *have no rights* to have it according to the current legislation.” See Mimmo Varone. “La Lega chiude: ‘Sanatoria? Mai.’” *Bresciaoggi*. Novembre 6, 2010 and Anna della Moretta. “Il sindaco Adriano

After the police charge on Saturday [30 October] during the demonstration, impeding us from demonstrating for our rights when they evacuated our occupation [...], they did not know [it] but they made us stronger. It was like saying to us that we have nothing to lose.²⁶⁰

6.2.2. *The role of the diocese and the church-based organizations*

The “white” city of Brescia is characterized by a powerful presence of the Church. The diocese and the parishes in Brescia are very wealthy and dominate the third sector almost entirely, at the expense of lay organizations and cooperatives which are very weak and have little weight in the local political arena (Bolgiani 2009).²⁶¹ One of my key informants told me, “The role of the Church is crucial. The Church in Brescia is very powerful. It owns an incredible number of structures such as a soccer field and spaces where [people can] meet” (Carlo L., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).²⁶²

Since the end of the 1980s, the diocese foresaw the changes that immigration was going to bring about in Italian society and very early (in 1981) it created the Migrants Center Association, an office entirely dedicated to assisting immigrants in the city.²⁶³ Benedetto G., the director of the Center, explained that the goal of the Center was to conduct human promotion and to help immigrants and their families integrate into the social fabric of Brescia (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013). In the official site of the Center, one can read about its main goal of helping immigrants to regularize their status through bureaucratic itineraries and knowledge of the Italian

Paroli: ‘un ricatto inaccettabile.’” *Giornale di Brescia*. November 8, 2010. Rolfi also added: “It is they who are negating to the Brescians the right to work, to study, to free movement and to exercise their economic activities in the area where they are protesting.” Massimo Lanzini, “Paroli: offesa la città. Ora nuovo patto sociale.” *Giornale di Brescia*. November 6, 2010. See Irene Panighetti, “Resistono, nonostante la febbre.” *Bresciaoggi*. November 3, 2010 and Francesca Mantovani. “Rabbia e stanchezza, ma non molliamo.” *Liberazione*. November 5, 2010.

²⁶⁰ Stefano Galieni. “Se non ci danno risposte positive noi da qui non scendiamo.” *Liberazione*. November 3, 2010.

²⁶¹ In the official sites of the municipality and the province of Brescia the only page dedicated to “Foreigner” (*Stranieri*) is the page of the social services. Unlike the sites of Reggio Emilia and Bologna, there is no reference to associations *for immigrants* or associations *of immigrants*. For the page of the services offered to the immigrant population see <http://www.comune.brescia.it/servizi/servizisociali/servizistranieri/Pagine/default.aspx> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

²⁶² As pointed out in Chapter 3, in other “white” regions in Northern Italy, over the years public authorities have tended to devolve most social policies to the third sector and in particular to the Church. The powerful role of the diocese and church-based organizations in the city of Brescia is widely recognized by local authorities (on the “white” culture see Campomori 2008; Messina 2002).

²⁶³ Benedetto G. made clear that the Center collaborates with Caritas, because they have the economic capacity, but it belongs to the diocese.

language. Furthermore, the Center offers the following services: listening, bureaucratic instruction, residences, domestic work, and legal counseling. It aims to operate alongside other associations, including public authorities and religious institutions, in order to assist immigrants - in particular those in need. It also offers legal counseling for “complicated cases” (such as expulsions, violence against women and unaccompanied minors), and it also interacts with local institutions such as the police and the prefecture (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013). Finally, the Center is also devoted to providing religious guidance for immigrants.²⁶⁴

Importantly, the Center also pays great attention to the theme of political participation by people of foreign origin.²⁶⁵ Benedetto G. told me: “The theme of political participation is particularly important. According to us, integration is performed through the political participation of immigrants. For political participation comes even before any other need” (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013).²⁶⁶ Benedetto G. added that to this end the Center became involved with the Project Brescia Open and Supportive launched by the municipality in 2006 and interrupted by the right-wing coalition in 2008.

During the right-wing administration (2008-2013), when the project was stopped by local authorities, we decided to be in charge of the project, because we believed that the dignity of immigrants is conveyed by participation. Our Center supported the project, because we believed that attachment to the territory *is* linked to the life of the city (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013).

However, notwithstanding the efforts to support it, in 2013 the project was struggling to survive because of its very limited resources. Additionally, according to Benedetto G., a major difficulty of the project was related to the fact that people of foreign origin came

²⁶⁴ For a complete list of the activities promoted by the Center see the official site: http://www.diocesi.brescia.it/diocesi/uffici_servizi_di_curia/u_migranti/migranti.php?codice=88& (Accessed June 20, 2015).

²⁶⁵ As will be shown in Chapter 7, in Bergamo the Church has not addressed the issue of participation. This difference testifies to the fact that the Church itself is not a monolithic block that acts similarly everywhere, but is rather linked to its history in the territory and the context in which it interacts.

²⁶⁶ Benedetto G. continued: “Here in Brescia, as well as in the rest of Italy, it is impossible for people of foreign origin to become protagonists in the country in which they live under these general conditions. Our main concern is *the right to vote* in the local election, because it would force political parties to take into account the point of view of immigrants” (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013). See the official site: <http://bresciaapertaesolidale.wordpress.com/progetto/> (Accessed June 20, 2015)

from very different backgrounds, and it was complicated for them to negotiate and understand each other (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013).

All things considered, as early as the 1980s, the diocese in Brescia played a crucial role in shaping the local realm of immigration in the city by promoting an assistance approach, through the creation of a structured office to promote service delivery. However, the strong presence of the diocese and church-based organizations and their dominant assistance approach leads to certain limitations with respect to opening the channels of civic and political participation in the city.

Since 2008, the diocese has attempted to open the channels of participation in the city through its support of the Project Brescia Open and Supportive. However, beyond this initiative, there were no other attempts to open channels of participation. Furthermore, the diocese and the church-based organizations did not promote an intercultural approach in the city. On the contrary, they represented a major obstacle in this direction. One of my informants made clear that the places dedicated to social activities in the city were not “neutral” spaces but were managed with a religious approach.²⁶⁷ My informant went on to point out three major problems with this situation: The first problem is the lack of acknowledgement of difference and pluralism. “Unfortunately—he said—very often it is not possible to go beyond a religious logic.” The second problem was the “selection of the educators, which is also univocal.” He explained, “the selection of educators can depend on their belonging to a specific religious area rather than on their specific expertise or their commitment to the promotion of pluralism and diversity” (Carlo L., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). Finally:

[...] in the social centers in the province of Brescia they do catechisms for people of migrant background. Here it is hard to see the difference between the role of the Church and the social centers. Some priests take money from the municipality, but they use it for their own activities, not to promote the activities of the social centers (Carlo L., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

²⁶⁷ He clarified, “Supposedly, the Centers of Youth Aggregation (CAG—*Centri di Associazione Giovanile*) are public centers dislocated in the city where aggregation and socialization of the youth is encouraged. There are eight CAGs in the city. With the exception of two CAGs, one of which is managed by an order of monks and the other by the municipality, [...] six out of eight are *managed with a religious approach*. These centers are meant to host young people in the afternoon for recreational activities and sports. There are people in Brescia who believe that the CAG should do pastoral activities for everyone, independently from their origin and religious beliefs. The implications of the presence of the Church in these activities are subtle and not simple. A lay approach of the CAG would avoid the imposition of a religious view and would promote a more pluralistic approach (Carlo L., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

Thus, the strong presence of the Church makes it difficult to guarantee a neutral approach in the city and makes it harder to promote an intercultural approach that emphasizes the relevance of other cultural and religious views and the ability of immigrant groups to gain public space in the city.

Finally, the strong presence of the Church in the city also has consequences for the local realm of immigration and thus on the ability of other actors to open channels of participation. In particular, many of my interviewees in the city lamented that the strong presence of the Church prevented other organizations, such as immigrant associations and Italian lay associations, from developing in the city. In Chapters 4 and 5, I showed that in Reggio Emilia and Bologna, lay organizations were key actors in opening and enlarging civic and political channels of participation for people of migrant background through their promotion of an intercultural approach (as in Reggio Emilia) or both an intercultural and political rights promotion approach (as in Bologna). In Brescia, the weak development of these organizations was a major cause of the lack of civic and political channels opened in the city by moderate actors.

As far as the Struggle of the Crane was concerned, together with the two main trade unions (the CISL and CGIL), the diocese played a crucial *role of mediator* with the local institutions until the very end of the protest. However, the then-director of the Migrants Center Association, Father Mario Toffari, entered into a heated conflict with the radical Left and with protesting immigrants who felt that the diocese was going against their interests and right claims.²⁶⁸ Father Toffari was involved in the entire event, acting on behalf of the diocese and of the bishop, Luciano Monari. When the occupation of the crane began on October 30, Father Toffari made explicit the *political* stand of the diocese. On November 2, after the heavy use of violence by police against those under the crane, he

²⁶⁸ A major conflict emerged with a parish priest, Don Armando Nillo. At the beginning of the struggle, Don Nillo showed great solidarity with the protesters by offering spaces in his parish during the first days of struggle. He openly declared, “There must be an answer at the national level to find a solution for this injustice. [...] these people have been swindled and it is necessary to find a pathway to establish legality. I believe that the entire episode is extremely sad for all of us” (30 October). However, as the protest was protracted, he became very critical towards the radical Left. In particular, he was annoyed because members of the radical Left organized a press conference without his permission in the place he had made available to support the occupation. What is more, he was disappointed because on that occasion the radical Left declared that the diocese was in solidarity with the protesters. Don Nillo reacted to this declaration by saying: “It does not correspond to the truth. First of all, the diocese is not the parish. Second of all, we have tried to be in solidarity with those who suffer, never with those who bring forth a *political struggle full of manipulation, manipulation of which, we feel, we also have become victims*” (4 November). “Don Nillo: ‘Solidale con chi soffre, mai con chi vuole strumentalizzare.’” *Giornale di Brescia*. November 5, 2010.

condemned the police actions and criticized the right-wing administration for its “attempts to collect votes on the skin of immigrants, people who holds human rights as people.”²⁶⁹ However, he was also extremely critical towards this type of protest, saying that it was “at the limit of legality and there is no place for outlaws.”²⁷⁰ On different occasions, he also expressed his belief that the radical Left was manipulating the undocumented immigrants on the crane and accused them of exploiting the vulnerability of immigrants on the crane for political purposes.²⁷¹ These statements created conflicts not only with the radical left, but with the immigrants who were protesting on the crane, who believed that the Church in Brescia was not doing enough to help them and that Father Toffari should have supported their protest instead of criticizing them openly.

6.2.3. The role of the traditional “white” trade union: the CISL

In addition to the Church, the Christian democratic culture of the city over the years has also favored the strengthening of the CISL, the main Italian “white” trade union. At the beginning of the 1990s, the CISL created the association CISL-ANOLF to offer services to immigrant workers as well as to encourage an intercultural approach by favoring cultural exchanges between immigrants and Italians. The CISL-ANOLF promotes an approach to integration that supports “a culture of integration, of tolerance and respect” (CISL Brescia).²⁷² In Brescia, around twenty volunteers are involved with the office and organize both service provision and cultural activities such as conferences, meetings with the population, etc. The goal of these cultural and social activities is to ease the process of integration for both people of migrant background and the local population by “creating the conditions for a peaceful and viable cohabitation” (Marta G., Interview in Brescia, 17 May 2013).

²⁶⁹ Roberto Manieri, “L’ultimatum di Paroli: ‘Decidere subito o la parola al questore.’” *Giornale di Brescia*. November 2, 2010. Massimo Tedeschi. “Bruciati tutti i margini per chi vuole mediare.” *Bresciaoggi*. November 10, 2010.

²⁷⁰ Manieri, “L’ultimatum di Paroli: ‘Decidere subito o la parola al questore.’” *Giornale di Brescia*. November 2, 2010.

²⁷¹ On several occasions, Father Toffari put himself on the line in an attempt to find a compromise between the opponents, and to avoid extremism and protect the lives of immigrants on the crane. In trying to impede a degeneration of the situation, Father Toffari climbed up on the crane to try to talk with the immigrants and encourage them to climb down on two occasions (2 and 9 November). See Wilma Pentenzi. “La proposta: presidio e tavolo. Ancora una note di tensione.” *Bresciaoggi*. November 3, 2013. One day, after he had climbed up on the crane for the second time, he declared: “I found them very determined, sure of themselves. I had the impression they were manipulated.” Massimo Tedeschi. “Bruciati tutti I margini per chi vuole mediare.” *Bresciaoggi*. November 10, 2010.

²⁷² See official site: <http://www.cislbrechia.it/servizi/anolf> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

In line with this general approach, the CISL in Brescia responded to the climate of closure created by the rise of the Northern League in the 1990s. The president of the CISL-ANOLF, Marta G., explained:

[...] the reason why the CISL-ANOLF of Brescia focuses mainly on culture and education is to fight against the widespread ignorance of the local population promoted by the Northern League over the years. The Northern League switched from the war against immigrants to the war against foreigners! They generated enormous problems for coexistence. The reason is ignorance. Thus, the CISL-ANOLF has opted to support the cultural and intellectual potential of the territory (Marta G., Interview in Brescia, 17 May 2013).

Marta G. added, “Our approach reflects the logic of cohabitation. We look at the culture and intellectual potential. Only in this way can we hope to construct the basis of coexistence.” For this reason, she clarified, the CGIL was promoting initiatives in the schools of the territory of Brescia to sensitize teachers and students to the importance of respect and cohabitation.

All things considered, through the CISL-ANOLF, the CISL of Brescia has contributed to shaping the local realm of immigration by promoting both a service delivery (assistance) and intercultural approach. However, the CISL has also been criticized for not having done more in the protection of immigrant workers against discrimination and at the level of political rights promotion. As far as the first point is concerned, some interviewees noted that the CISL has been reluctant to get involved in important issues and guarantee the greater protection of immigrants. It has done less in these domains than the CGIL. During our interview, Benedetto G. told me:

Until 1994 I was secretary of the CISL, and in 2000 I arrived in the Center of the diocese. I have to admit that the most relevant incentives arrived from the CGIL rather than the CISL. This is paradoxical when you think that when I was at the CISL, the CGIL was our daily enemy. The CGIL has undoubtedly been more present and it has also paid much more attention to...its work on immigration (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013).

With respect to the second point, the CISL has not created platforms in the city that would assist immigrants in making political demands. As I clarified in Chapter 2, the general

approach of the national CISL has been to treat immigrant workers in their organization the same way as their Italian members. For this reason, the organization chose not to create specific forums or platforms to provide space for immigrant organizing within the union. In this respect, the organization has not addressed in its discourse the importance of including immigrants in the organization through quotas or other means.

Nonetheless, as in the case of Reggio Emilia, in Brescia there was an attempt by the CISL to push for a greater representation of immigrant workers in its organization and give them some visibility (probably stimulated by the work done by the CGIL in this direction—see below). In 2013, there were few individuals of migrant background with roles of responsibility: Mammadu F., a man from Senegal and a functionary of the metalworkers' sector (the FIM) and Anna E, a woman from Moldavia and a volunteer in the office of the CISL-ANOLF.

During the Struggle of the Crane, the CISL played a major role as a *mediator of the conflict* and followed the same political line as the diocese: it was present at all the negotiations with the local authorities and pushed for quick resolution of the “struggle” by privileging compromise over conflict. It was particularly critical of any extremism in the city, both by the administration and the protesters. The organization openly condemned the attitude of local authorities, but also criticized the “illegal” forms of protest adopted by those involved in the Struggle of the Crane. The secretary of the CISL, Renato Zaltieri, was the spokesman of the organization and was present throughout the struggle. Zaltieri highlighted the centrality of the rights of immigrants, but he also denounced those “who decided to organize an unauthorized demonstration.” He also emphasized that the protest was reinforcing “the fracture between immigrants and citizens. The latter need to be reached with information to make them understand what kind of injustices are inflicted on people who come into the country.” For this reason, during a press release, he asked the protesters “to bring the situation back to legality.” He also criticized the radical Left, “who use immigrants as an expedient for political conflict, thereby forgetting that there are people up there.” He added: “They must climb down! They are damaging the rights of other workers. [...] the right of someone to finish where others start!” He concluded by saying that the protest on the crane was “against the city!” Until the very end he promoted the idea that negotiation was the only way to go.²⁷³ Thus, as in the case of the Church, the

²⁷³ See Angela Dessì. “La CISL: ‘Manifestare sì, ma nel rispetto delle regole’” *Bresciaoggi*. November 3, 2010. The public line of the CISL was also shared by many of the people of migrant background who worked in the organization.

Struggle of the Crane reinforced the conflict between the CISL, the radical Left and the migrant social movement in the city. On their side, immigrants who were protesting felt abandoned by the trade union, which according to them was not working on their behalf as a defender of universal human rights (see below, Section 6.3).

6.2.4. The role of the traditional “red” trade union: the CGIL

The CGIL is very strong in the city of Brescia with more than 114, 000 people enrolled in 2012. These are relevant numbers in a white city, where the number of people enrolled in the CISL were around 100,000. The CGIL in the city is particularly radicalized. This characteristic is historically rooted and has been reinforced over the last two decades as a result of its involvement in issues related to the fight against institutional discrimination as well as immigrants’ protection and political rights promotion in the territory of Brescia. During our interview, the Secretary of the CGIL of Brescia, Giulio D., clarified that, in the area of immigration, the CGIL of Brescia had always been “in the forefront” in the area of assistance, advocacy and political rights promotion (Giulio D., Interview in Brescia, 15 July 2013).

With the first arrival of immigrants in the 1980s, the CGIL created the *Office for Foreigners* to assist immigrants’ needs, and also encouraged greater participation of immigrants in the workplace. In addition to supplying immigrants and their families with information and bureaucratic assistance, the CGIL in Brescia distinguished itself from other organizations in Italy by promoting immigrants’ political rights through the creation of a Migrant Coordination Organization attached to the Office (see Chapter 2 on the Migrant Coordination Organization of the CGIL). Khalid D. (originally from Morocco), the person in charge of the Office since the 2000s, pointed out that the role of the CGIL was remarkable in promoting participation of immigrants in the city:

[...] the CGIL of Brescia created a Migrant Coordination Organization to allow immigrants to stake their political claims within the organization and in the territory of Brescia. The Migrant Coordination Organization’s goal is to support immigrant workers’ self-organizing in the union and to provide a space where they can get together and bring forth their claims (Khalid D., Interview in Brescia, 15 July 2013).

In the official site of the Office, one can read that, through the Migration Coordination Organization, the CGIL “proposes to organize, participate and support anti-racist mobilizations against any form of institutional discrimination.”²⁷⁴

In the province of Brescia, around 30 per cent of people of foreign origin are enrolled in the CGIL. In some sectors, such as construction and agriculture, more than 40 per cent are of foreign origin (Khalid D., Interview in Brescia, 15 July 2013). Giulio D. added: “By now, there are eight people who have important responsibilities in our union in Brescia. There are two functionaries at the FIOM (metalworkers sector), two at the FILLEA (construction sector), two at the FLAI (agricultural sector), and two people in charge of the Office for Foreigners” (Giulio D., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013). However, Khalid D. (also an active member of the migrant social movement, see Section 6.3) highlighted that the organization had been more supportive of immigrants’ claims in the past. He explained that the organization had supported immigrants’ mobilizations and demands for better living and working conditions since the first waves of immigration in the 1980s and that it had been consistent in its approach since at least the first half of the 2000s (see also Giancola 2008/2009, 94).²⁷⁵ Finally, given the lack of attention by local authorities to the subject, the CGIL has also created the Forum of Immigrant Associations (*Forum delle Associazioni di Immigrati*) in the city, in order to encourage the participation of immigrants at the group level. Today it has little funding, but for a while “it was working pretty well” (Khalid D., Interview in Brescia, 15 July 2013).

In addition to the initiatives directed to empowering immigrants in Brescia, the CGIL has reacted to the growing presence of the Northern League in the territory of Brescia since the beginning of the 1990s, which has strongly influenced its more recent “radical” approach to integration and its work in the territory. As Rosa S., one of the main members of the CGIL put it:

²⁷⁴ See official page of the “Migration Coordination Organization”: http://194.244.4.156/cgil_bs/sito_sportelloimmigrati/?page_id=89 (Accessed June 20, 2015)

It is also remarkable that unlike the other Migrant Coordination Organizations in Reggio Emilia and Bologna, the Organization in Brescia has been coordinated by people of foreign origin—an immigrant from Senegal in the 2000s and then by Khalid D. from Morocco from 2010 until the year of my fieldwork, 2013. The fact that the CGIL gave this responsibility to these persons revealed the commitment of the organization to be more representative of the immigrant population and to give them more visibility.

²⁷⁵ Giancola (2009/2010) explains that, back in the 2000s, the CGIL offered complete support to the radical claims of immigrants during one major mobilization. However, my interviewees in Brescia in 2013 affirmed that this was not the case in 2010 during the Struggle of the Crane, which created major conflicts with the immigrants protesting on the crane and the immigrants active in the migrant social movement, including the immigrant members of the CGIL with roles of responsibility: a person from Morocco, a second person from Senegal, a functionary of the category of the construction sector (FILLEA), and a third person from Senegal who was in charge of the Office for Foreigners, and who left his role of responsibility after the Struggle of the Crane).

The CGIL in Brescia is very *strong and radical* not only with respect to those in Lombardy, but also to those in Emilia-Romagna. The CGIL of Brescia has been working for years to improve the difficult situations of immigrants that have been created by the strong presence of the Northern League in this territory (Rosa S., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013).

In this general context, the union has been particularly attentive to the protection of immigrants against *institutional discrimination*. Institutional discrimination explains why the CGIL in Brescia has expanded its activities in the city and in the province of Brescia in order to compensate for the institutional void reinforced by the presence of the Northern League.²⁷⁶

As Giulio D. told me, the CGIL has done five “relevant things” to contest the growing presence of the Northern League in the territory since the end of the 2000s. It has: 1) reinforced the Office for Foreigners; 2) pursued lawsuits against institutional discrimination, 3) created an Observatory Against Institutional Discrimination (*Osservatorio contro la discriminazione istituzionale*); 4) established a legal office; and 5) invested in the workplace and promoted participation of people of foreign origin through the support of workshops and other formative activities (Giulio D., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013). Giulio D explained that, “with respect with the Office for Foreigners, in the last five years [2008-2013], when the Office of the municipality was closed by the right-wing administration, the Office of the CGIL reinforced its work for the residents of other municipalities in the province of Brescia” in order to offer basic orientation and services (Giulio D., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013). As far as lawsuits are concerned, between 2009 and 2013, the CGIL pursued around 36 cases to fight against the practices of the Northern League in the province of Brescia (Guariso 2013). This was an absolute novelty in the national context. The lawyer Alberto Guariso, an executive member of the ASGI, or Association for the Juridical Studies on Immigration (*Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici*

²⁷⁶Giulio D. highlighted: “In contrast with Emilia-Romagna, the most important characteristic of this region [Lombardy] and other regions of the North, such as Veneto and Friuli Venice Giulia, is the strong presence of the Northern League, both at the regional and local level. Our office is among the most advanced in Italy. In Emilia-Romagna, the regions have created a document that establishes guidelines in order to deter municipalities from having discriminatory attitudes, behaviors, and ordinances. In Tuscany, two weeks ago [end of June 2013], they put an end to the distinction between foreigners and Italians when it comes to employment in the public sector. This is undoubtedly an example of a positive step towards the conquest of equality. In Brescia, there has been a battle to gain parity with the ASL (thus the equal access to the health system) and parity with the labor system. We wanted to affirm that Italians and foreigners should have the same treatment” (Giulio D., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013; emphasis mine).

sull'Immigrazione) and president of the association Association of Pro-Bono Lawyers (*Avvocati per Niente*), is a national expert on workers rights and civil rights in general. He worked in collaboration with the CGIL of Brescia and pursued the most difficult cases of discrimination towards immigrants in the territory of Brescia, some of which garnered important coverage by the national media (Ambrosini 2013b, 319).²⁷⁷ While the Observatory Against Institutional Discrimination was officially established by the CGIL in 2009, the person in charge of the Observatory, Carmine E., told me that, “many activities had been around already for almost twenty years” (Carmine E., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013). He continued: “*De facto*, the Observatory existed since 1986. At that time, there was the first major amnesty in the history of Italy and we were already very active on these issues. Moreover, in 1998 and 1999, there was the crisis in the Balkan region” and the CGIL “got involved in anti-discrimination actions, on the topic of social policies and prisons” (Carmine E., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013). The CGIL has also sponsored a decentralized legal office to follow the cases of discrimination in the province. Giulio D. observed, “The province of Brescia is the biggest province of Italy. More than thirty offices have been created in this vast province in order to deal with the extreme situation of institutional discrimination that questions basic rights” (Giulio D., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013). Finally, the CGIL promoted the political engagement of people of foreign origin through workshops and other training activities. It also supported some of the immigrants’ mobilizations in the city, such as the First of March 2010 strike and the Struggle of the Crane before it became too radicalized, as well as other mobilizations in the following years until 2013. Taking everything into account, the CGIL has been a key actor since the 1990s in the city of Brescia and has been crucial in shaping the local realm of immigration by promoting assistance and advocacy and by empowering people of migrant background in the city. The trade union clearly expanded its work during the years in which the right-wing government was in power, between 2008 and 2013.

²⁷⁷The most famous event was that of the Baby Bonus (*Bonus Bebé*) (Guariso 2013). In Lombardy, in 2010 an economic bonus was given to help families that had a new baby. The Northern League said that, if the baby didn’t have at least one Italian parent, the family could not have the bonus. The CGIL pursued the Northern League and the cause was won on the ground that this would imply a “different treatment” and thus it was against the third article of the Italian Constitution (see also Guariso 2013; Ambrosini 2013b, 319). Another significant episode happened in the municipality of Adro, in the province of Brescia. The lawsuit was brought forth at the European level. As Giulio D. explained “At Adro, in a public school, the Northern League put the symbol of its political party in all classes, desks, and lockers of the school. The legal cause was conducted by calling to the fact that these practices challenged professors’ beliefs. It was the first case in Europe of this kind.” As all lawsuits settled by the CGIL and its allies, the two cases cited above were won (Giulio D., Interview in Brescia, 11 July 2013; see also Guariso 2013).

Despite these important organizational strengths, radical left actors and people of migrant background active in the migrant social movement have critiqued the CGIL for being too moderate in the last half of the 2000s, particularly during the Struggle of the Crane. During the Struggle of the Crane, the CGIL was more supportive than the other traditional actors, such as the Church and the CISL. At the very beginning of the protest in September, it offered its material support. However, unlike in the past (see below on the struggle of the 2000s), the CGIL did not support immigrants' radical demands all the way until the end. According to people of migrant background active in the migrant social movement (including people who were part of the organization, such as Khalid D.) during the greatest moments of tension (when the protesters climbed on the crane) the CGIL was present at the negotiations but did not offer material support to the protest as in the past. This caused conflicts with the radical Left and immigrant mobilization during the struggle. The radical Left had actively supported the protest from the beginning to the end and they strongly criticized the CGIL for its "ambiguous" behavior.

6.2.5. *The role of the Democratic Party*

In Brescia, the main left-wing political party in the city is the Democratic Party, while more radical left-wing parties, such as the Communist Refoundation Party, are almost nonexistent. Since the 1990s, the moderate Left political party, then called the Democrats of the Left (*Democratici di Sinistra*) and now the Democratic Party, has done little in the city to encourage the participation of people of migrant background in their organizations, not promoting candidates of migrant background or creating platforms for participation. Many interviewees in Brescia emphasized that, "the Democratic Party in the city has not gotten directly involved in the realm of immigration for many years, and in so doing it has left a huge gap that other organizations, such as the radical Left, have filled" (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). What is more, in recent years, they have continued to adopt an "ambiguous" approach and have been seen as "using immigrants rather than encouraging their participation" (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

In the first months of 2010, the Democratic Party created the first *Provincial Forum on Immigration* in Brescia, which followed on the heels of the National Forum (founded in June 2010). The coordinator of the Forum is an Italian member of the political party, Giovanna Bennini. Bennini had been particularly active on the issue of immigration in the city since the 1990s and she encouraged the involvement of people of migrant background,

mainly those active in immigrant associations in the city. It is important to note that, in contrast with the Provincial Forums of Immigration of Bologna and Reggio Emilia, of which the coordinators are people of migrant background (Donald R. in Bologna and Reda B. in Reggio Emilia), in Brescia the person in charge of the Provincial Forum has always been Bennini.

Within the Democratic Party, the Provincial Forum has been particularly isolated. One of the members of the Forum, Bujar A. (Albania), told me that he got involved in the Forum when Bennini reached out and asked him to join the group. He acknowledged that that was a good thing, but he also complained that, in three years “no one asked [him] to come out of the shell [of the Forum]” and get more involved in the Democratic Party (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). According to Bujar A., this was the case “because talking about immigrants makes [the party] lose votes and left-wing politicians preferred to avoid the subject” (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). He went on to describe that the Provincial Forum was created through a citizen initiative to force politics in general and the Democratic Party in particular to address the subject of integration more directly and courageously, and “to encourage people of migrant background’s political awareness” (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). According to him, this had never been done in Brescia by the main left-wing parties in the city.²⁷⁸ He also stated that the Provincial Forum was only a façade and did not have the power to do anything: “It is very weak and the decisions it can take are extremely limited. Thus the Forum is far from being a relevant actor in the city” (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).²⁷⁹ One of the members of the Forum on Immigration stated that:

²⁷⁸ See also *Piano di Lavoro Forum Immigrazione PD Brescia anno 2014* <http://www.pdbrescia.it/attachments/article/3352/Piano%20di%20lavoro%20Forum%20Immigrazione%20provinciale%20del%20PD%202014.pdf> (Accessed June 20, 2015). In the document, one can identify how the Forum intended to “force politics” to engage with major issues linked to immigration and integration in general and to the territory of Brescia in particular.

²⁷⁹ Bujar A. added that, “In 2013, the Democratic Party’s position was to grant all people of foreign origin resident in the city the right to vote in primary elections. [...] the Democratic Party allowed all non-EU citizens to vote” (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). However, Bujar A. commented: “In Brescia there were more than 100,000 people of foreign origin who could vote. In the last elections only 1,000 voted. It is less than 1 per cent of those who could vote. We need to help people of foreign origin to get closer to politics” (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). For this reason, the Forum organizes courses on political formation for people of foreign origin. “This initiative is particularly important,” Bujar A. explained, “yet it is a drop in the ocean” (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

The real problem is the right to vote. As long as immigrants do not have the right to vote, there is little chance that the political parties will take immigration seriously into consideration. However, the Forum on Immigration at the national level has been working on the promotion of greater inclusion through the Forum. The Democratic Party in Brescia is slower than other local counterparts (such as in the territories of Emilia-Romagna) (Field notes, Meeting Provincial Forum of Immigration Democratic Party, Brescia, 10 September 2013).

During the Brescian local elections of 2013, ten people of foreign origin ran on the electoral slate of the left-wing coalition. Together they gained a bit more than 500 votes.²⁸⁰ However, one has to be very cautious when evaluating these practices. A Donald R. explained, “when the local administration candidates put too many people of foreign origin on the same list, one of its main goals is to get the votes of people of foreign origin who have naturalized, while impeding any candidate of foreign origin from succeeding” (Donald R., Interview in Bologna, 5 June 2013). Put differently, this is a way for the party to take the votes of people of migrant background and also to give the impression that the party is inclusive towards immigrants, without granting them real representation in the administration.

As far as the Struggle of the Crane is concerned, in line with the generally hesitant approach described above, many key members of the Democratic Party showed very little support for the immigrant mobilizations and attempted to limit their exposure as much as possible, clearly fearing disapproval by the electorate in Brescia. On November 3, 2010, three days after immigrants had climbed onto the crane, the Democratic Party asked immigrants to climb down and stop the protest, because they considered it to be “detrimental for themselves [the immigrants] and the city.” The provincial secretary of the Democratic Party, Pietro Bisinella, encouraged the dialogue and the negotiation and asked immigrants to make an effort of *détente*: “Local institutions are ready to negotiate, but negotiations will start when immigrants will climb down from the crane.” He added: “The Democrats are ready to ask for a legal occupation to give immigrants the opportunity to keep attention high on the reasons for their discontent.” However, “now it is necessary to unblock a situation that is jeopardizing the image of the city and is dangerous for those who are in the crane.” Emilio del Bono, the future mayor of the city and then leader of the

²⁸⁰ See Manuel Venturi. “Loggia, sempre più stranieri e giovani donne.” *Bresciaoggi.it*. April 29, 2013. http://www.bresciaoggi.it/stories/Home/503412_loggia_sempre_pistranieri_e_giovani_donne/ (Accessed June 20, 2015).

opposition in the administration, talked about the “necessity to respect legality,” and did not show up to the square during the Struggle of the Crane.²⁸¹

6.2.6. *The role of the radical left-wing organizations and the migrant social movement*

The radical left organization and the migrant social movement occupy a very significant place in the city of Brescia, and are key in shaping the local realm of immigration in the direction of political rights promotion. During our interview, Vinicio M., one of the lawyers linked to the radical Left, said, “It is obvious what the antagonist left does in the city. Local institutions as well as social and political forces have no other choice but to recognize this fact” (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013). Vinicio M. made clear that, “political participation by people of foreign origin in the city of Brescia almost always passes through two actors: the radical Left and the organizations attached to Rights for All and the CGIL.” He added that in some cases “the mosques have also played a role in the city, but they are marginal compared to these two actors” (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013).

Since the 1990s, together with the CGIL, the radical left-wing organizations have contributed to putting the issue of political rights promotion of people of migrant background at the center of local attention and have supported mobilizations organized by people of migrant background. During our interview, Vinicio M. clarified that in the city there are four main actors linked to the radical Left: the well-established association Rights for All, the Social Center Warehouse 47 (*Magazzino 47*), the Radio Collision Wave (*Radio Onda d’Urto*), and Cross-point, a more recent organization established in 2010 after the Struggle of the Crane which “is trying to construct its own itinerary of participation in the city” (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013). As he explained:

Rights for All is the oldest organization and keeps all the other organizations of the radical Left together. It is open to all the groups that belong to the radical Left in a large sense and its convergences and assemblies are organized at the Social Center Warehouse 47” (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013).

²⁸¹ Carlo Muzzi. “PD: Scendano, poi si tratta.” *Giornale di Brescia*. November 3, 2010. Bisinella declared that the Party was ready to ask for a table of negotiation, but only after immigrants had come down from the crane. Emilio del Bono limited his intervention to the following statement: “The right of each person must be respected and also legality.”

Like Rights for All, the Radio Collision Wave and the Social Center Warehouse 47 have existed since the 1990s and have been active in the radical Left in the city. As Vinicio M. pointed out, “probably because of the dimension of the city—not too big not too small—people of different political orientation converge in one of these groups.” The radio is very important, because in addition to information, “it supports politics in the area” by following the struggles while they are happening (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013).

The history of Rights for All and the emergence of a migrant social movement in Brescia are closely interrelated: the organizations Rights for All was key in supporting spontaneous mobilizations by people of migrant background in the city in the 1990s and the 2000s, and at the same time mobilizations by people of migrant background have allowed the strengthening of the radical Left in the city. Together these mobilizations have resulted in the development and endurance of a migrant social movement in the city.²⁸² The history of these two entities can be divided into three key moments, each separated by about one decade: 1) the struggle of 1991, when the first mobilization by immigrants took place around the problem of housing; 2) the struggle of 2000 against the failures of the amnesty program launched by the left-wing government in 1998; and 3) the Struggle of the Crane in 2010, against the amnesty program launched by right-wing government in 2009.

Vinicio M. reconstructed the history during our interview. He explained that Rights for All was born in the first years of the 1990s, as a further development of the radical left movement in the city. “From the beginning, he argued, their mandate expressed a commitment to the recognition of immigrants as subjects with rights independent of their [legal] statuses.” Vinicio M. made clear that the radical Left in Brescia intervened on the issue of immigration because “it is committed to the universalization of human rights, against the exploitation of individuals, independent of their statuses.” Also, according to him, the universalistic understanding of rights of the radical Left “is embedded in the Catholic culture” (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013). Vinicio M. added that to deal with the situation of immigrants in the 1990s meant to welcome them in the city (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013).

At the beginning of the 1990s in Brescia, there were some centers of first welcoming, mainly offered by the Church, but there was a lack of intervention by local authorities

²⁸² For a reconstruction of the first phase of mobilizations in Brescia between the 1990s and the 2000s, see Giancola 2008/2009. It is important to highlight that the support of the CGIL was also very important during all these years.

(CNEL 1991, 60). For this reason, there was a severe lack of housing for immigrants at this time, which led immigrants to stage several illegal occupations (see Giancola 2008/2009, 65-70). The most clamorous occurred in 1991, when around four hundred occupied the Motel Agip (CNEL 1991, 60; see also Giancola 2008/2009, 70-75). Vinicio M. commented: “It was a multiethnic group. There were people from North Africa, Pakistan and India. Many were from Senegal. The involvement by the radical Left started in those years.” He added: “these were years when it was particularly hard to talk about the participation and self-determination of immigrants. We got involved in a situation in which institutions had not responded promptly and adequately” to the problem of immigrant workers’ housing. Among other things, he was keen to let me know that immigrants were the first to organize the occupations and that the radical Left simply decided to support them (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013). He added: “around one hundred families had been deported and we attempted a very quick operation to avoid other deportations. We occupied a school. There was a negotiation with the prefecture and we managed to find a place for them both in the city and in the province” (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013).²⁸³ Vinicio M. explained that, in addition to the radical Left, other organizations also got involved to support the immigrants: the Church, which was the first to respond in the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, and the CGIL, which “soon got involved and created the Office for Foreigners.” On the other hand, “the CISL, the moderate left and the Communist Refoundation Party did very little” (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013).

The second major phase of the development of Rights for All and the migrant movement in the city of Brescia took place in the year 2000. At that time, the movement focused on the new policy on amnesty, which was launched with the Turco-Napolitano Law by the left-wing government in 1998 (see Giancola 2008/2009, 86). In 2000, two years after the mass regularization, many people still had not received an answer. Vinicio M. said:

At that time people used to go to the prefecture. There were endless lines. There had been a huge demonstration with an incredible number of immigrants. It was the first

²⁸³ The official document of the CNEL (*Società e Istituzioni di fronte al processo migratorio*) highlights that, following prolonged protests of both immigrants and social forces, the administration left the building to the occupants and legalized their occupation (CNEL 1991, 60).

public demonstration in the city. Then, things escalated. There were other occupations and then demonstrations in Piazza Loggia, in front of the city hall.²⁸⁴

According to Vinicio M., this moment of great tension was “at the origin of the social movement of immigrants in Brescia.” It led to a 50-day protest movement “that had as participants a few hundred immigrants and lasted in its entirety a few months, with a continuous occupation of the squares of the city, bringing them to direct negotiations with the national government and a political victory” (Giancola 2008/2009, 85). The protest at that time was very important because it forced the left-wing government to respond to the immigrants’ request for permits for all those who were excluded from the amnesty.²⁸⁵ Thus this mobilization was crucial for the formation and consolidation of the migrant social movement in Brescia. Vinicio M. pointed out:

It was the first mobilization for immigrants by immigrants. A Caravan of Rights [*La Caravana dei diritti*] was also organized by immigrants with the help of the Italian militants. The Caravan crossed the country and arrived in Rome the same year. The goal was to ask political institutions to resolve the general situation of immigrants in Italy. In this respect, the year 2000 represented a watershed with respect to the model based on emergency. That year represented a turn because there was a more structured intervention by the radical Left and also a clear self-determination of immigrants in the city.²⁸⁶

Vinicio M. explained why the first great division between the moderates and the radical Left on the issue of immigration also took place in those years. The conflict that emerged in Brescia reflected the wider situation in Italy. It became evident once the Turco-Napolitano Law, introduced by a left-wing majority, made explicit the “link between the permit of stay and the work permit... In the legislation, the immigrant is not seen as a subject with rights, but as an economic subject, as a simple labor force” (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013). For this reason, the radical Left at that time worked on the redefinition of the concept of citizenship: “Challenging the concept means to question the system and the State, and the place of immigrants within it.” Since then, the struggle of the radical Left against the link between the permit of stay and the work permit

²⁸⁴ See also Giancola 2008/2009, 85-148.

²⁸⁵ See *ibid.*, 123-124.

²⁸⁶ See also *ibid.*, 113.

has been a struggle for equal access to rights independent of one's legal status. That is why the association is called Rights for All—to emphasize the idea that rights are attached to individuals and not to citizens of a specific country (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013). Thus, at the beginning of the 2000s, the development of the migrant social movement in Brescia went hand in hand with the creation of the Social Forums and the Table of Migrants after Genoa 2001, and the G8 protests. Vinicio M. explained, “With the year 2001, the period of the Social Forum started and a Social Forum of Brescia was created then.” In 2000s, the radical Left created the Social Center Warehouse 47, a space to meet with the Table of Migrants, and since then the place “has worked in support of immigrants’ mobilizations” (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013).

The third significant moment of the development of Rights for All and the migrant social movement in Brescia was in 2010, during the Struggle of the Crane. The association offered material and logistical support to the struggle until the very end of the protest and even afterwards. Vinicio M. made the point that the mobilization, like the previous one, started from immigrants in the city and that the radical Left offered support when they were asked for it. He added that during the long months of the protest, the close contact between Italian and immigrant protesters created new bonds among people active in the radical Left of Brescia, and that this had a long-lasting impact. This point of view was shared by most immigrants active in the migrant social movement. They all agreed that the Struggle of the Crane started from immigrants, who asked for the support of Rights for All, and they also believed that the Struggle of the Crane was a crucial moment in the reinforcement of the social movement in Brescia (see below).

It is important to note that during the Struggle of the Crane the radical left organizations experienced deep tensions, and that they came out from the struggle with irreconcilable internal divisions. A new organization, Cross-point, was born during the struggle, thanks to the initiatives of some women who were very active in the struggle as well as in earlier struggles of the 2000s. Their concern was to reflect on and challenge the traditional approach adopted by the radical left-wing organizations on immigration and on people. They challenged the approach of Rights for All, claiming that what needed to be privileged was the “encounter” of difference based on gender and also on cultural background (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013).²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ See official site: <http://cross-point.gnumerica.org/en/> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

As the key members of Cross-point told me during the organization's weekly meetings and informal meetings, the members of the new group, mainly Italian women, wanted to distance themselves from the rhetoric of the traditional association Rights for All, because they saw it as opposed to alternative approaches to the mobilization of immigrants. They believed that it was necessary to move towards a more inclusive approach to integration within the Brescian social movement by considering the role of diversity and pluralism.²⁸⁸ During one of the weekly meetings of the organization, one of the members told me:

We come from the experience of the radical Left and of the social centers. However, we believe that we need to change the approach to our claims. The Struggle of the Crane has shown that the movement has been transformed by immigration and by the participation of people who come from many different places and have different visions of the world. We privilege the idea of encounters and hybridization. The Struggle of the Crane has had a role in this process of hybridization and we believe that this fact needs to be encouraged because this is the way to go (Field note Brescia, 9 September 2010).

The lawyer Vinicio M. clarified how after the Struggle of the Crane, Rights for All had concentrated on struggles against evictions, resulting from the financial crisis that started in 2008. The organization helped Italians and immigrants alike in their struggles for housing. The organizations supported the struggle against evictions by organizing weekly meetings, supporting the pickets and the mobilizations at the national and local level, and by organizing the occupation of empty buildings. Vinicio M. explained, "The struggle is now against evictions. Here you can see the real self-determination of people of foreign origin in the territory of Brescia at work. They are very active in the picket lines to impede eviction of their peers" (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013). In 2013, unlike Rights for All, Cross-point was concentrating mostly on protesting against the slowness of the mass regularization that was launched in 2012. During my fieldwork, it organized weekly meetings in front of the prefectures to protest against the government's delays, and a major demonstration took place in the city on September 28, 2013. At that time, the organization was still very weak and had to ask for the support of Rights for All. However, it was working to develop its own trajectory in the city, one that would be

²⁸⁸ Vinicio M. added: "I think that the discourse is linked to the need to be recognized by the women in the movement. It is about a divergence that translates into practices. This is why they talk about 'crossing' and 'recognition'" (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013).

independent of Rights for All. All things considered, the radical left-wing actors significantly affected the local realm of immigration in the city of Brescia and contributed greatly to opening channels for political participation available since the 1990s.

Some of the main advantages of the strong presence of the radical Left in the city identified by local actors were: 1) filling gaps left empty by the institutions by offering assistance beyond the usual delivery of services, space for meetings and radio for the immigrant communities;²⁸⁹ and 2) preventing other more institutionalized organizations from occupying all the space in the city, and thus challenging the status quo and their traditional positions with respect to immigrants' rights. This forced the more moderate organizations (the Church, CISL and left-wing political parties) to respond more promptly to questions linked to the needs of immigrants (for instance, see the evictions in 1991 and in 2010). The radical Left forced more moderate organizations in the city to consider the issue of immigrants' inclusion and political participation more seriously (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). Finally, it put social and political conflict at the center of the political debate (Carlo L., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

However, my interviewees also identified some drawbacks. First, as Vinicio M. clarified, "the organization hinders the creation of other organizations. Among other things, it impeded immigrant associations in the city from acquiring political relevance" (Vinicio M., Interview in Brescia, 6 September 2013). The radical Left was also widely criticized by more moderate local actors in the city. Most of my interviewees agreed that the radical Left in the city privileges political self-determination over protection. This can be a problem because it exposes people in very vulnerable conditions to the repression of the state (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013).²⁹⁰ Additionally, it was said that the radical Left privileges a megaphone culture and makes instrumental use of immigrants to gain power in the political arena (Marta G., Interview in Brescia, 17 May

²⁸⁹ The Radio and the Social Center Warehouse 47 are also available to the immigrant communities. In particular, the Radio is used by some immigrant communities to do some activities linked to their associations.

²⁹⁰ Benedetto G., for instance, commented that given the extremely vulnerable conditions of people of foreign origin in Brescia (in particular undocumented immigrants), they can be more easily manipulated by local actors. "It is pretty easy to use immigrants. Even the Northern League knows how to use them. In the province of Bergamo they have one who they tell to say: "stop with niggers!" Groups like Rights for All attract those who are desperate, and because these latter see someone with open arms they fling themselves at them. If they want to find their way through, immigrants have to grow, know, and understand the reality in which they live. On our end, we have the duty to help them because they can't make it alone" (Benedetto G., Interview in Brescia, 11 November 2013).

2013).²⁹¹ This criticism came not only from Italian actors, but also from people of immigrant background. For instance, during our interview, Mammadu F. (Senegal), a functionary of the CISL in the category of the FIM (metalworkers), told me:

I do not agree with extremism. It is time that the law is equal for everybody. In Italy they treat immigrants as they want. Things change with the administrations. I am against the idea of bringing immigrants into the streets [to protest]. I want immigrants and Italians together. Here in Brescia there is a tendency to mobilize only immigrants. If we are divided it is not good. We must go together. Some bring the people to the squares to have visibility. These people tell immigrants: ‘We go together, six and seven immigrants, with no Italians!’ They tell them, ‘Do this and you will have your documents!’ The Struggle of the Crane was a big error. What have we gained?! The result was that the city was divided in two! We can defend our rights without being extremists! (Mammadu F., Interview in Brescia, 25 May 2013).

Finally, by framing migrant claims in a very specific way and focusing primarily on the residency permit and work permit, the radical Left leaves aside other crucial considerations linked to the processes of integration, including interculturalism (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

Major criticism also emerged during the Struggle of the Crane from more moderate actors, in particular of the means used by protesters: that is, the “illegal” occupation of the crane. The same criticism emerged during my interviews in 2013. Detractors argued that the Struggle of the Crane had been detrimental for the integration process already at work in the city. The Church, the CISL, and the Democratic Party all claimed that the struggle had distanced the Brescian population from the immigrant population, and that this radical struggle had undermined the basis of cohabitation and wiped out years of work.²⁹² Finally, many local actors, including the Church and the CISL, criticized the radical Left for taking advantage of vulnerable immigrants for ideological purposes and for encouraging them to continue using “illegal means” to fight for their recognition.²⁹³

²⁹¹ This kind of criticism was developed also by people who were active in the organization Cross-point. Among other things, this was at the origin of the split between Rights for All and Cross-point after the Struggle of the Crane.

²⁹² Massimo Lanzini. “Paroli: offesa la città. Ora nuovo patto sociale.” *Giornale di Brescia*. November 6, 2010. For example, the then-secretary of the CISL, Renato Zaltieri, declared that the protest was “against all the city of Brescia” and also that it “damages the rights of all workers.” Giuseppe Spatola. “Extracomunitari sulla gru. Denuncia dell’Ansaldo.” *Corriere della sera*. November 3, 2010.

²⁹³ As noted above, Father Toffari declared: “They [the protesters on the crane] are very determined. I have the impression they are manipulated by people under the crane.” Massimo Tedeschi. “Bruciati tutti i margini

6.2.7. Concluding remarks on the local realm of immigration, approaches to integration, and implications for participation

In Section 6.1, I presented the Struggle of the Crane in Brescia in 2010 and acknowledged the role of radical left-wing actors, and in particular Rights for All, in supporting immigrants' mobilization. Also, I pointed out that the struggle brought about conflicts among moderate local actors and the radical left organizations in the city as well as conflicts between the CGIL and the radical Left. What emerged among other things was the ability of Rights for All to support immigrants' claims in a very hostile context, and in the absence of support by the other relevant actors involved in the local realm of immigration in Brescia.

In Section 6.2, through the use of my key concepts—the local realm of immigration and approaches to integration—I proposed to explain the Struggle of the Crane by going beyond an institutional approach and looking at the multiplicity of local actors involved in the area of immigration in the city. My conceptual apparatus allowed me to identify the main local actors involved in the sphere of migration and clarify how, through their interaction and competing approaches to integration, they contributed to shaping the local realm of immigration and opening up channels of participation for people of migrant background in the city. In particular I described the factors behind the intense participation in non-conventional forms of mobilization that took place in Brescia in 2010 during the Struggle of the Crane. The reconstruction of the local realm of immigration showed the prevalence of a discourse of political rights promotion and self-determination of people of migrant background among radical actors in the city since the 1990s, and the absence of other openings of participation by more moderate actors. Among other things, the reconstruction of the history of the association Rights for All and its link with the migrant social movement highlighted the role of people of migrant background as key actors for the opening of new avenues for non-conventional political participation.

In the following section, I will present selected individual trajectories of immigrant activists in Brescia and survey how they perceive and seize the opportunities of participation in the city.

per chi vuole mediare.” *Bresciaoggi*. November 10, 2010. Other interviewees noted that radical actions including the Struggle of the Crane have had negative effects on the processes of inclusion by “eroding the bases for cohabitation” in the city. According to one member of the Forum of the PD, “the Struggle of the Crane has detached Italians from immigrants” (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). According to Marta G., “The event was exploited instrumentally both by the radical Left and the Northern League. Today we are fighting to reconstruct the bonds in the city” (Marta G., Interview in Brescia, 17 May 2013).

6.3. Channels of participation and immigrant activists in Brescia

When I was doing my fieldwork in Brescia and introduced my research to local actors, I was directed to the most relevant organizations: the CGIL and the migrant social movements linked to the radical left organizations Rights for All and Cross-point. After a few weeks in the city, I was able to contact people of migrant background active in other channels of participation, including those active in the world of associations, in the CISL and in the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party. During my interviews with people of migrant background in the city, it was obvious for everyone that the organizations that were able to attract and mobilize immigrants in the city were Rights for All and Cross-point. However, as will be explained later, interviewees who were active in other organizations also identified the limitations of mobilizing with the radical Left and why they decided to collaborate with more moderate actors to open up alternative trajectories of participation in the city.

In the following pages, I will present a few selected interviews with people of migrant background who were active in the migrant social movement (Yusuf A., Abou D., Ibrahim M., Khalid D. and Mohamed A.) and the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party (Bujar A. and Fatima N.). In each case, I will examine their perception of the channels of participation and the choices they made to participate in specific channels rather than others. The chapter will conclude by assessing whether in 2013 these actors were challenging the practices of other actors in the city and whether and how they were able to contribute to shaping the local realm of immigration and promote participation in the city.

6.3.1. Perceiving and acting upon opportunities for participation: immigrant activists in the migrant social movement and the radical Left

During my fieldwork in Italy in 2013, I was struck by the intense political activity in Brescia among immigrants (undocumented and documented alike), especially in non-conventional channels. Migrants were mobilizing in two main areas: the struggle against the failed amnesty policy of 2012 and the struggle against evictions. While the first type of mobilization was in line with previous struggles in the cities (the struggle in 2000 and the Struggle of the Crane in 2010), the struggle against eviction was relatively new. The latter was the direct response of people of migrant background and the radical Left to the consequences of the economic crisis. Between 2010 and 2013, in the province of Brescia alone, there was an average of 20 evictions per month, and the first to be hit by the crisis

were people of migrant background (Caritas 2014). The radical Left was very active in supporting mobilizations in order to prevent evictions, by organizing people for the pickets (mainly but not only immigrants) and by organizing occupations of empty houses to provide shelter for families who had already been evicted.²⁹⁴

Many of the immigrants active in the migrant social movement in Brescia in 2013 had played an important role during the Struggle of the Crane three years before. Among the people who were active in 2013, some had already been very engaged in the city before the Struggle of the Crane. This was mostly the case for those who had been in Italy for longer periods of time (since the end of the 1980s or during the 1990s) and who had participated in the mobilizations that took place in Brescia in the first half of the 2000s. Some more recent immigrants had already known the radical Left for a few years, and had participated in some events organized by the radical Left before becoming politicized and politically aware during the Struggle of the Crane. Others only started to engage the radical Left during the struggle. In the struggle against eviction, many people started mobilizing as a direct consequence of the threat of their own eviction between 2010 and 2013.

In all these cases, the legacy of the Struggle of the Crane was particularly strong: this was the case not only among people who had been active before and during the Struggle of the Crane, but also among those who had just started getting involved in the struggle against eviction since 2010 or 2011. The discourses by participants at the weekly meetings and general assemblies were often informed by an acknowledgement of the distinctiveness of the Struggle of the Crane within the Italian national landscape. What is more, there was the recognition by immigrant and Italian activists that, in the city of Brescia, immigrants had distinguished themselves by resisting injustice and institutional discrimination for quite a while now, and on many occasions people drew explicit links between ongoing struggles and previous mobilizations dating back to 2000, when the migrant social movement of Brescia was first established. In this general context, the Struggle of the Crane was depicted as an exemplary event that epitomized the distinctiveness, courage and self-determination of immigrant activism in the city of Brescia since 2000.

Most of the people I interviewed who were active in the radical Left explicitly established the continuity between the two “crucial events” of 2000 and 2010. While the legacy of the struggles of the 2000s shaped the collective identity of the social movement,

²⁹⁴ For the occupations see “‘Stop agli sfratti’: occupate a Brescia le cassette (vuote) di San Polo. La casa è un diritto!” *Radio Onda d’Urto*. September 13, 2012. <http://www.radionadurto.org/2012/09/13/stop-agli-sfratti-occupate-a-brescia-le-cassette-vuote-di-san-polo-la-casa-e-un-diritto/>(Accessed June 20, 2015).

the Struggle of the Crane reactivated it. During our interview, Khalid D., one of the activists who had been part of the migrant social movement since 2000, told me, “Since 2000, the fight in Brescia has never stopped!” Thus, one element that helped trigger the Struggle of the Crane in the first place, making a focused collective action possible, was precisely the collective identity of migrant social movements in the city, which could be traced back to the struggles of the 2000s.

This idea was shared even by immigrants who were very active in the city, but who were not there in 2000. Yusuf A., one of the undocumented immigrants who climbed on the crane in 2010, had not even arrived in Italy when the struggle of 2000 took place in Brescia. Yet, he made the link between 2000 and 2010 several times during our interview as well as during the meeting in preparation for the demonstration that took place on September 28, 2013. Yusuf A. told me:

In 2000 there were many demonstrations and protests against the amnesty...there were many negative responses and immigrants started to say that this was unfair and unjust...they did hunger strikes. They were tired of being clandestine. They wanted to work in a regular way and yet their requests were always rejected. There were sit-ins, occupations and protests in front of the police headquarters. There were also evacuations. The people in the square threatened to do radical acts. Someone said that she would burn herself. Many were brought to the police headquarters. Then they were freed and went to the square again. Finally they obtained their permit of stay (Yusuf A., Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013).

Given the intensity of immigrants’ mobilizations in Brescia, it is important to ask why immigrants were so active and why they were able to build a collective identity strong enough support a migrant social movement in the city. Also, it is important to understand how they were able to identify with the radical Left’s discourse and practices and eventually emerge and endure as a collective actor in the city.

During my fieldwork in Brescia in 2013, I interviewed some of the visible immigrant activists in the migrant social movement. Some of these activists had arrived very recently (e.g. Yusuf A., Abou D. and Ibrahim M.), but others had been living in Brescia for a while and had a much less precarious status (e.g. Mohamed and Khalid D.). Yusuf A., Abou D., and Ibrahim M. started mobilizing during the local right-wing administration (between

2008 and 2013). They were all undocumented at the time of the Struggle of the Crane in 2010 and had applied for the amnesty of 2009.

Yusuf A. was born in Pakistan in 1984 and arrived in Italy in 2006, without documents. He was linked to the Muslim community in Brescia aligned with the main mosque in the city. He got involved in the Brescian social movement in 2010, when the Struggle of the Crane started. He was one of the protagonists of the Struggle of the Crane and the spokesman of the young undocumented immigrants on the crane. From 2010 to 2013, together with another protagonist of the crane, Ramzi J., he was one of the most visible immigrant activists in the city. In 2013, he was mostly active with the association Rights for All, and was still undocumented because he could not regularize after the 2009 amnesty.

Abou D. was born in Senegal in 1979 and arrived in Italy in 2006. Like Yusuf A., he arrived without documents. He told me that he took “the boat of death” after he crossed the desert of Mali and Algeria, and lived in Libya for two years. Like Yusuf A., he worked underground doing very different jobs, mainly in the agricultural sector (in the south) and in the construction and transport sector (in the North). Like Yusuf A., he applied for the 2009 amnesty but could not regularize. He was not linked to any immigrant group in the city in particular, but he was strongly linked with the association Cross-point.

Ibrahim M. was born in Senegal in 1976 and arrived in Brescia in 2005. He was without documents at his arrival and could regularize thanks to the 2009 amnesty. He also worked all kinds of jobs in the underground economy, hoping to be regularized. He was strongly linked to the Senegalese community and collaborated with his compatriots when it was time to mobilize for immigrants’ rights. He met with Rights for All for the first time at the end of 2008, because he was denounced by the police as undocumented after visiting the hospital for an illness. Rights for All got involved right away in his case and defended him before the local institutions (see below).²⁹⁵

The other two interviewees of the migrant social movement, Mohamed A. and Khalid D., had a less precarious situation than the interviewees presented above.

Mohamed A. was born in Morocco in 1965 and arrived in Italy in 1998. He moved to Brescia in 2003. He had a long-stay permit and, like the others, worked in a wide range of jobs, including in the underground economy. Once in Brescia, he got involved right away. In 2013, he would not miss a local or national event (e.g. demonstrations, meetings, and

²⁹⁵ “Immigrazione: Assolto Makham.” *Qui Brescia*. June 3, 2009. <http://www.quibrescia.it/cms/2009/06/03/immigrazione-assolto-makam-ba/> (Accessed June 20, 2015).

other initiatives). He was particularly active in the struggles against evictions, supported by Rights for All, and he tried to be helpful in the Moroccan community to aid people who were losing their houses. He believed that the situation needed to be addressed by the active mobilization of those losing their houses, and he supported the idea of creating a network of solidarity to organize pickets against evictions.

Khalid D. was born in Morocco in the 1960s and arrived in Italy in the 1990s. At the time of the interview, he was an Italian citizen and the person in charge of the Office of Foreigners of the CGIL of Brescia. He had been working for the CGIL since the beginning of the 2000s. Even though he recognized as positive the fact that he was working for the CGIL, he also made the point that he was happy to do so because the CGIL did not try to stop him from mobilizing in the migrant social movement and making radical claims for the improvement of immigrant conditions in Brescia.

I asked the interviewees listed above why they mobilized. They unanimously answered that the extreme situations of injustice in Italy in general and in Brescia in particular required radical claims and radical responses. At the national level, they saw injustice to immigrants caused by “the institutional racism perpetuated by unjust laws” (Yusuf A., Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013). In Brescia, immigrants faced injustice due to institutional discrimination since the right wing came to power in 2008.

Institutional discrimination at the national level

At the national level, the interviewees observe that laws are unjust when they conflict with fundamental rights, which are attached to individuals. For many people of immigrant background active in the migrant social movement in Brescia, this meant that there was no other choice but to fight back. Abou D., for instance, made the point that the state “commits clear injustices towards immigrants” and condemned the stigmatization of immigrants by the state and the clear association that has been made at both the legal and symbolic level between immigrants and criminals since 2008, when the right-wing administration came to power. For this reason he believed that “radical action” was the best way to demand that the state comply with the “rules of law” and thus release a permit of stay for all immigrants who live “illegally” in the country. He told me:

In 2009 I presented my application for the amnesty. The state cashed my payment but it didn't give the permit of stay to me and many other people like me. We haven't come to Italy to break the law or commit crimes, but to work. People who break the

law are everywhere! When there were demonstrations, I would always participate. I firmly believe in action. I am against resignation and passivity... No one is illegal inside the boundaries that we have created. To give the “permit to all” does not mean to promote illegality. There are people who connect foreigners with illegality. Foreigner does not mean criminal! (Abou D., Interview in Brescia, 15 July 2013).

Mohamed A. presented an even more radical point of view than Abou D. During our interview, he challenged the exclusionary practices inherent in the idea of “legal citizenship” and in the immigration laws. From Mohamed A.’s perspective, citizenship and immigration laws are devices created to maintain inequality and to perpetuate a distinction between groups of people, in particular between rich and poor. In his own words:

Citizenship is a formality to create problems. It is the aristocracy that created it to keep its own privileges and to control the people. In this way, when ‘poverty’ asks for something, all that it is given is a concession, an act of charity. The Bossi-Fini Law serves exactly this purpose. It is a more sophisticated way to dominate and control. The government enacted it to make more money, and with this law the young generation of immigrant descendants is caught in the same vicious cycle: they do not have a future here (Mohamed A., Interview in Brescia, 21 October 2013).

According to Mohamed A., because of this situation, “one must resist unjust laws at all costs, since the foundation of justice is prior to any written law.” He continued:

When you know that the government does not give answers, when it leaves you with despair... in these extreme conditions... you *must* react. This situation makes you go out and shout. It makes you protest. People cry out: “No to the Bossi-Fini Law! No to the violation of rights! No one is illegal! Immigration is not a crime!” I ask politicians: “What is your role?” They are killing people. When I participate, I do not do it for myself. People here fight not for themselves, but for their kids. No one wants *this* future for their kids. The problem with politicians is that they abuse their power and they have broken the contract of reciprocity (Mohamed A., Interview in Brescia, 21 October 2013).

Yusuf A. expressed a similar point of view on the Bossi-Fini Law:

If the “law is equal for all,” we cannot really say that this is the case for the Bossi-Fini Law. We are citizens of the world and we are equal. We want dignity and respect. The Law must be abolished. The Bossi-Fini Law is a racist law! This law does not hit people, but it kills them. It perpetuates a differentiated treatment that is unacceptable (Yusuf A., Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013).

The ideas expressed by Abou D., Mohamed A. and Yusuf A. resonate with the views of other radicalized interviewees and with many interventions that took place during the meetings and demonstrations in Brescia in 2013, while I was doing my fieldwork. Many of the activists whom I interviewed felt that the extreme situation of immigrants in Italy justified the radical demands and mobilization that took place during the Struggle of the Crane and afterwards, from 2010 to 2013.

According to Yusuf A., the state plays with people and the 2009 amnesty was never meant to regularize undocumented immigrants “as the official statement would want us to believe.” It was rather an occasion to steal money from undocumented immigrants, already under very vulnerable conditions. For Yusuf A., this made these practices even more outrageous and thus legitimized resistance by those who were subject to them: “Enough was enough! We were sick of the situation we were experiencing!” (Yusuf A., Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013).

Institutional discrimination at the local level

In addition to these problems at the national level, people active in the immigrant social movement found that the strong forms of discrimination put in place by the right-wing local administration made life intolerable for immigrants, and left no other choice but to radicalize. During the right-wing administration, bureaucracy and institutional discrimination were the two major problems in Brescia. Yusuf A. explained:

In the city of Brescia, bureaucracy is unbearably slow. It takes three years for a simple temporary permit of stay. You are *suspended* and you wait for years... This is tremendously hard... People cannot go back to their own countries because then they cannot come back to Italy without documents. In 2011, after the Struggle of the Crane, I had my documents. So I finally went back to Egypt. You know, anything can happen during that time. Your parents can die. There are people here who have wives and kids. It is incredibly hard. My cousin had to stay here for 9 years without being able to go back home (Yusuf A., Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013).

Abou D. made clear:

It was a very bad moment for immigrants. The leader of the Northern League said: “Brescia is a garage and I am going to transform it into a drawing room.” He was referring to ethnic cleansing, of course! At that time, there were inspections everywhere: in the streets, in the stores, in the call centers. People in Brescia said that he had increased the police’s hours of work to counter immigration and look for undocumented immigrants. I heard there was a reward for the number of operations carried out to harass immigrants. The Northern League was omnipresent. They used to say horrible things. Not long ago, during the electoral campaign [in 2013], they took pictures of black people in the center of the city and said: “If the Democratic Party wins, this is what the old town center of Brescia will look like.” In another flyer with similar pictures, they wrote: ‘If the Democratic Party wins, they will command the city’ (Abou D., Interview in Brescia, 15 July 2013).

I asked what it meant to live in this context. He answered:

Inside me, rage was growing every day. Politicians are creating additional problems and troubles. It is an explosive situation. The Northern League creates rage inside me, because the immigrants who live here and work here, in the fields and the factories, are needed. This is the reason we are here. There is lots of rage! There are people who want to burn cars and stores. There are people who have paid for their permits. They want to work and go back to their home and their families. These people are insulted every day. From a psychological point of view this is devastating. When people are put in these conditions, rage explodes (Abou D., Interview in Brescia, 15 July 2013).

Ibrahim M. explained that his personal experience with the local administration, which was actively persecuting him in 2008, “was an encouragement to become an activist”:

The right-wing administration was looking for blatant historical victories against immigrants. Rolfi talked to the newspapers and said about me: “He is still here, but we will find him.” One day they took me, and then the judge let me go, because he claimed that what was happening was against Article 32 of the Italian Constitution. Even after this, Rolfi declared war against me and kept chasing after me in the city. Since then, I have become very active in all the struggles that take place in Brescia. I

am very busy with my courses of Italian language now, but I try to participate in all the assemblies and I am always up-to-date. I keep in contact with everyone thanks to the radio and email and I never stop my involvement in the mobilizations (Ibrahim M., Interview in Brescia, 8 September 2013).

Like Ibrahim M., many other people of migrant background became active during the right-wing administration and in particular during the Struggle of the Crane as a result of personal and collective attacks. These attacks were a triggering factor because they encouraged awareness and action. The administration continued to create a climate of hostility after the Struggle of the Crane in 2010, by retaliating against the immigrant population through deportation and increased control and violence. This attitude explains in part why immigrant activists continued to be so active after the Struggle of the Crane. Ibrahim M. explained that the cost of the struggle had been very high:

We have paid for our struggles. Many people were deported and we were very harshly controlled. The city was like a civil war. We underwent lots of repression and violence after the struggle. One person of our Senegalese community died in prison, when he was in police custody. However, the more they tried to repress us the stronger we became (Ibrahim M., Interview in Brescia, 8 September 2013).²⁹⁶

I asked my interviewees to define the political meaning of the Struggle of the Crane. Yusuf A. explained:

[...] it was a great opportunity for us [migrants] to raise our voice! People started to talk with each other sporadically. In those days people kept abreast. Moreover, every evening there were assemblies to get more information about what was going on... There were lawyers with us... It was a time of ferment, of great mobilization (Yusuf A., Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013).

What is more, Yusuf A. made a link with the more recent struggles that were taking place in 2013, while I was doing my fieldwork in the city:

²⁹⁶ For the repression after the Struggle of the Crane see Irene Panghetti, "Oggi saranno rimpatriati gli immigrati arrestati lunedì." *Bresciaoggi*, November 15, 2010. Nine Egyptians who were arrested on Monday, November the 8th after clashes with the police were repatriated. Giuseppe Spatola. "Brescia: ammalato d'asma, due notti in cella al gelo, così è morto Saidou." *Milano Corriere*. December 15, 2010 http://milano.corriere.it/milano/notizie/cronaca/10_dicembre_15/immigrato-asma-muore-cella-brescia-18178829773.shtml (Accessed June 20, 2015).

Now we are planning to organize occupations for the amnesty of 2012. For the 28th of September 2013, we are organizing a great demonstration. This is just a start. It is a great struggle, even bigger than the one that gave birth to the Struggle of the Crane. It is impossible to bear the present situation! The prefecture is slower than ever and we must act (Yusuf A., Interview in Brescia, 18 July 2013).

Thus according to Yusuf A., even though the state did not give immigrants what they asked for, the legacy of the struggle had a very important meaning for activists and for their role as promoters of social change in Brescia and in Italy. He made the point that after the Struggle of the Crane, the fight continued in many ways and became a source of inspiration for many.

Relationship with moderate local actors

While the national and local context tells us why immigrants undertook radical claims and radical action, it does not explain why these immigrant activists in Brescia created alliances with the radical Left instead of with more moderate key actors in the city, such as the Church and the two main traditional unions, the CISL and the CGIL. Abou D. explained that he had no doubt about the organizations that mobilized in favor of immigrants in the city: “I believe that only two organizations are really on our side: Rights for All and Cross-point. It is a matter of material, logistical, political and moral support!” Yusuf A. was of the same opinion. “They have always been with us! They have always supported us! They have also confronted the police for us.” Ibrahim M. also said, “Contrary to all other actors, the radical Left...was with us throughout it all” (Ibrahim M., Interview in Brescia, 8 September 2013).

In contrast with their positive view of the radical left organizations, immigrants active in the movement were critical of all other local actors, namely the Church, the CISL, the CGIL and the left-wing political party, the Democratic Party. While the last was criticized primarily for not exposing itself, the other actors were considered ambiguous and not trustworthy. During the Struggle of the Crane, when tensions in the city were very high, the Church and the two main trade unions played a major role as mediators between the protesters on and under the crane and the public authorities. Yet, according to immigrant activists, these actors were not really on their side. During the Struggle of the Crane, the Church and the CISL kept saying that immigrants should have stopped the

protest, because it was creating problems in the city and was undermining other people's rights through the illegal occupation of a construction site. They added that the protesters were manipulated by the radical Left. In this respect, my interviewees recognized that the left-wing union, the CGIL, was more supportive of the Struggle of the Crane than the Church or the CISL, because the CGIL offered more support from the beginning of the occupation and was more inclined to support radical action. The main criticism of the CGIL emerged during an interview with a member of the organization, Khalid D., in charge of the CGIL's Office of Foreigners:

In the past, the CGIL had a really positive political role in Brescia. It gave immigrants the opportunity to work autonomously with the migration office, and in the struggles of the 2000s it created platforms to support immigrant mobilizations... It was a very important time for immigrants' participation! There were platforms at the time in which even undocumented immigrants could participate... they could feel that they were protagonists. The most beautiful thing about the CGIL at that time (2000) was exactly this: They gave their support to the migrant movement 24 hours per day (Khalid D., Interview in Brescia, 15 July 2013).

However, unlike during the struggle of 2000, in 2010 the CGIL did not support the Struggle of the Crane until the end. During the greatest moments of tension, the CGIL did not expose itself. This caused conflicts between the traditional trade union and the radical Left and the migrant social movement during the struggle. Describing the role of local actors, during the Struggle of the Crane, Ibrahim M. recognized that

the event created an important split between moderate and radical left-wing actors in the city... in particular with the Democratic Party and the CGIL ... At one point, the CGIL drew back. It was ambivalent... We wanted to go ahead and they hesitated. Later on, after the Struggle of the Crane, the CGIL understood that they made a mistake and they came to apologize (Ibrahim M., Interview in Brescia, 8 September 2013).

All things considered, the interviews described above show that immigrants active in the migrant social movement in Brescia perceive the national and local context as closed and believed that moderate actors in the city were not able to carry through with their promises. In this context, they saw in the presence of the radical left-wing actors an

important opportunity to build alliances and mobilize through more radicalized forms of action.

Thanks to the repeated and long-lasting mass mobilizations in the city, immigrant activists were contributing to opening the channels of participation. What is more, through their actions they were acting as agents of change, by challenging both anti-immigrant practices and compromising actions by moderate local actors in the city (the CISL and the Diocese) as well as more radicalized actors such as the CGIL, which had stopped supporting the migrant social movement as it did in the past. The interviews also show the importance of alliances between immigrant activists and left-wing actors. The migrant social movement's mobilizations were possible precisely because they could identify with the radical Left and appropriate the material and discursive resources it offered in very hostile conditions.

Now it becomes crucial to explore why a minority of people of migrant background active in the city decided to mobilize in other, more moderate channels, and also how the prominence of the migrant social movement in the city affects their discourses and practices.

6.3.2. Perceiving and acting upon opportunities for participation: immigrant activists in the Democratic Party

In Brescia, a small number of people of migrant background have started getting involved with the Democratic Party since the creation of the Provincial Forum of Immigration in 2010. During the weekly meetings with the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party in Brescia, I had the occasion to meet with several people of migrant background who were involved in issues of integration in the city. After a few meetings with the Forum, I interviewed two people of migrant background linked to the Forum and very active in the city: Bujar A. and Fatima N. Their trajectories of integration in the city looked particularly successful from the economic and social point of view. I wanted to understand their perception of the other local actors and the migrant social movement and why their participation was so different in form than the radicalized activists associated with the radical Left.

At the time of our interview, Bujar A. was a 36-year-old professional from Albania. He arrived in Italy in 2001 (twelve years before our interview) at the age of 24. At the time of the interview, he had applied for citizenship, and he was hoping to be able to enter politics in the near future. At his arrival in 2001 he did not have documents and lived as a

clandestino for 3 years, until he regularized with the amnesty of the Bossi-Fini Law in 2002. He received his documents in 2003, and since then his status has been regular. In Italy he worked many different jobs and, once he received his permit, enrolled at the University in the Law Department. At the time of the interview, he was working as a freelance professional and offered expert advice on immigration. He recalled that he started being politically active in 2003, when he was a student at the University of Brescia. In 2009 he became a member of the Democratic Party. One year later, when the Forum was created in 2010, he became the person in charge of its institutional relations.

When I interviewed her in October 2013, *Fatima N.* was a 41 year-old cultural mediator from Morocco. She arrived in Italy in 1985, and lived as a *clandestino* for 5 years in the South (Sardinia) before moving to Brescia in 1990. She is married to an Italian and has a daughter, and is now an Italian citizen. At the time of the interview, she was studying for a diploma in the school of education. *Fatima N.* was a very active person in the city. She had started being active for the first time when she volunteered in a cooperative in Brescia nine years before, in 2004. Then in 2011, she founded an association called “Association Together,” to help women from Morocco in Italy. In 2013, she participated in the local elections with a minor left-wing party. The party obtained only a few votes and she was not elected. Like *Bujar A.*, *Fatima N.* was also active in the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party.

When I asked *Bujar A.* to tell me why he was active and why he opted for the Democratic Party, he explained that the main reason he participated in politics was “to deal with daily discrimination (permits, restrictions on movement, delays in the release of documents.)” He chose the Democratic Party because it represented most closely his political orientation and he thought that mainstream politics was the best way to bring about change. He explained that mainstream politics could have made it possible for immigrants to become stronger and “force politics to listen”:

The real problem is that *we* [the immigrants] are weak. Instead of asking, we need to force politicians to listen to us. To talk of immigrants makes them lose votes. So we need to change politics and stop asking for charity. Immigrants should represent immigrants, and bring forth their claims through the support of the [existing] associations. Immigrants have different mentalities, different cultures. Yet, they should unite and go beyond their differences. Many people are impeding this transition (*Bujar A.*, Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

Fatima N. explained that she became active because she did not want to wait another generation before immigrants' conditions improved in Italy. She decided to go to the Forum because she believed that the city of Brescia needed to make a "qualitative leap" to promote integration, by going beyond political partisanship.

I go where people work for immigrants. We are all working for the same thing and I want to help to promote the "qualitative leap." We are all one! We need to work for what unites us. If we don't move in this direction, many years will go by without us seeing any major social change. I have always thought that coming out of oneself means moving *away from the idea that we are immigrants and starting to take care of our city*. We need to make the necessary steps ahead. The Brescians understand you and you start thinking like them. This for me means imposing our problems on the administration. But it also means talking about the city and its real problems. We [the immigrants] have two cultures. This can be a great advantage. However, we fall behind if we are not able to make the qualitative leap: Once we overcome the label of immigrants, we must act as people who talk about the city (Fatima N., Interview in Brescia, 8 October 2013).

She continued: "I relate with others regardless of their political flag. The Northern League is the product of ignorance and if they don't talk about immigrants they do not get votes" (Fatima N., Interview in Brescia, 8 October 2013).

Both Bujar A. and Fatima N. expressed concern about the low level of participation among people of migrant background in institutional channels in the city. Bujar A. told me: "Many people of migrant background feel they are blackmailed for this reason. We [immigrants] distance ourselves from politics day after day. Just like many Italians, we believe that politicians have been corrupted" (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

These two interviewees also identified major barriers to participation. They talked about the lack of unity and communication among immigrants, and also emphasized the fact that immigrants are exposed to blackmail because of the restrictiveness of the Bossi-Fini Law, the exploitation of the issue of immigration by politicians (in both left-wing and right-wing parties) and the fear among immigrants themselves of being controlled by the police.

Bujar A. explained: "We are continuously exposed to the vigilant eye of the police. We have heard about cases of people who did not receive their permit because they had

participated in political rallies and thus were considered ‘dangerous individuals’” (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013).

These interviews with Bujar A. and Fatima N. were also relevant to examine their points of view on the question of whether moderate left actors were responsible for the limited channels for participation in the city. Bujar A. said:

In the last twenty years in Italy, there is a political side that defends immigrants [the Left] and a side that is against them [the Right]. In spite of their differences, both sides impede immigrants from talking for themselves.... there is no representation! Immigrants are used by politics: the right refuses them and the Left exploits them. In the Democratic Party, there is little space to access certain levels of representation. In Brescia, the moderate left is particularly blameworthy. In the past, with the Corsini administration [1998-2004 and 2004-2008], Brescia developed its own approach to integration. At that time, one could talk with institutions. The Office was a good thing. Yet, no one in the city thought about participation. Very little has been done at the level of the intercultural dialogue or at the level of political participation.

He added, “The problem is that we do not have the power to negotiate politically, because we do not have the numbers. Someone wants us divided. Not those who refuse us, but those who exploit us. The Left fears the right to vote.”²⁹⁷ He continued: “The new mayor, Emilio del Bono, thinks that immigrants are like everybody else. He is a balanced person and he tries to accommodate everyone. However, during the electoral campaign he never used the word ‘immigrant.’” In this view, the Forum, for Bujar A., is an opportunity to create the conditions to “force politics” to deal with immigration and integration in a better way.

In the city, the extreme left has the allegiance of the immigrants who are active. We [the moderates] believe that there is more than just the streets. We also want to build a trajectory that allows us to negotiate politically. We are trying to make Italians understand other aspects of immigration, beyond the exclusive focus on the permit of stay. We also live the crisis, even in a deeper way.

He acknowledged that,

²⁹⁷ “Brescia, elezioni comunali 2013: tutte le preferenze.” *Bresciaoggi*. May 28, 2013. <http://www.bresciatoday.it/politica/elezioni/comunali-brescia-2013/sindaco-preferenze.html> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

The Forum is young. The radical Left has been working on these issues for quite a while now. We wouldn't like to leave the radical Left a monopoly on the discourse on immigration. It is a question of parallel trajectories. One trajectory does not exclude the other. Above everything, we want to avoid going beyond the limits of legality. The Struggle of the Crane has disconnected the Brescians from immigrants. Their claims are more moderate than their actions.

However, also because of its recent creation,

the Forum, like other things, has a role which is a façade. The person in charge of the Forum has little power and cannot make the voice of the Forum heard. The power is extremely limited and we can take very few decisions. Some of the Italians involved are interested in the issue of immigration. However, many are put there when they [the Party] do not know where to send them. In my view, the radical Left represents the immigrants in the city much more than the political party. Among the main reasons, I believe that it is because the moderate left has left a vacuum. This is also the case for grassroots unions today. Given that workers have distanced themselves from traditional trade unions, the radical Left supported them. For trade unions, immigrants are numbers, but there is no representation.

Bujar A. and Fatima N. believe that the right to vote is a necessary step for greater inclusion. They believe in the validity of the principle “no taxation without representation.” Fatima N. tells me: “The administration sends me a request for the taxes every year. If you don't give me the *right* to vote, why do you ask this duty of me?” (Fatima N., Interview in Brescia, 8 October 2013). Bujar A. also agreed on this point. For him, “[t]he Left fears the right to vote! And this is the case for both the radical left and the moderate left. In this sense, the Left is guilty of duplicity” (Bujar A., Interview in Brescia, 11 October 2013). Fatima N. expressed a very similar point of view:

Why does the radical left-wing organizations never talk about the right to vote? This is called *duplicity*, pure propaganda. They are just like the Northern League. The latter attacks us, but the radical Left is like a traitor friend. With the Northern League you can at least fight back. The radical Left preaches, but they don't help you succeed. Why don't they talk of the right to vote? And the Democratic Party, why don't they

talk about the Bossi-Fini Law? (Fatima N., Interview in Brescia, 8 October 2013; emphasis mine)

The Left knows that “not all immigrants are adherents of the Left. Many immigrants are confused about their political orientation. In any case, it seems to me that very few of them are adherents to the Left” (Fatima N., Interview in Brescia, 8 October 2013).

These interviews with immigrant activists mobilized in more conventional channels shows that, despite the opportunities of political participation offered by the radicalized actors in the city, not everyone adheres to the political views of the radical Left and the migrant social movement. Even though they have a stable condition in Italy, Bujar A. and Fatima N.’s activism is rooted in a refusal to accept Italy’s institutional racism and unjust laws and in the fundamental idea that the Bossi-Fini Law must be abolished. However, when it comes to their perceptions and reactions to the opportunities of participation opened in the city, they explain that even though the radical Left is an undeniable ally of immigrant activists, it should not have a monopoly on the discourse about migration and participation in Brescia. Both Bujar A. and Fatima N. have mobilized in more conventional channels because they believe that it is important to address other questions in the realm of migration that concern immigrants and Italian society as a whole. Among other things, they mobilize to fight for the right to vote in the local elections, because this would allow immigrants to speak for themselves instead of having to rely on their allies. This fact also shows the mistrust of Bujar A. and Fatima N. towards the radical Left, which in their opinion never talks about the right to vote for fear that it might make immigrants become more autonomous and less radicalized.

6.4. Concluding remarks

In Brescia, the strong presence of radicalized left-wing actors and the adoption of the political rights promotion approach has resulted in the emergence of radicalized forms of political participation. This chapter has shown that the migrant social movement in Brescia was a relevant political force that was shaping the local realm of immigration towards an approach emphasizing political rights promotion. Immigrant activists in radicalized channels could emerge as a collective actor able to shape the local realm of immigration and encourage participation thanks to their appropriation of the discourses and practices of their main allies, the radical left actors. On the other hand, the weakness of moderate left-wing actors willing to promote an intercultural approach or a political rights promotion

approach has resulted in the absence of channels of civic participation and very limited opportunities to participate in conventional political channels. This situation has created an opportunity for the radical Left to encourage and support the development of a migrant social movement in the city at the expense of more moderate forms of participation.

In contrast to these radical immigrant activists, I also presented my interviews with two activists (Bujar A. and Fatima N.) mobilizing in the channels opened by moderate left-wing actors, such as the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party. They acknowledged the role of the radical Left and the migrant social movement in opening the channels of political participation in the city. However, they also lamented that the exclusive accent on the political rights promotion approach, without the support of other trajectories such as the intercultural approach, risked preventing greater inclusion of the immigrant community in Brescian society in the long run. For this reason, these individuals chose to mobilize in more moderate channels in order to force local actors in the city to take the necessary steps towards investing significantly in the realm of immigration.

Chapter 7. Bergamo

Limited Participation in the City of the Dominant Assistance Approach

7.1. “A Day Without Us” in Bergamo: Conflicts and mobilization for immigrants’ rights without immigrants

As in many cities in Italy and Europe, local actors in Bergamo organized a demonstration on March 1, 2010, called “The Strike of Migrants: A Day Without Us” (see Chapter 5). However, unlike the case of Bologna, in Bergamo the conflict-laden event included no strike of immigrants and no real participation from below by people of migrant background in the city. Different civil society organizations and trade unions in the city attempted to organize the event together and to involve the immigrant communities through their associations. A committee was created to prepare the mobilization of immigrants. However, a few days before the demonstration, the organizers split into two different factions: the March 28th Network (*Rete 28 Marzo*) and the Committee of the First of March (*Comitato Primo Marzo*). The March 28th Network was composed of the main trade unions (the CISL, the CISL-ANOLF and the CGIL) and a number of organizations linked to the Church (the Cooperative Ruah and the Santa Rosa da Lima, as well as the Secretariat Migrants).²⁹⁸ The Committee of the First of March, meanwhile, had been formed by the anti-racist movement and was led by the Communist Refoundation Party, the CGIL-FIOM (the more radicalized branch of the CGIL) and grassroots unions (such as the CUB and the USB).²⁹⁹ Additionally, just like in Bologna, during the organization of the event, moderate left-wing actors, including the Democratic Party, were completely absent.

²⁹⁸ For a complete list of the groups who participated in the Rete 28 Marzo, see the article by K. Manenti. “CGIL al Primo marzo: ‘Regolarizzare tutti gli immigrati che lavorano.’” *Eco di Bergamo*, February 25, 2013. http://ecodibergamo.it/stories/Cronaca/119457_cgil/?attach_m&object_id_from=119662&content_type_from_id=11 (Accessed June 25, 2015). The March 28th Network was created by private citizens, immigrant associations, trade unions and political parties in 2009. The Network was named after the date of a 2009 demonstration in Bergamo of approximately 2000 people asking local institutions to open up a dialogue on immigration. The demonstrations concluded with the meeting of a delegation with the Prefect Lucio Marotta and two other meetings, on April 2 and May 16, 2009, with local institutions (the Prefecture and the Migrant Office of the Police Headquarters). See “‘No al Pacchetto Sicurezza,’ In piazza la protesta della Rete 28 Marzo.” *Bergamonews.it*. July 16, 2009. <http://www.bergamonews.it/politica/no-al-pacchetto-sicurezza-piazza-la-protesta-della-rete-28-marzo-118151> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

²⁹⁹ “Bergamo. Manifestazione anti-razzista.” March 1, 2010. <http://www.alternainsieme.net/?p=9346> (Accessed June 25, 2015). R. Clemente. “Il Primo marzo: un presidio della CISL per i diritti degli immigrati.” *Eco di Bergamo*, February 25, 2010. The Democratic Party also took part in the demonstration but its role in the organization was very marginal. “Primo Marzo, sciopero dei migranti. Il PD ci sarà.” *PDBergamo.it*, February 25, 2010. <http://www.pdbergamo.it/articoli/1-marzo-sciopero-dei-migranti-il-pd-ci-sara/3778> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

On February 5, 2010 the two groups met for the last time. They both agreed on the idea of representing the immigrants in the city, but apparently could not agree on the modalities of the demonstration. In particular, the Network 28 March wanted to distance itself from “any instrumental use of the protest” for political purposes by the anti-racist movement led by the Communist Refoundation Party in Bergamo, and thus wanted to avoid bringing the flags of the political parties and the trade unions to the demonstration.³⁰⁰ They argued that the *strike of migrants* was not a good idea because it would be an “ethnic” protest that could widen the distance between immigrant workers and the Italian population (workers in particular). Thus, the organizations of the Network 28 March supported a demonstration “without a strike.”³⁰¹ On the other hand, the Committee of the First of March pushed for a politicization of the demonstration and also sought support of the strike by immigrants. The Provincial Secretary of the CGIL, Martino Signori, opposed the separation of the two organizations and pointed out their common cause, independent of the traditional ideological divide:

The subject of immigration is too important. It shouldn't divide us and it should not create two different demonstrations. It would be absurd to have two identical but separated parades, given that the goals are the same: the abolition of the Bossi-Fini Law and the Security Package and the end of the institutional racism that is emerging in our country. According to all of us, it is paradoxical (and dramatic) that an immigrant who loses his job after having worked in our country for many years risks everything. It is paradoxical that after six months one can be forced to be clandestine with all his family. All those who are going to demonstrate in Bergamo are convinced that the recognition of citizenship and the right to vote in the local elections are the two priorities of the process of constructing a cohesive country... Let it be only one demonstration!³⁰²

After negotiations and conflicts between the two organizations, only one demonstration was organized on March 1, by the Committee of the First of March of

³⁰⁰ “Rete 28 Marzo: No a strumentalizzazioni.” *Bergamonews.it*, February 27, 2010. <http://www.bergamonews.it/politica/rete-28-marzo-no-strumentalizzazioni> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³⁰¹ See R. Clemente. “Il primo marzo un presidio della CISL per i diritti degli immigrati.” *Eco di Bergamo*. February 25, 2010. http://www.ecodibergamo.it/stories/Cronaca/119368_integrazione_il_1_marzo_presidio_per_le_vie_di_bergamo/ (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³⁰² M. Sanfilippo. “Manifestazione del 1 Marzo. La CGIL: ‘Ci sia un corteo unico.’” *Eco di Bergamo*. February 26, 2010.

Bergamo.³⁰³ In the aftermath of the demonstration, one of the members of the Committee of the First of March declared the event a success, notwithstanding the complex and conflicting trajectory leading up to the event. He wrote:

Notwithstanding obstructionism, the bad information given by some of the main media in the city, the ambiguous political-unionist [...] plots that risk paralysing and not representing the people [...], around 1,500-2,000 people adhered to a happy and civil demonstration [...]. A large number of people, new citizens and Italians united. A relevant number for Bergamo that is one of the strongholds of the Northern League.³⁰⁴

During our interview, Angelo A., the person in charge of the CISL-ANOLF of Bergamo, told me:

Our objective [in the Rete 28 Marzo] was to empower immigrants and make them protagonists. We involved the other trade unions and the immigrant associations. We did not want to be seen as acting only as the CISL, but as a larger group. We organized meeting after meeting. At the end, what we wanted to avoid happened: the Communist Refoundation Party and the migrant coordination organization of the CGIL-FIOM came to the demonstration with their flags (Angelo A., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013).

Don Mariano M., one of the priests in charge of the Migrant Office of Caritas, confirmed this point:

The demonstration was organized to demonstrate opposition to the Bossi-Fini Law against the crime of illegal immigration. There were many Italian and immigrant organizations. Everyone was there, even though the Church has been only slightly involved at the general level. I was present. The demonstration showed *the difficulty of bringing everyone together*. In particular, the biggest conflicts were with the Communist Refoundation Party and other anti-racist organizations, who were demonstrating separately with their flags (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

³⁰³ “Sciopero degli stranieri, a Bergamo un comitato.” *Bergamonews.it*. February 25, 2010. <http://www.bergamonews.it/politica/sciopero-degli-stranieri-bergamo-un-comitato-124913> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³⁰⁴ See article: “Il primo marzo a Bergamo” March 5, 2015. <http://primomarzo2010.blogspot.ca/2010/03/il-primo-marzo-bergamo.html> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

On the other hand, Carlo F., one of the main representatives of the Communist Refoundation Party in the city, declared:

During the demonstration, the church-based organizations created a problematic depoliticization of the demonstration. They raised a conflict with the network we had been able to construct around the demonstration. That event made explicit their contradictions. The form of anti-racism they promote is compatible with the system. They believed that the movement was making an instrumental use of immigrants (Carlo F., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2014).

In addition to the blatant conflict between organizations in the city, it is notable that the March 1 demonstration was organized for immigrants without immigrants. Immigrants and immigrant organizations did not take part in the organization of the event and were thus marginal actors in the decision-making. During the demonstration, immigrants were of course present as members of the main organizations. But as they did not take part in the organization of the event, there was little participation from below.

7.1.1. Background to “A Day Without Us” and the limited participation by people of migrant background in Bergamo

The March 1 demonstration in Bergamo represents a useful case for examining alliances and conflicts in the local realm of immigration and divergent approaches to integration by local actors. Three significant elements emerge in the brief description above of the organization of the demonstration: 1) a conflict between the main “white” organizations (in particular the CISL and the church-based Cooperative Ruah) and their ally (the “red” CGIL), and the anti-racist movement (in particular the city’s branch of the Communist Refoundation Party); 2) the absence of moderate left actors such as the Democratic Party; and 3) the organization of a key event for immigrants without the involvement of those immigrants.

The event was neither the first nor the last time that these problems emerged in Bergamo. During many of my interviews with figures in local organizations, these difficulties were mentioned many times. Don Mariano M. of Caritas, for instance, explained that,

There had been other attempts to organize demonstrations for immigrants with the other local actors. Yet, notwithstanding the enormous efforts, all of them were a clamorous failure. On all these occasions, what emerged were “conflicts and difficulties in collaborating among immigrants’ advocates. The reason for the failure of the demonstrations was always the same. It was clear that they [immigrants] were objects of a political and union conflict in which they had little involvement (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).³⁰⁵

The following section (7.2) will examine the local realm of immigration in Bergamo in 2013 and describe the evolution that took place in the city since the end of the 1990s. As shown in chapters 4, 5, and 6, in the other three cities examined in this dissertation local moderate and radical left-wing actors were key to opening up the channels of political participation of people of migrant background, through their support of an intercultural and/or a political rights promotion approach. The case of Bergamo will show that a weak presence of moderate and radical left-wing actors and an approach to integration based predominantly on service delivery (assistance) resulted in the almost complete closure of the channels of political participation in the city. Section 7.3 will focus on the forms of participation from the perspective of selected individuals of migrant background active in Bergamo, including how they seize opportunities to participate and the implications of the local context for their ability to shape the local realm of immigration and become agents of political transformation.

7.2. The local realm of immigration in Bergamo

Like Brescia, the city of Bergamo has been traditionally associated with the “white” political culture, closely linked with the Christian Democratic Party until its fall at the beginning of the 1990s. As Campomori (2008) and Caponio (2006) suggest, the “white” political culture predicts a strong presence of the Catholic Church and “white” actors (such as the “white” trade union, the CISL) as well as a laissez-faire approach by the local administration, resulting in processes of devolution by local actors in favour of the Church. In 2013, in the absence of intervention in immigration issues by the local right-wing administration, the local realm of immigration in Bergamo was strongly shaped by two

³⁰⁵ He told me: “The first attempt was March 28, 2009, when the March 28th Network was created. It was organized in the city and province. The network wanted to express a presence. It gained an audience with the province, which unfortunately did not go ahead. The CISL was coordinating the entire thing. The second attempt was March 1, 2010. At that time there was an awakening, and we realized we needed to enlarge the network” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

powerful “white” actors, the Church and the CISL. These two actors were critical in shaping the local realm of immigration, tending to push it in the direction of assistance. In this context, lay and migrant organizations were very weak and had little impact. Additionally, left-wing local actors in the city did not represent a relevant counter-power. They were either very weak (as in the case of the main left-wing political party, the Democratic Party, the grassroots movement and the Communist Refoundation Party) or were *de facto* closely aligned with the assistance approach adopted by the Church and the CISL, as in the case of the CGIL. Finally, new radical Left, grassroots trade unions—the CUB and the USB—began to emerge in response to the financial crisis that started in 2008. In particular, the USB tried to develop trajectories of political participation for people of migrant background in the city. However, until 2013, its presence in the city was still very marginal.

Table 7.1 presents a schematic view of the main local actors shaping the realm of immigration in Bergamo and the approaches to integration they adopted in 2013. The table indicates the degree of investment by local actors in the three main approaches to integration: assistance (A), intercultural (I), and political rights promotion (PRP). One star indicates a weak level of intervention, two stars a medium level of intervention and three stars a strong level of intervention. The level of intervention depends primarily on the combination of two main factors: (1) the importance given to a specific approach by the local actor; and (2) the strength of that actor in the political arena and thus its ability to successfully promote that approach.

TABLE 7.1. Approaches to integration by local actors in Bergamo in 2013

Political orientation	Actors	A	I	PRP
	Right-wing administration	-	-	-
“White” actors	Caritas	***	-	-
	Church-based organizations	***	-	-
	Lay organizations	*	*	-
	CISL	**	-	-
“Red” actors	CGIL	**	-	*
	Democratic Party	-	-	-
	Communist Re-foundation Party	*	-	*
	USB	*	-	*
Others	Immigrant associations	*	*	-

The table indicates the strong prevalence of the assistance approach in the city and the weak presence of the intercultural and political rights promotion approaches. This weakness resulted in an almost total failure to open the channels of participation in the city

Table 7.2 shows that, as for the intercultural approach, the creation of the Agency for Integration in 2002 was an attempt to promote civic participation, by encouraging the development of immigrant organizations. As for political rights promotion, with the exception of the Communist Refoundation Party and the USB, which were not able to open up channels of political participation because of their weakness in the city, and the CGIL, which was more inclined to adopt an approach to integration close to the Church and the CISL, there were no significant channels of political participation in the city (Table 7.2).

TABLE 7.2. Opening of channels of participation by local actors and their relevance (1–weak to 3–strong) in Bergamo in 2013

Local actors	Civic channels	Conventional political channels	Non-conventional political channels
Lay organizations	Agency for Integration (1)		--
CGIL	--	Inclusion at the individual level (functionaries) (1)	Migrant coordination Organization CGIL-FIOM (1)
Communist Refoundation Party	--		Mobilization of immigrants (1)
USB	--		Mobilization of immigrants and promotion of inclusion at the individual level (1)
Immigrant associations	Participation in organizations (1)		

In the following section I will present the trajectories of local actors in the city—local administrations, third-sector organizations, traditional trade unions, institutional and radical left-wing organizations, and immigrant associations—since the end of 1998, in order to clarify how they have come to shape the local realm of immigration and channels of participation in 2013.

7.2.1. The role of local administrations

Since 1998, Bergamo has been characterized by an alternation of power between left-wing and right-wing coalitions. Left-wing parties governed the city in 1998-1999 (in

power since 1994) and 2004-2009. Right-wing coalitions governed the city from 1999 to 2004 and between 2009 and 2014 (see Table 7.3). The last right-wing administration (2009-2014) was characterized by a strong presence of the Northern League.³⁰⁶

TABLE 7.3: Political orientation of the local administrations in Bergamo since 1998³⁰⁷

	1998-1999 (since 1994)	1999-2004	2004-2009	2009-2014
Political orientation	Center-Left	Center-Right	Center-Left	Center-Right
Main Political Party	DS	UDC	L'Ulivo	PDL + Northern League
Mayor	Guido Vincentini	Cesare Veneziani	Roberto Bruni	Tentorio

A main characteristic of both left-wing and right-wing administrations has been the adoption of a *laissez-faire administrative style*, devolving integration policies to the Church and avoiding any coordination of the third sector. All my interviewees in Bergamo agreed that while the left-wing administrations showed some interest on the subject of immigration, the engagement of the right-wing administrations was derisory. However, both sides of the political spectrum actively renounced governing the phenomenon of immigration.³⁰⁸

Lack of involvement of local administrations

In my interviews with the main representatives of local organizations in Bergamo, many expressed their concerns about the lack of involvement of the local administrations. The director of the ACLI, or Association of Italian Christian Workers (*Associazione Cristiana Lavoratori Italiani*), one of the main social services agencies of Catholic orientation, explained, “Over the years, politicians in Bergamo have preferred not to

³⁰⁶The right-wing coalition led by mayor Tentorio won the election with 51% of the votes. Of these votes, 26.2 % (13 seats) went to the PDL and 14.9% (7 seats) went to the Northern League. The left-wing opposition lost with 42.3% of the votes. See “Elezioni Amministrative 6-7 giugno 2009 - Comunali. Lombardia - Bergamo.” Repubblica.it June 9, 2009. <http://www.repubblica.it/speciale/2009/elezioni/comunali/bergamo.html> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³⁰⁷In the context of Bergamo it is also important to consider the role of the provincial level. From 1999 to 2004, while a right-wing government was in power at the local level, a left-wing coalition was governing at the provincial level. In that period, the provincial administration launched a few initiatives to promote participation among immigrants. Between 2009 and 2014, the right-wing governments at both at the provincial and municipal level and the influence of the Northern League contributed to an increasing closure of local institutions and a shift of attention towards security measures.

³⁰⁸ Exploring the official site of the municipality, one notices that references to services for people of foreign origin are absent. http://www.comune.bergamo.it/servizi/notizie/notizie_homepage.aspx (Accessed June 25, 2015).

govern the phenomenon of immigration. They have observed it rather than governing it. There is a lack of coordination of the management of integration” (Raimondo D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013). He continued:

The Right has always closed down any possible initiatives and projects. The Left has always preferred not to expose itself. The Left has known that it is in a territory where people vote Right, so they did not want to be penalized. The Right has never opened talks on the theme of participation. What is more, in any case, there was always the idea that the Church would take care of everything by dampening down the problems. As a result, politicians have not governed the process (Raimondo D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).

He added:

The truth is that the ruling class did not keep up with the transformations of society. What is more, there is a lack of political culture in the political class. A work of institutional engineering could have been able to put the cooperatives in motion. Entrepreneurship, typical of Lombardy, has opened up very interesting and precious trajectories. Unfortunately, what has been missing is the political substance that would bring together all these efforts. In this respect, there is a striking difference with the intercultural approach of Reggio Emilia. Yet, the right path is the one taken by Reggio Emilia. We will get there whether we like it or not, because we have no other choice but to deal with integration (Raimondo D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).

The director of the Agency for Integration, Salvatore E., made the point that:

At the municipal level there is nothing. In the last fifteen years, they have done nothing! There is not a service or a cooperative. The third sector acts, but without coordination. It is not easy. What is missing is a culture of integration (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013).

The head of the CISL-ANOLF of Bergamo confirmed some of the ideas expressed above: “The fundamental problem in Bergamo is that the administrations have also talked about empty things. No one faces the issues without prejudice or *buonismo* (a noncommittal, overly sympathetic approach). No one is talking about the things that matter, such as

integration and access to rights” (Angelo A., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013). The same view was expressed by Don Mariano M., the person in charge of the Office of Migrants of Caritas and by Zaccaria M., the person in charge of the social policies of Caritas. The first said that “Politicians in Bergamo do not have a vision of the whole. They have no ability to plan and they always just fill the holes instead of solving problems” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013). The second pointed out that “Local authorities haven’t done anything. There is not a service or a cooperative” (Zaccaria M., Interview in Bergamo, 30 November 2013).

Greater efforts made by the Left than the Right

Most of my interviewees in Bergamo admitted that the approaches to integration of the center-left administrations had usually been “a little bit more open than those of the Center-Right.” As Karim M. (a person active in the Communist Refoundation Party) explained, “Left-wing administrations haven’t done much, but at least they have done *something*. For instance, they attempted to open an Islamic cemetery. Also they have demonstrated a certain openness towards creating a space for the associations” (Karim M., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013). What is more, left-wing governments at the provincial level supported initiatives to promote intercultural and political rights promotion approaches while right-wing administrations were governing the city between 1999 and 2004. In 2000, under the provincial left-wing administration, there was an attempt to valorize the presence of people of migrant background in the territory of Bergamo. Zaccaria M. (Caritas) clarified: “There were more than 2,000 volunteer groups in the city in 2000. Among them, 200 or 300 decided to dedicate their efforts toward people of foreign origin and the administration supported them” (Zaccaria M., Interview in Bergamo, 30 November 2013). Additionally, two organisations were created by the left-wing administration at the provincial level to put institutions in contact with immigrants through their associations: the Provincial Consultative Body and the Agency for Integration.

The Provincial Consultative Body was created in 1999 to make contact with immigrant organizations in the territory. However, all my interviewees agreed that “the organisation lasted only a short time, from 1999-2001” (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013). According to Salvatore E., director of the Agency for Integration, it was not designed to empower people of migrant background: it was not elective, so it was not very representative. Additionally, the organisation was not created

to promote participation, and “it did not originate from the needs of people of migrant background,” but rather was created to “solve the problems of the administration” that wanted to reach the immigrant communities” (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013). The Agency for Integration was created in 2002 with the support of the Church organizations (Caritas and the Cooperative Ruah, a non-profit organization created by the diocese) to promote intercultural dialogue in the city. In 2013, the Agency was still active, but as I will clarify below, it was far from making a difference in the city. Additionally, in 2005 the left-wing municipal administration (2004-2009) created a “house of the associations.” However, it was closed in 2009 after the right-wing coalition won the elections.

Shift towards a security-focused approach

In addition to the problems of a laissez-faire approach to integration, there was a visible shift of attention by the most recent right-wing administration (2009-2014) from integration to *security measures*. Mayor Franco Tentorio expressed this very clearly in his electoral program in the section “A Safer Bergamo,” in which he argued that it was necessary to reinforce police interventions to insure a safer city.³⁰⁹ This stance was restated in the official document of the administration once he took power.³¹⁰ It is remarkable, however, that unlike the right-wing administration of Brescia (2008-2013), the Tentorio administration did not target the immigrant community as a security problem. In its official program, the administration even emphasized the importance of supporting projects of solidarity in the city, including solidarity with the immigrant community.³¹¹ Overall, unlike Brescia’s right-wing administration, in Bergamo the administration did not make a strong link between immigrants and problems of security in the city and did not build its consensus directly around this issue.

Even so, the strong presence of the Northern League in the administration contributed significantly to the attitude of more moderate politicians in the city by raising the “electoral cost” (Caponio 2006a, 104) for both left-wing and right-wing actors in the

³⁰⁹ See the document “Programma Elettorale” (Electoral Program) <http://www.claudiasartirani.it/pdf/PROGRAMMA-ELETTORALE-LUNGO.pdf> (Accessed June 15, 2015).

³¹⁰ See the document “Comune di Bergamo. “Linee programmatiche: Mandato 2009-2014,” in particular pages 1-5 in which the new administration presents its program by emphasizing its commitment to “solidarity and security.” http://www.comune.bergamo.it/upload/bergamo_ecm8/notizie/Linee%20programmatiche_12927_5327.pdf (Accessed June 15, 2015).

³¹¹ See the document quoted in the note before at the pages 14-16.

territory. On the one hand, the center-right parties adopted an approach more centered on security measures, while on the other, the left-wing parties became even more uninvolved on the issues of integration than in the past, for fear of losing votes by addressing the issue openly and courageously. In 2013, the administration refused to release to the Muslim community the authorization for the creation of a mosque, and the “threat” of Islam emerged in the political debate.³¹² One of my key informants explained this point as follows:

Today things are made more difficult with a right-wing government. You can surely feel the difference... the left-wing government was a little more tolerant with the undocumented immigrants. The right-wing government pays more attention to security, because of the influence of the Northern League. Foreign people are seen as a threat. Now, they never lend a helping hand to ease integration. On the contrary, they make it very difficult. With the left-wing administrations this did not happen. They need time, but one mandate is not enough (Karim M., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

This political context also had implications for the work of other actors in the city. The head of the department of social policy of Caritas, Zaccaria M., expressed many concerns about this shift. He told me:

With this last right-wing administration in power, there has been a clear change for the worse in the orientation of the local administration. The administration is completely absent on the issue of integration. Politicians have now almost entirely submitted to the discourse of security. Their focus is on security, not on integration. For this reason, the third sector has taken on the task of *heavy substitution*. This last administration has not done anything, except an instrumental use of the subject for electoral purposes. Politics in Bergamo is not able to give answers. Now, with the financial crisis, we are going backwards by twenty years (Zaccaria M., Interview in Bergamo, 30 November 2013).

Raimondo D., the director of the ACLI, explained that the Northern League gained its success in the territory of Bergamo “by riding on people’s fear and cultural illiteracy,”

³¹² On the refusal by the local administration of Bergamo to allow the opening of a mosque in Rongo (province of Bergamo) and the responses of the Islamic community which brought the case to court, see R. Clemente. “Moschea, il Comune in tribunale. La comunità islamica ricorre al Tar.” *L’Eco di Bergamo*. April 16, 2013.

http://www.ecodibergamo.it/stories/Cronaca/368291_moschea_il_comune_in_tribunale_la_comunit_islamic_a_ricorre_al_tar/ (Accessed June 25, 2015).

and that the other political forces in the city were willing to adjust to this situation. He illustrated this politicization of the issue of immigration by describing a particular episode:

Once we had a meeting with one of the municipal administrators. We talked with him about the possibility of constructing a mosque. At that point, the Northern League told the left-wing party, the Democratic Party: ‘We will never give you the permission! If you want it, you have to put the proposition among the points to be discussed during the political campaign!’ Of course, the left-wing party did not dare to do so. In this context, what we lack the most is the ‘humus’ for the creation of a viable cohabitation. In Bergamo, even rights sanctioned by the constitution are constantly used in politics (Raimondo D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).

Giorgio B., the director of the Cooperative Ruah, a local organization directly connected to the Church, expressed similar concerns. According to him, the Northern League had negatively affected the political climate in Bergamo: “They represent the ‘immigrants’ as the ones who take away everything. Now you cannot say many things anymore. They have changed the dialogue of politics and there is little courage by the political parties. This makes a great difference for us” (Giorgio B., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013). Nonetheless, many interviewees pointed out that, notwithstanding the strong presence of the Northern League in the territory, in the city of Bergamo its impact has never pushed the right-wing administrations to extremist positions as in the case of Brescia. Alessio O., the person in charge of the immigration policies of the CGIL, told me: “Fortunately, the right-wing administration in Bergamo has never adopted openly xenophobic attitudes towards people of foreign origin and has never completely closed its institutions to the initiative of other local actors” (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

In addition to the Northern League, my interviewees were also extremely worried about the financial crisis, which added a new burden to an already difficult situation. I asked Raimondo D. how the crisis was affecting the situation of immigrants in the city. He answered:

The fact is that before the economic crisis, in 2009, there were some factors that helped us to bring the situation under control. We had enough work and a very high employment rate. Also, the school had done a great job, through the help of social mediators. However, with the default of the governmental and municipal funding, it

now becomes very complicated. What is more, there is no money to pay the few cultural mediators we have (Raimondo D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).

To summarize, since 1998 the local administrations in Bergamo have adopted a laissez-faire administrative style, which has meant a lack of intervention in the realm of immigration and the devolution of main issues to the third sector, and in particular the Church. Notwithstanding sporadic initiatives to address the issue of inclusion by left-wing administrations (and the provincial government) during the first decade of the 2000s, the increase in the power of right-wing coalitions changed the general political climate. Additionally, the last right-wing administration in power (2009-2014) changed the attitude toward immigration by focusing on security and politicizing the issue for electoral purposes. In terms of political participation, the result was that local administrations did not contribute to opening up the channels of political participation of people of migrant background. The only significant participatory structure linked to the administration was the Agency for Integration, which had only very limited support, as will be documented below.

7.2.2. The role of the diocese and the church-based organizations

On the one hand, the diocese and the church-based organizations in Bergamo are very powerful and well structured. On the other hand, the lay organizations are very few and have very little weight in the city.³¹³ The diocese is the center of reference of the third sector in the city and its main operative bodies are Caritas and the Patronage San Vincenzo. As Zaccaria M., the person in charge of the social policies of Caritas, explained in our interview, “The peculiarity of the Church in the city is that it assumes the

³¹³ In the official site of the Province of Bergamo, on the page “World of associations and voluntary sector,” under the heading “Immigration,” one can read about the help desks present in the city and also find a list of conferences and training programs organized in the city on the subject of immigration. However, there is no information on the associations for and of immigrants that offer services or promote other activities in the territory. Also, among the conferences organized in the city, there is no allusion to services that go beyond assisting immigrants to renew their permit of stay or similar issues linked to the renewal of documents. See page: http://www.provincia.bergamo.it/ProvBgSettori/provBgSettori_HomePageProcess.jsp?folderID=603 (Accessed June 25, 2015). Additionally, under the same heading one can also find references to the Immigration Observatory (*Osservatorio Immigrazione*), an instrument of the Province to study the phenomenon of immigration in the territory. The Observatory was created in 2005 in all the provinces of Lombardy and was coordinated by the Regional Observatory, the ORIM (Regional Observatory for Integration and Multi-ethnicity – Osservatorio Regionale per l’Integrazione e la Multiethnicità). For the provincial Observatory see <http://www.provincia.bergamo.it/ProvBgSettori/provBgSettoriHomePageProcess.jsp?myAction=&page=&folderID=35501> (Accessed June 25, 2015). For the official site of the ORIM see <http://www.orimregionelombardia.it> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

role of coordinating the parishes and other church-based organizations. Outside the church-based organizations, there is little space for lay cooperatives and organizations” (Zaccaria M., Interview in Bergamo, 30 November 2013). Zaccaria M. added that the main goal of the Church is to offer assistance:

The Church is attentive to the issue of poverty in general. On the issue of immigration, the diocese and the parishes have invested a great deal in the sectors of service and insertion into society. We focus on the delivery of services of low-threshold and managing the social services that are devolved by the public sector (Zaccaria M., Interview in Bergamo, 30 November 2013).³¹⁴

Since the first arrival of immigrants in the 1980s, the diocese understood the importance that immigration would assume in the city, and created bodies able to address the issues involved in welcoming new arrivals. Caritas created the Pastoral Migrant Office (*Ufficio Pastorale dei Migranti*) in 1993, while the Patronage San Vincenzo gave birth to the Cooperative Ruah in 1991, a non-profit organization devoted to delivering services to refugees and people of migrant background in vulnerable conditions.³¹⁵

The main tasks performed by the Pastoral Migrant Office of Caritas are assistance and pastoral care for the Catholic communities, sensitizing the local population, and developing relations with the public and civil institutions.³¹⁶ The Office has also established privileged relationships with some groups of Catholic immigrants, in particular with the Bolivians, who have benefited from its support in the city.³¹⁷ Don Mariano M. explained that:

³¹⁴ Zaccaria M. noted: “In the more general context of Lombardy, the Church in Bergamo stands out because of its powerful role as coordinator of the third sector.” Zaccaria M. also added that, for the Church in Bergamo, “The relationship with institutions is considered normal. However, collaboration does not mean accepting everything without criticism. The state tends to delegate, but we try to encourage the institutions to bring attention to these issues” (Zaccaria M., Interview in Bergamo, 30 November 2013).

³¹⁵ For the official site see: <http://www.cooperativaruah.it/> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³¹⁶ For a complete list of the activities promoted by the diocese see the official site http://www.diocesibg.it/home_page/curia/00000142_Segretariato_Migranti.html (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³¹⁷ The pastoral dimension is crucial for these organizations. Don Mariano M. explained: “The religious dimension is pivotal, even though one cannot dissociate the social and the cultural dimensions. The Migrant Office offers pastoral services for everyone. Some groups are particularly close to the Church, such as the Bolivians, the Ukrainians, the Filipinos, the Francophone Africans, and some other Catholic communities. There are different domains for the mission: it addresses religious needs of both the ethnic communities and the associations of immigrants, and leads discussions with civil and public institutions (provincial and local administration, ASL, police headquarter, SERT, prefecture...). Finally, in the province, its goal is to make the parishes more sensitive to these issues” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

Since the beginning of immigration in Italy, the diocese paid great attention to the issue of migration. In particular, the diocese of Bergamo has good and long-lasting relationships with the diocese in Cochabamba, in Bolivia. For this reason there are many Bolivians in Bergamo. The parish has as one of its missions the pastoral care of this group. The mission started in 2004. Sometimes it addresses one specific group. In particular it is easier with South Americans who speak Spanish (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

The Cooperative Ruah provides assistance and organizes training courses for social workers and initiatives to help immigrants' social inclusion.³¹⁸ What is more, with the help of the CGIL and the lawyers' organization, the ASGI, the Cooperative Ruah has appealed against cases of discrimination in the territory of Bergamo.³¹⁹ As Giorgio B., the head of the Cooperative Ruah, told me:

The Church in Bergamo does many things and it is recognized as a political force. The Cooperative Ruah was created by Caritas and the Patronage San Vincenzo to welcome new arrivals. At first it was an association. At that time it was created, it was easy to find jobs, so attention was given mainly to Italian courses and housing. Five years ago [2008], the association was transformed into a cooperative focusing on social entrepreneurship (COOP A & B). We have an incredible number of volunteers (100) and one professional. In the structure we have 50 social workers. Since 2010, we have been organizing courses in computing and courses in English and French for the healthcare workers. We also organize meetings to support socialization and also courses in civic and moral education. In the area of welcoming there are three houses that belong to the diocese, and we manage them. In these structures we do first, second and third assistance (Giorgio B., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).³²⁰

In addition to these two powerful church-based organizations, many parishes across the province of Bergamo collaborate in a network with Caritas for the delivery of services. There is also a component of the volunteer sector that contributes to this network, and

³¹⁸ For a complete list of its activities see the official site: <http://www.cooperativaruah.it/cooperativa-ruah/> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³¹⁹ See for instance the article on the interventions of the ASGI in collaboration with the CGIL and the Cooperative Ruah. "Social card agli immigrati. Ricorsi antidiscriminazione contro poste inps e ministeri." *Stranieri* *in* *italia.it*. http://www.stranieriinitalia.it/attualitasocial_card_agli_immigrati_ricorso_antidiscriminazione_contro_poste_inps_e_ministeri_18497.html (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³²⁰ For a list of the structures and the initiatives organized by the Cooperative Ruah see: <http://www.cooperativaruah.it> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

though not directly linked to the Church, its orientation is also Catholic.³²¹ In line with the diocese, the organizations involved in the realm of immigration concentrate mainly on the delivery of services. However, it is also important to note that in addition to this assistance-based approach, some of these organizations have attempted (often with difficulty) to open an intercultural dialogue in the city to promote cooperation of people with different faiths. One example is the initiative “Many faiths under the same sky” (*Molte fedi sotto lo stesso cielo*). Promoted by the ACLI with the sponsorship of the local administration and in collaboration with numerous associations in the territory, the initiative involved a cycle of meetings to promote intercultural and interreligious exchanges. As one can read in the official site, the goal of the initiative is “to learn the alphabet of cultures and religions that will offer the tools to meet responsibly and with discernment the epochal challenge of a plural world.” On the same page, one can read that a main concern of the initiative is “to live, rather than be subject to, the transformations at work.”³²²

During our interview, Roberto D., the director of the ACLI, told me how important it was for him to support intercultural dialogue. However, he also expressed regret that these initiatives were very isolated and were not making a real difference in the city. He repeated several times during the interview: “Compared to Reggio Emilia, we are still in the Stone Age. The initiatives we organize are just to give the ABCs, the alphabet of the other culture” (Roberto D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013). This example shows that local actors are aware of the need to move beyond a dominant assistance-based approach, but that it is extremely difficult to do so.

According to my interviewees in the city, the dominant presence of the diocese and the Catholic organizations in the cities had pros and cons. On the positive side, most of my interviewees agreed that the role of the Church is crucial in terms of immigrants’ protection. First, the Church counteracts the indifference of public authorities by taking charge of offering assistance to the immigrant population. Second, because in Bergamo the Church is *de facto* the provider of welfare services, anti-immigrant discourses and attempts to impede immigrants from accessing services find a powerful opposition. In this respect, the strong presence of the Church in Bergamo can be interpreted as a deterrent for manifestations of political extremism. When it comes to basic social policies, the right-

³²¹ For a list of the numerous lay organizations of Catholic orientation see the page http://www.webdiocesi.chiesacattolica.it/pls/cci_dioc_new/v3_s2ew_consultazione.mostra_pagina?id_pagina=11739 (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³²² See the official site: <http://www.moltefedisottolostessocielo.it/> (Accessed June 25, 2015). For a description of the goals of the initiative, see the page: http://www.moltefedisottolostessocielo.it/moduleContent-view_pagelayout-id_pagelayout-1.phtml (Accessed June 25, 2015).

wing administrations do not dare to oppose the work of the Church, which acts as a dampener against social and political conflicts.³²³ On this point, Giorgio B., the director of the Cooperative Ruah, made clear that:

The mayor and the assessor of social policies of the right-wing administration in power are people of wise judgment. They have continued on the same line as the previous left-wing administration (2004-2009) when it comes to letting us do our work of assistance and service delivery (Giorgio B., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

He also added:

I have worked with three different local administrations [1999-2004; 2004-2009; 2009-2014] and I have never observed hostile attitudes toward our work. With the previous left-wing administration, we opened the project “Casa Mater,” and with the current right-wing administration, we have carried it on. They do not obstruct us, because if they say no to me on integration issues, they also say no to the care of the elderly and the sick, because I am linked to the diocese (Giorgio B., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

Third, the church-based organizations contribute to supporting an approach of openness and dialogue. As the representative of the migration department of the CGIL, Alessio O., explained to me: “The Church plays a crucial role in the processes of integration and against the spreading of racism!” When the Minister of Integration Cécile Kyenge went to Bergamo on July 11, 2013, “the local authority did not show up. However, out in front of the meeting there was the Archbishop of the Bergamo diocese to shake hands with the Minister” (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).³²⁴

However, there are also significant problems linked to the overwhelming presence of the Church and devolution of immigration issues to the third sector. In terms of promoting

³²³ On the project Casa Mater see the site: <http://www.fondazionecasaamica.org/fei/rete-alloggiativa> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³²⁴ On the event see Fabio Paravisi. “Il ministro Kyenge: ‘Il ghiaccio del razzismo a Bergamo si è sciolto’” *Corriere delle sera, Bergamo*. July 12, 2013. http://bergamo.corriere.it/bergamo/notizie/cronaca/13_luglio_12/razzismo-kyenge-ghiaccio-sciolto-ministro-bergamo-2222115811650.shtml (Accessed June 25, 2015).

R. Clemente. “Il ministro Kyenge a Bergamo. Provocazione leghista dal cielo.” *Eco di Bergamo*, July 11, 2013. http://www.ecodibergamo.it/stories/Cronaca/385859_copia_di_il_ministro_kyenge_in_arrivo_a_precederla_tante_polemiche/ (Accessed June 25, 2015). On this occasion, Alessio O. (CGIL) publicly criticized the absence of the Mayor of the city, Franco Tentorio, and praised the presence of the Bishop, Francesco Beschi.

participation, my interviewees explained that the dominance of the Church represented a substantial barrier to the development of approaches to integration that go beyond assistance. The first main difficulty identified by my interviewees is that the Church treats immigrants as “poor” and in need of assistance, influencing other actors towards this same viewpoint. Salvatore E., the director of the Agency for Integration, told me, “The Church must stop treating immigrants as the losers of the hearth!” Similar criticisms emerged during my interviews with main members of the church-based organizations. Don Mariano M. (Caritas) told me, “Immigrants are always seen as people who need assistance, as if they were always in need” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013). He added that the approach of the Church has inevitable negative consequences on the type of integration developed in the city:

[...] an approach of “giving and receiving” has been developed rather than a more balanced insertion into society. The process of integration is made easier by the open attitude toward those who are in need. But the problem is that we have promoted *passive cohabitation* instead of a true relationship and integration of these people within the host society (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).³²⁵

The Church’s approach has a major effect on people of migrant background’s political participation in the city. One of my interviewees said:

This context has great implications for participation. The Church is a very specific container. There are few chances to develop any kind of participation whatsoever, whether by Italians or immigrants. If you want to do it, you do it at their rhythm, within their boundaries and rules (Piero P., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).

The interviewee continued by saying that, as long as the Church limits the available modes of engagement, “it would be impossible to promote a pluralistic and more inclusive view of society as well as autonomous participation by immigrants” (Piero P., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013). The director of the ACLI, Raimondo D., added to this point

³²⁵ Don Mariano M. added, “The parishes should have developed a true openness toward the poor and thus towards immigrants. It is all about charity, assistance, but that has not entered into the social tissue. There is not a dialogue that helps to valorize difference. If you are the mayor of your city, you look at the wellbeing of your city. If you have an association, you look at the interests of your association. There is not a real network. Here we are starting to create a network, but out of necessity and not because of a spontaneous initiative or the spirit of collaboration” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

by saying, “the overwhelming presence of the Church *prevents the growth of political self-awareness of individuals* in the city” (Raimondo D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013). He used the example of Reggio Emilia to clarify how hard it was in Bergamo to move away from a service-oriented approach to integration and promote participation:

In Bergamo there is *assistance*, but *not true integration*. In addition to the strong presence of the Northern League, the overwhelming presence of the Catholic Church represents a further impediment to the processes of political inclusion in Bergamo. Don't get me wrong! The Church has made a great effort to welcome people of foreign origin and has had a crucial role as a social dampener. Yet, the Church is not able to support socio-political subjectivity. There is no political subjectivity for the social operators that work within it. They have no clue of what political subjectivity is. In this respect, in comparison with Reggio Emilia, we are still in the Stone Age. There is a widespread illiteracy on other cultures. The advantage of Reggio Emilia is that for many years there has been an alternative power to that of the Catholic Church. To talk about political subjectivity in the territories around Bergamo and in the city is extremely hard. In Reggio Emilia, there is more social cohesion and they have recognized diversity. Here in Bergamo, cohabitation will be inevitable, but it will be the result of deep lacerations and conflicts. The Church does a huge amount of work at the level of reception and welcome. But assistance is a funnel. There is no way out. Precisely because there is a lack of other models of reference, the Church perpetuates to infinity a model of passive dependency on welfare (*modello assistenzialistico*) (Raimondo D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).

During our interview, Carlo F., one of the main members of the Communist Refoundation Party in charge of the immigration sector, explained the relationship of the Party with the Church. He answered: “We don't like Caritas, of course! But how can we not admire them for the work they do and for their effectiveness?!” He continued:

At the beginning of the processes of immigration, the Church was crucial in offering the first aid, and they have created a net of reception co-financed by the administrations and the Lombardy Region. One very negative aspect is that there is an immense problem of subsidiarity. The public procurements are privatized in favour of the Church and there is no space for lay organizations. What is more, we have many conflicts with the Church, simply because they do not think of the auto-organization of immigrants and their political claims. They see immigrants as passive subjects. On the

contrary we hold dear the cause of direct participation of immigrants. What is more, they do not put their approach into question. They do not conceive the idea that there is a subaltern process of integration [with respect to social and working rights]. It is about a subaltern integration with respect to social and working rights (Carlo F., interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2014).

In a previous interview, Carlo F. stated:

They have been creating a parallel welfare. They do not understand that. Not only they do not question their approach, but they create a culture that nourishes the phenomenon that creates the subaltern (Carlo F., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

The second main problem posed by the Church is its obstruction of intercultural exchanges. An analysis of my interviews shows that the church-based organizations often adopt a paternalistic approach vis-à-vis immigrant associations in the city, instead of allowing them to grow and exchange freely with one another. The Church admittedly offers space for the associations to meet. Yet, as Giorgio B. (Cooperative Ruah) told me: “Unfortunately, what the Church wants in Bergamo is *folklore* rather than real inclusion” (Giorgio B., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013) and, as Don Mariano M. explained, “for this reason, there has not been a qualitative leap here for immigrant associations” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013). He added that the Church’s approach is always “organizing Feasts of the People and intercultural events, but there is no intention to promote any kind of claim beyond ‘cultural’ recognition of the presence of immigrants in the city” (Mariano M. Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013). Overall, I could clearly observe that this general approach towards immigrant associations leads the Church to not treat them as equal partners in the city and dissuades them from contributing to the activities of the third sector. It is difficult for these associations to even develop an assistance approach, let alone a more activist profile.

Finally, many interviewees highlighted that, behind the humanistic reasons that push the Church to take care of the “poor,” the Church has interests to defend: it gains enormous power and money from the issue of integration in the city and has little incentive to act otherwise since no one has the power to challenge its approach. For this reason, one of my interviewees, Damariano D., stated, “the interest of the Church in the phenomenon of integration is also very instrumental” and “immigrants’ integration serves the purpose of

the Church in reinforcing and keeping its power in the city” (Damaniano D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013). Many interviewees also expressed the view that, by occupying a great space in the political arena, the Church blocks the opportunities of other local actors (Italian and immigrant organizations alike) to develop and affirm themselves in the local arena. As will be seen in the following sections, the Church’s emphasis on an assistance-based approach has implications for the approaches adopted by other local actors, including left-wing organizations such as the CGIL, which are strongly influenced both ideologically and logistically by the presence of the Church. In this landscape, one third-sector organization that could have made a difference is the Agency for Integration. Created in 2002 by the provincial left-wing government, the Agency occupies an intermediary position between the public and the private sector. In the official site one can read that the Agency is a non-profit association, created to promote integration in the territory and in particular to promote interculturalism in the city by favoring exchanges between the Italian and immigrant communities. Its stated goal is to “facilitate, stimulate and support integration between Italians and immigrants.”³²⁶

The Agency offers various services, including support to the administration in the promotion of integration, and organizes activities including training for cultural mediators and cultural activities in collaboration with other organizations in the city. It also maintains a relationship with immigrant organizations in the city and offers a space where the associations can meet.³²⁷ Furthermore, it supports the accumulation of knowledge on the realm of immigration, thanks to the “Barometer” that is published every year.³²⁸ During our interview, the director of the Agency, Salvatore E., expressed regret that the Agency had very little power in the city:

At the beginning, the Agency had some power. However, it has lost it over time. The local context did not allow the empowerment of the Agency in the territory and in recent years the lack of funding has diminished its impact (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013).

³²⁶ See official site: <http://www.agenziaintegrazione.it/22-home-page/12-chi-siamo.html> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³²⁷ Find the list of the activities in the document of the official site: <http://www.agenziaintegrazione.it/images/Documenti/AGENZIA%20AL%20LAVORO.pdf> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³²⁸ On this last point see the page on the “Barometer” in the official site of the Agency.

According to Salvatore E., the Agency could not advance in the territory because it lacked substantial support from the city administrations. He was also critical of all other local actors in the city involved with immigration. According to him, the real problem was the exclusive dominance of the assistance approach. He clarified:

In Bergamo, the culture of integration does not have any innovative twist. Most of the time, our problem is that we don't have the ability, the competence, the basic knowledge, or a basic problem-solving approach. The mayors see themselves as the representatives of the Italians. In my opinion, the mayors should work as "managers of diversity." The politician that understands this point would also recognize other things, such as differences based on religion, on origin (city or countryside), cultural characteristics... We live in a pluralistic society and the dichotomy between "us" and "them" does not work, particularly because this "them" is plural. For this reason, we need to update our way of seeing things. No one here has asked the question: "How do we manage this complex reality?" To talk about integration you have to look ahead, far ahead, otherwise you have not understood anything. It is a matter of strategy. Our role is to let it be known that "integration concerns us all." Our work is to reduce the distance (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013).

He also added:

In the case of associations, we think that they shouldn't be hyped up as separate entities. Institutions should contribute to transforming the competencies of social workers in resources. The approach we have adopted in Bergamo is doing the opposite and it risks creating a long-lasting handicap. Why is the social service in charge of immigration and immigrants in Italy? This perspective could work at the beginning, but now we have to move on (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013).³²⁹

He concluded that the Agency was trying hard to look ahead and move beyond an assistance approach. However, he said: "Our problem is that we say things that are too distant from the reality in which we are working" (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013).

³²⁹ He also wrote a book in 2010, entitled *Oltre il binomio welfare-immigrazione. Un'esperienza locale: l'Agenzia per l'Integrazione [Beyond the Welfare-Immigration Binomial. A Local Experience: The Agency of Integration]*, in which he addresses these issues in a more systematic way.

7.2.3. The role of the traditional “white” trade union: the CISL

Along with the Church, the two main traditional trade unions, the CISL and CGIL, have been pivotal in shaping the local realm of immigration in the direction of service delivery. Because of the lack of interventions by local authorities and the difficult political climate created since 2009 by the right-wing administration, they have largely taken over the role of the state in managing integration. As Salvatore E. (Agency for Integration) told me: “Traditional trade unions are places of protection, attentive allies for all that has to do with immigration. It is a particularity of the organizations and in Bergamo they make a real difference” (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013). Given its Catholic background, the CISL is the most important union in the city of Bergamo. It has the greatest number of workers enrolled in the province—around 127,000 in 2012 compared with around 96,500 of the CGIL—and is among the most powerful territorial branches of the CISL in Italy.³³⁰ In 1989, the CISL opened the CISL-ANOLF, and since then it has provided service delivery.³³¹ As in the rest of Italy, the CISL of Bergamo, through the CISL-ANOLF, promotes cultural projects and international cooperation. On the homepage of the official site one can read that the CISL-ANOLF “works to create a society open to diversity, in a country ever more multiethnic and multicultural.” The Association “fights against racism by promoting mutual knowledge and it works for equality among people, emphasizing rights, duties and mutual respect in a society founded on pacific cohabitation, as outlined by the Italian Constitution” (CISL-ANOLF Bergamo).

In terms of participation, the CISL-ANOLF works alongside the immigrant associations, offering space for their meetings, co-organizing cultural activities and events, and assisting them through training courses and technical support. Angelo A., the president of the Association, explained:

We collaborate with immigrant associations. We have done more than any other union. We have created courses to explain management to the members of the associations. The courses were not only for their presidents, but for all the members of the associations. We did it because we believed in it (Angelo A., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013).

³³⁰ For the number of people enrolled see: www.bergamo.cisl.it (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³³¹ For a list of its activities, see the official site: <http://www.cisl-bergamo.it/sistema-servizi/anolf-associazione-nazionale-oltre-le-frontiere> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

Notwithstanding its official declarations, over the years the CISL has worked mainly on the delivery of services, rather than the promotion of other activities. As Angelo A. admitted during our interview: “in the last ten years, the office diverted its attention to the helpdesk instead of doing social activities” (Angelo A., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013).

Recalling the earlier activities designed to promote the creation and development of immigrant associations, he observed that, “Notwithstanding our enormous efforts, the experiment with the immigrant associations was a failure. It was very hard to work with these associations. Often the reasons people would create associations was to make money. They are not reliable” (Angelo A., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013). At that point I asked him: “Why do you think the experience did not work?” He answered: “The goal of the Association is not always helping compatriots. They use the space we offer for personal purposes and opportunism and many people have lots of pretensions” (Angelo A., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013). Despite this comment, my interviewees outside the union noted that the organization tends to assume that the role of an immigrant association is to offer mutual aid to compatriots. It was observed that that the CISL adopted a paternalistic approach towards immigrant associations. This assumption also explains how the CISL justifies its interference in the work of the immigrant associations it supports and why there is no space in the CISL for these associations to develop autonomously. My interview with Angelo A. confirmed this point. He told me: “We work very well only with the immigrant associations with whom we have been working for decades.” I understood later that the associations he was talking about were precisely the mono-national associations, which since the 1990s had been offering service delivery and help to the people of their “ethnic” community.

My interviewees outside the trade union helped me to identify some of the problems linked to the CISL. The first problem was an overwhelmingly assistance-based approach, which left very little space for immigrant workers linked to the CISL to develop trajectories within the organization. At the time of the fieldwork there was only one Senegalese union employee (who worked for the Office of the CISL-ANOLF) and one person of second-generation migrant background (the vice-president of the CISL-ANOLF).³³² Another problem identified by my interviewees was the instrumental use of

³³² Additionally, with the exception of a person of Moroccan origin who left the organization in 2012, there were no people of foreign origin with positions of responsibilities in the CISL. Because of the lack of research on the topic, little is known about the number of representatives of people of foreign origin in the workplace. Angelo A. observed that the reason why the only functionary of high rank (from Morocco) left the CISL was because after he received his Italian citizenship he moved to Belgium.

the issue of immigration to gain power in the political arena. One of my key informants told me that:

Political opportunism reigns in Bergamo. It is all about looking for new members and media representation. To encourage real participation in this context is impossible. There is no incentive whatsoever to encourage participation and political rights promotion. Like all the bureaucratic organizations of representation, the main goal of the CISL is to co-opt all the immigrants [into its organization]. There has never been participation from below. When this participation from below arises, it is channelled elsewhere unless it is harmless or it brings personal advantages. In general the approach is conservative, that is, linked to self-conservation. During the organization of the demonstration on March 1, 2010, the CISL said: ‘No flags!’ Nonetheless, they would pull the strings of the entire organization of the event. The CISL was the one that coordinated the committee to further its own political interests, while it criticized the other organizations for doing so at the same time (Damaniano D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).

7.2.4. The role of the traditional “red” trade union: the CGIL

The left-wing trade union, the CGIL, is also very influential in the city with many members.³³³ Like other local branches in Italy, the CGIL in Bergamo offers its own members protection in the workplace, mediation with institutions (e.g. police headquarters and the prefecture), and delivery of services through the Migrant Office to migrants in the city. In order to compete with the CISL in the unionization of immigrants, it expanded the range of services it offered to include courses on the acquisition of citizenship, civic education, and support for centers that offer Italian language courses.³³⁴

In addition to these activities related to assistance, the CGIL has also mobilized to fight against discrimination in the territory, and at the time of my fieldwork it was attempting to expand its activities in this direction (like the CGIL of Brescia). In this regard, Alessio O., the person in charge of the CGIL’s migration policies, told me:

³³³ In 2013, the total number of people enrolled in the CGIL (retirees and active workers) was 96,168 and among them 48,421 were active workers and 10,074 immigrant workers. http://www.cgil.bergamo.it/images/documenti/DATI_TESSERAMENTO_2013.pdf (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³³⁴ On the services offered by the CGIL, see: <http://www.cgil.bergamo.it/index.php/migranti> (Accessed June 25, 2015). Note that there is very little information in the official site; I owe most of my information to my interviewees.

We are seriously considering mobilizing to pursue legal cases against discrimination. The Cooperative Ruah has already done it with the support of the union. In the past, our Migrant Office has appealed against some municipalities that had discriminatory attitudes. We were able to win some of these cases. Now, we are getting organized to be able to do it ourselves (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

Similar to the CISL, in the past, the CGIL of Bergamo cultivated relationships with the immigrant associations by helping them formally organize, find space to meet, and pursue their activities. However, these attempts had little success and they were eventually abandoned.³³⁵

As far as political participation was concerned, at the time of my fieldwork, the CGIL was investing very little in the political rights promotion of immigrants in its organization and in the city, and it had little leverage in the mobilization of immigrants. According to Alessio O., there were two main barriers to participation by people of migrant background in the city: institutional discrimination and racism. He clarified: “there are many barriers to participation in Bergamo... the climate is very difficult... the greatest wall is not work but the territory” (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013). He added:

Babacar S., one of the functionaries of the CGIL’s FIOM, who is of Senegalese origin, was many times kept out of the factories because Italian workers did not let him in. The territory is intimidating for people of migrant background and prevents them from exposing themselves and making claims in the workplace. Thus, it is more difficult than elsewhere to find immigrants willing to invest time and energy in union activities (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).³³⁶

In order to face these obstacles, the CGIL of Bergamo has made many efforts to promote courses on union formation for people of migrant background in the last six or seven years. Their investment in this direction is designed to promote participation in a hostile environment. There have been training courses for representatives in the workplace (delegates) and for leaders of different sectors of workers (functionaries). One important

³³⁵ For example, the CGIL offered their headquarters to the Pakistani community to organize their votes in the elections in their country (see Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

³³⁶ Alessio O. noted that, “the national context is the main barrier to participation. Yet, the hostility of the local context has a great impact too. It exposes people of foreign origin to blackmail and thus makes them more vulnerable and less inclined to engage in political claims inside and outside the workplace” (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

initiative is the course called “More Colours” that was promoted in 2007. “It was a course addressed to immigrants. The goal was to illustrate what is the union, what are rights and duties, and what is participation in Italy. The goal was to make them grow in the union” (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013). Twelve delegates of different sectors participated in the trainings. After the course, three of them were selected to leave the factory and assume roles of responsibility: one man of Senegalese origin was in the sector of metalworkers (FIOM), and two other men (one of Moroccan and the other of Norwegian origin) were functionaries in the construction sector (FILLEA) (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013). Alessio O. explained:

The support we offer is necessary to counteract the hostile attitudes of the Northern League. Immigrant workers find it hard to grow and participate in union activities. The path is upward. We have thought about creating a Migrant Coordination Organization of the CGIL. It is not foreseen by the statutes, but it is important in order to promote participation and put people in a situation where they know that they are not only receiving and supplying services (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

According to Alessio O., the initiatives of the CGIL, like the ones described above, are important to counteract hostility and promote participation in the difficult context of Bergamo. Yet, he added that, “notwithstanding the attempts to promote participation by the CGIL, so far the results have been very limited” (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

In addition to the problems highlighted by Alessio O., other interviewees, including people of migrant origin active in the organizations, explained that some of the problems faced by the CGIL were due to barriers to participation that were internal to the union rather than external reasons. A deeper analysis of the practices put in place by the CGIL shows that the union acted very similarly to the other two main organizations in the city: the Church and the CISL. Its approach to integration was strongly influenced by these powerful actors - hence the union did not consistently promote a political rights promotion approach. For instance, Babacar S., the functionary of the FIOM-CGIL, noted that many Italian workers enrolled in the CGIL voted for the Northern League and were very hostile towards immigrants. The CGIL thus had to be very cautious in supporting immigrant claims, since, at the end of the day, it had to be accountable to its Italian members as well.

Adopting a similar approach to the CISL and the Church, the CGIL was inclined to tone down its more political claims. One of my key informants, Damiano D., highlighted:

Notwithstanding the CGIL's usual tendency to lay claims and politicize workers, it gave up its conflict with the CISL and toned down its claims in order to bring immigrants into its organization, in line with the general apolitical approach of other local actors in the city of Bergamo, and because of the difficult context pervaded with discrimination. This has resulted in the absence of substantial initiatives to promote participation of people of foreign origin in the territory and a great investment instead in the delivery of services and assistance (Damiano D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).

The local context and its own internal divisions limited the ability of the CGIL to invest consistently in the political rights promotion approach. At the individual level, immigrants who work in the union and have roles of responsibility (the functionaries) have few occasions to really express their point of view in the union. On the contrary, many interviewees expressed their concerns about significant co-optation and tokenism. They believed that immigrants who had roles of responsibilities were "used" by the union to bring other immigrants into the organization (for further details, see Section 7.3). Mohamed, who had been part of the CGIL-FIOM for many years, brought up the example of Babacar S., one of the few functionaries of the CGIL of migrant background, to illustrate this point:

At the CGIL there are very few functionaries and they are not visible. Their role is often limited to the assistance of immigrants. At the FIOM they have a Senegalese, Babacar S. We have waged a war as immigrant workers to push for his election. Babacar S. should go along with the secretary and discuss the union and its political decisions, but instead they use him to attract immigrants and to deliver services. Here they are using the image of immigrants to attract other immigrants. The image is used to attract more people to enrol in the union (Karim M., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

At the collective level, the CGIL of Bergamo never created a Migrant Coordination Organization - that is, an organization providing a platform for delegates of foreign origin to

express specific claims within the organization and in the territory. As Alessio O. clarified during our interview:

We have tried to support participation through trainings for delegates of foreign origin. Now we are thinking of creating a Migrant Coordination Organization. What is missing are the material conditions (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).³³⁷

To add to these problems, one of my key informants, who asked not be identified, explained that the CGIL dealt with people of migrant background in a paternalistic and instrumental way. He told me:

In the CGIL ... there is no effort made for workers, let alone for immigrants. The CGIL responded to the aggressiveness of the CISL, which was aiming to take all the immigrants. The migrant coordination of the FIOM has been an answer to the aggressiveness of the CISL. It is about a dynamic of personal favours. The dynamic works this way: 'I welcome you and help you, and you bring my flag.' Political participation and activism is the contrary of this dynamic. In general, none of these organizations like autonomous individuals in their organizations, because these persons are believed to create problems. Babacar S., the functionary of the FIOM, has never been able to do anything, because the majority of the Senegalese go to the CISL. What is more, assistance and paternalism are the dominant things. For this reason, the dynamic of the personal relationship dominates. The CGIL in Bergamo is a right-wing union. In Bergamo the only left-wing organizations are the grassroots organizations (Damiano D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).

I asked my interviewees about the relationship between the CGIL with other local actors. They clarified that for both ideological and practical reasons, the CGIL was more inclined to ally itself with the CISL and the Church-based organizations than with left-wing or immigrant organizations. The CGIL in Bergamo was more moderate than the national organization and other territorial CGILs in Italy, which further favoured its relationship with the CISL and the Church.³³⁸ Alessio O. (CGIL) told me: "The CISL of Bergamo is the

³³⁷The metalworkers' division of the CGIL-FIOM, the more radical branch of the CGIL, created a Migrant Coordination Organization in Bergamo. This is because of their strong structure and their unquestionable commitment to promoting participation, independent of the context in which they operate. See for instance interview with Salvatore E. (Bergamo, 5 September 2013).

³³⁸Alessio O. pointed out: "The relationship with the Church is good. They work on integration by offering assistance and welcoming migrants. What is more, they are our allies against racism. With the grassroots

most powerful in Italy, because they are able to unionize many workers. They are very powerful and it is crucial for us to be effective enough to compete with them. Thus at the level of service we need to compete with them strongly.” However, when it comes to politics, “we have a very good relationship with them. We make many accords with them and we try to be united when it comes to the protection of individuals. For instance, when we meet with the police headquarters and the prefecture, we get together, so that we can bring home more results” (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

As I will describe in more detail in the following pages, the other left-wing organizations in the city are very weak and do not play a significant role in the local political arena. Thus, for the CGIL, it is easier to build alliances or collaborations with the CISL and the Church, even if this means moderating its claims and reducing its efforts in the direction of political rights promotion.

7.2.5. The role of the Democratic Party and the radical left-wing organizations

My interviewees agreed that other left-wing actors in Bergamo have little political weight. Salvatore E., the director of the Agency for Integration, told me: “The more moderate Left is completely absent. The Democratic Party does not get involved. What is more, the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party does not exist, or if it exists it is surely a ghost” (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013). During the local electoral campaign in 2009, the Democratic Party and other minor left-wing parties supported the election of a few candidates of migrant background. However, these candidates did not succeed in the elections.³³⁹ Overall, in the context of Bergamo, the moderate left remains an extremely marginal actor.

The radical Left is also very weak. As one of my key informants told me, “both the radical Left and the social center have little significance” (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013). By comparing Bergamo with Brescia, one of my key informants, Sergio S., from the radical Left told me:

There is a hole in the city. The movement in Brescia was very strong in the 1980s and in the 1990s. At that time there were two social centers. However, in the 2000s the

unions, the competition is more on political grounds rather than unionization” (Alessio O., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

³³⁹ See R. Clemente. “I volti ‘stranieri’ candidati alle elezioni.” *L’Eco di Bergamo*. May 21, 2009. http://www.ecodibergamo.it/stories/Cronaca/73038_i_volti_stranieri_candidati_alle_elezioni/ (Accessed June 25, 2015). Clemente notes that in 2009 there were six candidates of migrant background supported by left-wing parties for the local administration and one for the Province.

center has started to lose meaning. Like many other structures of the same time, it has become auto-referential. In practice, it has done nothing. It has not constructed anything and it does not represent anything: that's what I mean by auto-referential. Thus, in Bergamo there is no radical organization able to fill the gaps left empty by local institutional actors (Sergio S., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2014).

Many interviewees agreed that the Communist Refoundation Party was more important than any other left-wing organization (Sergio S., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2014). Carlo F., a member of the Communist Refoundation Party who has worked with the migrant communities for many years, explained that the weakness of the radical Left and the Communist Refoundation Party in Bergamo reflected the situation at the national level:

Until very recently, the anti-racist movement still had a role in Italy. However, with the fall of the Prodi government in 2008, the movement in Bergamo melted away. Since then, there has not been an organization on the Left able to stand up in the territory to give voice to immigrants. The big problem in Bergamo concerns the type of struggles we have been able to organize at the local level. Unfortunately, as an anti-racist movement we haven't been able to take root in the territory. This means that we haven't been able to become a relevant mediator, capable of imposing ourselves as a relevant political subject and thus opening negotiations and challenging institutions. If you organize big demonstrations but you are not able to change anything, the movements stifle (Carlo F., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).³⁴⁰

Carlo F. helped to reconstruct the history of this decline. Following the creation of the Social Forum by the anti-racist movement in Italy in 2001, in Bergamo the radical Left and the Communist Refoundation Party also created a Forum. However, like elsewhere in Italy, the Forum in Bergamo was constituted almost exclusively by Italians. Additionally, he recalled that, in 2002, with the approval of the Bossi-Fini Law, the main slogan of the anti-racist movement became "breaking the permit of stay with the permit of work," which assumed that the presence of immigrants in Italy could be justified only as a labor force. As Carlo F. explained:

³⁴⁰ This quote above illustrates an important difference from the radical left organizations in Brescia. Over the years the radical left organizations in Brescia were able to develop their structure around the issue of immigration, and, in contrast with the general national context, they were able to avoid a decline.

At that point a Migrant Committee was created with the support of the Communist Refoundation Party and some active communities in the city, such as the Senegalese and Moroccan communities. The Bengalese community would also often get involved. The Indian community followed at the beginning, then they quit. The problem with the Migrant Committee was that it could not evolve in the city (Carlo F., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

The Migrant Committee aimed to coordinate the immigrant associations in the city of Bergamo and the province, but it didn't achieve its goal:

Carlo F.: The main structure was composed mainly of Moroccans, linked to the Islamic cultural centers. They were very active. There were big mobilizations and demonstrations in front of the prefecture and police headquarters. There were institutional meetings and big assemblies in the province and then demonstrations in the city.

Teresa C.: How many people would participate in the demonstrations?

Carlo F.: 5,000-6,000. These were significant numbers for a small city like Bergamo. All these events were under the Organization for the Coordination of Migrants directly linked to the Communist Refoundation Party. The Catholic Church also participated at the beginning, then they distanced themselves when they understood that there were political claims involved.

After this first attempt, Carlo F. observed that between 2006 and 2008, during the left-wing government led by Romano Prodi, the Italian anti-racist movement seemed to gain strength again. However, with the end of the left-wing government, the idea of the changing the Bossi-Fini Law was dead and, from that time on, the anti-racist movement retreated at the national level. After 2008 the movement in Italy lost its momentum and so did the movement in Bergamo. With the development of the financial crisis since 2008, the Communist Refoundation Party shifted its attention from the organization of immigrants to the question of housing and fighting against evictions. However, Carlo F. expressed regret because the results were still extremely limited:

Since 2009, we have created a grassroots union and we have organized some struggles against evictions. However, our results are still very limited. With the financial crisis, even the CGIL-FIOM no longer has the strength it used to have in the past. In the face of the crisis, we have developed something new to deal with the new situation. We realized that it was not possible to continue supporting an anti-racist ethic and to focus exclusively on the struggle against the link between work permit and permit to stay characteristic of the anti-racist movements of the past. Thus, we decided to concentrate on the economic crisis and its effects. Immigrants are the most affected by the crisis. Our goal is to mobilize in support of the most vulnerable classes. The movement is constructed in opposition to the Center-Right. However, the real winner in the city is the Northern League. Because even though the Northern League has lately lost at the institutional level, at the cultural level it is the winner. For this reason we have created the Union for Tenants United [*Unione Inquilini*]. We are linked to a grassroots union, the CUB. The traditional unions have concentrated on work and we have concentrated on the problem of housing and eviction. We are interested in organizing people outside the workplace (Carlo F., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).³⁴¹

The Union for Tenants United in Bergamo attempted to duplicate the strength of the association Rights for All in Brescia (see Chapter 6), but with little success. Carlo F. explained the major differences from Rights for All:

They [Rights for All] have always been a reference for us, for the anti-racist struggle in the past as well as for the struggle against evictions. They have a very strong structure. We also promote resistance and political militancy, but we have been concentrating on the helpdesk, on offering a structure of solidarity rather than promotion of activism. We don't do our meetings at the social center, but at the branch of the Communist Refoundation Party. The biggest difference is that we dialogue more with the institutions (Carlo F., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

At this point I asked him which people of migrant background were involved with the grassroots union. He clarified:

There are two different generations. Many people who were once active are no longer there. There were people who were very active and now they are integrated. Many

³⁴¹ For the official site of the *Union for Tenants United* at the national level see <http://www.unioneinquilini.it/> (Accessed June 25, 2015). There is no official site for the city of Bergamo.

acquired their citizenship and are more active in the world of associations. Today, they are people who are part of the underclasses, people who could never integrate in the receiving society. They are mostly people who have been here for a short period of time and who have never been able to move beyond their precarious status. They come from rural places, with little education and little political formation. For all these reasons, it is very hard to organize them. They organize in the perspective of the resolution of their needs (Carlo F., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

I asked Carlo F. if he thought that the Communist Refoundation Party suffered from the same problems as the other organizations in the city, including paternalism and a difficulty in treating people of migrant background as equals. He admitted that the organization was not able to overcome a service-oriented approach and to empower immigrants. However, he denied that the Party adopted a paternalistic approach and used immigrants instrumentally. But other actors were more critical than Carlo F. One of my key informants declared:

The Communist Refoundation Party uses immigrants like anybody else. If there is someone who succeeds, it is because there is an Italian behind him. I'll give you an example of this *shameful opportunism*. In 2010-2011, Roberto Maroni released a one-year permit for humanitarian reasons to the asylum seekers from Libya. Ninety people found refuge in Bergamo. The Communist Refoundation Party hosted them for 3 or 4 days. Then, through the *Eco di Bergamo* [the main local newspaper], E. L. [the secretary of the Communist Refoundation Party] declared that these refugees were there, thereby exposing them to the electoral campaign. Why did they do it!? It is obvious: to gain power at the electoral level (Damiano D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).³⁴²

In view of the weakness of traditional radical left actors, it is noteworthy that new radical left-wing organizations were emerging in the city in response to the financial crisis, in particular around the issue of evictions. This is the case of the grassroots union USB, with its branch ASIA, specifically devoted to the issue of housing. One of the main members of ASIA observed:

³⁴² For a description of the event, see the article by Ezio Locatelli, Provincial Secretary of the Political Party: "Bergamo: Il PRC apre le sedi per l'accoglienza profughi." April 25, 2011. <http://www.controlacrisi.org/notizia/Politica/2011/4/25/12081-BERGAMO:-IL-PRC-APRE-LE-SEDI-PER-ACCOGLIENZA-PROFUGHI/> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

In Bergamo, a new movement for the housing struggle was born in the square after some mobilization in 2011. In January 2012, we gave ourselves a name to distinguish ourselves from the hegemony of the Communist Refoundation Party in the city, which used to be associated with the struggle. We wanted to affirm ourselves in the political arena. It is an organization of mutual aid. Our link with the USB was natural given our will to break with a traditional approach to the struggle (Sergio S., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013).³⁴³

He commented that, in comparison with the movement in Brescia:

We are far behind. They are more advanced because they had a different story than ours. However, since 2011, things have started to change in Bergamo as well. The movement in Bergamo is making an effort of reconstruction. In 2011, we organized our “Occupy” movement. The movement in Bergamo was born at the same time as the one in New York. It lasted a while, and from October to mid-November we occupied the center of the city. The name in our dialect was: “Noter an paga mia” (*We don’t pay the crisis!*). During the occupation, many things were born. There are different realities that move in synergy with each other. At that time, a few realities were born (Sergio S., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013).

He also emphasized the difficulty of going beyond a service-delivery approach:

The struggle against eviction in Bergamo is very far from the reality of Brescia, for instance, where they have been able to build a solid network. We haven’t been able to come out from an assistance-oriented approach. In Bologna, Turin, Milan, and Rome they say: “We are going to take the house!” We are not able to say that and we don’t know how to mobilize individuals. We have a very paternalistic approach indeed. Today we are trying to build the conditions for real participation but the path is long and difficult (Sergio S., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013).

During the occupation in 2011 the movement of the new left met with immigrants in the city. Some initiatives were born and died in the square. Others have continued afterwards, like ASIA. However, the number of the people in ASIA was still very low. There were around eight people who mobilized all the time and no one was of foreign

³⁴³ For a description of the radical grassroots trade unions, including the USB.

origin: “The only immigrants who are with us are those who are in need because they have been evicted.” And he added:

The reason why there are very few people of foreign origin with us is our fault. It is due to our inexperience. We didn’t know how to behave and in the beginning we were like their mothers. We haven’t worked on them. We haven’t pushed them to assume the struggle on themselves. We have made many mistakes. We haven’t been able to put together something similar to Brescia. At one point we were scared. Our goal was to build a political basis. Once we achieved this goal, we started to act like they do in Brescia. We ask them for advice, but we do not have a relationship of mutual aid with them. We also have a strong link with Milan, because some of them are our friends and we help each other (Sergio S., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013).³⁴⁴

To sum up, at the time of my fieldwork both moderate left-wing actors (the Democratic Party) and traditional radical left organizations (such as the Communist Refoundation Party and the social centers) were very weak in the city of Bergamo. During the financial crisis, in 2009, the Communist Refoundation Party tried to organize around the issue of evictions through the creation of the Union for Tenants United. New radical left actors, the USB, have also organized around the problem of evictions since 2011. However, members of these organizations admit that their ability to impose themselves as relevant actors in the realm of immigration and to mobilize people of migrant background in the city was extremely limited.

7.2.6. *The role of immigrant associations*

According to my interviewees in Bergamo, the immigrant associations were the places to find participation in the city. According to the Regional Observatory for Integration and Multi-ethnicity (*Osservatorio Regionale per l’Integrazione e la Multiethnicità*), in 2013 there were around 45 formal associations in the province of Bergamo, of which only 17 were based in the city of Bergamo. This number is very small compared with other cities, including Brescia, which had many more immigrant

³⁴⁴ He concluded on a positive note: “After our demonstration (on May 1st, 2013), things have started to move. The municipality had to do something and decided to open some houses. We have been able to free 50 houses. This was an important step because public opinion has realized what it was that was going on. Our strategy worked, because now the theme has become central. Up until now, there haven’t been occupations like in Brescia, but we are going to do it soon. Among people of foreign origin there are some potential activists, but it is still at the embryonic level” (Sergio S., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013).

associations (see Chapter 6).³⁴⁵ In addition to the small number, many of my interviewees suggested that one must also consider the limited influence of these associations in the city. Salvatore E., the director of the Agency for Integration, told me: “Even if thinking about the world of associations can be positive, one needs to pose some questions. You have to ask yourself, ‘*what weight do they have?*’” (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013). This point was confirmed by Marco Caselli and Francesco Grandi’s research (2010). His study on the world of immigrant associations in Lombardy showed that the organizations in Bergamo (as in most cities in Lombardy) were mainly mono-cultural or mono-ethnic and had very little weight in the city.³⁴⁶

As described above, participation by immigrants through their associations was encouraged by local actors since the end of the 1990s. In particular, the Agency for Integration was created to encourage intercultural exchanges and the growth of immigrant associations. Additionally, the diocese, church-based organizations and traditional trade unions made efforts to create collaborations with the immigrant associations. However, my interviews with Italian local actors and people of migrant background active in the world of associations showed that it was still very difficult to develop trajectories of participation in the city through immigrant associations. Among the barriers to participation were: (1) the absence of a space to meet; (2) the failure of immigrant associations to find common ground with each other; and (3) the interference of major local actors in the activities of the associations. My interviewees observed that there were no opportunities at all to meet in the city. There was no place where people of migrant background could interact and associate. One of the representatives of the radical Left told me that in Bergamo “there is a gap. For migrants there are neither intercultural centers, nor social centers” (Sergio S., Interview in Bergamo, 3 November 2013).

A second problem was that the associations were constructed as separate entities and were not able to build connections with one another. In the last ten years, different attempts were made by the Agency for Integration and the Church-based organizations to

³⁴⁵ See the official site of the ORIM: [http://www.orimregionelombardia.it/AM-risultatiRicerca.php?operatore=AND&chiaveRicerca=&provincia=15&nazionalita=0&obiettivi\[\]=0&obiettivi\[\]=0&obiettivi\[\]=0&obiettivi\[\]=0&action=ricerca](http://www.orimregionelombardia.it/AM-risultatiRicerca.php?operatore=AND&chiaveRicerca=&provincia=15&nazionalita=0&obiettivi[]=0&obiettivi[]=0&obiettivi[]=0&obiettivi[]=0&action=ricerca) (Accessed June 25, 2015) and of the province of Bergamo: http://www.provincia.bergamo.it/cd_01/Istituzioni/associazioni.htm (Accessed June 25, 2015).

³⁴⁶ Caselli and Grandi (2010) explain that immigrant associations are weak and little structured in Bergamo. What is more, these organizations do not mix with each other or with Italian organizations, and never participate in institutional negotiations or get funding from institutions. One of my interviewees noted that it is particularly hard to go beyond one’s own interests. “Immigrant associations reflect the tendencies of the city. We have tried to construct a network with them. But we have not been able to achieve this goal” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

promote participation with the associations, but the results were very poor.³⁴⁷ This created difficulties in creating exchanges and collaborations between the immigrant associations, as noted by Giorgio B., the director of the Cooperative Ruah:

My impression is that the Associations of Burkina Faso, Senegal, Morocco... are all ethnic and territorial expressions... Most organizations do activities for their own country. Immigrants do not organize among themselves (Giorgio B., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

Don Mariano M. confirmed this point: “The associations are very closed. They think of their own interests and it is almost impossible to create a network” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013). Salvatore E. told me, “In 2004, we organized a ‘multicultural party’ and there was not even a minimum of socialization among immigrants of different associations” (Salvatore E., Interview in Bergamo, 5 September 2013).³⁴⁸

Through my interviews I tried to understand the reasons for these failures. All my interviewees in the city confirmed that, notwithstanding the great efforts by local actors to encourage interactions between immigrant associations, the results were extremely poor and were not proportional to the efforts made. Don Mariano M.’s response was straightforward: “The truth is that these associations reflect the general context of Bergamo. We have attempted to encourage their networking for more than ten years. But it was a failure” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013). Don Mariano M. told me this problem was closely related to the lack of a common, neutral space for immigrants to meet:

There are structures linked to the Church: the Patronage San Vincent and the parishes. However, there is not a neutral space. Local authorities here do very little. We would always need a place. There was no will to do it. The things done by the Church are more enduring (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

³⁴⁷ The Agency for Integration was the only place where the leaders of the immigrant associations could meet. One informant observed: “In 2005, they wanted to organize a “Party for the Peoples” and it was very difficult to get together and construct the event together. They were around 30. The results were very limited. In 2007-2008, we created another project called ‘asso-soci-azione.’ This was another unsuccessful attempt to bring together a number of different associations. These difficulties in creating networks are the reflection of our society. In Bergamo there is a lack of spontaneity in creating relationships” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

³⁴⁸ For the complete list of immigrant associations in the city see the document: <http://www.agenziaintegrazione.it/images/Documenti/ASSOCIAZIONIIMMIGRATIDICEMBRE2013.pdf>

Giorgio B. made the point that the problem goes beyond the creation of a center:

What is completely missing is a dialogue that brings the valorization of difference and the enrichment of our country. There is no interest, no opening towards others' activities. The parish continues with Feasts of the People. But the parish makes mistakes. They used to do these ethnic dinners twenty years ago (Giorgio B., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

Zaccaria M. (Caritas) lamented:

We need to go beyond the issue of the world of immigrant associations. In Bergamo it is extremely hard to go beyond ethnic belonging. We should start to talk about "reciprocal contamination." The problem is that immigrants are not considered as political subjects here but rather as outsiders. This is an idea that must be overcome. We must stop viewing the immigrant associations as separate entities (Zaccaria M., Interview in Bergamo, 30 November 2013).

A third issue, my interviewees explained, was that the main organizations in the city had tried to create migrant committees or events with immigrant associations in the city without the active involvement of the associations themselves. The first Migrant Committee was created at the end of 1998 and the second in 2004. They both lasted no more than two years. As far as the first committee was concerned, one of my key Italian informants told me: "the creation of these organizations was decided by Caritas, the traditional trade unions and the radical Left. Everyone was involved!" (Damiano B., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013). According to this interviewee, what was problematic and "shameful" was that these organizations would interfere in the activities of immigrant organizations instead of letting them grow as autonomous entities. Regarding the second committee, Karim M. (an Italian citizen from Morocco, one of the people of migrant background involved in both committees and a member of the Communist Refoundation Party) told me:

The Migrant Committee of Bergamo was created in 2004. In 2005, there was intense activity with the immigrant associations, the key representatives of the CGIL and the

Communist Refoundation Party. There was a last demonstration in 2006 and then the committee ceased to exist (Karim M., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013).

Like Karim M., Mohamed A. of the USB was also part of this committee. I asked Mohamed A. if he knew why the Migrant Committee dissolved after one year. He answered:

I am not sure. Maybe it was because there were the Communist Refoundation Party and the CGIL at its interior. There were too many union-political interests. For instance, they would say, “No Flags!” and then they would all come with their own flags. The demonstration was for immigrants’ rights, not to advertise the union or the party. Notwithstanding these problems, thanks to the Migrant Committee I have been able to understand the evolution of the politics of immigration and thus it was an important school of political training (Mohamed A., Interview in Bergamo, 7 November 2013).

In addition to the Migrant Committees, other attempts to organize events with the immigrant associations failed (like the organization of “A Day Without Us”). Don Mariano M. (Caritas) confirmed this point:

The first attempt was in 2005. The Agency for Integration offered a place to meet. There were around thirty representatives of immigrant associations. We wanted to organize a Feast of the People with the different communities, but it was very hard to contact these people. The results did not match the efforts we made. The second attempt was in 2008. We launched the project *As-soci-ation* (“ass-soci-azione”). The goal was to reinforce the associations in the city. Only ten associations participated. The third attempt was in 2012. With the Cooperative Ruah, Salvatore E. from the Agency for Integration and I organized three meetings. At the first meeting there were ten people, at the second five people, and at the third no one. Then one member of an immigrant association told us to stop sending the email. He said, *‘Things have to start from us!’* (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013).

Overall, this section has showed the weakness of immigrant associations in the city of Bergamo, and how barriers to participation in the city substantially constrained their ability to shape the local realm of immigration and open the channels of participation in the city.

7.2.7. Concluding remarks on the local realm of immigration, approaches to integration, and implications for participation

In Section 7.1, I observed that the difficulties in organizing “A Day Without Us” in Bergamo illustrated the presence of three main issues: 1) conflicts between the main “white” organizations and the anti-racist movement; 2) the absence of left moderate actors; and 3) the lack of involvement of immigrants. In Section 7.2, I reconstructed the local realm of immigration in 2013 and described how it developed since 1998. I clarified that over the years local authorities had adopted a laissez-faire administrative style with very little involvement in the realm of immigration, and had devolved any investment in this domain almost entirely to the third sector.

The two main “white” actors in the city, the Church and the CISL, dominated the local arena and shaped the local realm of immigration mainly by supporting an approach based on assistance. On the other hand, left-wing actors were either too weak (as in the case of the Democratic Party and the radical left-wing organizations, including the Communist Refoundation Party) or unwilling to enter into conflict with the Church and the CISL (as in the case of the CGIL). I also described that the newest left-wing actor in the city, the USB, though it gained ground during the financial crisis, was still a very weak actor in the city. Finally I observed that, notwithstanding major efforts by local actors in promoting the existence and participation of immigrant associations in the city, the results were very limited and immigrant associations had not been able to build their own autonomous trajectories. My analysis shows that the local realm of immigration was shaped largely by the predominance of an assistance approach to integration at the expense of intercultural and political rights promotion approaches. This had important consequences on the limited opening of the channels of participation for people of migrant background in the city. The analysis also suggested that there was a link between the overwhelming presence of the Church and the difficulty by other local actors to move from an assistance approach to an intercultural and an empowering one. Among other things, processes of tokenism were particularly visible in the city and this made it more difficult for people of migrant background to participate in the opening of the channels of participation.

In the following section I will present selected individual trajectories of people active in the city, and examine how they perceived and seized opportunities to participate. I will examine how they got involved, their motivations and what obstacles they face. I will assess whether they challenge the practices of other actors and whether and how they

contribute to shaping the local realm of immigration and opening up the channels of participation in the city.

7.3. Channels of participation and immigrant activists in Bergamo

While I was doing my fieldwork in Bergamo, I contacted different organizations announcing my intention to investigate the forms of participation of people of migrant background in the city. It was emblematic that on several occasions I received the answer: “Political participation?! In Bergamo, political participation is equal to zero!” (Angelo A., Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013).³⁴⁹ According to Angelo A., the person in charge of the CGIL-ANOLF, “to talk about political participation in Bergamo is like putting a roof on a house without a foundation. Political participation follows socio-economic inclusion.” According to most local actors, the *only channels* of participation in the city were the immigrant associations. As one of my interviewees put it, “unless they create an association, immigrants in the city are practically invisible” (Mariano M., Interview in Bergamo, 12 November 2013). Through a snowball method, I contacted people of migrant background active in immigrant associations, trade unions and the radical Left. It was clear that there were very few opportunities for people of migrant background to participate politically.

This section focuses on few selected interviews with activists of migrant background in Bergamo. Through an analysis of these interviews, it discusses the challenges that these activists faced in their attempts to participation in the political life of the city. By looking at their perception of the opportunities of participation opened in the city, and their interaction with local actors, I assess their difficulties to become agents able to have a significant impact in the city.

7.3.1. Perceiving and acting upon opportunities for participation: immigrant activists in immigrant associations

While in Bergamo I met with different members of immigrant associations and interviewed three people of migrant background very active in the city: Donkor A. from Ghana, Sarah F. from Morocco, and Daniela D. from Bolivia. These interviewees confirmed that there were very limited opportunities for participation in the city and that it

³⁴⁹ This point of view was shared by Salvatore E., the person in charge of the Agency for Integration and Giacomo Angeloni, the Municipal Councilor of the Democratic Party (apparently interested in creating a Provincial Forum of Immigration in Bergamo). It was also the point of view of people active in the radical left organizations, such as Sergio S. of ASIA-USB and Carlo F., of the Communist Refoundation Party.

was very hard for them to mobilize. Our interviews rotated mostly around the barriers to participation in the city rather than the opportunities available to them.

Donkor A. was born in Ghana in 1963 and arrived in Italy in 1982.³⁵⁰ He held a long permit of stay (*Carta di Soggiorno*) and he was the founder and former president of the Ghanaian Association in the city of Bergamo. He created the association to provide help to his compatriots. He explained that while the Association was very active in the 1990s when the Ghanaian community needed help, the existence of the Association was now more formal than substantial. Since there was less need for them to help the community, the role of the association was less significant. He continued to run the Association in case people of his community needed help. Donkor A. recognized that there were major barriers to participation in the city. The first major problem, he said, was the lack of a neutral space where associations could meet. He observed: “If associations want to get together, they have to pay for a place. The administration never gave it and some groups relied on the spaces offered by the trade unions. They were free, but people wouldn’t want to come to the union to meet with the Association.” Another problem was the complete absence of funding for the associations. He also clarified that for immigrants, it was very hard to become visible in the city. The Agency used to help in the past, but there were many obstacles to integration. He noted that there were no meaningful mobilizations in the city after the 1990s. When I asked him whether he and his compatriots participated in “A Day Without Us,” he told me that, “As far as he knew, it had not taken place.”

Sarah F. was born in Morocco and arrived in Italy with her family when she was 8, in 1985.³⁵¹ She had Italian citizenship, was married to an Italian man and had two children. She was one of the main representatives of the Moroccan association Toubakal, created in 2005. The main activities of her associations were teaching Arabic to immigrants’ children and volunteering at projects in the city, with the support of other organizations. With the CISL and the Cooperative Ruah, the association organized meetings about citizenship and access to rights for people of migrant background.³⁵²

Sarah F. explained that in Italy people of foreign origin were not valorized and that in this way the state and politicians were “ruining the new generations.” She also added that the right to vote of immigrants needed to be recognized since immigrants paid taxes. She added: “In this country, they stifle you, they don’t allow you the possibility of doing

³⁵⁰ Interview in Bergamo, 29 November 2013.

³⁵¹ Interview in Bergamo, 29 November 2013.

³⁵² For a list of the activities see the official document: <http://www.cooperativaruah.it/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/PROGRAMMA-SCUOLA-CITTADINANZA-2013.pdf> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

anything. A young person in this country is like a flower that dries out.” At the local level, she commented that the administrations in Bergamo “had just taken things away from us [the immigrants] and given nothing back. When we opened our school of Arabic in 2005, they promised things and they have done nothing.” She explained that she became active in the association Toubakal three years before our interview, in 2010. She talked about her difficulties and the role of the Association in her life:

For me, working for the Association is a breath of air. You meet with marvellous people. It is helping me at the emotional level. I had an accident seven years ago and now I am disabled. In Italy if you can't work, it means you don't exist. Italy abandons you. Being part of an association allows me to get more information. Otherwise you succumb.

During our interview, Sarah F. expressed concern about the barriers to participation for immigrant associations in Bergamo. Like Donkor A., Sarah F. observed that the lack of a neutral space where associations could meet was a great barrier to participation in the city. She told me, “We are trying to get an autonomous space. We go to the Patronage of the diocese now, but to go there we pay. We need to have a space to do our activities.” She added:

The fact that there is not a center to meet discourages participation of immigrant associations and also more general exchanges between people of different origins. Immigrant associations have too little visibility in the city. It is extremely hard work for us. Our association teaches Arabic, and this is why we are looked at with mistrust. They say that Italy is a free country, but before they give you something they take a lot. Our association stands alone. No one helps us or gives us funding.

I asked Sarah F. why teaching Arabic to their children was important for her community. She answered: “It is important for us to transmit our culture and language to our kids. There is nothing wrong with it!”

Daniela D. was born in Bolivia in 1980 and arrived in Brescia in 2004. She arrived without documents and she was regularized in 2005.³⁵³ In 2013, she became president of

³⁵³ Interview in Bergamo, 29 November 2013.

the socio-cultural association of Bolivians in Bergamo, created in 1997 and called House of the Bolivians (*Casa dei Boliviani*).³⁵⁴ Like Sarah F., she was very critical of the national context. Even though they did not have her trust, she felt left-wing parties were closer to immigrants than right-wing parties, but that they didn't have the courage to act. She admitted that, "The Left has used the theme of immigration in an instrumental way for many years. Now, they fear the right to vote. They know that not all immigrants vote left. For this reason they fear it." As far as the local context was concerned, Daniela D. recognized that the city of Bergamo was a "closed city." She pointed out that "public institutions are very closed and do not stimulate participation by people of migrant background. Sometimes you find someone who helps you, but this is very rare." She told me that she decided to get involved because she has always been a very active person and she believed in the benefits of volunteer work. She also clarified that she did not like to participate through demonstrations in the streets and thus she did not get involved in the activities organized by the Communist Refoundation Party. She highlighted:

It is already difficult to be accepted by people from Bergamo. The Bolivian community doesn't want to become visible that way. We prefer to make ourselves known differently. Through our activities in the city, we want to become visible in a calm way.

As far as participation in the immigrant associations was concerned, Daniela D. pointed out the main difficulties to participation in the city, as for Donkor A. and Sarah F., was the lack of meeting space:

In Bergamo, there are no places where immigrants can meet. The authorities do not pay attention to this problem. We have asked them several times to create a center, but we never received a positive answer. For this reason, many immigrant associations devolve upon the spaces offered by the parishes. However, the problem here is that these places are not specific. One cannot rely on them. There are many associations that go there and often there is not enough space for everyone. Moreover, they have their own priorities and you have to adapt your schedules to theirs.

I asked Daniela D. whether she thought this fact had implications for the forms of participation developed by immigrant associations. She answered:

³⁵⁴ See official site: <http://www.casadeiboliviani.altervista.org> (Accessed June 25, 2015)

It is difficult to mix with each other because we don't have the space. While there is no space to meet, everyone is on his own. Also, a center would be crucial to encourage participation by those who do not participate. The fact that we don't have a center discourages participation. What is more, since the places are very small, our activities are very limited. Also, there is no space to organize events with other groups. Thus, as you can understand, the lack of space is a huge problem because this fact does not allow us to develop meaningful trajectories in the city.

According to Daniela D., it is also for this reason that most immigrant associations have not been able to move from their 'small gardens' –that is, to go beyond their national affiliations and start thinking of the city as a place where immigrants themselves could contribute to.

Daniela D. also noted that the Bolivian community in the city is in some ways an exception. The community is the most visible in the city and the Bolivian association is very active and able to develop activities in the city. Daniela D. observed that this community was more successful at promoting participation in the city for several reasons: (1) they were greater in number than any other community; (2) they had the tendency to get involved in their country of origin; (3) they were supported by the Church of Bergamo because of their Catholic background; and finally (4) they were less stigmatized than other groups and thus able to build more significant trajectories of inclusion in the city. Daniela D. added:

The Bolivian community is extremely active in the city. This fact is very positive. Thanks to our activities people acquire competences. People are able to reach out and contact people. The Bolivians have the tendency to be active. There are no other communities as active as us in Bergamo. However, I must say that for us it is also much easier to be accepted because we are Catholics.

Daniela D. suggested that, because of all its advantages, the organization of Bolivians was able to make some additional steps to leave their 'small gardens' and get more engaged in the city through civic activism. She pointed out the reasons behind the unique situation of the association in the city:

Most of our activities target “integration” and thus they address Italians rather than the other immigrant communities. However, we try to collaborate with the other associations, especially through their referees. This year we launched the initiative: ‘Bergamo for all! For a cleaner and more beautiful city!’ With that initiative we wanted to say that Bergamo is not only of the Bergamaschi, but of everyone. Bergamo is a multi-ethnic city. We wanted to tell immigrants that the city is not only a place of immigration, a place to work. We wanted to tell them to think of the city as our home. We have been here for a long time now. Many have created a family here. The new Bergamaschi are these people.³⁵⁵

This section has shown that “civic” participation in Bergamo by people active in immigrant associations is possible, but very difficult. Even though the three interviewees, Donkor A., Sarah F. and Daniela D., had very different migratory trajectories, they encountered very similar barriers to participation in the city. As far as participation in the world of associations was concerned, the three pointed out that institutions did not give incentives and that in general participation was not encouraged. In particular, they said that the lack of neutral spaces to meet and develop autonomous trajectories of participation, as well as the lack of funding, were creating a handicap. The greater visibility of the Bolivian association in comparison to others represents an exception that proves the rule. It is precisely because of the strong link with the Church in the city and its Catholic background that the Bolivian association was able to “come out” and to overcome “invisibility” (Daniela D., Interview in Bergamo, 29 November 2013). Finally, the interviewees expressed major concerns about the possibility of immigrant associations building significant trajectories of participation in the city. Even though they took action, it was very hard to move beyond the activities organized by the most powerful actors in the city.

³⁵⁵ For the activity organized by the Bolivian association see the official site: <http://www.santalessandro.org/2014/05/italiani-boliviani-insieme-per-bergamo-tutti/> (Accessed June 25, 2015). For the initiative Bergamo of all (*Bergamo di tutti*), see official blog: <http://www.bergamoditutti.it> (Accessed June 25, 2015). In May 2014, the initiative was organized a second time. See page of the diocese: <http://www.santalessandro.org/2014/05/italiani-boliviani-insieme-per-bergamo-tutti/> (Accessed June 25, 2015).

7.3.2. Perceiving and acting upon opportunities for participation: Immigrant activists in the CGIL, the Communist Refoundation Party and the USB

Participation in political channels in Bergamo was even more complicated. Very few individuals participated in the few political channels opened in the city by left-wing actors. I interviewed three people who were considered by many actors in the city as particularly active and who held roles (or who had previously held roles) of responsibility in major organizations: Babacar S. (Senegal), a functionary of the FIOM-CGIL, Mohamed (Morocco), a very active member of the CGIL-FIOM and of the Communist Refoundation Party, and Ayoub A. (Morocco), a member and representative of the USB, the new grassroots movement in the city. The fact that these people could be active in these organizations demonstrated that a minimal opening was present in the city and there were still opportunities, though very small, to get involved and open up the channels of participation. However, the analysis of the interviews will show that their ability to act upon the opportunities opened to them and to act as agents of change in the city was extremely limited.

Babacar S. was born in Senegal in 1967 and arrived in Italy in 1989.³⁵⁶ Between 1989 and 1991 he had lived and worked in the South and in 1991 he moved to Bergamo. At the time of the interview, he had just received his Italian citizenship. In 2007 he became a functionary of the FIOM (the most radicalized and inclusive category of the CGIL) after being a delegate in the factory for more than ten years. He was very active in the world of immigrant associations and was the president of the Senegalese association. Many political forces, including the migrants active in the Communist Refoundation Party's migrant committee, pushed for his appointment to a position within the CGIL-FIOM. Babacar S. admitted that the context of Bergamo was extremely closed and that this made it very difficult to participate. He told me that he considered himself one of the few "lucky immigrants": "I experienced distrust and closeness, but I have overcome them. Many people don't make it." He also told me that, compared to Reggio Emilia and Bologna, in terms of integration and inclusion of immigrants:

Bergamo is more than 30 years behind. The responsibility is reciprocal: immigrants are responsible because they don't get involved, and politicians are responsible because there is a total absence of incentives. The context is very closed. Immigration

³⁵⁶ Interview in Bergamo, 13 November 2013.

in Lombardy in general and in Bergamo in particular is a taboo, because politicians think they will lose votes. They don't say it, but they think it. What is more, the Bossi-Fini Law is the worst law in Italy: its main goal is to squeeze immigrants until it is possible to throw them away.

Babacar S. expressed his fear about the changing attitudes of the left-wing party and trade unions in the Lombardy Region:

I fear that even the other politicians are adjusting to the Bossi-Fini Law. They say that it is not too bad after all. I say, instead, that it must be abolished. At the regional level in Lombardy, the Northern League is governing now. This means that everyone has to bow to them and to the Bossi-Fini Law. What is more, left-wing trade unions in Bergamo are affected by this, because many people who are enrolled in the CGIL vote for the Northern League. The union cannot avoid considering the point of view of its members.

I asked Babacar S. why he decided to participate and why he got involved with the CGIL. He told me that he participates because it is natural for him. He also told me that he was active with the FIOM-CGIL because he shared the political position of the union: "For me the FIOM represents the suitable union for the present time. It is the only union that is faithful to its claims." By this he meant that he supported the view of the FIOM that one must fight without compromising. He also highlighted that the training organized by the CGIL allowed him to move from a role in the union as a delegate to that of a functionary. However, he also admitted that he was not given great visibility in the trade union and that he had few opportunities to make a difference in the organization.

Karim M. was born in Morocco in 1959.³⁵⁷ He arrived in Italy in 1986 after many years of experience in other countries. Like Babacar S., he was enrolled in the CGIL for many years and he was part of the CGIL-FIOM. In Morocco he had been active in the communist movement when he was young, and he explained that for him it was obvious to get involved in left-wing organizations in the country of arrival:

My first real political experience in Italy was with the CGIL-FIOM, of course! I was not a delegate because my company was very small, but I would participate in all the

³⁵⁷ Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013.

activities and meetings in which we would discuss rights. My second meaningful experience was with the Communist Refoundation Party. I have been very involved in their activities and I was in the directorship until three years ago. I wanted to learn how to do politics and I ran for elections with them on two occasions in 1998 and in 2008. In 1998, the idea of the Party was to support the elections of people of [non-EU] migrant background at the European and local levels. I was also very active in the Migrant Committee. There were around 35 immigrants in 2005. That was the time of the boom of participation in Bergamo, between 2001 and 2005, but it didn't last long.

I asked him about the reasons for his participation and why he chose the Communist Refoundation Party. He answered:

This country has given me a lot. I want to give back something in return. For this reason, if there is a chance to fight for the defense of rights, I get cracking. Politics have lost credibility and this holds true for the Communist Refoundation Party too. The Left has not understood that yet. I am not sure how it will be possible to win the trust of the people again. I chose the Communist Refoundation Party because I had a communist background, but also because my comrades encouraged me. [...] At that time there were strong relationships of friendship and a real involvement. I was at ease with them. I was a candidate with them several times, but unfortunately I was never elected. I have always been an activist within the CGIL, but I have never been co-opted. I did not want to have a career inside the union. I wanted to be free. I have always had a good relationship with those who think like me.

I asked Karim M. what were the main barriers to participation. He talked about the cultural barriers:

We are far behind in Italy in terms of participation. They still see you as a poor devil. Even our comrades [in the Communist Refoundation Party] have this attitude towards us, apart from those who have gone abroad, and thus understand a little bit more and change their attitude. Then they are different from the people who come from the valleys. In Northern Italy there is a lot of closure. There is no opening towards diversity and this is a great problem.

At this point, I asked Karim M. if the traditional trade unions make a difference in Bergamo. He answered:

They haven't done anything! It suffices to look at the level of representation. Compare the number of their members and the percentage of the representatives. They let you say very few things. Many of the delegates and functionaries are there because they tell them what they want. What is more, the Italian unionists are not prepared on the questions of immigration. Many fear the foreigners. They fear "the other." They always fear that the foreigner will steal their jobs. In the past they asked me to be part of the CGIL. It was fifteen years ago. I refused. I was one of the first to be targeted by the CGIL in Bergamo. The CGIL was the first to play on the image of immigrants and they continue to do it today. There are people of migrant background in the CISL and CGIL that have been working there for twenty-five years and haven't advanced in the organization. They always remain at the same level. You have to give some possibilities! But they do not do it. What is missing is the will. This is the truth. For me this is not the path. Society does not work well. It is far behind. The fact is that in Italy there is not meritocracy. This is the real problem of the country.

I asked Karim M. to tell me about his allies, the PRC.

Teresa C.: Does the Communist Refoundation Party act differently?

Karim M.: It is always the same thing... I have talked about it to my comrades. We are very far from giving immigrants space in the Party. All these organizations use immigrants and they treat them as subordinated.

Teresa C.: What about the grassroots unions? Are they also using immigrants?

Karim M.: Grassroots unions have gained power by giving light to immigrants and making them very visible in their organization. However, in reality they adopt the process of co-optation like anybody else. They use the image of immigrants in their organization. In this way immigrants are swindled. It is the same for the case of Brescia, you know. Some people were active with the Communist Refoundation Party, then they became unionists. At that point they have been calmed down.

Ayoub A. was born in Morocco in 1985 and arrived in Bergamo in 2004 to study at university.³⁵⁸ He was very young compared with Babacar S. and Karim M. During the time

³⁵⁸ Interview in Bergamo, 7 November 2013.

of the interview, he was active in the USB, the grassroots union of Bergamo, which had been gaining strength during the financial crisis. He had several responsibilities in the trade union. He was in the national council, in the regional coordination organization and was in charge of the immigration sector in Bergamo. He observed that in 2004, right after his arrival in Italy, he became very active in a student association of Moroccans at the university. In 2009 he left the association to work with the USB. He met with the USB at the beginning of 2008. He wanted to get involved in working with immigrants and dealing with problems linked to migration. In 2008 he participated in training to work with the union and since then he has been active on a volunteer basis. Ayoub A. explained that the reason why he was active in the USB and not in the traditional trade unions was that “traditional unions fight for the cards [enrolment] *rather for the true things.*” He continued:

In the USB I feel at home. The USB is the only union that still makes claims and does not compromise! The other unions stipulate accords without representation. As an activist, I have never seen a traditional trade union in Italy that has raised its voice for the rights of immigrants. This should be the role of the unions: to represent workers and to fight for their rights! The USB has decided to adopt the following path: that the immigrant is first a worker and a person and then an immigrant. This choice of the USB shows that it is a *real* union.

Ayoub A. added that, in addition to the experience with the union, he participated in the Migrant Committee created by the Communist Refoundation Party in 2005. He told me that, “even though it lasted only a short time, it was fundamental for my formation.”

All things considered, the perception of the channels of participation in the city by these three interviewees shows that the barriers to political participation in Bergamo are greater than the opportunities to participate. Additionally, the limited channels of participation in Bergamo affect the possibility for people of migrant background active in the city to act on the local realm of immigration. The interviewees acknowledged that a few channels had been opened in the city in the past, such as the Communist Refoundation Party’s Migrant Committee. They explained that even though very weak and short-lived, these platforms had been useful to acquire new skills and experience. However, they highlighted that what dominated was an inability to build on the resources and skills of immigrants active in the city. The interviewees lamented the fact that these organizations

used migrants just like other organizations in the city, adopted processes of co-optation and overall did not promote the autonomy of people of migrant background within their organizations. These were important barriers impeding immigrant activists from contributing in a meaningful way to opening up the channels of participation in the city. These difficulties were present in all four cities examined in this study. However, in Bergamo, the limited channels of participation prevented activists of migrant background from using the channels available to them to construct their own trajectories in the city, and from challenging other actors' practices by making alliances with left-wing actors in the city. Finally, the experience of Ayoub A. from the USB suggests that the emergence of new left-wing actors might contribute to opening new channels of participation in the city, thus potentially creating new possibilities for people of migrant background to build alliances and challenge the practices of other actors. However, in 2013, this new left-wing actor was still very weak and was far from representing a challenge to the dominant local actors. In this respect, the role of immigrants active in the organization was still far from representing a significant opening of the channels of participation in the city.

7.4. Concluding remarks

In the previous empirical chapters I showed that, in the other three cities examined in this dissertation, local moderate or/and radical left-wing actors were key to opening up the channels of participation of people of migrant background by supporting an intercultural and/or a political rights promotion approach. I also demonstrated that the opening of the channels of participation by left-wing actors allowed migrant activists to emerge as relevant actors able to shape the local realm of immigration and promote participation. In the city of Bergamo, in 2013, a weak presence of left-wing actors, a predominantly assistance-based approach to integration and an almost complete absence of intercultural and political rights promotion approaches resulted in a very limited opening of channels of participation in the city. This configuration made it difficult for people of migrant background active in the city to develop individual trajectories of civic participation at the institutional level (as in the case of Reggio Emilia) or at the level of the third sector (as in the case of Bologna). It was also very hard for them to build alliances with radical left-wing actors and thus emerge as significant collective actors, able to create a platform of participation to attract immigrants into the organization and challenge other powerful actors (as in the cases of Bologna and Brescia). Overall, the limited channels of participation available in Bergamo have prevented most immigrant activists in that city

from developing meaningful trajectories and from creating substantial partnerships and alliances with left-wing actors.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

This dissertation sought to explain variations in the forms of civic and political participation of activists of migrant background at the local level. Building on the migration literature on localities in Italy, in this dissertation I selected two “red” cities (Reggio Emilia and Bologna) and two “white” cities (Brescia and Bergamo), in order to control for variations in the configuration of power among local actors in both similar and different political cultures (see Chapter 3). Studying the discourses and practices of multiple local organizations through ethnographic work, and by documenting how their approaches to integration shape the local realm of immigration, I identified the main factors that explain variations in participation in the four cities. First, I showed how the interaction among a multiplicity of actors and their approaches to integration affect the local realm of immigration and the opening of channels of participation. Second, I demonstrated that activists of migrant background can play an important role in shaping participation by becoming politically active, by creating alliances with other local actors, and by appropriating the approaches to integration adopted by their allies. Their civic and political participation contributes to shaping the local realm of immigration by legitimizing the approaches to integration of their allies.

In this final chapter, I present my empirical findings (Section 8.1), the theoretical implications and contributions of my research (Section 8.2), and my recommendations for further research (Section 8.3).

8.1. Empirical findings

My comparison of four Italian cities shows important variations in the form and extent of civic and political participation by people of migrant background. Table 8.1 summarizes the forms of participation—civic and political (subdivided into conventional and non-conventional)—and the level of participation present in the four cities at the time of my fieldwork in 2013. The number of stars represents the strength of participation: the lack of stars indicates an absence of participation, one star refers to a weak level of participation, two stars to moderate participation, and three stars to strong participation. The table makes a distinction between individual participation and collective participation as well.

TABLE 8.1. Forms and extent of participation in the four cities in 2013

	“Red” cities		“White” cities	
	Reggio Emilia	Bologna	Brescia	Bergamo
Civic participation: individual level	**	**	-	-
Civic participation: collective level	**	**	*	*
Political participation: conventional	*	*	*	-
Political participation: non-conventional	*	***	***	*

The table suggests considerable variation in forms and extent of participation in the four cities. In accordance with the literature on localities in Italy (Caponio 2006a), the study confirms greater participation in “red” cities than in “white” cities. The table indicates that the “red” city of Bologna has the highest level of participation, followed by Reggio Emilia. As for forms of participation, the table suggests important variations across cities. With respect to civic participation, the greatest difference is between the “red” and “white” cities: while in Reggio Emilia and Bologna we observe the presence of both individual and collective participation, in Brescia and Bergamo it is very weak. With respect to conventional politics, the differences between the four cities diminish considerably. With the exception of Bergamo, where there is no participation in conventional channels, the cities Reggio Emilia, Bologna and Brescia present very low levels of participation. Finally, non-conventional political participation represents the most important variation. In particular, we notice that this measure cuts across the “red”/“white” division. While the table indicates very low levels of participation in Bergamo and Reggio Emilia, in Bologna and Brescia they are high.

In this section, I will show how the conceptual apparatus developed in this dissertation—the local realm of immigration and approaches to integration—allows me to document these variations in civic and political participation across cities in ways that would not be possible if I focused only on institutional variables (as most of the literature on migration does). By enlarging the political arena, and by looking at the roles of multiple actors—including immigrant activists—in the each city, we can understand these variations.

8.1.1. First main finding: approaches to integration matter

As suggested above, the literature on Italian cities shows that the configuration of power matters (Caponio 2005). In this study, I have upgraded this hypothesis by showing that the approaches to integration adopted by local actors also affect participation. In the Introduction of this dissertation, I offered a definition of three approaches to integration developed in Italy, and hypothesized links between these approaches and particular forms of participation. The first approach is assistance. This approach assumes that migrants are “poor” and in need of assistance, and thus focuses on delivery of services and advocacy. This approach does not directly promote participation, because it assumes migrants are passive subjects. The intercultural approach, on the other hand, assumes that immigrants are would-be citizens, and relies on the idea that diversity must be valorized as a resource in a growing society. For this reason, it encourages a positive vision of pluralism and exchanges between the native population and immigrants (see Campomori & Caponio 2014). In the Introduction, I suggested that this approach has direct implications for the opening of the channels of participation because it encourages civic participation at the individual and/or collective level. Finally, the political rights promotion approach assumes that immigrants are entitled to fundamental political rights, and focuses on the achievement of legal recognition and making rights claims. I postulated that this approach leads to an opening of the channels of participation by promoting political participation at the individual and local level by people of migrant background (in particular non-EU citizens, who are denied local voting rights). Building on preliminary definitions of the approaches listed above, in my four empirical chapters, I established links between the presence of local actors, their involvement in the sphere of immigration, and their adoption of these three approaches, and documented how they developed in each city.

Table 8.2 presents a summary of the main actors shaping the local realm of immigration in 2013, and indicates the approaches to integration adopted in each city: assistance (A), intercultural (I) and political rights promotion (PRP) (see also Introduction of this dissertation). The stars represent the strength of each approach: one star indicates a weak investment in the approach, two stars a moderate investment, and three, a strong investment.

TABLE 8.2. Approaches to integration by local actors in the four cities in 2013

		“Red”		“White”	
		Reggio Emilia	Bologna	Brescia	Bergamo
Center-Left	Left-wing local administrations	A (**) I (***)	A (*) I (*) PRP (*)	N/A	N/A
Center-Right	Right-wing local administrations	N/A	N/A	- - -	- - -
Institutional moderate “red” actors	Democratic Party	PRP (*)	PRP (*)	PRP (*)	-
	CGIL	A (**) PRP (*)	A (**)	A (***) PRP (***)	A (***) PRP (*)
Non-institutional Left	Radical left organizations	A (*) PRP (*)	PRP (***)	A (*) PRP (***)	A (*) PRP (*)
“White” actors	Church-based organizations	A (**) I (*)	A (*)	A (***) PRP (*)	A (***)
	CISL	A (**) I (*) PRP (*)	A (**)	A (**) I (*) PRP (*)	A (***)
Others (various political orientations)	Lay organizations	A (***) I (***) PRP (*)	A (***) I (***) PRP (***)	A (*)	A (***)
	Immigrant organizations	A (*) I (**) PRP (*)	A (**) I (**) PRP (**)	A (*)	A (*)

As suggested in Chapter 2, actors in Italy adopt specific approaches to integration depending on their *political orientation* (See also Mantovan 2007). The table confirms this point. The table shows that “white” actors (such as the Church and the CISL) are more inclined to adopt the assistance approach (A) and that—with the exception of the association CISL-ANOLF, through which the CISL adopts an intercultural approach (I)—their investment in the direction of interculturalism and political rights promotion is very weak or nonexistent. Furthermore, the table indicates that, while they support an assistance-based approach to integration, moderate left-wing actors, such as local administrations and lay organizations, tend to direct their attention to intercultural approaches, and, in some cases, political rights promotion approaches. As for the intercultural approach, left-wing administrations and third-sector organizations are more inclined to promote civic channels of participation, such as intercultural centers and

projects that involve the immigrant community. In this context, participation and interaction among immigrant associations is strongly encouraged. Left-wing actors are key in open conventional and non-conventional political participation with the adoption of a political rights promotion approach (PRP). As for conventional participation, the Democratic Party encourages participation of immigrant communities through the Provincial Forum of Immigration, and the traditional left-wing union, the CGIL, focuses on representation of immigrant workers in its organizations. However, it is important to note that in recent years both these organizations have done little in this direction. In non-conventional politics, radicalized left-wing organizations (including the CGIL) can be crucial in promoting non-conventional participation (such as protests) by immigrant workers or immigrants in vulnerable conditions.

The table suggests that approaches to integration by local actors are influenced by the presence of local actors and their level of involvement in the sphere of immigration. For this reason, we notice variations in intervention by similar actors across cities. The table indicates, for instance, that the strong presence of a few actors that promote one approach can lead other actors toward the same approach. This is the case in Reggio Emilia, where the main local actors, influenced by the administration, promoted an intercultural approach. Thus Caritas, in addition to the assistance approach it traditionally takes, was encouraged to invest in intercultural initiatives. Similarly, in Bergamo, where the strongest organizations, the Church and the CISL, adopted an assistance approach, the CGIL toned down its claims. Instead of promoting a strong political rights promotion approach, it almost exclusively adopted an assistance approach, in order to compete with these two prominent “white” actors.

Additionally, conflicts between local actors can contribute to the radicalization of their positions and that of their immigrant allies, and reinforce the distance between them. In Bologna, for instance, criticism of the CGIL by the radical left-wing organizations encouraged a greater distance between immigrant activists and the CGIL, and created conflicts between those immigrants mobilized in the radical Left and those in the more moderate CGIL. The case of Brescia showed that within a generally hostile local context, the strong involvement of the CGIL and the radical Left, combined with the absence of more moderate left-wing actors, resulted in the radicalization of immigrants. Strong alliances formed between the migrant social movement and the radical left organization, Rights for All, and as a consequence, the mobilized immigrants were isolated from all the other actors in the city.

Below, a closer comparison of the four cities will show how different approaches to integration shape forms of civic and political participation (see Table 8.1).

Assistance approach

In the Introduction of this dissertation, I asserted that the assistance approach discourages active participation by people of migrant background, because it assumes that immigrants are passive subjects who are “in need.” The empirical analysis showed the *direct and indirect implications* of this approach. I explained how the presence of local actors with a specific understanding of integration and this approach affect *de facto* participation. The most effective way to illustrate this point is to contrast the two “red” cities with the two “white” cities. In Chapter 2, I showed that “red” and “white” actors have been strongly supportive of newcomers’ first insertion into the receiving society (see also Mantovan 2007; Ambrosini 2013b). For this reason, in all four cities we find a very strong presence of the assistance approach. However, the research also spotlights important differences in the ways local actors frame their interventions. As one of my key interviewees in Reggio Emilia put it, while the “red” culture directs its attention to cultural enterprise, the “white” culture is more concerned with *social* enterprise (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013). This means that the “red” culture interprets assistance as a means to achieve greater inclusion, and the “white” culture is more inclined to see assistance as a goal in itself. The best example of this difference can be seen by comparing Reggio Emilia with Bergamo.

In Reggio Emilia, “the city of the intercultural dialogue,” the main “red” actors (particularly the local administration) believed that assistance was useful for covering the basic needs of the most vulnerable population, but that it was also necessary to promote a “qualitative leap” in the direction of greater inclusion (see Chapter 5). As the Assessor Cesare F. put it, the goal of the administration was “to give dignity back to immigrants” and “to endeavor that all citizens of Reggio Emilia participate and feel responsible for the history of this city!” (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013). When linked with the intercultural approach, the assistance approach helps construct an image of immigrants as would-be citizens, involved in civil society’s initiatives. On the other hand, in Bergamo, in the absence of intervention by local authorities, the Church promoted an assistance approach, without linking it to either of the other two approaches. The absence of relevant counter-powers in the city did not allow for any significant promotion of other approaches. In Chapter 7, by quoting Raimondo D., the Director of the ACLI of Bergamo,

I indicated how the strong presence of the Church, and its assistance-based approach to integration, represented an impediment to the growth of political self-awareness in individuals, and to the processes of political inclusion: “To talk about political subjectivity in the city is extremely hard” (Raimondo D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013). Raimondo D. observed that the Church did very important work in terms of welcoming. However, he also explained that assistance alone resulted in an impasse. Thus, in contrast to Reggio Emilia, in Bergamo, the assistance approach contributes to a construction of immigrants as outsiders. As Raimondo D. put it, “Precisely because there is a lack of other models for reference, the Church perpetuates to infinity a model of passive dependency on welfare” (*modello assistenzialistico*). Raimondo D. said, “In comparison with Reggio Emilia, we are still in the Stone Age. There is a widespread illiteracy of other cultures. The advantage in Reggio Emilia is that for many years there has been an alternative power to that of the Catholic Church” (Raimondo D., Interview in Bergamo, 15 November 2013).

To sum up, the examples of Reggio Emilia and Bergamo suggest that the assistance approach can have important implications for participation or lack of it. While the assistance approach can usefully encourage inclusion and participation where local actors favor cultural enterprise (Reggio Emilia), taken alone, it can be detrimental to the processes of inclusion and participation, and can promote passivity (Bergamo).

The intercultural approach

In the Introduction, I pointed out that the intercultural approach tends to valorize exchanges and cultural diversity, and sees immigrants as would-be citizens of a future multi-ethnic society. Actors who adopt this approach encourage civic participation of people of migrant background by promoting, for instance, the development of immigrant associations in a pluralistic environment. To this purpose, they also create intercultural centers and “neutral spaces” where immigrant associations can meet and develop their own activities. The comparison of the four cities highlights the versatile uses of the concept of interculturalism, and shows the implications it can have for both civic and political participation. In my analysis, I identified different understandings of interculturalism. As with the assistance approach, major differences can be observed in “white” and “red” cities. However, we can also observe important differences in cities with similar political cultures. Table 8.2 suggests that “red” cities tend to promote interculturalism more than “white” cities. “Red” actors (particularly the local administrations and third-sector

organizations) in Reggio Emilia and Bologna have invested in this approach thanks to multiple interventions at the individual and collective levels. They have both created intercultural centers, and have supported immigrant associations, not as separate entities, but as part of the richness of the receiving society. These centers have been empowered, and promote participation.

This work was possible because, in both cities, participation by immigrant populations was linked to the traditional understanding of active citizenship, that is “making people feel responsible and like part of the history of the city” (Cesare F., Interview in Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013). Overall, the great investment by local actors in the direction of interculturalism accounts for higher levels of civic participation in the two “white” cities of Reggio Emilia and Bologna, as indicated in table 8.1. Meanwhile, the cooperative model, between local administrations and the third sector, present in both “red” cities, promotes participation from below, and includes immigrants in this existing interaction. However, notwithstanding similarities, there are important differences between the Reggio Emilia and Bologna. In Reggio Emilia, interculturalism was promoted by top-down processes, as the result of a strategy of governance by the left-wing administration and third-sector organizations, and thanks to systematic attempts to create alliances with the immigrant population. The administration encouraged individual and collective civic participation by immigrants (particularly second-generation) in institutionalized forms, at the expense of less formal channels. With the help of the Mondinsieme Center, it encouraged the formalization of immigrant and mixed associations. This approach resulted in a tendency to detach civic participation from political grievances, and a tendency to depoliticize the active immigrant population.

In Bologna, interculturalism was encouraged by both top-down and bottom-up processes, and it was often linked to political participation. In the first case, local authorities promoted the participation of immigrant associations through consultative bodies. However, rather than empowering immigrant activists, this resulted in reinforcing the ethnicization of the immigrant population, and the use of social control. However, thanks to numerous initiatives from third-sector organizations, interculturalism was also encouraged from below, through the promotion of active citizenship. In this context, formal and informal immigrant and mixed organizations were developed, which coexisted and collaborated with other organizations. The result was the development of civic participation with a strong link to political activities. As one of my immigrant interviewees very active in the world of associations said: “I am interested in politics outside of politics.

Politics is not abstract: we do it!” (Lionel F., Interview in Bologna, 19 June 2014). This view was shared by many immigrant activists, who viewed political participation as something that does not belong to mainstream politics, but to the citizens.

As for the “white” cities, my empirical chapters showed local actors invested in a limited way to interculturalism. This was due to specific presence of local actors. First, in cities with a non-co-operative model, local administration tends to devolve to the Church, and to avoid creating alliances with third-sector organizations. This context promotes the strong presence of the Church at the expense of networks of lay organizations, and while it encourages solidarity and volunteer activities, it does not encourage practices of citizenship from below, as the “red” cities do. This leaves little space for the development of immigrant associations as equal partners. Additionally, the weakness of moderate left-wing actors affects the lack of investment in the intercultural approach. For instance, when local administrations of left-wing orientation were in power, they found it difficult to promote interculturalism, in part because of the configuration of power, and also because of the strong presence of the Northern League, which raised the electoral cost of the local administrations. Overall, the limited intervention by local authorities resulted in the lack of “neutral space,” where immigrant associations could thrive and exchange with other third-sector organizations. In these “white” cities, the Church and trade unions attempted to promote the participation of immigrant associations. In Brescia the interventions were limited, but in Bergamo, the Church and trade unions encouraged the creation and development of immigrant association in a structured way. In the 2002, these organizations formed the Agency for Integration, to encourage the political rights promotion of immigrant associations. However, local actors never took this body seriously, and their strong interference, and the prevalence of paternalism and political opportunism prevented, rather than encouraged, the development of immigrant associations as autonomous entities able to interact with them as equal partners. As most of my interviewees in Bergamo noted, local actors there tend to hype up immigrant associations as “separate entities” and to encourage “‘folklore’ rather than honest intercultural exchanges” (Giorgio B., Interview in Bergamo, 14 November 2013). To sum up, in Brescia and Bergamo, the lack of interest by local actors in an intercultural approach able to promote participation from below, resulted in a limited space for civic participation, and, we can argue, were even conducive to civic and political apathy.

All things considered, while in Reggio Emilia and Bologna interculturalism was seen as a way to encourage the participation of immigrants (seen as would-be citizens), in Brescia and Bergamo, this kind of framework never developed. This accounts for the differences in forms of civic participation between the “red” and “white” cities. A comparison between the two “red” cities shows that there can also be differences between intercultural approaches. While in Reggio Emilia strong top-down institutionalized forms of participation tend to promote civic participation and depoliticize the immigrant population, in Bologna, a combination of top-down and bottom-up forms of participation created a link between civic and political participation and encouraged the politicization of immigrants.

The political rights promotion approach

In the Introduction, I explained that the political rights promotion approach focuses on the promotion of political rights for people of migrant background, in particular non-EU citizens, who are denied the right to vote at the local level. Local actors who adopt this approach encourage political participation in both conventional and non-conventional channels. The empirical research shows that while moderate left-wing actors tend to concentrate on opening conventional channels for participation, by creating parallel institutions (i.e. consultative bodies by local authorities), for instance, or political platforms for discussion (i.e. the Provincial Forum of Immigration of the Democratic Party), more radicalized actors tend to support mobilizations in non-conventional channels (see also Martiniello 2009). In extreme cases, radical left actors (including the migrant social movements) can encourage “illegal” protests (such as the occupation of public space), as happened in Brescia during the struggle of the crane. It is important to note that while the more conventional channels promoted by moderate actors tend to support participation of people with a longer trajectory of integration in Italy (including new citizens, second-generation immigrants), more radical actors focus mainly (though not exclusively) on the promotion of the political rights of immigrant workers in vulnerable conditions (including undocumented workers and refugees). Overall, my analysis of the four cities shows that more established actors, such as political parties and trade unions, have been losing interest in the issues of representation and participation in the 2000s, and that the discourse on political rights promotion has not been supported by substantial efforts to empower the immigrant population through their organizations. In some cases, this situation has left a

gap that more radicalized actors, including emerging grassroots movements and trade unions, have filled.

8.1.2. Second main finding: left-wing actors matter

The migration literature suggests that alliances with left-wing parties matter (Garbaye 2005, 51-52). In addition to political parties, the section above indicates that the local actors who contribute the most to opening channels of civic and political participation are moderate left-wing actors (such as local authorities and lay organizations) and more radical left-wing actors (such as the CGIL, grassroots trade unions, radical left organizations and immigrant social movements). It has been argued that left-wing actors hope to legitimize their presence in the local arena through the issue of immigration, and have thus adopted complex processes of tokenism and co-optation (Mantovan 2007), as well as ambiguous practices of inclusion, more formal than substantial (Però 2007). Yet it is undeniable that they have contributed more than any other actor to opening up the channels of participation.

My comparison of the four cities suggests that the presence of left-wing actors pursuing intercultural and political rights promotion approaches leads to greater participation (i.e. Reggio Emilia, Bologna, and Brescia), and that the absence or weakness of these actors makes participation very difficult (i.e. Bergamo). My study also shows that the way left-wing actors promote participation depends upon their orientation within the political spectrum. My analysis has made it possible to clarify the role of left-wing actors in promoting participation and opportunities for action. While moderate actors have adopted an instrumental use of immigrants and tended to promote parallel channels or civic participation, radicalized actors have promoted more substantial political participation and have invested in non-conventional politics. Faced with a dearth of measures by political parties and trade unions to encourage substantial participation in conventional channels, radical left-wing actors have represented an opportunity for many categories of immigrants in Italy. The increasing vulnerability of immigrants, due to current legislation and the financial crisis, has made the radicalization of immigrants and their alliances with radical actors more plausible.

8.1.3. Third main finding: perception and appropriation by immigrant activists matter

In the section above, I argued that that the more powerful and the more numerous the left-wing actors that encourage participation, the greater the opportunities will be, and the

more likely immigrants will be to get involved, act upon these opportunities, and build upon them. Through an analysis of the ways immigrant activists perceive and act upon opportunities for participation, my study showed that immigrants contribute to shaping the realm of immigration and to opening the channels of participation. I found that no matter how numerous the channels of participation, immigrant activists get involved and become agents of change by acting upon the opportunities available. Among the main motivations for people to mobilize is a need to be active that comes from personal inclination, political orientation, or contextual factors (in their country of origin, or in Italy) (see Martiniello 2005). My research identified two main aspects: (1) the role of appropriation, and (2) the role of immigrant activists as allies of the Left and challengers of local actors.

The role of appropriation

My empirical analysis suggests that immigrant activists interpret and appropriate the discourses and practices of their allies, and in doing so they legitimize and reinforce their allies' approach to integration, and their role as relevant actors. A clear example is found in the case of Reggio Emilia. In Chapter 4, I explained how two local actors—the left-wing administration and lay organizations—promoted civic participation through the adoption of the intercultural approach. A major investment of the administration in this direction encouraged the greater inclusion of activists in institutionalized channels and lay organizations linked to the administration. I used the trajectories of two immigrants as examples of the role played by appropriation in shaping the realm of immigration: that of Mohamed A., the director of the Mondinsieme Center, and that of Sahid A., the president of the Rete TogetheER and leader of the CISL-ANOLF. My analysis suggests that both Mohamed A. and Sahid A. appropriated the intercultural approach promoted by local actors, and that they helped promote it (and push it further) through their direct involvement in the city.

A second example of appropriation was the case of immigrant activists in Brescia. In Chapter 6, I showed that most people of migrant background active during my fieldwork in 2013 were mobilized through channels opened by radicalized actors. I discussed how radicalized left-wing actors promoted the opening of non-conventional channels, in the absence of a relevant intercultural approach due to the weakness of moderate left-wing actors. This resulted in the prevalence of informal and non-conventional forms of participation. In this context, immigrant activists promoted participation through radicalized channels, and legitimized these forms at the expense of other forms of

participation and alliances with other local actors. I used examples of recent and more established immigrants who were very active, and showed how their mobilization promoted more radicalized forms of participation.

In Bologna, immigrant activists offered major contributions by mobilizing in third sector organizations and/or with the radical left organization, the MCO. Almost all people of migrant background that I interviewed acknowledged that the MCO was the most relevant actor in the realm of immigration. It gave immigrants a way to speak for themselves, and some immigrants active in the world of associations mobilized with this organization for political reasons. In Chapter 5, I analyzed some individual trajectories in Bologna to illustrate how people of migrant background shape the realm of immigration by perceiving and acting upon the different channels opened by left-wing actors and third-sector organizations (including immigrant organizations). I used a few examples of people active in third-sector organizations and the MCO.

All my interviewees recognized Bologna as an open city compared to most cities in Italy. They were very critical of most left-wing organizations, which they believed used the issue of immigration for political purposes. However, they acknowledged that left-wing organizations have supported intercultural dialogue and political rights for immigrants, and favored their participation, allowing them to contribute to Italian communities as well as their own. This was, for instance, the case for Irene A. (a Filippino woman) and Lionel F. (a Cameroonian man) who were active in the world of the third sector. Over the years, they helped promote participation by getting involved in channels opened for immigrants, such as the Provincial Council (in the case of Irene A.), and by creating associations devoted to promoting civic and political participation (in the case of Lionel F.). Both Irene A. and Lionel F. explained that their experiences of participation were key to acquiring new skills, and in building bridges between the Italian and the immigrant communities. Irene A. made remarkable contributions to opening the channels of participation in the Filipino community, and Lionel F. became a strong promoter of active citizenship and political engagement through the Association Universe. The immigrant activists in the radical left organizations in Bologna were key in promoting mobilizations around issues of institutional racism and workers' exploitation. The MCO, composed of Italian and immigrant activists, offered an important platform for mobilization, thanks to links that members established with the immigrant communities. Through constant work over more than ten years, the MCO became one of the main actors mobilizing immigrants and giving voice to their claims.

The role of alliances in shaping the local realm of immigration

My empirical research shows that alliances between left-wing actors and immigrant activists can challenge other local actors and shape the local realm of immigration. The case of Brescia illustrates this point. I found that in Brescia, because immigrant activists appropriated the dominant political rights promotion approach of the radical Left, they became agents of political change and were able to promote radical forms of political participation by other immigrant activists. Thanks to their strong alliances with immigrant communities, radical left organizations became relevant actors, and pushed other local actors to reconsider their approaches to integration. This was the case for the Democratic Party in Brescia, which created a Provincial Forum of Immigration to encourage participation in 2010, after it acknowledged that it had left a vacuum that was completely occupied by radical left organizations and the migrant social movement. The creation of the Provincial Forum was an attempt to forge alliances with immigrant communities, which had previously been most connected to the radical Left.

The case of Bergamo represents a completely different situation. In Chapter 7, I documented the weakness of left-wing actors and a lack of relevant alliances, which resulted in a level of participation almost equal to zero. The specific configuration of power (with the strong presence of the Church and “white” actors, and a very weak presence of left-wing actors) resulted in a predominant assistance approach, and only a very weak promotion of intercultural and political rights promotion approaches, which significantly limited the opening of space for participation. In order to become visible, my interviewees told me, people of migrant background had to create an “ethnic” association. During my fieldwork, I contacted people in the immigrant associations and also tried to find immigrant activists. It was clear that there were very few opportunities for people of migrant background to participate. The people active in the world of immigrant associations that I interviewed confirmed that the space for participation was extremely limited, and that it was hard for them to promote participation. The interviews mostly revolved around the barriers to participation, rather than the available opportunities. In particular, my interviewees explained that the lack of neutral space to develop autonomous trajectories of participation was a great handicap. The only exception I found was in the Bolivian Association. Daniela D., its president, explained that the Bolivian community’s Catholic background, and the Church’s support, favored the development of trajectories of participation for her association. Even though this group was not able to create alliances

with other local actors, it could more easily collaborate with local authorities and the Church. I also interviewed three people who were active in left-wing organizations: the CGIL, the Communist Refoundation Party, and the USB. The fact that they were active demonstrated that an opening, though it was small, was present, and there was still an opportunity to get involved. These individuals said that the channels that had opened in the past, though weak and short-lived, had been useful for acquiring skills and experience. However, what emerged most strongly from interviews, and my examination of other material collected during fieldwork, were the barriers to participation, and the inability of these activists to build on their resources and skills. Processes of co-optation and tokenism were present in all the cities under observation. However, it was clear that in Bergamo, people of migrant background had very few cards to play in challenging other local actors' practices.

8.2. Theoretical implications and contributions

As the section above shows, the conceptual apparatus used in this dissertation makes it possible to understand the participation of immigrants in a way that is not possible when the analysis is limited to the interaction between people of migrant background and institutional actors, as is found in studies based on the institutional approach (see for instance Garbaye 2005). In this section, I will explain how my theoretical approach has allowed me to overcome the limitations of the institutional approach. The institutional approach asserts that state policies and institutional channeling shape the trajectories of participation of people of migrant background in the receiving society (Ireland 1994). It argues that more open policies of integration encourage participation and mobilization, while exclusive policies dissuade their development (Bloemraad 2006; Garbaye 2005).³⁵⁹ Similarly, my study has shown that context shapes the opportunities for participation opened to people of migrant background in considerable ways. However, I have also pointed out that we can gain a great deal by going beyond institutional explanatory factors, and enlarging the conceptualization of *context* to include the interaction of multiple actors in the realm of immigration and their relationships in the local political arena. My empirical research has shown that we need to reframe our conceptualization of the opportunities offered to people of migrant background in the local arena. My study has proposed a way to move beyond an overly institutionalized understanding of the

³⁵⁹ For a literature review on the institutional approach see Chapter 1.

opportunities and constraints available for mobilization. I have shown that variations in the forms and extent of participation can be understood by looking at actors and action, and, in particular, by looking at the way multiple actors promote participation by interacting at the local level. Thus, even though the research shows that contextual factors matter (Garbaye 2005), in this dissertation I have demonstrated that opportunities are also shaped by the actions of local actors and by the immigrants themselves (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2011, 191).

In my research, I chose to examine conventional and non-conventional channels of participation as a continuum. This methodological approach allowed me to see the reasons immigrant activists mobilize. Assuming that their status, and thus their different access to political rights, shapes their understanding and their capacity to act upon opportunities for participation is misleading. I showed that there are different factors affecting *how* and *why* people participate at the local level. Increasingly restrictive measures toward newcomers, and the rising precariousness of immigrant workers (many of whom have lived in their host countries for years), are shaping new rights claims and community organizing in radicalized channels by people of migrant background with different statuses. An additional factor has been the recent financial crisis, which has made immigrants' working and living conditions very difficult, and has pushed both undocumented immigrants and new citizens to mobilize, not only around ethnicity (as most of the literature supposes), but also around issues of class, to fight against exploitation and evictions.

8.3. Recommendations for future research

This dissertation has shown the importance of examining new avenues of research. First, it pointed to the need to examine more closely the complex relationship that immigrant activists are building with their institutional and non-institutional allies. An increasing body of scholarship addresses the implications for integration of the rise of the Right, but very little systematic research exists on the responses to immigration by the Left (Però 2007). My study suggests how slow left-wing actors have been to read the phenomenon of immigration, and understand its implications beyond ideology and self-preservation. As one of my interviewees explained:

The truth is that even though the Left was more open, in the end they did not understand anything. While those of the Communist Refoundation Party and the radical left organizations befriended the immigrants and treated them as equal partners, as normal people, the other left-wing political parties (the PCI and the PD, for instance)

were not treating them equally. In substance, all these left-wing actors shared a big problem: it was never about trying to build something new together. It was about an instrumental use of the people of migrant background. It was not always conscious. They used immigrants to bring forth their own ideas, their own political claims. Still, the Left struggles to understand the differences that exist. Things can be solved only through interaction. This is what it has been missing until today: The awareness that these interactions and exchanges change everything (Marco G., Interview in Bologna, 26 June 2014).

The instrumental use of immigrants by the Left is one of the major problems presented by the issue of immigration in Italy, and it is a difficulty that has affected many countries in Europe. It has strained alliances and caused conflicts with immigrant organizations (Casseron 2007; Garbaye 2005). Further research is needed to assess the responsibility of the Left in contributing to failed processes of integration in European countries and cities. We need to examine how it has contributed to the more recent neo-assimilationist turn, and to processes of secularization that have occurred, in some cases, simply by misinterpretation of the important transformations that the phenomenon of immigration represents for the receiving society.

Second, my research raised concerns about the role of local actors in shaping participation by EU immigrants. It was surprising to find that in the four cities under observation, immigrants from member states (who have a different status from non-EU immigrants, and thus have local voting rights) very rarely get involved in local political issues and very rarely vote. Since these people are, in practice, excluded from any type of integration policy put in place by local actors, and since they are rarely considered relevant actors by left-wing organizations, there are good reasons to hypothesize that a lack of incentive has considerable implications for their political disengagement.

8.4. Concluding remarks

In this study, I have shown how, through their involvement in the sphere of immigration, multiple local actors contribute to shaping the local realm of immigration and participation in a hostile national context by adopting different approaches to integration from below. I have also shown that in some cases people of migrant background can play a key role in producing and shaping this realm by becoming politically active, and by appropriating the discourses and practices of their allies (mainly left-wing actors). Overall, I have illustrated that my sociological approach makes it possible to see the role of

multiple actors, including immigrant activists, who mobilize in the realm of immigration, in a way that would have not been possible by focusing exclusively on institutional actors or formal channels of participation.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

Guidelines for the interviews with local actors (local administrators, experts, social workers, and members of traditional trade unions, church-based and non-profit organizations, political parties, grassroots unions and the radical left organizations)

Biographical data

1. Name
2. Job, responsibilities
3. Do your main activities or responsibilities overlap with other activities? Which ones?
4. Could you tell me very briefly how did you come to occupy your current position?

The role of the administrations between 1998 and 2013

1. Could you tell me what the local authorities have been doing with respect to integration in the city since 1998?
2. What kind of involvement did the administrations have? What were its relationships with the third sector? Have the administrations encouraged networks with other actors in the city?
3. What areas of intervention have been addressed since 1998 (economic, social, cultural, or political)? Was there continuity in the interventions?
4. What kind of approaches to integration have the administrations adopted? Did they focus on service delivery? What they did to encourage participation? How? What structures were created? What role do they have in the city?
5. Were there differences between left-wing and right-wing administrations? In what ways did they differ?
6. What were the main strengths and main limitations of the measures taken by the local administrations since 1998?
7. What did the administrations do to encourage participation of immigrants in the city? What groups were targeted? Have they supported Consultative Bodies, immigrant associations, intercultural centers, forums, etc.? If yes, what was the effective power of these organisms and associations in the city? What were the relationships of these platforms with the administrations and the other local actors?

The role of non-state actors in the processes of inclusion between 1998 and 2013

1. Which are the main organizations involved in the processes of integration of immigrants in the city (church-based organizations, non-profit organizations, traditional trade unions, political parties, non-institutional organizations)?
2. What have been the relationships of these organizations with the administrations since 1998? What areas of interventions have been addressed over the years? What kind of approaches were developed (service delivery, interculturalism, empowerment)?
3. What kind of relationships did local actors entertain with each other? What kind of collaborations have been developed?
4. What were the strengths and limitations of the approaches to integration adopted by local actors in the city? Could they have done otherwise? How?
5. Was there continuity in the approaches adopted? Did the approaches adopted evolve over the years? Have been there improvements or retrogressions over the years with respect to the approach adopted?

The political participation of people of migrant background in the city between 1998 and 2013

1. Which actors have promoted political participation of people of migrant background in the city? Why? How did they do it? Were there discrepancies between their discourses (claims) and their practices? Could you give me any examples?
2. In what channels of political participation are people of migrant background active in the city? Why these channels and not others?

3. What are the obstacles to participation in the city?
4. Who are the people of migrant background active in the city? In what organizations or channels of participation are they active? How do they get involved? What kind of relationship do they entertain with the organizations that support their participation? What kind of relationships do they entertain with the other local actors?

APPENDIX 2

Guidelines for the interviews with immigrant activists

Biographical data

1. Name, date and place of birth
2. Nationality
3. Status in Italy
4. Education (diploma, years of study, type of study)
5. Family status (married, origin of spouse, children)

On the family of origin (parents and siblings)

1. Where do they live? What job do they do?
2. Social class in the country of origin

Migration

1. In which countries did you live before coming in Italy? For how many years?
2. How long have you been living in Italy?
3. How old were you when you arrived in Italy?
4. In which parts of Italy have you lived (South/North, city/countryside)?
5. What reasons pushed you to emigrate?
6. Why did you choose to come to Italy?
7. Did you think of going to another country? If yes, what are the reasons that brought you to Italy instead?
8. Have you thought about leaving? Why?
9. How did you enter Italy (tourist visa, immigration documents, without valid documents)? If you did not have documents, how did you enter? Were you able to regularize? If yes, when and how? Once you had the documents, was it easy to stay “regular”? If not, why not?

Jobs

1. What kind of jobs did you do before you came to Italy? For how long? What roles did you have in these positions?
2. What kind of jobs did you do in Italy? For how long? What roles did you have?
3. Were they always “regular” jobs?
4. At the moment, what jobs are you doing? What role do you have?

Civic and political life before the arrival in Italy

1. Were you a member of clubs, volunteering associations or other associations before you arrived in Italy? What kind of associations? What kind of activities did they promote?
2. Were you a member of political movements or organizations before you arrived in Italy? What kind of organizations? What was the political orientation of these organizations? What kind of activities did you do?
3. What was your engagement in those organizations? Why did you choose to be active in these organizations?

Civic and political life after the arrival in Italy

1. In Italy, have you been a member of clubs volunteering associations or other associations? What kind of associations? What kind of activities?
2. Have you ever been a member of political movements or organizations in Italy? What kind of organizations? What was their political orientation? What kind of activities did you engage in?
3. Could you describe your engagement in those organizations? Why were you active in those organizations?
4. In what organizations are you active now? What is the political orientation? What is your role in these organizations?
5. What are the motivations that pushed you to get involved in these organizations? Have you ever thought about getting involved in other organizations? If yes, what organizations? Why? If not, why not?

6. Could you list the principal advantages of participating in the associations or organizations with which you are involved? From the personal point of view? For your immigrant community? For the city?
7. Could you indicate a list of the principal disadvantages of participating in the associations or organizations with which you are involved? From the personal point of view? For your immigrant community? For the city?
8. In your view, what are the main barriers to your personal participation? To the participation of other members of your community? To the participation of other people of migrant background in the city?
9. Have you noticed changes over time (since 1998)?

Perception of the national and local context and opportunities for participation in the city

1. What are the opportunities for and the barriers to participation in Italy?
2. What role do local actors have in the processes of integration? Which have played a role in interventions in the city?
3. What actors have encouraged immigrants' participation over the years (since 1998)? Was there continuity in their encouragement of immigrants' participation?

APPENDIX 3

Total interviews with immigrant activists

	All cities	Distribution by level/city
Total number (national, regional and local level)	57	National level, 3 Regional level, 1 Reggio Emilia, 13 Bologna, 19 Brescia, 14 Bergamo, 7
Nation of origin	Morocco: 15 Senegal: 14 Pakistan: 6 Moldavia: 2 Tunisia: 1 Algeria: 1 Egypt: 1 Albania: 1 Cameroun: 1 Nigeria: 1 Philippines: 1 Bangladesh: 1 Bolivia: 1 Romania: 1 China: 1 Togo: 1 India: 1 Ghana: 2 Ukraine: 1 Peru: 1 Somali: 1	<u>National level:</u> Peru 1, Cote d'Ivoire 2 <u>Regional level:</u> Pakistan 1 <u>Reggio Emilia:</u> Morocco 5, Senegal 3, Tunisia 1, Algeria 1, Togo 1, India 1, Pakistan 1, Ghana 1 <u>Bologna:</u> Senegal 5, Pakistan 3, Morocco 2, Moldavia 1, Cameroon 1, Nigeria 1, Philippines 1, China 1, Romania 1, Ukraine 1 <u>Brescia:</u> Morocco 5, Senegal 6, Pakistan 2, Moldavia 1, Egypt 1, Bangladesh 1, Albania 1, Bolivia 1 <u>Bergamo:</u> Morocco 3, Ghana 1, Senegal 1, Bolivia 1, Romania 1
Women	12	<u>Reggio Emilia:</u> 4 (Senegal, Morocco, Algeria, India) <u>Bologna:</u> 3 (Senegal, Moldavia, Philippines, Ukraine 1) <u>Brescia:</u> 4 (Morocco 3, Moldavia) <u>Bergamo:</u> 4 (Bolivia, Morocco 2, Romania) <u>Reggio Emilia:</u> 2 (Senegal 2, Morocco, Ghana) <u>Bologna:</u> 2 (China, Morocco) <u>Brescia:</u> 2 (Bangladesh, Morocco) <u>Bergamo:</u> 1 Morocco
Second-generation	8	<u>Italian Citizenship:</u> Reggio Emilia 5, Bologna 4, Brescia 5, Bergamo 2 <u>Resident permit:</u> Reggio Emilia 2, Bologna 7, Brescia 6, Bergamo 5 <u>Work and study permit:</u> Reggio Emilia 4, Bologna 4, Brescia 6, Bergamo 3 <u>Undocumented:</u> Reggio Emilia 3, Bologna 2, Brescia 1
Immigration status	Italian citizenship (16) Resident permit (20) Work and study permit (17) Undocumented (6)	

Organizational
affiliation

Democratic Party (Provincial Forum and administration)	<u>Democratic Party:</u> Reggio Emilia 1, Bologna 1, Brescia 2
Links with the administration	<u>Links with the administration:</u> Reggio Emilia 2, Bologna 1, Brescia 3
Trade unions	<u>Trade unions:</u> Reggio Emilia 4, Bologna 3, Brescia 4, Bergamo 1
Active in Associations (mainly but not only immigrant associations)	<u>Associations:</u> Reggio Emilia 2, Bologna 7, Brescia 2, Bergamo 2
(Inter)cultural mediators	<u>Cultural mediators:</u> Reggio Emilia 1, Bologna 1, Brescia 1
Outside mainstream politics (social movements, struggles against eviction, struggles for recognition, etc.)	<u>Outside mainstream politics:</u> Reggio Emilia 2, Bologna 7, Brescia 6, Bergamo 3

APPENDIX 4**List of interviews in or related to the city of Reggio Emilia**

Name	Origin and sex	Organization	Role	Place and Date of the interview
Monica T.	Italian (F)	Emilia-Romagna Region (left-wing government)	Assessor of Social Policies since 2003	Bologna, 25 November 2013
Cesare F.	Italian (M)	Local left-wing administration	Assessor of Security and Social Cohesion since 2003	Reggio Emilia, 3 March 2013 Reggio Emilia, 10 May 2013
Teresa E.	Italian (F)	Municipality of Reggio Emilia	Cultural Mediator	Reggio Emilia, 29 October 2013
Adil M.	Moroccan (M)	Municipality of Reggio Emilia	Cultural Mediator	Reggio Emilia, 11 May 2013
Mohamed A.	Moroccan (M)	Mondinsieme Center	Director	Reggio Emilia, 11 June 2013
Rinaldo D.	Italian (M)	Mondinsieme Center	Communication Officer	Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013
Morgan M.	Italian (F)	Mondinsieme Center	Logistics and Organization Officer	Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013
Mario G.	Italian (M)	Caritas	Director	Reggio Emilia, 19 February 2013
Roberto I.	Italian (M)	Caritas	Youth, volunteer, civil service sectors	Reggio Emilia, 9 May 2013
Emanuel S.	Togolese (M)	Caritas	Volunteer	Reggio Emilia, 12 May 2013
Carmela R.	Italian (F)	CGIL	Immigration Policies since 2012	Reggio Emilia, 20 October 2013
Clara A.	Italian (F)	CGIL	In charge of the Office for Migrants (2000 - 2010)	Reggio Emilia, 7 May 2013
Farooq M.	Pakistani (M)	CGIL	Functionary Office for Migrants	Reggio Emilia, 8 October 2013
Sarah K.	Algerian (F)	CGIL-FIOM	Functionary FIOM	Guastalla (Reggio Emilia), 28 October 2013
Sandra M.	Italian (F)	CISL	Secretary	Reggio Emilia, 18 June 2013
Sahid A.	Second-generation Moroccan (M)	CISL-ANOLF Network Together	In charge of the CISL-ANOLF, President Network Together	Reggio Emilia, 3 May 2013
Pamela F.	Italian (F)	GA3	Member	Reggio Emilia, 5 May 2013
Francesca F.	Italian (F)	Democratic Party	Main member	Reggio Emilia, 30 October 2013

Reda B.	Tunisia Italian (M)	Democratic Party	In charge of the Provincial Forum Immigration	Reggio Emilia, 20 February 2013 Reggio Emilia, 27 November 2013
Dhakhirah S.	Second- generation Ghana (M)	Democratic Party	Member of the Provincial Forum of Immigration	Reggio Emilia, 24 November 2013
Patrik P.	Senegal (M)		Musician	Reggio Emilia, 27 November 2013
Salim S.	Morocco (M)	Passa-parola	Volunteer	Reggio Emilia, 11 June 2013

APPENDIX 5

List of interviews in Bologna

Name	Origin and sex	Organization	Role in 2013	Place and date of the interview
Francesca L.	Italian (F)	Municipality of Bologna	Employee of the administration (Office of Cooperation and Human Rights)	Bologna, 26 June 2014
Marco G.	Italian (M)	Municipality of Bologna	Director of ISI between 1996 and 1999, one of the main experts in Italy on immigration and unions	Bologna, 26 June 2014
Veronica P.	Italian (F)	Caritas	In charge of the Center of Listening (<i>Centro d'Ascolto</i>)	Bologna, 4 June 2013
Pietro M.	Italian (M)	CISL-ANOLF	Service	Bologna, 19 June 2014
Roberta A.	Italian (F)	CGIL	In charge of the Office Foreign Workers since 2010	Bologna, 30 October 2013
Alessandro F.	Italian (M)	Intercultural Center Massimo Zonarelli	Director of the Center	Bologna, 30 May 2013 Bologna, 5 May 2013
Irene A.	Filipino (F)	Council of Foreign Citizens and Stateless People in the Province of Bologna, Federation of Filipino Associations of Bologna	Councilor, President of the Federation	Bologna, 2 July 2013
Corrado G.	Italian (M)	Migrant Coordination Organization	Main member	Bologna, 19 July 2013
Abou B.	Senegalese (M)	Migrant Coordination Organization Association of the Senegalese community in Bologna	Main member	Bologna, 17 May 2013
Ben S.	Senegalese (M)	Migrant Coordination Organization	Key member	Bologna, 15 May 2013
Tariq I.	Pakistani (M)	Migrant Coordination Organization	Key member of both organizations	Bologna, 3 June 2013

		Association of Pakistanis in Italy		
Mohamed A.	Moroccan (M)	Migrant Coordination Organization Association of Moroccan Workers in Italy	Key member of both organizations	Bologna, 13 June 2013
Farid M.	Second-generation Moroccan (M)	On the Move-Generation in movement	Key Member	Bologna, 19 June 2013
Sonia	Senegalese (F)	Migrant Coordination Organization Association of Senegalese Women	Member of the MCO, President of the Association of Senegalese Women	Bologna, 3 June 2013
Claudia E.	Italian (F)	Migrant Coordination Organization	Main member	Bologna, 8 May 2013
Sorana E.	Moldavian (F)	Migrant Coordination Organization	Main Member	Bologna, 2 July 2013
Yon W.	Second-generation Chinese (M)	Asso-Cina in the network Rete TogetHER	Main member	Bologna, 4 June 2013
Adelina Y.	Italian (F)	AMISS Association of Cultural Mediators	President of the association	Bologna, 19 June 2014
Makham M.	Senegalese (M)	Council of Foreign Citizens and Stateless People in the Province of Bologna	Councilor	Bologna, 30 October 2013
Nnkeme N.	Nigerian (M)	Nigerian association	President	Bologna, 2 July 2013
Donald R.	Cameroonian (M)	PD	In charge of the Provincial Forum and Assessor of integration of San Lazzaro (Province Bologna)	Bologna, 5 June 2013
Yana L.	Ukrainian (F)	Ukrainian association	President	Bologna, 3 April 2013

Lionel F.	Cameroonian (M)	Association Universe	President	Bologna, 19 June 2014
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APPENDIX 6**List of interviews in Brescia**

Name	Origin and sex	Organization	Role	Place and date of the interview
Emilio Del Bono	Italian (M)	Local left-wing administration	Mayor since 2013	Brescia, 19 September 2013
Vittorio F.	Italian (M)	Local administration (1998-2008) CGIL since 1998	In charge of the Municipal Office for Foreigners	Brescia, 12 July 2013
Benedetto G.	Italian (M)	Migrants Center Association of the diocese	Director	Brescia, 11 November 2013
Luciano F.	Italian (M)	Carmine Street	Director – Priest	Brescia, 11 July 2013
Carlo L.	Italian (M)	Carmine Street	Social worker	Brescia, 11 October 2013
Giulio D.	Italian (M)	CGIL	Main Secretary	Brescia, 11 July 2013
Carmine E.	Italian (M)	CGIL	In charge of the Office Against Discrimination	Brescia, 11 July 2013
Rosa S.	Italian (F)	CGIL	Main member	Brescia, 11 July 2013
Marta G.	Italian (F)	CISL-ANOLF	President	Brescia, 17 May 2013
Mammadu F.	Senegalese (M)	CISL	Functionary FIM (Metalworkers)	Brescia, 25 May 2013
Anna E.	Moldavian (F)	CISL-ANOLF	Volunteer	Brescia, 25 May 2013
Vinicio M.	Italian (M)	Rights for All	Lawyer	Brescia, 06 September 2013
Yusuf A.	Pakistan (M)	Migrant social movement & Rights for All	Main member	Brescia, 18 July 2013
Ramzi J.	Egyptian (M)	Migrant social movement & Cross-point	Main member	Brescia, 18 July 2013
Abou D.	Senegalese (M)	Migrant social movement & Cross-point	Main member	Brescia, 15 July 2013
Ibrahim M.	Senegalese (M)	Migrant social movement	Main member	Brescia, 8 September 2013
Khalid D.	Moroccan (M)	Migrant social movement, CGIL	Main member, In charge of the Office for Migrants CGIL	Brescia, 15 July 2013
Mustafa M.	Moroccan (M)	Communist Refoundation Party	Provincial responsible	Brescia, 6 September 2013
Mohamed A.	Moroccan (M)	Rights for All	Main Member	Brescia, 21 October 2013
Bujar A.	Albanian (M)	PD	Member, Provincial Forum on Immigration	Brescia, 11 October 2013

Fatima N.	Moroccan (F)	PD	Member, Provincial Forum on Immigration	Brescia, 8 October 2013
Sanshia S.	Bangladeshi (F)	Association Bangladesh women second-generation	President	Brescia, 13 September 2013

APPENDIX 7**List of interviews Bergamo**

Name	Origin and sex	Organization	Role	Place and date of the interview
Salvatore E.	Italian (M)	Agency for Integration	Director	Bergamo, 5 September 2013
Don Mariano M.	Italian (M)	Caritas	Priest member of the Caritas	Bergamo, 12 November 2013
Zaccaria M.	Italian (M)	Caritas	In charge of the social policies of the Caritas	Bergamo, 30 November 2013
Giorgio B.	Italian (M)	Ruah Cooperative	Director	Bergamo, 14 November 2013
Raimondo D.	Italian (M)	ACLI	Director	Bergamo, 15 November 2013
Angelo A.	Italian (M)	CISL	In charge of the office, CISL-ANOLF	Bergamo, 13 November 2013
Alessio O.	Italian (M)	CGIL	In charge of the migration policies	Bergamo, 14 November 2013
Piero P.	Italian (M)	N.I.	Activist in the city	Bergamo, 15 November 2013
Carlo F.	Italian (M)	PRC	Main member	Bergamo, 12 November 2013
Sergio S.	Italian (M)	ASIA	Main member	Bergamo, 15 November 2013
Damaniano D.	Italian (M)	N.I.	Activist in the city	Bergamo, 15 November 2013
Daniela D.	Bolivian (F)	Bolivian Association	President	Bergamo, 29 November 2013
Sarah F.	Moroccan (F)	Moroccan Association	Main member	Bergamo, 29 November 2013
Donkor A.	Ghanaian (M)	Ghanian Association	President	Bergamo, 29 November 2013
Babacar S.	Senegalese (M)	FIOM-CGIL Senegalese Association	Functionary President	Bergamo, 13 November 2013
Karim M.	Moroccan (M)	Communist Refoundation Party FIOM-CGIL	Main member	Bergamo, 14 November 2013
Ayoub A.	Moroccan (M)	UBS	Volunteer, role of responsibilities of immigration policies	Bergamo, 7 November 2013