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Abstract

This chapter aims to highlight the complexity of the Italian case in relation to immigrants' integration at work. After an initial framing aimed at tracing the political and cultural directions that accompany these processes, an attempt is made to read the Italian case as the outcome of an encounter between market-based institutional logic and community-based institutional logic. These logics guided policy choices and favoured the development of a plurality of immigrant access to the labour market. Moreover, an attempt is made to find a point of contact between institutional logics and organisational practices that develop locally in the various integration contexts. Considering the examples of the village of Riace, and a case of the market insertion of female immigrants, we highlight the extensive use of arrangements that make institutional logics less effective and deterministic.

Keywords (separated by “ - ”)

Immigrants' labour - Institutional logics - Organisational practices - Community-based model - Inclusion system

The Italian Non-model. Integrating Immigrant Labour in Practice

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and Barbara Poggio

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Immigration as a Political Issue

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AUI

Italy is heading towards its third consecutive decade of intense immigration. In these years, many of the institutional distortions that characterise the Italian labour market have intertwined with the integration of immigrants into workplaces. Among these, at least three should be mentioned: (1) a lack of investment in the skills of the employable population; (2) the accompanying phenomenon of the delocalisation of production with low investment in workers' skills; and (3) the reduction of labour-related guarantees in accordance with a neo-liberal model that would like

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15 employment to be flexible and market-orientated (Antonioli et al., 2011;
16 Cattani & Pedrini, 2021).

17 In recent decades, the neo-liberal perspective has changed the view of
18 the migration phenomenon in Italy. At the same time, due to its position
19 in the centre of the Mediterranean, Italy has over recent years become a
20 “border interface” (Schmoll, 2006), finding itself at the centre of differ-
21 ent migratory currents that also involve different types of migrants for
22 different destination countries. For years, Italian governments have
23 attempted to define and redefine “the solution” to the migration phe-
24 nomenon, trying to “fix” the problem by considering it as something
25 temporary and contingent. The proposed policy lines have never been
26 defined to include needs related to country of origin, time of arrival, wel-
27 fare, or access to the labour market, health services or protection for fami-
28 lies and minors. The prevailing perspective, particularly since 2000, has
29 been that of “controlling the flow of entry” as a policing and security
30 action. The workforce demands of the economic world are solved through
31 entry quotas, temporary entry visas and a certain tolerance towards irreg-
32 lar entries.

33 These developments present a clear testimony to the inability of the
34 Italian public administration to manage both the internal demand for
35 workforce and the emergencies arising from the economic cycles. The
36 chronic lack of manpower for the lowest jobs on the occupational scale
37 has always been the factor urging the entry and recall of workers from
38 abroad. This discordance between the actual demand and the political
39 commitment has been clearly visible in discursive practices of the politi-
40 cal forces and the media in response to breaking news. After the 2008
41 crisis, regulated flows have been drastically reduced, forcing immigrants
42 and business networks to rely on other entry channels that are much
43 more difficult to monitor, such as access without a permit, family reuni-
44 fications and tourist visas. Since then, the failure to match labour supply
45 and demand has become even more evident. Right-wing governments
46 have nurtured the idea of offering more control and more police, while
47 left-wing governments have usually loosened control, supporting services
48 and access to the labour market through funding, among other things,
49 language courses, which were definitively abolished by the populist Lega-
50 M5S government of 2018–2019. The same government also closed ports

and made the access of migrants and their rescue at sea illegal. The public 51
debate has developed in recent years around the narrative that the man- 52
agement of immigrants in Italy was an “organisational disaster” that the 53
right wing wanted to remedy by “closing every border” through the 54
police force. 55

The result of these failures is certified by the massive presence of immi- 56
grants in the poorer segments of the population. It should also be remem- 57
bered that governments have often acted with contradictory policies. For 58
example, during the Renzi (centre-left) government between 2014 and 59
2016, job security deteriorated, and agreements were made with Libya to 60
reduce arrivals by sea. At the same time, during the populist government 61
of 2018–2019, the citizenship income measure was launched to support 62
the poorest people, the largest share of whom are immigrants. But despite 63
these and other contradictions, governments have always tried to demon- 64
strate that they favour migration that is necessary for vacant jobs. 65

This inconsistency in policies and these contradictions in rules for the 66
integration of immigrants reveal two competing institutional logics:¹ one 67
aimed at following the demands of the market, which we define as 68
market-based, and another aimed at the welfare of the community and its 69
needs, which we define as community-based. These two institutional log- 70
ics are the latent patterns of material practices and values that Italy has 71
built over the decades. As a result, several contradictory practices can be 72
identified in practical solutions adopted during the past decades in both 73
scenarios; solutions that have turned into a constitutive part of immi- 74
grants’ labour integration processes. 75

The discussion presented here is supported by the review of a large 76
volume of secondary data. Documentary material we analysed contained 77
reports and documentation derived from primary data available in aca- 78
demic publications and on government agencies’ websites, official docu- 79
ments on immigrants’ labour integration, journalistic investigations and 80

¹ Thornton and Ocasio (1999, p. 804) defined institutional logics as “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality”.

81 court documents related to the Riace case.² All these field materials present
82 an ideal ground for an analysis of the contradictions, inconsistencies
83 and non-linearity of governmental actions. The institutional logic
84 approach has been chosen as a theoretical framework, as it is truly useful
85 in an attempt to understand a complex phenomenon such as the labour
86 integration of migrants.

87 **Institutional Logics** 88 **and Organisational Practices**

89 As has been shown in many studies, migration to Southern Europe is
90 perhaps the most difficult both to circumscribe and to describe. Apart
91 from a few studies that addressed specific sectors such as farming (Giarè
92 et al., 2020), home care (Scrinzi, 2018), construction (Shepherd et al.,
93 2021), manufacturing (Venturini & Villosio, 2017), and self-employment
94 (Lintner, 2018), labour integration studies reveal a dense fabric of plots
95 and relationships that people build in their daily practices which allow
96 them to encounter expected and unexpected situations, where market
97 rules are of little help. With the aim of following immigrants' trajectories,
98 we looked at how people actually cope with constraints experienced in
99 various local settings.

100 The institutional logics approach is one of several recent approaches
101 that try to bring together macro and micro perspectives to analyse complex
102 organisational situations. This theoretical framework provides an
103 insight that explains how institutions both enable and constrain action
104 (Thornton et al., 2012, p. vi). The concept of institutional logics helps to
105 show that organisations are incrementally constructed according to multiple
106 tracks, which may be linked to political choices, the historical development
107 of welfare and labour systems or the development of local expertise. Collective
108 actors, such as employment agency operators and employers' associations,
109 influence the choices of both policy makers and

² Reference is here made to a particularly successful model of integration implemented in a municipality in the region of Calabria, which was cancelled following a series of accusations brought forward by political figures and followed by actions of the judiciary against the mayor.

immigrants, as do the international regulators and the intrinsic complexity of the “migration machine” (Greenwood et al., 2002; Plsek & Wilson, 2001). Some studies have revealed the centrality of rituals and public communication in orientating policy choices (Deephouse & Heugens, 2009). Such contributions offer a dynamic view of integration services, often misleadingly represented as a stable framework. In practice, this framework is incrementally reinforced by elements that support a long-term logic of action (Reay & Hinings, 2009). The simultaneous focus on both the institutional logics and on actual practices, the latter reinforced by, for example, Nicolini et al. (2003), or Gherardi (2016), makes it possible to counterpose the rational choice paradigm with new, relational ways of exploring organisations. As Lounsbury and colleagues have pointed out, such views have paved the way for a stream of research that can be called “a practice-driven institutionalism”, which allows researchers to focus on “the collective performance of institutions as grounded in (and therefore inseparable from) the situated, emergent and generative practices that comprise institutions” (Lounsbury et al., 2021, p. 5).

Market- and Community-Based Institutional Logics

As shown in Table 8.1, the actions of the Italian government in the context of the labour market seem to follow on the one hand, a logic according to which enterprises and economic sectors are the indirect regulators of flows and entries into the labour market; and on the other hand, a logic of a solidaristic vision where access to the labour market is only one of the critical aspects of immigration. This second logic, only slightly recognisable in governmental actions, is instead widespread among NGOs, informal groups and local communities.

On a symbolic level, the market logic focuses on the difficulty of finding workers for less qualified positions, and on the need for business organisations to reduce labour costs and rules for the stability of their contracts. The community-based logic, on the other hand, recommends following the path of informality and spontaneous solidarity in various

Table 8.1 Institutional logics for immigrants' integration, adapted from Thornton (2004)

Feature	Market-based integration logic	Community-based integration logic	
Economic system	Market capitalism	Welfare capitalism	t1.3 t1.4 t1.5 t1.6
Effect of symbolic analogy	Market as priority for development	Job priority as priority to better life	t1.7 t1.8 t1.9
Source of identity	Work-based	Community-based	t1.10 t1.11
Source of legitimacy	Capital	Human values and solidarity	t1.12 t1.13
Source of authority	Enterprise needs, legislation	Personal needs, family needs	t1.14 t1.15
Informal mechanism of control	Awareness of local economic sectors and media and political narratives	NGOs, Catholic networks and informal communication about migrants' experiences	t1.16 t1.17 t1.18 t1.19
Formal mechanism of control	Laws and regulations that make migrants easy to manage (limited police monitoring of compliance with labour contracts)	Welfare, networks of local contact persons, ethnically based networks, parishes, business districts that activate people and resources to support when needed	t1.20 t1.21 t1.22 t1.23 t1.24 t1.25
Organisational form	Market-based, competitive	Ethnic-based associations, civil rights associations, cooperatives, charities, parishes	t1.26 t1.27 t1.28
Investment logic	Workforce for capital	Migrants as opportunities for a better society	t1.29 t1.30

142 social circles such as the Catholic communities, the political Left, and the
 143 non-profit sector (Ambrosini, 2011). According to the latter logic, the
 144 market is simply a stimulus to look for the best access to an occupation,
 145 on the assumption that for social and small-medium enterprises, immi-
 146 grant workers are a resource, as they will become integrated sooner or
 147 later into the local networks in cities and towns. The actual interventions
 148 are guided above all by people's needs, and their need to find security and
 149 a stable job. The best example of such reasoning is the common event of
 150 immigrant women being routed to home care services for the elderly. In

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the last 20 years, this route has been particularly used by solidarity circles, 151
which are aware of the strong demand for such services. 152

Since 2000 there have been two clear channels of access to the labour 153
market in Italy: one linked to sectoral quotas provided by the government 154
from year to year by decree, but clearly insufficient to cope with the com- 155
plexity of the economic sectors; and the other consisting of circumvent- 156
ing the rules and allowing regularisation if immigrants found any 157
employer in the territory (sometimes real employers were mixed with 158
fictitious employers). 159

The alliance between informal networks, word-of-mouth, and the 160
needs of families and businesses fuelled the attempt to circumvent 161
employment regulations, multiplying the ways in which migrants entered 162
Italian territory. Many analyses confirmed that without this massive and 163
confusing entry, it would not have been possible to meet the growing 164
demand for labour in care services and small businesses. 165

Both these logics have become radicalised in recent years. On the one 166
hand, businesses demanded, and obtained, an increasing flexibilisation of 167
employment contracts; on the other hand, the third sector went through 168
various attempts to make the community-based model profitable and 169
widespread. 170

Especially interesting is the combination of these logics in terms of 171
actual arrangements. In fact, both logics have always relied on similar 172
practices, which are not always consistent with the two opposing logics. 173
Such hybrid practices make clear the incoherence and inconsistency of 174
the Italian model. To begin with, the institutional logic orientated towards 175
the needs of the market and the capital permits entrepreneurs to support 176
certain welfare practices. At the same time, initiatives consistent with the 177
community-based logic can intertwine with business practices that are 178
helpful to immigrants. This combination has been pursued so extensively 179
that sometimes intervention by the courts has been required to mitigate 180
excesses. 181

182 **The Community-Based Model:** 183 **The Riace Ambiguity**

184 Riace is a small Calabrian village of 1825 inhabitants that has become
185 world famous thanks to its model of welcoming migrants, developed in
186 the late 1990s. The beginning of what became known as the Riace Model
187 is usually traced back to 1998, when 200 refugees from Kurdistan arrived
188 on the Calabrian coast by boat. The Città Futura Association was created
189 at the same time, to help the newly landed immigrants by hosting them
190 in old or abandoned houses whose owners had emigrated.

191 Thanks to the innovative model of inclusion developed year on year,
192 Riace was able to apply the SPRAR model for the Calabria Region (the
193 acronym stands for the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and
194 Refugees, which lasted until 2018). The novelty of this event lay in how
195 the community-based logic was adopted by a municipality in a depressed
196 and remote area. The mayor, Mimmo (Domenico) Lucano, activated the
197 system in the municipality, while also gaining some external financing.
198 The system supported micro-entrepreneurial activities in handicrafts,
199 agriculture and eco-tourism, which resulted in jobs for both immigrants
200 and locals. The Riace Model earned admiration all over the world, as it
201 not only accepted asylum seekers, but also helped them and its own
202 inhabitants to design new life paths. The widespread reception of immi-
203 grants in Riace over almost two decades has also revitalised a village that
204 was economically suffering and demographically depopulated. In 2006,
205 Mimmo Lucano was listed by Fortune as one of the 50 most influential
206 people in the world.

207 The main features of the Riace Model as introduced by Lucano were as
208 follows:

- 209 1. Local housing resources were used to support widespread reception
210 and mobility of people, in line with suggestions by many scholars (see
211 e.g. Schönfelder & Axhausen, 2003).
- 212 2. In order to cover the delays in the arrival of national funding for host-
213 ing projects, a kind of virtual currency was created and used in Riace.
214 A special banknote was created and accepted in local economic

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- activities; it was converted into euros as soon as the national funds were disbursed by the national Government. 215 216
3. Internships were used to integrate both immigrants and Riace residents into local economic activities, thus providing a new economic and social opportunity for the local citizens, who could benefit from the reception system for asylum seekers. 217 218 219 220
 4. Many immigrants and residents found employment in local workshops, revitalising trades that had faded in previous years, such as ceramics, handloom weaving and wool spinning, but also organising workshops for food conservation, milk processing, baking bread and producing chocolate. An old mill with millstones was restored and provided with modern equipment to produce olive oil. In 2018, a didactic farm was also inaugurated in Riace, where immigrants and locals could together breed animals and cultivate local products with ecologically sustainable methods. In addition, thanks to a loan of €51,000 provided by Banca Etica, several long-abandoned houses were transformed (with the permission of their owners) into tourist accommodation.³ At the same time, ecotourism initiatives were promoted. A new recycling system offered further opportunities for employment. 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234
 5. The repopulation of the village also revitalised the local educational circuit: schools at all levels (starting with daycare), recreated classes that had disappeared due to the demographic crisis. 235 236 237

In Riace, the path to work has been opened due to intense activities, which were possible without the presence of companies asking for workers. Amazingly, these activities brought together the few opportunities in the area, and from these few resources a network of relationships that had been lost was reborn. 238 239 240 241 242

I always thought that welcoming people into depopulated villages helped to revive a sense of identity. Communities where only natives live are, in 243 244

³ Banca Etica (Bank Ethics) is an Italian credit institution that aims to operate according to the principles of ethical finance. Its experience is part of The Global Alliance for Banking on Values (GABV), an independent network of major banks that operate worldwide inspired by the principles of ethical finance.

245 my opinion, not an ideal model; there is no growth, no cross-fertilisation
246 in places like these. I have always considered what we have created over the
247 years as something spontaneous and beyond borders. (Mimmo Lucano)⁴

248 Houses were empty and the local economy was paralysed. (Mimmo Lucano)⁵

249 In this context, the prevalence of community-based logic is very clear.
250 Mimmo Lucano placed the key to his interventions in the concept of
251 solidarity within a community. The creation of employment opportuni-
252 ties in an abandoned territory was possible because he managed to con-
253 vince others that the task of a community is to be ready to welcome
254 strangers. This belief probably led him to make some ambiguous arrange-
255 ments that led to him being accused in 2018 of misappropriating
256 resources for personal gain. Various media enquiries confirmed that these
257 actions were dictated by a largely symbolic approach to rules and regula-
258 tions. His commitment to the community and to the various actions
259 serving to promote the territory and various businesses came first. The
260 following excerpt is from what the judges wrote when they sentenced the
261 former mayor, together with 17 collaborators, to 13 years in prison and a
262 massive €700,000 fine.

263 [The recordings show a] predatory logic of the public resources coming
264 from the SPRAR, CAS and MSNA projects, increasingly subservient to
265 their personal appetites, often declined in political terms, and satisfied by
266 exploiting to their advantage the system of migrant reception which, from
267 being the primary and appreciable objective of those subsidies, became a
268 convenient screen behind which to conceal the conspicuous embezzlement
269 of public money that they carried out, for exclusively individual ends. (1st
270 Grade Court Sentence)

271 The judges tried precisely the “arrangements” that the solidaristic logic
272 imposes on those who act in a complex context, which includes the use
273 of public funds. With those funds, the mayor provided opportunities to

⁴ https://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2022/07/04/news/villaggio_globale_riace_ripopolato-356498761/, accessed 2022-07-28.

⁵ <https://thevision.com/attualita/riace-modello-villaggio/>, accessed 2022-07-28.

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open workshops and to create social enterprises that would strengthen inclusion and integration in the village. Some of these funds were used to buy an olive oil mill and reopen olive oil production, creating opportunities for the local population and immigrants alike. The tactic was to fill abstract official rules with actual content that was justified by traditional local practices. Even at present, when many public funds have been closed, the reputation of some of the businesses thus created in the village of Riace continues:

They learn about it by word of mouth. Among them are those who have completed their reception projects in the SAI network but don't know where to go. There are also those who are escaping from the violence of their families. An example? Last week a pregnant Nigerian woman arrived here with two children. She came here because she knew they would find an open door, because despite everything we don't leave anyone on the street. (Mimmo Lucano)⁶

This quote also confirms the institutional logic adopted, and it emphasises that the arrangements to make integration possible still take place in the area. Among these initiatives is the above-mentioned cooperative for the collection of waste for recycling, which is carried out with the help of donkeys as the streets of the village are too narrow to allow cars to pass. In this case, the organisational form is unique, but even this marks a continuing relationship between institutional logics and organisational practices.

To understand the Riace case better, it is important to point out that the creation of inclusive paths was possible because some rules, which govern the management of public funds as well as economic services of general interest, were interpreted in a broad way and/or were not completely observed. Yet it must be emphasised that the purpose was not to act illegally, but to support a system that was understood in terms of its positive effects on immigrants and the local territory. The social and economic development generated by the Riace version of the system has, despite some formal irregularities, embodied the community-based

⁶<https://www.micromega.net/riace-processo-mimmo-lucano/>, accessed 2022-07-28.

306 institutional logic through the arrangements that impacted the lives and
307 freedoms of individuals. Those arrangements are supported by a com-
308 munitarian vision:

309 It might sound like an exaggeration, but Riace has somehow challenged the
310 capitalist system with the force of irreverence and disrespect.
311 (Mimmo Lucano)⁷

312 There are still many activities going on in the Global Village of Riace.
313 The textile and carpentry workshops, the social bakery, the Human
314 Rights library and Radio Aut are still active. There is also a food bank that
315 provides each family in need with a weekly shopping voucher, and the
316 medical clinic, where three doctors examine (free of charge) both refugees
317 and residents.

318 Riace's peculiarity is not only the result of the project and the vision of
319 one person (the mayor) and a small group of his collaborators; it is also a
320 brilliant case of organisational practices that have helped to develop a
321 system of associations and cooperatives which supported the project itself.

322 **Gender and Work Integration:** 323 **A Complex Covenant**

324 Another useful case of labour integration in Italy is that relating to the
325 employment status of immigrant women. In Italy, the majority (52%) of
326 immigrants are women, which translates to 2.6 million women from 198
327 different countries and territories of the world, particularly from Romania,
328 Albania and Morocco. The percentage of employed women is slightly
329 lower at 42%, similar to the employment rate for Italian women.
330 Employment for more than half of the women is limited to three occupa-
331 tions: domestic helpers, carers and office and commercial cleaners
332 (IDOS, 2021).

333 This picture confirms the existence of a “hidden” space in which the
334 female labour force is most frequently found. This situation has been

⁷ As above.

further aggravated by the pandemic; reports confirm that women's difficulties were intensified by structural inequalities, such as horizontal segregation that is particularly widespread in Italy. At the same time, as intersectionality scholars have highlighted (Cho et al., 2013), the employment difficulties of the female workforce are compounded by the difficulties of being immigrants and by working in less visible sectors with low protection contracts.

Women are the workers most involved in processes of labour integration that we have defined as community-based, and this means they are most sought after in informal circuits that respond to the demand for home care, care services and support to businesses. In most cases, their migration route follows two flows: one by sea or across unmanned borders, and the other pseudo-legal one that allows permanent employment relationships to be established. Their first jobs are often exhausting, such as harvesting; then follows a move to urban areas and sectors where service labour is sought, such as in domestic care services and care for the elderly and disabled. In this area, too, the Italian state fails to clearly define the access processes and temporary contracts, even after recent reforms of employment contracting in a liberalist spirit. But these spaces of underpaid employment do not affect all women workers in the same way. In fact, it has been argued for many years that the slowness and cumbersomeness of the mechanisms for granting residence permits to immigrant women forces them to accept any kind of employment, which in some cases amounts to exploitation and violence.

Most immigrants (men and women) have work experience before leaving their country of origin; their enrolment into the Italian labour market is, in general, characterised by experiences in precarious contexts but for which a higher salary (compared with their national standards) is paid. This scenario is due to various circumstances such as a lack of knowledge of the language or the failure to recognise any qualifications obtained abroad (in particular, outside the borders of the European Union). These circumstances apply particularly often to foreign women who, in Italy, see their employment chances greatly reduced and are directed to specific segments of the job market (Istat, 2018).

According to a survey by Istat (2018), the work and employment paths of immigrants in Italy are characterised by an occupational downgrading,

371 and by a more general entrapment in ethnic networks, which often cre-
372 ates an obstacle to occupational careers. However, the same ethnic net-
373 works that often contribute to slowing down the employment of
374 foreigners can, in some circumstances, favour other employment paths,
375 such as entrepreneurial ones. A recent analysis conducted on the trend of
376 foreign companies in Italy disaggregated by gender shows that the entre-
377 preneurial behaviour of immigrant women is still strongly influenced by
378 the ethnic contexts of origin.

379 Colombelli et al. (2020) analysed the trend of foreign companies in
380 Italy from 2002 to 2013 and observed some elements that allow us to
381 make hypotheses about the behaviour of foreign (especially women)
382 entrepreneurs in Italy. The analyses conducted by the authors suggest that
383 female businesses led by foreign women also have the potential to push
384 other foreign women to create new entrepreneurial initiatives. Through
385 “learning-by-example” mechanisms, individuals learn new skills inspired
386 by the observation of role models with whom they can identify (Gibson,
387 2004). According to the role identification theory, however, the degree of
388 similarity between the would-be entrepreneur and the role model mat-
389 ters. The extent to which the role model inspires the would-be entrepre-
390 neur depends upon the perceived compatibility between the role model
391 behaviour and their own behavioural opportunities (Slack, 2005). It fol-
392 lows that women entrepreneurs—especially if they come from similar
393 cultural backgrounds—seem to be a source of positive inspiration for
394 other women, who see in them an example and a chance for personal and
395 professional growth and emancipation.

396 Another aspect highlighted by the research is that foreign women seem
397 more likely to develop strong bonds and connections. Positive testimo-
398 nies describe success as the result of meeting the right people at the right
399 time. These encounters, which are often connoted by relevant solidarity
400 logics, confirm that there are no pathways and/or programmes that are
401 structured by the reception systems; rather, they are the result of bottom-
402 up actions attentive to the opportunities of the moment.

403 These situations reveal a complexity that characterises the life of a
404 working woman in Italy, to which are added the burdens of being an
405 immigrant. The presence of informal welfare systems makes it possible to
406 deal with the problems related to the lack of services, but the same

informality can lead to non-compliance with labour contracts, not granting time off and the lack of full recognition of welfare rights for immigrant families and their children (Catanzaro & Colombo, 2009). These developments can never be interpreted in one way only. Ambiguous situations are in many cases attractive to women workers who can, for example, move faster in a market with a high demand for labour (Scaglioni & Diodati, 2021). Also, as sometimes happens, women workers can denounce the situation and obtain financial benefits to which they are entitled once they have the security of a work permit. One could say that these irregular practices function as compensation for the many problematic management situations encountered by women in their various insertion pathways (see also Chap. 6).

Final Remarks

As Dalla Zuanna (2013, p. 47) pointed out, it is necessary to “look at the concreteness of the (integration) process because the implicit model of migrant integration in Italy is defined as a mixture of regulations and practices that have been built up over the last twenty years”. The context described confirms the lack of a functioning system of immigration laws, and the absence of a system of procedures that would favour an effective integration of migrant citizens.

It should also be stressed that the lack of an a priori defined integration model in Italy has not entirely prevented the development of some positive examples of immigrants’ integration. Local practices have been the effective response to various situations, as we have seen in the case of Riace and women entrepreneurs. Effective adaptation tactics have had a great impact on immigrants’ labour integration without, however, ever becoming the institutional logic in the country. While policy makers have failed in recent decades to build an effective system for the integration of immigrants, the history and traditions of Italy have in some cases contributed, albeit indirectly, to the establishment of bottom-up integration pathways (especially within the labour market).

Historically, Italy appears very differentiated: a nation that remains strongly rooted in local and regional identities and traditions. While it is

440 true that the majority of immigrants in Italy are located in the productive
441 areas of the country (the north-east and north-west), it is also true that
442 the national production chain is strongly connected to small towns and
443 suburban areas, especially in provinces around large urban centres (Dalla
444 Zuanna, 2013; Di Sciullo, 2020). This aspect has allowed immigrants to
445 be territorially distributed throughout Italy, in some cases even occupy-
446 ing certain remote areas (known as fragile areas, their fragility due to the
447 lack of services and infrastructure and their geographically remote loca-
448 tion; Osti & Ventura, 2012).

449 Italy has been experimenting with the consolidation of the presence of
450 immigrant citizens whose settlement has taken on the character of ethnic
451 polycentrism (Pittau, 1999), taking into consideration different issues
452 and characteristics in different local settings. No wonder that in such a
453 situation an evident competition between two institutional logics
454 emerges. Yet multiple studies and analyses conducted in recent years have
455 revealed the richness of solutions that, rather than deriving directly from
456 these institutional logics, rely on specific local opportunities that are dif-
457 ficult to reproduce. As seen in the Riace story, and in women's access to
458 various paths to employment and job security, a fundamental role is
459 played by local arrangements and eventually by particularly relevant peo-
460 ple who become the "directors" of the various implemented actions.

461 Such arrangements are presented in Table 8.2, where we attempt to
462 map those organisational practices that put the two logics in dialogue
463 with each other, through a multiplicity of arrangements made by those
464 who pursue these institutional logics as their priority objective. In this
465 way, we hope to present a reliable description of the Italian situation that
466 is typical of the recent decades.

467 Public discourses and institutional logics fight their battles in the polit-
468 ical arena and the media, but locally they are characterised by continuous
469 agreements and arrangements which allow a slow but progressive path for
470 immigrants' integration into the Italian labour system. This obviously
471 does not solve the weaknesses of the inequality structure of the labour
472 system in Italy. Immigrants must go through all the classic routes of
473 entering at the lowest level of rights: they face precariousness, contractual
474 and wage discrimination, and lack of services and welfare. Each person
475 entering the labour market must find some kind of balance that may turn

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Table 8.2 Arrangements provided at situated organisational practices level for immigrants

Feature	Market-based arrangements	Community-based arrangements
Economic system	Support for workforce and new businesses	Norms and regulations for basic welfare
Effect of symbolic analogy	Promotion for migrants with (west-defined) "good manners"	Economic support, business and skills attainment
Source of identity	Means for housing and family re-unification	Means to support independence and ethnic-based services/businesses
Source of legitimacy	Economic aid	Community support or personal project
Source of authority	Local network and support for integration	Allowing people to be underpaid and accept precarious working contracts
Informal mechanism of control	Informal communication network for jobs, undeclared work	Application for formal solidarity projects, local commitment
Formal mechanism of control	Workaround for norms about working conditions	Formal inconsistent working contracts allowed
Investment motivation	Interest to keep companies' networks competitive and supportive	Interest to allow a soft access, including some segregation (often ethnically based)

into security and guaranteed rights over time. This final goal is supported both by those actors who support the market-based system and by those who support the community-based logic.

These arrangements are particularly useful in the Italian context because they allow the actors to use the different institutional logics in combination with the organisational context. The organisational practices seem to confirm what has already been indicated by Gherardi (2016), who highlighted the role of "agencement" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988; Callon, 2007), and "formativeness". These two characteristics of the practices underline the situated nature of actions that take place outside of established models.

These practices in the concept of agencement become a space for learning awareness that allows us to decipher the practice context and

489 understand it from the perspective of labour integration (agency). With
490 the concept of formativeness, we refer to the learning of practices that
491 immigrants perform in “constructing” in turn the conditions for integra-
492 tion. The practices of agencement and formativeness allow different life
493 histories to intertwine with the practices needed to best orientate their
494 own and others’ trajectories. It is, therefore, important to study at the
495 same time the institutional logics followed by traditional actors (legisla-
496 tors, business associations, trade unions) and those followed by the enor-
497 mous constellation of local networks (agencies, families, informal groups
498 and networks, NGOs).

499 Over the years, and through continuous tinkering, Italy has learned
500 both to cope with the limits of its non-model and to distribute competi-
501 tive advantages, in ways that sometimes privilege the fabric of the pro-
502 ductive world, and sometimes that of social networks animated by
503 inclusion intentions. In this dialectic, opportunities and constraints are
504 distributed without a precise rule. It is up to immigrant workers to deci-
505 pher these complexities, as organisational practices may sometimes foster
506 trajectories within the classic entrepreneurial world, while at other times
507 they favour trajectories that intertwine with the third sector and the
508 worlds of solidarity. Yet the overall outcome remains problematic: Italy
509 may continue to hide behind institutional logics (more market vs more
510 solidarity), turning its gaze away from the incremental opportunities of
511 the inclusion system that could guarantee a better programming of the
512 markets and a better response to the needs of the immigrant labour force.

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