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Grassroots multiculturalism in Italy. Milan, Bologna and Naples compared

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The Local Dimension of Migration Policymaking

edited by Tiziana Caponio and Maren Borkert

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2 Grassroots multiculturalism in Italy: Milan, Bologna and Naples compared

Tiziana Caponio

1 Integration models at a crossroad: a defeat of multiculturalism?

'Multiculturalism' is one of those polisemic terms whose use is likely to raise a great deal of misunderstandings and incomprehension. It is a notion that may be understood in very different ways (Martiniello 1997; Vertovec & Wassendorf 2004; Sciortino 2003; Vertovec 2007): while in a mere descriptive manner it acknowledges the de facto multicultural makeup of contemporary societies, in political philosophy and public discourse, more prescriptive and value-loaded understandings prevail. In this chapter, I will refer to multiculturalism as an analytical concept, which in sociological and political science research is usually linked to some notion of recognition. This may occur either on the part of groups/collectivities calling for the recognition of their own distinctiveness, or on the part of institutions through policies aimed at addressing groups' differences. This study is concerned essentially with policy and, even more narrowly, with local policy, to find which actors at the local level are likely to mobilise and/or promote issues of recognition and cultural difference.

The existing literature has focused especially on national-level state policy, identifying different models or regimes for immigrants' incorporation into the rights of citizenship (Brubaker 1992; Castles 1984; Soysal 1994). Starting from the late 1990s, these models have undergone a phase of crisis and revision (Joppke 2006; Carrera 2006). A convergence towards neo-assimilationist policies has been observed (Joppke 2006), as indicated by the diffusion of so-called 'introductory courses', i.e., language and civic education for candidate immigrants and for those who aspire to long-term resident status.

Yet one might wonder if distinct, national models have ever existed. The isolation of a few macro-institutional variables has often overshadowed the complexity of processes of social integration usually taking place at a local level, where policies have not necessarily complied with principles stated at the national level (Favell 2001). Germany is a clas-

sic case in point: whereas conservative *Länder* in the South adhered to the national guest workers model, left-wing progressive *Länder* in the North were more likely to promote settlement policies and initiatives aimed at improving integration (Thranhardt 1992). In the case of Belgium, on the other hand, instead of one unitary national system, two regional models have been identified (Blommaert and Martiniello 1996, 51), the assimilationist one in the Walloon region and a multicultural one in the Flanders region.

A further contribution to a reconsideration of the primacy of national integration models comes from the first systematic studies of immigrant policies in new immigration countries such as Italy and Spain (Zincone 1998; Baldwin-Edwards 1999, 2002). These countries have traditionally been characterised by a high degree of territorial differentiation, both in terms of cultural identity and socio-economic development, as well as by considerable differences in the performance of local/regional administrations and in the shape of welfare arrangements. Moreover, comprehensive national legislation on immigration has been approved in relatively recent times, while local/regional policies were in some cases already in place. As a consequence, especially as far as social policies are concerned, access may vary considerably according to the area where immigrants happen to live: for example, in certain areas, such as southern regions in Italy or regions like Murcia in Spain, delegation of services to third-sector organisations prevails; in other regions, such as Emilia Romagna or Catalonia, local and regional authorities have been promoting various integration programmes throughout the 1990s.¹

Thus, the study of national models of immigrants' incorporation into host countries has not taken into sufficient account the actual complexity of immigrant policy, which often takes shape at a local or regional level. Studies analysing multiculturalism at a local level, are still few and far from systematic. In the emerging literature on local immigrant policy, at least two research pathways can be identified: studies reproducing the logic behind the models which attempt to reconstruct coherent configurations of local immigrant policies (Alexander 2004, 2007); and studies emphasising the specificity of the city context and of the policymaking processes taking place at this level (see e.g. Vertovec 1996; Gaxie et al. 1999; Mahnig 2004).

In the first kind of studies, multiculturalism represents one policy option among others. According to Alexander (2004, 2007), at least five attitudes towards immigrants can be identified, each one being the premise of different local policy responses: *transient*, *guest worker*, *assimilationist*, *pluralist* and *intercultural*. Alexander finds that, whereas transient attitudes are typical of initial labour migration, when immigrants make up a small and often undocumented population and the

local authority is seen as a guest worker attitude, albeit on a temporary basis, stay only a few years. The other three models concern labour immigrants: the *assimilationist* (Blommaert and Martiniello 1996, 51), the *pluralist* (Blommaert and Martiniello 1996, 51) and the *intercultural* (Blommaert and Martiniello 1996, 51). The first two worldviews: while the 'otherness' will eventually be permanent (Alexander 2004, 2007), cities adopting the *assimilationist* to integrate into the national dimension; or the *pluralist*-based, i.e. the *intercultural*, rather than an *assimilationist* attitude and policy, is initially as a reaction to terms of stigmatisation, intercultural attitudes towards multiethnic societies, minority residents, eventually their own.

Policy attitudes towards identifying four types of economic, cultural and social how cities may be defined. Yet, what show how cities like Amsterdam, Birmingham, Lille are prototypical *assimilationist/multiculturalist* texts traditionally culture, and the same cities. Variation in immigrants seen as a model into which

On the other hand, policymaking context and local policies. Whether a systematic attitude of absence (July 1992; 1999), other countries immigrants are

local authority is not aware of, or prefers to ignore, their presence, guest worker attitudes imply the acknowledgement of this presence, albeit on a temporary basis. Since such immigrants are assumed to stay only a few years, policies will cater only to minimal basic needs. The other three categories mark a shift in the social construct of labour immigrants, and occur when local authorities finally realise that labour migrant presence has become permanent (Alexander 2007: 35). The first two are particularly relevant since they express opposite worldviews: while the *assimilationist* attitude assumes that migrants' 'otherness' will eventually disappear, the *pluralist* attitude looks at it as permanent (Alexander 2007: 47). In terms of policies, local authorities adopting the first kind of attitude will help individual immigrants to integrate into the dominant host society while minimising the ethnic dimension; on the contrary pluralist policies are explicitly community-based, i.e. looking at ethnic-based empowerment as a vehicle rather than an obstacle in the integration process. Finally, the fifth attitude and policy response, the *intercultural* one, is represented essentially as a reaction to pluralist policies and its perceived pitfalls in terms of stigmatisation and segregation (Alexander 2007: 210): the intercultural attitude stresses the need for more common ground in a multiethnic society, in order to enable individual immigrants and minority residents to choose among multiple identities, including eventually their ethnic one.²

Policy attitudes are combined by Alexander with a second dimension identifying four different local policy domains: legal-political, socio-economic, cultural-religious and spatial. This enables him to point out how cities may adopt different attitudes across the various policy domains. Yet, what I think is more relevant to stress here is that findings show how cities that more coherently implement a pluralist policy are Amsterdam, Birmingham and Frankfurt while, by contrast, Paris and Lille are prototypes of *assimilationist* attitudes and policies. Clearly, pluralist/multicultural³ cities are more likely to be found in national contexts traditionally characterised by a multicultural institutional structure, and the same holds true for the opposite case of *assimilationist* cities. Variation in local attitudes – and thus in local policies – towards immigrants seems to be largely dependent on the national institutional model into which cities are embedded.

On the other hand, studies emphasising the specificity of local policymaking contexts have yielded contradictory evidence on multicultural policies. Whereas some scholars point to the more open and pragmatic attitude of local governments in accommodating cultural difference (Joly 1992; Leggewie 1993; Rex & Samad 1996; Vertovec 1996, 1999), other accounts contradict such a positive view. Local policies on immigrants are generally designed to address the fears and particular-

istic demands of local electorates (Gaxie et al. 1999; De Barros 2004; Mahnig 2004), who are by no means more enlightened or pragmatic than national ones.

However, these studies addressing the problematic aspects of local policy often implicitly take into account just one aspect of the policy process, thus focusing on decisions pursued officially by municipal administrations and on the conditions that lead to the adoption of those decisions. To get a complete picture of how policies for immigrants actually take shape at a local level, implementation should also be considered. According to Penninx and Martiniello (2004: 156), 'effective implementation [of immigrant policies] will be impossible without engaging the immigrant groups themselves in policy formulation and implementation'. A comparative analysis of integration policies in such different cities as Manchester, Toulouse and Marseille (Moore 2004) is revealing. In the first case, immigrant organisations have, since the very beginning, been called to take part in local policymaking. While, in the two French cities, more informal ways of dealing with immigrant problems, such as recruiting community mediators, have been put into place.

In more general terms, despite the convergence of national integration policies throughout Europe towards a kind of neo-assimilationist strategy, Penninx and Martiniello (2004) suggest that at the implementation level an opposite process can be observed. They identify a process leading to a convergence of strategies towards immigrants' recognition and participation, i.e. what might be called *soft recognition*.⁴ Two different layers or spheres of local policymaking are noted: the sphere of local government's official policymaking, on the one hand, and that of formal and informal practices of implementation, on the other. Different actors take part in these spheres, and different strategies are likely to be pursued.

Official policy has to be formally sanctioned by political actors governing the city, and thus is likely to be subject to cycles of politicisation. In contrast, formal and informal practices of intervention and implementation are carried out by complex networks of public institutions and private, especially non-profit, organisations. It is at this less official level that stakeholders' collaboration is needed, even though different ways of pursuing this collaboration can be identified. Recognition and participation of immigrant groups, through the promotion of multicultural practices, is just one possible strategy, since collective actors already mobilised on the issue are likely to define 'the stakeholder' according to their own vested interests and identities.

This chapter intends to contribute to the emerging debate on local-level multiculturalism by comparing three Italian cities – Milan, Bologna and Naples – which represent very different contexts in terms of the

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economic situation as well as cultural and political traditions.⁵ As a first step, I shall focus on official policy priorities explicitly agreed upon by political actors. At this level, an opposition emerges between the assimilationist approach pursued by the administration of Milan and the multicultural one promoted by that of Bologna, while Naples lies in between. The reconstruction of implementation strategies, which is the second step of the analysis, clearly points out a convergence towards practices of formal and/or informal recognition of cultural differences in making services accessible/available for immigrants. However, this does not coincide necessarily with a move towards inclusion and participation of immigrant organisations in policymaking. As a third and final step of the study, I shall look at the interests and logic behind the actions of the different categories of local policymakers in order to understand who is likely to endorse multicultural policies/practices and for what reasons.

2 Policies for immigrants in Milan, Bologna and Naples: a comparison of official priorities

Milan, Bologna and Naples represent very different contexts both in economic and socio-political terms. Milan represents the post-industrial north-west, now successfully converted to the service economy. Bologna is characterised by the development of small and medium-sized firms, often export-oriented. Naples is a service metropolis in the less economically developed south. These cities necessarily offer immigrants different job opportunities (Ambrosini 2001), and are also characterised by very different cultural and political traditions. Milan has the legacy of its industrial past, with a division of responsibility between Catholic organisations providing social assistance to poor people, and the unions, which have traditionally been more concerned with issues of workers' rights. Bologna has a strong left-wing tradition, as evidenced by the over 40-year hegemony of the Communist party in local government. Naples represents a traditional, Catholic, family-based culture, where the church has always played a role of moral guidance and material assistance.

In what follows I analyse official immigrant policy priorities from 1993 to 2001. During this period, the three cities were governed by different political majorities which assumed quite different positions on immigration during the electoral campaign. In the case of Milan, two right-wing majorities have been governing the city since 1993, the Northern League (Lega Nord) and the Pole for the Freedoms (Polo della Libertà). In both cases, mayoral candidates' electoral campaigns took a negative stance on immigration, emphasising the supposed link be-

tween illegal entries, deviant behaviours such as prostitution and begging, and criminality. Integration could be achieved only through work and acculturation into the receiving society lifestyle and culture.

By contrast, in the case of Bologna, an open, pro-immigrant attitude can be found in the political programme of the centre-left coalition (i.e. the Ds, Green Party and Popular Party) that won elections in 1995. Immigration was defined as a *resource* for the receiving society. The stated goal of public policy was that of building a multicultural society where cultural diversity should be not just tolerated, but positively integrated. To this end, particular emphasis was placed on policies favouring intercultural education, community mediation and immigrants' participation in the running of social services. However, such a favourable political climate changed suddenly in the 1999 electoral campaign, when the centre-right-wing Pole for the Freedoms mayoral candidate Giorgio Guazzaloca succeeded in promoting an alternative definition of immigration as a *problem* of law and order.

As for Naples, in the period considered, immigration did not represent a relevant issue either in local electoral campaigns or in the political programmes of the winning centre-left majority. Traditional problems such as administrative corruption, unemployment and lack of public housing dominated the debate. However, starting from 1995 a number of official city documents began to consider the necessity of providing for immigrants' participation and integration through specific policies aimed at supporting foreign groups and organisations.

Table 2.1 shows policy priorities in the period 1993-2001. These have been identified through an analysis of the official documents approved by the local executives and/or by the municipal councils (*delibere di giunta e di consiglio*), establishing and/or financing services for immigrants.⁶ At least in part, these decisions appear to reflect the political majorities' different standpoints on immigration.

In the case of Milan, the Northern League majority focused from the beginning on a few priorities aimed at supporting individual integration through housing facilities (shelters and initial-accommodation centres) and access to jobs (vocational training). Attention was also devoted to vulnerable categories of immigrants such as refugees, with specific programmes aimed at assisting their insertion in the labour market (vocational training and Italian language courses), and trafficked women, with special protection and social integration programmes. Cultural projects were almost nonexistent, with the exception of the interpretation and translation service that hired professional interpreters on an ad hoc basis.

In Bologna, on the contrary, we find a far more diverse list of priorities, combining policy measures directed at integrating both foreign individual workers and immigrant groups. Similar to Milan, the first

Table 2.1 Official policy priorities in Milan, Bologna and Naples (1993-2003)

Milan		Bologna		Naples	
Northern League (1993-1997)	Pole of Freedom (1997-2001)	Centre-Left (1995-1999)	Centre-Right (1999-2003)	Centre-Left (1993-2001)	
1) Shelter/accommodation 2) Vocational training 3) Interpretation-translation service 4) Refugees	1) Shelter/accommodation 2) Vocational training 3) Social protection programmes for trafficked women 4) Interpretation-translation service 5) Refugees	1) Shelter/accommodation 2) Intercultural education 3) Italian language courses 4) Vocational training 5) Community mediation 6) Immigrant associations 7) Anti-racism	1) Shelter/accommodation 2) Asylum-seekers 3) Intercultural education 4) Italian language courses 5) Vocational training 6) Community mediation	1) Information board 2) Intercultural education 3) Vocational training 4) Community mediation 5) Social protection programmes for trafficked women	

priority is represented by initial-accommodation centres, in order to cope with immigrants' difficulties in finding decent housing at a reasonable price in the private rent market. However, in Bologna this policy was explicitly framed by the centre-left majority in terms of 'community centres', to be run by immigrant groups' associations. Also policies such as intercultural education for children, community mediation to facilitate access to services and support for immigrants' associations can be clearly characterised as group-oriented, recognising diversity in order to facilitate immigrants' integration into the local society. At the same time, individual integration is also pursued through Italian language courses, vocational training schemes and projects to combat racial and ethnic discrimination.

The electoral victory of a centre-right majority in 1999 led to a partial revision of these priorities. The project of creating community accommodation centres was definitively abandoned while, similar to Milan, along with measures aimed at supporting processes of individual integration (i.e. first-accommodation, Italian language courses and vocational training), particular attention to vulnerable groups such as asylum-seekers came to the fore. Specific housing and vocational training schemes were developed, justified by the necessity of avoiding the risk of deviant behaviours and social marginality because of the uncertain legal status of this category of migrants. However, some degree of cultural recognition in making services more accessible to immigrants was maintained, as pointed out by the continuity of intercultural education for children and community mediation.

Finally, in the case of Naples, a mix of different measures can be observed. Similar to the Bologna centre-right administration, policy priorities combined individual integration (first-information points and vocational training), recognition of groups' differences (intercultural education for children and community mediation) and a programme for trafficked women. As for this last priority, contrary to a similar project initiated in Milan in 1997, in Naples the programme was a consequence of the 1998 immigration law which introduced a special fund for the financing of actions aimed at protecting foreign women forced into prostitution and sustaining victims' social insertion.

From the analysis of official policy on immigration, i.e. of the decisions formally agreed upon by different local government majorities, at least two models emerge: the multicultural model, emphasising immigrant organisations' inclusion and group recognition, as in the case of Bologna in the period 1995-1999; and the assimilationist model, that favours individual integration and assistance to particularly disadvantaged categories, as in Milan. However, in the cases of Naples and of the Bologna right-wing administration, mixed patterns of policies emerge. As demonstrated by Figure 2.1, politics seems to have some

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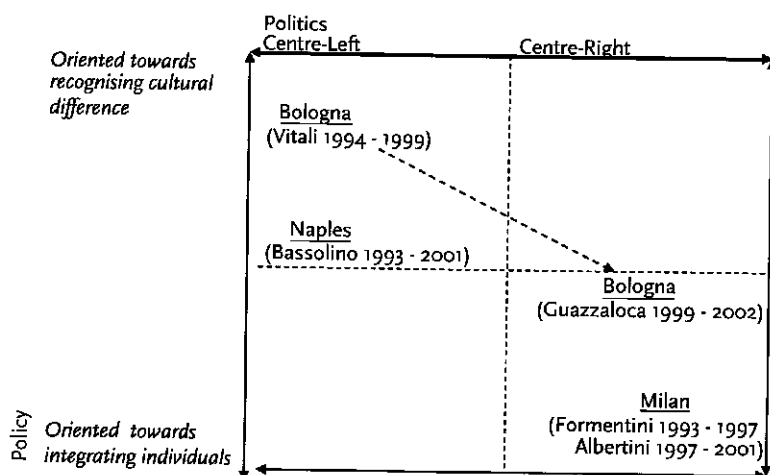
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Figure 2.1 Political majorities and official policy models in Milan, Bologna and Naples (1993-2003)



impact on official policy outputs: centre-left majorities usually show a preference for recognition policies, consistent with a definition of immigration as a *resource* for the local society; on the contrary, right-wing governments tend to privilege measures aimed at favouring individual integration and at preventing deviance among the most vulnerable groups (refugees, asylum-seekers, trafficked women), according to a definition of the issue as potential *problem*.

Thus, according to Figure 2.1, at the level of official policy, divergence in the priorities pursued prevails. Yet, external contingent factors can have an impact: as noted in the case of Naples, the social protection programme for trafficked women was essentially undertaken on the basis of national funding. Also, the continuity of cultural policies during the centre-right Guazzaloca administration in Bologna is at least in part explained by the availability of regional funding for the promotion of community mediation and intercultural education programmes. External funding represents the first factor to be taken into account when looking for policy divergence/convergence at the local level.

3 Policy networks and implementation: a reconstruction of practices

If we look across the columns of Table 2.1, we see that, along with vocational training, a minimum convergence on measures aimed at facili-

tating linguistic communication can be identified. However, only in the cases of the left-wing administrations in Bologna and Naples are these part of a broader policy project aimed at recognising and including immigrant groups. The following analysis of policy networks and implementation practices is aimed at finding out if, and to what extent, this project has translated into concrete actions. At the same time, I shall attempt to identify mechanisms and processes of cultural recognition which are also at work in Milan, despite the clear preference of official policies for individual integration.

In other words, the purpose of this section is to reconstruct practices of implementation in the three Italian cities in order to find out if there is any convergence towards *soft recognition*, i.e. some degree of – formal or informal – immigrant groups' inclusion and participation. To this end, I look at the actors involved in the delivery of immigrant policies and at their definitions of 'the stakeholder', which are crucial in order to identify who is in and who is out of the local policy networks.

3.1 Milan

Since the late 1970s, as the presence of foreign immigrants in Milan became increasingly perceived, two networks mobilised on the issue to propose quite different definitions of the phenomenon. There were Catholic third-sector organisations, on the one hand, and the unions supporting first-community associations, on the other.

Regarding the first network, two organisations emerged as being crucial. In 1979, Caritas Ambrosiana opened the first office providing assistance to foreign citizens in the city. In 1983, on the initiative of the Cardinal of Milan, the Curia established the Foreigners' Secretariat (Segreteria degli Esteri), with the aim of coordinating and integrating initial-help interventions (e.g. night shelters, canteens) provided by parish churches and other Catholic agencies. Both organisations shared a similar conception of immigrants, regarded as 'new poor people' coming from less developed countries to look for better life chances in Europe. Whereas the Curia, thanks to its network of informal voluntary services, copes with the most needy immigrants, including illegal ones, Caritas is more concerned with running facilities for legal immigrants and asylum-seekers, often in partnership with public administrations.

The second network is composed of two different kinds of organisations: immigrant associations and the unions. On the one hand, immigrant associations began to organise in the 1970s, either as informal networks or as homeland-oriented political movements. Nevertheless, the process of settlement taking place in the 1980s caused a reorientation of these movements, which started to take an interest in the living

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conditions of fellow national workers. A case in point is represented by the two Eritrean Liberation Fronts, which during this period merged into the Eritrea Community, catering to the needs of Eritrean citizens living in the city.⁷ A similar pattern was followed by student associations – first Iranian and then Egyptian – which in the same decade became increasingly concerned with the living conditions of immigrants in Italy, particularly those of their fellow nationals. Labour unions, for their part, supported this new interest/orientation by promoting a discourse centred on the recognition of migrant workers' rights, including the right to associate. Community organisations were regarded as immigrants' legitimate representatives in the local policymaking processes.

Thus, at the beginning of the 1980s, two alternative discourses on immigration were confronting each other in Milan, each one mobilising different actors. The first one looked at immigrants as 'new poor people' who needed material help and moral assistance, and was promoted essentially by Catholic organisations. The second, in contrast, centred on issues of citizenship rights and group recognition, and gathered together immigrant associations and the unions with the explicit purpose of influencing local policy.

Official policies promoted by the then centre-left majority favoured the immigrant associations–unions coalition. In 1986, the Municipal Consultative Committee was established, an appointed body providing the local administration with advice and suggestions on immigration issues. In 1989, thanks to an agreement between the Education and the Social Services Department, the Foreigners' Centre (Centro Stranieri) opened, with the ambition of being a reference point for immigrants in the city. Social services were provided by the centre with the informal collaboration of ethnic leaders, members of the Consultative Committee who acted as interpreters and mediators. The centre also provided rooms and facilities for community associations to organise their activities⁸ and favoured the creation of immigrants' cooperatives. These were entrusted with the running of the municipal initial-accommodation centres – foreign-workers' hostels established with the funds provided by the 1990 immigration law.⁹

Yet such a multicultural project of social integration yielded contradictory outcomes. The Consultative Committee progressively became less influential as a result of a lack of representativeness among many associations participating in it (Murer 2000: 19; Palidda 2000: 22). The project of the Foreigners' Centre also failed because of quarrels between the managers of the administrative departments: at the end just a small Foreigners' Office remained open to deliver first reception and assistance services. As for the multi-ethnic cooperatives, most of these organisations lacked experience in running accommodation services.

Maximum-stay rules (six months) were often disregarded, as were the monthly fees. Episodes of drug dealing and other illegal activities were reported by newspapers, causing tensions in the neighbourhoods concerned.

The situation was further exacerbated by the corruption scandals that decimated the Milanese political elite in 1992 (the so-called 'Tangentopoli'). The Foreigners' Office was left alone to face the degradation of the living conditions in the accommodation centres. The electoral victory of the Northern League in November 1993 left no room for any positive evaluation of previous multicultural policies. The first two years of the Northern League's administration were marked by an effort to close down the most disreputable accommodation centres and get rid of the insolvent cooperatives.

Immigrant organisations and the unions mobilised against these plans for dissolution, and provided support to the people living in the centres. In order to face these tensions, in May 1995 a roundtable on immigrants' housing problems was established gathering together local politicians, public officials, as well as representatives of the unions and of Caritas. At the same time, the decision of the Mayor to appoint the vice-president of a prominent Catholic organisation, the Italian Voluntary Movement (Movimento Italiano per il Volontariato, Mo.Vi), as head of the Social Services Department opened a window of opportunity for the institutionalisation of the Catholic policy network, sanctioning the definitive exclusion of immigrant associations (Caponio 2005).

Thus, the implementation of the Northern League policy priorities was pursued through a strategy of redefinition of the legitimate stakeholders. These were no longer identified with immigrant groups claiming recognition and participation, but rather with foreign individuals who needed to be assisted and/or integrated. As a consequence, Catholic associations were regarded as crucial, given their greater professional experience in providing social services to people of disadvantaged social strata.

Issues of cultural difference became of secondary relevance for such an implementation network. However, at the level of service delivery, communication problems continued to be dealt with by the Foreigners' Office through the Interpretation Service. This was a legacy of the previous implementation network: as mentioned above, in 1989 the Foreigners' Office began to collaborate informally with ethnic leaders in order to address problems of linguistic and cultural communication. In the following years, the number of foreign interpreters working for the administration increased constantly, and some of them were employed as community mediators to act as bridges with their own communities and facilitating their access to services. However, community mediation projects were run on a short-term basis, and targeted essentially

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those groups which were regarded as the more problematic ones, i.e. the North African workers living in the initial-accommodation centres. In general, the prevailing approach has always been ad hoc, emergency interpretation, consisting of the hiring of professional interpreters on the basis of specific needs.

The service, which is still active, provides interpreters to other municipal offices/services as well as, on demand, to primary schools and hospitals.¹⁰ Tasks assigned to interpreters range from mere translation of documents to supporting social workers. Demands are different according to the services concerned. Whereas the Population Register usually asks for just the translation of documents and certificates, the Family Support Service (*Servizio Sociale per le Famiglie*) and the Minors Assistance Service (*Pronto Intervento Minori*) have more elaborate needs, such as supporting the establishment of communication with problematic foreign families and abandoned minors (Favaro 2001).

Cultural recognition and mediation, while denied in official policy and in the implementation network, based essentially on Italian Catholic third-sector organisations, actually inform at least in part delivery practices. However, this kind of intervention is generally regarded more as a resource for facing particularly difficult and problematic situations, rather than as a stable feature of social services for immigrants.

3.2 *Bologna*

First interventions in favour of immigrants were promoted by the municipality of Bologna as early as 1986, when foreigners living in the city were but a few hundred and, for the most part, students. The Orientation Centre was opened, run by the unions with the purpose of providing information and assistance to immigrant workers. In 1989, when flows started to increase consistently, it was always the municipality that took the lead: one billion lire were destined to the provision of initial-accommodation services. Old schools where groups of immigrants squatted were restructured and converted into accommodation centres managed by union-affiliated cooperatives.

Thus, at the beginning of the 1990s, the main actors dealing with immigration in Bologna were the municipality and the trade unions. They were replicating a model built up by the communist administrations governing the city since the end of World War II, i.e. direct delivery of basic services and contracting out of more specialised ones to highly professional, union-affiliated cooperatives. Significantly, one of these cooperatives, called *Metoikos*, was founded in 1990 by a group of first-generation immigrants – foreign students and political dissidents who had already arrived in the 1970s.¹¹ Here, the Catholic movement was weaker than in Milan and highly fragmented. Parish churches and

voluntary groups provided some initial help and material assistance, but these were essentially spontaneous initiatives that never became a consistent alternative network (Bernadotti 1995).

As is clear, Bologna represents a case of strong public intervention and low third-sector autonomy. In fact, the local administration continued to develop ad hoc services for immigrants throughout the 1990s. This is the case, for instance, of the Documentation Centre on Intercultural Education (Cd-Lei): specialised in intercultural education, it was established in 1992 on the initiative of the Education Department, signing an agreement with the Province, the Provincial Education Authority (Provveditorato Agli Studi) and the Department of Science of Education at the University of Bologna. In this context, third-sector associations have always experienced a low degree of autonomy: either they were directly involved in the administration policies, as in the case of the union-affiliated cooperatives, or they were completely marginalised. Immigrant organisations could hardly have access to this system unless there were relational resources to affiliate them with the crucial actors, as in the case of the *Metoikos* cooperative.

However, at the beginning of the decade, an internal crisis of the communist party created pressure for the renewal of such a system and for the finding of new solutions to manage social policy. In the area of immigration, renewal meant essentially to shift attention from initial accommodation towards integration. In the programmes of the centre-left administration elected in 1995, this implied a recognition of immigrants' differences, i.e. of their cultures of origin as well as of their associations.

To implement such an ambitious goal, a new autonomous agency was established in 1996, the Institution for Immigrants' Services (Istituzione dei Servizi per l'Immigrazione, ISI), directed by an independent committee of experts in the field of immigration and social policy. Its mandate was to implement the policies formulated by the political executive and coordinate all the public and private actors working on the issue in the Bologna metropolitan area (Bernadotti & Mottura 1999). Immigrant associations were to take part in this process through the Metropolitan Forum of Extra-Communitarian Immigrant Associations, which was officially established in 1997 on the basis of a project co-financed by the European Commission. Compared to the Milan Consultative Committee, the forum was not an appointed institution; all the associations willing to take part were admitted. Over 40 organisations entered the forum and facilities were provided to support their activities.¹² In 1998, immigrant associations were also invited to apply for municipal funding.¹³

This opening of the implementation policy network to immigrant associations went hand in hand with the building of a multicultural pro-

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gramme of integration. In the area of accommodation, for instance, the administration pressured the Pakistani, Moroccan and other Maghrebi men living in the municipal centres on the outskirts of the city to form community associations to be entrusted with the everyday running of the centres. Given a similar problem – providing initial-accommodation services for foreign male workers at reasonable costs for the administration – the Northern League in Milan and the centre-left majority in Bologna adopted two opposed strategies. While in Milan initial-accommodation services were curtailed, in Bologna the accommodation policy was framed as an opportunity to empower immigrants' groups and organisations. Delegation allowed a lowering of the expenses for contracts to third-sector cooperatives.

A multicultural approach was also pursued in the areas of education and access to social services. As for education, the ISI coordinated the Inter-Ethnic Pole (Polo Interetnico) project, based on a joint partnership between various schools, seven city districts, the Cd-Lei and a Catholic association affiliated to the local Caritas. Community mediators of different nationalities were made available in order to facilitate foreign children and parents' initial approach to schools, and to familiarise Italian students with their cultures of origin. At the same time, special courses of Italian as a second language were provided.

Access to social services was another key area of concern. In 1998 the first training course for cultural mediators in the social and health area was organised, which led to the foundation of an association specialising in health care mediation and interpretation. Other courses followed in 2000 and 2001, on the initiative of the Cd-Lei, and new associations of foreign cultural mediators were founded.¹⁴ Moreover, cultural mediators of various languages were directly employed by the ISI in the front office service, to welcome foreign clients and to help them to get access to the facilities offered by the municipality.

Despite the building of an essentially inclusive policy network aimed at fostering immigrants' participation in service delivery, some contradictions have to be pointed out, particularly with the community accommodation centres. First, community associations were perceived as an imposition by the municipal administration, rather than an expression of genuine ethnic identities, as pointed out particularly in the case of Maghrebi immigrants, comprised of very different nationalities such as Moroccans, Tunisians and Algerians (Però 2002). Moreover, many associations turned out to be unable to manage the accommodations, with a rapid degeneration of living conditions in the centres.

Another contradictory point was represented by participation of immigrant associations, although this was a key factor in the multicultural project implemented by the ISI. The Metropolitan Forum of Extra-Communitarian Immigrant Association was just a first step. It should

have been completed with immigrant residents over the age of eighteen directly electing two foreign representatives to the city council, the so-called 'adjoined' councillors.¹⁵ However, in 1999, the city council defeated the proposal elaborated by the ISI and the Forum, leading to the resignation of the Forum executive.

The election in June 1999 of a centre-right Pole for the Freedoms majority put a definitive end to the development of the multicultural model pursued by the ISI. The autonomous agency was closed, the experts directing it dismissed, and responsibility for immigration reassigned to the Social Services Department. In terms of policy priorities, the new Immigration Service focused its attention on initial accommodation. The implementation strategy they adopted was at least in part similar to the one pursued by the Northern League in Milan: an in-depth revision of the accommodation system was undertaken by redefining the stakeholders and thus the actors to be involved in service delivery. The emphasis shifted more and more to foreign workers' individual needs. The implementation network was therefore opened to Catholic organisations close to Caritas, which were involved in the running of so-called 'social centres', smaller residential structures implementing specific projects aimed at supporting the autonomy of the immigrants' hosts.¹⁶ Immigrant organisations were marginalised, except for the strongly professionalised union-affiliated cooperatives, which continued to be charged with the running of initial-accommodation centres. Most of them had been employing foreign cultural mediators since the mid-1990s.

However, the policy network did not change much as far as integration services were concerned. Many cultural activities initiated by the previous administration, such as the Inter-ethnic Pole or the Zonarelli Intercultural Centre,¹⁷ continued to receive financial support. Such continuity has been favoured by the Emilia-Romagna Region, by assigning funds to the municipalities in order to carry out projects aimed at enhancing the recognition of differences in the delivery of services. To avoid losing these funds, the Immigration Service continued to collaborate with the implementation network that had been consolidated in the previous years (Cd-Lei, associations of foreign cultural mediators, etc.), and which could ensure a long-term experience in the area of intercultural policy.

At the same time, the Immigration Service continued to employ cultural mediators of different nationalities in order to ease immigrants' access to social services. There were ten such mediators in 2003. In 2002, a Centralised Service of Community Mediation and Social Interpretation was established by the Immigration Service providing qualified foreign operators¹⁸ to other offices of the municipal administration, as well as to other public and private institutions in the territory (hospitals, schools, training agencies, etc.). As is clear, during the cen-

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tre-right administration, the implementation network encompassing the local administration, the unions, their affiliated cooperatives and immigrant associations was not completely discarded. On the contrary, it actually came to represent the backbone for the development of new projects, as pointed out by the Centralised Service of Community Mediation and Social Interpretation.

3.3 *Naples*

Similar to Milan, in Naples the first organisations to deal with immigrants were also Catholic parish churches, coping with basic material needs and providing services such as canteens, health centres, night shelters, showers, counselling and help centres. In some cases, Catholic institutions became a meeting point for informal groups, such as the Cape Verdean women hosted at the Cappuccini Monks' convent of Mergellina and the Sri Lankan immigrants who attended the church of S. Pasquale in the Chiaia district.

At the end of the 1980s, immigrants also started to organise, often supported by the unions, which, during the two first amnesties for illegal immigrants, in 1986 and 1990, actively mobilised in favour of recognising immigrant workers' rights, including the right to participate in public life through their autonomous organisations. In 1991 the Immigrants Regional Coordination Group was set up by the trade union CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana Lavoratori). Together with immigrant community associations (Senegalese, Somalis, Filipinos, Sri-Lankans, Eritreans, among others), prominent religious associations – Catholic ones, in particular – such as Caritas, the S. Egidio Community and the Federation of Evangelical Churches also took part in the initiative. A few years later, a new Coordination Group of Extra-Communitarian Associations in Campania (CASEC) was founded by ten foreigners' associations. These also joined the anti-racism forum promoted by Italian civil rights organisations.

Thus, in contrast to the other two cities analysed so far, in Naples we do not find two networks supporting different views on the stakeholders, but rather an enlarged network agreeing on the necessity of involving immigrant groups in the development of local policy. This enlarged network found an opportunity to enter the policymaking arena in 1995, when the centre-left majority, which had been governing the city since 1993, started to get interested in the issue of immigration. An informal roundtable was established. Along with representatives from all of the public institutions (the prefecture, the police headquarters, the regional government, the Chamber of Commerce, the Provincial Education Authority, the Local Health Administration, municipal social services, and the Regional Employment Bureau), the un-

ions, lay and Catholic voluntary associations, and immigrants' organisations (from Argentina, Somalia, Eritrea, Senegal, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Cape Verde and Sri-Lanka) also took part in it.

It is at this roundtable, led by a sociologist with expertise in the field of immigration, that the official policy priorities (see Table 2.1) of the centre-left majority were identified and agreed upon. The delivery of services was usually contracted out to Italian Catholic and lay organisations, the only ones able to offer a stable structure and long-term experience in providing social services. Yet, the projects, especially those implemented by lay cooperatives, were particularly keen to take into account issues of cultural difference and recognition. This was indicated by the initial-assistance and information points opened in 1996 in four districts of the city (*territorial front offices*). Originally run by Caritas, the service was contracted out in 1997 to third-sector lay organisations and became more and more culturally oriented, employing a number of cultural mediators of different national origins. Cultural mediators were also employed in the implementation of vocational training projects. Actually, the main initiative carried out in this area by the Dedalus cooperative was a professional course for foreign community mediators, which resulted in the founding of a multiethnic cooperative called Casba.

Thus, in the implementation of the various projects, as well as in everyday service delivery, a cultural approach prevails, even though stakeholders – immigrant associations – were not formally incorporated into the system of service provision. One partial exception was the Islamic community: in 1999 this association was awarded a public contract for the running of a municipal information office for immigrants thanks to the intermediary role played by an Italian association. Yet, informal participation of immigrant associations seems to be the rule, especially through cultural/community mediators hired on an individual basis. This sort of informal participation also takes place in intercultural education projects, which are run by Italian lay cooperatives employing foreign immigrants as social educators and/or community mediators.

4 Explaining grassroots multiculturalism: actors' logic in different contexts

In this section I analyse in greater depth the interests of and logic behind the actions of the different actors taking part in the making of local policies for immigrants, to find out who might endorse multicultural policies and for what reasons. To this end, two different phases of local policymaking processes must be distinguished: 1) the decision-making phase, where official policy priorities and programmes are

agreed upon in the decision-making phase, which involves the delivery of services and the need to keep these p

4.1 Decision-making

Despite the existence of a number of different processes on immigration, the priorities are not the same as those of a coherent policy for immigrants either.

Nevertheless, the role of mediators since the late 1990s, even when they are not formally employed. For this category of services, maintaining a balance between the different interests presents a viable framework for gaining support. This is the case of the Italian approach to immigration, which is seen as a recipe for success for immigrants living in the city. The prevailing centre-left policy framework does not differ significantly from the one in place.

According to the Italian framework, either the state or the local authorities (Milan) have a responsibility for providing services. e. personalities and are not seen as experts, but as mediators.

In our analysis of the case of Bologna, where the service was set up, a number of factors can be used to explain the role of the immigrant in the provision of services. In all cases, the service-oriented approach perceived by the local authorities presents a viable

agreed upon, approved and financed; and 2) the implementation phase, which consists of the translation of official priorities into service delivery practices. While strictly intertwined, for analytical purposes I keep these phases distinct.

4.1 *Decision-making processes and the setting of official policy priorities*

Despite images that tend to emphasise the role of politicians, a number of different actors actually take part in local decision-making processes on immigration-related issues. As a consequence, official policy priorities are the output of complex negotiations and bargaining, rather than of a coherent and pre-established model or ideology looking at immigrants either as individuals or cultural groups.

Nevertheless, at the local level, elected politicians represent crucial actors since they have to agree at least on a set of official policy priorities, even when these are somehow suggested or defined by someone else. For this category of actors, the main interest is that of building and maintaining a consensus. As a consequence, multiculturalism represents a viable solution insofar as it will be considered a 'good' policy frame to gain stable consensus on controversial migratory issues. This is the case of centre-left majorities in Bologna and Naples which present immigration as a resource for the society, and thus multicultural policies as a recipe for establishing positive relations with the foreign populations living in those cities. On the contrary, in the case of Milan, the prevailing centre-right parties' political discourse on immigration as a problem does not allow for any positive evaluation of cultural difference.

According to the cases analysed, once politicians have set the general frame, either of a multicultural (Bologna and Naples) or an assimilationist (Milan) kind, a strategy of blame avoidance is often pursued: the responsibility for defining concrete intervention is delegated to experts, i.e. personalities who are well known for their competence in the field and are not subject to electoral judgement. In other terms, by resorting to experts, politicians attempt to minimise electoral risks.

In our analysis, this strategy is seen particularly in the case of Bologna, where an independent agency led by a committee of specialists was set up, and of Naples, where an expert was called upon to coordinate the roundtable charged with the task of establishing the basis for immigrant integration policies in the city. Also, in 1995 in Milan, the Northern League, despite a programme aimed at curtailing immigrant services appointed an expert as head of the Social Services Department. In all of the cases considered, experts have pursued a problem-solving-oriented logic, i.e. one aimed at providing sound solutions to perceived problems. As a consequence, multiculturalism will represent a viable solution for those experts who define issues of immi-

grants' integration in terms of group recognition and the validation of differences. This was the case in Bologna and in Naples, where experts made considerable – if not very successful – efforts to involve immigrant associations in policymaking, but not in Milan, since the appointed expert was far more closed to Catholic NGOs acting for immigrants rather than with immigrants.

Of course, politicians usually take care to appoint experts who are not completely at odds with their own perceptions and definitions of the problem. Yet, the problem-solving logic is very often likely to contradict politicians' search for consensus. Bologna is a case in point: the ISI experts committee strongly supported foreign groups' participation, despite the indifference of the centre-left majority that actually defeated the ISI and Metropolitan Forum of Extra-Communitarian Immigrant Associations proposals in the Municipal Council.

However, politicians and experts do not act alone, but rather in a context where other actors are mobilised and seek to pursue their views on how immigrants should be integrated. This is the case of civil servants who might have been dealing with the issue well before politicians and appointed experts, thus developing their own ideas on the matter. They often take part in decision-making processes by providing proposals and advice, as well as crucial data and information on the feasibility of the policy interventions supported by politicians and experts. This a crucial veto power, which is likely to have a considerable influence on policymaking as well as implementation.¹⁹

Usually, bureaucratic offices will endorse multicultural policies insofar as these provide an opportunity to gain legitimacy and control over new financial and/or organisational resources. For example, since new resources were opened in Bologna by the Emilia-Romagna Region, public officials continued to carry out programmes such as community mediation and intercultural education even under the not very culturally sensitive centre-right administration, relying upon their established competence in these kinds of activities. Such expertise was clearly lacking in Naples and Milan but for opposite reasons. If in Naples it is a matter of administrative inefficiency, in Milan, the prevalence of Catholic NGOs in delivering services to immigrants, together with a public discourse emphasising issues of law and order, did actually prevent the emerging of any programme explicitly dealing with immigrants diversity.

Finally, there is a fourth category of actors who have to be taken into account when analysing local decision-making processes on immigrant integration. These are civil society organisations, i.e. third-sector associations and interest organisations such as the unions. They contribute to the setting of official policy priorities through formal and informal consultations, as well as through their close relationships with politi-

cians, bureaucrats, and civil servants. In Bologna and in Naples, upon the recognition of the problem, the experts proposed solutions, by proposing a set of measures that may be more or less effective in the definition of the policy and the intervention. As in Bologna and in Milan, have developed a set of additional activities that involve immigrants first as recipients of moral assistance and then as active participants. On the other hand, that have been concerned with the rights of immigrants in principle, have not been concerned with their rights.

Official policy interventions in a multicultural context according to the requirements of multiculturalism may be a solution to the problem of immigrants concerned, or at least a step towards policymaking. If the centre-left governments have adopted a multicultural approach (political agencies' approach) to the problem of immigrants' interest and efficiency, it has been decidedly unfavourable.

4.2 Implementation

This analysis questions the existing processes towards immigrant integration, and thus the role of civil society networks are in the process. Who is not necessarily the most representative. The implementation network is carrying out initiatives that meet the needs of foreign immigrants, vocational training, and social protection.

This does not mean that it is not existent. Yet, in the past, there have been many opportunities for community associations.

cians, bureaucracies and/or experts. Their logic of action is centred upon the recognition of their capacity to efficiently mobilise on the issues, by proposing bottom-up solutions. However, these organisations may be more or less open to cultural difference, and much depends on the definition of the stakeholder which is at the core of their mode of intervention. As pointed out, Catholic associations, which are central in Milan, have developed their interventions as a consequence of their traditional activities of assistance to the poor, and usually look at immigrants first as needy persons to whom they deliver both material and moral assistance. The unions and their affiliated NGOs, on the other hand, that have played a pivotal role in Bologna and Naples have always been concerned with issues of foreign workers' rights and, at least in principle, have been more prone to recognise specific cultural rights.

Official policy priorities are the output of this complex web of interactions in a policy arena which is likely to take a different shape according to the relative power of the actors involved. Consequently, multiculturalism represents a viable policy option only insofar as it proves to be a solution coherent with the interests and logic of all the actors concerned, or at least of those controlling the crucial resources for policymaking. If this was the case in Bologna, especially during the centre-left government, the situation seems to be much more fuzzy in Naples (political agreement, in principle, and convergence with the unions' approach to immigration, but scarce resources and lack of interest and efficiency on the part of the bureaucratic apparatus) and decidedly unfavourable in Milan.

4.2 *Implementation networks and practices of service delivery*

This analysis questions the thesis of a convergence in implementation processes towards some kind of immigrant group inclusion and participation, and thus of soft recognition. On the contrary, different policy networks are in place based on different definitions of the stakeholder who is not necessarily identified with immigrant associations or group representatives. This is especially the case of Milan, where the implementation network is centred on third-sector Catholic organisations, carrying out initiatives with the explicit purpose of catering to the needs of foreign individuals, such as initial and subsequent accommodation, vocational training, assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees and social protection for trafficked women.

This does not mean that immigrant associations in Milan are non-existent. Yet, in the context described above, these associations did not have many opportunities to develop and establish themselves. The community associations, which were among the best established in the

1980s, are now far less organised and significant. The majority of immigrant associations present in Milan today can be depicted as 'community leisure time associations'. They meet on weekends, such as the Philippine women in Catholic parish churches do (Lainati 2000: 56), or occasionally get together for national celebrations, as can be observed with the Albanian-Italian Cultural Association (Palidda 2000: 103). There are also a number of well-established multi-ethnic cooperatives specialising in cultural mediation services,²⁰ but none was under any contract with the local administration in the period considered, i.e. 1993-2001.

In the case of Bologna and Naples, on the other hand, immigrant associations have been considerably involved in implementation networks, especially at an informal level. Their relationship with the union cooperatives and NGOs charged with implementing the municipality programmes proved to be crucial. However, formal contracts awarded have been few (Caponio 2005): one in Bologna in the period 1995-1999 during the centre-left administration and one in Naples to the Islamic Community in the period 1999-2001.

Despite differences in the three cities' implementation networks, similarities emerge with respect to the practices of actually delivering services to immigrants. At the delivery level, some form of cultural recognition is pursued by street-level bureaucrats. The implicit assumption is that in order to efficiently deliver services to immigrants, basic problems of linguistic communication and cultural understanding have to be dealt with. Even though different conventions are used – social interpreters in Milan and community/cultural mediators in Bologna and Naples – foreign workers play similar functions: they facilitate immigrants' first approach and relations with service providers, and they also support front office operators and practitioners in relating to foreign clients.

However, different conventions may also prove to be relevant, since these signal different conceptions of cultural differences on the part of public administrators. In Milan, the emphasis on interpretation clearly points to a conceptualisation in terms of a transitory problem, to be tackled by employing professionals able to provide ad hoc translation and to overcome obstacles in communication. Once these obstacles are removed, service delivery is supposed to continue in a standard way.

On the other hand, the use of labels such as cultural/community mediation point to the necessity of favouring a more long-term and ongoing process of reciprocal cultural adaptation. Usually the mediator is required to master both cultures in order to understand the two concerned parts: the stake here is mastering processes of social change. Immigrants should be included in order to properly account for their specific cultural point of view. In such a context, group participation and inclusion cannot be avoided. Even if not yet fully realised, this

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5 Conclusion

If we look at multiculturalism as a policy option – i.e. as a set of public policies based on principles of (soft) cultural recognition – from the analysis thus carried out, we see that there are considerable differences between the cases, both at the level of official policy priorities and of implementation networks. On the first point, multiculturalism, or policies recognising groups' cultural diversity in access to services and social resources, is a policy option which requires the agreement of all the actors taking place in local decision-making processes or at least of those having control of relevant resources.

Elected political majorities are in this respect crucial, since they rely upon the democratic source of legitimate decision-making: voting. The analyses carried out in this chapter clearly demonstrate the influence of other categories of actors. This is particularly the case of civil servants, who control vital resources for policy implementation. Moreover, as emphasised in the cases of Bologna and Milan, immigration and foreigners' offices play a role in selecting, and thus including or excluding, civil society organisations which take part in policy implementation networks.

Consequently, as far as implementation networks are concerned, differentiation rather than convergence prevails, in the sense that different implementation networks are likely to be established and to consolidate over time. Immigrant associations may or may not be included. Inclusion depends on the definition of the stakeholder agreed upon by all the concerned actors, i.e. politicians, civil servants and prominent civil society organisations working in the field. As we have seen, these may either agree to favour immigrant groups, regarded as representing different interests and identities, or individual foreigners. The latter is usually the position of Catholic organisations, drawing upon their consolidated tradition of caring for the poor, regardless of any other specification. Thus, implementation networks do not necessarily imply the linking or participation of immigrant groups, since alternative definitions of the stakeholders may also prevail.

However, a certain convergence can be detected at the level of service delivery, where it is difficult to completely avoid issues of cultural and linguistic diversity. Here the key actor is the so-called 'street-level bureaucrat' (Lipsky 1980), i.e., social workers, teachers, counter-clerks, educators and others who may feel unable to provide adequate answers to a culturally different clientele. Yet ways of defining and dealing with

such issues are again different, suggesting that trends towards convergence are only partial and do not necessarily entail recognition of groups and their participation.

A sort of functional strategy prevails, in that accommodation of diversity is regarded first and foremost by practitioners as a way to overcome obstacles in the delivery of existing services to foreign users. This is especially the case in Milan. In Bologna and Naples, despite a public discourse open to cultural recognition, accommodation is more a matter of informal relations than an institutionalised system providing for groups' inclusion and representation.

Rather than a convergence towards some sort of formal or informal linking of groups and foreign associations in policy implementation and formulation, our cases show a convergence towards functional recognition or, in Vermeulen and Stotijn's terms (in this volume), pragmatic accommodation, driven by practitioners in order to address problems in everyday service delivery. Research studies on the level of delivery practices are still few and far from systematic – not only in Italy. However, if we are to understand how multiculturalism concretely takes place – and in spite of ideological opposition at the level of official policy – a more in-depth analysis of practices and their diffusion across similar institutions/organisations is of utmost relevance. In the case of health care services, for instance, a certain convergence has been noted across European hospitals towards practices of cultural recognition in the delivery of child-care and maternity services, as well as towards the incorporation of interpretation and/or cultural mediation services (Caponio 2006b).

In order to look at multiculturalism at the local level, one must thus overcome traditional political units of policymaking. This is in order to find out how practitioners in different organisations deal with issues of cultural diversity, as well as the conditions that, within organisations, favour or discourage the adoption and diffusion of different practices of recognition. To what extent these also entail groups' inclusion and participation is still an open question. In the Italian cities analysed here, inclusion is not necessarily the case. After all, practices aimed at accommodating immigrants' cultural differences in access to services might well co-exist in the absence of any – formal or informal – participation channel.

Notes

- 1 For a review of the literature on local policies for immigrants in Italy, see Zincone and Caponio (2004) and Caponio (2006a). For the case of Spain, see Morén-Alegret (2004).

- 2 The *intercultural* occurrence of a p the designation (2007: 214). H ties such as A ones such as T conceptualising comings of mu al city is one t domains in ord
- 3 It must be poin to be essentially
- 4 *Soft recognition* The latter indic an appreciation ferent from we nised in the pr in the public sp Entzinger (200 ideas of liberal motion of the a ence. The categ fers to immigra difference in ac explicit acknowl
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- 2 The *intercultural* attitude is just sketched by Alexander. Doubts are cast on the real occurrence of a policy change since, according to him, it is difficult to establish whether the designation of 'intercultural' is just a rhetorical variant for pluralist attitudes (2007: 214). However, the fact that this attitude applies not only to once pluralist cities such as Amsterdam, Birmingham and Stuttgart but also to new immigration ones such as Turin, Rome and Barcelona, seems to point out a certain weakness in conceptualising intercultural attitudes and policies as a mere reaction to the shortcomings of multiculturalism. According to Wood and Landry (2008), the intercultural city is one that pursues intercultural exchange and cross-fertilisation in all policy domains in order to get the most from its multifaceted diversity.
- 3 It must be pointed out that Alexander intends his prevalent use of the term 'pluralist' to be essentially interchangeable with 'multicultural'.
- 4 *Soft recognition* should not be confused with *soft multiculturalism* (Martiniello 1997). The latter indicates social practices, consumer and lifestyles that are oriented towards an appreciation of cultural difference though not related to public policy. It is also different from *weak multiculturalism* (Grillo 2007) in which cultural diversity is recognised in the private sphere, contrasted with the high degree of assimilation expected in the public sphere, i.e. law, the market, education, employment, etc. According to Entzinger (2000), this is the individual approach to cultural diversity, i.e. based on ideas of liberal pluralism, which is in opposition to *strong multiculturalism* and its promotion of the acknowledgement and institutionalised recognition of cultural difference. The category of *soft recognition* proposed here falls somewhere in between. It refers to immigrant policies that somehow take into account the relevance of cultural difference in access to social services and social resources overall, albeit without an explicit acknowledgement or strong institutionalisation of group differences.
- 5 The chapter is based on research initially carried out in 2001-2002 for my PhD in political science (obtained at the University of Florence), and enriched and completed in 2003 during my contract as researcher at the University of Bologna. As will be specified, my main sources were official documents approved by the three local administrations considered. Over 50 in-depth interviews with policymakers and ethnographic observations in the cities' immigration offices were also carried out.
- 6 Priorities have been established according to three criteria: 1) the amount of financial resources invested in the various policies; 2) the number of administrative records concerning a certain policy; and 3) the source of the financial resources invested – if coming from the local administration budget or from external funding. This third point is a crucial dimension, since it distinguishes between priorities set directly by the local government and sustained with internal resources from policies drawing from regional and national laws and provisions that are thus based upon external resources.
- 7 For a more detailed description of the development of immigrant associations in the city of Milan, see Caponio (2005).
- 8 The longer-established associations, such as those in the Eritrean and Egyptian communities, were able to set up a range of initiatives, such as native language courses for children.
- 9 For details on immigration laws in Italy, see Zincone (1998, 2006).
- 10 However, must be pointed out that school and hospitals only marginally apply for this service, since there are other organisations in Milan providing cultural mediators specialised in the areas of education and health care.
- 11 These were primarily architects, mainly from Argentina and different African countries, who came to Italy and completed their studies (Bernadotti & Mottura 1999: 80).
- 12 A Metropolitan Forum of Extra-Communitarian Immigrant Associations office was opened and provided with computers, a printer and a photocopier.

- 13 However, only awarded were small grants, each around € 2,500-€ 3,000.
- 14 In 2005, Bologna had at least four active associations of cultural mediators: one specifically catering to women, two specialising in children's education and one to facilitate access to health services (Provincia di Bologna - Osservatorio per l'Immigrazione 2006).
- 15 'Adjoined' councillors were voted on in the mid-1990s in Rome and Ancona. They are not allowed to vote in the Council, and have a mere consultative function. Other cities allowed for the direct election of consultative committees, the 'consulte.' This was the case of Turin in 1995 (though only until 1999), of Modena (1999), Palermo (2001) and Bergamo (1999).
- 16 This is the case, for instance, of a social centre run by the Arc-en-ciel association hosting foreign male workers who wish to reunite with their families living abroad. The centre assists them with finding a proper home in the private market and with bureaucratic procedures involved in family reunion.
- 17 The centre provides facilities to ethnic communities and associations to enable them to organise cultural activities (national celebrations, language courses, ethnic festivals, etc.).
- 18 These are selected by the Immigration Office based on of a number of criteria. A list of qualified foreign community mediators and social interpreters is available on demand (Provincia di Bologna - Osservatorio per l'Immigrazione 2006: 11-13).
- 19 See, for instance, the role of bureaucracy in Bologna in impeding the consolidation of the ISI (Caponio 2006a).
- 20 This is the case of, for instance, the Crinali and Kantare cooperatives. Founded in the 1990s by Italian and foreign trade union activists, these cooperatives work particularly in partnership with city hospitals and health centres.

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