DIVƎRSE

Diversity Improvement as a
Viable Enrichment Resource
for Society and Economy

Country Report Italy

At a (Possible) Turning Point Between Constraining Tradition and Promising Developments in the Field of Diversity

by Laura Zanfrini, Massimiliano Monaci, Francesca Mungiardi and Annavittoria Sarli

2015

Co-funded by the European Union

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UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA del Sacro Cuore

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| Welfare, Work, Enterprise
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DIVERSE

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The European approach to immigration is traditionally characterized by a sort of "schizophrenia", generated by the attempt to keep together two contradictory philosophies: the "economicistic" philosophy on which the system of entry (and stay) is regulated and the philosophy of solidarity and equal opportunities. To overcome this paradox, three major changes are necessary: shifting from the perception of migrants as contingently instrumental resources to the conception of their human capital as a structural resource for the economic and social development of European societies by exploiting their skills, knowledges and competences (hereafter SKC); promoting a wider awareness, among different types of organizations (profit, non-profit and public), of the importance and potentialities of Diversity Management strategies; improving the social participation and the civic and voluntary engagement of Third Country Nationals (hereafter TCNs) in view of the construction of an inclusive European society and in order to change the common perception of immigrants as people needing to be helped and assisted.

These three ambitions constitute the challenges addressed by the project DIVERSE – Diversity Improvement as a Viable Enrichment Resource for Society and Economy – supported by the European Commission through the European Integration Fund (Grant Agreement No. HOME/2012/EIFX/CA/CFP/4248 *30-CE-0586564/00-20).

The project, implemented from January 2014 to May 2015, was directed by Laura Zanfrini, coordinated by the research centre WWELL – Work, Welfare, Enterprise, Lifelong Learning – of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan, and was carried out in 10 EU countries in cooperation with 13 other partners: Associazione Nazionale Oltre le Frontiere – ANOLF, Varese, Italy; Commission on Filipino Migrant Workers, The Netherlands; Fondazione ISMU, Italy; Karlshochschule International University, Germany; MENEDEK – Hungarian Association for Migrants, Hungary; Nova Universidade de Lisboa, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Portugal; Radboud University, The Netherlands; Società San Vincenzo de Paoli, Federazione Regionale Lombarda, Italy; Umeå University, Sweden; University of Huelva, Spain; University of Lods, Poland; University of Tartu, Estonia; University of Vaasa, Finland.

This volume presents the findings of the research activity carried out in Lombardy (Italy). The final report of the full project, including a synthesis of the ten national reports and of the transnational analysis, is published in the volume "The Diversity Value. How to Reinvent the European Approach to Immigration", *McGraw-Hill Education, Maidenhead, UK, 2015 (freely freely accessible at* http://www.ateneonline.it/zanfrini/. *A detailed presentation of the project, of its results and of the rich set of materials produced can be found in* www.ismu.org/diverse. *Both the present report and all the other texts produced reflect the view only of the Authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*

Milan, October 2015

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INTRODUCTION:

A GENERAL LANDSCAPE
OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS' MIGRATION

0.1. History of TCNs' migration in Italy and in Lombardy

As it's well known, Italy has a long and important tradition of out-migration and began receiving sizeable inflows of migrants only relatively recently: it's in 1974 that the number of immigrants coming from abroad exceeded, for the first time, the amount of Italian migrants' expatriations. Even after this "migratory transition", considering the low number of migrants living in the country, Italian society had continued to represent itself as an "emigration country", according to an iconography embedded in the collective memory and displayed by cinema, music and literature. In this landscape, Italians tended to perceive themselves as neither racist nor xenophobic at all – despite the experience of the "racial legislation" approved during the fascist period, immediately after forgotten by the collective conscience –. The very few foreigners living in the country were not perceived as "migrants", while the relationship between the host society and the "stranger" was, substantially, an issue of regional differences: the archetype of the stranger was the worker coming from another region and speaking an incomprehensible dialect. Migrations too were a domestic issue, represented by the internal movements from the Southern regions (and the poorest provinces of the North) to the industrial poles of the Northern regions, particularly Milan, Turin and Genoa (the so-called "industrial triangle").

It's only since the late 1980s that a certain number of migrants from Third World countries and Eastern Europe, most of them unauthorised, have been entering Italy: during the late 1980s, the inflow from non-EU countries was estimated at more than 100,000 people per year. In the 1990s the foreign population grew slower, so that by 1999 migrants living in Italy, either legally or illegally, were estimated to a number between 1,300,000 and 1,500,000 people, or about 2.3% of the domestic population. Few of them entered Italy holding a residence permit. The number of permits granted to people from East European and underdeveloped countries increased substantially (from one third to 40%) after each of the four regularisation schemes in 1986, 1990, 1996 and 1998. In the following years migrants' presence continued to register a frantic growth, up to more than 5 millions in 2010.

So Italy, for more than a century a country of emigration, in the last 25 years has been forced to cope with a rapid change of roles. It was only in 2010 that new arrivals started to decline: in this year, the foreigners' presence recorded a modest increase of 69,000 units, whereas in 2011 the augmentation was only of 27,000 units; nothing if it is compared with the hundreds of thousands which were common in the earlier years. According to the estimations made by ISMU Foundation (www.ismu.org), the foreign population present in Italy at 1st January 2012 can be estimated at 5.4 million. But, if we consider the preliminary 2011 census data, this estimation falls to 5,018,000, giving consistence to the hypothesis of a certain number of returns to the sending countries or of emigration to other destinations. Finally, according to the most recent data by ISTAT (the National Institute of Statistics), the non-EU foreigners holding a residence permit at 1st January 2014, are 3,874,726, with an increase of approximately 110,000 units between 2013 and 2014.

As far as the single nationalities are concerned, the change in the structure of the foreign population by nationality clearly confirms Italy's status as an immigration country, in which flows are diversifying and are not just linked to a few countries: the number of sending countries is huge (around 200) and many of them are very distant and have never had economic or cultural relationships with Italy. Nowadays, the largest foreign group is the Romanian (more than one million), followed by the Moroccan and the Albanian ones (both around half a million), by the Chinese, Ukrainian and Filipino ones. Nevertheless, as it is clearly demonstrated by data reported in Table 0.1, the composition of the migrants' presence in Italy has been repeatedly changing during time, augmenting the incidence of the European (both EU and non-EU) sending countries.

The increase of the permanently settled immigrant population is responsible for the rebalancing in the gender composition of different national groups; for the growth of the share of the foreign population under the age of 18; for the considerable increase of the numbers of marriages and above all for foreign citizens births.

Even if the gender composition of the different national groups shows the variety of migratory models (with the two extremes, among the major communities, represented by Senegal, with 75.6% of males, and Ukraine, with 79.8% of females), as the years go by we can observe a re-balancing trend. In general terms, a good equilibrium was already notable in 1997: males constituted 55.2% and females 44.8% of the total number of foreigners present in Italy. In 2002, a complete balance was almost reached, with males constituting less than 52% of the total.

Tab. 0.1 – Foreigners residents in Italy. First ten nationalities (only heavy migration pressure countries) and total. Years 1971-2011

1971*		1981*		1991*		2001*		2011**	
Yugoslavia	6,460	Iran	8,399	Morocco	63,809	Morocco	162,254	Romania	1,110,848
Argentina	2,068	Yugoslavia	6,472	Tunisia	31,881	Albania	146,321	Albania	515,808
Iran	1,752	Philippines	4,107	Philippines	26,166	Romania	69,999	Morocco	484,288
Poland	1,504	Ethiopia	4,048	Yugoslavia	22,335	Philippines	65,073	China	231,199
Venezuela	1,477	Egypt	3,139	Senegal	21,073	China	60,143	Ukraine	209,575
Brazil	1,406	India	2,535	Egypt	14,183	Tunisia	45,972	Philippines	142,906
India	1,057	Jordan	2,411	China	12,998	Yugoslavia	40,151	Moldova	136,675
Syria	975	Cape Verde	2,168	Poland	10,933	Senegal	39,170	India	131,001
Turkey	930	Libya	2,080	Brazil	9,364	Sri Lanka	33,789	Poland	125,110
Libya	860	Argentina	2,018	Sri Lanka	8,747	Egypt	32,381	Tunisia	113,251
Total	143,838	Total	198,483	Total	548,193	Total	1,379,749	Total	4,744,290

* Data reported refer to the number of foreigners possessing a valid permit of stay.
** Data reported refer to an estimation made by ISMU Foundation of foreigners regularly living in Italy.
*Source***: Interior Ministry for the years 1971-2001; ISMU Foundation for the year 2011.**

Another interesting phenomenon is represented by demographic events. Marriages in which one or both partners were foreign accounted for 13% (26,617, among those the majority – 14,799 – is represented by the unions of an Italian man with a foreign woman) of all marriages contracted in 2011 (but the divorce rate for marriages involving foreigners was twice as high).

In the second half of the 1980s the proportion of foreign children born in Italy was only 1.1% of the total number of births; this proportion has reached 4.5% in 1996, 9.4% in 2006 and 14.5% in 2011: this figure is probably the most important indicator that a significant proportion of foreigners is in the process of settlement on a permanent basis. In 2011, 105,975 new births (19.4% of the total new births) had at least one foreign parent; 21,213 an Italian father and a foreign mother and 5,501 an Italian mother and a foreign father.

The about 50,000 minors registered by the 1991 census survey rose up to 284,000 units ten years after, and further increased up to reach 502,000 units as to January 1st 2005 and 993,238 units as to January 1st 2011. Among those, the "Italians by birth" (albeit still foreigners according to the Italian legislation) are half a million, representing a proportion of about 60% of the total of foreign minors.

Also the percentage of foreign minors attending the Italian school has been in uniform and constant growth. In 1983/84 there were only 6,104 pupils with a non-Italian citizenship in the Italian schools (0.06% of the total); ten years later (1993/1994) they were 37,478 (0.41% of the total); in 2003/2004 they amounted to 282,683 (3.49% of the total), and in 2012/2013 (the most recent data available) they reached the number of 786,630 (8.8% of the total). From the beginning of the century the yearly growth rate has not ceased to rise, sextupling over a decade. Nowadays, the phenomenon has become stable and a slower growth can be noticed. The higher number of foreign students (276,129) is recorded in the primary school. Moreover, if the general trend is characterized by a slowdown in the increase of students with non-Italian citizenship, there is a progressive transformation in the composition of the foreign school population, with a significant growth in the number and incidence of those born in Italy from foreign parents (who often register the same educational performances of their Italian mates) and a decrease in the number and incidence of newcomers (the latter being the most vulnerable category, needing a specific attention). Typical of the Italian context is finally the heterogeneity of nationalities. When comparing the largest groups of foreigner citizens present in the Italian schools, it emerges that the most consistent quota of minors comes from Romania with 148,602 students, followed by four non-EU countries: Albania (104,710 students), Morocco (98,106), China (36,043), and Moldova (24,196).

Finally, to be remarked is the growing number of migrants acquiring the Italian citizenship, despite the restrictive requisites stated by the law [see § 0.2]. During 2012, 65,383 foreigners acquired Italian citizenships; the vast majority of them (91.9%, that is 60,060) come from a non-EU country, particularly from Morocco (14,728) and Albania (9,493).

As we will see in detail in section 0.3, all these trends are particularly evident in Lombardy. Actually, since the beginning of the migratory transition, the region has demonstrated a particularly high capacity of attraction and absorption of new migrants, anticipating the process of transformation of an "immigration of workers" into an "immigration of permanent residents and families". Considering that the region hosts around one fourth of the migrant population living in Italy, the history of TCNs' migration in Lombardy is substantially similar to the national one. At the same time, the region has been playing a crucial role in the evolution of both migratory processes and patterns of economic and social integration, because of the quantitative importance of migrants living in its vast territory; the dynamism of its heterogeneous economic structure; the vitality of the local civil society that has given birth to thousands of organisations and initiatives addressed to migrants and migrants' needs.

Finally, a crucial issue in Italy has been always represented by irregular immigration[1]. Very rarely, however, such a problem has been dealt with adequate instruments, which involve the availability of correct data about the real proportions of the problem itself, its structural features and distribution in the Italian territory. It was only in the late 1980s that the first official estimates produced by ISTAT, and concerning the phenomenon, were made public. The figures referring to the irregular immigrants were estimated as running as high as 500,000: in other words, one out of two immigrants was an irregular. In the following years, according to the statisticians, the various regularizations may have had the effect of "emptying the basin" of irregularity, which was however unavoidably destined to grow again in the following years. The total amount and the characteristics of the irregular foreign population can be therefore described *ex post* on the basis of the number of applications submitted on the occasion of the different regularization laws (which obviously do not include all irregular migrants, but in any case a meaningful part of them). Thanks to a research carried out by the ISMU Foundation of Milan during the second half of 2005, it was possible to estimate the numerousness of foreigners coming from high migratory pressure countries (new EU member states included) without a residence permit. According to this source, irregulars totaled about 540,000 units, one fourth of which

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[1] L. Zanfrini, W. Kluth, *Policies on irregular migrants. Volume I: Italy and Germany*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2008.

settled in the South (27% *vs.* 16% on a national scale). A projection of this estimation with reference to 2006 (1st July) resulted in a number of 760,000 irregular migrants, decreased to 349,000 at the beginning of 2007, thanks to the large number of entry quotas admitted by the government. But it was only "thanks" to the serious economic recession, and particularly to its persistence, that irregular arrivals and presences started to decline considerably: at 1st January 2012 foreigners with a non-legal status can be estimated at 326,000, 117,000 less than in 2010. They are down to 6% of the total, that is, the lowest level ever observed.

In any case, we cannot underestimate the fact that a large part (maybe the majority) of regular migrants who live and work in Italy have been through an irregular approach with the country and a more or less long permanence in illegal conditions. Quite often, even those who have always been regular migrants succeeded in migrating thanks to the presence of a relative who had passed to legality through an amnesty or a fraudulent recourse to the entry procedure. This datum not only provides an evidence of the failure of state sovereignty, as it is expressed by control on migration movements. It has also strongly conditioned migrants' relation with Italian society and its main institutions, their access to the welfare structures (up to cause their "informalization", that is, their actual opening also to non-entitled parties when safeguard requirements deemed fundamental are at stake), as well as the image of immigrants spread by mass media. The formal system of rights and controls, which regulates immigration for economic and humanitarian reasons, goes along, in fact, with an informal system of employment, social support, "tolerance" towards irregular presence and labour[2], a periodical resort to mass-regularizations, which have become the "normal" procedure for managing migration flows and a completely distorted use of the legal entry procedures [§ 0.2]. The final outcome is that of having contributed to de-legitimize the normative structure, and strengthen the belief that both the Italian borders and the Italian society are extremely "porous" towards irregular immigration. Not to mention the decline of the sense of legality and its possible consequences on the future of interethnic coexistence.

Focusing now on the relationship between immigration and the Italian labour market[3], the most striking phenomenon is represented by the continual and exceptional growth of both active and employed migrants. There are no doubts that the massive inclusion

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[2] L. Morris, *Managing Contradiction: Civic Stratification and Migrants' Rights*, in «International Migration Review», XXXVII, 1, pp. 74-100, 2003

[3] For this section we have referred to the chapters, authored by Laura Zanfrini, devoted to the labour market and published in the yearly *ISMU Report on Migrations in Italy*. See in particular Fondazione ISMU, *Twenty years of migrations in Italy: 1994-2014*, McGrow Hill Education, Milano, 2014. See also L. Zanfrini, *Immigration and labour market*, in V. Cesareo (ed.), *Migration: a picture from Italy*, "Quaderni ISMU", n. 2/2013, pp. 39-55.

of immigrant workforce is one of the major elements characterizing the changes occurred in the last decades in the Italian labour market. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the number of both active and employed migrant workers have been continuously growing, conferring to the Italian labour market a more and more evident multi-ethnic character. This growth has not been broken up even during the present economic recession. The impact of the crisis on immigration has proved to be softer than in other countries, thus revealing the peculiarities but also the weakness of the Italian labor market.

Between 2005 (the first year with reference to which these data are available) and 2013 the foreign workforce in the country grew from 1,297,700 to 2,832,400, registering an increase of 218%; this is even more significant if we consider that, in the same period, there was a reduction of over 543,000 active citizens in the Italian population. The foreign nationals employed, in their turn, increased of 1,187,000 units (+201%), while the Italians employed decreased of 1,329,000 (Tab. 0.2). Even unemployment took on a more and more visibly multiethnic configuration, considering that in this period the number of immigrants looking for a job quadrupled, up to the point of covering over one-sixth of the unemployment figures (while it was only one-fourteenth at the beginning of the period taken into consideration). If the growth of the unemployed foreigners' number certainly has a connection with the difficult economic situation (the increase became especially relevant from 2008 to 2009, and it got even worse in the last months with the persistence of a negative employment picture), what is especially noticeable is the fact that, even in the darkest years of this recession, both the workforce and the foreign employed were growing, creating that strange binomial – or, better, a true oxymoron – of an immigration which keeps increasing notwithstanding stagnation. Between 2007 and 2013, active foreigners increased by 73%, while the employed increased by 56%: the growth of foreign employed (+843,000), in correspondence with the dramatic decrease of Italian employed (-1,704,000), seems to demonstrate that the process of growth/emergence of immigrant labor – that has uninterruptedly characterized Italian history in the last 25 years – has not been completed yet. However, it is exactly the contribution provided by foreign nationals to the general holding-up of employment, within such a negative scenario, that strongly raises the question of their real impact on the Italian labor market. As shown by data reported in Table 0.2, the above reasoning substantially maintain their validity if – within foreign employed – we consider the group of non-EU migrants.

Tab. 0.2 – Employed according to gender and nationality; 15 years and older. A.V. (in thousands), 2005-2013

		2005	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
Total	Foreigners	1,169	1,348	1,502	1,751	1,898	2,081	2,251	2,334	2,356
	Extra-EU27	*898*	*1,014*	*1,163*	*1,270*	*1,298*	*1,384*	*1,511*	*1,565*	*1,572*
	Italians	21,393	21,640	21,719	21,654	21,127	20,791	20,716	20,565	20,064
	Total	22,563	22,988	23,222	23,405	23,025	22,872	22,967	22,899	22,420
Men	Foreigners	737	836	923	1,050	1,111	1,212	1,292	1,299	1,296
	Extra-EU27	*599*	*666*	*754*	*806*	*810*	*856*	*926*	*941*	*932*
	Italians	13,001	13,103	13,133	13,013	12,678	12,422	12,327	12,142	11,794
	Total	13,738	13,939	14,057	14,064	13,789	13,634	13,619	13,440	13,090
Women	Foreigners	433	512	579	701	787	869	960	1,035	1,060
	Extra-EU27	*230*	*348*	*409*	*464*	*488*	*528*	*585*	*624*	*640*
	Italians	8,392	8,537	8,586	8,640	8,449	8,369	8,389	8,423	8,270
	Total	8,825	9,049	9,165	9,341	9,236	9,238	9,349	9,458	9,330

Source: Eurostat, Labor Force Survey, 2005-2013.

Actually, in order to explain migrants' occupational performance we can suggest that the low quality which is a distinctive mark of migration in Italy, has contributed "to protect" migrants [see § 0.4]. In any case, despite this dramatic expansion, the process of TCNs' insertion in the Italian and Lombardy labor market continues to be characterized by some problematic aspects, that have been even reinforced in the last years, in parallel with the acumination of the effects of the crisis. We can schematize them in five points, as follows:

a) *The territorial diversification of the inclusion models*, which mirrors the situation of heterogeneous economy and society, the multiple local productive vocations and specializations, and the different spreading degree of underground and irregular economy. Beyond the national trends, the local perspective thus constitutes a necessary step to interpret the models of immigrant inclusion, and assess their impact on the labor market and on the growth models, as the crisis itself has confirmed by highlighting in particular the non-univocal evolution experienced by the different territorial regimes of accumulation and, in their contexts, the destiny of foreign (and native) workers. In particular, it is worth noting how the traditional dualism North-South resurfaces nowadays in the singular distribution of immigrant unemployment, which – in a specular way if compared to what happens to "native" unemployment – mainly concentrates in the North of the country: so, while in Southern Italy unemployment is still an indigenous problem of dramatic dimensions (1,383,078 Italian unemployed, that is, 52.8% of total indigenous unemployment), in the provinces of the North more than one unemployed person out of four (27.7%) is a

foreigner, a circumstance that contributes to call into question again the whole evolution of inter-ethnical relations.

b) To this peculiar "geography" of the foreigners' occupational condition we can also partly relate *the two ideal-typical models of utilization of immigrant work*, which represent another distinctive trait of the Italian model of inclusion. The first one is constituted by employment in families, to which is owed the birth and progressive diffusion on the whole Italian territory of a "parallel welfare" mainly supplied by female labor. This model, grown uninterruptedly in the course of the years, has gone practically intact through the economic crisis itself – the preponderant share of new employment should be ascribed to it, in fact – which has also reinforced its ethnic connotation (see the next point). The second ideal-typical model has, on the contrary, a more precise territorial connotation as it affects in particular the regions of the Center and the North of Italy, protagonists of an "economic boom" based on the small business system, where – starting from the second half of the 1990s – the figure of the immigrant factory worker has been spreading. Because of its sectorial specialization, it is the model that has suffered more due to a recession that has taken a heavy toll especially within some "historical" communities (such as the Moroccan and Albanian ones, traditionally concentrated in economic sectors that have been hit hard by the crisis, from the building industry to the manufacturing industry) and some regions that in the past had had an extraordinary – for dimensions and speed – process of inclusion of immigrant labor. The figure of the immigrant factory worker runs the risk of making way for that of the immigrant expelled from the productive processes, thus materializing, in Italy too, that kind of historical nemesis that has given the lie, in other countries, to the myth of the "guest laborer".

c) A *concentration in the lowest levels of the hierarchy of professions*. This characteristic, already present at the beginning of the migratory transition, continues to represent the distinctive feature of immigrant work in Italy, even in comparison with the other European countries. According to the Eurostat classification (2013), 29% of foreign nationals have a low-level occupation (against 7% of Italians); the majority (52.9%) belongs to the category of skilled workers in the various fields of agriculture, fishing, handicraft, plant and machinery operators; only 13% have white-collar jobs or works in sales; and only a small 5% have a high-level position as managers or technicians (a category that, on the contrary, includes the relative majority of Italian employed, 35.9%). This can explain, on the one side, why Italy represents a particularly attractive destination for low-qualification migrants, and, on the other side, why deskilling, that is, the waste of human resources, reaches the highest levels, thus becoming a sort of distinctive trait. On the contrary, after subtle signs of upgrading registered in the years

immediately before the recession, the latter has contributed to a further acute phase of the concentration of foreign nationals in lower-level jobs, while there was a specular reduction of the quota – already (with the sole exception of Greece) the lowest in Europe – of those doing qualified and technical jobs. Not even one out of ten, among the foreigners with a diploma or degree, has a qualified job. More than four foreign nationals out of ten are overeducated, that is, employed in jobs that require lower skills than the educational qualification they possess; a percentage that among women even reaches 50%. The concentration of the need for workforce in correspondence with the less qualified[4] figures certainly explains a phenomenon which is also nurtured by the social (and entrepreneurial) expectations related to the "place" of the foreigner in society: it is not by chance that the inclination to resort to immigrant personnel only partially overlaps with the recruiting difficulties of enterprises and, on the contrary, tends mainly to follow mechanisms of pre-categorization on an ethnic basis.

d) Deskilling is but one of *the multiple forms of discrimination that affect immigrants*. In this case too, we have to deal with a "constitutive" problem of the Italian model of integration[5], worsened in these years of crisis, in a scenario of general decline of the occupational picture of migrants (whose first indicator is the increase of the differential in the unemployment rate as compared to Italians). In the last five years, the segments more affected by ethnic diversification have seen a further growth of immigrants, particularly in the borderline case of home help and assistance, where they represent more than three employed out of four (in 1999 they were one out of two, in 1994 one out of four, just before the crisis they did not reach 70%). Entering the labor market mainly through the intermediation of relatives and friends (in almost two-thirds of the cases), foreign nationals involuntarily contribute to reinforce its segmentation according to ethnic-national type divisions. In the case of foreign women this phenomenon of ethnic diversification is even more marked: only three professions – home help, home assistance and janitorial services – are sufficient to represent half of the employed immigrants. Moreover, the average pay of migrants has decreased (also due to the reduction of the number of hours worked), thus widening the category of the so-called "working poor", and the gap between the monthly net salaries of an Italian and an immigrant has increased even further.

e) Finally, examining the function carried out by immigrant labor as opposed to a prevailing interpretation that defines it as *complementary*, the most detailed analyses

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[4] Also because of the peculiar structure of work demand in Italy, where low-level occupations, and in general the low-skilled ones, keep having a strong (and growing) weight.

[5] One of the first "denunciations" of this phenomenon can be found in the thorough investigation in L. Zanfrini, *Discrimination in the labour market*, in Fondazione Cariplo-ISMU, *The Fifth Italian Report on Migrations 1999*, Milano, 2000, pp. 105-122.

have revealed, since the beginning, risks of *competitiveness*, especially in the regions of Southern Italy where the levels of indigenous unemployment were (and are) higher, while in the regions that are richer in occupational opportunities the danger concerns the role of immigration in keeping alive those traditional activities that could not otherwise cope with international competition. In addition, in a migration picture in constant evolution – from both a quantitative and a "qualitative" point of view – the risk could have been expected of *an internal competition in the same immigration universe, among whose effects it cannot be overlooked the one of controlling the dynamics of salary and favoring an overall worsening of work conditions* (phenomena to which the strong presence of immigrants in the underground economy certainly contributes). Although the negative consequences (from the de-structuration of the labor market to the slowing down of the modernization of certain labor-intensive sectors, up to the high incidence of fiscal and contributive evasion) could be easily imagined since the beginning of the inclusion process, *the warning to provide the appropriate correcting measures – as for the governance of the labor market and the management of human resources – was essentially ignored*. The crisis offered a dramatic confirmation of this, not only by rendering us aware of the fact that the decline of the immigrant occupational picture certainly has a connection, besides the difficulties relating to the economic situation, with the strong and ungoverned inflow of labor from abroad. But also because, as it was pointed out, there are many indications of a progressive generalization of the Southern model of inclusion, that is, of a system in which the employability of foreigners is built thanks to their willingness to adapt to work conditions that are below the threshold of acceptability and outside the area of "industrial citizenship", with the relative corollary of an involution of our work culture.

0.2. Legislative framework at national and regional level

As it is well known, between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the major European destination countries put an end to active recruitment policies. The oil shock in 1973 marked the definitive conclusion of the previous stage: from then onwards, migrations began to assume the character of "undesired" presences, either tolerated or rejected, depending on circumstances, but in any case increasingly less legitimated by economic needs. Immigration, more and more manifestly not depending on planning policies any longer, began to be depicted as an "emergency" from which European societies have to defend themselves. It was actually during that period, dominated by restrictive policies and spontaneous migrant flows, that South-European countries, at

the head of which was Italy, began their transformation into destination areas for "spontaneous" and heterogeneous flows of migrants arrived independently of any active recruiting policy, often with no links with the colonial past, attracted by the relative facility with which they could enter the country and stay (even despite an irregular status), and by the possibility to mask the real motivations of their permanence, considering Italy's tourist vocation.

Along with offering many opportunities to include those migrants in shadow economy, this phenomenon contributed to further increase a widespread irregularity, in terms of persons' presence and labor, and was destined to weigh for a long time upon integration processes to such an extent as to be identified as one of the distinctive features of what was later called, by some authors, the "Mediterranean immigration model". It took several years to make Italy, as well as the other South-European countries, aware of its new role within the international migration system, and an even longer time before it recognized the existence of requirements for imported labor, considering the sudden turnabout of its demographic trends. In a situation of overall normative and institutional deficit, which characterized Italy's migration transition, lay and religious associations and organizations acted as real substitutes for an insufficient and inadequate public intervention (to such an extent that several scholars talk about a situation of "functional overload" in charity organizations, which were obliged to make themselves responsible also for tasks that did not concern them).

Juridical vagueness has thus become a basic element in the structure of the relations between immigrants and Italian society. In fact, the first law on immigration dates back to 1986, that is, more than ten years after the "turning point" of 1974. Law 943/1986, besides establishing an entry and access mechanism to the labour market (which however remained substantially not enforced), granted equal protection to Italian and foreign workers, and acknowledged to the latter a few social rights, including the right to family reunifications. Broader was the reach of the so-called "Martelli Law" (Law 39/1990), which besides introducing a yearly flow planning system, also laid down some regulations concerning legal protection, expulsion, asylum, and self-employment of foreigners.

The first organic set of rules came only in 1998, through the passing of the Law Decree 286 (so-called "Napolitano-Turco", still in force today albeit a set of changes have been gradually introduced), which was also the fruit of the pressures of third-sector institutions and civil society. In countertendency with the juridical frame prevailing in Europe in those years, this law acknowledged, along with push factors in the sending countries, also the existence of pull factors strictly connected with Italy's economic requirements for imported workforce, by providing for a special mechanism aimed at

determining every year the required incoming immigration quotas for labour purposes (in addition to the flows for family or humanitarian reasons, which are unpredictable and cannot be planned). This set of measures are based on four fundamental principles, which describe the "Italian integration model" (according to the definition proposed by the "Commission for Integration", a consultative body at that time operating for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers):

Interaction based on security: the law provides for a set of tools aimed at combating irregular immigration, carrying out expulsions, fighting criminality and human being trafficking;

Safeguard of personal rights extended to irregular migrants: the law provides for compulsory education granted to all foreign children, regardless of their residence title; in addition, it guarantees essential healthcare also to irregular migrants and introduces a residence permit issued for social protection purposes in order to safeguard the victims of trafficking (particularly women involved in prostitution);

Regular migrants' integration: the law ratifies the same civil and social rights as those granted to Italian citizens, acknowledges the right to family reunifications and introduces the institution of a residence paper (*carta di soggiorno*, a permanent right to stay in the country, in line with the EU Directive concerning long-term residents), which can be obtained by those who have achieved a residence seniority in Italy of five years at least;

Pluralism and communication: the law respects cultural differences also through the safeguard of the language and the culture of the country of origin; at the same time, it acknowledges the right to literacy; finally, it provides for the involvement of voluntary organizations in carrying out integration policies.

The integration model outlined by the legislator shows considerable openings to social rights, but a substantial closure in terms of political rights. In addition, the law on citizenship, passed in 1992, is based on the descent principle (i.e., children born in Italy from foreigner parents are themselves foreigners) and requires 10 years of regular residence to apply for naturalization. Considering the length and the uncertainty of the procedures, and the different attitudes toward the prospect of being naturalized, there are several million adults permanently residing in Italy without any political right (apart some of an "intermediate" nature, such as the right to associate or to join the unions) and destined to remain in this condition for a long time.

As for the school legislation, the choice made by Italy is that of investing in interculturalism and in education to foster dialogue and coexistence within multicultural school contexts, according to the direction indicated by the European Union. The ministerial pronouncements emphasise the complementarity of directives,

which include integration of foreign students and intercultural exchanges in curricular and extracurricular activities.

Actually, the most relevant limits do not refer so much to the text of the law, but rather to its actual enforcement. The debate which preceded and followed the passing of the Consolidated Act was monopolized by the theme of security, meant both as border controls and as fight against criminality attributed to foreigners, as well as by a very strong media exposure of the whole migration question. Those circumstances diverted the public opinion's attention from some qualifying aspects of this law, such as the introduction of a residence paper, implemented however with great delay, and the norms concerning fight against discrimination, which, from a certain point of view, "go beyond" the EU-Directives (insofar as they extend the principle of equal treatment also to TCNs). Along with the well-known farrago and ineffectiveness of the Italian bureaucracy, several researchers have noticed in norm application an excessive administrative discretion, and, quite often, a considerable territorial diversification in the treatment reserved by the public administration to immigrants, further increased by operators' and managers' insufficient information and sensitization action. The number of convictions concerning crimes with racial discrimination purposes is negligible, for the time being, also because foreigners, and particularly irregular migrants, tend for different reasons not to denounce the episodes, quite often committed by other foreign subjects of which they are the victims. This turns also into a lack of a sufficiently abundant case law to which reference can be made. Furthermore, the establishment of a contact centre against racial discrimination at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers does not seem to have had an impact as significant as that of similar services implemented in other countries. Finally, the right to equal treatment granted to foreign and Italian subjects in acceding any resource and social opportunity clashes with a situation of widespread discrimination (especially as regards some sectors of society, such as the real-estate market) and with a socially shared expectation that a privileged access to resources and opportunities should be reserved to the local population.

For some aspects, the Law 89/2002 (so-called "Bossi-Fini") has acknowledged these expectations by:

limiting entry possibilities, through abolition of entry possibilities aimed at allowing migrants to go in search of a job, reintroduction of the principle of local workforce unavailability aimed at filling some jobs for which an authorization to a foreigner's entry is required, restriction of the criteria regulating family reunifications (earlier extended also to the migrant's parents);

introducing some restrictions concerning immigrants' permanence, which in any case results more strictly bound to being in possession of a job contract;

increasing penalties and measures aimed at fighting irregular immigration, through the introduction of a new kind of crime in the case of a further migrant's irregular entry in the Italian territory after expulsion, the provision for forced expulsion in case of irregular permanence, and the extension of "administrative detention" (which may arrive to 60 days).

Finally, in 2008 the Government included new amendments in the so-called security package (*pacchetto sicurezza*), which identified a new kind of crime (so-called "reato di clandestinità") consisting in illegal entry/residence in the Italian territory and extended to 18 months the period of detention in special centres (CIE – Centres for Identification and Expulsion) waiting for the migrant's actual compulsory expulsion. These new rules provoked a sharp debate and were accused to infringe some fundamental human rights; actually, they were revised in 2011 following a pronouncement of the European Court of Justice.

Focusing now on non-EU migrants access to the labour market, one of the most vulnerable points in the juridical regulations on immigration still in force consists in the distance between the norms that regulate entries for labour purposes and the actual procedures through which usually migrants' economic inclusion is carried out. Indeed, in the legislators' intentions, the approval of the Consolidation Act on immigration, in 1998, had to inaugurate a new era in the governance of labor migrations, for the first time rendering really operative a system of recruitment from abroad. Since its creation, the system of entry planning has never stopped feeding debates and polemics about its concrete application and its (so many times evoked) necessity of being reformed. In the years, there have been various attempts to render it more functional to the objectives of contrasting irregular immigration, through the establishment of "privileged quotas" to be reserved to the countries subscribing specific agreements on the matter; more coherent with the needs of the labor market, for example through the establishment of quotas for professional nurses or, more massively, for caregivers to be employed in families; more converging with the international trends, by privileging seasonal and short-term entrances; more suitable for complying with the presumed expectations of public opinion (favorable to the attribution of some privileges to the descendants of Italian emigrants); or more congruent with the ambitious and essentially unrealistic objective of attracting highly qualified migrants or aspiring businessmen. None of these objectives seem to have been achieved, though, to the point that we can emit a judgment of essential failure, on the other hand "blurred" by the arguments that have accompanied various

modifications in the system. Moreover, since the beginning, the requirements quantification carried out through the mechanism of quotas was the object of strong dissatisfactions, with a peculiar alliance of the entrepreneur world and that of the pro-immigrants associations, joined in the denunciation of a system that was obstinately defined as restrictive, notwithstanding the significant increase, in the last decade, of the authorized entries [see Tab. 0.3], which were transforming Italy into one of the main official importers of labor in the international scenario.

Tab. 0.3 – Number of entrances authorized through the planning decrees, 1995-2014

	Non-seasonal work	Seasonal work	Self-employment	Privileged quotas*	Of which specific categories**	Looking for a job	Total
1995	15,000	10,000	-	-	-	-	25,000
1996	10,000	13,000	-	-	-	-	23,000
1997	20,000		-	-	-	-	20,000
1998	54,500	-	3,500	6,000	-	-	58,000
1999	54,500	-	3,500	6,000	-	-	58,000
2000	66,000		2,000	18,000	-	15,000	83,000
2001	27,000	39,400	2,000	15,000	5,000	15,000	89,400
2002	14,000	60,000	3,000	63,600	2,500	-	79,500
2003	9,700	68,500	-	72,300	1,300	-	79,500
2004	46,500	66,000	-	106,400	3,000	-	115,000
2005	115,500	45,000	-	145,500	18,500	-	179,000
2006	558,500	80,000	-	288,500	51,500	-	690,000
2007	167,000	80,000	3,000	127,100	112,900	--	252,000
2008	150,000	80,000	--	44,600	105,400		230,000
2009		80,000	--	--	--	--	80,000
2010		80,000	4,000		36,000	--	120,000
2011	98,080	60,000	--	68,080	30,000	--	158,080
2012	11,850	35,000	2,000	--	--	--	48,850
2013***	14,200	30,000	3,500	--	--	--	47,850
2014****		15,000					15,000

* Quotas assigned to countries subscribing agreements to contrast irregular migration. Inclusive of the quotas assigned to the countries which recently joined the EU. Included or not, in the various years, in the total volume of entrances for seasonal or non-seasonal work; **Categories such as professional nurses, managers, new technology experts, home help and assistants; *** Also including conversions of residence permits and other categories; **** Updated to May 2014.
Source: ISMU Documentation Center.

Planned as a concrete governance instrument of labor migrations – as attested by the debate that, especially at the beginning of the new millennium, saw as a protagonist the system of organized interests – the system of quotas at first ended up becoming just a functional equivalent of regularizations, practically being used to regularize the situation of those migrants who were already living and working in Italy – a metamorphosis of which the planning of year 2006 (whose capacity was similar to that

of 2002 "great regularization") was an emblem, and that at a certain point was even assimilated into the institutional jargon. Later on, in the last few years, before the crisis reached its peak, it has ended up losing any coherence with the entity and composition of the imported workforce requirements. As confirmatory evidence we can remember that the reduction of irregular presences registered in the last few years is not due to an actual increase of the planning measures' effectiveness, but rather to a reduction of the migratory pressure itself on the one side – caused by an awareness of the worsening of the occupational situation – and to a progressive but more and more evident evolution of the migration flows on the other side. Along with the component of migrants coming from other EU countries – now free from the restrictions of the migration laws – there has been an increase, in time, of the immigration for family reasons, a component that is destined, in over half of the cases, to offer itself to the labor market[6]. Secondly, there has been a growth – with a strong acceleration in very recent years and even more in the last months – of immigration for humanitarian reasons, because of its nature impossible to plan. And what has increased is also the capacity of the communities by now permanently settled in Italy of having recourse (often in a completely inappropriate way) to entrance and emergence measures: on this matter, eloquent are the job applications presented on the occasion of the latest flows decrees and regularizations, which showed the fictitious nature of a good part of the contracts subscribed to by the immigrants to obtain a residence permit[7]. In short, the introduction in the labor market continues, today like yesterday, to take place outside any measures of institutional regulation, with an impact whose results might be alarming. Actually, as the international experience has taught us, the introduction into the labor market of foreign nationals immigrating for family and humanitarian reasons is going to be really problematic, not only in view of the overall macro-economic picture, but also because we cannot take for granted that they possess those qualities of flexibility and hyper-adaptability that allowed for a fast inclusion of the first waves of immigrants.

However evaluated in its "theoretical" outline, the system designed by the Consolidation Act on immigration has ended up – at best – complying with the function of seconding the self-propulsive dynamics of migrations, and – at worst – feeding the illegal (and criminal) business that revolves around the regularization

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[6] We estimate this datum on the basis of the percentage of over-15-year-old immigrants holders of a residence permit for family reunion that in Lombardy have declared to be "active" (e.g. employed in any form or looking for a job) in the occasion of the latest ORIM (Regional Observatory for Integration and Multi-ethnicity) survey.
[7] With regard to this, the recurrence can be observed of applications referring to domestic workers, often males belonging to nationalities completely extraneous to this kind of collocation. The short, often *extremely* short, duration of these contracts has also been observed.

procedures. From this point of view, it can be defined as an emblematic case of "worst practice". However, while decreeing its failure, it is also necessary to mention two aspects. First of all, its merit must be recognized of having marked a breaking point in a European context that, at the time of its adoption, was dominated by restrictive orthodoxy, that is, by an almost complete closure towards economic migration, notwithstanding the numerous situations of job vacancies and demographic trends that were (and are) condemning the old continent to become older and older (UN, 2000); perhaps involuntarily, the initiative of the Italian legislators has contributed to reopen the debate on the matter, inaugurating a new season of migration policies.

The second aspect refers to the recognition that no measure, however well devised, could have worked in a system that, besides registering a completely abnormal diffusion of the underground economy (with its formidable power of attracting irregular immigration), presents a strong contamination with the culture of illegality and profound deficits in the action of governance (and control) of the labor market. As a matter of fact, when irregular immigration is attributed to the restrictive nature of the law, there is a tendency to underestimate the fact that it is a phenomenon by now deeply rooted in the migration cultures of foreign communities and in the organizational cultures of the entities that deal with them, and even of the institutions. What is certain is the fact that public opinion has hardly ever seen in massive immigration proof of vitality of the Italian economy and appreciated its unexpected capacity of attraction; rather, it has interpreted such heavy immigration as a demonstration of incapacity on the part of the authorities to exert effective control of the borders and real governance of the allocation processes of social opportunities, starting precisely with labor.

Finally, as it emerges from the above considerations, the legislative framework concerning both the entry and the sojourn of TCNs and their integration is defined at national level. In any case, several regions have enacted their own regulations, disciplining some topics included in their sphere of competence. In 1988 Lombardy passed a law (n. 38), devoted to "interventions for the protection of non-EU migrants and their families", integrating the previous 943/1986 on "norms on the placement and treatment of non-EU migrant workers and against illegal migrations". It is aimed at ensuring rights to work, social and health protection, together with the safeguard of cultural identity, vocational training and housing and supporting the process of migrants' integration into social life. It also established a consultative body for migrants' needs with a representation of the migrants' communities and of the organizations of the local civil society.

0.3. A statistical outline of the presence of TCNs in the region

Since the beginning of the migratory transition, Lombardy has played the role of major region of attraction and stabilization of migrant population. Actually, statistics show that foreigners and TCNs are not distributed evenly throughout the country, but they tend to concentrate in those regions which offer the greatest working opportunities; the Northwest regions record the highest number of presences (35% of the total), followed by the Northeast ones (26%), the Centre ones (25%) and the South ones (14%). As far as non-EU migrants are concerned, 594,115 live in the Northwest, 405,901 in the Northeast, 428,688 in the Center, 194,190 in the South and 72,225 in the Islands.

Moreover, on the whole, there exist important territorial gaps concerning both the development of the migration phenomenon within the Italian reality and the characters of the process of integration. In the regional context, in particular, we can distinguish: the metropolitan reality of Milan, with a tertiary and international profile; industrial provinces and districts such as Brescia, Bergamo, Como, Lecco, Monza-Brianza and Varese; the provinces of the South of the region (Cremona, Lodi and Mantua) where a large part of migrants are employed in the agriculture and cattle breeding sectors; Sondrio as a mountain area.

According to the data provided by Istat, resident foreigners in Lombardy are now more than one million, that is nearly one fourth of the foreigners resident in the whole country. They are particularly concentrated in the province of Milan (34.8%), followed by Brescia (15.8%) and Bergamo (11.6%). Once omitted EU countries (particularly Romanians, who are around 140,000), the main groups are Moroccan, Albanian, Egyptian, Chinese and Indian.

Lombardy is particularly attractive for both economic migrants (it hosts 26.5% of non-EU workers employed in Italy) and family migrants. Actually, numerous data sources confirm the progressive transformation of a population of "temporary workers" into a population of permanent residents and families. Nowadays, 22,5% of new births are of foreign origin. During 2012, 14,386 migrants living in Lombardy obtained Italian citizenship. Foreign students are 191,526 (13.7% of the total number of students), four times more than ten years ago. Among them, a growing percentage is represented by students born in Italy (currently 53.9%), who are the "real" second generation.

0.3.1. Distribution by nationality, gender, age and level of education

Since 2001, Lombardy has adopted a regional monitoring system (www.orimregionelombardia.it) based on a yearly survey on a representative sample (including also the component with no permit of stay) of over-14 migrants coming from so defined "countries with a high migratory pressure". According to the last survey, the immigrant population living in Lombardy at 1st July 2013 is estimated at 1,279,000 (+3,4% than one year before). Among them, only 87,000 (6.8% of the total) do not have a regular permit of stay.

As far as the single nationalities are concerned, the composition of the migrants' presence in Lombardy has been repeatedly changing during time, augmenting the incidence of the European sending countries. According to the last estimation, only 3 countries have more than 100 thousand units: Romania (174,000), Morocco (129,000) and Albania (120,000); six other countries register more than 50 thousands residents: Egypt (82,000), Philippines and China (both 65,000), India (58,000), Peru and Ukraine (both 55,000). From a dynamic standpoint, the group that during the XXI century has grown the most is the Ukrainian one, which registered an annual increase rate of 35%. Almost similar the growing trend for Romanians and Moldovans (22% and 21% respectively), followed by Ecuadorians (18%), Bangladesh, India and Pakistan (nearly 15%).

Tab. 0.4 – Estimation of the number of foreigners coming from high migratory pressure countries and living in Lombardy at 1st July 2013, by origin country and province of residence. First 60 countries

		VA	CO	SO	MI	MC	AM)	MB	BG	BS	PV	CR	MN	LC	LO	Tot.	%
East Europe	Romania	9,550	6,450	1,550	50,200	14,250	35,950	13,650	18,350	25,050	17,400	12,200	8,200	4,100	7,050	173,700	13,6
	Albania	13,900	5,100	700	27,950	5,800	22,150	7,600	15,700	24,400	8,600	4,650	4,750	3,400	3,300	120,050	9,4
	Ukraine	4,550	2,750	600	19,300	8,650	10,600	4,850	5,250	9,350	3,800	1,200	2,150	800	650	55,250	4,3
	Moldova	750	1,200	550	8,950	3,700	5,200	2,350	1,550	7,800	1,300	750	1,500	1,000	350	28,000	2,2
	Kosovo	250	500	250	1,200	250	900	50	2,750	5,400	50	100	50	1,700	50	12,300	1,0
	Bulgaria	650	350	100	6,400	1,600	4,800	1,300	750	650	950	350	200	150	300	12,200	1,0
	Poland	1,050	650	200	2,650	1,150	1,500	700	1,100	1,600	550	300	650	350	150	10,000	0,8
	Russia	700	650	150	3,250	2,150	1,100	500	550	850	350	150	200	250	150	7,750	0,6
	Serbia	400	200	50	1,250	650	600	150	1,250	1,700	150	650	450	200	150	6,650	0,5
	Macedonia	300	200	400	600	200	450	100	800	1,600	100	300	1,300	100	350	6,200	0,5
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	300	250	50	600	250	400	200	1,600	2,400	100	100	200	100	100	6,050	0,5
	Croatia	200	150	50	1,000	400	600	200	350	900	150	100	150	200	100	3,500	0,3
	Hungary	150	50	50	400	200	200	100	150	300	100	50	100	50	50	1,500	0,1
	Belarus	150	100	50	400	250	150	100	350	150	50	50	50	50	0	1,500	0,1
	Slovakia	100	50	0	400	200	250	100	150	100	100	50	50	50	0	1,200	0,1
	Montenegro	50	50	0	200	150	50	0	50	400	0	0	50	250	0	1,100	0,1
	Czech Republic	100	50	0	400	250	150	100	100	150	50	0	50	50	0	1,100	0,1
	Lithuania	100	50	0	350	200	150	50	100	150	100	50	50	50	50	1,050	0,1

Region	Country															Total	%
Asia	Philippine	1,000	2,450	50	54,450	45,500	9,000	1,150	1,150	2,450	850	250	550	300	250	64,850	5,1
	China	3,650	1,550	500	35,550	29,600	5,950	2,100	4,150	5,950	2,100	1,800	6,300	650	550	64,800	5,1
	India	850	450	250	2,900	1,200	1,700	400	11,800	18,100	900	8,700	11,550	650	1,500	58,000	4,5
	Pakistan	4,150	1,700	100	7,650	1,450	6,200	4,550	4,750	16,800	350	300	1,800	200	100	42,450	3,3
	Sri Lanka	1,700	1,900	0	23,300	17,300	6,050	2,150	550	2,950	600	200	650	400	200	34,700	2,7
	Bangladesh	2,150	350	50	8,550	7,300	1,300	2,400	1,800	3,000	300	50	3,350	400	300	22,750	1,8
	Turkey	450	3,550	100	2,500	1,200	1,350	350	200	100	400	200	100	450	150	8,450	0,7
	Iran	50	150	0	1,400	1,250	150	50	100	100	150	0	50	350	50	2,450	0,2
	Syria	150	300	0	1,150	350	800	150	150	100	150	50	0	0	50	2,300	0,2
	South Korea	0	0	0	1,600	550	1,050	50	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	1,900	0,1
	Thailand	100	100	50	500	250	250	150	250	300	100	100	50	50	50	1,700	0,1
	Lebanon	200	400	50	400	200	200	50	50	100	100	50	0	50	0	1,400	0,1
	Georgia	50	0	50	400	350	50	50	50	0	0	0	350	0	0	950	0,1
Africa	Morocco	10,950	6,850	2,250	23,000	9,250	13,750	8,650	25,300	23,350	5,650	5,900	9,100	5,200	2,950	129,100	10,1
	Egypt	1,400	1,300	100	55,000	33,350	21,650	3,200	3,350	6,150	4,950	2,650	300	1,000	2,750	82,100	6,4
	Senegal	1,950	1,250	200	6,250	2,200	4,050	2,000	12,700	9,500	850	950	750	2,500	500	39,400	3,1
	Tunisia	2,900	2,700	100	4,850	1,550	3,300	1,250	2,600	4,100	1,900	1,050	1,550	600	950	24,550	1,9
	Ghana	700	1,850	50	550	200	350	450	2,250	6,350	50	850	1,900	300	50	15,400	1,2
	Cote d'Ivoire	1,350	250	0	1,500	450	1,100	300	2,300	1,500	850	850	150	1,500	500	11,150	0,9
	Nigeria	600	700	0	1,600	600	950	450	1,700	2,600	400	700	1,400	200	500	10,850	0,9
	Burkina Faso	200	200	0	300	100	200	150	1,500	1,900	100	50	50	1,050	50	5,500	0,4
	Algeria	300	300	50	1,500	600	900	300	350	1,350	200	300	350	250	100	5,350	0,4
	Eritrea	50	50	0	2,800	2,100	700	50	300	50	50	100	0	150	100	3,700	0,3
	Mauritius	200	100	0	2,100	1,500	600	250	200	50	100	50	0	0	0	3,050	0,2
	Cameroon	150	50	0	750	400	350	150	100	450	650	50	50	150	300	2,800	0,2
	Togo	200	250	50	300	150	200	100	150	100	100	50	50	300	500	2,150	0,2
	Ethiopia	50	50	0	1,000	650	350	50	300	150	50	50	50	100	0	1,850	0,1
	Benin	100	100	0	150	50	150	100	100	250	150	0	0	200	50	1,200	0,1
	Guinea	50	50	0	250	100	100	50	250	250	50	50	50	50	0	1,050	0,1
	Somalia	50	0	0	600	450	150	0	150	100	0	0	0	0	0	950	0,1

Peru	2,950	1,250	200	38,950	22,950	15,950	4,150	1,350	900	1,800	750	100	1,250	950	54,600	4,3
Ecuador	3,200	1,250	50	31,450	14,900	16,550	4,950	1,900	550	2,700	550	50	950	1,200	48,850	3,8
Brazil	1,100	600	150	7,000	3,600	3,450	1,000	1,100	1,450	950	350	1,400	200	350	15,600	1,2
Bolivia	100	100	50	3,450	2,500	950	550	7,200	150	150	200	0	200	100	12,250	1,0
El Salvador	1,200	650	0	7,900	5,450	2,450	350	50	200	200	100	0	150	100	10,900	0,9
Rep, Dominican	1,100	600	100	2,600	1,300	1,350	700	450	350	900	100	150	450	150	7,700	0,6
Colombia	350	250	100	2,250	1,150	1,100	400	400	800	250	100	150	150	50	5,250	0,4
Cuba	350	250	100	1,700	750	950	450	600	650	300	200	200	150	150	5,100	0,4
Argentina	200	100	50	1,200	600	600	150	300	250	150	50	50	50	50	2,550	0,2
Venezuela	100	50	0	700	350	350	100	100	100	50	0	50	50	0	1,400	0,1
Chile	100	50	0	600	400	200	50	50	100	50	0	0	0	0	1,050	0,1
Mexico	50	50	0	450	250	200	50	100	50	50	50	0	50	0	900	0,1
Other countries	1,250	1,050	100	6,700	3,500	3,250	1,000	1,450	1,850	850	500	700	750	300	16,550	1,3
Total	81,050	54,000	9,700	473,350	257,950	215,400	77,150	144,600	198,500	64,300	49,300	63,650	34,400	28,700	1,278,700	100,0

The left margin label reads "Latin America" (rotated) for the first group of rows.

Source: Orim, 2013.

With respect to the distribution by gender, the female component, increasing in the most recent years, has reached, in 2013, 49% of the total. Considering the masculinity rate (that is the number of men out of 100 women), it is 104, coming close to a perfect balance between the two genders. The two components differ considerably with regard to the juridical condition: we count 99.9 regular residing males each 100 women but even 178 undocumented males each 100 women. Finally, concerning the reasons of stay, among men labor is largely the most important motive, accounting for 81%, while family reasons cover only 15.3% of permit holders. Among women, only one out of three holds a permit for work reasons, whereas 63.5% entered with a permit for family motives.

As for age distribution, the median age has now reached 36 years, for both men and women, following a tendency to growth that goes hand in hand with the increase of the migratory seniority. Particularly significant is the percentage of migrants over 40, that in the case of women coming from non-EU Eastern European countries reaches 47.6%. If we consider the moment of the arrival in Italy, the median age was 25 for men and 26 for women.

Tab. 0.5 – Estimation of the number of foreigners coming from high migratory pressure countries and living in Lombardy at 1st July 2013, by gender, geographic area of origin and age

		Median Age	*% Over 40*	*% Over 50*
Men	East Europe (EU)	36	43.3	12.0
	East Europe (non-EU)	36	40.2	14.0
	Asia	36	37.1	9.3
	North Africa	36	39.4	11.1
	Other Africa	35	33.4	10.9
	Latin America	35	33.2	10.4
	Total	*36*	*37.9*	*11.1*
Women	East Europe (EU)	36	37.0	12.9
	East Europe (non-EU)	38	47.6	16.9
	Asia	34	33.0	10.7
	North Africa	35	26.0	4.0
	Other Africa	33	26.4	4.8
	Latin America	38	43.8	16.7
	Total	*36*	*36.8*	*11.7*

Source: Orim, 2013.

Finally, as for the level of education, the tendency, for both genders, is that of a progressive reduction of the incidence of migrants with high levels of credentials.

Tab. 0.6 – Estimation of the number of foreigners coming from high migratory pressure countries and living in Lombardy at 1st July 2013, by gender and level of education

	All migrants			Non-EU migrants		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
None	18,182	12,427	30,609	16,388	9,880	26,268
Compulsory	231,858	175,610	407,469	203,542	145,257	348,799
High school	209,951	226,664	436,615	171,985	184,250	356,235
University	61,023	87,248	148,271	53,780	73,392	127,172
Total	521,014	501,950	1.022,963	445,695	412,779	858,475

Source: Orim, 2013.

0.3.2. Territorial distribution

According to the Istat data, non-EU foreigners holding a residence permit are distributed as follows, confirming the leading role of Milan, but also the relevance of the situations in Bergamo and Brescia, especially taking into account the size of the domestic population.

Tab. 0.7 – Non-EU citizens regularly resident in Lombardy, by reasons of entry and province of residence (1st January 2014)

	Work	Family	Study	Humanitarian	Other	Total
Varese	9,980	12,313	165	825	327	23,610
Como	9,219	9,089	573	595	703	20,179
Lecco	4,306	4,710	294	477	102	9,889
Sondrio	1,163	1,386	4	51	24	2,628
Milan	117,261	86,196	9,640	5,055	3,007	221,159
Bergamo	21,208	19,449	326	784	429	42,196
Brescia	22,247	21,125	286	1,000	478	45,136
Pavia	8,276	8,889	759	414	253	18,591
Lodi	3,505	3,163	39	605	71	7,383
Cremona	5,319	5,638	245	446	160	11,808
Mantua	9,972	9,213	83	317	138	19,723
Total Lombardy	212,456	181,171	12,414	10,569	5,692	422,302

Source: Istat, 2014.

Also ORIM data confirm that the city of Milan registers the main attractive power, with 204.4 migrants out of 1,000 inhabitants, followed by the province of Brescia

(159.1), Mantua (154.8), Cremona (136.5) and Bergamo (132.2). In global terms, the number of migrants for each 100 inhabitants has passed from 5 in 2001 to 13 in 2013.

Fig. 0.1 – Estimation of the number of foreigners coming from non-EU high migratory pressure countries and living in Lombardy by province; years 2006 and 2013 (thousands)

Source: Orim, various years.

0.3.3. *Distribution by occupational status, professional profile and level of qualification*

According to the official data provided by the Ministry of Labor, around one fourth of all employed migrant workers living in Italy are in Lombardy, and 26.5% of all employed non-EU workers. The main sectors of activity are represented by "Transports, communication, financial activities and other services" (due to the high presence of migrant workers employed as cleaners and other manual no-qualified profiles); "Hotel and restaurants", "Activities carried out by families and other forms of cohabitations", and "Constructions".

Tab. 0.8 – Occupational condition of 15-64 year old male foreigners coming from high migratory pressure countries and living in Lombardy at 1st July 2013 (%)

	EU East-Europe	Non EU East Europe	Asia	North Africa	Other Africa	Latin America	Total
Unemployed looking for a job	8.6	18.0	18.5	25.2	19.0	17.7	19.4
Student	5.8	5.3	4.1	5.2	5.3	4.3	4.9
Worker student	0.0	3.9	2.2	3.2	3.4	2.3	2.7
Housewife	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1
Regularly full time and permanent employed	48.1	43.0	34.6	29.0	34.4	35.1	35.4
Regularly part-time employed	8.6	5.6	9.4	6.7	7.8	6.5	7.6
Regularly fixed-term employed	5.1	2.2	7.0	3.8	6.7	9.9	5.6
Temporary unemployed with subside	0.5	1.9	1.9	1.8	4.9	2.3	2.2
Worker on temporary leave	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
Irregular stable worker	4.2	6.9	2.3	3.3	3.2	5.6	3.8
Irregular occasional worker	3.1	3.6	3.6	4.7	5.4	5.6	4.3
Para-subordinated worker	0.7	0.0	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.3	0.7
Regular independent worker	13.5	4.7	11.5	8.7	3.2	7.0	8.4
Irregular independent worker	0.0	0.4	0.7	3.6	4.3	0.8	1.9
Entrepreneur	0.0	1.5	2.5	2.0	0.1	0.3	1.5
Other non-working conditions	1.4	0.0	0.1	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.5
Cooperative associate	0.0	2.9	0.5	0.6	1.2	1.9	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Orim, 2013.

More deep information is offered by ORIM. About the distribution by occupational status of TCNs, the first observation to be made is that the male and the female components differ significantly with regard to both activity and employment rates. In particular we can observe that more than half of men (56.6%) have a regular employment, while this incidence declines at 46.2% for women. Decidedly changing over time is the weight of inactive population: women who do not offer themselves on the labor market are now almost a third of the total (31.4%); but also men in this

condition have grown up if compared with the situation before the beginning of the crises, and are now 7.9%. Unemployed men have even reached 20.4%; the percentage of women unemployed has grown slightly, reaching 11.1%. This landscape is the outcome of different strategies adopted respectively by men and women to cope with the weakening of job opportunities: the former, besides augmenting the exposure to the risk of unemployment, have addressed to the autonomous and entrepreneurial work; the latter have been victims of an effect of discouragement, and have left the labor market.

These data certainly depict migrants presence as less advantageous than it happened in the past. Anyway, in their evaluation it is important to note that, considering the continuing arrivals of new migrants, even during the most acute phases of the crisis, the number of TCNs employed in the region has continued to growth, in parallel with a decrease in the number of the Italian employed and in the total number of employed (Italian plus foreigners). As a result, the Lombardy labor market has gained a more and more multiethnic and multinational composition, a trend particularly evident in those sectors of activity which register the highest concentration of migrant workers. Moreover, unemployment too has a more and more multiethnic configuration, and the growing number of unemployed migrants – a phenomenon until recently obscured by the rapidity and the ampleness of the process of migrants insertion into the labor market – now poses a new and unexpected challenge to the local employment services. Finally, Tables 0.10 and 0.11 present the distribution by professional profile, confirming the high level of segregation for both men and women in the typical "migrants' jobs".

Tab. 0.9 – Occupational condition of 15-64 year old female foreigners coming from high migratory pressure countries and living in Lombardy at 1st July 2013 (%)

	EU East-Europe	Non EU East Europe	Asia	North Africa	Other Africa	Latin America	Total
Unemployed looking for a job	7.4	12.5	9.8	8.7	18.3	9.7	10.4
Student	2.7	6.6	4.9	5.4	8.3	5.2	5.0
Worker student	0.0	1.3	0.9	3.8	1.2	2.7	1.6
Housewife	12.8	13.3	34.7	44.5	27.1	4.1	10.5
Regularly full time and permanent employed	30.1	38.0	17.2	10.8	12.7	31.2	30.3
Regularly part-time employed	15.1	8.4	15.9	9.1	16.7	17.8	10.3
Regularly fixed-term employed	2.9	5.2	3.5	3.2	2.9	12.2	5.3
Temporary unemployed with subside	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.2	1.6	0.9	0.5
Worker on temporary leave	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.3	1.0	2.3	0.7
Irregular stable worker	11.0	4.9	1.6	2.4	2.3	5.7	4.9
Irregular occasional worker	9.2	3.3	0.9	5.6	3.8	4.8	4.6
Para-subordinated worker	1.9	2.7	0.4	1.5	1.3	0.8	1.5
Regular independent worker	1.4	1.2	8.4	3.2	0.3	2.1	5.8
Irregular independent worker	1.1	0.7	0.0	0.1	1.2	0.0	0.5
Entrepreneur	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.4
Others non-working conditions	0.0	0.0	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Cooperative associate	2.9	0.2	0.5	0.3	1.3	0.5	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Orim, 2013.

Tab. 0.10 – Professional profiles of 15-64 year old male foreigners coming from high migratory pressure countries and living in Lombardy at 1st July 2013 (%)

	EU East-Europe	Non EU East Europe	Asia	North Africa	Other Africa	Latin America	Total
Unqualified factory workers	5.1	9.8	14.6	9.7	23.6	12.2	12.8
Unqualified services workers	4.9	8.3	12.1	12.0	18.3	24.1	13.1
Specialized workers	7.3	7.5	0.8	3.2	8.7	2.6	4.2
Building workers	28.5	34.4	3.5	19.7	3.0	6.5	14.6
Agricultural workers	2.6	4.1	12.0	3.1	5.5	1.1	5.6
Cleaners	0.0	1.1	4.6	5.0	4.1	11.0	4.5
Clerical workers	1.2	2.1	0.5	1.3	2.4	0.5	1.3
Sales and services clerks	0.0	2.7	6.7	2.2	2.5	0.5	3.1
Shopkeepers	3.8	2.0	12.4	10.6	10.1	3.6	8.5
Catering and hotel operators	1.7	6.4	18.5	11.8	5.2	8.0	10.6
Artisans	13.4	8.3	3.2	9.3	5.1	4.3	6.9
Transport operators	23.9	5.2	1.8	3.8	4.4	13.0	6.3
Housemaids	0.0	2.3	3.8	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.6
Home-base care workers	1.3	0.5	0.2	1.0	1.2	1.0	0.8
Healthcare and social assistants	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	5.5	0.7
Doctors and paramedic professions	2.1	0.8	0.7	0.0	0.4	0.7	0.6
Intellectual professions	2.3	3.1	1.0	1.5	1.8	2.5	1.8
Other professions	1.9	1.8	3.5	5.2	2.8	2.0	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: **Orim, 2013.**

Tab. 0.11 – Professional profiles of 15-64 year old female foreigners coming from high migratory pressure countries and living in Lombardy at 1st July 2013 (%)

	EU East-Europe	Non EU East Europe	Asia	North Africa	Other Africa	Latin America	Total
Unqualified factory workers	2,4	1,8	4,7	4,1	8,5	2,0	3,0
Unqualified services workers	2,3	2,5	4,5	4,4	1,4	1,4	2,6
Specialized workers	0,5	0,0	0,3	2,1	0,0	1,5	0,7
Building workers	0,0	0,1	0,0	1,6	0,0	0,0	0,2
Agricultural workers	0,9	0,8	0,0	0,0	1,7	0,0	0,5
Cleaners	8,9	5,7	4,5	22,4	22,1	6,0	8,9
Clerical workers	3,7	5,8	4,3	1,6	0,0	4,5	4,0
Sales and services clerks	4,8	7,4	9,6	6,5	5,5	2,9	5,9
Shopkeepers	2,1	1,6	5,0	3,0	2,6	1,5	2,4
Catering and hotel operators	15,4	12,1	15,4	8,2	12,1	16,3	14,0
Artisans	0,0	1,8	1,9	0,5	0,1	0,3	0,8
Transport operators	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,6	0,0	0,0	0,2
Housemaids	18.0	19.5	30.9	15.9	17.9	20.5	20.8
Home-base care workers	18,7	26,3	7,0	5,8	5,1	16,5	15,9
Baby sitters	3,3	2,5	4,3	3,1	4,3	3,8	3,4
Healthcare and social assistants	7,6	6,0	1,7	3,7	11,6	12,7	7,4
Doctors and paramedic professions	0,3	1,4	1,2	2,0	2,7	3,0	1,6
Intellectual professions	4,1	3,1	3,8	6,2	3,3	2,3	3,6
Other professions	7,1	1,6	0,8	7,4	1,0	4,6	4,0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Orim, 2013.

0.4. Conclusions and implications for the following parts

During the last 30 years Lombardy has been turning itself from a substantially mono-ethnic society into a very heterogeneous one, with about 180 origin countries represented within its resident population and an incidence of foreign workers that reached, right during the recession, about 20% of the total active population; within this group, about 80% come from a non-EU country. Thanks to the size of its territory and to the diversification of its economy, the region has demonstrated a strong and continuous attractive power and has witnessed the progressive dissemination of migrant workers in different sectors of activity and in different jobs. Also, at an individual level, several examples of upward mobility (particularly through the move to independent and entrepreneurial work, sometimes also through the recognition of the titles acquired abroad) have been registered, which take shape as migratory seniority grows, and outline the paths to emulate. However, at a general level, the needs expressed by firms and families seem to unavoidably reroute foreign labor towards those segments which are already widely characterized by its presence and which, in some cases, satisfy the need to cover jobs deserted by Italian workers (such as it happens in the typical case of home-caretakers). The result is that no progress has been able to actually change the general picture of TCNs labor market participation, that continues to be characterized by high horizontal and vertical segregation into specific sectors and jobs; discrimination (with regard to retributions, working conditions and career paths); and widespread over-qualification. Moreover, all these phenomena have been exacerbated during the current crisis, parallel with a progressive augmentation of unemployed migrants and more and more evidence of the risks of social dumping implied by migrants' adaptability and by the continual growth of migrant labor offer.

At the same time, more than 191,000 migrants' offspring (the majority of them born in Italy) are attending the regional school system (and are now visible also in the tertiary and university levels of education), and many others have already entered the labor market, bringing with them hopes and expectations completely different from those of their parents, mostly employed in "migrants' jobs".

As the Italian one, the regional model of insertion reveals itself as characterized by ambiguities and contradictions, representing an emblematic case of what has been defined, in the premises of DIVERSE project, "the unresolved paradox of European

legacy"[8]. As we have seen, in a short period of time, there has been a shift from a substantial invisibility of immigrant labor to a sort of celebration of its role and of the idea of complementarity, which would soon become an unquestionable theorem both in the interpretation of inclusion paths, and in the shaping of principles on which to base the governance of migration and interethnic society.

It is therefore in this situation, corresponding to a particularly positive phase for the Italian labor market[9], notwithstanding its atavistic territorial unbalances and the chronic difficulties experienced by some categories of workers (women and young people *in primis*), that the foundations were laid of a model of integration (and society) *destined to go towards a "demand-based immigration" leeway*, which is a widespread orientation intending to base the right to reside in Italy on the requirements (quotas) of *labor demand*. The emphasis on recruitment difficulties denounced by the enterprises, the call to necessity of "arms" and "hearts" to employ in assistance work, the appeal to a duty of reception that would find grounds in the willingness of immigrants to do the jobs with the lowest social gradient, together with the inevitable underlining of the immigrants' contribution to the balances of the social security system, are all ingredients of a sort of "liturgy" strongly rooted in the general opinion: it is enough to think that still nowadays, notwithstanding the dramatic overall employment situation, more than six Italians out of ten agree with the statement that "immigrants are necessary to do the work that Italians don't want to do"[10]. It is a conviction that has on its side the persistent absorption capacity of the labor market, capable to beat, as we have seen, any attempt at quota restrictions.

In this picture, *the massive inclusion of immigrant workforce has represented the main factor of transformation of the Italian labor market*, supplying a quite relevant contribution in occupational terms and also to the production of GDP and to the phenomena of job creation and entrepreneurial development. However, this process also contributed to reinforce the segmentation of a labor market traditionally characterized by division lines mirroring the ascribed features and the peculiar geography of the country's development. If it is difficult to draw a line between the function of "lubricant" carried out by immigrant labor and its presence in the area of black economy, of "gray" work and, especially, of "bad work" – with scarce protection and low pay –, what seems to be indisputable is the fact that *what was generated is a low-profile integration model,*

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[8] L. Zanfrini, *I "confini" della cittadinanza: perché l'immigrazione disturba*, in R. Lodigiani, L. Zanfrini, (a cura di) *Riconciliare Lavoro Welfare e Cittadinanza*, "Sociologia del Lavoro", n. 117, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2010, pp. 40-56.
[9] The period between 1995 and 2008 can be considered, as a matter of fact, one of the "golden seasons" of the Italian labor market from the point of view of the overall growth of employment.
[10] This datum emerged from the Survey on "Discriminations on the basis of gender, sexual orientation and ethnic group belonging" referred to in the 2013 Istat Annual Report.

constrained in the limits of labor participation, inescapably destined to be questioned with the first "winds of recession". It is not by chance that, more than on the constantly growing volumes of immigrant employment, in these months the focus has been especially on immigrant unemployment. The latter is a disruptive phenomenon, because it marks the "fall" of the "demand-based immigration" theorem and clearly shows a structural disadvantage that was obscured for a long time: the occupational vulnerability of foreign nationals, synthesized by the differential in the unemployment rates as compared to the natives, which has always been unfavorable to the former, even if never before to such a strong extent. As a matter of fact, if at the beginning the consequences of the crisis were surprisingly modest – thanks to the concentration of immigrants in "ethnicized" jobs, and as such protected by symbolical barriers from the entrance of indigenous workers –, the duration of the crisis has finally rendered unsustainable even those strategies of contraction of labor cost and deterioration of the general quality of employment that seemed to have "favored" foreign laborers.

Thus, an awareness emerges: the degradation of the immigrant occupational picture—certainly to be ascribed to the effects of the longest and most severe recession since the post-war period—is also *the result of a development model that has imprudently adopted a "low path"*, employing migrants in (by now) mature sectors on the way to decline (and also in less efficient businesses), without considering their human and work destiny, the prospects of mobility and professional development, and without encouraging those investments (in the field, for instance, of training and of certification of skills) that could now be strategic for a reinsertion of those who lost their job. Basically, the degradation of the immigrants' occupational situation is also the bitter fruit of that "demand-based immigration" which, making the requirements of "adaptable" labor force the fundamental criterion for migration governance, *has ended up leaving to the market, to its rules and vices, the task of dealing with an epochal phenomenon like that of human mobility.* Apart from the ambivalent picture given by statistics – which register the growth of foreign nationals employed together with the growth of the unemployed, the increase in the absolute figures of employment together with the decrease in the employment rate of foreigners –, these years of crisis have given us a certain awareness: *the same factors called in question in the past to interpret the high level of employability of immigrants and the necessity to resort to their services* – e.g.: adaptability to do certain jobs; acceptance of hard working conditions; employment in small businesses and traditional sectors; concentration in the sectors more affected by recruitment difficulties – *today explain their exposure to the risk of losing their job or ending up in even more precarious work situations.* In such a new scenario, *work, from being source*

(and requirement) of citizenship, runs the risk of turning into an instrument of exclusion and a stumbling block on the path to the construction of an interethnic society.

In fact, a relatively easy access to jobs has led many people to undervalue the risks involved in a scarcely universalistic market driven by informal and spontaneous mechanisms. A little hastily, perhaps – even though with an undisputable interpretative effectiveness – they came, in the past years, to read the Italian inclusion model (and particularly the Lombardy one) in terms of opposition between a mostly achieved economic citizenship, even considered as "strong" by somebody, and a weak and inadequate social citizenship as regards both access to houses and, more in general facilities and social relations. The strong workforce demand denounced by companies and families contributed to support the idea according to which the extra-professional sphere was the most critical side of integration. Over time, instead, it has become increasingly clear that social integration does not only retroact on the results of economic inclusion processes and on the professional projects and investments themselves. As becomes to emerge, a job in itself is not necessarily a source of "citizenship", but may give rise to discrimination, on the one hand, and nourish interethnic conflicts, on the other hand. Discrimination is an issue that consequently takes a new meaning. Differently from what social closure theories had assumed, according to which discrimination of minority groups would undoubtedly benefit majority groups (strategically enjoying in this way the best opportunities and benefit from the low-cost services provided by immigrants), discrimination produces costs and consequences in terms of loss of competitiveness and deficit of social cohesion.

It would be misleading, however, to interpret these phenomena as the consequence of a deliberately unfavorable, or racist, attitude on the part of Italian employers. As showed by the same experiences object of our cases studies [see § 2.4 and 2.5], several employers have shown an empathetic aptitude towards TCNs workers, supporting them (and sometimes also their family members) in the process of insertion inside and often also outside the workplace. As a matter of fact, *the discrimination, in all its forms, that affects immigrants is a result that is perfectly coherent with the processes of social and institutional construction of migrants, with the migration patterns and cultures shared by the main foreign communities* (which depict Italy as a country where it is relatively easy to find a job, provided the foreigner adapts to do, precisely, an "immigrant's job") and, not the least, *with the arguments usually adduced to legitimize their presence and their right to be received*, which unfailingly evoke the willingness to do the jobs rejected by Italians. The problem, it must be noted, involves not only social equity and the theme of workers' rights. *It is the competitive capacity itself of the economy to be severely compromised, and with it the future of our regime of accumulation and of the systems of social*

protection. What must be highlighted is that it is precisely the conditions of (under)utilization of human resources that make Italy risk "missing the train" of the economic recovery, which in the developed countries will be founded on activities marked by a high level of professional and technological content[11]. It is a risk reflected clearly by the relation between immigrants and the labor market, as in a kaleidoscope.

It is only by starting from such awareness, and therefore from the necessity to promote a change first of all of a cultural kind, that it will be possible to learn a "lesson" from the crisis, *thus inaugurating a new and more mature season in the relation between immigration and the labor market*, where the former will not be seen exclusively as an adaptable and cheap work reservoir, but will rather be finally considered as a potential to be valued. The priority that till now has been given to the issue of entry selection should therefore give way to a reflection on the most suitable way to manage migrants' impact on the labor market and to valorize their potential through the recognition of their skills and competences, through the promotion of their role as a driving force for the internationalization of local and national economies, and, last but not least, through the adoption of strategies of human resource management inspired by the perspective of cross-cultural management. But, first of all, it is indispensable to rethink the idea of integration, which until today has been strongly unbalanced towards the purely working dimension, by promoting a fuller and more equilibrate conception of migrants' membership in the Italian and Lombardy society.

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[11] E. Reyneri, F. Pintaldi, *Dieci domande su un mercato del lavoro in crisi*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2013.

FIRST PART:

THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS' SKILLSKNOWLEDGE, COMPETENCE RECOGNITION

1.1 Process of data collection

A preliminary explorative activity was conducted. Through desk analysis the main features of the national and regional contexts were identified, as well as some interesting practices to be explored. In this stage, 3 interviews with experts of the theme were conducted, so as to seize some general indications for organizing the field work in Lombardy. Moreover, synergies were activated with the actions carried out in WP4 of the Diverse project: through the participation in the stakeholders' meetings envisaged in this WP, useful information was collected on the regional panorama and related practices, and useful contacts with relevant stakeholders were created. Within this stage, the lack of scientific literature on the issue of competence recognition with specific reference to migrants was observed.

Thanks to this overview, some main sectors of interest were identified: institutions, labor market, training system, education system, and third sector/migrant associations. Within these fields, some key informants were selected to be interviewed. Progressively, through these interviews, new suggestions emerged about further key informants to be involved and practices to be explored.

Overall, 15 interviews were carried out: 3 with experts in the broad field of competence recognition, 6 more specifically on the theme of foreign qualification recognition, and 6 more specifically on the theme of competence assessment or certification. A list of the organizations involved and of the role played by their representatives is provided below:

1 - Independent expert in research, planning and assessment of training programs and systems;

2 - Person in charge of the area of learning validation and certification at Istituto Italiano di Valutazione;

3 - Person in charge of the continuous vocational learning and of European policies for training at the Research and Training Department of CGIL (national trade union);

4 - Director of Cimea: Italian ENIC - NARIC center;

5 - Coordinator of the area "Authonomy of the Milan Provincial Education Agency", under the Regional Education Agency;

6 - Person in charge of the service for qualification recognition at Eupolis Lombardia (technical agency of the Lombardy Region);

7 - President of the Filipino Nurses Association in Milan;

8 - Manager of the Structure for Accreditation, Controls and Communication of the D.G. Education, Training and Labor of the Lombardy Region;

9 - Coordinator of the area "Services for labor" of the Secondary school for Trade;

10 - Lombardy reference person for the program "Labor's International Mobility" at Italia-Lavoro S.P.A. (technical agency of the Ministry for Labor and Social Policies);

11 - Person in charge of the area "Competence valorization" at the Politecnico Foundation (organization linked to the academic world);

12 - Manager at Formedil (national organization for vocational training in the construction sector);

13 - Multi-cultural consultant and in charge of external relations with migrant communities at Bonboard (consulting and HR recruiting firm);

14 - Business Development Manager for Healthcare & Medical, at ManpowerGroup (temporary labor agency);

15 - Person in charge of the International Students Office at the Università Statale in Milan.

The recruitment of key informants was easy as all people contacted showed a particular interest in the themes at issue. The most critical aspect was the high heterogeneity of the information collected, which rendered the analysis and re-elaboration phase particularly challenging.

1.2   Legislative and administrative framework at national and regional level

1.2.1   Recognition of formal qualifications acquired in Third Countries

In Italy the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad is regulated with great caution, and the related legislative framework, although quite complete, is very complex: the system of recognition is based on a case-by-case approach and

procedures vary and are entrusted to different bodies depending on how the foreign qualification is to be utilized.

A) The objective is participating in a public competition. EU citizens, as well as TCN holders of EC residence permit for long-term residents, TCN holders of short term residence permit who are family members of an EU citizen, and TCN holders of residence permit for international protection, are entitled to be employed in the Italian public administration, provided that their position does not imply the exercise of public powers. If their qualifications were acquired abroad, in order to participate in public competitions, they have to address a request of qualification's equivalence to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Department of Public Function[12].

If on a normative basis rules and procedures are well defined and structured in this concern, very scarce information exists within single administrations responsible for launching and managing competition announcements and for providing applicants with the necessary information. For instance, words such as qualifications' "equipollence", "equivalence" and "correspondence", having very different meanings in legal terms, are often confused and utilized incorrectly[13]. This disorients potential applicants who risk undertaking wrong procedures and failing their objective.

B) The objective is practicing in Italy a regulated profession with professional qualification. Non-regulated professions are those whose rules are not defined by national law. From a legal standpoint these can be practiced without possessing a specific educational or professional qualification. Thus holders of abroad qualifications do not need to have it recognised for this kind of professional practice in Italy. On the contrary, regulated professions are those whose practice is regulated by national law. The latter defines deontological norms and necessary educational qualifications, as well as the training requirements, such as internship and/or state examination, to be carried out for achieving a professional qualification, necessary for professional practice. According to EU directive 2005/36/EC, professional qualifications issued by

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[12] Article 38 of Decree Law 165/2001, modified by Article 7 of law 97/2013.

[13] *Equipollence* refers to the fact that a foreign qualification is recognized as having equal legal value as one issued by the education system of the receiving country; this means that an equipollent qualification is equalized, for all legal effects, to a qualification acquired in Italy (it becomes as an Italian qualification) and it will be possible to spend this equipollent qualification for any aim (participation in a public competition, enrollment in a certain level of the education system, etc.). *Equivalence* involves a foreign qualification being recognized as valid, for its educational level and contents, only and specifically for a certain aim (e.g.: participation in a public competition or enrollment in a certain level of the education system). Finally, we have *correspondence* when a foreign qualification is recognized as having the same level as another one issued by the education system of the receiving country (i.e.: the same level in the educational system); here, the specific contents of the learning route leading to the qualification acquisition are not considered.

an EU country must be recognized by any other member state[14]. This means that holders of such qualifications have the right to have them assessed and subsequently recognized by the Italian competent authority[15]. Requests of recognition, containing documents testifying the applicants' previous educational and training achievements must be addressed to the Ministry responsible for the professional sector at issue. In some cases, if meaningful differences exist between the educational and training systems of the two countries involved, the competent authority may express a partial acceptance of the request, subordinating full recognition to an internship period or/and an examination. The recognition of professional qualifications is sufficient for professional practice: the legal recognition of previous educational qualifications is not necessary to this end. Nevertheless, after the professional qualification's recognition, it is generally necessary to register within the concerned professional order, an operation which may request further tests (usually linguistic examinations).

When dealing with professional qualifications issued by non EU countries, very similar rules and procedures are applied. The only difference is that recognition is not an obligation for Italy: the Italian competent authority may express a full or partial acceptance of the request, but also a denial, if some requirements, mainly linked to previous education and training, are not fulfilled by the applicant. In this case, the person willing to practice a regulated profession in Italy has to access the Italian educational system and carry out all the necessary steps for obtaining the required educational and professional qualifications.

Also in this case very well defined rules and procedures are defined by the Italian law, but a lack of training and of information on the part of the personnel in charge can be observed. Hence TCNs willing to undergo the recognition process risk having to face quite a chaotic situation. This is why this possibility is scarcely used[16]. Another reason is linked to the cost and the uncertain outcome of the procedure, as well as the conviction that the Italian labor market is not able to valorise TCNs' competences.

C) The objective is having access to higher education, pursuing university studies in Italy or achieving an Italian academic qualification. In 1997 Italy signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention[17]. This Convention stipulates that abroad degrees and periods

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[14] Guida per l'utente. Direttiva 2005/36/CE. Tutto quello che vorreste sapere sul riconoscimento delle qualifiche professionali. 66 domande, 66 risposte.
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/guide/users_guide_it.pdf.
[15] Riconoscimento delle qualifiche professionali - Guida all'utente –
http://www.politicheeuropee.it/attivita/17576/introduzione.
[16] R. Ricucci, *Il riconoscimento delle competenze: un percorso ancora complesso*, Studi e Migrazioni, XLVII, n. 179, 2010, pp. 542-557.
[17] Council of Europe/UNESCO, Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region.

of study must be recognised unless substantial differences can be proved by the institution in charge, and that students and graduates are guaranteed fair procedures. In Italy the Lisbon Recognition convention was acknowledged and implemented by law 148 of 2002. The authorities competent for the assessment of foreign qualifications are Universities, who are autonomous and have full jurisdiction on this matter. A didactic committee, composed of professors teaching in the field at issue, will analyse in detail the applicant's previous studies and qualifications and will decide on the application's outcome. In most cases an individualized program is proposed (for instance undergoing some examinations and preparing a degree thesis), for filling the gaps linked to the differences between the educational systems of the two countries involved. In case of recognition refusal, the reasons for this choice must be officially communicated to the applicant.

With reference to the higher education system, recognition rules and procedures are quite well defined and implemented. Nevertheless, also in this case, greater effort should be devoted to spreading more correct information among the personnel in charge. The procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications necessary for accessing the primary and secondary educational levels can be activated upon request to the Provincial Education Agency, representing the Ministry for Education, University and Research (MIUR) in every Italian province. These rules and procedures are well defined from a legal standpoint and managed quite effectively within the school system's administration. If the requested documentation is correct, the outcome will be positive.

1.2.2 *Assessment, recognition and validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning*

The 2001 Reform of the fifth article of the Italian Constitution[18] established that both State and Regions are responsible, with different roles and competences, for both the field of education and training, and that of professions regulation. This implies a very high level of fragmentation in both the fields of formal learning and non-formal and informal learning. Many different institutions are involved in the regulation of these systems, such as the Ministry for Education, University and Research (MIUR), the Ministry for Labour and Social Policies (MLSP), and all Italian Regions. The division of competences is very complex, and this generates several conflicts and a high

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[18] Constitutional law 3/2001.

heterogeneity in rules and mechanisms adopted. Concerning specifically non-formal and informal learning, according to the 2001 reform, the State should have defined a general frame containing a set of guidelines for regional implementation, but for several years this task was not accomplished. Only very recently, mainly due to solicitations from the EU, has the State developed a national legislative framework. Law no. 94/2012[19] contains indications for the definition of general norms and basic levels of performance for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, with reference to the national system of competence certification. In addition, Law Decree 13/2013 defines the minimal levels of service of the national system of competence certification in terms of process, attestation and system, establishes the national repertory of professional standards, formulated in accordance with the EQF[20], and institutes the National Technical Committee for the control of the respect of minimal standard levels on the part of the responsible bodies. This committee, involving the Conference of Regions, MLSP, MIUR and the Ministry for Economic Development is currently working, with the technical support of ISFOL[21], for the homogenisation of the various regional contexts. This is necessary because, during the long period of immobility on a national level, some regions remained in a situation of stasis while some others started acting on an autonomous basis, developing very different legislative frameworks and methodological tools. The current challenges for the National Technical Committee consist in accelerating the adoption of a validation system in the less advanced regions, and the matching of all the existing regional repertories of professional standards with the national system of reference[22]. All Regions agreed that certifications issued within the framework of any regional system will be recognized on the whole national territory.

Lombardy is among the most advanced regions in this field. Anticipating the national legislation, it elaborated a Regional Framework of Professional Standards (QRSP - Quadro Regionale degli Standard Professionali), adopted in 2008[23] and constantly updated with further profiles and competences. This framework is formulated in accordance with the EQF and matches with the national framework. Moreover, through an experimentation period carried out from 2008 to 2011 and involving about

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[19] In particular, article 4: Further provisions concerning the Labour Market.

[20] R. Pettenello, Quadro *europeo delle qualifiche per l'apprendimento permanente EQF Lussemburgo*, Ufficio delle pubblicazioni ufficiali delle Comunità europee, 2009.

[21] Institute for the Development of Workers' Professional Training: a research institution under the Ministry for Labour and Social Policies.

[22] C. Bettoni, "Lavori *in corso" per la costruzione del sistema nazionale di certificazione delle competenze*, Relazione al Seminario Europa CIOFS/FP, Genova, 11 settembre, 2013.
http://www.ciofs-fp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/slide-intervento-Costanza-Bettoni-Genova-11.11.2013.pdf

[23] Regional decree no. 8486/2008.

500 beneficiaries, a regional model was set up for the certification of non-formal and informal learning[24].

An interesting aspect of the Lombardy certification model is that, differently from other regional systems, it certifies single competences and not complete professional profiles. The choice is linked to the conviction that often organisations in the labour market do not need full professional profiles, but rather versatile workers able to cover different roles and to spend their competences in various fields. In this way, the certification process gives individuals the opportunity to valorise their competences even when aggregated in non-standard clusters.

Nevertheless, according to our key informants, the process set up by the Lombardy Region for the certification of non-formal and informal learning is undergone by a very limited number of people. This possibility is still unknown to the majority of potential beneficiaries, i.e. both workers and employers. Certifications recognised on a regional basis have an institutional value, but do not yet have a relevant social value. This process is very time demanding and complex, and its outcome in terms of better employability is currently quite uncertain. Hence few people, and in particular a scant number of TCNs, are interested in undertaking this endeavour. For rendering this system a real opportunity for workers and the labour market, much more effort should be devoted by the Lombardy Region for its promotion among employers.

Such interventions would be beneficial in the whole national territory, where the culture of competence certification is very scant. In this regard, it is relevant to mention the scarce valorisation of the Citizen Training Booklet (*libretto formativo del cittadino*). This tool was instituted by the national Law 30/2003 and is aimed at recording, synthesizing and documenting the competences acquired by individuals in formal, informal and non-formal contexts. This tool could be particularly useful for individuals who, such as TCN migrants, experiment some sort of disadvantage in accessing the labor market[25]. Nevertheless, after more than ten years from its institution, this tool is hardly known by most citizens and stakeholders, and its utilization within the vocational and training sector – and, even more, in the labor market – is really uncommon.

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[24] Regional decree no. 9380/2012.

[25] L. Zanfrini, P. Bonetti, *Italy, Recognition of qualifications and competences of migrants*, 2013;(N/A): 88-118. http://hdl.handle.net/10807/41799.

1.2.3 Bodies, procedures, instruments envisaged for TCNs' SKC recognition

As has been seen, as for recognition of professional qualifications acquired abroad, the national legislation and related procedures are framed based on the country were the qualification was issued, rather than on the nationality of the holder of the qualification. Nevertheless, in this respect, it is worth mentioning that since 2002[26] professional nurses to be hired within Italian private or public health structures are included among the few categories of TCN workers who are admitted into Italy outside the limits imposed by the quota system. This is due to the shortcoming of professional nurses which characterized the Italian labor market until the recent economic recession, and subsequent cuts to the public expense, which has recently interrupted this trend. In order to activate the procedures for these professionals entry to Italy, their future employers have to address to the Provincial Direction of Labor[27] a request of authorization for hiring TCN workers residing abroad, while activating the procedures for their professional qualifications recognition.

As the recruitment of nurses from third countries had been a very widespread practice in the recent past, several interesting experiences were activated in this concern, also with respect to qualifications recognition. Some of these experiences will be described in paragraph 1.4.

The normative framework for the recognition of academic qualifications does not envisage any difference for qualifications acquired in EU or non-EU countries. Nevertheless, the more the information provided by the applicant is comprehensive and clear, the more his/her opportunities to have the previously acquired knowledge valorised increase. Hence the assessment of qualifications acquired in EU countries is likely to produce more positive outcomes, thanks to the description of previous learning in terms of the ECTS-European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. Moreover, the evaluation procedure may result to be facilitated when involving diplomas acquired in countries which signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention: these countries' higher educational systems should be familiar with the instrument of the "diploma supplement", that is, a document providing a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the student's studies. In addition, with some non-EU countries bilateral agreements have been stipulated that may imply some facilitations in procedures for the recognition of academic qualifications, thanks to the previous exchange of mutual information on the educational systems involved.

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[26] Law 189 /2002, modifying article 27 of Decree Law 286/1998.
[27] Territorial body of the Ministry for Labor and Social Policies.

Moreover, as for the valorization of TCNs competence, it is important to mention that, through the European Integration Fund 2007-2013, the Ministry for Labor and Social Policies promoted and supported pre-departure linguistic and professional trainings addressed to would-be TCN migrants and aimed at facilitating their entry and integration in Italy. These projects are conceived within the framework of article 23 of Law Decree no. 286/1998, which, within the quota system, envisages the formulation of priority lists for the entry of migrants who undertook ad hoc education and training programs in their countries of origin. These interventions are generally organized in collaboration with countries which stipulated bilateral agreements with Italy concerning migration policies. Within this field some activities of competence certification were carried out, mostly for the recognition of the learning accomplished through the trainings promoted by these projects. In few cases the initiatives envisaged some orientation and counseling activities for the emersion and recognition of competences acquired by would-be migrants also in non-formal and informal contexts[28].

Within this framework it is important to mention the program "Labor's International mobility" promoted by Italia-Lavoro S.P.A. The latter is a technical agency of the Ministry for Labor and Social Policies, which promotes and coordinates actions in the field of policies for labor, employment and social inclusion. The program "Labor's International Mobility" is aimed at supporting the creation of an international network of services for labor. In particular, the program is intended to develop, within third countries with whom bilateral agreements were signed for the management of migrations, a network of coordination offices for labor and migration, aimed at fostering the collaboration between employment services in the countries of origin and Italian public and private bodies dealing with the entry of TCNs for work reasons. Within this framework, some programs were implemented for the pre-departure professional and linguistic training of TCN would-be migrants. Such initiatives showed a lot of weaknesses, firstly for the difficulty in matching labor supply and demand (and hence in offering to trained TCNs the actual possibility to migrate), secondly for the ineffectiveness of the professional training provided, which showed its limitations when some of these TCNs dealt concretely with the Italian labor market. If on the one side these programs should be improved, on the other it would be interesting to think of the possibility to include in these initiatives some intervention for the certification of competences acquired by would-be migrants in non-formal and informal contexts. Moreover the "Labor's International Mobility" program is aimed at providing technical support to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies during

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[28] M. Pangaro, *Il valore aggiunto della formazione pre-partenza*, Libertà Civili, maggio-giugno 2013, pp. 183-188.

negotiations of bilateral agreements: within this framework the development of services for pre-departure competence certification could be introduced as a means for selecting TCN workers to be admitted into the Italian territory.

1.3   Recognizing TCNs' SKC

1.3.1. Statistics and studies about TCNs' SKC recognition at national and regional level

The availability of statistical information on TCNs' competences recognition is very limited. With respect to the certification of informal and non-formal learning, this can be considered as totally inexistent, a fact which is not surprising given the very recent introduction of this opportunity within the Italian context, its scarce utilization, and its fragmented implementation.

Studies assessing the impact of TCNs' competences recognition on the labor market are also very rare, even if some general considerations can be drawn from literature generally tackling migrants inclusion in the labor market.

As for the assessment of the impact of qualification recognition on TCNs' professional careers, the main source of information is probably constituted by a survey carried out in 2005 by ISMU Foundation[29], commissioned by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, and accomplished on a sample of 30,000 migrants, the vast majority of whom was composed of TCNs. Some data emerging from this survey will be reported in paragraph 1.3.3, and will be referred specifically to the 28,138 TCNs included in the sample.

Another important source of information on TCNs' qualifications recognition is offered by the Regional Observatory on Migration and Multi-ethnicity[30], which has been carrying out, since 2001, a yearly survey on a representative sample of 8–9,000 migrants living in Lombardy. Unfortunately, the most recent editions of this survey did not collect data about the recognition of foreign qualifications. We must therefore

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[29] Survey - *Esiti della regolarizzazione nelle regioni meridionali e percorsi di mobilità geografica e professionale dei lavoratori regolarizzati* (Outcomes of the regularization in the Southern regions and geographic and professional mobility of the regularized workers). The results were published in G.C. Blangiardo, and P. Farina (eds) 2006, *Il Mezzogiorno dopo la grande regolarizzazione*, vol. 3, FrancoAngeli, Milan.
[30] www.orimregionelombardia.it., managed by ISMU Foundation www.ismu.org.

refer to the 2008 survey. Also in this case, in paragraph 1.3.3 some meaningful data will be reported focusing attention on the TCN component of the sample.

1.3.2. Potential benefits of TCNs' SKC recognition for the national and regional labor demand

As extensively illustrated in chapter 0, the model of inclusion of migrant workforce in the Italian labour market conceives immigrants as confined to the lowest levels of the occupational ladder. Their contribution is not observed in terms of competence, but merely in terms of hyper-adaptability and willingness to cover the positions refused by autochthonous workers. Within this context, instead of being conceived as a potential to be unleashed for economic growth, foreign manpower has been utilized as a means for procrastinating obsolete models of production, hence becoming a factor hindering innovation. The underutilization of the competences possessed by migrants is one of the main features of the Italian inclusion model, but, in order for migrant workforce to be considered as an asset to be valorized for an increased competitiveness of the Italian labor market, a radical cultural change would be necessary. Within the frame of the recent recession, the increasing recourse to migrants' hyper-adaptability as a means for facing economic problems has implied a growing risk of social dumping. Now more than ever the urgency to put in place corrective measures for the governance of the labor market and the management of human resources is compelling.

The issue of competence recognition is strategic in this regard. Fostering discussions about the potential advantages of competence certification for productive organizations could contribute to stimulate a change in the general mindset of Italian managerial realities, conveying the importance of investing in training and competence strengthening. Currently, according to our key informants, some organizations tend to see competence certification as a threat: the tendency is widespread to conceive it as a possible means for workers and trade unions to require salary increases. At the same time, when properly informed, organizations tend to express a strong interest towards an instrument able to provide transparent, qualified and reliable information about workers' competences. On one side, this is an asset for a more effective selection of human resources; on the other side, it offers the possibility to manage, assess and train organizations' internal staff so as to maintain, within a context of rapid change, a constant correspondence between the organization's strategy and the available human resources.

Another increasing interest expressed by Italian organizations concerns migrants' intercultural competences[31]. More and more often, these are considered as a crucial resource for internationalization. An interesting experience was explored through our research, that is, BonBoard[32], a consulting firm which recruits, on behalf of enterprises seeking new international markets, talented young workers with strong intercultural skills, especially migrants and second generations.

Moreover, a sector in which recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning results to be particularly crucial is that of private care. This is a highly ethnicized sector, where mainly migrant women are employed. The matching between labor supply and demand generally occurs through informal channels: acquaintances and word-of-mouth processes, taking in little account the issue of workers' competences. Nevertheless, we are dealing with a profession implying very delicate and complex tasks, for which a wide range of skills are required. A large number of migrant women developed a significant experience in this sector, probably acquiring a valuable set of competences. Some other migrant women might have worked, in their countries of origin, within the health sector, hence possessing precious skills to be spent in the private care market. For improving the quality of the latter, which is becoming increasingly crucial in the Italian welfare system, it would be necessary to develop consolidated methods for the certification of these competences.

Several hints have been already referred to the nursing sector (see paragraph 1.2.3). In the recent past, the labor shortage in this field has led Italian institutions to facilitate, from a legal and procedural standpoint, the recruitment of nurses residing abroad and the recognition of abroad professional qualifications as nurses. Interesting experiences in this field will be described in paragraph 4. Currently, in the nursing sector, labor supply exceeds demand. Nevertheless, a new scenario is taking shape that could bring to new similar recruitment practices, that is, a relevant shortage of physicians. In this case, probably, recognition procedures will be even more complex and articulated.

1.3.3. Outcomes of SKC recognition for TCN workers

As far as non-formal and informal learning is concerned, it is not possible to offer evidence-based information on the impact of certification on TCN workers employability and position in the labor market, as scientific studies in this area are nearly absent. As a matter of fact the same lack exists also with reference to workers

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[31] M. Di Mauro, *Approcci e strumenti per la formazione interculturale,* AIF Learning News, 5 ; 2013.
[32] http://bonboard.it.

tout court, regardless of their origin or nationality. Nonetheless some of our key informants, especially from the construction sector, reported that during these years of economic recession and increasing unemployment the fact of possessing some tangible recognition of the competences possessed and of the trainings attended appeared to favor workers' possibility to maintain their job or to find a new one. Certainly, in order to reinforce this tendency and to extend it to all professional sectors it would be necessary to develop, among all stakeholders and particularly employers, a better knowledge of the meaning and objectives of competence certification and an increased awareness of the advantages it could imply for economic growth. Finally, concerning the recognition of non-formal and informal competences, it is easy to imagine that well structured and recognized models of certification would be particularly beneficial to migrant workers, whose pre-migratory training and professional experience risk remaining hidden within Italian society and whose professional performance in Italy takes often place within shadow economy, hence being difficult to be documented and valorized.

As far as the recognition of foreign qualifications is concerned, some data provided by the surveys mentioned in paragraph 1.3.1 help providing interesting insights. Concerning TCNs involved in the survey carried out in 2005 by ISMU Foundation, the sample majority (42.2%) attained a secondary education level, 32.3% reached a compulsory school level, 14.4% have an academic qualification, and 11.1% had no education. According to this survey's findings, only 17% of TCNs possessing a secondary or a university degree obtained a full recognition. According to the survey's findings, recognition of academic qualifications influences both employability (very low incidence of unemployment) and participation in the labor market (very low incidence of non-active subjects); at the same time, it increases the possibility of becoming self-employed, a professional condition that generally enables migrants to improve their earnings[33].

In a context characterized, as showed in paragraph 0, by a strong concentration of migrants in low-profile jobs, about 60% of workers, among those who obtained recognition of their academic qualifications, are employed in qualified jobs (exercising intellectual, clerical, medical and paramedical professions). The incidence of qualified workers becomes much less significant among those TCNs who did not obtain – or did not request – formal recognition. The recognition of a university degree seems to be genuinely advantageous in permitting access to jobs more consistent with the worker's educational background. In this respect, it is important to point out that this outcome may be determined both by features related to the labor demand and by characteristics

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[33] Information provided in this paragraph is drawn from the study referred to in note 25.

pertaining specifically to TCN migrant workers. As shown by some qualitative studies[34], a large number of migrants tend to opt for immediate earnings through available, low-skilled jobs, rather than undertaking more complex and initially less remunerative professional itineraries. Recognition procedures, quite complex and time demanding and often implying some supplementary enquiries, are probably undertaken by migrants with high motivation to gain a better professional position, which may be a reason for their actual success in this endeavor. This is only a hypothesis, which should be verified through specific qualitative studies aimed at explaining statistical data.

Going back to the above mentioned survey, another point regards levels of earnings, which appear to be significantly higher for TCNs who have obtained the recognition of their qualifications, especially if academic.

As for the survey carried out by the Regional Observatory on Migration and Multi-Ethnicity in 2008 (see paragraph 1.3.1), referred specifically to the context of Lombardy, the majority of respondents (39.3%) declared to possess a high school diploma; 37.4% the compulsory level of education; 15% a university diploma and 8.3% no education at all. About one out of five migrants declared having obtained the recognition of their training. Confirming previous considerations, data collected through this survey demonstrate that the process of recognition increases the level of earnings and the possibility of becoming a self-employed worker/entrepreneur, or of pursuing an educational career. In particular data presented in Table 1.1 demonstrate how the recognition of qualifications completely changes the distribution of jobs: the majority of those who possess a recognized qualification are employed in the health sector – as physicians or paramedical operators – or as clerical and intellectual workers. At the same time, they tend not to be employed in the typical "migrants' jobs", such as domestic worker or private career (in the case of women), or farm, building or service workers (in the case of men). In fact, in Lombardy, qualification recognition seems to influence the professional position more than the level of employability of TCNs.

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[34] L Zanfrini, and Sarli A, *Migrants' Associations and Philippine Institutions for Development (First year activity). Italian Report*, "Quaderni-ISMU", Fondazione ISMU, Milan, n. 1/2009, Id., What are the Opportunities for Mobilizing the Filipino Diaspora in Italy? Lessons from the MAPID Project. In: *Brick by Brick. Building Cooperation between the Philippines and Migrants' Associations in Italy and Spain* (F. Baggio, ed.), Scalabrini Migration Center, Manila, 2010, pp. 139-253.

Table 1.1: Jobs of TCN migrants living in Lombardy, by level of education and its recognition, 2008

	University degree (recognized)	University degree (not recognized)	High school (recognized)	High school (not recognized)
No-skilled industrial workers	4.3	9.6	15.3	15.3
No-skilled services workers	2.9	5.5	6.6	6.1
Skilled workers	1.4	2.4	3.3	2.8
Building workers	1.2	6.4	10.2	13.0
Farm workers	0.1	1.0	2.6	2.2
Cleaning workers	2.6	4.4	3.4	5.8
Clerical workers	11.8	4.9	3.8	.8
Sale workers	2.3	3.1	4.8	2.7
Trade workers	5.3	3.5	4.2	5.2
Food and beverage workers	6.4	11.6	12.9	9.8
Craftsmen	3.8	6.0	6.4	5.1
Truck workers	0.4	1.5	2.5	3.2
House helpers	2.0	15.3	5.6	12.7
Home based caregivers	0.5	9.0	2.8	7.3
Baby sitters	0.6	1.4	1.0	1.1
Social assistance operators	2.0	2.2	4.5	2.8
Medical and paramedical professions	22.4	1.9	3.5	0.3
Intellectual professions	21.6	8.0	2.9	2.0
Sportspersons	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0
Sex workers		0.0	0.0	0.1
Other jobs	7.9	2.3	3.4	1.6

Source: L. Zanfrini and P. Bonetti, 2013[35].

1.3.4 Problematic issues and possible improvement strategies

A first problematic aspect to be pointed out is the lack of scientific studies on the topic at issue. In order to get a clear picture of the role that recognition may play for both TCN migrant workers and the Italian labor market, hence creating evidence-based information for dialogue with the main stakeholders, a greater effort should be made in terms of statistical and qualitative research.

Moreover a critical issue is linked to the current logics regulating the management of human resources, especially when dealing with migrant workers. The value of

[35] L. Zanfrini and P. Bonetti, "Italy", in A. Schuster, M.V. Desiderio and G. Urso (eds), *Recognition of qualifications and competences of migrants*, International Organization for Migration, Brussels, 2013, pp. 89-118.

competence tends to be neglected, little effort is made for improving the quality of internal human resources, and migrants tend to be chosen mostly for their proneness to accept disadvantageous working conditions. This is a very rooted attitude in the Italian labor market, but some insights emerged from our research show that the issue of competence certification, easily recognizable by organizations as a useful asset, could be a lever through which to stimulate a change in this mindset. From our interviews some interesting ideas emerged for improving the culture of competence certification among employers. For example, discussion groups involving all relevant stakeholders should be promoted on a territorial basis. In addition, it would be important to create a network of qualified assessors operating in organisations particularly recognised within their professional sector, hence able to diffuse the culture of competence certification within their field. In return, within the framework of *ad hoc* agreements, certifying bodies could provide these influential organisations with a database of job seekers with certified, transparent and reliable competences, enhancing the importance of competence certification for an effective recruitment. Also trade unions could play an important role in promoting the value of competence certification, but their interest and awareness in this regard are still very weak. Interesting initiatives in this direction could be financed through the Bilateral Inter-Professional Fund[36], deriving from an agreement between enterprises and social parties, and devoted to workers' continuous vocational training and life-long learning. Certainly, in the present situation, competence certifications still do not have a meaningful social recognition. For this reason few migrants undertake this process, whose usefulness is still unclear. Nevertheless, an interesting development of tools for the validation of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, especially for TCNs, could be related to their utilisation in synergy with formal learning. In fact, within vocational training, the possibility exists of envisaging individualised routes which take into consideration the competences already possessed by learners, hence develop based on the aim of filling the still existing gaps. These routes represent for migrants a means, not too time demanding, for valorizing their already possessed competences while at the same time obtaining a formal qualification recognized within the Italian context.

Finally, as has been seen in paragraph 1.2.1, the lack of information and training on the part of operators in charge is the main problematic issue concerning the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad. CIMEA-Centre for Information on Mobility and Academic Equivalences is located in Rome and was established by Rui Foundation in accordance with MIUR; since 1984 it has been working for providing information and

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[36] Established with Law 388/2000.

consultancy to citizens and institutions on the recognition of foreign qualifications. CIMEA belongs to NARIC-National Academic Recognition Information Centers (promoted by the EU), ENIC-European Network of National Information Centers on academic recognition and mobility (promoted by the Council of Europe and by Unesco Europe Region), and MERIC-Mediterranean Recognition Information Centers networks (created by the Intergovernmental Committee for the implementation of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Mediterranean Countries). It is an important reference point within this field by playing a key role in spreading information, but its action should be supported by other bodies operating in the national territory and by training initiatives addressed to the concerned personnel of public administrations.

1.4   Regional experiences in the recognition of formal qualifications

1.4.1. Regional and local stakeholders involved in the process

As has been seen, the recognition procedures are quite centralized for what pertains to the participation in public competitions and the recognition of professional qualifications. In the latter case, however, some procedures have been partly decentralized with a view to simplification. In particular, concerning the recognition of health professional qualifications – which is very relevant as in the recent past a large number of TCN nurses have been recruited to fill the labor shortage in this sector (see paragraph 1.2.3) – the Ministry for Health delegated the process of preliminary check of all requirements and requested documents[37] to all regions willing to assume this responsibility[38]. Among these, the Lombardy Region, with the support of its agency for statistics, research and training (Eupolis), set up a mechanism for carrying out the task. The latter will be described in paragraph 1.4.2, as well as the actions carried out by the Filipino Nurses Association in Milan, a migrant organisation aimed at providing information and support to Filipino nurses willing to have their professional

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[37] This procedure is described in detail in Circular 12 April 2000 of the Ministry of Health, competent authority in this field. The assessment of foreign health professional qualifications is based on several documents: not only the diploma with related legalized translation and "dichiarazione di valore" (validation declaration) issued by the consular authority in the candidate's country of origin, but also a detailed description of his/her program of study, with related legalized translation.

[38] Ministerial Decree 18.06.2002, Ministry of Health and Social Policies.

qualification recognized in Italy. According to our findings, this kind of initiatives are quite uncommon in the landscape of migrant associations in Lombardy, as the issue of qualifications recognition appears to be very marginal within these organizations' objectives. Concerning the recruitment of TCN nurses and the activation of the procedures for the recognition of their qualifications, an important role has been played by temporary work agencies. In this respect the experience of Manpower Group, operating in the whole national territory and also in Lombardy, will be described in the next paragraph.

As previously mentioned, universities have full jurisdiction on the recognition of academic qualifications. In Lombardy, as well as in other regions, such institutions are usually endowed with *ad hoc* personnel and offices for doing this. In this respect, the experience of the International Students Office of the Università Statale in Milan will be described in paragraph 1.4.2.

Finally, concerning the recognition of qualifications necessary for access to primary and secondary school cycles, the office in charge is the Regional Education Agency and subordinated Provincial agencies. The experience of the Lombardy Regional Education Agency will be described in the next paragraph.

1.4.2. Initiatives implemented and results accomplished

In the previous paragraph some interesting initiatives, referred to different relevant fields, have been hinted at. Some more detailed information about these experiences will be provided below.

The Eupolis service for the recognition of qualifications in health professions.

Since 2011 Eupolis has been managing, on behalf of the D.G. Health of the Lombardy Region, the preliminary check of the documents to be sent to the Ministry for Health by health professionals willing to have their qualifications recognized in Italy. This service is offered to EU or TCN citizens holders of professional qualifications as nurse, obstetrician or technologist in medical radiology, obtained in a non-EU country. Most users are TCNs with a qualification in nursing. The process is articulated according to the following stages:

- The user will be offered orientation about the itinerary and its most probable outcomes, assessed on the basis of his/her educational training and working experience. As a general trend, at least 10 years of primary and secondary schooling, 3 years of professional training and a degree issued by a post-secondary education institution are necessary for a fully or partially successful outcome.

Professional experience is also considered as an asset by ministerial evaluators. On this basis, people will be able to decide whether or not to start the process of documents collection and translation, which is in fact quite costly in terms of time and money.

- A meeting will then be scheduled for the documents'[39] verification. The Eupolis team will analyze the documents to express a technical and administrative evaluation, that will be sent, with all materials, to the Ministry for Health.

- Some experts, working for the Ministry for Health, will evaluate these documents from a substantial standpoint (the previous evaluation is concentrated on the formal dimension, acting as a sort of filter). On this basis the outcome of application could be a full recognition, a partial recognition to be completed through a compensatory measure (examination or internship period), or a duly justified denial.

- After the ministerial decree, which is issued about 3-4 months after submitting application, a second orientation session is envisaged at the Eupolis help desk: in case of positive outcome the user is provided information for the preparation of the test for entering the IPASVI (the professional association of nurses); in case of denial, the user is oriented towards university courses, for obtaining the nursing academic qualification, or towards training programs for social and health auxiliary or professional career.

In 2013 Eupolis created a vademecum[40] available online in Italian and English versions, written in simple language and with a final glossary. It contains detailed information on the procedure and basic requirements. It also provides tables showing the most recent trends, for each issuing country, in ministerial decrees. Through this tool users can find correct preliminary information and evaluate their possibilities of success. So as to provide correct and homogeneous information, the Eupolis team listed and shared FAQ and related answers. These operators have good relational skills: they work in an intercultural situation and their users are very diverse. In 2013 the Eupolis team conducted 120 meetings: 54 among these users decided to pursue the procedure. Out of these, 19 resulted in full recognitions, 8 in denials, and 16 in partial recognitions. Moreover, 4 requests of integrations to the provided documentation were expressed by the Ministry of Health. 7 applications were still under evaluation when these data were collected.

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[39]These documents are listed in attachment H formulated by the Ministry of Health, www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_bandi_74_listaFile_itemName_11_file.pdf.
[40] http://www.eupolis.regione.lombardia.it/shared/ccurl/994/1023/Vademecum_en_v12_marzo2014.pdf.

The Filipino Nurses Association.

This association was created in 2009 thanks to a suggestion coming from the Philippine General Consulate, which still works in tight collaboration with the association. The activities of this association, managed by migrant volunteers, consist in providing information and training to Filipino nurses willing to have their professional qualification recognized in Italy. Users are always addressed to the association by the Consulate. After an initial orientation session, users are suggested to start, right after the application submission, a training for improving both their competence in Italian, in particular in grammar and in medical language, and their preparation for the compensatory examination, which in most cases is required to people who studied in the Philippines. During these trainings medical instruments are shown to learners who in some cases have no professional experience and little knowledge of these materials, as in the Philippines students have quite a passive role in training internships. These trainings are conducted by some volunteer Filipino nurses who have already obtained qualifications recognition. In 2014 the training was initially attended by 30 people but only 13 learners pursued the process. Out of these, 5 have already been called for the compensatory examination. Since 2009, 18 people who attended the association's trainings passed the examination. Few weeks before the latter, intensive trainings are offered to people undertaking the test, a simulation is organized and teachers express their opinion about learners' preparation. For undergoing the examination some payment is necessary and travel expenses are perceived by most Filipino migrants as quite important. Hence they usually prefer undergoing the examination when the possibilities of success are quite high. Another objective of the Filipino Nurses Association in Milan is improving the overall recognition procedure. In particular, the Philippine Consulate was informed by the association that the Italian consular authority in Manila needed very long times (about 6 months) for issuing the documents to be submitted to the Italian Ministry for Health. Thanks to the intervention of the Philippine Consulate, now these documents are issued within about 3 months.

Manpower's activity for the recruitment of nurses residing abroad.

Manpower is a temporary work agency: an international firm working in more than 80 different countries. The issue of human resources internationalization represents a key theme for this organization. Since 2005, Manpower had to recruit nurses from third countries in order to meet the requests of hiring coming from health structures. This was linked to the labor shortage in the Italian nursing sector and the

subsequent possibility to admit to the Italian territory TCN nurses to be hired in public and private health structures (see paragraph 1.2.3). Thanks to its branches in third countries, an investigation was carried out to identify the most effective educational and training systems and those which were more compatible with the Italian one, in order to recruit more qualified resources and to foster successful recognition procedures. For ethical reasons, countries suffering a lack of health personnel were excluded. In the chosen countries, in particular Colombia (which resulted to have a very efficient training system for nurses), the selection of human resources was activated. A person-centered approach was adopted: special attention was paid to reduce, for selected resources, the difficulties linked to migration. Workers were informed of their hiring about three months in advance, in order to let them organize their move overseas. Moreover, Manpower found a solution for their housing before their arrival in Italy. As for the qualifications recognition procedure, this was activated by the agency as soon as the resource was selected, so as to have it concluded (or at an advanced stage) at his/her arrival in Italy. The expenses for the procedure were covered by Manpower, which also activated a collaboration with the territorial IPASVI. This was aimed at the organization of training programs devoted to the preparation for the test for being admitted to the Professional Nurses Association. This training focused on Italian language, with special attention to specific medical terms, and on the features of the Italian health system. The expenses for the process were covered by Manpower, as well as the living expenses of trainees, who could start working just after passing the IPASVI examination. These trainings were opened also to external people, that is, nurses who did not enter Italy through the intermediation of Manpower.

The International Students Office at the Università Statale in Milan.

This office manages the applications for recognition regarding abroad academic qualifications or secondary school diplomas necessary for access to the higher educational system. These applications are submitted by people already residing in Italy (about 1,000 per year) and by people who have just entered Italy for reasons of study (about 100 per year). For the latter a welcome desk is available, assisting them in the bureaucratic procedures for obtaining a residence permit, a health card, a tax code, etc. To this end the International Students Office activated some conventions with the offices involved, so as to be able to offer some kind of facilitation in these procedures. Moreover, the International Students Office works in close collaboration with Italian Consulates abroad and foreign consular authorities in Italy, in order to manage issues connected to the release of visa for reasons of study, the enrolment in universities and

the recognition of qualifications. In particular, once all the documentation is provided by the student[41] this is transmitted, for assessment, to the didactic committee of the course concerned. The International Students Office often provides consultancy to these committees about the features of the foreign educational systems. Once the deliberation is issued by the committee, the International Students Office communicates it to the student during a personal meeting. In most cases, a partial recognition is expressed, requiring enrolment in university to obtain an Italian academic qualification. The student can choose whether to enter the Università Statale in Milan (what happens in most cases) or to carry out the recognition procedure again in another university. In fact the procedure outcome may differ from a university to another, given that every academic organization has full jurisdiction on this matter and develops its own evaluations and deliberations in full autonomy. The International Students Office interacts with students in various different languages. The structured staff speaks Italian and English, but some collaborations have been activated with the course in linguistic and cultural mediation. Hence some students (of Italian or foreign nationality) speaking Chinese, Arabic and French are currently collaborating with the office.

The Lombardy Regional Education Agency.

This agency is an emanation of the Ministry for Education, University and Research. It coordinates provincial education agencies and is aimed at ruling and implementing education policies on a regional level. Provincial Education Agencies deal with the recognition of school qualifications acquired abroad by minors, who usually entered Italy through family reunification and who are to be included within the school system. The documentation required consists of original diplomas with related legalized translations and "dichiarazioni di valore" (validation declarations) released by the Italian consular authority in the issuing country. If the documentation produced is complete, the procedure always has a positive outcome. While the recognition procedure is being carried out by the competent agency, the concerned school, based on the information contained in the validation declaration, will choose the most adequate group and school grade where to insert the migrant minor. National guidelines indicate that the student's age must be the prevailing criterion guiding this choice.

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[41] Original diplomas, legalized translations, "dichiarazione di valore" (validation declarations) released by the consular authority in the issuing country, transcripts describing the student's study programs.

1.4.3. Problematic aspects and actionable levers

As previously mentioned (see paragraph 1.2.1), the overall framework of foreign qualification recognition is very complex: different bodies and procedures are concerned depending on the recognition objectives. For this reason, it is difficult to develop a general picture of its strengths and weaknesses with respect to the regional panorama. Nevertheless, some interesting insights can emerge from the analysis of the problematic aspects and actionable levers of the single experiences described in the previous paragraph.

The Eupolis service for the recognition of qualifications in health professions.
With regard to this experience, which can be considered as a good practice in the field of recognition of TCNs' professional qualifications, the most problematic aspects concern communication and networking. The Ministry for Health expressed high appreciation about the creation of a vademecum on recognition of health professional qualifications. Being the only region disposing of this tool, Lombardy (and in particular the Eupolis team) was requested to share it with the other Italian regions dealing with this service. Despite the efforts of the Eupolis team in this direction, the action of networking with other regions currently appears to be difficult and ineffective. Moreover, the Eupolis team is trying to circulate the vademecum in the territory, but the relation with some key bodies, such as territorial IPASVIs or third country consulates is quite difficult. Universities and regional public administrations were chosen as possible centers of dissemination. Migrant associations and communities are other crucial subjects who have not yet been taken into account but with whom communication should be strengthened.

The Filipino Nurses Association in Milan.
Networking and communication represent the main weaknesses also in the case of the Filipino Nurses Association in Milan. This lack does not concern interactions with institutions in the country of origin, but, rather, with relevant organizations and authorities in the receiving country. As a matter of fact, dialogue should be promoted between this association and the Eupolis regional agency, the IPASVI, and the Ministry for Health. The initiative carried out by the Filipino nurses in Milan is very interesting and should be promoted within the framework of migrant associations.

Manpower's activity for the recruitment of nurses residing abroad.

A problematic issue encountered by Manpower was the difficult integration of these workers within their work environment. Prejudice was very widespread among their colleagues who mistrusted their actual professional competence and felt threatened by competition with them in the resource allocation process. Manpower encountered some resistance also in building a collaboration with IPASVI; hence, for pragmatic reasons, this operation was finally successful.

Manpower's good practice was interrupted in 2012 as the labor market situation changed radically.

The International Students Office at the Università Statale in Milan.

This practice shows many strengths: from the efficient networking at an international and local level, aimed at facilitating integration of international students, to the capacity of valorizing internal resources (such as training of multi-lingual students as linguistic and cultural mediators) for improving the service. This good practice is not isolated, as in general the academic world is quite well organized in this concern. Nonetheless, if the International Students Office works with competence and carries out an effective work, its activity and function is not totally understood within the university organization as a whole, still partly unfamiliar with the concept of internationalization. For instance, despite the fact that the International Students Office should dealt exclusively with students (both Italian and non Italian citizens) who acquired a qualification abroad, it is wrongly perceived as an information centre addressed to students with foreign origin or to second generations, who are often wrongly addressed towards its welcome desk.

The Lombardy Regional Education Agency.

This agency has to correct the tendency, quite common in schools, to include minors with foreign origin in a school grade not corresponding to their age. Contrary to what indicated in national guidelines and in the wrong conviction to facilitate them, very often minors are included in a group of younger students and even in a school level, or school cycle, inferior to their qualification. The Regional Education Agency devoted important and effective efforts to improve the compliance to national guidelines, which is progressively increasing. Schools are normally suggested to respect the age criterion and to activate, for the newly arrived student, an initial individualized program for linguistic training and facilitation in school activities. This individualized program is built based on an evaluation of possessed competence acquired in formal, non-formal and informal contexts. Also, if the minor is aged

between 14 and 17 but does not possess a diploma corresponding to 8 years of schooling (primary degree of secondary cycle, so-called "licenza media"), schools are equally invited to respect firstly the age criterion. At the same time, the student is invited to regularize his/her itinerary attending an individualized program at a Territorial Permanent Center (center devoted to adult education), for the acquisition of the primary degree of secondary cycle.

1.5   Regional experiences in the recognition of informal/non-formal competences

1.5.1. Regional and local stakeholders involved in the process

The Lombardy certification system was elaborated through the technical support of Politecnico Foundation, a foundation linked to the academic world which accompanied the experimentation and is still guiding the model implementation by providing assistance to new certifying bodies. According to the Lombardy validation model, certifications can be issued by bodies accredited for employment services, that is, able to fulfil certain proved professional, management and patrimonial requirements, and by public bodies entitled by national law (such as employment centres, universities, schools, and chambers of commerce). Following the regional standard procedure, which will be described in paragraph 1.5.2, all these bodies can release an official certification. This public certification, as has been seen, up to now has gained a very weak recognition within the labour market.

Interestingly, however, some associations of employers or other organisations representing certain employment sectors developed different models for the certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts. These certifications do not have any public value, but tend to have a relevant social value, linked to the recognition of the certifying body within the sectors at issue. These certifications, in fields such as the construction sector or the mechanical engineering one, are often acquired also by TCNs. This is because migrants' presence is quite relevant in these sectors. Nevertheless these models have not been developed, from a methodological standpoint, paying special attention to this target's specific needs. Some experiences of this kind will be described in paragraph 1.5.2.

Moreover, several EU-funded international projects were promoted, usually by non profit organizations or local institutions, fostering the construction of a knowledge

management system based on competence development and certification[42]. Some of these were conceived with reference to labor sectors featured by a high presence of migrants, such as constructions, care and catering. These were usually intended to meet specific labor market's needs. Developments and reflections specifically linked to the high presence of migrants occurred during the project development, but were not part of its foundations. Some of these projects involving Lombardy will be described in paragraph 1.5.2. Another relevant experience will be hinted at, that is, the Prisma project, that, differently from those previously mentioned, was conceived specifically to combine the issue of competence recognition with that of migrant social and economic inclusion.

Finally, the already mentioned Regional Education Agency also coordinates adult education[43], whose users are, to a large extent, people with a migratory background. Within this field the evaluation of competences acquired in formal, but also in non-formal and informal settings, is an increasingly relevant practice. Adult education is provided by Centers for Adults Education (CPIA) and Permanent Territorial Centers (CTP), subordinated to the former. These bodies deal with adults' primary education, the certification of competences connected with this education cycle, and linguistic trainings for migrants. Moreover, technical, professional and artistic institutes are relevant actors in adult education. They allow adults to acquire secondary school diplomas through the so-called evening courses. In the next paragraph some information will be given about the utilization of competence evaluation by these bodies.

1.5.2. Initiatives implemented and results accomplished

In the previous paragraph some interesting practices, referred to different relevant fields, have been hinted at. Some more detailed information about these experiences will be provided below.

Bodies utilizing the Lombardy certification model.

The Lombardy certification model envisages an online procedure and the involvement of three different functions: 1) a supervisor, responsible for the process quality, who is

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[42] Isfol, *Repertorio di pratiche di validazione delle competenze da esperienza. Dati sulle sperimentazioni rilevate*, aggiornato a giugno 2011.
http://isfoloa.isfol.it/bitstream/123456789/214/6/Perulli_Repertorio%20pratiche%20validazione%20pubblicazione.pdf
[43] E. Porcaro, *La riforma dell'istruzione degli adulti*, La ricerca n.3, Turin, Loescher, 2014. www.laricerca.loescher.it.

part of the organisation's staff; 2) an assessor, nominated by the certifying organisation, who must have attended a training program on the regional certification model, be from the professional sector concerned, and have a ten year experience in the competence to be certified[44]; 3) a help desk orienting the applicant during the process (this function may be replaced by a personal tutor, but this is a facultative choice of the organisation; in this case, the tutor must be a different person from the assessor). The standard process lasts 9 hours within a period of up to six months. Its cost has been estimated at € 600 for the whole process (not including the facultative tutor). These duration and cost concern specifically the certification process, which may be preceded by a process based on counselling for orienting the potential applicant. His/her real benefit in undergoing a certification process is assessed and, if this opportunity appears to be advisable, he/she is guided in the appraisal of his/her competences and their identification within the QRSP. This process of orientation is based on a relational approach. On the contrary, during the following certification process the focus is on the individual considered as aware of his/her competences. The help desk or the facultative tutor will not accompany the subject throughout the process, but will put some tools at his/her disposal which she/he will use to demonstrate his/her competences. The certification process is based on an online procedure. The Lombardy regional certification process envisages the following stages:

a. Presentation of the application: the candidate will prepare his/her CV in Europass format, answer (either in written or oral form, by audio or video recording) the questions contained in the so-called form 2, which will guide him/her through the description of his/her competence, and fill in the application, to be submitted along with the previously described materials. Some support from the help desk is available in this phase.

b. Assessment of the application: the certifying body will evaluate the application and attached materials. If they result to be appropriate, the candidate will be involved in a group orientation activity, for information on the following steps. If they will be deemed to be inappropriate, a meeting will be planned with the candidate for clarifying the reasons of the gaps observed and orienting him/her towards the preparation of adequate materials.

c. Evidence production: the candidate will provide evidence proving his/her actual possession of the competence at issue. This evidence may be of three kinds: written declarations such as reference letters, attestations, or self-certifications; materials such as pictures, emails written at work, reports produced by the candidate; actual

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[44] At the moment it is not possible to have certified assessors, as this is a new professional profile and no assessors are available for this certification yet, but in the future this possibility will be taken into account.

practice on the ground (also video recorded). Also in this stage the candidate can have some support from the help desk, but the role of the latter must not overlap with that of the former. If he/she is not able to produce any evidence, the so-called form 3 can be utilised, that is, a tool guiding the candidate in the written or oral (and audio recorded) explanation of his/her competence, and in the verbalization of the "taken for granted".

d. Assessment: the evidence produced will be evaluated by the assessor. This type of assessment is objective and transparent, as based on factual evidence. If evidence is found not to be complete and convincing, the assessor may ask for some integration through an examination, consisting of a series of questions aimed at filling the gaps.

e. Conclusive stage: if the assessment is successful the certification is issued. If not, a meeting with the candidate is planned for explaining him/her the reasons of his/her failure and for suggesting him/her to go back to a certain stage of the process. Only a second attempt is possible. In case of further failure, the candidate has to start the whole process again.

In September 2013 the Lombardy Region launched the so-called "Dote" (endowment) system, that is, a financing system addressed to specific target groups and organised on an individual basis. This means that beneficiaries of endowments are single individuals. Funds will be supplied, on a proportional basis, to bodies able to demonstrate that they will provide a certain number of individuals with a specific service. "Dote Lavoro" (Endowment for Work) is addressed to the following target groups: unemployed people, young people willing to enter the labour market, people willing to create an enterprise, and workers entitled to redundancy fund or at risk of unemployment. One of the services envisaged for these categories, which can be covered by "Endowment for Work", is the certification process, which through this fund is being implemented by several bodies (employment centres, temporary work agencies, training centres, etc). A monitoring report providing data on the beneficiaries involved, probably containing information also on their nationalities, will be produced soon by the Lombardy Region, but unluckily this source is not available at the moment of this writing.

Practices implementing different certification models.

As for non-institutional certifications with a high social value, guaranteed by the recognition of the certifying organization within a specific professional sector, the model built and implemented within the mechanical engineering sector by Probest Service S.P.A. can be mentioned. The latter is a service company belonging to UCIMU - Systems for Production (the association of Italian manufacturers of machine tools,

robots, and production systems). This model was elaborated and tested within the context of formal learning, where the need for such instrument was initially expressed: in this context learners require an attestation of their participation in courses, and training centres need to certify the results of the service provided. However, this model is currently utilized, with little adjustments, also for the certification of non-formal and informal learning. The certification is usually required by companies, in the selection phase, or for managing workers' career development. Due to its relevant cost, certification is requested by individuals only rarely. In addition, Probest Service often collaborates with temporary work agencies, which require interventions for competence certification. In the case of non-formal and informal learning, the functions involved in the certification process are: 1) a tutor, dealing with the reconstruction of the candidate's CV and the evaluation of the requirements for undertaking the certification process; 2) an assessor, who must be a third party and have a 10-year working experience in the training sector and a 15-year working experience in the mechanical engineering sector; 3) a supervisor guaranteeing the correct functioning of the instruments utilized during the examination. The assessment stage consists in the observation of the candidate while carrying out some significant activities of the working process, and of the related product. The examination can be conducted both in the candidate's working place (usually when the certification is required by the company) and through a simulation (usually when the certification is requested by the candidate). In the logic of this model, professional competences are very specialized, hence certifications must be released only by specialized bodies representing the professional sector at issue.

An interesting practice within the construction sector was developed by a group of construction schools in Lombardy (for example the Cremona construction school) and in other Italian regions. Construction schools have a long tradition of vocational training and are highly recognized within the construction sector. They have an important role in training construction workers, *inter alia*, in the field of safety on the job. An important issue in this concern is the use of heavy equipment, for which a high level of competence and specialization is required. In 2007, with reference to the latter training area, this group of schools started reflecting on the importance of planning training programs able to connect theory with the concrete work process. A model combining formal training and the recognition of competence acquired in non-formal and informal contexts was conceived. The introduction of a national law[45] produced important advancements in this methodological reflection: in 2012 the Ministry for Labour and Social Policies defined a training standard, with related certification, for

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[45]Decree Law 81/08 art. 73 and Agreement of the Conference of Regions and State 22/02/2012.

the utilization of heavy machines. In this initial conception the training standard was referred to single machines, seen outside the context of the work process. For every machine a different formal training program was required. Based on the above mentioned methodological reflections, ANCE - National Association of Construction Workers proposed to the Ministry a different training model[46], which observes the worker utilizing a given heavy machine within the work process and which valorizes his/her already possessed competence. In December 2012, a 24-month experimentation was started for testing this training and certification system. Firstly, based on common features, heavy machines were grouped in categories. For each category a common basic training (theoretical and practical) is envisaged, complemented by few additional training hours referred to every single machine. We are dealing with a not very time demanding training, aimed at systematizing and enriching the competence already possessed by the worker. After this, a competence assessment is carried out, taking into account formal, non-formal and informal learning. If all competences required are possessed, a certification is issued. If not, the worker is allowed to participate in the work process under the supervision of an expert operator, so as to undergo a learning on-the-job process. Then a new examination is envisaged, for final certification. Examinations consist of both administering some questionnaires and the observation of the candidate at work.

EU-funded transnational projects.

Within the construction sector it is worth mentioning the project "Trasforbuilding - Between formal and informal: a double model to assess competences in the building sector" (2007-2009), coordinated by Formedil, the national body for vocational training in the sector. This develops in synergy with the project "Cogito - COmpetenze: Gestione Integrata Transnazionale Organizzata" (2009-2010), promoted by a partnership of bodies based in Italy (Lombardy) and Switzerland, and aimed at developing a tool for the recognition of the competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts by cross-border workers. In its turn, Trasforbuilding developed a repertory of competences in the construction sector. Based on the EQF concept, a repertory was developed that can be interfaced with different national and regional repertories, so as to facilitate competence recognition for construction workers moving within the EU or the national territory. Based on this repertory, the tool developed through Cogito was tested in different Italian regions, among which Lombardy, and countries: Belgium, Germany, Spain, Portugal and Italy. Furthermore, trainings were organized for operators who were to administrate this tool to final beneficiaries.

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[46] MICS - Integrated Modules for Safety in Construction.

Within the sector of private care, a significant project is "I CARE - Informal Competences Assessment and Recognition for Employment" (2010-2012)[47], promoted by a partnership involving non-profit organizations, scientific institutions and agencies for labor in Italy (Lombardy and other regions), Romania, United Kingdom and the Netherlands. It was aimed at promoting procedures of validation and recognition of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, with reference to white jobs and in particular to private care. A model for the emersion, assessment and certification of competences was elaborated, in accordance with the existing institutional systems. To this end, a research was carried out on the tools already used by employment centers in Italy and Romania, and on the validation procedures implemented in some Italian regions and in other national contexts. This model was shared with all stakeholders in the field of orientation, employment and training, so as to favor the utilization of this tool by services in charge of competence recognition and occupational intermediation.

The Prisma project, funded by the EU initiative Equal (2000-2006), involved three large partnerships in Veneto, Liguria and Lombardy, composed of local institutions, non-profit organizations, scientific institutions, and training and labor agencies. In particular, the Lombardy partnership, carrying out an action called "Foreign Workers' Empowerment and Diversity Management", was coordinated by the Foreigners Office of the Milan Municipality and involved, among others, the Cooperative Officina Lavoro and the Bocconi University in Milan. The project was aimed at providing models and instruments for steering policies for integration and labor. In particular, the Lombardy and Veneto partnerships developed programs aimed at fostering active policies for labor addressed to migrants, through a set of actions including research, experimentation of training initiatives, creation of models for social and professional inclusion, and creation of orientation centers for competence analysis. Moreover a tool was developed and experimented for the validation of migrants' competences, with particular reference to the catering sector in Lombardy and to the health and construction sectors in Veneto. In its turn, the Liguria partnership developed a flexible model for competence monitoring, with respect to the ICT sector. Subsequently, integrating the work of the three partnerships, the Prisma project envisaged the adjustment of the competence monitoring system, conceived for Italian workers employed in the ICT sector, to a target of migrant workers employed in Italy. The results of this operation and of the related experimentation were finally disseminated among the main national stakeholders.

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[47] C. Belardi, *ICARE Work Package 4 – Standard of competences of the caregiver*, Report di Ricerca. Rome, 2012. http://www.projecticare.eu/newsdett.php?nid=11

Regional Education Agency and adult education.

Within the framework of adult education, competence evaluations are carried out with learners before they start a given formal training program. Already possessed competences, acquired in formal, informal and non-formal contexts are assessed in order to envisage an individualized training, able to valorize the existing background while at the same time filling its gaps. This practice is currently quite consolidated in Lombardy: the Regional Education Agency has been developing an important activity of coordination of the approaches and methods used by the different education institutions.

In addition, it is important to mention that CTPs provide Italian language courses to migrants, and offer them the possibility to obtain the certification of their linguistic competence (acquired in formal, non-formal and informal contexts) through specific examinations. Four kinds of linguistic certifications, recognized internationally, are utilized by Italian CTPs: the certification promoted by the Università degli Studi of Rome; the CILS certification, promoted by the Università per Stranieri of Siena; the Celi certification, promoted by the Università per Stranieri of Perugia; and the Plida certification, promoted by the Dante Alighieri School.

Since 2012, within the framework of the so-called "integration agreement" (Decree of the President of the Republic 14 September 2011, n. 179), TCN newcomers are requested to reach, within two years from their arrival, at least level A1 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) of competence in Italian. This is necessary to remain legally on the Italian territory. In addition, since 2010 (Decree of the Ministry of Interior 4 June 2010), in order to obtain an EC residence permit for long-term residents, TCNs are to reach level A2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) of competence in Italian. CTPs, on behalf of prefectures, implement tests for verifying these requirements. These examinations are simpler than those envisaged by the previously mentioned international certifications. If the examination is successful, TCNs are provided an attestation recognized only in Italy.

1.5.3. Problematic aspects and actionable levers

As mentioned in paragraph 1.2.2, the overall context of non-formal and informal competence recognition is still undefined and in progressive construction: different bodies are involved and several experimentations are still in progress. For this reason, it is difficult to formulate general considerations on its strengths and weaknesses with respect to the regional panorama. Nevertheless, some interesting insights can emerge

from the analysis of the problematic aspects and actionable levers of the single experiences described in the previous paragraph.

Bodies utilizing the Lombardy certification model.

The main weakness of the Lombardy regional certification model was already discussed in paragraph 1.2.2. It lies in his scant social value, due to the scarce awareness of its potentials and advantages on the part of the main stakeholders, mainly the world of employers. Some strategies to develop this awareness were hinted at in paragraph 1.3.4. Here, it is interesting to report that, based on some focus group discussions organized by Politecnico Foundation, it emerges that, when properly informed, small enterprises recognise this system as an important means of growth. As a matter of fact, these organisations are not skilled for selection and recruitment of human resources, and have recourse to expensive external consultancies for achieving this task. Through a qualified system of competence certification small enterprises would become autonomous in this field.

Moreover, some stakeholders interviewed point out that the online procedure for regional certification is quite complex and should become more user-friendly. Several experts also think that a methodological approach giving more emphasis to the relational dimension, to the professional role and competence of tutors, and to the building of subjects' awareness on their competence would be much more effective in promoting their employability: it would stimulate an improved awareness of their potentials and eventual gaps to be filled through training. The presence of a tutor (or linguistic and cultural mediator) appears to be even more important in the presence of migrant users, for whom the utilization of this tool may be complicated by the linguistic barrier.

Practices implementing different certification models.

These certifications have a high reputational value, hence they are socially recognized and give actual advantages in terms of employability. Nonetheless, their recognition is limited to a certain professional sector and to the Italian territory. In this regard, Ucimu is developing a dialogue with some similar organizations in other EU countries in order to create an EU system of certification in the mechanical engineering sector.

In these certifications the presence of a practical examination based on the observation of the candidate at work implies, in the case of migrants, a more limited impact of the linguistic barrier. Nevertheless, this factor may create some difficulties in interactions between candidate and assessor during the certification process. The Cremona Construction School usually overcomes this problem through the intervention of a tutor (usually the expert teacher), or a co-national of the candidate with better knowledge of Italian, or a linguistic and cultural mediator. Moreover, interestingly,

this school trained a group of linguistic and cultural mediators for facing the issue of risk perception. As a matter of fact, this can change meaningfully depending on the life experience and culture of each person, and with migrant workers it is usually crucial to develop some reflections on the importance of risk prevention.

EU-funded transnational projects.

All these initiatives have the important role of developing reflections and dialogue on the issue of competence certification. They facilitate networking among the most relevant stakeholders and foster the exchange of good practices on international level. Nonetheless, the main weakness of these projects is the fact of being linked to temporary financing and often not part of a systematic and coordinated strategy. For this reason, their developments and acquisitions risk remaining an unutilized asset after project completion. To valorize and strengthen the impact of these experiences, a system should be set up which is able to gather and institutionalize their results and outputs and to disseminate them, also in the long term, at a national level.

Regional Education Agency and adult education.

As mentioned in paragraph 1.3.4, the synergies between formal and non-formal/informal learning are very interesting routes for improving the training system and increasing migrants' possibility to see their already possessed competences valorised. If in Lombardy the system for adult education is quite strong in terms of competence evaluation, its weakness lies in the subsequent practice of formal training (mostly in evening courses). Once their competences have been assessed, adults are proposed a didactic approach which do not differ substantially from that envisaged for minor education at school. Individualized programs – including combinations of traditional methods, based on contact hours and theoretical lectures, with innovative approaches, based on e-learning, workshops and on-the-job trainings – are still rare and unfamiliar to most teachers. This often demotivates adult learners, among whom a high level of dropout is registered. To improve this aspect, collaborations between the education system, managed by the Ministry for Education, University and Research, and the vocational training system, managed by the Lombardy Region, appear to be fruitful, as the latter is more familiar with innovative approaches, with structured competence-based programs, and with flexible and individualized learning routes.

1.6. Discussion and conclusions about Part 1

The research, mainly based on an activity of desk analysis and on 15 interviews to key informants representing – on a regional level – public institutions, the labor market, the education and training systems, and migrant associations revealed a legislative and procedural context featured by a high level of fragmentation and complexity.

As for the recognition of foreign qualifications, procedures vary and are entrusted to different bodies depending on how the qualification is to be spent. If laws and procedures are quite well defined and structured, their implementation shows some shortcomings, due to a lack of information on the part of the personnel in charge. This is particularly true in public administrations, while in the school and academic world procedures are managed with greater awareness and competence. The CIMEA Centre, located in Rome, provides information and consultancy to citizens and institutions on the recognition of foreign qualifications. It represents an important reference point within this field, but its action should be supported by other bodies widespread on the national territory and by training initiatives addressed to the concerned personnel of public administrations.

Certainly, a crucial factor preventing migrants from undertaking the procedure of recognition is the conviction that the Italian labour market is not able to valorise TCNs' qualifications. On one side, this idea is certainly reasonable, as the Italian labour market tends to disregard the importance of migrants' contribution in terms of human capital, and to consider their added value only in terms of hyper-adaptability, in the name of the principle of complementarity between autochthonous and foreign workforce and within a logic of cost reduction. On the other hand, the few existing studies, to be updated and enriched with further quantitative and qualitative research, show that TCNs who obtained the recognition of their foreign qualification saw significant improvements in their levels of employability and earnings and in their position in the labour market.

However, TCNs willing to undergo the recognition process often give up, discouraged by a disorienting situation and by very time demanding and costly procedures, with uncertain outcomes. Some interesting practices exist in the Lombardy Region, carried out by institutional bodies, migrant associations and temporary labour agencies, and aimed at providing correct information and supporting TCNs during the procedure for the recognition of professional qualifications in the nursing sector, where high possibilities of employment used to be available in the recent past. Currently, in the nursing sector, labor supply exceeds demand. Nonetheless, a new scenario is shaping that could bring to new similar recruitment practices, that is, a relevant shortage of

physicians. In this case, probably, recognition procedures will be even more complex and articulated and good practices of facilitation and support will be needed.

As far as the overall context of non-formal and informal learning recognition is concerned, we are dealing with a still undefined reality, in progressive construction: different bodies are involved and several experimentations are taking place. The 2001 Reform of the Fifth article of the Constitution established that both State and Regions are relevant, with different roles and competences, in the field of regulation of professions. This implies a very complex and heterogeneous situation within the national territory. With regard to the field at issue, since 2001, the State should have defined a national framework for Qualifications, in accordance with the EQF, and a set of standards for regional implementation, but for several years, until 2013, this task was not accomplished. Only recently, also due to solicitations from the EU, has the State improved its legislative framework and tried to homogenise the various regional situations, which in the absence of national guidelines had became very varied. In fact, some regions remained in a situation of stasis, some others started acting on an autonomous basis, developing very different legislative frameworks and methodological tools. Lombardy is among the most advanced regions in this area. An interesting aspect of its model is that it certifies single competences rather than complete professional profiles. In this way, the certification process gives individuals the opportunity to valorise their competences even when aggregated in non-standard clusters, and organizations the possibility to have versatile workers to be employed in different and often complementary tasks. The Lombardy certification system is based on an online procedure, considered by some key informants as not enough user-friendly. It does not necessarily imply the presence of a tutor: the individual is considered as the main actor responsible for his/her certification process. Some experts argue that a methodological approach giving more emphasis to the relational dimension and to the role and professional competence of tutors would be much more effective in promoting employability, as it would stimulate an improved awareness of one's potentials. The role of a tutor, who could be replaced by a linguistic and cultural mediator, appears to be even more crucial with reference to migrant candidates, for whom the linguistic barrier could represent an important handicap in the certification process.

However, the most critical aspect of the Lombardy model concerns the fact that its certifications have an institutional value, but not yet a relevant social recognition. Hence few people, and in particular a scant number of TCNs, undergo this process, which is very time demanding and complex, and with uncertain outcomes in terms of better employability or opportunities of professional mobility. To improve this

situation, a greater effort should be devoted for creating awareness among employers about the benefits of such a system within the labour market. Discussion groups involving all relevant stakeholders should be promoted on a territorial basis. In addition, it would be important to create a network of qualified assessors operating in organisations particularly recognised within their professional sector, hence able to diffuse the culture of competence certification within their field. In return, within the framework of *ad hoc* agreements, certifying bodies could provide these influential organisations with a database of job seekers with certified, transparent and reliable competences, enhancing the importance of competence certification for an effective recruitment and management of internal human resources. Also trade unions could have an important role in promoting the value of competence certification, but their interest and awareness in this respect are still very weak. Structured initiatives in this direction could be financed through the Bilateral Inter-Professional Fund.

Interestingly, some associations of employers and other organisations representing certain employment sectors developed different models for the certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts. These certifications do not have an institutional value, but show to have a relevant social value, linked to the recognition of the certifying body within the sector at issue. Nevertheless, this value is closely linked to a specific professional sector and national territory, thus proving to be ineffective for horizontal or international mobility. These certifications, in sectors with a high presence of migrants, such as the construction or the mechanical engineering ones, are often acquired also by TCNs, even if, from a methodological standpoint, the models have not been conceived with special attention to this target's specific needs.

An interesting development of tools for the validation of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, especially for TCNs, is related to the utilisation of such instruments in synergy with formal learning. Within vocational trainings, the possibility exists of envisaging individualised routes which take into consideration, after a process of assessment and validation, the competences already acquired by learners in non-formal and informal contexts. In these cases, formal learning becomes an integration of already possessed competences, and results in being less time demanding and more motivating and effective. These synergies have already been put in place in the vocational training system, mainly managed on a regional basis. Also in the education system, with particular reference to the education of adults, these combinations of formal, non-formal and informal learning are more and more common and consolidated. In this vein, in order to strengthen the system of adult education, collaborations between schools and the vocational training system, more familiar with innovative didactic approaches, appear to be very fruitful.

Another interesting idea emerged from the research is the possibility to implement instruments of competence certification in pre-departure contexts, as a strategy for integrating migration and labor policies, for a more effective management of migration flows. This issue could be taken into consideration also within the framework of negotiations of bilateral agreements between Italy and countries with a high migratory pressure.

Finally, several EU-funded international projects were promoted, usually by non-profit organizations or local institutions, fostering the construction of a knowledge management system based on competence development and certification. Some of these experiences were conceived with reference to labor sectors featured by a high presence of migrants, such as catering or private care. Within the latter, recognition of competences is found to be particularly important. We are dealing with a highly ethnicized sector, increasingly relevant within the Italian welfare system, which tends to take in little consideration the issue of workers' competence, notwithstanding the delicate and complex tasks required. For improving the quality of private care, it is strategic to develop consolidated methods for training and certifying competences acquired in informal and non-formal contexts. All these EU-funded international initiatives are useful in this direction. They have the important role of developing reflections and dialogue on the issue of competence certification. They facilitate networking among the most relevant stakeholders and foster the exchange of good practices at an international level. Nevertheless, the main weakness of these projects is the fact of being linked to temporary financing and often not part of a systematic and coordinated strategy. For this reason, their developments and acquisitions risk remaining an unutilized source after project completion. To valorize and strengthen the impact of these experiences, a system should be set up which is able to gather and institutionalize their results and outputs and to disseminate them, also in the long term, at a national level.

1.7 Summary of Part 1

With respect to the recognition of foreign qualifications, the legislative and procedural framework is quite well defined, even if complex and fragmented: rules vary and implementation is entrusted to different bodies according to the reason underlying the request of recognition. The lack of information on the part of the personnel in charge, especially in public administrations, hinders the utilization of this opportunity, especially for TCNs, who feel disoriented and often give up the idea of undertaking an itinerary perceived as costly, time-consuming and with uncertain outcomes. Some good practices were mapped in the Lombardy Region, intended to provide migrants with correct information and to support them during procedures for the recognition of professional qualifications in the nursing sector. In the recent past, the latter was quite open to TCN workers, due to a situation of autochthonous labour shortage. Now the situation has radically changed, but a shortage within the medical sector is being registered which may give shape to new practices which could be structured based on the lessons learnt in the nursing sector. Certainly, a labour market which, such as the Italian, tends to "underutilize" the human capital possessed by migrants and to confine them at the lowest levels of the occupational ladder, does not encourage TCNs to undertake the procedures of qualification recognition. Nonetheless, the few existing surveys, to be updated and enriched through further qualitative and quantitative research, show that TCNs possessing recognized qualifications have lower risks of unemployment, better earnings and greater possibilities of professional mobility.

The 2001 Reform of the Constitution established that both State and Regions are responsible, with different roles and competences, for the field of education and training as well as that of the regulation of professions. This implies a very high level of fragmentation in both the areas of formal learning and of non-formal and informal learning. Many different institutions are involved, the division of competences is very complex, and this generates several conflicts and a high heterogeneity in rules and mechanisms adopted. Concerning specifically non-formal and informal learning, only very recently, mainly due to solicitations from the EU, has the State developed national guidelines for regional implementation, which in the meantime had became very varied in terms of levels of development and models put in place after experimentation.

Lombardy is among the most advanced regions in this field. An interesting aspect of its model is that it certifies single competences rather than complete professional profiles. Thus, individuals are given the opportunity to valorise their competences even when aggregated in non-standard clusters. At the same time, organizations are

offered the possibility to recruit workers to be employed in different, often complementary tasks. A first weakness of this model lies in the online platform where to access the certification procedure, which should become more user-friendly. Mostly when dealing with migrant workers, often disposing of relatively poor knowledge of Italian, this model shows a further critical aspect, that is, the marginal role played by the tutor. According to some key informants, the scarce attention paid to the relational dimension also hinders this tool's capability to increase candidates' employability by improving their awareness and ability of expressing their competence. Nevertheless, the main weakness of the regional model lies in the very scarce social value of its certifications, which, for this reason, are not advantageous for workers. This is why this model is scarcely implemented and utilized. To unleash the potential of this certification system, a greater effort should be devoted for creating awareness among employers about its benefits within the labour market. In this respect, discussion groups involving all relevant stakeholders should be promoted on a territorial basis. Trade unions could have an important role in promoting the value of competence certification, but their interest and awareness in this concern are still very weak. Structured initiatives in this direction could be financed through the Bilateral Inter-Professional Fund.

Some associations of employers and other organisations particularly recognized in certain employment sectors developed different models of certification. Despite their lack of institutional value, these certifications have a high social recognition, which, however, is limited to a certain professional field and national territory. In highly ethnicized sectors, such as the construction industry or the mechanical engineering sector, these certifications are often achieved also by TCNs.

Several EU-funded international projects were promoted, usually by non-profit organizations or local institutions, fostering the creation of a knowledge management system based on competence development and certification. Some of these experiences were conceived with reference to labor sectors featured by a high presence of migrants, such as catering or private care. All these initiatives have the important role of developing reflections and dialogue on the issue of competence certification. They facilitate networking among the most relevant stakeholders and foster the exchange of good practices on an international level. Nevertheless, the main weakness of these projects is the fact of being linked to temporary financing and often not part of a systematic and coordinated strategy. For this reason, their developments and acquisitions risk remaining an unutilized asset after project completion. To valorize and strengthen the impact of these experiences, a system should be set up which is

able to gather and institutionalize their results and outputs and to disseminate them, also in the long term, at a national level.

The possibility exists to implement instruments of competence certification in pre-departure contexts, as a strategy for integrating migration and labor policies, for a more effective management of migration flows. This issue could be taken into consideration also within the framework of bilateral agreements between Italy and the main countries of emigration.

Solutions for the validation of non-formal and informal learning can also be utilized within the field of formal training, and this appears to be a promising strategy, offering interesting opportunities to TCNs. Within formal training, the possibility exists of envisaging individualised programs which take into account, after a process of assessment, the competences already possessed by learners. In this way, formal learning can be integrated into the already existing background, and become less time-consuming and more motivating and effective. These synergies have already been put in place in the vocational training system, mainly managed on a regional basis. Also in the education system, with particular reference to the education of adults, these combinations between formal, non-formal and informal learning are more and more common and consolidated. In order to accelerate this process, improving adult education where migrants are very numerous, as well as collaborations between schools and the vocational training system, seems to be particularly promising.

SECOND PART:
DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED BYPROFIT, PUBLIC AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

2.1. An overview of the existing studies and experiences at national and regional level

Introducing the issue of Diversity Management (henceforth: DM), an opening general observation to be made is that this notion – emphasising workplace diversity and originally developed in the domains of organizational analysis and management practice – has become a powerful and pervasive discourse of our time and has spread into the corporate world, civil society, academic research, and among national and supranational public actors (first of all the European Union, as testified by a seminal study – or a sort of manifesto on the benefits of diversity – sponsored a decade ago by the EU Commission[48]). By combining the ideas of the classical texts on the topic[49] with what suggested by the most recent international literature[50], DM can be defined as follows: a theoretical and practical approach to human resource management in organizations aimed at promoting an inclusive work environment; i.e., a context capable of facilitating the expression of the different predispositions, experiences and identities of personnel and where this potential is valorized to enhance the enterprise performance.

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[48] European Commission, *The costs and benefits of diversity. A study on methods and indicators to measure the cost-effectiveness of diversity policies in Enterprises*, DG for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, 2003.

[49] See, for example: T. Jr. Cox, *Cultural diversity in organizations: theory, research and practice*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, CA, 1993; R. Kandola and J. Fullerton, *Managing the mosaic: diversity in action*, Institute of Personnel and Development, London, 1994; R.R. Thomas, "From affirmative action to affirming diversity", *Harvard Business Review*, 68 (March-April), 1990, pp. 107-17; D.A. Thomas, and R.J. Ely, "Making differences matter: a new paradigm for managing diversity", *Harvard Business Review*, 74 (September-October), 1996, pp. 79-90.

[50] See, for example: M.A. Bond, *Workplace chemistry: promoting diversity through organizational change*, University Press of New England, Lebanon, NH, 2008; A. Klarsfeld, *International handbook on diversity management at work*, Cheltenham, Elgar, 2012; H. Primecz, L. Romani, and S. Sackmann, *Cross-cultural management in practice*, Elgar, Cheltenham, 2011.

Developed in the early 1990s in the United States and a little later in Europe (especially, for understandable historical and socio-cultural reasons, in the United Kingdom), since the beginning of the 2000s the DM perspective has taken hold also in the Italian context, with the growth of a recognizable stream of both academic and practice-oriented studies[51]. This notwithstanding, as pointed out by Zanfrini and Monaci's recent reappraisal[52], in Italy the ongoing discourse on DM, while gaining increasing visibility, involves some relevant criticalities which renders it an opaque (and, ultimately, a still relatively unexplored) field.

One of the major problems is *the persistent gap between the espoused discourse on diversity*, such as that displayed by organizational vision and mission statements or by consultants and public bodies' recommendations[53], *and the real consistency of the practices implemented to enhance and valorize diversity in the workplace*; meaning by "practices" a wide array of actions which can range from recruitment mechanisms to training activities, from mentoring programs to the appraisal of managers' performance, from the creation of roles formally devoted to diversity issues to work-life balance initiatives. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the now well-known research observatory given by the 2009-2012 surveys of Cranet (*The Cranfield Network on International Human Resource Management*)[54] put Italy, within the European landscape, in a secondary position but not among the lowest with regard to the degree of formalization of the diversity statement in the case of large firms[55]. On the other hand, in one of the very few Italian empirical studies about the use of DM practices Pezzillo Iacono and colleagues[56] have documented a considerable disproportion between what was "exposed" and what was "acted" in a significant population of medium and large (and predominantly internationalized) Italian companies; that is,

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[51] See, for example: M.C. Bombelli, *Uguali o diversi? Riflessioni per un utilizzo consapevole del Diversity Management*, Economia & Management, 5, 2003, pp. 99-110; M.C. Bombelli, *Management plurale. Diversità individuali e strategie organizzative*, Etas, Milan, 2010; A. Cocozza, *Il diversity management. La gestione delle differenze nelle relazioni di lavoro*, FrancoAngeli, Milan, 2010; S. Cuomo, and A. Mapelli, *Diversity management: Gestire e valorizzare le differenze individuali nell'organizzazione che cambia*, Guerini e Associati, Milan, 2007; L. Mauri and L.M. Visconti (eds.), *Diversity management e società multiculturale. Teorie e prassi*, FrancoAngeli, Milan, 2004.

[52] L. Zanfrini and M. Monaci, *Introduzione. Di quale 'diversità' e di quale 'valore' parliamo?*, in M. Monaci M. and L. Zanfrini (eds.), *Creare valore con la diversità*, Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2014, pp. 7-39.

[53] In this respect, it is worth pointing out how a relevant effort, since mid-2000s, has been made by regional public authorities in Italy. In particular, the administrative Regions of Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna, Veneto and Lombardy have sponsored and financed a set of projects involving stakeholders such as enterprises, unions and entrepreneurial associations.

[54] http://www.cranet.org/home/.

[55] Although it should be stressed that the presence of these written commitments to diversity is largely related to the sample component consisting of Italian subsidiaries of foreign multinationals.

[56] M. Pezzillo Iacono, V. Esposito and L.M. Sicca, *Diversity management o retorica del linguaggio manageriale?*, in M.C. Di Guardo, R. Pinna and D. Zaru (eds.), *Per lo sviluppo, la competitività e l'innovazione del sistema economico. Il contributo degli studi di organizzazione aziendale*, FrancoAngeli, Milan, 2009, pp. 277-301.

exactly the types of organizations best provided with requisites and resources for defining and carrying out DM policies. From this standpoint, while even for the American case someone has contended that "at best 'best practices' are best guesses"[57], when we take a close look at the Italian situation it seems somehow drastic but not inappropriate to share these authors' conclusion according to which the discourse of DM, basically, represents a rhetoric.

A second and more relevant point is given by the fact that in the most recent Italian debate we can detect the initial formation of a niche critical line of inquiry *inviting to frame DM in a perspective more sensitive to the distinctive institutional traits of the Italian reality* [58]. Such an attempt addresses the challenge of paying adequate attention to those conditions under which theoretical models and logics of design/implementation/evaluation of DM actions developed mainly in the North American experience can or should be translated in a context which is dissimilar from it in social, cultural, economic and regulative terms. Incidentally, this need to counter the risk of indifference to local variations of "diversity at work" also emerges from time to time in the international literature, finding an extreme but still emblematic expression in the opinion by which nearly fifteen years ago someone regarded as "an ironic paradox that, as 'managing diversity' develops as a globalising vocabulary of difference, US cultural dominance may be reinforced by a US model of difference"[59].

Generally speaking, among the distinctive elements of the Italian institutional framework that can (or should be expected to) influence the diffusion of DM practices in the country, the following have to be mentioned[60]:

a. the predominance of small and medium-sized enterprises, which differ quite considerably from the kind of organization at the heart of experiences and models of DM in the Anglo-Saxon world (i.e., the large and publicly-traded company);

b. the logic of network management, through which – differently from the North American approach centred on the individual firm's voluntary initiative and internal control instruments – personnel management policies are chiefly the result of negotiations that extend beyond organizational boundaries and entail the participation of other stakeholders acting primarily at the level of local territories (employers' associations, trade unions, government agencies, community groups, etc.);

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[57] See p. 590, in: A. Kalev A, F. Dobbin and E. Kelly E, *Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmative action and diversity practices*, American Sociological Review, 71, 2006, pp. 589-617.

[58] See, for example: L.M. Visconti, *Diversity management e lavoratori migranti. Linee guida per la gestione del caso Italia*, Egea, Milan, 2007; M.C. Bombelli, *op. cit*; S. Cuomo and A. Mapelli, *op. cit*.

[59] See p. 364, in: D. Jones, J. Pringle and D. Shepherd , *Managing diversity meets Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Personnel Review, 29, 2000, pp. 364-380.

[60] L.M. Visconti, *op. cit*.

c. within the previous tendency, the crucial role of unions as actors provided with substantial negotiation powers in the definition of personnel policies;

d. the absence of an articulated system of legal obligations that – along similar lines to Anglo-Saxon contexts – prescribe minimum quotas of employees hired from a significant range of social groups and minorities, although the Italian legal system provides for some measures based on principles of affirmative action[61].

Within the landscape outlined above, what is mostly important here revolves around the theme of cross-cultural management; that is, a research stance from which the kind of diversity at issue, and at the heart of the organizational practices observed, regards cultural differences related to national origin and ethnicity[62] in the personnel composition.

It has immediately to be said that this focus does not deal with what usually goes by the label of "international dimensions of organizational behaviour"[63] and "strategic international human resource management" (SIHRM)[64]. This literature, now flourishing in the field of management studies, suggests that the pursuit of business strategies in globalized contexts of action requires and fosters processes of human capital development aimed at both the internationalization and the transnational integration of human resources, and particularly of middle/top managers and professionals equipped with key skills for the organization. In other words, this type of approach to "organizational multiculturalism", now also popular in Italy, seems particularly suitable for grasping the case of large and structurally internationalized organizations and, typically, has led scholars to focus on those dynamics and problems that distinguish the management of the network of national subsidiaries within a multinational group.

Far less attention has been drawn, in Italian research, to how national and ethnic differences in the workplace may affect collective life and performance in organizations which, while being not necessarily large neither included in transnational networks, employ non-native human resources; i.e., *a condition now increasingly frequent in Italy due mainly to the migration phenomenon and that, concretely, is best expressed through the case of organizations with a relevant presence of foreign workers from Third Countries subject to a strong migratory pressure*. Actually, the scarcity of

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[61] Particularly in two areas: the compulsory and targeted placement of disabled people in organizations with more than 15 employees, and women's access to boardroom seats of a restricted typology of companies.

[62] Thus, to be more accurate, the cross-culture theme is meant in a narrow sense here. As suggested by Cox and Beale (1997), this theme may play a broader role when applied to the various cultural influences (cognitive styles, values, conduct rules) that characterize social groups (e.g.: professional communities) from which organizational members can obtain significant materials for the construction of their identity.

[63] N. Adler (ed.), *International dimensions of organizational behavior* (3rd ed.), Wadsworth, Belmont, CA, 1997.

[64] R.S. Schuler R.S and S. Jackson (eds.), *Strategic human resource management* (2nd ed.), Blackwell, Oxford, 2007.

studies in this domain reflects primarily a substantial lack, in the Italian experience, of organizational DM practices addressed specifically to the category of immigrant workers. We may also argue that, when considering this possible target group of DM initiatives, the aforementioned gap between the general rhetoric of DM and the reality of its practical application tends to reach a sort of maximum extension. In such regard, the data of Cranet we alluded to earlier clearly suggest how, with reference to large organizations' accounts about their adoption of DM practices oriented towards different groups of workers, in Italy the national-ethnic minorities are by far the most neglected category[65].

This notwithstanding, we may argue that there is no absence of elements that encourage crafting a more incisive agenda on the front of reflection and studies, as well as of change promotion in organizational practice, regarding cross-culture DM as defined above.

The first, needless to say, lies in the now seemingly paradoxical resistance to extending DM's premises and purposes to a target group – that of foreign immigrant workers – that is increasingly represented in both Italian population and workforce. Indeed, this difficulty is not so inexplicable when we take into account a particular feature of the Italian context, consisting in its internal model of governance of migratory flows. As a whole, these policies have until now largely favoured the selective containment and control of migration intakes rather than focusing on the conditions of foreigners already present in Italy and employed[66]. More than that, they have neglected to promote measures aimed at making immigrants' potential a structural resource for the qualitative development of the national economy and society, in accordance with the "human capital model" depicted by the European Employment Strategy.

Furthermore, it is worth noting – as it will be detailed in the next sub-section – that some sporadic attempts have been made to apply the DM lenses to the social group of migrant workers.

As argued above, in Italy, up to now, very meager attention has been dedicated – in both research and organizational practice – to the issue of how the presence and contributions of TCN workers with a migratory background are or could be valorized to the advantage of the organizations employing them.

Taking a look at the limited national literature devoted to the issue, it is possible, in particular, to single out a couple of works which, as a whole, suggest that there seems to be promising space for tackling such a challenge. Both of them are qualitative and

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[65] Not surprisingly, the target group on which Italian enterprises declare to focus most are women.
[66] L. Zanfrini, *Immigration: a resource for the economic competitiveness and the social cohesion of the European society*, ISMU Foundation, Milan, 2011.

exploratory studies which considered a set of organizations operating in various Italian regions. They may be deemed as representative of both the national "state of the art" and the situation in the Lombardy region (i.e., the geographical and social focus of the Italian part of DIVERSE), due to the fact that, on one hand, some of their cases studies regarded exactly organizations located in this area and, on the other hand, there has been so far a substantial lack of research conducted on cross-culture DM practices implemented specifically by Lombardy-situated organizations.

The first work is a research by Visconti[67], which essentially brought to light two relevant aspects: *i)* the not rare presence of situations in which attention to specific needs and characteristics of the immigrant workforce – although mostly unplanned, informal and faced with several "adjustment" difficulties – had resulted in benefits not only for this personnel (for instance, in terms of professional development) but also for the organization itself (especially in terms of employees' motivation and loyalty); *ii)* several practices of self-enhancement of specific skills, related to the national and migratory background, implemented in the context of ethnic businesses.

The second work to be mentioned consists of a qualitative field study[68] sponsored by ISMU Foundation and aimed to investigate the practices of recognition, integration and valorization of cross-cultural differences in a group of North-Italian organizations with a relevant presence of extra-EU immigrants. Within the limits inherent to its exploratory character, this research project documented several forms of organizational attention given to ethno-national diversity, which to a certain extent were richer than expected. Most importantly, though, it led into glimpsing a sort of recurring pattern in these practices of inclusivity, by which informal social dynamics and more formalized interventions coexisted and intermingled. In addition, consistently with what argued above about the need for a more nuanced sensibility – in theory and practice – to dimensions of institutional embeddedness, the study threw light on the role of a number of distinctive features of the Italian entrepreneurial system and of the socio-cultural fabric underpinning it in the development of cross-cultural DM actions. Amongst these traits we may cite the firm's interdependence with the surrounding territory and the unfolding of day-to-day organizational life around direct forms of mutual knowledge and interaction between people, both of which primarily connected to the quantitative and qualitative influence of the small and medium enterprise in Italy's socio-historical development and current scenario.

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[67] L.M, Visconti, *op. cit*.

[68] M. Monaci, *Culture nella diversità, cultura della diversità. Una ricognizione nel mondo d'impresa*, FrancoAngeli-ISMU Foundation, Milan, 2012.

Furthermore, a significant point to note with respect to the latter research is that it contained a specific case-study – on Sweet S.p.A., a medium-sized firm in the confectionery sector, located in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region – that could be considered "exemplary" in two regards. In the first place, this organization's recent trajectory in DM could be literally intended as a best practice in that its distinctive engagement in practices of attention to immigrant staff and valorization of diversity had been recognized publicly through the attribution of the "2008 UNAR National Award" for the best business practices (among medium-sized firms) in the integration of foreign workers, organized by UNAR (the National Office against Racial Discrimination of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers). Secondly, the recent trajectory of this organization showed very explicitly the combination of both emerging social dynamics and purposeful and targeted mechanisms in DM practices we alluded above. More precisely, its experience in cross-culture DM seemed to have developed following two different – if not, in some respects, "divergent" – logics in the two key areas of organizational activity. The first logic underpinned organizational decisions in the production area and looked at the inclusion of immigrant human resources consistently with principles of political correctness and social solidarity, then according to a purely ethical, if not philanthropic, type of sensitivity. This ethical vision was connected directly to the moral choices and the influence of the founder, to his personal concern about the situation of certain "disadvantaged" categories of people. The attention that had initially been placed on women subsequently extended to foreign women (with their specific work and family needs), and then expanded to embrace the category of foreigners as such. Interestingly, although in the production area ethnic-national heterogeneity had not been "designed" and was not meant as a means to the achievement of specific performance goals, the integration of people from disparate national contexts and "cultures of work" turned into the possibility for the enterprise to benefit from a certain richness of viewpoints and from confrontation of ideas also on the performing of operative tasks themselves. In the other key organizational sphere, referred to management activities, the choice to employ human resources of different ethnic and national origins was explicitly motivated by the search for competitive advantage in international target markets. What came to light in this second case, then, was substantial consistency with the most distinguishing aspect of the canonical models of DM, namely the attempt to valorize an organizational resource (human capital) that is central to the process of value creation. This logic oriented to make the multicultural dimension a competitive lever was especially evident in the commercial function, where the decision to place foreign personnel in critical roles such as that of "export manager" (with the task of identifying new

markets abroad and formulating effective entry and consolidation strategies) was openly interpreted as an economic investment, aimed at having professionals "naturally" qualified to understand the characteristics of the market demand in their countries of origin (or surrounding regions) and hence to meet the needs involved. This depiction intertwined with the idea, consistent with the win-win logic of DM rhetoric as well, that enabling people to fulfil their potential to the benefit of the organizational performance could enhance their well-being and foster their integration into the work environment. In conclusion, this apparent (and seemingly even paradoxical) coexistence of informal socio-cultural dynamics and more strategic ones at the basis of DM actions was interpreted – or proposed – as a pivotal factor of the possible reality and for the prospects of an "Italian way" to cross-culture DM in organizations.

2.2. Description of the sample and of data collection

As for all the countries involved, one of the central components of the project's complex architecture consisted in the realization of at least ten organizational case histories on practices of Diversity Management (DM) addressed to TCN human resources. As for all the activities entailed in the Italian part of the project, this empirical study was carried out in the local region of Lombardy; that is, the whole set of the ten organizations – or their units and sites – that were selected and observed are located and operating in this national area.

2.2.1. Selection of the organizations

In general, and consistently with the first of the two common basic guidelines [for the second, see below 2.2.3] to be followed by all project partners in this activity, the organizational cases for the study were identified by referring to four criteria, in accordance with which the selected organizations had to:

(as already said) be located in the local region considered by the Italian part of the project, i.e. Lombardy;

be operating in the profit, non-profit or public sector;

be employing foreign human resources with a migratory background;

have engaged in visible practices of attention to, and valorization of, TCN personnel (and, if possible, also regarding other categories of difference such as gender or disability).

With this "map" in mind, for fieldwork eleven organizations operating in the Lombardy region were chosen, which displayed an already-existing commitment to the inclusion of immigrant workers.

In the process of detecting the organizations to investigate in the study, the research team resorted mainly to the following sources: *a) information provided by national media* about significant organizational experiences in this field; *b) suggestions and indications offered by a group of "privileged witnesses"* consisting of academics, business consultants and public officials with a longstanding interest in the field of DM and who had previously collaborated with the WWELL Research Centre of the Catholic University of Milan.

In the context of the previous set of criteria, the aim was to ensure *an overall heterogeneity of the organizational sample selected*, in two respects. The first was *sector variety*, with the inclusion of organizations respectively operating not only in the distinctive "institutional" segments given by the profit, non-profit and public sectors (as directly required by the afore-mentioned criteria), but also in different domains of activity (e.g.: food, consultancy, healthcare, communication). The second differentiation factor was given by *size variety*, so as to examine the situations of both small-to-medium organizations and large ones in terms of the number of employees.

The phase of the concrete identification and subsequent contacting of organizations considered suitable for the study began immediately after the First Partners Meeting in late January 2014 and continued until the beginning of April 2014. At this stage it was necessary to discard some of the organizations initially identified as appropriate for the research because of their low or questionable willingness to be involved (in the form of an explicit refusal or – more often – through a tendency, despite an initial opening, to postpone continuously the time of fieldwork). Aside from the fact that this kind of attitude may in itself be regarded as a sort of indirect indicator of organizational attention and "investment" in DM issues (by devoting time and resources to participation), it was considered that an essential additional criterion for the selection of cases was the quality of the organization's motivation to be involved and "observed"; i.e., a motivation based on the interest in the research topics and – as emerged for the organizations finally chosen – the intent to obtain, through the study, an in-depth representation of its "state of the art" (about DM actions but also more generally) as well as useful practical insights for future strategies and organizational change.

2.2.2. Description of the sample

The final set of chosen organizations, constructed in accordance with the above-mentioned points, consisted of a large enterprise, a large cooperative business, three small enterprises, a large public healthcare organization, a provincial office of a national trade union, a large non-profit foundation, a medium-sized non-profit social cooperative, a medium-sized non-profit organization, and the Italian military unit of NATO Rapid Deployable Corps. Table 2.1 shows the composition of the sample according to its main internal differentiation factors.

Tab. 2.1 – Composition of the sample

ORGANIZATION	SECTOR	FOUNDATION	LOCAL AREA	PERSONNEL
YALLA.IT	Non-profit: communication	2007	Milan	49
COOPERATIVA SOCIALE "LA RETE"	Non-profit: social and health services	1991	Brescia	81
FONDAZIONE "DON CARLO GNOCCHI"	Non-profit: social and health services	1948	Milan	2,035
BONBOARD S.R.L.	Profit: business recruitment and consulting	2011	Milan	3 (+ advisory board of professional members)
AUTOGRILL S.p.A.	Profit: food and beverage - travel retail and duty free	1977	Milan	4,857
VIADANA FACCHINI Soc. Coop.	Profit: warehouse and handling services	1995	Mantova	390
FBC BONFANTI + BISTEEL S.R.L	Profit: metalworking	---	Lecco	11+11
BIOCATERING S.R.L.	Profit: catering	2014	Milan	5
GOLGI-REDAELLI A.S.P.	Public: healthcare services	2003 (origins dating back to the 14th century)	Milan	1,274
CAMERA DEL LAVORO DI BRESCIA (CGIL)	(Non-profit): trade union	1892	Brescia	110
NRDC – ITA (NATO Rapid Deployable Corps, Italy)	Public (supra-national): military	---	Varese	2,000

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2.2.3. *The process of data collection*

Fieldwork took place between April and July 2014; moreover, in order to carry out adequately some case-histories, it was necessary to collect empirical data also in September 2014. Consequently, the case-histories were completed and reported in written form between May and September 2014.

This methodological part constituted the second area (beside selection criteria) to be explicitly shared by all the national research teams; this from a twofold standpoint: *a)* the general research approach adopted; *b)* the specific check list used for fieldwork and the subsequent phase of data analysis.

In particular, the case histories were carried out using a qualitative approach. This choice was considered as the most appropriate for exploring the ways in which ethno-national differences are perceived and "treated" in personnel management and more generally in organizational life. This kind of approach seems to be *especially suited for grasping not only overt actions and outcomes but also interpretations and expectations, as well as possible tensions, arising from the presence and the practice of cross-culture diversity*. As suggested by a robust literature (usually under the label of "case-study research"[69]), the main strength of this research strategy lies in the multiplicity of data sources used, which allows a sort of "all around" analysis of the specific organizational reality observed.

Accordingly, field data were produced from documentary materials and semi-structured interviews (4 to 6 for each case study), as well as informal conversations, with organizational members. The interviewees were both TCNs and Italians; they were from different hierarchical levels and, especially for medium and large organizations, from various functions. In addition, as the opportunity arose, direct observations were made of the "scene of the site" during visits to the organizations.

The check list used in fieldwork, as well as in the interpretation phase, related to seven central thematic areas:

organization profile (basic information contextualizing organizational activity and commitment to DM);

organizational demography (key aspects in the composition of personnel with a particular focus on TCNs' presence, position and roles);

organizational culture and climate (social, cultural and ethical dimensions underpinning organizational life and action);

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[69] See, for example: K.M, Eisenhardt, *Building theories from case study research,* Academy of Management Review, 14, 1989, pp. 532-550; R.K. Yin, *Case study research: design and methods* (4th ed.), Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2009.

human resource management practices (main aspects in the personnel management cycle – recruitment, training processes, forms of career and professional development, etc. – with particular regard to the management of TCN staff);

perceptions of diversity at work (with specific respect to the presence of TCNs);

implemented DM actions and initiatives (aimed at recognizing diversity in general and, especially, addressed to TCN human resources);

impacts, and – in particular – benefits of cross-culture DM practices at various levels (the organization, TCN personnel, the surrounding social context), with a focus also (when possible) on barriers to DM practices, assessment tools for evaluating outcomes and prospects in the near future.

2.2.4. *Annex: sketching each organization of the sample in a box*

1

Name and legal form: *Yalla.it, an initiative of VITA Cooperative Business*
Type of organization: *non-profit*
Sector of activity: *communication*
Typology of services/products: *internet blogging*
Total number of personnel: 49
Number of TCN personnel: 48
Key diversity management practices: *soliciting the expression of individual and unique viewpoint; encouraging the discussions and proposal of different opinions on the subjects posted (which revolve on multi-ethnic society); coordinating the editorial meetings so as to allow each participant to express his/her opinion; searching proactively the diversity in the group composition; promoting the second generation growth in a local and national multicultural environment*

2

Name and legal form: *"La Rete", social cooperative*
Type of organization: *non-profit*
Sector of activity: *social and health services*
Typology of services/products: *services in the fields of mental health, social exclusion and housing hardship*
Total number of personnel: 81
Number of TCN personnel: 7
Key diversity management practices: *not-codified attention to individual and cultural differences as fuelled by a global and "ordinary" inclusive approach and as a reflection of the organization's competences in dealing with the diversity of external users; forms of support offered on a case-by-case basis to meet immigrants' emerging needs (advances on pay, redistribution of holiday periods, etc.)*

3

Name and legal form: *"Don Carlo Gnocchi", foundation*
Type of organization: *non-profit*
Sector of activity: *social and health services*
Typology of services/products: *health rehabilitative services, socio-assistential services, socio-educational services*
Total number of personnel: 2,035
Number of TCN personnel: 189
Key diversity management practices: *experimental training projects; attention to the knowledge of the Italian language and to religious needs; advances on pay and flexible management of holiday leaves*

4

Name and legal form: *BonBoard, limited liability company*
Type of organization: *profit*
Sector of activity: *business recruiting and consultancy*
Typology of services/products: *selection of multicultural candidates for client firms, consulting in hiring of multicultural staff*
Total number of personnel: 3 *(+ advisory board of professional members)*
Number of TCN personnel: 1 + 1 *of TCN origin*
Key diversity management practices: *cooperating strictly with TCN communities and associations for candidates sourcing; definition of the multicultural skills to be searched and evaluated in the selection processes; respect for individual cultural diversity (e.g., with regard to distinctive holiday periods of TCNs); openness to the TCN personnel's opinions and suggestions in planning and discussions taking place in the Board meetings*

5

Name and legal form: *Autogrill, joint-stock company*
Type of organization: *profit*
Sector of activity: *food and beverage, travel retail and duty free*
Typology of services/products: *food services*
Total number of personnel: 4,857
Number of TCN personnel: 491
Key diversity management practices: *search and enhancement of language skills; career advancements; creation of foreign-staff task forces for the entry in new international markets*

6

Name and legal form: *Viadana Facchini, business cooperative*
Type of organization: *profit*
Sector of activity: *warehouse and handling services*
Typology of services/products: *handling services and solutions for client firms*
Total number of personnel: 390
Number of TCN personnel: 355
Key diversity management practices: *"civic education" of TCN employees; support in job search and family*

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reunification; responsabilization through TCNs' extended presence in the board of directors and by assigning them coordinating roles in the clients' premises; concession of long vacation periods and attention to religious needs (e.g.: during the month of Ramadan)

7

Name and legal form: *FBC Bonfanti + Bisteel, limited liability "twin" companies*
Type of organization: *profit*
Sector of activity: *metalworking*
Typology of services/products: *metal carpentry (steel structures for the field of automation and industrial switchboards)*
Total number of personnel: 22 (11 + 11)
Number of TCN personnel: 6 (5 + 1)
Key diversity management practices: *overall attention towards immigrants' needs and contributions and respect for individual cultural diversity; signing of a formal corporate agreement (with the mediating role of a trade union), aimed at guaranteeing specific TCNs' rights (especially in the religious domain)*

8

Name and legal form: *Biocatering, limited liability company*
Type of organization: *profit*
Sector of activity: *catering*
Typology of services/products: *collective catering and distribution of organic food products*
Total number of personnel: 5
Number of TCN personnel: 5
Key diversity management practices: *involving TCN workers (i.e., the whole current staff) in the company distinctive mission revolving around the idea of sustainable catering and consumption, starting from the assumption that exactly young people provided with a dense migratory background can have the right motivation for rendering the engagement in this kind of social-oriented goal also a means for personal and professional advancement*

9

Name and legal form: *Golgi-Redaelli, organization of health services for people*
Type of organization: *public*
Sector of activity: *healthcare services*
Typology of services/products: *residential and semi-residential health services for the elderly with specialized units for specific pathological conditions (Alzheimer's patients, people in a permanent vegetative state)*
Total number of personnel: 1,274
Number of TCN personnel: 64
Key diversity management practices: *an agreement with a training school for nurses in Albania, resulting in the hiring of numerous Albanian nurses thanks to the organization's engagement in additional training and in the process of obtaining equivalence of degrees; actions for meeting specific workers' needs with regard to shift scheduling and vacation periods; an action-research project aimed at mapping the demographic (gender, age, educational level, etc.) and professional characteristics of foreign staff and at identifying criticalities and possible solutions; employee motivation and participation in organizational processes*

10

Name and legal form: *Camera del Lavoro di Brescia, provincial office of CGIL national trade union*
Type of organization: *(non-profit)*
Sector of activity: *trade union representation, social and assistance services*
Typology of services/products: *employee representation and protection in the workplace, collective bargaining, assistance services (e.g.: fiscal assistance), analysis of labor market and job opportunities, worker training, socio-cultural activities*
Total number of personnel: 110
Number of TCN personnel: 7
Key diversity management practices: *anti-discrimination rules for equal opportunities of representation in management committees; immigrant office; internal unit devoted to the planning and implementation of cultural and educational activies for immigrant inclusion; continuing training; involvement in decision making; (informal) human resource management system oriented to role enhancement and advancement of immigrant personnel*

11

Name and legal form: *NATO Rapid Deployable Corps – Italy, supranational military corps*
Type of organization: *public*
Sector of activity: *military activities*
Typology of services/products: *rapid activation of troops for missions inside and outside the boundaries of NATO member countries (e.g.: crisis-management operations, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping)*
Total number of personnel: 2,000
Number of TCN personnel: *(not possible to obtain precise information)*
Key diversity management practices: *forms of support and services for integrating the families of foreign personnel; attention to individual background and experiences in the context of common procedures and rules governing behaviors and professional communication; pre-mission culturally sensitive training sessions; national heterogeneity as historically entrenched trait of the organization*

2.3. TCN personnel

2.3.1. Reasons for resorting to TCNs

As remarked above (paragraphs 0.1-0.4), the Italian and Lombardy models of economic incorporation follows, in general terms, the logic of complementarity between autochthonous and immigrant labor, so producing the high concentration – or, better, the tendential segregation – of foreigners from countries with a strong

migration pressure in certain sectors and occupational areas (e.g.: construction, catering, healthcare and home care services) and in the low-mid levels of the organizational hierarchies, often with a considerable over-qualification of their educational and professional credentials in relation to the tasks they carry out.

As a whole, this is reflected also in our case histories, to the point that in several cases the initial resort to TCN manpower has been determined by the need to face specific job vacancies. Firstly, this applies to the two healthcare organizations ("Fondazione Don Gnocchi" and "Golgi-Redaelli") which, since the mid-1990s (and as many other similar organizations in Italy), have had to cope with serious difficulties in finding candidates for not only professional nursing positions, but even more for the other care roles of medium and low level. This also applies, as described in paragraph 0.1, to some typical Italian manufacturing industries, represented in our sample by a metal-carpentry factory ("FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel") which, in front of the difficulties in recruiting manual but also qualified workers, started to employ foreign migrants suitable to be trained to cover these positions. Not surprisingly, we can identify a further expression of this trend in the handling services company ("Viadana Facchini"), which we may regard as paradigmatic of problems faced, before the current crisis, in finding Italian workers to do low qualified and particularly low-status manual jobs.

In some other cases the recruitment of immigrant people constituted primarily a natural adaptation to changes in the composition of the local labour offer, determined by the considerable migratory flows characterizing the region during the last 25 years (paragraph 0.3). This particularly occurs in the case of the other cooperative ("La Rete") included in the sample, which since the 1990 has started to resort to a recruitment pool more and more heterogeneous, also thanks to investments in training and degree recognition made by some TCNs provided with a certain migratory seniority. In one specific case, that of Golgi-Redaelli, the awareness of the opportunity to recruit qualified personnel led to the signature of an agreement with an Albanian school for nurses.

Another case in point is, in part, that of the union ("Camera del Lavoro di Brescia"), whose representatives openly stressed the convenience and the necessity of adapting their staff to the changing composition of the local population to be represented. Actually, this same case allows us to underline also another important reason for selecting TCNs, imbued with a specific and declared political and cultural aim, that is, the promotion – together with the workers' rights – of a deeper visibility and participation of TCNs in the public sphere.

In our sample, the union represents the most ambitious example of a mainstream society organization intending, at least at the level of formal statements and engagements, to open itself to the whole set of challenges entailed by a growing pluralistic society. In our group of case histories, we also find a good example of a "grass-roots" initiative ("Yalla.it"), with a displayed and predominant "ethnic" profile (even if the participants have very different national and cultural backgrounds), which similarly is oriented to exercise its influence at a cultural and political level. In this kind of organization, the fact of being a migrant – or, better, a migrants' offspring belonging to a declared second generation – is as such a source of positive discrimination in order to be involved.

In another case, that of the consultancy firm ("BonBoard"), it is almost immediate to see the explicit pursuit of organizational performance goals by means of cultural pluralism in personnel, as a strategy to exploit their social and ethnic ties within the migrant communities, and their image of young educated people belonging to minority groups, in order to offer business clients a unique repertoire of competences and services.

A very singular case is that of "Biocatering", where the choice to recruit only young TCNs is connected to the ethical engagements of the Italian founder and especially to the conviction – that is also a sort of bet – that just people with an uncommon and dense background can have the right motivation and receptiveness for both grasping opportunities of personal advancement and interiorizing the company specific mission (related, in this case, to the idea of sustainable catering and consumption). In other terms, here TCN workers (that is, the whole current staff) were recruited not on the grounds of some alleged peculiar skills or knowledge they could be holder of, but, instead, on the basis of the idea of the potentialities entailed by their migratory experience as such.

Obviously, within the single organizational experiences observed, different motives for resorting to TCNs often intermingle. More frequently, other more sophisticated and purposeful reasons have added to the reasons entailed at the beginning. A good case in point is that of the food and beverage large enterprise ("Autogrill"), where TCNs, initially recruited to fill job vacancies for the positions requiring highly flexible scheduling, have been gradually recognised for their linguistic and relational competences, which are today key assets for this kind of business. Also in the case of one of the above-mentioned healthcare institutions, over time there has been an organizational process of learning and awareness raising about the training investments many TCNs are making and, consequently, about their possible value for organizational goals and performance capacities.

2.3.2. Characteristics of TCN personnel

A short description of the demographical composition of the observed organizations is contained in the Annex inserted above.

As for prevailing national backgrounds, they reflect the tendencies towards ethnicization observed in various jobs and sectors of activity. This happens, for example, in the case of the carpentry firm, where most foreigners come from Muslim countries. Moreover, the vast presence of North-Africans within some of the most unionized sectors probably deals with their cooptation by "Camera del lavoro".

The significant presence of Albanians has to do with the size of their immigration in Italy, which makes it the first non-EU country represented. An emblematic case is that of "Golgi-Redaelli", where the massive presence of Albanian nurses is due to the afore-mentioned signature of a formal agreement with an Albanian training center. Latin Americans are well represented in the two healthcare institutions, also as a consequence of the positive stereotype usually applied to them and of their investments in specific training.

In other cases, such as that of "Viadana Facchini", the composition of the non-EU staff mirrors the particularly concentration of South-Asian migrants in the Southern provinces of Lombardy (paragraph 0.3).

"Yalla.it" registers a prevalence of North-African migrants' offspring, in line with with their role in the current composition of second generation in Italy, or more precisely in their more "politically" engaged component. It shares with "BonBoard" the fact of having recruited only high educated and prevalently second generation members.

More in detail:

In "BonBoard" the two employees of foreign origin have respectively an Indian and a Chinese background. The Chinese one, a woman, has acquired the Italian citizenship. Both are young and one of them acquired its university degree in Italy. One of them has an apprenticeship contract while the other (an Indian man) is an independent consultant even if he works exclusively for "BonBoard".

In "Camera del lavoro", we recorded the presence of 6 males and 1 female with a migratory background, but all of them acquired the Italian citizenship. They come from Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, India and Kazakhstan and are aged between 30 and 40. All are employed through of an open-ended contract, even if they are formally employed by private firms from whom they obtained a special permit, accorded by the Italian legislation to those engaged in union activity.

In the social cooperative "La Rete", two women are from Moldavia. Other four women are respectively from Brazil, Morocco, Romania and Serbia, while the only TCN male is from Argentina.

"Golgi-Redaelli" employs 89 foreign workers (representing 7.4% of the global staff), 64 of them being from a non-EU country. As described before, 41 come from Albania, due to the special agreement signed for their recruitment. Other origin countries are Romania and Peru (10 each), Germany (7), Switzerland, Spain, France (3 each), United States, Belgium and Argentina (2 each), and then India, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Congo, Colombia and Brazil (1 each). Nearly one third are employed as professional nurses; 32% of all nurses working in the institution are from a non-EU country.

In "Yalla.it" TCN collaborators are all young (aged between 16 and 34) and in majority female (35 vs 10 males and two persons writing under a nickname). All of them belong to the so-called second generation – actually, they adopt the label "G2" to identify themselves – and have very heterogeneous national family background: Egypt (9), Morocco (7), Tunisia (4), Sri Lanka (3), Chile and Pakistan (2 each), Albania, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Iran, Lebanon, Philippines, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen (1 each).

"Viadana Facchini" has 355 foreigner workers out of a staff of 390. They come from a huge number of countries: India (191), Albania (50), Pakistan (24), Morocco (24), Senegal (20), Ghana (12), Romania (8), Kosovo (6), Ukraine and Moldova (4 each), Nigeria (3), Guinea and Mali (2 each), Bangladesh, Congo and Sudan (1 each).

In the different Lombard centres of "Fondazione Don Gnocchi" (whose network is present throughout the whole national territory), foreign workers are 232 out of 2,035; 189 of them are TCNs. The nationalities represented, aside from Italians, are 45; non-EU national groups are 40, whose members are prevailingly from Peru (73), followed by Albania (22) and Ecuador (11). Also to be noted is the weight, among other origin countries, of the employee group coming from Romania (38).

In "Autogrill", foreign workers come particularly from Romania (81). Considering the non-EU nations, the prevalent group is the Filipino one (47) followed by the Albanian (34) and the Moroccan (30). The great majority of TCNs are women (350 out of 491). The relative majority of them (215) are aged between 26 and 35.

In "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel", TCN workers are 6 out of 22 workers; 5 come from Morocco and 1 from Algeria.

Finally, "Biocatering" employs 5 male TCNs, all aged between 17 and 24, coming from Egypt and Afghanistan.

2.3.3. Roles and functions assigned to TCN personnel

The roles and functions assigned to TCN personnel obviously depend on the size and activity sector of the observed organizations. In what follows, we sketch a brief outline regarding ten of the organizations involved.

In "BonBoard" the two employees of foreign origin have professional all-embracing roles (from relationships with client enterprises to scouting activities within immigrant communities), due also to the small size and flexible form of this consulting firm.

In the trade union, we find TCN staff in three organizational positions: as officials with representative roles in enterprise bargaining, as the coordinator of the internal immigrant office and as a member of the steering committee of an organizational unit (also participated by volunteers and external stakeholders) with functions of planning and coordination of cultural and educational activities aimed at improving immigrant inclusion and valorization in the territory.

In the social cooperative "La Rete", aside from a couple of foreigners assigned to cleaning tasks, the rest (5) of TCN personnel are professional educators and social assistance operators, whose utilization in the organization (which has strong relationships with public local actors, on behalf of whom it furnishes a substantial part of its services on the basis of agreements) has been made possible through the formal recognition of their degrees.

In "Golgi-Redaelli", TCNs are largely employed in the roles of nurses and healthcare assistants.

In "Yalla.it", the about 50 collaborators of 19 different nationalities are all members of the editorial staff; they are the key resources of the group's "core business" in internet blogging communication, since they post ideas and opinions and subsequently respond to comments from a vast audience of readers.

In "Viadana Facchini", TCNs are mainly employed in low-qualified practical tasks, although – as they represent more of the 90% of the whole workforce – they can be found also in positions of higher responsibility; this is, in particular, the case of TCNs performing the role of foreman, who has the responsibility of supervising the whole work process and of managing relationships with corporate clients directly in their premises. Moreover, it is worth noting how the current board of directors of this business cooperative has 6 TCN members out of a total of 7.

In the "Fondazione Don Gnocchi", following a typical pattern already observed for the other healthcare organization (and, as we said, of the whole Italian healthcare sector), TCN employees are strongly – if not exclusively – represented in two positions, those of nurse and of social or healthcare worker.

In "Autogrill", non-EU immigrant workers are essentially concentrated in the position of multiservice operator in single organizational stores (more than 90% of all TCN staff); however, although there are no TCNs occupying the key positions of store director or manager, some of them perform the role of service manager (6% of all employees with this formal function).

In "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel", TCN workers – accounting for nearly 30% of the whole personnel – are all employed in tasks (e.g.: welding) directly related to the production processes of metalworking.

Finally, in "Biocatering" all the 5 non-EU workers are kitchen operators.

2.3.4. *Perceptions of personnel towards diversity and towards TCN personnel*

In general terms, contrary to what was generally recorded several years ago, at the beginning of the processes of migrants insertion in the Italian workplaces – when some coworkers reacted with open hostility and sometimes also discriminatory and xenophobic conducts – fieldwork did not bring to surface significant negative reactions. Only rarely, some colleagues or supervisors pointed to the scarce time discipline of migrants belonging to specific groups, according to a sort of widespread stereotype. Rather, the most relevant cases of conflict – in any case not particularly harsh – involved different groups of TCNs and were mainly based on strictly practical matters, such as the allocation of duties and tasks.

Generally speaking, many managers and supervisors tended to emphasize the positive attitudes and the particularly accentuated adaptability to the organizational needs, as it will be described in the following point.

In some of the organizations observed, our interviewees underlined the disappointed reaction of some Italian workers in front of specific initiatives implemented to meet migrants' needs. A case in point is represented by the authorization to extend holiday periods beyond the normal limits, in order to permit foreigners coming from far away countries to amortize the travel costs. In some cases, this reaction led to consider the matter more carefully and in accordance with individual specific situations.

2.3.5. *Specific attitudes/competences possibly observed in TCN personnel*

Coming to the issue of the specific attitudes and competences attributable to TCN workers, a general observation to be made is that in the vast majority of our organizations interviewees tended to identify and underline what could be named a "trait model"; that is, a view according to which the decisive elements underpinning persons' behaviors in (and outside) organizations are essentially of an individual character, rather than being significantly influenced by socio-cultural factors such as those linked to ethnic-national identities and experiences. This notwithstanding, in accounts collected in fieldwork it has often been possible to grasp interpretations alluding to a set of distinctive contributions brought to organizational performance by TCNs' diverse cultures and referred chiefly to underlying patterns of conduct ("the accuracy of Albanians", "the attention to the elderly of South Americans") or conceptions of work and work execution.

This kind of arguments is intrinsically ambivalent, in that, while stressing such types of "attitudes and competences", they end up in reproducing the logic of complementarity; that is, the assumption that migrants are needed because of their "adaptability".

2.4. Organizational culture and HRM practices

2.4.1. *Key values in organizational life and their possible formalization*

As it will emerge from the following description of DM practices implemented by the observed organizations, the established organizational culture plays a key role in both the genesis and the subsequent shaping of such practices. On the other hand, the formation and the development of culture is influenced by the "natural" evolution of the organizational life.

Particularly emblematic is the case of "Autogrill", whose character of a multi-national company formed through several acquisition processes has led it to be, so to speak, genetically predisposed to multiculturalism.

To offer another completely different example, concerning a very little firm, we can cite the culture of "Biocatering", which is based on the most recent trends of

consumption and on the conviction that everyone has to be involved in the commitment to the construction of a society more sensible to environmental sustainability and social wellbeing; such orientation led the founder to focus the activity on the business of organic food production and delivery.

The three organizations operating in the care field – "Fondazione don Gnocchi", "Golgi-Redaelli" and "La Rete" – have developed an internal culture founded primarily on the guiding principle of "respect for/empowerment of the uniqueness of any person"; significantly, this value has been openly codified in various formal documents employed for internal and external communication (e.g.: statute, code of ethics, service charter). In the case of "La Rete", it is worth underlining that the distinctive organization's vocation for dealing with individual differences, which (almost necessarily) drives care work relationships with users (people with psychiatric problems and in other critical situations such as homelessness), is "naturally" translated within the context of internal interactions; favoured, in this, by the overall heterogeneity of personnel (from the standpoint of life experience, cultural background, etc.). Moreover, it shares with "Viadana Facchini" a culturally thick context stemming from the influence of the guiding principles of the cooperative movement (mutuality, solidarity, promotion of the community interest), which in Italy is a typical expression of the vitality of the civil society and of specific solidarist local subcultures.

Another intriguing example is that of "Yalla.it", which, as will be described in point 2.5.3, focuses its organizational identity on the mission of promoting, in the public Italian debate, some issues related to pluralism, double belonging, heterogeneity of views, with the final aim of valorizing, in particular, the second generations profile to the benefit of the Italian civil society.

In the very small reality of "BonBoard", we cannot speak of a formalized culture; nonetheless, its members insist on their very distinctive identity as "prime movers" in a field – recruitment of multicultural personnel – which is essentially a novelty in Italy.

The "Camera del Lavoro di Brescia", as part of the biggest Italian union, identifies itself with the laic and reformist tradition of left-wing unionism, with a strong emphasis on inclusiveness and universalism in access to rights as a way to create a more equal society. At the same time, this territorial office has developed a locally specific culture of openness addressed to build synergies and partnerships with a large array of community stakeholders (public administrations, voluntary associations, etc.), regardless of their political and cultural orientation.

Finally, we can consider "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel" as a typical expression of the North-Italian artisanal and entrepreneurial tradition, displaying the key role of the

founder/owner and based on direct forms of mutual knowledge and interaction, as synthetized by the frequent resort to the metaphor of "the big family" to represent the whole firm community.

2.4.2.   *Strategies for personnel motivation and involvement*

In many of the studied experiences, sometimes also regardless of the implementation of specific strategies for personal motivation, what emerges as absolutely relevant is the presence of basically symbolic forms of involvement and motivation through which the commitment and the retention of collaborators – including TCNs, even if employed in the lowest ranks of the internal hierarchy – are obtained. These mechanisms are fundamentally fuelled by the daily surrounding recognition of workers' contribution – first of all by supervisors, but usually also by coworkers and clients –.

However, in some organizations we have also found formal instruments of recognition. One case in point is that of "Autogrill", which, within a highly structured system, has developed an original methodology of self-assessment (see paragraph 2.4.8).

In the experience of "La Rete", we can hypothesize even a sort of self-selection mechanism enacted by those people who decide to interact – as members or interlocutors – with an organization that copes with particularly critical situations.

2.4.3.   *Organizational attitudes towards innovation*

"Yalla.it" offers an example where openness towards new ideas and contributions, and its combination with the issue of diversity, coincides completely with both the identity and the explicit mission of the group, which presents itself as an anti-conformist, unconventional and provocative arena of mutual exchange and debate.

Similarly, "BonBoard" has found a pioneering market niche by presenting itself as an innovative business, addressed to valorize a "new" untapped resource – that is, second generation members – in order to exploit new business opportunities.

Finally, in the case of "Biocatering" we might also see an underlying conduct pattern given by the attempt to obtain advanced business results (coherent with the growing

emphasis on sustainable models of production and consumption) through the utilization of human resources deemed as "marginal" in current collective imaginary.

2.4.4. Leadership styles

Many of our organizations, even when highly structured, have stressed the presence – and, seemingly, the success – of "emphatic" leadership styles, in that managers and supervisors tend to describe themselves as particularly receptive in understanding subordinates' feelings and needs. They stress direct dialogue and "familial" relations between coworkers, and between them and superiors, as an established pattern of good functioning (see, for example, the case of "Golgi-Redaelli").

"Viadana Facchini" offers a striking example of an organization strongly influenced by the charismatic leadership of the founder and current president (a person deeply involved in the social and political local life), showing also the profound ambivalence of this kind of situation. Through his personal influence, he succeeded in incorporating in the organizational life, albeit informally, a set of attentions and priorities inspired by his ethical convictions, especially inclusiveness; but, on the other hand, we can grasp the typical limitations of an organizational condition prevalently dependent on the personality and initiative of a single person (first of all, with regard to the problem, in the more or less near future, of entrepreneurial succession).

2.4.5. Communication strategies, styles and practices

With regard to the communication sphere, it is firstly to be noted how in at least two cases – "Yalla.it" and "BonBoard" – communication processes, both internal and external, are an essential "ingredient" for pursuing organizational goals. In the former context, on one side, internet blogging communication is as such the group's "business" and the recent organizational success appears to derive exactly from the editorial staff's capacity of involving an increasing number of external stakeholders in the discussions promoted on the internet; on the other side, peer-to-peer communication – or, better, virtual communication, as even interaction among staff members is mainly internet-based – is a fundamental instrument assuring collective and day-by-day coordination. Although less frequently, in "Yalla.it" a considerable communicative function is also played by periodic face-to-face meetings; they often

become brainstorming sessions, which prove to be vital for utilizing the (natural) internal diversity as an asset in discussion and decision-making.

As for "BonBoard", communication has a similar pivotal role, first of all through an extensive use of social networks for the identification of candidates to be considered for the needs of client organizations (needless to say, here, as in the former case, the role played in communication by new digital technologies is simply decisive).

As a matter of fact, in these two cases – and in "Biocatering" and "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel" as well – a central role is also played by processes of informal communication, involving dynamics of direct interpersonal knowledge and relationships as opposed to means of strictly formal (i.e., hierarchical and procedural) interaction. While this is not in itself so surprising, as we are alluding to small-sized organizations, it is worth remarking that the (positive) influence of informal communicative and relational mechanisms in normal organizational life emerges also in larger and more complex realities such as "Camera del lavoro", "Golgi-Redaelli" and "La Rete". In all these settings, direct mutual relationships resulting in a "constructive" and collaborative collective climate are likely to be fostered by a distinctive and shared organizational culture variously based on the key values of the "centrality of the person" and of "worker participation". From this angle, the situation of "Golgi-Redaelli" appears to be almost exemplary, because, notwithstanding its high degree of internal structuration, the informal communication seems somehow to overlap with formal communication mechanisms. To provide an eloquent example, this is very visible in the regular meetings held within each department, which have become an opportunity of dialogue and conflict management extended to topics not formally included in the agenda.

2.4.6. Criteria and methods for personnel recruitment and insertion

As expected, within our sample we can distinguish different patterns of personnel recruitment and insertion, according to the size and the typology of the organization. Starting from the most structured systems, we can consider the following situations:

In "Golgi-Redaelli" the recruiting process occurs essentially through open competitive examinations, in line with the public character of the institution. Nevertheless, in the last years the resort to personnel formally recruited by, and belonging to, the system of services cooperatives has imposed itself as the main channel of cooptation of the staff to be employed for the crucial positions of nurses and social/health assistants. Not

incidentally, the vast majority of TCN workers, who have entered the local labor market in the same period of the advent of this outsourcing process, are employed through this channel.

"Fondazione Don Gnocchi" follows two different modalities, according to the different profiles searched. The management is selected by the headquarters offices, whereas the staff members (which includes the totality of TCNs) are autonomously recruited by the local units. Actually, most newcomers are selected though the training center owned and managed by the organization itself and which is involved in the training of nurses and of other healthcare professionals. At any rate, the compulsory internal stage represents the crucial phase during which direct supervisors can appreciate the qualities of possible candidates and recommend them for possible recruitment; here, among other qualities, a key aspect is represented by the language abilities shown by candidates.

"Autogrill" has recently adopted a new approach stressing personal attitudes rather than previous experience (as in the past). The recruitment process is based on a codified and standardized procedure (group sessions and individual interviews) during which the candidates' traits which are especially assessed consist of motivation to service work, customer orientation and propensity to engage in teamwork. Also in this case, the process is exactly the same for Italian and foreign workers, but candidates living in the store's surrounding areas and/or who possess linguistic competences are positively discriminated.

At an intermediate level of structuration we can identify the two cooperatives and the metal-carpentry factory:

"Viadana Facchini" adopts six different channels, all informal in character: a) evaluation of spontaneous candidatures; b) direct knowledge of future collaborators, also thanks to the social and political activities in which the founder is involved; c) "snow-ball" mechanisms, based on recommendations about relatives, conationals and friends on the part of already employed workers (especially TCNs), a mechanism that has revealed its limitation because it has produced dysfunctional behaviors (formation of internal clans composed of conationals) and effects (recruitment of workers who lack basic working skills, starting from a minimal level of linguistic competence).

The methods of recruitment employed by "La Rete" are determined by the fact that the cooperative's main external stakeholders are public local actors, on behalf of whom it furnishes a substantial part of its services on the basis of agreements. Thus, a fundamental condition linked to this strong relationship with the public sector is that the recruitment of workers and their employment in projects is primarily dependent on the education degrees and qualifications they formally hold.

"FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel" uses the traditional methods of recruitment employed by small manufacturing factories, largely based on spontaneous candidatures and suggestions provided by local actors.

Finally, in other four cases we may single out original selection processes which are mainly connected with the specific characters and mission of the organization:

"Yalla.it" represents a case based on "self-recruiting", also because the process is very simple: it is sufficient to send an e-mail to the editorial office, in which the candidate's interests and requisites are presented (and then assessed) through a written text on the typical topics discussed in the organizational site. Moreover, since the initiative has led to the creation of a network of numerous stakeholders revolving around the word of immigration (cultural mediators, academics, professionals in multi-ethnic markets), in a sense many of them – for their recurrent participation in the discussion – may actually be considered additional members of the editorial staff, conferring to the organization the traits of a sort of "boundaryless" organization.

"BonBoard" is a very small setting which substantially coopted the three collaborators on the basis of personal ties.

In the case of "Biocatering", in line with the ethical motivations embedded in the organizational culture described above, all the current staff (completely formed by TCNs) was recruited through a very special channel. The recruitment pool, in fact, was given by TCNs who had attended classes offered by a voluntary organizations within a project addressed to humanitarian migrants.

"Camera del lavoro", in line with what usually happens in all Italian union organizations, has not a formal HR function. The process of selection and insertion of new delegates and operators occurs through direct observation and appreciation of people met during assemblies in the workplaces or already involved in some voluntary initiatives of the union. This process applies to both Italian and immigrant collaborators.

2.4.7. Personnel training and development practices

"Golgi-Redaelli" appears to be an exemplary case of the implementation of continuing training addressed to all human resources; this results in both the enrichment of the quality of care offered to patients and more opportunities of professional advancement, also for TCNs (as will be detailed below).

"Autogrill" created, in 2011, a "development center", i.e. an instrument aimed to assess the individual potential in order to monitor and support employees' internal

careers. The firm has also elaborated a "360° questionnaire", that is, an instrument aimed at collecting feedbacks from one's supervisor, colleagues and collaborators in order to increase self-awareness about personal strengths and weaknesses. Training programs are planned and implemented thanks to the suggestions coming from these development and assessment tools. Within the single store, training is organized through a "snow-ball" methodology, by which local directors and managers are in charge with the transmission of the received training to their subordinates.

Another interesting case is represented by "La Rete". Here, on the one hand, the institutional dimension (that is, the bureaucratic restrictions imposed by the fact of delivering services on behalf of public institutions) turns out to be a limiting factor, since in some cases it prevents the valorization of skills that are not formally recognized (leading to over-qualification); on the other hand, this same condition is gradually emerging as an enabling factor, because, by means of credentialization, it permits access not only to job positions but also to professional opportunities in the management of services.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that, as a whole, the role of investments in training (also as a means of employee development) is quite visible also in the small realities included in the sample. As a matter of fact, this occurs in "Yalla.it", through training opportunities provided by the parent organization to which this editorial initiative belongs; it takes place in "BonBoard", especially in the domain of ICT (which is a key channel for doing business); and it is cultivated in "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel" too, through both interventions in the area of work safety and processes of on-the-job learning explicitly provided by coaching to newcomers on the part of more experienced workers.

2.4.8. *Performance assessment practices*

As described in the previous point, "Autogrill" launched an initiative of self-assessment through which all employees can promote themselves by signaling their specific competences, attitudes and experiences. Significantly, also some TCNs managed to reach more important positions within the organization by resorting to this internal career tool.

For the rest of the sample, evaluation is usually not formalized but, instead, concretely realized through the feedbacks coming from clients and customers. "Viadana Facchini", also with the aim of managing and anticipating possible reactions of business clients in the premises where TCN resources operate, has practically

delegated this assessment function to the supervisors operating in the organization's various work sites.

2.4.9. Remuneration and other incentive mechanisms

In several of the organizations studied we identified open – albeit not always formalized – systems of compensation linked to some sort of performance indicators. This occurs, for instance, in two cases: "Yalla.it", which remunerates its collaborators on the basis of both the posts published and the volume of the feedbacks received from the website users; and "BonBoard", where annually bonuses are paid to the three employees on the basis of an evaluation of both the individual performance and the firm's overall performance.

From a different standpoint, an interesting case is provided by "Fondazione Don Gnocchi": in fact, despite the legal possibility of adapting employment contracts to the local public health systems (involving more favorable solutions for some local centers and less advantageous conditions for other ones), the organization has preferred to adopt a fairness policy, by granting the same collective agreement for all its local centers.

 The opportunities indicated above are offered to all the employees of the involved organizations, including naturally foreign staff. As suggested above (paragraph 2.4.2), however, in most of these realities a key – if not the main – form of employee incentive is social and symbolic in character, and lies in the propensity to motivate and reward workers' contributions by means of an explicit recognition of this "value" by colleagues and superiors; according to many interviewees, this type of incentive is currently highly relevant in the fidelization of TCN workers, signaling a certain difference from the past (when, on average, these employees appeared to be predominantly motivated by forms of monetary compensation).

2.5. Diversity management practices and initiatives

2.5.1. *The origin and evolution of diversity management practices*

Analyzing the case-histories we may discern three general underlying patterns that characterize cross-culture DM practices in the group of the considered organizations.

In the first, attention to ethno-national diversity *is a sort of implicit premise of collective action*, that is, something entailed, although not necessarily "displayed", by the value platform of the organization. For example, in the cooperative "La Rete", where the ordinary organizational activity and management take place in a culturally "thick" context inspired by the guiding principles of the cooperative movement (mutuality, solidarity, promotion of the community interests), this has been reinforced by the development over time of values such as those of "respect for/empowerment of the uniqueness of any person" (codified in the statute) and the "principle of sharing" in both internal relations (e.g.: the choice of candidates for career advancement) and external ones (e.g.: building projects participated, as much as possible, by users).

In the second case, DM practices addressed to foreigners *emerge primarily as a mode or means of action* for dealing more effectively with a set of challenges posed by organizational reality. The most immediate examples are represented by the two healthcare institutions ("Golgi-Redaelli" and "Fondazione Don Gnocchi"), where the focus on diversity was stimulated with respect to both the increasing ethnic heterogeneity of users and the necessity of facing recruiting problems linked to job vacancies in the area of professional nursing and social/health assistance. In light of this situation, "Golgi-Redaelli" started a process of internal awareness-raising about the potential valorization of TCNs' cultural and relational traits, which has resulted in – and simultaneously was improved by – a set of knowledge management initiatives (see paragraph 2.5.5). Quite differently, in "Fondazione Don Gnocchi", although there was a sort of intuitive grasping of the potentialities entailed by the valorisation of TCNs, what lacked was the managerial conviction to translate this intuition into concrete practices.

In the third situation, cross-cultural diversity *is as such the goal towards which organizational conducts and strategies are aimed*, be it framed within a mission emphasizing civic and cultural objectives or pursuing innovative solutions for clients. The main examples are represented by the two initiatives employing young and educated minority groups' members. The former is "Yalla.it", where the purpose itself deals with the principles of diversity through the intent to create collective debates by

giving voice to "new citizens" who live in two worlds simultaneously (and can point out interesting or contradictory aspects of such worlds). We cannot speak of an evolutionary process in a strict sense, because since the beginning the focus on diversity and on diversity of perspectives has overlapped with the identity and the public image themselves of the organization. The same can be said about "BonBoard": here the mission envisaged by the founders explicitly includes the social goal of valorising second generation's members, making this the firm's core business.

Indeed, these modalities may also tend to intermingle, as paradigmatically shown by the "Camera del Lavoro di Brescia", where the focus on internal diversity is – so to say – a starting point, a tool and an end simultaneously. In particular, here we find a real longitudinal learning process by which the organization has transformed the challenges linked to an unexpected increase of the TCN component in workplaces into the promotion, at a social and political level, of the idea of a multicultural and multi-religious society where everyone must be considered as a full citizen.

Other interesting examples of organizational learning induced by the presence of TCN personnel are provided by "Autogrill" and "Viadana Facchini". In both cases, as we will detail later, the initial focus on their mere adaptability to do certain kinds of jobs has progressively developed to assign them new codified responsibility roles ("Viadana Facchini") and to explicitly recognize their key contribution connected to specific linguistic competences ("Autogrill").

At the basis of these organizations' engagement in the field of diversity we find a prevailing role of informality and evolutive conducts; i.e., cross-culture DM has emerged primarily as something that "is done" and that is closely related to the evolution and ongoing experiences of the organization, rather than as a well-defined area to be connected to a system of planned and formalized interventions[70]. As it will be underlined, in this evolutive dimension a key influence is played by self-propulsive factors that, in some way, refer to the development of distinctive cultural traits; but an important role is played also by factors related to outside social dynamics, such as an increased possibility of finding the required formal qualifications within the immigrant labour supply (e.g.: "Golgi-Redaelli", "Fondazione Don Gnocchi", "Viadana Facchini"). The evolutive character of the practices observed, often – to cite a recurring statement in interviews – based on "the use of common sense" in dealing with the specific needs and opportunities involved by the cultural heterogeneity of human resources, is

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[70] In line with this primarily pragmatic orientation, interviews revealed that, within the organizations studied, knowledge of the ideas underpinning the theoretical and public debate on "diversity at work" (not to say the very notion of DM) is largely absent.

clearly visible even in those settings where diversity has been more openly "sought" and/or "thematized".

This said, we may identify also some few cases in which, at a certain point of the organizational trajectory in diversity, the formal dimension has emerged and somehow consolidated. We can cite the case of "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel", where the possibilities to extend the holidays duration for TCNs willing to come back to their origin countries and to pray during the work day, initially granted in an informal manner, were codified by being inserted into a formal agreement. Another case is offered by "Viadana Facchini", where over time a new organizational position has been constituted, and mainly assigned to TCN workers, with the specific task of enhancing clients' trust in other TCNs employed in manual jobs.

2.5.2. *Main actors in the starting and development of the process*

The most common situation in our sample is that of the founder (or the original nucleus of founders) acting as key-actor in the process of both starting and developing cross-culture DM-practices. Obviously, this is also related to the fact that a certain number of the observed organizations are small and medium-sized ("Yalla.it", "La Rete", "BonBoard", "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel", "Biocatering"). In these cases, of paramount importance is especially the process of translation of personal views and beliefs originally held by the entrepreneur (regarding, for example, a sort of "social mission" attributed to one's business activity) into more collective and shared orientations which get somehow "routinised" within the organization. Furthermore, this basic role played by the founder/entrepreneur in the activation of DM practices is noticeably strengthened when the declared aims themselves of organizational activity revolve around issues and values linked to cultural pluralism and diversity. This is obviously the case of "Yalla.it", founded with the specific aim of giving voice to diversity.

The situation looks different in the case of medium-large organizations, provided with a formal organizational charter, where the relationship with staff members is mediated by specific roles like middle managers and supervisors. This type of intermediaries plays a crucial role in that they know and try to manage the day-by-day needs, difficulties and relationships among workers. Two cases in point are, once again, the healthcare organizations where, starting from an initial concern and even disappointment for the progressive ethnicization of the staff (especially personnel in direct contact with patients and their families), these intermediate actors have been

urged to deal with the issue of "diversity" on the front of the relationships both with coworkers and with clients. Taking into account and valorizing diversity, besides their concrete impact on the organization performance, have been a strategy to reassure these two vital categories of stakeholder.

A singular experience is that of "Camera del Lavoro", where both the cooptation and the valorization of TCNs has occurred through the initiative of Italian union delegates who, operating directly within workplaces, could identify some "brilliant" workers suitable for being involved in the various bargaining, assistance and socio-political activities of the organization.

2.5.3. Formal statements on organizational commitment to diversity management

Many of the organizations included in our sample have formulated and diffused formal statements which more or less openly refer to diversity and to cross-cultural management.

"Camera del Lavoro" – deriving from a tradition in unionism started at the end of the 19th century, strongly rooted in its territory and emphasising the principles of associative democracy and social justice – has a set of statutory rules which, firstly, express a series of anti-discrimination norms ensuring equitable representation of women, people aged under 35 and immigrants in the elected management committees. On its part, "Golgi Redaelli" formalized its cultural orientations in a code of ethics that has been recently written through the involvement of several working groups representing the whole staff. The value system of the organization stresses the "centrality of the person", starting with a commitment to the comprehensive care of individuals and families who use its services. During fieldwork, interviewees repeatedly emphasized this assumption as the main source of legitimization for the attention devoted to TCN human resources.

A very peculiar case is that of "Yalla.it", which produced a set of written rules to be followed in conceiving and preparing texts to be posted on the website by the collaborators. These are guidelines aimed at promoting the use of a common non-rhetorical and unconventional (if not provocative) style in discussing about ethno-national diversity; among them, besides freedom of expression (and to disagree), one finds the recommendation to avoid moralizing platitudes and the risk of being labelled "ideological".

"Fondazione Don Gnocchi", in its external communication, often alludes to the issue of diversity incorporated into the internal staff as a key resource for ensuring its

institutional and historical mission, that is, to cope with the unavoidable diversity of individual conditions, needs and family backgrounds brought by patients.

The last case is also the most advanced and is represented by "Autogrill", which has adopted a real repertoire of formal instruments in order to display its commitment to diversity and diversity management. First of all, there is a code of ethics stressing in particular the importance of each individual's personality and dignity and the prevention and contrast to every kind of discrimination or abuse. The firm obtained also the certification according to the SA8000 standard (the so-called "ethical certification"), on the basis of which, again, it formally commits itself to the goal of adopting anti-discrimination measures. Finally, and most relevantly, "Autogrill" elaborates and publishes an annual sustainability report in which diversity and cultural pluralism are presented as explicit organizational concerns.

Finally, as described above, we may also consider the case of the organizational agreement signed between "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel" and the union representatives aimed at guaranteeing TCNs specific rights.

2.5.4. Practices aimed at recognizing and valorizing diversity with regard to gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, family status, religious background and other possible aspects
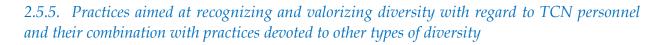
The observed organizations, selected on the basis of their inclusion of TCNs, do not display a particular attention to other kinds of differences. In any case, we have to mention at least two cases in which the focus on TCNs overlaps with attention to other kinds of diversity.

The first one is, again, that of "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel", where a bilateral agreement was signed that specifically mentions religious rights.

The second case is that of "Viadana Facchini", which exhibits a particular sensibility towards TCNs with family responsibilities. The organization offers specific support in relation to family reunion procedures, helping its collaborators from a logistic point of view and supporting them in the handling of bureaucratic requirements. Moreover, there is a tradition of employing, whenever possible, also workers' relatives looking for a job, or of recommending them to some clients.

Finally, in the experience of "Camera del lavoro", the issue of diversity related to nationality and migratory background has been inserted in a context of sensitivity and entrenched concern towards equality, as emerged by the description of the formal statements provided above.

2.5.5. *Practices aimed at recognizing and valorizing diversity with regard to TCN personnel and their combination with practices devoted to other types of diversity*

Generally speaking, a variety of practices of integration and valorization of immigrant human resources emerge.

These include, firstly, forms of practical support aimed at assisting TCN workers in tackling a number of basic needs (e.g., long leave periods, family reunions). In a sense, these elementary and even contingent – since they are usually implemented on a case-by-case basis – practices have to be seen as assuming a meaning that is more relevant than what it might appear. In fact, these actions are decisive in promoting an individual condition of serenity and productivity at work, which are prerequisites for facilitating the expression of employees' attitudes and potential. For example, the concession of extended holidays periods to migrants wishing to come back home is a very common practice, even in big and structured organizations (e.g.: "Golgi-Redaelli") and sometimes, as we have seen above, it has been formally institutionalized.

Furthermore, notwithstanding their practical and not formally regulated character, such basic interventions somehow imply a redefinition of the organization's commitment toward its persons, through which the conventional function of "employer" tends to extend to a broader support role on the border between work and personal life. These types of intervention are often "grafted into" a philanthropic and paternalistic tradition of support to employees in situations of difficulty and fragility. A case in point is that of "Fondazione Don Gnocchi", where this practice, although frequently implemented on a discretionary basis, is also legitimated through a collective rhetoric centred on the idea of the "value of the person".

But, in addition, we find also formal – and, more often, informal – actions directed toward different kinds of aims.

The first area regards the communication and socialization of inclusiveness-oriented organizational cultures. Aside from the envisaged impact of initiatives such as the adoption of codes of conduct or the insertion into the statute of specific references to diversity issues, some organizations have implemented projects addressed to staff members in order to make them more aware of the opportunities for individual and collective learning and development entailed by a "diverse" workplace.

The most relevant example is offered by "Autogrill", which, apart from a specific attention to the entire process of personnel management, promotes other interesting practices, among which: the sensitization of store directors on how to welcome TCN workers and, to this aim, on how to boost their mental openness; the resorting to the

methodology of self-narration in order to introduce newcomers to coworkers and to foster shared reflection about culturally different traits and specificities.

Another case worth underlining is that of "Camera del lavoro". Among its many representation and service activities, in the last twenty years the organization has started and established a path of innovation related, initially, to the necessity of responding to the needs of the "new" users given by immigrant workers. This has resulted in the creation of an internal immigrant department (now coordinated by a TCN), the use of TCNs as officials with representative roles in enterprise bargaining, and the formation of a transversal organizational unit – which is also participated by volunteers and external stakeholders – with functions of planning and coordination of cultural and educational activities aimed at improving immigrant inclusion and valorization in the territory. This last initiative reflects, in fact, a broader objective in the present phase, that is, promoting (both inside and outside the organization) the transition from a "labour approach" to a wider socio-cultural approach towards the migration phenomenon and integration processes within an increasingly multi-ethnic local community. In this respect, currently the organization, on the one hand, pursues bargaining strategies oriented to an extension of labour rights to the vast majority of workers (rather than based on contingent conditions of specific worker groups); on the other hand, it proposes itself as a kind of "open reflective laboratory".

The second area regards the reshaping of some personnel management mechanisms. Again, we can cite the case of "Autogrill", which provided selection units with tools and materials in different languages in order to welcome foreign candidates; this "kit of the newcomer" contains the description of the organization and of its conduct rules. The same company, in 2011, has started a census procedure aimed at mapping the linguistic competences of all employees distributed among the various company's stores, for valorizing them in the context of a strategy of adaptation to a multi-linguistic clientele and of internationalization of the group.

In the case of "Golgi-Redaelli", an interesting recruitment practice regards the agreement with a nurse training school in Albania, signed in the early 2000s to cope with difficulties in finding national applicants for this professional position; this resulted in the hiring of almost thirty Albanian nurses also thanks to the organization's direct efforts in additional training and in the process of obtaining equivalence of degrees and qualifications.

Quite often, DM practices are addressed to promote opportunities of advancement for TCNs initially inserted in low-level and manual positions, at the same time obtaining improvements in organizational performance. "Viadana Facchini" offers a good example of this kind of action through the habit of appointing TCN workers to the

"linking pin" role of local supervisor of other colleagues working directly in the business clients' premises.

Interesting suggestions are offered by the experience of "Fondazione Don Gnocchi". If initially, some years ago, the presence of TCNs was perceived as a resource due to their very ample time flexibility – in its turn determined by the fact that most of them had no family in Italy and were exclusively motivated by economic incentives – with the passing of time they have become more "similar" to Italian workers (e.g., requesting leave periods during school holidays). Paradoxically, the process of social and cultural integration reduces TCNs "exploitability", showing once again the inherent ambivalence of the discourse about the valorization of "diversity".

Finally, the third kind of practices involves the explicit pursuit of organizational performance goals by means of cultural pluralism in personnel.

"Autogrill", after the implementation of the mapping procedure, has tried to place workers possessing particular linguistic competences in those stores more frequented by foreign clients. Moreover, it has identified some TCN workers as suitable for supporting the opening of new stores in their countries of origin, thus acknowledging their "mastery" of both the organizational culture and the characteristics of local stakeholders.

"Yalla.it" represents the best example of an initiative which utilizes internal diversity as an asset for achieving its institutional purposes. The same occurs in the case of "BonBoard": multi-cultural skills and belonging are considered as a resource to enhance, at the same time, the performances of the client organizations interested to recruit personnel with a foreign background (in order to penetrate new international markets), and its own functioning (thanks to the multicultural and double belonging of two of its staff members); and the latter opportunity permits to access the specific recruitment pools represented by immigrant communities and associations living in Italy.

Also in the case of the union, we can note that, originally, the involvement of TCNs was primarily motivated by the intent of attracting the more and more numerous TCNs in Italian workplaces.

In a more nuanced way, a targeted approach can be seen in an action-research project recently carried out by "Golgi-Redaelli" with the aim of mapping the demographic and professional characteristics of foreign staff (including physicians and care workers) and thus of highlighting different conceptions of care practices and identifying critical issues and possible solutions.

2.5.6. Difficulties emerged in the design and implementation of diversity management practices addressed to TCN personnel

The main, and maybe sole, source of difficulties emerging from fieldwork regards various stakeholders' reactions that will be discussed in the following point. Apart from this, we can cite the case of "Fondazione Don Gnocchi", which, after having invested in the planning of a training initiative devoted to improve intercultural competences in personnel, had to abandon this project due to financial restraints. This, incidentally, lends support to some considerations proposed by our previous studies and inquiries, suggesting that this kind of institutions – particularly healthcare organizations hosting disabled and elderly people – are caught in the grip of the tension between, on one hand, the growing expectations and needs of the clients (concerning both care intensity and quality) and, on the other hand, budget constraints which are more and more stringent because of the cuts to the welfare expense.
A similar problem was met by "Viadana Facchini" – another organization operating in a field particularly subject to the pressure for costs reduction – which had to abandon a "long" tradition of investments through internal classes for the improvement of foreign collaborators' linguistic competence.

2.5.7. Reactions of internal stakeholders and external stakeholders

Paradoxically, the most elementary type of DM practice – i.e., an extension of holiday duration, implemented in several organizational contexts – provoked negative reactions and resistance both internally and sometimes also externally (among organization's clients). The first situation is the most common, with Italian workers claiming they were discriminated against. This was managed trying to strike a balance between equity and attention to distinctive needs of TCNs objectively related to their migratory background. In some other cases, the problem has been faced by making Italian workers more conscious of the fact that, in a pluralistic society, also workers' rights can be differentiated in accordance, for example, with peculiar religious and national backgrounds. Probably, in the case of "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel", exactly the presence of a union not prejudicially opposed to this kind of solutions permitted to formalize this practice through an organizational agreement.
In another particular case, that of the cooperative "Viadana Facchini", the disappointment was shown by clients – i.e., firms utilizing the handling services – because they feared the possibility that the temporary absence of TCNs workers with

whom they were accustomed to collaborate could undermine the effectiveness of their organizational operations.

2.6. Actual and potential impacts of diversity management practices and initiatives

2.6.1. Impacts on, and especially benefits for, the organization and their possible assessment

The assessment of benefits produced by DM practices for organizational performance is actually scarcely developed. None of the organizations observed could provide some sort of documentation on this topic. Only indirectly, in the case of "Camera del lavoro", we can see a significant and progressive increase of TCNs enrolled, in line with a general trend observable for almost all Italian unions.

Notwithstanding this lack of formal impact evaluations, the accounts collected in fieldwork give support to the idea that some impacts have been actually produced, as implied by our discussion so far. For example, we can cite the case of "Autogrill", which successfully employed TCNs to penetrate new foreign markets through the opening of stores. As said, on average, the organizations investigated seem to have variously achieved performance advantages (though not always explicitly sought) with respect to personnel motivation and retention, the interaction with heterogeneous clients/users, and sometimes (e.g., "La Rete") the ability to find solutions to specific operational problems.

2.6.2. Impacts on, and especially benefits for, personnel and their possible assessment (in general and specifically for TCNs)

More visible are the benefits gained by TCNs. In one case, that of "FBC Bonfanti-Bisteel", they obtained specific formalization thanks to the signature of an organizational agreement contemplating special rights for TCNs. In other cases, these advantages regard TCNs' career paths (e.g.: "Autogrill" and "Viadana Facchini") and their presence in various steering committees/boards, like in the union and, again, in "Viadana Facchini" (where 6 out of 7 members of the Board of Directors are

immigrants). More generally, our interviewees considered as "undisputable" the achievements obtained in terms of a better workplace climate, a sense of dignity of TCNs, their chance to see their contributions and skills on the job recognized, let alone benefits regarding work placement and the availability of tools for handling problems related to their migrant condition (and, more widely, for improving the quality of their family life). More broadly, it is possible to detect benefits also for the Italian personnel of these organizations, especially related to the opportunity to develop experience (and competences) within multi-ethnic and multinational relational contexts.

2.6.3. *External economic and social impacts*

In addition, albeit the fieldwork plan did not include interviews with external stakeholders, it is reasonable to assume that the distinctive diversity practices of these organizations are generating positive effects on the surrounding social context and communities. In general, since – as known – the empowerment of immigrant workers constitutes a primary vehicle for the full realization of citizenship rights in multi-ethnic societies, these practices are likely to be contributing to current processes of social integration and cohesion in the territories involved.

Among the various organizations included in our sample, only two have explicitly thematized the question of the impacts of their DM practices at social and economic level. This is related, undoubtedly, to their specific identity and mission, which, for different reasons, have led them to care about these external impacts.

In the first case, that of "Yalla.it", the expected impact was exactly that of concurring to give visibility, in the Italian cultural debate, not only to the diversities connected with the migratory background, but also to those related to the peculiar condition of migrants' offspring, the so-called second generations. Actually, this initiative has contributed to bring to the public attention the issue of citizenship, and to press the authorities to adopt a new legislation in order to permit migrants' children born in Italy to obtain (or apply for) the recognition of Italian citizenship before coming of age, as it now happens.

The second case is that of the union, where the cooptation of TCNs and the implementation of a set of initiatives aimed at valorizing their contribution is a component of a wider strategy aimed at encouraging a deeper change of attitudes towards diversity, that is, "accepting" that the Italian society is no longer a mono-ethnic and a mono-national one and that the whole issue of citizenship, in its different components – rights, duties, sense of belonging and active participation – must be

rethought in this perspective. Aside from the risks of an ideological exploitation of this issue, it is easy to perceive its consonance with the general aims of the DIVERSE project.

Considering the other organizations, and apart from their heterogeneity, we can grasp, once again, the intrinsic – maybe unavoidable – ambivalence embedded in this issue. On one hand, by inserting TCNs and sometimes promoting their professional advancement, these work organizations contribute to develop (among both internal and external stakeholders) familiarity with people coming from different contexts, giving visibility to their economic contribution. But, on the other hand, concurring – in the majority of cases – to the concentration of migrants in those sectors and positions already marked by their presence, they feed the already entrenched idea of complementarity and thus the related stereotypes about TCNs' role.

Finally, the economic impact is particularly evident in the cases of "Autogrill" and "BonBoard", to the extent to which they contribute to the process of internationalization of Italian firms.

2.6.4. Internal and external communication about the impacts of diversity management practices

As a matter of fact, even if a discrete number of our organizations have adopted formal statements, at the moment this dimension appears to be scarcely developed.

2.6.5. Prospects of organizational commitment to diversity management in the near future

In evaluating the prospects of organizational commitment to DM in the next future, we have first of all to consider the situation of prolonged recession and its impact on the general climate, that presumably will not rend the focus on this kind of concerns a priority for organizational strategies. This said, we can underline a couple of points suggested by two of the case histories.

"Golgi-Redaelli" is perhaps the most emblematic example of an organization "in the middle of the ford". In fact, thanks particularly to the mapping project, it was able to bring to light several interesting issues regarding, for example, different national approaches to the elderly and to end-of-life practices, which are often already discussed in everyday work; but the project has not had, so far, an organizational impact in terms of more targeted policies. Presumably, in the near future the

modalities of a possible movement of this type will represent a crucial point for this organization's trajectory in the domain of DM.

An even more paradoxical situation is that of "Fondazione Don Gnocchi", where our interviewees acknowledged openly, also with a sort of regret, that an intuitive perception of the possible lines of valorization of diversities connected with TCNs' cultural backgrounds has never been strengthened through a more focused and "ad hoc" organizational approach to the issue.

2.7.   Discussion and conclusions about Part 2

As a matter of fact, the analysis of case histories brought to surface some further insights beside the central ones outlined in the above points. For instance, it leads us to consider the organization's activity sector as an important "situational" factor permitting involvement in activities to play a pivotal role as a rewarding and valorizing mechanism for TCNs. This typically takes place through the opportunity of having direct and continuous relationships with clients/users (e.g.: the three organizations offering social assistance and/or health services, "Yalla.it", the provincial union office).

From another angle, the study suggests an idea worth delving into; namely, that especially non-profit organizations may have a set of resources, for the internal and – no less important! – external valorization of ethno-national diversity (and of other categories of difference), which is naturally "inscribed" into their organizational forms (often oriented to an innovation open to stakeholder participation) as well as in their objectives and cultures, and hence in the ordinary work practices deriving from them.

More profoundly, the overall "picture" emerging from the research allows us to enrich further what we pointed out with respect to cross-culture DM practices and impacts (see paragraphs 2.5-2.6). In particular, it leads us into conceptualizing more explicitly three distinctive mechanisms that, to varying degrees and often in non-explicit ways, seem to sustain or at least facilitate these organizations' trajectories in the sphere of DM.

The first mechanism is related to the role of internal (ethical) cultures as self-propulsive factors. In fact, as it has been noted, in most of the cases studied shared conceptions and values exist, which: *a)* have become routinized (or, for the more recently founded organizations, are in the process of being institutionalized) through the "natural" history of the organization and the development of its "traditions"; *b)*

revolve around tenets and basic assumptions that can be related to the principles of inclusiveness. In other terms, among those evolutive elements that – as considered before – appear to contribute to DM endeavours, *a pivotal role is played by the gradual development of socially oriented value systems which are consistent with the ethical options posed and required by diversity as such* (i.e., regardless of instrumental considerations referred to technical and economic issues or even regardless of an explicit commitment to multicultural diversity, as in the case of the social cooperative "La rete").

Two observations are to be made here. First, although in some cases (e.g.: "BonBoard" and "Yalla.it") these self-propulsive factors of a value-based and ethical nature are tightly linked with strong convictions held by the founder and/or the founding group, they are fuelled by processes of internal dissemination and sharing-of-meaning in the organization. And it is mainly through this channel, together with the positive feedback on organizational services and "style of action" coming from external stakeholders, that in several of our organizations these socially significant options have been strengthened after the start-up phase[71]. The second aspect worth noting is that the organizational cultural platform underpinning the exercise of distinctive "collective" competences often include directly an orientation towards experimentation (e.g.: the two organizations just mentioned and, to certain respects, the union office); this implies a basic propensity to innovation which turns out to be enabling with regard to openness to situations and opportunities involving diversity.

The second mechanism deals with a continuous process of opening-up to, and – simultaneously – incorporation of, the context. In the experiences studied we find an emerging pattern of interdependence between these organizations and their external context. At a general level, this is visible in their constant interaction with stakeholders in the territory, based on the sense of belonging to distinctive local communities and the "pressure" to participate to their evolution. In some circumstances, we find *an even more relevant tendency to bring the experiences, needs, and competences of a series of context stakeholders "directly into" strategies and processes for the creation of services*, with decisive effects on the capacity to carry out organizational activities successfully.

This occurs visibly for the activities of the editorial group and the consulting firm, through their ordinary interdependence, respectively, with participants in blogging communication and with client businesses and immigrant associations. Here, this advanced type of networking – which in the case of "Yalla.it" entails a sort of constant reinvention of organizational boundaries – is undoubtedly favoured by innovative organizational forms (whose hybrid and flexible character is naturally open to crossing

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[71] Incidentally, this is in line with approaches that criticize the reductionist view of "cultural engineering", which maintains that an organizational culture can be shaped unilaterally from above. See, for example: M. Alvesson, *Understanding organizational culture*, Sage, London, 2003.

borders and cross-fertilization), let alone the pervasive use of digital technologies by a staff of young (and TCN) people. This, again, seems to have important consequences for organizational attention to personnel diversity, in a twofold sense: first, because through continuous exchanges with external stakeholders specific opportunities for recognizing, acquiring and valorizing different human resources may be generated; second, because (as for "La Rete"), we may expect the development of a (virtuous) process of mutual strengthening between dealing with stakeholder diversity and the internal practice of diversity.

The third mechanism regards what we may name "citizenship processes" within the organization. As noted, almost all of these organizations are characterized by an internal climate that is based on respect for individual needs (and rights) and on collaborative relational models. This trait has evidently a positive impact on the quality of life in the workplace, a condition from which also the immigrant staff benefits. Delving into the issue, we may also go so far as to say that *in most cases there are formal and (especially) informal processes of "internal organizational citizenship"*, a concept[72] which refers to effective processes of involvement and participation of human resources in the tasks and priorities pursued by the organization.

The presence of high levels of commitment and proactive behaviours by personnel is probably favoured by these organizations' distinctive and engaging cultural identities, as well as – as reported by several immigrant interviewees – by the opportunity of having direct and continuous relationships with users (see what observed about the importance of the activity sector). For our purposes, however, what appears to be crucial is represented by two implications. On the one hand, *immigrant employee engagement generates specific "symbolic" benefits for these collaborators*: in the words used directly by some respondents, their satisfaction stems from the "perception of the usefulness of one's work" and from the social recognition that one obtains "when colleagues, bosses and users make you realize that your effort is valuable for them". On the other hand, exactly by engendering and sustaining this personal "passion" and "emotional connection to tasks" (these are other expressions collected in fieldwork), the majority of these organizations are able to mobilize key intangible assets for their goals and to the advantage of their performance.

Returning, finally, to the issues at the heart of this empirical study on the diffusion of (cross-culture) DM practices in the Lombard context, two general conclusions are suggested by the research. The first – reflecting, if you wish, the win-win logic

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[72] See, in particular: P.M. Podsakoff, S.B. MacKenzie, J.B. Paine and D. G. Bachrach, *Organizational citizenship behaviours: a critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature and suggestions for future research*, Journal of Management, 26, 2000, pp.513-63.

underlying DM canonical models – lies in the real presence of mechanisms capable of generating value not only for foreign personnel (in terms of work integration, quality of life and even professional opportunities), but also to the advantage of organizational performance (e.g., for developing commitment toward collective goals and for managing key relationships with culturally heterogeneous clients or users) and, as far as is possible to glimpse, of surrounding local communities.

Secondly, our findings throw light on the influence of a set of relational, and prevalently informal, mechanisms of organizational life as an essential driver for the consolidation of DM practices and their continuity over time. Among such "natural" conditions of the organization's evolution, a pivotal role is played by the development of socially oriented value systems. This notwithstanding, it was also possible to distinguish, sometimes very clearly (albeit at an initial or experimental stage), several more formal or "systematic" aspects that current international research identifies (or recommends) as crucial components of a "strategic" DM practice. Thus, what is particularly worth emphasizing here is the fact that the practices of inclusion and valorization of the foreign component enacted in some of these organizations (like "Camera del lavoro" and "Golgi-Redaelli") tend to be sustained by the intertwining and mutual supporting of both emerging social processes and more deliberate and targeted actions.

Obviously, all this opens up to what will be indicated by further studies on the subject. In particular, on this will depend the possibility to reinforce the conviction – to which our case histories appears to lend support – that the development of an "Italian way to DM" would (or should) involve more explicit forms of design, codification and monitoring of practices, but so as not to jeopardize their (chiefly informal) relational and cultural foundations.

2.8. Summary of Part 2

This part has taken as a starting point the documented awareness that, although since the beginning of the 2000s the DM approach obtained considerable visibility in the Italian context, very little attention – in both the scholarly community and among organizational practitioners – has been devoted so far to the following issue: how national and ethnic differences in the workplace impact organizational performance and life, especially when the focus is on organizations with a relevant presence of foreign workers from Third Countries subject to a strong migratory pressure.

In the empirical investigation on DM practices discussed here, the organizational cases for the study were chosen on the basis of a set of criteria according to which the selected organizations had to: be located in the local region considered by the Italian part of the project DIVERSE, namely, Lombardy; be operating in the profit, non-profit or public sector; be employing foreign human resources with a migratory background; have engaged in visible practices of attention to, and valorization of, TCN personnel.

The final set of selected organizations consisted of a large enterprise, a large cooperative business, three small enterprises, a large public healthcare organization, the provincial office of a national trade union, a large non-profit foundation, a medium-sized non-profit social cooperative, a medium-sized non-profit organization, and the Italian military unit of NATO Rapid Deployable Corps. The ten case histories were carried out using a qualitative approach, with field data being produced from documentary materials and semi-structured interviews.

The first types of findings to be mentioned regard a set of contextualizing factors which are of paramount importance to interpret the cross-culture DM practices implemented in the observed organizations.

With respect to reasons at the base of the choice of resorting to TCN workers, in general the case histories reflect the Italian and Lombard models of economic incorporation, founded on the logic of complementarity between autochthonous and immigrant labor. In other terms, in several cases the initial resort to TCN human resources has been determined by the need to face specific job vacancies. This is especially the case of organizations operating in the fields of health and social care, and those in the manufacturing sector (or related ones, like handling services). In some other cases, what emerged (often from the beginning) was an openness to the whole set of challenges and opportunities entailed by a growing pluralistic society, with the explicit intention of incorporating the valorization of foreign personnel – or even of TCNs' presence in society – directly into the goals of the organization. Furthermore, in the organizational trajectories observed, sometimes more purposeful reasons have

added to the reasons involved at the beginning, through learning processes that over time have led to consider the possible specific value of immigrants' presence for organizational goals.

Somehow related to this latter consideration about the evolution of organizational motives appear to be three other points highlighted by the study. The first concerns the roles and functions assigned to TCN personnel. Aside from the obvious fact of depending considerably on the size and sector of the organizations investigated, these positions involve chiefly operative tasks but in several situations extend to roles of responsibility (e.g.: coordinating roles or delicate tasks in the relationships with clients and users). In a couple of cases it was also possible to discern how, mainly due to the specific aims of the organization, human resources of foreign origin are central for the organizational "core business" or mission itself. Secondly, in these organizations no negative reactions and perceptions emerge with regard to cross-culture diversity and TCNs' presence. In general, managers tend to underline the positive traits of TCN workers and in particular their high adaptability to organizational needs. This appreciation sometimes alludes to distinctive contributions brought by TCNs' diverse cultural patterns of conduct at work. It is worth pointing out the inherent ambivalence of such interpretations, which, while emphasizing such kinds of propensities, result in reproducing the logic of complementarity between immigrant workers and autochthonous ones.

Among the contextual conditions influencing DM practices in the organizations observed, a key role is played by the specific collective cultures they have developed throughout their "natural" evolution. In particular, and leaving aside a couple of cases where the institutional identity and mission themselves revolve openly around values and goals referred to cultural pluralism and the valorization of diversity, for the most part these organizations have developed value systems which, formally and more often informally, appear to be intrinsically coherent with the (ethical) tenets of inclusiveness.

Similarly, another overall area whose relevance has to be stressed is the system adopted (or "in use") of human resource management, particularly in two respects. The first regards employee motivation, especially in the form of symbolic mechanisms of involvement which – through the daily recognition of workers' contribution – succeed in obtaining the commitment and the retention of collaborators, including TCNs (even when employed at the lowest levels of the hierarchy). The second aspect deals with leadership styles, which, also by intertwining with socially-oriented organizational cultures, concur, on average, to sustain internal climates based on collaborative relational models and respect for individual needs and rights.

Furthermore, in at least a couple of cases personnel training and development processes are regarded and implemented as basic tools, resulting in the improvement of the quality of services offered and in more opportunities of professional growth and advancement also for TCN employees. However, some investments in training are visible also in the small realities included in the sample.

Coming to the key topic of DM practices addressed to TCNs, these organizations' engagement in the field of diversity is characterized by the prevailing role of informality and evolutive conducts. Actually, many of them have formulated and diffused formal statements which more or less openly refer to diversity; in this regard, an exemplary case is provided by the agreement signed between a small enterprise and union representatives aimed at guaranteeing TCNs specific rights. This notwithstanding, in general DM has emerged primarily as something that is strictly related to the evolution of the organization, rather than as a well-defined system of planned and targeted interventions. Significantly, a variety of practices of integration and valorization of immigrant human resources emerge, which sometimes intermingle with attention to other kinds of diversity (e.g.: religious background, family status).

These include, firstly, forms of practical support aimed at assisting foreign workers in tackling a number of basic needs (e.g., long leave periods, advances of pay). Albeit elementary and usually implemented on a case-by-case basis, such practices appear to be quite crucial in that they tend to promote individual conditions of serenity and productivity at work, which are prerequisites for favouring the expression of workers' attitudes and potential. Aside from this, other types of intervention emerge which are pursued informally and, less frequently, in a more formalized way.

A second area concerns the communication and socialization of inclusiveness-oriented organizational cultures. From this standpoint, apart from the adoption of formal statements, some organizations have implemented initiatives addressed to the whole staff for increasing awareness about the opportunities related to a diverse workplace.

A third type of organizational action involves the reshaping of some personnel management mechanisms through, for example, the agreement with a foreign training centre for the recruiting of TCN nurses, the ensuring of forms of flexibility in working hours, the adoption of tools and materials in different languages in order to welcome foreign newcomers, and advancement opportunities for people in low-level job positions.

Fourthly, in some of the organizations investigated a set of practices is connected with the explicit search of organizational performance goals by means of cross-culture diversity in human resources. This is pursued – and, apparently, obtained – through various processes; for instance, the placement of foreign personnel in important

positions, by resorting to them in the implementation of specific strategic lines (e.g.: meeting foreign customers' needs, market penetration in foreign countries), and, *tout court*, by using the staff multicultural composition as the key resource for "getting the business done" or reaching the organization's institutional purposes.

As for difficulties faced in the realization of DM practices, only two aspects are worth mentioning. The first is that, in some cases, promising projects or informal "traditions" had to be abandoned due to pressures to reduce costs. The second critical situation concerns negative reactions and resistance that several of the organizations studied had to cope with, internally and sometimes externally (i.e., clients' reactions), with respect to the practice of conceding holiday periods extensions to TCNs.

Shifting to another pivotal issue, that of impacts of DM practices, the research has shed light on a number of "virtuous" effects related to the presence, and especially the management, of TCN workers. These impacts are to the advantage of two actors.

The first is given by foreign human resources, who can get benefits regarding work placement, the availability of tools for handling problems related to their migrant condition, the chance to see their contributions and skills recognized and thus opportunities for professional development and/or career advancement.

The other party obtaining benefits from cross-culture diversity (and its management) are the organizations studied. Generally speaking, they seem to have variously achieved performance advantages (though not always explicitly sought) with regard to personnel involvement and retention, the interaction with heterogeneous clients/users, and sometimes the ability to find solutions to specific operational problems. The advantages for the organization are particularly discernible in two cases where cross-cultural diversity is as such the goal towards which organizational conducts and strategies are aimed.

In addition, it is plausible to assume that the distinctive diversity practices of these organizations are producing positive effects on the surrounding social contexts (e.g.: development of a local community's human capital). Moreover, for those organizations in which the tenets of diversity are directly incorporated into the "institutional" mission, this social contribution tends to overlap, more profoundly, with a function of cultural dissemination and education.

On the other hand, confirming the afore-mentioned low degree of structuration of these initiatives, in the whole sample – so far – the two areas of formal assessment and communication of DM interventions have not been developed.

Finally, as for the prospects of these organizations' engagement in DM action in the next future, two observations are to be made. First, for several of them, a crucial point will be represented by their actual capacity and willingness to strengthen their present

attention to the issue through more targeted policies (e.g.: to derive decisions and interventions from internal monitoring of diversity). Secondly, and more generally, it has to be considered that presumably the current situation of prolonged recession will require a sort of "extra-effort" for making DM investments an organizational priority.

THIRD PART:
TCNs' PARTICIPATION
IN VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

3.1. Description of the methods and sources for data collection

3.1.1. Selection of TCNs associations leaders, leading experts and actors at regional level

This part, on one hand, focuses on the analysis of the state of art of TCNs civic engagement in ethnic associations and mainstream voluntary organizations, which is crucial for identifying the main features of these two different phenomena in Italy; on the other hand, it summarizes the main evidence stemming from the analysis of some successful experiences of TCNs' civic participation in the territory.

The first step in the process of identification and choice of the interlocutors to interview was to identify the different stakeholders involved in mechanisms of TCNs' civic participation, which were divided into four different categories of interest: institutional stakeholders and local authorities, leading experts from the world of academia, representatives of mainstream voluntary organizations and leaders of ethnic associations. The first institutional interlocutor identified was the CSVnet, which is the National Coordination Center for Voluntary Services representing over 90% of the centers for voluntary services in Italy. All 12 directors of the provincial CSVs of the Lombardy region were contacted and the directors of CSVs in Milan, Como and Monza-Brianza were identified as local experts to interview. The second institutional interlocutor selected was the Municipality of Milan, thanks to its role in promoting TCNs' civic engagement and active citizenship practices such as the involvement of TCNs in the implementation process of policies specifically targeted to them.

The leading experts from the academic world were selected according to their area of research, in order to outline a general framework on the following different topics: formal volunteering, TCNs' participation in mainstream voluntary organizations and TCNs' ethnic associationism.

As far as the world of ethnic associationism is concerned, 4 interviewees were chosen among associations for cultural promotion, integration support and development in the country of origin, as well as umbrella associations. The associations identified (*Sunugal* and *Colori del Mondo Adda*) have been selected as they managed to become peer interlocutors with other local subjects and, in this position, contributed to the acknowledgment of the role of TCNs as active actors of development both in the receiving and in the sending countries.

Finally, with particular regard to the phenomenon of TCNs' participation in mainstream volunteering, the interlocutors chosen for interviews were 2 representatives of the *Red Cross* and of *City Angels* – an association whose aim is meeting and helping homeless people, drug addicts, alcohol abusers and prostitutes during night time –, both of which registered a (relatively) significant number of foreign volunteers even without displaying any intentional TCNs engagement practice; and 2 representatives of *Nazareth Social Cooperative* – which operates in the field of solidarity and promotes educational projects involving foreign families for fostering care of foreign unaccompanied minors – and *Amici del Fai Onlus,* which promotes immigrants' interest in the Italian artistic, cultural and environmental heritage; in particular, the latter organization aims to enhance the contribution of TCNs in the host society through volunteering, thus contributing to counterbalance the negative perception about their presence in the territory and highlighting migrants' important role for the development of the whole society.

3.1.2. *The process of data collection*

As previously mentioned, an important actor for formal volunteering in Lombardy is CVSnet and this was the first body contacted in order to outline a general framework with respect to the topic investigated, both in terms of existing significant experiences of TCNs' mainstream volunteering in ethnic or non-ethnic associations in the area, and with regard to the corresponding reference regulations.

The process of data collection regarding the presence of TCNs in voluntary organizations was difficult because of the scarcity of information from both scientific literature and practice-based empirical contributions. CSV's representatives were able to mention experiences of TCNs' spontaneous participation in some mainstream voluntary organizations such as the *Red Cross*, *City Angels* and other minor voluntary associations, but were not able to identify intentional practices of immigrant engagement; as a matter of fact, they seemed to be very unfamiliar with this idea.

Hence, in order to identify such practices in the area, a desk analysis was conducted, which revealed that in Italy involvement of TCNs in mainstream voluntary organizations is rare, albeit not absent. The authors of the few existing studies on this topic were contacted and interviewed. They managed to cite two successful practices implemented in the area and some other little experiences of TCNs active engagement in non-ethnic organizations. In depth interviews were carried out with the representatives of all the experiences listed and the phenomenon of TCNs' formal volunteering has also been deepened through the analysis of the existing literature. The statistics available did not allow, however, to quantify the phenomenon.

On the other hand since the presence of TCNs in ethnic association has been much more investigated in our country, the process of data collection regarding this topic was easier. Both the representatives of local CSVs and some existing contacts of UCSC, as well at the ISMU Foundation, were helpful to easily identify some successful practices of TCNs' associationism and the different key informants to interview. Ethnic associationism has been deepened also through desk analysis of literature concerning this topic.

3.2. An overview of formal volunteering at national and regional level

3.2.1. Policy frameworks for formal volunteering and existing measures to support voluntary organizations and to promote voluntary work

Formal volunteering is highly valued in Italy: it has an important role in encouraging the institutions to take charge of the weakest people, anticipates the State's responses to emerging social needs and integrates public services. During the 70s, albeit volunteering began to acquire more self-awareness of its social and political function, there was no national legislative framework that regulated it. Between 1981 and 1989 many regions independently addressed the issue of volunteering with specific laws; however these regional laws appeared to be contradictory and often difficult to understand[73]. It was not until 1991 that the structure and the tasks of volunteering were clearly defined by the national law n. 266/91 as a result of a Parliamentary debate lasted more than 15 years. The law promotes the development of voluntary

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[73] E. Modonesi, *Volontariato: agente di convivenza nella società multiculturale. La persona di origine straniera tra formazione e partecipazione al volontariato*, University of Bergamo, Phd Thesis, 2011/2012.

organizations, it safeguards their independence and supports their contribution to the achievement of the social, civic and cultural purposes identified by the State and the Regions. This law is still the main point of reference on volunteering at national level and, by acknowledging its function and social value as an expression of the principles of participation, solidarity and pluralism enshrined in the Italian Constitution, it marks volunteering as a new political subject able to contribute to the democratic and economic development of the country[74]. The political function of volunteering is also spelled out in article 7 and article 9 of the Volunteering Charter of Values[75] promoted by the Italian Foundation for Volunteering (FIVOL), which was established in 1991 with the specific aim to promote and encourage volunteering in all its forms and fields. An important cornerstone in the above-mentioned law concerns the establishment (art.15) of the Centers for Voluntary Services (CSVs), which are the subjects in charge of the administration of special funds provided by the Regions and destined to voluntary organizations. They play a key role in supporting, promoting and qualifying volunteering through the implementation of services and accompanying measures able to encourage its development in the territory. CSVs' tasks basically cover four different areas:

- to promote the spread of solidarity and to support voluntary initiatives;
- to provide voluntary organizations with qualified assistance and tools for the design and implementation of specific activities;
- to train and qualify voluntary organizations members;
- to collect and to disseminate information, news, documentation and data on volunteering at both the local and national level.

Lombardy has 12 provincial CSVs thanks to whom it was able to activate a wide range of promotional services for associations, thus encouraging the construction of networks in the territory, implementing awareness-raising initiatives about volunteering, facilitating the recruitment of new human resources and creating solid bonds with the world of education and youth, also by capitalizing the opportunities offered by the European Union in this field.

As far as the regional level is concerned, the main legislative reference is the regional law 01/08 "Consolidation Act of regional laws on volunteering, social cooperation, associations and mutual aid societies", which, along the same lines of the previously mentioned national law, states that Lombardy fully recognizes the role of volunteering as an independent tool of social solidarity and cultural promotion and that it supports

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[74] L. Tavazza, *Dalla Terra Promessa alla Terra Permessa. Scelte, sfide, progettualità nel cammino del MO.V.I.*, FIVOL, Roma 2001.
[75] FIVOL, *Carta dei Valori del Volontariato*, 2001, artt. 7, 9.

its development while safeguarding its autonomy and pluralism. An important measure provided by the law 01/08 is the "Call for volunteers", a call managed by CSVnet Lombardy together with Cariplo Foundation and the Committee for the Management of Special Funds for Volunteering, which in 2014[76] provided the sum of € 2.3 million for the implementation of projects promoted by voluntary organizations in Lombardy. The main purpose of the call is to encourage projects able to promote the creation of social networks and foster the collaboration between different voluntary organizations.

3.2.2. Statistics and studies about formal volunteering

Formal volunteering has been deeply investigated in the country as it represents one of the most dynamic social phenomenon that characterizes Italian contemporary society. Recent sociological studies have explored this topic with respect to the relational dimension of volunteering and to the intergenerational dynamics that take place among voluntary organizations. By studying the process of transmission of the propensity to volunteering between generations, they revealed a significant relation between current volunteering and parental/family volunteering in the past. Moreover, these studies point out how volunteering, by its ability to involve different people in the pursuit of the same aims and ideals, is an effective means of inclusion and social integration[77].

The phenomenon of formal volunteering has been investigated considering both prosocial behaviors of young people and their civic participation[78] and the

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[76] The same call was promoted also in 2012.

[77] See, for example: E. Scabini – G. Rossi, *La famiglia pro-sociale*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2002; L. Boccacin, *Il terzo settore tra le generazioni. Un'analisi delle relazioni tra i soggetti di welfare plurale*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2003; L. Boccacin, E. Marta, (eds), *Giovani adulti, famiglia e volontariato. Itinerari di costruzione dell'identità personale e sociale*, Unicopli, Milano, 2003; L. Boccacin, *Rispondere ai bisogni creando legami sociali: il contributo del volontariato*, in Politiche Sociali e Servizi, n.32, pp. 9-40, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2009.

[78] See, for example: L. Boccacin, *La costruzione dell'identità personale e sociale: il caso dei giovani-adulti impegnati nel volontariato*, in E. Scabini, - G. Rossi, *La famiglia prosociale*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2002; L. Boccacin, *Giovani e volontariato organizzato: trend emergenti dalla ricerca sociologica* in E. Scabini, - E. Marta, *Giovani volontari: impegnarsi, crescere e far crescere. Una ricerca su Giovani-adulti tra famiglia e comunità sociale*, Giunti Editore, Firenze, 2003; L. Boccacin, - G. Rossi, *Stili partecipativi emergenti nel volontariato giovanile*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2004; D. Marzana, *Volontari si diventa. Conoscere e promuovere l'impegno nel volontariato e nella politica dei giovani italiani*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2011; A. Salvini - L. Corchia, (eds), *Il volontariato inatteso. Nuove identità nella solidarietà organizzata in Toscana*, CESVOT, Firenze, 2012; C. Alberico, - P. Bonomi, - V. Righi, (eds), *Rigenerare il volontariato. Una ricerca sui comportamenti pro sociali dei giovani milanesi*, CIESSEVI, Milano, 2013.

engagement of older people[79], emphasizing, in the latter case, how formal volunteering promotes active ageing by encouraging dialogue with young people, by preventing social isolation and by boosting civic participation in the territory. Other studies, instead, have focused on the socio-cultural value orientations of formal volunteering and on its different social representations[80], suggesting that formal volunteering – being characterized by the symbolic codes of altruism, reciprocity, trust and solidarity – is an effective means to promote inclusion and social integration.

Moving to the available statistical data, the most recent surveys[81] agree in defining formal volunteering as a phenomenon deeply rooted in the whole national territory and particularly widespread in Lombardy. In 2011 Italy's National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) conducted a census on non-profit organizations, which defined the profile of the latter and stressed out the valuable contribution of volunteers[82]. In 2011 non-profit organizations operating in the country were 301,191 – 28% more than in 2001[83] -, while the number of volunteers was about 4.7 million people, of which 20% were under 29 years old.

Another important source of statistical data about formal volunteering is the statistical survey conducted in 2013 by ISTAT, with the collaboration of CSVnet and the Volunteering and Participation Foundation, on a sample of 19 thousand families, with the aim to deepen formal volunteering in our country[84]. The latter is the first internationally harmonized survey conducted in Italy and it provides information about the rate of formal volunteering[85], the number of citizens engaged in it, their characteristics, their main activities; also, it analyses the motivations underpinning engagement in volunteering and the personal implications stemming from pursuing this kind of activity. The survey suggests that formal volunteering rate (total rate is 7.9%) is greater in the central age groups of population, it increases with age – reaching its maximum in the age class of 55-64 years old (10.95%) – and then slowly decreases, thus removing the stereotype of Italian volunteering as a purely juvenile

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[79] E. Innocenti - T. Vecchiato, (eds), *Volontariato e invecchiamento attivo*, CESVOT, Firenze, 2012.

[80] L. Boccacin - D. Bramanti, (eds), *Dare, ricevere, fidarsi. Cosa c'è di nuovo nel circuito del dono*, Sociologia e politiche sociali, 2000, n.2; L. Boccacin - G. Rossi, *Le culture e le pratiche di volontariato in Italia* in P. Donati - I. Colozzi, *Il perché del volontariato*, in Le risorse del volontariato, "SocialNews", Anno 8, n. 10, Dicembre 2011; I. Colozzi, (ed.), *Il terzo settore in Italia. Culture e pratiche*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2004, pp. 71-107; L. Boccacin - G. Rossi, *Le identità del volontariato italiano. Orientamenti valoriali e stili di intervento a confronto*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2006; L. Boccacin, 2009, Op. cit.;

[81] (Istat, 2014a; 2014b).

[82] Data are available at http://censimentoindustriaeservizi.istat.it/istatcens/dati/.

[83] The last census of this sector was conducted in 2001.

[84] Data are available at http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/129115.

[85] Percentage of individuals in the total population that have been engaged in voluntary activities during the 4 weeks preceding the interview.

phenomenon[86]. The survey also highlights a direct relationship between voluntary commitment and level of education, since the percentage of voluntary engagement grows as the level of educational attainment increases: the formal volunteering rate is very low among those who have a primary school certificate or did not attain any school certificate (3.1%), and it reaches the highest level among those who graduated (13.6%). Also the availability of economic resources affects the level of civic participation in voluntary activities, since the latter increases in correspondence with higher levels of economic possibilities. As a matter of fact, the rate of volunteering among members of wealthier families is nearly three times higher than among people living in families with insufficient economic resources (15% vs 5,5%). The average engagement of each volunteer is 18.6 hours each month. With regard to the activities carried out within voluntary organizations, only 6.5% of volunteers have a leadership role and in this case the presence of gender imbalances is clear, as 73% of this group are men. Considering the area of voluntary activity, 23.2% of volunteers are engaged in organizations with religious purposes; 17.4% participate in recreational and cultural activities; 16.4% are active in the health sector and 14.2% in the field of social and civil protection: 8.9% of volunteers are engaged in sports activities and 3.4% in the environmental sector; finally, just 3.1% are active in the educational and research field. The remaining part of volunteers is active in other sectors of activities. Finally, as for the specific motivations underpinning engagement in volunteering[87], 62.1% of the volunteers are engaged because they believe in the cause supported by the group or organization, 41.7% because they think that being engaged in volunteering is a way of giving a contribution to the community and 25.8% because they consider voluntary work as a way to follow their religious convictions. Young people up to 34 years and students are encouraged by the possibility of being part of a group, meeting new people, experimenting a sense of belonging; however, they also consider volunteering as a means of self-empowerment which allows them to consolidate their skills. 49.6% of volunteers feel gratified by being engaged in voluntary activities, for 28.1% of them the activities performed in voluntary organizations changed their attitudes towards life, and 20.4% think volunteering allows them to develop greater social conscience.

With particular regard to the Lombardy context, a detailed picture of formal volunteering in Lombardy and Milan comes from the numerous CIESSEVI reports. The most recent was conducted in 2010[88] and, besides confirming the trend emerged in the national context, it shows two possible signals of change in the formal volunteering

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[86] L. Boccacin, 2003, Op. cit.
[87] Multiple responses were allowed.
[88] S. Citroni, *Il volontariato a Milano e provincia nel 2010. Una risorsa per l'innovazione sociale*. CIESSEVI, 2012.

scenario: the increase of the functional specialization of voluntary action and the further development of relations with other actors in implementing joint projects. The increasing number of partnerships established by voluntary organizations with other local actors is, according to many scholars[89], complementary to the inclusion of voluntary organizations in the system of local welfare services. Moreover, the research points out that voluntary organizations are facing some difficulties in terms of generational change of volunteers and in the involvement of younger age groups.

3.3. TCNs' civic participation and volunteering in non-ethnic organizations at national and specifically at regional level

3.3.1. Legislative framework

As will be detailed hereinafter, although in Italy we find some significant experiences of TCNs engagement in mainstream voluntary organizations – too often promoted only by the specific initiative of individual associations or citizens –, the reflection on the nexus between volunteering and integration processes has not been yet fully developed neither in the institutional arena nor in the public debate. There are not specific legislative acts concerning TCNs' civic participation and their engagement in voluntary organizations, as the decision to volunteer is enshrined in the Constitution as an individual right of the person, regardless of nationality or ethnicity[90]. However, it should be noted that in 2011 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Entry Visa to Italy for volunteering purposes. Thanks to an agreement between the foreigner and the sponsoring organization[91], the Visa allows young people aged between 20 and 30 years old to entry Italy in order to participate in volunteering organizations or projects. The agreement must define volunteer functions, terms and conditions for

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[89] See for example: R. Frisanco, *Volontariati: trend e prospettive*, in Impresa sociale, XIX, 4, pp.21-42; L. Boccacin, *Third sector and Social Partnership in Italy. A sociological perspective*. Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2005; L. Boccacin, *Terzo settore e partnership sociali: buone pratiche di welfare sussidiario*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2009.
[90] E. Modonesi, 2011-2012, Op. cit.
[91] The sponsoring organizations must belong to one of the following categories:
- legally recognized ecclesiastical organizations, in accordance with the Law 05/85, n.222;
- non-governmental organizations legally recognized under the Law 02/87 n.49;
- associations of social promotion regularly registered in the national register established under the Law 12/00, n.383.

complying with them, working hours, the resources allocated for travel expenses and those for room and board, as well as the resources for linguistic training, if needed[92].

Furthermore, with particular regard to measures implemented to promote the civic participation of foreigners, the most significant element to be highlighted is the recognition of volunteering as a way to earn credit in order to obtain the Residency Permit. Since march 2012, foreign people between 16 and 65 entering Italy for the first time and applying for a Residency Permit valid for at least one year, must sign an Integration Agreement with the State[93], through which they commit themselves to acquire a basic knowledge of the Italian language and of the fundamental principles of the Italian Constitution, as well as about institutions and civic life in Italy. The foreigner must also attend the civics course held by the Prefecture Immigration Helpdesk. In addition, s/he must comply with compulsory education for her/his children and with customs duties and tax requirements. While subscribing the Integration Agreement, the foreigner person is awarded 16 credits. After two years, the Single Desk for Immigration will verify if the Agreement terms are fulfilled (this requires 30 credits at least). If the credits are less than or equal to zero, the foreigner will be expelled, while, if they are between 1 and 29, s/he will obtain a one-year extension. The credits are deducted in case of criminal convictions, including non-definitive ones, and in case of fines of at least 10,000 Euro. On the contrary, credits will increase through the participation in courses and the attainment of educational degrees and honors, as well as by conducting economic and entrepreneurial activities, by selecting a primary care physician, by renting or purchasing a house, and by participating in volunteering activities (which gives the opportunity to gain 4 credits).

3.3.2. *Main features of TCNs' civic participation and voluntary work*

Civic participation is defined as a form of political participation outside the mainstream political institutions and it can be considered as an active and collective dimension of engagement in society[94]. One form of civic participation consists in being active through volunteering in active citizenship organizations, which – focused or not

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[92] The Visa for voluntary purposes must be used within six months from the data of issue. This permit is valid for a maximum of one year, is not convertible into any other type of Residency Permit and cannot be renewed.

[93] The regulation of the Integration Agreement was issued in September 2011 through the decree n.179 of the President of the Italian Republic and it provides the criteria and procedures for the signing of the agreement by the foreigner.

[94] S. Gsir, *Civic Participation and integration: a Country-of-Origin Perspective*, INTERACT research report, CEDEM, Liège, 2014.

on the issue of immigration – are not ethnic associations, like those focused on protecting rights, taking care of common goods and empowering weak people. Moreover, civic integration of TCNs can be achieved through migrants' participation in the definition, implementation and evaluation of public policies promoted by the initiative of active citizenship organizations[95]. TCNs' civic engagement is a matter of great importance because being active in the public sphere allows TCNs to practice the participatory dimension of citizenship even without the juridical citizenship status and to play an active role in influencing the process of citizenship redefinitions that immigration has triggered[96]. Nonetheless, in Italy, while the presence of TCNs in ethnic associations has been widely explored, the phenomenon of TCNs' participation in non-ethnic organizations has not been researched and evaluated consistently yet. As a matter of fact, the available literature focuses mostly on the study of immigrants' engagement in civil society organizations in general and highlights the presence of TCNs in trade unions organizations[97] and in organizations representing economic and professional categories[98], while there is a lack of representative data or studies about TCNs engagement in formal volunteering organizations.

The analysis of the available literature has highlighted only two studies on this topic which both point out that TCNs' formal volunteering is very limited in our country. The first study is a research report on migrant associationism in Italy. This study, among other things, has to do with the topic of TCNs' formal volunteering in non-ethnic associations[99] and underlines that the area in which the highest level of immigrant participation can be found is the one regarding support to other migrants, confirming the hypothesis of a sort of a path: at the beginning, when the socialization

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[95] G. Moro, *La partecipazione civica dei migranti: lo scenario italiano*, in L. Zanfrini (ed.), *Costruire cittadinanza per promuovere convivenza. Atti della III edizione della Summer School "Mobilità umana e giustizia globale"*, Studi Emigrazione, n.189, Roma, 2013.

[96] L. Zanfrini, *Cittadinanze. Appartenenze e diritti nella società dell'immigrazione*, Laterza, Bari, 2007.

[97] P. Basso, *Sul rapporto tra immigrati e sindacati*, in L. Mauri, L. M. Visconti (eds), Diversity *management e società multiculturale*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2004, pp. 113-131; A. Bernardotti, - G. Megale, - G. Mottura, *Immigrazione e sindacato. Stesse opportunità, stessi diritti. IV Rapporto*, Ediesse, Roma, 2006; E. Galossi - A. Megale - G. Mottura, *Immigrazione e sindacato. V Rapporto Ires*, Ediesse, 2008; Caritas Migrantes, *Immigrazione, Dossier statistico*, Caritas, Roma, 2009.

[98] Codres, La *rappresentanza diffusa. Le forme di partecipazione degli immigrati alla vita collettiva*, Rapporto di ricerca, Cnel, 2000.

[99] Strategie, IPRS, *La partecipazione degli immigrati all'associazionismo come veicolo di integrazione sociale*, Roma, 2010. The study was was commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior , and co-financed by the European Commission within the European Fund for Integration of third country nationals. It was conducted on voluntary organizations regulated under Law 266/91, recorded in regional registries around the country and engaged in activities in the following sectors: health and welfare, culture, education and sport, civil protection , protection of rights, protection of the environment. The sample was built according to criteria of probabilistic extraction and took into account the geographical distribution and areas of activity.

experiences are fragmented and marginal, ethnic and kinship bonds are predominant, so that immigrants are more likely involved in volunteering within ethnic associations or tend to be engaged in volunteering within associations that operate in favor of immigrants; only in a more mature stage of the integration path, the sense of belonging and the engagement in active citizenship organizations is expressed through volunteer activities in mainstream organizations.

Similar results also emerge from the research carried out in 2009-2010 by the Foundation for active citizenship (FONDACA)[100] on the presence of TCNs in mainstream volunteering associations and active citizenship associations. The survey involved 300 civil society organizations – divided into 3 subgroups: civic activism, social and cultural infrastructures and professional associations – which carry out activities not focused on immigration. Only 87 organizations have responded to the questionnaire and just 26.4% of them declared to have immigrants among their members, hence confirming the small extent of the phenomenon under study.

Our key informants have confirmed this finding, pointing out that the presence of TCNs in mainstream voluntary organization is rare – albeit not absent – and that, in most cases, there is not a form of active and conscious engagement on the part of the organizations involved. On the contrary, the presence of TCN volunteers in mainstream organizations quite often depends on the immigrant's individual initiative and on his/her level of sensitivity about the topic. This clearly emerged from interviews with the *Red Cross* in Milan and *City Angels*, an association which in 2013 had 30% of its volunteers coming from abroad. Immigrants' presence in the associations is crucial as they play a key role in approaching, and as intermediates with, foreign population; however, in both cases the presence of TCNs was not in any way stimulated by awareness campaigns that could intercept this segment of the population.

3.3.3. *Factors and conditions promoting or hindering TCNs' volunteering and civic engagement*

Among factors promoting TCNs' formal volunteering and civic engagement, an important role is played by the presence of some practical conditions such as the availability of resources in terms of time, money and civic skills (i.e., organizational and communication skills), the existence of a good cause for which getting engaged,

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[100] The Survey was conducted as part of the Italian report on the Civil Society Index (cfr. M. Ruffa, Immigrants *and Italian Civil Society's Organizations: Presence, Role, Impact*. Fondaca, paper, 2010.

the existence of volunteering recruitment structures and a social fabric sensitive to the issue of voluntary work[101]. The presence of one or more of these conditions promotes civic engagement, while, on the contrary, the lack of these resources often negatively influences immigrants' formal volunteering. Another factor that adversely affects their civic engagement is the lack of information and awareness about the role that civic participation can have in the integration of newcomers; as a matter of fact, TCNs often do not know volunteering opportunities and lack language and time resources for discovering them.

When focusing on the barriers that prevent TCNs from formal volunteering, we may identify both cognitive and operational obstacles on the immigrants' side as well as on the side of active citizenship organizations. In the first case, TCNs often deal with significant barriers to civic participation such as lack of language competences, different organizational cultures and communication patterns, as well as cultural differences in the perception of formal volunteering due to dissimilar traditions or to lack of volunteering experience in the country of origin. They also deal with unfamiliarity with the social fabric and have a weak sense of belonging to the host society (e.g., as for gender roles). Moreover, as previously mentioned, other obstacles are given by lack of time and economic resources and lack of support for child care (which are a serious obstacle in getting them engaged as they are often in precarious financial situations), as well as by the fact that they are mainly focused on basic needs (e.g.: paid work, remittances and household). Another important factor that can negatively influence their engagement is low self-esteem: TCNs often have a negative image of themselves, frequently nurtured by the media coverage, and they do not perceive themselves as potential helpers[102].

On the other hand, there are also hindering conditions linked to the organizations' structure, such as lack of targeted recruitment procedures, prejudice and closure towards new members, the social perception of immigrants as beneficiaries (and not as protagonists) of active citizenship practices, lack of TCNs' SKC recognition, lack of resources for paying training of volunteers and their expenses and, finally, lack of intercultural competences. With regard to the policy level, besides issues in the definition of their legal status, barriers TCNs often face are the lack of awareness about the role that volunteering may play in integration processes and the scarcity of significant integration policies recognizing this influence. Finally, another significant

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[101] See: G. Moro, 2013, Op. cit; S. Verba – K. Schlozman - H. Brady, *Voice and equality. Civic voluntarism in American Democracy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1995.

[102] See for example: CEV, INVOLVE, *Involvement of third country nationals in volunteering as a means of better integration*, European Volunteering Center, Bruxelles, 2006; G. Moro, 2013, Op. cit.

factor hindering TCNs' civic engagement is strictly related to the social representation of migrants, which is often linked to terrorism and criminality images rather than considering also the positive effect their presence can have in society.

3.3.4. Forms and specificities of TCNs' participation

As for the forms and specificities of TCNs engagement in voluntary and civic organization, we will hereinafter refer to the IPRS research study previously mentioned and to the information collected through interviews with different stakeholders and interlocutors with some significant experience in TCNs involvement. With particular regard to the IPRS research, although the pertinent figures are not high (only 26% of the respondent voluntary organizations declared to have also immigrant volunteers), it is possible to identify some trends and elements worth considering about TCNs' participation in voluntary organizations. The survey reported that immigrant volunteers got engaged by direct contact with the organization (26.8%) or through personal knowledge of other Italian volunteers (25%), while 16.1% joined voluntary work through personal knowledge of other foreign volunteers. This data confirm that informal channels still play an important role in the dissemination of information among immigrants and the reason for this might be their social distance in relation to the institutional information channels.

This tendency was also confirmed by interviews with representatives of the *Red Cross* and *City Angels*. On the other hand, awareness-raising initiatives targeting immigrants carried out by voluntary organizations, with the explicit aim of encouraging TCNs' engagement in their activities, seemed to produce excellent results in boosting their involvement. Evidence of this comes from some civic initiatives recently promoted by the major blood and organ donation associations[103]. It is the case of AVIS, which in 2006 established the "Center for the blood gift culture"[104] with the specific aim, among others, to involve migrants in donating blood and to raise awareness about health protection. The result obtained are considerable, since, according to the data presented on the occasion of the World Day of the Donor in 2011, immigrants who actively donate blood are growing: Italian volunteers are almost 1,700,000, equal to 4.4% of the

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[103] See: E. Modonesi, 2011-2012, Op. cit; T. Canetta, P. Pruneddu , *Sangue immigrato, ne abbiamo tanto ma ne serve di più*, in «Linkiesta», 11 Marzo 2014, in http://www.linkiesta.it/.

Besides Avis, also some other organ donation organizations showed their commitment in involving TCNs by promoting awareness-raising campaigns specifically targeted to them. This is the case of AIDO (Italian Association of Organ Donors) and ADMO (Association of Italian Bone Marrow Donor).

[104] http://www.avis.it/attachments/4827_documento.pdf .

potentially suitable donor population, while immigrants donors are 10% of the latter[105]. In 2010, in Lombardy 8% of the 300,000 regular donors were immigrants and the percentage is still growing[106].

With respect to the specific role of the second generation, a significant experience is that related to foreign volunteers engagement in GREST[107]. GREST means "Recreational Summer Group", an experience promoted by the Catholic Church that takes place every year early in the summer; as a matter of fact, according to the survey "Educate, generating future"[108], in the Diocese of Milan more than half of the ecclesial communities have foreigners volunteers. Volunteers are teens that deal with animation activities for younger children during the daytime. The activities are addressed to elementary and secondary school's children, promoting (with the guide of a group of pastors and leaders) a meaningful shared experience of life and friendship. Although GREST is promoted by the Catholic Church, being Catholic or Christian is not required to be a volunteer or to attend the activities. Moreover, children's parents – no matter what their religious affiliation is – are informed and invited to get involved in the identification of the educational objectives, like cultural exchange between different cultures (games, songs, proverbs, symbols, foods, prayers, sacred texts), the highlighting of shared values and the recognition of – and respect for – differences.

3.3.5. *Specific motivations underpinning TCNs involvement*

The reasons underlying the civic engagement and the participation in voluntary organizations can be both personal and altruistic. Generally speaking, despite considerable differences in experiences, we may identify two levels of analysis when considering the specific motivations underpinning TCNs' civic involvement: the first level concerns the dimension of *taking part* in a social system that promotes the interests and rights of those in need, such as other immigrants; the second level is more related to the dimension of *being part* of a community, i.e. experimenting a strong

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[105] "*Aumentano i donatori di sangue immigrati*", 13 giugno 2011, in http://www.stranieriinitalia.it.

[106] V. Daloiso, *Fratelli di sangue: è boom di donatori stranieri*, in «Avvenire», 23 Febbraio 2010, in http://www.avvenire.it.

[107] See: S. Pasta, *Ieri stranieri, oggi animatori all'oratorio*, in «Credere», n.26, 29 giugno 2014; S. Pasta, *Mio padre è iraniano, ma io vado all'oratorio. Con altri centomila bimbi "stranieri"*, in Corriere della Sera, La Città nuova - 3 luglio 2014.

[108] The Survey was carried out by ISMU Foundation with the collaboration of Oratori Milanesi Foundation, Caritas Ambrosiana and Ufficio Pastorale Migranti of the Diocese of Milan. See: E. Garavaglia - G. Castiglioni, *Educare generando futuro. I minori di origine straniera in oratorio: dall'integrazione alla condivisione*, Francinetti, Milano, 2014, pp. 5-38.

sense of belonging and self-identification with the general interest and aims of society[109].

The first level of civic engagement is often related to the TCNs' desire to give back the support they received when they were in need (i.e., the help received at the beginning of their permanence in the host country). This motivation clearly emerges during the first interview TCNs have with social workers or operators in the organizations involved, and it is highly related to their migratory background and path of integration into the host society. As a matter of fact, when they have stabilized in the host country, many TCNs become volunteers in the same organization where they were helped once arrived in Italy and give their contribution by returning the aid they had received to other people in need. The logic behind this motivation is to feel useful to the host society's development by taking part in active citizenship practices.

The second motivational level of TCNs' civic engagement is that concerning the possibility to experiment a sense of belonging coming from being socially recognized by the host community thanks to their participation to voluntary activities. Social recognition appears to be crucial for the role volunteering plays in social integration: being part of a group with whom you share purposes, objectives and actions, allows you to create bonds of friendship that go far beyond being people who simply share the same type of activity. Quite often, this is the main reason to continue volunteering in the long run, as it happened, for example, to the volunteers of the association *Amici del Fai Onlus*, where the relational dimension of voluntary work is one of the key factors that motivated TCNs to keep on participating in the association's activities every year. As a matter of fact, some scholars[110] highlighted the so-called "halo effect" that volunteering has on those who practice it, as its social representation is extremely positive and people who are engaged in it are considered to be better person if compared to those who are not engaged.

3.3.6. Specific contribution offered by TCNs (positive and negative aspects)

The main positive aspect mentioned by the organizations' representatives was that TCNs have foreign language skills that the local citizen usually does not have and this is a key resource for communicating efficiently when approaching foreign population. Moreover, generally speaking, TCNs are bearers of experiences, skills and

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[109] IPRS, 2010, Op. cit.
[110] See for example: P. Berti, *Forme di volontariato e riconoscimento sociale,* in C. Arcidiacono (a cura di), *Volontariato e legami collettivi. Bisogni di comunità e relazione reciproca*, F. Angeli, Milano 2004, pp. 46-55.

competences – such as the intercultural ones – different from natives, they experiment a different perspective on immigration and this allows them to be natural mediators between their ethnic communities and the host society. Thus, they are precious resources for overcoming the lack of awareness about volunteering initiatives and opportunities TCNs often experiment, by spreading the word among members of their ethnic communities. Finally, TCNs allow the organizations to embrace cultural diversity, to develop and improve their intercultural competences, to tackle prejudices, as well as to recognize the opportunities coming from a society that deals with different cultures.

No negative contribution is reported, rather certain difficulties may arise regarding TCNs engagement, such as having to prepare informative material in a foreign language (in order to involve TCNs with limited language competences), and the fact that TCNs may be unfamiliar with the organizational culture of the host country and so intercultural misunderstanding between them and the organizations may affect negatively social representations of TCNs or strengthen already existing prejudices.

3.3.7. Presentation of relevant and successful experiences at regional level

TCNs are a very heterogeneous group and it was impossible to identify good practices able to provide solutions to all the previously identified challenges related to their engagement. This said, we can highlight two successful experiences regarding TCNs involvement in voluntary organizations which can be considered as concrete examples of practices of democratic citizenship, based on integration as a two-way process of mutual exchange between the receiving society and immigrant newcomers. Both these experiences entail the promotion of projects and activities aimed at fostering TCNs' civic participation and thus at contributing to improve their integration within the host society.

The first experience has been implemented in Cremona by the *Nazareth Social Cooperative,* a cooperative founded in 2001 by different organizations engaged in the field of solidarity and which promotes educational and charitable projects primarily addressed to children and families in need. The main activity of the cooperative is the foster care of unaccompanied foreign minors and, in 2007, it started to invest resources in the intercultural dimension of help by involving TCN families in the foster care process of unaccompanied minors. Even if legal guardianship of minors is provided the public institution, the contribution requested to families is to support and welcome

minors during the evening and night time as well as over the weekend, while in the day time minors are looked after by the cooperative through the implementation of some activities that also include voluntary actions such as going to the grocery store for elderly in need. Since the beginning of 2007, more than 600 unaccompanied foreign minors have been welcomed and today 100% of the foster families are foreign. The reason is that foreign families – with migration experience behind them – have been identified as the best counterpart to help the territory in addressing the needs of unaccompanied minors. In addition, there is a demand for awareness, on the part of foreign families who are now well integrated in our country, that Italy is not just their host country but also the "place" they are expected to build together with Italians and other foreigners. At the beginning, volunteer families were recruited through personal contact and were mostly families in some way connected to the minors (like, for example, families from the same city), while now they are recruited through word of mouth with families that have previously been engaged by the co-operative. When the families are composed of single persons, in most cases these are people who were previously unaccompanied foreign minors helped by the cooperative and that now desire to give back the aid received when they were in need. The project also includes a small financial contribution of € 250 a month (equivalent to what Italian foster families receive and funded by the local institution), which is definitely important because many families do not have a stable economic situation and so welcoming one more person can be a considerable burden for the family budget. Nevertheless, this economical contribution has to be regarded as an expense reimbursement and not as a motivation to engagement in foster care. This experience is successful thanks to the cooperation and the joint work of the families, the Municipality and the co-operative, which plays a key role by being a flexible interlocutor between families and the institution. Beside cost savings for the institution (family foster care makes it possible to save about 30% of the costs if compared to the inclusion of unaccompanied foreign minors in a community), the value of this practice is that it contributes to strengthen vulnerable relations and to create new ones. Furthermore, it allows a change of the perspective through which the presence of immigrants was socially considered in the territory: i.e., not only as passive subjects to be helped, but rather as active actors in the process of their integration.

Another successful experience in TCNs engagement is the project "Art, a bridge between cultures", promoted for the first time in 2008 by *Amici del Fai Onlus*, a voluntary association which operates in connection with FAI (usually referred as the Italian National Trust) and whose mission is to promote a tangible culture of respect for Italy's, art, history and traditions. The specific aim of the project was to stimulate

immigrants' interest in the artistic, cultural and environmental Italian heritage, based on the belief that knowledge of the territory in which immigrants live can increase their sense of belonging and boost integration. The idea of engaging newcomers arose when the association realized there was a lack of foreign people to the classic FAI Spring event: a large-scale national festival, which throws open the doors of hundreds of FAI properties across Italy – normally closed during the rest of the year – by offering free guided tours to all citizens. This event is animated by volunteers whose job is to learn the history of the places and to pass on to visitors what they have learned about them. A hypothesis for explaining the low level of TCNs' participation in this event was that it was due not to their lack of interest in the Italian reality but, instead, to FAI's scarce ability to reach them. The initiative[111] was firstly promoted in the territory of Brescia, where on the occasion of FAI spring day in 2008 the association promoted free guided tours in Italian as well as in the languages of the most representative TCNs communities in the town. TCNs' participation in this initiative widely confirmed their interest in knowing the territory they live in, and, in the wake of this interest, in 2010 a training course for artistic cultural mediators was set up and addressed to the whole population with a particular focus on immigrants. The aim was to train people who could pass on what they learned about the history, art and culture of the city where they lived, and to create opportunities for cross-cultural exchange on historical and artistic themes. Applications for participation in the course were numerous: 28 participants from 19 different nationalities were selected. At the beginning, all the participants received a small refund but, thanks to the social bonds created during this experience and to word-of-mouth processes, from the following year all the volunteers participated to the initiative free of charge. The training course was a successful strategy to engage newcomers in this kind of activities and the association discovered that the trigger to participation was not the opportunity to acquire technical skills, but rather the opportunity to become part of a group. This experience emphasizes, once more, the importance of the relational dimension of integration and the role of mutual recognition within the community; moreover, it has marked a turning point for the growth of volunteers. During FAI spring day in 2012 more than 30 Italian cities have involved the immigrants' communities in the territory by organizing free guided tours in different languages, but the experience of Brescia is particularly remarkable as foreign volunteers, beyond conducting guided tours in foreign languages, have accompanied more than a thousand Italian visitors, thus

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[111] The project was supported by Brescia Community Foundation, Cariplo Foundation and the Municipality of Milan, with the contribution of some local associations dealing with integration and immigration issues as well as ethnic associations in the area.

transforming their engagement towards their community of origin into a concrete practice of active citizenship to the benefit of the whole society.

Both the above mentioned experiences were successful thanks to the promotion of a targeted approach to TCNs communities and thanks to their general focus on building relationships and strengthening social bonds between participants. Furthermore, they gave high visibility to immigrants and to their contribution in the host society through volunteering, counterbalancing the negative collective perception of migrants and thus highlighting TCNs' key role – not only in economic terms – in society.

3.3.8. Relation between national/local integration models and TCNs' civic participation

According to what previously said, the public debate and the institutional interest about the nexus between TCNs' civic participation and their integration have recently increased in Italy, although the role of formal volunteering in this process is not yet fully acknowledged. When talking about integration processes, we may distinguish the national level, which is mainly characterized by ideological issues and abstract debates about national identity and social cohesion, from the local level, which, on the other hand, is more focused on basic and practical concerns like fair access to public services and to civil society organizations[112]. As far as Italy is concerned, the national integration model is mainly focused on the economical dimension, as the labor market – together with educational institutions in the case of second generation migrants – operates as the main integration channel; but, although important, it cannot remain the only agent of social inclusion. For this reason, the integration model at national level is guided by a restrictive approach and has an exclusionary character, since, instead of being inclusive, it does not provide tools for the integration of those who do not work actually excluding a large segment of the immigrant population or marginalizing their voice. It is instead the local level the one which, through the promotion of some inclusive practices, deploys the integration process in its multidimensional nature: cultural (language, social norms, values, rules), social (interaction and civic participation) and emotional (identification and sense of belonging). The local level becomes a privileged arena of study, as it represents the "field" (streets, schools, workplaces, local organizations) where natives and immigrants actually meet and

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[112] R. Penninx, *Decentralizing integration policies, Managing migration in cities, regions and localities*, Policy Network Papers, 2009.

interact with each other, implementing integration practices able to take into account the specificities of different territories.

The promotion of TCNs civic engagement through formal volunteering – although it is often not taken into consideration – is a concrete example of local practices of integration, as it allows local communities and newcomers to meet and to get engaged together on issues of common interest, thus boosting interethnic interaction at a local level. The promotion of TCNs civic engagement enables the host society to deal with social change and to recognize the full potential of a society that recognizes and valorizes cultural diversity.

3.4. TCNs' "ethnic" associations and civic participation at national, regional and local level

3.4.1. Legislative framework concerning TCNs' associations

Through the increasing spread of ethnic associations in Italy, in the 1990s, immigration shifts from being an individual/familiar phenomenon to being a collective and shared experience. This represents the transition from a pioneering phase, in which the support and assistance of the family played a central role in terms of social inclusion, to a more organized phase, in which the national group becomes the key actor in promoting the newcomers integration into the host society[113]. From this moment onwards, ethnic associationism starts to be considered as a new social subject to interact with, and it is precisely this feature that was taken into account by the Law 40/98[114], which outlined the government interventions aimed at fostering foreign people's family relationship, their social and cultural integration and the protection of different identities and cultures. Article 42[115] (later confirmed by the Law 189/2002[116]) states that "The State, the regions, the provinces and the municipalities have to promote – in collaboration with associations of foreigners and organizations stably operating in the area, as well as in collaboration with the authorities or with public and

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[113] See: L. Zanfrini, *L'immigrazione in contesto urbano: spunti da una ricognizione delle ricerche empiriche* in ISMU, *Secondo rapporto sulle migrazioni 1996,* Franco Angeli, Milano, 1998; IPRS, 2010, Op. cit.
[114] Law n.40/98. "Immigration discipline and rules about the status of foreigners".
[115] "Measures for social integration"
[116] "Amendment legislation in the field of immigration and asylum".

private entities of countries of origin – the social, economic and cultural development of foreign people". The local administration's key role in promoting newcomers' integration through ethnic associationism had been already highlighted in the Law 39/90[117], in particular with regard to the ethnic association's management and funding allocation. The latter allowed regional administrations to supply financial resources for TCNs associations, but these policies – mostly due to their decentralization – actually have not led ethnic associationism to become an influencing phenomenon in the policy-making process of the political arena[118]. The promulgation of the Law 39/90 had a twofold effect: many ethnic associations – whose main characteristic was to have an informal structure – started to formalize their legal status and to sign up into regional registers[119] in order to receive the funding; but, on the other hand, their role started to be overshadowed by Italian associations, which tended to be considered the most reliable intermediaries between public institutions and ethnic communities[120]. As a matter of fact, the widespread presence – since 1980s – of Italian voluntary organizations which often had a long tradition in helping the poor, thus developing a high degree of professionalism (e.g.: Caritas Ambrosiana and Comunità di Sant' Egidio), negatively affected the relation between ethnic associations and local administrations as they became real competitors in the allocation of funds coming from public institutions. In other words, local administrations developed a tendency to choose Italian associations – Catholic or lay – as interlocutors between TCNs associations and themselves and hence to allocate most of the funding to them[121].

However, focusing on this point, the behavior of local administrations has recently changed, also thanks to the huge interest shown by the European Union about TCNs civic engagement as a way to promote active citizenship and the development of transnational projects. The latter have been promoted through some calls for proposal aimed at TCNs associations willing to boost co-development initiatives in their homeland.

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[117] "Emergency measures in the field of asylum, entry and residence of third country nationals and regularization of third country nationals and stateless persons in the territory of the State".

[118] See: L. Zanfrini, *Le politiche per gli immigrati tra interventi istituzionali e reti associative,* in ISMU, *Terzo rapporto sulle migrazioni 1997,* Franco Angeli, Milano, 1997; T. Caponio, *Policy networks and Immigrants Associations in Italy: The cases of Milan, Bologna and Naples",* Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 31, 5, 2005.

[119] According to the Law . 39/90, migrants' associations must be registered in some specially provided regional registers in order to have access to financial resources from the public institutions.

[120] See: T. Caponio, *La dimensione locale delle politiche migratorie*, in "Mondi migranti", n. 3/2007, pp. 23-29, 2007.

[121] See: L. Zanfrini, 1997, Op. cit.; T. Caponio, 2005; Op. cit.

3.4.2. Main features of TCNs' "ethnic" associations and their activities

In Italy, the universe of ethnic associations is highly fragmented due to the interaction between a variety of different nationalities, migratory patterns and cultural identities. TCNs' ethnic associations highly differ in terms of history, degree of formalization, ethnic composition, type of relationships established with local institutions, number and type of activities promoted, internal organization and temporal stability. However, despite the heterogeneity of the phenomenon, the available literature highlights some general tendencies.

The first feature relates to the historical evolution of the phenomenon, which can be outlined at both national and regional level: TCNs ethnic associations began to acquire a certain relevance only in the mid-1970s, mainly thanks to the support of some third sector bodies and Catholic organizations. The great majority of them were *homeland–oriented* students' associations and political dissident groups escaping persecution in their country of origin. Frequently, they were linked to homeland movements and their main goal was to promote awareness-raising campaigns to improve the social and political life in their countries of origins[122]. At the beginning, their aims were to promote civic engagement mostly regarding the socio-political situation of their motherland. Only after the mid-1980s, their focus shifted to the living conditions of immigrants in Italy[123]. During this stage, which can be described as the *phase of recognition and visibility*[124], ethnic associationism increased within ethnic communities; furthermore, it fostered the collaboration between them and some local organizations, such as trade unions and worker associations. In the 1990s, the main features of TCNs ethnic associationism changed again, becoming highly characterized by the promotion of TCNs' active participation and civic engagement[125].

The second important aspect is that, although TCNs associations have been significantly present in our country for 30 years, most of them are still unstructured and often have little influence on the social and political life of the country[126]. Moreover, they tend to be "impermanent" as they are often linked to the initiative of a single person (which often coincides with the founder), and usually do not survive

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[122] See: M. Caselli, *Migrant Associations in the province of Milan,* Franco Angeli, Milano, 2006; T. Caponio, 2007, Op. cit; M. Pizzolati, *Associarsi in terra straniera. Come partecipano gli immigrati*, L'Harmattan Italia, Turin, 2007; L. Zanfrini, - A. Sarli, *Migrant's Associations and Philippine Institutions for Development: (First year's activity) Italian Report*, Fondazione ISMU, 2009.

[123] See: F. Carchedi, *Immigrant Associationism,* in E. Pugliese (Ed.), *Rapporto immigrazione: lavoro, sindacati, società.* Ediesse, Roma, 2000; T. Caponio, 2007, Op. cit; M. Caselli, *Integration, Participation, Identity: Immigrant Associations in the Province of Milan,* International Migration, Vol. 48 (2), 2009.

[124] L. Zanfrini – A. Sarli, 2009, Op. cit.

[125] See: M.. Pizzolati, 2007, Op. cit.; L. Zanfrini – A. Sarli, 2009, Op. cit.

[126] See: M. Ambrosini, *Sociologia delle migrazioni*, Il Mulino, Bologna; M. Caselli, 2009, Op. cit.

when s/he decides to leave the association. At the same time, new associations are continually set up.

The third common feature is their organizational weakness, due to the fact that local institutions rarely assign them tasks or direct funds; as previously mentioned, this attitude turns TCNs into a passive actor of the integration process because it does not allow them to empower their experience and competences[127].

With particular regard to the Lombardy context, ORIM[128] has been monitoring TCNs' associationism since 2008, and, according to its online database[129], by the end of 2013 the associations operating in Lombardy were 424. More than 1/3 of these were located in the province of Milan, and this is not surprising as 37% of Lombardy foreign population lives in this area[130]. 4/5 of the mapped associations have been created by members of the same nationality (54.5%), or by members among which a particular nationality is predominant (25.5%), which clearly shows that sharing the same nationality is a key factor in generating associationism among immigrants. However, this tendency does not mean that, once associations have consolidated, they always remain inaccessible to other ethnic groups: 70.4% of them have members who belong also to different nationalities. As far as the single nationalities are concerned, associations promoted by the Senegalese community are the most numerous (46)[131], followed by Moroccan (40), Peruvian (39), Ivorian, (13), Ghanaian (13), Filipino (12) and Albanian (11). It is interesting to point out that the most recurrent nationalities in ethnic associations are not necessarily those being the most present in the immigrant population living in Lombardy. For example, the Senegalese community, which shows the greatest number of associations, is only the 12th largest ethnic group in the area. The geographical area in which the associations' activities are promoted is mainly strictly local and in most cases does not go beyond the provincial level, even if the majority of them (55.6%) reported that their activities are also directed towards the countries of origin of its members. The collected data show a twofold approach in the general objectives of the associations monitored in Lombardy: most of these, on the one hand, promote the civic engagement of their members by encouraging them to take part in the activities of the host society; on the other hand, they pay particular attention to their members' homeland in order to maintain the culture and identity of their reference community. This emerges also with regard to the second generations,

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[127] See: L. Zanfrini, 1997, Op. cit.; T. Caponio, 2005, Op. cit.
[128] Observatory on Integration and Multiethnicity in Lombardy.
[129] The database is freely accessible online: www.orimregionelombardia.it.
[130] See: M. Caselli, - G. Paterniti, *La partecipazione associativa dei cittadini immigrati in Lombardia* in Fondazione Ismu, Éupolis Lombardia, Regione Lombardia, ORIM, *Rapporto 2013,* Milano, pp. 217-244, 2014.
[131] Absolute figures.

for which ethnic associations became privileged places for maintaining ethnic-cultural identity. The data outline also the effort of TCNs associations to integrate into the Italian society, as well as their role as intermediaries between ethnic communities and Italian institutions. In fact, there is a large number of associations declaring to have relations – even occasional ones – with local institutions and entities: in particular, 68.4%[132] of the associations have considered the municipality as their major interlocutor. Relationships with the provincial institution are less frequent but still significant (34.7%), while rarer are those with the Regional Authority. Ethnic associations frequently had contacts also with other entities: religious associations (41%), schools (37.3%), trade unions (26.9%), police stations (21.0%) and prefectures (19.8%).

3.4.3. Specific motivations underpinning TCNs' associations

Albeit we are dealing with a very heterogeneous phenomenon, we can identify three main motivations underlying the formation of TCNs' associations, which are strictly related to their specific aims and areas of activity and which were underlined also in interviews with the key informants. The first one is the aim to integrate their members into the host society by promoting their social inclusion and by creating networks of solidarity between them. Especially when they first arrive, newcomers need legal assistance but also economic, social and cultural support. In other words, TCNs' associations' main objective is to facilitate the process of immigrants integration into the receiving society. What is particularly worth stressing is that the process of integration may be considered not as a way of assimilating newcomers into the host society by obliterating differences between them and native population, but rather the opposite. As a matter of fact, TCNs' associations are fully committed to maintaining and recovering their reference community's identity ties, compromised during the experience of migration. Thus, they promote the cultural, social and civic inclusion of their members into the receiving society, yet without sacrificing their own specific cultural identity, which is actually often promoted through awareness meetings and activity addressed to both second generations and native population. In addition to this, another important motivation underpinning ethnic associationism relates to the goal of becoming mediators between a TCNs' community and the local society through actions of political representation. This aim is consistent with the idea of

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[132] The sum of the percentages is greater than 100 because it was possible to give more than one answer.

TCNs as potential citizens – even when in lack of citizenship as a legal status – and press them to get involved in the civic and political life of the local society, thus contributing to the rejection of a vision that entrusts to immigrants only an economic role. Finally – and this is a more recent feature – TCNs' association aim to create ties between migrants' receiving society and their homeland through the promotion of development projects in their countries of origins.

3.4.4. Factors and conditions facilitating or hindering TCNs' associations

Beyond institutional opportunities, the willingness of TCNs to set up ethnic associations seems to be influenced by other elements such as those linked to the ethnic communities' main features and specific social capital[133], to the active engagement into webs of relations with different actors, to the legislative framework on immigration, to the development of a dense associative texture in the territory, to the strengthening of relations between native people and foreigners and the level of active engagement of the latter into the social and political life of the receiving society[134].

As previously mentioned, a condition that clearly facilitates the generation of TCNs' associations is shared nationality among members[135]. There are several studies that explored the phenomenon of the so-called *hometown* associations, pointing out that the experience of migration tends to enhance the need to maintain ethnic identity and to be well-bonded in opposition to natives[136]. Furthermore, family networks play a central role in boosting and influencing migratory flows[137] and being part of a network of ethnically connoted relations often underlies the beginning of the associative experience[138]. Once the associations have been created, their internal flexibility and the active engagement of their members – mostly through volunteering – are two important factors which facilitate their survival.

On the other hand, as for conditions hindering TCNs' associationsim, there are several interrelated factors that influence each other, thus making it difficult to suggest cause-effect relationships. Some of the most cited critical factors are the scarcity of economic

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[133] A. Portes, *Social capital: its origins and applications in modern sociology*, Annual Review of Sociology, 24: 1-24, 1998.
[134] See: M. Pizzolati, 2007, Op. cit.; L. Zanfrini, 2007, Op. cit.; IPRS, 2010, Op. cit.
[135] See: M. Caselli, 2009, Op. cit.
[136] See: M. Schrover, - F. Vermeulem, *Immigrant organizations,* Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 31 (5): 823-832, 2005.
[137] See: L. Zanfrini, 2007, Op. cit.
[138] See: M. Caselli, 2009, Op. cit.

resources – also those required to manage a permanent office – and problems faced when applying for funding, which make really difficult to manage everyday tasks and to develop new projects. Moreover, the lack of resources is a symptom of the lack of competence and is both cause and effect of these associations' weaknesses. Some other hindering factors are the lack of adequate infrastructures and the scarcity of professionalization, which often lead ethnic associations to deal with serious difficulties when trying to consolidate their organizational structure.

3.4.5. Role of the sending countries

With respect to the integration process, it is interesting to focus not only on the role of the receiving society but also on the influence that the sending countries have on civic engagement. Third Country governments are more and more aware of the importance of their diaspora as a crucial resource for the development of the country and, as a result, the international debate about the relationship between migration and development has gained importance. As mentioned above, TCNs' ethnic associations often emerge spontaneously as informal social networks and then organize in more formal entities. Frequently, they are encouraged by receiving countries – especially in the case of co-development policies – but can be supported by sending countries as well[139]. The latter case is strictly related to the development of *Diaspora policies* or *Diaspora engagement policies*[140], specifically aimed at maintaining and reproducing relationships with those who expatriated. In more detail, when talking about these policies, we refer to a series of measures concerning ministerial or consular activities or reforms, investment policies aimed at attracting remittances, extension and promotion of migrants' political rights abroad (such as dual citizenship or the right to vote abroad), or specific policies aimed at strengthening the feeling of belonging to their homeland[141].

There are different approaches to Diaspora engagement, which can be influenced also by the social representation of the person who emigrates, that is, whether s/he is perceived as a guilty person who abandoned her/his homeland or, instead, as a national hero "who saves the motherland". This is the case of the Filipino Diaspora in

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[139] See: E. Ostergaard-Nielsen, *International Migration and Sending Countries: Key Issues and Themes*, in E. Ostergaard-Neilsen (eds) *International Migration and Sending Countries; Perceptions, Policies and Transnational Relations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
[140] See: A. Gamlen, *Diaspora engagement policies: what are they, and what kinds of states use them?*, Working Paper 06-32, Compas, University of Oxford, 2006.
[141] See: S. Gsir, 2014, Op. cit.

Italy, which is well celebrated by the Philippine government due to the great role remittances have in boosting national economy[142]. Moreover, the Philippine government expects its embassy and consulates to maintain a close relationship with the Filipino migrants' associations in the host society, in virtue of the latter's capacity to be active agents of development in both the sending and the receiving countries. Furthermore, it supports migrant associations abroad as a means to strengthen the link between second generation migrants and their homeland. However, an engaged Diaspora does not always translate only into benefits: strengthening young migrants' attachment to their homeland could produce an ambivalent situation of double exclusion: both in the host society and in the sending country[143].

Another example of the important role that sending countries have in promoting ethnic associationism concerns the establishment of the Ministry of Senegalese Abroad (MTSE), which, being well aware of the potential of the Diaspora for the development of the country, constantly interacts with the Senegalese associations abroad and actively participates in the activities promoted by the latter. In addition, the Senegalese government contributes also economically to migrants' integration in Italy with the program "Support platform to the private sector and to the Senegalese Diaspora in Italy (PLASEPRI)", providing a platform for financial and technical assistance aimed at the development of the Senegalese private sector and thus at exploiting the economic potential of the Senegalese community in Italy.

3.4.6. *Presentation of relevant and successful experiences*

One of the most remarkable experiences of ethnic associationism in Lombardy is probably *Sunugal,* a Senegalese socio-cultural association formally established in 1998 and aimed at promoting both migrants' integration in the host country and Senegal development. Its headquarters is in Milan but, thanks to the expansion of the network of relationship and of activities over the years, it has members throughout Italy. The association was created informally in 1990 but only in 1998 it started to encourage

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[142] See: L. Zanfrini - A. Sarli, 2009, Op. cit.

[143] See: S. Roncaglia, *L'organizzazione relazionale dei giovani filippini a Milano*, In *Asia a Milano*, Edited by Daniele Cologna. Milan: Abitare Segesta Cataloghi, 2003; L. Zanfrini, - M. Asis, *Orgoglio e pregiudizio. Una ricerca tra Filippine e Italia sulla transizione all'età attiva dei figli di emigrati e dei figli di immigrati Milan*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2006; L. Zanfrini, - A. Sarli, *What are the Opportunities for Mobilizing the Filipino Diaspora in Italy? Lessons from the MAPID Project* in F. Baggio, *Brick by brick, Building Cooperation between the Philippines and Migrants' Associations in Italy and Spain*, 2010.

exchanges between villages of origin and Italy in order to boost the creation of new relations between them and to support the socio-economic development of the villages in Senegal. With particular regard to the latter, the association main purpose is to promote the engagement of local population in activities able to generate an income (instead of being dependent on migrants' remittances); this, by raising awareness about the difficulties and sacrifices entailed by the emigration experience. The projects implemented over the years are many, such as the construction of the Ker Toubab Cultural Center in Beud Dieng to accommodate Italian volunteers engaged in development activities, or different other initiatives carried out in order to develop both the local infrastructures (schools and access to water and electricity) and the local economy; e.g., the promotion of organic farming, the establishment of rural cooperatives and other activities such as sewing and bakery, especially aimed at sustaining the financial independence of women and young people. Some projects are self-financed through the contributions collected thanks to the different activities and are aimed at promoting the association and its initiatives in the territory, while other projects have been supported and co-financed by some local actors (foundations, banks, etc.) and local institutions such as the Municipality of Milan. *Sunugal* played a pioneering role in the Italian context as it managed, by its experience, to overcome the typical obstacles that ethnic associations usually face and to become a peer and qualified interlocutor for local institutions, thus gaining a political influence in the policy-making process. Moreover, thanks to the competences acquired and the high level of professionalism developed over years, *Sunugal* has become an important reference point in the area for other ethnic associations, which are supported in their activities and involved in co-development projects; this is the case of *Afegui* (Association of Guinean women in Italy), which is engaged in the *Migrant's bread* project: a two-year initiative involving Italy, Senegal and Guinea in the creation of a bakery school in Senegal and of a bakery training course in Guinea. The aim is to create a network of bakers extended to 3 countries for exchanging information on baking techniques and the types of raw materials used.

Another ethnic association which was able to communicate effectively with different local actors – beyond the cultural promotion sphere – and to gain influence in the territory is *Associazione Colori del Mondo Adda*. The association was established in 2007 by a group of foreigners living in the suburbs of Milan. Its main purpose is to promote intercultural dialogue between different ethnic communities and to support TCNs' integration into the host country. The association was created with the aim of becoming a meeting place and a reference point for all foreigners living in the territory and its strength – beyond relying on a large number of volunteers from different

countries – is the fact of being a flexible entity able to adapt itself to the different evolving needs that migrants bring during the process of their integration, starting from the need for legal-administrative support in the early period after they have arrived in Italy. Furthermore, the association deals with helping TCNs in the search for a job and with emerging needs of the second generations; in fact, the latter usually reach our country through family reunification and, while experimenting a new cultural environment, often face a lack of reference points. With particular regard to this aspect, a project – named *Abracadabra* – was established with the particular aim to support and help second generations in doing their homework and to tackle their tendency to drop out of school. The association is part of the Volunteering Council of Inzago and its President is a counselor of *Forum Città Mondo* in Milan.

3.4.7. Relation between national/local integration models and TCNs' civic participation through "ethnic" associations.

Despite what has previously been highlighted about the (not fully exploited) potential of TCNs' associations, currently the nexus between national/local integration models and TCNs' civic participation through "ethnic" associations is slightly changing, according to the different stakeholders interviewed. Focusing on the Italian context, some "pilot projects" have been promoted such as "Migration for Development in Africa" (MIDA)[144], launched in 2002 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and addressed to the sub-Saharan African diaspora in Italy. MIDA ended in December 2007 and involved actively immigrant communities in the planning of interventions and productive investments in their countries of origins, while also promoting the creation of new conditions to allow TCNs to set up small and medium-sized enterprises in their homeland (by facilitating their access to new financing tools). Another remarkable initiative was "Fondazioni4Africa-Senegal"[145], a 3-year project launched in 2008 and aimed at fostering the development of rural population in Senegal, while promoting active engagement of Senegalese migrants' associations through an innovative bottom-up approach and a participatory governance[146]. These initiatives are remarkable as they see TCNs associations as peer interlocutors in the partnership, i.e., in funding allocation and in decision-making processes; in this way,

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[144] http://www.italy.iom.int/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=36&Itemid=61.
[145] http://www.fondazioni4africa.org/.
[146] See: P. Mezzetti - S. Ceschi, *The migration and development nexus: reflections and empirical evidence from a contested social field*, paper presented at the 10th ESA Conference, Geneva, 2011.

TCNs stop being pictured just as passive beneficiaries and start to be fully recognized as active actors of development.

Focusing on the local level, the Municipality of Milan confirmed this new institutional approach by promoting, in 2007, "Milano per il co-sviluppo", a call for proposal – the first one in Italy launched by a local authority and containing an explicit reference to co-development – aimed at enhancing TCNs' human, social and economic capital both in the country of origin and in the receiving country[147]. The response to the call was very rich and heterogeneous. In total, 69 projects were presented and 28 different nationalities were involved. One of the rewarding elements in the selection of the project to be financed was the presence of an innovative development component.

Another remarkable experience supported by the Municipality of Milan was the constitution, in September 2013, of *Associazione Città Mondo*, a second level association composed of 80 different ethnic associations aimed at helping migrants to integrate into the host society and at involving them in the development process of both their countries of origin and destination. This umbrella association was created in order to boost interethnic dialogue between different ethnic communities and also to represent a qualified interlocutor between the latter and the Municipality of Milan, with the capacity of managing projects involving public and private entities. The initiative arose from "*Forum Città Mondo*", set up in 2011 during the first International Participants Meeting (IPM) of Expo Milano 2015. The Forum involved more than 500 associations[148], linked to 100 different international communities in the area of Milan, and helped them to be leaders in both the cultural life of the city and the development of Expo 2015 through their relationships with the countries of origin. As previously stressed, the importance of this experience regards the actual representativeness that Ethnic associations – which usually tend to be recognized as weak and not-so-reliable interlocutors – gain in the public sphere. As a matter of fact, the association promoted the creation of shared paths and actions aimed at the civic and socio-political active engagement of ethnic associations at the local, national and transnational levels, by means of forms of direct collaboration between them and various institutional stakeholders.

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[147] See: P. Mezzetti – A. Ferro, *Politiche municipali per il co-sviluppo. Esperienze europee a confronto e benchmarking del Bando sul co-sviluppo del Comune di Milano*, 2007-2008, CeSPI, Working Papers, n. 49/2008.

[148] The Forum membership is free and reserved to associations, organizations or groups of citizens which have, among their members, citizens of different nationalities, which operate mainly in the Milan area, and which primarily pursue the development goals of intercultural dialogue and of promoting actions related to their members integration into the host country. The membership gives the right to be informed and directly involved in many activities of the Municipality of Milan, in particular with respect to important cultural events that take place in the city.

3.4.8. *Transnational activities promoted by TCNs' associations and their links with the sending countries*

Transnational engagement is not a common feature of all TCNs' associations and it varies significantly among and even within ethnic groups – depending on factors like gender, class, the country of origin and the receiving context – with notable differences in the extent and the characters of the transnational activities promoted, which can be different but always interconnected between them. In particular, we can single out the following activities:

Economic activities such as collective remittances and business investments in the country of origin. Raising money in order to help communities left behind is a very common practice of many TCNs' associations. Furthermore, remittances are one of the foremost relational indicators in that they are a concrete expression of continuity and proximity with the family members who live in the native country[149]; this tool allows migrants to act in their homeland *as de facto* social citizens, who provide left behind families with access to civil and social rights, and as political actors, since they play a key role in influencing the decisions regarding the community even if they are not physically present[150].

With particular regard to our country, we may refer to the findings from the MAPID research in Italy, which focused on the transnational practices of the Filipino community and associations. As a matter of fact, Filipinos, besides being one of the earliest and major TCN groups in Italy – with the first arrivals having taken place at the beginning of the 1970s –, show a transnational behavior that could be considered one of their foremost migration features[151]. As a matter of fact, the MAPID research states that 1/3 of the Filipino associations can be considered transnational. The major expression of their transnational behavior is the flow of remittances as an important instrument for preserving the cohesion of the household. Filipinos' regular remittances are aimed at financially supporting their families by covering basic household needs, as well as at the education of the children left behind, but also have a symbolic value by succeeding in keeping alive migrant Filipinos' ties in the motherland. Furthermore, irregular remittances are directed to support extra-expenses or to cover unexpected costs such as those due to illness or natural disasters. Finally, occasional remittances

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[149] See: E. Zucchetti, *Il risparmio e le rimesse degli immigrati*, Quaderni ISMU, n.5. 1997; L. Zanfrini, 1998, Op. cit.

[150] See: F. Marini, *Immigrants and transnational engagement in the diaspora: Ghanaian associations in Italy and the UK*, in *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 2013.

[151] See: L. Zanfrini – A. Sarli, 2010, Op. cit.

are addressed to collective celebrations in the homeland or to the implementation of infrastructures on a local level, such as the construction of new schools[152].

Political activities such as membership in political parties in the country of origin and voting in its elections, *advocacy*, and diffusion of political ideas (e.g., writing a blog). An example of this kind of engagement comes from the experience of *Sunugal*, whose President has highlighted the nexus between political engagement and development and the important political role that migrants play in both the country of origin and in the receiving society.

Socio-cultural activities, also-called *social remittances* [153], which regard those activities that allow the exchange of social capital, such as socio-cultural practices involving TCNs emigrated abroad and those who are still living in the country of origin. With particular regard to this aspect of transnationalism, an experience worth mentioning is that of *So.Fra.Po*, a Senegalese association based in the Brescia area and composed by both Senegalese and Italians. In 2012, *So.Fra.Po* promoted a co-development project involving both young Senegalese and Italian citizens, aimed at raising awareness among young people living in Senegal about the risks entailed by illegal immigration and the hard life of illegal immigrants in Europe. The association organized a trip to Senegal, which was attended by some members of the association and by an Italian delegation of 30 people selected among the association's partners, local authorities and private citizens interested in the project. A 2-day conference was organized in Dakar, in collaboration with various local associations, in order to discuss about strategies for informing and educating young people who try to reach Europe clandestinely and about the role of Senegalese immigrants in promoting the development of their country through both the identification of areas in which to invest and the involvement of Italian entrepreneurs. The development project of this association mainly focused on self-development activities which enable to promote and support the participatory process of the local community through the empowerment of their members' skills in order to solve their own problems and satisfy their needs.

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[152] See: L. Zanfrini – A. Sarli, 2009, Op. cit.
[153] See: P. Levitt, *The transnational villagers, Berkeley and Los Angeles*, University of California Press, 2001.

3.5. Discussion and conclusion about Part 3

TCNs' civic participation through ethnic associations and through their active engagement in mainstream voluntary organizations can be considered two different dimensions of the same integration path into the receiving society. In both cases, the local context becomes a privileged field in which to implement innovative social inclusion practices, since the outcome of the integration process deeply depends on the concrete interaction between newcomers and the host society. Furthermore, TCNs' civic participation is to be considered both a vehicle and a result of integration, as it is a manifestation of TCNs' commitment to the development of the society which they feel to be part of.

With particular regard to formal volunteering, the strong nexus existing between integration and TCNs' civic engagement has been proved by the evidence coming from available studies at European level[154], which underlined that formal volunteering counteracts social exclusion, encourages the development of inter-community relationships, helps to tackle racism and intolerance, enables newcomers to empower the basic knowledge of the receiving society and has a key role in developing the personal and professional skills of those involved. Formal volunteering is a deeply rooted phenomenon in Italy and it is well-acknowledged as an agent of local development: it generates practices of active citizenship able to foster social ties between volunteers and people in situations of social fragility, it has a formative role in the self-empowering of those who volunteer and it boosts civic participation in society. Formal volunteering is characterized by the symbolic codes of reciprocity, solidarity, trust and altruism and, while promoting social inclusion, it enhances social integration among members of the same society. However, the Italian landscape of TCNs civic engagement in voluntary work is characterized by the lack of studies and researches on the topic; this is due to a reflection on the role that volunteering plays in the integration of migrants, not yet fully developed in the institutional arena and in the public debate. Furthermore, even when formal volunteering starts to be perceived as a tool for integration, there are still significant barriers and obstacles that hamper the level of TCNs involvement in such activities. As far as the local context is concerned, a similar evidence stems from the previously mentioned practices of TCNs targeted involvement in mainstream voluntary organizations, which highly contributed to foster social inclusion by enabling volunteers, host communities and organizations to

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[154] See: IVR, MEM-*VOL Migrant and Ethnic Minority Volunteering, Final Report. A Transnational Exchange Programme in Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, The Netherlands and United Kingdom in the framework of the Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion* (2002 - 2006), 2006; CEV, 2006, Op. cit.

integrate with each other. Formal volunteering emerges as a place of integration because it enables foreigners to be recognized as persons, enhances their personal skills, promotes the creation of meaningful relationships, fosters their sense of belonging and allows them to actively participate in the process of construction of the host society. Furthermore, TCNs' formal volunteering in mainstream organizations can be considered as a social trampoline: it enhances the inclusion of those who face problems entering the labor market because of their low level of education, and allows newcomers to get engaged in society through their non-formal and informal competences. This is a key point in Italy, where the labor market and education are still the main channels of integration; but these, although essential, cannot remain the only vehicles of social inclusion. TCNs' volunteering contributes to life-long learning and generates intercultural competences: it allows local communities and newcomers to meet and to get engaged together on issues of common interest, thus boosting interethnic relationships at the local level. Finally, TCNs' volunteering enables the receiving society to deal with social change and to recognize the opportunities arising from cultural diversity. This fosters an attitude of openness to other cultures in both the receiving society's population and ethnic communities, and it leads to the development of a feeling of mutual trust and confidence that contributes to the dynamic two-way integration process required for the creation of a shared citizenship. However, when talking about the integration process, TCNs' ethnic associationism and the element of civic participation implied by it are important aspects to be taken into account, since they play an important role – not yet fully exploited by local institutions – in the integration of newcomers into the host society. As a matter of fact, local institutions have historically preferred to collaborate with other third-sector organizations such as some Catholic or lay associations, which, based on a long tradition in helping the poor, developed a high degree of professionalism – which often lacks in ethnic associations – and became real challengers in the allocation of funds. The result is that ethnic associations have always scarcely influenced the policy-making arena. However, TCNs' ethnic associations can be considered as natural bridges and privileged interlocutors between migrants and the receiving society; for this reason, local institutions should have a strong interest in supporting them and in building their capacities, firstly by acknowledging them as active actors in the integration process and in the public discourse.

3.6. Summary of Part 3

Part 3 has focused on TCNs civic engagement in ethnic and mainstream voluntary organizations in Italy. With the specific aim of identifying the main features of this phenomenon, 11 in depth interviews were conducted with members of ethnic associations and mainstream voluntary organizations, and with representatives of the local Centers for Voluntary Services (CSVs). Further information on the topic was collected from brief interviews with 4 academics and from the analysis of the existing studies and statistics.

Both in the public debate and in the institutional domain, the reflection about the nexus between TCNs' engagement in mainstream voluntary organizations and the level of their social integration has been not yet fully developed in Italy. There are not specific legislative references regarding TCNs' participation in mainstream voluntary organization. However, there are some specific measures – such as the establishment of an Entry Visa to Italy for volunteering purposes and the inclusion of volunteering in activities that allow to gain credits for the maintenance of the Residency Permit – which highlight the increasing institutional attention and interest towards this topic.

The presence of TCNs in mainstream voluntary organizations is rare – albeit not absent – and too often it is promoted just by individual initiatives. However, as far as the local context is concerned, two experiences of TCNs engagement in mainstream voluntary organizations have been identified as good practices, since they both consciously promoted foreigners involvement in their activities and highlighted TCNs' contribution to the development of the whole society. Furthermore, the evidence coming from the analysis of these two experiences brought to light how formal volunteering can be considered as a privileged tool for the social inclusion of TCNs, as it encourages the development of inter-community relations by enabling volunteers, the host community and organizations to integrate with each other. Also, formal volunteering allows newcomers to actively participate in the process of development of the host society and to be fully recognized as active actors in their integration path.

Factors hindering TCNs' formal volunteerism in mainstream organizations have been identified from both the immigrant's side and the side of the organizations involved. In the first case, lack of language competences, different organizational cultures, a weak sense of belonging and being unfamiliar with the concept of volunteering, as well as scarcity of time and economic resources, are the main obstacles TCNs have to deal with. As for the organizational side, hindering conditions are, for example, lack of targeted recruitment procedures, prejudices, lack of TCNs' SKC recognition and the social perception of immigrants as potential beneficiaries and not as actors of active

citizenship practices. Moreover, there are also hindering factors related to the policy level, such as the institutions' lack of awareness of the role that volunteering plays in favoring social inclusion and the corresponding scarcity of targeted policies aimed at promoting TCNs' engagement.

Another phenomenon analyzed in this part is TCNs' ethnic associationism, which – differently from TCNs' mainstream volunteering – has been widely explored in Italy. The existing literature depicts it as very heterogeneous phenomenon in terms of history, degree of formalization, ethnic composition, internal structure, temporal stability, type of activities promoted and type of relations established with other local actors. However, despite this high level of fragmentation, it is possible to highlight some general tendencies and common features. The first one concerns the genesis of TCNs' ethnic associations: their basic aim is nearly always the desire to help their members to integrate into the host society; almost all the activities they promote can be related to this general objective, which, nonetheless, does not entail goals of assimilation into Italian society. As a matter of fact, most of these associations are fully committed to maintaining the cultural identity of their motherland, which is often promoted through cultural activities addressed to both TCN second generations and Italian natives. The second common feature regards these associations' organizational weakness and inner structure: most of them are unstructured and often have little influence on the social and political life of the host society. Furthermore, through a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, the tendency of public institution to rarely assign them tasks and funds because of their weaknesses, prevents them from gaining the experience required to achieve greater competence and reliability. The third common feature regards the hindering factors that most of these ethnic associations have to cope with: lack of financial resources and low level of professionalism, as well as lack of adequate infrastructures and relevant difficulties encountered in applying for funding.

When considering the role of TCNs' ethnic associationism in the integration process, our discussion also focused on the influence of transnational connections promoted by TCNs in terms of economic, political and cultural activities. In this particular regard, various "pilot projects" have been launched with the aim of involving TCNs in the planning of development activities in their countries of origin. The Municipality of Milan confirmed this new institutional approach by promoting some initiatives aimed at enhancing TCNs' human, social and economical capital in both the receiving country and in the countries of origin. For instance, this occurred through the call for proposal "Milano per il co-sviluppo" and the establishment of a second level association composed of 80 different ethnic associations, aimed at the integration of

migrants into the host society and at involving them in the development process of both their origin and destination countries.

As far as the local context is concerned, two experiences regarding TCNs' ethnic associationism have been identified as good practices, since these entities managed to become peer interlocutors with different local actors and gained influence in the decision-making process, thus contributing to the acknowledgement of the role of TCNs as active actors of development in both the receiving and the sending countries.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Starting from the general issue of TCNs migration to Italy, it is only since the late 1980s that a certain number of migrants from Third World Countries and Eastern Europe, most of them unauthorized, have been entering Italy: during the late 1980s, the inflow from non-EU countries was estimated at more than 100,000 people per year. In the 1990s, the foreign population grew slower, so that by 1999 migrants living in Italy, either legally or illegally, were estimated to number between 1,300,000 and 1,500,000; namely, about 2.3% of the domestic population. Few of them entered Italy holding a residence permit. The number of permits granted to people from East European and underdeveloped countries increased substantially (from one third to 40%) after each of the four regularisation schemes: in 1986, 1990, 1996 and 1998. In the following years, migrants' presence continued to register a frantic growth, up to more than 5 million in 2010. It was only in 2010 that new arrivals started to decline: in this year, foreigners' presence had a modest increase of 69,000 units, whereas in 2011 the increase was only of 27,000 units. Finally, according to the most recent data from ISTAT, non-EU foreigners holding a residence permit at 1st January 2014 are 3,874,726, with an increase – between 2013 and 2014 – of approximately 110,000 units.

The massive inclusion of immigrant workforce has represented the main factor of transformation of the Italian labor market, supplying a quite relevant contribution in occupational terms and also to the production of GDP and to the phenomena of job creation and entrepreneurial development. However, this process also contributed to strengthen the segmentation of a labor market traditionally characterized by division lines mirroring the ascribed features and the peculiar geography of the country's development. More profoundly, what has been generated is a low-profile integration model, constrained in the limits of labor participation, inescapably destined to be questioned with the first "winds of recession" and – above all – fuelled by a collective tendency to represent the work of immigrants in terms of complementarity; significantly, still nowadays, despite the dramatic overall employment situation, more than six Italians out of ten agree with the statement that "immigrants are necessary to do the work that Italians do not want to do".

Within this overall picture, during the last 30 years Lombardy has been turning itself from a substantially mono-ethnic society into a very heterogeneous one, with about 180 origin countries represented within its resident population and an incidence of

foreign workers that reached, just during the recession, about 20% of the total active population; within this group, about 80% come from a non-EU country. Thanks to the size of its territory and to the diversification of its economic activities, the region has had a strong and continuous attractive power and has witnessed the progressive dissemination of migrant workers in different sectors of activity and in different jobs. Also, at an individual level, several examples of upward mobility (particularly through the move to independent and entrepreneurial work, sometimes also through the recognition of the titles acquired abroad) have been registered. However, at a general level, the needs expressed by firms and families seem to unavoidably reroute foreign labor towards those segments which are already largely characterized by its presence and which, in some cases, satisfy the need to cover jobs deserted by Italian workers. The result is that no progress has been able to actually modify the general picture of TCNs' participation to the labor market, which continues to be characterized by high horizontal and vertical segregation into specific sectors and jobs, discrimination (with regard to retributions, working conditions and career paths), and over-qualification.

Moreover, as in the whole country, all these phenomena have been exacerbated during the current crisis, in conjunction with a progressive increase of unemployed migrants and more and more evidence of the risks of social dumping implied by migrants' adaptability and by the continual growth of migrant labor offer. At the same time, more than 191,000 migrants' offspring (the majority of them born in Italy) are attending the regional scholastic system (and are now visible also in the tertiary and university levels of education), and many others have already entered the labor market, bringing with them hopes and expectations completely different from those of their parents, mostly employed in "migrants' jobs".

In conclusion, the regional model of inclusion, as the Italian one, reveals itself as characterized by ambiguities and contradictions, representing an emblematic case of what has been defined, in the premises of the project DIVERSE, as "the unresolved paradox of European legacy"; that is, the tension between the tendency to stress the working dimension of immigrants' presence (interpreted according to the "low path" of complementarity and concentration of immigrants in "ethnicized" jobs) and the growing tendency to extend citizenship social rights (if not also political ones) of citizenship to TCNs and their families.

Shifting the focus to the issue of the recognition of TCNs' skills, knowledges and competences, a first general observation to be made is that in Italy the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad is regulated with great caution and the related legislative framework is quite complex: in fact, the recognition procedures vary and

are entrusted to different bodies depending on how the qualification is to be used. If laws and procedures are quite well defined and structured, their implementation shows some shortcomings, due to a lack of training and information on the part of the personnel in charge. This is particularly true in public administrations, while in the academic world procedures are managed with greater awareness and competence. Within this scenario, TCNs willing to undergo the recognition process risk facing quite a chaotic – and sometimes discouraging – situation. Another reason why this possibility is scarcely used deals with the costs and uncertain outcomes of the process, especially in the field of professional qualifications recognition. Certainly, however, the most relevant reason is the conviction that the Italian labor market is not able to valorize TCNs' qualifications. Some interesting practices exist in the Lombardy Region aimed at providing correct information and supporting TCNs during the procedure for the recognition of professional qualifications in the nursing sector, where higher possibilities of employment have proved to be available in the recent past.

With regard to the certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, the 2001 Reform of the Fifth article of the Italian Constitution established that both State and Regions are relevant actors, with different roles and competences, in the field of professions regulation. This implies a very complex and heterogeneous situation within the national territory. Concerning the field at issue, since 2001 the State should have defined a national framework for qualifications, in accordance with the EQF, and a set of standards for regional implementation; however, for several years (until 2013) this task was not accomplished. Only recently, also due to solicitations from the EU, the State has improved its legislative framework and tried to homogenize the various regional situations, which, in the absence of national guidelines, had become very varied. In fact, some regions remained in a situation of stasis, while some others started acting on an autonomous basis, developing very different legislative frameworks and methodological tools. Lombardy is among the most advanced regions in this field. An interesting aspect of its model is that it certifies single competences rather than complete professional profiles. In this way, the certification process gives individuals the opportunity to valorize their competences even when aggregated in non-standard clusters. The Lombardy certification system is based on an on-line procedure, considered by some key informants as not enough user-friendly. It does not necessarily imply the presence of a tutor: the individual is considered as the main actor responsible for her/his certification process. Some experts argue that a methodological approach giving more emphasis to the relational dimension and to the role and professional competence of tutors would be much more effective in promoting employability, as it would stimulate an improved awareness of

one's potential. However, the most critical issue in this domain concerns the fact that certifications recognized on a regional basis have an institutional value, but not yet a relevant social value. Hence few people, and in particular a scant number of TCNs, undergo this process. This process is very time demanding and complex, and its outcome in terms of better employability is currently quite uncertain. To improve this situation, a greater effort should be devoted for creating awareness among employers about the benefits of such a system within the labor market.

Some key informants point out that an interesting development of tools for the validation of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, especially for TCNs, is related to the utilization of such instruments in synergy with formal learning. Within vocational systems of training, the possibility exists of envisaging individualized routes which take into consideration, after a process of assessment and validation, the competences already acquired by learners in non-formal and informal contexts. In these cases, formal learning becomes an integration of already possessed competences and results to be less time demanding and more motivating and effective. Finally, and interestingly, some associations of employers and other organizations representing certain employment sectors developed different models for the certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts. These certifications do not have an institutional value, but appear to have a relevant social value linked to the recognition of the certifying body within the sector at issue. These certifications, in sectors such as construction industry or private care, are often acquired also by TCNs, although the models, from a methodological standpoint, have not been developed paying special attention to this target's specific needs.

The part of WP3 concerning the empirical investigation on DM practices started from the following documented awareness: in the Italian context very little attention has been dedicated so far to how, in workplaces characterized by a relevant presence of workers from Third Countries with strong migratory pressure, national and ethnic differences may impact organizational life and performance.

This qualitative field study was carried out on eleven selected organizations, located in the Italian region of Lombardy, which: *i)* operate in different sectors (profit, non-profit or public sector) and different domains of activity (such as healthcare, manufacturing, communication, social assistance, trade union services, consultancy, etc.); *ii)* employ foreign human resources with a migratory background; *iii)* have engaged in visible practices of attention to, and valorization of, TCN personnel.

The first set of research results to be underlined refers to some contextualizing factors that are essential for interpreting the cross-culture DM practices implemented in the observed organizations.

To begin with, when considering reasons at the base of the choice of employing TCN workers, the case-histories tend to reflect the Italian and Lombard models of economic incorporation, founded on the logic of complementarity between autochthonous and immigrant labor: in fact, in several cases the initial resorting to TCN workers has been caused by the need to fill specific job vacancies. However, in some other cases, this recruiting choice was directly connected with an innovative and/or socio-political organizational mission explicitly oriented to the valorization of foreign personnel or even of TCNs' presence in society. Moreover, in the organizational experiences studies more purposeful reasons have added to the reasons involved at the beginning, through learning processes that have gradually led to consider the possible specific advantages of immigrants' presence for organizational performance.

Two further crucial conditions deal with organizational cultures and the processes of human resource management. As for the former point, in most of the cases studied shared conceptions and values have developed over time which revolve around basic assumptions and ethical tenets that can be related to the principles of inclusiveness. From the latter standpoint, in these organizations we find successful mechanisms of employee motivation, particularly through a daily recognition of workers' contributions, which results in the committed involvement and the retention of collaborators (including TCNs). Furthermore, leadership styles emerge which favor internal relational climates founded on collaboration and respect for individual needs and rights.

Moving to the key issue of DM practices addressed to TCNs, although formal statements referring to diversity are not absent, in general DM has emerged prevalently as something that is strictly related to the "natural" evolution of the organization and its informal life, rather than as a well-defined system of planned and targeted initiatives. This said, a variety of practices of integration and valorization of immigrant personnel are clearly observable. First of all, these include forms of practical support aimed at supporting migrant workers in facing a number of basic needs (long leave periods, advances of pay, etc.). A second domain of action regards internal communication and dissemination of inclusiveness-oriented organizational cultures, for instance by means of initiatives addressed to the whole staff for enhancing awareness about the opportunities entailed by a diverse workplace. A third area of organizational intervention has to do with the reshaping of some personnel management mechanisms, involving – for example – the agreement with a foreign training centre for the recruiting of TCNs, forms of flexibility in working hours, and advancement opportunities for members in low-level job positions. Fourthly, several organizations exhibit practices openly aimed at pursuing organizational goals and

improvement through personnel's cultural diversity. This occurs, for instance, by placing foreign personnel in positions of responsibility, by using them in specific strategic actions (e.g.: meeting foreign clients' needs, expansion in new international markets), or, more profoundly, by pursuing and treating staff multicultural composition as the key resource for the organizational mission.

Finally, with respect to impacts of DM practices, the study has cast light on a number of "virtuous" effects linked to the presence and especially the management of TCN employees. The first group benefiting from DM processes are TCNs themselves, who obtain tools for tackling problems related to their migrant condition, the possibility to have their abilities recognized, opportunities for professional development and career advancement. The other actor gaining advantages from cross-culture DM is given by the organizations investigated, which, on average, have variously achieved performance benefits such as increased personnel commitment and retention and effective daily relationships with heterogeneous clients/users. The advantages for organizational performance are particularly evident in those cases in which cross-cultural diversity is as such the stated mission of organizational strategies and action. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that the various DM practices implemented by these organizations are also generating positive effects on their social contexts, in particular by contributing to the development of local communities' human capital and by playing a function of cultural dissemination and awareness-raising.

Moving to the final part of WP3, which deals with TCNs' participation in voluntary organizations, the book provides a general outline of TCNs' civic involvement in mainstream voluntary organizations and ethnic associations in the Italian and Lombardy contexts. The phenomenon of TCNs civic engagement has been investigated through 11 in-depth interviews with different key informants from mainstream voluntary organizations, ethnic associations and local centers for voluntary services. Additional information was collected by analyzing the available literature and through added interviews with 4 academic experts in the field.

The existing studies and the interviews conducted suggest that neither the local institutions nor the public sphere have fully acknowledged the role that TCNs' formal volunteering plays in the process of their integration.

In Italy there is not any distinct legislation regarding the specificities of TCNs, as volunteering is constitutionally protected as an individual right of the person, regardless of nationality or ethnicity. Nonetheless, the attitude of local institutions towards this topic has recently changed. Increased institutional attention has been highlighted by two important initiatives: the establishment of an entry visa to Italy for

volunteering purposes and the inclusion of volunteering in activities that allow to collect credits for the maintenance of the Residency Permit.

There are no available statistics permitting to quantify the phenomenon of TCNs' volunteering. However, the existing literature and the information collected from different key informants suggest that the level of TCNs engagement in mainstream voluntary organizations is very low and moreover, in most cases, there are no intentional practices of TCNs involvement. On the contrary, TCNs' engagement is often linked to their personal initiative and seems to be related to their migratory background and integration path into the host society: when they first arrive, TCNs tends to be much more involved in volunteering within ethnic associations, while, when they are more stabilized in the host country, their increased sense of belonging to the local community and their commitment to participate in active citizenship practices are also expressed through volunteer activities in mainstream organizations.

Nevertheless, some interesting practices geared toward encouraging TCNs' engagement have been implemented at local level by different mainstream voluntary organizations. This is the case of the *Nazareth Social Co-operative*, which involved TCNs' families in the practice of foster care for unaccompanied foreign minors; and of *Amici del Fai Onlus*, which engaged foreign volunteers to promote the citizens' interest in the Italian artistic, cultural and environmental heritage, by providing free guided tours in both Italian and the languages of the most representative TCN communities in the area. Both experiences suggest that formal volunteering in mainstream organizations can be considered as a privileged means for TCNs social inclusion, as it encourages the development of inter-community relations by enabling volunteers, hosting societies and organizations to integrate with each other. Furthermore, this kind of experiences allows newcomers to actively participate in the process of development of the host society and to be fully recognized as active actors in their integration path. In addition, civic initiatives have been implemented in the territory, such as the promotion of awareness-raising campaigns addressed to migrants in the field of blood and organ donations, and the engagement of foreign volunteers in recreational summer groups promoted by the Catholic Church.

Some of the main factors and obstacles hindering TCNs' formal volunteering in mainstream organizations are the following: lack of language competences, different organizational cultures, different understandings of volunteering, financial limitations, lack of time and a weak sense of belonging. Major obstacles are also faced by organizations when attempting to engage TCNs in their activities, such as the lack of targeted recruitment procedures, the presence of prejudices, the lack of recognition of TCNs' skills and competences, and the social perception of immigrants as typically

potential beneficiaries rather than as actors of active citizenship practices. Finally, hindering conditions emerge also at the policy level, such as the public institutions' low awareness of the role of volunteering in promoting social inclusions and the corresponding lack of targeted policies and initiatives aimed at promoting TCNs' civic participation.

This part of the book also analyzes TCNs' civic participation realized through ethnic associationism, which, according to the existing literature, is a highly fragmented phenomenon in terms of historical evolution, degree of formalization, ethnic composition, internal structure, temporal stability, type of activities promoted and type of relations established with other local actors. Despite this, some general aspects regarding the formation of these associations, their organizational structures and the obstacles they face can be outlined. Most TCNs' ethnic associations have been established with the specific aim to help their members to integrate into the host society and nearly all the activities they promote can be related to this general goal, which, however, does not involve assimilation into the host society. The cultures of origin are often promoted through cultural activities addressed to both TCNs and natives. As for these associations' organizational structure, most of them have a weak structure and little influence on the policy-making process in the host society. In addition – through a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy – the tendency of the public institutions to privilege Italian third-sector organizations (i.e., some Catholic or lay associations) in the allocation of funds impacts negatively the relationship between local administration bodies and ethnic associations, which consequently often miss the opportunity to gain the experience and the competences required to accomplish a higher level of professionalism and reliability. Finally, impeding factors that most ethnic associations have to cope with are the scarcity of financial resources and of professionalism, as well as the lack of adequate infrastructures and difficulties when applying for funding.

This final part also focuses on the role that transnational connections may play in the civic engagement of TCNs in both the host country and the receiving society. In this respect, the municipality of Milan promoted some initiatives aimed at involving TCNs in the implementation of development projects in their country of origin. For example, this has occurred through the call for proposals "Milano per il co-sviluppo" and the establishment of *Associazione Città Mondo*; the latter is a second level association composed of 80 different ethnic associations, which intends to promote migrants' integration and to involve them in the development of both their countries of origin and Italian society.

Finally, at the level of the local context, two successful experiences of TCNs' ethnic associationism have been identified: *Sunugal* and *Colori del Mondo Adda*. Both of them appear to be successful in overcoming the obstacles that many ethnic associations face; in particular, by gaining more and more influence in the decision-making process, they managed to become peer interlocutors of various local actors, thus contributing to the process of recognizing TCNs as active actors of development in both the receiving and the sending countries.

The ISMU Foundation is an independent research centre funded in 1992 promoting research and training activities on migration, integration and the ever-growing ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary societies.

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