



Negotiating active citizenship in a deprived multi-ethnic neighborhood

*A study on the elementary inclusionary and exclusionary practices by which citizens negotiate
their representations of active citizenship in Pescaraola, Bologna, Italy*

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Word of Thanks

‘La vita e dura’ – ‘It’s a hard life’.

It may sound trite, but this sentence isn’t about writing a master’s thesis, it’s about the reality of living in Pescarola, Bologna, Italy, about living with 10 family members on one minimum income, in a small two-bedroom apartment. Nevertheless, during my life I rarely experienced so much warmth and sincerity, as expressed by the residents and volunteers of this little area. Although spending days until one at night in the library may not be my most favorite activity, it provided me a future perspective. A future perspective, even when things seem hopeless, I wish more than anything for the lovely, open-minded residents who explained me into the most intricate and sensitive detail how they daily negotiated their place within society.

Hence, my first words of thanks are to all the residents and project staff I met within ‘Spazio Commune’ and in Pescarola in general. Also special words of thanks are for Gerrit Dielissen, Federica Tarabusi and Adele di Stefani. First of all, by providing a research location, you made it possible for me to come to Bologna, which has been a great life experience and has learned me –at least some more - how to stand on my own feet. Besides, you always provided me the right academic feedback on my research plan, theoretical framework, practical fieldwork and on understanding what mechanisms were actually going on.

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Abstract

During the 70s and 80s, Italy shifted from being a traditional country of emigration to a country of immigration, and ever since the reification of immigrants into problematic categories regarding culture, race and gender is omnipresent within public discourse, politics and media. This research explores the Italian multiculturalism by revealing the elementary everyday inclusionary and exclusionary practices by which the residents of the various ethnic groups within a deprived urban area negotiate their representations of active citizenship. In contrast to prior studies, it combines social science insights about social cohesion, safety and interethnic relations in multi-ethnic neighborhoods with the practical outcomes regarding active citizenship that such insights imply. I argue that ‘active citizenship’ primarily contains the negotiation of equal labor market opportunities, participation in daily neighborhood activities and the dispose of a diverse, inter-ethnic social network. Though, competition caused by the financial crisis sharpens ethnic boundaries and makes labor market participation virtually impossible for the social deprived residents who don’t have the connections needed within ‘the corrupt Italian system’. Besides, deeply rooted perceptions on the incapacity of people belonging to other ethnic groups hampers the construction of interethnic relations, which is problematic because interaction between these relations, language improvement and subjective safety causes a virtuous cycle improving active citizenship. The fact the ‘passive’ government doesn’t take responsibility to create a well-functioning welfare system causes people to make a living in criminal ways or by finding creative alternatives in active collaboration with the voluntary sector. Since communist spheres dominated Bologna during the 70s, a sense of solidarity and responsibility still finds big support, improving the quality of life in a deprived neighborhood considerably. Civil society is way ahead of the Dutch, hence I recommend future research on how to follow the Bolognese example, especially seen current cuttings on social policies.

Key words: Active Citizenship; Italy; Multi-ethnic Neighborhood; Employment Deprivation; Voluntarism; Interethnic Relations; Essentialism; Social Cohesion; Safety

Introduction

Since the 70's and 80's Italy shifted from being a traditional country of emigration to a country of immigration. The lives of (partly illegal) migrants and the relationships they create are for a big part shaped by characteristics of the multicultural Italian society.

First of all, they are affected by the complex regulatory practices of the Italian state, which differ per region and local community. The many bureaucratic practices, about permits for education, health and safety are causing that migrants end up working in the 'grey market' and make it impossible for them to profit from welfare regulations (Grillo & Pratt, 2002).

Besides, local communities, imagined or not, are strong in Italy. To get a proper job, it's necessary to have a reputation within bounded public spheres, which migrants often don't have (Grillo et al., 2002).

Thirdly, migrant's lives are influenced by 'the shadows of the socialist and communist parties'. They controlled the political domain in the 1980s and attracted migrants from the south, of whom was expected they would 'integrate automatically once participating in the left wing culture'. Their policy was characterized by a general failure to develop an analysis of cultural difference and a way to deal with xenophobia. In addition, Catholic activists try to 'purify' Italy, which mainly collides with the Islam (Grillo et al., 2002).

Furthermore, the lives of migrants are for a large part shaped by North-South contradictions in Italy: in social, linguistic, economic and political spheres of life. The aggressive campaign of Umberto Bossi's xenophobic Lega Nord states that northern people are different; in the past from southern Italians, nowadays from 'the migrant groups (especially in the south) which take advantage of 'hardworking northern Italians'. This has contributed to increased pressure for migration control and the creation of an essentialized image of migrants. This image contains notions about culture, race, class and gender (Salih, 2003) and is often representing migrants as a "problem" (Riccio, 2011).

Besides the public discourse, policies and public opinion, the Italian citizenship law of 1992 causes difficulties for migrants. This law made it easier for descendants of Italian emigrants to regain citizenship but at the same time more difficult for immigrants to apply for naturalization. It stated that children born of foreign parents in Italy assume their parents' nationality and they can apply for Italian citizenship when they are eighteen years old, only if they have resided in Italy continuously (Riccio, 2011).

Italy is marked by local and regional differences concerning history, politics, economy, culture and legislation.

This article analyses the negotiation of active citizenship of the residents of the various ethnic groups of the area of 'Pescarola' in Bologna, in the Emilia-Romagna region in Northern Italy. Emilia Romagna is a rich region, considered among the leading regions in the enactment of social and welfare policies towards migrants. Though, current economic restructuring and uneven local development

shape migrants' dispersed settlement, difficult implementation of housing and migration policies and a moral panic accompanied by a growing sense of insecurity (Grillo et al., 2002).

In Bologna, the most significant flows of economic migrants were recorded at the 1990s. Especially North-Africans moved to northern Italy to look for job opportunities in the small and medium-sized firms around Bologna in the engineering and chemical sectors (Caponio, 2005). Bologna has a long tradition of communist and left wing politics (Grillo et al., 2011). As a result, the social capital is relatively large; the social policies are one of the most advanced in Italy and both the many immigrant associations as well as the welfare institutions attempt to improve the (political) participation of immigrants. Further, civil society takes an important role, which can be seen in the many voluntary initiatives aimed at helping immigrants. Though, at the same time financial cuttings cause difficulties concerning these very policies.

The local project "Cittadini di Pescaraola" started at 2011. This project aims at promoting social inclusion and active citizenship within the community of 'Pescarola', by organizing research-, promotion- and training activities that promote *non-discrimination*, *safety* and *social cohesion*. Pescaraola is part of the district 'Navile'. This socially and economically deprived area is characterized by *inter-ethnic*, *inter-generational* and specific *neighborhood* conflicts (research file: Pescaraola non e un'Isola, 2012).

Summarized, the program deals with the topics of *urban citizenship* and *multicultural cohabitation* in a deprived local area and within an Italian society characterized by a backlash against diversity. My research is conducted within this project, in the period 15 January – 15 June 2013.

Marshall (1950) refers to citizenship not just as a legal status, but as a 'status bestowed on those who are full members of the community', which includes civil, political and social rights and obligations: *active citizenship*. I will not take this definition for granted, but will go one step beyond it; The purpose of this grounded theory study (Wester, 1984) is to discover by which everyday inclusionary and exclusionary practices the residents of the multiple ethnic groups within the area 'Pescarola' negotiate their social and cultural representations of active citizenship within a local, urban context. The main sensitizing concept is '*active citizenship*'. Sub sensitizing concepts are '*social cohesion*', '*non-discrimination*', '*safety*', '*interethnic relations*' and '*racism*', all in relation to active citizenship.

The social relevance of this research exists in the fact that it provides insight in the negotiation of active citizenship on a local level, within the multicultural Italian context of 'Cittadini di Pescaraola'. Therefore, it can contribute to improvement of local and/or Italian migration policies. In addition this research is relevant in the sense that it contributes to optimizing *local* initiatives, aimed at promoting immigrants participation in multi-ethnic neighborhoods. Cross-national initiatives of a similar nature could be implemented as well, for example in The Netherlands, where local projects are currently promoted only on a very limited scale (Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009).

The scientific relevance of this research lays in the fact that it will contribute to the research literature on the improvement of cohabiting and the living conditions in interethnic neighborhoods. It is innovative in nature because it *combines* different social science insights considering those neighborhoods (insights about social cohesion, non-discrimination, safety, interethnic relations and racism) with the *practical everyday outcomes regarding active citizenship* that such insights imply. This research also is innovative since it doesn't contemplate citizenship from a formal, juridical perspective by a top-down approach, but instead examines citizenship from a sociological and anthropological perspective, through a bottom-up approach. Colombo and Semi (2007) point out the importance of such a field based approach towards active citizenship. He poses that by using existing top down theories it is only possible to "*write about an island we created ourselves*", which restrains us from discovering new information.

Finally, the research gives more body to the concept of 'active citizenship' within a local urban context, particularly in Pescaraola, Italy.

The overarching research question is 'Which inclusionary and exclusionary practices on a local level promote or undermine the negotiation of *active citizenship* of the residents of the various ethnic groups of the area of 'Pescarola' in Bologna, Italy?'. Sub-questions are: Which representations of 'active citizenship' do the residents of the ethnic groups within Pescaraola use within their everyday lives? (1); How do the residents *understand* and *negotiate* active citizenship, *non-discrimination*, *safety* and *social cohesion*? (1A); How does the project 'Cittadini di Pescaraola' *understand* and *promote* non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion? (1B); What are the connections and/or discrepancies between the way the residents understand non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion and the way the project 'Cittadini di Pescaraola' promotes them? (1C); What is the nature and quality of interethnic relations within the area, from perspectives of both the various ethnic minority groups and the native Italians? (2); To what extent is there everyday contact and exactly of what kind and what quality is this contact? (2A); What kind of attitudes do groups have towards other groups and to what extend and in which way are those attitudes negative or even racist? (2B); Does the nature and quality of interethnic relations differ between men and women and among different generations? (2C).

How these questions derive from the current scientific debate and existing theories, will be explained in more detail.

Representations of 'active citizenship'

My first research question (1) is on the representations of active citizenship. In contemporary theories, 'active citizenship' is consistently defined in a broad way, for example as: 'A status bestowed on those who are full members of the community' (Marshall, 1950). Still, the notion of active citizenship of the citizens of Pescaraola is unclear. Is it about having a permanent employment contract? About socializing with fellow residents?

Colombo, Domaneschi and Marchetti (2011) researched the representations of active citizenship among second generation immigrants in Milan. These existed in the fact that they had a feeling of belonging to three interacting layers of society: 1) admittance (which regards the universalistic claim to be equal, to not be excluded on the basis of discrimination), 2) identification, and 3) involvement (which regards lifestyles and everyday relations). Similarly, I will aim to define different layers and structures of citizenship within the context of Pescaraola.

Lastly, Italian social policies seem to be dictated almost exclusively by conceiving migrants as ‘problems’ (Riccio & Scandurra, 2008). For this reason, it is important to compare the representations of active citizenship from the institutional point of view of ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’, which might unintentionally be shaped by certain discourses, to the representations of the residents themselves (research question 1C).

The voluntary sector

In Italy, especially in Bologna and as well within the project ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’, the promotion of active citizenship is largely based on the help of volunteers. Jochum, Pratten and Wilding (2005) emphasize the importance of this way of working. According to them the responsibility for active citizenship isn’t just the preserve of the government; in order to really engage people, initiatives aimed at promoting active citizenship need to be embedded within a wider supportive policy framework including voluntary organizations. Bodd, De Graaf and Steyaert (2009) call this shared professionalism: focusing per case instead of per administrative authority.

Social cohesion, non-discrimination and safety

In contemporary theoretical and policy debates on social cohesion, the neighborhood has re-emerged as an important setting for many of the processes that supposedly shape social identity and life-chances (Forrest, 2001). Social cohesion, non-discrimination and safety are all interdependent. In turn, the strengthening of social cohesion is assumed to promote active citizenship (FRA, 2008).

The FRA report on ‘Community Cohesion at local level’ (2008) cites examples of how mainstreaming non-discrimination can contribute to community cohesion and shows that diversity and equality can reinforce each other within one community cohesion policy vision. Within this report, different European cities and regions have been examined. These cities have moved from a policy of integrating immigrants to a policy concept of addressing the needs of city residents. With the change in policy direction, strategy and vision, the cities showed a strong political commitment by developing a sense of citizenship, local participation and mutual trust. This has been done in a response to recognition of "errors of the past": lack of mainstreaming of anti-racism and anti-discrimination measures in all public policies; lack of dialogue and leadership of the city on issues of community cohesion and non-discrimination and lack of responsibility of each community to take active part in building social cohesion. The report ends by recommending the local authorities to take the lead in

developing an equality strategy that is aimed at combating racism and discrimination, with the active involvement of all ethnic communities concerned, civil society, and other relevant key partners.

Other research (Ross, Mirowsky & Pribesh, 2001) shows that the experience of feelings of threat, insecurity and un-safety may cause disorder and mistrust, which may cause alienation and a decrease of social cohesion in the neighborhood and may strengthen again the perception of threat/insecurity/un-safety.

Moreover, one of the most important findings of the research of Niekerk, Kleinhans and Bolt (2011) on 'Trust within neighborhoods' is that without sufficient trust in fellow residents and without *social cohesion at a local level*, residents are not likely to move against experienced *inconveniences and insecurity*. Citizens need to know they are supported by the government, fellow neighbors and agencies who care about their neighborhood.

Further, the lack of acquaintance and knowledge of other cultural groups within a local neighborhood, is an important predictor of experienced nuisance and feelings of insecurity (Kleinhans & Bolt, 2010).

Wittebrood and Van Dijk (2007) share the cited visions; they argue that community development can contribute to active citizenship by focusing on the topics of *safety, community cohesion and equal social-economic opportunities*.

Altogether, the studies mentioned, combined with both the aims of 'Cittadini di Pescaraola' and my own observations and interviews on location, made me decide that research questions 1A and 1B are for a big part highlighted by people's concerns on the topics of *non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion*.

Interethnic relations

According to Gijssberts and Dagevos (2007) interethnic relationships play an important role in the social-cultural participation of ethnic minorities, mostly because these contacts are important for a good command of the language and as well because they may result in a decline of negative attitudes and stereotypes.

This corresponds to the 'Contact Hypothesis' (Williams, 1947, in Hewstone & Swart, 2011) and the 'Intergroup Interaction Theory' (Hogg, Meehan & Farquharson, 2010), both based on the idea that positive intergroup contact, even indirect contact, could be used to promote better inter-group relations and to reduce prejudice. This effect is mediated by the fact that intergroup contact reduces threat and anxiety and increases empathy.

More specific, the 'Neighborhood Contact Hypothesis', as used by Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi (2002), states that interracial neighborhood contact acts to break down prejudice. Contact, therefore, may result in stable racially integrated neighborhoods. However, Coenders, Lubbers and Tolsma (2008) found that at the neighborhood level, proximity of ethnic out-groups increases opposition among the lower educated, whereas it decreases opposition among the higher educated. Another

criticism of this theory is that negative contact may be more strongly associated with increased racism and discrimination than positive contact is with its reduction (Hewstone et al., 2011).

Glick (2008) poses that interethnic relations can as well reduce scapegoating. By scapegoating he means that an individual's own moral shortcomings are transformed into the perceived flaws of others, who become targets of what would otherwise be self-directed aggression.

According to Putnam (2000), a theoretical distinction between bonding and bridging social capital networks, the connections among individuals' social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (p. 19), exists. Bonding social capital consists of contacts with and trust in people of your own group. Bridging social capital consists of contacts with and trust in people from other groups. The social capital of groups is the highest when *both* bonding and bridging forms exist simultaneously. However, the shift from bonding to bridging social capital isn't self-evident; the exclusion aspect of social capital persists in the transition from bonding to bridging social capital (Leonard, 2004).

Gijsberts, Vervoort, Havekes and Dagevos (2010) argue that interethnic contacts in one domain are in interaction with contacts in another domain. Because of that, interethnic contacts can promote *active citizenship*. For example, if an immigrant has more contact with natives within his work environment, he often also has more contact within the private sphere, which increases neighborhood social contacts and activity patterns.

These theoretical insights demonstrate the importance of discovering the nature and quality of interethnic relations within neighborhoods. The research question "To what extent is there everyday contact and exactly of what kind and what quality is this contact?" aims at mapping these relations.

Finally, my last research question, "Does the nature and quality of interethnic relations differ between men and women and among different generations?" derives from the differences I noticed during my initial observations in 'Cittadini di Pescaraola', and from the conclusion of the research file 'Pescarola non e un'Isola' (2012): the main types of conflicts within Pescaraola, are *interethnic* and *intergenerational*.

Submission to traditions?

Okin (1999) states that immigrant women, especially Muslim women, maintain less interethnic relationships than immigrant men. She argues this is because of the internalized norms of submission originating from the 'mother country', which can be in contradiction with western liberal, modern and feminist norms, thus reducing the options that women have to go outside.

On the other hand, Van Voorts (2010), concluded that women felt more confident, strong and empowered when they identified with the Islam, for example by wearing their head-scarf. Also in contradiction to Okin (1999), Salih (2003) found that because of the interconnectedness between Italy and other countries, migrants don't experience a sharp contradiction anymore between 'the west and the rest'. The dominant representation of the Islam in Italian media and in many public debates in Italy

is still one that alludes to the assumption that there is tension between, on the one hand, a modern society where women supposedly enjoy emancipation and freedom, and Muslim communities, on the other hand, that are portrayed as persevering an anti-modern understanding of society and gender relations (Tarabusi, 2012).

Moving away from both the ‘feminist’ viewpoint of Okin (1999) and the adversarial perspectives of Van Voorts (2010) and Salih (2003), I will research gender differences in the construction of interethnic relationships by exploring the discrepancies in how men and women do *daily negotiate* their contact with other ethnic groups.

Intergenerational differences

Maliepaard, Lubbers and Gijsberts (2010) researched generational differences in ethnic and religious attachment and their interrelation among Muslim minorities in the Netherlands. Their data indicate that the second generation reports weaker ethnic and religious identities, and engages less in ethno-cultural and religious practices, even though ethnic and religious identities are increasingly linked to each other.

In Pescaraola, the majority of the inhabitants follows the Islamic religion. My observations indicate that in this area the second generation reports weaker ethnic and religious identities. For example, their style of clothing is a lot less traditional than that of their parents. Though, the second generation does participate in some ethno-cultural practices, like Arabic classes. Whether a decrease in identification with one’s own ethnic and/or religious group results in more, or a different kind of interethnic contact in Pescaraola, is something I hope to be able to discuss in the results section of this study.

Racism

Contemporary theories on racism and prejudice demonstrate a vicious cycle: the more *racism* is perceived the more difficult *social participation with/ within other ethnic groups* is -> the less *active citizenship* is possible -> the more racism is perceived etcetera. Thus, racism undermines active citizenship because it discourages the social participation of immigrants (Holston & Appadurai, 1999).

Unfortunately, in Italy hostility towards migrants is legitimized by presenting it as a natural response of people protecting their territories (Cole, 1997). This reflects the ‘Ethnic Competition Theory’. Coenders, Gijsberts and Scheepers (2002) found that people living in individual competitive conditions perceive ethnic out-groups as a threat, and that this in turn reinforces ethnic exclusionism. Contextual competitive conditions, particularly the presence of non-EU citizens, also affects ethnic exclusionism. This corresponds to the ‘Group-Threat Theory’ (Schneider, 2008). According to this theory, the strength of the threat experienced by the dominant group is mediated by two factors; firstly by the economic conditions in a country, secondly by the number of individuals in the minority group in relation to the number of individuals within the majority group. The current financial and economic

crisis in Italy, resulting in a current unemployment rate of 11,6 percent, and a youth unemployment rate of even 37,8 percent (Ycharts, February 2013) predicts a high experience of economic threat and thereby a likely increase of ethnic exclusionism. Koopmans, Giugni, Passy and Statham (2005) explain the hostility from a different point of view. They state that the opportunities within the institutional, respectively discursive spaces, ‘the opportunity structure’, is the main predictor of the immigration discourse. By the institutional space they mean the legal, political space that is available for claims making by various ethnic groups. The discursive space considers the notion of national citizenship and integration that prevails among the citizens. The most comprehensive explanation of the prevailing attitudes towards immigrants can be found in a combination of both ‘Grievance Theories’, like the Ethnic Competition Theory, and the Opportunity Structure Theory of Koopmans et al. (2005). Decisions within politics that influence the immigration discourse are themselves often influenced by economic factors (Wittebrood, Permentier, 2011).

Colombo, Leonini and Rebughini (2009) claim that different ethnic groups experience different types of racism. The different experiences per ethnic group might be associated with three different types of racism that native Italians may use. According to Fassin (2000), the *classical* racism, where it is about physical features (‘race’), is coming up again in e.g. French society. This might result in different kinds of racism than do *cultural* racism or even ‘*reasonable* racism’, in which racism is explained out of reasonably standing up for the protection of the neighborhood (Verkuyten, 1997). Another explanation for the difference between groups can be that ethnic minorities who are successful experience a worse kind of discrimination, because they threaten the Italian majority most (Glick, 2008).

All of the above mentioned theories taken together make it important to research if, and how non-participation because of racism plays out on a local level: “What kind of attitudes do groups have towards other groups and to what extent and in which way are those attitudes negative or even racist?”

Essentialism and discourses

My observations in Pescarola taught me that attitudes of the various ethnic groups, even of the project staff, towards other groups are often based on the *ethno-cultural identity* that the residents ascribe to members of those groups. Culture is considered to be a fixed, static property of an entity; an *essentialist* concept of culture (Modood, 2007).

However, everybody has different identities depending on the context (Taylor, 1994). Constructing an identity therefore calls for proactive work, which involves gathering information and building experiences (Salih, 2003).

The research of Tarabusi (2008) shows dominant common sense representations and media discourses are embodied in the everyday work of welfare institutions in Italy. These representations tend to essentialise the second generation, normalizing social exclusion and legitimizing the incommensurability of different cultures.

The everyday work of ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’ is also interwoven with another discourse; from their institutional point of view, one of the most crucial ways to promote active citizenship is by creating a sense of *agency* among the residents. Jochum, Pratten and Wilding (2005) support this idea and define agency as the idea of *empowerment*, of exercising *choice* – including the choice to *not* get involved.

Ramadan (2010) advocates for agency, by using his motto ‘contribution instead of integration’. (Muslim) immigrants need to get out of the victim mentality and should think critically and creatively about their contribution to society. Teachers and other role models should spread such a message, starting at young children. The success potential of such an initiative is supported by the ‘Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977)’, which assumes that social behavior is primarily learned by observing and imitating others.

During her research on second generation children in a Youth Centre in Bologna, Tarabusi (2012) discovered that some foreign girls accessed the Youth Centre with the purpose of solving specific problems, but in other cases their choice to come to the Youth Centre was motivated more general as a wish to develop one’s potential for critical thinking or to improve future opportunities. So agency wasn’t something intentionally promoted by the Youth Center, but existed in the very choice of the girls that went there. This example shows the importance of the question if ‘agency’ *can* be actively promoted at all, or that the very concept implies something that can just be supported by broadening the possibilities for people to make autonomic *choices*.

Wimmer (2008) emphasizes the importance of agency in the negotiation of active citizenship from another perspective. He explains how ethnic minorities revert to their agency in the negotiation of ethnic boundaries. In order to become active citizens, they use strategies to change ethnic boundaries, which might limit their civil, political and social participation. In his *agency-based* comparative model on ethnic boundary making, he puts forward that boundaries only exist in the way they are experienced and reproduced by citizens. He distinguishes between five main strategies: to redraw a boundary by either expanding or limiting the domain of people included in one’s own ethnic category; to modify existing boundaries by challenging the hierarchical ordering of ethnic categories, or by changing one’s own position within a boundary system, or by emphasizing other, non-ethnic forms of belonging.

Finally, during my research I hope to find how internalized discourses of the various ethnic groups and the project staff influence the interethnic relations within the area.

‘Multiculturalism’: the dialectic between urban space and social interaction

This research explores multiculturalism through the lens of active citizenship. The concept of multiculturalism can indicate an ideology; a politics consisting of a control agenda, a social agenda and a difference agenda (Grillo et al., 2002). I consider multiculturalism as the complex nature of a multicultural reality. Colombo et al. (2007) argue that focusing on urban spaces is an ideal way to

interpret the everyday forms of multiculturalism, because it reveals the struggles and conflicts that constantly are produced and reproduced in our cities. Accordingly, the general elements that we refer to when describing the multicultural reality are territorial and geographical, for example; a protest in a deprived neighborhood, the conflicts over the construction of a mosque, the annoyances to the use of one of the Arabic languages in the public transport. Summarized, besides looking at the urban space from the material elements that define it, he considers it as a product of interactions. These interactions consist of an implicit way of linguistic nuances that subtly express the way in which inhabitants regard other ethnic groups within the local area.

Semi's (Colombo et al., 2007) viewpoint matches the project 'Cittadini di Pescaraola', which tries to resolve the conflicts and difficulties related to a multicultural society, by improving the local urban space on both a material and a social level.

In practice, community development often means that houses are refurbished and rental houses are transferred by the government into owner-occupied houses, in order to attract different socio-economic classes within a district; 'mixing'. This should promote social cohesion, safety and non-discrimination within a neighborhood. Duyvendak, Scheffer and Uitermark (2004) doubt whether this mixing embodies in fact just a shift of, instead of a solution to neighborhood problems. After all, those who have to leave the district due to the increase of the housing costs, will have to live somewhere else.

A preliminary theoretical model

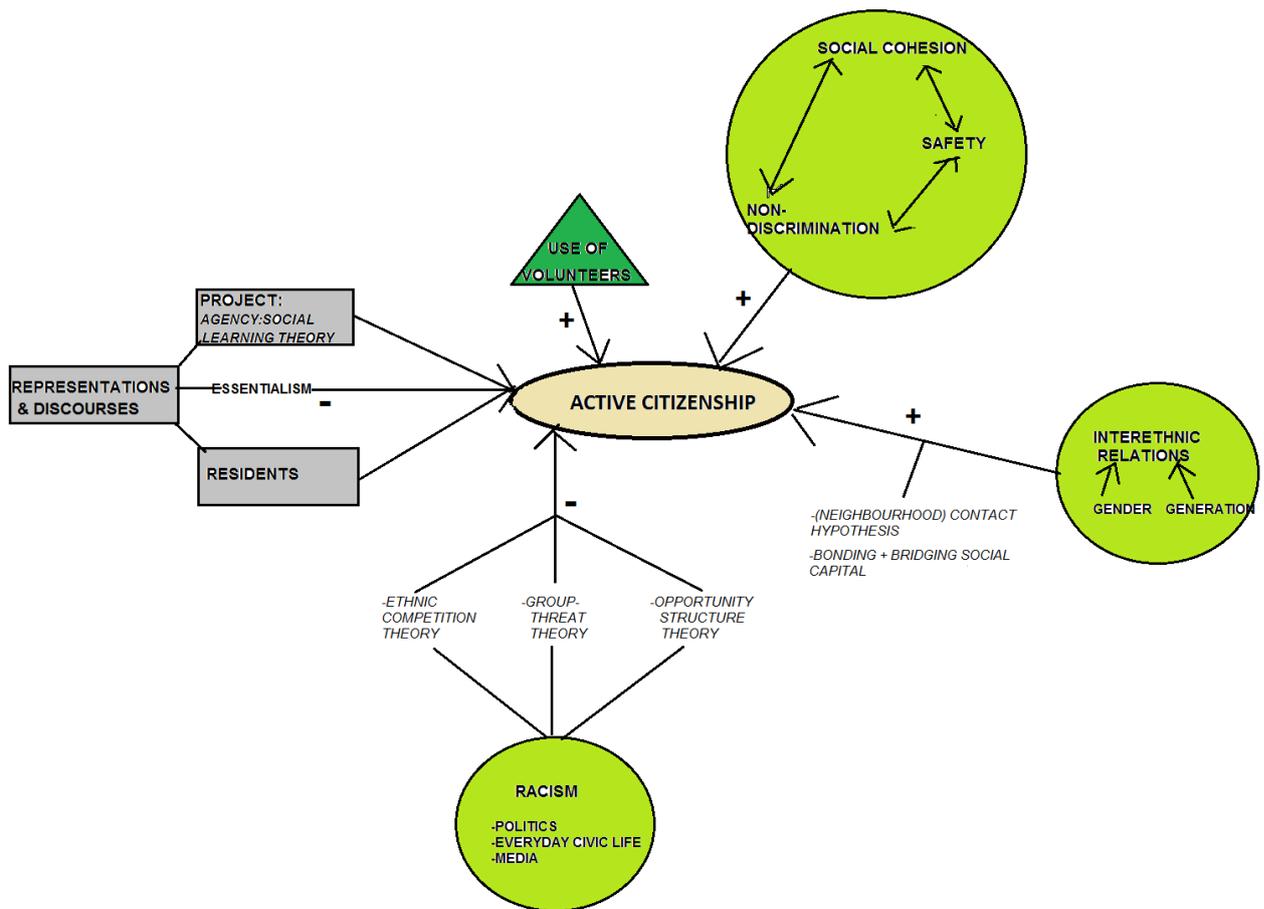


Figure 1. Factors that promote or undermine the negotiation of active citizenship by residents of Pescaraola.

Explaining the model, summarizing the theories

Figure 1 summarizes factors which, based on both existing scientific research and the theories used, constitute the everyday inclusionary and exclusionary practices by which the residents of the various ethnic groups in Pescaraola negotiate their representations of active citizenship.

First of all, the strengthening of *social cohesion*, *non-discrimination* and *safety*, which are all interdependent, promotes active citizenship (FRA, 2008). On the other hand, feelings of un-safety causes mistrust, which causes alienation and a decrease of social cohesion in the neighborhood (Ross et al., 2001).

Secondly, according to the Contact Hypothesis (Williams, 1947, in Hewstone et al., 2011), the Intergroup Interaction Theory (Hogg et al., 2010) and the Neighborhood Contact Hypothesis (Ihlanfeldt et al., 2002), positive intergroup *contact* promotes better *interethnic relations* and reduces prejudice. This promotes active citizenship, because it increases the social capital and favors a good command of the language (Gijsberts et al., 2010). The positive effect is the highest when both bonding (with the own ethnic group) and bridging (with other ethnic groups) contact exist simultaneously (Putnam, 2000). Besides, the construction of interethnic relations is determined by gender and generational differences.

Thirdly, *racism* undermines active citizenship because it discourages the social participation of immigrants (Holston et al., 1999). Unfortunately, in Italy a popular hostility towards immigrants is internalized within politics, media discourses and everyday civic life (Grillo et al., 2002). The Ethnic Competition Theory (Coenders et al., 2002) and the Group-Threat Theory (Schneider, 2008) use the experience of feelings of threat as explanation for racism and ethnic exclusionism. In particular, the economic conditions and the number of individuals within minority groups in relation to the number of individuals within the majority group, are held responsible. Koopmans, Giugni, Passy and Statham (2005) explain the hostility from the Opportunity Structure Theory; the opportunities within the institutional, respectively discursive spaces are the main predictor of the immigration discourse. The most comprehensive explanation of racism can be found in a combination of Grievance Theories, like the Ethnic Competition Theory, and the Opportunity Structure Theory.

In addition to the explanatory factors, differences between the *representations* (which might unintentionally be shaped by certain *discourses*) of active citizenship from the institutional point of view and the representations of the residents, influence the negotiation of active citizenship. These representations are often shaped by an unjustified *essentialist* image, based on assumed ethnocultural identities that the various ethnic groups ascribe to members of other groups (Modood, 2007). The work of ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’ is interwoven with the representation that active citizenship should be promoted by creating a sense of *agency* among the residents, for example through education. The success potential of such an initiative is supported by the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which assumes that social behavior is primarily learned by observing and imitating others.

Finally, the large size of the voluntary sector, typical of the left-wing culture in Bologna (Grillo et al., 2011), can be a valuable resource in promoting active citizenship (Duyvendak et al., 2009).

Methods

Qualitative research: The Grounded Theory Approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

This qualitative research on active citizenship follows the logic of the Grounded Theory. To make the results useful, the evolved theory needs to fit the research field, the area of Pescaraola. The grounded theory approach is about giving body to sensitizing concepts (Wester, 1984). An analysis following the logic of the Grounded Theory Approach looks as follows: First there is exploration (discovery of specific field concerned topics), then specification (development of concepts), the next phase is reduction (determination of the basic process) and last of all there is integration (development of the relationships to the theories). This is a circular process; during the research I observed, analyzed, reflected upon data and went back into the field and observed again. This continued until sufficient saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 in Wester, 1984) concerning the research questions was reached, within the time limit of my five months stay in Italy.

Data collection: participant observations and open interviews

‘Participant observation’ mainly is a method of data-collection, with its roots in anthropology, in which the *ethnographer* is assumed to collect data while observing and sharing the life of the observed population. Nowadays, this research method doesn’t consider the researcher as an ‘ethnographic authority’, able to objectively describe a fixed entity; an ‘exotic group’, immune from outside influences. Instead, the researcher tries to learn about the complex reality of a group, which can be situated within a western country as well, by capturing the *intercommunication patterns*, the *cultural products*, of the research population (Rossi, 2003). The day to day construction of reality by the multiple ethnic groups in Pescaraola was a constant focus during my observations.

The main reason for choosing ‘participant observation’, is that to fully understand the complex interethnic and intergenerational relationships between individuals and groups, I needed to be part of the local context (Silverman, 2010).

During my fieldwork, I had ample opportunity to have formal and casual conversations with the residents of Pescaraola. Within these conversations all kind of topics have been discussed, regulated by the topics on my topic list (annex 1). This directed the *informal, unstandardized interviews* (Berg, 2007). Both during the participant observation and in the unstandardized interviews with the residents of Pescaraola I kept written notes in my fieldwork diary. In some cases I made sound recordings as well.

Furthermore, the project staff served as knowledgeable informants. In addition to the informal conversations, I conducted formal, semi-structured interviews with them (Berg, 2007), using a topic list (Annex 2). Because many of my respondents were not fluent in English, the interviews were conducted in Italian.

Research population

Initially I reached my respondents by participating within the activities of ‘ Cittadini di Pescaraola’ (table 1), which involved different local actors (e.g. volunteers, mediators, social practitioners, local associations, municipality, immigrants, city dwellers). Adele di Stefani, responsible for both the communication between the different organizations involved in the project as well as the communication with the residents, introduced me and functioned as main informant during the first period. Later, I managed to meet residents who weren’t involved within the project activities, by using ‘snowball sampling’ (Boeije, 2005). For example, the women who followed the Italian language course invited me for dinner, where they introduced me to their families.

1. Making a ‘Comitato’ ; a representational group of Citizens who can communicate with the municipality and the housing association ACER on improvements within the area.
2. ‘Percorso Sicuro’; a project of ‘Architetti di Strada’ aimed at involving citizens in increasing the safety in the area by material and maintenance improvements .
3. Free Italian language course for immigrant women
4. Free Arabic language course for youth 8-12
5. ‘Dopo scuola’: Homework class for young residents of all ages
6. Free movie night for the youth
7. Help service to repair bicycles
8. Free food distribution (voluntary)
9. Free clothes distribution (voluntary)
10. Options in the community center (spazio commune): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can play/ do activities • People can organize birthday party’s etc. (Giving them the keys to do this will be a next step in creating responsibility/ agency) • Men have the opportunity to meet each other to play cards

Table 1. Activities of the project ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’.

I needed to discover the point of view of both the different actors that cooperate within the project (table 2) and the city dwellers of different ethnic backgrounds (table 3): *population triangulation*. The differences within their points of view played a key role in comprehending how dynamics within the area interacted. This selection of research units, based on their potential contribution to the problem analysis, is called *theoretical sampling* (Silverman, 2010).

As shown in table 2, I succeeded in talking to actors working within different levels of the organization.

Actors Involved Within the Project ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’	Number
<i>Volunteers coordinating the various activities within ‘Spazio Comune’ (the community center)</i>	10
<i>(Voluntary) Teachers of Italian and Arabic Classes</i>	10
<i>Executives ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’</i>	3
<i>Staff ‘Architetti di Strada’¹</i>	3
<i>Staff ‘Comitato’²</i>	3
<i>Sociologists of the University of Bologna</i>	3

<i>'Giornalismo di Strada', (Community-) Journalists that write about the project</i>	1
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Table 2. Profile of the project staff.

Note 1. 'Architetti di Strada' is a group of architects, engineers, urban planners, human rights experts, communication - and participation experts which, in co-operation with 'Cittadini di Pescaraola', tries to resolve economic, ecologic and social problems, especially regarding safety.

Note 2. Within 'Cittadini di Pescaraola', the 'Comitato staff', a group of experts, aims at creating a representational group of Citizens who can communicate with the municipality and the housing association ACER.

To be able to answer research questions 1A, 2A and 2B, it was necessary to contact residents belonging to different ethnic minority groups as well as residents belonging to the Italian majority (table 3).

Gender	Number
<i>Male</i>	21
<i>female</i>	22
Nationality	
<i>Italian (Bologna)</i>	3
<i>Italian (Internal migration)</i>	5
<i>Moroccan</i>	23
<i>Tunisian</i>	5
<i>Pakistani</i>	1
<i>Indian</i>	1
<i>Ivory coast</i>	1
<i>Bengali</i>	4
<i>Moldavian</i>	1
If immigrant: legal status	
<i>documented</i>	15
<i>undocumented</i>	5
If immigrant: generation	
<i>1st generation</i>	19
<i>2nd generation</i>	23
Age	
<i>< 10</i>	4
<i>10-25</i>	16
<i>25-40</i>	9
<i>40-55</i>	8
<i>55-70</i>	3
<i>>70</i>	3
Employment	
<i>employed (legal)</i>	5
<i>employed (illegal)</i>	4
<i>unemployed</i>	16
<i>School pupil</i>	12
Living in Pescaraola for how many years..	

< 1	12
1-5	13
5-10	7
>10	11

Table 3. Profile of the citizens I met in ‘Pescarola’.

Note. Some data are incomplete due to privacy preferences of the respondents.

In 2011, 30,5 percent of the registered residents of the Pescaraola area did belong to ethnic minority groups (ACER in Architetti di Strada, 2012). However, the actual percentage is much higher than the recorded rate, because many immigrants let family members (illegally) indwell (Architetti di Strada, 2012). The ethnic minorities are, compared to the Italian majority, slightly overrepresented within my research (table 2). This is because of many of the project activities are mainly focused on solving the typical kind of problems experienced by ethnic minorities. People with a (partly) Moroccan nationality constitute the largest minority in the area. Of all residents, migrants and locals together, 58 percent does live below the poverty line, which means they have an annual income of less than 7500 euro (ACER in Architetti di Strada, 2012).

The only inhabitants difficult to approach were the gypsies (‘zingari’), mainly Sinti, originating from eastern European countries, who only showed up at the free food distribution. However, I was strongly advised not to start an in-depth conversation during this highly “sensitive moment”, which is characterized by conflicts because not all attendees are entitled to obtain the free food. For this reason, they are not shown in table 3.

To answer research question 2C I needed to hold conversations with both men and women and citizens belonging to different generations. As shown in table 3, I was able to have conversations with both genders.

I have built relationships with people of all different generations (table 3). Sometimes I experienced a language barrier in my contact with older immigrants, because they couldn’t speak Italian nor English, while on the other hand I could not speak their native language. Though, ‘Architetti di Strada’ organized focus group meetings to talk to elderly people about safety, so their staff could provide additional information.

The remaining characteristics shown in table 3 are of importance because they influence the negotiation of active citizenship to a great extent, which is further elaborated in the chapter ‘Data presentation’. On some quotations I used pseudonyms, due to privacy preferences of the residents.

Data analyses

I typed all of the collected material to provide a complete picture, using this information, I carried out an analysis with the aid of Nvivo 10.

First, I assigned codes to the various pieces of texts: *open coding* (Boeije, 2005). Based on a combination of concepts directly expressed by respondents and current theories, a code tree got created.

Thereafter, I used *axial coding* (Boeije, 2005). I critically revised the texts in order to make sure that the collected material had been adequately covered. Subsequently I made a distinction between main and sub codes. Where necessary, I merged or divided codes. Also, I created memos containing ideas, main themes, important statements and methodological difficulties.

After axial coding, my data were organized and needed to be structured. This has been done during the last phase of *selective coding*, in which fragments were integrated and connections were made. The main categories hereby emerged. Afterwards, I conjoined these categories with my *theoretical framework*.

To keep an overview, I performed preliminary analyses when I required new information or conducted new interviews. For this reason the phases of open coding, axial coding and selective coding were constantly alternating. The regular update of both the research results and the different tables with the profiles of the research population provided me an image on which themes and which groups additional information was needed. I adjusted my focus accordingly.

Data presentation

In this paragraph, the main themes introduced by the respondents are discussed with help of quotations from the people I observed and spoke to during the research. I have organized the data successively along the themes ‘employment opportunities’, ‘ghettoization and seclusion’, ‘safety’, ‘agency’, ‘neighborhood relations’ and ‘racism’.

Employment opportunities

Both the residents and the project staff agreed that the exclusion from the labor market as experienced by the residents of Pescarola undermines active citizenship. Certain characteristics which are, according to them, typical of the Italian context impede their job search, while characteristics of the specific context of Bologna slightly decreased the negative effects.

The Italian system

First, “The typical Italian system” is described as a bastion of *nepotism* and *corruption*. Succeeding in finding a job doesn’t depend on your CV, but on the entrenched *connections* you have with ‘important people’ within the labor market:

“The most I abhor the system of recommendations. It harms everyone, but even more the immigrants, who don’t have the right connections.” (Anas, male, 23, Moroccan, searching for a job)

Since most residents of Pescarola are either immigrant or Italians from ‘lower social classes’, they haven’t had opportunities to build the right relationships.

The complex *bureaucratic* practices of the Italian state are also described as a problematic part of “the system”. Cumbersome procedures cause that obtaining a contract of employment takes a long time. Immigrants face an additional obstacle since the citizenship law of 1992 made applying for *naturalization* more difficult:

“Consider me as a refugee from Sudan. The bureaucratic process to gain legal citizenship takes years. Meanwhile, I don’t have the right to work. I need to fill my days by doing nothing.” (Bassam, 27, teacher of Arabic class)

Besides, I often found that employment opportunities for immigrants aren’t limited per se intentionally by the government. However initiatives to promote participation cannot count on support either, as Daniel (voluntary teacher of Italian class) explains:

“Italy has communists, fascists, Berlusconi... summarized Italy is very divided into political groups, which are all the very opposite of each other. You could see this during the elections, when Berlusconi and the Left had the

same amount of votes. Within this division, most Italian don't even take an active position towards immigrants; their attitude can best be described as a passive citizenship, or a non-citizenship. This comes forward in their way of acting: they don't bother at all about immigrants, as long as they 'don't step on their shoes'. For this reason, a law about forced language courses for immigrants wasn't accepted. There was no support of the people, they didn't care."

The severe *economic crisis* reinforces the experienced exclusion from the labor market:

"The problems that residents, many of whom are less educated, experience are general. Even the highly educated Italians don't succeed in finding a job. Given all this choice of potential employees, you can imagine it's even worse for the people here." (Marina Lavezzi, volunteer coordinating various activities within the community center)

The desperation caused by the interaction between the economic crisis and "the Italian system" makes that some residents start to deal drugs or commit other crimes:

"At the moment I'm dealing marijuana. I don't like doing this, but I feel I have no choice after a year of failed applications. Besides, the real Mafiosi are the politicians who maintain this system that hinders my search for work, not me." (Hassan, 24, Moroccan, unemployed)

Voluntary initiatives

Although future possibilities in Italy are considered very minimal, the general representations of the specific context of *Bologna* are in comparison rather positive, due to the large-scale *voluntary sector* which struggles to improve the difficulties experienced by local citizens. This sector is so big because of the left-wing culture among the Bolognese citizens, which never disappeared since the Communist 70s. Everywhere around Bologna, I meet people, from students to pensioners, who voluntarily work in one of the many social centers.

"Although the Bolognese politics are nowadays, after 10 years of Berlusconi, not anymore as left wing as they used to be, the ideal of solidarity is still alive and carried out among the citizens of Bologna. Together, they try to improve the quality of life of the less fortunate." (Daniel, voluntary teacher of Italian class)

For this reason, all of my respondents agreed that future possibilities for people living in deprived neighborhoods are way bigger in Bologna than, for example, in Milan.

The project 'Cittadini di Pescaraola' doesn't have much government support and can only exist because of the hard work of volunteers. A total amount of 17 voluntary organizations are active in this neighborhood. Their activities are for a large part focused on improving employment opportunities, for example by a new project named 'Borse Lavoro', literally 'A Bag of Work'. To avoid that

unemployed young adults lose themselves in doing nothing or getting involved in criminal activities, this project aims at give meaning to immigrants' lives by teaching them how to do maintenance jobs within the area.

Leaving Italy

Many of the young people I met in Pescarola were planning on leaving the country, because they assume the standard of living as being higher in other, mostly Northern European countries. They gave up the hope of negotiating active citizenship in Italy. Donia (21, Moroccan, working in a pizzeria), who currently moved to Paris, explains this:

"I see my chances as zero percent here, so I will leave for Paris. In France the economic crisis is less severe, and there is more government support for immigrants!"

Some of the young immigrants even want to return to the motherland of their parents, because they assume that, with their Italian education, they will have a better chance to build a financially stable future there.

Finally, I conclude this topic with a quote that seems to reflect the general opinion:

"La vita costa tanto, stipendi miseri e opportunita di lavoro sono precario."

Translated: "The costs of living are high, though the salaries are low and the job opportunities are precarious."

(Anas, male, 23, Moroccan, searching for a job)

Ghettoization and seclusion

Many of the residents I met have to deal with psychological, social, linguistic and financial problems; the area of Pescarola consists largely of public housing, in order to qualify your income needs to be very low. How this creates a vicious cycle, and how this influences the new generation, I will describe below.

A vicious cycle

The problems of the residents are very diverse, though they all lack *participation in spheres of everyday life*. Many first generation immigrants experience a language barrier which causes difficulties when doing such simple chores like buying groceries. Other residents experience bigger challenges, they are addicted to drugs or alcohol, or involved in criminal activities. All kinds of problems are represented. For example Lorenzo (Italian, internal migration from the South) recently,

in addition to many family problems, had his legs amputated because of health problems caused by many years of hard work in construction.

According to the project staff, the fact that the community makes people dealing with severe problems all live together in one small area causes a *vicious cycle of ghettoization and seclusion*:

“I noticed a vicious cycle on the relationship between social, linguistic and economic capital and isolation; a low level of language comprehension causes a low level of social relationships. This induces difficulties in finding a job. Because residents don’t have a job, they stay in this isolated residential area, “this ghetto”, all day. In this area, they don’t have many opportunities to improve their linguistic and social capital. For this reason, they stay unemployed and thereby isolated, etcetera. I think learning happens by observing and imitating, by having role models.” (Loredana Salituro, voluntary teacher of Italian class)

Most residents agree that a socially mixed neighborhood would be a solution to open up the isolated problem area of Pescarola.

One obstacle in fighting ghettoization is that the community doesn’t offer any social or financial help to support initiatives of residents. In addition, many immigrants have many children, but a very low income. For example, Amina (35, Moroccan, unemployed) lives with five sons, husband, sister and parents in law in a small 3-room apartment. She isn’t able to work because she needs to take care of her five children and two elderly people. Hence ten people need to live on the income of her husband. Given these circumstances it is impossible to save money to improve one’s situation.

However, there are exceptions; people who do manage to escape the difficult circumstances. Claudia (Italian, resident and voluntary teacher of Italian class), who faced many psychological and family problems, broke the downward spiral by signing up as Italian teacher for immigrants. Although she doesn’t receive salary, the job gives meaning and structure to her life.

The new generation

Many inhabitants living in Pescarola for a long time state that members of the new generation, by which they mean youngsters in the age category between 8 and 15 years old, are a lot more ill-mannered than the generation of their older brothers and sisters, aging between 15 en 25. For example, the younger ones ruin the streets and are involved in (small) robberies. Older citizens attribute this to the fact that in the past the area used to be more socially mixed. Some immigrants even pose that this is because too many of them are living there:

“Around 80 out of 100 immigrants in our neighborhood are ill-mannered, against 25 out of 100 native Italians. Back in the days, when we arrived here, there were far fewer immigrants.” (Wafa Sebbar, Moroccan, 1st generation, living in Pescarola for over 10 years)

Safety

Feelings of insecurity hinders the daily life of the inhabitants of Pescaraola. However, the topic of ‘safety’ is characterized by different representations; by those of the project employees versus the residents, but also in varying ways within those groups. The different opinions on how insecurity influences their lives, as well as the opinions on how to address this, will be illustrated in the following paragraph. A leading question is ‘How (un)safe is the neighborhood actually?’.

Maintenance

According to both residents and project staff, women and elderly people experience the most severe feelings of insecurity in Pescaraola, which causes them barely to leave the house.

These feelings are partly caused by the structure of the buildings and the area in general; by *material* characteristics. The project staff is convinced that material improvements can start an upward spiral:

“In my neighborhood it’s lighter, cleaner and more green. In the past there used to be a lot of drug abuse, however after the parks were refurbished, a virtuous cycle got created: the children started playing in the parks again, which gave parents an opportunity to meet each other. This made the ties with the neighbors stronger, which conserved the movement on the streets and enforced social control.” (Marina Lavezzi, volunteer coordinating various activities within the community center)

‘Percorso Sicuro’, a collaborative of ‘Architetti di Strada’ and ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’, tries to involve citizens in increasing the safety of their neighborhood by maintenance improvements. They started by asking ‘What are the places in Pescaraola you like and/or dislike to go to with your children, and why?’. The citizens could point these locations on a large map, so the architects knew where to start the material improvements.

Insecurity

Next to feelings of insecurity caused by physical conditions of the neighborhood (dark areas, neglected houses, broken windows, bad roads), some residents experience feelings of insecurity because they are afraid of criminal fellow residents. However, this topic is characterized by widely *divergent discourses*. While some residents claim the area isn’t unsafe at all and people are just groundlessly *problematizing*, others state that those who do not see the dangers live in a serious *denial* of existing problems. The totally adversarial quotes of two women demonstrate this conflict very well:

“There should be many camera’s and much police in the area! The only way I feel comfortable leaving the house, is by going together with my husband!” (Naima)

“I have never ever experienced dangerous situations in Pescaraola! Why do ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’ and Architetti di Strada’ constantly talk about this? Our only problem is the tiny houses, other problems are just in people’s minds!”(Halima)

While the project ‘Percorso Sicuro’ will start *refurbishing* and *reconstructing* the area, some citizens think this will be useless unless the new problem generation, the one containing the youth between 8 and 15 years, will be properly *educated* first.

Agency

The project staff told me that active citizenship can only be truly negotiated once there will be a sufficient sense of agency among the residents. How they understand and promote agency will be elucidated in this paragraph, as well as the conflicts this implies.

Responsibility

From the project staff’s point of view, agency means that inhabitants will feel *responsible* to *actively create* their own future, as Adele de Stefani (executive ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’) explained:

“In the end, change can be made just by the citizens themselves. ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’ just provides the instruments, the guiding lines in order to make this possible. We open doors by giving suggestions and support. But the people who really live in this area, off course know best exactly what needs to be improved.”

The staff realizes changing a whole way of thinking will be a *long-term process*.

In addition to a practical purpose, like language acquisition, all of the project activities aim at promoting agency. For example, the project ‘Comitato’, aims at creating a representational group of Citizens who can actuate the municipality and the housing association ACER to meet their responsibilities towards the district, which they often fail to do. Nicolla (executive ‘Comitato’ staff) expounds the idea behind the project:

“Our second objective is to encourage residents to communicate. It’s about the active involvement of citizens in the representation of their own neighborhood.”

The same creation of responsibility is a main focus within ‘Percorso Sicuro’, the project of ‘Architetti di Strada’:

“Currently, we collaborate on a plan with the women. After, we will ask them to involve their partners, friends and family members in refurbishing the area, which is necessary because it will partly contain heavy work. The positive aspect of this method is that when the inhabitants do all the reconstruction themselves, the result will

“remain in their hearts”, which likely will make them feel responsible to maintain the area in the future.”

(Vincenzo, ‘Architetti di Strada’)

A final example is the Italian language course, which is also aimed at increasing agency: besides focusing on linguistic aspects, teaching methods focus on how life in Italian society works.

Conflicts

While the project promotes non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion by asking citizens to *actively contribute*, some of the residents expect the project to *simply solve all of the problems for them*, preferably in a short amount of time. This discrepancy in expectations causes disappointment in the project, which finds its way out in anger or aggression.

For example Francesco (Italian, internal migration from the South, unemployed), who convinced vulnerable fellow residents to turn against the project collectively. Remarkably, the currently running project ‘Comitato’ was partly his idea, nevertheless he is greatly disappointed in what the project has been able to achieve. During the activities in the community center ‘his followers’ often pass by to complain, yell, argue or simply start a fight:

“The project staff are a bunch of thieves! I heard they received 20.000 euro from the municipality, but they do nothing with it! My situation hasn’t change a bit, the money simply disappears!” (Ketty, Italian, unemployed)

Neighborhood relations

Both the residents and the project staff are convinced that improved neighborhood relations, especially interethnic ones, can significantly contribute to a greater sense of security and social cohesion in Pescarola, and can reduce discrimination. The importance of both interethnic relations and relations within one’s own ethnic group, as well as the importance of language acquisition by immigrants, will be argued for in the following paragraph. Also gender and generational differences in these relationships, and the (non-) existence of a Moroccan community will be discussed.

Interethnic relations

While younger ones in the neighborhood maintain *interethnic friendships*, adults often prefer to have contact with people of their *own ethnic group*. However, there are counter examples:

“The contact with my neighbors of other ethnicities is very good, I am optimistic. This mindset is necessary, because life here is not easy.” (Lagnetta Antonia, Italian, internal migration from the south)

“The Italians are a closed group, they do not want to talk to me.” (Naima, Moroccan, first generation)

Some residents blame gender and *generational differences* for lack in neighborhood contact, among immigrants, and differential adherence to ‘cultural values’:

The men of the older generation are more bossy and possessive, and tell their wives to stay inside. In my generation this is not anymore the case. (Sara, 23, half Italian, half Tunisian)

In general, immigrant women in Pescarola keep more neighborhood relationships than men. During visits, other women and children were always present, while their husbands never were. The same goes for some of the activities within the community center. Although immigrant men build less neighborhood relations at home or in the community center, they meet in other places, such as the mosque. *Gender differences* mentioned, I did not observe among native Italians in Pescarola.

The project staff tries to promote active citizenship by creating interethnic relations, which will result in a *decrease of racist attitudes* by taking away *the fear of the unknown*. The Italian language class for example, in addition to its focus on language acquisition, aims at creating relationships between members of different ethnic groups. This is successful, during the lessons women of all nationalities and ethnic backgrounds, for example Moroccan, Tunisian, Indian, Pakistani and Moldavian socialize a lot. Also Italian residents are involved, predominantly in being volunteer in the center or language instructor (assistant).

Language acquisition

According to the project staff, a *shared language* is crucial in working towards improved neighborhood relations and *social cohesion*. Residents argue that the *ability to speak Italian* makes all (immigrants) feel more *safe* and more *attached to Italian society*, and besides this *greatly enlarged their individual social network*.

“At first, I did not like to live in Italy, because I did not understand anything, which made me afraid to go outside. But now, because I speak the language, I have friends of all backgrounds, all over Bologna. For this reason, I do very much like to live here. My best friend is from Moldavia, but I also have, Italian and other Bangladeshi friends.” (Anika, Bengali, 40, 1st generation, living in Pescarola since 17 years)

All agree that the younger generation is better integrated because they have a good command of the Italian language.

Since language acquisition is perceived so vital, many of the project staff also want to involve men in the Italian language class for immigrants. Though Mariagrazia (founder of ‘Cittadini di Pescarola’) is afraid women won’t show up anymore once the classes will be gender mixed, because they are afraid men won’t allow women to join them. Against that, Daniele Stabellini (voluntary teacher of Italian class), states that mixing is impossible is a construct in our ‘Western mind’, which is

not in any way substantiated by his past experiences. He thinks it's a good way to fight gender differences.

The Arab language course serves another goal; it's perceived as a way to preserve a culture. It was established after several requests of mothers who don't want their children to completely lose connection with their country of origin.

Finally, some residents use their knowledge of foreign languages in a creative manner. For example, Amrita (Bengali) works as an Arabic, Indian and English language teacher.

The absent Moroccan community

When the project started, the expectation was a Moroccan community would exist in Pescaraola. Currently, the staff is convinced that the *alleged Moroccan community* doesn't exist, at the very most not in an *antagonistic* way. This image is based on women telling they never see each other outside the community center and there are many small conflicts among them. My experience, derived from visits, is conflicts accounted for are real and exist, but Moroccan women do see and meet each other outside of the community center.

Racism

The everyday language of many respondents, including immigrants and the project staff, is unintentionally intertwined with negative, sometimes even essentialist assumptions of other ethnic groups. Furthermore, explicit racist attitudes towards immigrants are present in different social contexts; first in everyday life spheres, for example during the activities in the community center and on the labor market, secondly within the Italian political debate, finally immigrants feel negatively judged by different Italian media. Such racist attitudes limit participation of immigrants in everyday life, for example on the labor market, and cause them to be suspicious towards government institutions.

Discourses

Respondents, when talking about each other, tend to use terms like "the niggers always ..", or "..men leaving the work to women, is a typical characteristic of the Arab culture". Such *discourses* are internalized at young age. During the Arab language class, most jokes made by the North-African youth are about those 'retarded Pakistanis'. Also *Southern Italians* are generally labeled "*Moroccan*". The most common discourses are about the reification of immigrants and gypsies in problematic categories.

When talking about the political instability and the economic crisis Italy currently faces, Italian residents tend to easily blame these problems on immigrants. Besides, they criminalize their behavior and subscribe unchangeable traits to them, like Adriano (Italian, internal migration from the south):

“Moroccans, who are always ill mannered, are taking over this area.”

At the same time, residents expressing such beliefs uphold frankly that they “honestly have nothing against immigrants”.

The respondents express more negative sentiments versus gypsies than to any other ethnic group in the neighborhood. In addition, the project staff confirms gypsies don’t participate in activities because of ‘the free gypsy way of thinking’ and the fact they ‘don’t like to have a permanent place to live, like an apartment’, which is supposed to make it impossible for them to adhere to agreements.

Daniel (voluntary teacher of Italian class) explains such talk through rooted history:

“Gypsies have never been accepted, not even before World War 2. This is because they have always been protected by the Italian government as some kind of “endangered species”; The king of Italy was married to the queen of Montenegro, and they had the agreement that gypsies were not to be forced to adapt. For this reason they never integrated. Back then their deviant behavior created negative and racist attitudes, which nowadays still live in the minds of the people.”

Racism in different contexts

According to my respondents, racist attitudes are present in daily life, politics and in the media.

Daily practices of immigrants in Pescarola are limited by explicit forms of racism, opportunities partly depend on *skin color* and *family name*:

“When they read my last name on my CV, Ben Ahmed, they will always ask me about my background, even though I’m a legal citizen, born in Italy. You are an immigrant in Italy as well, though you are blond and Western, so you won’t experience these problems. If the color of your skin is darker, they will reject you.” (Sara, 23, half Italian, half Tunisian)

Their position on the labor market is the most glaring example. If my immigrant respondents had a job, it were always in lower segments of the labor market, regardless how educated they are. The limited employment opportunities aren’t just caused by “*the Italian system*” and the *economic crisis*, as previously described, but also by a *racist mentality* of (many) native Italians and the *interaction* between these factors. During my fieldwork I captured many stories that illustrate this interdependence:

“Our friend worked in the transport, loading and unloading, 10 hours a day. After a while he discovered he got paid only 6 hours a day, which mean 3 to 4 euro per hour for heavy work. So, after a few days he quitted. His boss literally told him: ‘Because you are an immigrant, I pay less.’ This illustrates the dominant position, created by a combination of the economic crisis and the “typical Italian mentality””. (Willy and Anas, 24 and 23, Moroccan, unemployed).

“Since the 90s, poor and dirty jobs were taken by immigrants, like truck driver. Because of the economic crisis, Italians want these jobs back. This causes racist attitudes.” (Maurizio Maggi, ‘Architetti di Strada’, and Sergio Giovine, bicycle repair)

So, the limited employment opportunities affecting all residents, cause some Italian respondents to state ‘they deserve the privilege to the few jobs left’.

Further, residents participation within activities in the community center is hindered by some Italians, mainly by Francesco (Italian, internal migration from the south) and his followers. They interrupt activities by provoking conflicts, during which they always accuse ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’ of devoting too much money and time, meant to help ‘*the real Italians*’, on helping immigrants.

In general elderly express more racist views. The project staff attributes this to the circumstance that most older people aren’t raised with immigrants, so ‘*the fear of the unknown*’ is more strongly present.

Practices such as nepotism causes a *distrust in the government*. For example, residents believe there is no playground in Pescaraola, because the major doesn’t care about a neighborhood mainly inhabited by immigrants. However, Adele de Stefani (executive ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’) explained this is simply because the soil type isn’t suitable to build.

Finally, respondents state Italian media, especially television, creates racist attitudes and even makes people afraid of immigrants by portraying them only in a negative way, and not letting them participate in normal shows.

Data analyses and conclusion

In this chapter, I will interpret the data presented and elucidate the relationships between various findings and their relations to theories used, given my research question and sub-questions.

Firstly I will answer sub-question 1A, ‘How do the residents *understand* and *negotiate* active citizenship, *non-discrimination*, *safety* and *social cohesion*?’

Active citizenship is perceived as being included in the legal *labor market* and having an *average economic status*. However, respondents - immigrants and Italians belonging to ‘lower social classes’ - state they lack the right connections needed to have employment opportunities within ‘the Italian system’, described as being ‘a bastion of corruption and recommendations’. Many of them are enrolled within the endless bureaucratic procedure to apply for naturalization, during which they aren’t allowed to work. Discrimination is perceived the last piece deteriorating job opportunities. Since legal employment often is impossible, residents negotiate economic participation in creative ways, for example by using their knowledge of foreign languages to become an Arabic teacher. For me this is a perfect example of the mechanism Ramadan promotes to escape typical integration problems (2010); immigrants should critically and creatively negotiate a way to contribute to society. On the other hand, the despair of years of failed applications cause respondents to start innovative, criminal career paths or to try to leave the country. Residents having too many children and letting family members illegally indwell, results in situations in which ten family members live on a very modest income in a small house. This makes adequate negotiation of an average economic position difficult if not impossible, even more since illegal inhabitants don’t have rights to profit from welfare regulations.

Further, experienced insecurity combined with a lack of social cohesion, mainly by *women* and *elderly*, causes them barely to leave the house. This hinders ‘daily neighborhood participation’ such as doing groceries; women state ‘only to feel comfortable leaving the house by going together with their husbands’, because they are afraid of ‘delinquent neighbors’, hidden in dark buildings. This mechanism is consistent with earlier findings of Ross et al. (2001), who suggest un-safety causes mistrust, which causes alienation and a decrease of social cohesion in the neighborhood. Paradoxically other residents state ‘insecurity exists only in people’s minds’. In reality, this barrier is partly *imaginative*; though sometimes ill-mannered or marijuana dealing youth is present, during daytime the area is safe. However during nighttime even the most optimistic residents advised me to stay away. Further, all residents agree learning the Italian language made them feel more confident confronting people and situations outdoors, thereby forming a suitable strategy to negotiate active citizenship, another positive effect is the possibility to have conversations outside the own ethnic group greatly enlarged their social network.

Living in the very area of Pescaraola impedes the negotiating active citizenship also for another reason. Residents experience to be stuck in a vicious cycle of ghettoization and seclusion because they cannot find role models to follow: all residents have a low level of language comprehension and/or

limited social capital, which induces difficulties finding employment, therefore they stay in the isolated neighborhood all day, where they don't have many opportunities to improve their linguistic and social capital. They prefer the government to mix rental houses with owner-occupied houses to attract different socio-economic classes, 'mixing'.

Finally, the conscious choice to leave another city for Bologna, with its big voluntary sector, has been a way to negotiate active citizenship for some residents, which leads to question 1B, 'How does the project 'Cittadini di Pescaraola' understand and promote non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion?'. The 'passive' Italian government and community don't take responsibility for the lives of the less fortunate: they don't fight corruption and bureaucracy, don't (financially) support initiatives by or in order to help immigrants, and do nothing to improve the absence of a working welfare system. Only fellow citizens prevent feeding them to their fate, by means of the voluntary sector, involving all generations. This solidarity is what is left of the communist and left-wing spheres dominating Bologna during the 70s. So, in Bologna active citizenship is not just the responsibility of the less fortunate, but something they negotiate in collaboration with the 'average citizen', who doesn't only provide in basic needs as food, but also helps improving *the quality of life*, for example by language courses. Citizens fill the gap where the government will never take responsibility. 'Cittadini di Pescaraola', in which 17 voluntary organizations cooperate, provides a perfect example. The success of the method of *shared professionalism*, focusing per case instead of focusing per administrative authority, finds support in prior studies of Bodd et al. (2009).

The promotion of active citizenship by the project exists first in increasing *safety* by improving the '*structure of the buildings and the area*', which they believe causes an upward spiral by making people feel safe to move through the streets, where they can get to know each other. This in turn is perceived to strengthen *neighborhood ties* and enforce *social control*. However, the project staff believes long term safety and social cohesion can only be truly promoted by creating a sufficient sense of *agency* among residents, which they explain as making them feel *responsible* to actively create their own future within the area. For this reason, 'Percorso Sicuro' *involves citizens* in maintenance improvements, so the result 'will remain in their hearts', while the 'hidden goal' behind the practical project 'Comitato' is to actively involve residents in the independent representation of their neighborhood.

To promote non-discrimination, interethnic relations are created by letting all ethnic groups including Italians, sometimes in the role of volunteer, communicate during activities. Out of prior experiences the project staff believes this will take away '*the fear of the unknown*', an indicator that seems to validate the relevance of the Neighborhood Contact Hypothesis (Ihlanfeldt et al., 2002) in the local context.

Question 1C 'What are the connections and/or discrepancies between the way the residents understand non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion and the way the project 'Cittadini di Pescaraola' promotes them?' can firstly be answered by concluding *language acquisition* is for both the

project staff and residents *indispensable* in increasing participation in spheres of everyday life, by increasing social capital, ‘making friends’, and in feeling safe. The project recently implemented suggestions of citizens, like the Arab language course. Residents autonomously suggesting initiatives, shows the creation of agency, of ‘taking responsibility for the future’, is at least partially successful. By preserving the mother culture in Italy, this activity is one of the few not so much aimed at *participation in*, but more at *identification with Italy*. Residents like Claudia, who broke the downward spiral of her life by signing up as volunteer, prove that just by being present the project unintentionally may create a sense of agency and responsibility, keeping alive the idea the very concept of agency implies something that can just be supported by broadening possibilities to make autonomic *choices*, earlier encountered by Tarabusi (2012). Another connection is residents experience limited employment opportunities and the resulting youth criminality as main obstacle, ‘Borse Lavoro’ gives meaning to their lives by paying them for maintenance jobs. Finally the high turnout in ‘Percorso Sicuro’ suggests the idea of improving safety by material improvements is supported among residents, even though some believe ‘*refurbishing* is useless without education’.

The most important discrepancy is that the project promotes non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion by asking residents to *actively contribute*, ‘agency’, while some residents expect the project to *solve the problems for them*. This caused a sense of disappointment among small groups of Italian residents, that translated into aggressive behavior towards the project staff and fellow residents, which greatly impedes daily activities. Finally, the biggest misunderstanding witnessed is women tell the project staff they ‘just meet during project activities’, while they also meet outside, leading me to conclude that that the interaction between the different members of the local community are more frequent than can be observed at first sight.

After answering sub-questions 1A, 1B and 1C, I can answer question 1, ‘Which representations of ‘active citizenship’ do the residents of the ethnic groups within Pescaraola use within their everyday lives?’ Colombo et al. (2011) described active citizenship as belonging to society by legal admittance, identification and involvement. Involvement, translated in *participation spheres of everyday life* in collaboration with the strong voluntary sector, within the areas of equal employment and economic opportunities, the creation of neighborhood security and the dispose of a diverse social network, together comprise the main representation of active citizenship.

Question 2 deals with the nature and quality of interethnic relations in Pescaraola, starting at sub-question 2A, ‘To what extent is there everyday contact and exactly of what kind and quality is this contact?’. During project activities residents of various ethnic groups ‘socialize’, interethnic contact is successfully promoted. Promotion arises from the believe interethnic contact in the community center is in interaction with contact in another domain, a mechanism earlier mentioned by Gijsbert, Vervoort, Havekes et al. (2010). In Pescaraola this mechanism seems to work, however it is mediated by ‘language acquisition’: residents who do maintain interethnic relations perceived as *valuable*, such as *friendships*, state *language comprehension* gave them the *confidence* diversifying their social network.

Putnam (2000) states social capital of groups is the highest when *both* bonding and bridging forms exist simultaneously. Indicators at work seem to validate this in the local context; residents that do have daily interethnic contacts, have the most *positive* evaluation about life in Pescaraola, because they feel more *safe*. Prior research of Leonard (2004) demonstrates the shift from bonding to bridging social capital is not self-evident. In local area of Pescaraola, neighborhood contact outside the community center occurs predominantly within the own group, which seems to validate this. The quality of these relations, although characterized by some gossip, can be described as good, at least good enough to organize dinners.

Barriers to contact often are *imaginative*; immigrants perceive Italians 'to be a closed group' and vice versa, besides residents are *afraid* to talk to gypsies who are supposed to be 'aggressive', even though they have never even tried to talk to them. The fact residents who actually do have interethnic relations, experience less *anxiety*, seems to validate the Contact Hypothesis (Hewstone et al., 2011).

Sub-question 2B, 'What kind of attitudes do groups have towards other groups and to what extend and in which way are those attitudes negative or even racist?' is aimed at explaining mutual perceptions. Though attitudes aren't always intentionally negative, the language of the residents is intertwined with negative essentialist discourses, while at the same time they frankly uphold they 'honestly have nothing against other ethnicities'. Most common is the reification of immigrants and gypsies in problematic categories. Paradoxically, while the project explicitly aims at promoting non-discrimination, their vision is unintentionally intertwined with essentialist representations. Firstly about gypsies, because of their impossibility to 'adhere to agreements' they have given up on them, besides they believe 'cultural values' make it impossible for Islamic men and women to join the same activities.

A surprising outcome is ethnic minorities also use *racist terms* about certain members of *one's own ethnic group* and about *other ethnic minorities*. Residents living in Pescaraola for many years, state the relative amount of free community houses increased last decade, whereby current youth has had even less contact with the higher 'social economic class', causing them to be more criminal and ill-mannered than adolescents; immigrants believe this is because 'too many ill-mannered immigrants' have come to live in the area. Obviously they do not count themselves as belonging to the misbehaving group. This mechanism might be explained by Wimmers (2008) theory about strategies of boundary making by which immigrants negotiate a higher status within host societies, two of those strategies are to redraw a boundary by limiting the domain of people included in one's ethnic category and to modify existing boundaries by challenging the hierarchical ordering of ethnic groups. The first seems to reflect the fact immigrants, especially Moroccans, do no more include 'the ill-mannered part' into 'the group of normal Moroccans'; challenging the hierarchical ordering seems to happen when for example North-Africans express condescending attitudes towards Pakistani. Here, ethnic boundaries

are the result of identification with specific groups, created through social action, which is prior encountered by Baumann (1999).

Further, Italians believe given the financial crisis they, the 'real Italians', deserve the privilege to the 'few jobs left' and want back 'their jobs'; poor and dirty jobs taken by immigrants because previously Italians didn't want them. Francesco and his conflict seeking followers make similar statements considering the project, which they believe to spend too much money on helping criminal immigrants, a mechanism prior labeled as '*reasonable racism*' by Verkuyten (1997), originating from standing up for the neighborhood. Statements also seem to validate the applicability of the 'Ethnic Competition Theory' (Coenders et al., 2002) within the local context, competition caused by unemployment, combined with the presence of many non-EU citizens, causes racist attitudes. Finally, the more residents seem to face personal problems, the more racist attitudes they seem to express. Glick (2008) named this 'scapegoating', personal shortcomings are transformed into the perceived flaws of others, who become targets of what would otherwise be self-directed aggression.

Residents job applications fail because of skin color and family name, classified as *classical racism* based on physical features by Fassin (2000). What makes the presence of racism in Pescarola extremely precarious, is that even if the economic crisis would be solved deeply rooted perceptions on the incapacity of people with a certain skin color is not likely to suddenly disappear. Finally, racist attitudes are fueled by xenophobic Italian media and even cause immigrants to mistrust officials and politicians.

On my last sub question, 2C, 'Does the nature and quality of interethnic relations differ between men, women and different generations?' I found indicators suggesting second generation immigrants report weaker ethnic identities and have a more modern lifestyle, for example visible through their western style of clothing. They do participate in ethno-cultural practices, like the Arabic course, which was however established after requests of their *parents*. Younger people told me a lower identification with the 'mother country', combined with better *language comprehension* resulted in more *interethnic friendships*. Among native Italians, older generations also maintain less interethnic contact than youth, though instead of due to linguistic barriers they explained 'Architetti di Strada' the reason is 'they are afraid of immigrants since they weren't raised with them', again suggesting the contact hypothesis might be valuable in the local context. Finally some non-Islamic residents expect Islamic women to maintain less interethnic relationships than men, because they believe 'bossy Arab men aren't allowing them'. Feminist theorists like Okin (1999) predict such mechanisms, however my observations show an equal quantity of interethnic contact among men and women, they just meet in other locations.

After answering the sub-questions I can answer question 2, 'What is the nature and quality of interethnic relations within the area, from the perspectives of both the various ethnic minority groups and the Italian majority?'. Residents maintaining valuable interethnic relations are the most optimistic and feel safest, validating the relevance of some 'classic theories' like the contact hypothesis and the

ethnic competition theory within the context of an urban, multi-ethnic deprived neighborhood, even though these theories have been criticized a lot. Further, racist practices undermine the negotiation of active citizenship of immigrants since they discourage participation in spheres of everyday life. This counts predominantly on the labor market, if respondents were employed it were always within the lowest sectors where they sometimes even receive a lower salary than Italian coworkers, and within everyday neighborhood activities, which for example get disturbed by fights.

Finally, I will answer my over-arching research question, ‘Which inclusionary and exclusionary practices on a local level promote or undermine the negotiation of active citizenship of the residents of the ethnic groups within the area of ‘Pescarola’?’. Active citizenship contains participation in certain *spheres of everyday life* (table 4), according to average socio-economic life quality standards, which only is possible to be promoted in collaboration with the *Bolognese voluntary sector*, partly compensates for typical undermining characteristics of the Italian society. Table 4 summarizes the in- and exclusionary practices derived from my daily observations:

Areas of participation ¹	Exclusionary practices undermining the negotiation	Inclusionary practices promoting the negotiation
<i>The labor market & Average living standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having insufficient connections within a system of nepotism • Immigrants being unable to apply for naturalization because of bureaucracy • Suffering the absence of successful co-residents who can function as role model in increasing the social/ employment network • Having to move within a highly competitive labor market, due to the economic crisis • Starting a criminal career path or leaving Italy • Living with big families on minimum wage in small houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding creative and alternative job opportunities • Focusing on education and language acquisition • Improving the own socio-economic status by challenging the hierarchical ordering of ethnic categories
<i>Daily neighborhood activities²</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and elderly barely leaving the house out of feelings of insecurity, especially ‘the criminal youth’, ‘the problematic immigrant’ and ‘the gypsies’ • Being hindered in daily activities by conflicts between racist Italians and Immigrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling safe to leave the house by acquisition of the Italian language and improving the structure of buildings and the area • Creating a daily structure by working as a volunteer in the area • Creating a sense of responsibility to autonomously communicate with various co-residents about local

		future improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a housing association
<i>Interethnic relations & Local friendships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding contact with unknown members of other ethnic groups because of anxiety and internalized negative perceptions of their cultural values • Avoiding the negotiation of men-women friendships because of essentialized representations of the Arab culture • Italians blaming immigrants for economic and political problems • Being influenced by the Italian xenophobic media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing neighbors by voluntarily joining the multi-ethnic project activities • Improving language comprehension • The older generation socializing with members of the own ethnic group, e.g. having dinner • The younger generation building strong friendships among them, mainly because of shared language

Table 4. Elementary practices promoting or undermining the negotiation of active citizenship

Note 1. All areas are interdependent, meaning successful negotiations within one domain result in an upward spiral within the others, and vice versa.

Note 2. E.g. taking children to the playground.

Besides the negotiation of participation by all ethnic groups, some immigrants in Pescaraola negotiate active citizenship by increasing identification with Italy, which they explain neither as *assimilation*, nor as *segregation*, but as the Arabic and Italian culture being *positively intertwined*. To achieve this, they actively advocated for an Arabic Course, which was realized, to educate children with *both* the Italian and the Arabic culture.

Discussion and recommendations

The use of a field based approach made it possible to discover actual perceptions of active citizenship in a multi-ethnic neighborhood in Bologna, thereby changing the concept of ‘active citizenship’, previously predominantly defined in a broad way, into something *tangible* (table 4), which can be used to optimize local initiatives. Moving away from the focus on *cultural identification*, which dominates the Italian public debate under the influence of actors such as the Lega Nord, my research indicates ‘active citizenship’ should be defined in terms of *socio-economic and political participation*. Moreover, the fact I conducted my research in Bologna can constitute a contribution to Dutch literature, in particular concerning civil society; the Bolognese voluntary sector is way ahead of the Dutch. Local factors, like a long, consistent and strong history of leftist politics, worldviews and communally living ethics contribute largely to the unique situation of Bologna.

Though my research validates the relevance of ‘classic theories’ on social cohesion, safety and discrimination for the local negotiation of active citizenship, such as the Ethnic Competition Theory (Coenders et al., 2002), nuances can and should be made. Firstly I expected that the extent to which racist attitudes affect active citizenship, would be best explained by the Opportunity Structure Theory (Koopmans et al., 2005). This theory assumes that when much political mobilization of the extreme right-wing parties takes place within the institutional field, less racist (violent) action groups will appear within the discursive field. Despite the aggressive campaign of the xenophobic Lega Nord, in this study Francesco and his followers constitute a violent group, characterized by racist attitudes. Secondly, Duyvendak et al. (2004) reason that mixing the socio-economic composition of a neighborhood embodies is just a shift of problems, instead of a way out of them. My research shows that the residents of Pescarola actually consider mixing a real solution, because it gives them an opportunity to use neighbors as a role model in improving their own future prospects. This finds support in the ‘Social Learning Theory’ (Bandura, 1977)’, assuming that social behavior is primarily learned by observing and imitating others.

I am aware that some critical notes can be made in regard my research, in particular in the way tried to overcome barriers encountered. Since repetition of my research is impossible, the reliability is in danger. In order to solve this, I made memos, which forced me to act systematically (Wester, 1984) and improved the inter-rater reliability, since fellow researchers can control my decisions (Boeije, 2005). The validity of my research could have been endangered by reactivity; the way the residents interacted with me and among themselves in different contexts. By personalizing my researcher-informant relationships (Berg, 2007), I tried to reach an erosion of visibility, which prevented the relationship between me and my respondents from getting too unequal. For example, I had the privilege honor to have dinners at residents homes of different ethnicities. The direct contact with the everyday environment of the research population, created a realistic insider’s view (Wester, 1984). This was beneficial for the internal validity and improved the substantive representativeness, which is

important since *statistical representativeness* was impossible (Silverman, 2010). In addition, I ensured reliability and validity by *member checks*.

Finally some recommendations for future research. My research and prior studies of Tarabusi (2012) and Riccio (2008, 2011) show the work of welfare organizations in Emilia Romagna is limited because their approach is unintentionally intertwined with essentialist representations on immigrants. For example, the perceived impossibility of gypsies to ‘adhere to agreements’ has caused ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’ to give up on supporting them. Hence, future research on such limitations is recommended. Another suggestion derives from the conclusion that mixing the socioeconomic composition of neighborhoods in order to open up isolated problem areas, appeals to both residents and project staff. Though, how to convince the municipality to actually accommodate people in different districts, and how to practical arrange this, stays an unanswered question, in need of further research within the local context of Bologna (and elsewhere). Finally, in the Netherlands, people rely still very much on the deployment of the welfare state; citizens don’t feel the need to help their fellow citizens on such a large scale as is the case in Bologna. However, seen current cuttings in welfare, social work and health care, it is recommended that future research should focus on factors, circumstances and activities that could help create a mindset of greater solidarity and like this enlarge the quality of civil society in the Netherlands.

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Annexes

1. Topic List Residents of 'Pescarola'

* Information acquired through: *Open interview/ Participant Observations*

* Name/number respondent and date:

* Gender: *male / female*

* Legal status: *documented / undocumented*

* Nationality:

* Age:

* Employment:

* Living in Pescaraola since... years.

- 1) Which representations of 'active citizenship' do the residents of the ethnic groups within 'Pescarola' use within their everyday lives?

- A) How do the residents both *understand* and *negotiate* active citizenship as well as *non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion*?

- Living in Italy

Positive aspects Italian society (general)

Negative aspects Italian society (general)

*Feeling **accepted** in Italy*

Identification with Italy

Chances in Italy

Discrimination in Italy

- Living in Pescaraola

Main aspects you are looking for in a neighborhood

Positive aspects Pescaraola (general)

Negative aspects Pescaraola (general)

*Feeling **accepted** in Pescaraola*

Identification with Pescaraola

*Daily **activities** in Pescaraola*

*Activities you **would like** to join in Pescaraola*

*Feeling **safe** in Pescaraola*

Reasons to feel **unsafe** in Pescaraola

Experience of economic problems within Pescaraola

Interdependence problems in Pescaraola

- Future prospects:

You see yourself living in Italy – reasons and conditions

You see yourself living in Pescaraola – reasons and conditions

Improvement suggestions (general)

Improvement suggestions non-discrimination

Improvement suggestions safety

- B) What are the connections and/or discrepancies between the way the residents understand non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion and the way the project ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’ promotes them?

-Positive aspects project (general)

-Negative aspects project (general)

-Conflicts

-**Expectations** of the project

-Feeling supported by the project – **reasons and conditions**

-**Improvement** suggestions

- 2) What is the nature and quality of interethnic relations within the area, from the perspectives of both the various ethnic minority groups and the Italian majority?

- A) To what extent is there everyday contact and exactly of what kind and what quality is this contact?

-Contact with **own** ethnic group

-Existence **interethnic** contact

-Kind of interethnic contact

-Quality of interethnic contact

-**Advantages** of interethnic contact

-**Barriers** to interethnic contact

-**Improvement** suggestions

- B) What kind of attitudes do groups have towards other groups and to what extent and in which way are those attitudes negative or even racist?

-Positive aspects about other ethnic groups

-Negative aspects about other ethnic groups

-**Discourses** in (implicit and explicit) use of **language** about other groups (**unintentional!**)

-Experiencing racism (examples of situations)

- C) Does the nature and quality of interethnic relations differ between men and women and among different generations?

- Existence of men-women differences

Causes

Improvement suggestions

- Existence of intergenerational differences

Causes

Improvement suggestions

- Additions:

2. Topic List Actors Involved Within the Project 'Cittadini di Pescaraola'

* Information acquired through: *Open Interview/ Participant Observations*

* Name/number respondent and date:

* Short description of function within 'Cittadini di Pescaraola':

* Gender: *male / female*

* Age:

* Nationality:

* Living in Pescaraola? *Yes / no*

- 1) Which representations of 'active citizenship' do the residents of the ethnic groups within 'Pescarola' use within their everyday lives?
- A) How does the project 'Cittadini di Pescaraola' both *understand* and *promote* non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion?

-Understanding:

Positive aspects Pescaraola

Negative aspects Pescaraola

Positive aspects project

Negative aspects project

Problems discrimination

Problems safety (by material/ maintenance/ constructional changes)

Problems safety (experience of safety/ problems concerning criminality)

Problems social cohesion

Economic problems

Interdependence problems

Opinion immigration in Italy

*Discourses in use of language by project workers (**unintentional!**)*

-Promoting:

*Most important **goals** (According to **you!**)*

How to promote non-discrimination

How to promote safety (by material/ maintenance/ constructional changes)

How to promote safety (experience of safety/ problems concerning criminality)

How to promote social cohesion

*How to promote **agency** among citizens*

How to improve the economic situation

***Interdependence** improvements*

*Improvement **current** activities*

*Suggestions **future** activities*

-Structure of the project:

Different actors involved

*Projects **activities***

***Relationships and communication within** the project (between different actors/layers)*

***Relationships and communication between** the project and external organizations (for example the community)*

Bureaucracy

***Changes** in the area so far*

***Changes** in the area **because of the project** so far*

- B) What are the connections and/or discrepancies between the way the residents understand non-discrimination, safety and social cohesion and the way the project ‘Cittadini di Pescaraola’ promotes them?

-Results so far

-Positive contact with citizens

-Difficulties so far

-Conflicts with citizens

-**Discourses** in use of **language** about citizens (**unintentional!**)

-**Improvement** suggestions

- 2) What is the nature and quality of interethnic relations within the area, from the perspectives of both the various ethnic minority groups and the Italian majority?

- A) To what extent is there everyday contact and exactly of what kind and what quality is this contact?

-Having interethnic contact **yourself** - **causes**

-About the **citizens**:

Contact with own ethnic group

Existence interethnic contact

Kind of interethnic contact

Quality of interethnic contact

Advantages of interethnic contact

Barriers to interethnic contact

Improvement suggestions

- B) What kind of attitudes do groups have towards other groups and to what extent and in which way are those attitudes negative or even racist?

-**Your** opinion about other groups

-**Discourses** in use of **language** about ethnical groups (**unintentional!**)

-**About the citizens:**

What are their attitudes (general)

Noticed racism (examples of situations)

Noticed interethnic conflicts

- C) Does the nature and quality of interethnic relations differ between men and women and among different generations?

- Existence of men-women differences

Causes

Improvement suggestions

- Existence of intergenerational differences

Causes

Improvement suggestions

- Additions: