Special Issue Distances

FUORI LUOGO

Journal of Sociology of Territory, Tourism, Technology

Guest Editors

Anna Maria Zaccaria
Maria Camilla Fraudatario

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This issue is dedicated to the memory of Prof. Gabriele Qualizza, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia

Summary

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Carlo Colloca, Licia Lipari, Elisa Lombardo[1]

Cities, Immigrants and Political Participation: The ase of Constituencies in Milan[2]

1. Living in the suburbs (Centre-North) and old town centres (South)

The theme of the territorialisation of social inequalities first arose together with urban sociology, in that late 19th-century phase characterised by industrialisation, migration and urbanisation. International migrations on the one hand, and integration patterns in new urban contexts on the other, have always marked the increase of polarisation phenomena between the centres and outlying areas of the world and of polarisation between centres and suburban areas within the cities themselves. On various scales of observation, it is still possible to observe how migrations reflect the constitution and functioning of social orders that cast the figure of the foreigner as being out of place from a social, economic, legal and political viewpoint (Sayad, 1996). Thus, within cities, in terms of spatial organisation, the presence of the foreigner and the territorial concentration of immigrant groups and communities are not simply signs of segregation and social marginality, but are expressions of structures of social distance and power relations (Wacquant, 2018).

The ever more plural and differentiated characterisation of contemporary cities does require us to focus our attention on spatially circumscribed micro-areas of deprivation, no longer so easily ascribable to the centre/suburban model. However, the appeal to adopt a spatialist approach is also an invitation to adopt multiple scales of observation, small and minuscule units of observation, as broader geographical areas (Mela, 2006). The ecological approach remains an indispensable key for analysing how and to what extent socio-economic inequalities are reflected in the spatial structure of cities (Bergamaschi and Castrignanò 2006), even more so when analysed in their close interplay with the migrant's legal status and the ethnic question.

The distribution of housing of foreign citizens does actually differ from one city to another in Italy, in some places more centrally concentrated and in others with a greater density in the suburbs. Through a cartographic representation, we endeavoured to "frame from above" some Italian cities in order to distinguish areas, if any, that are more or less discernible due to the greater housing density of foreign citizens, and where they are located. Such an analysis could be useful in sketching out a comparative framework within which to place individual case studies, so as to then investigate the relationship between the formation of areas of concentration of immigrant populations and the characteristics of the local housing and labour markets, urban and social policies, and the role of attracting newcomers of pre-existing territorial concentrations of compatriots.

In the context of an almost unanimous consensus concerning the non-segregating character of the residential concentration of immigrant foreigners in Italy, unlike in other national contexts, a rift is now emerging, due to the recording of phenomena of widespread precariousness of housing and a simultaneous "invisibilisation" of the housing issue in Italy. The "legal irregularisation" of the presence of migrants, due to changes in the management of national borders, together

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2 Received: 07/02/23. Revised: 12/06/23. Accepted: 18/06/23. Published: 30/06/23.
Although the essay is the result of joint reflections by the authors, paragraphs 2 and 5 are attributable to Carlo Colloca; paragraphs 3 and 4 are attributable to Licia Lipari, paragraph 1 is attributable to Elisa Lombardo. In this paper, the authors present some results of the research project "GRIDAVI – *Gestione del Rischio, Incertezza Decisionale e Vulnerabilità Sociali*" (Risk management, decision uncertainty, social vulnerability) financed by University of Catania, research program "PIACERI – *Piano di inCEntivi per la RIcerca di Ateneo 2020-22* (Plan to encourage research – Intervention line 2).

with the economic stagnation characterising the current European historical context, have led to discourses of an acceleration of the expulsion processes of lower-income populations and the emergence of new suburban areas, both in the outskirts and in city centres (Petrillo 2018). This would seem to be a kind of 'individualisation' of housing segregation, focused on single occupied buildings or shanty-town formations, and which seems to pursue and radicalise that progressive loss of the post-war reformist spirit already afoot from the 1980s onwards (Tosi 1980). Following Tosi's teaching, the concepts of spatial concentration, disorder and danger would appear to have become central in the public discourse on housing, giving rise to segregative or dispersive interventions. In the first case, containment policies were developed leading to the formation of ghetto-suburbs on the French model, to the construction of specially equipped camps for the Romani and Sinti populations, and to the establishment of first reception facilities for immigrants. In the second case, practices of residence dispersion were implemented, especially in France with the policies of *mixité* until the 1970s and, later, with the eviction of occupied buildings (Tosi 1980, 1993). In the American context, where segregation has traditionally been concentrated in the ghettos of the central areas of the city, profound and fast-changing processes of gentrification are now underway, driven by a plurality of factors of urban policy, real estate market investments, and the creation of attractive commercial areas for the upper-middle classes, which push working-class inhabitants elsewhere, into the abandoned recesses of the suburbs (Brown-Saracino, 2010).

Italy features high levels of internal territorial differentiation, as far as both cultural identity and economic development are concerned, as well as in terms of institutional performance and welfare responses. For a long time, Southern Italy - like Southern European countries in general - has been looked upon as a place of transit towards a North capable of offering greater opportunities for employment. In fact, there is a considerable difference in the number of foreign residents among the Italian regions, with higher percentages in the North, although in the South one must also consider the higher number of illegal presences, therefore invisible to official statistics. It is, however, a ratio that is probably destined to change, in view of the frontier nature of the southern regions, places of first arrival of migratory flows that have profoundly changed with respect to the past, which now see situations of extreme vulnerability prevailing and which will inevitably lead to different modes of settlement. These betoken far more worrying forecasts, considering the weak industrial development of the South and its dependence on the service sector, notoriously characterised by less protection and greater ease of sinking into the black economy (Consoli, 2009). These peculiarities of the Mediterranean urban economy would seem to have an impact on another characteristic common to Southern European cities, often overlooked, which is a stronger housing concentration of immigrant populations in historic centres (Gentileschi, 2004).

Starting from the hypothesis of co-existing centrifugal and centripetal trends in the housing placement of foreign citizens, we can identify three different patterns of residency of immigrant populations in Italy.

The first model features a centrifugal trend in the residency of foreign citizens and is represented by cities such as Milan or Turin. This would seem to be a settlement pattern indicating more 'mature' migratory flows and reproduces a housing model similar to that identified for migrant Italians in the 1950s-1970s coming from Southern Italy and heading to the former large industrial cities of the North (Martinotti, 1993; Mugnano, 2017).

As well illustrated by the city of Bologna, the second model does not show significant differences in the residential location of foreigners, but a substantial overlap with the areas of maximum concentration of the total population. This model positions itself somewhere between the other two, in which only some neighbourhoods, located in semi-central areas of the city, are characterised by greater multi-ethnicity (Bergamaschi, 2010).

Lastly, a third model is represented by the cities of Naples and Palermo, which feature a higher concentration of foreign residents in their respective old town centres. In contrast to the fist

model, a centripetal residential distribution pattern is evident in the third. In the southern cities, in the extension of the inhabited urban area, the divide between the outskirts in which foreign citizens are practically non-existent and an old town centre in which almost all of them reside is more evident. Influenced also by the availability of housing in a poor state of preservation, but with affordable costs (Gentileschi, 2014), the greater attractiveness of the old town centres probably furthermore reveals the 'younger' character of the foreign presence in the cities of Southern Italy, as well as the existence of historic centres fortunately still untouched by gentrification processes, although affected by major demographic changes and transformations in usage that confirm their 'liveliness' (Mazzette, Sgroi, 2003).

If one were to attempt an operational definition to measure the Mediterranean-ness, the cities of Southern Italy could probably provide a favourable context for exploration (Amendola 2019). Inhabiting old town centres seems to bring with it, however, more opportunities to trace one's presence in the physical space of places, as in Naples, in those neighbourhoods and dwellings 'now out of the official market for the local population' (Amato, Coppola, 2009, p. 207), and also Palermo, whose ancient properly Mediterranean multiculturalism, already testified by architecture and toponymy, re-emerges in the re-functionalisation and re-styling of the spaces of the old parts of town by migrants (Tumminelli, 2010).

In all likelihood, what is actually of major interest from a sociological standpoint, and which would require a comparative and in-depth study in different 'concrete' contexts, is just to what extent these models have implications in terms of different relational potentialities and different ways of inhabiting urban space. Here, however, it is possible to point out some food for thought. First of all, despite the fact that settlement choice in favour of old town centres or suburbs is largely motivated by economic reasons, wherever the cost of living is presumed to be lower, also motivations linked to the desire to keep alive the relational fabric with the community of compatriots, for affective reasons (presence of ethnic organisations) or instrumental reasons (development of ethnic economies), are likely to be implicated.

In the old town centres, the heightened presence of activities of everyday life (of working, residing and consuming, to quote the categories proposed by Martinotti), should facilitate the unfolding of opportunities for social participation. Living in the compact city would appear to foster the formation of more disordered networks of relations, both in terms of strong ties due to the presence of ethnic, religious or other forms of associationism, and also weak ties due to the heterogeneous social fabric of which the compact city is composed. On the contrary, the widespread city would limit living only to sleeping, leaving less space for casual interaction and the establishment of meaningful social relations. In fact, the historic centres are widely seen as reservoirs of relationality and creative opportunities, pursued also in controversy with the processes of urban dispersion and undifferentiation that were taking place around the 1970s.

In opposition to such processes - as well as to the attempt to address them by adopting logics of mere utilitarianism rather than empty aestheticism - drawing from the Bolognese experience, Guidicini (1976) called for the endorsement of a social rationality based firstly on the elimination of those mechanisms restricting the accessibility and usage of old town centres and secondly, on participation in the formulation of the values and goals of the new urban reality that was approaching.

Better known is the position of Lefebvre (1968) who in contrast to the breaking down of the living space into differentiated areas and functions traced precisely in recreational centrality the possibility for the inhabitants to re-appropriate the time and space of the city, and to restore to the urban centres their role as spontaneous theatre and as an offer of «movement, the unexpected, possibilities and encounters» (Lefebvre, 1968, p. 128). Such characteristics of spaces and neighbourhoods would be able to ward off the risk of the formation of ghettos and hyper-ghettos in the urban city centres.

Far from seeking to contribute to the demonisation of the suburbs, this vision would rather be an attempt to urge a reconfiguring of the relationship between inhabitants and spaces, in

reference to the concept of relationality, restoring to social ties their intrinsic political capacity. All too often, in fact, there is a tendency to overemphasise the marginality and exclusion of certain neighbourhoods in the city, ignoring the 'demand for centrality' raised by these. The marginalisation of the margins appears even more evident when these are inhabited by foreign immigrant citizens whose perspective, precisely because electorally voiceless, goes all the more easily unheard (Ambrosini, 2012).

2. The *black swan*, or the political rights of immigrant foreigners

The "black swan" is actually part of a distinct branch of the swan family, but for the theory that evokes it (Taleb, 2007) it has become synonymous with an unlikely and unforeseeable event, the occurrence of which could have far-reaching consequences. In reference to the relationship between immigrants and politics, the 'black swan' represents the full recognition of rights, i.e. the exercise of the right to vote and stand for election; not least because where legally resident, immigrants can affect the definition of constituencies, as will be seen later in the case study.
Moreover, political institutions affect immigrants' political participation mainly through the citizenship regime of their country of residence, and the Italian institutions privilege an ethnic conception of citizenship. This conception, for natives and immigrants, defines rigid symbolic and material distinctions with regard to political rights (not only), and more generally, determines low levels of mobilisation and access to the public sphere on the part of immigrants compared to countries in which there is a territorial and civic conception of citizenship (Koopmans *et al.* 2005, pp.78-79). From a national standpoint, Italy harbours an ethnic cleavage that determines an asymmetric distribution of resources and as such the native organisations are in a dominant position with respect to the field of immigration, while the ethnic ones are mainly marginalised.
Italy has been experiencing migratory dynamics for just over thirty years - at least since that Thursday 8 August 1991, when the arrival of the ship Vlora on its way from Durrës to Bari marked the beginning of the country's history not only as a land of emigration, but also of immigration. Nevertheless, a substantial part of society, and even more so of Italian politics, still seems reluctant to acknowledge the profound transformation in a multiethnic and multicultural sense that the country has experienced since then. Still more so if the issue of political rights is addressed.
It must be observed, however, that while in Europe, long before 1991, models of reception and inclusion of migrants based on assimilationism (in France), on the centrality of the community dimension (in Germany), on differentialism (in Great Britain) or on interculturalism (in Sweden) were being developed, more than five decades after the events in Bari Italy has still not elaborated its own model. Legislative production has certainly not been lacking, even though until the mid-1980s, in open contrast with the provisions dictated by Article 10.2 of the Constitution, the Italian Republic regulated the influx of foreign citizens into its territory through reference to the 1931 Consolidated Act of Public Security Laws, periodically supplementing it with ministerial circulars to compensate for the loopholes in the Fascist regulations.
It was Law 943/1986 (the so-called Foschi Law) that was the first regulatory intervention worthy of note on the subject of migratory flows, despite there being no provisions for programming, but above all it contained a simplistic vision of the immigrant labour market, accompanied by a series of complex mechanisms. In the years that followed, with Law 39/1990 (the so-called Martelli Law) there was a first attempt to deal with the issue in an organic manner, giving the impression that an Italian immigration policy could be envisaged. In reality it was created to respond to emergency situations and perhaps it is no coincidence that it still represents the basis of legislation on the subject today.
The introduction of the Consolidation Act on Immigration in 1998, following Law 40/1998 (the so-called Turco-Napolitano Law), was certainly a significant step, but not a decisive one in offering an Italian model of reception and inclusion, also because it was heavily reformed

in a restrictive sense by Law 189/2002 (the so-called Bossi-Fini Law). There followed a twenty-year period marked by a succession of security packages (the main protagonists being the Ministers of Home Affairs Maroni, Minniti, Salvini and Piantedosi), of discriminatory practices of human rights in the cumbersome system of reception among the various refugee facilities such as the CPT (*Centro di Permanenza Temporanea* – Reception Centre for Temporary Stays), the CARA (*Centro di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo* – Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers), the CAS (*Centro di Accoglienza Straordinaria* – Special Reception Centre), the CIE (*Centro di Identificazione ed Espulsione* – Centre for Identification and Expulsion*)* and the CPR *(Centro di Permanenza per Rimpatri* – Reception Centre for Repatriation) and of agreements with countries, such as Libya, to curb arrivals. Exceptions are rare cases of international protection measures and choices that should be reinforced in order to realise sustainable reception projects, such as the former Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR), today the Reception and Integration System (SAI), set up by the network of local authorities.

Further exceptions include the outstanding work of certain secular and religious volunteers who pour so much time and effort into the issue. Perhaps, on closer inspection, Italy has developed a model of reception and inclusion inspired by the culture of *emergency* and *security*. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the prolonged length of stay in the reception system and the unsustainability of the same in terms of respect for human rights. Likewise, there is the inexplicable question of those immigrants who, notwithstanding their legal residence in Italy (as of today there are 5,193,669 and they represent 8.8 % of the resident population, IDOS, 2022), cannot enjoy the right to vote and the right to stand for office, despite having an impact on the configuration of electoral constituencies, and who thus remain in the condition of 'half-citizens', as it were, or perhaps second-rate citizens.

In Italy, to date there is still no law regulating the political participation of immigrant foreigners. In this context, numerous local administrations have provided for the preparation of unprecedented forms of political integration, clashing, in the case of the most ambitious initiatives, with constitutional regulations. There is, increasingly, a proliferation of immigrant representative bodies within the local administrations, which include the Councils and Committees established at the regional, provincial and municipal levels. There are also cases in which local governments have appointed the figure of Deputy Foreign Councillor.

Although these instruments manifest the political will of local authorities to facilitate the political participation of foreigners and the forms of representation of interest, one cannot fail to point out the limitations of the scope of these new bodies. In particular, the powers provided under these institutions are of an advisory nature only, and the absence of adequate economic support has inevitable repercussions on the scope of action of the bodies themselves and the extent of the commitment required of those who participate in them.

In the context of collective bodies (councils and advisory boards), local governments can set up different criteria in relation to the mechanisms governing electoral consultations, providing, for example, ethnic-national constraints on candidacy and voting or introducing corrective mechanisms for gender representation. In most local contexts, however, given the multiplicity of backgrounds of the immigrant population, the issue of representativeness of these bodies often appears highly controversial. Ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences tend to overlap with those related to nationality of origin, making it difficult to identify representative entities with respect to the plurality of interests of immigrants in the area. Councils and advisory boards certainly have a strong symbolic value because they enshrine the recognition of the legitimacy of communities of permanently resident foreigners as citizens who can actively participate in public life. In the absence of incisive policy tools, however, there is the risk of adopting a paternalistic approach to immigrant subjects, starting from the consideration of the position of weakness and marginality they hold in the local socio-political context.

Within the framework of the scholarly debate, it has further been pointed out that «in a situation in which the possibilities of truly affecting the decisions of local institutions are almost nil, it

is very likely that strategies of action will be redefined in an attempt to use the council as a personalistic tool rather than an institutional space of representation» (Borghi, 2007, p. 99). The establishment of such bodies by local governments and the actual function they play probably need more empirical testing.

3. Morphology of urban immigration: the case of Milan

The approach to studying the housing distribution of foreign nationals through socio-territorial analysis reveals a rather multifaceted picture in Italy. In this scenario, characterized by differences between North and South, the city of Milan presents specific traits. It can increasingly be defined as a global city, a hub of material and immaterial capital flows, high-ranking activities and services (finance, communications, high-tech sector), and not least it has become an attractive destination for temporary populations but also for new residents (Rullani, 2012). On the other hand, Milan is representative of an urban model in transition, where some issues, including the housing of the regular immigrant population, still present atypical dynamics that differentiate it, as we shall see, from other major international capitals.

The city is located in a highly appealing territorial area for migratory flows (ISMU Foundation, 2018). Suffice it to say that in 2018 in the Lombardy region, foreign residents exceeded 1.1 million, making up 22.4 % of the total number of foreign residents in Italy (Istat). They represent 11.7 % of residents in the region, a figure that exceeds the national average value (8.7%). Another relevant aspect that characterizes the presence of foreigners in Lombardy is social stability. As reported by the Statistics Dossier on Immigration (IDOS, 2019), more than half of non-EU citizens hold a long-term residence permit (63 %), which indicates the entrenchment of foreign citizens in the Lombardy territory. Milan is the metropolitan area with the largest number of foreign residents (more than 470,000), who make up 40 % of the total presence in the region, marking a significant gap compared to other metropolitan cities where the maximum number recorded is 157,000 in Brescia (IDOS, 2019).

Like other large urban agglomerations in Southern Europe, the city of Milan became a key destination for foreign immigration between the 1980s and 1990s, thus relatively recently by comparison with Northern European capitals (Costarelli, Mugnano, 2017). As labour opportunities increased, the appeal of migratory flows heightened and this influenced changes in the urban structure. The increase in the foreign immigrant population can be observed through the establishment of cultural, religious and, no less importantly, economic activities that have contributed to forging the multi-ethnic character of some areas of the city (Riva, Lucchini, 2014). In order to understand the extent of the phenomenon and the repercussions on the changing urban profile of Milan, it is first of all necessary to analyse the spatial dimension of the housing of foreign immigrants.

The analysis was carried out with the support of GIS[3] (Geographic Information System) tools and the open data available on the Municipality of Milan website. The updated dataset enabled us to carry out a detailed analysis on an urban scale with Local Identity Nuclei or units taken as territorial units for reference. These represent areas in which it is possible to discern the distinctive characteristics of historic neighbourhoods as well as those in embryo. Introduced by the Territorial Government Plan, these Local Identity Units (LIUs) are defined by the Municipality of Milan as «a set of areas connected by infrastructures and services for mobility. They are systems of urban vitality: concentrations of local businesses, gardens, meeting places, services; but they are also 88 nuclei of local identity in need of development and project planning».[4]

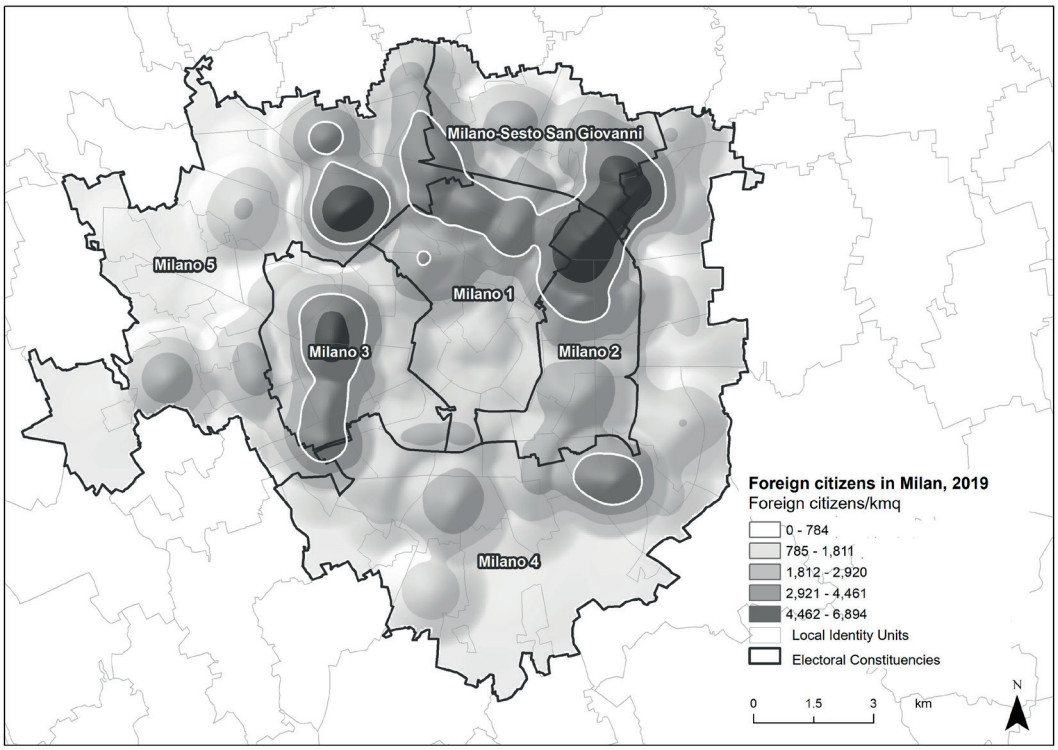
First, the density of foreign residents on an urban scale was analysed. The kernel statistical meth-

3 The maps for Milan were elaborated with the support of the ArcGis, ESRI software version 10.5.

4 The geographical database of the Local Identity Units is from the Municipality of Milan (http://dati.comune.Milan.it/dataset/e8e765fc-d882-40b8-95d8-16ff3d39eb7c, published on 4 December 2020).

od[5] was used, which has the advantage of superimposing a bell-shaped distribution on each sample point in space «and the values of the different bell-shaped surfaces are summed at the points of overlap, so as to obtain a cumulative density surface» (Boffi, 2004, p. 106).

Fig 1. – Foreign resident population density in Milan, 2019.



Source: elaboration on data from Municipality of Milan (2019).

The socio-territorial analysis reveals the dynamics of residential concentration of foreign citizens in certain areas of the city. Four macro-areas can be identified that differ in intensity, breadth and form (areas delimited by the white border[6] in figure 1, which correspond to the aggregation of the fourth and fifth classes of the distribution). In the first, larger macro-area located in the north-east of the Milan municipality, there is a hotspot (underlying the area with a high concentration of foreign residents, in dark grey in figure 1), that includes the Local Identity Units of Loreto and Padova, and encompasses part of Parco Lambro and Viale Monza. The significant presence of foreign citizens extends into the territories bordering the hotspot, including Maciachini-Greco and Affori-Comasina.

In the north-west a second macro-area emerges that includes Bovisa and whose hotspot falls in the LIU of Villapizzone. In the south-west there is a third macro-area extending to Bande Nere, Lorenteggio and Giambellino, in the south with hotspots in the LIUs of San Siro, Selinunte and De Angeli-Monterosa. The last macro-area is located in the south-east and includes Lodi-

5 The kernel method requires indicating the bandwidth, i.e. the width of the bell that will be superimposed on the sample points, which allows greater precision in the distribution of the density over the reference area. For Milan, a bandwidth of 500 metres was entered.

6 The white line that identifies the area with a significant concentration of foreign immigrant residents is referred to as isoline. Constructed through a function called contour, it is the line that delimits homogeneous bands of territory with respect to a variable (Boffi, 2004). In Figure 1, the isoline divides the territory into a portion with density values equal to or greater than 2,921 (the lower limit of the fourth class of the distribution) and another with lower values. This function allows the territory to be segmented into zones in relation to the phenomenon observed.

Corvetto and part of Rogoredo. Alongside the four aforementioned macro-areas, two poles emerge which, though small in size, present a significant density of foreign residents: Quarto Oggiaro located in the outer belt to the north, Sarpi and Ghisolfa adjacent to Corso Buenos Aires and north of the Duomo area.

In order to understand the distribution of resident foreign citizens in the Milanese territory, we need to elaborate some considerations on the peculiarities of the settlement neighbourhoods and, more generally, on the local housing context. A first aspect that emerges from the map is that the location of foreign immigration is not defined by administrative borders but rather is influenced by socio-territorial and economic factors. Many of the LIUs where hotspots are located (figure 1) include neighbourhoods where the foreign presence has taken root over time, where housing quality is low, thereby meaning more affordable costs.

Recent studies on the housing situation in the chief town of the region of Lombardy (Costarelli, Mugnano, 2017; Mugnano, Costarelli, 2018) highlight how a significant proportion of immigrant foreigners reside in housing where conditions are degraded and precarious, characterised by problems related to overcrowding as well as the inadequate quality of facilities (ANCI, 2010). Added to this is a poor quality of life that affects some of the areas with a high concentration of foreign residents. Among these, Padova, Rizzoli, Bovisa, Giambellino, Lorenteggio and Corvetto are indicated by the Suburban Plan as degraded areas of Milan where the need for redevelopment is a priority (Costarelli, Mugnano, 2017).

In the most deprived neighbourhoods it is not infrequent to see a process of succession involving low-income households in the most degraded housing left behind by family nuclei that in contrast have embarked on a path of upward social mobility. As already pointed out by the urban studies of the ecological branch of the Chicago School, this influences the preservation of social distances and fixes status (Park, Burgess, 1921). This phenomenon leads to the persistence of poor conditions in some neighbourhoods of Milan, with negative repercussions, especially on newcomers who usually represent the most fragile groups of foreign immigrants.

Compared to the previous decade (Boffi, 2007), there has been an increase in the immigrant presence in public housing districts where the most fragile segments of the native population live, such as the elderly or low-income families. These neighbourhoods include Giambellino, San Siro, Lorenteggio, Comasina, Corvetto and Quarto Oggiaro. This change is indicative of the extent to which foreign families have taken root in Milan (IDOS, 2018), as seniority of residence is one of the binding criteria for access to public housing. However, a negative filtering process persists which means that, compared to the applications submitted by immigrant families, only a limited number manage to access public housing (Mugnano, 2017).

Further reflections on the housing condition can be added when analysing the degree of potential accessibility to services that further differentiates the settlement districts of the foreign immigrant population. Accessibility is defined as the degree of potential accessibility of something or someone (Moseley, 1979, p. 56). From a spatial perspective, accessibility «indicates the ease of a place [...] to be reached by urban populations and the manner in which this occurs» (Daconto, Colleoni, Gwiazdzinski, 2017, p. 74). Elements that influence accessibility to urban opportunities include the transport system, planning and time scheduling of daily activities by individuals. Recent studies on the metropolitan area of Milan show that the immigrant population usually resides in areas with medium to high potential accessibility, often well connected so that they can reach their workplaces using public transport (ibid.).

These neighbourhoods are increasingly turning into multi-ethnic areas, where the rise in the immigrant presence is being matched by the creation and growth of new enterprises and businesses run by foreign citizens (Riva, Lucchini, 2014). Despite this, some areas with a high concentration of immigrant population feature problems of accessibility, mono-functionality and insufficient resources, including Ponte Lambro to the east, Quarto Oggiaro to the north, De Angeli and San Siro to the west, although the latter two have recently been connected by the new M5 metro line (Daconto, Colleoni, Gwiazdzinski 2017).

An overview of the distribution of the population of foreign residents related to the socio-demographic and economic peculiarities of Milan and its surrounding territory, and to the accessibility of urban opportunities accordingly yields a complex and varied picture. Similarly to other cities in Northern Italy, the presence of foreign residents tends to be greater in the semi-suburban and suburban areas of the city, confirming a tendency to spread outwards with respect to the central core, as highlighted above. Compared to other large European cities, in general, Milan is not characterised by strong segregation phenomena on the basis of ethnicity, but rather by a social mix and a patchy distribution of foreign residents (Zajczyk, 2003; Borlini, Memo 2009).

4. Political representation and presence of immigrants: the composition of constituencies

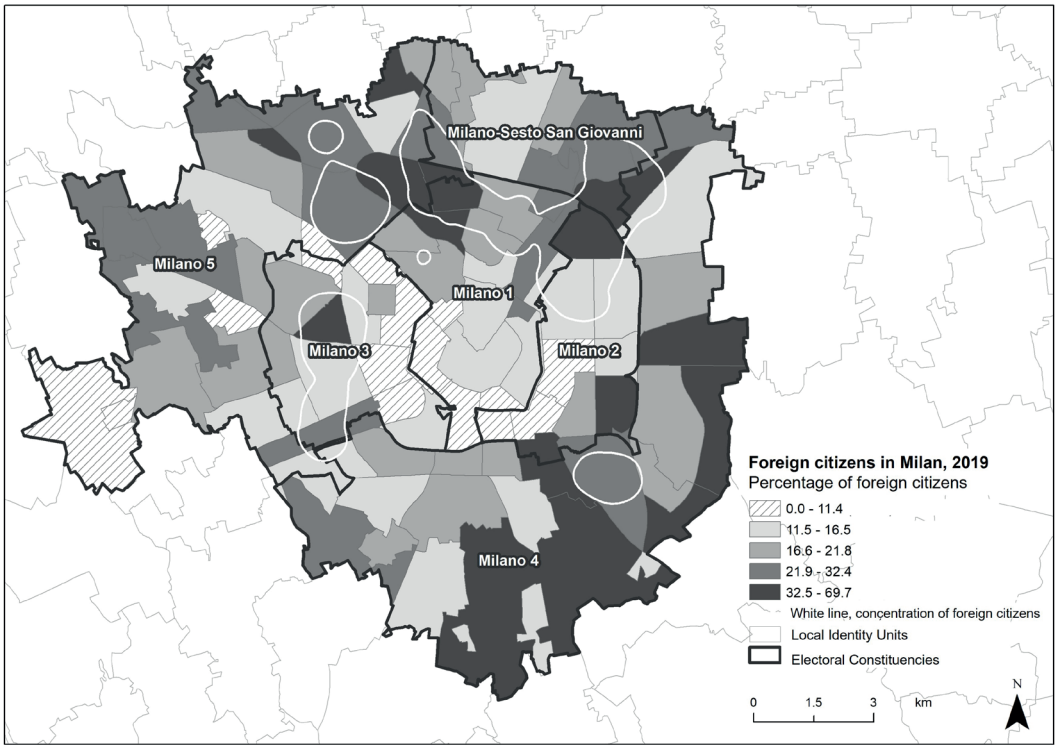
From the socio-territorial analysis, the Lombard capital emerges as an interesting case study for observing how the stable presence of foreign citizens contributes to the socio-cultural and demographic change of cities. We have seen how the concentration of foreign residents has influenced the processes of change in some neighbourhoods that are steadily shifting towards an increasingly multicultural and multiethnic profile (Barbagli, Pisati, 2012).
Cities like Milan that have a strong appeal for migratory flows cannot afford in their political agenda to pay no heed to the issues of reception and inclusion underpinning the complicated and delicate issue of participation. In contemporary cities, the challenge of combining the different needs and expectations of urban populations, including immigrants, becomes a priority issue in order to avoid conflicts and loss of consensus by local administrations. In city governance, a form of conflict emerges that is most often «difficult to mediate between an order that is the outcome of an explicitly rational action carried out by a scientifically neutral public subject and an order that is instead the result of a myriad of actors motivated by private interest» (Amendola, 2016, p. 55).
Some Italian municipalities have undertaken measures to involve regular foreign citizens in the decision-making process, including that of granting them the right to elect their own representative to take part in administrative consultations, which, however, reveal quite a few limitations and complexities (Ambrosini, 2016). Therefore, if in the governing of the city understood as the "projection of society onto the territory" (Lefebvre, 1968), the difficulty of managing and guaranteeing the inclusion and participation of the different populations that live there on a daily basis emerges with increasing incisiveness, the picture becomes even more complicated if we broaden the perspective of analysis.
Under Italian law, legally resident foreign citizens numerically weigh on the definition of electoral constituencies. As stated in Article 3 of the law of 3 November 2017, 'the single-member constituencies are distributed proportionally to the respective population determined on the basis of the results of the last general population census, as reported by the most recent official publication of the National Institute of Statistics'[7]. Among resident foreigners, only those with the citizenship of a European Union country can claim their right to vote.[8] In Italy in 2017, of the 5,144,440 foreign resident citizens, only 28% were from Member States of the EU, thus with the possibility to exercise their right to vote, while the remaining 72% are excluded (data source: IDOS 2018). From this it can be deduced how the presence of foreign citizens affects the definition of political representation, even if they are then excluded as subjects who do not enjoy the right to vote or stand for election. As happened to women in times of male suffrage,

7 Legislative Decree No.189 of 12 December 2017. Decision of the electoral constituencies of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic in implementation of Article 3 of Law No. 165 of 3 November 2017, containing amendments to the election system of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic. Entry into force of the measure 20/12/2017.

8 The legislative references on this claim for the right to vote are: Legislative Decree No. 197 of 12 April 1996; Decree-Law No. 408 of 24 June 1994; Community Law 1999.

immigrants are asked to accept and obey laws that they are unable to contribute to defining.
In this scenario, the case of Milan is emblematic. With reference to the foreign population, it suffices to recall that over the last decade there has been an increase to reach 19.3% of the total number of residents in 2017 and 20% in 2019 (data source: Municipality of Milano, 2017 and 2019). Of the approximately 281,000 regular foreigners, in 2019 only 11.6% are EU citizens, while the remaining 88.4% come from non-EU countries.
Therefore, compared to the Italian picture, the share of those excluded from political representation is higher. The municipality of Milan is divided into 6 single-member constituencies[9] (indicated in Figure 2 by the black border in bold). By superimposing the ratio of resident foreigners to the total population per LIU it becomes clear how each constituency presents within it diversified situations. In particular, although less densely populated[10] (in figure 2 outside the white boundary in bold), the constituencies in the outer belt of the municipality have districts within them that exceed the average values of foreign presence in the total number of residents. This result is confirmed if one aggregates the composition ratio by constituency (figure 3). It emerges, in fact, that the constituencies of Milano 4 (23.2%) are characterised by the highest proportion of foreign citizens, followed by Milano-Sesto San Giovanni (22.0%) and Milano 5 (21.6%).

Fig. 2. – Percentage of foreign resident population out of total population per Local Identity Unit (LIU) in Milan, 2019.

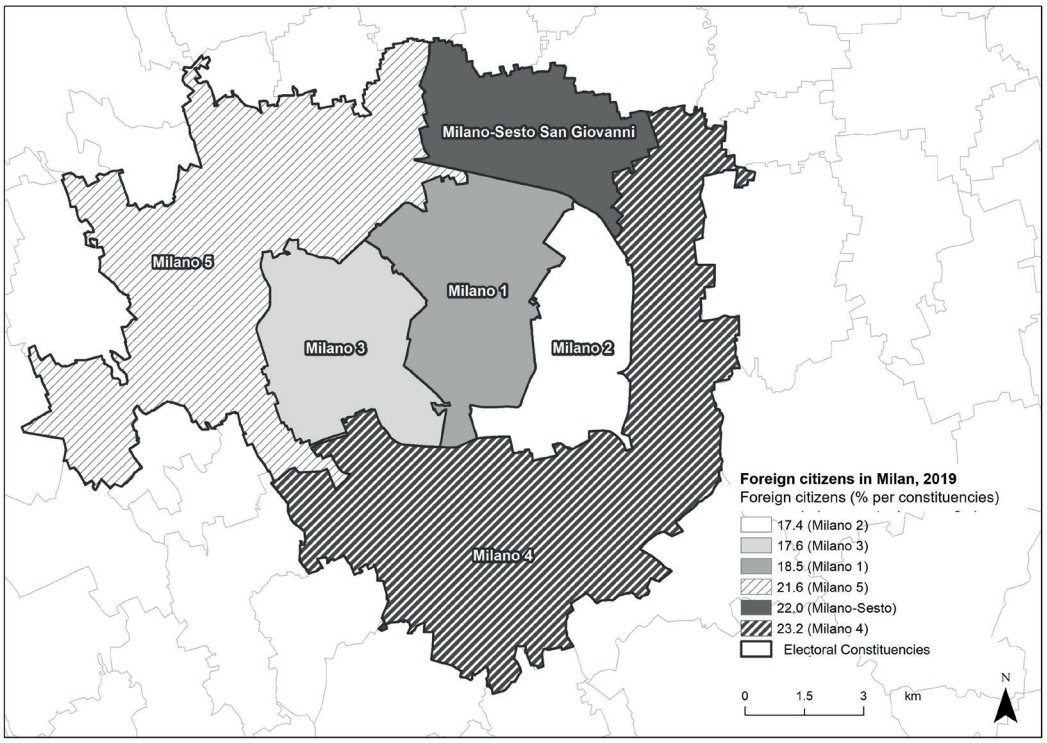


Source: our elaboration on data from the Municipality of Milan (2019).

9 The geographical database of the constituencies is from Istat, published on 15 May 2018 (see https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/208278).

10 In particular, the Milano 4 and Milano 5 constituencies are characterised generally by low population density, and not only of the foreign population. Because of this connotation, the two aforementioned constituencies are also the most extensive on the Milanese territory, respectively 63 and 52 square kilometres (see table 1).

Fig. 3 – Percentage of foreign resident population out of total population per constituency (single-member constituency)[11] in Milan, 2019.



Source: our elaboration on data from the Municipality of Milan (2019).

If we disaggregate the share of residents from non-EU countries, we can see that they are more present in the constituencies of the outlying areas than in those comprising the urban centre and neighbouring areas (see Table 1). The three constituencies that encompass the large Milanese suburbs (Milano 4, Milano-Sesto and Milano 5) exceed the average of 17.7 % of non-EU citizens out of the total resident population, while at the same time the share of EU citizens is lower than the urban average of 2.3 %.

Tab. 1 – Resident population in Milan per electoral constituency (single-member), 2019 (v. a. and ratios)

Electoral constituency	Tot. pop. (v.a*1.000)	Foreign residents (v.a.*1.000)	UE citizens/ tot. pop. (%)	Non-UE citizens/ pop. tot. (%)	Kmsq
Milano 1	240,4	44,7	2,7	15,9	19
Milano 2	254,6	44,2	2,2	15,2	14
Milano 3	226,7	39,9	2,9	14,7	17
Milano 4	294,5	68,3	2,2	21,0	63
Milano 5	258,7	56,0	2,0	19,6	52
Milano-Sesto	129,6	28,5	1,9	20,1	16
Municipality of Milan	1.404,4	281,6	2,3	17,7	182

Source: our elaboration on data from Municipality of Milan (2019).

11 The constituency of Milan 1 includes the area of the old town centre (Duomo, Brera and Ticinese); Milano 2, the eastern areas bordering the centre (Porta Romana, Città Studi, Loreto); Milano 3, the western areas bordering the centre (from the Navigli to S. Siro); Milano 4, the eastern part of the city (Stadera, Rogoredo and Lambrate); Siro); Milano 5, the western part of the city (Lorenteggio, Baggio, Quinto Romano, Gallaratese, Bovisa and Quarto Oggiaro); Milano-Sesto, includes the northern part of Milan (Niguarda, Bicocca and Viale Monza) and the municipalities of Sesto S. Giovanni and Bresso (see http://www.cittametropolitana.mi.it/statistica/osservatorio_ metropolitano/osservatorio_elettorale/).

Some of the LIUs in Milan's outer belts such as Barona, Stadera and Gratosoglio, Corvetto, Parco Lambro-Cimiano (in constituency Milano 4) and Affori, Quarto Oggiaro, Comasina and Niguarda (in constituencies Milano 5 and Milano-Sesto) are characterised by a relevant degree of socio-economic vulnerability (Mugnano, Costarelli 2018). Immigrant citizens living there can often generally only afford low housing costs and therefore live in more precarious conditions than other groups of legal immigrant citizens. This suggests that the largest share of immigrants present in the three outer belt constituencies is not only excluded from political representation but is also, more often than not, in a situation of precariousness in social and economic terms, and with regard to housing and potential accessibility to urban resources (Daconto, Colleoni, Gwiazdizinski, 2017).
It can thus be inferred that the immigrant residents of outlying constituencies hold similar traits to those whom Gans (1962) referred to in his analysis as 'the entrapped', i.e. those disadvantaged social groups who remain stranded in deprived areas of the city from which it is increasingly difficult to get away. The high degree of criticality also leads to a higher risk of conflict in these neighbourhoods. The denied right to political participation, especially to those fragile immigrant population groups, therefore risks entrenching a condition of marginality and exclusion not only in the use and management of the city, but more generally on a broader scale of analysis and reflection on the issue.

5. Conclusion: towards an extension of civic solidarity

To conclude, it seems appropriate to emphasise that a sociologically oriented approach must address immigrant citizens' urban needs, and the development of urban lifestyles as a result of the relationship between natives and foreigners, as well as the sustainable socio-economic behaviours and values ensuing from this multicultural interaction. The paradigms and policies of territorial government play a large part in this reflection, without disregarding the "good practices" promoted by the voluntary world, but in order for an immigrant citizen not to perceive himself as a 'half-citizen', full appreciation of political participation is needed, and this depends on legislative choices being made in parliament.
Legal foreign citizens, whether they choose to live in the city or in rural communities, should also have the right to vote and stand for election because, being legal residents, they affect the definition of electoral constituencies. Taking into account the high density of immigrant-dominated populations that some Italian cities have (especially in central-northern Italy, as in the case of Milan analysed above), we arrive at the following contradiction: the immigrant is a subject in a country of citizens insofar as he or she does not enjoy the aforementioned right. He/she impinges on the definition of political representation, only to then be precluded from it. Therefore, as happened before to women in times of male suffrage, the immigrant is asked to obey laws that he cannot be involved in, or contribute to, defining.
Despite having been a destination for immigration for over twenty years, Italy has not yet developed a model of socio-cultural and political inclusion of foreign immigrant citizens, leaving it chiefly to the spontaneism and civic culture of the territories, individual cities, and local governments, in synergy with the sector of volunteering and trade associations, to offer themselves, 'from below', as actors willing to initiate practices of cultural acknowledgement and models of inclusion.
One need only think of the current procedure for granting citizenship, which could be defined as familistic, since in order to have the right to be Italian, one must be the child, descendant or spouse of Italians; therefore, foreigners who regularly reside, work and study, from South to North, can only hope to acquire it after a long time (from four to more than ten years depending on whether they are EU citizens or not) and after complex bureaucratic procedures. Even more disqualifying for a democratic society is the issue of citizenship with regard to the children of foreign citizens.

Also if born in Italy and therefore not migrants, due to the *jus sanguinis* in force (citizenship is therefore only transmitted by consanguinity) these people are discriminated against because of their origins on biologically-based grounds and it matters little if, in addition to being born in Italy, they also pursue their individual life trajectories there on a daily basis[12]. In Italy, even obtaining the right to citizenship would also appear to be a 'family affair'. It seems to be a rebuttal to the idea of fully assigning the 'right to have rights' to those who are not yet socialised or included, without realising that inclusion-integration derives from the *erga omnes* expansion of the spaces of citizenship; not doing so generates the risk of denying the fundamental right to self-determination, and «constructing non-persons [...] in the name of a presumed beneficial attitude towards them» (Rodotà, 2012, pp. 281-283).

As if this were not enough, for the recognition of qualifications, as a result of issues concerning bilateral and multilateral agreements stipulated by the Italian government, a Peruvian citizen collaborator of a Nobel Prize winner coming to Italy should accept a job as domestic collaborator, with a cultural impoverishment of the person in question, but also of the society hosting this person, which draws no benefit in terms of scientific development from the presence of these *new Italians* with high levels of education. The issue is even more poignant in times such as these, during which 'brains' regularly 'flee' from Italy, after incurring significant costs for the nation for their training, while at the same time there is no proper and fitting recognition of the 'brains' coming into the country.

Immigrants and their children should represent an opportunity for Italian society to think about its future not only from a securitising perspective. This is the conviction of Jürgen Habermas, who sees in the transnational presence of immigrant citizens an opportunity for an extension of European civic solidarity, since the challenge of multi-ethnicity can make national cultures «more porous, more receptive and more sensitive both internally and externally. [...] The opening up within them of cultures closed in on themselves also makes them open up to each other» (Habermas 2011, p. 18). The hope is that Italian society and institutions, pursuing universalist logics, will consolidate the citizenship rights of the *new Italians*, fully acknowledging their right to vote and stand for election, as well as addressing the demand for protection and recognition of the rights that the arrivals of thousands of non-EU citizens pose every day, rather than concentrating their energies on border control or launching reception policies based on the selection between 'economic migrants' and asylum seekers.

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12 An exception to *jus soli,* also known as birth right citizenship, is granted only to the children of foreigners born in Italy and who have resided there without interruption. The right to become Italian is subject, however, to the submission of an application to the competent institutions between the age of eighteen and nineteen. The child of a foreigner, not born in Italy, but who arrives there after only a few months of life and perhaps completes his schooling in Italy, is not entitled to citizenship.

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