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The political participation of third country nationals

The Italian case

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1. Introduction

The “DivPol – Diversity in Political Parties Programmes, Organisation and Representation” project¹ (December 2012 – June 2014) aims to initiate, assess and support diversity development processes in regard to ethnic diversity in major political parties of member states.

The project is implemented by a partnership composed by universities, research institutes and NGOs in eight European countries. In particular, the project partners are: the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue – ACIDI in Lisbon (Portugal), the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration – GRITIM from the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona (Spain), the Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research – IPRS in Rom (Italy), the Department of Political Science from the Stockholm University (Sweden), the Integration Centre in Dublin (Ireland), the Łazarski University in Warsaw (Poland) and the Migration Policy Group – MGP in Brussels (Belgium). Coordinator of DivPol is the CJD Hamburg + Eutin (Germany).

The project originates from the assumption that global migration is a process that poses new challenges to political, economic, cultural and social structures in the European societies. The integration of migrants in host societies, the acceptance and the successful implementation of diversity development processes within the overall socio-economic system in all member States are all crucial elements to social development.

Political parties, acting as organisations holding legislative and governing powers and central agents of societal developments, are expected to incorporate diversity. They also have a key influence on this development in all areas of society of the member states. Improving participation opportunities for non-nationals and immigrants in party politics is crucial for increasing both their influence in decision-making processes and their effectiveness as players in the democratic system.

By using empirical methods, the project partners have assessed the current opportunities for participation of migrants, particularly of those coming from non-EU countries, in political parties and have identified key elements for promoting the inclusion of diversity within them. Under the project, in total 276 representatives of political parties and foreign associations were interviewed, and national workshops and focus groups were conducted in the partner countries, involving politicians, representatives of political parties and migrant organizations.

Starting from the assessment of current opportunities for participation of third-country nationals in political parties, the project partners went through the identification of the factors that hinder and support such participation, in this way it was ultimately possible to draw up a document of political and strategic orientation, containing guidelines for promoting diversity development in political parties at European level.

This paper shows the results of the scientific research conducted in the initial phase of the project by the Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research on the political participation of third-country nationals in Italy. The second part of the paper depicts the outcome of the empirical research carried out through interviews and focus groups involving politicians, representatives of political parties and foreign associations in Italy.

¹ This project is co-financed by the European Commission (EC), European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (EIF). The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.



2. Migration in Italy

The political participation of immigrants in Italy, whether third country nationals or EU citizens, represents an area in which little is known and the amount and nature of attention paid to the subject has been extremely limited. What follows provide an overview of existing knowledge and some of the key issues related to migrant political participation and, more specifically, their participation in political parties. All of this needs to be understood within a broader cultural and political context that, as underscored by the most recent election in February 2013, is highly unstable and characterized by a relatively fractured and persona based party system.

2.1. Introduction to immigration in Italy

An analysis of immigration in Italy permits us to concentrate on a fairly recent period that began in the early 1970s. It is only in the last thirty years in fact, that Italy has started to change its outlook from being a country of emigration to a country of immigration that is gradually registering its own balance of migration surplus. The first migration flows, in the 1970s, primarily consisted of women who worked as domestic labourers and were largely invisible within Italian society. Similarly, asylum seekers at that time essentially saw Italy as a place of passage and hence stayed off the public radar. Data² indicates that there were 143,838 registered immigrants in Italy in 1970, the first year for which data is available. All in all the early 1970s can be seen as time in which migrants were present, but maintained a very low profile. Ten years later, following an amendment to the system for registering residence permits, the presence of foreigners in Italy had more than doubled to 298,749. With a constant inflow of 10% per year, the number of registered immigrants increased to 400,000 in 1984 and more than half a million by the early 1990s.

The beginning of the 1990s saw the arrival of people from the Balkan peninsula (as a result of the conflict linked to the ex-Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), and people from eastern Europe. Italy's geographic position, which puts it in direct contact with northern Africa, eastern Europe and Asia, and the possibility of regularization for immigrants who did not have residence permits, but had jobs, even if undeclared, represent the main factors that contributed to the increase in the foreign population at that time. Work represents the main reason for the arrival of foreign migrants followed by family reunification, especially for female immigrants. These factors contributed to an increase in the foreign population that reached nearly 1.4 million in 2000. With the advent of the new millennium, the rate of immigration started to speed up. In fact, in 2003 the number abundantly exceeded two million. According to 2011 census data³, the foreign population has increased by more than 200% in the past decade exceeding 4 million regularly registered individuals. Conversely, after 2010 we see a sudden drop in the number of reported immigrants. The number of permits to stay dropped by almost 40% in 2011 in comparison to 2010. Similarly, permits to work decreased by 65% and permits for family reunification by 21.2%. At the same there was a sharp increase in applications

² Data taken from the Statistical Dossier on Immigration, 2005, Fondazione Migrantes – Caritas di Roma: "35 anni di immigrazione in Italia. Una politica a metà sguardo." (http://www.chiesacattolica.it/ci_new/documenti_cei/2005-05/19-23/DOCUMENTAZIONE.doc visited on 15/03/13).

³ Data from the 15th general Census of the Population and Housing, produced by the National Statistics System.



for asylum, which went from 10,336 in 2010 to 42,672 in 2011. (This is, however, in line with international data as 2011 was a record year for the number of people seeking asylum).

2.2. The effects of regularization from the 1980s to present day⁴

Data from an analysis made by the IOM covering the last three decades (from 1982 to 2011) demonstrate that Italy has resorted extensively to regularization measures that have led to the legalization of 1.66 million immigrants, more than any other EU Member State. The first regularization goes back to 1982 and granted residency to those who had entered the country without permission or whose permits had expired, resulting in the regularization of a few thousand people. The second amnesty was proclaimed in 1986 leading to the regularization of half a million foreigners by the end of the decade. In addition to amnesties, the first law regarding foreigners in Italy was also created in 1986 (30th December 1986) followed by the “Martelli” law (n. 39/1990), which provided for the influx of migrants and led to 225,000 requests, but only 4% of foreigners seeking a permit to stay could demonstrate regular employment. The quota system, which accounts for a significant amount of labour immigration, was subsequently introduced with the Consolidation Act in 1998 (n. 286/1998). Italy’s adherence to the Schengen agreement and ratification and the implementation of the Amsterdam Treaty, significantly influence the country’s immigrant policy, especially in relation to the legal status of foreigners. This is seen in the 1998 provision in which the legislator sought to: fight illegal immigration; control limited, regular and planned migration flows; and initiate the process of integration⁵. Further steps were taken in 1999, 2002 and most recently in 2009. On April 13th, 1999 Legislative Decree n.133 introduced the possibility to regularize foreigners who had presented their requests by December 15th of the previous year. This led to the submission of 250,966 requests of which 14.5% came from self-employed individuals contributing to the marked role of “ethnic entrepreneurship” within the migrant population. Subsequently, in 2002, more than 700,000 requests for regularization were made in response to the Bossi – Fini Law (enacted July 30th, 2002), which targeted domestic workers and carers. It represented a far higher number than that of past amnesties. The most recent regularization was called the “Domestic workers and Carers Amnesty” (it only covered individuals employed in the domestic sector) and dates back to 2009. The measure was introduced as law n. 102 of August 3rd, 2009 and led to the filing of 295,126 applications for recruitment by employers.

2.3. Data and characterization of migratory flows

At the end of 2011 an estimated 5,011 million immigrants legally resided in Italy, including persons from the European Union and those not yet officially registered. At the end of the year there were 3,637,724 residence permits (including minors)⁶, which represents a slight increase (2.9%) in comparison to 2010 (3,536,062 permits). Of the estimated 1,373,000 EU citizens 87% came from 12 member states: Romania 997,000; Poland 112,000; Bulgaria 53,000; Germany 44,000; France 34,000;

⁴ Data referring to the amnesties was taken from the dossier of the International Migration Organisation “Migrations to Italy. Current Scenario and future prospects” (http://www.dossierimmigrazione.it/docnews/file/2012_OIM_1951-2011_IT.pdf visited on 15/03/2012).

⁵ Casatelli, M.F. (2010), *La disciplina giuridica dell'immigrazione e i suoi rapporti con i principi costituzionali*, Università degli studi Roma Tre, available at: <http://dspace-roma3.caspur.it/handle/2307/592>.

⁶ ISTAT.



Great Britain 30,000; Spain 20,000; and the Netherlands 9,000. A breakdown of the total number of residency permits shows a prevalence for European citizens, both Member (27.4%) and non-Member States (23.4%), followed by Africa (22.1%), Asia (18.8%) and North and South America (8.3%). The vast majority of this latter group is comprised of individuals from South and Central America (354,323 out of 391,189 or 90.6%).

Table 1: Residents from non-EC European Countries: Total and primary countries of origin

	Total	Albania	Ukraine	Moldavia	Serbia and Montenegro	Macedonia	Russia
Number of Residents	1,171,163	491,495	223,782	147,519	101,554	82,209	37,519

Table 2: Number of Residents with African Citizenship: Total and primary countries of origin

	Total	Morocco	Tunisia	Egypt	Senegal	Nigeria	Ghana	Algeria	Ivory Coast
Number of Residents	1,105,826	506,369	122,595	117,145	87,311	57,011	51,924	28,081	24,235

Table 3: Number of Residents with Asian Citizenship: Total and primary countries of origin

	Total	China	The Philippines	Bangladesh	Sri Lanka	India	Pakistan
Number of Residents	924,443	277,570	152,382	106,671	94,577	145,164	90,185

While immigration has clearly undergone a significant transformation, very few immigrants have been granted Italian citizenship in large part due to the prevailing of *jus sanguinis* in ascribing citizenship. Ministry of Interior data⁷ show a slight increase in the number of applications for Italian citizenship (2008, 2009, 2010) for the last few years this increase in applications; however, appears to be offset in by an increase in the number of applications denied (see Section 4.2).

Table 4: Requests for Italian Citizenship: 2008-2010

	2008	2009	2010
Requests approved	39,484	40,084	40,223
Requests denied	739	859	1,634
Total Requests	40,902	40,943	41,857

⁷ *Statistiche 2008-2010, Cittadinanza Italiana*, Ministry of Interior – Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, Central Directorate for Civil Rights.



Total	81,125	81,886	83,714
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Source: *Statistiche 2008-2010, Cittadinanza Italiana*, Ministry of Interior – Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, Central Directorate for Civil Rights.

3. Research

3.1. Research on the participation of third country nationals in political parties

The issue of political participation of foreigners in the planning and organization of political parties as well the migrant’s representation in and by these parties, remains to this day unexplored in Italy. Underestimation of the importance of this issue can be seen by the complete absence of data regarding foreign participants in Italian political parties that, in turn, show a general lack of interest towards a potential constituent group. In light of a strong desire for social inclusion, made evident by the political activism of a number of foreign communities⁸, research in Italy has mainly focused on the exercise of political rights. Research, has not, however, included comprehensive or in-depth studies on the subject of electoral law and the inclusion of foreigners in privileged positions for the exercise of sovereignty that would guarantee them political integration at the highest level: representation in political parties. In this context, one sees the need to carry out a study in Italy on the role played by political parties regarding the inclusion of foreign representatives and on the political orientation of these communities. Up until now these groups of immigrants have only found space for political participation within trade unions and associations.

3.2. The issues investigated by existing studies

As revealed by various studies (Carchedi & Mottura, 2007; Mantovan, 2010), both the labour market, which strictly demands a legal *status* of its workers, and the effort made to promote workers rights, have made a significant difference in immigrants’ lives, but cannot be said to have an impact on the area of interest here — participation in political parties. It should be noted however that more than a million foreign workers⁹ have benefitted from the campaigns of federations that have fought for the integration of immigrants and their political rights. While information is available in regards to the

⁸ The results of a research conducted on a European level by the ISMU Foundation, King Baudouin Foundation, Migration Policy Group e ReteG2 – Second Generation, *Immigrant Citizens Survey – How immigrants experience integration in 15 European cities* (May 2012), bring forward the general issue of the participation of foreign citizens in politics, an issue that also Italy must deal with. Based on a study carried out in seven European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, and Spain), it is clear that Italy has the highest percentage of immigrant participation in civic life after Belgium: in Milan 14.6% of those interviewed belonged to a trade union (compared to 5.5% of the local residents); in Naples 3.2% said they were a member of a political party (in keeping with the national average which is 3.7%). Naples is the European city where immigrants have the most awareness (more than 80%) and participation (about 20%) of immigrant groups. In Italy, the percentage of those who declare themselves ready to vote is between 70 and 80%. Milan is where there are the most people who deem it necessary for there to be more MPs with a migrant background (almost 90%), followed by Berlin and Naples. The number of immigrants, therefore, who aspire to join political parties, groups and trade unions is evidently high as is their interest in the need to exercise their right to vote, a right that will inevitably promote greater diversity in politics.

⁹ Allinova, *Oltre un milione di immigrati iscritti al sindacato*, 7 May 2010, www.stranieriinitalia.it.



number of members belonging to trade unions, data on the involvement of foreigners in political parties and on what exactly is being done by parties to include immigrants does not exist.

Italy's chronic delay in guaranteeing the political inclusion of third country citizens has, in the last twenty years, given rise to a significant amount of research questioning: the correlation between citizenship and the right (both active and passive) to vote; the extension of legal rights to non-citizens; and the possible forms of representation provided by law in conjunction with national and regional councils and deputy councillors. To date studies have focused on the openings that the constitutional rules grant foreigners within politics — openings that, in fact, deny the possibility of active participation in politics and hence stand in complete contrast to the notion of citizenship. This legislative condition also contributes to the lack of political, academic and social debate on this issue.

Foreigners' capacity to benefit from "political rights" has, until now, mainly been viewed in connection with a change in the legal category of their citizenship¹⁰. At present the legislator denies non-EU citizens the right to be involved (whether actively nor passively) in local elections. According to institutional requirements, the right to vote in general and local elections, or in legislative or popular referendums, is reserved to citizens who possess the right to exercise sovereignty and therefore depends on the *status civitatis*. This means that, in accordance with EU law EU citizens have the right to vote in local, administrative elections (but not at the regional or national level) whereas non-EU citizens have no right to vote (see Section 4.2).

Since the 1990s the absence of a reform granting foreign residents in Italy the right to vote in local elections, the political, academic and social debate has revolved solely around this topic. Political discussions on this matter may be found, in fact, in an ample amount of literature of a legal nature that analyses proposed bills and legislations. The majority of these bills call for an amendment to Art. 48 of the Constitution despite the fact that local authorities (with no legal entitlement) have led some constitutionalists to exclude the need to submit a constitutional law in favour of an ordinary law¹¹. In recent years, as a result of the crisis regarding forms of representation required by law, the inability to influence decisions on migration policies, and the succession of various centre-right governments opposed to reforms regarding citizenship, public debate on the immigrant's right to vote has come to a complete halt. Publications on this subject, the majority of which date back to 2007, mainly focus on ways in which to obtain citizenship. They do not, however, adequately analyze the importance of being able to exercise ones political rights.

3.3. Primary organizations and research centres

A number of monitoring and research centres have focused on the issues of immigrant participation in politics alongside the various university departments that have been conducting studies in the field since the 1990s. These monitoring and research centres are the only ones to have studied migratory flows and the rectification of the Strasbourg Convention^{12 13}, while also exploring issues of

¹⁰ Plutino, M., *Stranieri e diritto di associazione in partiti*, N. 1/2012 del 15/01/2012, www.dirittifondamentali.it.

¹¹ Sardo, D., *Il dibattito sul riconoscimento del diritto di voto agli stranieri residenti*, Rivista dell'Associazione Italiana dei Costituzionalisti - N.00 del 02.07.2010.

¹² The Strasbourg Convention was adopted by the European Council on the 5th February 1992 and came into effect on the 1st May 1997. It was ratified and went into effect in Italy on the 8th March 1994, n. 203 (in Suppl. ordinario n. 52, Gazz. Uff. n. 71, 26 March).



representation and participation of immigrants in community life, investigating the response of the foreign community to the possibility of having representative bodies and associations in order to exercise their active citizenship.

The result of these studies is, that the issue of the representation of immigrants, has found many openings in voluntary organizations involved in supporting immigrants (IPRS, 2010) and in associations formed by migrants themselves (CNEL, 1999). These associations have been increasing more and more both locally and nationally and on a slightly lesser scale within trade unions and in national political parties, the latter, however, has still not been researched¹⁴.

4. Legislation regulating political participation

The following analysis seeks to identify the areas of opportunity for political participation available to foreign citizens from third countries within Italian parties. This analysis examines the possibilities foreseen by the constitution and the EU while analysing the internal rules and regulations of the main political parties in order to identify potential ways to guarantee immigrants the possibility to participate both formally and informally.

4.1. The right to political participation according to EU law

Analysing the first aspect, or rather the allowances made available by law for third country citizens to freely participate in political associations, we come across the limitations that a foreigner living in Italy encounters when trying to exercise his/her political rights. It should be noted that in Italy it is not possible to constitute a political party *with* foreign members that is *for* foreigners. Regardless of the extent to which one takes advantage of Art. 49 of the Italian Constitution, which allows for the right to create associations, in general, juridical doctrine states that the right to participate in political movements is solely connected to the *status* of citizen¹⁵.

The non entitlement of a foreign person to be involved in political associations (whether as a member, founder or co-founder) is due to the absence of rulings on this issue. At present the creation of a political party or the formal recognition of existing foreign political groups, some of which exist in Italy albeit unofficially, would be considered illegal. Political groups in Italy that do have foreign persons as leader or co-founder are composed of EU nationals. Parties such as PIR

¹³ The main ones being: CNEL – National Council of Economy and Labour; IPRS – Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research; ISMU – Initiatives and studies on ethnicity; Associazione Parsec – Research and social intervention; Associazione for Legal studies on Immigration; Caritas Italiana; Commission for integration policies for immigrants; Master on Immigration – Ca' Foscari; European University Institute; FIERI – International and European Forum for Research on Immigration; CODRES – Cooperativa Documentazione Ricerche Economiche-Sociali; Istituto Fernando Santi.

¹⁴ CNEL (2000), *La rappresentanza diffusa. Le forme di partecipazione degli immigrati alla vita collettiva*, Roma; Vicentini, A. e Fava, T. (2001), *Le associazioni dei cittadini stranieri in Italia*, Roma, Consiglio nazionale dell'economia e del lavoro – Organismo nazionale di coordinamento per le politiche di integrazione sociale degli stranieri; Osservatorio delle immigrazioni (2003), *L'associazionismo degli immigrati in provincia di Bologna*, Bologna, www.provincia.bologna.it; Caritas Italiana (2005), *Immigrati e partecipazione. Dalle consulte e dai consiglieri aggiunti al diritto di voto*, Edizioni IDOS, Roma; IPRS, *Immigrazione, volontariato ed integrazione*, Rapporto 2010.

¹⁵ Plutino, M., *Stranieri e diritto di associazione in partiti*, n.1/2012, www.dirittifondamentali.it.



(Italian Party of Romanians), the Movement of New Italians and the New Italian Immigrant Party, benefit from the active and passive right to vote, the right to be naturalized citizens or to have dual citizenship.

Despite the existence of several EU treaties that recognize the right to fairness in the treatment towards third country nationals and the Constitution, which upholds the principle of freedom of association, the possibility for a foreigner to even join a party has not yet been sanctioned. The political inclusion of foreign citizens and their right to exercise sovereignty and be represented is left up to the internal regulations of political parties, which may or may not then grant them permission to join¹⁶. This lack of laws regulating political parties paves the way not only for bans and restrictions of the doctrine, but also benefits that are limited to European nationals. This phenomenon is also in contrast with the principals laid down by the EU and interferes with the link between citizenship and political rights.

EU legislation has intervened repeatedly to promote social inclusion and improve conditions for the integration of third country nationals legally residing in the EU. It has not however expressly recognized immigrants' right to participate in political organizations. The Tampere European Council of 1999 made it clear that it is necessary to offer third country nationals who regularly reside in Member States with "*rights and obligations comparable to those of European Union citizens*" in order to "*promote non discrimination in social, economic and cultural life*" through the alignment of the juridical *status* of third country nationals to that of the European Union citizens¹⁷.

Various EU laws have been introduced as a means to guarantee fair treatment of certain categories of third country nationals. With regulation n. 859/2003/CE, for example, the Legislator extended EU dispositions regarding the provision of national social security benefits to third country citizens¹⁸. This European policy was strengthened by the Lisbon Treaty Art. 79 of the TFUE indicates the objectives of the common European policy regarding immigration, which also includes that of fair treatment of third country citizens regularly residing in one of the Member States¹⁹. The concept of fair treatment of third country nationals (certainly not as effective as full recognition of the right to equal treatment) is already confirmed in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. It furthermore, became fully binding following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Furthermore, Art.11, which grants freedom of assembly and association, states that "every person has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association of various nature, namely in the political, civic and trade union field". The fact that this policy refers to "every person" rather than "every EU citizen", means that it does not only refer to EU nationals but to all persons regularly residing in one of the Member States. While reiterating the principle of freedom of association, Art. 12 however, only mentions the right to freely participate in non-political associations thus underlining how the immigrant is seen as a worker and not as a citizen. With regards to the freedom to form political parties, the Treaty states that political parties

¹⁶ Cfr. Plutino, M.

¹⁷ Citti, W. (2012), *The categories of non-Member third-country nationals protected by the principal of fair treatment (relatives of EU citizens, long term residents, Euro-Mediterranean association agreements). Insights and issues regarding current Italian law and out look on the new concept of "European citizenship"*, Association for Legal Studies on Immigration.

¹⁸ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/other/l33197_it.htm.

¹⁹ Orlandini, G. (2007), *The freedom of circulation of workers within the European Union*, Il Mulino, pp. 34-35.



at EU level should help promote the political interests of European citizens²⁰. Council Directive 2003/109/CE goes beyond this as it addresses the *status* of third country nationals who are long-term EU residents. In this case equal treatment is expected across the entire EU regardless of the country of residence. With reference to section 'g' of Art. 11, these persons have the same rights as EU nationals concerning the right to freedom of association, membership and affiliation with organizations representing workers and employers.

4.2. The legal requirements for voting in Italy

Unlike some other European countries, Italy denies third country nationals the right to vote whether in local, general or European elections. This represents the failure to fully adopt the *Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Local Public Life* (Strasbourg), which was adopted by the European Council on February 5th, 1992 and came into force on May 1st, 1997. The convention includes the following stipulation relating to the social inclusion of foreign residents in local community life:

- A: Freedom of expression, assembly and association;
- B: Advisory bodies designated to represent foreign residents on a local level; and
- C: The right to vote in local elections.

Italy has ratified sections A and B of this convention while excluding section C, claiming that it was in conflict with Art. 48 of the Constitution and thus denying foreigners the right to vote in local elections. This action is also in contrast with Law n. 40/98, known as the Turco-Napolitano law, which grants the right to vote in Art. 2 and sanctions "participation in local public life" in comma 3. There are in fact numerous bills that strive to reform the issue. As a result, it is clear that the issue of electoral law is linked to the reform of citizenship law. At present naturalization is the only way in which foreign citizens can acquire the right to vote.

Apart from the issue of citizenship, foreigners' right to participate in local political life is expressly provided for by legislation as a result of the direct disposition of European directives, however it only applies to EU nationals. Many municipalities have established special bodies with the objective of allowing foreign citizens greater political visibility. The establishment of councils and deputy councillors guarantees the foreign population with some level of representation. These forms of representation were made possible in 1986 with Law n. 943, which foresaw the establishment of national and regional councils to deal with problems that non-EU workers and their families may encounter. It was the "Testo Unico" of 1998, however, that finally introduced new organisms for representation such as the Council and the National Board for Immigration, the latter being regulated by D.P.R. n. 394 of 31st August 1999. These forms of political participation however, have many weak points due to the frail legal structure that "safeguards" immigrants. In fact, councils, institutions and associations that represent the foreign population are left out of decision-making processes and do not play a structural role at an institutional level.

²⁰ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/other/l33197_it.htm.



4.3. The right to participate in political parties: Statutes and internal regulations

Faced with the legal limitations concerning the right to exercise their political right to the fullest, how can we guarantee participation in political associations to third country nationals in Italy? What roles should they assume and what role should they play? According to the findings of this desk analysis, the lack of data and insights available point to the need for a thorough analysis of the Italian situation, an analysis that can answer questions regarding the inclusion of foreign citizens politics and that can uncover clear means by which these individuals can participate in political parties both formally and informally. Despite to the scarce regulations governing the activities of political parties, there have however been, throughout the years, some examples of direct political participation by foreign citizens regularly residing in Italy. These cases, however, primarily concern individuals who have been naturalized. Some key examples include: the membership of foreign citizens in the main Italian political alliances; the establishment of immigration departments; and the election of leaders for major institutional positions. These examples of political participation were possible despite the limitations discussed above and have been sanctioned by what is called “political party policy”, or rather made possible in accordance with the statutes and internal regulations of each party.

The following section takes a look at the statutes of today’s political parties, the majority of which were established between 2007 and 2011. It should be noted that the current morphology of politics, characterized by the very recent establishment of both parties and alliance between parties, does not allow for the creation of a clear picture of the consolidated inclusion of third country nationals. The analysis covers the most representative parties across the political spectrum as well as parties that, although intermittently, have paid the most attention to the political inclusion of foreign citizens within their party or, on the other hand, made immigration a central part in their xenophobic politics. The parties covered are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Primary political parties in Italy covered

Party	Year	Past Formations	Political Orientation
Partito Democratico [Democratic Party] (PD)	2007	Democratici di Sinistra [Democrats of the Left] (1998-2007) and Margherita (2000-2007)	Left
Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà [Left Ecology and Liberty] (SEL)	2009	Partito Rifondazione Comunista [Comunist Refoundation Party] (PRC)	Left
Partito Rifondazione [Comunist Refoundation Party] Comunista (PRC)	1991	PCI (1921-1991)	Left
Il Popolo della Libertà [People of Liberty] (PDL)	2008	Forza Italia [Italian Power] (1994-2008) and Alleanza Nazionale [National Alliance] (1994-2008)	Right
Lega Nord per l’indipendenza della Padania [Northern League]	1989-97		Right



Unione di Centro [Union of the Centre] (UdC)	2008	Unione dei Democratici Cristiani e di Centro [Union of Christian Democrats and the Centre] (2002-2008), Rosa per l'Italia [Rose for Italy] (2008), Coord. Popolari-Margherita per la Costituente di Centro [Populist-Margherita Coordination for Centrist Constituents] (2008).	Centre
Movimento 5 Stelle [5 Stars Movement]	2009		Movement

Within the present political landscape the PD and the PDL represent the two majority parties that must currently negotiate the sharing of power with a movement that emerged gained prominence during the 2013 elections—the Movimento 5 Stelle (5 Stars Movement), a non-party affiliated group. The majority of these parties were only formed in the past five years and are a direct result of new alliances between parties that have been on the Italian political scene since the 1990s. What emerges is a purely Italian phenomenon: from the rather linear history of Italian trade unions, which hail back to three centuries ago, and the establishment of the Second Republic, when Italy became a unified state²¹, came a profound transformation in politics as the fragmentation of the Italian political system witnessed the passage from three great popular parties to the establishment of the modern parties mentioned above. The political panorama is clear: Italy went from having three popular parties (Democrazia Cristiana – DC Christian Democracy, Partito Socialista – PSI Socialist Party and Partito Comunista – PCI Communist Party) to an exorbitant number of parties. Twenty-two parties were represented in Parliament in the 2013 elections as part of the national political landscape with the addition of 24 other parties that operate at various levels whether in local, provincial or regional governance.

Statutes and internal regulations

In contrast to the current interpretation of the doctrine, the parties have albeit, on a limited scale, opened up to foreign membership, without distinguishing between EU and third country citizens. With the aid of specific guidelines, each party has established the potential level of involvement for third country citizens. And while on the one hand the representatives of left wing parties declare themselves to be in favour of foreign participation, on the other hand, those belonging to the right wing exclude the possibility altogether²². It is important to point out the difference between membership and access: even though the possibility to rally foreign subscribers is not mentioned in the statutes, it does not necessarily mean that they cannot become members, with some parties even instrumentally counting them among their numbers. Beyond access and membership, how foreign individuals are included needs to be further explored since immigrants are often only

²¹ Vallauri, C. (2008), *Storia dei sindacati nella società italiana*, Ediesse, Roma.

²² <http://www.pdl.it/notizie/15377/statuto-del-popolo-della-liberta;>
[http://www.udcitalia.it/Dipartimenti/ContenutiStaitci.aspx?tipo=161&dip=2.](http://www.udcitalia.it/Dipartimenti/ContenutiStaitci.aspx?tipo=161&dip=2)



discussed in regards to public safety (i.e., crime) and labour policies. For theoretical discussion's sake we can reiterate the fact that becoming or not becoming a member of a political party does not necessarily mean being free to express ones rights. In truth, while the regulations do not preclude participation in political life (though in some cases there are limitations regarding age and the length of stay in Italy), this participation is often limited and usually only regards the issue of immigration.

According to the statute of the PD party, "any regularly residing citizen can become a member or elector" and for the PRC and SEL "all men and women over the age of fourteen, regardless of citizenship" have the right to join. Thus, some left wing parties grant the full right to fair and equal treatment, as for example SEL²³ and PRC²⁴; placing respect, cultural, political, gender, and national pluralism first and foremost. Other parties, among their fundamental requisites, require potential members to be regular long-term residents in Italy.

Centre left parties are in agreement on the fact that only Italian nationals can apply for membership with the Northern League going one step further, granting membership only to nationals of certain "nations" (Alto Adige – Südtirol; Emilia; Friuli – Venezia Giulia; Liguria; Lombardy; Marche; Piedmont; Romagna; Tuscany; Trentino; Umbria; Valle d'Aosta – Vallée d'Aoste; Veneto)²⁵. The only exception among the right wing parties is Future and Freedom for Italy, as it accepts all Italian, European and regularly residing immigrants²⁶. Despite the differences between the left and the right parties, the fact that the right wing parties do not admit foreign citizens has not been reported by the left wing as "discriminatory". The legal situation regarding the participation of third country nationals is not based on specific laws, but is a purely political matter—one that parties still have to effectively deal with.

Unlike the statutes of SEL and PRC, the Democratic Party's statute is without a doubt the most forward thinking as it is in favour of foreign citizens in possession of residence permits. Art.1 of the "Principals of internal Democracy", the statute promotes political participation of "all young men and women, of all EU citizens and of other nationals with regular residence permits", guaranteeing equal rights for all. Art.2 however, regarding the "Fundamental subjects of the Democratic life of the party", defines the different kinds of participation within the Democratic party itself. It is open to membership of foreign citizens both as members and electors. As a consequence, they can participate in the direct election of party officials or advance their own candidacy for any high ranking position besides being able to vote for the party's candidates for the major institutional offices²⁷. The possibility for immigrants in possession of ID cards to vote in general elections, was the subject of a specific regulation put forward in occasion of the "Primary elections for the common good of Italy" on the 25th November 2012. The regulation was outlined by PD, SEL and PSI (Italian Socialist Party) for the election of a candidate which would represent all three as Italian Prime Minister in the 2013 elections²⁸. While there is no official publication referring to data on foreign party membership, journalists have made some estimates regarding the percentage of foreign voters in the latest election. This percentage concerns citizens adhering to the left wing constituencies in

²³ <http://www.sinistraecologialiberta.it/materiali/statuto/statuto24102010.pdf>.

²⁴ <http://web.rifondazione.it/home/index.php/partito/73-partito-contenuti/25-statuto>.

²⁵ <http://www.leganord.org/index.php/il-movimento/lo-statuto-della-lega-nord>.

²⁶ <http://www.futuroelibertatoscana.com/statuto.asp>.

²⁷ www.partitodemocratico.it/doc/100454/statuto-del-partito-democratico.htm.

²⁸ http://www.partitodemocratico.it/Allegati/principi_regolamentari_primarie.pdf.



Milan, where roughly 10% of votes were cast by immigrants²⁹. The expressed desire to participate is most prevalent in Arab and South-Asian groups³⁰ but, with the exception of a few rare cases, it does not mean that they hold positions of leadership or management within the parties.

5. Foreign representation in political parties

After more than twenty years since the immigrant population in Italy became a significant reality, there is still no real representation of their interests. In truth, the recent Italian political scene proves that parties have all but lost their role of mediation through which citizens can express their right to political participation.

The crisis regarding representation is quantifiable if we take into consideration the complete absence of possibilities for immigrants to express their right to passive (that is, to benefit from the legal right to hold elective offices) and active (not being able to express with their vote any kind of preference) political activity. Despite the absence of data on foreign representation in political parties, the analysis reveals the severe restrictions that foreigners face in accessing positions of decision-making power within the parties themselves or within institutions. Any role or position they may be given is usually restricted to the issue of immigration. In the case of the latter, the role given to foreigners is that of Local Deputy Councillor (without the right to vote) but this position is only granted to those foreign nationals who have been naturalized. Once naturalized citizens they effectively forgo their *status*³¹ as foreigner.

In the event of the allocation of positions within the party, the restricted access to leadership roles is not actually formalized seen as the statutes allow it, but in practice it's not common. In fact, in political parties which accept foreign citizen membership there is no legal constraint preventing immigrants from holding high ranking positions but at the same time there are no regulations regarding the allocation quotas for immigrants.

Yet in parties, which are supposed to represent the political will of European citizens, as stated by the European charter of fundamental rights, there are hardly any foreign citizens in high ranking roles and those who do have a position of "power" are naturalized citizens³². We shall remit this issue to when we will empirically examine the reasons behind this apparent discriminatory condition, hopefully producing a more complete understanding through an in-depth analysis.

²⁹ <http://affaritaliani.libero.it/milano/immigrati-voto-primarie-svelano-voglia-partecipazione.html>.

³⁰ Research conducted from 2004 to 2008 entitled *"Immigrati, identità culturale e partecipazione politica: un'indagine nel Comune di Roma"*, promoted by the Department of Sociology and Communication Science of the University of Rome "La Sapienza", chair of Sociology of Ethnic Relations, by the Immigration, Multiethnicity and New Rights Commission and by the office for the Representation of Foreign Communities of the Municipality of Rome.

³¹ In this sense, we can mention the parliamentary experiences of some citizens of foreign origins, undertaken by Ali Rashid (PRC), of Palestinian origins; by Mercedes Lourdes Frias (PRC), from Santo Domingo; Suad Sbai (PDL), of Moroccan origins; by Jean-Léonard Touadi (IDV), of Congolese origins; Khalid Fuad Allam (Margherita, political organisation currently merged into PD).

³² Compared with the general elections in 2013, in the elections for the Chamber of Deputies and the Lazio Region leading positions have been assigned to candidates for renewal, who are Khalid Chaouki, leader of "Nuovi Italiani" and Jean-Léonard Touadi, indicated as possible deputy secretary. Other candidates of foreign origins in the lists of SEL party to the Chamber are Diaw Mbaye, of Senegalese origins, and Mercedes Lourdes Frias.



The new guidelines issued by certain political leaderships for the political inclusion of foreign representatives also remain with the fixed notion of naturalized citizenship. The National Directorate of the Democratic Party is committed, through the approval in agenda, to initiate a genuine and profound renewal of its high-ranking positions through a representation of immigrants elected to Parliament³³, which is in fact, something entirely different from recognizing foreign nationals their right to representation.

Despite a marked delay in acting on what has been laid down in European Treaties, diversity is now starting to play a major role in the election campaign especially after controversy regarding top level management roles in parties. In the present context, it now seems that political inclusion of foreign citizens is no longer just about a fundamental cultural change towards the recognition of political right, but also the direct consequence of an appeal made by our modern society. It must be said though, that rather than witnessing true “recruitment campaigns” on the part of the various parties, what we have seen is more an attempt to change the structure of the parties from within, starting from the highest positions and aimed at guaranteeing increased political profile. The risk of exploitation is strongly perceived by foreign citizens, who view the request for the participation of immigrants, especially before important elections, as an operation of mere facade³⁴. This is mentioned as one of the main reasons for foreign citizens not enrolling in parties, along with the fact that they are still not guaranteed the right to vote on a local or general level.

6. Debate and approach within parties

6.1. Campaigns to promote diversity proposed by political parties

It is necessary to make clear that there have not been any specific campaigns on behalf of political parties to promote political inclusion of third-country nationals. There have been, however, social campaigns to promote the issue of respect for diversity. Political parties have been involved in championing awareness in society for tolerance and respect of cultural differences. But, from studies conducted by I.P.R.S. on national campaigns carried out in 2011, it seems that political parties have lost their substance due to a recent period of acute fragmentation and internal instability. The matter is only made worse by the expansion of a civil movement formed by a national network of organizations spread across the country aimed at promoting the right to citizenship and contrasting the phenomenon of discrimination and racism.

Although some of these campaigns were not carried out directly by parties, they have been closely working alongside lay and catholic organizations committed to supporting the rights of immigrants. Left wing parties for example, have helped to promote campaigns such as: Racism is an ugly story (2008); I am not afraid (2009); Clandestine (2009); 24hrs Without us (2010); I am Italy (2012).

³³ “Il Paese è maturo, rappresentanza per gli immigrati”, order of the day presented by Livia Turco, Marco Pacciotti and Jean-Léonard Touadi on behalf of the PD Immigration Forum and approved by the PD National Directorate on 17th December 2012 (Source: *L'impegno del PD: “Porteremo nuovi italiani in Parlamento”*, www.stranieriinitalia.it/, 18th December).

³⁴ Cfr. research “*Immigrati, identità culturale e partecipazione politica: un'indagine nel Comune di Roma*”.



6.2. Successful paths of foreign nationals in political parties

Journalists have provided a great deal of literature documenting success stories regarding foreign nationals, most of whom are now naturalized citizens involved in political parties.

Among the politically active fringe groups within the foreign communities in Italy, which have effectively organized the first workers movements and groups such as CII – Immigrant Committee Italy, we can find many examples of foreign nationals committed to political organizations. In order to comprehend the origin of these success stories we must underline the strong connection between the immigrant movements of the 90s, such as the sans papier movement and those against racism and the political parties. The link goes well beyond the support lent by left wing parties to campaigns for the rights of immigrants.

We can ascertain that the main foreign leaders heading immigrant organizations in Italy have now claimed their places among mainstream parties. As in the case of SEL candidates Senegal native Diaw Mbaye or Mercedes Lourdes Frias, both founding members of the CII – Immigrant Committee, which organized and represented immigrant struggle across the whole of Italy.

In addition to the afore mentioned foreign leaders, there are other activists who were already at the head of parties in their countries of origin, now unofficially present in Italy. Among these foreign parties now actively working for the communities with the highest levels of political activism, is the Sri Lankan communist party, The People's National Liberation Front, present in the Milan area. One of its representatives, Sudath Adikari Mudijanselage, has been elected member of the City Council for the Foreign Community in Rome and is an activist in campaigns promoted in conjunction with JVP and the Italian Communist Party (PDCI). Another interesting example of political participation, is that of the Arab community whose presence has been permanent in Italy. Representatives of this group are at the top of the major Italian parties, such as PD and SEL among the left wing parties and PDL among the right.

The presence of political activists originally from North Africa and the Middle East in high ranking positions within Italian parties, is on one hand due to the fact they are from the geographical proximity and that they are part of permanent settlement projects. Many of them in fact, aimed at naturalization through marriage and residence, giving Italy's immigration a predominantly Mediterranean characteristic. On the other hand though, there are also those who, as seen in many migration flows, were exiles or political activists fleeing abroad as a result of over forty years of persecutions perpetrated by Arab regimes and decades of Israeli occupation.

The driving forces that characterized the organization of Arab-Muslim groups in Italy were: the lay groups, which gave way to student and political movements during 1968; the religious groups, closely linked to the political Muslim Brotherhood, who founded the Union of the Italian Islamic Community (UCOII) and many other religious organizations.

The pioneers of these various immigrant groups were at some point absorbed by some political parties and grappled with other political experiences. An example is in the list of candidates put forward for local elections. An example is "Milano Nuova" (New Milan), a multi-ethnic group presented itself for the local elections in 2011, whose candidate for the position of Mayor, Abdel Hamid Shaari, is the president of the Islamic Cultural Centre and Spokesperson for the Islamic Centre in viale Jenner.



With regards to the driving forces which characterized the Middle Eastern lay groups there is another important component to bring to attention, that of the National Secretary of the Palestinian Student Union (GUPS), member of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists and since 1987 First secretary to the Palestinian Delegation in Italy, Ali Rashid. Elected in 2006 to the Chamber of Deputies PRC, he is currently national coordinator for SEL.

Yet another example of an activist for Muslim organizations present in Italy, is Khalid Chaouki, one of the founders of the Young Muslims association of Italy (GMI), member since 2005 of the Italian Islamic Council for the Ministry of the Interior, national representative in 2008 of the Second Generation of Young Democrats, presently representative of the New Italians of the Democratic Party and a Member of Parliament since the 2013 .

Originating from self-organized protest movements such as the Italian *sans papier*, trade unions and political parties from their native countries with Italian ramifications, we can claim that the main issues at the heart of these groups concern: the cessation of armed conflict and the conclusion of political controversies in their countries of origin, in respect of human rights and UN resolutions; promotion of legislative policy to shorten the time necessary for recognition and renewal of residence permits, granting of citizenship, the right to vote, proposals for amendments or the abrogation of laws regarding immigration and the labour market.

The political goals that third-country nationals strive for, are still based on archaic beliefs that see the foreigner only interested in problems related to his status, which in turn, determines their choice of political party. In general, the various communist party groups in Italy also rally militants from foreign communist parties. In a specific article of the PRC statute, it states that “it is forbidden to simultaneously belong to two political organizations, except in the case of foreigners resident in Italy and Italians resident abroad provided that the two parties have an officially established relationship”. The PRC provides support to self-organized protest movements of immigrants in Italy, bringing together amongst its ranks of activists, members of anti-racist movements. They are not only involved in migration issues but also in the main social and union struggles, such as that against the abolition of Art. 18 of the workers statute.

Foreign militants that adhere to the major political parties, both of the left and of the right wing, have various roles, and are chosen among the representatives elected by the foreign communities. These representatives are placed in branches and departments specifically established in order to develop political programs and social campaigns to raise awareness and respect for diversity, rather than actual political mobilization.

6.3. Quantitative data on the phenomenon

The lack of recognition of the right to vote in Italy, in truth, does not preclude third-country national’s participation in the activities of political parties nor does it prevent the formation of awareness groups representing issues connected to this significant part of the population.

The refusal to recognise a right might encourage those who are denied it to launch campaigns and lobby political parties and politicians. In this way substantial legislative changes could be proposed, not only in terms of the struggle for the right to citizenship but also in general to make a change in Italy’s highly restrictive migration policies and the labour market. It is interesting to note that political parties are in fact, closed to the idea of third-country nationals participating within the parties



themselves. This indifference is demonstrated by a lack of internal discussion and data regarding the number of immigrants involved in political party life. The result of this closure on the part of political parties is that even EU nationals have sought to create other means of political representation. Being excluded from candidature and leadership has greatly limited the number of foreign activists and party members. This has led to the necessary emergence of mixed groups, bringing together EU citizens and Italians, where the foreign members can be co-founders or leaders.

Because foreign citizens have no place within Italian political parties, in recent years there has been a noticeable increase in political formations and a growing call for the establishment of parties for immigrants, alongside immigrant associations and Italian political parties. It must be said that as a result of alternating active and inactive policy making, the parties for foreigners would not comprise only foreign citizens as they do not have that right.

Although the presence of foreign activists and members is limited, an analysis of the kind of activism that does exist within the parties should be made, starting from the albeit limited studies conducted in Italy over the last 25 years. The studies involved the political members of the foreign communities, and in particular, the afore mentioned protagonists, the successful representatives of social and political associations.

6.4. Ways to access and register within the party

Browsing through the official pages of party websites, there are two levels of membership provided for every citizen. To access the first level one must register on-line and subscribe to a newsletter. This allows a direct flow of information between the party organization, their members and ordinary citizens who have not submitted a formal request for inclusion in the activities and campaigns proposed by the parties. The second level foresees the filling out of an on-line membership card together with the payment of an annual quota. This method of access does not however, apply to the 5 Stars Movement (M5S), which is a political organization rather than a political party. Access and registration are covered by different regulations and conditions contained in the party's statute and one fundamental difference is the fact that there is no annual quota to pay. To join the M5S Movement it is as simple as registering with any other website where the request and the answer of acceptance are both done on the internet.

6.5. Types of involvement

In the context of limited participation of third-country nationals within political parties, there are some examples of involvement that can be illustrated. For the most part the tendency is to award foreign party members "segregated" roles which sees them occupying liaison positions between the immigrant community and the party. Unfortunately this is the only role they are deemed compatible with. The number of foreign persons in political parties holding down such roles is by no means in proportion to the amount there should be. Even in the parties that seem more attentive to the needs of immigrants there is still need for improvement as they do not adequately reflect the changing structure of Italian society. What strikes the eye about the Italian political system, is the lack of democracy and the elitism that not only limits the participation of foreigners within the parties but that of women warranting the intervention of the legislator. With the introduction on the 23rd November 2012 of law n. 215 which ordered a more balanced representation of these categories



within local and regional councils. The nature of democratic representation does not allow for citizen's direct participation in political decisions and assigns a fundamental role to the parties regarding direction and consensus of political action. It is the party alone and the present electoral law that nominate the candidates to be elected.

The parties that are taking their first steps towards political inclusion are the ones that make the issue of rights a priority. These parties have created immigration departments and sections and are open to the candidature of foreign citizens for election. In fact, these sections, which were created solely to prepare specific political programs, have been disinclined and not very proactive in establishing a dialogue with other political parties nor with immigrant associations. They have in fact only contributed in marginalizing this issue, treating it as a problem regarding merely foreigners and not guaranteeing them any space for expression. The only exceptions being, as we shall analyze, the PRC and the PD. Among the few positive examples we can highlight is that of the creation in 1991 of an Immigration Department within the PRC. One of the few of its kind dedicated to the issue of immigration and having as its first national coordinator Tauty Coundoul.

Text Box 1: The PRC's Immigration Department

Since its establishment, The Communist Refoundation Party had decided to prioritize immigration issues creating a specific department entrusted to Tauty Coundoul. At that time it made an attempt to better the first and only legislation on the subject, the so-called "Turco – Napolitano" law which immediately presented limitations and shortcomings. In the meantime, after the split in 1998, the department was assigned to Carlo Cartocci and renamed "Area movimenti". It was during this time that they also managed to establish and grow in various cities, often in connection with movements present at that time which were open to non-registered members. A period of growth and expansion that drew a considerable migrant number to the party, leading, at the end of November, to a National Immigration conference which was well attended and concluded with a speech by Fausto Bertinotti. This conference highlighted the necessity but also the wealth of problems in having immigrants assuming positions of power within the party. A necessity which when realized in some areas, had a positive result, but which was never really consolidated on a national level. If it had been, it would have helped to create a strengthening of political representation. In 2004, at the party's National Congress in Venice, the National conference was held up as a model and a commitment for the party's statute, but it was never implemented. Meanwhile legislation regarding immigration worsened (in 2002 modifications introduced by the Bossi – Fini law aggravated the openly xenophobic climate of the country). At the same time, Communist Refoundation was battling against temporary holding centres to allow freedom of movement, for the extension of rights and exploitation of migrant workers. After the National Congress, Roberta Fantozzi became the new coordinator of the department in question. The meetings of the Commission diminished but the number of department components increased, in view of the imminent elections. The department intervened to propose a drastic revision of the Bossi – Fini law and the relationship with the new government and the presence of PRC minister Paolo Ferrero at welfare, gave hope. But the new bill proposed, after mediation and in accordance with the Minister of the Interior did not even have the time to be approved. In fact, the government fell before it could even be discussed. In the meanwhile, the department had also written its own bill and presented it in Parliament. It was an



alternative to the one already in existence and definitely more incisive regarding the modifications to be made. In 2008 the department, suffering from cuts in funding, was entrusted to Stefano Galieni who is still its coordinator today. Over the last five years the department has been compelled to diminish the meetings among migrants or those who deal with immigration but it has participated in and co-promoted most of the national and local activities, such as the great demonstration held on the 17th October 2009. The members present across the country have participated in initiatives to combat and raise awareness for a variety of important issues, among which: the CIE (Identification and Expulsion Centres), the Lampedusa deportations, the immigration policy, the right of asylum, the stop to the link between employments contracts and residence permits and have initiated petitions such as the “ I am Italy too” campaign for a reform of citizenship and the right to vote. The work put into these activities has often had to be carried out in an underground manner receiving little or no recognition. Working in collaboration with associations and movements, like in the case of the North African Emergency, they have had to rely on the use of spaces within local groups in order to provide immigrants with legal support and Italian lessons or simply to offer these foreign communities a place in which to hold meetings and assemblies. Where ever present in regional councils they have proposed special regional policies in favour of immigrants that have for the most part, sadly not been implemented because of lack of funds. The complex job of promoting-campaigning and supporting immigrant communities is an arduous one which is met by many obstacles, mostly of a legislative and financial nature. The people involved are committed to the issue but the work they do falls short of the challenge in light of the difficulties the Italian situation presents³⁵.

Starting from the MIDS – Democratic Movement of Immigrants of the Left, a political group established in 2005 to give voice to foreigners in a Democratic context, the leading left wing party, then called DS now merged with the PD, created one of the most important opportunities of foreign political representation – The Social and Political Forum – “New Italians” PD. Other organizations of note are the Welfare Department of the IDV party – Italy of Values, whose central theme is that of immigration, and the UDC Immigration Department, whose coordinator Khawatmi Radwan has stepped down in order to take on the role of President of the New Italians Movement. Unfortunately the absence of dialogue between these departments and the political world and the lack of leadership roles within parties for foreign citizens, is still an open debate.

7. The empirical report

7.1. Methodological considerations

The methodological approach taken for the empirical research has taken into consideration the complexity of Italian politics and party and attempted to capture the spirit of party life within Italy

³⁵ Document provided by Stefano Galieni, national coordinator for the PRC Immigration Department.



while working with the constraints imposed by a topic that tends to be of greater concern to left wing parties, than to right wing parties.

7.1.1. Political party selection

The Italian political system comprises more than 60 political formations. The identification of parties for study inclusion was primarily based on party prominence and historical importance. The study included: Popolo della Libertà (PDL), Partito Democratico (PD), Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (SEL), Partito della Rifondazione Comunista (PRC), and Italia dei Valori (IDV). The historical PRC party was included to provide some insight into the developments over time alongside the most recent right (PDL) and left wing (PD, SEL) party formations, established between 2007 and 2011, that represent the primary political parties in Italy. The IDV, a party that is not currently active at the national level, but has representatives at the local level, was included in order to capture a broader picture of foreigners' participation in politics.

The research targeted party leadership and secretariat at the local and national level and included some departments within the parties that deal with immigration and international politics. The decision to include local party representatives, particularly in areas with a high presence of foreign nationals, stems from the need to investigate the actions taken at various levels of governance. At the national level, for example, attempts were made to identify: the problems tied to the low level of immigrant participation in political parties; regulations that restrict or limit participation; topics deemed to be of interest to immigrants and the associations that represent them; and finally the subject areas addressed by party leaders. The inclusion of local party representatives made it possible to explore the foothold gained by immigrants within local politics where differing mechanisms potentially facilitate and hinder political activity for this group.

7.1.2. Migrant associations

The identification of immigrant group representatives in Italy focused on two primary types of associations:

- 1) Associations with a clear political orientation whose membership sees the association as a means to campaign for the recognition of member rights, to make claims related to their country of origin and to organize events that enable the discussion of problems relating to the difficulties of settling abroad; and
- 2) Associations that strive to guarantee certain services (e.g., Italian language courses, childcare, consulting services, space for religious practice) within a given geographical area (generally local)³⁶.

7.1.3. Data collection

The study included the collection of data via interviews and focus groups carried out in June and July, 2013 that included 45 representatives from the main political parties and foreign associations (see

³⁶ Some of these groups act as a point of reference for immigrant communities and provide a place where immigrants can organize cultural events and religious celebrations. The religious aspect is a key aspect for these associations that provide a means for promoting the membership's religious principles and customs.



Table 6 and Table 7)³⁷. Twenty-nine interviews were conducted with representatives and members of political parties (13 from the PD party, 8 from SEL, 2 from PDL, 4 from PRC, and 1 from IDV). The overrepresentation of left-wing parties (only one right-wing party, the PDL, agreed to participate in the research) is closely tied to the issue being studied and the party statutes. While left wing parties have a history of being more open to dialogue with immigrant communities, offering solidarity and trying to guarantee immigrant rights, the right wing, bound by the constraints of their statutes, have never shown an interest in the subject of immigration (except for a few cases which are discussed in this research). Consequently, the left wing parties represent the main interlocutors within Italy when seeking to understand the participation of non-Italian citizens in political parties. This is especially evident in two recent left-wing parties (PD and SEL) that have seen a relatively high level of activism on the part of political activists and party membership by non-Italian citizens or individuals with a migrant background. It should be noted that there has been a change in the approach used to address immigration both in organizational terms and in terms of the creation of debates involving foreign citizens. The remaining 16 respondents participated in one of two focus groups that included representatives from migrant associations.

Interview and focus group participants include the following five categories:

- 1) Politicians with an immigrant background;
- 2) Politicians without an immigrant background;
- 3) Members of parties from third countries³⁸;
- 4) Members of parties from EU³⁹ countries; and
- 5) Representatives of immigrant organizations.

The interviewees included 33 Italian and 12 foreign citizens. One third of the Italian citizens were native Italians, but the majority had acquired Italian citizenship. The interviews did not make it possible to determine either the exact number of immigrant citizens that are members of political parties, or to quantify the number of immigrants active in the political parties that participated in the research. While a significant number of foreign citizens and/or Italian citizens with an immigrant background were included in the research, findings indicate that the number of non-Italian citizens active in political parties is generally quite low.

Twenty-six of the interviewees were men and 19 were women. Of the latter, 10 were members of political parties and 9 were involved in immigrant associations (5 of which were president of the association they represented). Six young adults participated in the research: one young activist who

³⁷ It should be noted that while official data is not available of any of the parties in regards to the number of non-Italian citizens that participate in political parties, the research indicates that immigrant (notably for non-Italian citizens) is limited to certain parties.

³⁸ A portion of the politically active third country nationals in Italy are engaged in political activity within their country of origin.

³⁹ While the survey focused on third country nationals, it was deemed opportune to include an interviewee of Romanian nationality, a city councillor for Riano (in the Province of Rome). He is also a representative elected for the SpiritRomanesc association which was involved in the focus groups. The decision to involve this association derived from the desire to understand the problems encountered by immigrants from the EU, notably EU countries. It should also be noted that while Romania is part of the EU, the challenges that Romanian immigrants encounter in Italy are, on a social and economic level, more akin to those of immigrants from third countries than to immigrants from more established EU countries.



was a member of the PD but did not have a specific role, three young politicians with representative roles at the local or national level within left wing parties (Members of Parliament and city councillors), and two individuals who were part of national and local coordination departments for immigration. Less than half of the political party representatives interviewed held high-level positions within the parties (14); of these only five had a leadership role.

In conclusion it must be said that the majority of the study was conducted in and around the city of Rome. Being the capital of Italy the city is the seat for the head offices of Italian political parties and home to a high percentage of foreign citizens. Furthermore, national meetings, conferences and protests are regularly held in the city as people see Rome as the place in which to fight for their rights and be heard. This said, some interviews were conducted with party members in other regions (e.g., Tuscany and Veneto where the community representatives of Padua and Treviso were interviewed). This provided some insight into local differences and experiences across the country.

7.1.4. Participant profiles

The in-depth interviews produced a variety of testimonials: ordinary members of political parties involved in the study who have an active role at a local level promoting party initiatives; members of left wing parties with a migrant background, elected at a community and municipality level in various Italian municipalities; lastly, key exponents of parties were interviewed. These people held roles such as leader, national or local secretary, MP, area coordinator, head of the national or local immigration department and international cooperation. The interviewees involved in the survey came from some of the most active regions in Italy where foreign participation in politics is concerned. The cities included in the research were: Florence in the region of Tuscany, Rome in the region of Lazio and Padua and Treviso in the Veneto region.

Table 6 lists the socio-political and personal data of the respondents belonging to different political parties on the basis of certain factors analysed: political party of reference, role within the party, citizenship, migrant background, gender and city in which their political activity takes place. As demonstrated by Table 6, more than half of the respondents (18 in total) are Italian citizens with a migrant background. Among these, only a small minority (five) hold representative and/or leadership roles within the party meaning that they are able to affect both policies and national strategies within the party.

Table 6: Interviewee Profiles

Party	Role – internal assignment	Citizenship	Migrant Background	Gender	City
PD	<i>Member of Parliament</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Rome</i>
	<i>Executive immigration assembly</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Rome</i>
	<i>Councillor to Foreign Minister</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Rome</i>
	<i>Immigration officer Esquilino department</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Rome</i>
	<i>Member Immigration Forum</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Rome</i>
	<i>Member of the Foreign Council</i>	<i>Third Country National</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Rome</i>
	<i>National coordinator Immigration Forum</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Rome</i>
	<i>Secretary General</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Rome</i>



	<i>Deputy Advisor</i>	<i>Third Country National</i>	Yes	Male	Rome
	<i>Member</i>	<i>Third Country National</i>	Yes	Male	Rome
	<i>City Councillor</i>	<i>Italian</i>	Yes	Female	Padua
	<i>Member of Parliament</i>	<i>Italian</i>	No	Male	Rome
	<i>Coordinator Immigration Forum Florence</i>	<i>Italian</i>	Yes	Female	Florence
PDL	<i>MP and Party leader</i>	<i>Italian</i>	No	Female	Rome
	<i>ex MP</i>	<i>Italian</i>	Yes	Female	Rome
SEL	<i>Member</i>	<i>Third Country National</i>	Yes	Male	Rome
	<i>Head of International Relations (Mediterranean countries)</i>	<i>Italian</i>	Yes	Male	Rome
	<i>President of the Parliamentary group SEL</i>	<i>Italian</i>	No	Male	Rome
	<i>City Councillor</i>	<i>Italian</i>	Yes	Male	Treviso
	<i>Head of Immigration Department</i>	<i>Italian</i>	No	Male	Rome
	<i>Member</i>	<i>Third Country National</i>	Yes	Female	Rome
	<i>Member</i>	<i>Italian</i>	Yes	Female	Florence
	<i>President of City Hall</i>	<i>Italian</i>	No	Female	Rome
PRC	<i>Head of Immigration Department</i>	<i>Italian</i>	No	Male	Rome
	<i>Member</i>	<i>Italian</i>	Yes	Male	Rome
	<i>Member Secretary Tor Pignattara Department</i>	<i>Italian</i>	No	Male	Rome
IDV	<i>City Councillor</i>	<i>EU</i>	Yes	Male	Riano (Rm)

The majority of Italian citizens with a migrant background who have acquired, after a long history of activism within particular political parties, the status of Italian citizenship, hold various roles including: members of party branches, city councillors, deputy councillors, and heads or deputies of regional or community based immigration departments. As we will see further on, native citizens have a clear path ahead of them where collaborating with political parties is concerned, which stands in contrast with the participation and career paths undertaken by members with a migrant background. Of the ten testimonials, in fact, the majority held coordination roles both at national and local levels. It should be noted, however, that this difference is due to sampling and does not reflect the broader party membership.

7.1.5. Profile of the associations in the focus group

The two focus groups involved counted a total of 13 immigrant associations active on the Roman territory. These associations are subdivided into organizations that operate on the whole of the country but are based in Rome, and organizations who operate only in the Rome area and are based in the capital. As previously mentioned, there are essentially four types of organizations: national-ethnic based associations, associations whose aim is merely to provide services and help to foreigners, religious associations and lastly associations for politically active foreigners. It is necessary to point out that the latter of these associations, despite being a significant part of the focus groups (of the 13 testimonials they make up a third of the associations), in reality they do not represent the most popular type of organization. Most immigrants, in fact, seem to have a preference for national-



ethnic associations as these ensure a place for them to practice the culture and customs of their country of origin.

Table 7 provides a complete list of the associations that participated in the focus groups. In this occasion the participants were called upon to discuss the inclusion and participation of foreign citizens in politics. The table highlights some of the factors analysed such as: name of association, citizenship, migrant background, gender, and location.

The migrants' associations involved include: associations that represent the religious communities of the various countries of origin, associations aimed at promoting campaigns for social and/or legal rights of immigrants (residence permit, second generation representatives, female quotas), and associations that develop and provide services (Italian language courses, intercultural childcare, legal and technical advice). Thus, people join and create associations in order to promote community integration and socialization, very often to maintain the culture and customs of their country of origin, but also to create a point of reference for foreigners living in Italy, who are facing financial and/or social difficulties. Associations are still, after more than 25 years of regular and continuous existence, a reality that absorbs requests for mutual aid but they are still far from becoming a sounding board for political participation. The only exceptions are youth associations, an expression of the network of second generation new Italians, where we can find interesting experiences from political activism to paths for career advancement. The involvement of associations in the survey also helped to reconstruct the historical relationship between associations and political parties, in particular with the formations of the left, who have for many years been engaged in the issue of immigration in Italy. In this regard, it should be noted that the entire contents of this report, in particular the historical analysis of shared ideological paths which follows, is the result of the data collected through interviews and focus groups.

Table 7: Profile of Immigrant Association Representatives

Association	Citizenship	Migrant Background	Gender	Location
Italian Islamic Cultural Association	Italian	Yes	Male	Rome
SpiritRomanesc Association	EU	Yes	Female	Rome
Euro Latin Association	Italian	Yes	Male	Rome
Villaggio Esquilino	Italian	Yes	Male	Rome
Deputy adviser Group	Italian	Yes	Male	Rome
Albanian Association	Italian	No	Female	Rome
Palestinian Community Lazio	Foreign	Yes	Male	Rome
This is Rome Association	Italian	Yes	Male	Rome



Cape Verdean Women Association	Italian	Yes	Female	Rome
Assciation for Real Change	Italian	Yes	Female	Rome
Nodi Association	Italian	Yes	Female	Rome
Deputy Adviser Group	Italian	Yes	Female	Rome
Foreign Workers in Italy Association	Foreign	Yes	Male	Rome
Beza Association	Italian	Yes	Female	Rome
Phrala Europe	EU	Yes	Female	Rome

7.2. The inclusion of foreigners in Italian political parties: General overview

Focusing attention for a moment on the primary left and right wing party formations, it is safe to say that more than 20 years after the foreign community in Italy became a significant reality, there is still a lack of representation of a major part of the nation’s population. In reality, the reasons for this under-participation of foreign citizens in Italian politics, analysed below, go hand in hand with the crisis affecting the new political party formations. The self-referential attitude of politicians towards public duties, the loss of the fundamental role of encouraging participation in the electoral process and the equal access of citizens to public life are responsible for the depletion of the role of institutions. This has caused a deficit in democracy and has led to a lack of attention to the cultural dimension, young people and women, and to a high degree of internal hierarchy. On the other hand, the lack of political participation of foreigners, with the exception of a few cases reported in the left-wing parties, is part of the overall weakness of Italian integration policies and migration policy guidelines, which focus attention on irregular migration and emergency situations, despite the long-term aspect of the phenomenon and the clear instructions dictated by Europe, previously analysed.

Although European legislation demands full freedom of participation in social life and the extension of political rights to third country citizens, Italian political parties maintain statutory limitations, have no internal regulations aimed at encouraging inclusion and lack measures to encourage the enjoyment of full political rights on behalf of foreign residents. Added to the failed commitment of allowing foreigners full political participation in parties and not just as consultants or once they have obtained Italian citizenship, are the claims of violation against basic social and human rights. Claims that are based on the legislative restrictions regarding foreign nationals entering, residing and working in this country. The little consideration given to foreigners in programming, organizing and participating in political parties is a consequence of the fact that immigrants are still not considered an important part of the electoral pool. Only a few left wing political formations truly value the importance of immigrants as a potential constituency.

The promotion of legislative policies that protect rights, and that are aimed at the abrogation of the crime of illegal immigration, the closure of the CIE’s (Identification and Deportation Centres), the abbreviation of time for obtaining a residence permit or asylum recognition, the renewal of residence permits, granting of citizenship and the right to vote, is part of what left wing parties advocate. These parties have turned immigration into a political struggle and a reason to compete against one another. In collaboration with NGOs and civil movements, focusing on second generation



immigrants due to their future as potential voters, political parties see the potential of such a proportion of the population of foreign origin entering the electoral pool.

Analysing the past and the more recent measures adopted by the parties to encourage the inclusion of foreigners is useful to delineate what mechanisms are activated within the parties and immigrant communities, such as the roles assigned in the consultative bodies and areas of inclusion. Reviewing the estimates provided by respondents regarding the number of foreign citizens recorded in the four main Italian political party formations (PD, PDL, SEL, PRC) outlines a phenomenon limited to a few hundreds cases, involving the most active areas and major cities, such as: Catania, Florence, Padua, Rome, Treviso, or small towns of the provinces of the vast Roman metropolitan area such as Riano. Although the numbers in Italy are still very low, there are a few positive outcomes regarding this subject in the north eastern and western regions and in Tuscany. In these areas the parties are much better organized and strongly rooted to the territory and it is more common to come across foreign born citizens elected to cover roles as public administrators in both big and small municipalities.

7.2.1. Actions taken in order to include third country nationals

Unlike workers' organizations, engaged ever since the foreign population in the country became a significant proportion of the labour force in the inclusion of immigrant workers in trade union life, the party formations of the time, even those on the left, with various organizations spread out across the country, struggled to develop sufficient cultural sensitivity towards the issue of immigration as it began to take on importance at a social level.

The delay in the establishment of specific departments committed to improving the subordinate condition experienced by the foreign labour force in Italy, as opposed to the activism of trade unions and their work exclusively on the issue of labour and human rights, led to the rise of activism on the part of foreigners within dedicated associations and trade unions. This phenomenon led to a progressive rise in number of foreigners in high-level positions within these associations and unions, a stark contrast to political parties that seemed unable to accept proposals for change in this regard.

The Senegalese, employed in factories in the north and in agricultural work in the south, along with the historic settlement of the Albanian community in Italy, occupied in the construction industry, elected their own representatives in the main trade unions, which began to be populated by foreign workers. These, in time become part of the senior management of the social organizations considered the most active in the defence of rights and more open to embrace the demands for change.

“Within the associations the Senegalese and Albanians started to assume roles of ever increasing leadership of a political nature. The unions were the first to appoint some of these leaders that emerged from their communities, handing them roles such as that of cultural mediator. The phenomenon reached across the entire country and as these personalities gained importance they started to make careers for themselves. In the CGIL union for example, they dealt with immigration and the labour market”. Jean-Léonard Touadi, Councillor Foreign Minister PD

Starting from a young age as activists within associations and social/political organizations, offered quite a number of foreign youth social recognition. Being politically active has paved the way for



them to later become community leaders, weaving relationships between society, associations, trade unions, the government and with voluntary organizations.

The first measures adopted by some parties to promote the inclusion of citizens from third countries occurred in the 90s, with the introduction of the first Martelli law and the establishment of advisory bodies within the parties. This commitment arose, as we shall see later on, from the anti-racist movements and parties of the left, who were united by the struggle of the workers to represent the rights of a new class of Italian labourers. One of the first foreigners who held the office of National Coordinator of the Immigration Department was Touthy Coundoul. The Department was first created in 1991 within the PRC.

As the number of immigrant citizens in Italy started to rise so did specific departments within the left wing parties dedicated to their particular needs. As of today, they are the only ones in existence. The progressive fragmentation of the larger Italian political parties, over time creating a somewhat jagged outward morphology, saw an increase in round tables and departments supposedly there to represent the foreign population. In fact, they did not provide any real opportunities to exchange ideas or solve problems, and rather paternalistically relegated the difficulties encountered by immigrants to their “cultural characteristics”.

To date, if we observe the general morphological structure of the parties, those that have adopted measures to include immigrants (object of this survey) are only some of the left wing formations. The majority of parties do not consider foreign citizens as potential voters and have not attempted to create immigrant departments or councils. The fear being that this unpopular campaign in support of non-voters would result in the risk of loss of consensus.

Analysing the steps taken by the parties to promote the inclusion of citizens from third countries, effectively means studying almost exclusively the left-wing parties, with the exception of the PDL, the main party of the centre-right. Merging with the National Alliance party, they have brought forward and touched on some issues that have now wide acceptance in Italy, such as the recognition of the right to vote in local elections and the adoption of measures to simplify the acquisition of citizenship of children born in Italy from immigrant parents. Both subjects now opposed only by the xenophobic Northern League. Before taking a closer look at the political measures adopted by the main parties on both sides and the steps undertaken to assign roles to foreigners within the parties, we must underline the kind of measures addressed. Among the actions proposed there were: legislation drafts to guarantee and safeguard foreigners living in Italy, the formation of a future ruling class by opening regional training colleges and the establishment of local networks and representative bodies.

In regards to institutional interventions concerning legislation drafts, without going into the specific proposals put forward by the individual parties, we ought to mention the possibility put forward to grant the right to vote to non EU immigrants. This bill proposal was to be included in the draft of the Turco – Napolitano Law, but was then deleted and proposed as a constitutional bill. However, it never came to be considered because of the heavy opposition on the part of the right wing parties. The draft in question was of course, initiative of the centre-left party formations and took into account the international treaties and agreements on the right to vote (with the exclusion of the election of members of the Chambers and regional elections).

Now, after over 15 years, the right to vote in local elections has become a bipartisan proposal but there is still a clear political divide between the political formations regarding the subject of



immigration. The regularization of foreigners in Italy has even become a matter of intervention of the European Parliament with the implicit request to modify the Bossi-Fini Law. A law, as reported by the Hon. Bergamini:

“that was the result of very high level political negotiations between three very different parties if we think of the right represented by Fini, the Lega and us of the PDL who have a much less ideological approach”.

The legislative terrain sees the various left wing parties fairly united, with the proposal to reform citizenship, the abolition of the crime of illegal immigration, and some even wanting to close the Centres for Identification and Expulsion (CIE). They are obviously met by the approval of the immigrant population in Italy and a part of the Italian electorate attentive to issues of human rights and social solidarity. Tangible examples of inclusion measures adopted by the parties over the years can be seen across the country, where they have linked up with the more proactive areas where immigrant’s rights are concerned. This link is strengthened through the creation of networks and the coordination of formal and informal voluntary associations, which work alongside local branches of the party. Particularly active in the creation of a community politic are the associations formed mostly by young activists, such as the PD Esquilino.

Alongside the activities of the local branches of the party, organizations specifically dedicated to building networks with the foreign communities have sprung up. Among the most significant examples, through the establishment by the local immigration forum PD, are spaces of participation of the most basic kind and workshops of social representation. The main activities carried out by the local party branches to encourage greater political participation are: regular political meetings and open discussions, the organization of internal initiatives, the building of networks with civil society, the creation of spaces for participation, in-depth technical and legal advice, social awareness campaigns and voter registration during the primary elections.

Text Box 2: The Immigration Forum

“The Immigration Forum of the PD party has branches spread out across the major Italian cities and where there is a high concentration of immigrants. It is open to everyone, member of the party or not, politician or representatives of associations, with the aim of creating a small space where experiences can be exchanged and discussed. The Forum is also, on one hand a way to connect with the immigrant population and their specific issues and on the other a way for the party to understand what policies are needed to guarantee their rights.

The Forum is present in the areas where there are also party branches and in conjunction with the local society, the associations, the unions and the volunteer associations it allows the party to be more receptive on a social level.

The party is particularly present in the north east and north west of Italy and in the region of Tuscany where there are a multitude of politically active young people. In these areas there are also a number of administrators with a foreign background who have become councillors. In other areas of the country, particularly south of Rome, the immigrant population is not as high, thus the Forum, and the party branches, are less present.

Furthermore, the Forum is a way to break down the barriers. Where politicians and party leaders



can openly discuss issues with foreign caregivers and domestic workers.

Every four or five months the Forums meet to discuss the work done in these intervals of time, the best practices and the areas of intervention.

Together with the immigrant community we identify the main issues to be dealt with as well as relying on focus groups to propose policies which could improve their lives. One such improvement, upon which all foreign nationals in Italy agree, is the cancellation of the Bossi-Fini Law along with Maroni's national security policies. During meetings, in fact, the cancellation of this Law in favour of one more acceptable to the EU, is a recurring issue.

In the meetings with the associations we have also proposed to extend citizenship not only to children born in Italy but also to those that have been brought up here. So, as you can see, our work is a constant dealing with important issues such as citizenship but at the same time trying to offer solutions for smaller day to day problems. Solutions that help immigrant citizens feel like they are more part of our society. Speaking of young people, a Moroccan boy would like to join a football club but the paperwork to do so takes months. Just a little optimistic example”.

Marco Pacciotti, National PD Immigration Forum coordinator

The parties that are taking their first steps in the direction of the inclusion policy are those that have assigned to the issue of rights a central role and that have managed to create immigration departments. They are also open to citizens of foreign origin being candidates in the various elections. The most significant examples of inclusion can be observed in the PD as this party enlists its foreign representatives from the various Forums across the country. These representatives are usually naturalized institutional councillors, elected within municipal and provincial councils after a period of activism in the youth sections. They are the most involved in immigration issues and determined to see change take place at a social level. A fundamental characteristic of the PD is that there is a large number of young people, especially second generation youths, involved in party activities across the country. During the last elections they even voted one of their representatives into Parliament.

If we look at the activities conducted locally across the nation, we can notice a dual mechanism working within the parties. On one hand, there is the desire to gain local consensus among immigrants, offering them the possibility to occupy roles pertinent to their situation. On the other, there is a very different standpoint, which denotes a lack of will to assign roles of power at a national level.

7.2.2. Assigning role: The co-optation method

While it is not possible to provide a detailed estimate of the number of immigrants involved in political parties, the qualitative data that emerged in the survey can reconstruct the organizational structure of some sectors and the roles and responsibilities assigned therein of each organization involved in the political survey. The picture that emerges from the interviewees, on a national more than on a local level, is that the parties are reluctant to grant roles of much relevance to third country citizens. The positions they are given are generally those linked to social activism.



Analysing four political party formations (PD, PDL, SEL, PRC), there is a clear hierarchal structure within the distribution of roles. In fact, there is no pluralism where the youth component, immigrants and women are concerned, and the absence of foreigners in senior management roles, in political committees, meetings and/or national conferences is fairly evident. At a closer glance, the only political representatives with a successful position within the parties are those with migrant backgrounds, as seen previously in the respondent’s profiles. They have acquired Italian citizenship, a requisite that is not official but compulsory if they want to cover certain roles in Italian institutions and “appropriate” within a political party.

Table 8: Roles, functions and tasks assigned to Third Country citizens

Party	Role/ Appointed task	Function/ Institutional Role
PD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegate of the National Assembly - Chairman New Italians - Local Coordinator for the Immigration Forum - Municipal immigration Delegate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minister - Member of Parliament - Foreign Ministry Counsellor - City Counsellor - Member Foreign Council - Counsellor - Member of the Secretariat of Counsellors
PDL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member of Parliament
SEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immigration Coordination Member - Head of International relations Middle East and Mediterranean Countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member Foreign Council - City Counsellor - Municipal President
PRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Branch Secretary - Head of Local Immigration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member of Local Election Committee
IDV*	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City councillor

* The party Italia Dei Valori (IDV), was dissolved in March 2013 following unsuccessful elections, it maintained however, some representatives in local administrations.

Table 8 shows the near complete absence of allocated positions within the parties, even in those formations that foresee the possibility of inclusion of third country nationals. The result is the same whether the statutory regulations of the party impose an explicit ban or not, the granting of roles is restricted by certain prerequisites or whether the party is completely open to foreign participation; foreigners are always placed in the lowest ranking roles available. In addition, with the exception of



PD, SEL and PRC, the absence of specific programs aimed at the participation of foreigners leads to a lack of social participation, which in turn denies immigrants the right to a career within the political system.

Failure to assign positions of power to foreign political or community leaders (who commence their collaboration with political parties by first being involved in immigrant organizations) is evident from the analysis of senior management roles (assemblies, executive and coordination bodies) and of implementation bodies (departments or national implementation orders). Yet among the roles that are assigned to citizens of third countries it is possible to find some members of secretariats, regional and local area coordinators or representatives of national assemblies and especially a large number of national and local institutional representatives. In the latter case, we are talking about foreign citizens who have been naturalized at the time of the assignment, who have had the status of migrant throughout the course of their activism within the party and are now delegates of the parties even in positions of high calibre such as that of Minister of the Italian Republic.

The delegated nature of the representative democracy in Italy assigns a central role to the parties with regard to the consensus building and orientation of policy interventions, which, according to the current electoral law, which foresees proportional closed lists without preferences, allows them to directly nominate the candidates to be elected. Until the proposed amendments are accepted for the abrogation of electoral law n. 270 of 21st December 2005, defined the *porcellum*, at present the voter is limited to: vote for lists of candidates without having the opportunity to indicate preferences, for primary elections (optional), and to vote for the selection of candidates in electoral contests (which in some elections also allow foreign nationals to vote). Alongside the nature of the legal system, the lack of operational roles within parties is attributed to the absence of voting rights, as can be read directly from a representative of the PDL, the main political party of right wing formations.

“There are no foreigners inside the party with operative roles because whoever does not have the right to vote does not even have the right to be a member of the party. This choice, although unpopular, is correct, I do not see demagoguery, because it’s very pragmatic. Nowadays parties are there to direct the right to vote. The Political party is a very particular kind of organization, not surprisingly it receives funding for a specific function. So I think that this approach is very pragmatic, if you do not have the right to vote of course you are welcome to participate in all the initiatives and debates. But it would be going against common sense not to allow you to vote and then give you an operative role within the party. If someone is not qualified to vote they do not get a membership and this goes for everyone. We have never had someone in the party who’s role it was to listen to the needs of immigrants. The reason being that ours has always been a party based on activism, thus less structured than a traditional Political party. Differently from the Democratic Party we’ve never had immigrant departments or dedicated councils. We did recently attempt to do something of the kind, however it’s difficult to distance ourselves from the activism aspect particularly during the election period. An aspect that in the end has proved to be the most direct”. Deborah Bergamini, Deputy PDL

Not being able to depend on a regular election process in order to determine the assignment of roles within parties, non-voting foreign nationals must make do with the co-optation method. A



mechanism which has worked for the different political formations as well as the unions in favour of the foreign citizens who have roles within parties. More than an actual “recruitment campaign” the various political parties have been conducting an initial inclusion process of foreigners in political organizations and trade unions. This process has been conducted in a top-down manner with the aim of obtaining visibility through appointing successful foreign leaders who have stood out from associations across the country.

The symbolic co-optation of personalities from within the movements, associations or unions from the outset proved to be the only way for foreign people, judged undemocratic albeit necessary, to approach and join political parties.

“Subjective co-optation can also have its advantages as it may reveal personalities that, if they were to go through the election process, might not have had the chance to emerge. And, in a system that is still not entirely democratic, this may be a necessary path to take. I think that the only way to do without is if we were to return to a full party democracy. Where even preferences are a preferable selection implement than co-optation”. Fausto Raciti, National secretary of the Young Democrats and deputy of the PD

Co-option is a direct result of the absence of a real democratic mechanism. The concept of merit, usually decided on from above, and not from below, is the basis for the selection of national and local ruling classes, and does not perform a merely instrumental function in terms of the democratic exercise, which remains relegated solely to consent.

There are also some technicalities within the decision-making, such as the quota systems for the various applications. In fact they hardly favour foreign representatives in senior management roles. This has led to the initiation of a process instrumental in determining co-optation of some of the more successful foreign exponents involved in politics especially among the representatives of the second generations immigrants. The latter are in fact, the most active in terms of political and social rights activism made in Italy. Representatives of associations of young people of foreign origin and citizens with an active social role exercising their right to vote in Italy, are absorbed into the parties and organisations who have decided to invest in the “new Italians”. This quota of the electorate is now being put in charge of internal roles, which were, up until now, exclusively relegated to the field of migration policies.

7.2.3. Relegation to specific areas of intervention

Looking closely at the results of the analysis and the experiences reported by some of the higher ranking respondents, it clearly emerges that in recent years the roles assigned to citizens of foreign origin, even after many years of activism and the acquisition of Italian citizenship, are almost exclusively regarding the issue of immigration. The parties that do foresee immigrant’s involvement tend to only assign them roles, at local level (rarely at a national level), concerning immigration issues. This seems to be the only area they are thought to be compatible with. In practice, the majority of foreigners who wish to collaborate with a political party will be relegated to the “immigration department” of that party. There are of course, some exceptions on a local level, but this “relegation” phenomenon can be witnessed in most institutional roles, both in political parties and outside of them. It can also be seen within the parties that place a lot of emphasis on the issue of guaranteeing foreigner’s rights.



If we look closely, we notice that the limited success stories are a demonstration of the fact that if citizens from third countries are assigned roles, the only ones made available to them are the ones centred on the theme of immigration. A recurring example during the interviews also concerns the current post of Minister for Integration, assigned by the PD to a woman doctor of Congolese origin. The former head of the Provincial Forum of International Cooperation and Immigration and member of the welfare and social policies in Modena, she was put in charge of, despite her high professional competence, a constitutional position by virtue of her background as an immigrant. This example of political inclusion, however singular, does not have any similar examples to back it up because all the other leadership roles in the various public offices and even in the immigration departments, are given to native Italian citizens.

Even the left wing parties have not sought to put in charge foreigners. Issues directly regarding immigrants living in Italy such as the granting of citizenship would benefit from have officials with a foreign background in charge but they are not automatically considered for these jobs. Another issue is that because of the internal hierarchal structure of the parties, even once a role has been assigned, it does not automatically mean that that person is part of the entourage of that party, nor that they will receive remuneration. Explanatory in this regard is the experience reported by a member of the Regional Secretariat and Head of the Democratic Party Immigration Department Lazio, a Delegate of the National Assembly of foreign origin, which, despite repeated appointments, never became part of the body politic.

“Being a delegate to the National Assembly is not an assignment, I am the only citizen of foreign origin within the Assembly among thousands. The first time I was elected I was given the position of Head of the Democratic Party Immigration Department Lazio. My job was not formally within the party, I was part of the secretariat, divided in components between different policy areas within the party. I've always just dealt with immigration”. Sibi Mani, National Assembly Delegate for the PD

What might seem like an obvious cultural limitation, that of exclusively representing their cause within Italian politics, is by all means, not considered a limiting condition by all respondents. In fact, the criticism is not all unanimous concerning the conferment of a role which rotates solely around the issue of immigration. This concept is partly attributed to the notion of meritocracy. The skills and experiential knowhow of foreign nationals who are active in political parties are considered to be valued individual merits. In this regard, the leaders of community based associations, who then joined a party, can boast a large amount of legal – administrative interventions, mediation services with public offices, as well as a deep understanding of the procedures related to obtaining residence permits and other general legislation.

This expertise is considered necessary to help in the resolution of territorial disputes and the development of a political program and/or proposals for regulatory measures that reflect the issues of the foreign population in Italy. As we shall see in the section dedicated to the contribution of associations to the inclusion of immigrants in the party, including the measures undertaken by the parties to affect the policy making process, it still remains a sought after objective.

At this historical moment, Italy’s commitment those who are involved in the parties is aimed at the repeal of the Bossi-Fini law, the approval of a reform for citizenship and redefining the reception centre system for refugees and asylum seekers who arrive in Italy. Even in the absence of assigned roles within the parties, points for discussion during the round tables with third country nationals are



oriented towards the study and analysis of legislations and statutory provisions; bureaucratic services; analysis of the labour market; protection of human rights.

Following the dramatic events of the frequent refugee landings in Lampedusa, which shot to the headlines, the human rights violations and the deterioration of living conditions of immigrants in Italy became subjects of greater focus and commitment on the part of foreign students enrolled in the parties. Highlighting the plight of these people they call for greater resources to be deployed and urgent measures to be taken for the immigration issue. But those in Italy who have dealt with the issue of integration for years and have a deep knowledge of how this country's system works, and have now incorporated their knowhow into their professional skills, still see themselves confined to operate only within one sector, that of immigration. Those who have lived in Italy for many years, have gained citizenship (a requirement which is not ascribed but obliged in order to have positions within the Italian institutions) and aspire, after long periods of political activism, to continue on their political career paths, are still "relegated" to certain functions.

Those who have undertaken or are responsible for the promotion of the process for social integration, reiterate that the issues linked to immigration can be seen extensively within the labour market and social and international policies. In this way, it is possible to re-evaluate the underestimation of skills, stressing the need to politically control immigration in certain sectors. The main one being the labour sector, an area of interest for those coming from the base and confederate unions.

The issue of being able to reside legally in this country is strongly linked to the residency contract. This in turn regulates the employment relationship between an Italian or regularized foreign employer and an employee from a non-EU member state. In a historical moment marked by flexible working practices, where people change their occupation and / or employer over and over, the conditions of the labour market are not reflected in migration policies that take into account the uncertainty, the high mobility of labour and growth of temporary employment contracts. In contrast, there is a tightening of the laws regulating entry and legal residence in Italy without there being thug a fast and efficient process to renew residence permits. Illegal work, an Italian phenomenon which now dominates in certain labour sectors, as well as undeclared rents clearly emphasize that the issue of legal residence cannot be detached nor limited to the main areas of social policies.

Lastly, the international scenario cannot be ignored as wars, natural disasters, poverty and the violation of human rights are the cause of migration flows. Whether they are exiles, fleeing from poverty stricken areas, or seeking refuge, foreigners from around the world enter arrive in Italy. The international cooperation field, which began as a collaborative approach to support development in the most disadvantaged countries in the southern hemisphere, sees political personalities working in co-operation projects on behalf of the international departments of their parties. The projects they are involved in go from supporting social/health assistance, the protection of human rights, food security, rural development, basic education and vocational training, support for the democratization of the country, information programs and to promote the cultural heritage of developing countries.



7.3. Political party membership: Shared ideological paths and opportunities for social claims

Career, idealism, power, public notoriety, solidarity, these are just some of several decades, the reasons for third country nationals wanting to gain access to political parties has been characterized by slightly different reasons, among which:

1. The crisis and the changing international scenario which determined the first waves of political refugees originating from various war torn and repressed countries;
2. The deficiencies in the Italian legal and political framework, which in the absence of statutory provisions that govern the life of foreigners in Italy, who in the 90s were already present in large numbers, needed to be corrected by an adjustment to new social reality.

As we will see more in depth in the following sections, the reasons reported by the respondents, regarding changes in the international political context, have resulted in large numbers of students, exiles and political activists joining political party formations in the host countries as a way to continue their political careers or merely to share their political ideology. Entry into politics dictated by the need to focus on a rapidly increasing phenomenon in Italy, which was almost completely de-regulated until the '90s, became a prerogative for members of the foreign community involved in associations and organizations and committed to carving out niches within the parties in order to claim social spaces.

The following sections analyse some of the reasons given by the respondents for being involved in the political activities of their parties of choice. To do this we will use excerpts from the real life accounts of some of the interviewees. The decision to become involved in politics is rarely an individualistic choice, despite there being at times personal interests at heart. There are a variety of reasons that underlie the choice of individual immigrants (or exiled activists) to become a spokesperson, but it is primarily a choice dictated by the need to represent the collective needs of a group.

7.3.1. Shared ideological paths

In the '70s and '80s, even before the subsequent ratification of the Strasbourg Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level, which led to the proliferation of Italian associations aimed at the inclusion of third country citizens (in a society at the time invested by a wave of innovative anti-capitalist policies, even considered revolutionary), foreign students originating from countries in the Mediterranean and political exiles from all over the world, experienced new forms of participation and protest, finding significant forms of aggregation in the face of many antagonistic political groups and trade unions .

At that time political parties represented the only opportunities for participation, the first to welcome political exiles coming to Italy from Latin America and the Middle East. The then second largest Italian political formation, the Communist Party, along with the PSI, offered solidarity and support to the exiles in a constant political commitment to restore democracy to people struggling for liberation from military dictatorships and constant military coups. Social tragedies which shook entire populations in the twentieth century (as happened in that of Allende's Chile, for example), was a strong presence in the ideals of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) of the seventies, which inspired Berlinguer's party in the massive mobilization that followed the proposal of the historic compromise.



From the need for a symbolic call for the Italian road to socialism, in a time characterized by the revolutionary myth of Latin America, to the creation of relevant political analogies that, starting from the rise of the Christian Democrats (DC), manifested itself in two countries as diverse as Italy and Chile. Following the formal banning of left wing parties in those countries characterized by political and military repression, many members found asylum in Italy.

Among the many political activists involved in the various liberation struggles of the time, Italy also gave asylum to some activists who survived the Black September massacre in Jordan, which took place in 1970 and in which thousands of Palestinian civilians were killed or imprisoned. Then in 1982, as a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon there were the massacres of Sabra and Shatila, the latter denounced after a visit to the sites of the massacre by President Pertini, at a time in history when Italy played an important role in the international political scene.

A particular welcome was given to the representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in search of support for their cause in Italy, obtained in particular by the PSI (the historical year-end speech to the nation on December 31st 1983 by President Pertini) who held a clearly pro-Palestinian position in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Adhering to the Third International, Yasser Arafat's PLO essentially had the Italian Communist Party as a point of reference for Italy, but in the eighties the PSI (Italian Socialist Party) started building a relationship of friendship and cooperation with representatives of the Palestinian people. Craxi and Arafat, with the mediation of representatives of the PLO in Italy, put up a line of direct dialogue that over the years reached its culminating moment. The intense political transformation of the country and the fact that at that time Italy was "in the centre" where Foreign policy was concerned, led to the gradual formation of political associations headed by students. Active within the universities they welcomed also the Iranian students fleeing from the Shah and also some exiles and activists from within the communist party.

Shared ideology, which was a key component of the international communist political project, was the main reason to join the PC and the extra-parliamentary group Workers Vanguard (later named Proletarian Democracy), as well as the shared cultural setting and international agenda of one of the principal parties dominating world politics. The membership and the activism of refugees and political exiles (political leaders, trade unionists, representatives of communist parties, etc.), as well as the party's historic commitment to the protection of workers' rights extended to foreign workers arriving in Italy, determined the development of policies for the protection of human rights and the recognition of political asylum. Also the rights of the new labourers which gained consensus within the trade unions and created political protagonism.

Activism at a regional or national level together with the commitment towards the politics of their country of origin, led the then leaders to give important roles to major foreign political exponents. Among these, respondents reported the commitment and activism of many Italian - Argentines, some already Italian born citizens as they were children of Italian families emigrated to Argentina, still at the head of the local parties, such as Susanna Fantino, enrolled in SEL and current President of the Municipality of the City of Rome, VII, and George Ucceliani, former Secretary of the Section of PRC Torpignattara and current member of the secretariat of the club.

"I was a political activist in Argentina. I came to Italy because of the criminal dictatorship of Pinochet; my great grandfather went to Argentina in the '800s, so I had Italian citizenship. I have had a rather privileged ride: I came during a period in which everyone in Italy was mobilized, just after the coup in Chile and Argentina, the kidnappings and the



massacres. We arrived here and there was the PC to welcome us and give us a hand. I was branch secretary for ten years in the '60s for the PCI of Tor Pignattara, now the Casa del Popolo of the PRC".

Political reasons represent one of the key factors determining the choice of Italy as a country to escape to in order to continue political battles; this was further supported by the international foreign policy program of a party already ideologically in favour of peace and brotherhood among workers in every country. Mindful of international affairs and united with communist parties associations formed by the main parties, they were leaders on the global scene.

Among the roles in leadership and executive bodies assigned to prominent international personalities in asylum in Italy, it should be mentioned that the PRC has assigned to Ali Rashid, member of Parliament in Italy, top politician of the PLO, and who represented within the PRC, currently SEL, the Arab - Israeli issue as a pro-Palestinian (see Text Box 3).

Text Box 3: Ali Rashid

"The Palestinian side to my story was not a personal experience but more a collective one as it touched all of my generation. We found ourselves in very difficult conditions as refugees fleeing from our country and as a nation occupied by the Israelis. As a child, despite being passionate about literature, reading, poetry and writing, I found myself involved in a mass movement that used weapons.

The result of the armed struggle was that of affirming the Palestinian issue, but, in my opinion, the results were very scarce. It would have been better to focus on the political, economic, civil and cultural growth of the Palestinian population so as to maintain its role at the forefront of the Arab world. I was already an activist in 1965, head of my area and of the youth organization. I was part of Al-Fatah, which was the main Palestinian revolution movement at the time and at a national level it was headed by PLO, the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine. The National Palestinian Authority had not been created yet. We were in contact with the Italian political forces particularly the then PCI. In Italy there was also a very strong movement to the left of the Communist party, the extra-parliamentary left both of which had an excellent relationship with the various Palestinian organizations. I decided to come to Italy in 1971. At the time I had a particular rapport with the student movement, as well as of course the PCI, the PSI and with some sections of the DC. They had married the National cause of freedom of the people. The PCI was not only active on the Palestinian front but sustained many populations who were fighting for their freedom and independence. That experience only lasted a short time because I had to go to Lebanon for many years before coming back to Italy permanently in 1982.

I was nominated First Secretary for the Palestinian General Delegation in Italy in 1986. Despite being an institutional role, my intention was to take up position further in the left wing. I felt at ease on a cultural and ideological level with the left wing forces. The particular rapport that I had with the student movement that I had when I was young, continued in time with Proletarian Democracy founded by some of the exponents of the student movement and Avanguardia operaia. With them I had a very active role especially in foreign policy seen as with the Palestinians there was continuous unconditional support. To accept the offer made by Rifondazione Comunista when Bertinotti was Secretary, I had to resign from my diplomatic post to take charge as Member of Parliament of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber of Deputies. Changing roles and accepting the candidacy



for Parliament was one of the most difficult choices I've ever had to make in my life. I had the double role as Palestinian comrade somehow involved in the Italian political debate. Accepting this meant entering into a difficult contradiction, changing role is like changing identity. The moment you are elected to Parliament you become a representative of the Italian population.

The many divisions, some justified others less so, within the Rifondazione Comunista party, have had a lacerating effect because they have deprived the Italian political scene of a left wing government force which was very numerous and present across the country. A force, which could have contributed in influencing national political choices in favour of more social justice and cultural advancement for personal freedom. Now we are faced with Italy's political class's biggest limitation that it cannot comprehend the fast paced changes that have taken place in the world, on an economic and financial level and that the solutions to our problems are not within the confines of our national territory but far beyond them".

Ali Rashid, First Secretary for the Palestinian General Delegation in Italy and Member of Parliament XV legislation.

7.3.2. The political party as a means for social claims

Among the various profiles of the respondents, together with the students and the exiles from war torn countries, there are many politically active exponents belonging to the various immigrant associations. These associations were the first to show an interest in the immigration phenomenon which was steadily growing in Italy. In addition to a commitment within the sphere of associations, reported by the mainly foreign respondents in the survey, third countries citizens participating in political parties is characterized by having chosen to join in what are considered "spaces of social territorial claim", a form of organization that uses a broad community of individuals as a means to participate in the democratic process and to represent the collective interests. These people are the most active in the struggle for immigrant rights. Entering Italy to seek work during the flows of immigration, their numbers became increasingly significant. Joining the first groups of migrants, particularly the exiles and students, they formed communities, mainly from geographically neighbouring countries politically tied to Italy. The left wing parties at the time, which already had organizations spread through the country, found it hard to develop sufficient cultural awareness towards the issue of immigration, which began to gain importance at a social level. The first immigration departments or sections within the parties, in fact, date back to the '90s. On the other hand, associations and social clubs in parishes proliferated, organizations that were ready to provide different types of initial support and provide charity in the various structures of the Caritas, which began to receive a growing number of foreigners in need.

The cultural fervour and the movements, which crossed civil society led to the creation of many associations, some of which are now completely autonomous, and are still major players in our society. Other groups converged with the ARCI (Italian Cultural and Recreative Association), which in the '80s began to be structured in thematic areas. Belonging to a confederation of independent groups working on various themes among which: culture, local welfare, mafia, migrants' rights, peace and cooperation, civil rights campaigns, the environment, promotion of active citizenship and political renewal through the responsible participation of citizens.



Up until the active participation of immigrants in organizations then engaged in the field of acceptance and the rise of autonomous organizations of foreigners, the approach to the issue of immigration is considered patronizing and instrumental. Especially denounced by citizens of foreign origin, they chose after a short period of activism in the social and political organizations affiliated with the left wing parties to pursue their own path in the right-wing parties.

“When I arrived in Italy I looked into the associations to see what they were doing. I didn’t like the centre-left wing ones because they exploited foreigners and were also political. They exploited immigrants as they didn’t know the language and didn’t really have to participate. They were left out. You could tell straight away when they were interested in living or learning”. Souad Sbai, Deputy of the PDL

The first civil battles promoted by immigrants opened the Italian anti-racist movement to the true protagonists of the struggles for the vindication of the rights of foreigners, and gave way to a motion moved by the first self-organized associations and committees.

The first anti-racist demonstration ever organized in Italy, which saw the participation of hundreds of thousands of foreign protesters, took place after the tragic death of South African refugee Jerry Masslo, a murder which deeply moved public opinion. It led the government to pass, after numerous protests, Legislative Decree of December 30th N.416 laying down emergency measures for the status of foreigners, then converted into Law no. 39 of 1990: the Martelli law.

Politically active foreigners, who went from the associations to joining political parties, paved the way for a new and increasingly significant part of Italian society to be represented. As previously reported in the desk analysis, the politically active foreigners who were excluded from parties, approached political organizations and associations. This does not mean, however, that the closure of parties towards foreign participation made them turn to associations, which remains for many a driving force towards success, as the driving force to social commitment is dictated not by a personal career vocation, but to put oneself at the service of the weakest. The desire to be socially active and/or to offer themselves as volunteers is a calling for many who come from the poorest areas of the world. The party is considered a tool to serve the most vulnerable. A view shared by those involved in social work, who carve out a role for themselves within political parties, in order to build political careers. Not only to improve their own lives but also that of others. The principal aim is to be part of a movement (with an advanced political conscience) to reach a goal, rather than building a career based on activism.

Text Box 4: Jean-Léonard Touadi

“Ever since I first arrived in Italy I have always frequented political parties. When a person came to Rome after 1978, the only organizations that paid any attention to the immigration phenomenon were catholic, like Caritas or on the opposite side, sections of the PRC the DS and ARCI. Therefore my first experience with politics in Italy was with regional branches of left wing parties. Following the death of a South African refugee, everything involving this issue, brought about the first real immigration law, the Martelli law. Although I was never an activist of national organizations, I have always preferred those associations which were open to multiple nationalities. Ever since I came here, I have detested a certain habit amongst immigrants to isolate themselves by forming ghettos. This isolation or segregation is proportional to the amount of acceptance shown by the host society. The more the society shows itself to be closed to immigrants, the more these immigrants will isolate



themselves. I have always thought we would have made more progress whilst still maintaining our identities, if we had been to create some sort of dialogue with the Italian society”.

Jean-Léonard Touadi, Special Councilor for the Foreign Ministry, Member of the XVI Legislature

To better understand this course of action, which is not always a successful one, we must first highlight the link between the Italian movements, which first welcomed immigrants in the '90s (such as the antiracist movement and Sanspapier), and political parties. On behalf of the left wing parties, the link went beyond the shared campaign for the rights of immigrants, although this fact united the two in moments of particular social tension (e.g. during the approval of the safety package) and helped them organize a joint struggle.

We can maintain that co-optation has brought together within parties, the main foreign leaders who have even carved out leading roles for themselves. They are the ones to have guided the self-organised movement of immigrants in Italy and are the founders of the first immigrant associations created in the various areas of territorial struggle. Unlike exiles and political activists, these people do not necessarily come from a background of activism in their country of origin. The different forms of activism of which they are the protagonists in Italy also stem from the discriminatory and exclusionary immigration experienced in the host country. Through their career in the associations, they broke down the barriers. Membership of left wing political parties, which were considered the most active in the field of social rights, in the majority of cases, meant giving up their work for the associations. A renunciation which was, in fact, in favour of a better chance to influence the decision making process and act as a link between the civil society and the institutions. In the next section, it is interesting to reflect on the parties' answers to requests from the associations — through association representatives within parties — and the nature of the dialogue initiated by the associations and political parties was.

7.3.3. Political parties and associations: the dual interests in dialogue

As an important form of representation of specific social groups, the associations dealing with the issue of immigration fall under the scrutiny of political parties. The informal nature of the majority of these associations of people, united more than organized, by the common wish to reach an objective, makes it difficult for parties and associations to dialogue with one another. This problem stems from the early ties between political formations and the first organized immigrant movements in Italy. The leaders of the various struggle groups, fighting for: the right to guaranteed work, homes and the recognition of refugee status, joined in time the anti-racist associations. Then from the 1990s onwards, they started creating autonomous organizations, formed prevalently by foreigners. At the same time, the various community based groups, which were more interested in creating cultural/recreational spaces rather than fighting for their rights, opened informal organizations based on the ones they had in their countries of origin (religious, ethnic – national, cultural). The key to improving their standard of living and working in Italy became the preservation of their culture and national identity. It is this type of organization which made it difficult to match the associations of immigrants with the definition of interest group associations, since the claims often brought forward by the organizations in a spontaneous and unorganized way, based on the general public interest more than the systematic organization of activities.



Only a few associations act as a political link between the people and the parties and few are those that go from being interest groups to pressure groups. The interlocutors of the survey believe that mono ethnic and mono national associations are too self-referential and aimed at maintaining and supporting the culture of the country of origin. This does not promote integration nor does it put the association in a position to give an organized response and obtain political results. In fact, these kind of associations can have the opposite effect, limiting the immigrant's integration in local society. There is no real opening towards the native population of the host country but rather a "reverse social mediation" based on the mechanism of "ethnic self-reference".

Association's intermediary role is not intended to solve the problem of integrating immigrants into society, but the objectives are to promote the aggregation between fellow countrymen, through the organization of cultural and recreational activities; offer gathering places where they can spend moments of socialization; quell disputes within the community, provide support and services for the business and employment sector. On the other hand, there are some social and political associations, which are under scrutiny from the political parties. Associations such as the G2 Network, the national organization of second generation immigrants, active in proposing precise social demands of the political parties and the Italian government, demands that unfortunately go unheeded.

Text Box 5: Elvira Ricottadamo

"I started belonging to associations in 2008, when myself and some other young people formed one called "Second Generation Catania". This organization was created to defend the right to claim citizenship for second generation immigrant children. Our objective was also to merge with an association with a national network such as the G2 Network. Thanks to a meeting in Catania with the national co-coordinator for the Immigration Forum I joined the PD as part of their forum. An intense experience, the result of long hard work, never taken for granted and often hidden. I'll give you an example: many people were surprised by the election of a black minister to Parliament, Khalid Chaouki, a nomination that tends to be exploited. I remember the criticisms that were made about this case saying that certain choices were made to shift attention from real problems.

Certainly, from the moment you start talking about not only second generation but third and fourth generations of a population that comprises more than one million young people and adults, it cannot be considered a marginal or niche problem. In this case the work of the forum is useful to me to get into the community and not just make second generation immigrants the object of information, but also the principle subject for those claims the community has. In regard to the G2, I believe specifically that the richness of these generations consists in their being Italian and having the same potential as their peers and equals. An added value in this case is given to their families of origin who provide a bridge between culture and generation. Therefore, in my opinion, regarding one way the party has to attract and evaluate their request to participate, is not to take for granted that all they want to discuss are citizenship issues. Many second generation young people involved with the Immigration Forum are in fact journalists and are involved with other topics altogether. I for example started as a journalist, and even if I find myself in the "cauldron" of second generations, I have Italian parents and am occupied with other issues. I have become a representative in the union by working in that field not by being second generation or an immigrant. For me the only way to have substantial equality is to be considered equal by others. Enhancing this and not categorising it. In my opinion therefore, what is needed to attract immigrants are political practices. One should be able to see



oneself in the party and to be reflected in it. General party policy should advance at the same pace as other thematic work. Although I understand the difference between the two, I am not able to separate them. Above all, to split my party ideal with what would necessarily result in it counting for something in the political panorama”.

Elvira Ricottadamo, Second Generation Association, Catania

If we consider all of the immigrant associations participating in the focus groups (immigrant associations with political characteristics and objectives, associations and/or organizations aimed at planning services in favour of foreigners in the Italian territory, the G2 Network and lastly associations based on promoting the culture of the countries of origin) we can classify the demands put forward by these associations to the political parties in three categories: technical/legal requests, requests of political participation and requests for of social inclusion and support. Table 9 shows in detail the various types of demands, divided among the different associations.

The requests made to political parties vary depending obviously on the type of association and on the necessity that each organization has. If we take into consideration, for example, the immigrant associations with a political aim, then their request will undoubtedly be that political parties become a point of reference concerning technical/juridical changes. There is a search for dialogue and support on the part of institutions in favour of political campaigns promoted by civil society (immigrant citizen rights, campaigns for the right to vote, in dialogue with top political representatives). The request made by political associations to involve only the EU foreign communities in the campaign for the primary elections of the centre-left and to vote in local elections, can be traced back to the political reluctance of some communities to exercise their right to vote. This phenomenon is probably caused by a lack of democratic debate in their country of origin, and from the operative the difficulties that immigrants encounter in obtaining the right to vote through the acquisition of Italian citizenship. These obstacles make it necessary to launch campaigns to raise awareness and participation in the exercise of political rights which are not fully guaranteed to immigrants in Italy, who feel, in fact, excluded and disenchanted by politics.

Table 9: Demands put forward to political parties according to association type

Type of Association	Demand put forward to Political parties
Ethnic/National Cultural Associations	Meeting venues
	Italian language courses
Political Associations	Repeals and legislative amendments
	Election campaigns
	Spaces for political discussion and shared programming
	Dialogue with top exponents
	Advice in funding and finding locations



Service oriented Associations

Handling procedures

Legal guidance

Spaces of social secretariat

Advice in finding funds and locations

The associations engaged in the service side of integration require that measures be taken to support and advice in finding funds and participating in public tenders, in order to support the development and organization of the activities of the association. What immigrant associations organized on an ethnic basis appear to require is a greater willingness to make space for meetings and social secretariat aimed at the community. To support the management and handling of legal practices, legislative amendments and repeals and more policy decisions addressing the issues concerning immigration.

This is what we have found to be true for the small local associations and organizations spread out across the nation. If, on the other hand, we turn our attention to national immigrant associations we can see that their way of communicating their requests is rather different. The associations use social campaigns as a means to be heard, some of the most famous being: the 2012 campaign “IamItalianToo” sponsored by the Caritas and the G2 Network (with the aim of affirming the right to citizenship of second generation immigrants and sustained by all the left wing part formations: PD, SEL, PRC); “International Migrant’s day” sponsored by the OIM – International Organization for Migration and by the ILO – International Labour Organization; “LetUsIn” campaign against the administrative detention centres for immigrants (sustained by the centre-left wing parties). This kind of initiatives organized on a national scale and which certainly attract a certain number of followers, are the kind of movements that parties can support. Parties find it easier to sustain these campaigns because they are more in line with the democratic ideology of the left and also because all they require from the parties is support. On the other hand, the smaller associations with their specific requests want too much in terms of financial support.

If we analyze the activities and factors which promote participation in local immigrant associations and political parties, we find that many people are drawn by the fact of having a space for discussion and an opportunity to start projects useful to the foreign community. The association representatives are usually asked to participate in party activities enrolling and/or joining in with the discussions aimed at sharing the good practices which promote integration within the local communities:

“I was elected president of the Filipino Immigrant Association, that is when I started my collaboration. They called me to talk about the positive instances regarding immigrants and from then on I starting participating in the PD” Romolo Salvador Deputy Advisor PD.

During the focus groups organized with the immigrant associations, the representatives were asked to reflect upon another issue regarding the survey: namely, what measures did the political parties adopt in order to satisfy the requests put forward by the associations? By asking this question the intent was to shed light on what strategies the parties adopted in order to set up discussions and involve immigrant associations (see Table 10).



Table 10: Answers to the requests put forward by the immigrant associations

Political Party	Answer to the requests of the associations
PD	Social secretariat
SEL	Concession of meeting venues
PRC	Involvement in election campaigns Interventions to repeal and/or amend legislative provisions Sponsorship of national campaigns proposed by association networks

We have previously mentioned that it was the parties of the centre-left who were more constitutionally interested in starting a political debate with immigrant associations, i.e. those which, according to their founding political principles and ideals, appear to be more open to immigrant political participation (campaigns in favour of the right of citizenship, the right to vote and the anti-racism initiatives represent the core principles of their political advocacy). These parties are generally present at a regional level as entities capable of representing and developing in political terms demands of recognition of the rights of those communities. By reiterating what was noted in the focus groups, it would seem that the conditions for collaborative work are not lacking.

Up until now the party proposals have revealed to be lacking the ability to successfully develop initiatives. As reported by the testimonies that follow:

“The Pd has spoken a lot and is doing a lot for immigration but, on a national level there is no point of reference where we can go to meet and dialogue; there are many initiatives to promote integration in the community and the politicians speak a lot about integration, competence and services but we are all here searching for a common ground for discussion”. Representative of the association Real Change present in the focus groups

“The things we have managed to obtain (through a dialogue with the parties) are the things we had a right to in the first place. We cannot say that we actually got anything from the political parties except for what we were due for which we shouldn’t have to fight for anyway”. Representative of the Palestinian community Lazio present in the focus groups

The strategic decisions made by parties at local and national level, however, consists in proposing to the associations representatives to participate in spaces created ad hoc to discuss policies and immigration issues; to ensure availability to take on any questions or problems and to be present as institutions, able to promote political changes; lastly, supporting the various national campaigns organized in order to promote equality, citizenship for foreign nationals and second generation immigrants and foreign labourers.

Among the ambivalences that emerge in the dialogue between migrant associations and political parties a good part focus on the kind of dialogue proposed by political parties during election campaigns. Many associations claim in fact, that especially during the elections the parties



endeavour to create contacts with local representatives to discuss the topic of immigration and ask about proposals and strategies that aimed at resolving immigrant issues. The reason for there never really being any results from these talks is that there isn't sufficient communication between the local party representatives and the national leaders. The local party branches are there not only to make the party ideology known but to get a better understanding of the problems of the community. Unfortunately though, the information garnered does not translate into the resolution of the problems and does not seem to influence the decision making of the national party leaders. We hypothesize that this discrepancy represents one of the reasons often leads association representatives to feel disenchanting by the parties and too often use the adjective "manipulative" when describing party initiatives. Most of the foreign communities present in the Italian territory are still, in fact, largely excluded from the right to vote.

This fact, other than having the effect of immigrants not wanting to participate in politics, it pushes association representatives to be prejudiced towards invitations to participate in political party initiatives such as election campaigns. It is also for this reason that the so called dialogue between political parties and associations does not produce any concrete results. Parties seem to only use the associations as sounding boards to understand what difficulties immigrant communities may be facing but then do not effectively propose solutions to those difficulties. This results in a general diffidence on the part of immigrants towards politics and indeed politicians and their honest will to include immigrants and create change on a national and local level.

Foreigners, who play a part in parties and are invested with the task of laying the foundations for a constructive dialogue, are in fact crushed by the dominant internal view of these formations, which are typically hierarchical. The unavailability of positions within the party and the few roles exclusively for immigrant representatives in some local branches, triggers a ruthless competition between community leaders and representatives of various foreign associations, which in turn makes it impossible to attain political party roles and the construction of a dialogue anything but simple.

The co-optation method in fact, has not created a real political debate within associations, but has only let to forge individual relationships. This finding suggests that the unique career experiences of some foreigners have not produced true inclusion. On the other hand though, the success of some foreign community leaders is the result derived from the co-optation method, which has established relationships with the fringes of the most integrated groups of foreigners which are completely detached from the communities and often naturalized. Co-optation, acquisition of citizenship, social status, have thus, become the *sine qua non* (indispensable conditions) for being able to obtain roles within politics and political parties, beside the requirements of the obligation of activism, ideological commonality and a strong interest in politics. It must also be said that failure in developing a dialogue is also in part the fault of the immigrant associations in Italy, which are heavily mono-ethnic, and have as their main goal that of social integration.

8. Concluding comments: List of factors that promote and hinder migrant participation in parties

For a concluding recap, it is useful to summarize briefly the reasons for the under participation of foreign nationals in Italian political parties and the elements of transformation to be introduced to



encourage such participation, proposed by representatives of political parties and interviewed representatives from the immigrant associations.

Tables 11 and 12 provide a list of factors that hinder and support the participation of immigrants in political parties. These factors are seen both from the point of view of the immigrant association representatives and from that of the political party representatives.

Table 11: List of factors that hinder and support the inclusion of foreigners in the parties as reported by the political representatives of the parties surveyed

FACTORS THAT HINDER INCLUSION	FACTORS THAT SUPPORT INCLUSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Crisis of Politics and its representation, self-referentiality of parties</i> - <i>Delay in institutional and legislative reforms</i> - <i>Statutory limitations and exclusions</i> - <i>Segregation of thematic areas</i> - <i>Assignment of roles and responsibilities through the co-optation method</i> - <i>Lack of a quota system or technicalities in applications</i> - <i>Lack of specific departments and branches</i> - <i>Delegates with no representative rights</i> - <i>Discrimination in career paths and no foreigners in senior management</i> - <i>Internal party divisions</i> - <i>Delayed and paternalistic approach to the serious immigration issue</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ensuring access to foreign nationals to regional policy training schools</i> - <i>Opening of youth branches for social dialogue</i> - <i>Opening of local centres for institutional mediation and cultural exchange</i> - <i>Creation of specific branches and departments</i> - <i>Drafting of shared policy and legislation proposals</i> - <i>Building of networks between the associations and the civil society</i> - <i>Interruption of the segregation and public selection of the ruling classes</i> - <i>Participation in the public awareness campaigns promoted by National associations</i> - <i>Overcoming the emergency management of immigration</i> - <i>Adoption of reforms and policy changes</i> - <i>Adoption of policy programs in collaboration with the G2 Network and the immigrant population</i>



Table 12: List of factors that hinder and support the inclusion of foreigners in parties reported by the foreign association representatives

FACTORS THAT HINDER INCLUSION	FACTORS THAT SUPPORT INCLUSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Disorientation for the fragmentation of parties</i> - <i>Prevalent concentration of ethnic associations and self-segregation of immigrant communities</i> - <i>Negative experience with politics in countries of origin (e.g., limited political rights, repression, dictatorship)</i> - <i>Difficulty in participating in election campaigns and/or learning about the system and how to vote</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Opening up to the requests made by immigrant associations</i> - <i>Belonging to specific profiles (e.g., G2, politician, community leader)</i> - <i>Experiences of social commitment activism in unions/parties abroad and in Italy</i> - <i>Consultation Case studies and representation in the youth sections</i> - <i>Aquisition of Italian citizenship requirement</i> - <i>Measures to promote career paths and spaces for discussion</i> - <i>Ability to organize networks to promote campaigns</i> - <i>Overcoming self-referentiality and the need of ethnic associations to provide services</i> - <i>Adoption of reforms and policy changes</i>

In short, it appears evident that the representatives of the political parties have highlighted among the factors which would hinder the inclusion of foreigners in parties, the current situation of political instability. Instability which can be felt throughout Italy, and has a negative impact on overall political participation. The anti-political feeling stems mainly party's self-referentiality in regards to public service and the loss of the principal role of politics, to encourage participation in the electoral process and the equal access of citizens to public life. The emphasis on the part of politicians is placed on:

- The crisis of politics and representation, which also includes the most recent party formations who are unable to unleash positive experiences, due to the prevalence of anti-political sentiments and previously bad political practices. This is a period characterized by a depletion of the role of institutions and a democratic deficit, the lack of attention to the cultural dimension, young people and women and to the internal hierarchy within the parties. Moreover the loss of the principal role of politics, namely to encourage participation in the electoral process and guarantee equal access to citizens in public life and the inability of party formations to adopt a uniform policy in response to the current economic crisis.



- The institutional delay, in particular the absence of a reformation of the law on citizenship and the right to vote, on failure to reform Article 49 of the Constitution and the absence of legislation designed to regulate the functions and role of intermediary bodies between the individual and the authorities.
- The formal restrictions (lack of the right to vote and be elected, prohibitions or restrictions in the statutes of the parties, membership only for Italian citizens, etc.). Restrictions of content (absence within parties of immigrant representatives in the decision making departments), cultural restrictions (e.g., participation guaranteed only to members, the absence of discussion groups when defining political programs).
- The cultural delay in the role of politics and parties with respect to the social changes introduced by immigration in Italy, represented politically by the media and mass phenomena as emergency (a clear example being the landings in Lampedusa). Lack of programs and campaigns to contrast alarmism of a xenophobic nature, which sees the representation of the immigrant as a guest rather than a subject of law.

In particular, the emphasis is placed on the structural and operational functions of political parties which act as cultural barriers to participation. Specifically:

- Structural functions:
 - different statutes and requirements regarding the participation of immigrants;
 - absence, with the exception of the Democratic Party and the PRC, of sectors of intervention with specific immigration programs;
 - quota systems regulating nominations;
 - hierarchal party structure;
 - absence of foreigners in senior management roles, committees, political meetings or national conferences, manipulation of appointments and nominations;
 - waiver system for the extension of nominations, statute restrictions; non-adoption of specific programs to regulate reception of immigrants.
- Cultural functions:
 - democratic deficit in the co-optation method of appointment not based on meritocracy. In particular the co-opting method relegates immigrants to a limited field of action;
 - lack of attention to the representation of youths and women; self-referentiality; current internal divisions and lack of a uniform policy; paternalistic approach to the issue of immigration policy;
 - all knowing attitude of politicians who do not research thoroughly before acting; cultural delay of the leadership;
 - lack of official data on registered foreigners;
 - lack of support to the candidates of foreign origin; and



- gender discrimination regarding career advancement.

Alongside these elements, migrant association representatives highlighted the causes and factors that hinder their inclusion in political parties. The difficulties they have experienced are the following:

- political associations are not as efficient in offering solutions as the unions are; there is much disorientation regarding the fragmentation of political parties and the continuous creation of new party formations;
- associations are created on an ethnic base rather than on a political one; there are different approaches to politics based on specific background cultures, so the chosen delegates often do not really represent the immigrant communities;
- there is little free time available to dedicate to political activism; many immigrants move around a lot and do not stay in the same place for much time;
- foreign communities isolate themselves as a result of not being considered in society; diffidence towards politics, emptied of the meaning of representation of the collective and a sense of resignation towards the fact that immigrants are exploited by politicians; difficulty in participating in election campaigns and understanding how the election system and voting work;
- difficulty in recognising among the political programs answers to their request for the respect of their rights; restrictions on the part of political parties in allowing foreign membership; absence of and advanced political conscience, especially regarding immigrants who come from countries where political participation was not a given right; absence within the pressure groups of foreign representatives;
- strict “emergency” policies regarding immigrants which prevent their social integration; stereotypical image of immigrants shown by the media; and
- paternalistic approach towards foreigners in politics; immaturity on behalf of immigrants who do not realise their full potential and in general, the social isolation of immigrant communities in regards to their host society.

The elements of transformation in order to increase and promote immigrant participation as highlighted by the associations involved in the survey, are the following:

- Cultural changes:
 - new political culture which overcomes institutional racism and social exclusion, present also in political parties;
 - inclusion of the new Italians; breaking away from the relegation to participate and have a say only on the issue of immigration;
 - opening up to youths and social dialogue; non hierarchal setup of parties; opening up of clubs as places for institutional mediation and cultural exchange (such as the PD Immigration Forum);
 - promotion of equality, and anti-discrimination and equal rights policies; organization of campaigns and social struggles;



- remodernization of the hierarchal dynamics within parties; overcoming the “emergency” mentality where the immigration phenomenon is concerned; and
- overcoming the paternalistic approach in relationships with the diverse immigrant cultures giving them the possibility to be represented in decision making processes.
- Policy amendments:
 - art. 49 amendment of the Italian Constitution;
 - exercising the right to vote and abolishing the figure of “foreign consultant” within administrations;
 - citizenship rights; and
 - abolition of the current restrictive legislation (e.g., illegal immigration crime, Bossi-Fini Law, Security Package).
- Technical changes:
 - opening up political parties to foreigners;
 - facilitating positive experiences and networks, especially among the movements;
 - increasing human and financial resources in when organizing campaigns in favour of immigrants;
 - opening up existing clubs to immigrants so that they can organize activities (e.g., cultural initiatives, language courses, meetings) and the creation of political programs together with foreign networks, especially the 2G segment of the population;
 - renewal of the leadership classes;
 - adaptation of the political program of clubs in order to welcome social change;
 - increased coordination within parties regarding international immigration issues; adding lists of candidates to primary elections (1000 memberships for the city of Rome during the primary elections of the centre left);
 - opening of special polling stations in order to promote the lists of candidates and the information regarding the voting section;
 - representation shares; and
 - public choice of leadership candidates through open elections and not through the co-optation method.

Lastly, the following factors characterise successful outcomes:

- belonging to specific groups (G2, political or union representatives, medium-high status); personal inclination towards politics;
- representation roles within civic associations and trade unions, acquisition of nationality requirements;



- previous political experiences, decisive in the choice of the party and/or the political alignment; direct experiences in the form of advice and representation in the primaries;
- representatives of movements and foreign political party formations;
- roles in their communities; activism in the party;
- experiences in youth clubs or associations with a high percentage of youth involved; and
- clubs active in immigration issues with a high number of young participants.



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