



# INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION: MIGRANTS' PERSPECTIVE ON POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN ITALY

**Cinzia Albanesi, Elvira Cicognani,  
Bruna Zani, Davide Mazzoni, Alberto  
Bertocchi, Paola Villano**

*Department of Sciences of Education "G.M. Bertin"  
University of Bologna (Italy)*



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# Our aims

- To understand migrants' ideas and views about their opportunities and resources for participation in Italy
  - Types and level of youth participation
  - Obstacles to effective youth participation
  - Differences according to migrant group, age and gender



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# Our Sample

- Focus group study

- 28 Albanians
  - 13 adolescents (5 M; 8F)
  - 15 young people (8 M, 7F)
- 29 Moroccans
  - 11 young people (5M, 6F)
  - 18 adolescents (10 M, 8F)

- Individual Interviews Study

- 4 Parents
  - 2 Albanians
  - 2 Moroccans
- 5 Media referents
  - Albanian media,
  - 2 Intercultural media
  - Youth Media
- 2 Teachers
- 1 Peer
  - young Albanian



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# Our Sample

- Focus group study – 28 Albanians
- Individual Interviews study

**Recruitment through**

**gatekeepers and snowball technique  
(key informants, community leaders,  
youth workers, young people)**

TARGET GROUPS

– 1 Peer

- young Albanian

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# Who has the right to be an Italian citizen?

Italian citizenship is based on the following principles

- Citizenship can be transmitted **by descent** “iure sanguinis”: a child born to an Italian mother or father is Italian
- Acquisition “iure soli” (by **birth on the territory**) only in given cases
  - A child born to foreign parents in Italy doesn’t automatically acquire Italian citizenship: It can be obtained only if it’s requested before the child reaches the age of 18
- Acquisition by **residence** on the territory only in given cases
  - Foreign people can apply for citizenship after ten years residence (four years if he/she is a European Union citizen)
- **Explicit statement of will is necessary to acquire Italian citizenship** (Applying to the Minister of the Interior)



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# And if you are not Italian...

## You can enter and live in Italy only

- If you hold a valid passport or an equivalent travel document
- According to a planned quota system
- If you have a job-seeker visa
- If you get a residence-employment contract

## You have civil and social rights

- **Documented** immigrants are treated like Italian citizens as far as civil rights are concerned
- **Documented** immigrants enjoy the same social rights as Italian citizens, with only minor exceptions ( access to public housing is now tied to a two-year residence permit)

## You have no political rights

- The right to vote is not recognized



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# Results

- Migrants recognize different opportunities to participate to social and political life:
  - To march and protest (to defend and to promote their rights) when they are not afraid of the consequences
  - To participate through the web (social networking, getting information, doing some “political” activities)
  - To belong to local and migrant associations/groups (defense, promotion of rights and/or culture)



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# Results

- But they all cannot vote

*I have been living in Italy for 11 years and I cannot vote because I am not allowed to have citizenship yet. We just had elections and I wanted to express my opinion. Italy is very far behind in comparison with other EU countries. Now there is a proposal that foreigners asking for citizenship should make a test on Italian Constitution, to verify whether they know it. But even many Italians do not know it, so what do they want to do?*

[Young Albanians]



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# Results

**THEY ALL  
EXPERIENCE  
INSTITUTIONAL  
DISCRIMINATION**

- But

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*foreigners asking for citizenship should make a test on Italian Constitution, to verify whether they know it. But even many Italians do not know it, so what do they want to do?*

[Young Albanians]



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# Results

## INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

- But  
I ha

### THE MOST RELEVANT OBSTACLE TO PARTICIPATION ACROSS GROUPS AND GENERATIONS

*For migrant youth it is paradoxical to think that, since they are not allowed their citizenship rights, they can be motivated to participate in politics, which should be stimulated by a feeling of belonging. It is true that there are youths who are fighting for their own rights and are doing political activity, but they are few”*

[media referent, Italian woman]

*...when you are born in Italy and you reach 15 years, you need the resident permit, and this makes you angry against a society that is yours but excludes you, and this sometimes makes it difficult your future participation also because this sort of things create a “we” and “they” and this is very dangerous for the society,... At 15 you experience this as an injustice to ask for a resident permit not to the Municipality but to the police, as if you were a criminal ...sometimes it becomes an “institutional racism”*

[media referent, president Mier],



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# DIFFERENT OUTCOMES OF INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION (1)

## ACTUAL PARTICIPATION

**Moroccan  
young adults**

- » They march and protest (to defend and to promote their rights)

**Albanian young  
adults (S)**

- » They participate through the web (social networking, doing only some “political” activities)

**Moroccan  
young adults**

**Albanian  
adolescents**

**Moroccan  
young people**

**Albanian  
adolescents**

- » They belong to local and migrant associations/ groups (defense, promotion of rights and culture in different ways)



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# DIFFERENT OUTCOMES OF INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION (2)

- ATTITUDES AND MEMBERSHIP MEANINGS

Albanian adolescents

Albanian young people (S)

Moroccan young people

Powerlessness

Lack of trust toward Italian Institutions

Pessimism

Limited efforts in collective action

Individual efforts to promote change

Empowerment

Hope

More participative efforts in order to promote equal rights and integration

(Successful) Vision of the future

Membership as **Cultural** identity

Membership as **Politicized** identity



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# BESIDES INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION...

What else inhibits young  
migrants' opportunities to  
participate?



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# OBSTACLES (1)

**Albanian young  
people (W)**

More focused on financial strain  
Less educated  
Less experienced

**Moroccan  
Adolescents**

Girls: more focused on daily interactions and cultural based family conflict  
  
Boys: “unaware” attitude



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# OBSTACLES (2)

**Moroccan young people**

**Albanian young people**

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
PARTICIPATION IN  
ITALY IS NOT  
SUPPORTED**

**Albanian adolescents**

**Moroccan adolescents**



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# OBSTACLES (2)

**Moroccan young people**

**Albanian young people**

*You agree with the position that young people want to participate but are not offered opportunities?*

*R2: Yes.*

*R5: I agree. There is a mismatch*

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN ITALY IS NOT SUPPORTED**

**Albanian adolescents**

**Moroccan adolescents**



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## Albanian young people

*it is not an issue of not being taken seriously: they do not listen to us, this is different.  
How can they take us in consideration if they do not listen to us?*

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN ITALY IS NOT SUPPORTED**

## Albanian adolescents

## Moroccan adolescents



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**YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN ITALY IS NOT SUPPORTED**

*If every time you say something, they tell you that you do not know anything because you are young, you try to speak and they tell you: "eh when you will have my age and my experience, you will be allowed to speak".*

## Albanian adolescents

## Moroccan adolescents



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## Albanian adolescents

*Who care?  
Not me, nor them*

## Moroccan adolescents



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# So, what?

- Different facets of the problem, different proposals
  - Rebuild intergenerational communication and trust
  - Valuing youths and enhancing their self-confidence in order to promote the construction of a *sense of responsibility*
  - Promoting concrete experience and opportunities to practicing participation
  - Sharing responsibility and power
  - Promote equal opportunities and equal access to rights



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Thank you!



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