

Civic and political engagement by immigrant organisations in Italy. The case study of Milan ***O envolvimento cívico e político de organizações de imigrantes em Itália.*** ***O estudo de caso de Milão***

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse the activities of immigrant organisations in Milan, paying special attention to the two major immigrant communities, Filipinos and the Egyptians, and to assess their engagement in the Italian political sphere. Our findings show that most activities pursued by immigrant organisations are of a civic-oriented nature with no direct political aim. The few organisations that can access the political sphere seem to be able to do so due to the resources provided by networks involving other organisations. Yet not all links increase the political activities of immigrant organisations. Numerous and diverse links built up by Egyptian organisations seem to provide them with the necessary resources to engage in the political sphere. In contrast, the ethnic networks that Filipino organisations establish with other Filipino organisations, and the links that Filipino organisations have with religious associations are mainly associated with participatory forms of civic engagement.

Keywords

immigrant organisations, politics, participation

Resumo

O objectivo deste artigo é analisar as actividades estabelecidas por organizações de imigrantes em Milão, com especial atenção para as duas principais comunidades de imigrantes, os filipinos e os egípcios, e avaliar o seu envolvimento na vida política italiana. Os nossos resultados mostram que a maioria das actividades desenvolvidas por organizações de imigrantes são de carácter cívico, sem nenhum objectivo político directo. As poucas organizações que acedem à esfera política parecem ser capazes de fazê-lo graças a recursos fornecidos por redes que envolvem outras organizações. No entanto, nem todas as ligações aumentam a actividade política que as organizações de imigrantes praticam. Numerosas e diversas redes construídas por organizações egípcias parecem fornecer-lhes os recursos necessários para exercer na esfera política. Em contraste, as redes étnicas, que as organizações filipinas constroem com outras organizações filipinas que têm ligações com as associações religiosas, são principalmente associadas com formas participativas de envolvimento cívico.

Palavras-chave

organizações de imigrantes, política, participação

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Introduction

Immigrant organisations in Italy are relatively weakly organised when compared to other Italian civic organisations (Danese, 1998; Caponio, 2005; Della Porta, 2000; Pilati, 2007). The latter are by far more active in the immigration field, as they often function as suppliers of welfare assistance and providers of services such as first aid shelters or accommodation for newly arrived immigrants, as well as legal assistance and employment opportunities (Ambrosini and Abbatecola, 2004: 224-239; Lainati, 2000; ISMU, 2005). Such patterns are also established in Milan, the second largest city in Italy, with the biggest foreign population in the country. In Milan, it is Catholic organisations which have especially managed immigration policies. Furthermore, they have largely substituted the marginal presence of the local public administration and the government in the immigration field. Indeed, the local political elites, despite the fact that the resident foreign population in Milan accounted for 12.5% of the city's total population in 2005 (ISTAT, 2005), have been relatively absent in terms of policies favouring immigrant integration, compared with other European cities. This constituted relatively closed political context for immigrant integration (see Morales and Giugni, 2010). Institutions linked to the Catholic Church, such as Caritas, have consequently been important resources for immigrant actors. For instance, they have been major intermediate recruitment agencies for many immigrant workers upon their arrival in Milan. Catholic institutions have in fact offered a guarantee for the trustworthiness and responsibility of many Filipino women, and convinced Italian families to rely on their assistance in housework, domestic services and care assistance (Cominelli, 2004: 278).

In light of the relatively constraining political context for the political representation of immigrants provided by the local government, the possibility for immigrants to organise in associations may represent the means to obtain a certain degree of visibility in terms of the representation of their interests in the political sphere. While a constraining local political context and the absence of local minority integration policies may reduce the extent of the activities of ethnic and immigrant organisations (Fennema and Tillie, 2004: 105), the impact of the Italian organisational structure on the possibility for immigrant organisations to organise and to mobilise is not clear. The Italian civic community may have a twofold effect on the self-organisational capacity and political engagement of immigrant organisations: on the one hand, it may hinder the capacity of immigrants to organise, as the literature has tended to underline. At the same time, however, these Italian organisations may also provide immigrants and their organisations with various types of services and resources. Italian organisations may function, for instance, as bridges between Italian political institutions and immigrant organisations. They may furnish information, communication channels and logistic support, as well as political recognition, to immigrant organisations that have

limited resources. This is especially important in view of the closed Milanese political context where immigrant organisations that are disconnected from Italian organisations risk remaining isolated and not being able to engage in the political arena of their country of residence. Studies have highlighted the fact that Filipinos, for instance, tend to construct associations based on familial and community links (Espiritu, 2003) and, in Milan, they have a tendency to remain cut off from the broader social context (Lainati, 2000).

Given these conditions, the objective of this article is to consider the effects of different types of links that immigrant organisations have with other immigrant and Italian organisations and to analyse the impact on their capacity to act in the political sphere. With this purpose in mind, the article draws on scholarship focusing on the importance of organisational networks for immigrant political engagement (Fennema and Tillie, 1999, 2001; Vermeulen, 2006) and on concepts offered by the social movement literature, namely network approaches to collective action (Diani and McAdam, 2003). On this basis, some interpretative patterns shall be suggested, on the role of networks for organisational activities.

In order to explore this issue, the empirical study will focus on different types of activities that immigrant organisations in Milan may engage in, by including both civic and political actions. Through the analysis of activities and the network resources of immigrant organisations, the aim is to understand the degree to which immigrant organisations are involved in the Italian and Milanese political sphere.

Network resources for immigrant organisations

Even in a context that offers few opportunities at the institutional level, access to the political sphere can be obtained through other resources, namely through organisations and social networks that activists are a part of. A network-based version of social movement theory, stemming from the resource mobilisation theory (RMT) (McCarthy and Zald 1977), focuses on the central role of resources for political action derived from networks of organisations and activists (Diani and McAdam, 2003). In this perspective, organisations have been widely studied as mobilising structures. Social movements arise because of the existence of an organised network of relationships between organisations and activists (Tilly, 1978: 69). While the network approaches to collective action devote particular attention to organisations as mediators for the representation of aggregated preferences, and to resources for the production of shared collective identities sustaining mobilisation, European scholars have also for a long time emphasised the role of the organisations and networks formed by immigrants (Schoeneberg, 1985). Recently, a group of scholars has focused on 'ethnic civic communities', that is, links among ethnic organisations. Mainly following Putnam's lines of reasoning on social capital (2007), these authors have argued that thick and dense horizontal links among ethnic civic communities contribute to the creation of 'civicness' and provide resources to members that improve their political participation (Fennema and Tillie, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2005; Vermeulen, 2006). The denser the networks of ethnic organisations, the greater the number of individuals who vote and who are interested in

politics. From this perspective, those ethnic organisations with dense and horizontal relationships with other ethnic organisations contribute to the democratisation of the wider society by diffusing rules of 'civiness' and furnishing political resources as stimuli or channels of information (Fennema and Tillie, 1999, 2001).

Although these scholars usually underline the positive effects of ethnic networks for immigrant political participation, this study tries to partly advance their findings on an issue that has been disregarded so far, namely, the effect of different organisational links (Van Londen, Phalet and Hagendoorn, 2007). Other studies also suggest that the role of ethnic organisations and engagement in ethnic organisations is not significant across different contexts for increasing levels of political engagement and may change according to the ethnic group considered (Jacobs, Phalet and Swyngedouw, 2004). While ethnic organisations and their networks may be relevant for immigrant mobilisation in contexts where the social organisation around ethnicity is well promoted by a multicultural policy and where social practices founded on ethnic ties are historically rooted in the pillarisation system (Duyvene de Wit and Koopmans, 2005), in contexts where multicultural policies are not encouraged, like the Italian one, autochthonous actors seem to have far more resources than immigrants to intervene in the public sphere. If there is indeed a link between the associational life and political involvement of ethnic minority groups, different kinds of organisational networks in which immigrant actors are engaged may consequently develop different forms of participation (Jacobs and Tillie, 2004: 422-423). We therefore expect that immigrant organisations that have links with Italian organisations may behave differently in the political sphere compared to those immigrant organisations that tend to construct links within their own ethnic community.

The empirical study

Source of data

The empirical study is an analysis of 46 immigrant organisations in Milan and particularly focuses on organisations in which Filipinos and Egyptians, the two largest communities in Milan, participated.¹ Data were collected at the organisational level from January to June 2005 through face-to-face interviews with 46 leaders of immigrant organisations based in and undertaking most of their activities in the Municipality of Milan. In order to collect information on the associations, we contacted organisational leaders or their closest associates, who were given a one hour and 15 minute questionnaire. Given the central position of the leaders within the association, we expected them to convey the most reliable information on the organisation and to interpret organisational objectives and shared value orientations of the association better than any other member (Portes, Escobar, and Arana, 2008). With regard to the selected organisations, at least half of their members or executive board was made up of immigrant individuals. The interviewed organisations represent a large section of the total population of immigrant organisations in Milan, at least of those that were publicly visible at the time of the interviews. Although we initially mapped 155 organisations, we could only get in contact with 58.1% of them. Out of the 65 organisations contacted, we were able to interview 46 organisations.²

Consistently with the heterogeneity shown by immigration flows to Milan, the organisations show a very diverse ethnic composition. The Filipino and Egyptian communities have the highest number of visible organisations. Our data in fact point to the existence of eight Filipino organisations and seven organisations in which Egyptians participate.³

Filipino and Egyptian associational engagement in Milan

Before turning our analysis to immigrant organisations and their networks and activities, we present a figure on immigrant associational engagement at the individual level by focusing on Filipinos and Egyptians. In fact, while we focus on immigrant organisations and their activities, individual immigrants may be also engaged in mixed organisations or local organisations mainly composed of Italians. We present the distribution of Filipino and Egyptian individual engagement in different types of organisations by distinguishing organisations in terms of their ethnic composition (figure 1).⁴

Figure 1 – Filipino and Egyptian involvement in ethnic immigrant and Italian organizations

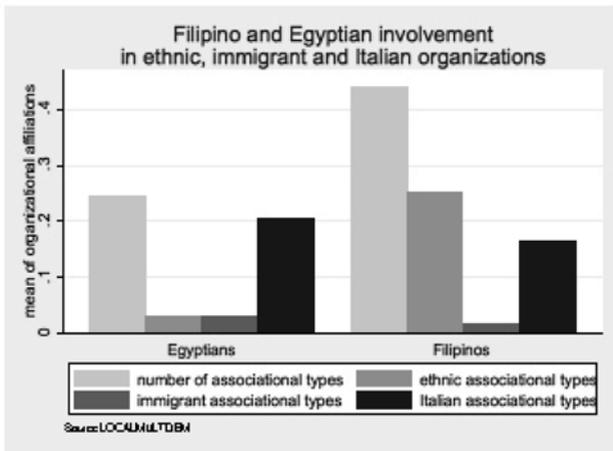


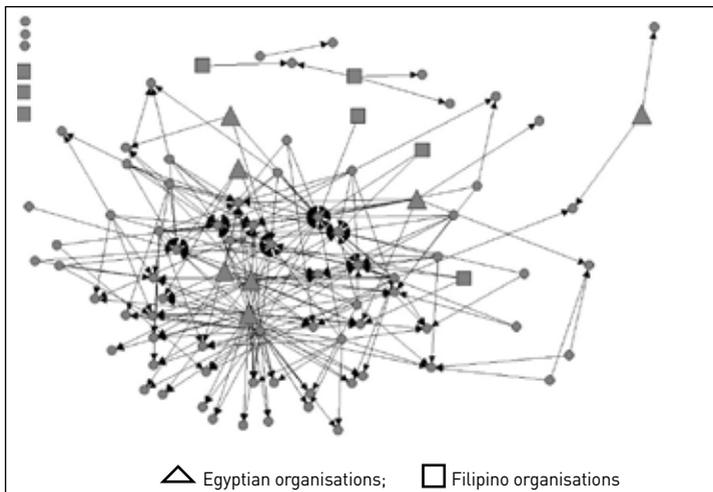
Figure 1 shows that the two immigrant communities that we focus on indeed have very different patterns of individual associational engagement in different types of organisations. Filipinos are far more engaged in either ethnic or mixed immigrant organisations, consistent with the existing literature stressing the familial and communitarian nature of Filipino associations. Egyptians seem instead to join more Italian organisations. This may be due to their higher socio-economic integration in Milan. The Egyptian community is in fact the one with the highest number of individual enterprises in

the Province of Milan, providing chances of internal social mobility and career advancement, especially among middle-class Egyptians who arrived in Milan holding higher educational degrees (Ambrosini and Abbatecola, 2002, 2004:237; Codagnone, 2003). As a consequence, Egyptians' higher levels of socio-economic integration may provide them with better opportunities to join Italian associations. At the same time, Egyptians show low levels of ethnic associational membership and slightly higher rates of engagement in mixed immigrant associations which may be either North African and/or Muslim associations.⁵ While it seems clear that engagement in ethnic or Italian associations varies depending on the ethnic group considered, we will now turn our attention to ethnic and immigrant organisations themselves and focus on the meso level concerning immigrant organisational network dynamics and their activities.

Networks of immigrant organisations in Milan

We now look at the different distribution of network resources available to ethnic and immigrant organisations with special attention to the Filipino and Egyptian organisational communities. We analysed the networks they have built with other immigrant organisations as well as with other Italian organisations operating in Milan (Figures 2 and 3).⁶ Of the immigrant organisations studied, the two figures highlight the Filipino and the Egyptian organisations (through triangles and squares).

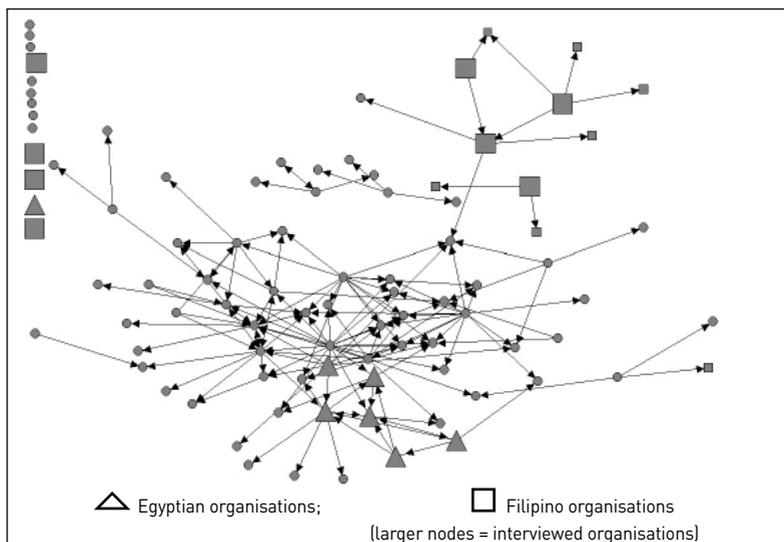
Figure 2 - Network of links with Italian organisations



Source: LOCALMULTIDEM organisational survey

Note: for the sake of clarity, pending nodes of the mentioned organisations of the main component have been deleted. For reasons of anonymity, the names of the organisations have been deleted.

Figure 3 - Network of immigrant organisations



Source: LOCALMULTIDEM organisational survey

Note: For reasons of anonymity, the names of the organisations have been deleted.

Specific analyses not presented here show that the number of links that immigrant organisations have with Italian organisations (Figure 2) is on average higher than the number of links with other immigrant or ethnic organisations (Figure 3). Ties with Italian trade unions and Catholic organisations play the most relevant role supporting the existing literature highlighting the dominant position of Italian organisations: 20 organisations (43.5 %) have at least a link with trade unions and 27 organisations (58.7%) have at least a link with Catholic organisations. Catholic associations (for instance, CARITAS, ACLI) and trade unions (like CGIL, CISL, UIL) are located in the central area of the network that immigrant organisations have built with Italian organisations (Figure 2).

Figures 2 and 3 show that the Egyptian and the Filipino organisational communities show very different network organisational structures. In the network concerning links that immigrant organisations have with Italian organisations (Figure 2), Filipino organisations (indicated by squares) tend to be located in the peripheral areas of the network, whereas Egyptian organisations (triangles) occupy central structural positions. This relational pattern is partly reproduced if we consider Figure 3 presenting the immigrant organisational network. Egyptian organisations are well connected to one another, but their structural position is more central given that they link to other immigrant organisations as well. Hence, Egyptian organisations tend to have a high

number of links, when compared with Filipino organisations, and connections with more diverse organisations. In line with the studies on the Filipino community in other contexts which suggest the disunity of their organisations (Espiritu, 2003), Filipino organisations form either isolated clusters or are totally isolated from other immigrant organisations (isolated organisations are those located on the upper left-hand side of the figures). Furthermore, when they are not isolated, they tend to be mainly linked to religious, mostly Catholic organisations, whether Italian or immigrant.

Immigrant organisational activities

We now consider immigrant organisational activities as collective actions - defined as actions with the aim of pursuing a common objective, and associated with the efforts of an organised group, undertaken publicly and orientated around change or resisting change (McAdam and Snow, 1997). The literature on collective actions focuses mainly on direct and explicit action aimed at changing or resisting a change, that is, strictly speaking, collective political action. In line with this, unlike the literature that addresses typologies of political participation at the individual level, whereby involvement is usually classified from more or less civic-orientated activism to protest-orientated behaviours (Norris, 2003, Verba, Nie and Kim, 1971; Verba, Scholzman and Brady, 1995), the literature on collective action drawing on the social movements tradition mostly focuses on protest activities. Except for some authors who explicitly recognise these shortcomings (Sampson *et al.*, 2005; Mc Adam *et al.*, 2005; Minkoff, 1999), many scholars equate social movements with protests, loosely-coordinated struggles, urban-based protest activities, and claim makings by disadvantaged groups (McAdam *et al.*, 2005). This tends to restrict the attention to a limited repertoire of collective actions, mainly forms of contention that often adopt disruptive means. As a result, forms of collective action that articulate 'demands for either a change in society or an avowed desire to resist a proposed change' (Sampson *et al.*, 2005: 684) are not explicit, and are often not considered among forms of collective actions. They are not counted as possible forms of political action even though they may implicitly involve conflicting elements through the proposal of new cultural models or new identities (Melucci, 1996).

In this study, we examine organisations as mediating different interests and identities and as possible free spaces of socialisation for their members through activities in the civic realm of action and services delivery. Consequently, we consider that organisations may convey direct political actions, civic actions implying a political change or resistance to it, and civic action which may not imply any political objective. Given the difficulty in distinguishing the last two types of action due to the structure of our data, we will contrast the civic activities of organisations with political activities and distinguish collective actions that are mainly concerned with the socialisation of members with those whose aims are explicitly political (Theiss-Morse and Hibbing, 2005; Sampson *et al.*, 2005). Hence, in this framework, collective actions define a space where organisations achieve their activities according to social and/or political commitment. Placed on a continuum, at one end, civic activities refer to actions that do not imply any direct aim of changing or influencing institutions, and that are mostly pursued through

routine means. At the opposite end, protest activities involve explicit and direct conflict and adopt more challenging means. Additionally, within the political activities we studied, we consider both conventional political engagement, such as writing letters to authorities and participating in press conferences or releases and less conventional forms of political engagement like protest activities (for instance the organisation of boycotts and the occupation of buildings).

Although we work with a low number of cases, the results concerning the analyses of activities pursued by immigrant organisations in Milan are rather clear: Table 1 shows that almost half of the associations in the two years preceding the interviews had been active in civic activities, especially in the organisation of social, cultural, and intellectual events. Egyptian and Filipino associations had organised religious events more frequently than other immigrant organisations. In contrast to such civic actions, political activities have only been regularly organised by a few associations.

Table 1 - Organisation of events (every week or every month)

	All organisations		Egyptian organisations		Filipino organisations	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Cultural events	17	37.78	2	28.57	2	28.57
Educational events	3	6.52	1	14.29	-	-
Social events	21	46.67	5	83.33	4	50.00
Intellectual events	21	45.65	4	57.14	4	50.00
Political events	11	23.91	3	42.86	2	25.00
Sports activities	11	23.91	2	28.57	2	25.00
Religious activities	17	36.96	5	71.43	5	62.50

Source: LOCALMULTIDEM organisational survey, N=46

While Table 1 shows that there is not much difference between Filipino and Egyptian organisations in terms of their activism in civic engagement, Table 2 suggests that there is more variation between the two civic communities, if we take a broader look at their political engagement. Despite the fact that there is wide and shared disaffection for the most challenging forms of political participation, given that almost none of the associations ever took part in any boycott, occupation or sit-in and rarely collected signatures for a petition, when we look at less disruptive forms of political engagement there seems to be significant differences between Egyptian and Filipino organisations. Egyptian organisations have been very active and dynamic in the public sphere. Most of them have often written letters to authorities, participated in local or national radio or TV programmes, held press conferences or issued press releases and implemented or managed public programmes. In contrast to the active public engagement of

Egyptian organisations in such activities, only a few Filipino organisations, often just one or two, have been regularly active in such types of political or public activities.

Table 2 - Political or public activities undertaken by organisations at least 4-6 times per year

	All organisations		Egyptian organisations		Filipino organisations	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Letters to authorities	15	32.61	5	71.43	1	12.50
Press conferences or releases	19	41.30	4	57.14	3	37.50
Implement or manage public programmes	17	36.96	4	57.14	1	12.50
Distribution of information notes	14	30.43	3	42.86	4	50.00
Collect signatures for a petition	5	10.87	-	-	-	-
Organise public meetings/demonstrations	16	34.78	3	42.86	2	25.00
Organise boycotts	3	6.52	1	14.29	-	-
Organise occupation of buildings	1	2.17	-	-	-	-
Participation in local radio/TV-programmes	16	34.78	5	71.43	1	12.50
Participation in national radio/TV-programme	14	30.43	4	57.14	2	25.00

Source: LOCALMULTIDEM organisational survey, N=46

The previous pattern highlighting differences between the two major immigrant communities in Milan in the activities orientated around the public sphere is replicated when we look at other types of political activities. Separate analyses not shown here demonstrate that only 3 organisations out of 8 Filipino organisations (37.5%) had been able to have regular contacts with local or national political institutions in the two years preceding the interviews, while 5 out of 7 Egyptian organisations (that is 71.4%) had at least a regular contact. The gap between Egyptian and Filipino organisations is even more marked when we consider the participation of organisations in at least one protest activity on a variety of different issues during the last two years. While 6 out of 7 Egyptian organisations (85.7%) took part in at least one protest activity, only one Filipino organisation protested. When considering all immigrant organisations, 12 out of 46 (26.7%) protested at least once, and 28 organisations (62.2%) had at least a regular contact. It follows that Egyptian organisations had on average systematically higher levels of political engagement than other organisations and engaged in a wide

range of political activities, including both relationships with institutions and more unconventional forms of political engagement, such as organising and/or participating in public events and protests.

Discussion

Several factors may account for the differences in political engagement by immigrant organisations that we have encountered, especially when we consider the high levels of engagement of Egyptian organisations compared with the low levels of political commitment by Filipino organisations. Considering our main hypothesis - stressing the role that different types of links may play in the different types of activities that immigrant organisations are involved in - the network-related hypotheses seem to suggest that the network patterns that Filipino and Egyptian organisations build may lead to diverse outcomes in terms of the participatory dynamics of organisations in the political sphere. While Filipino organisations are rather isolated, Egyptians tend to be well integrated both into the immigrant network and into the Italian organisational community. Immigrant organisations that are strongly embedded in the organisational civic community seem thus to have the necessary resources to be able to participate in various public and political events. In this context, however, only certain links seem to matter. The numerically higher and more diverse links that Egyptian organisations have been able to build seem to partly explain their high levels of engagement in the public and political sphere. For their part, Filipino organisations, when they are not isolated, tend to be linked to a few types of organisations with a tendency to be linked to religious, mainly Catholic, associations or to other Filipino organisations. Given the low levels of political engagement by Filipino organisations, Catholic and other Filipino organisations to which they are linked do not thus seem to be useful for political engagement. It is, however, important to note that links that Filipino organisations have built with the Catholic organisations have instead helped them in reducing the costs of immigration linked to social and economic isolation. The organisation of the Filipino community's free and recreational time through sports events, community meetings and traditional and religious feasts has in fact been largely possible thanks to the sustainment of Catholic institutions that have provided spaces and logistical support for such activities (Cominelli, 2004: 278-279). In a similar way, immigrant organisations linked with organisations of members of the same ethnic origin, as demonstrated by Filipino organisations, tend to be more active in the civic domain while showing a limited capacity for engagement in the political sphere. Consequently, ties that organisations maintain with organisations of the same nationality risk forming closed networks defined on the grounds of ethnicity, and producing political subcultures. In this sense, participation through organisations may become self-referential, and reproduce practices by which organisations become a means of reaffirming immigrants' belonging to a particular ethnic group rather than a means of obtaining political representation in the host country.

Despite the findings that seem to suggest that only links with some types of organisations may help immigrant organisation to be active in the political sphere, we are nevertheless unable to identify which kinds of resources such organisations specifically make available. As most immigrants in Italy are still foreigners, thus granting

them far fewer social, economical, and political rights than Italians, links with the Italian civic community - the role of which is well recognised in the Italian political sphere - may, for instance, provide immigrant organisations with the necessary political recognition and resources to be able to engage in the political sphere. Political action by immigrant actors may in fact be intrinsically riskier than civic engagement since "immigrants may not want to bring unwanted attention or trouble to themselves" (Martinez 2005: 139). Political actions may become much more cost-intensive than civic engagement and only emerge when networks with Italian actors provide the necessary symbolic and material resources - resources that immigrant organisations alone may not possess.

Besides the network hypothesis, which seems rather helpful in explaining patterns of political engagement by immigrant organisations in Milan, other factors may contribute to affecting the results that we have presented. Among these, above all, are the specific characteristics of the Filipino and Egyptian communities. These characteristics may also account for the different resources that organisations are endowed with and, consequently, for the different levels and types of activities organisations eventually engage in. As mentioned, Egyptians tend to be more integrated into the labour market structure due to the higher socio-economic positions that they occupy, while Filipinos, despite showing very high levels of employment rates, are often segregated into the domestic sector of the labour market. Therefore, the most integrated Egyptians may be able to offer more resources to the organisations they are affiliated to than Filipinos.

Resources for organisations to become involved in the political sphere may also be provided by the political environment. As for theories stressing the role of the political context on the diffusion of immigrant organisations and types of activities they engage in (Fennema and Tillie, 2004), the constraining political context in Milan seems to affect the modalities of political integration among immigrant organisations, above all, in terms of the level of political engagement shown by Italian organisations vis-à-vis the relative marginalisation of immigrant organisations. However, the link between a constraining political context and the levels of political engagement among immigrant organisations is not totally clear. In particular, if we consider the cultural recognition of immigrants and minorities, despite the fact that the Italian political context may not encourage the recognition of Muslim values and tend instead to valorise the Catholic ones, Egyptian organisations, the majority of which are composed of Muslim members, seem to be able to act at different political levels and through different means. At the same time, Filipino organisations, which are for a large part closer to Italian Catholic values, and therefore, in principle, have a more favourable political context, are actually rather isolated from the political sphere. Therefore, the network resources Egyptian organisations are endowed with seem to partly overcome the limitations imposed by a constraining context.

Therefore, in light of such results, further research may assess the interplay of resources deriving from different levels, namely, the political context, the networks and the characteristics of the immigrant groups considered on the levels of organisational political engagement.

Notes

- ¹ On 31 December 2005, Filipinos and Egyptians in Milan respectively numbered 26,633 (16.4% of all foreigners residing in the city) and 20,979 individuals (12.9 % of all foreigners residing in the city) [Municipality of Milan, Statistics].
- ² Most organisations we had mapped were not reachable: for 83.3% of mapped organisations, we had a wrong address and/or telephone number, 11.1% were not active, and 5.5% were excluded because they did not fulfil the criteria used in the selection of organisations. Among organisations that we contacted, 19 organisations - that is 29.2% - could not be interviewed: 15 organisational leaders did not have time to be interviewed, 2 refused, and 2 were excluded. These 19 organisations were found not to be part of the major bulk of networking organisations since none of them was cited more than once. Despite the difficulties related to the collection of data, according to Marsden, 'if egos are sampled "densely", whole networks may be constructed using egocentric network data.' (Marsden, 2005: 9; Kirke, 1996). We thus considered the organisations and their relations as a complete network.
- ³ For the sake of clarity, we will hereafter refer to Filipino organisations and Egyptian organisations.
- ⁴ This picture uses data deriving from the LOCALMULTIDEM project regarding an individual survey of 300 Filipinos, 300 Egyptians and 300 Ecuadorians in Milan. The ethnic composition of organisations was defined as follows: we considered as ethnic organisations those whose memberships consisted of at least 50% people from the respondents' ethnic group of origin. Organisations whose memberships consisted for at least 50% members of immigrant origin without a specific ethnic group prevailing were considered immigrant organisations. Organisations whose memberships consisted of at least 50% members of Italian origin were considered autochthonous organisations.
- ⁵ As a matter of fact, in this study, despite referring to interviewed organisations exclusively as "Egyptian organisations", many of them include members from other North African and/or Muslim countries.
- ⁶ To construct the two figures, we relied on data collected on six different types of ties held by interviewed organisations with other organisations, namely: major collaborations, personal links, co-memberships, project collaboration, exchange of resources, consultation and exchange of information. If requested, the author can provide further details on the construction of the network matrices and the use of UCINET tools (Borgatti, Everett and Freeman, 2002).

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