

## **Aliens are citizens: the local dimension of inclusion policies**

**Nadia Nur**

### **Abstract**

This paper concerns essentially how local policies deal with inclusion of immigrants in Italian cities, with a focus on housing issue.

Despite the nation state is considered the main integration policy subject by European institutions, the once taken for granted correspondence between citizenship and nationality has been called into question as new forms of transnational and sub-national belonging are shaping up within the city due to global migration. This disjuncture between the conventional forms and spaces of citizenship and being a citizen in daily life has led to a political devolution of citizenship claims-making from national to urban space. Perhaps the crucial challenge in order to address the social and spatial inclusion for immigrants is to reimagine citizenship in the context of the globalisation and denationalization of urban space.

Since the transnational character of global migration flows and cultural networks have dramatically changed the narratives and practices of citizenship, “inhabitation” has become a status allowing participation in policy-making.

Immigration impacts mainly on social, spatial and political structures in cities, thus the response to such a global issue is mainly local. The steps of the policy making are now going from global to local. And this is self-evident especially in Italy where the State structure is turning into a federalist form.

Local activities on integrating migrants and setting up dialogue structure at the subnational level, and collaboration between various government levels and between local bodies and non-governmental organizations are essential to spread inclusion-driven policies.

Despite the numerous changes in the Italian institutional and legislative framework, the role of local administration in supporting immigrants integration and access to urban advantage, based on principles of freedom, equity, and social justice, remains crucial. An increasing number of Municipalities have recently set up immigrant consultative committees or special councillors representing foreigners, drawing special attention to political participation and migrants involvement into the policy-making process. Despite the great relevance of political participation, housing issues are even more crucial for an effective inclusion policy. While the gap between demand and supply for public housing is wider, the opportunities of private rental for moderate or low-income people are decreasing.

While some cities are taking forward inclusion-driven policies, some municipalities reject the multicultural idea denying basic rights to foreign citizens and seeking spatial segregation.

Both groups point out that national policies are no longer adequate to cope with migration issue.

### **1. Citizenship beyond nationality**

The institutional configuration of citizenship based on nation state doesn't fit anymore to the reality of citizenship. This concept of nationality-based citizenship and the sovereignty of nation state are challenged by the migratory process and the claim of aliens inclusion. Boundaries traditionally separate the ones "inside" from the ones who are outside the territory of the state, who is to be considered a citizen from who is a non-citizen. Juridically, citizenship is a nation state matter, even if we consider supranational level (e.g. The European Union). However, if we take into account social citizenship, the matter turns immediately to a local level.

The idea of citizenship as a matter of belonging to a state has always been ambiguous. It assures inclusion and equality through the legislative system but at the same time it is an instrument of exclusion and closure.

The migration phenomenon is producing a radical change in the traditional concept of citizenship and is questioning a new definition of citizenship rights. Referring to the Italian case, the character assumed by local citizens is to be analysed through the lens of immigrants policies established by local governments. However we have to consider that the Italian territory is highly fragmented and heterogenic, both in cultural and political levels. Municipalities, regions and provinces show a significant differentiation in assuring rights access, both for aliens and national citizens.

Many regions have approved several provisions that promote the rights of participation to non-national citizens. Case study Regions could be Emilia Romagna, Tuscany and Campania, which are fostering the participation of non-national citizens and extending the right to vote to immigrants. The recognition of the right to political participation to non-national citizens is thus independent from nationality and it is based only on the residence in the Region. Those considered aliens or non-citizens by the national law system, thus acquire a sort of citizenship at local level, through the recognition of political rights. Aliens are citizens de facto. However, it is a long way to go to get the full recognition of equal rights of citizenship based not on nationality but on inhabitance.

### **2. Migration vs immigrant policies: from national to local level**

At national level the first immigration laws – namely Law No. 943/1986 and Law No. 30/1990 – didn't mention any integration policy and didn't consider territorial

differentiation in access to citizenship rights and provision of services. Resources provided to the Regions were given only for first accommodation centres.

Only in 1998, with the Turco-Napolitano Law (40/1998), a comprehensive policy framework for immigrant integration began to be drawn and financial resources were established at regional level to implement integration programmes. With the establishment of the National Fund for migration policies (Article 45 of Law No. 40/1998) Regions have become a major player in the management of immigrant policies. However Regions had to sign agreements with Municipalities, which managed relations and cooperation with the third sector organisations such as charities, unions etc. for the provision of basic service at city level.

The main outcome of Law No. 40/98 is the recognition of the pivotal role played by local administration in providing assistance to unaccompanied minors, people under humanitarian protection and victims of trafficking.

In 2002, this law has been partially modified by the Law No. 189/2002 (Bossi-Fini) through a reform that made the relationship between work and residence permit more binding, reduced funding for integration policies, and made illegal immigration more difficult.

The Bossi-Fini Law increased the role of the Municipalities regarding asylum seekers issue. However, due to budget cuts, in 2003, the National Integration Fund became a more general part of the Social Fund given to the Regions for welfare interventions. In this way Regions alone are responsible for using this fund for general welfare services or even for immigrants inclusion policies.

At the moment in almost all Italian Regions there is a regional law for the integration of immigrants, rather than other regulatory measures. There is a Regional council (and sometimes even a Provincial one), a three-year program of interventions in different areas and an annual program in some regions, namely Piedmont, Veneto, Umbria, Marche, Puglia, Calabria, Sardinia. Monitoring migration, collecting and processing data in order to estimate the labour need is quite common praxis: now there are regional observatories on migration and a Register of Associations of migrants.

Despite the numerous changes in the Italian institutional and legislative framework, the role of the Municipalities in supporting immigrant integration and access to urban advantage, based on principles of freedom, equity, and social justice, remains crucial. An increasing number of Municipalities have recently set up immigrant consultative committees or special councillors representing non-national residents in the Municipal Councils (Fieri-Asgi, 2005).

The steps of the policy-making are now going from global to local. And this is self-evident especially in Italy where the State structure is turning into a federalist form.

### **3. State reform and new tasks for local governments**

“Italy can be regarded as a case of a regionalised state structure in transition towards a quasi-federalist form” (Caponio, 2010, p166). In fact in the last twenty years a devolution process has undergone and local administrations acquired more authority.

The 2001 reform of Title V of the Italian Constitution changed dramatically the structure of the State, turning it into federalism and thus assigning more legislative power to the Regions, while Municipalities have administrative functions.

The reform provides that immigration issues remain yet under the exclusive jurisdiction of the state, while policies towards immigrants – including social services, health care, educational assistance, vocational training, and public housing – are under exclusive responsibility of the Regions (except for the protection of health care).

However amid this sort of incomplete federalism Regions cannot influence the legislation of the State since at national level there's not any chamber representing regions.

### **4. Local policies and aliens inclusion**

“Social inclusion of international migrants depends largely on the positions they fill in the local economy, the socio-cultural conditions of the host city, the migrant own willingness to be “included” as well as the patterns of settlement and the uses they make of the public urban space. In fact, migrants are not a homogeneous group of people. To be effective, policies must acknowledge that different cultural, religious and educational backgrounds generate different perspectives on the notions of inclusion and citizenship” (Balbo, 2006, p.92)

In Italy the phenomenon of immigration is markedly urban. Thus it is in the urban context, or more generally at local level, that inclusion or exclusion is determined.

However, to understand the dynamics of inclusion urban, both social and spatial, it is important to take into account the territorial differences of the issue, both for the characteristics of the foreign presence and regarding the social context and local policies. Moreover, we have to consider the weakness of welfare policies and integration in Italy.

The Italian case is pretty unique as it is characterized by a fragmented model of integration and inclusion of migrants. Therefore is difficult to draw a clear framework of inclusion local policies: territorial differences and the different strategies adopted has to be added to cultural differences between immigrants communities. Policy differences have been related to the different context or to the different relations between public actors (Ponzo 2006) and between public and private players such as Ngo's, foundations, unions, associations etc.

Different citizenship models show that the "right to the city" for migrants depends essentially on the conditions offered at local level. In this context, policies for migrants inclusion are played on multiple levels of government (Zincone G., Caponio T., 2006). There are several interactions between the various levels of government and civil society organizations. Moreover, grassroots policies are growing as a new "informal" model.

Thus, local administration plays a more crucial role in supporting "right to the city" and providing services to alien citizens. Local activities to support integration, and set up dialogue structures at subnational level, and collaboration between various government levels and between local bodies and non-governmental organizations are essential to spread inclusion policies.

At municipal level, in Italy, early policies aimed at immigrant inclusion and integration have been carried out in the North of the country, in the late 80's. Yet the third-sector already played an important role to assist first accommodation.

In the 90's we assisted at a differentiation of inclusion models, which focused for example on housing (Milan), cultural integration, intercultural mediation and equal access to urban services (Bologna).

While in Northern Italy main actions were carried out mainly by municipalities, in the south of the country a crucial role has been played by non-profit organisations and the Catholic web (Zincone, G., Caponio, T., 2006).

"Inclusion has implications for any commitment to "urban citizenship" by both host and migrant communities. However, the emergence of an international migration with limited commitment to the host community, can lead to a decay in civic values. In this perspective, inclusion can be seen as a compact between migrants and host communities whereby they share certain civic values while other factors of diversity are kept untouched" (Balbo, 2006, p.92).

## **5. Housing Policies as a matter of inclusion**

Housing is the most critical urban condition that involves inclusion of immigrants. Despite the great variety of conditions, generally speaking we can notice a massive situation of hardship and housing exclusion. Many immigrants, including the ones who are not to be considered poor, are badly housed. Poor immigrants, even if they are refugees, or under humanitarian protection, are often homeless because they are not provided with any housing right.

Within the real estate and rental market, accommodations offered to immigrants are basically worse or more expensive than those available to local people with same type of income (Makno-Ministero dell'Interno, 2007; Eurispes, 2007). Precarious conditions of inhabitation is a matter of concern also for regular immigrants with regular income.

The extent of discomfort and exclusion of immigrants call into question the issue of policies.

Social housing for immigrants is a recent and very dynamic phenomenon: most of the initiatives have been launched over the past ten years, and have increased rapidly over the past five years.

It should be emphasized that the local actions of social housing are generally influenced by the central government, which has established several funding for housing, but did never adopt a specific legislation aimed at the solution of this problem that is becoming more and more relevant even for the Italian middle class. A recent innovation, though it is part of a financial law and is not specifically oriented to housing r, is that of House Plan (L.133/2008).

Due to the lack of institutionalization of housing policies, social housing in Italy is typically constructed from the interaction between different players and using resources from different areas of policy. Moreover informal and self-managed grassroots solutions are to be taken into account.

Housing policies seem to be characterized by "different speed": the local level responds more quickly to the needs of new citizens, while the central government's response is slower (Ponzo, 2010) This trend follows in part the dynamics of the development of integration policy in Italy (Zincone, 2006; Caponio, 2006). But I argue that is strongly affected by changes in the composition and settlements of the migrant and immigrant population, and trends in the real estate market and the supply of housing, which impact first on local government before becoming sensitive at national level.

Probably what is happening is a kind of polarization (Crosta, P.L., Mariotto, A., Tosi, A., 2000) caused by the improvement in the conditions of immigrants already settled, and growing housing insecurity for those who are at the beginning of the migration experience.

Several factors have contributed to a transformation of housing demand: the stabilization of a large quota of foreign population, the growth of the number of families due to the reunification or the making up of new families, the different composition of new citizens. Regarding the housing offer, we are assisting at the worsening of the housing market, besides the lack of innovation in the institutional framework.

The settlement of families determines obviously an increase in demand for housing, in the sense of stable and adequate housing, not a first assistance shelter. And, the need for housing is basically a need for rental, which in most cases should be a cheap rental.

The gap between supply and demand for public housing is not filled by the increase of opportunities offered by the private housing market, which is no longer accessible to moderate or low-income people. This means that it becomes more difficult for immigrants to improve housing careers.

According to a recent research conducted by Fieri (Ponzo, 2010), which has surveyed the social housing projects for immigrants in Italy, 34% of the projects are carried out at the municipal level, 46% involve the supra-municipal level (province, district, district social-welfare, etc..) and only 18% is conducted on regional basis.

The highest number of housing projects is founded in Emilia Romagna and Tuscany, followed by Lombardy and Veneto. In Southern Italy the interventions are scarce and most of them concern first reception and information desks.

People involved in housing projects reflect the evolution of the foreign presence in Italy, characterized by a high proportion of families, increased as a result of family reunions and marriages.

Generally speaking, different players, public and private, are involved in the development of housing projects for immigrants. Public actors are getting more and more important both as promoters and partners of the project. However, at national level this data is not homogeneous: Fieri survey shows that two-thirds of the projects promoted by public actors are concentrated in Emilia Romagna and Tuscany. Real estate brokerage office and a social management of housing are the main actions that take place.

The role of foundations as promoters, partners and financiers, compensates the scarcity of public resources and lack of innovation. Conversely, the third sector and non-profit organizations play a marginal role.

Aiming to give just an overview on housing policies for immigrants in Italy, I attempt to highlight some positive experiences, where the objective of inclusion through the granting of housing right has been reached, but also negative experiences and innovative projects yet non implemented.

Veneto Region is an symbolic case of the bind between politics, local administration and attitudes towards inclusion or exclusion policies. The municipality of Padua has become famous when the local administration decided in 2006 to build a wall to separate “via Anelli”, the major immigrant settlement, from the rest of the town. Via Anelli was the typical example of an ethnically oriented neighborhood, that most of the times means that immigrants settle in a place after searching for housing in other neighborhoods and confronting with high rental rates, discrimination and often illegal behaviors of the owners. “However most migrants knew before they started their migratory journey that they were going to end up in Via Anelli as safe place where to receive the support of fellow citizens, in terms of working protection in situations of illegality” (Ostanel, 2010).

The community of via Anelli “can visibly use the city and its services but cannot exercise the same grade of citizenship as the natives. The term marginality, in this sense enquires various concepts such as access to housing, public space, services and security linking them to the notion of citizenship” (Ostanel, 2010). Immigrant population settled in Via Anelli can be defined “included with exceptions” ((Mezzadra cited in Ostanel, 2010).

In 2007, after the relocation of the nearly 560 regular inhabitants in public houses within the city and the province of Padua, housing became once again a hot issue for the immigrants that after having benefit of a location contract of 2 or 4 years, couldn't find other affordable housing solutions.

The 2008/10 project “Oltre il ghetto” (Beyond the ghetto), sponsored by the municipality in cooperation with the Health and Welfare Ministry and other players, supported people (100% foreigners) that were living in Via Anelli in accessing the private housing market, helping them to pay the rent deposit, and facilitating cohabitation for singles. Moreover, the project aimed at the social inclusion of singles and at the mediation of ethnic conflicts. At the end of 2010, 230 people were still living in public houses due to the difficulty in accessing housing in the private sector. Moreover the financial crisis has strengthen the situation of marginality that migrants were living and most of them has become undocumented.

While the public administration looks at “Oltre il ghetto” project as a success, which allowed to recover a great number of public housing housing (Gamba, Ferrandino, Ruggero, 2011)the relocation policies “tried to solve the social and spatial constraints that Via Anelli were materializing, but they did not address the macro-social constraints that are forcing migrants to marginality. What is important to highlight is the relationship between local and national/transnational level of policy because it stresses the role of local government in managing migration: while local governments have a specific responsibility on the community they are governing, macro-social elements that are affecting migrants' urban inclusion/exclusion are playing at different levels. Local policies become partial and national and transnational constraints are impossible to address” (Ostanel, 2010).

Another example, less emblematic and perhaps more ordinary, is the one of Cesena. The Foundation rental of Cesena, promoted by the Municipality of Cesena in connection with the "Cassa di Risparmio di Cesena" was created (along with religious players, unions and associations of owners of real estate industry) in 1993 to promote access to housing by households. The service was primarily aimed at families, but since 2005 groups of singles usually willing to share accommodation have been admitted. More generally the conditions for accessing the service are: a regular employment, a residence permit (in the case of foreigners) and an annual income of at least 8,000 euros. It is interesting to notice that to access the service is no longer necessary to have a permanent contract, but it is now sufficient to prove to have an income for several months.

At the beginning the foundation activity was addressed mainly to Italian families but today non-national citizens represent almost 70% of the target. The preponderance of immigrant users, however, has not been disputed by Italian ones.

On the contrary, "Vicini di casa", a cooperative-association founded in '93 as part of the parish of St. Dominic of Udine was initially targeting only the immigrant population until 2006. The extension to Italian citizens took place after being funded by Law No. 15/2005 which aimed to address people living in disadvantaged position, regardless nationality. Since then the association started promoting change in the legislation, urging the Immigration Sector to stress in the drafting of the Regional Immigration Law No. 5 of 2005 the issue of equal access to housing both for Italians and foreigners rather than on promoting interventions reserved for immigrants.

The percentage of foreigners users is still very high and varied depending on the service (from 65-70% in social real estate brokerage, to 75% in temporary residential facilities, 90% in real estate management).

The intervention is supported by the municipality and the social welfare sector. The main financial donors to "Vicini di Casa" are the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and the Province of Udine.

While in Tuscany the "Abitare il mondo" project is financing actions aimed at promoting the inclusion of non-European immigrants through the construction and renovation of housing, in Lombardy the extension to 5 years of continuative residence as a condition to housing access makes this Region a sort of laboratory of exclusion. It is interesting to notice that in Milan, the number of non-Italians owners of houses has increased of 300% over the last ten years (22%). While this could be seen as a positive figure, often the choice of buying a house, in some cases shared between more than one family, reflects the difficulty to access to rental market or to social housing, due to the restrictive requirements or, in the case of private rental, to discriminatory attitudes.

## **5. Conclusions**

The brief reconstruction of housing policies towards immigrants inclusion in several Italian cities highlights the importance of the third sector in supporting the public administration, which is highly fragmented. Different medium or long term migratory patterns, the influence of political attitude pro or anti-immigrants of the ruling political party, and the support of Ngo's and associations paint an unclear picture of the local policies of inclusion of immigrants.

While public administration is the driver of inclusion policies, especially in the Northern Italy, the immigrant issue is completely undertaken by non-profit associations, charities, Ngo's and Catholic networks. Local policies show a variety of strategies and conceptions, some oriented to integration, some to first assistance and some to security and control. In the north and sometimes in the center of the

country the attitude is to a sort of "subordinate inclusion" (Crosta, Mariotto, Tosi, 2000), recognizing the immigrants' right to be integrated in the productive sphere but not in the social and political one. In the Southern Italy the role of public administration is weaker and immigrants issue is a matter of concern mostly for the private actors.

As policy-making is played at so different layers it is difficult to underline a unique strategy. What is evident is the shrinking influence of the state and the national law system. Regionalization of housing policies in Italy puts local administrations in front of the concrete task of housing welfare for all citizens, immigrants included. Immigrants' inclusion is more and more a matter of local policy, despite the national legislation.

The ones considered aliens by the national laws, are inhabitants living in urban contest, thus they are de facto citizens, which means they should be provided all citizenship rights within the municipality they live in, especially housing rights.

## References

Balbo M., 2009, International migrations and the "Right to the City", in Jouve B., Urban Policies and the Right to the City. The UN-HABITAT and UNESCO Joint Project. Lyon: Presses Univeristaires de Lyon.

Balbo M., 2006, International migrations and the "Right to the City". In: Unesco, Urban Policies and the right to the city. Paris: Unesco.

Caponio T. Policy Networks and immigrant's associations in Italy: the cases of Milan, Bologna, Naples. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31 (5), pp. 931-950.

Caponio T., Maren B., 2010. The Local Dimension of Migration Policymaking. IMISCOE Report Series. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Caponio T., Zincone G., 2006. The Multilevel Governance of Migration. In: Penninx, R., Berger, M., Kral K., The Dynamics of Migration and Settlement in Europe. A State of the Art. IMISCOE Joint Studies Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Caponio, T., 2006. Città italiane e immigrazione. Discorso pubblico e politiche a Milano, Bologna e Napoli. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Crosta, P.L., Mariotto, A., Tosi, A., 2000. Immigrati, territorio e politiche urbane. Il caso italiano. *Migrazioni Scenari per XXI° secolo* Convegno Internazionale Roma, Agenzia romana per la preparazione del giubileo , 12-14 July 2000. [online]

Available at: [http://www.cestim.org/argomenti/31italia/rapporti-papers/dossier\\_migrazioni/parte\\_3/urbane.htm](http://www.cestim.org/argomenti/31italia/rapporti-papers/dossier_migrazioni/parte_3/urbane.htm) [Accessed 10 may 2012].

Eurispes, 2007. Rapporto Italia 2007. Eurispes: Roma.

FIERI-ASGI, 2005. La partecipazione politica degli stranieri. [online] Available at: [http://www.fieri.it/rapporto\\_finale\\_la\\_partecipazione\\_politica\\_degli\\_stranieri\\_a\\_1\\_ivello\\_.php](http://www.fieri.it/rapporto_finale_la_partecipazione_politica_degli_stranieri_a_1_ivello_.php) [Accessed 10 may 2012]

ISMU, 2010. Migrazioni, politiche urbane e abitative: dalla dimensione europea alla dimensione locale. Milan: Fondazione Ismu.

Kirchberger A., Niessen J., 2011. Integration beyond Migration: Kicking off the debate. Brussels: European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

Makno - Ministero dell'interno, 2007. Una ricerca sociale sull'immigrazione. Indagine estensiva sugli immigrati. 6° rapporto. Milan: Makno. [online] Available at: [http://www1.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala\\_stampa/notizie/immigrazione/0976\\_La\\_Ricerca\\_Makno\\_sugli\\_immigrati.html](http://www1.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/notizie/immigrazione/0976_La_Ricerca_Makno_sugli_immigrati.html) [Accessed 10 may 2012].

Mezzadra, S., 2004. I confini della libertà. Per una lettura politica delle migrazioni contemporanee, Roma; DeriveApprodi.

Ostanel E., 2010. The non-access to formal housing: Via Anelli as an informal housing policing. The right to adequate housing of migrants factsheets. N.1 Padova, Italy. [online] Available at: [http://www.unescochair-iuav.it/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/ssiimpsno3\\_ostanel1.pdf](http://www.unescochair-iuav.it/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/ssiimpsno3_ostanel1.pdf) [Accessed 10 may 2012].

Ponzo I., 2011. Immigrant integration policies and housing policies: the hidden links. Fieri research report. [online] Available at: [http://fieri.it/immigrant\\_integration\\_policies\\_and\\_housing\\_policies\\_the\\_hidden\\_links.php](http://fieri.it/immigrant_integration_policies_and_housing_policies_the_hidden_links.php) [Accessed 10 may 2012]

Ponzo, I., 2008. Quello che i comuni hanno in comune. Politiche locali di accoglienza per gli immigrati. Polis (3), pp. 451-479.

Ponzo, I., 2010. Il disagio abitativo degli immigrati: le risposte dell'housing sociale. [online] Available at: [http://fieri.it/il\\_disagio\\_abitativo\\_degli\\_immigrati\\_le\\_risposte\\_dell\\_housing\\_sociale.php](http://fieri.it/il_disagio_abitativo_degli_immigrati_le_risposte_dell_housing_sociale.php) [Accessed 10 may 2012]

Ruggero A., Gamba C., Ferrandino A., Padova – Oltre il ghetto di via Anelli Azioni positive a sostegno della convivenza e dell'inclusione sociale [online] Available at: [www.espanet-italia.net](http://www.espanet-italia.net) [Accessed 10 may 2012]

UN-Habitat, 2010. How to enhance inclusiveness for international migrants in our cities: various stakeholders view. Paris: Unesco.

Zincone, G., 2010. Citizenship Policy Making in Mediterranean EU States: Italy.

Zincone, G., Caponio, T., 2005. Immigrant and immigration policy-making: The case of Italy. IMISCOE Working Paper: Country report. . [online] Available at: <http://dare.uva.nl/document/39853> [Accessed 10 may 2012].

Zincone,G., 2006. Italian immigrants and immigration policy-making: Structures, actors and practices. IMISCOE Working Paper. [online] Available at: <http://dare.uva.nl/document/39856> [Accessed 10 may 2012].