



Governing Urban Diversity:

Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today's Hyper-diversified Cities

Report 2i

Fieldwork entrepreneurs, Milan (Italy)

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1. Introduction

High levels of economic growth and increasing the well-being of citizens (Fainstein, 2005; Bodaar and Rath, 2005), which are the main objectives of urban policies, are closely connected to their levels of entrepreneurship and ability to create new enterprises. In the global era, cities compete for enterprises with high economic performance and talented entrepreneurs, besides creating conditions necessary for new start-ups. The literature emphasises that cities open to diversity are able to attract a wider range of entrepreneurs than those that are relatively closed (Fainstein, 2005; Florida, 2002; Taşan-Kok and Vranken, 2008; Eraydin *et al.*, 2010). Empirical research on how economic competitiveness is connected to urban diversity, however, is quite limited and provides evidence usually only at macro level. One of the aims of this project is to close this gap with empirical evidence collected at neighbourhood level from 14 diverse cities of Europe.

Diversity has been often linked to economic success. Classic European studies like Simmel's and Sombart's, as 20th century American literature on middleman minorities (Bonacich, 1973) and more recent network studies on structural holes (Burt, 1992), maintain that some forms of marginality (even deviance) and peripherality with respect to core social networks and positions may boost innovation. This may take place because people located on the fringe can be in a good position to connect different markets, or even to create new niches to make a living in exclusionary contexts.

Though, a likewise rich literature in business studies and economic sociology also underlines the other side of the coin. For instance, Johanson and Vahlne (1977; 2009) talk about the “liability of foreignness” and the “liability of outsidership” – a set of cultural and institutional barriers limiting inter-group business collaboration and success. Thus, an effective mixed embeddedness (a situation where a business minority is positively related from a social and economic point of view with other members of the same minority and with members of the majority, see Kloosterman and Rath, 2001) can develop only under specific conditions, that include a favourable institutional arena and chances of inter-group contact.

In this respect, it is important to underline that cultural and social resources of minorities are not enough to disentangle their market position, if not contextualized in intergroup social networks and in the national and local formal and informal regulation of the economy (Ambrosini, 2005; Panayiotopoulos, 2010). The characteristics of a market (e.g. its economic and institutional entry barriers) and the bridging among minorities and the majority may selectively define the importance of diversity – e.g. ethnicity, gender, age...

This report is aimed to analyse the role of urban diversity (and of policies directly or indirectly affecting local diversity and economy) in the economic position and success of different population groups living in Milan. We focus on the economic performance of enterprises in deprived, dynamic and diverse neighbourhoods, and the conditions that support and sustain their competitiveness and longer term development. We aim to demonstrate the role relationships between urban diversity and the success of entrepreneurs. More specifically, we want to explain and document the reasons why some neighbourhoods provide conditions for individuals or groups to strengthen their creative forces and enhance their economic performance.

In particular, the report firstly examines the entrepreneurs, who start their businesses in diversified neighbourhoods, and the factors that define their economic performance. It

might be expected that factors like the ethnic background of the entrepreneur, his/her age, family background, gender, education and previous experience are important variables in determining the success of their enterprises. These factors mediate the influence of diversity on the neighbourhood and city level. Second, it explores the main motivations of entrepreneurs and assess whether neighbourhood diversity is important for starting their business, where they are located now. Third, it evaluates the market conditions that are important for the economic performance of entrepreneurs. Fourth, the report evaluates the role of policies and measures at different levels and the institutionalisation of such policies.

The evidence on these issues can be reached with concrete research questions below, which will constitute the focus in the chapters of this report:

- (1) What are the main characteristics of the entrepreneurs and their business? What are the evolutionary paths and the fields of activity? What are the physical conditions and the ownership pattern of their offices/production sites/shops? (Chapter 2)
- (2) What were the main motivations of entrepreneurs for establishing a business? What is the importance of neighbourhood diversity for starting their business where it is located now? Why did he/she select this line of business and from whom the entrepreneur has received support in different forms in starting this enterprise? (Chapter 3)
- (3) What are the success and failure factors important for the economic performance of enterprises? What is the current level of performance and how did it change? To what extent does the diversity of the neighbourhood play a role in economic performance? What are the long-term plans of entrepreneurs? Do they have any plans to change size, market and business strategies in order to reach higher levels of competitiveness? (Chapter 4)
- (4) Which policies, measures and organisations contribute to the performance of enterprises? What are the contributions of membership to various initiatives on the performance of enterprises? What do the entrepreneurs want from policy makers at different levels? (Chapter 5)

These questions deserve a specific attention in a national context, like the Italian one, where small entrepreneurship has an almost unique role in the European context: in many European countries, talking about small business means talking about a limited and poorly profitable segment of urban and national economies (OECD, 2010; Panayiotopoulos, 2010). This is not the case of Italy, where the number of employees and the added value produced by micro enterprises are the highest in Europe (Eurostat, 2011), as the entrepreneurs' rate (Istat, 2015a). Since micro enterprises are the entry door to self-employment for many minorities, in Italy this means that they enter a field significantly guarded by “core” social groups (typically, native adult males). This does not necessarily mean that the access to entrepreneurship is particularly hard (sectors with low entry barriers, requiring poor capital and skills, are usually accessible, even though success is far from granted). Though, this means that competition and cooperation with natives may be frequent. Thus, it is interesting to understand how dynamics of cooperation, competition and (in case) substitution may root inter-group production chains or confrontation and blaming against minorities perceived as “intrusive”.

This is even more relevant in the case of Milan, one of the liveliest economic contexts of the whole country – even though hit by common problems of competitiveness well before

the crisis (Cucca and Ranci, 2013). The local labour area of Milan (an economic area a bit larger than the official metropolitan area) produces 13,6% of the national value added – the highest in Italy (Rome, that ranks second, produces 8,2%) and the third highest per capita (Istat, 2015b). Milan ranks first among the Italian local economies also for exports (16,1 % of the Italian exports), cultural economy and advanced services (Istat, 2015b).

Nevertheless, the Italian society and economy were hit particularly hard by the recession (Bigos et al. 2014; Gabos *et al.* 2015), and Milan was no exception, even though the local economic fabric was equipped to deal with the crisis better than other areas (an average income among the highest in Italy supported the domestic demand; a good degree of internationalization and innovation favoured a more evident resilience of the local economy), the evidences of an economic recovery are still limited and volatile.

Recent studies from the Chamber of Commerce of Milan (Camera di Commercio di Milano 2015a) show that more than half of local entrepreneurs are dissatisfied with the performance of their business (the peak was reached in 2013, while in 2011 the dissatisfied were less than 40%), even though 1/3 of them think that there will be a future improvement (the share was 11% at the end of 2012).¹

The study areas we selected in the Northern districts of the Municipality of Milan – as already mentioned in previous research (Angelucci *et al.*, 2014; Barberis *et al.*, 2014) – are characterized by a meaningful plurality of populations (by age, social class and origin), with some relevant concentration areas of international immigration, and also some areas of high entrepreneurial development – in particular the neighbourhoods Loreto and Padova (in the decentralization area 2, along the north-east direction) (Riva and Lucchini, 2014).

As we will explore in Section 2.1., Milan proves to be quite attractive for foreign entrepreneurs – and this includes both the high-end economic sectors like finance and fashion and the immigrant petty business. In the period 1997-2013 Chinese, Egyptian, Bangladeshi, Moroccan and Peruvian entrepreneurs have been the most active foreign businesspersons (Riva and Lucchini, 2014). Many of the new firms opened in these 15 years have been located in the Northern part of the city (Chinese, Egyptians) or in the North-Eastern neighbourhoods (Bangladeshi, Peruvian), while Moroccan (as Romanian and Albanian) firms are more evenly spread throughout the whole city (Riva and Lucchini, 2014). This is partly related to the settlement of immigrants in the city (that provide customers for ethnic businesses; direct and/or network-related information to entry the local markets), but also to the local built environment, that provides opportunities for quite cheap facilities in frequented areas.

Within Northern Milan, we decided to focus on an area with a significant and dynamic business community and also a high share of immigrant residents and entrepreneurs (Via Padova) and another one, mainly residential and more mixed in terms of business characteristics (Niguarda). This choice was aimed to connect results to previous studies on diversity, social cohesion and inhabitants (Barberis and Angelucci, 2015), and to give a more nuanced view on Milan's business landscape.

1 The firms that are more likely to close are micro enterprises (especial artisan businesses), active in the services (especially trade – see Camera di Commercio di Milano 2015b) with limited incomes.

Neighbourhood diversity will be a red line throughout the chapter, to analyse how (if) it is a relevant factor for the start-up of new businesses. This area can be considered as one of the most diversified in Milan: first, it has one of the highest shares of foreign residents, that account for 26.2 per cent of the inhabitants (mainly Egyptian, Chinese, Bangladeshi and Filipino citizens), including some concentration areas. For example, among the 36,000 inhabitants of Via Padova neighbourhood – one of the focal points in our research non-Italian citizens are up to 34 per cent, and as many as 49 per cent among the minors of age.

The area is also mixed in terms of family structures, age and income. A generally young-to-adult immigrant population lives side by side with Italian elderly: 65+ make up 21 per cent of the population in the area, while minors are some 15 per cent. Also, in this area 45.7 per cent of household is single-person.

As we showed in Barberis and Angelucci (2015), Northern Milan is home to quite a number of families in transition (new wedlock, parents with new-borns, single parents, divorced...) thanks to the mix of low housing and living costs and good connections with the city centre and the more peripheral areas.

The interviews were balanced to cover a wide range of social and business characteristics, basically in terms of sectors and entrepreneurs' characteristics. We looked for (a) traditional and old petty shops (e.g. groceries and stationers'), possibly run by experienced Italian businesspersons; (b) immigrant businesses, covering main nationalities mentioned above, but also different generations and markets (basically: ethnic products for coethnic customers, or for an Italian / mixed clientele; immigration-related services for immigrant customers; open-market products / services for a general customer base – see Chapter 4 for details); (c) young entrepreneurs as a potentially weak (but also innovative) segment of the business population, that is not so frequent in Milan (as shown in Tables 1 and 2); (d) cultural entrepreneurs, as a specific form of innovative business possibly more sensible to diversity (but also potentially challenging it due to gentrifying effects); (e) entrepreneurs active in the social economy, to analyse the economic role non-profit organizations that may employ quite a number of persons cognizant diversity as a potential target of their business.

The fieldwork was conducted between September and December 2015. The 41 interviewees were sampled in different ways. At first, using the contacts developed during the previous research phases (Angelucci *et al.*, 2014; Barberis *et al.*, 2014; Barberis *et al.*, 2015): we had contact with different local actors and stakeholders (inhabitants, associations, institutions) – including our policy platform. They provided a first set of suggestions on potentially relevant economic actors, that was later complemented with information from two background interviews to a labour consultant and a trade association.

Our knowledge of the study area allowed to contact entrepreneurs in selected sectors autonomously, and they usually accepted the interview, with a high success rate. Finally, the sample was completed with chain-referrals provided by previous interviewees.

2. The entrepreneurs and their businesses

There is a growing literature on the link between diversity and entrepreneurship, in different scientific fields such as sociology, economy, management and geography (Alexandre-Leclair, 2014). The more recent literature, in particular, focusses the link

between economic performance of cities and regions and diversity (Nathan and Lee, 2013), where diversity can boost innovation and competitiveness (Fainstein, 2005; Eraydin *et al.*, 2010). In hyperdiverse urban context, the intersection of a plurality of diversities located in different kinds of urban contexts may turn into competitive chances.

Specific characteristics of the entrepreneurs – in terms, among the others, of ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, social class, age, beliefs, life-styles (Baycan-Levent *et al.*, 2003; Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013) – can make room to creativity and lateral thinking, creating new market niches or transforming traditional ones.

Individual features are also matched with the socio-economic networks where the entrepreneurs are embedded, at local level but also at transnational level (in case bridging between distant locales). In the post-Fordist economy, localities (and their connections) represent an engine of new wealth: the need to overcome information asymmetries becomes essential, so that personal networks can play a relevant role in circulating information and know-how (Storper and Scott, 1995).

Though, it is worth noting that a number of factors influence how much diversity can become a positive asset. An excess of focus on cultural factors and the supply-side in the structuring of markets underplays the role of structural factors and interactive processes (Engelen, 2001; Barberis, 2014).

We can mention at least two: the societal reception (Portes, 1995) and the institutional context (Rath, 2000) – including the regulation of markets (Engelen, 2001). Also, these processes do interact, in the frame of rescaling (Brenner, 2004), that saw the territorial redistribution of power and economic processes as a continuing interplay between social and economic forces and related instituted processes.

As for the *institutional context*, the new economic centrality of places reshaped Statehood: local actions gained more and more importance, with a rescaling of economic policies as much as of policies targeting specific social groups (e.g. migration policies, see. Varsanyi, 2010). Diversity, and entrepreneurial success are associated to institutional openness (Mosk, 2005; Florida, 2004) and to the chances of socio-economic upward mobility (Blanes and Martin-Montaner, 2006; Faustino *et al.*, 2009).

This links institutional contexts with *societal reception*: diversity may be connected to inequality and to discrimination. So, entrepreneurship can also be a defensive strategy against the lack of other chances: in this case, business activism is boosted, but the formal and informal barriers to access more profitable economic segments make diverse firms less successful.²

Those features are to be taken into account in our case study, since Italy lacks most of the more positive features associated to a favourable economic outcome of diversity – e.g. easy upward mobility, clear regulations, skill match (Barberis and Violante, forthcoming). So, the recent growth of immigrant firms during the crisis, when native businesses shrunk (Idos, 2015) it is not necessarily an evidence of a good market integration: independent employment may be due to processes of informalization of dependent employment (Panayiotopoulos, 2010) (e.g. transforming an employee into a business partner/supplier

2 For an interesting case in Milan, see Marzorati and Quassoli (2012).

can increase flexibility), or can be related to the lack of job opportunities – as a way to try an upward mobility not possible with internal careers as much as to obtain a permit of stay (that in Italy is strongly related to the labour position) in a period of unemployment.

It is an open issue if Milan, as a particularly dynamic context in Italy, can overturn negative factors in place-specific positive conditions. For this reason – in this and in the following chapters – we will particularly stress the characteristics of the entrepreneurs in association with other relevant factors, i.e. socio-economic networks they are embedded in, societal reception at neighbourhood level, institutional contexts and market positions.

2.1 Characteristics of the entrepreneurs

Tables 1, 2 and 3 portray some basic indicators on the business structure of Milan, compared to other territorial levels. Tables 1 and 2 shows that Milan is a context particularly positive for immigrant self-employment. Obviously, this is related to the highest share of foreign residents in the area, but the analysis of the entrepreneurship rate³ confirms it: in the province of Milan, foreigners' entrepreneurship rate is 9.3 (2014) vs. 7.9 at national level, that mirrors at a distance the rate of the population as a whole (13.2 vs. 11.2).

Table 2 shows also that Milan economy is mostly tertiary, but that foreign entrepreneurs (Table 3) have some ethnic specializations, especially in construction and trade. Those are the sectors where a “survival” entrepreneurship, as described above, may be more frequent, characterized by a poor self-employment in a cut-throat competition,

Table 1. Share of some categories among self-employed in active enterprises, 2013

	Italy	Milan
Foreign citizens	6,4	9,9
Young (15-29)	5,9	5,1
Women	30,0	30,9

Source: Istat – Imprese – Struttura (dati.istat.it)

Table 2. Business indicators in Italy, Lombardy and Milan

	Italy	Lombardy	Milan
1) % of artisan business	26,5	31,0	23,4
2) % of businesses run by young entrepreneurs	9,8	8,8	8,0
3) % of businesses run by female entrepreneurs	22,3	18,8	17,4
4) % of businesses run by foreign entrepreneurs	9,4	11,1	13,9
5) % of individual businesses	60,0	50,0	40,0
6) % of manufacturing enterprises	10,3	12,8	10,9
7) % of construction enterprises	15,0	17,1	13,8

³ It is calculated as the share of self-employed on the resident population in working age (15-64).

8) % of trade enterprises	27,5	24,1	25,1
9) % of service enterprises	32,5	40,3	48,9

Sources: indicators 1-5, Camera di Commercio, 2015c (data at 1st trimester 2015); indicators 6-9 Camera di Commercio, 2015d (data at 2014).

Table 3. Share of active enterprises per economic sectors – selected groups and sectors in Milan, year 2014

	Youth	Women	Foreigners
Manufacturing	4,7	14,0	8,1
Construction	11,9	5,6	25,7
Trade	10,0	18,8	16,4
Total	8,9	17,5	13,7

Source: Camera di Commercio, 2015d

The purposeful sampling of the interviewees was meant to have a control over some basic features, relevant to both mirror the diversity of businesspeople in the city (as reported in the tables above) and in our study area, and to cover sectors likely differently related to neighbourhood diversity.

As for the characteristics of the entrepreneurs, we basically focussed on age, gender, citizenship and ethnic background. Those are the main characteristics of diversity considered in the national and local statistics and analyses, considered also as potentially weak groups. At the same time, their position at the fringe of the local business structure (the young, the immigrants and the women are all under-represented among entrepreneurs if we consider their share in the whole population) can intertwine fragility with the exploration of innovative entrepreneurial strategies to break out and achieve a good market and social position.

In particular, we interviewed 20 males and 21 females. The age groups were quite represented: 9 under 35 (we selected this large age group as “youth” since legally this is the age considered in youth entrepreneurship programmes); 29 adults (aged 35-64); 3 elderlies (65 or more), selected to provide also a long-span view on the changes in the study area and its economy.

Among our interviewees, 19 are native Italians (including those with an experience of internal migration), while other 5 are naturalized Italians. The last 17 are foreign nationals and – including the naturalized Italians – they provide a good representation of the plurality of migration paths to Milan: 10 countries of origin, with a higher share of those from Egypt (3 Egyptian citizens and 3 naturalized Italians), Peru (5 Peruvian citizens) and China (3 PRC citizens). We also included some interviewees from EU (France and Germany) and other countries in the global North (e.g. Japan and Switzerland).

Finally, we considered also the business location, to provide a nuanced view of the business landscape in Northern Milan: 28 interviewees are active in the *zona di decentramento* 2 (where the area of Via Padova is located), while 13 in the *zona di decentramento* 9 (where Niguarda is placed).

2.2 Characteristics of the businesses, their evolutionary paths and core fields of activity

The characteristics of the business are obviously influenced by our purposeful sampling, that targeted varied business niches to analyse the role of diversity in them. Re-aggregating main groups according to their economic sector, interviews are grouped as follows:

- Manufacturing and constructions: 4
- Trade and other services alike: 22
 - *Whose food services*: 9
- Social economy (education, human, social work and social housing): 7
- Cultural industries⁴ (arts, entertainment, publishing): 8

As typical in many urban contexts – including Milan – there is a strong role of tertiary businesses, which are particularly relevant among our interviews. Half of the interviewees are active in food catering (e.g. restaurants, bars, kebab and pizza shops) and various kind of retail shops (grocery, bread, clothes, stationery). Though, we considered also creative businesses in the cultural economy (e.g. theatres, publishing houses, artists and art galleries) and in the social entrepreneurship (associations, cooperatives and individual professionals working in educational, housing and other social programmes).

We can also try to classify these firms according to the role diversity plays in their market position, relating the characteristics of the entrepreneurs with the characteristics of products and clients – with a classification based on Ambrosini (2005) and reported in Tabel 4.

Table 4. A classification of ethnic markets

	Product/service	
Customers	Ethnic	Mainstream
Ethnic	(a) Ethnic business (e.g.: ethnic catering targeting co-ethnics)	(b) Intermediary business (e.g.: travel agencies specialized in flights to/from migration countries)
Mixed	(c) Extended ethnic business (e.g. ethnic catering targeting co-ethnic and mainstream customers)	(d) Proximity business (e.g. convenience stores)
Mainstream	(e) Exotic business (e.g. import of ethnic handcraft)	(f) Open business (e.g. bars run by immigrant entrepreneurs)

4 Cultural industries “include television, radio, the cinema, newspapers, magazine and book publishing, music recording and publishing industries, advertising and the performing arts. These are all activities the primary aim of which is to communicate to an audience, to create texts” (Hesmondhalgh, 2002)

Source: own adaptation from Ambrosini (2005)

In particular, in our case:

- a) A very limited number of interviewees focus on a specific *ethnic or cultural niche* (4): we include here 3 businesses activated by immigrants and directed to their ethnic community, and an ideologically committed publishing house that produces books targeting a specific cultural community;
- b) 2 firms provide *intermediation* services for immigrants (money transfer and travel agency);
- c) 5 can be defined as *extended ethnic* businesses, where the ethnic catering is meant to have a mixed customer base (both ethnic and non-ethnic);
- d) 2 are *proximity* businesses, open by migrants, with no ethnicized products, attracting a mixed customer base (even though quite dependent on coethnic clients);
- e) 2 can be somehow classified as *exotic* businesses, that use cultural elements from their national backgrounds to access local customers (in both cases, they are non-native artists using cultural elements from their motherland in their artworks, that are meant to a Western customer base);
- f) The other 26 firms can be defined as open businesses, targeting a mainstream client base with mainstream products – even though with some nuances. Most of the social enterprises, for example, have the goal to reach a wider public, but do actually target some specific disadvantaged groups, while some others do have a specific social class customer base (e.g. artists, craftspeople and some professionals targeting high spenders) or a more or less explicit gender orientation (e.g. a herbalist and a toy producer – both females – targeting mostly female clients).

This classification starts to tell something also about the hyper-diversification of social and economic niches – that is in the specific intersection of diverse groups, categories and lifestyles (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013). Actually, quite a number of enterprises mirror a pluralization of personal and social paths: from the internal migrant from Southern Italy converted to Islam that operates in a religious-oriented catering business to the retired physician with a passion for woodwork that turned his retirement spare time into a new job.

All the 41 studied enterprises can be considered micro-firms: none of them has more than 15 employees, while some (mainly: professionals in the cultural industries and small shops) have none. On average the number of business partners, employees and family co-workers is lower than 3. This feature is consistent with the Italian and local business landscape, where more than 90% of firms are micro-businesses. Besides a large ethnic restaurant, firms with more collaborators are non-profit ones (by law, cooperatives have to have at least 3 partners), that enjoy specific regulations.

“The cooperative society has founding members and working partners. We are 5 founding members and 3 working members with a contract. B-type cooperatives have to employ 30% of staff from disadvantaged groups. Since July we have 2 interns from an association of disabled. We create jobs, and the Province subsidizes” R29 (35, F, Italian, Social Cooperative)

At least 5 interviewees maintain that they had to cut the number of employees as a consequence of the crisis. Related to this, we have to consider also the use of a certain degree of informality. No less than 6 interviewees explicitly or implicitly mentioned they are resorting to informal labour or other informal arrangements (e.g. avoiding the VAT registration). What is more, this practice seems enacted not just by low-skilled, poorly

profitable firms in highly competitive markets, but also by quite successful businesses in the cultural and social economies, and in relatively high-end handicraft markets. Informality, and employment off the books, are meant to cut costs (taxes and social security in particularly), but also to achieve a certain degree of flexibility (e.g. having faster and cheaper hirings and dismissals).

“Our rule is somehow against contracts, we had to use special regulations: I’m the only regular employee with a part-time open ended contract, while the others are project workers [...] they are paid with a payment system associations are allowed to use – a kind of refund [...] We hire a lot off the books. We try to involve women we know, but hiring them officially is hard because they have no real qualifications” R28 (65, F, Italian, Association for social advancement)

Italy as an official estimate of its underground economy, calculated by Istat (2011).⁵ In general, the crisis is not clearly correlated with the share of informal labour (also due to the effect of large migrant regularizations that made hundred thousands of workers enter the official statistics), even though there is evidence of a recent slight growth. This is less the case of Region Lombardy (where Milan is located), that shows an increase of informal labour arrangements especially at the beginning of the crisis. Females, migrant, young and elderly workers, self-employed, with limited cultural capital are more likely to be inserted in the underground economy (Istat, 2015d). The sectors where undeclared work are more common are family services (54,9% in 2013), art and entertainment (22,5%) agriculture (22,3%), hotels and restaurants (16,5%) and constructions (14,5%).

Table 5. Share of informal labour on total employment

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Employees	11,6	11,8	11,6	11,4	11,6	11,6	11,8	12,1	12,2
Self-employed	14,5	14,4	14,5	14,6	14,4	14,1	13,9	13,8	14,3
Total	12,4	12,5	12,4	12,2	12,3	12,3	12,4	12,6	12,8
Lombardy	9,8	10,4	10,8	10,7	10,0	9,2	9,1	9,5	9,6

Source: dati.istat.it – national accounts

As for the duration of business operations, we have both very young and very old firms: approximately one third opened three years ago or less (from young Italian skilled professionals to intermediation businesses), while some ¼ have been open for more than ten years: this is especially the case of some Italian proximity shops or cultural enterprises (as for the latter, also with a significant change in the shareholders in the years). The other firms are in the middle and include very different types of businesses, from ethnic and exotic to open ones.

Besides those basic features, we can identify some preliminary characteristics of studied firms, that differentiate not only their market position, but also the role their business plays

5 See also Orsi, Raggi and Turino (2012). Underground economy “is defined as the production in legal activities that is deliberately concealed from the public authorities to avoid payment of taxes or compliance with regulations” (Istat, 2015c: 1). Besides undeclared work, it includes also under-reporting of taxes and revenues. Underground economy is calculated by Istat as an estimate based on matching and comparing different sources (e.g. surveys and national accounts).

for our interviewed entrepreneurs. For example, for approximately one on six interviewees the studied business is not the main source of income.

It is either the formalization of a hobby / personal interest, or a complementary income on top of other personal or family revenues, often from dependent employment. This is to be taken into account because implies a “way out” in term of economic and emotional investment. In two directions: one the one hand, some are experimenting and have a safe way back in case of failure; some others do have a job – they are poorly attached to – whose revenues are invested in more risky, but also more satisfying and engaging businesses.

“I work as an educator in a cooperative society. Some years ago I also started to work as a freelance, offering labs on self-expression. In particular, I work as a drama therapist [...] Though, it is always hard to understand if the projects go on for a while, so it is hard to have just this job under these conditions” R32 (28, F, Italian-Egyptian origins- Freelance drama-therapist)

Anyway, for most interviewees the opening of their business is the last step of a career in a sector (and/or passion for an activity), that started with the creation of expertise in the dependent employment (or, in few cases, in education and training) and the accumulation of an economic and social capital.

“I have worked as an employee, always in a food shop. After three years I became a business partner and we opened a new branch. Then, I took over that branch, and now it is something different” R17 (37, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, Kebab shop)

The few reporting more complex business careers – with opening and closing down of at least a couple of other firms in different sectors – are international migrants. Failing attempts seem based on inadequate information and unrealistic business plans.

“The place I chose for the pizza shop was on two levels. Though, the owner of the first floor didn't allow to install the vent. So, the shop was closed for a long time. Later on, I talked to a friend – he was an hairdresser – and I understood he was really pissed off with his boss. So, I considered to give him a part of my shop: – We can do this business together. I set it, and you manage – In the end I managed it for two years [...] Later on I opened a shop close to here, but it was unsuccessful. It was a huge loss. It was again a hairdresser's.” R40 (46, M, Egyptian, Barber's)

2.3. The location and site/s of the enterprise

Some $\frac{3}{4}$ of interviewees are renting their business site. Since some work at home (artists and artisans) and some have no single location (e.g. a peddler and a singer/dancer that work in different clubs), the owners of their business site are very limited (and all native Italians). Some $\frac{3}{4}$ of them also live in the neighbourhood. At least ten entrepreneurs were not living in the neighbourhood when they rented their business site, even though half of them moved afterwards for convenience, in order to be closer to their work and minimize commuting. This is especially the case of immigrant entrepreneurs.

“I live 150 mt. far from here. I looked for a home close-by for one year and half, in order to be near my shop” R17 (37, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, kebab and pizza shop)

The choice of the location is not so connected to a real business plan about potential customers. Though, immigrant entrepreneurs living in another neighbourhood are less represented in open businesses and more in ethnic, proximity and intermediary businesses. For many interviewees, opening in our case area was a good deal due to quite cheap rents and the availability of vacant facilities with desired characteristics – both in terms of housing and business facilities. Nevertheless, ethnic networks may have worked in circulating information on such good deals.

Especially for the area of Via Padova, in a partly downgrading area that attract also migration and other weak social groups (see Barberis and Angelucci, 2015) due to cheap housing and good connections, business opportunities aimed to serve a new and growing population mix can partly revitalize the local economy. Vacant shops are reopened, and a share of entrepreneurs move in the area, becoming itself a consumer base for the local economy. A (cheap) economy develops and can ground future improvements.

“According to the location the cost of a market stall varies: there are places where you earn € 1000 per day. In Via Padova stalls cost € 3000 [per month] since it is a neighbourhood where people cannot afford a 500-euro dress. It is a poor customer base, earnings are limited.” R13 (35, M, Moroccan, Peddler)

The few that explicitly mention they have selected the area due to its characteristics are usually social entrepreneurs (working on urban blight for their own choice or as winners of public tenders for urban renewal projects) and some cultural entrepreneurs that appreciate diversity as an inspiration for their creativity. So, not rarely the latter decided also to live in the area to fully enjoy neighbourhood diversity.

“Before we lived in [neighbourhood in the Eastern part of Milan]. Though, they were all Italians there – elderly, Italian families with children – and I didn't like it so much. While here there are many artists, since the area is not expensive and it is close to the centre.” R37 (40, F, Japanese, Freelance artist)

2.4. Conclusions

The intersection between entrepreneur's diversity, market diversity (in terms of customers and products/services) and neighbourhood diversity provides some room of manoeuvre for the economic valorisation of diversity. Notwithstanding the emergence of significant ethnic communities, the leeway for strictly ethnic business seems more limited, with a number of entrepreneurs with different backgrounds targeting a more mixed customer base.

If this is achieved by just “breaking in” into mainstream, existing and consolidated (and in some cases shrinking) market niches, the success may be short lived, and strongly curtailed by the aftermaths of the crisis. Though, “breaking out” into new market niches requires more risks, human, social and economic capitals: diverse markets – at least in the Italian case – are largely unexplored and their profitability is to be seen yet. A safety net made up by other revenues and/or family resources is a necessary support to venture in markets with mixed customers and products.

In this respect, more diverse neighbourhoods can cushion the risks by providing a plural potential customer base with different needs. Where and when new populations succeed in impoverishing and vacant neighbourhood, they can contribute to neighbourhood revitalization: even though new social groups (migrants, families in transition – see Barberis

and Angelucci 2015) are not big spenders, their arrival and growth can boost new entrepreneurship.

New businesses can both target diverse population and contribute to such diversity (when entrepreneurs move to the neighbourhood), but also “exploit” this diversity as a lively context for high-end ventures; furthermore, neighbourhood diversity can be a context to experiment innovative services and products, at least in two ways. On the one hand, they seem to provide low-cost facilities for new enterprises; on the other hand, public and private investment in renewal may take into account diversity: with the growth of new public management practices, this can boost a social entrepreneurship targeting diversity and social cohesion.

3. Motivations to start a business and the role of urban diversity

3.1 Introduction

As hinted above, small- and medium-sized entrepreneurship (and micro-businesses in particular) are the backbone of the national and local production model. Thus, differently from other countries, where urban entrepreneurship is more marginal, establishing a business in Italy may mean entering the core of economic structure – that is accessing a field controlled also by mainstream economic actors. For example, Italy is one of the few countries with a high rate of both native and immigrant entrepreneurship (OECD, 2010). In a national context characterized by limited chances of upward social mobility tied to the features of the labour markets and family relations (Causa and Johansson, 2010), external careers (i.e. opening an own business instead of gaining a promotion as employee) are a quite common way out (Barberis, 2008).

For marginal or disadvantaged social groups, this may be particularly relevant, since direct and indirect forms of discrimination can block upward mobility even more. Their success may be related to the structuring of an adequate mixed embeddedness, for different reasons:

- a) the complex Italian bureaucracy (possibly quite “diversity-unfriendly”) may require a specific linking social capital⁶ to comply with needed regulations;
- b) the downward assimilation of relevant disadvantaged groups (e.g. youth and immigrants) may be not enough for the sustainability of an in-group market niche, thus requiring to target more mainstream or mixed customers and products/services;
- c) the strong presence of mainstream economic actors in small entrepreneurship is likely to require a good level of interaction with natives – from suppliers to landlords to competitors and other business partners;
- d) mixed markets – the breaking out from both in-group niches and open markets – may require a combination of networks, resources and expertise that may take place just with an intergroup contact.

In this light, we will explore the motivation, localization and selection of business lines by our interviewed entrepreneurs, analysing also the sources of information, support and capital formation that may help to overcome asymmetries and disadvantages in the social and economic capitals needed to access the local business world.

6 I.e. the ability to connect with local institutions – see Woolcock (2001).

3.2 Motivations for establishing a business

The motivating factors behind the choice to start a business are quite plural among our interviewees. Such motivations are related, among the other factors, to the nature of business they established, personal characteristics and kinship networks. We divided our interviewees in 4 main motivations groups.

(1) *Passions and hobbies*

Many interviewees state that their passion with their job was the first motivation to start their business up.

Some of them caught the opportunity to transform their hobby into a job thanks to different forms of capital accumulation (retirement from a remunerative work; in-work capital accumulation as employees in related sectors; support from kinship networks).

“...because I love wood passionately since I was a child. When I was seven my dad gave me a box containing the tools for woodcarving. That was the moment when I felt in love with wood.” R2 (65, M, Italian, Wood artisan)

This group of entrepreneurs is mainly made up by people working in creative business in culture, art and handicraft sectors. They are both native Italians and immigrants (especially second generations), with different ages: though, they share a frequent use of the word “passion” to refer to their business, that is actually how they experience their work. This means that their business is strongly connected to their personal and social identity; it hasn't just an instrumental value (make a living in a profitable business), but they feel a personal attachment that allow them to survive difficult situations and relevant business risks.

(2) *Activism*

A specific subset of interviewees motivated by their leaning for altruism and social activism. This is the case of entrepreneurs working in the social economy, whose personal interest for social activism becomes a job that is aimed to be useful for the community. This motivation doesn't affect only the choice of the sector they are engaged in, but also the way their business is structured: partnerships are very frequent, often within cooperative societies. In this case interviewees are mainly young Italian adults and, usually, this kind of business is started up by a groups of friends who share the interest for social issues.

“The idea was to work together with my friends, providing us a remuneration, but at the same moment doing something good for social cohesion.” R29 (35, F, Italian, Social cooperative)

(3) *Kinship networks and family legacy*

The second group motivates their business with family history and kinship relations. At least five interviewees have taken over a business started from a relative (usually a parent). Some of them have replaced their relatives in business management, others started from an existing family business to create something new and different. Most of these businesses are family-run restaurants and bars, with a large representation of immigrant entrepreneurs.

“My dad is a chef and I followed him. He has been living here for 22 years, he started peeling potatoes. He's a crackerjack.” R19 (20, F, Chinese, Italian-Chinese restaurant)

As a motivation, kinship ties have sometimes tricky consequences: they can be seen not only as enabling (providing resources and skills) but also as constraining. The social pressure on the to-be entrepreneur may be particularly strong, motivating self-employment as a status-symbol of success for relatives and other acquaintances. The fear to disappoint familial expectations can be a relevant source of stress. So, sometimes the opportunity to take over the family business is not perceived from the entrepreneurs as an opportunity but as a trap, an inevitable destiny they can't escape. Interviewees with this “motivation” and problems are both native Italians and (more likely) with an immigrant background. They usually share a younger age: likely, the blocked mobility and the hard access to labour market for younger generations – especially during the crisis – pushed them to accept what they consider a trap.

“Working in a coffee bar was the last thing I would have liked to do. But my father told me: – Come on, come and help your father on Saturday evening! [...] And then, my mum went to France because she had a breast cancer, my brother injured his hand on his motorcycle and I had to take his place completely. Then he decided not to come back, and in this way I was trapped.” R21 (55, F, French, Bar)

(4) *Self-fulfilment and income opportunities*

Some of the interviewees started their business moved by the desire to improve their income and to live a freer and more satisfying work experience. Even though many of them consider self-employment as consistent with their personal attitudes, hurdles in upward social mobility and some forms of discrimination (e.g. a labour insertion as employees in low-wage, low-skilled and demanding jobs) may have pushed them towards a business venture. Not by chance, this large group of motivations is expressed in particular by immigrant interviewees that worked in poorly profitable sectors.

“I came here to help my family, but they paid me too little, so I decided with my son to open a little shop” R10 (55, F, Peruvian, Clothing Shop)

“I have an entrepreneurial character, a bit individualistic, so I need to do things by myself to be happy” R31 (39, F, Italian, Freelance counsellor)

3.3. The importance of location and place diversity

The choice to settle an enterprise in a specific neighbourhood may be motivated by different reasons: from the availability of cheap commercial infrastructures to its accessibility; from the link between housing and job distance to the availability of a potentially large and targeted customer base.

In the case of a hyperdiversified neighbourhood, diversity can be considered both as an element providing a plural customer base, and as a background for daily life (e.g. in case of immigrant businesspeople living and working in ethnic economies, or for “diversity-seekers” in cultural economy). At the same time, diversity – if linked to inequality – can be a background factor for other reasons: an impoverishing neighbourhood can attract different social groups (not rarely disadvantaged ones), but also restructure its business community thanks to succession processes and the availability of cheap commercial areas.

Whatever the reason to install in a neighbourhood and its relation to place-based diversity, it is worth underlining that diversity becomes relevant afterwards. Actually, diversity influences the customer base (the characteristics of market demand) – notwithstanding the

awareness interviewed entrepreneurs had of the plurality of clients in the area. On the other hand, the change in the business community influences how diversity is deployed locally. For example, an ethnic business can increase the visibility of an ethnic community, and in some cases even “produce” an ethnic community by exploiting, branding if not inventing a specific tradition (e.g. food). Actually, the exploitation and/or construction of diversity and the marketing of cultural identities may turn some businesses and market niches into landmarks for consumers looking for cultural-based experience (either for exotic consumption or for the struggle to affirm a positive collective identity – e.g. for stigmatized minorities, cfr. Storti, 2014).

As a matter of fact, a large number of interviewees describe their location choice as quite accidental, driven by contingent opportunities and short term evaluations. However, this is not the case for everyone. Therefore, we can first distinguish between those who consciously decided to settle their enterprise in a diversified neighbourhood and those who were motivated by other reasons.

Among the “conscious decisions”, we have a first group that consider neighbourhood diversity as *inspiring* and *stimulating* for their job. These businesses are mostly in the creative and artistic sector, where entrepreneurs are active “diversity-seekers”, either to combine this plurality in their artwork, or to convey a “bohemian” attitude.

“The idea arose while a was having breakfast close to the Chinese restaurant. Because Via Padova is promising, and very, very unusual. [...] It is a source of inspiration to me. Even, prosaically, when you see the Indian guy with his colourful clothes...[...] so this is the perfect area!” R12 (40, M, Italian, Art Gallery)

There are also other entrepreneurs that targeted the multicultural character of the neighbourhood as the main reason to settle their business: this is because their business work with diversity. This includes social entrepreneurship working with specific social groups, their interrelation, social mix and social cohesion. Obviously, this includes also a number of (extended) ethnic and intermediary businesses.

“We were exactly interested in the multi-ethnic and multicultural nature of the neighbourhood. [...] We were really interested in implementing projects in this neighbourhood” R31 (39, F, Italian, Freelance counsellor)

For these kinds of entrepreneurs, diversity is essential for their business, and, even in case there is not a direct correlation between diversity and income, they still perceive it as an element with a positive impact on their activity.

Among the “unknowing decisions”, we can include a number of businesspeople that didn't focus of neighbourhood diversity in their location choice. To them, diversity is at most a mere chance (without a clear strategy to target it), while their business settlement is mostly related to a number of contingencies. So, these entrepreneurs didn't consider the impact of diversity on their business, but they chose their location according to other factors, namely:

- the affordability of locations with desired features (e.g. availability of house and laboratory in the same building)
- the good connections with other areas of the city (easing work-home mobility or customer accessibility, for example)

- the familiarity with the neighbourhood, especially if their home is close-by
- public subsidies

In this group, diversity is usually perceived as non-influential on economic success. Rather, choosing a neighbourhood just for its affordability may turn out as a negative factor for some firms targeting a more high-end customer base, since their target social class may be not particularly available in the area

“Well, here I don’t find my ideal customer, because, being a multi-ethnic area, this is also a poor zone...” R31 (39, F, Italian, Freelance counsellor)

3.4. Selecting the line of business

In some cases, the line of business is related to a long-term personal, social and/or family investment (in education, training, work experience...).

“I went to the catering institute, to work into the restaurant industry. Then I worked in couple of places as an employee and then I decided to start up a business of mine.” R15 (26, M, Italian -Egyptian origins- Kebab and pizza shop)

“My dad is a chef, so I followed him.” R19 (20, F, Chinese, Italian-Chinese restaurant)

When the selection of the line of business is not due to any passion or talent (as mentioned above for the artistic and creative firms), interviewees often talk about fortuitous cases: e.g., an encounter or a particular event of their life that turned out to be decisive to select their business sector.

“I’m Italian, and I converted to Islam 10 years ago, I’m Sicilian, and when I first knew Islam I wanted to open something halal.” R17 (37, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, Kebab shop)

“Because I met a friend who was a hairdresser. [...] So I realized that we could have worked together, so I told him: We can do this activity: I do it and you manage it.” R40 (46, M, Egyptian, Barber’s)

Sometimes the business of the interviewees has been changed and developed as the time went by, trying to adapt it to the changes of market and supply and trying to cover empty market niches. This is particularly relevant for those petty businesses (in particular in the retail sector) that suffer from a cut-throat competition in market niches with low entry barriers and low profitability

“When I first started I had a slot room, so with my license I could sell everything. But what was more requested was white pizza, bun, pizza... so I decided to sell bread. But then I clashed with another bakery, that is an historical one... so I started to sell also products from Apulia. I noticed that there wasn’t a shop that sold this kind of stuff, and a lot of people are from Southern Italy.” R8 (39, M, Italian, Baker’s)

3.5 The availability of advice, start-up support, and finance

Even though we can identify a variety of channels for information, support and capital formation, in our interviews there's a clear evidence that official and institutional channels are poorly relevant (just one interviewee received money from banks, while a couple of

others formed their capital by winning public or public-private competitions (in particular for those active in social economy). Social networks – especially kinship ones – provided most of the necessary background to start the studied businesses. This applies to both native Italian and immigrant interviewees, especially those with a lower cultural capital.

As a matter of fact, one of the most frequent financing channels is that coming via kinship networks. Many of the interviewees received money from parents or borrowed it from friends.

“The starting capital came from our parents. [...]and then we received also a loan from a friend of us. We will pay him back starting from December 2016 without interests.” R29 (35, F, Italian, Social cooperative)

However, most of the times people try to start their business by their own efforts, investing their savings and trying to cut costs as much as possible. Given the sector they operate (e.g. petty retail or small artist/artisan production), many of the enterprises required little starting capital.

“When I left the [name of the multinational corporation] I got a pay-out, and I also asked for receiving my unemployment insurance all at once. Then I did a lot of things at home, being my husband a programmer.” R4 (52, M, Italian, Romanian origins, Constructions)

For quite a number of immigrant entrepreneurs, kinship networks are particularly relevant, and often assume a transnational dimension. In particular, they often receive financial help from their homeland,⁷ while they receive relevant information by fellow country people in Milan. This helps connecting distant social cliques and trying to exploit new market niches.

“Well, my mum is quite affluent in my Country, she has hotels and houses there. So she helped us a lot. We didn’t receive any loan from banks.” R18 (23, M, Ecuadorean, Latino restaurant)

When a starting capital was not available, the most common option has been to share the risk by finding business partners – in some cases with a division of labour, with one partner putting the money and the other putting labour. So, our interviewees sold their expertise (human capital) in return for the necessary money (financial capital).

“I am associate with the owner of the garage, he’s Italian, I deal with the mechanic and he handles the parking. [...] But I pay a rent for the garage.” R5 (47, M, Egyptian, Mechanic’s)

When not related to kinship networks, usually information is based on previous education and training, or professional experiences. More rarely, part of the initial investment was dedicated to acquire skills opening small market niches

“The course of drama therapy was an investment, for sure. I spent almost € 2000 for 1200 hours of lessons. But it was worth to do so.” R32 (28, F, Italian – Egyptian origins- Freelance drama-therapist)

7 For the importance of so-called “reverse remittances”, see Mazzucato (2011)

3.6. Conclusions

Summarizing, the main points emerging from this chapter are the following:

(1) motivations to start an enterprise are diverse among interviewees, varying from the conversion of a passion (e.g. hobby) or an interest (e.g. social action) into a job, to the possibility to improve personal and economic conditions. Being many of the enterprises family-run businesses, the continuity of the family enterprise is also another important factor that motivates entrepreneurs.

(2) Diversity can be considered both as an element providing a plural customer base, and as a background for daily life. At the same time, diversity linked to inequality can make a neighbourhood attractive for different (disadvantaged) social groups. Though, for many interviewees the location choice has been driven by contingent opportunities not so related to diversity. Those that considered diversity in their choice include “diversity-seekers” looking for inspiration (e.g. in cultural and artistic services) and entrepreneurs in the social sector that work on social cohesion.

(3) Entrepreneurs generally find the starting capital and support in informal kinship networks, being difficult to access institutional financing channels. In particular, immigrant entrepreneurs may sometimes rely on transnational networks that ensure economic support, with the idea that a support in the start-up phase of a business abroad may produce high returns for the kins involved.

4. Economic performance and the role of urban diversity

4.1. Introduction

The economic performance of enterprises in diverse urban contexts – especially for discriminated-against minorities – risk to be particularly thin (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001; Rath, 2002; Panayiotopoulos, 2010; OECD, 2010). Not rarely the sectors open for business to them are low-threshold, low-profitability stagnating markets not attracting “core” economic actors anymore. The hard passage from a “breaking-in” into poor and competitive markets (where the competition with “left-behind” core actors can boost blaming and discrimination) to a “breaking-out” requires often economic and social capitals supporting innovation (OECD, 2010; see also Engelen, 2001).

On the other hand, diversity is also a contextual factors of urban life, that any entrepreneur has to take into account. The diversification of markets (customers and suppliers) can become a resource if there are conditions to fill “structural holes” (Burt, 1992) among separate socio-economic cliques. Thus, diversity can become a reference for the market positioning of local enterprises – in terms of products/services offered and in the customers targeted. In this respect, a good example come from a typology of immigrant entrepreneurship developed by Ambrosini (2005) – cfr. Table 4 – that we will use in this chapter and that show multiple market niches related to diversity.

In addition, markets have to be associated with networks: intra- and inter-group networks (including transnational ties) define the market position and the information on market opportunities.

Taking into consideration the economic performance of enterprises in Italy and in Milan means also talking about the long-lasting effects of the recent economic crisis. As mentioned in the introduction, business data and entrepreneurs' perceptions still show evidence of a long stagnation and of a very slow recovery. This trickles down into everyday discourses, where the ghost of the crisis still haunts consumers and businesspeople.

4.2. Economic performance of the enterprises

The perceptions of economic performance and success expressed by our interviewees are strongly influenced by the recent and lasting effects of the 2007 economic crisis, that coalesced with long-lasting problems in the Italian socio-economic context (limited mobility, decreasing productivity, stagnation, poor degree of social and economic innovation). Italy showed a very limited resilience to the crisis and a slower recovery compared to other European countries (Bigos *et al.*, 2014). This trend is mirrored in the words of our interviewees, and has to be contextualized at least in two ways. First, the 2007 crisis hit hard on an already declining economy, where structural weaknesses have been visible from some 15 years (Tridico, 2015). The limited competitiveness and profitability of relevant parts of Italian petty capitalism has been an open issue, too. Second, the strongest social consequences (on consumption and employment, for example) of the 2007 crisis deployed quite late – more or less from 2011/2012 on. Also thanks to a high level of private savings, Italians were able to survive the beginning of the crisis without reducing too much their consumption levels (Sergi and Kazepov, 2014; Gabos *et al.* 2015). Thus, for the interviewed entrepreneurs the overall consequences of the crisis are still fresh.

So, the perception of their economic success portrayed by the entrepreneurs interviewed in the Northern districts of Milan is very limited – and worsened during the recent years. The evidence of a (slow) recovery is not so shared among all the respondents, while to them it is much more clear that the hard times of the crisis have long lasting effects – directly on their firm and indirectly on the socio-economic environment of the area. Even successful enterprises (see below) maintain that the recession affected them: among those that decided to disclose this information, the shrinkage of profits ranges between 10 and 40% in the last three years.

Actually, the crisis in sectors other than their own business has a general negative effect on the economic performance in the area. For example, the deep crisis of the building industry is considered detrimental by the interviewees operating in the catering sector, since construction workers were important clients

“Much is related to the market out there. For example, it is related to constructions: if it slows down, everything slows down – butchers', hairdressers!...”, R40 (46, M, Egyptian, Barber)

The retrenchment of public expenditure was considered negative by many interviewees having a business in the cultural industry and in the social economy: even in cases where public administrations were not direct clients of our entrepreneurs, public expenditure formerly created some opportunities to them.

“I started a number of projects, and they were partly based on Municipal endowments to associations and cooperatives. They started small scale, with the idea to grow year by year. Though, they stayed small scale and they were closed the next year. Thus, with a big waste of the worktime invested by me and them” R36 (46, F, German, Freelance artist).

Besides this general and quite shared narrative, there are anyway some interesting and significant differences among entrepreneurs and firms. We will divide our interviewees in three groups: a) those that declare a good success; b) those that find hard to make ends meet; c) those that declare significant losses.

We will analyse these three groups according to their socio-demographic characteristics, their business feature (sector, experience, market niche), their satisfaction with the situation and the reasons they identify for their economic success (or failure).

a) the successful

A perception of good or sufficient success is reported by some ¼ of our interviewees. The successful firms are those that declare a good turnover, usually enough to guarantee a decent income for the interviewed entrepreneurs: *“we have done a lot of improvements, and we are still paying them. So, the remaining is like the wage of a factory worker”* R18 (23, M, Ecuadorean, Latino restaurant).

Even when the economic turnover is not so positive, some consider their business successful analysing comparatively some issues. Two relevant ones, for example:

- the perception of being scarcely (if not at all) affected by the negative consequences of the crisis plays a role

“keeping the same turnover we had in the past two years... I mean, we won the lottery!” R11 (49, F, Italian, Herbalist’s)

“Thanks to my participation to some trade exhibitions, now I have a minimum income I bring home. It has been a great improvement” R38 (44, F, Italian – Japanese origins – Freelance Cartoonist)

- the awareness of not being too dependent on the monthly turnover of their firm, thanks to savings or other family incomes (e.g. having parents or partners with good labour positions). Though, some of them also express some anxieties on the long term sustainability of the good turnover, mainly due to the increase of a competition often perceived as unfair:

“belt-tightening is needed... Now, with all these new shopping malls” R9 (74, M, Italian, Stationer’s)

“in my sector there are a number of new musicians. They are not that good, but they aim for limited incomes?” R34 (32, M, Peruvian, Piano bar singer).

The successful entrepreneurs we interviewed include some old neighbourhood shops (a stationer's or a dry-cleaner's shop) and more recent activities targeting a middle-upper class clientele (a producer of handmade toys for babies, a naturopathy shop, a freelance cartoonist) led by native Italians or by immigrants from developed countries. As a matter of fact, even before the crisis income distribution in Italy was polarizing, due to presence of wealthy groups with good spending capacity (Drudi and Tassinari, 2014). This is particularly relevant in Milan, where upper classes are particularly present compared to other large Italian cities (D'Ovidio, 2009).

Nevertheless, this group includes also some immigrant entrepreneurs that found a profitable niche in the ethnic, exotic or intermediation businesses (e.g. ethnic catering and music; travel agencies). They share a good position in the ethnic community, acquired via kinship networking or investments that qualify their ethnic niche over the co-ethnic competition, matched also by a wider and mainstream customer base that increase their profitability.

Besides the traditional neighbourhood shops, diversity and diversification is often relevant issue in the success of both Italian and immigrant entrepreneurs here. Many firms in this group target specific lifestyles in leisure and consumption that may guarantee access to quite affluent or unchallenged market niches.

b) making ends meet

The second group includes entrepreneurs with a more limited turnover and riskier conditions for their business. Approximately two interviewees out of five maintain they are not able to earn enough to make their living from the present job. Most firms in this group are active in the cultural industry, in the social economy or in specific niches of the (ethnic or exotic) market economy they try to exploit (e.g. a barber's and beautician's shop doing threading hair removal,⁸ Arab bridal make-up, etc.).

Even though they share common conditions of hardship, entrepreneurs in this group express quite different representations: some are somehow satisfied and happy anyway.

This subgroup includes:

- a handful of native and naturalized Italian entrepreneurs (usually relatively young) who choose to open a business for self-fulfilment, with a strong personal motivation and inclination for the chosen sector, usually in the cultural industry or in the social economy. They expected to go through hard times, but the perspective of doing what they liked most helps facing the situation. Some of them have also a safety net that can support them in case of failure, and this makes them less anxious about their situation.

“It's a struggle. The business is new – one-year-old – so I feel satisfied, but I have to struggle. If my parents would not support me, I would have shot myself. Though, to me, this is my only chance. I have a talent, and I am capitalizing on it” R12 (40, M, Italian, Art Gallery)

Motivation, ideological and cultural attachments are relevant factors to resist negative market pressures in a period of crisis and in an unfavourable situation for some sectors: an example is the associate of an anarchist publishing house that resists in a market monopolized by few large suppliers and by bigger and bigger franchise retailers, that limit the market visibility of independent productions. But this is also and especially the case of businesses active in the social and cultural economy, where sometimes profitability is not considered the primary factor in the business choice and evolution, and has to be coupled with self-fulfilment. This is particularly relevant for younger entrepreneurs active in some innovative activities, that can also rely on personal or family resources in case of failure.

8 Threading is an Asian epilation method, used also in Egypt (where is called *fatlab*) and in the Arab World. A twisted thread is used to remove undesired hair.

- some native Italian and few immigrant entrepreneurs that just embarked on a new business or resisted the crisis, and consider a period of stagnation as normal – if not positive, since they took into consideration to lose money at the beginning of this new venture.

“I don't need to spend much. I never go back to China, I haven't gone back in the last 4 years, too expensive. I'm here every day, and step by step I am working this situation out” R22 (53, F, Chinese, Bar)

On the other hand, there are quite a number of immigrants active in businesses with low entry barriers (i.e. needing limited investments and skills), but also low profitability (Rath, 2002; Panayiotopoulos, 2010) – not rarely due to strong (co-ethnic) competition and important effects of the crisis, such as small family-run businesses in the catering sector, corner shops with no specialization, artisans, services for immigrants like money transfers. Their debt load (with the humiliating experience of having to borrow money from kins), the dissatisfaction with the business they run (sometimes acquired from their parents) are factors of great anxiety to them. They blame the general crisis for their economic situation.

In this case, diversity does not become a resource: ethnic and immigrant markets are too fragile to allow good turnovers, and the competition is very harsh due to low entry barriers in the chosen economic sector. Even though the amount of potential clients available in the area is high, it is dispersed among a high number of competitors.

“It is worsening. We struggle to pay the rent. [...] We are also behind in paying the rent for our house – never happened before. And the owners are not sympathetic: we have been paying our rent for more than 7 years now, and for 3 months behind they go on calling. We do not run away. They know our business is here!” R19 (20, F, Chinese, Italian-Chinese restaurant)

c) the unsuccessful

The third group is constituted by those who cannot make their living from the present business, some one fourth of our interviewees. These entrepreneurs are usually immigrants active in retail, with small and poorly profitable shops, strongly hit by the (a) consequences of the crisis and (b) by the level and perceived unfairness of the competition. As for the first factor, some were prepared to cope with a short crisis (resisting thanks to savings and support in the kinship network): they were unprepared and not equipped to deal with a persistent slowing down of consumption. As for the second factor, they are active in markets with low entry barriers and low profitability, where cut-throat competition and informalization are more likely (Rath, 2002; Panayiotopoulos, 2010).

In this respect, some unsuccessful entrepreneurs see diversity as a problem, with an ethnicized blaming of competitors: based on other researches in Milan and elsewhere in Italy (Pastore and Ponzio, 2012; Barberis and Angelucci, 2015; Angelucci *et al.*, 2014; Bracci, forthcoming), we can suppose that ethnicized blaming was stronger at the beginning of the crisis, while the evidence of more structural problems and limited success of ethnic economies is redirecting blame towards other targets (politicians, the EU, the banks...). All in all, in some cases diversity can also be considered a problem since they established a business in an open market (exotic or generalist catering, retail) without being able to attract the potential diverse clientele in the neighbourhood. The weakness of their intra- and inter-group social networks is mirrored in the weakness of their revenues.

“In the last three years [the market] is shrinking, and it is worrying since this trend affects all the colleagues in this sector [...] Then, some foreigners started to play a bit dirtier: they don't care about the quality of the products, and they just cut prices [...]”
R17 (37, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, kebab and pizza shop)

“We run out of money just paying taxes. My problem is that the rent is very high [...] Though, my biggest problem is that I cannot raise the prices: for example, I should sell a cappuccino for € 1.40 or 1.50, but I cannot because the Chinese have much lower prices [...] It is fault of the Chinese!” R21 (55, F, French, Bar)

4.3 Markets, customers and suppliers

Based on studies about territorial embeddedness (Grabher 1993; Colletis *et al.* 1997; Dicken and Malmberg 2001; Rota 2012) we considered the relation between markets, neighbourhood and diversity and divided our entrepreneurs in three groups.

The *rooted* have a strong local socio-economic embeddedness. The neighbourhood is not just a place where their business is located; it is also a space of relations that trickle down in the economic performance and in the market position of the firm. The characteristics of the neighbourhood are fundamental for the operations of the business and for the life of the entrepreneur.

The *anchored* have a more nuanced mixed embeddedness. The neighbourhood context is important for a number of features (that we will explore below: from the social atmosphere to the number of clients), but it is not fundamental for the operations of the business and in the life of the entrepreneur, so that at given conditions it is possible to disconnect the business from its location.

The *stopping over* have a very limited local embeddedness. The choice of the neighbourhood location is related to fortuitous events and the market position of the firm is poorly related with the local context. Their business could be easily located elsewhere without damaging their market position.

While analysing the three groups, we will define their socio-demographic backgrounds, and their relation with the neighbourhood diversity.

a) *the rooted*

Among our interviewees, the rooted are a small group of entrepreneurs whose location and market position is strongly connected to neighbourhood features. In this respect, diversity is basic to them, since they gained their market niche by servicing specific needs of the plural population of the area. Their socio-economic embeddedness means also that they are particularly attached to the neighbourhood, and actively involved in its social and economic promotion.

We can identify two main types of businesses here:

- ethnic, exotic and intermediation firms (usually led by quite young businesspeople from an immigrant background) that are trying to satisfy the needs of different groups, also creating products that mix cultural backgrounds. Fusion catering firms are an example. They can get over the high competition in the sector since they fit the needs of a wider customer base, looking for typical ethnic food, but also for exotic and new products. The fact that those entrepreneurs live in the neighbourhood helps them getting access

to mixed social networks and to grasp the chance to enter different markets, also actively promoting the neighbourhood diversity.

“I have a very mixed customer base, from Italians to South Americans, from Arabs to Syrians – I have even Filipino clients. I don't know if any ethnicity is missing here, since I have also people from black Africa and – thanks to the Expo – also European groups, like Germans and Dutch. [...] We are a multicultural enterprise, we have different foods and we are able to satisfy everyone. Romanians come because they find something they like, Africans and Italians, too, since we have an international cuisine” R17 (37, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, Kebab shop)

- activities in the social economy (usually led by young nationals) that praise local diversity as a relevant issue in the neighbourhood, and offer services explicitly or implicitly targeting diversity to increase social cohesion – from social housing to social animation. Not all these activities are tied to public resources, since some of them, in the commodification of social actions, have to rely on their turnover and revenues, managing strictly commercial activities side by side with social ones.

b) the anchored

A large number of the anchored entrepreneurs is somehow connected to the neighbourhood, but does not strongly depend on it. To them neighbourhood diversity is somehow an element of profitability, but it is not a strong feature of their business. In a way, we can maintain that they exploit diversity, without contributing so much to its reproduction. Among the different types of anchored businesses, usually led by both native and immigrant, male and female middle-aged owners, we can identify:

- ethnic catering that mostly serves a specific group (well represented in the neighbourhood), with suppliers from the place of origin. This doesn't pertain just foreign immigrants. They cannot be considered rooted, since the business can move in any neighbourhood with a specific concentration of the target clientele; though they are anchored since this neighbourhood provides a good customer base.

*“My regular customers are people from Apulia, that want to come back to their origins [...] most of them live in the area [...] All the Apulian products come from Cerignola”*⁹ R8 (39, M, Italian, Baker's).

- corner shops with a long lasting presence in the area, but products that are not place-specific (e.g. stationers', dry-cleaners'). Due to their long history, they are somehow local landmarks, but they did not adapt to the changed social conditions and they could find another localization without particular disadvantages for the firm. The present localization has the advantage of public brand awareness.

“This activity has a long history. Before I took it, there was another owner, I hadn't to do the start-up phase. The clients were his, and now they are mine. They usually come from other parts of Milan.” R1 (57, M, Peruvian, Leather artisan)

9 Apulia is a Region in Southern Italy that has been a traditional place of origin of internal migrations to Milan.

- cultural businesses that operate on much larger markets (at city, national and international level), but try to keep a contact with the local community, with a reciprocal spill-over effect. The larger socio-economic networks these firms have occasionally find a place locally; the activities these firms conduct locally are traded to a larger customer base., They are not rooted since their link with the neighbourhood is relatively superficial and not particularly bounded, though. We may wonder whether their strategy may open the door to gentrification processes.

“We carried on a project on waste – since there was Expo in Milan – and we worked on the concept of schiscetta, that is the [traditional Milanese] lunch box [...] We considered to reinvent it using cork as a natural material with good thermal insulation. We did it with an important Portuguese firm” R30 (35, F, Italian, Social Enterprise).

“The furniture fair is a design international event par excellence and brought many people here [...] For the first [event they organized] a lot of people from outside the neighbourhood came. What we like is to interact both with people from the neighbourhood and with people that don't know it” R30 (35, F, Italian, Social Enterprise).

- activities in the social economy that found a space within the neighbourhood and try to revitalize the block they are working in. Different from the rooted ones, those businesses have a weaker relation with the neighbourhood. The entrepreneurs usually have limited previous experience of the area; they access it because there are localized resources to exploit, and they are sometimes part of larger entities with similar activities elsewhere in the city. In a way, their situation implies a long-term commitment in the area, but not necessarily with the area. They may embed more locally with the passage from anchorage to rootedness, but at this moment this is not the case

“Actually we do not look for anyone, the people just come.” R28 (65, F, Italian, Association for social advancement)

c) the stopping over

This group includes quite a number of firms that chose our target area for a number of fortuitous events or market considerations that have not so much to do with the social and cultural specificity of the neighbourhood. They follow a trend concerning the housing choice¹⁰: availability of commercial facilities and lower rental and purchase costs; position near transport facilities and in frequented streets. In this respect, the entrepreneurs did not develop grand marketing strategies connected to the area. Often, their customers and suppliers are not related to the neighbourhood: they target a middle-to-upper class clientele which is also present in the neighbourhood, but usually lives in other parts of the city or can be reached through e-commerce. Also, there are some ethnic businesses that are landmarks for immigrant communities at city-level, and do not specifically cater for neighbourhood clients. In this respect, neighbourhood diversity is not relevant; it is more important that the quality of the built environment and the stigmatization of the neighbourhood make it a low cost area.

¹⁰ Already discussed in the WP6 report

In some cases, we have also entrepreneurs living in the area and working there, but with limited local socio-economic embeddedness, if any. Our case neighbourhood is just a cheap place; the diversity of its population, intersecting with inequalities, helps keeping costs low.

“There's no direct link between the neighbourhood and what I do [...] My customers are not from this area, I get it mostly via internet – we have orders from Parma, Naples, Rome, Bologna. Also Milan, obviously, but this neighbourhood” R2 (65, M, Italian, Wood artisan)

Thus, diversity plays a different role in the market position of local businesses according to their level of local embeddedness. Focussing a bit more on immigrant entrepreneurship, it is interesting to note that bounded ethnic markets are quite rare. Usually the value chain of most immigrant firms does include suppliers, clients and even employees from different backgrounds. In particular, it is interesting that ethnic caterers active in the exotic market usually underline that their suppliers and raw materials are Italian, as a quality guarantee and a way of gaining trust of a diverse customer base:

“I don't use Chinese stuff, just Italian one. All our products are from an Italian professional brand” R40 (46, M, Egyptian, Barber's)

“I prefer to have Italian suppliers, for example I take the kebab meat from an Italian producer; check in my fridge, all the processed food is Italian” R17 (37, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, Kebab shop).

In this respect their contribution to the local and national economy and to the market position of native Italians is larger than a superficial idea of ethnic economy can support. As a matter of fact, ethnic economies are not isolated from local and national contexts (Mazzucato, 2008): ethnic entrepreneurs may find convenient to use local supplier (because of costs or of market positioning, to attract a mixed customer base) – and being sometimes also residents in the area they consume also locally; they contribute to the local real estate market by renting or buying properties, not rarely from native owners that are losing money in impoverishing neighbourhoods; finally, they pay taxes locally (Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2015).

4.4. Relations among entrepreneurs: evidence of competition or cooperation?

Co-location in a same neighbourhood can have pros and cons: a thick business community can turn a neighbourhood into a commercial destination for different kinds of customers, thus benefiting firms in different market niches. Though, a high number of competitors at short distance can reduce profitability, while the characteristics and changes of firms in the local business landscape can reposition firm's market position: the “ethnicization” of the business community in a neighbourhood, for example, may reduce its attractiveness for native entrepreneurs and customers. Building relations with other local entrepreneurs can be a way to share basic formal and informal rules, as to lobby towards public institutions and other competitors. On the other hand, cut-throat price competition may be a way to kick out some competitors.

Relations among entrepreneurs in the researched area are usually quite weak, characterized by a civil coexistence that results in economic exchange and/or cooperation in quite a limited number of cases.

When competition is mentioned, it is usually within a discourse on lack of fairness of competitors. This discourse – as mentioned above – is particularly relevant for businesses operating in markets with low access threshold, low profitability, relevant informalization processes. In these sectors, the blaming not rarely assumes ethnicized tones, blaming other socio-cultural groups for the worsening of their economic situation (see Section 4.2.).

On the other hand, the level of local embeddedness (as described in Section 4.3.) and the sector both influence the perspective on cooperation. Not surprisingly, the interest for cooperation is higher in rooted and anchored firms than in stopping-over businesses.

Also when networking is considered, it may stay at a social, relational level with limited or no trickle-down effect on the economic activity. The main role these relations have is to keep a peaceful living together through courtesy, at most trying to establish a reciprocity in the creation of trust among clients ('I suggest your shop to my customers; you suggest my shop to yours') – even though few interviews report evidence of a positive economic effect of this process; except for a couple of cases where collaboration with next-door shops implies bartering goods. Again, the effect is more on fair coexistence.

“Close to my shop there's an Italian hairdresser for men and women; thanks God I have a good relationship with him, since his customers are only Italians and they are not from this area. Getting acquainted with the other is helpful, because it generates confidence” R40 (46, M, Egyptian, Barber's)

This is particularly true for those entrepreneurs whose markets are not particularly place-related, even though they live in the neighbourhood.

A mix of cooperation and competition seems more likely in the case of ethnic and exotic firms owned by fellow countrypersons: they operate in the same sector (e.g. ethnic catering), and sometimes they can associate to start a new business, diversify incomes, share costs¹¹ – even though this is not the rule, since co-ethnic relations can be also quite loose.

“We keep in touch: if I run out of something, I get it from him and the other way around; the same for the employees. If I need one, he send him to me. We can say that we are business partners, even though not on paper” R17 (37, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, Kebab shop)

“I know a number of Chinese, but not so much” R6 (40, M, Chinese, Small retailer)

Though, a strongest neighbourhood cooperation has been undermined by the consequences of the crisis, since a number of close-by firms closed:

11 The same applies to businesses in economic niches related to specific lifestyles (well-being, organic food...): *“when I started my business, I've been supported by a number of colleagues and other professionals – trainers, yoga teachers, counsellors: people whose fields try to improve their own life, well-being and awareness”* (R31 [35, F, Italian, Freelance counsellor])

“I relate with someone, though the shoe shop is selling less and less, the cobbler closed down, the internet point is under new management, the clothing shop closed down, as the bar” R17 (37, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, Kebab shop).

Also, interethnic cooperation can be hindered by perceived cultural distance and stereotypes. Derogatory classifications and stereotypes are (re-)produced also among migrant groups, and can engender segmented geographies of collaboration. Cultural and social distance among migrants, which is quite visible in the group-making at local level (see Pastore and Ponzio, 2012) can trickle down and find new shapes in the business collaboration-competition processes.

“I don't like so much their manners. For example, the Arabs are too familiar, they touch you with their hands, and I don't like it. Also, they are easily offended, they are aggressive. And the Chinese, they have another mind-set. On the other hand, I have good relations with the Indians, they supply me with spirits and we exchange favours” R18 (23, M, Ecuadorean, Latino restaurant)

Entrepreneurs active in the social economy, especially those more firmly rooted in the neighbourhood, and partly in the cultural industry are keener to develop collaborations, mixing social and economic effects. They usually have a higher cultural capital and given the specific niche they cover (from social housing to social cohesion initiatives) they don't consider other parties as competitors. Since they have strong social aims with their activities, developing social cohesion and networking diverse people is consistent with their goals.

“Networking is our aim [...] we have another idea, that everyone can chip in. Now we are working together with a private toy library, that provides us with room for our labs. Everyone can come and ask for a collaboration [...] There's an acquaintance with other entrepreneurs; they even asked us to distribute our leaflets in their shops, to be known” R29 (35, F, Italian, Social cooperative)

4.5 Long-term plans and expectations of entrepreneurs

Long-term plans and expectations of interviewed entrepreneurs are strongly in line with the economic performance of their business. In this respect, forecasts on future economic chances are related to present economic situation and expectations on the duration of the crisis, its future effects and the possibility of recovery. For this reasons, we will analyse plans and expectation of the above-mentioned three groups of interviewees according to their business performance.

Those with enduring unsuccessful performances (usually international migrants) and negative forecasts for the future do plan to close down – and even to move abroad¹² – or just do not dare to plan anything. The “escape plan” is sometimes related on the one hand to a resentment towards the harsh working conditions in Italy that in their words do not

12 We have no evidence of actual transfers of entrepreneurs. Literature on local case studies shows that transfer projects may be limited for many reasons (e.g. lack of capitals or family rooting, especially for those immigrants having children in school age, cfr. Pitrone *et al.* 2012), while data from the civil registry shows a slight increase of foreign residents transferring abroad (Istat 2015e): from 44,000 to 47,000 in 2014 at national level. In the area of Milan such growth is taking place at a lower pace.

allow to recover from the crisis; on the other hand, to a nostalgic and positive view of lifestyles in their country of origin.

“It is now clear that I have to leave Italy. I earned nothing. I earned something when I arrived, but I invested the money here” R10 (55, F, Peruvian, Clothing Shop)

Though, return may be hindered by the fear of blaming, the humiliation for the failure, their changed lifestyles. These persons are somehow stuck and have no clear perspective. Survival strategies may include a return to weak and informal employment as much as a new migration towards other countries in the Global North.

“When you go in a new country you get used to it. If I go back to Morocco I can stay one or two months and no more, I can't [...] So, I have nothing, I lost 12 years of my life in this country. This is the biggest mistake I made in my life. If I go back, I have to start from scratch. It is hard to go back after 12 years with empty hands. None accepts this in Morocco.” R13 (35, M, Moroccan, Peddler)

A couple of other entrepreneurs plan to limit their involvement in the business due to their old age. Among them, there is also the idea that the high and successful efforts they put in the business deserve now a break. To sum up, it is now time to enjoy the earnings they got, retiring or delegating bits of management to business partners.

Most of the entrepreneurs who barely make ends meet (especially those that started-up recently) and the successful ones do plan to expand their activities in a way or another (improving their present business, opening new branches, entering related market niches, giving continuity to the present achievements, networking with relevant partners). For those in the cultural industry, sometimes this means a more international orientation of their business, even though without disanchoring from the local context:

“I plan to do more exhibitions abroad [...] but also doing more labs for teachers, so to guarantee continuity to my projects” R36 (46, F, German, Freelance artist)

Thus, the neighbourhood is usually considered an adequate context for developing their business – even though diversity is not mentioned as the issues to take into consideration in future plans. For this reason, it is interesting to understand the perspective of a couple of entrepreneurs with different backgrounds (an Italian male and a female immigrant) that plan to move out of the neighbourhood. In their opinion, leaving the neighbourhood would improve their market niche thanks to new customers. For them, the crisis is not the most important reason of their economic situation. Or, at least, crisis affects differently local contexts, and it is necessary to look for more affluent customers elsewhere.

“The plan would be to open elsewhere [...] In an area where there are more potential clients, less peripheral. In the centre, for example” R8 (39, M, Italian, Baker's)

4.6 Conclusions

Summarizing the main finding of this chapter, we can maintain that the aftermath of the crisis still constitutes an important problem for the performances of most enterprises taken into consideration. Better performances are achieved by native Italian entrepreneurs and migrants (especially from developed countries) who have established businesses or recent activities targeting middle-upper class customers.

Nevertheless, also some immigrant entrepreneurs that found a profitable niche in the ethnic, exotic or intermediation businesses (ethnic catering and music; travel agencies) show positive turnovers. The ability to reach a plural customer base in terms of origin and lifestyles – that is the ability to profit from hyperdiversity – is a value added in the success of many interviewed entrepreneurs. Having a mixed customer base that relies on co-ethnic clients but is open to other groups provides a wider market niche.

On the other hand, the exploitation of exoticism and of neighbourhood diversity by cultural and social enterprises may help reaching a high-end clientele: selling diversity can be fruitful for the individual entrepreneur, while it is far from clear if this is good also for the neighbourhood as a whole. Probably, it depends on if and how diversity is reproduced, mainstreamed and promoted at local level (also) by these firms. If they just consume it, the overall neighbourhood effect could be negative. An awareness on social cohesion and diversity seems a bit more developed among social enterprises than among cultural ones.

Though, in general, given the largely deprived situation of different neighbourhoods in our case study area, the possibility of positive outcomes may be limited (Williams and Huggins, 2013). Many retail shops just survive in an unfavourable situation, with harsh competition, limited human, social and financial capitals.

The relevance of diversity in their market niches is very variable according to their local socio-economic embeddedness, though. Rooted firms are strongly related to neighbourhood inhabitants and features, and contribute to the reproduction and liveliness of local diversity, while anchored firms do mainly exploit neighbourhood diversity. Other firms do just stop over in the area, taking advantages of some market conditions (e.g. low rental prices) in some slots in our target area.

Notwithstanding the importance of diversity in embeddedness and markets, it is worth noting that cooperation among entrepreneurs is quite limited (especially when considering its economic returns), with the partial exception of some ethnic niches and of enterprises in the social and cultural economy. The main explanation that can be provided is related to the link between diversity and inequality: a number of enterprises work in poor niches with low profitability, high informality, low entry barriers and – consequently – harsh competition, that can undermine positive relations.

5. Institutional support and government policies

5.1 Introduction

A free and open market is not necessarily favourable for many entrepreneurs and for the business community of a neighbourhood. In particular, small entrepreneurs can suffer from the competition of larger players; minorities can be hit by direct and indirect discrimination affecting their market position; neighbourhood diversity can be coupled with inequality, hindering socio-economic mobility and opportunities – with a kind of “superstar effect” favouring richest areas.

Institutions – by action or inaction – do willy nilly regulate the market and influence the space different economic actors and areas can have in the local economy. Their action may be supportive to some groups of businesspeople (e.g. with policies targeting specific categories: females, youth, immigrants...) or to some areas (e.g. with place-specific policies, e.g. urban renewal projects), with specific targeting strategies that do not help to

understand the intersection and plurality of urban diversity – thus *de facto* handicapping some groups (Syrett and Sepulveda, 2011). Also, different policies targeting diverse populations may be contradictory, on the one side, for example, trying to explicitly boost minority entrepreneurship, and on the other side – indirectly but pervasively – downplaying it (Collins, 2003; Syrett and Sepulveda, 2012).

The literature in this field shows some interesting evidence in this respect: first, formal arrangements are not enough. Informal institutions play a relevant role, too (Kemeny, 2012). The connection between instituted processes and informal arrangements may increase accessibility of information and measures, and enhance the economic performance and the economic benefits of cultural diversity. The different sides of the coins (informal and instituted processes, both in in-group and inter-group networks) do contribute to the mixed embeddedness of minority businesses (Ram and Jones, 2007; OECD, 2010).

In this chapter we will analyse how local and national government support is perceived by the interviewed entrepreneurs (Section 5.2), and how (if) they benefited from public or public and/or private programmes (Section 5.3). Finally, we will review policy priorities to support the business community our interviewees prioritize (Section 5.4).

5.2. Views on the effectiveness of business support provided by local and central governments

In this Section we will not review extensively the complex set of measures activated locally and nationally to support the business world, specific categories of entrepreneurs or to boost the socio-economic landscape of some neighbourhoods. In Angelucci *et al.* (2014), the analysis policies targeting economic performance at city and neighbourhood level showed a limited focus on diversity (see also Marzorati and Quassoli, 2012).

While a structured and comprehensive diversity policy is missing, at national, regional and city level there are quite a number of short-term initiatives to support specific categories – in particular youth, women and partly immigrants – and their access to entrepreneurship. At national level, in the years a number of more or less short-lived initiatives and laws have supported the access to entrepreneurship for youngsters, women, and other vulnerable groups (e.g., the disabled) – mainly via training and tax credits – especially in some fields (e.g., agriculture) and in some areas (e.g., Southern Italy). Two examples are the Legislative Decree 185/2000 (“Incentives for self-employment”); the Law 247/2007 (“Norms on social security, labour and competitiveness”), particularly aimed to boost entrepreneurial innovation; the Law 99/2013 (“Extraordinary measures promoting employment and social cohesion”) (Fratto, 2013).

Actions targeting migrants and minorities have been more inconsistent and infrequent (Ambrosini, 2000), usually related to short-term local or regional projects, not rarely funded by the European Social Fund or by the European Fund for the Integration of non-EU immigrants, and targeting specific groups (e.g. refugees).

Thus, not rarely, Italy is seen as a context frustrating entrepreneurial projects of minorities, due to high taxes (that see anyway a high elusion, especially by the self-employed, see Torrini, 2005), a complex bureaucracy that pertains both immigration laws (e.g. the permits of stay) and the economic freedom (see Cnel, 2011).

At city level, in Milan the focus on the relation between diversity and economic performance is a bit more developed. For example, Formaper – a public corporation owned by the Chamber of Commerce of Milan – has the aim to develop entrepreneurship (especially small one) through guidance, information, training, research and support. In the years, they provided dedicate support and projects to different targets, including migrants, the young and the women.

In this chapter, we will focus mostly on an interpretative perspective, on the perception our interviewees have of the attitude and support public institutions have towards the entrepreneurship. Actually, besides actual measures implemented, a negative perception or a lack of information (an issue we will explore in the next paragraph) may reduce the accessibility of available initiatives.

Analysing our interviews, only 1 respondent every 8 express some sort of positive views on the support provided by public bodies. This includes only native Italian interviewees, in particular few social enterprises that won public bids and/or have contracts with public administrations and few artisans that appreciated public projects in their sector.

We can group the criticisms in few categories:

- a large number of Italian interviewees, especially operating in social and cultural economy, see bureaucracy as a hinder to their operations. Bureaucracy is perceived as too slow, not open enough to innovation, too much focussed on controlling compliance with norms and not enough to support new activities;

“At the beginning you have to ask a permit for everything; a permit for the awning, a permit for the sign, a permit for the toilet...” R8 (39, M, Italian, Baker’s)

- connected to this, younger entrepreneurs in innovative businesses do not feel recognized and appreciated. They often work in professions and fields not clearly regulated in Italy (drama therapists, counsellors, social economy...);

“I have to say that our interlocutors at the Municipality are not knowledgeable at all, they are very strict because they never did something like that; some of them have never been called into question by citizens’ wishes” R30 (35, F, Italian, Social Enterprise)

“My profession [counsellor] is not regulated [...] This means weakening a profession with 40 years of success in Anglo-Saxon countries. Though, in Italy, because of general attitudes and opposing lobbies, in the end you have nothing” R31 (39, F, Italian, Freelance counsellor)

- another quite widespread criticism (that we will see also in other paragraphs) refers to the costs of bureaucracy and taxes. The tax rate and the return on services of taxes paid is considerate inadequate, especially by immigrant entrepreneurs that operate with limited margins. Some are worried by the limited welfare coverage self-employed have, for example in case of injury.

“Taxes are too much for a starting-up business. True, you have not to pay taxes in the first year, but then you have to repay later” R8 (39, M, Italian, Baker’s)

“Declaring all your income, you have to pay an enormous amount of taxes, and you have also to deposit an advance payment for the social insurance of the following year, based on your future estimated income. And then you have no rights: if you fall ill, you're fucked up” R25 (53, M, Italian, Freelance copywriter)

- a more limited number of interviewees – especially Italians from an immigrant background – blame public actions for being inappropriate and damaging the local economy, also with forms of indirect discrimination. For example, it is maintained that austerity cut public orders hitting hard the more disadvantaged; or law-and-order neighbourhood policy deserted some (ethnic) commercial areas; civil servants are less available with migrants.

“Bureaucracy killed this area. Implemented policies created anxiety for no reason” R17 (37, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, Kebab shop)

“There's a lot of prejudice on my business” R24 (27, F, Peruvian, Money transfer)

In this respect, a large part of criticisms do pertain the support for the business environment as such, even though indirectly this may hit harder some groups and neighbourhoods, especially in cases where diversity is coupled with socio-economic disadvantage.

5.3 Wider awareness of organisations, programmes, and initiatives to support entrepreneurs

Participation into associations and local initiatives seem not relevant in the performance of our case enterprises. On the one hand, we have a share of entrepreneurs that declare no specific membership, mostly claiming that their work absorbs all their time and have no way to do something else. This is especially the case of small, poorly profitable businesses in mature sectors where the only way to increase productivity is increasing the number of worked hours.

On the other hand, 1/3 of interviewees members of trade associations – usually native and naturalized Italians – and some more active in other kinds of associations. Though, usually belonging to organized groups do not provide a specific economic advantage. Some of the interviewees even refuse explicitly to link their personal involvement with the promotion of their business, considering it a questionable behaviour from a moral point of view.

“I'm a member of the Egyptian Community of Milan [...] It hasn't much to do with my work. I mean, someone knows I'm a mechanic and makes a call. Though, I'm in the Association as an Egyptian and not because of my job. I don't want to promote myself, I just want to be close to fellow countrypersons and to Egyptian problems” R5 (47, M, Egyptian, Mechanic's)

Also the involvement in trade association is usually poorly rated, with a perceived limited economic outcome: trade associations are more seen as a consultant and used instrumentally to survive in the complexity of Italian regulations, even though with a limited satisfaction for their advocacy action.

“[I'm member] of a trade association, to be informed about bureaucratic stuff and about refresher courses. Also, I'm a member of Compagnia delle Opere [a business

association close to the Catholic movement [Communion and Liberation], *since it seems that banks are more accommodating and helpful if you're a member of CdO*" R11 (49, F, Italian, Herbalist's)

"There's the trade association, that sends you a leaflet with all the shit they organize. It costs a king's ransom – € 250 per year – to have a satin paper leaflet. And you can't decide to sign out when you want. Once they were also our fiscal consultant, but they were a total mess." R7 (56, F, Italian, Grocer's)

The only exception seems to be trade associations in the cultural industry, that prove to be quite effective in networking, establishing collaborations and opening market opportunities.

"We are going to be part of an association of young female entrepreneurs active in graphic design. It could be an opportunity to exchange ideas and collaborate" R41 (27, F, Italian, Artistic Association)

"I'm in contact with Japanese cartoon associations, and sometimes they place an order" R38 (44, F, Italian – Japanese origins- Freelance cartoonist)

On the other hand, the participation to municipal and neighbourhood-level initiatives seem more relevant, but poorly accessed by most interviewees.

The neighbourhood initiative more quoted as a positive example of visibility and intercultural contact (though with no or poor economic effect) is "Via Padova è meglio di Milano" [Via Padova is better than Milan – for details see Angelucci *et al.*, 2014; Barberis *et al.*, 2014] a neighbourhood festival praising local diversity.

Local and city-wide programmes are more used by enterprises active in cultural and social economy: on the one hand, for many of them public authorities are a relevant client; on the other hand, they seem to have a better cultural and linking social capital – as long as an organizational structure – to access information on funding opportunities, and adequate skills to write projects and win calls.

"Our budget is partly made-up by the sale activity here, and partly by public calls. We need to run after public calls, you have to be always innovative. There are not so many opportunities around in this period, but we win quite often; actually, we win almost every tender we take part in" R28 (65, F, Italian, Association for social advancement)

As a matter of fact, most of the interviewees have a limited cultural capital and acquaintance with bureaucracy, thus being unable to access opportunities they consider too complex and time-consuming. Access requirements formally and informally cut out a large number of our interviewees. Weakest firms (that potentially may be more in need of support) do not access public benefits being worried by inspections: and their fear is well grounded, since they are more likely to use informal arrangements to survive. The lack of an effective support to access relevant measures seems a very central issue.

This applies especially to immigrant entrepreneurs, that mostly access inaccurate and incomplete information through personal networks. On the one hand, 2/3 of interviewees

are not aware of any opportunity have an international migration background, while 4/5 of those aware and successful were native Italians.

“[Youth entrepreneurship programmes] are to complex, I never tried” R15 (26, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, Kebab and pizza shop)

“Last year we contacted Formaper [see above] to have information on tender notices and advertising opportunities. They gave us suggestions and supported some ideas we had. Nevertheless, we find it difficult to start-up; we would need a person searching the web” R41 (27, F, Italian, Artistic Association)

5.4 Policy priorities for entrepreneurship

Based on the most frequent answer by our interviewees, this paragraph would be very short: cut taxes!

More than half of the respondents (both native Italians and immigrants, mostly operating in retail trade) consider the high level of direct and indirect taxation, the costs of social insurance and the organization of tax collection (advance payments, associated bureaucracy and controls) as a threat to their business and as the main policy priority that can relieve their situation. In the frame of the economic crisis, for example, advance payments based on previous incomes are considered as particularly affecting business turnover. Taxes are considered even less palatable due to a perceived lack of correlation between taxes paid and services received.

For example, some interviewees – especially but not only from an immigrant background – connect tax burden to the lack or costs of welfare services (e.g. housing; education and training; health and social insurance; costs of bureaucratic procedures for permits of stay and citizenship).

“I think that tax advance payments affect the most: you have to pay 65% beforehand even though you have still to earn the money” R39 (42, F, Italian, Laundry)

“If you consider the youth unemployment rate, the only way to work is self-employment. The State should support you in every respect, while it destroys you anyway [...] Rights and welfare measures for this kind of workers should be created [...] I'm happy to pay taxes, but the way they are used is unfair” R25 (53, M, Italian, Freelance copywriter)

A few others, even though not complaining with taxes, do focus on bureaucracy, that can hinder a successful business: with lacking support for start-ups, with too many controls and inspections, with too complex regulations.

“I wish the State supports start-ups, especially non-profit ones. Not with big money, between 5 and 50 thousand is enough. Something to start with, and also a guidance to address you” R29 (35, F, Italian, Social cooperative)

We have anyway other two groups of respondents that pay attention to dimensions potentially related with neighbourhood diversity. The first group – made up mainly by native shopkeepers in retail trade – underlines how the deregulation of retail trade (e.g. distance between shops in the same market segment; opening of large shopping malls

owned by national and international chains) are negatively affecting neighbourhood corner shops.

This doesn't only change the local commercial landscape, but also community practices; if deregulation is meant to cut costs for the residents (by increasing competition), cut-throat competition jeopardizes the diversity of commercial offer and may impoverish the neighbourhood. Even though this opens the leeway to new trade businesses (e.g. migrants that accept less profitability and can access commercial rents and business sectors thanks to the cut of competition and lower prices), the balance may not be positive.

“With the deregulation everything is falling to nothing [...] if tomorrow another herbalist's opens 300 mt. from year, we share the same cake: in the long run maybe this is not helpful. They just opened [name of shopping mall chain], and we have two or three [other shopping malls] here, to the detriment of small retailers. We're losing a culture, the beauty of shop at the bakery and grocery behind the corner”
R11 (49, F, Italian, Herbalist's)

This is related to another group of policy priorities, basically requiring to invest in different ways on neighbourhoods to create a social and economic environment conducive to positive business performances. Few ask for a direct promotion of stigmatized neighbourhoods by municipal authorities; some respondents ask for a stronger devolution of projects and funds to smallest public bodies (basically, the “zone di decentramento” – decentralization areas, i.e. district authorities with an own governing body; for details see Barberis et al. 2014), supporting the principle of subsidiarity: local authorities are considered closest to neighbourhood social needs and more accessible by inhabitants.

“First of all, a promotion of the neighbourhood is needed, showing that in recent years police actions are decreasing and scaremongering is needless.” R17 (37, M, Italian, Egyptian origins, kebab and pizza shop)

“Actually my suggestion is to channel all European Funds through the district. District authorities can map small retailers and shops” R1 (57, M, Peruvian, Leather artisan)

5.5 Conclusions

Institutional support, according to our interviewees, is one of the most critical features negatively affecting the economic performance of selected businesses. Public support is perceived as scant and marginal, in many cases also due to accessibility problems in existing measures. Since a number of our interviewees have a limited cultural and linking social capital and operate in precarious economic sectors, they find hard to get information on available opportunities; to access opportunities they know; to be successful in the application to opportunities they access.

As a consequence, most of the interviewees perceive public institutions as hostile to their venture. This sentiment is reinforced by an inadequate support networks (in particular, trade associations are usually considered ineffective) and by the tax burden, particularly heavy in a context of crisis.

Neighbourhood diversity and the link with its entrepreneurial environment seem not considered enough by policy-makers: deregulation seem to negatively affect the local business structure, while support measures are not close enough to neighbourhood characteristics and needs. More devolution is sometimes considered useful.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the key findings

Analysing the link between diversity and economic performance in a country (and in a local context) still hit hard by the crisis, where there is limited attention to diversity policies and where inequality and diversity are often associated is a challenge. Though, the evidence collected in this report show that something is on the move, even though not undisputedly rosy.

For example, in Italy and in Milan immigrant entrepreneurship is on the rise; though, this does not necessarily mean that there are new and fruitful market niches. Self-employment may be a shelter option resulting also from institutional, societal and economic constraints (e.g. the expulsion from labour market, the lack of upward mobility, problems with the permits of stays...).

On the other hand, markets where diversity plays a role (in terms of entrepreneurs' background, suppliers, customers, and products) seem gaining some room, even though in many cases in frail niches with a limited profitability. If the concentration of some groups and categories (e.g. some immigrant groups in constructions or the youth in semi-dependent self-employment) is quite plainly the outcome of a disadvantaged position in the labour queue, there are hints of a positive association between diversity and economic performance – under specific conditions.

For example, there is a number of retailers and caterers active in niches with low entry barriers and cut-throat competition. Though, some of them are able to achieve a more robust position. Besides a small number of first movers (that even achieved important ethnic market niches at supralocal level), in many cases the successful are those able to satisfy the needs of a mixed customer base – inventing or hybridizing identities; exploiting the taste for exoticism; pluralizing their products and services; building trust thanks to mixed networks and brands (e.g.: the use of Italian supplies also in ethnic catering chains).

Also, in our case neighbourhoods there are some raising market niches explicitly related to diversity: in the cultural and social sectors, for example, there is an entrepreneurship reflexively working with diversity to improve social cohesion. Though, it is an open issue how much some of them work with or on diversity. Thus, contributing to forms of oppression and exclusion (in different ways: categorizing diversity as disadvantage, or contributing to a gentrification that risks to expel some of those that are active part of neighbourhood diversity).

For many, diversity is a matter of fact. In this respect, whatever the reason to install in a neighbourhood and its relation to place-based diversity, it is worth underlining that diversity becomes relevant afterwards: actually, diversity influences the customer base (the characteristics of market demand) and changes the face of the local business community.

As a side consequence, the association with inequality can have a hyperdiversification effect: the stigmatization of the neighbourhood, the blight of some of its part, make available a number of cheap houses and premises. This attracts entrepreneurs that have limited capitals, are investing in innovative and risky businesses, and/or are part of the

different new social groups settling in the area. Many entrepreneurs do not only work in a diversified neighbourhood; before or later they do come and live there, contributing to its diversification.

Not by chance, our case study area is also home to businesses with low profitability, but strongly based on personal involvement, motivations, passions and activism, that would go easily through much harder times in more expensive neighbourhoods. Being a cheap and plural area, thus, means also laying the foundations to be home for innovations.

Again, what kind of consequences this has on the individual business, on the neighbourhood diversity and on the neighbourhood as a whole depends basically on the embeddedness balance that will be achieved in the mid-term. This is why (Section 4.3) we considered the relation between markets, neighbourhood and diversity and divided our entrepreneurs in three groups, the rooted, the anchored and the stopping over. The rooted have a high socio-economic embeddedness and also contribute to the reproduction of neighbourhood diversity and liveliness; the anchored have a mid-level socio-economic embeddedness, that is mainly one-way, since they exploit diversity more than contributing to it; the stopping over have a limited socio-economic embeddedness. At first sight, the rooted condition seems the best option coupling social cohesion and economic success. Though, based on previous research on embeddedness and networks, we also know that a strong rooting may end up into a lock-in situation, where social bounds limit economic success.

In this respect, further explorations are needed to understand how the small path that keeps together liveliness, social cohesion and social inclusion, bridging social capital and economic performance can be turned into a long term win-win situation. In our case study, the general climate of distrusts towards main economic and public institutions, the limited peer cooperation and the limited linking social capital our interviewees have may run the risk to produce short-term successes.

6.2 Policy recommendations

In a blocked labour market, with limited chances of access and upward mobility, especially for some disadvantaged groups (e.g. the youth and immigrants), self-entrepreneurship could be a way to give value to new ideas and innovations. Though, petty business in traditional markets (e.g. small retail) may likely reinforce a disadvantaged labour market position, due to the low margins of profitability. Policy-makers should support the collaboration among to-be entrepreneurs to share and promote business ideas, as much as to support solid and innovative business plans.

Though, at the moment the awareness and accessibility of many national and local programmes and initiatives seems very limited. Existing measures – even when properly targeted to appreciate and support diversity – cannot be fully used by potential users because information hardly reach them or practices are too complex to manage. Policy makers should pay a particular attention to the ways information is conveyed and to support entrepreneurs and to-be entrepreneurs with limited cultural and linking social capital.

In this respect, trade associations are not always an adequate partner, having similar problems in conveying information and in providing an individualized support for their (potential) members. Trade associations – as some of them have been doing for some years

now – should invest in staff and communication tools able to relate with new entrepreneurs with a background far from their traditional mainstream target.

Finally, the relation between economic performance and neighbourhood diversity should be taken into account when implementing measures with potential socio-economic impacts (from urban renewal programmes to deregulation measures). Since diversity is not rarely associated with inequality at neighbourhood level, there is the risk of further impoverishing and stigmatizing some areas. A larger involvement of neighbourhood-level institutional and informal actors in the definition and implementation of local programmes and initiatives may turn into an advantage by:

- a) recognizing, accepting and promoting neighbourhood diversity as an asset;
- b) fine-tuning measures according to localized needs expressed by different actors
- c) inserting economic measures in wider neighbourhood actions aimed at reversing stigmatization processes and increasing social cohesion
- d) creating mixed markets – the breaking out from both in-group niches and open markets – by supporting inter-group networking

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Appendix

List of the interviewed entrepreneurs

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Citizenship	Area	Type of business	NACE	Type of enterprise (see Tab. 5)
1	57	M	Peruvian	2	Leather artisan	C15.12	f)
2	65	M	Italian	2	Wood artisan	C16.29	f)
3	38	F	Italian	2	Toy laboratory	C32.40	f)
4	52	M	Italian (Romanian background)	9	Constructions	F43.39	f)
5	47	M	Egyptian	9	Mechanic's	G45.20	f)
6	40	M	Chinese	2	Small retailer	G47.19	f)
7	56	F	Italian	9	Grocer's	G47.21	f)
8	39	M	Italian	9	Baker's	G47.24	c)
9	74	M	Italian	9	Stationer's	G47.62	f)
10	55	F	Peruvian	2	Clothing shop	G47.71	d)
11	49	F	Italian	9	Herbalist's	G47.75	f)
12	40	M	Italian	2	Art gallery	G47.78	f)
13	35	M	Moroccan	2	Peddler	G47.82	f)
14	20	F	Italian	9	Restaurant and pizza shop	I56.10	f)
15	26	M	Italian (Egyptian background)	9	Kebab and pizza shop	I56.10	c)
16	46	M	Peruvian	2	<i>Latino</i> restaurant	I56.10	a)
17	37	M	Italian (Egyptian background)	2	Kebab Shop	I56.10	c)
18	23	M	Ecuadorean	2	<i>Latino</i> restaurant	I56.10	c)
19	20	F	Chinese	2	Italian-Chinese restaurant	I56.10	c)
20	45	M	Italian	9	Restaurant and pizza shop	I56.10	f)
21	55	F	French	2	Bar	I56.30	f)
22	53	F	Chinese	9	Bar	I56.30	d)
23	33	M	Italian	2	Publishing house	J58.11	a)
24	27	F	Peruvian	2	"Money transfer"	K64.19	b)

25	53	M	Italian	2	Freelance copywriter	M73.11	f)
26	35	M	Egyptian	2	Travel agency	N79.11	b)
27	40	F	Italian	2	Social enterprise (social housing)	O84.12	f)
28	65	F	Italian	2	Association for social advancement	P85.52	f)
29	35	F	Italian	2	Social cooperative	P85.52	f)
30	35	F	Italian	2	Social enterprise	Q88.99	f)
31	39	F	Italian	2	Freelance counselor	Q88.99	f)
32	28	F	Italian (Egyptian background)	9	Freelance drama- therapist	Q88.99	f)
33	35	F	Swiss	2	Social enterprise	Q88.99	f)
34	32	M	Peruvian	2	Piano bar singer	R90.01	a)
35	59	M	Italian	9	Theatre	R90.01	f)
36	46	F	German	2	Freelance artist	R90.03	f)
37	40	F	Japanese	2	Freelance artist	R90.03	e)
38	44	F	Italian (Japanese background)	2	Freelance cartoonist	R90.03	e)
39	42	F	Italian	9	Laundry	S96.01	f)
40	46	M	Egyptian	2	Barber's	S96.02	a)
41	27	F	Italian	2	Artistic association	R90.03	f)