Migrant Activism in Australia: The case of the Italian Federation of Migrant Workers and their Families (FILEF)

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ABSTRACT

Migrant organisations, as social actors in the global migratory process have become the focus of much research interest in recent decades. In this context and with greater levels of transnationalism than in previous generations of migrants, a new phase emerges between host and home country. The emphasis can change from one of migrant integration in the destination region to one that takes into account the region of origin, linkages and relationships between them. Links include political, sociological and economic environments of home countries as well as well those of host countries.

The Italian Federation of Migrant Workers and their Families (FILEF), a worldwide voluntary organisation, organised by and for migrants of Italian background and engaged in the areas of welfare, education, and culture, is an example of an organisation that from its inception focused its attention on providing a voice and a hand to Italian communities around the world.

In Australia FILEF was the successor of a string of left-wing grassroots organisations, such as the Italian Australian League (Melbourne) and the Italian Australian Club (Sydney). FILEF set up branches in Melbourne and Sydney in 1972 and later on in Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth. FILEF sought to raise political awareness amid migrant communities, in particular amongst Italian working class migrants, by providing a left-wing political voice and a platform to left-wing Italians in Australia. It did so amongst other things by forging close relations with political parties such as the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and trade union organisations. Education was an important activity of FILEF as was welfare, Italian community development, women's emancipation, civil rights and ethnic affairs. These matters have remained the most important areas of FILEF engagement since the 1970s. Through its fortnightly paper *Nuovo Paese*, community radio programs, migrant workers' conferences, surveys, and petitions, FILEF sought to be a 'voice' for Italian immigrants in Australia. The political contact between FILEF and the Labor party and the involvement in the unions also provided the historic opportunity of having its own Member of Parliament in Victoria and thereby extending its political influence and weight into state and federal politics.

This research presents previously unknown material and oral histories on FILEF and their impact on the Australian and the Italian political economy. Equally, this study reveals important links and relationships between FILEF and Australian and Italian political parties. Finally, this study addresses the characteristics of the new Italian migrants and their quest to integrate into the existing Italian community in Australia and in more general terms into Australian society.

The purpose of this research has been to re-evaluate and ascertain the sustainability factors which explain how FILEF acted and survived in Australia. Despite its limited presence in the Italian community in Australia and its brief history, this organisation survived the political demise of its benefactor, the Italian Communist Party, and became a relevant instrument for the integration of Italian migrants in the host country. This thesis sought to address this unique scenario of Italian migrant activism and how it provided a vehicle for Italians to integrate and settle in their host country.

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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text.

To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

This research has been approved by the Swinburne University Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC), Application 2012/279 (see Appendix 2) and I certify that all conditions pertaining to this ethics clearance have been properly met and that annual reports and a final report have been submitted;

Luca Marin

Signed _____

Date _____

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACLI	Associazione Cattolica Lavoratori Italiani (Catholic Association of Italian Workers)
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AGWS	Australian Greek Welfare Society
AIRE	Registry of Italians Resident Abroad
AJWRS	Australia Jewish Welfare and Relief Society
ALEF	*Associazione Lavoratori Emigrati del Friuli – Venezia Giulia* (Association of Workers of Friuli – Venezia Giulia)
ALP	Australian Labor Party
AMWU	Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union
ANFE	*Associazione Nazionale Famiglie degli Emigrati* (National Association of Migrants' Families)
ARCI	*Associazione Ricreativa e Culturale Italiana*
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
BIMPR	Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research
CGE	*Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione* (General Commissariat of Emigration)
CGIE	*Consiglio Generale degli Italiani all'Estero* (General Council of Italians abroad)
CGIL	*Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* (Italian Federation of Labour)
CISL	*Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori* (Italian Confederation of Worker's Union)
COASIT	*Comitato Assistenza Italiani* (Italian Welfare Committee)
COMITES	*Comitato degli Italiani all'Estero* (Committee of Italians Abroad)
CPA	Communist Party of Australia
CURA	Centre for Urban Research and Action
DC	*Democrazia Cristiana* (Christian Democratic Party)
DIPB	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
DLP	Democratic Labor Party
EMC	Ecumenical Migration Centre
FCC	FILEF Cultural Committee
FCLIS	*Federazione Colonie Libere Italiane in Svizzera* (Federation of Free Italian Colonies in Switzerland)
FEC	Fitzroy Ecumenical Centre
FGCI	*Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana*
FIEI	*Federazione Italiana Emigrazione Immigrazione* (Italian Federation Emigration Immigration)
FILEF	*Federazione Italiana dei Lavoratori Emigrati e loro Famiglie* (Italian Federation of Migrant Workers and their Families)
FMA	FILEF Melbourne Archive

FSA	FILEF Sydney Archive
FTG	FILEF Theatre Group
FWG	FILEF Women Group
INCA	*Istituto Nazionale Confederale di Assistenza* (National Federal Institute of Assistance)
ISTAT	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica
MSI	*Movimento Sociale Italiano* (Italian Social Movement)
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
OMA	Office of Multicultural Affairs
PCF	*Partito Comunista Francese* (French Communist Party)
PCI	*Partito Comunista Italiano* (Italian Communist Party)
PCRG	*Partito Comunista della Regione Giulia* (Communist Party of Giulia Region)
PSI	*Partito Socialista Italiano* (Italian Socialist Party)
SCOs	Social Change Organisations
UDI	*Unione Donne Italiane* (Italian Union of Women)
UIL	*Unione Italiana del Lavoro* (Union of Italian Labour)
UNAIE	*Unione Nazionale Associazioni Immigrati ed Emigrati* (National Union of Immigrants and Emigrants Associations)
USEF	*Unione Siciliana Emigrati e Famiglie* (Sicilian Union of Migrant and Families)

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The 19th century is acknowledged as the century of the creation of the working class across most industrialising nations. Also saw the beginnings of modern migration movements which countries such as Italy are a testimony to. Migration to the modern world especially from Europe to fast developing nations such as the United States would become the backbone of the new labour force laying the economic foundations of these nations. Yet newly arrived migrants initially found insertion into modern host societies challenging. The experiences sometimes manifested in hostility towards the newcomers, most often in host country labour market structures. Italians migrating to the USA in the late 19th century experienced exactly this dilemma. However, over time integration—or more appropriately assimilation—achieved more harmonious outcomes in places such as the US. The subsequent forms of immigration with migrants establishing ethnic communities would end up impacting many modern nation-states. These included Europe, and North and South America. Australian migration history is somewhat different as the largest phase of immigration was initially European in origin, and occurred after World War II. Italians made up a sizeable number of this post war migration.

Unlike many of the studies conducted into ethnic communities in the United States and Canada, there is a more limited field of research into ethnic communities in Australia. Several studies including Cresciani (2003) and Gabaccia (2000) focus on Italian emigration in general terms. Others analyse this phenomenon focusing on regional differences and different Italian cultural traditions (Baldassar & Pesman 2005; Pascoe 1987). There are a range of scholars focusing on Australian immigration such as Price (1963) and Hugo (2014) in the fields of demography; Jakubowicz *et al*. (1984, 2013) in the area of sociology; Bottomley & de Lepervanche (1984) in the field of anthropology; Jupp (1966, 1984) in the field of politics, Markus (1994) from a historical perspective and Ozolins (1993) from a languages perspective. These studies demonstrate the variety of the traditional approaches to studying a community in its quest for acceptance and a better life in a new country. Moreover, they also demonstrate the need for an interdisciplinary approach when seeking to understand these communities.

However when it comes to migrant associations and migrant politicisation in the host country, there are but a handful of studies which tackle this theme in a complete and holistic manner. In recent years a number of scholars such as Pojmann (2008) and Goeke (2014) focused their research on migrant activism in Europe. Espinosa (2014), Ho (2008) and Mason (2010) focus on migrant activism and women's activism among ethnic communities in Australia.

1.2 The purpose of this study

The Italian Federation of Migrant Workers and their Families (FILEF) is a global voluntary organisation. Branches were initially set up wherever there were large concentrations of Italian emigrants. The main reason for its existence was to provide support in the areas of welfare and education, but it also engaged in the provision of cultural activities for its members and for Italian migrants at large. In the case of Australia this study examines FILEF which was especially active in the 1970s and 1980s and has survived to this very day. This study investigates the nature of FILEF, seeking to understand how it was established in Australia, and how it survived and remains to this day an organisation designed to provide a voice to a small number of Italian immigrants of left-wing persuasion. Part of the purpose is to explore why FILEF did not meet the same fate as many similar organisations. That it did not entirely disappear like its benefactor, the Italian Communist Party, or was absorbed into other like-minded organisations during the political turmoil of the late 20th century post-Cold War politics. Instead it survived, albeit in a small way focused on cultural activities rather than directly political ones.

This research is set in an Australian context with the purpose of the study to explore the survival and legitimacy of this Italian migrant political organisation. This chapter introduces FILEF as a research topic and addresses how community-based organisations like FILEF played a multifaceted role in Australia. FILEF saw as some of its tasks the provision of education (often in the form of language classes), aged care, child care, and heritage preservation services. Like other likeminded organisations, FILEF also acted as a pressure group on local, state and federal governments to ensure that Australia continued to have pro-migration policies, and that all levels of government ensured that migrant communities remained properly cared for in the areas of welfare and education.

1.3 Aims and significance of the study

The aim of this study is to re-evaluate the activism of a particular group of Italian migrants and ascertain how FILEF as an organisation survived amidst the political turmoil of the late 20th century, the end of the Cold War, the disappearance of the Italian Communist Party and the decline of ideologically-based organisations. The purpose of this study is to ascertain – through the journey of many of its members, detailed in vivid accounts of their personal understanding of the historical significance of the organisation – how they managed to integrate this organisation into the Australian experience. The journey is even more astonishing given the small group of supporters associated with FILEF.

The importance of this study lies in the fact that this Italian migrant organisation had little reason to exist and survive but it did. However, its experience is a telling example of the potential and limitations of political and social activism in Australia by migrant organisations. One of the aims of this study is to provide both government agencies and the academic community an insight into the journey and obstacles this voice of Italian politically-minded migrants faced as a lesson for future generations of different migrants. Whether FILEF can, as a worldwide association, be a social actor among the new Italian migrants arriving in Australian today, is not part of this study. The lessons and experiences, however, are invaluable. They need to be understood and widely disseminated. Moreover, the findings of this dissertation may provide policy makers with better tools for understanding and, as a consequence, lead to better policies in terms of migration and settlement. In addition, this research informs the academic community of past and present roles fulfilled by FILEF and similar associations.

1.4 Personal reasons for conducting this study

Italian migration to Australia, both past and more recent, has strongly influenced my choice of subject matter as well as my theoretical and methodological approach. Traditionally, Australia is acknowledged as a country receiving migrants, while Italy is seen as a country of emigration. This distinction may be less rigid today than in the past. Many studies have examined the subject of Italian migration to Australia over the last two hundred years from different perspectives. This research focuses on a very different

aspect of the migration relationship between these two countries. Its entire focus is directed towards migrant activism, a theme hitherto mostly overlooked.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the social and political activism of migrants prior to World War Two in Europe, the USA and Australia was well documented and researched. My own view is that this does not apply to developments after World War Two, and certainly not between Italy and Australia in the field of migrant activism. The same applies in the European context as has been highlighted by Pojmann (2008).

My reasons for examining these issues are also personal. I am part of the contemporary Italian migration which affects Italy and Australia and I was interested in understanding what contribution migrant activists and their associations made to a specific migration phase which began in the 1970s, and since then. Without any particular knowledge of this phenomenon I was however aware that the migrant social network of the current migration was significantly different from those of the past.

I soon discovered that Italian emigration to Australia, especially the large scale migration post 1947 had been extensively treated by scholars. I thus became more interested in more recent migration—the period of the 1970s and an examination of the push-pull factors affecting this more recent migration. My reading of the stories of these more recent migrants provided different stories; and stories which engendered more empathy with them than with the first migration wave. I soon arrived at the question of what assistance there may have been for these later Italian migrants: did they have organisations in place which might be a magnet for this group of Italian emigrants? I could also see from a scholarly point of view that there was a contribution to make in this current study through the investigation of the nature of a migrant activist organisation and the services it offered to like-minded Italian migrants. Moreover, what organisations were assisting Italian migrants? Which ones were the most influential in the Italian community? Who were the most important leaders representing the Italian community? Why was it that only the conservative segment of the Italian community had a voice in Australian society?

1.5 The research problem

One of the most significant challenges faced by this research was how to investigate the establishment, the activities, the survival and continuation of FILEF. The organisation was established in 1972 in Melbourne and very soon established branches throughout most Australian capital cities. The political context in which newly arrived Italian workers found them was not one of a wholehearted welcome. Within the labour movement they were sometimes viewed with suspicion, and often found themselves belonging to racist and xenophobic mainstream labour movements (Gabaccia & Ottanelli 2001: 11). On the other hand, from a sociological perspective, the collective identity of social groups, such as workers and ethnic communities, increased exponentially, at times dramatic with consequences. In Australia as well as in other developed economies built on migrant labour, the coming together of new migrant labour with existing organised labour initially rarely followed a smooth path. It took decades of working together to overcome the initial distrust.

Italian migrant organisations in Australia, often representing a largely working-class background, have not yet received the scholarly treatment this subject merits.

Since the establishment of FILEF in Australia in 1972, the political, economic, and sociological landscape has changed dramatically locally and internationally. In turn, the objectives, roles, activities, and membership of FILEF have changed significantly, too. The geo-political role of Australia within the Cold War context of the 1970s meant that positions within the Italian immigrant community were also polarised along Cold War lines; between those who claimed to be 'left' and 'progressive', and those who claimed to be 'right' and 'democratic'. This was a political struggle which lasted until the end of the 1980s; it ended with the fall of Berlin Wall, the end of the bipolar system initiated by the Yalta agreements (Vittoria 2006), the dissolution of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), and the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). In this context it is important to understand how FILEF related to these cataclysmic changes and upon what political foundations FILEF's self-definition rested. It had initially made reference to its affiliation and connections with the Italian PCI which initially boasted the largest membership and network of any Communist party in the Western World, but ceased to exist after 1991. Moreover, another association which FILEF had links to, the Australian Communist Party, also ceased to exist at the same time. Therefore, this study seeks to ascertain how FILEF as an organisation in conjunction with other association

with a left-wing ideology, was able to survive and provide a voice to left-wing minded Italian migrants. Consequently, one of the questions posed in this study is why FILEF was even established in Australia.

1.6 The research setting for a study of this kind

The theories and conclusions from the literature in this thesis derive from studies that focus particularly on Australia and Italy. They partially explain the methods and findings used to assist in locating the answers to the research questions.

There is no complete study on the history of FILEF, neither in Australia nor in other countries. Volpe (2007) examines the establishment of FILEF in the political environment and cultural settings of Italy and Europe; others such as Battiston (2012), Battiston and Sestigiani (2015), Lopez (2000) and Carli (1982) focus primarily on the activism of FILEF's supporters in Australia.

This lack of research is particularly noteworthy considering the historical significance of collective participation of migrant groups in anti-government and protest movements against conservative political, social and economic policies that occurred in Australia and in Western countries in the late 1960s and 1970s. Crainz (2012) and Ginsborg (2003) focus on the transformation of Italian society in those years; Kuhn and O'Lincoln (1996), Lever-Tracy and Quinlan (1988), and Sparrow and Sparrow (2004) focus on class conflict and ethnic tensions in the post 1970s which dramatically manifested in a socially conflicted Australia.

The multifaceted role of migrant organisations in Australia is yet to be fully researched. It is argued that through these associations it is possible to compare economic and political views of different migrants from Italy to Australia during the second half of the 20th century. Emerging migrant communities generally feel a need to have their concerns, needs, and aspirations channelled by culturally and linguistically appropriate spokespeople within the host society. To study the way in which these organisations perform their multifaceted roles at community level over time is to monitor the success and failures of ethnically based community lobby activity, at collective as well as individual levels. In the case of this study a fundamental question revolved around the connection between FILEF and the political systems in Italy and in Australia, how this affected the organisation and what internal and external factors contributed to the success and decline of FILEF.

The emergence of Italian-run immigrant organisations in post Second World War Australia is better understood and contextualised against an ethnic community building framework. The large presence of Italians in post-1945 Australia '… has led to the formation of a complex community structure covering not only social and sporting activities but also religion, welfare, culture, education and language' (Rando 1992: 184). Some Italian community-based organisations (from the 1960s onwards) like the Italian Assistance Committees (COASIT) of Melbourne and Sydney have been particularly active in the welfare sector, providing Italian-Australians with a number of social and welfare services in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. In doing so they sought to address immediate and long-term needs of Italian migrants in Australia. Other emerging community-based and migrant-run organisations fulfil similar roles, such as the Australian Greek Welfare Society or the Australian Jewish Welfare and Relief Society.

These community-based organisations provided various types of support including education (specifically language classes), aged care, child care, and heritage preservation services. Some other community-based, ethnic-run organisations, whilst providing limited welfare services to their target communities, also acted as pressure groups to local, state and federal governments for pro-migrant policies, especially in the broad areas of welfare (i.e. demanding ad hoc welfare programs for migrant communities) and education (i.e. the inclusion of community languages in the state school curricula). These latter organisations were particularly active during the so-called era of multiculturalism (D'Aprano 1984; Lopez 2000).

1.7 Terminology

Before proceeding with the dissertation, it should be emphasised that some terms are used frequently in the literature. In order to better contextualise them and for the convenience of the reader, brief definitions will follow:

Assimilationism: The term assimilationism describes a process whereby people from different countries and different cultures are absorbed in the host country society as a consequence of migration process. In this dissertation the term refers to a specific era that of what is often referred to as the time of the 'White Australia Policy'.

Campanilismo: attachment by Italians to the village/town, referring to the church bells (campanile).

Centralismo democratico (Democratic centralism): the term refers to a decision-making practice and disciplinary policy adopted by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and later on followed by communist parties in other countries. Democratic centralism purported to combine two opposing forms of party leadership: democracy, which allows for free and open discussion, and central control, which ensures party unity and discipline. (*Democratic centralism 2015*)

Diaspora: the term Diaspora is often used for peoples displaced or dispersed by force (e.g. Jews, African slaves, etc.). In this thesis the terms diaspora can be imagined as a complex network of social connections creating transnational identities. In addition, diaspora is frequently used to describe recent developments related to skilled workers and migrants. In this dissertation the term diaspora is used interchangeably with the terms transnationalism and migration.

First-generation Italian: Italian-born settler; defined as Australian with Italian origin.

(Generation) post-1968: Italian and/or Australian born after the Second World War, affiliated with student movements of that time, and emigrated to Australia between the 1970s and the 1980s.

Integrationism: this term indicates the sociological process by which divisions and heterogeneous factors within a society are overcome in order to create a new balanced whole (Bolaffi et al. 2003). In this dissertation the term refers to a particular political era in Australia. According to York the shift from assimilationism to integrationism in the 1960s depended on a number of factors. The first was the non-return of migrants to their home countries due to Australian economic growth; the second is related to migrants' political engagement and voting patterns based on new settlement patterns in inner suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney (York 1996: 9). Lopez (2000) highlights the internal debates in the Australian agencies and migrants committees and the evolution from assimilation to multiculturalism facilitated by concepts and policies of integrationism.

Multiculturalism: Multiculturalism is related to significant elements such as religion, cultural identity, cultural difference, and economic conditions. As a general overview of the sociological and political debate, multiculturalism refers to a 'particular political system or specific policies aimed to granting and ensuring equal dignity to different cultures and at fighting discrimination against those belonging to specific ethnic/cultural minorities' (Bolaffi et al. 2003: 185). From a social scientific perspective multiculturalism can be seen to incorporate the two global principles of human

existence, that is, the principle of *biological unity* of the human species and the principle of *cultural diversity* among human groups within species. With regard to human rights principles, it may be argued that individual human rights derive from the global principle of human unity, the oneness of humankind as a single species. Collective human rights derive from the global principle of human diversity, the distinctiveness of human cultures as unique manifestations of diverse human groups (Kallen 1987: 125). As a predominant ideology it is challenging to pinpoint the beginnings of multiculturalism in the modern society. However, in this thesis the term multiculturalism is strictly related to the immigration history of Australia which bears similarities with United States and Canada. The term 'multiculturalism' was imported from Canada, and finally acknowledged by Australian government in *Racial Discrimination Act* (1975).

According to Gabaccia & Ottanelli, Australian, Canadian and American immigrants consider their countries as "nations of immigrants", due to their multi-cultural make-up (Gabaccia & Ottanelli 2001: 13).

Second generation: Australian with Italian ancestry born to (at least) one Italian-born parent.

Third generation: Australian of Italian ancestry with at least one Italian-born grandparent.

Transnationalism: The term transnationalism is connected with the much older concept of diaspora. However, this term stresses the link between sending and receiving societies. Rapid improvements in technologies make easier for migrants to maintain close links with their areas of origin (Castles & Miller 2009: 30). In this thesis two different levels of transnational activities are defined: micro and macro. 'Transnational activities are those that take place on a recurrent basis across national borders and that require a regular and significant commitment of time by participants. Such activities may be conducted by relatively powerful actors, such as representatives of national governments and multinational corporations, or may be initiated by more modest individuals, such as immigrants and their home country kin and relations. These activities are not limited to economic enterprises, but include political, cultural and religious initiatives as well' (Portes 1999: 464)

White Australia Policy: The 'White Australia' policy describes Australia's approach to immigration from federation (1901) until the latter part of the 20th century, which

favoured applicants from certain countries. The abolition of the policy took place over a period of twenty five years. Following the election of a coalition of the Liberal and Country parties in 1949, Immigration Minister Harold Holt allowed 800 non-European refugees to remain in Australia, and Japanese war brides to enter Australia. Over subsequent years Australian governments gradually dismantled the policy with the final vestiges being removed in 1973 by the new Labor government (*Abolition of the White Policy*, DIPB 2015).

1.8 Outline of the thesis

This thesis examines the political and social activism of left-leaning Italian migrants in Australia who actively participated in FILEF since 1972. It re-evaluated the role of this community-based organisation through its influence among the Italians. Through the use of interviews it was also possible to undertake a comparison of the demands and expectations of the different groups involved in this research.

Chapter one introduces the background statement and discusses the aim, the significance and the purpose of the study, providing an overall idea of the research problem and the journey undertaken to make an original contribution in the field of migration studies.

Chapter Two reviews the literature on Italian migration. It describes the major themes in the historiography focusing on what has been written about Italian migration since the Second World War. Then it analyses the settlement of Italians in Australia by concentrating on the studies related to the migrant organisations and their participation in the Australian society. The chapter concludes with a review of the FILEF literature and the major critiques of the literature. This chapter presents the gap in the literature, and the opportunities to cover some aspects not researched in prior studies.

Chapter Three describes the research context and the methodology adopted. Then, the research questions on which the dissertation is based are described as tools to identify the nature of FILEF, distinguishing it from other, similar associations. The second part of this chapter sets out the data collection strategy and the limits of this collection strategy. Finally, the original contribution of knowledge made by this thesis is outlined.

Chapter Four explores the economic and socio-political aspects that affecting Italian emigration from the Second World War until the 1970s. Providing an historical background regarding the settlement of Italians in Australia, it focuses on the role of political parties in Italy and migrants associations in Australia in the Cold War framework. It describes the origins of FILEF in Europe and later on in Australia, outlining differences and similarities between the traditional countries of Italian immigration. It concludes describing the integration of Italians in the Australian political system.

Chapter Five and Six investigate the role and the evolution of FILEF branches in Melbourne and Sydney as typical examples of migrant activism during the 'turbulent decade' of the 1970s. They focus on the life trajectories of the leaders of FILEF. These two chapters outline also the main activities of FILEF from the 1970s to the 1990s, highlighting differences and similarities between Melbourne and Sydney. They argue that the trajectories of FILEF members represent important instances of integration into and critical interaction with, both individually and collectively, the Australian social and political fabric. The level of autonomy from the Italian parties and institution are investigated, bearing in mind level of involvement in Australian government agencies and in local. The main factors in the evolution and decline of FILEF branches in Australia are also highlighted.

Chapter Seven describes the evolution of FILEF in the last twenty years. The investigation focuses on the macro-external factor of the dramatic social and economic global changes which affect migrant organisations around the globe. On a micro level, the limits of FILEF as a traditional association confronted with new demands in Australia is analysed. It shows three main historical phases of FILEF in Australia from the most politicised period to the more contemporary social movements.

Chapter Eight draws the preceding discussion together, and offers concluding observations. The final chapter demonstrates also that the evolution of FILEF and the level of its presence among the Italian migrant community has to be viewed not only as a reflection of the dynamics of politics but also as one of the dynamics and conflicts of its supporters with their demands, targets and involvements.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter provides a road map for presenting the purpose of the research and the approach towards the research topic. With the introduction of the research topic, the author of this study has sought to indicate the reasons which have played a role in building the research framework, inclusive of the theoretical approach used in this dissertation. The chapter provides an explanation of the methodological aspects pertinent to sampling and data collection. Key to this study is of course the purpose and aim of this research which is to address the question of the survival and continuation of this unique organisation in a migration context in a host country like Australia. Clearly, this study seeks to address a research and literature gap, to be set out in the following chapters; however, at the same time it has to be understood that it is not possible to cover all aspects of this unique theme. Therefore, mention will be made of future research suggested for those who will succeed the author in the study of this topic. The research questions which so far have been addressed only briefly will be more thoroughly interrogated in the study. The manner of collecting the data for this study included semi-structured interviews, with most participants interviewed choosing to be cited using their real names.

The following chapter will provide the literature review in the field of Italian migration; moving from general aspects to the more specific phases of the Italian experience in Australia. The key intention in this chapter is to define and highlight the literature gap as related to the presence and survival of FILEF. The literature review will discuss in detail the numerous themes around the question of Italian migration to Australia and especially those matters which also intersect with the FILEF experience. These themes will include the Italian community, the role of ethnic media and organisations established in Australia before FILEF.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the literature addressing the main research fields of migration alongside relevant migration theories addressing migrant organisations like FILEF. The literature review will explore the arguments in relevant works dealing with Italian migration broadly and then specifically that of migration to Australia. This chapter will seek to contextualise the literature which examines not only migration but also Italian settlement in Australia, with a focus on an organisation which set itself the objective of being a welfare organisation of left-leaning policies. The political affiliation of FILEF places it as an activist organisation and the different approaches of grassroots and social impact will be explored in the literature review. Moreover, the political, economic and social features of the Italian community in Australian society will be examined. The literature of most interest relates to migration in the post-war period which is relevant to the period of FILEF's establishment in Australia. Finally, this chapter provides an analysis of the contemporary literature related to FILEF, including recent studies and critiques of this organisation by contemporary scholars, the literature gap and missing areas of study on FILEF.

2.2 Migration theories: an overview

Migration, in this specific case 'voluntary migration', according to one scholar denotes 'the move to and settlement in a particularly country' (Bolaffi et al. 2003: 177). The factors behind this migration are several. However, the most significant ones are related to economic aspects (i.e. moving from developing to developed country), political aspects (change of a political system in home and host country) and sociological aspects (i.e. family reunification and diaspora). These features above are also called push and pull factors from one country to the other and vice versa. Migration theories can focus on the macro situation such as economy, politics, and community displacements as well as on the micro level of individual decision.

It is argued (Castles et al. 1992; Castles, de Haas & Miller 2014; Cresciani 2003; Jupp 1966) that after the end of the Second World War the economic and social role of migrants and their organisations dramatically changed. This occurred mostly in

developed countries such as Canada, USA and Australia, and generally, in Western European countries. From 1945 to the early 1970s manufacturing production, for instance, was concentrated in these developed countries, attracting a large number of migrant workers. These economic changes have been elucidated by a multiplicity of migration theories. Leading theoretical frameworks have engaged with neo-classical, new economics of labour migration, historical-structural approaches and world system theories among others. Most importantly, scholars such as Massey et al. (1998) argue that no single migration theory can explain exhaustively the migration phenomenon.

> Current patterns and trends in international migration suggest, however, that a full understanding of contemporary migratory processes will not be achieved by relying on the tools of one discipline alone, or by focusing on a single level of analysis or one conceptual model. Rather, their complex, multifaceted nature requires a sophisticated theory that incorporates a variety of perspectives, levels, and assumptions (Massey et al. 1998: 17).

An interdisciplinary approach to understand contemporary migratory processes may need to be employed. For instance, how is the macro level/macroeconomic model (i.e. labour migration) related to the micro level/microeconomic model (i.e. individual choice of migration)?

Neo-classical theory, which focuses on push and pull factors, concentrates on role of the individual choice by migrants as rational actors. This approach has been criticised by other scholars using a historical approach towards migration. Scholars using the historical approach (Hugo 2005; Portes 2010) criticized that neo-classic theorist were focusing completely on rational choices of migrants rather than taking into account the recruitment of labour and the inequality between poor and rich countries. This historical assumption, based on the neo-Marxist theory of global capitalism and labour market, emerged during social and economic changes that affected developed countries and the Third World after decolonisation in the post war period.

However, these two migrant theories do not include and explain other features of the multifaceted issue of migration. Other migration theories (Massey et al. 1998), such as network, transnationalism and diaspora theories emphasise aspects that include family networks, households, and communities as 'social groups' (Portes 1999). Much attention by scholars has been focused on anthropological and sociological aspects of migration.

'Most of these theories focus on the micro-and meso-level and are interested in what motivates people and social groups to migrate, how they perceive the world and how they shape their identity during the migration process' (Castles, de Haas, & Miller 2014: 37). Thus, political and socio-cultural transnational activities are considered as a relevant contribution for the integration in the host society as well as a social and economic development for the sending countries (Portes 1999).

The Italian case

Since unification in 1861 Italy has been a country of emigration although as Gabaccia (2000) has stressed this phenomenon began long before 1861. According to the statistics more than two million Italians emigrated between 1790 and 1870. However, it was after 1870 that Italian emigration changed, paving the way for successive waves of mass emigration. Gabaccia (2000) explains that Italian mass migration was not only a product of Italian national history but also of global economic and geo-political changes in the Americas and in the so-called 'global labour market'. In the case of Italy there were three pull factors affecting Italian migration. In so far as the Americas were concerned, this emigration of Italians responded to social change with the emancipation of African slaves in the Americas. A second pull factor is associated with the turbulent revolutions which created new states in the Americas and with it new opportunities to populate them and thirdly, it is related to economic changes, which moved the industrial global capital from northern Europe to America, Africa and Asia. All these factors were determinants in the Italian mass emigration, mainly by manual workers.

Audenino & Tirabassi (2008) highlight how the population growth, the agrarian crisis of the 1870s, and the new tax laws of the new Italian state were three key push factors for Italian migration. In addition, the new global labour market demanded skilled jobs that attracted a large number of skilled artisans from Italy who could not find work in their home country.

Another aspect which has to be considered is the social change in the sending and the receiving countries. Castles, for instance disagrees with Portes' view (2010) which argues that migration does not generally change the fundamental structures and institutions of developed countries. Castles argues that 'migration is one part of the process of transformation of these structures and institutions that arises through major changes in global political, economic and social relationships' (2010: 1566).

So, in this particular case how did the receiving societies change due to the 'mass' arrival of Italian emigrants and how, as a sending country, did Italy change in those years? According to Portes (2010), migration changes does not change either receiving of sending societies much. In his conclusion, Portes affirms that for the receiving countries it is easier to regulate migrant flows than for the sending societies. In the Italian case this was certainly the case.

After the Second World War, one of the consequences of the restriction on emigration in Italy was the dramatic increase of internal migration. The emigration of peasants and workers from rural areas of south Italy to the north-west confirms what Portes noticed for Central American migrants, when they move to Canada and USA.

2.3 The Italian community in Australia: an overview

Several studies (Castles et al. 1992; Cresciani 1983, 2003; Jupp 1966, 1984, 2001) confirm that Italian migration to Australia during the twentieth century was significant and left its mark. According to statistics, the most important phase of Italian migration to Australia started in the early 1950s and concluded at the end of the 1960s. One of the main facilitators of Italian migration to Australia was the bilateral agreement (promoting migration) signed between the Australian and Italian governments in 1951. Australia sought unskilled labour in order to kick-start large public works, such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. These public works allowed for a chain migration which contributed to reunification of families, increasing remittances, and with higher wages even the possibility to amass savings and possibly a return visit to the home country. Moreover, in the case of the Snowy scheme 'a number of workers were able to put together work gangs, and as a consequence establish their own small subcontracting firms. Thus, some subcontractors were migrants (including Italian) who recruited employees from their own country of origin', (Panucci, Kelly & Castles 1992: 59). But Italian chain migration had developed even before the Second World War, in particular in the areas of building construction which involved recruiting workers from same areas of Italy, and in employment in the Queensland sugar cane or tobacco fields. This holds particularly true for North Queensland with workers from towns located in Friuli, a northern region of Italy (Grossutti 2001: 154-156), or in rural areas of Victoria such as Mildura, and Griffith in New South Wales (Burnley 2001: 84-88).

Except for a few pioneering studies in the area of demography (Price 1963) and politics (Wilson 1971), there is a wholesale absence of study on the presence of Italians in Australia. Unlike ethnic groups in USA or in South America, Italians in Australia are a relatively "young community" and need more time to be contextualised and historicised.

The end of Italian mass emigration at the beginning of the 1970s coincided with a new interest in the field of migration studies in both Australia and in Italy. Cresciani highlights, for example, the role of *Centro Studi Emigrazione* of the Scalabrinian Order in Rome and the dramatic increase of academic studies, journals, and research from the 1970s. On the Australian side, according to Cresciani 'the most significant and intense period of cultural interaction between Italy and Australia was between 1976 and 1999' (Cresciani 2014: 52-53) as a result of the important role played by the Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies (De Felice 1979: 9-10).

On the Italian side, the growth of studies, surveys and statistics about Italian migration came firstly from a general settlement of Italians in the host countries and secondly from the first century of the Unification of Italy. The first Italian emigration census started in 1876 and 100 years late, it then became possible to provide a general overview, at least in statistical terms, of the Italian migration waves (Rosoli 1978).

The Italian communities scattered around the globe did attract new fields of study. They also attracted the involvement of Italian organisations because their communities sought new studies and new methods of research in the fields of demography, anthropology, sociology and economy. Over the last forty years a significant quantity of studies about specific communities established in host countries coming from specific Italian places has been conducted. This is most noticeable with regard to migrant communities from Calabria, Veneto Sicily that settled in the rural regions of South America (Devoto & Miguez 1992) and Australia (Baldassar & Pesman 2005, Borzomati 1982, Cecilia 1993).

The literature on the Italian community in Australia since the 1970s

The presence of the Italian community in Australia has been studied first by practitioners and secondly by scholars only as recently as the late 1970s. A telling example is the bibliography of Lidio Bertelli (1979) about Italians in Australia. Most

studies on the Italian community however were not scholarly but undertaken by practitioners.[1]

In 1978 Lowenstein and Loh published *The Immigrants*, a collection of testimonials from different ethnic groups. Two years later Loh (1980) published, with the support of FILEF, a study which included several oral histories of Italian workers in Australia. These memories highlighted, among others issues, the harsh conditions of the work environment in the late 1940s and 1950s as well as the first settlement of newcomers. Remaining in the collective memories studies, Rando (1997) highlighted the connection, for example, between the advent of multiculturalism in Australia in the mid-1970s and the production of films based on Italian migrant experiences (Rando 1997: 17). Before the 1970s only few Italians had the opportunity to explore the migrant's life through documentaries and films.[2]

However, it is from the 1980s that there is a clear significant development of interdisciplinary studies on Italian migration in Australia. In the work edited by Cresciani (1983), for example, new research fields were analysed. The relationship between Catholicism and migration, the impact of Italian migrants within Australian culture, the role of education and the Italian language in the Australian society, and the internment of Italians in some Australian states were the new topics of studies which involved Italian and non-Italian researchers.

In addition, it is important to highlight that two aspects contributed to the development of the historiography of Italians in Australia. The first came from the political agenda of Australian governments and the Australian bicentennial (1788-1988). The second came from the settlement and integration of the first generation of Italian migrants in the host country. A key contribution to the scholarship is represented by the edited book *Australia's Italians: Culture and community in a changing society* (Castles et al. 1992), that included, among others, sociological, historical and linguistic studies, and specific research on multiple aspects of Italian life in Australia such as work, the role of the Church, media, welfare associations, Italian women and the

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[1] The delay on migration historiography has also been noticed in the traditional countries of immigration. In Germany, for example, an increase in the number of migration studies can be observed from the 1980s onwards. For migrant activism in Germany see Goeke (2014). For a general overview on migrant activism in Europe see the book edited by Pojmann (2008).
[2] A remarkable exception was Giorgio Mangiamele. For his contribution and for a general review about the Italians in the Australian film industry, see Rando (1997, 2005).

settlement of newly arrived migrants from Italy. This study provides a certain framework for the Italian migration process and a starting point for this research.

The growth of gender studies throughout the last decades saw several authors (Vasta, Pesman) define the role of women in different fields such as the work environment, health, identity issues, and citizenship; it also introduced a field of gender studies focussed on Italian women. However, unlike anthropologists, sociologists, social workers and activists, this literature did not attract the attention of the historians. Pesman noted that 'in contrast to North America, there have been no Australian case studies of women's roles in ethnic communities or in ethnic-group formation' (2002: 387-388). Only in recent years has this absence been addressed with studies on political and social activism of women involved in FILEF (Battiston & Sestigiani 2015). However, there are significant deficiencies overall, not in the recollections and biographies studies, but more in the political activism of Italian women in Australia.

A consequence and development of the historiography on the presence of Italians in Australia as well as the final settlement of the first generation of migrants has inevitably had scholars examine settlement aspects of Italian migration to Australia in the question of Italian expatriate voting in Australia. Mascitelli and Battiston (2008) argue that there are four main factors that involved the Italian community in Italian politics and consequently in the quest for the expatriate vote. The first related to the end of the economic crisis – started in the 1970s – and the terrorist emergency, the new stability of the Italian government in the early 1980s, the success of 'made in Italy' leading to a sense of pride among Italians migrants. The second was the changing nature of Italian emigration to Australia. The newer and fewer arrivals in the 1970s were composed of people who were more politicised, with higher skills and with experience in political organisations in the host country as well as the home country (Cavallaro 2003, Bertelli 1987). The third was the conclusion of the 1988 Social Security Agreement (SSA) between Italy and Australia and its application. In some ways this helped migrants return to Italy due to less risk of losing their pension rights. The fourth factor, and probably the most important, was the reform of the Italian citizenship law in 1992. According to the authors

> This law made reacquisition of Italian citizenship easier as well as allowed the
> transferability of citizenship rights to future generations, who may have known
> little or nothing about the country bestowing them such right. The 1992

changes allowed for a greater scope for the acquisition of Italian citizenship which was later evidenced by the inflated number of resumed citizenship. A side effect this new generous interpretation of citizenship acquisition, as a result of the 1992 changes, was a resurgence of national pride. (Mascitelli & Battiston 2008: 125-126).

All of these factors have contributed to an increase the political consciousness among Italians since the 1970s.

Studies related to activism of migrant workers

Political consciousness increases in the migrant communities not only from their personal profile, but also with the demands and success in the work environment. Several scholars focus on the labour market and migrant workers in the host country. Labour historians such as Guerin-Gonzales & Strikwerda (1993) highlight the connection between political and economic factors in the host countries and their development through different economic phases since the Second World War. On the one hand this could be due to different parties' strategies and the activism of migrant workers. On the other hand, the influence of the global economy (i.e. economic crisis in the 1970s) affected primarily labour market policy and, consequently, migrant workers in host countries. In this context a certain role has been adopted by nations and their governments (i.e. the Common Market in Europe) to determine the tide of migration (Strikwerda 1999). For instance, Schandevyl in her study highlights the connection between migration, the labour movement and demographic policy that impacted Belgium in the 1960s. One of her findings was that 'the Belgian population was slowly ageing and it was gradually understood that migrants could boost the birth-rate. In other words, the migrants not only had to produce, they also had to be encouraged to reproduce, family reunion for migrants consequently became a valuable political option' (2008: 131).

In Australia, many studies have addressed the role played by Italians in the social fabric of the country. In other words, what was the Italian contribution toward economic and social development in Australia? Starting from a demographic approach Burnley (2001) focuses on the Italian concentration in Melbourne and Sydney, making a connection between individual occupations and residential concentrations. He also highlights how economic factors helped to explain housing adjustments and

consequently how in the 1960s Italians had the highest percentage of home ownership. Burnley reached the conclusion that 'for persons from poverty-stricken backgrounds in provincial regions of southern Europe, a stake in the property market became essential as well as indicating that they had 'put down roots' in their new land' (2001: 157).

Di Nicola (1994) analysed the political impact of Italian migrants in political elections in the suburbs of Sydney arguing that economic status of these Italian migrants was a key factor for their political participation (Di Nicola 1984: 162-178). Castles (et al. 1992) argue that local council elections were the main place for Italian political participation from the 1960s onwards. This level and form of political involvement has different causes. One cause according to Castles (et al 1992) is related to the fact that Italian 'migrants represented a significant section of working-class voters, and that their votes could be decisive in inner-city areas' (Castles, Rando & Vasta 1992: 131-132). In addition, for Castles the case of Fairfield and Wollongong, which have two different Italian communities, is a telling example of social stratification. The community established in Fairfield was more representative of a higher socio-economic level while the second was more working class in its social economic positioning.

A clear example of the social change affecting Australia in the early 1970s was the strike in 1973 at the Ford Broadmeadows Plant in Melbourne when Italian and other immigrant workers repudiated union leaders and refused to return to work without a significant improvement in their economic situation and work rights. According to Castles et al. (1992) this strike was a watershed in improving the working conditions of workers as well as the economic status of migrant workers. For the first time in its history union leaders focussed on how to involve migrant workers in the industrial relations system rather than see them as a threat to Australian workers. Among migrant workers in the 1970s it is possible to see a growth of class consciousness and the development of a social group identity. To an extent, the Ford Broadmeadows strike could be considered also as a representation of community identity (in this case Italian workers) in opposition to the outside world (Fentress & Wickham 1992). As we see, the previous studies follow what Castles (2010) asserts:

> People's chances of getting jobs depend not only on their human capital (i.e. their education and skills) but also on gender, race, ethnicity, origins and legal status. Each case reflects the complex links between labour force change and processes of social transformation in both North and South.

Research strategies that concentrate on specific experiences of emigrant employment and ignore such connections cannot unravel the broader dynamics of change. (Castles 2010: 1582).

For the migrant communities access to high levels of social status was hindered at least in the early years. According to Jupp, in the 1960s the presence of British Protestants was dominant in conservative political parties, business and professional classes, large-scale agriculture and political and bureaucratic institutions (1984: 179). However, as York (1996) highlighted, the Ford Broadmeadows strike gradually changed the idea of multiculturalism which in its initial stage was almost exclusively connected to cultural heritage and individual rights, and much less with collective rights and social reform in the political agenda. As we know Australia throughout the 1970s experienced radical and extreme forms of protest among workers.[3]

The 1970s also saw major changes in the European context. As Goeke (2014) argued, there was also a surge in migrant activism and protests in the host countries such as Germany which affected workers' rights and working conditions. 'Migrants must therefore no longer be viewed as simply the objects of migration history, but instead seen as its active subjects' (2014: 165). Goeke in his study focuses also on the strikes organised by Italian workers in Munich in 1972 and by Turkish workers in Cologne in 1973, highlighting two similar features with the Australian context. As in Germany, the first problem was the lack of support by unions; the second aspect was that the establishment of internal working committees for foreign workers eventually received support from local unions.

Despite these events, which saw migrants as social actors, Goeke points out that there is a lack of study regarding the political participation of migrants which affected the whole analysis of this subject into the 1980s. As it may be observed this deficiency in the literature also applied to Australia for the same period. It could be said, as many studies also argued (Goeke, 2014, Pojmann 2008), that the field of social activism among migrants has not been thoroughly analysed either in Australia or Europe.

A further focus of those years was the economic, cultural and political relationship between Italy and Australia. Bertelli (1987), Pascoe (1987), Cavallaro

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[3] A recent study focuses also how the workers challenged in the 1970s the traditional leadership of unions developing instances of self-management in Australian factories (see Burgmann, Jureidini, & Burgmann 2014).

(2003) highlighted respectively how the new migrants, emigrated in the 1970s, affected not only the social and welfare system in Australia, but also the increase of Italian-Australian trade thanks to the education and professionalism of these immigrants.

However, recent studies (i.e. Mascitelli 2014) underline how this positive trend, which started in the 1970s and 1980s, did not change the overall trade between Australia and Italy significantly, thus diminishing the role of Italian communities as a key factor of this international trade. The geographical distance between the two countries affected the development negatively and therefore reduced opportunities to cement relationships. Specifically, Mascitelli (2014) in his study points out that trade between the two countries was affected not only by the geographical distance and the geopolitical roles assumed by Australia and Italy in the last decades, but also by business skills and the level of education of Italian migrants. The establishment of the Italian Chambers of Commerce in Australia as well as the increase of Australian trade with Italy in the 1980s gave realistic support to this research in which 'Italians were better skilled and educated, who possessed business skills and wanted to create bridges with their country of origin' (Mascitelli 2014: 186). Another point that has to be stressed in connection with the last statement is related to the establishment of specific regional communities in some cities rather than in others which ultimately affected trade and the economic agreements between Australia and Italy. This is the case of Italian Chambers of Commerce and Industry set up in capital cities. In Melbourne and Sydney the majority of agreements were made with northern Italian institutions whereas in Perth and especially in Adelaide the presence of institutions from the south is more evident. This could be influenced by the local origin of Italian communities, although the industrial and trade systems of these cities have to be seen as the major reason of these different agreements rather than the original location of the Italians (Mascitelli 2014: 207-209).

Two other factors which impact trade relations are (a) the overall preservation of administrative control by Italian companies which discourages any delegate control, and (b) 'the perception that Australia is a location of high labour costs, language barriers, and an investment location offering limited return to initial investment relative to emerging economies' (Mascitelli 2014: 202). On the other hand, the instability of the Italian political and economic system, as well as the complex Italian bureaucracy affects the promotion of Australian business in Italy. Finally, the geographical settlement of

these two countries influences their business strategies. For Italy the main focus is the European Union and for Australia the Asian continent. Mascitelli concludes his study saying that 'the only relatively strong trade relationship between the two nations has by and large occurred due to market factors' (2014: 204). He highlights the fact that the role of the Italian community was less central than the efforts by the Italian and Australian government.

In terms of Italian political involvement in Australia, the role of Italian social clubs should not be underestimated. The connection with regionalism and its particular identities was one of the main reasons for the establishment and development of these clubs. Australia was in effect to many a destination of particular migrants, who identified with specific ethnicity or with political beliefs (Gabaccia 2000; Nelli 2000). The presence of Italian social clubs connected with regional identities emerged in the 1970s. The establishment of regions in Italy in 1970 increased the connection between migrant associations and their institutions through, for example, *consultori regionali* creating relationships with the second generation of Italians as well as the community of their parents. On the other hand, this diversity accentuates the debate around Italian communities and local identities versus national identity. As Sala (2008) and Colucci & Sanfilippo (2010) argue the decline of political associations and patronages was related to the growth of the associations which referred to regional and local identities. In spite of this Bauböck (2003) suggests that regional and local identities are an essential part of political transnationalism which developed in the case of Italy after the 1970s with several partnerships between host countries and Italy.

Local and national identity in the political transnationalism debate was, furthermore, an important focus among several scholars in Australia. One focus was the nexus of identity and political participation of Italians. According to Battiston (2012) the poor rate of Italian participation in local organised politics is partly due to the influence of radical politics on migrant workers, political sectarianism, and the multiplicity of organisations as well as the regionalism of issues in the Italian community. This fragmentation is not only social but also political. In fact, the Italian political contrast between left-wing parties and right-wing has impacted on the Italian community through migrant worker associations (conservative vs progressive). It is important to point out how this fragmentation and variety of associations influence not only their activities but also other significant aspects. For instance, a recent study

considers sociological aspects of the Italian community to explain the level of political participation. In their study Cresciani and Mascitelli (2014) affirm that

> Being Italian, then as now is not a set thing, nor a thing that is agreed between 'Italians'. Class and gender discrimination, domineering family ties, 'ethnic' patron-client bonds, isolation in self-imposed Little Italies, local and regional feuds and a poor standard of education, just to mention a few, were barriers to participation'. Political participation, the vocal assertion of their rights and collective unionism were not an experience they had shared in their geographically and socially limited world (Cresciani & Mascitelli 2014: 286).

This *campanilismo* can be seen as an original contribution of Italian heritage abroad as well as a weakness in the collective participation in the host countries. For the migrants arrived in Australia in the 1950s and in the 1960s, the concept of *patria* was connected with *paese*. 'Abruzzese' or 'Veneto' rather than 'Italiano' was the keyword for most to identify their belonging. Then the Italian institutions such as public officer (*carabinieri, prefetti,* etc.) appeared so far from their own identities and demands. According to Cresciani (1980) the particularities of belonging affected Italian patriotism. This lack of sense of belonging towards these institutions equally affected the migrant approach to Australian institutions. Lack of education, not knowing much about the host country, and the disunity of the Italian community in those years affected first of all the general involvement in the political framework and secondly, the representation in government institutions and Australian agencies.

2.4 Migrant organisations in Australia since 1945

Studies of migration have explained social, economic, ethnic and political aspects of ethnic communities around the world. This debate has acquired a 'new' historical context since the end of the Cold War. Skilled migration and temporary migration are, for example, are two issues that are analysed through social, economic and demographic approaches from the 1980s. Several studies (Castles, de Haas, & Miller 2014; Khoo, Hugo & McDonald 2011; Koser & Salt 1997) highlight the fact that the 1970s were a

particular watershed in the migration system when temporary migration and skilled migration became more important.

In this regard several fields of research such as politics (1), identity (2), education and culture (3) have captured the attention of scholars interested in the experiences of migrants in Australia.

Politics

Lopez (2000), McAllister (1998), Zappalà (1999) have examined the nexus between migrants, migrant organisations and mainstream politics in Australia. The trajectories of migrant-based organisations that have been active in both social (i.e. welfare) and political (i.e. lobbying activity) spheres have not escaped the attention of scholars, practitioners and policy makers. Smith argues that 'local or grassroots associational participation makes people more likely to get involved in other kinds of individual democratic political participation' (Smith 1997: 296). On the other hand, Moya focuses on the relationship between associations and the demographic and social evolution of migrants. He affirms that: 'large longer-established communities also tend to become more complex in their socio-economic composition. The working class becomes more diverse as access to higher-paid, more skilled positions increases' (Moya 2005: 852). In Australia occupational mobility (from blue-collar to white collar) that affected the Italian migrants, has been analysed by Ruzzene & Battiston (2006). This study confirms the fact that the trend affected the first and the second generation of Italians-Australians differently, i.e. the second group had more opportunities to increase their economic status. However, there is still an absence of a comprehensive study on the post-war Italian-Australian contribution to the Australian workforce (Ruzzene & Battiston: 2006: 63).

More than the economic aspect, political participation is a research field in which scholars have put their efforts in understanding the involvement of ethnic communities in the Australian parties and more in general in the struggle for migrant rights. Zappalà (1999) and McAllister (1992, 1998) point out the significance of the relation between migrants and political knowledge in Australia from the 1960s and how political interest and education trends have been modified in these last 50 years. Zappalà (1999), for instance, has attempted to periodise the different phases of participation of migrants in

Australian politics over time, from marginal to mainstream. He argued that there are four phases, that is:

1. Immigrants as non-participants (1950s to 1960s);
2. Immigrant as extra-party organisations (from 1966) see the Italo-Australian Labor Council;
3. Immigrants as internal party structures (1970s);
4. Immigrants as active agents and participants (1980s and 1990s).

The chronological list above shows, for instance, that the immigrant as active agents started when the second generation were completely integrated into mainstream Australian society and when the second wave of Italians brought new political participation, demands and culture from Italy. All of these aspects certainly affected the political system in Australia. Nevertheless, this evolution of political participation has to be also linked to three different main periods of the migration agenda in Australia. Assimilationism from 1945 to the early 1960s; integrationism from the early 1960s to 1972 and the multiculturalism approach from the early 1970s are the periods during which the ethnic communities changed their roles. Representation of the ethnic groups which increase their influence in Australian politics has also been a focus of scholars. Zappalà (1998) analysed "Clientelism" as form of representation for immigrants. He argued that this representation was a common political culture among ethnic communities such as the Italian one.

Smith asserts that in industrial democracy there is a tendency among grassroots associations to politicise their members significantly. This is causing them to get more involved in politics generally' (1997: 204). Can FILEF with its characteristics be included in the framework proposed by Smith? Are there sufficient studies that can affirm or reject this assertion? And in what framework can FILEF be included? Moreover, according to Lopez the rivalry and division between migrant organisations such as FILEF and COASIT became a characteristic of multiculturalism in Australia. This competition 'had a profound impact on its development and progress as a basis for government ethnic affairs policy' although the author underlines that FILEF like the Australian Greek Welfare Society 'constituted only a tiny fraction of the more than a thousand ethnic organisations that existed at that time' (Lopez 2000: 151-152). On the other hand, Pascoe notices that the different approaches at all levels of government in Italy and Australia (clearer political identification in Italy, more neutral in Australia)

negatively affected the direct participation of FILEF and *Lega Italiana* in the Australian government system (Pascoe 1987: 231-232). Basically, most Italian political organisations clashed with the Australian political system.

Identity

The literature on migrant politics and politically active organisations within migrant communities in migrant-receiving countries like Australia (see for instance, Battiston 2012; Carli 1982; Castles 2010; Cresciani 1988; Jupp 1989), suggests a strong need for 'space' for both identity and memories. These studies elaborate the meaning of 'identity' and 'memories' for migrant communities. For example, one which researched Italian migrants in the UK (Fortier 2000: 157) concludes that 'written histories, politics of identity and popular religion are three areas where Italians create a new cultural identity grounded in memory and multi locality'. Even if it is impossible to define exactly the meaning of community spaces, in this specific case community spaces mean public spaces such as churches, libraries, sport areas, or private spaces like ethnic associations and clubs where a community of migrants could be able to engage in common activities. For example, in Leichhardt (a suburb in inner Sydney with a traditionally high concentration of Italy-born and Italian-background Australians) a Missionary Centre was set up by the local church and Italians who went to the centre to find 'friendship, guidance, moral and material support' (Di Nicola 1984: 164). In this suburb of Sydney the Italian community could find other supporting organisations such as welfare agencies, Italian cultural clubs, etc. Likewise in Melbourne, COASIT (Italian Assistance Committee) had been addressing the needs of the large Italian-background community since 1967. Furthermore, organisations such as the Ecumenical Migration Centre (EMC), established in the early 1960s, had a significant role in terms of assisting disadvantaged migrants and refugees regardless of their ethnic backgrounds by promoting their rights and well-being, and recognising their contributions to Australia's multicultural society. Another subject matter is examined by Pascoe who focuses on different stages of the Italian community to 'finds its identity in the social relationship of the workplace, the country town or fishing village, the urban neighbourhood, and the public ceremonies of these places' (Pascoe 1992).

It is clear that different styles of urbanisation could change attitudes, habits and roles of ethnic communities. At the same time it could destroy but also reconstruct their

identities. This is one of the most important aspects examined in the studies on modern urbanisation and its influence on the contemporary society. Correspondingly, the geographical origins of migrants (for example, from rural rather than urban areas) could be important aspects when analysing the process of urbanisation of Italian migrants in Australian major cities and metropolitan areas. In this context of space and identities, the literature offers in-depth analysis, for example, of individual memories of suburban life in an effort to capture traits of a collective identity. Identity can also be included in those migrant organisations which developed simultaneously with the growth of ethnic communities in the urban areas.

To summarise, there is a wealth of academic and non-academic studies specifically in the area of Italian immigration and ethnic communities in Australia (Castles 1992; Cresciani 1983, 2003), and research about the multifaceted topic of multiculturalism in Australia (Jakubowicz 2007; Jakubowicz *et al* 1984; Jupp 1966, 2007; Lopez 2000; and York 1996), However, there is a lack of studies regarding political participation of migrant organisations in post Second World War Australia. This is even more the case for Italian-run organisations active from the 1950s onwards as pressure and lobby groups. Hence, this study will examine the main reasons for this lack of representativeness through the case of FILEF, an organisation which tried to adopt a role more adapted to the Australian context, and not importing exclusively patterns from the Italian identity.

Education and culture

The literature debate about education and culture focuses on the connection between the Italian language, the policies adopted by the Australian government, and the demands of the Italian second generation. School programs, language programs, theatre, cultural events commenced in the 1970s, and new fields of migrant organisation services were supported by the Australian government which in 1987 adopted a National Policy on Languages. Bettoni and Lo Bianco's study (1989), argues that the articulation of concerns regarding the Italian language in Australia, particularly in the 1980s, was connected not only with the desire of migrants to preserve their identity but also with the Italian economic growth of the 1980s. Many migrant organisations such as COASIT and FILEF, but also religion institutions stimulated the Italian community to preserve its culture in Australia. However, several scholars (D'Aprano 1984) highlight the lack of

Italian political representation (still a concern in the 1980s) which affected the debate about Italian culture and the partnership between Australia and Italy. Others (Rando & Leoni 1992) point out the sociological connection between the first and the second generation of Italians as a key point in understanding the different use of the language among these two groups and the mixture of Italian and English languages and dialects. As a research field the trilingual issue developed mostly in the last three decades analysing host country attitudes and the level of language distribution among Italians of the second generation (Rubino & Bettoni 1998) and among Italian migrant women (Vasta 1992).

2.5 Ethnic media

A significant chapter related to Italian migrants and their communities overseas is the presence of ethnic media with research interest concentrate on the relationship between migrants and ethnic media in the twentieth century. The first studies focused primarily on the USA and France regarding labour movement, migration and antifascist news press. In the following years, studies were conducted among Italian communities in Brazil and later on in Australia (Bosworth 2002, Tosco 2002).

Apart from the first study published by Gilson and Zubrzycki in 1967 analysing the Australian press supporting the role of foreign-language press as a 'powerful instrument of a social control in immigrant community' (Gilson & Zubrzycki 1967: 65-66, 147, 153, 161), there are few studies related to immigrants and the treatment by the media in Australia. White & White (1983), among other aspects, point out the social profile described in the daily press as an additional resource to delineate immigrants in Australia. They argue that the role of the Italian newspaper in Australia was significant to understanding the history of Italian migration from the late nineteenth century. However, their study analysed mainly Australian press ignoring the ethnic newspapers (German, Greek, Italian, Turkish, and Yugoslavian) which had a significant distribution in the 1980s.

Tosco in his study (2005) concludes, through the case of *L'italo-australiano*, that between 1920 and 1940 the Italian language press tended to unify the Italian community ideologically. Tosco considers the Italian journalists of the time as 'pure

intellectuals' related to the fascist regime in Italy.[4] However, another significant assumption of Tosco is that the majority of Italians as permanent immigrants were 'more influenced by economic and social situations completely unknown to seasonal Italian migrants in Europe' (2005: 22). This emerges consequently in the ethnic newspapers which had more influence especially with the migrants who sought a social position in the host country. As a result the change from seasonal migration to permanent migration affects not only economic and sociological factors in the host country but also the approach to governance in the home country too. The presence of ethnic newspapers attempted to be a communication channel between ethnic communities and the Australian mainstream society. On the other hand, Zangalis (2001) in his study regarding the establishment of the ethnic radio station 3ZZ in 1975 points out the different approach of this type of media compared to the traditional ethnic newspaper which became, according to Zangalis, 'a profit making private business' (2001: 144). Apart from this criticism and the sometimes contradictory relationship with the Australian institution, this study confirms the political conditions in Australia were changing in support of ethnic communities.

The case of the Italian newspapers

The first study on *Il Globo* (Mascitelli & Battiston 2009) published on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the main Italian newspaper, points out the role of the editors of the newspaper as spokespersons for the whole Italian community in Australia, more specifically for those living in Victoria. The attempt to be the 'voice' of Italians has faced, over the years, anti-Italian prejudice and discrimination. Criticism of Australian immigration policies and the struggle to be the voice of Italian community were the main purpose of this newspaper. However, the disappearance of the first Italian generation and new communication technologies are challenging the role of *Il Globo*. Common features of ethnic media are the export of ideological and political divisions from the home countries to the host countries; and, more applicable to a pre Second World War context, nationalist propaganda.

One conclusion of these studies is that ethnic newspapers were for an important contact tool the Italians migrants and the Australian society. On the other hand, some

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[4] According to Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 'pure intellectuals' can be defined as people that 'acting as the elaborators of the most widespread ideologies of the dominant classes and as leaders of the intellectual groups in their countries' (1971: 390).

studies assert that press media perform an important role in determining the different levels of involvement of ethnic communities in the Australian context. In terms of dissimilarities regarding the contents of the ethnic newspapers Gilson & Zubrzycki (1967: 31-32) point to the difference between Greek and Italian newspapers in terms of political or non-political characteristics which indicate the dissimilarity of these two ethnic communities and their involvement in the politics of their home countries. According to these authors the high rate of news politicisation reflects foremost conflicts among the community.

> The main difference between the Greek and Italian presses lies in the partisan appeal of the former as compared with the predominantly non-political character of the latter. The references to partisan leanings of the Greek newspapers are, of course, made with relation to Greek domestic politics. (…) By contrast, the Italian press, with one exception, is overwhelmingly non-political (Gilson & Zubrzycki 1967: 31-32)

The political division among the Greek emigrants in the Greek-language press in Australia is exemplified by the establishment in 1957 of one of the most important left and progressive Greek newspapers called *Neos Kosmos*.

> Progressive people saw the need for a progressive paper in Australia, as all the other papers had nothing about the life of migrants here. They were simply coping what they were able to get from Greece. The Communists were the pioneers of every progressive move in the Greek community, but this does not mean that other people were not involved in matters that concerned them. But matters political were for the Communists (Zangalis 2009: 352).

The political exoduses of anti-fascist Greek to Australia after the war provided the opportunity to increase their presence within ethnic newspapers as spokesperson of this community.

Furthermore, many newspapers had different approaches regarding the migrant policies of the Australian Government. Some of these, such as the Polish newspapers, had positive opinion encouraging naturalisation and promoting migrant assimilations

into the Australian society. However, an important debate inside of this media shows the complexity of migrant issues (Edwards 2008).

Among Italian ethnic newspapers in Australia, different approaches to news reporting can be observed. Tosco (2002), for example, points out how class division among Italian immigrants is addressed by different Italian newspapers. According to an analysis by the Office of Government Information and Advertising OGIA (1995), while *Il Globo* includes all social classes, *La Fiamma* is more popular among low skilled classes whereas *Nuovo Paese* attracts highly skilled migrants. This fact is also related to the publication frequency of the newspapers and their establishment in Australia. Tosco (2002) points out using the survey conducted by OGIA (1995) different categories of news. This survey highlights for example how *Nuovo Paese*, in comparison with the other Italian newspapers, has the highest presence of news related to Politics and Government (20.57%), Literature and Arts (8.57%), Immigration and Multiculturalism (6.38%), and Welfare/Social Security (4.57%), (Tosco 2002: 86). In this way it is possible to assert that Tosco reaches the same conclusions as Alcorso, Popoli and Rando (1992) about the target audience of *Nuovo Paese*. For Alcorso, Popoli and Rando *Nuovo Paese* encourages debate of current issues such as politics and immigration by the better-educated and politically more sensitised immigrants (Alcorso, Popoli & Rando 1992: 118). Bertelli, furthermore, defines them as *impegnati* who have brought their Italian experiences to bear through political activity in Australia (Bertelli, 1986: 4).

However, it is not possible to compare the role of media and politics between the Italian context and the Italian communities in Australia. Bearing in mind what has been said above, it is necessary to notice that politicisation and propaganda was a key feature of the political strategy of the Italian parties. Conversely, the target readers in Australia did not reflect the readers in Italy. Even the propaganda inevitably had some differences. One of these, for example, was the inability of Italians in Australia to vote in the political elections in Italy. This then meant other strategies needed to be applied within the political propaganda and the Italian press abroad.

On the other hand, it is important to stress that *Nuovo Paese* was a fortnightly newspaper and later on monthly. This difference of release (from fortnightly to monthly) certainly affects the target readers as well as the timing of the news. In addition, it is disputable which social classes were the main target of *Il Globo* and *Nuovo Paese*. It is more important to understand if these newspapers were and still are

the voices of the Italian community. Carli for example notes that the content of *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma* is written in such a way as to present the newspapers as Italian provincial papers rather than more respectable national papers. He argues that

> the local news is not about life in the town but about Italian community life (…) a feature of the provincial newspapers is that a reader can identify with a defined geographic location (…) the provincial Italian papers are often published in distinct editions if they cover more than one city. Similarly *Il Globo* in Melbourne and *La Fiamma* in Sydney are two editions of the same paper (Carli 2009: 96).

In the 1980s and especially in the 1970s Italian and Australian political tension was reflected in the editorials of the time. The *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo* were seen as the only serious representatives of the Italian press in Australia. A study by Civili (2006), for instance, does not mention the existence of *Nuovo Paese* among the Italian media in Australia. However, this lack is most probably due to conciseness of this study which focused mostly on the competition between *La Fiamma* and *Il Corriere della Sera*. Civili, in his study confirms the fact that the readers of *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo* were the first generation Italians, less interested in Australian and Italian politics. On the other hand, Bertelli (2001) highlights and over-emphasises the role of *Nuovo Paese* confecting its editorial movement with the loss of influence of FILEF among the community.

As there is a lack of studies regarding the Italian press in Australia, an in-depth analysis of this non-English press could prove worthwhile, investigating the role of the newspaper editors in ethnic communities, and the connection to Australian politics through newspaper editorials. As for *Neos Kosmos* and the Greek community, it is important to highlight the role of spokesman of this ethnic media and the leadership it provided to the second generation of migrants.

Though there are more recent studies that have analysed Italian ethnic newspapers such as *Il Globo* (Edwards 2008; Mascitelli & Battiston 2009) a complete analysis has yet to be undertaken. For example, there is a little to no study of the periodical of FILEF, *Nuovo Paese* which has been in existence since 1974 in Australia. In the following chapter of this dissertation (chapter 4) the role of *Nuovo Paese* will be analysed in more detail. However, the main focus will be on the special role played by

the editors and coordinators rather than focusing on the readers and the target audience of this newspaper. In effect this study focuses on the role of *Nuovo Paese's* editorial staff which increased its influence among different generations of Italians in Australia especially in the 1970s and 1980s.

2.6 The literature on FILEF Australia

The Italian Federation of Migrant Workers and their Families (FILEF) is a worldwide voluntary organisation in the area of welfare, education and culture. It is run by Italian-background migrants that had enjoyed the support of the Communist Italian Party (PCI) from its foundation in Rome in 1967 until 1991. Nowadays FILEF has locations in all Italian regions and in the main countries of Italian emigration such as Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Chile, Switzerland, the USA, and Australia.

In Australia, FILEF was the successor of a string of left-wing grassroots organisations, such as the Italian Australian League (Melbourne) and the Italian Australian Club (Sydney). FILEF set up branches in Melbourne and Sydney in 1972 and later on in Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth. In addition to its welfare and pressure group roles, FILEF sought to raise political awareness amid migrant communities, in particular amongst working class migrants, by providing an Italian-language political and cultural platform to left-wing Italians in Australia (through its PCI connection) and by forging a close relationship with political parties such as the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and trade union organisations. FILEF, similar to some others organisations as described by Lever-Tracy and Quinlan 'also sought to act as a catalyst by which relatively poorly integrated immigrant workers could be converted into active union members' (1988: 151).

The historical evolution and significance of FILEF has not gone unnoticed by practitioners and scholars. A recent study about FILEF in Melbourne in the 1970s by Battiston (2012) and previously by Lopez (2000) and Carli (1982) have contributed to the migrant activism literature. Not all aspects of the FILEF experience have been researched or thoroughly examined. For instance, education was a significant activity of FILEF, but also welfare, Italian community development, women's emancipation, human civil rights and ethnic affairs being considered the most important branches from 1970s (Battiston 2012; Donato 2002, Carli 1982).

It is possible to consider, according to Smith's view, that FILEF can be included at least partially in the framework of grassroots associations. The most important link with Smith's view is that, at least in the 1970s, the structure of FILEF tended to be more complex due to changes in government funding. As a result, the complexity that Smith sees in grassroots associations can be noticed in FILEF starting from 1972 when, for example, the Fitzroy Ecumenical Centre diverted some grants to the establishment of the FILEF office (Lopez 2000: 149).

The role and scope of FILEF's activity did change over time. Education and culture related activities were amongst the most significant ones of FILEF, which attracted most of its membership from immigrant workers with limited formal schooling, as well as recent arrivals from Italy from the 1970s onwards. Halevi (1989: 204) highlighted, according to the Gramscian framework, that 'the lack of education does not imply the absence of culture'. This issue is relevant to the first generation of Italian migrant workers, who played a different role in the initial FILEF activities. However, Battiston (2012) pointed not only to the collaboration between the first and the second generation, according to the Gramscian framework and guidelines from the PCI and FILEF in Rome, but also to conflict and a leadership crisis which affected the FILEF Melbourne branch in the late 1970s. On the other hand, the contribution of the second generation brought the opportunity to increase its presence among the Italian community, especially in Sydney where all the aspects of education (theatre, school, etc.) were of significant importance. Rando (2004) highlights how the development of so called *teatro dell'emigrazione* has had visibility only since the 1980s when FILEF, among others, produced plays on the theme of migration, peace, labour and gender stories.[5]

FILEF's activities, especially in the 1980s and in Sydney, had a focus on the fields of education and language. Analysing the organisation through these activities n, it is possible to discern differences between Melbourne and Sydney, which also found its representation in the different approaches which the second generation and the Italian-Australian youth took in Melbourne and Sydney respectively. It would appear that in Sydney the leadership (post-1968 generation), focused more on a grassroots level (local council, schools, community) whereas in Melbourne the main focus related to local politics as well as strongly unionised workplaces and the trade union movement.

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[5] For a review of Italo-Australian theatre from its origins to the present days, see Rando (2004). For the FILEF theatre and its activity see also the following chapters.

Among the supporters of FILEF, Italian women played a relevant role. Childcare, education and, more general, social activism were the main activities of the FILEF women's groups established in the 1970s. Although gender studies have developed significantly in the last thirty years, it is necessary to highlight that there has been a lack of studies regarding migrant women and their activism in Australia. Only in recent years, despite the remarkable studies conducted by sociologists, anthropologists, and social activists, have historians focused on political activism in Australia.

For the case of FILEF it is even more evident considering that several women had important roles in government agencies, ethnic affairs organisations, unions and multicultural programs. An outcome of this was the contribution of some FILEF activists, especially in the 1980s, to gender studies related to Women's movements (Pieri, Risk, & Sgrò 1982), the role of women in the trade unions (Zaccari 1986), and the oral testimonies among Italian workers, both women and men promoted by FILEF (Loh 1980). Despite the significance of these studies, there have been no studies with a historical approach on activism among women of FILEF. As Pesman argued 'what is missing from the studies and reports are the Italian women in the role of actors and agents in their own lives, their lived experience, their perspectives, their agendas' (2002: 391).

Recently, a study conducted by Battiston & Sestigiani (2015) focused on the political activism of four women who were members of FILEF and the PCI in Italy and in Australia. The authors of this study highlighted the fact that most of the respondents were not active members of FILEF at the time of the study which helped to better historicise the memory of political activism in Australia. The originality of this research is twofold. First, the authors are not FILEF members unlike other studies (Carli 1982, Loh 1980, Pieri, Risk & Sgrò 1982). Secondly it covered an area poorly covered by scholars on the issue of Italian female activism as described by Pesman (2002). Nevertheless, this study has not covered two potential fields of research. Firstly, all of these respondents left FILEF between the late 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, thus not able to contribute information regarding the evolution of FILEF in the next decades. Secondly, all bar one of these supporters were active only in the Melbourne and not in the second most important FILEF branch located in Sydney. The main focus of Battiston's and Sestigiani's study is related to the activism of each respondent. As a result the potential limitation of this study is the absence of a comprehensive analysis of

the decline of FILEF. Moreover, it does not cover the activism in other FILEF branches in Australia which were without doubt working differently. However, this study is noteworthy for two purposes. First, this study covers the literature in the field of gender studies in Australia; secondly, it could be considered amongst the first studies of its kind undertaken by 'outsider' researchers on FILEF in Australia.[6]

A critique of FILEF in contemporary literature

Battiston's book (2012) concentrated its efforts on looking at the role of FILEF in Melbourne in the 1970s, leaving to others the task to take into account a national view. Bearing in mind that the connection between FILEF and the Italian Communist Party (PCI) was significant and undoubtedly strong, it would be worthwhile to analyse and explain if the ideological and political support of the PCI affected FILEF from the 1980s onwards overstating the importance of Salemi. Scholars agree that the case of Ignazio Salemi as one of the main organisers and most politicised members of FILEF was a watershed in FILEF history. Salemi was sent to Australia by the PCI emigration office and in 1977 he was expelled from Australia. Battiston points out the aftermaths of his expulsion. One of these was certainly the danger that the activities of a militant communist like Salemi could compromise the role of FILEF, specifically the leadership of Sgrò, and its members in the Australian political context. Another aftermath was a discrepancy between old and new generation that emerged after the Salemi case. Battiston concludes that the 'recollections about Salemi emerge in a field of tension between two poles, one represented by old working-class activists and the other by young FILEF activists' (2012: 87). This divergence contributed in the following years considerably to the decline of FILEF's Melbourne branch.

Although Battiston did not attempt to outline a comprehensive history of FILEF in Australia (or even in Melbourne), the value of his research lies in the fact that he highlighted the key FILEF events and figures of the 1970s in Melbourne. This study made inroads into new fields of research and has laid the groundwork for future investigations into the history of FILEF in Australia and, more generally, in the political activities of Italian migrant communities abroad. It is necessary to point out how internal and external factors have affected the presence and evolution of FILEF. Pascoe, for instance, asserts that 'once COASIT was in the hands of ALP moderates, the Party

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[6] The methodological issue about 'insider' and 'outsider' researcher is analysed in chapter 3, section 3.6.

no longer needed FILEF as a channel for Italo-Australian interests' (2014: 127). Lopez (2000), on the other hand, highlighted that FILEF, after the Salemi case, was attacked by the Liberal Party, while Carli (1982) pointed out internal friction, which is stressed by Battiston too.

For others (Cappello 2013) Battiston's study shows how FILEF was a natural continuation in terms of its political affiliation of *Italia Libera*. This latter association was established before the end of the Second World War with the main purpose of releasing Italians interned in Australian camps. Battiston pointed out that the characteristics of *Italia Libera*, its links with socialist and communist expatriate Italians (i.e. *Alleanza Internazionale Giuseppe Garibaldi,*) the CPA, and the print media were later adopted by FILEF.

Moreover, Cappello (2013) stresses the general disregard which the migrant community had for FILEF. His example is the election of Italians who might have been elected to the Australian parliament but without important and effective political roles. The Cappello's conclusion regarding FILEF's case is that the 'Italian Left has failed to win the minds of the Italian migrants in Australia: as economic migrants, their natural progression has been toward conservatism' (Cappello 2013: 271). On the other hand, Pascoe reached a different conclusion focusing more on the Australian political system rather than inside the Italian community. Bearing in mind that in Australia several organisations identified with Italian political parties (MSI, PCI, DC), Pascoe affirms that 'whereas the Italian system allows for clear party identification at all levels of government; the Australian tradition is to steer toward public service neutrality in the operation of its agencies' (1987: 231). Pascoe concludes that the influence of Italian right and left-wing organisations in Australia such as *Lega Italiana* (Italian League) and FILEF respectively did not have direct access to the Australia government.

However, in this context Italian migrant organisations in Australia, which have often attracted members from working-class backgrounds, are yet to be fully researched. In fact, some authors that studied FILEF, such as Carli (1982), were current or former members of the organisation and this inevitably affected their overall analysis. Others such as Jupp et al. (1989), and Lopez (2000) emphasised almost exclusively the contrast between FILEF and COASIT or focused too narrowly on the role played by selected and well known members of the organisations. Furthermore, there is no study on the

current role of FILEF and it evolution in the last two decades during the dramatic changes that occurred in Australia as well as in other countries.

2.7 Concluding remarks and gap in the literature

There are two key areas in the existing studies on FILEF which this study has ascertained as genuine gaps in the literature on this theme. The first relates to the ability of an organisation like to FILEF to survive since the 1970s in the way it did. This is yet to be addressed by the literature. The second theme which appears to have been absent in the literature are the factors which should have led to the disappearance of FILEF but did not do so, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This is not addressed in the scarce literature on FILEF to date. The second aspect missing in the literature relates to the impact the changed nature of Italian communities, the emergence of the second generation and the end of Italian migration had on the role and profile of FILEF. This is also ignored in studies on this theme and as such will become areas which this study seeks to offer an understanding.

This chapter has in the first instance reviewed the literature across the various facets of Italian migration, and the establishment of organisations which emanated from Italian migration such as FILEF. This literature review has analysed migration literature focusing on the historical prospective including engaging with the main migration theories in the fields of economy, anthropology and political science. The review critically assesses the literature addressing Italians in Australia, highlighting the historiography, the gaps in the studies and the main fields of the debate. One of the literature fields addresses the presence and role of migrant organisations in Australia, including the objectives and profile of these organisations in the host country. Scholars in the field of Italian migration studies in Australia address the connection between policies and the participation of migrants; the way in which ethnic communities were established; and what defined them not only in Australia but also abroad. The literature review also examined the limited scholarly research on the role played by ethnic media and how ethnic media represent and provide a voice to these communities. The critical analysis of this literature underscores both the message originating from these media outlets and the lack of substantive study of these ethnic media outlets.

The last part of this review addresses the debate about FILEF and its historical role in the Italian community in Australia. The review of the most recent studies of

FILEF highlighted contributions and limits of existing literature and the need for new approaches and research into this theme. The objective of this study is precisely to offer not only an additional study on FILEF as the voice of migration from Italy, but tone on migrant activism that it personified. This is the literature gap this study intends to address and hopes to fill. The following chapter will explain the methodology that has been adopted for this dissertation, as well as the methods, justification of the sources and the data collection which has been conducted to answer the research questions.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

A starting point in this research is the premise that Italians living in Australia since the advent of mass migration to Australia in the late 1940s required some form of political representation or voice. The Italians, amongst a range of communities coming to Australia, were in comparative terms more demanding and prepared to speak their mind. This was evidenced with their rowdy behaviour in the migration reception centres, the 1962 strike against the immigration authorities and their general reluctance to just accept what was promised to them in their quest for settlement and integration.

The literature indicates that until the arrival of FILEF in the early 1970s, Italians had a political voice but not necessarily one that they enjoyed or agreed with. The voice representing Italians until that moment was a conservative voice, one expressed through the conservative newspaper *Il Globo*. It was the voice of the Catholic Church, the voice of conservative politics such as the Christian Democrats and in all aspects it could be said to be a voice of anti-communism. This was not what they were used to in Italy where the pluralism of political voices was quite normal and ideological divisions and representation was standard and to be expected. It was for this new organisation, FILEF, an opportunity to fill a political vacuum, contest what was accepted as normal Italian thinking on matters, breaking the monopoly of the Italian voice being a conservative one.

The purpose of this study is to re-evaluate the role of FILEF and in particular seek to understand how this organisation survived to this present day in the light of organisational transformation, ideological change and finally the disappearance of its benefactors (the Italian Communist Party and the Communist Party of Australia). The approach which will be undertaken by this study is threefold. In the first instance this study will seek to pose specific research questions which will focus on extracting answers and an understanding of the purpose of this study and the problems posed as noted above. In the second instance the study will examine the theoretical blueprints of organisations and scenarios similar to that of FILEF and explore their relevance to this study. The third and final aspect of the methodological approach will be to indicate the approach towards the data collection necessary to support the direction and intentions of this study. This data collection will seek to offer evidence to the purpose of the study

and at the same time answer the research questions mentioned as point two. This will include examination of previously unavailable documentation and files; alongside in-depth interviews with those leaders and members of this organisation that are still alive and in a position to offer their observations.

3.2 The research questions

The preliminary questions were mainly related to the main causes of political or non-political involvement of Italians in Australia. After a deep analysis of Italian migration studies and bearing in mind the Australian framework the preliminary questions were firstly, why did Italian migrants need political organisations despite the fact that at that time there were already several associations well established with leaders well known? Then, why and how did the Australian and also Italian political environments support this organisation? And finally, who were the political protagonists of this support? What kind of political transnationalism did FILEF tend to assume during that time?

For the above questions the connection between FILEF and Australian political parties provided an explanation of the political role played in those years. Similarly, the partnerships with unions and Italian institutions explained the sociological and economic role. Last, but not least, school programs, theatre and Italian language teaching among community provided a point of view in terms of education and cultural role played by FILEF. Only by analysing these issues and by answering the above mentioned questions, it is possible to define FILEF as a political front organisation and or an organisation that was reshaped over time. In conclusion, in the framework of migrant organisations this study shows the strengths and limits of FILEF in Australia. There are two sets of research questions guiding the overall analysis:

- What role did FILEF play in the post-war period in Australia?

- How has FILEF survived in Australia for over forty years despite the radical changes which affected community based organisations such as FILEF?

These research questions were developed in order to facilitate an historical analysis of FILEF as well as the collective memory of its activists. As a result of the macro and micro levels of the research questions, different theoretical approaches need to be used.

3.3 Theoretical considerations

Starting from the point that FILEF is an organisation established in a particular time of the last century, several theories were adopted to support this study and its results. By looking at the evolution of FILEF as organisation and the biographies of its activists, it was necessary to examine also theories regarding individual and collective memory.

The qualitative approach provides the opportunity to explore the micro-level experiences of the respondents. In doing that a constructivist paradigm was adopted to understand and interpret the cultural settings of the participants. Through oral interviews it was possible to define 'public' and 'private' lives of FILEF members and supporters. 'Personal narratives are contextualized by, reflect on, and explore the individual's place in collective events and historical time (Maynes, Pierce & Laslett 2012: 43). So, the 'dynamics of memory approach' which analyses 'how, when and why some social events are more likely to form part of collective memory' (Misztal 2003: 71), fits with the aim of this study. In fact, on the one hand the social activities of FILEF have to be seen also as a collective memory; on the other hand people have different styles for telling their stories. Then, I saw FILEF's members as storytellers, too, who 'not only make statements about themselves, their experiences and others, they also comment about the groups to which they belong and their participation in them. Narratives help to understand the communities to which individuals belong' (Glover 2004: 63). Furthermore, as Halbwachs argues 'the individual participates in two types of memory: individual and collective memory, but adopts a quite different, even contrary, attitude as he participates in the one or the other' (Halbwachs 1980: 50). However, as Halbwachs highlights 'the individual memory could not function without words and ideas, instruments the individual has not himself invented but appropriated form his milieu' (Halbwachs 1980: 51). In this case the 'milieu' cited by the author was the association called FILEF.

Two types of memory were applied with these respondents. The interview process separated, for example, their background, family, and their education in Italy and Australia which were part of their personal narratives, from their involvement in FILEF which was a part of their collective memory.

Another distinction, necessary to bear in mind, was not only the personal contexts but also the gender difference. In the case of immigrant women an important

concern was to understand their experiences within a FILEF context but also, even more important, their involvements among the host society, with a gender studies focus. So doing that, I usually asked my female respondents the following questions: how did your involvement in FILEF affect your life as a social activist as well as woman? How did your connection with women associations of other ethnic communities affect your role and participation in FILEF?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this thesis was built by engaging ideas and concepts from other studies. Six are the steps of this framework.

The first is the review of the literature which started from the overall analysis of community-based organisations, and the history of Italians in Australia and then migrant organisations such as FILEF.

The second is the gap discovered in the literature. There are no studies that have analysed the evolution of FILEF in the 1980s and 1990s; there is also a lack of information about the activism of FILEF supporters in the last decades.

So this gap led to the formulation of the third step, the research questions.

The fourth step was the use of different approaches which produced answers to the research questions.

The adoption of a historical method to analyse and interpret primary and secondary sources was the preliminary level. Then several theoretical approaches were used. One suggested by Lever-Tracy & Quinlan 1988 considered FILEF as an immigrant worker club which focused on sharing cultural, ideological and social values among immigrants: 'FILEF tried to complement rather than compete with union operations […] in urging greater immigrant involvement in unions, FILEF tended to support progressive or militant rank and file factions within individual unions'. Other approaches (Battiston 2012, Carli 1982, Lopez 2000) examined the connection between FILEF and the political system in Italy (especially the close connection with the PCI) as a key feature of its role but also a cause of its subsequent weakness. However, these approaches did not give an exhaustive explanation of the more recent evolution of FILEF. Then Social Movements theory suggested by Tilly 1984 explains the life cycle of FILEF and its final stage: starting as a mass organisation (or tended to be) and ending as a social movement which adopts movement campaigns of other organisations.

Grassroots theory as proposed by Smith (2000) added a few features to understand the decline of FILEF and the leadership crisis which contributed to the change in the role of FILEF in Australia.

The use of these approaches needed the primary sources as data collection which was the fifth step. The majority of the sources that were utilised in this study are primary sources. Mostly the data are stored in public and private archives in Australia as well as in Italy. Then after a preliminary screening of these sources, the interviews among the activists were included with the previous sources, to allow for triangulation of the sources.

Finally the sixth, and last, step which is the original contribution to knowledge provided the original answer to the research questions of this thesis. In this thesis several theories were used to identify the role and the nature of FILEF such as labour pressure group, grassroots and social movement theories. However, one of the findings of this study is that there are no theoretical models that can be applied completely to this subject matter.

In the course of this study it became clear that all these approaches partially explained the role of FILEF and the historical process which affected this organisation. The recent evolution of FILEF in Australia can be also encompassed in what Chetkovic and Kunreuther describe as a Social Change Organisations (SCOs) 'non-profit organisations that aim to address systematic problems in a way that will increase the power of marginalised groups, communities, or interests' (2006: 14). As part of SCOs Chetkovic and Kunreuther include, among others non-profit organisations, Community Voice (CV). The features of CV include economic justice, better access to public services for non-English-speaking residents and a healthier neighbourhood environment (2006: 13). In the case of FILEF Sydney (see Chapter 6) this framework proposed by Chetkovic and Kunreuther fits well with the activities and the strategies adopted by this FILEF branch in the last twenty years, focusing more on the political and social issue that affect Australia rather than concentrating its efforts exclusively on the Italian community. Theories of social movements explain the evolution of FILEF adopting the definition used by Tilly to describe a social movement that basically is a series of 'interactions between power holders and person successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which those persons make publicly visible demands for changes in the distribution or exercise of

power, and back those demands with public demonstrations of support' (Tilly 1984: 306).

To summarise, at the end of this dissertation it is possible to assert that no theoretical approaches can be considered as an exclusive method to explain the role of this association. The evolution and the complexity of this organisation described in the following chapters is such as the conclusive chapter will demonstrate that it is an impossibility to accept one approach over another as an exclusive approach.

The original contribution is that this study examines for the first time the recent evolution of FILEF giving a 'voice' to the FILEF members who in some cases are still active in this association. In addition, despite the enormous amount of migration studies, this research provides a broader look at the development of activism in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s despite the dramatic changes that affected political associations such as FILEF. Finally, this study contributes to a comparison with future research about FILEF in other traditional countries of Italian immigrations.

3.4 Justification of the sources selected

After a preliminary analysis of previous studies about FILEF in Australia, I thought that it was necessary to start my study by using different primary sources. This use of new data derived from two reasons. Firstly, at the beginning of the research in 2012 no one had access to the collection of FILEF Sydney held at the Mitchell State Library in Sydney. I thought that by analysing these sources one would contribute to a preliminary understanding of FILEF. Secondly, no one had a complete or even partial collection of testimonies in Sydney except for the study of Quinlan (1982). In fact, to understand the rise and decline of FILEF and the involvement of its supporters it was indispensable to collect not only unpublished archival records but also to investigate in-depth the experiences of a specific group of Italian migrants and their migrant activism. Last but not least it was important to identify the leadership in this migrant group as well as how this leadership acted within FILEF in those years.

So doing that, it was possible, as Neuman argues to define an analysis by a qualitative researcher, to 'move from the description of a historical event (i.e. rise and decline of FILEF) or social setting to a more general interpretation of its meaning' (Neuman 2000: 426). Moreover, Berg defines a quality approach as 'refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing. Qualitative research, thus, refers to the meanings,

concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and definitions of things' (Berg 2009: 3). As a result, a qualitative approach regarding a migrant organisation established in the past as historical study was adopted. For this study a qualitative approach can give answers to research questions by examining various social settings, who lives in these settings as well as how they are related to the latter. In other terms, the use of semi-structured interviews needed to bear in mind two different contexts in which all of the respondents have acted, Europe (primarily Italy) and Australia respectively. The historical context of the 1970s, early 1980s in Italy provided the opportunity to understand which causes triggered emigration movements to Australia and at the same time which factors pushed some respondents to return to Italy.

Moreover, another group of respondents was involved, namely those who were born in Australia with Italian ancestry, the so-called second generation. They have a different setting and different perspective of Italy and Australia compared to that of their parents as well as to those who belonged to the post-1968 generation. In so doing, a sociological approach has been adopted to better understand the balancing of work and personal life. The findings are quite different from those reached by the study of Chetkovic and Kunreuther (2006) as will be shown in the following chapters.

Initially, my PhD project intended to cover all the FILEF branches in existence in Australia since the 1970s. FILEF as an organisation run by Italian migrant workers was established in the major centres of the Italian community. Sydney, the largest city in Australia, was initially the focus of my research. Then, since only a few studies examined the FILEF experience in Melbourne, the focus shifted to a comparison research between the two main branches: Melbourne and Sydney. Why, for example, does FILEF still have a relative presence in Sydney, while in Melbourne it is completely absent? What were the factors and events that led to this difference? What kind of data can give a complete answer to these fundamental questions, related to the main research questions? Moreover, emphasise that FILEF in Adelaide is home to the editorial staff of FILEF's newspaper *Nuovo Paese* showing how this branch is still important as a data source for further research.

However, during my research I was more interested in contextualising these two FILEF establishments in their settings, rather than undertake a comparative study between FILEF Melbourne and FILEF Sydney only. As the project progressed, with the literature review and the background research, the analysis of oral testimonies took

priority over the analysis of the archival records. So my focus was not on a comparative study between Melbourne and Sydney which needs first of all a recollection of their members and an answer about the similarities and differences between Melbourne and Sydney. My effort was to understand also if it was a potential handover or legacy between these two branches. Moreover, some of the respondents lived and were activists in both cities, facilitating in this way an answer regarding the evolution of these two FILEF branches. This is not to say that an analysis of quantitative data is not important for the research purposes. However, a collective memory risks to be limited if written records are prioritised over oral testimonies. This latter research strategy could be more useful for the history of the organisation rather than for uncovering a collective meaning that supporters ascribe to this association. In other words, what did FILEF mean for its supporters in the past and what is FILEF for them now? By doing so, I was able to generate specific questions which have been useful for my general research questions. What I wanted to uncover was not just 'why' they were involved in FILEF but also 'how' their individual settlement experience in Australia and their involvement in FILEF intersected.

Oral history, through semi-structured interviews, can lead from the past to the present (Portelli 2009). This can be strategically useful when using the collective memory of the second generation and the post-1968 generation who are still alive. The prevalence of interviews among people who migrated to Australia, mostly in the 1970s and 1980s, showed, as it will be seen in the following chapters, the different aim for them to be involved in FILEF. Comparing with other studies (Battiston 2012, Lopez 2000) it is possible to see, for instance, a remarkable difference between the recollection of the above generation and the generation emigrated in the 1950s. Portelli said: 'Oral sources tell us not just what people have done, but also what they wanted to do, what they believe in doing and now what they think have done'.[7] This last statement has been followed during the interview process, asking the respondents why they acted individually as well as collectively.

Consequently, one of the aims of the research was to establish a connection between events and the meaning of these events through the collection of oral testimonies. This was seen as a compensation strategy for deficiencies in the archival

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[7] 'Le fonti orali non ci dicono semplicemente quello che le persone hanno fatto, ma anche quello che volevano fare, quello che credevano di fare e quello che oggi pensano di aver fatto' (Alexander Stille, 'La storia e la memoria', la Repubblica, 14 March 2001).

records. In fact, from the beginning of my data collection, I noticed that Melbourne archival records of FILEF ended in the early 1990s, whereas in Sydney they were collected until the early 2000s. Another issue was that of the real engagement of activists in FILEF, in other words what was the real importance of membership. Only by accessing more than one data source was it possible to assess the real level of activism of the supporters.

So the preliminary observation was that I had to bridge a lack of data through the use of different sources. Other primary data has been gathered by collecting documents such as photos, letters official papers, and articles in the private collection of former and current members of FILEF. As a result, 'the events or facts of the case study have been supported by more than a single source of evidence' (Yin 2009: 116). This use of different data collection included 'triangulation' (Berg 2009; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009). In addition, the lack of archival records and the use of oral testimonies gave the possibility to understand the evolution of FILEF in Australia. In fact, from the historical view the lack of archival records from the early 1990s demonstrates that FILEF in Melbourne was not active anymore, at least as a formal organisation.

3.5 Participants and sampling

The collection of a variety of sources is fundamental for historical research as well as for other social research purposes. Berg, for instance, includes 'confidential reports, public records, government documents, newspaper editorials and stories, essays, songs, poetry, folklore, films, photos, diaries, letters, artefacts, and interviews and questionnaires' as research information (Berg 2009: 301-302). In so far as interviews are concerned, there are three identifiable types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. This research employed the semi-structured interviews as one of the key primary sources of data. By using semi-structured (or semi-standardised) interviews it is possible to reorder questions during the interview and give the researcher the chance to clarify and connect between subsequent subjects.

An initial dilemma centred around who should be included – FILEF collaborators, sympathisers and/or outsiders who may have developed a different prospective on FILEF. Initially my intention was to include FILEF members only. I was focusing on this cohort of interviewees bearing in mind my research questions. Using qualitative methods means, according to Miles and Huberman (1994: 28) that the

themes of the topic emerge. However, during the process of interview collection I noticed that the research questions could provide a more comprehensive answer if both an internal and external perspective were included. Furthermore, another key point for my research was to consider FILEF as a meeting place for a group of persons. I thought it worthwhile to understand how interviewees use their recollections to define not only FILEF, but also to define and exclude outsiders. This approach was extremely useful to understand, for example, the estrangement of the interviewee towards outsiders, in this case other migrant organisations.

In addition, several respondents named the same person for the same matter. In other words, I started to use a method called 'snowball sampling' or 'network sampling' which was useful, for example, to extend the field of my research. In so doing, it was possible to adopt a broader framework and many viewpoints on how FILEF operated in those years. The set of qualitative methods provided the opportunity to investigate the meanings the people attach to their actions (Miles and Huberman 1994: 10)

As a result, I conducted interviews with journalists, politicians, employees of ethnic and multicultural government offices, member of educational institutes and members of other migrant associations who provided different explanations regarding the success and the decline of FILEF in the 1980s. I considered these respondents an elite group which due to their privileged position in society had a more complete understanding of the role played by FILEF. The research question regarding the internal and external factors of the changing roles and the decline of FILEF in Australia produced different explanations which are analysed in the following chapters.

The recruitment of the participants was supported particularly through the collaboration of the president of the Sydney FILEF branch, Claudio Marcello, who gave me access to their membership database. Thanks to his support it was relatively easy to contact former and current members. Once the Swinburne University of Technology ethics requirements were fulfilled I invited a selection of them to participate in my PhD project. Thirty-five members, supporters, and sympathisers of FILEF were interviewed from January 2013 to June 2014. Thirty-two participants in this study were born in Italy or are of Italian background. Twenty-one of them are male and fourteen are female. The role of women in FILEF was important and to date remains under-researched.

Thirty-three respondents were interviewed in person and two via Internet (Skype). The majority of the interviews (twenty-nine) were conducted in the Italian

language. The participants can be divided into two types based on their location: the Sydney group and the Melbourne group. In addition, three of these spent time in both cities as members of FILEF and one, who has never lived in Australia, has been interviewed due to his role as principal coordinator of the Rome FILEF branch. In the latter case, I decided to interview him for three reasons: one for his current role to answer one of my research questions as follows: do you think FILEF has a future in Australia?

Secondly, the coordinator was interviewed for a brief overview regarding the establishment of FILEF in Europe which has not been examined by previous studies. His migration experience to Germany and his involvement with FILEF in the host country and then in Italy was useful for a brief comparison between two countries of immigration, Australia and Germany respectively. Lastly, as a current leader of FILEF, he was able to shed light on the focus of current FILEF activities, and the relationship of the FILEF head office in Rome and FILEF Australia.

There were only three members or supporters of the first FILEF generation (belonging to the 1950s and 1960s generation of migrants) on the interview roster. I decided to focus my interest more on second generation supporters of FILEF for two reasons. Firstly, because the access to first generation migrants was limited due to their age, and secondly because it was more useful to concentrate on the migrants of the 1970s and the second generation of Italians. In fact, it was worthwhile at the end of each interview to ask each respondent if she or he can suggest anyone else with a similar background that might be willing to have an interview with the researcher. This snowball sampling method gave me the opportunity, especially at the beginning of the data collection, to find research subjects. In fact, by asking first respondents if they knew someone else involved, the researcher was able to gather enough data.

The interviews took between approximately half an hour to nearly two hours. Generally, the interviews were conducted in the home of the participants. I usually started by asking the participant to talk about themselves, the reason to emigrate to Australia and in some cases (4) the reason for their return to Italy. I encouraged them to develop their own stories. I continued the conversation with set questions on political activities in the FILEF organisation and so on. The interview was usually wrapped up by asking about the future trajectory of FILEF in Australia. In addition, when it was possible, a preliminary research about respondents was conducted. To do that, it extra

themes were added for each interview. For example, it was more suitable for some of them who were elected in the local councils, or in the government institutions at the end of their professional career to ask about their political activity abroad rather than focusing exclusively on their involvement in FILEF. For others, who achieved their professional career in academia, for example, it was interesting to understand if this achievement had led an estrangement from FILEF or on the contrary a contribution to the organisation itself.

With the exception of one, all participants wished for their names to be cited. A list of participants is provided in Appendix 1.

3.6 Insider and outsider researcher

FILEF as an association which still has several supporters among Italians in Australia gave me the opportunity to participate in some of their activities such as the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of FILEF in Australia. This helped me establish rapport and build relationships with potential interviewees. According to Portelli the 'rapport is therefore essential in the oral history process because the interviewee gives a high level of trust over to the researcher and makes themselves vulnerable to a range of emotions, feelings and thoughts' (2006: 159). According to Nowicka & Cieslik 'insider research is used to describe situations in which the researcher shares membership in a social group with the research participants' (2014: 6).

However, bearing in mind that I considered myself as an 'insider' researcher (Nowicka & Cieslik 2014, Merton 1972) also because I could share with these respondents my migration experience, I realised from the beginning, that two different approaches were necessary. This was due to the fact that it was necessary to deal with two different groups of respondents, those who were born in Italy and in Australia respectively. This dissimilarity ties in, first of all, with the interviews questions (i.e. it was not possible to ask the second group about their first contact in Australia but rather their first visit to Italy) and secondly with different belongings. Consequently, with the second group the focus was more related to understand what kind of common interests they found in FILEF rather than other progressive associations present at that time in Australia. To achieve that I tried to assume the role of the 'outsider researcher' rather than that of the 'insider'; not knowing the Australian society of that time, and the different approach of these respondents. This method was confirmed by several studies

(Dwyer & Buckle 2009; Voloder & Kirpitchenko 2013) which argued the existence of the 'fluidity' of insider and outsider researcher. After the collection of interviews in Sydney, in Melbourne a different approach was adopted also because in this city FILEF does not exist anymore. According to Adler and Adler (1987) there are three 'membership roles' of qualitative researchers: peripheral member researchers, active member researchers, and complete member researchers. Thus, I could not be identified in any of these three roles in Melbourne. This different context gave me the opportunity to be a complete outsider to the organisation. In Melbourne, a historical prospective on FILEF is adopted. In Sydney, where FILEF is still active, the role of the researcher was more that of the insider. However, regarding the data gathering there was no particular difference between these two groups.

Generally speaking, all groups of participants in Melbourne and Sydney were open to the researcher. Being part of the same ethnic group and sharing the same background and culture gave me easy access to these groups. Therefore, Dwyer & Buckle's conclusion is that 'the process of qualitative research is very different from that of quantitative research. As qualitative researchers we are not separate from the study, with limited contact with our participants; instead, we are firmly in all aspects of the research process and essential to it' (2009: 61) is appropriate.

3.7 Limits of the study

At the beginning of the study I intended to analyse mostly documents and archival records published by FILEF and other left-wing organisations held in the main in Sydney at the Mitchell State Library of New South Wales and at the Public Library of Leichhardt, and in Melbourne at the FILEF Melbourne Archive and at the State Library of Victoria. However, during my research I also analysed a selection of Italian newspapers: *Nuovo Paese* (FILEF's periodical) *L'Unità* (PCI's organ), and locally produced Italian language newspapers *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma*. The main reason was to understand influences and conflicts, for example, between *Nuovo Paese* and *Il Globo* and their struggle to become the mouthpiece of the Italian community. Scholars have stressed the role of ethnic media in Australia. In the Italian case the social and political context imported from the home country has been showed, for instance, by the editorials of these newspapers. These editorials give at the same time an overview about the Italian community and the attempt to be one of the main channels of communication

between the needs of the Italian community as a whole and the policies of the Australian institutions. In addition, my focus was also on the role played by the coordinators and editors of *Nuovo Paese* rather than the readership of this newspaper.

A field trip to the Italian archives had also been considered due to the strong connection between FILEF and Italian political parties such as PCI and PSI. In fact the most important primary source regarding FILEF and PCI is held at the Antonio Gramsci Institute Foundation in Rome. However, two factors prevented that. Firstly, the lack of time and the limited sources available. Secondly, my primary focus was on what FILEF was for the supporters, what kind of contribution sustained to them, rather than a chronological history of FILEF or the strong connection with the Italian political parties, as these topics have already been addressed by other studies (Battiston 2009, 2012). With the exception of the study by Battiston (2012), other works on FILEF did not use oral interviews as primary sources of data. Bearing in mind that this organisation had little more than 400 members (a relatively small organisation when compared with other migrant organisations in Australia) even in the years of his greatest activity, the late 1970s, it was considered more worthwhile to give a voice to these supporters, highlighting the grassroots activism rather than the organisational history.

The purpose of the research was not to reconstruct a complete history of FILEF in Australia but to focus more on its activism as a launching pad for the single activism of its supporters. Single activism of FILEF supporters also gave the chance to extend the life cycle of FILEF in Australia. The evolution of FILEF encompassed the nature of a political association in the early years as well as a social movement in the present time. This evolution is shown in the findings chapters as well as in discussion chapter.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter described the researcher's journey to find the gap in the literature, and the methodology and methods for the data collection and analysis for this subject matter. It explained the purpose of the study through the original contribution for this research field. The contribution to knowledge of this study is that it will examine the evolution of FILEF through unpublished resources and with several theories adopted in the dissertation. Finally, this dissertation is conducted by an external researcher. This avoids the risk of conducting a hagiographic study which by its nature can have methodological and theoretical limits.

Chapter 4 Background

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the setting for the migration of Italians to Australia and its contextualisation in the overall phases of Italian emigration. The chapter begins with an overview of emigration from Italy to distant parts of the world throughout the 19th and 20th century. This sizeable wave of emigration was driven by specific causes and ultimately had significant consequences on Italy. The new economic and socio-political circumstances which emerged at the end of the Second World War represented a turning point for Italian emigration; it also defines the last major Italian exodus which lasted until the early 1970s. This chapter also explores the settlement patterns of Italian emigrants in Australia in the post-war period, how this new community went from migration to settlement and what impact they had on this new country in social, economic and political terms. Finally, the chapter analyses the context within which the historical experience of FILEF's activism can be set. FILEF was established in Italy in 1967 and began branching out across the globe to wherever Italians resided. In Australia this involved establishment in 1972. The chapter addresses how FILEF exerted political influence in Italian circles and how this was transmitted across the globe by working with its benefactor, the Italian Communist Party.

4.2 Italian migration: activism and politics abroad

A preliminary overview

For purposes of contextualisation, it is pivotal to provide a general overview about Italian migration in the first part of the twentieth century. The main reason for this is that some patterns, causes and settlements present similarities across the different historical periods. From the time of the Italian unification in 1861 onwards, sizeable emigration from Italy—often referred to as the Italian diaspora—can be observed. This phenomenon has led to much consideration regarding its causes and effects.

An examination of emigration patters shows that until the First World War there was what can be defined as traditional mobility around Europe which affected not only elite migrants or minority groups such as artists, merchants, bankers, and entrepreneurs

(Caglioti 2008), but also artisans and seasonal migrants such as street vendors from Northern Italy commercialising their products (Viazzo 1989). In addition there were other historical reasons for this mobility. Firstly, European wars throughout the previous centuries provoked migration of many peoples across the European continent. This occurred not only after the establishment of modern nations but also in the age of empires. A new type of emigration emerged after the failure of Italian *Risorgimento* – political exiles – in 1848. This occurred repeatedly and can also be observed as occurring during the Fascist regime – 1922-1945 – and after the Second World War. Finally, a number of famines through the centuries affected not only internal migration, but also led to temporary displacements in the south and north of the Alpine regions. Literature informs us that the phenomenon of migration (mostly seasonal) had economic and demographic ramifications for many European nations. In his study on Alagna, a small alpine village in Italy, Viazzo (1989) argued that seasonal migration was – despite the safety valve theory of migration, i.e. migration as providing a balance between population pressures and exploitation of economic resources – a rational and highly successful search for opportunity in different economic environments. He demonstrated that around the time of the First World War seasonal migration came to an end and this coincided with the economic decline of villages as geographic entities. The local economy of these villages in Italy no longer received remittances from the skilled and well-paid work of plasterers who had migrated seasonally for centuries to France and Switzerland.

One of the decisive moments of Italian migration came in the first decade of the twentieth century. Migration records indicate (Rosoli 1978; Gabaccia 1997; Colucci & Sanfilippo 2010) that the main phase of Italian emigration occurred before the First World War when more than 13 million Italians expatriated. From 1876 until 1976, more than 25 million Italians departed from Italy, with more than half of them leaving Italy before 1914. In 1913 alone, more than 400,000 Italians expatriated to North America (USA and Canada), making this particular year the peak of Italian emigration between 1876 and 1914. On the other hand, it is important to note a new trend, that of return migration, Italians returning back home after a stay abroad, provides an equally interesting story. For example the data shows that in between the two World Wars significant repatriation occurred. In 1915 and even more noticeably in 1939, for instance, repatriations surpassed emigration numbers in a net inflow of more than

18,000 in 1915 and a net inflow of almost 58,000 in 1939 (see Table 4.1). One of the obvious reasons for repatriation was the nationalistic appeal, the call to arms, and the dramatic need for male labour in the home country. Overall from 1876 to 1976, more than 8.5 million Italians returned home after a short migration abroad.

Table 4.1 – Italian expatriates and repatriates, 1905-40

Year	Exp	Rep	Balance	per 1.000	Year	Exp	Rep	Balance	per 1.000
1905	726,331	110,440	-615,891	-17.6	1923	389,957	119,738	-270,219	-7.0
1906	787,977	145,766	-642,211	-18.2	1924	364,614	172,811	-191,803	-4.9
1907	704,675	233,794	-470,881	-13.2	1925	280,081	189,071	-91,010	-2.3
1908	486,674	280,649	-206,025	-5.7	1926	269,156	196,461	-72,695	1.8
1909	625,637	124,164	-501,473	-13.8	1927	232,438	156,897	-75,541	1.9
1910	651,475	147,364	-504,111	-13.8	1928	184,222	144,876	-39,346	-1.0
1911	533,844	202,435	-331,409	-9.0	1929	202,764	146,374	-56,390	-1.5
1912	711,446	170,906	-540,540	-14.6	1930	346,781	193,137	-153,644	-2.6
1913	872,598	176,024	-696,574	-18.7	1931	165,860	107,730	-58,130	-1.4
1914	479,152	208,704	-270,448	-7.2	1932	83,348	73,175	-10,173	-0.2
1915	146,019	164,418	18,399	0.5	1933	83,064	65,836	-17,228	-0.4
1916	142,364	39,039	-103,325	-2.7	1934	68,461	49,827	-18,634	-0.4
1917	46,496	16,885	-29,611	-0.8	1935	57,408	39,470	-17,938	-0.4
1918	28,311	9,025	-19,286	-0.5	1936	41,710	32,760	-8,950	-0.2
1919	253,224	89,833	-163,391	-4.4	1937	59,945	35,741	-24,204	-0.6
1920	614,611	78,498	-536,113	-14.3	1938	61,548	36,892	-24656	-0.6
1921	201,291	123,999	-77,292	-2.1	1939	29,489	87,279	57,790	1.3
1922	281,270	110,786	-170,484	-4.5	1940	51,817	61,147	9,330	0.2

Source: Data adapted from ISTAT *Serie storiche*, viewed 24 April 2014

It is generally accepted by scholars such as Rosoli (1978), Gabaccia (1997), and Sanfilippo (2010) that Italian migration can be divided into three main periods: namely, from 1876 to 1914; from 1914 to 1945; and from 1945 to today.

In the initial phase of emigration there was significant movement from the northern Italian regions of Veneto, Trentino, and Friuli by thousands of peasants who switched from seasonal migration (the most common destination was the Austrian-Hungarian Empire) to a permanent one, involving emigration to South America. In addition, smallholders from South Italy, affected by the imposition of new taxation by the newly created Italian state, migrated to North America. After the First World War, changes to the immigration legislation in USA (1924) and in France (1926) restricted emigration flows from Italy. The Great Depression of 1929 and the new regulations implemented by the Italian Fascist regime decreased overseas-bound emigration

favouring more internal migration (south to north); there were also new settlement programs in the Italian colonies of Libya, Eritrea and Ethiopia and Dodecanese. Migration restrictions in the US and France among others contributed to a decline of seasonal emigration of many peasants, who traditionally immigrated from their alpine villages to France, impacting the economy of their places of origin (Viazzo 1989).

The migration process from the 1920s to 1945

From the early 1920s and throughout the fascist period (until 1939) three key phases of emigration occurred. The first involved internal migration to new areas for urban development settlements, for example from Veneto and South Italy to the marshy rural areas of Rome, called *paludi pontine*. The new urban settlements provided an internal solution for emigration as well as saving face of the fascist regime. In the aftermath of the Second World War, these programs were no longer pursued and a completely different approach was adopted (Colucci & Sanfilippo 2010: 18D). New migrant urbanisation started to develop despite the Fascist ideology which tended to discourage emigration and talk up the preservation of rural life as the backbone of the Italian national economy and Italian identity. Unlike other European countries such as the UK and Germany, Italy up to that time had not experienced significant levels of migration from rural to urban areas. The expansion of cities (first of all Rome) and the development of other urban centres (Latina, Sabaudia, Pontinia, etc.) commissioned by the Fascist regime had thus initiated the phenomenon that would expand dramatically in the post-war period.

The second phase was related to the alliance between Mussolini (Fascist Italy) and Hitler (Nazi Germany). From 1938 to 1943 more than 100,000 Italian workers were employed in Germany as farm and building workers, and as miners, contributing to the German war economy. Mantelli (1992, 2006) distinguishes these workers, who were employed due to the bilateral economic agreements between Italy and Germany, as quite separate from those Italians deported after the armistice of 8 September 1943. From 1943 to 1945 approximately 800,000 Italians were sent to German factories, labour camps and *lagers*. Although the Fascist regime had tried to restrain workers from leaving Italy, in this case—for the purposes of supporting its German ally—the war economy affected the labour market and the migration of skilled workers. In 1941 Italian industries were practically forced to provide a list of all employees to the Italian

fascist authorities in order to select a number of 'voluntary' skilled workers to send to Germany (Mantelli 2006: 14-18).

Finally, the third phase refers to antifascist emigrants in France, their involvement in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), and their participation in the Resistance period (1943-1945) in Italy. This last process shows the nexus between migrants who emigrated for political rather than economic reasons and the strategy of Italian political parties. For the entire history of Europe and Italy, political exile was a part of the migration process. In the twentieth century there were large numbers of displaced people moving from one territory to another for political reasons. By the end of the First World War, the collapse of empires and the formation of new nation states led to the emergence of diasporas of entire communities emerged. Similarly, after the Second World War new needs and challenges emerged for new diasporas. Italy was no less affected than other emigration nations.

The role of political parties in Italian emigration until 1945

Emigration began to demand and receive political support from a range of political parties such as the PCI, PSI, welfare societies such as *Società Umanitaria*, Catholic organisations e.g., *Opera Bonomelli*, and later the Catholic Association of Italian Workers (ACLI). Particularly for PCI and the PSI the core strategy to survive during the fascist regime period was to build strong connections with migrant workers (Gabaccia 2000: 144-152). This connection was considered a prelude to the PCI strategy of the *partito di massa* – better known as the shift towards the masses. Prior to the 1921 split between the PSI and the PCI, the PSI counted 200,000 members and was in some respects a *partito di massa* (mass party). With the split this number fell considerably and the relationship between the two parties would remain tense and conflicted to the end. The extraordinary number of supporters defined PSI, for the first time in its history, One year later the split of the PSI and the creation of the PCI influenced the consensus between these two left-wing parties gradually and forever.

Only a party which involved a relevant number of followers and that had a very large support in the society in which it operated through its organisations (party branches and affiliated associations) could be considered a *partito di massa*. In the following years, one of the aims of the PCI was to penetrate lesser fascist organisations in order to win them over.

It was a well-defined political strategy, advanced by PCI leader Palmiro Togliatti in August 1936, to proclaim *Per la salvezza dell'Italia riconciliazione del popolo italiano!* (Save Italy by reconciling the Italian people). This was a manoeuvre by Togliatti to try and recruit wavering fascists based on populist programs and policies such as a minimum wage, land to the peasants, capital tax with progressive taxation, universal suffrage, abolition of the Senate, and the creation of a national militia to replace the Italian army. This was a plan to involve Italian people to support the PCI; meanwhile the Fascist regime was reaching its maximum popular support with the conquest of Ethiopia (Agosti 1999: 34-39). In some ways the strategy adopted by the PCI was to curtail much of the fascist consciousness and therefore the influence of Fascism among the Italian population.

Despite fascist repression, during the 1930s and into the 1940s the presence of the PCI and its clandestine organisations was especially noticeable in areas of central Italy (Emilia-Romagna and Toscana). Even during the war the PCI gradually increased its presence throughout the unions in Northern Italy and amongst Italians abroad.

Finally, the contribution of communist leaders abroad, as well as their contribution to the efforts in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), was to successfully establish the Garibaldi partisan brigades during the resistance to German occupation of Italy (1943-1945). Most scholars, albeit with some differences, agree on the importance of the role the PCI played in the organisation of the military as well as political resistance which led to the ultimate defeat of Fascism. This final phase of the war gave the PCI the strength to achieve what Palmiro Togliatti described in 1945 as changing from small vanguard group to a mass party:

> In both urban neighbourhoods and villages, the Communist sections must become centres of working-class life, centres where all comrades, sympathisers and independents can go, knowing that they will find there a party and an organisation which is interested in their problems and which will give them guidance. They should know that they will find there someone who can direct them, who can give them counsel, and if necessary can make sure that they have a good time. (Ginsborg 2003: 46)

The declaration of Togliatti anticipated the strategy of PCI which involved not only its structure but also increasing a strong link between the working classes and

organisations such as trade unions (for example CGIL), and left-wing cultural associations of workers and emigrants. The aim was to increase, in accordance with the Gramsci view, the connection between workers and peasant masses. With an extraordinary increase in support for the PCI and the left-wing parties in Italy in general, this was the beginning of achieving the status of *organizzazioni di massa* (mass organisations) which were acting as a conduit between the parties and the Italian masses. Mass organisations included political parties and social organisations which increased influence in their own societies in terms of members, supporters, activities in different fields. In Italy *organismi di massa* normally meant organisations such as the three main Trade Unions, CGIL, CISL, and UIL, Catholic Associations such as ACLI, and cultural associations which had much presence among students, intellectuals, workers, emigrants and immigrants.

Togliatti on 9th July 1944 explained this approach in terms of creating the widest political alliance including across catholic parties and supporters:

> Siamo disposti come partito comunista, alleato del partito socialista, a stringere con il partito della democrazia cristiana un patto di azione comune il quale prevede la lotta delle grandi masse comuniste e socialiste e delle grandi masse cattoliche per un programma comune di rigenerazione economica, politica e sociale. (We are willing as the Communist Party, an alliance with the Socialist Party, to tighten with the Christian Democrats party a pact of joint action which involves the struggle of the communist, socialist and catholic masses for a joint program of economic, political, and social regeneration (Spriano 1975: 393).

The Italian Communist Party saw the need amalgamate the different classes and sectors, including the catholic movement into one big movement as part of its reconciliation for the country's development. The role of the catholic masses and the influence of the Church in education and culture in general were recognised by PCI leader Antonio Gramsci from the 1920s onwards. It was the contribution of Antonio Gramsci to recognise 'the inherent popular strength of the Italian Right represented by the still unorganised forces of the Church, and to experiment tentatively with extending the concept of alliances beyond the forces of the traditional Left' (Blackmer & Tarrow

1977: 584).[8] On the other hand, the leaders of the PCI tried to find a further strategy to promote the PCI as a mass party among intellectuals, youth and women.[9]

As a phenomenon which influenced the history of Italy since its unification, mass emigration appeared relatively late on the Italian political agenda. Land reform and economic development were two of the main issues that politicians, economists and intellectuals debated continuously before and after the Second World War. For the Italian bourgeoisie, as well as for the Socialists, migration remained the main safety valve for the economic crisis. If in 1920 for Francesco Saverio Nitti (Prime Minister 1919-1920) the main strategy was to improve emigration without altering existing policies, even in 1949 as expressed by DC leader Mariano Rumor emigration still represented an important feature and necessity for Italy. However, Rumor, rather than Nitti, had a clearer view about migration. The most important difference was in the ability to use Italian foreign policy for regulation purposes and to assist emigrants abroad. This was an initial difference which became more evident as the years went by (Ciuffoletti & Degl'Innocenti 1978: 86-88; 235-253). Having said that, although the political debate in those years showed a lack of knowledge and planning, many institutions were established to assist emigrants and workers abroad. Some of them were almost 'substitutes' of the government, whereas others were creations of the Italian state. In 1901 the government's emigration policy established the *Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione* (General Commissariat of Emigration). In addition to the government institutions there was space for Catholic and Socialist movements to create their equivalent emigration organisations. Scalabrinian fathers as well as *Opera Bonomelli* (1900) were the main catholic institutions which assisted Italian emigrants abroad with moral and material security, without forgetting that one of their aim was to defend migrants against socialist ideas and their organisations. On the other hand, socialists established the first *Camera del Lavoro* (Trade Union Council) in the 1890s which received a contribution from members of the philanthropic society called *L'Umanitaria*. These associations had the opportunity, among others, to increase the class-consciousness among migrant workers and providing support to the establishment of the PSI as well. For many decades concern about Italian migration escaped the attention of the political parties but by the 1960s this began to change.

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[8] The main core of this study is the comparison between PCI and PCF in terms of ideological and political strategy used by these two parties in their respective societies. The authors highlight the role of the Church in Italy and the influence of Gramsci's thought.
[9] See Secchia's speech in *Il partito della rinascita*, cited in Blackmer & Tarrow (1977: 462).

4.3 Emigration from Italy since 1945: An overview

After 1945 countries in Europe were forced to convert their economies from wartime to peacetime. In Italy, where the Second World War destroyed significant areas of infrastructure, and urban and rural landscapes, the government supported emigration as a necessary condition for kick-starting economic development and growth. The emigration flow had a particular impact on the southern Italian regions of Calabria and Sicilia, as well as the North-Eastern regions of Veneto and Friuli–Venezia Giulia. North-eastern economic development compared to North-western development in terms of infrastructure, manufacture and modern agriculture productions was still lower.

During the Italian economic boom (from the end of the 1950s onwards) seasonal emigration changed permanently. This change was more evident in the mountains villages (Alps in the north of Italy and Apennines in centre-south Italy respectively) where agricultural production was less sustainable due to the development of the manufacturing sector and the gradual industrialisation of Italy (Heady 2013: 177). In addition, these areas of Italy were traditionally the sources of Italian emigration before and after Italian unity in 1861. According to emigration statistics more than half of the emigrants were born in southern Italy; one third from north and only one tenth from Central Italy.[10]

From 1945 to 1990 almost 9 million Italians left their country for European and Non-European destinations (Audenino & Tirabassi 2008: 138). At the same time, and for the first time in modern times, internal migration numbers exceeded external emigration. Between 1951 and 1971, 9.1 million Italians engaged in inter-regional migration (Ginsborg 2003: 219). The main destinations of this internal mobility included the move towards the North West, the *Triangolo industriale* 'Industrial triangle' which included the three main cities of Turin, Milan and Genoa. These centres attracted thousands of workers particularly from Southern Italy and the Veneto region from the end of the 1950s to the end of the 1960s. The industrial triangle of north-western Italy was the area comparable to the more advanced countries of Northern Europe in terms of social composition, level of urbanization and standard of living (Gundle 2000: 3) In sociological terms this inter-regional movement affected the migrants and their understanding of new work environments. As Ginsborg highlighted, for the southern Italians the new environment was a kind of cultural shock where they

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[10] (http://www.emigrati.it/Emigrazione/DatiStatItalMondo.asp).

had to contend with different dialects, climate, traffic, urbanization, and other phenomena (Ginsborg 2003: 222).[11]

In addition, another consequence after the Second World War was the loss of the Italian colonies in Africa. According to the *Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione* (CGE) 371,290 Italians had expatriated to Africa from 1876 to 1942. In particular, from 1916 to 1942, 133,324 immigrated to the African continent. In the same period, 80,889 repatriated to Italy, with a net loss of 52,435 (CGE; Rosoli 1978). At the end of the war the new colonial settlements were affected by Italian migration, although a relevant number of these migrants came back to Italy after the war, or emigrated again in other places as skilled workers.

Colucci (2008) pointed out that the role of *Ufficio del Lavoro* (Labour Minister offices) was to promote overseas migration rather than inter-regional migration. This policy conflicted with the *Camere del Lavoro* supported by CGIL (Colucci 2008: 108). This was a general trend of the Italian government which promoted both permanent and temporary emigration. To sum up, while the government through the Labour Minister offices was promoting overseas migration as an exclusive exit strategy of labour excess, the left-wing unions and their institutions (*Camere del Lavoro*) favoured inter-regional migration.

As we can see from Tables 4.2 to 4.4, from 1946 to 1957 the majority of Italian workers emigrated to Belgium, France, West Germany, Luxemburg, Holland, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. Notwithstanding these statistics there is a direct link between Italian emigration to Europe and to North and South America after the Second World War and the Italian unemployment levels. In fact, according to Table 4.3, the increase of Italian unemployment in the early 1950s shows a corresponding growth of expatriation to Europe and America. It means that Italy was not able to absorb a large number of unemployed labourers. One piece of data which has to be considered is the delay in the industrialization of Italy. According to the data, only in 1958 did the number of workers exceed that of the number of peasants. This means that at least for fifteen years after the war the lag in the development and imbalances in the agricultural sector (particularly in southern Italy) affected the national economy as well as the emigration trend.

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[11] A similar reaction was from those who emigrated to Australia in the 1950s (see following chapters).

Table 4.2 – Italian expatriates to selected European countries, 1946-57

Year	Belgium	France	West Germany	Lux.	Holland	United Kingdom	Switzerland	Other
1946	24653	28135					48808	1481
1947	29881	53245				365	105112	3263
1948	46365	40231		346	312	2679	102241	1129
1949	5311	52345		23	597	6592	29726	365
1950	4226	18083	74	139	80	3451	27144	1730
1951	33308	35099	431	1423	34	9967	66040	2904
1952	22441	53810	270	453	5	3522	61593	2004
1953	8832	36687	242	1168	81	5502	57236	2321
1954	3278	28305	361	904	142	7787	65671	2109
1955	17073	40713	1200	5700	240	10400	71735	1965
1956	10395	87552	10907	6500	2010	11520	75632	3115
1957	10552	114974	7653	8874	2420	10595	78882	2060

Source: Mae, Dgeas, *Problemi del lavoro italiano all'estero. Relazione per il 1966,* Roma 1967. (Colucci 2008)

The numbers of expatriates for the decades of the 1950s and 1960s reached their highest level in 1956 and 1957 as a consequence of the high number of the unemployed reached in 1954 and 1955, according to Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 – Italy, unemployed registered at the Labour Offices, 1950-55

Year	Number of Registrants
1950	1,860,000
1951	1,938,000
1952	2,073,000
1953	2,181,000
1954	2,197,300
1955	2,161,000

Source: Mascitelli & Battiston 2008, adopted from data of Italy's Ministry of Labour

Table 4.4 – Italian expatriates in North and South American countries, 1946-69

Year	Canada	USA	Venezuela	Brazil	Argentina
1946	0	5442	127	603	749
1947	58	23471	2328	4137	27379
1948	2406	16677	8541	4697	69602
1949	5991	11480	15403	6949	98262
1950	7135	8998	17249	8980	78531
1951	21467	10225	12689	9183	55630
1952	18742	7525	20705	17026	33366
1953	22610	9996	23920	14328	21350
1954	23440	26231	21978	12949	33866
1955	19282	34975	29541	8523	18276
1956	28008	36386	22350	6022	10652
1957	24536	16805	19899	6157	14928
1958	28502	25302	13190	4528	9523
1959	23734	10806	13000	3874	7549
1960	19011	15208	10623	2976	4405
1961	13461	16293	5097	2223	2483
1962	12528	15348	3211	1205	1817
1963	12912	13580	2162	528	945
1964	17600	8866	2264	233	621
1965	24213	11087	2143	295	436
1966	28541	31238	1347	384	592
1967	26102	17896	1276	554	794
1968	16745	21693	673	419	723
1969	9441	15470	1959	749	1389

Source: Data adapted from G. Rosoli (eds), *Un secolo di emigrazione italiana 1876 – 1976*, Roma 1978.

The role of political parties among Italian migrants during the Cold War

In the context of Italian emigration after 1945, it is necessary to remember how the involvement of Italian parties (PCI, PSI and DC) affected the strategies of the emigrants also given the new geopolitical context that was forming in Europe in the late 1940s.

The Cold War dramatically impacted Italian migrant settlements and in turn their political organisations. During the Cold War the political and ideological polarisation influenced the strategies adopted by Italian migrant organizations and government agencies alike across Western Europe. A telling example of the new political climate came from Switzerland, one of the main post-1945 destinations of Italian workers. From 1945 until the 1970s a few thousands supporters and members of *Federazione Colonie Libere Italiane in Switzerland* (FCLIS), an organisation established after the collapse of the Fascist regime in 1943, were expelled due to their involvement in communist subversive activity in the host country. Although the main aim of FCLIS was to act as an *organizzazione di massa,* it was also to welcome antifascist workers separate from party structures (Ricciardi 2013: 24). In February 1948 the Swiss government passed an act against the politicisation of immigration. The

main concern of the government was to ensure against "communist subversion" and stamp out left-wing activities given the new geo-political scenario. This act had important consequences for Italian migrants who were supporters and members of Italian left-wing parties.

Table 4.5 – Italian expatriates and repatriates, 1946-69

Year	Total				Europe			Extra European countries		
	Exp	Rimp	Bal	per 1.000	Exp	Rimp	Bal	Exp	Rimp	Bal
1946	110,286	4,558	-105,728	-2.3	103,077	3,958	-99,119	7,209	600	-6,609
1947	254,144	65,529	-188,615	-4.2	192,226	55,420	136,806	61,918	10,109	-51,809
1948	308,515	119,261	-189,254	-4.2	193,303	101,691	-91,612	115,212	17,570	-97,642
1949	254,469	118,626	-135,843	-3.0	94,959	97,680	2,721	159,510	20,946	-138,564
1950	200,306	72,034	-128,272	-2.8	54,927	38,377	-16,550	145,379	33,657	-111,722
1951	293,057	91,904	-201,153	-4.3	149,206	53,441	-95,765	143,851	38,463	-105,388
1952	277,535	96,900	-180,635	-3.9	144,098	72,151	-71,947	133,437	24,749	-108,688
1953	224,671	103,038	-121,633	-2.6	112,069	71,463	-40,606	112,602	31,575	-81,027
1954	250,925	107,200	-143,725	-3.0	108,557	76,183	-32,374	142,368	31,017	-111,351
1955	296,826	118,583	-178,243	-3.7	149,026	86,344	-62,682	147,800	32,239	-115,561
1956	344,802	155,293	-189,509	-4.0	207,631	120,150	-87,481	137,171	35,143	-102,028
1957	341,733	163,277	-178,456	-3.7	236,010	127,977	-108,033	105,723	35,300	-70,423
1958	255,459	139,038	-116,421	-2.4	157,800	98,006	-59,794	97,659	41,032	-56,627
1959	268,490	156,121	-112,369	-2.3	192,843	132,275	-60,568	75,647	23,846	-51,801
1960	383,908	192,235	-191,673	-3.9	309,876	166,414	-143,462	74,032	25,821	-48,211
1961	387,123	210,196	-176,927	-3.6	329,597	182,496	-147,101	57,526	27,700	-29,826
1962	365,611	229,088	-136,523	-2.7	315,795	210,575	-105,220	49,816	18,513	-31,303
1963	277,611	221,150	-56,461	-1.1	235,134	206,685	-28,449	42,477	14,465	-28,012
1964	258,482	190,168	-68,314	-1.4	216,498	174,210	-42,288	41,984	15,958	-26,026
1965	282,643	196,376	-86,267	-1.7	232,421	187,939	-44,482	50,222	8,437	-41,785
1966	296,494	206,486	-90,008	-1.8	219,353	200,919	-18,434	77,141	5,567	-71,574
1967	229,264	169,328	-59,936	-1.2	166,697	162,337	-4,360	62,567	6,991	-55,576
1968	215,713	150,027	-65,686	-1.3	158,462	142,448	-16,014	57,251	7,579	-49,672
1969	182,199	153,298	-28,901	-0.6	139,140	130,642	-8,498	43,059	22,656	-20,403

Source: Data adapted from ISTAT *Serie storiche*, viewed 24 April 2014

An article from *l'Unità* (the daily paper of the PCI), dated 26 February 1957[12], highlighted the concern of the Italian government regarding actions against Italian migrants. The Italian government was also concerned about growing communist activity in the context of events across Europe involving the USSR invasion of Hungary. However, the Italian government needed to ensure that the real issues for migrant workers in Switzerland such as visa permits and economic conditions were not entirely dismissed due to ideological loyalty. For the Colonie Libere in Switzerland it was especially difficult to come to an acceptable agreement on conditions for Italian migrants given the political context of the time. The case of FCLIS highlights the struggle these *organizzazioni di massa* had to face after the Second World War and placed in a Cold War framework.[13] In 1970, for example, Paolo Cinanni, member of the PCI Committee, was still forbidden to attend the Emigration Conference held in Zurich.

In the immediate post-war period, besides Western European and the Americas, other countries become destinations for Italian migrants. For instance, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia attracted migrant workers who had, among others, enjoyed the support of the Italian Communist Party and communist trade Union CGIL (Berrini 2004; Marin 2004; Colucci 2008). In these two cases it is possible to assert that the political emigration was probably the main 'push factor'.

The Czechoslovakia case study provides an example of assisted emigration between two governments. Among the different agreements entered into between the Italian and Czechoslovak governments, one concerned the importation of raw materials from the latter country. Colucci (2008) pointed out how in some cases the importation of these sources has been included even with the salary of Italian workers through an agreement with Italian companies established in Czechoslovakia. One Italian company used a part of the remittances of its workers as account value of raw materials (Colucci 2008: 203). The case of Czechoslovakia was a clear example of political propaganda among emigrants especially after 1948 when the Communist party in that country took power. In this case the PCI established a particular organizational structure in support of the Italian workers, the so-called *Democrazia Popolare*. The Italian community in Prague in the late 1940s was the most significant of Italian communities across the entire East (Gozzini & Martinelli 1998: 152-153). Furthermore, the case of Czechoslovakia provides a clear example how the PCI used new strategies to create a

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[12] 'Il Governo approva l'espulsione di lavoratori italiani', *l'Unità*, 26 February 1957.
[13] 'Vietato parlare degli emigrati', *l'Unità*, 17 February 1970.

network between Italy and the politicized workers abroad. One of these strategies was the establishment of an Italian radio station called "Oggi in Italia" in Prague which transmitted in Italian and was supported by the PCI until the 1960s. However, for the PCI, it was even more important to provide an escape for activists of the PCI who had been convicted in Italy for war crimes, or to peasants who were involved in the agrarian struggles in southern Italy after 1945.[14]

In Yugoslavia the PCI and the Communist Party of Giulia Region (PCRG) formed an important connection with the Yugoslavian state. In February 1947 with the Treaty of Paris, some territories of north-eastern Italy were returned to Italian sovereignty; while other territories became part of the new nation-state of the Yugoslavian Federation. This treaty increased the exodus of Giuliani-Dalmatic people of Italian ethnicity, which had already started in 1945, dramatically. More than 200,000 Italians left these territories for Italy, creating a manpower shortage in Yugoslavia. It was at this point that many of the skilled workers employed in Monfalcone, one of the most important shipyards in the North Adriatic Sea, were attracted to move to Yugoslavia, taking advantage of the support by the PCRG, local trade unions such as CGIL and the anti-fascist union italo-slava (UAIS). Even Togliatti, leader of the PCI, in 1947 in one of his statements, considered Yugoslavia as the 'most advanced of the new democratic regimes' (Gozzini & Martinelli 1998: 5). Obviously, this judgment from the leader of the PCI was an important incentive among workers who decided to emigrate to Yugoslavia.[15] In this case, political reasons rather than economic reasons affected the decision-making of skilled migrant workers. The primary aim for most in choosing Yugoslavia was the ideologically-based idea to build a socialist country. The pull and push factors in this case have to be understood in the framework of the Cold War. Yugoslavian studies on this migration confirm the complexity of it and contextualise it within an economic rather than political framework of reason to emigrate.[16]

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[14] There is a lack of documentary sources that affected studies regarding this political emigration. However, Philip Cooke in his study (2007) analyses the profile of some of these migrants still living in that country.

[15] Compared to the French Communist Party (PCF), Togliatti was less vigorous in the anti-Tito campaign that began in 1948 (Blackmer & Tarrow 1977: 579).

[16] Cresciani in his study argues that this was an emigration by choice not by necessity (2011: 15). However, I disagree partially with Cresciani's conclusion. Among these were a significant number of redundant workers of Monfalcone shipyards. In this case it is possible to argue that the economic condition were more significant than the political one. For this reason during the so-called 'Cominform resolution' some of these Italian emigrants in Yugoslavia were not involved in this political crisis and they were not affected by Tito's repression. On the contrary, those more politicised took the risk of being imprisoned for few years (Scotti 1991, Marin 2004).

Most of the migrants went to Fiume and Pola where they were employed as skilled workers and technicians to resurrect the shipyards of the city after the devastation of the war. But few chose other destinations such as Sarajevo, Belgrade and Ljubljana. The first group was more politicized; trying to create Italian communities of workers and trying to replicate the same work environment they left in Italy. Whereas the latter, as in all migrations, were attracted to the idea of getting involved in a different reality from the one in which they grew up. This distinction is important for understanding the different individual choices and the events that took place later.

Even though in quantitative terms these two countries were not particularly relevant, they nevertheless give us a clear example about the politicization of migrant workers and the political system which assisted them during the Cold War. In some ways this involvement was not an exception and the influence of *partiti di massa* and their associations was a *continuum* among post-war migrants especially in Europe but also in the rest of the world as shown in the following sections.

4.4 Pro migrant left-wing lobby: the establishment and influence of FILEF in Europe's Italian communities

The dramatic changes after the Second World War such as the reconstruction of the state economy and later on the decolonisation in Africa and Asia put pressure on all government agencies in the Western countries to regulate the global phenomenon of migration. Firstly, different settlement and rights of colonial workers and guest workers affected former colonial countries (primarily UK, France, Germany, and Netherlands). Secondly, the renewal of emigration involved the unions and generally workers' agencies. In Italy, for instance, a debate focused on the union representativeness abroad and what role these agencies were to play in the host countries. However, the Cold War radicalised and froze the political debate among the social actors and agencies. Despite several bilateral agreements between Italy and migrant receiving countries, the lack of policy direction persisted for at least a further twenty years.

It seemed that after the end of the mass emigration (early 1970s) and the permanent settlement of Italians abroad provoked social and political debates in the receiving countries rather than the sending country. However, the end of the 1960s was a turning point for Italian government agencies; moreover the role of the unions increased enormously in those years. As Colucci argues the dramatic growth of internal

migration in Italy (from South to North) and the social conflict of 1968-1969 affected the governance of the unions and their relationship with migrants (Colucci 2009: 602). In effect, the CGIL alongside the CISL and UIL were more concerned about working class struggles that were related to the internal migration between 1968 and 1969. The effort of the unions was focused on the organisations such as patronage and mass organisations giving to them the support for migrant worker rights.

On a political level, the dramatic changes in the Italian emigration processes in the late 1960s were accompanied by a gradually growing political interest. The involvement of the *partiti di massa* such as the PCI, PSI, but also the Democrazia Cristiana (DC) in the Italian society increased after the Second World War. However, the strategies of these parties changed according to the destinations as well as the new migrations flows. One of the first associations established after the War was the *Associazione Nazionale Famiglie degli Emigrati* (National Association of Migrant Families) (ANFE). ANFE was established in Rome in 1947 by MP Maria Federici of the DC and one of twenty-one women elected in the 1946 Constituent Assembly. In 1961 ANFE established a branch in Australia, which was led by Bob Masi as its first president.

FILEF was established in Rome on 21st December 1967, which coincided with the period when Italian political parties began paying more attention to the socio-economic issues of Italian emigration (Monferrini 1987). Before then, emigration was primarily dealt with by migrant associations of different political persuasion. For instance, there was a long tradition of Catholic associations in support of Italian emigrants. Despite this long tradition, in the 1960s most Italian political parties supported the foundation of other new migrant associations. This is the case for FILEF, but also for Unione Nazionale Associazioni Immigrati ed Emigrati (UNAIE), an organisation established in 1966 with connections to the DC, and the Istituto Fernando Santi (1968) and linked with the PSI. The political debate in Italy shifted from how to prevent migration to how to best assist and safeguard workers' rights abroad – a significant outcome was the First International Conference on Italian Migration held in Rome in 1975.

Who were the first supporters and members of FILEF? Carlo Levi, famous writer and senator, was elected its first president. Levi, even though he was not a member of the PCI, was elected senator in the 1960s as an *indipendente di sinistra* (left-

wing independent), and can be associated with the category of the *intellettuale impegnato*. After the war he was editor of *Italia Libera*, investigating the underdevelopment of southern Italy through economic and social surveys conducted by this journal and later on by *l'Unità*. Gundle stressed that intellectuals, writers, scholars, and actors that supported the PCI were a product of the Italian social and political landscape (Gundle 2000), ascribing a remarkable and unique role to culture and to intellectuals in the establishment of Italian socialism. The main focus of the PCI was to 'harness the energies of intellectuals, and use them to construct a counter hegemony' (Gundle 2000: 6). Nevertheless, the important roles of intellectuals within the PCI affected the internal debate and the ideological discipline of the PCI in the 1960s and onwards. For example the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the strikes in Eastern Europe in the 1980s[17] created significant turmoil and even breakaways from the PCI. This conception of an active role was a particular political strategy developed by the PCI in Europe. Levi in his famous autobiographical novel *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, published in 1945 recounted his experience of political exile in Lucania between 1935 and 1936. He confronted the remoteness of the Basilicata countryside from the modern world and the cultural and technological development of society. It is a comparison between a young intellectual, a writer and painter, a member of the Turin bourgeoisie and politically involved in the fight against fascism and the victim of the regime's persecution. Carlo Levi was part of the movement "Freedom and Justice", founded in 1928 by Carlo Rosselli. It reminded its readers of the rural environment still tied to pagan traditions, superstitions and sorcery and dominated by a parasitic bourgeoisie, living off the majority of the local population, a population which has of no instrument of rebellion and redemption.

For Carlo Levi emigration must be considered as modern day ostracism and a product of modern societies.[18] As a Marxist view, the exploitation of workers by the capital was then the most important concern of FILEF during that time. Generally, FILEF maintained strong connections with the PCI especially in the 1970s. Several of its activists were also PCI members, officials, and MPs; among these, Claudio Cianca (President of FILEF from 1970 to 1985), Gaetano Volpe and Paolo Cinanni. The latter, for example, can be considered as a *trait d'union* between the PCI and FILEF. Member

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[17] For comparative study of the intellectual's role in the communist parties in Western Europe, see Blackmer & Tarrow (1977).
[18] Levi: Condanna all'esilio, *l'Unità*, 16 December 1967.

of PCI since 1940, Cinanni was involved, from the late 1940s to the early 1950s, in the peasants' struggles supported by the PCI in Southern Italy. In 1967 he was one of the founders of FILEF and vice-president, and for twenty years a member of the PCI Central Committee (Cinanni 1986). According to Gramsci's framework, the PCI had to link the struggles of peasants from the South with the struggles of workers from the North. To do this it was necessary to have the involvement of mass organisations to ensure a strong political and social consensus and hegemony in Italy. In this context FILEF whose membership embraced these social classes (intellectuals, politicians and workers) was a driving force behind this strategy.

Indeed, the context in Italy and in Europe from the late 1960s was more favourable than in the past to increase the influence of the mass organisations as well as that of left-wing parties, particularly the PCI and unions. In Italy the crisis of the centre-left alliance (DC, PSI) as well as the student movement of 1968 found the Communist Party initially unprepared to absorb the demands of this new political and social environment. On the one hand the Cultural Revolution of 1968 involved an Italian society which was changing rapidly. The overall demands of Italian society diverged considerably from the social and political projects of the '68 movements. This gap of expectations was, in those years, one of the hardest to resolve for the PCI as a major opposition party. This political dilemma saw the 'Communist stuck in an uncomfortable half-way house. They wanted to lead the social movements, but they feared that to do so would alienate the moderate electorate and compromise their chances of entering government' (Ginsborg 2003: 344). On the other hand, the trade unions had a great opportunity to involve not only the working class but also the whole of society of that time. Although the trade unions attempt was only partially successful, it is possible to see the achievement of important goals such as *Statuto dei Lavoratori* Statute workers (1970) and the establishment of factory councils and delegates.

The political polarisation of the Italian electorate (the 1972 election in particular when the neo-fascist party MSI reached the highest level of support in its history) and the risk of a coup d'état gave the PCI the opportunity to be considered as an important defender of Italian democracy. Strategically speaking, the influence at the level of popular culture was accompanied in those years at every level by the tradition of antifascism. Interestingly, membership of the PCI increased from 1,495,662 in 1968 to 1.772.992 in 1978 (Are 1980: 33). Moreover there was a larger involvement of

intellectuals which Gundle called 'the diversification of Marxist culture' (Gundle 2000: 142).

At the third Congress of FILEF held in 1971 Carlo Levi said: '*L'emigrazione deve essere intesa come capacità di esprimere una cultura nuova, intesa, naturalmente, non come una passiva acquisizione ma come un'attiva capacità di creazione di valori, di idee, di linguaggio*' (Cinanni 1986: 117). According to Levi's view, culture, unity and autonomy were the three key points for a migrant organisation such as FILEF. Levi in his speech argued that the migrant should be considered not just as a worker but also as person with their own culture and values. To summarise, for the migrant it was necessary to have a progressive organisation as a spokesperson.

But what were the changes affecting Italian society in those years? The evolution of Italian society in those years showed the strengths but also the limits of the political parties. According to many scholars (Crainz 2012, Ginsborg 2003, Gundle 2000) the PCI's attempt to increase its influence in Italian society was complex and conflicting. The dramatic increases of working-class struggles as well as the student movements were just two definitive instances of the so called 'Collective Action' (Ginsborg 2003: 298-347). The multifaceted modernisation processes of the country were reflected first of all among workers, students, middle class and intellectuals. In the left-wing arena unions and cultural associations such as Italian Cultural and Recreational Association (ARCI) assumed a more relevant than the political parties. As a result, revival of collective action can be observed: festivals, communist press, publishing activities and so on. All of these to demonstrate how the areas of culture combined with that of welfare were the two main political strategies of the PCI and left-wing associations.

In this context FILEF set up branches in several European countries such as Belgium, Germany (8 March 1970[19]), Switzerland, and the UK from the end of the 1960s onwards. In some cases, such as in Switzerland, FILEF had support from FCLIS or other migrant organisations (Germany). FILEF played an important role in organising migrant return to Italy for the 1970s elections and voting rights.[20] Moreover,

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[19] 'Costituita la FILEF anche nella R.F.T.', *l'Unità*, 9 March 1970. The slogan of that FILEF foundation was: "Basta con l'emigrazione forzata vogliamo lavorare in Italia" (Stop with the forced migration we want to work in Italy).

[20] In the official PCI daily organ l'*Unità*, there is a large amount of press releases about the voting rights and for Italian emigrants in Europe. See, for example, l'*Unità* 28 and 29 April 1972 and the involvement of FILEF in this issue.

the activities of FILEF in those years were concerned with emerging demands by Italian emigrants and internal migration processes involving the South and North of Italy. Conferences on Italian emigration and immigration were organized by FILEF, one of which was held in Reggio Emilia in 1974. The core of that conference was the double process of internal migration from South to North Italy and from Northern regions to Europe. This double migration process according to Volpe (2007) had an important effect on the reorganisation of the industrial system in north Italy. With the expatriation of Italians in the north and the simultaneous arrival of workers from the south, the wage policy became a very specific feature of the capitalist system of that time. As a result, FILEF and other associations were concerned about the Italian situation. In addition, a new phenomenon emerged in the 1970s: For the first time in its history, Italy was affected by immigration, initially from the African continent but later on also by migration from Eastern European countries.

4.5 From Italy to Australia: migration patterns since 1945

Migration governance between Europe and Australia has been affected by the global economy of the time and government policies. In Italy the devastation of the war in urban and rural areas affected the migration flows from south to north-west Italy and to European western countries such as Belgium, France, West Germany, Switzerland and United Kingdom. This phenomenon was supported by the Italian government which saw emigration as a necessary safety valve for Italian economic development. At the same time the Italian-Australian agreement signed in 1951 shows a utilitarian programme of assisted immigration which included a travel cost subsidised by the Australian government, and a plan to secure future migration of other family members (Idini 2012). In neoclassical theory this could be viewed as a pull factor. In addition to the agreement, the Australian campaign 'Populate or Perish', launched by Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell in 1945, can also be seen a pull factor in terms of attracting migrants. Gradually Australian society that until 1947 was characterized as British was opening its borders to different migrants.[21]

The global economic crisis of the 1970s had a significant impact on society in particular in terms of social cohesion and government policies towards workers and

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[21] According to Jupp, in 1948, approximately 35,000 a total of 70,000 newly arrived migrants were British (Jupp: 1966: 7).

migrants. This impact was remarkable in Australia as well. The 1970s were in fact the turning point for government migrant policies. The political debate about multiculturalism and changes within Australian society increased dramatically. Moreover, as Jupp (2007) highlighted, the development of multiculturalism and the new migration agenda often had bipartisan endorsement and were developed by the Labor and Liberal parties despite their political differences.

Ethnic community building

Data, on Italian-born residents in Australia from 1901 to 2006, show that the demographics of the Italian community in Australia were radically and rapidly transformed from the 1950s onwards. So much so that the Italian-born population and the Australian population of Italian ancestry constituted, until very recently, the largest non-English speaking background (NESB) cohort in Australia with over 850.000 Australian residents claiming Italian ancestry, according to the 2006 Census data.

A major factor of this development can be found in the agreements between Australian and Italian governments. The initial treaty between Italy and Australia signed in 1951 with the duration of five years provided assisted passage for Italian emigrants to Australia which lead a new wave of Italian arrivals in Australia. One of the reasons for this agreement was to attract more unskilled peasants than workers from those European countries which were still, at beginning of the 1950s, less industrialised than the UK. Australia after all in those years had more sources to import immigrants in rural areas rather than in manufacturing areas which were still undeveloped. As a result, Italy, a country where agriculture was still a sector where demand exceeded supply (see for example the peasant's struggles in South Italy in those years) was potentially a source of these workers. However, the strict rules to be assisted and employed in Australia affected the number of application accepted considerably. In addition, the Australian government in 1952 decided to reduce the assisted passage program places available due to economic crisis (1952-1953). This crisis, albeit temporarily, caused an increase in unemployment among immigrants; as a result the Italian arrivals between 1952 and 1953 decreased temporarily (Idini 2012).

Table 4.6 – Italian-born residents in Australia, 1901-2006

Year	Italy-born residents
1901	5,678
1911	6,719
1921	8,135
1933	26,756
1947	33,632
1954	119,897
1961	228,296
1966	267,325
1971	289,476
1976	280,154
1981	275,883
1986	261,883
1991[a]	253,332
1996[a]	238,246
2001[a]	218,718
2006[a]	199,121

Source: McDonald (1999, p. 4) and ABS Census data; [a] overseas visitors excluded.

After the expiry of the first assisted migration agreement, a new migration and settlement agreement was endorsed in September 1967; while it did not offer financial assistance as the previous one, it provided new rights to the Italian migrants (i.e. family reunification and direct negotiations with Australian employers). With the end of mass migration to Australia no more migration agreements between these two countries were endorsed. However, in 1975 the Agreement of Cultural Cooperation between Australia and Italy, renegotiated ever four year, mirrors in some ways the development of Italian migration into a stable Italian community in which the migrants were motivate to be also Australian citizens. In fact, in terms of migrant waves, the agreement did not affect the general trend which already showed the end of Italian mass migration to Australia in the final years of the 1960s. However, with the treaty above mentioned the Australian government was involved to know culturally and economically better the Italian community. Another effect of this agreement was to preserve and disseminate the Italian culture in Australia and vice versa.[22]

The decline of Italian immigration is associated with demographical changes in Australia. As we can see in Table 4.7, the Italian migration from 1947 to 1971 showed a significant transformation in terms of geographic distribution. For example, the decrease of Italians in Queensland from 1947 to 1971 is due mostly to the decline of work in the cane fields and the beginning of new settlement patterns in urban areas in Victoria, New South Wales and partially in South Australia.

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[22] According to Cresciani 'the most significant and intense period of cultural interaction between Italy and Australia was between 1976 and 1999' (2014: 52-53).

As mentioned above the Italian internal migration in Australia changed significantly from the 1950s to the 1970s. In 1988, according to the Italian Department of Foreign Affairs, 200,000 first and the second generation Italians lived in the Melbourne area; 180,000 in Sydney and 90,000 in Adelaide. As a result the working class changed from agricultural employees to new well paid and skilled jobs (Baggio & Sanfilippo 2011; Ruzzene & Battiston 2006).

Table 4.7 – Distribution of the Italian Born Population in Post-War Australia by State

Year	VIC	NSW	WA	QLD	SA	Total
1947	8 305 25%	8 721 26%	5 422 16%	8 541 25%	2 428 7%	33 632
1954	42 429 35%	29 940 25%	17 295 14%	16 795 14%	11 833 10%	119 897
1961	91 075 40%	62 365 27%	25 249 11%	20 000 9%	26 230 12%	228 296
1966	111 219 42%	72 875 27%	28 141 11%	20 272 8%	30 848 12%	267 325
1971	121 758 42%	80 416 28%	30 541 11%	19 280 7%	32 428 11%	289 476

Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Census of Australia: 1947 – 1971.

Consequently, new types of work affected the demands of the ethnic communities. Italian workers in the state of Victoria in particular constituted a large group of workers in the manufacturing sector (see, for example, the presence in north Melbourne). This led to new roles in trade unions dealings as well as at the local political level, and in the education and welfare system. In addition to this transformation of Italian communities in Australia there is a different type of Italian who emigrated in the 1970s. Compared to the 1950s migrants, these newcomers were highly skilled, had a different economic status and were politically more involved. They searched for work suitable for their skills, and in fact most of them sought and found jobs in the area of a third sector (education, hospitality, trades), which was increasing dramatically in the urban areas of Australia.

As it will be examined in the following chapters, for most of them the necessity to emigrate to Australia was more related to their personal experiences than a real economic necessity. Personal experience meant family networks, university exchanges, but also political transnationalism which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s especially in Europe but mostly in south America where political refugees increased dramatically in the wake of military dictatorships; Australia was one of the main destination for them and diasporas formed (Pellegrino 2000: 398).

4.6 The Australian chapter of FILEF: origins and developments

FILEF opened branches in Australia in 1972: first in Melbourne and immediately after that in Sydney and Adelaide. It coincided with the final phase of post-war immigration from Italy. In that year, the number of Italian residents in Australia born in Italy reached its maximum number: almost 300,000 (see Table 4.6 and 4.7). Language problems, social and workplace discrimination, low levels of education were still plaguing the Italian community at that time. The aims and purposes of FILEF attracted mainly people from the progressive arena of politics. Communists, socialists, libertarians, environmentalists, but also others without a defined political identity were attracted to FILEF. The first fields of intervention included working-class struggles in the factories in collaboration with the Australian trade unions and in the field of social security and health. In the welfare sector FILEF worked closely with the Patronato INCA – CGIL, which was affiliated to the PCI. To make their action more effective FILEF founded a bilingual weekly paper, *Nuovo Paese* (New Country) which became a powerful pressure tool with widespread distribution in workplaces where Italian workers were employed.

To direct and assist the first stage of organisation and the establishment in the new country, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) which was the main support of FILEF, sent Ignazio Salemi to Australia, a journalist and activist sent on behalf of Giuliano Pajetta, key member of the PCI, to coordinate activities between the various FILEF branches in Australia and Italy (Battiston 2012).

The assistance offered by the PCI followed the strategy of involving politically active migrant worker, and secondly, more related to PCI strategy, to increase the authority of the PCI among migrants. According to the Italian communist supporters the first purpose was not only a partnership with unions but also real participation in the political and social life, faced:

> ogni forma di paternalismo, interessate tendenze campanilistiche e di falso patriottismo, alimentate da ben individuati ambienti e circoli che operano fra i nostri emigrati. In questo senso va la richiesta (…) di una partecipazione effettiva degli italiani alla vita amministrativa e politica degli Enti locali in quei centri dove la comunità italiana rappresenta una percentuale rilevante della popolazione.[23]

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[23] See 'Federazione autonoma del PCI in Australia' by Mario Abbiezzi, *l'Unità*, 10 March 1972, p. 11.

To achieve the second purpose, the Federation of PCI in Australia needed to increase its autonomy among Italian workers 'operante nel pieno rispetto delle leggi australiane, e l'impegno a muoversi unitariamente, nello spirito dell'internazionalismo, e a lottare a fianco del Partito comunista australiano'.[24]

There were three main left-wing enactors of this strategy: the PCI, FILEF through its branches, and the *Patronato* INCA-CGIL. A general historical overview related to the 1970s in Europe shows first of all the PCI propaganda among Italian migrants. In those years two issues were strictly connected for the PCI and for the left-wing associations: one was the status of the migrant abroad and the other the expectation of a new political environment in Italy. In 1972, for example, the PCI gave extraordinary prominence to Italian elections. They highlighted the precarious status of migrants in European countries such as in Western Germany, and they propagated a return of migrant workers to Italy as a great opportunity for changing Italian economic policies, setting out the possibility of a definitive return.[25] In Australia, as in other non-European countries, they pursued a different strategy. The PCI propaganda machine leaned on the traditional correspondence between migrants and their relatives in Italy. Again the aim was to support the most important opposition party in Italy fostering the hope to return, one day, to their home countries.

Three years after the establishment of FILEF in Australia, Des Storer, a social activist and collaborator of the Centre for Urban Research and Action (CURA) published one of the first demographic surveys on the Italian community in Melbourne. This survey in conjunction with FILEF involved 400 Italian families living in Melbourne's suburbs. The Storer's study was important not only because it was one of the first demographic research studies in those years but also because this paper was presented at the World Conference on Italian Immigration held in Rome in 1975. For the first time, FILEF Australia had the opportunity to promote an important piece of social research on Italians in Australia at a conference in Italy. Several conclusions and recommendations were brought to the Italian government. Through Storer's survey FILEF asked, among others, to 'negotiate with the Australian government to implement the proposed scheme to exchange 30 Italian teachers with 10 Australian teachers', and 'support and encourage exchange visits at cultural, trade union, political and scientific levels', and 'providing also direct resources to those Italian groups concerned to

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[24]*Ibid*.
[25] See 'Gli emigrati tornano per votare PCI', and 'Nel «lager» di Wolfsburg', *L'Unità*, 28 April 1972.

articulate the position and rights of Italians living in their new countries of residence' (Storer 1975: 19-20).

The last request denotes a clear aim to emerge as a new pressure group among Italians in Australia.[26] After all, the context of those years was finally favourable to increase its presence. Three years later the Whitlam government changed the governmental approach towards ethnic communities. In 1973 the then Minister for Social Security, Bill Hayden announced a scheme for the employment of welfare rights officers to assist disadvantaged ethnic groups. In this scheme FILEF was one of the ten migrant organisations given access to the program and its funding. The second important development for FILEF at that time was the First Migrant Workers Conferences held in Sydney and Melbourne where FILEF was represented by Ignazio Salemi.

FILEF was formally established in 1972, but it wasn't until 1974 in the new political climate that migrant activism among Italians began to flourish. Examples of this activism were launch of *Nuovo Paese* (1974), the survey by Storer, and participation in the Welfare Rights Officer Program. The visibility of FILEF in those years demonstrates that the Whitlam government supported migrant-based organisations.

The multiculturalism approach which had become mainstream received real endorsement and clarification in 1977 through the report of the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council and in 1978 through the Galbally report. According to Jupp, after the Galbally report the grant-in-aid scheme of the Immigration Department was improved. This provided funding for ethnic organisations to deliver advice and services (Jupp 2007: 85). In the following years, welfare services, patronage and education institutions were supported as result of these reports. However, the main focus of successive Australian governments was not the preservation of immigrant cultures but rather improving trades, business and commercial connections.

4.7 Migrant activism and party politics among Italian-Australians

The Vietnam War polarised Australia along with other western societies including the USA, UK, France and Italy. As Gerster & Bassett argue, 'any assessment of the 1960s

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[26] At the World Conference on Italian immigration FILEF was represented also by Giovanni Sgrò, Franco Lugarini and Joe Caputo. See Battiston (2004) for their biographies.

must acknowledge the war in Vietnam as a commanding historical presence' (1991: 21). The collective participation in protest movements against governments with conservative social and economic policies played a significant role in the late sixties and seventies (Robinson & Ustinoff 2012; Sparrow & Sparrow 2004). This also helped Whitlam when entering office in late 1972 to undertake key reforms after twenty-three years of consecutive conservative governments.

In this context many organisations including migrant associations had the opportunity to significantly increase their visibility. FILEF, which was connected to left-wing parties and other migrant organisations, was able to exercise its influence. The migrant activism which was related to the 'traditional' issues related primarily to workers' rights had a global impulse, not only in the traditional countries of immigration, but also in the newer countries such as Australia.

FILEF was not the only migrant-run organisation which was involved in the political and culture domain in Australia and in rest of the world. In 1977, according to the Department of Social Security, there were almost 2000 ethnic organisations in Australia, 166 of which were Italian (Jupp, 2007: 25). However until the election of Whitlam government none of these received public funding. This lack of funding affected not only the body of organisations but also the ethnic media which had a long history within the ethnic communities.

The dramatic economic change in Australia since the 1960s had several consequences for immigrants. The new urbanisation in many Australian cities, especially in Melbourne and Sydney and the development of industrial areas (Geelong in Victoria, Wollongong in New South Wales) increased the amount of migrants venturing to these locations and the associations joining them. In the 1970s according to statistics (see table 4.7) almost two thirds of all Italian migrants were residents in the state of Victoria and New South Wales, mostly in Melbourne and Sydney.

The similarities between Italian and Australian urbanisation from rural to industrial areas was considerable. As a result, these changes affected the labour market, from farmers to blue collar workers, as well as the role of Italian associations. The large number of working class Italians residing in the manufacturing centres of North Melbourne for example gave FILEF the chance to be involved.

The first concern was, from a Marxist perspective, the need to raise class consciousness among Italian migrant workers.[27] This purpose was facilitated by the activists of the Fitzroy Ecumenical Centre (FEC). However, apart from Zangalis and Sgrò, many were less concerned about Marxist ideology. Consequently one of the first objectives of FILEF was to counter the control of moderate and conservative Italian migrant organisations in Australian and Italian government institutions. Unlike other metropolitan areas such as Sydney or Adelaide, Melbourne with the higher number of ethnic communities was more representative as a political laboratory. 'The FILEF strategy in Australia involved a linkage of community work and political demands through grassroots organisations in heavily working class areas of Melbourne' (Jakubowicz, Morrissey & Palser 1984: 63), and as Lever-Tracy & Quinlan stressed 'FILEF also advocated the establishment of shop committees with nationally-based representation at the workplace. (…) Its firm commitment to a single union movement helped it to secure a base of contact with unions which surpassed most other immigrant worker associations' (Lever-Tracy & Quinlan 1988: 155). For a while this strategy was successful in increasing FILEF's influence. But changing governments and a changing political consciousness in the Australian society impacted FILEF's growth and influence.

Since the end of Second World War, the Italian community as all migrant communities in Australia was affected by the policies of the host country. In Australia the restrictive residence approach prevented certain immigrants from becoming naturalised immediately, with a waiting period of five years. Despite the request for new bilateral agreements between the two countries, the legacy of the war as well as the conservative immigration policies made diplomatic achievements impossible. Two years after the end of the war, no Italians diplomats had been posted to Australia (Idini 2012). This lack of relationship affected not only political but also the economic aspects such as trades for some years (Mascitelli 2014).

As a result, the role of migrants established in Australia before the war had a significant relevance. Who had, for instance, the right to be a spokesperson for the entire community? The Catholic Church was considered among Italian migrants as the first institution of welfare and assistance for the first migrant generation. As argued by some studies (Jupp, 1984; Kantowicz 1975), ethnic communities, for example as in the

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[27] See the Carlo Levi's speech at the first interview about FILEF in 1967 (*l'Unità* 16 December 1967).

case of the Polish in Chicago between the First and Second World War, needed to be accepted with an active participation and recognition by the two most powerful institutions of that time: the Democratic Party and the Catholic Church respectively. Although the political recognition of the ethnic communities was developed earlier in the USA, this framework is suitable for Australia as well. In fact, the first wave of migrants who did not have a welfare state support tended to be attracted by mutual, benefit, and recreational associations rather than the political ones. Basically, in the case of Australia, religious associations dispensed these services to Italian migrants before and after the Second World War.

However the new political climate of the 1970s gave FILEF the opportunity to increase its political activity at grassroots level eventually and propelled the political careers of its activists. The cases, for instance, of former Victorian State Labor MPs Giovanni Sgrò and of Carlo Carli, both FILEF activists, and of Franca Arena, New South Wales MP, can be seen as the successful result of the presence of FILEF in Australia, in itself the result of the growth of ethnic communities and their expectations as regards ethnic service by appropriate providers (labour and trade unions, chambers of commerce, cultural groups). In the case of the political parties, as Healy (1995) and McAllister (1992) argued, the Victorian Labor Party became to be seen as the champion of multiculturalism and its policies and turned this party into the party of choice for migrants striving to become more involved in mainstream Australian politics. Moreover, in general, the ALP was the traditional party for ethnic voters to claim their rights; and in which the second generation of NESB had the opportunity to increase its political participation in State and Federal elections. 'The consistent loyalty of these ethnic concentrations has been only grudgingly rewarded by Labor and mainly in Victoria. Only in Victoria has the party created an effective network of ethnic branches since 1975' (Jupp 2007: 30). A quick examination of the demographic profile of suburbs of Melbourne in 1971 shows evidence that Brunswick, Coburg, Broadmeadows, Essendon, Fitzroy, Northcote and Preston alone accounted for over 57,000 Italians (Jupp, 2007, Burnley 2001). Around the mid-1970s, the large concentration of immigrants concentrated in few suburbs of Melbourne stimulated the creation of ALP ethnic branches in Victoria.

Last but not least, it is important to underline how in the 1970s it was a time when new partnerships emerged between migrants, their representative associations and

new Italian agencies. The creation in Italy in 1970 of a fourth tier of government (the Regions) provided the opportunity to intensify relationships between Italian communities abroad and Italian institutions, particularly in the areas of vocational training and social support of Italian emigrants. Regionalism and local identity-inspired associations such as social clubs began to emerge within the Italian emigrant associations' landscape. It was a sign of those local and regional identities beginning to play a role in the wider field of Italian emigration. The countless social clubs, which had a long tradition going back to before the war became one of the more visible indications of local transnationalism in Australia as well as in the other countries.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an historical background in the field of Italian migration. It showed the evolution of the debate among the political parties during the second half of the nineteenth century and the strategies they used to influence the political views among Italian emigrants. A continuity of this strategy underpins the foundation of FILEF in Italy and later on in the countries of Italian emigration. Thus, the establishment of FILEF was encompassed in the framework of the PCI to involve the workers as political actors in home as well as in the host countries. Among these countries, Australia is specifically addressed and studied. The dramatic change of migration policies in Australia, as well as the settlement of Italians migrants in Australia, has encouraged migrants to become activists. Their social and political participation gradually developed in the fields of labour market, politics, identity, culture and education. FILEF took the opportunity from the mid-1970s to play a role within a political vacuum to provide a voice to new Italians in Australia in their pursuit of a better life in a new homeland.

Chapter 5 FILEF during the turbulent decade of the 1970s

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the establishment and the early developments of the FILEF Melbourne branch through the oral history testimonies of its supporters. It also provides the political and economic contexts of Italy and Australia in which push factors for Italians who emigrated to Australia as well as pull factors for immigration in Australia marked the post-1968 migration. Secondly, it focuses on the features which affected the activities of FILEF in Melbourne from the late 1970s highlighting the relationships between FILEF's members and their personal activism. Then, it examines, through the biographies uncovered in interviews conducted with former and current activists, supporters, and sympathisers of FILEF, the demands originating with the new and younger generation of Italian-Australians which affected FILEF at leadership level. Finally, it describes the historical legacy of FILEF at individual careers level and the integration of Italians in mainstream Australia.

5.2 The Italian and Australian political environments from the 1970s

In the 1970s new challenges appeared in both Italy and Australia. Firstly, the economic crisis in Europe triggered by the oil crisis and the break-up of the Bretton Woods system provoked, among others, a dramatic economic downturn which affected Italy, one of the most vulnerable of the Western economies. Part of the reason for Italy being hit so hard was its historical reliance on foreign energy supplies and raw materials for its industry. In Germany, one of the main destinations, along with Switzerland, of Italian emigrants, the closing of borders in 1973 as well as the dramatic increase of unemployment especially among migrant workers affected the employment figures in Italy. In Germany from 1973 to 1974, the national unemployment rate sharply increased (Cinanni 1978: 438-442). This crisis also exacerbated the Ausländerpolitik which considered Germany as a country of non-immigration[28], thereby provoking demonstrations and strikes by

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[28] Only in 2002 the Bundesrat approved a new migrant policy which implemented a reunification of migrant families, their naturalization and new rules in the labour market of Germany.

migrant workers.[29] These dramatic developments captured the attention of many in Italy and Carlo Levi, for instance, at the Third Congress of FILEF in 1971 remarked:

> Il mondo dell'emigrazione è adulto e maturo. […] Abbiamo capito che bisognava rovesciare questa visione imposta dalla civiltà e dalla cultura proprietaria; bisognava vedere l'emigrazione dal di dentro, e dal suo interno, con le sue forze, operare per giungere alle cause, e agire per spiegarle e distruggerle […]. Il movimento degli emigranti e la loro organizzazione sono un grande fatto di liberazione (Cinanni 1986: 117-118).

The 1970s are also considered an exceptionally turbulent decade in the Italian political system. Student demonstrations, trade union initiated actions, home grown terrorism (i.e. Red Brigades, neo-fascist associations), unstable political governments and even attempted military coups were features of that time. The political radicalisation of those years encouraged an emigration based on post-1968 generation some of which would arrive even in Australia the far shores of Italian emigration. This generation would be an essential element of FILEF in Australia in the following years.

From the end of the mass emigration from Italy to Australia to new arrivals and new demands

The early 1970s saw the end of the Italian mass emigration. For the first time in its history Italy became a country of immigration rather than of emigration though this would only be verified after 1974. This change equally occurred with other southern European countries such as Greece and Spain.

As the table 5.1 shows, another trend started during this decade. More precisely a significant number of Italians who emigrated to Australia returned to their home country – return migration. In other words, the decline of expatriates in Australia is also accompanied by the increase of the repatriated. According to the statistics, this trend was similar among other countries, especially in Europe. For instance, (West) Germany, France, and Switzerland followed the trend of Australia.

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[29] See Chapter Four regarding strikes in Munich (1972) and Cologne (1973) and the literature debate comparing these with the Broadmeadows strike in Australia.

Table 5.1 Italian migration to Australia 1960 – 2000 (Departures and Returns)
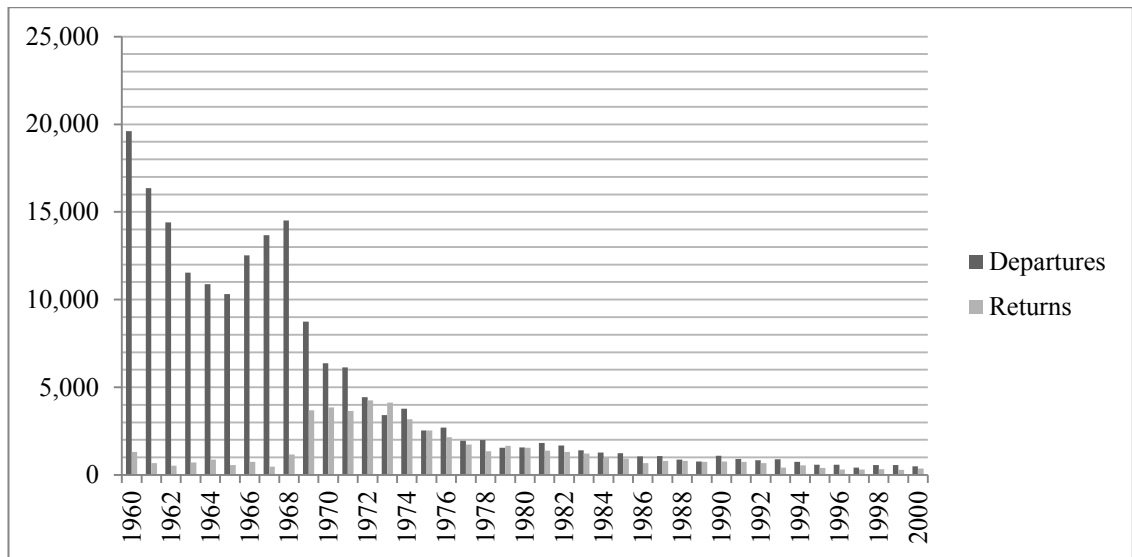
Source: data adapted from ISTAT *Serie storiche*, viewed 20 August 2015

Castles and Miller argued that the 1970s for Italians marked the end of mass emigration and the beginning of a new type of migration which would involve Asian migration to Australia (2009: 140-142).

This new type of immigration affected Italy and Australia alike. In fact, the migration flow from Europe dropped dramatically, whilst an intense increase of Asian migration occurred. For instance, the Vietnam War in which Australia was involved as military ally of the USA provoked massive refugee movements to Australia. The military alliance with the U.S. in the Vietnam War also incited lively debates within the Australian society. Rallies and demonstrations against the Vietnam War spread around Australian cities. In addition, the first Labor government elected in 1972 after twenty-three years of conservative governments and its dismissal three years later provoked massive demonstrations among Australians and ethnic communities around the country.

For Italian migrants more politically active, these events provided further opportunity for being involved in the Australian political debate and the chance to increase their presence in left-wing parties and migrant associations such as FILEF.

> At the end of 1972 I attended a rally in Sydney against the Vietnam war.
> There, I met Italian comrades, whom I had never met before in Sydney. So I

started to get involved with the Italian Communist Party and then in FILEF.

After that, it became pretty clear how to work with migrants.[30]

The political context in Italy and in Australia had a dramatic impact on the post-1968 generation of emigrants. One consequence of the undeniable and definitive historical decline of Italian emigration abroad was also the new phase of settlement of Italians in Australia. The presence of the second generation Italians raises the question of settlement and adaptation of the post-1968 generation within the country of adoption. Within this framework and alongside the demands of the earlier migrants the cultural (language tuition) and generational (young Italians) demands were added.[31]

In many respects the establishment of FILEF in Melbourne in 1972 coincided with the beginning of the generational transition between the first and the second group of Italians in Australia. Was FILEF a platform to help settle into Australia for individuals rather than the 'organisational umbrella'? (Battiston 2012: 22) Both of these approaches are certainly relevant and did in fact occur. On the one hand for the most politicised migrants FILEF has been considered an organisation that historically provided support with a strong tie for the communist members. On the other hand, the post-1968 generation members saw in FILEF a meeting place where to share their own ideas which did not reflect always the ideological umbrella of PCI. After all most of them were not affiliated to the PCI although they were left-wing parties supporters or supporters of far left Italians organisations such as *Lotta Continua* and feminist movements. In addition, as argued by Battiston (2009), FILEF was a *trait d'union* between PCI and other left-organisations.[32] Also *L'Unità* in 1973, in one of its press releases stated that 'important activities have been taken by our comrades, who along with other friends of FILEF and with the support of the Italian-Australian League had achieved the result to increase the number of Italian language programs among migrants children'.[33] This and other articles highlighted the number of different left-wing organisations affiliated or non-affiliated to the PCI in Australia. In 1974, for example, the first FGCI club (Italian Young Communists) was established in Sydney. The club

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[30] 'Pierina' Pirisi, interview with author, 5 July 2013, Modena, Italy (audio file and full transcription in possession of author)
[31] See Fortier (2000) for the concerns of Italian emigrant leaders in UK.
[32] 'Sarà infatti la FILEF a divenire una delle organizzazioni di maggiore riferimento per la sinistra italiana in Australia, mentre al Pci spetterà un'azione di collegamento con l'Italia e di appoggio politico' (Battiston 2009: 569).
[33] 'Iniziative per la scuola dei figli degli immigrati' (*l'Unità*, 6 July 1973, p. 10).

was composed of second generation of Italo-Australians and students involved in Italian politics.[34] This shows that in the early 1970s in Australia there was interest in Italian politics, political parties and society which increased through these political associations which after all were supported by the PCI. But how did second generation Italians get involved in these associations?

First it is necessary to bear in mind the real significance of FILEF among Italians in Australia and the number of those who were active members in the 1970s. In Melbourne, for instance, the archival records indicate that there were no more than 30-35 active members between late 1970s and early 1980s.[35] However, this data has to be contextualised. In fact, the involvement of Italians in FILEF was broadly related also to their involvement in the CPA, the ALP and the PCI Federation of Australia. According to Burani the members of the PCI were also automatically members of FILEF showing again how FILEF was perceived as an *organizzazione di massa*. He states that:

> All the political engagement in Australia was done by FILEF. We did not go to the Trade Unions as PCI but always as FILEF. We had contacts with local governments and councils as FILEF which was the mass organisation. PCI was the ideological core.[36]

The political associations were functional for mass parties like the PCI. Australia was considered an interesting political place in which the left-wing supporters should enlarge their influence among the ethnic communities.

In 1980 the PCI national Committee in Australia affirmed that, unlike in the European context where the traditional workers organisations were well established, in Australia the creation of religious and regional clubs had anticipated organisations as FILEF, PCI, ACLI, and ANFE.[37] This acknowledgment shows how the new migrants

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[34] 'Costituito il circolo della FGCI' (*l'Unità*, 22 November 1974, p. 8).
[35] Tesseramento FILEF 1977-1985 (FMA).
[36] Edoardo Burani, interview with author, 5 July 2013, Modena, Italy (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[37] ' [...] Mentre in Europa erano attive, generalmente da molti anni, le organizzazioni dei lavoratori più legate all'Italia e all'esperienza politica italiana (PCI, PSI, FILEF, ACLI, ANFE, UNAIE, UCEI, SANTI, ecc.) che a loro volta hanno dato spesso origine a organizzazioni di tipo regionale soprattutto in questi ultimi tempi, date le nuove responsabilità delle regioni nel campo dell'emigrazione, qui in Australia si assiste invece, già da diversi anni, alla formazione di associazioni di tipo paesano, religioso-paesano: regionale, religioso, clubs, già molti anni prima che sorgano organizzazioni "più italiane", come il PCI, la FILEF, le ACLI (come patronato), l'ANFE, ecc.', 'Contributo per una discussione sulla natura e le strutture della collettività italiana in Australia e sui nostri compiti – Organizzazioni del PCI del New South Wales – Sydney 1980' (FMA).

were aware of the political context in which they would be involved. For them FILEF was closer to the new cohort of Italians and to their needs in Australia.

Secondly, notwithstanding the small number of activists and members involved, it is important to remember that the welfare, cultural and social activities offered by FILEF since the 1970s were not just for FILEF members but for the broader community of Italians, among these young activists, leaders of ethnic communities, and, in the case of cultural activities, even Australians regardless of their ethnic background. The aim of FILEF was to spread its influence regardless of the political background of the Italians. This broader approach among Italian migrants is confirmed also by Australia's security organisation, ASIO. According to ASIO reports the involvement of Italians in the Australian federation of PCI was relatively small. This confirms what several activists claimed about FILEF as an organisation which included in many cases left-wing sympathisers but not only communists.[38] However, ASIO was concerned about the potential of political engagement with the CPA, a party that in the late 1960s had no more than 3.000 supporters in all of Australia.

It was after a trip to Italy in 1972 that one activist, Domenico Fammartino, secured the establishment of FILEF in Melbourne (Battiston 2012: 52). However, it was only in 1973 that FILEF started to carry out activities. The partnership with the Centre for Urban Research and Action (CURA), until 1975 the Fitzroy Ecumenical Centre (FEC), was crucial for FILEF. One outcome of this partnership was the survey conducted in partnership with social activist Des Storer.[39] But there was also a program on ABC TV and the Welfare Rights Officer Program which was established by the federal government in 1974 where some of its key activities occurred.

In 1977, the objectives of the newly formed FILEF Cultural Committee in Sydney were, among others, 'to encourage Italian migrants to organise around the problems of education, introduction of Italian language in schools, and to organise cultural events and activities leading cultural development, in order to generate a positive sense of identity and self-esteem'.[40] In the same year FILEF held its first Congress in Australia in the Melbourne suburb of Carlton whose theme was 'FILEF for the unity of all workers to tackle and solve together the problems of immigrants in Australia'. The theme summarised the social and political crisis that had affected

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[38] The involvement of ASIO in monitoring the supporters of FILEF is cited in Blaxland (2015: 113
[39] See the section about the establishment of FILEF described in the background chapter.
[40] Mitchell Library ML MSS 5288, File FILEF Cultural Centre, un-dated.

Australia in the second half of the 1970s. At the Congress the issues debated were the economic crisis and unemployment; the anti-worker campaign of the Federal government; the specific problems of immigrant women; immigrant and education; information and media; discrimination against immigrants and their democratic organisations; Unitarian committee and consular committee and bilateral agreements between Italy and Australia.

Some of the debates presented by FILEF were already developed in other welfare organisations such as COASIT, as well as government agencies, supported by the Whitlam Labor government until 1975, and later on by the Fraser Liberal government. So what new strategy was FILEF trying to adopt in regard to Italian migration? It was acknowledged that the growth of workers' movements in Italy in those years was an ideological stimulus for the immigrants in Australia. However, the dilemma was: Should the immigrants be included in the Australian mainstream organisations (unions, workers committee) or run their own equivalent organisation? The PCI Federation in Australia pushed for its members to be involved in Italian-run organisations rather than in the CPA. Lino Magnano, member in Italy of the extreme left organisation *Lotta Continua* stated that when he became a member of the CPA, he was not encouraged by the leaders of PCI in Australia.[41] On the other hand, the ALP did not agree with the fact that in Australia

> There were distrust and misunderstandings become from the fact that it was
> not clear the necessity to organise a political network overseas. This was
> equally the case for the trade unions which saw in FILEF a kind of
> encroachment even if its role was also acknowledged and valued too.[42]

According to many respondents, there was a sense of a strong connection between FILEF and the local political parties which was both one of FILEF's strengths and weaknesses.

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[41] 'Alla fine del 1978 mi sono iscritto al CPA, che era una cosa che i comunisti italiani vedevano di cattivo occhio, perché noi dobbiamo lavorare al nostro, è inutile pensare di integrarsi all'interno della realtà australiana' (Lino Magnano, interview with author, 13 February 2014, Carlton VIC, audio file and full transcription in possessione of author).

[42] C'era una diffidenza e una non comprensione che nascevano dal fatto che non si capiva l'utilità potesse avere e organizzare all'estero una rete di iscritti e di persone che risultavano attiviste per il partito di un altro paese. Questo valeva in parte anche nei sindacati che vedevano nel ruolo della FILEF un'invasione di campo anche se tutto sommato veniva apprezzata la sua attività' (Marco Fedi, interview with author, 15 October 2013, Carlton, VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

The political controversy on dealing with ethnic interest was partially solved when the ALP allowed for the establishment of ethnic branches. However, the representativeness in local councils was gradual and controversial. Harry Jenkins remembers when he was elected to the Australian parliament in 1979 that 'something like two thirds of the population was southern Europeans, but only one quarter of the council was represented by them, the majority was still Anglo'. According to Jenkins a community-based organisation such as FILEF was important 'because in the absence of an organisation that was based on the beliefs and values and political associations that people had in their homeland these people could have been forgotten'.[43]

So, the purpose of FILEF was twofold: on the one hand to increase its presence among the Italians as a pressure group and on the other hand to voice the concerns of the young Italians in Australia that were more aware about the demand of the Italian community rather than their parents.[44]

Networks and contacts of new migrants in Australia

As mentioned above, since the early 1970s there were more departures from Australia than arrivals from Italy. However, the new push factors not related directly to the economic crisis of the 1970s appeared with the new migration flow. As some studies noted (such as Castles & Miller 2009), the dramatic increase of students in Italian universities was not being absorbed by the labour market in Italy. This process affected this new migration flow which can be considered part of an elite migration, where highly skilled migrants become the main part of this phenomenon. The destinations of this migration were similar to those of the pre-war era and mobility was similar to that which affected Italy and Europe generally in the nineteenth century. However, the differences between recent migrations and previous ones lay in changed migration governance protocols.[45]

Among Italian migrants who immigrated to Australia in those years, some were called 'post-68' generation; they were not involved directly in political activities, but

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[43] Harry Jenkins, interview with author, 7 May 2013, Mill Park (Vic) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

[44] 'Contributo per una discussione sulla natura e le strrutture della collettività italiana in Australia e sui nostri compiti – Organizzazioni del PCI del New South Wales – Sydney 1980' (FMA).

[45] See Gabaccia (2000) for Italians Diasporas and Caglioti (2008) for patterns of settlement, integration and identity negotiation in Italy and Europe in 19th and 20th century.

more often in cultural activities related to left-wing associations and more in general with student movements.

> I wanted to go, to get out. That time it was like, you know the 1970s, the years of 'lead'. Those years were heavy because many were firing. Basically everyone fired. Black terrorists or Red Brigades, police, uniformed police, citizens to defend themselves or criminal organizations that naturally were taking advantages of all history, fired [...] I was not so much involved, anyway I was tired to be affected by that environment. I was constantly being stopped at the checkpoint by soldiers... it was not a quiet life I have to say. It was not a life that I wanted.[46]

Also the networks of these migrants were slightly different. The exclusivity of the Italian traditional meeting places (clubs, associations, parishes, schools and neighbourhoods) gave way to new networks and places and the period in the late 1970s and 1980s saw a new type of political transnationalism between Australia and Italy.

Some of the second generation migrants went to Italy through their connections, partnerships and involvement in educational institutions. Cecilia Palma before her involvement as officer in FILEF Melbourne went to Italy for the first time in the mid-1970s as an exchange student of Swinburne College (now University) of Technology, whose Italian department was led by FILEF activist and lecturer Charles D'Aprano. D'Aprano, too, went to Italy and lived there for several months.[47] Others, such as Spinoso or Zaccari, went to Italy and where they became involved in Italian politics courses held by *Scuole di Partito* run by the PCI.[48]

The influence of the PCI among the second generation of Australian-Italians was remarkable. Most of those who had travelled to Italy affirmed that this political support

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[46] Avevo voglia di andare, di uscire un po' da quel periodo che era come sai gli anni Settanta specialmente verso la fine erano anni, famosi anni di "piombo", perché erano pesanti per il piombo che ognuno, ogni categoria sparava. Sparavano tutti praticamente, dai terroristi o brigatisti rossi, neri, la polizia in borghese, la polizia in divisa, il cittadino per difendersi o le organizzazioni criminali che naturalmente si approfittvano di tutta la storia. [...] quindi erano anni proprio pesanti e nonostante insomma io non ci fossi così tanto dentro naturalmente ti influenzavano la vita perché essere fermati continuamente al posto di blocco con militari in assetto di guerra ... non era una vita tranquilla diciamo, non era una vita che volevo vivere insomma. (Rosalba Paris, interview with author, 20 February 2013, Bronte, NSW, audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[47] About his Italian experience, D'Aprano published in 1979 a book entitled 'Violence or Democracy: the Italian experiment' in which he described a turbulent biennium in Italy. The *Brigate Rosse* (Red Brigades), the Italian far-left movements and the Italian politics during his permanence in 1977 and 1978 were the main themes of his book. See D'Aprano 1979.
[48] See Bellassai (2002) about the role of *Scuole di Partito* between the 1940s and 1950s in Italy.

was an important way to understand not only politics but also the modernisation of the Italian society. Carli confirms that his generation was attracted to Italian politics of the 1970s but also by the radical changes that affected Italy at the time.

> What impressed me was the economic development in Italy, especially in Veneto where the industrial sector became predominant. I went to Padua in 1980 and in those years the political climate was heavy.[49]

All of these experiences were imported in Australia not only by the political and ideological support of PCI but also with the establishment of FILEF in Australia. For many this organisation was a common place where to share these new ideas about Italy and how to engage also the young generation of Italians.

FILEF as a meeting place for newcomers

The political time was appropriate for the younger generation to be involved in new political ideas and activities promoted by the ethnic communities and supported by new multicultural policies. FILEF at that time also wanted to be a point of contact in which young and old generation of Italians had the possibility to work for the Italian community as whole. However, the needs of the newcomers were partially met by the old and traditional associations. One of the leaders of FILEF in Melbourne explained where and how he had his first contact with FILEF:

> I arrived here in 1978. As a communist militant I tried to find fellows, while I was walking I found a bookshop which is called International bookshop and there were books about Marxism. The only word that I knew in English language was 'Marxism'. Then I met an Italian guy who gave a contact with FILEF supporters.[50]

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[49] 'La cosa che mi ha colpito è stato il fatto che c'è stato un grosso sviluppo in Italia, in Veneto specialmente che da zona agricola è diventata zona industriale (...) io sono andato nel 1980 e allora Padova era pesante politicamente in quegli anni. Era un periodo duro dove il rapporto polizia movimento studentesco era denso e difficile. La repressione si sentiva a Padova' (Carlo Carli, interview with author, 26 April 2013, Coburg VIC audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[50] 'Sono arrivato qua nel 1978. E quindi da militante comunista ho cercato di vedere rapporti (...) camminando per strada ho trovato una vecchia libreria che si chiama International Bookshop e c'erano dei libri sul marxismo, l'unica parola in inglese che conoscevo era 'marxism' e quindi sono entrato e per fortuna ho trovato uno che parlava italiano, che poi mi ha indirizzato ai compagni della FILEF e così è tutto nato lì' (Lino Magnano, interview with author, 13 February 2014, Carlton VIC audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

It could be argued, as Slobodian (2008) does, that the Australian 68-movement was affected by 'dissident guests' or vice versa. Was this the case for FILEF supporters? To answer this question we need to analyse the respondents' early years in Australia and their perceptions at the time.

First of all, the framework of the Italian community in Australia did not reflect the dramatic changes of the Italian society of those years. In Italy new progressive movements and new welfare organisations were developing alongside the traditional ones. In Australia the role of religious organisations among migrants was still predominant showing how the religious assistance was a fundamental aspect for the Catholic social doctrine and other religious institutions. A revealing example was education which had catholic schools as first alternative to public education. A large number of Italian migrants and second generations were attending these institutions, especially in areas where the Italian community was predominant such as the northern suburbs of Melbourne. However, for most of the respondents the link with these catholic institutions and welfare agencies was becoming unsuitable. COASIT, for instance, was considered by a section of the migrant Italian community as too conservative and unable to satisfy economic, cultural and political needs. Most Italian migrants, who arrived in Australia between 1970s and 1980s, were included in the 'post-68' generation. For the majority of them the necessity to integrate in the host country was possible through the contact with those who shared certain ideas and initiatives predominant at that time.

> Un giorno, nel 1978, ero a Lygon street [Carlton] dove c'era un mercatino. Mentre ero lì ho sentito una canzone di Fabrizio De André [...] e ho detto: mi gioco le palle che questo qua deve essere come minimo di sinistra [...] si chiamava Alberto. [...] Gli dissi: guarda sono disperato, ho bisogno di avere un contatto umano con qualcuno semi di sinistra e lui mi ha parlato della FILEF. Lui era già coinvolto. Lui faceva il programma italiano della 3CR era il programma della FILEF infatti. Un giorno aveva un appuntamento e mi dice: ti porto ad incontrare questi altri compagni, questa organizzazione di sinistra, legata al Partito comunista... così tramite lui sono venuto in contatto con la FILEF [...] E quindi è stato bello perché c'era una bella energia di tutti questi qua che si sono riuniti, tutti compagni e mi hanno fatto vedere il giornale (Nuovo Paese ndt) e insomma praticamente son diventato anch'io un attivista. Questa è una delle ragioni che mi ha fatto stare più qua anche

volentieri. Perché ovviamente ho scoperto anche il mondo dell'emigrazione. Perché in Italia in effetti venendo da una famiglia diciamo ceto medio sapevamo dell'emigrazione. Ci ho questa immagine dei treni che venivano da Milano, dalla Germania, dal Belgio. [...] Però era bello perché ad ogni stazione c'era il Partito Comunista e i sindacati che organizzavano i pacchi, colazioni ...questa era l'esperienza mia. Mentre qua, attraverso la FILEF, ho avuto la possibilità di conoscere più da vicino diciamo la storia ma anche i problemi attuali di allora degli emigrati italiani qui a Melbourne.[51]

On the other hand, the way in which politics was experienced in Australia was quite different from Italian and European experiences. In European countries such as Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and France, Italian parties had a long history of involvement in migrant expatriate communities. Since the end of 19th century and during the period of Fascism the influence of Italian mass parties increased dramatically. At the end of the Second World War the demand for political representation was a common request, firstly the right to vote (Monferrini 1987). In Australia the context was still different.

Durante i primi anni alla politica non ci si pensava. Da un lato ovviamente l'Australia era un po' strana, così un po' primitiva (sic) se vogliamo [...].[52]
Chiaramente in Italia negli anni '70, l'Italia era molto politicizzata con piuttosto ideologie molto forti sia di sinistra, di centro e di destra. C'era un dibattito politico molto elevato a tutti i livelli. Non si parlava solo di economia, di quante ... la lira, il mercato o la disoccupazione. C'era tutto un insieme di cose importanti per la vita dell'uomo. Quindi un discorso politico molto alto. Quando son venuto qui abbiam trovato addirittura nessun discorso politico o quasi insomma.[53]

For those born in Australia and involved in Australian left-wing parties, student movements, or unions, FILEF was perceived as a place in which Italian political culture could be discovered. Panucci once said: 'after my visit to Italy, one of my friends, who

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[51] Roberto Malara, interview with author, 28 April 2013, Thornbury (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[52] Claudio Marcello, interview with author, 14 February 2013, Bronte, (NSW) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[53] Renato Licata, interview with author, 18 January 2013, Hawthorn (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

were, like me, a member of the Communist Party of Australia, introduced me to the supporters of FILEF. From that time, I think it was in 1980, I became involved in FILEF here in Sydney'.[54]

In line with Slobodian's (2008) view, is possible to assert that the Panucci's case was a clear example of a new kind of political participation of the time. When he had his first contact with Italian political culture, which was far from the post-war Italy stereotypes, he was more motivated to discover an Italian association closer to his interests.

Moreover, for other Italians of the second generations, this interest in Italian society and politics was mediated through FILEF and the PCI in Australia. In those years when Panucci was involved for the first time with FILEF, the PCI in Australia was aware that:

> Non abbiamo compreso appieno l'importanza per gli immigrati di organizzarsi nei partiti in cui si riconoscono (….) il carattere dell'emigrazione della fine degli anni '60 e inizi degli anni '70, formata da emigrati che hanno vissuto in qualche misura l'esperienza italiana più recente e che più difficilmente sono disposti a rinunciare alla propria identità politica e culturale; i nuovi fermenti che sono nato nella società australiana all'inizio degli anni '70, quando si comincia a parlare di "identità nazionali" e di multiculturalismo, e gli effetti che questi nuovi fermenti hanno avuto anche sui giovani italo-australiani.[55]

The political bridge between Italy and Australia was reinforced in those years not only by student exchange, but also with the launch of several publications by FILEF and by the Circolo di Vittorio in Australia. The field of these publications was vast and included the area of culture as well as Italian political history and the revival of the most prominent left-wing intellectuals. Among these the ideas of Gramsci and his political legacy in left-wing culture emerged. His thoughts attracted special attention amongst the young generation of Italians in Australia. Gaetano Greco, for example, found an explanation of the differences between the CPA and PCI and the concept of mass party

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[54] Frank Panucci, interview with author, 18 February 2013, Sydney (NSW) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[55] 'Contributo per una discussione sulla natura e le strutture della collettività italiana in Australia e sui nostri compiti – Organizzazioni del PCI del New South Wales – Sydney 1980' (FMA).

through Gramsci. The influence of Gramsci in Australia had a long tradition, as Davidson argued in his studies (1969, 2007).

To summarise, the influence of Italian intellectuals such as Gramsci, among the young generation in Australia shows the role of FILEF and related left-wing associations such as Circolo di Vittorio in disseminating new key ideas about Italy and the role of the mass parties. This effort found a favourable context in Australia until the 1980s where several Gramsci conferences, volumes and articles attracted many Italo-Australian students (Davidson 2007). The leaders of the CPA, after all were interested to being involved in the PCI too. This fascination of PCI increased also in those years due to the establishment of the Euro communism a trend developed by the PCI and encouraged by CPA leaders too (Brown 1986).

This new involvement influenced FILEF's younger supporters who did not have this knowledge either through their family or through the traditional and conservative associations. This attraction was reflected in Australian workplaces where the most active left supporters tried to import Gramsci's theory of factory councils, alarming the traditional trade union leadership. In this framework FILEF tried to infiltrate the unionised factory workers in where possible. A debate ensued around the migrant workers in those years and the leaders of FILEF Sgrò, Salemi and the young generation were much more involved in this matter. Historically speaking, the influence of activists such as Salemi helped broaden their profile. In the 1930s the presence of anti-fascist and communist associations such as *Gruppo Italiano contro la Guerra* (Italian Group Against War established in 1935) and *Casa d'Italia* (House of Italy established in 1938) had as leaders Matteo Cristofaro who tried to obtain a visa to come to Australia for Vittorio Vidali, an Italian communist leader (Cresciani 1980). The refusal to grant a visa reminds how deep the deportation of Salemi and the distrust towards communist activism was inside of the Australian government. Cresciani in his study stressed the activities of these Italian communists during the late 1930s and the potential role of Vidali to 'galvanise and organise Italian anti-fascists' in Australia during the turbulent pre-war decade (Cresciani 1989: 67). These communist leaders that in different time had an active role among migrants can be seen as an historical continuity of political activism in the host country.

FILEF and Union Workers

In 1975 at the First International Conference on Italian Migration held in Rome, FILEF presented a paper written in collaboration with CURA activist Des Storer regarding the social conditions of Italians in Australia. The survey showed that the majority of Italians confirmed that they 'did not have much knowledge as to which persons and organisations are influential in decision-making as regards politics, business, community affairs or the provision of education and welfare services' (Storer 1975: 17). One of the findings and the recommendations was to promote an organisation to work for the rights of Italians. FILEF with this survey brought these requests to the Italian government, serving as a spokesperson for their needs.

But what was the Australian context regarding the participation of migrant workers in the Unions? According to many studies, as we are reminded by Lever-Tracy and Quinlan (1988), union leaders were sceptical about the participation of immigrants in unions. The economic crisis in the 1970s had an impact on workers, unions and the Australian business system. Overall migrant workers were considered a threat in terms of salaries among the Australian labour force. According to a document by Pierina Pirisi the fragmentation of the unions deprived migrant worker of chances to fight against the Liberal government policies adopted in 1977:

> Il movimento operaio non trova la necessaria unità per passare al contrattacco, ma non riesce nemmeno a unirsi per l'autodifesa, e infatti le leggi antisindacali sono passate, si può dire, senza colpo ferire, a parte qualche fiera dichiarazione e qualche sciopero isolato. Le ragioni sono da ricercare nell'estrema frammentazione politica e organizzativa del movimento operaio australiano, e in particolare del movimento sindacale, nella mancanza del concetto di sindacato di classe, che superi le barriere corporative, e perciò nell'assenza di un indirizzo comune e di classe delle lotte sindacali. Il sindacato è ancora in pratica concepito come un'associazione di arti e mestieri, che deve badare principalmente alle questioni salariali.[56]

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[56] FILEF Sydney Archive (FSA) Mitchell State Library (MSL), box 4, folder 1st Congresso FILEF 1977, 'Relazione introduttiva di Pierina Pirisi'.

This awareness was also due to the work, parties, and trade union environments which were considerably different in the Italy of the 1970s compared with Australia:

> Noi partiamo con la nostra cultura italiana e poi arriviamo in Australia. Quindi noi le considerazioni che si fanno siccome venivamo da questa storia, da questo Partito Comunista che era molto forte, al quale io non ero iscritto prima di partire per l'Australia, era molto forte (...) era una sinistra. Siamo nel '75, un sindacato molto forte che contava molto in Italia, che portava a casa anche dei risultati concreti. Era il periodo di massimo splendore del sindacato, lo Statuto dei lavoratori, le conquiste anche di livello salariale perché in quel periodo lì i salari italiani avevano raggiunto i livelli europei. Poi l'espansione economica ti consentiva di far le lotte e portare a casa dei risultati perché le aziende anche ti davano, perché avevano bisogno di lavorare. A quel tempo ancora non c'era la possibilità di portar la fabbrica, di delocalizzare.[57]

The 'golden era' of the working-class in Italy,[58] as described above by Burani had a huge influence among the new migrant arrivals in Australia. Some of them tried to import to Australia the experience of the Italian representative bodies such as *Consigli di Fabbrica* (Union Committees/ Factory Councils).

Interesting, in this case, Caputo's recollection:

> solamente 8 sono i funzionari italo-australiani nelle Trade Unions del Victoria. E anche le unioni che sprecano retorica a favore dei lavoratori immigrati, quando si va ai fatti c'è poco di sostanza. [...] In generale le unioni non considerano ne importante ne prioritario informare i lavoratori emigrati o incoraggiare la loro partecipazione alla vita sindacale se non parlare addirittura di diffidenza.[59]

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[57] Edoardo Burani, interview with author, 5 July 2013, Modena, Italy (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[58] Ginsborg described the climate of agitation and conflict occurring in Italy in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a golden era for Italian workers. In that time they became aware of the power of collective action, and acquired a new self-confidence (2003: 321).
[59] Joe Caputo file 1980, (FMA).

However, as mentioned previously, there were other significant issues which affected Italian migrants' workers in the social fabric of Australia. First of all, labour activism was hindered not only by industry owners but also by unions and native workers for a long time.[60]

In 1977 Renato Licata said during the first FILEF Congress held in Melbourne:

> la discriminazione contro i lavoratori immigrati esiste in tutti i settori, e come ha affermato il segretario dell'AMWSU ad una recente conferenza della Migrant Workers' Conference Committee, persino nelle unioni. John Halfpenny infatti ha detto che purtroppo nel movimento unionista australiano non tutti i lavoratori hanno la stessa opportunità di partecipare alla vita della propria Unione, e il fatto che a quasi tutti i livelli, di quasi tutte le Unioni, l'attività è svolta principalmente da lavoratori australiani di origine anglo-sassone potrebbe confermare proprio questo. Addirittura si dice che persino alcuni dirigenti unionisti tra i più progressisti tendono a dividere la classe operaia secondo il paese d'origine.[61]

The testimonials of the immigrant workers show several issues which required consideration. The deportation of Salemi (1977) resulted in the absence of an effective organiser, and this loss affected FILEF internally more than its the relationship with the unions. After all, as Storer argued, the demands of the Italian workers were related to the Australian environment not the Italian context and the working class struggles that were increasing in home country. In other terms the case of the Ford Broadmeadows automobile plant, the first Migrant Workers Conference held in the same year and the Welfare Rights Officer Program launched by the Minister for Social Security Bill Hayden reflected the complexity of the working class in Australia. This also come from the work environment where the 'immigrants were more inclined to be viewed as the cause of local problems rather than as victims of their own special difficulties' (Lever-Tracy & Quinlan 1988: 163). Compared with the case of the USA where there was a longer phase of immigration, in the case of Australia, Anglo-Saxon dominated unionism was still predominant. The connection between multiculturalism, ethnic communities

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[60] For a comparative case, see the strained relationship between the unionised works' council and the foreign workers in Germany cited in Goeke (2014).

[61] FSA-MSL, box 13, folder sindacati 1° Congresso FILEF 1977, 'Diritto al lavoro, disoccupazione, immigrati e unioni, intervento di Renato Licata.

and workers' rights was complex and contradictory due to the policies of the government and Australian trade unions. For instance, agencies focused more on ethnic issues rather than working class issue. According to several FILEF activists this affected a more direct involvement in trade unionism as well. For a long time the Australian institutions did not see workers as a social class but rather as members of ethnic communities.

> Noi ci muoviamo in una situazione diversa da quella italiana, lì esistono i partiti della classe operaia che riescono a realizzare la loro teoria, perché comprendono le condizioni materiali, lo sviluppo delle forze produttive e soprattutto comprendono, quali sono i veri rapporti tra le classi che operano nell'area politica. Uno dei nostri obiettivi deve essere, quello di riuscire a portare tra gli operai italiani in Australia quella esperienza politica che deve servire a farli diventare attivi e partecipi nelle loro organizzazioni (unioni) e nei partiti politici, costruendo e formando un orientamento che deve pervenire anche dall'esterno. (...) Numerose unioni hanno tra i loro membri, molti operai immigrati, altri solo una piccola percentuale, la logica dovrebbe portare quelle unioni, i cui membri sono una grossa percentuale, ad interessarsi dei loro problemi e della loro partecipazione (...). Si avvertono dei cambiamenti nella società australiana ma fino a che punto? (...) Ci sono iniziative positive, ma avvengono solo in quei settori come: la scuola, l'informazione, i servizi d'interprete gestiti dai governi statali o federali che si susseguono. (...) Tali iniziative presentano un altro limite, quello della profondità e dell'ampiezza, che non raggunge mai il lavoratore nelle fabbriche. (...) I lavoratori immigrati non sono un problema particolare, sono un problema della classe operaia australiana. (...) Quando si cerca di etichettare l'operaio immigrato, si tenta nello stesso tempo di dividerlo da quello anglo-sassone, mentre la fabbrica potrebbe rappresentare un momento di costruzione dell'unità, dell'identificazione del problema di classe, quello che l'unione e l'operaio devono innanzitutto considerare.[62]

Among the Italian community the politicisation of worker rights was also an issue in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Nino Randazzo, editor of *Il Globo*, the most well-known Italian ethnic newspaper in Australia, pointed out the lack of participation of Italian

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[62] FSA-MSL, box 13, folder sindacati 'Relazione sulla natura delle Unioni in Australia e il ruolo che esse svolgono tra i lavoratori immigrati' a cura di Enzo Soderini.

workers in the Australian unions but he had little time for the PCI inspired FILEF organisation.

> Nella quasi totalità di quei pochi tentativi d'inserimento e partecipazione attiva italiana al movimento sindacale australiano che si registrano, si riscontra una strategia, una matrice politica che propone modelli tipicamente italiani di sindacalismo inacettabili nella situazione australiana. Ma nel vuoto lasciato per indifferenza o per incapacità dalla stragrande maggioranza di lavoratori immigrati, s'inseriscono appunto pochi attivisti politici che servono da comoda "copertura etnica" per lo strapotere e l'irresponsabilità di alcuni dirigenti sindacali australiani. (...) A questo punto si presenta la necessità e insieme l'occasione da non lasciarsi sfuggire per un'organizzazione italiana operante in Australia, ma libera da controlli e condizionamenti politici italiani o locali, di istituire corsi d'addestramento sindacale, con l'obiettivo, anche se a lunga scadenza, di piazzare un'adeguata rappresentanza italiana nei quadri del movimento operaio. Quella della mancata partecipazione italiana al sindacalismo australiano è un'altra falla da tamponare nella barca del nostro gruppo etnico.[63]

The editor of *Il Globo* was concerned about the ethnicity and the disunity of the Italian community. Randazzo wrote editorials against FILEF and left-wing associations during his journalistic career, especially during the Salemi case (1976-1977) (Battiston 2012). His support for the split of the ALP and the establishment of the conservative DLP was a turning point for his involvement in politics. For Randazzo FILEF was more or less a *paracomunista*[64] (front) association supported by the PCI to politicise the Italian community, which put the role of Italian conservative lobbies in Melbourne at risk. For Randazzo the main aim was to increase the influence of the Italian establishment among Australian politics and culture.[65] In the mid-1970s *Il Globo* was aware of the social changes affecting Australia but, unlike FILEF, the effort was to show that the whole community wanted to be represented by Australian institutions without Italian influences which could affected the integration of the first and second generations. This concern was also related to the relationship between trade unions and Italian workers.

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[63] Randazzo: 'Partecipazione degli italiani al sindacalismo australiano', *Il Globo*, 7 July 1980, p. 15.
[64] Randazzo: 'Indecenza politica dei liberali-agrari', *Il Globo*, 26 July 1976, p. 19.
[65] See Rando (2004) for the theatre performances written by Randazzo.

Randazzo argued that integration of Italians into Australia's mainstream had to go through the Australian organisations and not politically affiliated Italian political organisations, patronage, or even Italian parties. Randazzo was in effect arguing for Italians in Australia to avoid the influence of the Italian political system in the host country. For FILEF activists however, the politicisation of Italians was a significant step for integration into Australian society. For FILEF in the 1970s the aim was to establish an *International Federation of Migrant Organisations*.

> Molto importanti sono i nostri rapporti con le organizzazioni di lavoratori immigrati di altre nazionalità. (...). Perché tutti gli immigrati, di qualsiasi nazionalità hanno più o meno gli stessi problemi da risolvere (...) Agendo soltanto come FILEF possiamo ottenere soltanto dei risultati minimi con i sindacati perché non siamo abbastanza forti, però agendo assieme alle altre organizzazioni di lavoratori immigrati potremo ottenere molto di più. A parte il fatto che tre sindacati comprano il nostro giornale, non abbiamo mai svolto delle campagne assieme ai sindacati. Credo che la migliore via avanti per trovare una soluzione a questo problema si troverà nella futura Federation of Migrant Organisations.[66]

Two aspects affected the relationship between local trade unions and migrant workers, as many studies have already argued (Lever-Tracy & Quinlan 1988; Zangalis 2009). One related to economic recessions (1952, 1961-1962, 1973). Then trade unions were the main actors in the effort to stop immigration which was considered a threat to the local labour force. The second aspect related to the assimilationist and multicultural policies of Australia at the time. Only in 1979 did the ACTU 'after a decade of campaigning by migrants and some Left-wing and progressive unions, break with the conservative assimilationist policies and declared its support for multiculturalism' (Zangalis 2009: 495-496).

Another factor has to be considered in terms of the involvement of activists in FILEF. The late 1970s and early 1980s were years in which the cultural environment influenced by South American politics was one of the issues in which the post-1968 generation were attracted to.

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[66] FSA-MSL, box 13, folder sindacati 'Nostri rapporti con i sindacati e i partiti dei lavoratori e partecipazione ad essi dei lavoratori immigrati', by Claudio Crollini, 25 September 1977.

> At the beginning when I arrived in Australia I was not involved in any social
> and political events. After all I did not anyone. I knew friends of my husband
> and then I make some friendships until I started at University. The next year
> in 1980 I was involved in political activities especially in the South American
> issues. That time was the age of Chili, Argentina, Uruguay, Salvador, and
> Nicaragua. I was so much involved in this type of solidarity.[67]

But among these new emigrants with their personal stories, one common feature emerges. Most of them were part of the migrant elite which was a product of a new social phenomenon of the 1970s. In this case the term elite migrant is connected not only with the economic status of the newcomers, notwithstanding that many come from working class backgrounds, but also with different links that influenced their choice to emigrate to Australia.

The role of the family, as a social network in migrant receiving countries, changed dramatically in those years. As Gabaccia argued for USA, Canada, and Argentina, Italy's elite migrants had few contact with the village-based diasporas (Gabaccia 2000: 160-165). This holds true also for Australia. In Melbourne the supporters of FILEF could be divided into two groups. One included Italians who emigrated to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s, and a second group who arrived in Australia in the 1970s and 1980s. The first group included people who emigrated to Australia as mostly unskilled workers or peasants. The second group included people with high professional qualifications, such as researches, professors or with Italian and Australian higher education qualifications.[68] However, for the case of FILEF members, this division is not completely suitable regarding their social and economic background. Some of them, such as Pirisi and Di Biase, come from working-class background. But their social involvement in the Italy of the 1970s and, in the case of di Biase in South America before Australia, gave them the possibility to develop their career in Australia by using different kinds of networks which fit into the pattern proposed by Gabaccia.

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[67] 'Arrivata in Australia per il primo anno non ho fatto nulla. Non conoscevo del resto nessuno. Conoscevo le persone amiche di mio marito e poi mi son fatta delle amicizie mie finchè non ho iniziato l'Università. L'anno dopo nel 1980 ho fatto attività politica più che altro in relazione all'America Latina. Erano gli anni del Cile, Argentina, Uruguay, Salvador, Nicaragua e quindi ero molto coinvolta in questa attività di solidarietà' (Chiara Caglieris, interview with author, 17 July 2013, Lido di Pomposa, Italy, audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[68] For the first group and second group, see Battiston (2004) in the appendix of that study there are biographical profiles of some members belonging to FILEF's Melbourne branch.

5.3 Leadership crisis and generational conflicts

A leadership debate started in FILEF in the 1970s and continued into the next decade. This impacted both FILEF's relationship with 'external' bodies but primarily its own functioning. Previous studies (Carli 1982, Battiston 2012) note the controversial relationship between the leaders of FILEF in Melbourne and the friction between older and younger generations. But the tensions went beyond the matters referred to in these two studies (Carli 1982 and Battiston 2012). For example, despite the fact that Salemi's deportation was a political turning point for FILEF in Melbourne, the activities of FILEF continued throughout the following decades in his absence. Moreover, in the immediate years after the Salemi deportation, some leaders of FILEF left the organisation never to return. Besides Pirisi and Burani who were more active in Sydney, in Melbourne some members left the local branch in the early 1980s, returning to Italy such as Stefania Pieri, Cathy Angelone, and Renato Licata in 1989. In this case the professional career and their personal story overlap with their participation in FILEF. For other members, though, the involvement in FILEF ended due to conflict especially in Melbourne. According to the archival data alongside the interviews gathered, it would appear that by the early 1990s the involvement of most active members of FILEF in Melbourne had come to an end.

However, among the respondents, there did not appear to be a unique reason for the FILEF Melbourne decline and disengagement of members. It could be said that the evolution of migration policy in Australia and the social and economic changes in Italy and in all host countries affected FILEF in Australia as well. In addition, as for most non-profit organisations, the lack of government funding is one of the main reasons for the decline or inactivity of the association. For FILEF, for instance, the support to migrants was certainly affected after 1975 when the new government rearranged the funding for welfare agencies.

According to the respondents in this study the Salemi case was on the one hand a significant opportunity to involve other ethnic communities in fighting for ethnic rights, on the other hand the departure of Salemi also provoked a sense of loss among FILEF activists (Battiston 2012). It is important to point out the difference between Melbourne and Sydney in those years. Spinoso, for instance confirms that

Forse è stata l'influenza di Salemi, le sue ragioni di essere qui, di organizzare la FILEF, la comunità, di dare la presenza del Partito Comunista Italiano. Pajetta veniva spesso, parlavano. Forse avevano questa intenzione, sapevano che forse un domani si sarebbero svolte le elezioni qui e che il Partito si doveva organizzare per avere una presenza. [...] Forse questo era un obbiettivo troppo forte e ha creato una stagnazione nella FILEF qui a Melbourne.[69]

Joe Caputo pointed out that not only the loss of Salemi's leadership but also a lack of understanding of left-wing activities among Italians was an issue.

Fra i lavoratori impegnati seriamente a voler cambiare le cose, pochi erano coloro che erano in possesso di qualsiasi cognizione organizzativa e didattica. [...] La nostra necessità di far venire qualcuno dall'Italia era un'espressione oggettiva delle condizioni in cui la sinistra italiana in Australia si trovava in quel periodo. [...] i nostri vecchi compagni provenivano da un passato contadino, diventati proletari in Australia e l'isolamento politico e sociale, ha contribuito pesantemente ad assicurare che le loro concezioni rimanessero statiche (cultura congelata, ecc.). Delicato era anche il lavoro che si svolgeva fra i giovani compagni, anche qui difficile una convergenza delle idee e del modo di fare. I rapporti fra questi compagni erano spesso tesi e contrastati da percezioni diverse.[70]

In his conclusion Caputo affirmed that different to other major ethnic emigration waves such as that of the Greek community, Italian immigration of the 1950s was traditionally based on economic reason and drivers. This affected the possibility of politicising Italian workers and involving them in the workplaces, or in progressive parties.

Caputo's statement at the time provoked a reaction among FILEF supporters in Melbourne and in Sydney. The secretary of FILEF in Sydney, after his visit to Melbourne, wrote a letter of complaint to Rome where he criticised Caputo's behaviour, recognising a generational conflict that was affecting the FILEF branch.[71]

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[69] Gianfranco Spinoso, interview with author, 11 January 2014, Coburg (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[70] Joe Caputo file 1980, (FMA).
[71] FSA-MSL, box 2, file correspondence, letter of Bruno di Biase to FILEF Rome, 22 September 1980.

Caputo in his manuscript affirms what others supporters in their interviews confirm about the conflicts among the members. This statement has to be contextualised in the framework of that time (early 1980s). In fact, it is important to stress that the presence of Salemi in Melbourne had a double effect. Firstly, according to the respondents, he increased the role of the younger generation in Melbourne through involvement in *Nuovo Paese*; secondly, his dynamism was a key factor for internal conflicts in FILEF (Battiston 2012, Lopez 2000).

In his document, dated May 1980, Caputo asserts the lack of Italian political representativeness in the state government. Sgrò and Sidiropoulos were the only two elected in the Victoria Parliament as representative of the Italian and Greek communities respectively. Caputo's complaint focuses also on the ALP's opportunism, and on the political strategy of Italians.

> L'ALP si avvicina alla FILEF soltanto quando ci sono le elezioni in giro. [...] Recentemente nell'ALP ci sono stati dei sviluppi organizzativi, verso i vari gruppi nazionali. [...] Gli italiani sono più impegnati come "friends of the ALP", con l'eccezione di due sezioni una a Northcote e l'altra a Brunswick-Coburg. Questo tipo di "amicizia" è, per dire poco, molto strana perché in pratica vuol dire appoggiare un partito senza aver diritto di decidere la sua linea politica.[72]

Caputo was expelled from FILEF in 1980 for his criticism. The main cause was, as Battiston reported, it 'was alleged that he passed on distorted and defamatory information about FILEF and Sgrò to *The Age* (2012: 91). But there were other factors involved. Internal conflicts concerning how to lead the PCI in Australia affected the debate among FILEF supporters. One of the post-1968 generation affirmed that

> For the old fellows was important to have a strong man inside the Party. There were too many opinions, too much democracy. And this clearly clashed with those like me who came from different experiences pro-Maoist, Lotta Continua. And this issue was even among the young generation born here that was not involved in the Party. They did not know anything about Democratic Centralism. This often led to some friction both within the FILEF, both within the Communist Party. Also because this Maginot line

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[72] Joe Caputo file 1980, (FMA).

that existed between these two realities occasionally appeared, and sometimes disappeared. It was not clear. And these were the problems of the time. Then were disagreements between Rome, the Party and inside of FILEF. Joe Caputo has always been, a bit like me, a maverick. So within the PCI and within the FILEF where the majority was the group of hawks, our independence was bad eyesight. Then there had been rumours where Joe had been accused of writing letters to various newspapers and then he was the first and the last to be expelled from FILEF.[73]

According to Caputo, not only an internal conflict affected the debate between these groups but also a not so clear distinction between FILEF and the PCI which affected non-communist members of FILEF in Melbourne.

C'era la doppia tessera PCI e FILEF. Questo è stata una forza ma anche una debolezza. Il PCI era un partito centralista, il che vuol dire che la decisione fatta dal PCI doveva essere poi trasmessa nella FILEF. Ciò ha allontanato molte persone (...). Le decisioni importanti erano prese a Roma e questo era il fattore più negativo. Al principio degli anni Ottanta, io sono uscito dalla FILEF. C'è stata una rottura tra un gruppo di giovani che pensavano di creare cose locali e non di avere direttive, non di andare a Roma, perché noi credevamo che la questione essenziale era di imparare a crescere politicamente qua in Australia.[74]

According to FILEF activists of the second generation there was also a lack of knowledge that the Australian welfare system did not need political representativeness amongst the ethnic communities.

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[73] 'Per i vecchi compagni c'era bisogno di un uomo forte dentro il Partito. C'erano troppe opinioni, troppa democrazia. E questo evidentemente cozzava contro quelli come me che venivano da esperienze diverse filomaoisti, *Lotta Continua*. E poi anche i giovani nati qua che non avevano vissuto la vita di Partito, non conoscevano cosa fosse il *Centralismo Democratico*. Questo creava spesso delle frizioni sia all'interno della FILEF, sia all'interno del Partito Comunista. Anche perché questa linea Maginot che c'era tra queste due realtà ogni tanto appariva, ogni tanto scompariva. Non si capiva bene. E questi erano i problemi del tempo. Poi cominciavano ad arrivare lettere a Roma sia al Partito che alla FILEF dove si denunciavano l'uno contro l'altro. Joe Caputo è sempre stato, un po' come me, un maverick. Per cui all'interno del PCI e all'interno della FILEF dove maggioritario erano il gruppo dei "falchi", questa nostra indipendenza veniva vista male. Poi c'erano state delle indiscrezioni dove Joe era stato accusato di aver scritto delle lettere a vari giornali e quindi fu il primo e l'ultimo ad essere espulso dalla FILEF' (Lino Magnano, interview with author, 13 February 2014, Carlton VIC (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

[74] Joe Caputo, interview with author, 22 May 2013, Brunswick (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

Il COASIT, per esempio ha funzionato in linea con le aspettative della politica australiana. La politica australiana non vuole organismi militanti, bensì organizzazioni di semplice welfare. Ovviamente la FILEF si è presentata semore come un gruppo militante e ovviamente su questo punto il COASIT ha potuto giocare un ruoloo fondamentale nel ricevere aiuti sia coi govenri liberali sia coi governi laburisti. Dal punto di vista interno della FILEF, quello che attirava dell'associazione era sì anche la politica italiana. Allo stesso tempo però la FILEF non ha attirato abbastanza gli italo-australiani anche perché dovevano conformarsi al modo di fare politica italiana. Gli italo-australiani andavano anche in altre direzioni: chi andava nel Partito Laburista chi nei sindacati. In più la comunità italiana nel suo insieme non era politicizzata.[75]

For the post-1968 generation it was hard to increase a political consciousness amongst the first generation. Renato Licata, activist of FILEF and secretary of the PCI in Australia, stated

Il vivere giorno per giorno, day by day, pensando alla casa, al giardino, allo sport, mi aveva fatto capire dopo molti anni che questo pragmatismo quotidiano era un problema fondamentale per la comunità italiana. Voglio dire che quelli arrivati molti anni prima di me non erano mai entrati nel discorso politico del Labor Party, del Liberal Party. Gli altri partiti come il CPA o il SPA a livello elettorale non esistavano praticamente e quindi non potevano influenzare più di tanto la politica australiana.[76]

This conflict between these groups within FILEF has to be contextualised. Historically, FILEF was considered a mass organisation with the aim of being a pressure group amongst migrants. In the early years of its establishment, due to the politicisation of all organisations such as FILEF, the role of left-wing parties and unions were predominant. The strategy used by the PCI was, ideologically rather than financially, a strong point for FILEF. However, for the post-1968 and second generation of Italians in Australia

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[75] Gaetano Greco, interview with author, 30 May 2013, Northcote (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[76] Renato Licata, interview with author, 18 January 2013, Hawthorn (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

this political umbrella was not adequate to achieve their needs in a political context so different to the Italian one.

5.4 FILEF as a community building organisation? Individual careers and political culture adaptation

Former and current FILEF members can be identified into three different groups: migrants who arrived in the 1950s and early 1960s, the post-1968 generation and the second generation of Australians with Italian ancestry. In this section the group which was involved in FILEF Melbourne is analysed. The biographies of this group help understand the environment in which they were involved and their contribution to the main activities of FILEF Melbourne between the 1970s and the 1990s. The oral testimonies and other primary sources will answer of the research questions outlined in Chapter 3.

'Nuovo Paese': as a unifier for FILEF members
Several studies point out the important role of the ethnic media in Australia. Some also highlight the political role of the ethnic media (Gilson & Zubrzycki 1967; White & White 1983; Tosco 2002; Edwards 2008; Cover 2013; Johansson & Battiston 2014).

It was clear among FILEF members that in order to make an impact, at community level, a newspaper was necessary. In line with this need FILEF established a fortnightly newspaper titled *Nuovo Paese* in 1974. In the first issue which was launched on 1st May 1974 the editorial focused on the lack of news targeting migrant workers in Australia and their rights by saying that *Nuovo Paese* proposed to fill the vacuum in information regarding the struggle and the successes of local workers, and that of other countries which constitute the reality of this world of which even Australia is part'.[77]

The content analysis of *Nuovo Paese* shows that the editorials focused more on politics than generic news as covered by other Italian-language newspapers.[78] This confirms that *Nuovo Paese* was aimed at the more politically conscious Italian immigrants (Tosco 2002; Alcorso, Popoli, Rando 1992).

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[77] 'Australia is also part of the world', *Nuovo Paese*, 1 May 1974.
[78] The second number of *Nuovo Paese* opened with the result of divorce held in Italy. 'Reason has triumphed in Italy', *Nuovo Paese*, 15 May 1974.

However, the purpose of this study is not to focus on the readership of *Nuovo Paese*, but to see how this newspaper played a role in the social integration of FILEF members. Bertelli (1986) defined as *impegnati* (committed) those who had brought their Italian experiences to bear through this new political activity in Australia. A clear example of that was Ignazio Salemi, professional journalist, and editor of *Nuovo Paese*. As Battiston reported in his study 'Salemi was exactly what FILEF was looking for: a dynamic resourceful organiser, quick to adapt to the local reality' (2012: 87).

But what was the involvement of the editors and collaborators? Around Salemi an intergenerational group was formed in Melbourne, then in Sydney and later on Adelaide. For most of them *Nuovo Paese* was a *trait d'union* between the needs of these two groups and the activities of FILEF launched also by *Nuovo Paese* in its editorials.

> È stato molto interessante anche da quel punto di vista, nel senso che si sono incontrate appunto diverse generazioni che hanno comunicato e hanno creato per chi veniva dall'Italia diciamo per altre ragioni, un ambiente interessante dove si potevano trovare stimoli e nuovi interessi.[79]
>
> Salemi aveva aiutato a creare il giornale. Per noi era un po' come una scuola di partito, di assistenze e di formazione. Un sistema quotidiano dove si scrivevano volantini, articoli e dove si creavano rapporti di area di interesse. Il lavoro di raccolta era enorme, perché non avevamo i mezzi e si lavorava fino a tarda notte addirittura fino al mattino.[80]

Despite its limited distribution *Nuovo Paese*, become a new vehicle for political discussions between different classes of migrants. The working class was, according to the respondents, more connected to the latest arrivals than before. The post-1968 generation as well as the second generation saw *Nuovo Paese* as a potential link between the demands of these two groups.

For the supporters of FILEF, *Nuovo Paese* was seen as a window to better understand Italian politics (for those born in Australia) not otherwise covered by other Italian ethnic newspapers. Bruno di Biase and Gianfranco Spinoso (2013) confirm this focus when they asserted that *Nuovo Paese*, put more effort into engaging with Italian

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[79] 'Pierina' Pirisi, interview with author, 5 July 2013, Modena, Italy (audio file and full transcription in possession of author)
[80] Joe Caputo, interview with author, 22 May 2013, Brunswick (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

political events. As Spinoso asserted the challenge launched by *Nuovo Paese* against the establishment represented by the conservative part of the Italian community as well as by the Catholic Church was also a clear example of the social and political disunity between Italians in Australia compared with other communities such as that of the Greeks (Spinoso 2014).

Nuovo Paese never reached large levels of circulation like *Il Globo* or *La Fiamma*. It certainly circulated amongst Italians who had a greater level of understanding of Italian left politics and were more class conscious. They were often member of unions or educational institutions. Musolino (2013) for instance, recalled that *Nuovo Paese* and the social network related to it were instrumental in providing an understanding to her union's Italian language members. For others, *Nuovo Paese* was a way to improve their Italian, many were only dialect speakers.

Surveys, dossiers, interviews and news published in *Nuovo Paese* made it easier for its collaborators to appreciate and understand not only the demands of the Italian community but also how to share initiatives with other progressive associations in Australia. *Nuovo Paese* was also a medium for other migrant associations. FILEF, for instance, partnered with South-American associations of exile communities in Australia after the occurrence of military dictatorships in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. Several members of FILEF through their personal connections were involved in community based organisations from South American countries.

The experience of being part of *Nuovo Paese* highlighted the fact that in the late 1970s and 1980s there was possibly a difference between FILEF in Melbourne and FILEF in Sydney. Gianfranco Spinoso asserts that

> C'è stato un momento mentre collaboravo col giornale che le notizie che venivano da Sydney e pubblicate erano molto diverse da quelle di Melbourne. Parlavano di altre cose, erano molto più inserite su questioni della scuola, l'insegnamento dell'italiano, mentre qua c'era questo approccio di politica all'interno dei sindacati e quindi una visione che si avvicinava più alla visione in Italia. Forse a Sydney non c'è mai stato questo periodo italo-centrico che c'è stato in Australia a Melbourne.

The nature of *Nuovo Paese* underwent a change when the editorial office moved from Melbourne to Sydney in 1983 and later on to Adelaide in 1986. According to

Melbourne-based respondents involved in producing *Nuovo Paese*, this relocation affected FILEF Melbourne, particularly the second generation and the post 68 generation.

Lidio Bertelli (2001) suggests that the relocation affected the influence of FILEF although his conclusion is too radical; he considers the transfer of *Nuovo Paese* from Melbourne to Adelaide as a key event of FILEF's decline in Melbourne and overestimates the diffusion of the newspaper itself.[81] In fact, in late 1983, when *Nuovo Paese* was reduced to a monthly publication, the main reason advanced was due to the constant lack of funding and volunteers. In the report written by the Sydney editorial staff in September 1984 the issue regarding the drafting of *Nuovo Paese* was described as follows

> Il giornale finiva per assorbire le forze, i quadri, più qualificati, non solo della FILEF, ma anche del Partito, i quali assillati dalle scadenze inevitabili dell'uscita del giornale, non riuscivano ad esprimere un loro contributo nel lavoro più ampio sia per la costruzione e la crescita delle organizzazioni e sia per un intervento attivo e qualificato della FILEF e/o del partito nella collettività italiana e nella politica australiana più in generale. Questo ha privato cioè l'organizzazione di Melbourne della possibilità di esprimersi, di intervenire nelle cose, di agire politicamente in modo coerente e continuo, di sviluppare propri metodi e campi di intervento. (...) Il problema è la continuità dell'intervento e la crescita politica e numerica dell'organizzazione nella collettività. (...) Certamente altri fattori politici e non hanno contribuito a debilitare la nostra organizzazione ma è innegabile che il giornale vi ha contribuito in modo rilevante.[82]

The experience of *Nuovo Paese* demonstrates at least two aspects. One is the visibility and influence of FILEF among the community; the second the different views regarding the role of *Nuovo Paese*. While for Salemi saw a newspaper as FILEF's most important tool to develop a mass organisation,[83] for the activists, especially in Sydney, the risk was to dissipate the energies and disregard other worthwhile activities.

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[81] 'Since the late 1980s its headquarters together with its monthly bilingual magazine, *Nuovo Paese*, have been moved to Adelaide and the Melbourne branch has lost the influence and prominence in the Italian community which it previously enjoyed (Bertelli 2001: 520).
[82] FSA, box 1, 'Quali prospettive per *Nuovo Paese*?', September 1984.
[83] ML MSS 5288, box 4, Salemi letter to FILEF Australia, Rome 23 February 1984.

In conclusion, the launch of *Nuovo Paese* had different aims. First of all, it offered the opportunity for interaction with different generations: those of the first generation who were more connected with workplaces and had strong connections with the PCI, unions and parties; the second group composed of the post-1968 generation; and a third group which included the second generation of Italians. For those involved in the student movement, left-wing associations and interested in the social and political changes evolving in Australia and in Italy in those years, *Nuovo Paese* provided a broad coverage of the social and political issues in Italy and in Australia. At the same time, *Nuovo Paese*, especially after the departure of Salemi, would go on to affect the activities of FILEF. The chronic lack of funds and volunteer work for the newspaper made it more difficult without the efforts of activists within the Italian community in Australia.

5.5 Conclusion

The findings outlined in this chapter suggest a number of things. Firstly, all the respondents interviewed for this study had a different recollection of FILEF from each other, and they each had different levels of involvement in it. The migrants of the 1970s had more in common with the second generation of Italians-Australians than with the migrants of the 1950s. For all respondents, but especially for the Melbourne group, the ideological and organisational support by Salemi was a telling example of the term *impegnati*. The strength of FILEF was its earlier ideological and political support from Italy (specifically from the PCI) and in Australia from the new migrant policies which supported the activism of migrant associations in different fields. However, for these generations of migrants to be *impegnati* also meant new engagements among the Italians in Australia. While the memory of the activists is linked to a process of a collective memory and the construction of a common space such as *Nuovo Paese*, the economic difficulties and human resources that emerged in those years, demonstrate the struggle for a small association like FILEF to emerge as a pressure group in the host country.

Chapter 6 FILEF activism of the 1980s – 1990s

6.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the evolution of FILEF branches in Australia. It mainly focuses on the activism of FILEF Sydney during the 1980s when a new second wave of migrants took an important leadership role at this branch. It begins by presenting a broader context in which most of FILEF activists where involved as social actors. It analyses specifically the cultural activities of FILEF and the link with other migrant organisations in Sydney. Secondly, it examines, through biographies of selected activists, supporters, and sympathisers of FILEF, the historical legacy of FILEF in Sydney. It also illustrates how these Italians integrated into mainstream Australian society. Finally, it provides some comparative analysis between the establishment of FILEF in Sydney and the establishment of FILEF in Melbourne.

6.2 From old to young activists: a new leadership of FILEF in Sydney

The establishment of FILEF in Sydney in 1972 was supported by the first generation of Italian migrants. Mario Abbiezzi, for instance, was a pre-war political activist who fought as member of the Communist-leaning Partisan Brigade Garibaldi and against the Nazi-fascists in the Second World War. In 1949 he immigrated to Sydney. With Pietro Schirru, Salvatore Palazzolo, and Nicola Vescio[84] he was one of the founding members of FILEF.

These members were all part of the post-war migration. Their involvement in the war, their peasants' background and their participation in the peasants' struggles in the South of Italy affected their settlement in Australia where they had an active role in migrant welfare agencies, unions and left-wing politics. According to Bruno di Biase the death of Vescio in the 1997 was a watershed in the history of Italian left-wing activism in Australia.[85]

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[84] Nicola Vescio (Catania 1926 – Sydney 1997), founding member of INCA Patronage, was involved in the FILEF especially in the area of Welfare supporting Italian pensioners and workers. A biographical note was published in Nuovo Paese (March 1998) by Elizabeth Glasson and Bruno di Biase.

[85] 'La scomparsa del compagno Nicola Vescio, fa riflettere in qualche modo sulla conclusione del periodo, direi "classico" dell'emigrazione italiana in Australia e, per chi l'ha conosciuto, fa pensare a Nicola Vescio proprio come esponente, appunto, "di classe", di questa emigrazione, fa pensare all'estrazione contadina e operaia della stragrande maggioranza di essa (...)' (Nuovo Paese March 1998).

The 1970s in Australia was a decade of party activities for FILEF members who were PCI sympathisers. The PCI Federation in NSW at their Conference held in Sydney in 1978 saw FILEF as a natural meeting point for most activities of Italian communists in Australia. This strategy hoped to disseminate activities supported by the PCI under the name of FILEF.

> La maggior parte delle attività dei comunisti, d'informazione, di organizzazione, di mobilitazione, si svolgerà nella FILEF, dato l'anticomunismo profondamente radicato in questa società, e per cercare di superarlo con gradualità. (...) La FILEF, intanto, incomincia a farsi conoscere, iniziando ad organizzare e mobilitare gli italiani intorno ai loro problemi e a intraprendere le attività di ricerca necessarie.[86]

In addition, the establishment in 1976 and in 1980 respectively of front organisations Circolo di Vittorio and the Circolo Fratellli Cervi by FILEF members associated with the PCI, was seen as a practical way of increasing the PCI presence among migrants in blue-collar suburbs.

In 1973 FILEF established the *Nuovo Paese* Committee and the Women's group. 1977 was the time of the establishment of the Cultural Committee, and finally, in 1984, the Theatre group was established, showing a different focus in different years.

According to Bruno di Biase, secretary of FILEF from 1975 to 1989, one of the main concerns was the lack of Italian language programs in the schools.

> Abbiamo fatto dei comitati, abbiamo cercato di fare riunioni pubbliche, dove non era solamente la FILEF ma anche altre organizzazioni come il COASIT (...) si invitava gente e si andava anche a fare lavoro proprio spicciolo nelle scuole (...) si andava a parlare col preside.[87]

The new arrivals in the 1970s gave FILEF the opportunity for inter-generational interaction. For instance, first generation migrants could share their work experiences with younger generations and find out about the new demands that were emerging from

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[86] ML MSS 5288, File FILEF Relazione introduttiva al congresso di sezione del PCI del NSW, 9 April 1978.
[87] Bruno di Biase, interview with author, 19 February 2013, Sydney (NSW) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

the Italian community. In Sydney where a younger group of activists led FILEF they were already aware of these issues.

In the 1970s and in the 1980s the activity of FILEF focused mainly on second generation migrants and not exclusively on workers' rights. For this reason, in 1974 FILEF Sydney launched a petition for the introduction of an immigrant (community) languages programs into schools.[88] The political framework to introduce community language programs was supported by the Labor state government.

> Noi si parlava del fatto che la scuola era tutta in inglese e comunque i servizi di inglese non erano sufficienti che non c'erano interpreti. (...)e quindi noi si cercava di capire quale era l'esigenza fondamentale, e si è capito che in pratica c'era l'esigenza di non perdere il nucleo familiare per tante famiglie, perché i figli erano discriminati a scuola, e poi non c'era l'italiano nelle scuole, questa era un'esigenza che era nata proprio in questi contesti.[89]

According to the government of NSW and the survey conducted by Gaetano Rando, the lack of Italian languages subjects at school was remarkable, when compared with the French and German languages. In 1979, for instance, the number of secondary schools offering Italian in Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle was 38, whereas the number of schools offering German and French were respectively 214 and 240.[90]

This low level of Italian language classes offered was even more remarkable bearing in mind that unlike the Italian communities in the Americas which had started to decline due to older migrations, in Australia the Italian community was growing; thus the low penetration of the Italian languages in the schools system needed a different explanation. According to Lo Bianco, there is a notable connection between identity, language and dialect.

> When you come here, you are Abruzzese; you are Calabrese or Veneto (…) So I think that this meant that the language was not a unifying thing for everybody. It was more the dialect. And then the dialect is not going to survive. It's just not just supported enough. No institutions, no schools, no

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[88] ML MSS 5288, File FILEF Introduction of Community languages into Australian schools: an essential reform.

[89] Bruno di Biase, interview with author, 19 February 2013, Sydney (NSW) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

[90] ML MSS 5288, File Scuola 1979 'Community language programmes in N.S.W. government schools'.

structures, nothing for – So the dialect's not going to survive. The standard language would survive but it's already a – It's almost a foreign language, lots of communities. That's not true now, but in the '50s and '60s, it was. And this I think is also true from the point of view of politicians are standing to – What is – if you go as a politician to appeal to the community, the community has to exist for you to appeal to it. It has to be a coherent thing. But if it's highly fragmented ideologically and in community bases, it's very hard to do it.[91]

Notwithstanding the issue related to language and dialect, the respondents for this study highlighted a kind of ideological disunity among Italians in Australia. This issue may be best explained in the fragmentation of Italian ethnic newspapers, in the majority of migrant organisations and in selective advisory bodies such as the COMITES, in which FILEF members were not appointed for a long time. The disunity of the Italian community can also be seen in the widespread level of political disengagement. Gaetano Greco and Renato Licata pointed out this disengagement. Francesco Raco's reaction, when he arrived in Australia in the early 1970s, was similar. His first political experience was the Italian community radio programs. However, the response towards his editorials overall was negative.

Praticamente quello che facevo alla radio era di convincere gli italiani che stavano qui ad informarsi, a studiare, a leggere. Insomma un po' quello che dice Gramsci: studiate, informatevi in modo che il padrone non vi possa ingannare. Organizzatevi in modo che dopo aver saputo quali sono i vostri diritti sarete anche in grado, organizzandovi con gli altri di farvi valere. E io facevo questo tipo di interventi con risultati molto ambigui. Cioè le telefonate che arrivavano erano più negative che positive, e dicevano: ma che vuole questo che viene dall'Italia a portarci queste cose politiche? Noi abbiamo lasciato l'Italia, qui vogliamo solo lavorare e non avere niente a che fare con questi discorsi politici.[92]

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[91] Joseph Lo Bianco, interview with author, 4 March 2014, Carlton (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[92] Francesco Raco, interview with author, 16 February 2013, Sydney (NSW) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

This response shows that for FILEF and its activists the involvement of the Italian community in broader terms was particularly difficult. With the involvement of the second generation of the newcomers from Italy and with the establishment of cultural committees new instances of collective endeavours by different sections of Italians in Australia took place.

6.3 FILEF cultural activities

Between the 1970s and the 1980s FILEF in Melbourne and Sydney encouraged the establishment of theatre groups. The setting was particularly favourable. The foundation of the Australian Council of the Arts by the Whitlam government in 1974, which financially supported cultural activities, was certainly a significant driver.

With the foundation of the FILEF Cultural Committee (FCC) (1976) and the partnership of FILEF with important cultural organisations in Australia, newcomers to FILEF became involved for years to come. The latest arrivals to FILEF brought their own experiences and then developed in Australia.

When the FILEF Theatre Group (FTG) was established in Sydney in 1984, the local cultural context favoured migrant cultural activities. In the same year a full-time officer under the Grant in Aid (GIA) scheme was employed by FILEF. 'In particular, the grant has enabled the FCC to meet some of the growing needs of second generation Italians mainly through cultural and educational activities'.[93]

Roberto Malara, an active member of FILEF in Melbourne that moved to Sydney in the 1980s, pointed out the role of cultural activities in Sydney and the engagement between the FTG and FILEF. According to him, the background of the supporters in Sydney was quite different.

> Forse a Sydney c'erano più intellettuali, mentre a Melbourne, se non sbaglio,
> (…) aveva più operai (...). la FILEF di Sydney penso infatti che fosse più
> attiva nelle scuole, per l'insegnamento italiano proprio per il ruolo che ha
> avuto Bruno di Biase. (...) Lo spettacolo che abbiamo fatto noi a Melbourne
> (...) non era un soggetto nostro. Mentre a Sydney era un soggetto nostro. Poi
> tieni conto che la forza del Gruppo Teatrale della FILEF di Sydney erano le
> donne. (...) L'attività teatrale ha fatto passare attraverso la serie della FILEF

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[93] FSA, box 29 10 'Filef, Culture Committee Report and Correspondence', p. 5.

un sacco di gente. Alcuni sono diventati anche loro militanti (...) perché alla fine ci riunivamo sempre nella sede della FILEF per discutere degli spettacoli. Poi se c'era ovviamente una manifestazione della FILEF il gruppo teatrale era lì e partecipava.[94]

The FTG forged strong connections with Australian artists. Several post-1968 militants said to have been involved with Australian theatre groups. In Melbourne and Sydney two theatre groups of the so-called vanguard theatre provided excellent starting points. One was the Pram Factory located in Carlton (VIC) and the other one the Nimrod Theatre Company in Sydney, both established in 1970.[95] Malara, who was one of the main organisers of the FTG in Sydney, had his first contact with Australian artists after he arrived in Melbourne. Then the theatre groups in Italy were influenced by 'teatro d'avanguardia', a type of performance based on historical narratives and by *collettivi teatrali* that Dario Fo and Franca Rame promoted. At the same time other *collettivi teatrali* were established, such as the *Living Theatre* in the U.S., the *7:84 Theatre Company* in UK, and *West Berlin's Grips Theatre* in Germany (Van Erven 1988). The main themes played by these theatres usually focused on social and ethnic groups, cultural traditions and linguistic experiments (Scapolo 2014).

According to Malara (2013), the strong collaboration between the FTG and the Australian artists was paramount:

> C'era bisogno di avere contatti con artisti australiani e artisti italo-australiani per poter ottenere grants dalla Community Arts Board. Tramite Rose Costelloe e altri artisti ci mettemmo in contatto anche col gruppo teatrale SideTrack di Sydney e così potemmo produrre la prima rappresentazione teatrale della FILEF chiamata 'Nuovo Paese'. Questo modo di fare ci ha aiutato ad uscire da un certo tipo di ghetizzazione che era quello rappresentato dai social clubs.

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[94] Roberto Malara, interview with author, 28 April 2013, Essendon (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[95] See Meyrick, J 2002, *See how it runs: Nimrod and the new wave*, Currency Press, Sydney; Robertson, T 2001, *The Pram factory: The Australian performing group recollected*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton (VIC).

An involvement of different generations with different backgrounds was the production of the bilingual theatre which included the FILEF Theatre Group in Sydney, Adelaide's Doppio Teatro and The Melbourne Workers' Theatre.[96]

If one looks at the participants of the FTG it is remarkable to observe the presence of Italian born and Italo-Australian women.

Sonia Sedmak, born in Sydney of Italian and Slovenian parents, got involved in FILEF through its cultural activities when approached by the post-68 generation militants:

> At the beginning of the 1980s I used to go to the FILEF meetings (…) but I couldn't do anything about because I felt I did not know enough about the history. I did not know enough about Marxism. So the theatre was an interesting way. It was more tangible or something practical I could do. Politically FILEF showed you how to put your political ideas into practice so that you could have an ideology. So for me doing the theatre was one thing, *Nuovo Paese*, was another one.[97]

Through FILEF's cultural activities, the role of women expanded dramatically both in Melbourne and in Sydney. The FTG produced four theatre plays: Nuovo Paese/New Country in 1984; Lasciateci in Pace/Leave us in Peace in 1986; L'Albero delle Rose/The Tree of Roses in 1987; and Storie in Cantiere/Stories in Construction in 1988. These plays focused on the same way of the *collettivi teatrali*. In addition, the peculiarity of these performances was that FILEF's women had an active role organising these cultural activities.

> FILEF was involved in 'identifying and working with groups of Italian migrants and their families and especially with young Italo-Australian women who feel alienated from their parents and their parents' culture giving rise to family and social tension which can lead to family breakdown. Projects are designed to motivate and interest the girls to learn more about their Italian heritage in an innovative, creative manner which allows them to develop and establish an identity which does not deny their cultural origins

[96] See also for a sociological survey about the bilingual theatre, M. Shevtsova, 1990 'Italo-Australian bilingual community theatre and its audiences' (Box 3, folder 10, Local History Archive – Balmain NSW) and R. Calabrese 1993, *A sociological investigation of Doppio Teatro: A South Australian bilingual theatre company*, PhD Thesis, University of Adelaide.
[97] Sonja Sedmak, interview with author, 4 April 2013, Manly (NSW) (audio file and full transcriptions in possession of author).

but leads to increased self-esteem and a positive base on which to form a multicultural Australian society.[98]

All the members of the FTG interviewed for this dissertation stressed that the cultural and educational activities paved the way for a greater social participation. In short, the FTG and FCC fulfilled two objectives to increase the involvement of the younger generation who had rarely been in contact with contemporary Italian culture and, secondly, to offer a politicised theatre program. According to those interviewed, workers, women and migrants were always the core subjects of theatre performances. Usually they were performed in public spaces such as parks, schools and yards. On politicised theatre Van Erven stressed that 'along with the radical intellectuals, young artists had become aware (…) that politics and art could no longer be kept in separate compartments' (1988: 65).

One activist of the FTG, Rosalba Paris, indeed stressed that FILEF production heavily related to current politics, bilingualism, changes in society, workplace safety and so on'.[99] Even landmark anniversaries such as the Australian bicentenary (1788-1988) gave the FTG the inspiration for a new play *Storie in cantiere*/Stories in Constructions. This theatre performance focused on the 'White invasion' and on the safety issues raised during the construction works for the celebration. In this play, FILEF was able to play on two different levels. One related to Aboriginal rights and the other one to work safety, primarily of migrant workers.[100] 'For the first time the FTG worked directly with a union, the Building Workers Industrial Union, gaining access to migrant building workers and their families in Sydney' (Costelloe 1995: 35).

Further analysis of the FTG has let Shevtsova (1990) to argue that the social framework of the FTG was more related to ethnicity class rather than the broader working class. Language and ethnicity were the main features of FTG production

I saw the young people in the Leichhardt High School change and grow in confidence. At the start of a project many would refuse to speak their parents' language (…) yet by the end of the project they would be speaking their languages on stage and using words from their own languages. The

[98] FSA, Folder 'Attività FILEF', 'Brief history of organisation' (1983), p. 2.
[99] Rosalba Paris, interview with author, 20 February 2013, Bronte, NSW (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[100] On 26 January 1988, during the Aboriginal march in Sydney, the only banner allowed for this boycott event was that of FILEF.

creative ways we found to work bilingually impacted the English speaking theatre world and absorbed into the work of community theatre groups (Sedmak 2014).

On the other hand, the FTG was under the umbrella of FILEF which at the time was influenced by the post-1968 generation of activists. 'The Italians brought their political ideas and beliefs from Italy and they were also an education for me because they lived in a way that I never lived in Australia' (Sedmak 2013). For those that came in the 1980s the FTG was also a way to know the history of mass migration of the 1950s as well as a way to get to know Australian intellectuals who were emerging in the local vanguard theatre, influenced by the student movement of late 1960s.[101] Moreover, the affiliation of FILEF with left-wing parties such as the ALP in Australia and the PCI in Italy provoked controversy about founding eligibility. This controversy ought to be seen as a political maneuvering of the mid-1980s.[102]

6.4 Women's participation

Between the 1970s and the 1980s migrant women's participation in community life experienced a particular surge in Australia. Several migrant associations, including FILEF, had their own women's group that started to have a significant visibility in Australia. By the International Women's Year of the 1975, the FILEF women's group was one of the first to champion migrant women issues in Australia. A direct result of the increased participation of women was the launch in 1977 of the Working Women's Charter which lobbied not only for child care, maternity leave, parental leave, health service provisions, but also for a 'particular attention to the needs of migrant workers' (Lake 1999: 267).

Italian women participation in the Australian labour market and society in general could rely on the great historical experience shown by the women's movement

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[101] This is the case of the director Robin Laurie who had her first contact with FILEF in the mid-70s, when she was involved with the Pram Factory in Melbourne in one of the Festa dell'Unità. Later on she became artistic director of the play title *Nuovo Paese* in Sydney in 1984, and *L'albero delle rose*, in 1987 (see FSA Box 27 9 FILEF Cultural Committee Report on l'Albero delle Rose 1987, Leichardt Library).
[102] Mitchell (1987) in his study reported this controversy when in 1986 Michael Cobb a M.P. of New South Wales 'suggested that New South Wales government should not be funding a group (FTG) with Communist and Mafia connections' (1987: 38). This statement provoked a test reaction by the Italian ambassador who replied saying that the FILEF organisation operating in Australia fulfils a valuable role in the assistance and support to Italians who settle here and whose productive integration within the host country is indeed one of FILEF's primary aims (cited in Mitchell 1987: 39).

in Italy. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, 'working-class and peasant women in northern Italy were active in the struggles of the early union and socialist movement' (Pieri et al 1982: 390). But the contribution of women grew dramatically during and after the Second World War. In 1945 left-wing parties established the UDI *Unione Donne Italiane* (UDI) (Italian Union of Women). The UDI was especially active in the 1970s by promoting women rights, which certainly inspired the experience of the FILEF women's group.

The involvement of FILEF members in cultural activities has to be analysed by adopting different perspectives. The active participation of women in cultural committees, and in other activities, reveals that, for instance, second generation Italian-Australians were more connected to the post-1968 generation of militants. The FCC, which was composed mostly of young generation and post-1968 activists, had a new approach when interacting with the Italian community in Sydney. In 1986

> the Italian community (and other communities of non-English speaking background NESB) have had little or no opportunity to participate on their own terms in the creation of the artistic and cultural life of this country. Even though the opportunity for involvement in the arts has increased somewhat for the wide Anglo-Australian community through community arts activities, NESB communities are still restricted in their participation. Furthermore, these activities often do not reflect these NESB communities and are therefore not relevant to them. In order to meet these needs and redress the imbalance, FILEF sees that the involvement of the community is an essential part of any community based project – involvement through all stages, from the inception and planning to the final product.[103]

Pesman (2002) noticed that the growth of NESB organisations has seen women of second generation leaders and involved in welfare and bureaucracies agencies. This profile encompassed most of FILEF women activists. Cecilia Palma, for instance became involved with FILEF after her first journey to Italy in the early 1980s. Her activism increased not only after her experience in Italy but also through her Italo-Australian identity. For most FILEF women activists the life experience of their parents radically affected their involvement in work, care and welfare centres. The support of

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[103] FSA, box 29 10 'Filef, Culture Committee Report and Correspondence', pp. 1-2; 1986.

FILEF was twofold: the first was to attract the new generation of women, and the second was to connect the second generation with the first migrant generation. As Pesman (2002) noted the role of young educated members of FILEF was relevant, for instance, to build oral history project regarding Italian women in Australia. The participation was also supported by the political context. 'The 1980s marked the high point of migrant women's activism in Australia, during which time they were most successful in sustaining strong and independent organisations and in gaining governmental and public recognition of the challenges migrant women faced in Australian society' (Ho 2008: 778-779). Furthermore, it appears that the activism of these women was focusing on new demands by migrants. The search for new cultural activities shows how this involvement was not only coming from the traditional women's movement but also (and this is the case of the women activists of FILEF), from the male-dominated ethnic associations. So, on the one hand there was a favourable framework established by the Federal Labor Government; and on the other hand there was the role of the younger women's generation that provided FILEF with an opportunity to increase the presence of these activists in the 1970s and 1980s. However, how has the background of FILEF women activists contributed to this development? As argued previously the new generation of migrants and, in this case, women migrant was significantly different from the previous generations. Firstly, because they were more politicised; secondly because they were more aware of social changes in Italy between the 1960s and the 1970s. Abortion, family health and sexual violence were already well established debates among left-wing parties, unions and organisations in Italy. However, in Australia this framework was different due to the general impediments to migrant women's participation, at least until the late 1970s, in Anglo-Saxon women's movement.

This awareness was present in the ethnic communities and in the political debate. In 1982 Stefania Pieri, Anne Sgrò and Mirna Risk, activists of FILEF, published a paper. This paper which was a collective effort by the FWG (FILEF Women Group) and proposed that the Italian women's experience is considered for the Australian scenario.[104] 'A better understanding of Italian women in Australia might be gained if there were also a greater awareness of recent developments among Italian women in Italy' (Pieri et al 1982: 390). They observed that the Italian experience in the twentieth century was a good starting point for the women's role in Australia in the 1970s. Taking

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[104] This paper was published in the study edited by Bevege, James & Shute (1982).

the example of the UDI which had a long history of women's involvement in Italy, these activists aimed to join different groups of Italian women groups, such as the first generation of Italian women migrants as well as the newcomers of the 1970s.

In his recollections, Claudio Marcello asserted that

> Women of FILEF were themselves a separate group and involved in feminist politics. They had then a direct contact with the Australian feminist movement. This was one of the FILEF characteristics that certainly are not repeated on other occasions. Other Italian organisations had the female group but they focused on Italian traditions and therefore the latter organisations were not comparable to the feminist movements of the time.[105]

Even for some, who were unskilled or with workers background, the involvement in FILEF gave them the chance to increase their education. This last case encompasses for example the experience of Pietrina 'Pierina' Pirisi[106] and Bruno di Biase, who were two of the most important activists in Melbourne (Pierina) and in Sydney (Pierina and Bruno) and who had arrived in Australia in their early twenties. Their involvement started when multiculturalism in Australia become government policy and was well received by the community. Access to Australian tertiary education allowed them a better understanding of contemporary Italian culture.[107] Malara, as well as other members of FILEF, got involved in such activities due to their personal background. Most of them had access to higher education in Italy or Australia

> I used to go to the FILEF meeting but they were just it was not anything I felt I could do anything about because I felt I did not know enough about the history. I did not know enough about Marxism. I did not, so the theatre was an interesting way. It was more tangible or something practical I could do.[108]

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[105] 'Le donne della FILEF erano a loro volta un gruppo separato e organizzato in quell'area che ha portato avanti la politica femminista. Avevano poi un contatto diretto con il movimento femminista australiano. Questo è stato una delle caratteristiche della FILEF che certamente non si è ripetuta in altre occasioni. Altre organizzazioni italiane avevano il gruppo femminile ma si occupavano delle tradizioni italiane e quindi queste ultime non erano paragonabili ai movimenti femministi dell'epoca' (Claudio Marcello, interview with author, 14 February 2013, Bronte, NSW, audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

[106] See the previous chapter regarding her participation in FILEF

[107] See the case of Charles D'Aprano and his students (chapter 5, section 5.2).

[108] Sonia Sedmak, interview with author, 4 April 2013, Manly (NSW) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

FILEF saw not only a new generation of activists but also a radical change in leadership. According to Raco (2013), the growth of women leadership in Sydney led to a few consequences, among which, the dramatic increase of cultural activities, and the conflict between the most politicised women and the older leaders of FILEF. The ideological conflicts present in the PCI and the far left movements in Italy were also mirrored among FILEF activists.

Chiara Caglieris, who arrived in Australia in 1979, belonged in the post-1968 generation. In Italy she was an activist in a feminist group. She well described the two groups of FILEF activists.

> I was part of group of people who arrived in Australia recently with a different background. Many members of FILEF who were PCI members too, were old emigrant. They had a different idea of society, a different opinion about male/female relations and other issues that did not interest them. So let's say that there were two souls of FILEF, the most conservative and the most innovative part. Then, for me the PCI was a very conservative party. The PCI was monolithic, and hierarchical especially against women. But after all when it was time to vote we voted PCI.[109]

To summarise, the new demands and the different background of the post1968 generation affected the history of FILEF branches in Australia. In the case of Sydney, for instance, the women's group increased its leadership, showcasing the difference between the newcomers and the first generation of migrants. The political umbrella represented by PCI provided ideological support for the old but also for the younger generations. The strategy the PCI used in Italy (namely, to increase its influence in different strata of the Italian society) was implemented in Australia through FILEF and its activists. However, the different social backgrounds of left-wing supporters emerged in FILEF as well.

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[109] 'Io facevo parte di quel gruppo di persone arrivate in Australia di recente, con un background diverso. Molti membri della FILEF che erano tutti del PCI erano vecchi emigrati, con una idea della società ben diversa, relazioni uomo/donna ben diverse e anche certe tematiche a loro non interessavano. Quindi diciamo che c'erano due anime della FILEF, la parte più conservatrice e la parte più innovativa. Poi per me il PCI era un partito molto conservatore, specialmente nei confronti delle donne era un monolita, molto gerarchico. Poi per carità quando era il momento di votare si votava PCI'. (Chiara Caglieris, interview with author, 17 July 2013, Lido di Pomposa, Italy, audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

Vittoria Pasquini, when she arrived in Australia in 1983, was not a supporter of FILEF. Vittoria, a graduate from Rome and at the time a member of a far-left feminist organisation in Italy was not sympathetic towards the PCI. Despite her reservations to her FILEF represented a more acceptable political vehicle for involvement in the new country. Among the newcomers the political environment in Australia was more engaging than in Italy with possibilities for genuine social outcomes. It is possible to see in the case of the post-1968 generation that there were two the vehicles for integration. One was Australian politics, and the other FILEF itself. FILEF was seen as a tool for involvement with the well-educated generation of new migrants and with Australian welfare and cultural agencies.

The influence of Italian politics among the post-1968 and second generations

For Italian-Australians, the fascination with the PCI under the leadership of Enrico Berlinguer[110] may have helped them discover the presence of FILEF in Australia in the 1980s. Especially among the second generation, the way in which the leadership of the most important Communist party in the West was attractive to left-wing Australians. The CPA in in the 1980s was far too ideological and too extreme in their demands for most of FILEF's young supporters.

> I was interested to know more about the political culture of a party like the
> PCI, the largest communist party in the capitalist world. I was interested how
> it worked this mass party based on Gramsci's thought. I always compared the
> PCI to the CPA. The latter was a tiny party and it did not have a connection
> with the people. The other aspect that I liked was that the FILEF was an
> organisation focused on the figure of emigrant. Instead, for example, the
> CPA did not pay attention of this figure. So, I was more close to the PCI.[111]

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[110] Enrico Berlinguer was the national secretary of the PCI from 1972 until his death. In the years of his leadership he was an important political supporter of 'Historic Compromise' (compromesso storico) with the Christian Democracy Party, trying to bring his own party to the government of Italy. In foreign policy he also pointed criticism against the Soviet Union, promoting with the Spanish and French Communist Parties the Eurocommunism. This new policy encourages a social transformation in Western countries but far from the political hegemony of the Soviet Union and maintaining fidelity to the democratic institutions.

[111] 'A me interessava conoscere di più la cultura politica di un partito come il PCI, il più grande partito comunista nel mondo capitalista. Ero interessato a come funzionava questo partito di massa, come funzionava il suo pensiero che si basava su quello di Gramsci. Io il PCI lo paragonavo sempre con il CPA. Quest'ultimo era un partito chiuso in se stesso, non aveva legami con la popolazione. E poi l'altro aspetto che mi piaceva era che la FILEF era un'organizzazione che parlava di questo soggetto che era l'emigrato. Invece, per esempio, il CPA non parlava di questa figura. Io mi identificavo più con il PCI'

However, the ties with the PCI were complex. For some of them was far from the Australian context.

> At the beginning of the 1980s, I left FILEF. It was also a split between a group of young people who thought to create something by their own and not from Rome. We believed that it was important to learn and grown by our self in this place [Australia]. It was good to have ties and assistance from Italy, however had to be unconditional. This is what we wanted.[112]

For most FILEF activists, the role of the party among Italian society was different compared with the CPA in Australia. For these activists FILEF was an organisation where 'intellectuals can initiate "formative activities' in order to attract groups and individuals with particular ideological interests and political goals' (Blackmer & Tarrow 1977: 606). In Italy this political strategy was attractive not only for the working but also middle-class. In Australia the goal was to attract the second generation of migrants.

For the most politicised activists the attachment to Italian politics overshadowed any involvement in Australian politics. Panucci, for example, stated that his Italian political view during an interview conducted by a conservative Australian magazine. 'Why we should be secretive? (…) we are the second-biggest party in Italy, we receive a third of the votes and we believe passionately in democracy'.[113] Even the columnist did not underestimate this statement when he wrote at the end of the interview that 'for many migrants, the politics of their former countries are the only real politics – far more important to them than the politics of Australia from which they are, to a degree, excluded'.[114]

This analysis is even more important when one considers that Panucci was from the second generation and the article was published in late 1983. It clearly indicates that the demands of political representativeness in Australia were an important issue fort the

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(Gaetano Greco, interview with author, 30 May 2013, Northcote VIC, audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[112] Joe Caputo, interview with author, 22 May 2013, Brunswick (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[113] See Philip Grenard, 'Australia's transplanted politics', *The Bulletin*, 8 November 1983.
[114] *Ibid.*

ethnic communities. The example of the PCI in Italy, and its journey to be a mass party has to be seen in historical prospective.

To summarise, two factors interacted in the life of FILEF in Australia: one a strategy from the political parties which tended to influence the communities overseas as a key point for a new constituency. In other words the effort of the PCI to attract, especially in Europe, the return of migrants for political elections in Italy was significant as argued in Chapter 4; the second factor, more related to FILEF activists, was precisely the charm of the PCI among migrants, which urged the young generation to get closer to political participation through FILEF.

> Noi ammiravamo il PCI, i mezzi che aveva. Si osservava cosa faceva in Germania, in Canada e in altri paesi. Era una forza grossa, non si era mai visto che un quadro del partito parte e va a trovare ad esempio gli australiani in Inghilterra come invece succedeva per gli italiani in Australia. Noi sentivamo questa forza, anche la forza del '68 e poi negli anni '70 fino al '77 fino al terrorismo. Noi sentivamo questo fermento e lo volevamo portare in Australia. Volevamo democratizzare la scuola, i comitato consolari, le fabbriche (...). non avevamo solo l'idea di fare il tesseramento. Ci interessava portare delle idee rivoluzionarie, parlavamo di estendere la democrazia nei posti di lavoro, nel comune dove si viveva. Noi volevamo che questo meccanismo di estensione della democrazia rinnovasse la collettività.[115]

Another strategy used by the PCI and FILEF was the involvement of the most politicised FILEF's members of second generation. In most cases, their journey to Italy gave them the opportunity to increase their political education.

> After being in Faggeto Lario (school of the PCI party) I returned to Australia and I began to understand that politics were not only made formally by the parties and parliament. There was also a cultural aspect that was very important. The militancy in Italy in PCI has opened my eyes. In those days it was *festa dell'Unità* here in Coburg. For me politics meant music, theatre

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[115] Edoardo Burani, interview with author, 5 July 2013, Modena, Italy, (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

performances. These experiences helped me to be engaged in the Australian life that might never have embraced.[116]

In Italy, they had the opportunity to see the considerable growth of the PCI and its affiliated organisations (ARCI, Festivals, Communist press and League of Cooperatives). Most FILEF activists, such as Spinoso, went to Italy. This coincided with an increase of *L'Unità* festivals from 4,700 to 7,000 between 1972 and 1975 (Gundle 2000: 141). This popularity and the mass participation in the cultural activities held by left-wing associations with the support of the PCI made lasting impressions on the Italian-Australian activists. Most of them, before their first stay in Italy, had an unrealistic idea of the Italian society which was largely mediated through their families. In addition, in those years even the PCI changed its strategy, although the process was often contradictory and too conservative regarding the changes in the Italian society such as the divorce law, abortion and the emancipation of sexual rights.[117] The festivals ceased to be events directed exclusively at PCI members and became a key aspect of a wider cultural strategy (Gundle 2000: 144).

Among second generation activists the interaction with the post-1968 generation made them better understand the Australian political culture of the 1970s. Spinoso stated that:

> With these cultural activities such as the Pram Factory in Coburg and street theatre I began to understand that politics were not only the Italian Communist Party in Australia. Yes the early years, however, I was interested, but for me it was a bit artificial doing these party meetings in the houses of comrades. These activities were in somehow a bit illegal and also the way in which these comrades were behaving. Then with the influence of Salemi but also of Martinengo and Stefano de Pieri I made contact with this little wave of emigration. Since that connection I was more involved in Italian and

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[116] 'Dopo essere stato a Faggeto Lario, scuola di partito del PCI, sono tornato in Australia e quindi a livello teorico ho cominciato a capire che la politica non era solo quella che si faceva formalmente tramite i partiti e nel parlamento. C'era anche un aspetto culturale che era molto importante. La militanza in Italia nel PCI mi ha aperto gli occhi. A quei tempi si faceva ad esempio la festa dell'Unità anche qui a Coburg. Per me la politica era la musica, era il teatro e mi ha aperto tutte queste vie per entrare nei settori della vita australiana che forse non avrei mai abbracciato' (Gianfranco Spinoso, interview with author, 11 January 2014, Coburg, VIC, audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

[117] Gundle, for example, described the PCI as old fashion and puritanical party regarding the debate of liberalisation and commercialisation of sex that emerged dramatically in the mid-1970s (Gundle 2000: 146).

Australian culture. So for me it was an education towards a cultural life rather than political. While others, such as Carlo Carli, was much more involved in the heart of politics and in parliamentary life.[118]

The interest in Italian politics by different generations was also reflected by essays and books published by FILEF between 1978 and 1989.[119] By looking at these publications, it is possible to see the broad evolution of the FILEF focus and its change from worker's rights to welfare assistance and language education. These publications which were edited and authored by post-1968 and second generations, suggest that generational changes were affecting the leadership of FILEF.

The context in which the FILEF publications flourished was linked to historical events. One of these was the fiftieth anniversary of Gramsci's death commemorated in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. An outcome of this celebration was the book 'Gramsci and his thoughts and influence' edited by FILEF, Centre of European Studies of University of Sydney and Circolo PCI "Di Vittorio", in which scholars and activist of FILEF argued the role of Gramsci in the Italian culture and how it was imported into Australia. In this context, the FTG took advantage by staging *L'Albero delle Rose*, a play in which the role of the FILEF women was predominant. The nexus between culture and politics was highlighted through the Gramscian notion of a national-popular theatre and linguistics as a form of cultural development.[120]

FILEF's various activities were subsidised by government grants ('Grant in Aid) and by local councils grants albeit not always between the 1970s and the 1980s. In Sydney, where cultural activities were predominant and supported by the Australian Art Council, FILEF was even able to employ two members.

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[118] 'Con queste attività culturali come ad esempio la Pram Factory di Coburg e il teatro di strada ho cominciato a capire che la politica non era solo il Partito comunista italiano in Australia. Sì i primi anni mi interessava però era una cosa un po' artificiale fare queste riunioni di partito all'interno delle case dei compagni. L'idea era un po' clandestina e anche il modo in cui questi compagni si comportavano. Poi con l'influenza di Salemi ma anche di Martinengo e Stefano de Pieri ho preso contatto con questa piccola ondata di emigrazione collegandomi agli aspetti culturali italiani e australiani. Quindi per me è stata una formazione verso una vita più culturale e forse meno politica. Mentre altre persone come ad esempio Carlo Carli sono entrate proprio nel cuore della politica, nella vita parlamentare' (Gianfranco Spinoso, interview with author, 11 January 2014, Coburg, VIC, audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

[119] See *Terrorism today in Italy and Western Europe* (1978); *Tra lingua, dialetto e inglese; il trilinguismo degli italiani in Australia* (1985); *Italian in Australia: language or dialect in schools?* (1985); *Language Rights and the school: community language programs in primary schools in Australia* (1988); *Gramsci his thoughts and influence* (1989).

[120] The FILEF play was introduced by Fabio Bettanin of the Gramsci Institute in Rome (Shevtsova & Rubino 1989).

The support from some activists employed in local and government offices certainly allowed FILEF to receive several grants. In this case the integration of the post-1968 and second generations in the Australian mainstream have to be seen as a clear support for a numerically small association in Australia such as FILEF.

To summarise, for FILEF, there were two main supports. One ideological and cultural which had come from Italy through the post-1968 generation and PCI organiser such as Salemi; the second from the Australian state and federal government that promoted in those years new ways of cultural, welfare and even political engagement among migrants.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on a specific group of FILEF supporters who arrived mainly in the 1970s and 1980s in Australia. This generation, called post-1968, took advantage of the new political and social context in Australia. The involvement of these supporters with the new migrants especially from South America, or a strong collaboration with the unions, parties and leaders of other communities was a clear adaptation to the new social framework. The new ideas imported from Italy as well as the growth of intercultural exchanges between Australia and Italy saw several activist of the second generation influenced by FILEF. Partnerships and collaborations with other communities also intensified in those decades, increasing the participation of women activists. An outcome of this involvement was the gradual estrangement from Italian politics which unfolded from the 1990s onwards.

Chapter 7 FILEF since 2000

7.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the historical evolution of the FILEF branches in Australia since 2000. First, it analyses the broad context in which FILEF has been operating as a community-based organisation as well as the environment responsible for shaping FILEF leaders' politics. Secondly, it examines the new initiatives championed by FILEF which saw the organisation further integrate into mainstream Australian society. Ultimately, this chapter delves into the area of FILEF legacy in Australia as articulated by its former and current members by means of oral history interviews.

7.2 FILEF since 2000: an overview

New tendencies

The last fifteen years or so saw new economic and social trends affect FILEF in Australia. The dramatic changes at the beginning of the new century such as terrorism attacks, the global economic crisis, famines and political instabilities impacted on globally on populations and, consequently, on migration processes. Protection of labour markets for native workers, control of migrant arrivals and encouraging their return are some of the most hotly debated policies adopted by several states and international institutions since 2008 (IOM 2010).

Focusing on political instability, it is argued that the end of the so-called 'Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991':[121]

> revealed the precariousness of the domestic political systems that had essentially rested on that stability. The tensions of troubled economies undermined the political systems of liberal democracy, parliamentary or presidential, which had functioned since the 1945' (Hobsbawm 1994: 10).

Furthermore, the 2008 financial crash has challenged the idea that, with the collapse of communism, the capitalist system would inevitably gain strength. The global economy

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[121] This definition regarding the 20th century it comes from the subtitle of the book entitled 'The Age of Extremes' published by Eric Hobsbawm. The author called the last century from the start of First World War to the fall of the USSR 'the short twentieth century', see Hobsbawm 1994.

combined with policy trends such as the 'new assimilationism' is affecting not only developing and sending countries but also developed and receiving countries including Italy and Australia. Social transformation

> can be seen in the closure of older industries, restructuring of labour forces, erosion of welfare states and decline of traditional working-class communities. Combined with demographic change (especially population ageing) and requirements for labour for new types of service industries, this leads to demand for migrant labour (Castles 2010: 1580).

According to recent studies such as Castles, de Haas & Miller's (2014), which focus on contemporary migration, there are six key features affecting contemporary migration patterns: globalisation of migration; changing direction of dominant migration flows; differentiation of migration; proliferation of migration transition; feminisation of labour migration; growing politicisation of migration.

Last but not least migration resulting from environmental change is likely to increase in the foreseeable future. In 2008, for instance, 20 million people were displaced due to climate-related natural disasters (IOM 2010).

Most of these global economic and social changes, combined with internal and political policies, affected social actors and migrant organisations in Italy and Australia. In Australia, the growing politicisation of migration is a relevant feature of contemporary migration. Since 1996, changes introduced by the Howard and subsequent governments saw the demise of institutional and policy research such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (BIMPR). The new immigration policy introduced in the wake of the 2001 *Tampa* affair[122], when the government implemented the Pacific Solution policy, devised new criteria to determine who will enter and reside in Australia.[123] In a post-9/11 world a new concept of Australian sovereignty was forged. The *Tampa* affair was a clear evidence of the dramatic change of policy affecting the boat people. Whilst the 1970s and the 1980s geopolitical context was favourable for the acceptance of asylum seekers, using them as political propaganda against communist countries (i.e.

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[122] In August 2001 the Australian government refused the Norwegian ship *Tampa*, which was carrying more than 400 refugees, to enter Australian waters, thus provoking a diplomatic controversy between the Norwegian and Australian governments.
[123] John Howard, House of Representatives, 29 August 2001.

Vietnam and China), the beginning of the twenty-first century showed new trends of mobility and migrant organisations have to deal with these. As Moya (2005) argued these trends affected mutual and aid organisations in new immigrant communities, leading to overall disaffection toward these traditional associations.

In Italy the social and economic context changed radically, too. The globalisation of migration, the changing directions and the feminisation of labour migration have been among the most significant changes occurring in the last fifteen years or so. Italy has become a country of immigration and a place of transition between the Middle East and Europe.

FILEF reviewed its strategies due to internal and external transformations. In the early 1990s, FILEF was aware of the radical changes affecting Italy and other countries. At the 8th Congress held in Perugia in 1989 FILEF focused its attention on immigrants and their integration in Italy. It also increased its connection with regional institutions which were active in migration policies, its involvement in return of Italian or Italian-background migrants from South America (due to the economic crisis), and in forging new relationships with Italian migrant-receiving countries. In 2000 the FIEI (*Federazione Italiana Emigrazione Immigrazione*) was founded, an organisation given the title *Immigrazione*, which stressed the importance of immigration in Italy's contemporary society.

FILEF established new partnerships with the *Istituto Ferdinando Santi* and regional associations such as the Friulian ALEF (*Associazione Lavoratori Emigrati del Friuli Venezia Giulia*), and the Sicilian USEF (*Unione Siciliana Emigrati e Famiglie*). After all, FILEF's statute encouraged the collaboration with the regional institution especially after the establishment of the regions as fourth tier of government in 1970. Recently, 'FILEF was founded or re-established in Bruxelles, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro', showing the importance of these new networks between Europe and countries of historic Italian immigration. These new collaborations emerged due to the resurgence of return migration to Europe and Italy between 1990s and 2000s. However, even a superficial look at these associations shows the increased role of the regions. The professional training programs combined with cultural identity is connected more with the region of origin than with the country of origin, Italy. Even among former FILEF supporters there are some who are involved in these regional associations.

In Australia a similar process of return migration has taken place in the last ten years. According to migration statistics, there is a significant growth in circulation migration. For example, the traditional retirement return migration to Italy is no longer a major driver nowadays. In fact, one characteristic of globalisation that affects this mobility is the age of departures from and to Italy. Since the 2007, almost thirty-six per cent of permanent departures were aged between 20 and 39. Hugo in his study asserted that 'many of these young Australians have an Italian heritage which has influenced their choice of Italy as a destination' (Hugo 2014: 103).

Furthermore, the increasing age of the long-established Italian migrant cohort and the rapid growth of Asian communities in Australia, have radically affected FILEF and its presence in Australia. This trend confirms not only the decline of the traditional networking role of migrant organisations, but also the fact that some of them had to change their focus in response to demographic changes, the movement of capital and labour, and the new flows affecting developed and developing countries alike. This phenomenon, as Vasta (2006) argues, has led to a resurgence of anti-immigration sentiments in Australia and represented in the new federal policies adopted by Howard government (1996-2007).

Since 2000, FILEF, too, began to face new challenges. First of all, as argued in Chapter 5, the Melbourne chapter of FILEF was inactive; the absence of archival records from the middle of 1990s as well as the testimonies of the respondents evidences this inactivity clearly. In the case of FILEF Melbourne a number of factors contributed to its demise: it was not only internal conflicts which affected activity, as Battiston argued in his study (2012), or the lack of political support, but also the lack of grants as well as the transfer of the editorial staff of *Nuovo Paese* to Sydney and later on to Adelaide in the course of the 1980s.

In 2001 a new chapter in FILEF's history commenced. In that year FILEF' Sydney branch sold its head office in Leichhardt—shared for a number of years with '*Circolo di Vittorio*' (an Australia association supported by members of the PCI). According to the respondents, the loss of a head office caused a period of inactivity. However, 'thanks to the sale of its premises, FILEF had funds available to finance activities, at a time when obtaining grants from public institutions was becoming more and more difficult' (Marcello, 2013).

According to its supporters FILEF's agenda in the last two decades shifted from migrant workers' rights and welfare to environmental issues, asylum seekers issues, and Aboriginal rights. This involvement relates to a wider Australian context and shows the attempts of FILEF to move away from Italian politics despite, as outlined before, the gradual loss of public grants. Why did this shift occur? It was not the core business of the Melbourne branch, inactive for years. In Sydney the focus on Italian language and culture was attracting a cross-section of generations of Italians. The most visible outcomes were the bilingual theatre and the Italian bilingual school programs. In so doing, FILEF Sydney was following what the deputy president of FILEF in Italy, Luigi Sandirocco, suggested in 1993. Sandirocco expressed his concern regarding the involvement of the younger generation by focusing on new activities led by FILEF (*Nuovo Paese* July 1993, p. 5).

7.3 New involvements and challenges

In 1993 Claudio Balzamonti, one of FILEF's coordinators based at the Rome headquarters, stated that FILEF, in the wake of the geopolitical changes of 1989, needed to join other progressive associations to coordinate migrant-focused initiatives. In other words, time was ripe for FILEF to broaden its partnerships beyond the traditional political and trade union reference points (*Nuovo Paese*, 12 February 1993). FILEF in Australia was already involved in reaching out to progressive associations and social clubs since the 1970s.[124]

Balzamonti in his interview admitted that FILEF was entangled in well-established but fast-disappearing political frameworks rather than engaging in organisational strategies as then in use by such *organizzazioni di massa* as INCA, CGIL, SPI, Lega delle Cooperative and others.

However, it is important to stress that since the 1990s a new political agenda affected left-wing associations in general, FILEF included. Ricci points out the role of FILEF headquarters as a core of the evolution of FILEF in the last twenty years:

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[124] FILEF archival records gathered in Melbourne and Sydney demonstrate these connections. There are several documents belonging to many associations from the most politicised such as 'Circolo di Vittorio', 'Italia Libera' and 'Associazione progressista repubblicana (Italo-Australiana)' to 'Italo-Australian Women's Association', and 'Italo-Australian Youth League'.

In Italy but also in other countries, FILEF gradually was able to realise important political activities, especially cultural projects, local development plans, vocational training. All of these were based on the concept that emigration was a kind of resource as an idea that developed from the end of the 1980s.[125]

Focusing on the core of FILEF members in Australia, it is notable to highlight that the professional profiles of FILEF supporters developed mainly in Australia. This profile is in line with findings of other studies such as Pojmann (2008), Slobodian (2008), and Goeke (2014) in regards to migration and social activism. While migration association activism of the 1970s and 1980s was located in factories and work environments in general, the last thirty years saw a shift in the engagement of many FILEF activists focusing on global challenges related to environment issues, asylum seekers, international cooperation with developed countries, and networks with non-profit organisations. FILEF in Australia and in Europe started to be involved in so-called new criticism against neoliberalism. This shift in interest resulted in an increased number of social forums and the revival of *cultura della sinistra italiana* which appeared, for example, in South America.[126]

Ricci in his interview asserts that many leaders of trade unions and left-wing parties share a common Italian ancestry. South America was again, as in the 1970s-1980s, a political laboratory in which FILEF was involved. Following Gramsci's theory the dramatic social and economic challenges, FILEF engaged on this continent. It seems that in the case of South America, as Gramsci argued about the role of intellectuals and their hegemony, FILEF, as *organizzazione di massa*, involved not only traditional intellectuals but also a broader network composed of workers, literati, social activists, and community leaders. In fact, as argued in Chapter 6, the collaboration between members of FILEF and progressive South American associations, established since the 1970s after the military coups in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, shows how the politicisation of migration fitted with FILEF's political framework.

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[125] Rodolfo Ricci, interview with author, 26 June 2014, Rome, Italy (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[126] See the case of italians in Venezuela pubblished in 'Italiani in America Latina: Un Sud America per la sinistra' pubblished in *Il Manifesto* (14 April 2006).

FILEF between political participation and the expatriate vote in Australia: a challenge among the Italian community

Traditionally, FILEF opposed any changes to the Italian vote abroad legislation, supporting the policy of the PCI which was against the possibility of expatriates voting from abroad. This policy changed in the early 1980s. Technical issues such as the absence, until the late 1980s, of any registry of Italians abroad as well as the risk of political manoeuvring by the right-wing parties prevented any substantial change to the legislation. Furthermore, the focus of left-wing parties in Europe was primarily to encourage the return of migrants during the elections in Italy, in this way providing the opportunity to increase political propaganda not permitted in the host countries. One of the longest debates of Italian politics ended gradually at the end of the 1980s when the establishment of COMITES, AIRE and CGIE stimulated the PCI to change its view on the vote of Italians abroad (Mascitelli & Battiston 2008). Eventually in 2001 the Italian parliament approved a new law that granted Italian citizens overseas the right to vote by mail.

In Chapter 4 the main characteristics of the *organizzazioni di massa* were explained, and how FILEF fitted into this framework. However, this related more to the Italian and European context, where the *organizzazioni di massa* still played an important role. Especially in Europe where, as it was argued in the previous chapter, the connection between migrants, parties and associations, the dissolution of PCI and the political system of the so called 'Prima Repubblica' in Italy was strong, and affected most of the migrants organisations dramatically. For example, it is worthwhile to consider what Rodolfo Ricci in his study (2007) asserted. He pointed out not only the closure, in the 1990s, of the political representatives abroad but also the European and local rights vote for migrants which contributed to the collapse of Italian parties, and ended the seasonal phenomenon of migrants returning home for electoral purposes. The permanent settlement of Italian communities led to the emergence of different needs.

The European framework described by Ricci reflects in part the Australian context and the challenges faced by FILEF in Australia. Two historical characteristics must be considered. First, FILEF, as it was argued before, aspired to be an *organizzazione di massa*, but the involvement of the Italian community in FILEF and the historical events in Australia did not offer FILEF the opportunity to become a leading mouthpiece for Italians in Australia. The number of supporters and members of

FILEF never reached significant numbers, not even during the organisation's heyday. Secondly, the level of autonomy exercised by FILEF in Australia was, by the early 1990s, well established for a number of reasons. First, the possibility of political representation differed markedly between host countries, a case in point are Australia and Germany. From the 1970s onwards, the Australian FILEF president, Giovanni Sgrò, was able to be elected to the State Parliament of Victoria, a tangible example of a new level of integration of migrants in the local political system, whereas in Germany it was still not possible for migrants to participate even in local council elections. The only right granted to migrants was to be elected in the Ausländer Beirat (Foreigners Council) which had an advisory role. Only with the Maastricht treaty (1992) was it possible for all European citizens to be elected at municipal level. This treaty finally has approached for example, the Italian community in Germany with the community in Australia.

The political representativeness in a multicultural Australian context also affected FILEF in the last twenty years. The definitive integration of the second and third generation of Italians in Australia changed the focus of FILEF. The campaigns and petitions are now more related to global challenges or to Italian identity transmission to a younger generation rather than traditional labour rights and political representation in the host country, historically main issues on FILEF's agenda.

In addition, the necessity to give a 'voice' to the Italian community has found a new platform in the vote abroad and diaspora parliamentarians. Has this result satisfied the need of Italians abroad? In the case of Australia where FILEF supported this right in recent years there is a debate among members and supporters. There is no unified opinion among the supporters. Some, for example Claudio Marcello, president of the Sydney branch, stated that FILEF had already moved away from the Italian politics and focusing more on Australian politics in the 1990s.[127]

However, bearing in mind the recent changes among Italian communities, the question of how much the Italian vote abroad reflects the real demands of Italians-Australians has to be asked. For some the expatriate vote eroded the unity of the Italian community (Greco 2013, Arena 2013) while for others it meant giving a voice to the demands of the old generation of Italian migrants in Australia. Fedi, for example, in his electoral campaign in 2013, put a great effort into the themes of Italian citizenship, and pension rights for Italians living abroad. He concluded that after the political

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[127] Claudio Marcello, interview with author, 14 February 2013, Bronte, NSW (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

recognition of Italians abroad (Comites and CGIE) and parliamentary recognition (Italian vote abroad), a cultural acknowledgement was also necessary, and FILEF could be part of this revival.[128]

Former MP of Victoria Carlo Carli pointed out at the risks brought about by the expatriate vote and how FILEF for a few years—and in line with PCI policy—was critical of this voting right. Moreover, this criticism was shared by many Italians and scholars. Tintori, for instance, pointed out that in South America the 'chance to run for an Italian seat is seen as a means to consolidate local and social and political hierarchies and, in the worst case, extant clientele networks' (Tintori 2011: 180).

This concern is still present among FILEF's activists. But more than the danger of a growing political lobby, which moreover has been usually existent among the traditional Italian organisations, the main risk is to focus more or even exclusively on politics in Italy rather than in the host country. Ricci asserted: 'I think that the expatriate vote turns away the Italian collectivism from the integration process in the host countries and consequently from the access to the local politics. It is important to analyse this issue among the Italians overseas'.[129] This issue shows the dilemma represented by voting right and broader political participation. Paradoxically, it seems that the expatriate vote demonstrates on the one hand an approach to the political life of the home country, but on the other hand a disenfranchisement from participating in the political life of the host country which should be seen as the ideal launching pad for a definitive political integration.[130]

Therefore, FILEF has struggled to find a balance between the novelty of the expatriate vote and satisfying demands among Italians. Even so the traditional concern related to the vote abroad and the support of this right by the right-wing parties, according to the FILEF supporters, was not the main issue, although they were aware of political opportunism among Italian parties. It is necessary to bear in mind also the important differences among the Italian communities overseas and their different level of settlements. As many studies analysed (Battiston & Mascitelli 2012; Tintori 2011, Bauböck 2003) the vote overseas does not automatically mean a real participation in the

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[128] Marco Fedi, interview with author, 15 October 2013, Carlton, (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[129] Rodolfo Ricci, interview with author, 26 June 2014, Rome, Italy (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[130] The case of Germany shows the difficulty, even in the recent years, to be active for the immigrants in the political context. See the case of Italian immigrant's women in the city of Munich (Prontera 2015: 207-231).

politics of home country. In the Australian case, one should consider the fact that definitive or temporary returns to Italy remain lower than other for other European countries, impacting on active citizenship.

FILEF and the newcomers

From the early 2000s FILEF has been more involved with younger generations and especially with newcomers. FILEF veteran Claudio Marcello explained two main issues still affecting FILEF in Sydney. The second generation of Italian-Australians are already integrated and they do not need an association such as FILEF. Yet, newcomers who are mostly skilled do not have overall any political affiliation. The first visible outcome is that FILEF is focusing on different fields nowadays. Cultural activities such Italian movie festivals, rallies and so on are the contemporary main activities in Sydney. This reflects not only the interest in the Italian culture but also how FILEF has shifted from the traditional aid for migrant workers to the new generations and to the Australian society abroad. In fact, in the last few years has become noticeable that FILEF's the new partnerships with other associations in Australia are mainly related to Australian issues rather than Italians ones.

FILEF acknowledged that it was necessary to increase its autonomy involving necessarily the needs of Italians in Australia in a context which is far removed from the Italian and even from European experience. The ageing of the first generation of Italian migrants coincided with the end of historical demands and the emerging aging-related issues. Notwithstanding the decline of FILEF in Melbourne, there is also a dilemma regarding the generational gap between the migrants of the 1970s and new Italians arriving in the last twenty years. Pugliese (2014) asserted that for the new migrants, the generational gap affects well-established traditional organisations around the world dramatically, social clubs as well as culture institutions which were traditionally regarded as the first point of contact for newly arrived migrants. These institutions and organisations involve almost exclusively older generations and rarely second generation migrants. In the case of Australia, this phenomenon is even more noticeable considering the rapid ageing of first generation migrants. Specifically for FILEF, this gap is even more significant considering that its presence in Australia was always small and the involvement in the Italian community was historically more difficult than for other associations.

Many supporters or ex-members of FILEF have expressed concerns about the new generations coming from Italy to Australia. Most of the newcomers are less political than their predecessors. Yet, the leadership of FILEF in Sydney and the ex-supporters of FILEF in Melbourne see a social connection with them. It seems that in the memories of the respondents these newcomers have in common at least the highly skilled background that was a characteristic of the post-1968 generation. According to many of the interviewees, only the cultural activities can have an influence among these newcomers. On the other hand, it seems that there is no particular connection between the third generation of Italians and the latest arrival from Italy. Unlike the 1970s and the 1980s when the two groups that I described in chapters five and six, identified FILEF and other left-wing associations as a meeting point, the so called 'fluid society' of today has prevented a bond between newcomers and the third generation of Italo-Australians (Caltabiano & Gianturco 2005).

Even the idea of migrants does not fit well with the latest arrivals. The term *mobilità* 'mobility' reflects better, according to the respondents, the new wave of Italian migration. FILEF in this context tries to assume a role like other agencies in Australia. The dramatic increase of social networks, cultural exchanges between Australia and Italy, and migration policy which facilitates international mobility (see the popular working holiday visa) has been one of the main focuses of FILEF since 2000. Historically speaking, FILEF was, as argued in this and other studies, an agency for the integration of Italians in Australia.

The literature and the field studies supported by FILEF also show the broader evolution regarding the migration field. When in 1980 Morag Loh edited a book based on oral history testimonies of thirty-five working class Italian migrant and their families in Melbourne she received the support of the local FILEF branch and of CURA. In the following years other studies regarding gender and activism (Zaccari 1986, Battiston & Sestigiani 2015), language (Bettoni & Lo Bianco 1989), politics (Halevi 1989), history (Cresciani 2014), multiculturalism (Bertelli 2001, Lopez 2000), and migrant activism (Battiston 2012, Battiston & Sestigiani 2015) focused on FILEF and its multi-diversified role in Australia.

Regarding the interest of the researchers in FILEF, findings from Nowicka and Cieslik's study are noteworthy:

The complex, mobile trajectories of researchers and the researched reveal when and how common origin becomes a meaningless category. This is not only because the existence of other categories, such as gender, age or education, transforms the relationship between people who share origin in one ethnic or national group. Trajectories of life can both distance people or create unexpected commonalities that bring them together for a certain moment in time. (2014: 10).

The term community when applied to a migrant group is a controversial one. Can the Italians in Australia be considered a community? Does the expatriate vote allow to be considered Italian overseas despite generational belonging? These questions affect both old and young generations as well as newcomers and first generation of migrants. As argued in the study cited above commonality was one of the main strategies to create a social network among the Italian community in Australia. Academics worked together with social activists and vice versa. The present does not boast such strong collaboration.

The historical link between the migrants who emigrated in the 1950s-1960s and those who emigrated in the 1970s-1980s, is replicated at the beginning of the 21st century. The study of FILEF titled '*Le nuove generazioni nei nuovi spazi e nuovi tempi delle migrazioni*' [The new generations in the new spaces and new times of migrations] bears testimony to the involvement of FILEF in Europe, the Americas and Australia with the latest arrivals from Italy.

One of the most important challenges faced by FILEF Australia today is what leadership role to play in the Italian community. Recent studies argue that until the mid-1990s Australia's immigration policy focused almost entirely on permanent settlement and that temporary labour migration was eschewed (Hugo 2014: 100). With migration between Italy and Australia shifting from long to short or medium term, traditional welfare agencies such as FILEF, COASIT, ANFE, and Patronati such as ACLI, INCA, CGIL, face great challenges in their effort to assist the newcomers. For a volunteer-based association such as FILEF the strategy to get newcomers involved implied close collaboration with other welfare and educational agencies. The de-politicisation of the progressive and conservative organisations allows this collaboration. It is common for FILEF activists to be involved in other organisations which in the past were antagonists (i.e. COASIT). There is also a new kind of meeting place that encompasses social

networks, word of mouth, news exchanges (work, accommodation). All of these new supports, according to Ricci are reminiscent of the mutual aid associations of the early 20th century.[131]

New challenges were spelt out by a roundtable discussion in 2012 when FILEF Australia celebrated its 40th anniversary in Sydney. Then, members of welfare agencies, historians, politicians and supporters suggested new ways forward for FILEF, which would enable it to be better involved in the new migration processes. One of the issues debated at the roundtable was the linkage between the younger generation of Italians and the Italian community in Australia. A range of options were discussed, including FILEF's involvement in social media, the running of forums, and theatre activities that would attract the younger generations of Italians-Australians and of Italians of recent arrivals, as in the past. Between 2005 and 2009 three film festivals organized by FILEF were held in Sydney. The first focused on Italian emigration to Australia through three generations of Italian-Australian directors; the second on Italian emigration around the world; and the last on immigration in Italy. These initiatives combined with *Vacanzascuola*, the Cultural Sunday afternoons, and the most recent cultural activities such as short film competitions launched by FILEF and the Sydney Film School in 2014 and 2015, focus on the themes which were already well established in FILEF Sydney in 1980s and 1990s.

FILEF supporters and newcomers show similarities and differences. In terms of education and skills there are similarities between the newcomers and the post-1968 generation. The difficulty for FILEF to attract and involve these young Italians originates from the different approach of these newcomers to Italian politics. It seems that the social and economic conditions in home country are similar to the push factors of the 1970s. 'Southern and Eastern Europeans are less attracted by Australia's lifestyle and are motivated by more conventional 'push' and 'pull' factors, such as dissatisfaction with conditions in the home country and a better future for the family in Australia' (Khoo, Hugo and McDonald 2011: 564). However, at the same time the economic crisis is, for most of them, related to the inadequacy of Italian politics and new economic issues. As a result most of them do not feel represented by unions, parties and other organisations.

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[131] See Rodolfo Ricci, interview with author, 26 June 2014, Rome, Italy (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

This non-representativeness is also confirmed by supporters of FILEF in Sydney. Raco (2013), for instance, points to the general nonparticipation of these newcomers in Italian politics and consequently in the Italian institutions of representativeness (i.e. CGIE and Comites.). As a result, FILEF is still being seen as a political organisation, despite the fact that it sees itself more as a social movement nowadays. Temporary migration (see for example temporary worker visas as well as student and working holidaymaker visas) dramatically increased migrant mobility and return migration in Italy and Australia according to recent statistics. For most of the newcomers' one of the main aims is to make connections with established migrants to receive support due to their precarious economic situation (Baldassar et al 2012) rather than to be involved in the traditional cultural activities of migrant and social organisations. It looks that this new process shows a revival of the traditional networks (family links) and that the traditional links developed in the 1970s such as social clubs, including FILEF, do not reflect the demands of these newcomers. This absence of representativeness of FILEF concerns the post-1968 migrants. Zaccari (2013), for instance, asserted that

> you can participate in any other number of organisations. You don't have to go to FILEF to be involved, but some people who feel more comfortable with that language and been associated with other Italians who talk about mostly ideas in Italian. It's important to have an organization like FILEF. But now, even more important is the refugee issues. As migrants, we are in a very strong position to make statements because that little pyramid where everyone stands on the shoulders of the weaker, the newest arrivals.

The view of Vera Zaccari, who was one of the most prominent leaders of FILEF in Sydney, is best explained in the Sydney context: language and cultural identity in the era of global changes. She shows how the activities in Sydney can be important for the new generations and modern migrant issues rather than for the local identity. In the case of Melbourne Lino Magnano (2014) focuses more on the idea of community and a new leadership among Italians in Melbourne:

> It necessary to give back to the community an alternative leadership, because there is not alternative … in the meantime there is *no* leadership. There is a

> leadership of power, but which does not give voice. It represents itself. There is a space, a window of twenty thirty years where among Italian students, among newcomers and among people born in the 1950s like me. So what we can do among these generations?

It seems that for those who are more politicised and involved in politics, there is a necessity for a new role for FILEF, to challenge the role of the traditional Italian organisations such as COASIT. Fedi (2013) he points out that Sydney was historically involved more in the Australian politics rather than other FILEF branches.

> I always felt FILEF Sydney as the most 'Australian'. They always assume the work of FILEF as an important involvement at the political level in Australia. Their campaign, for example, about the Australian Republic did not the same commitment in other FILEF; the same case was for the Aboriginal rights. So we can say that they were the guide on the major issues that concerned Australia in those years. Whereas the other FILEF historically were concerned most of the traditional issues related to the Italian communities, like the issues of pensions, the issues of relations with Italy, the Committee of Italians abroad and so son.

In conclusion, there are several challenges that affected migrant associations, welfare agencies, and other social actors. In the 1970 and 1980s, as argued in the chapters 5 and 6, FILEF was also a *trait d'union* between newcomers and second generation Italian-Australians. This link was facilitated at the time by the PCI, trade unions, and Australian political parties. Since the late 1990s, when a new wave of Italian migrants emerged in Australia again, this link no longer exists due to the absence of traditional organisations. The dramatic growth of international students and skilled migrants on the other hand are one of the most visible effects of this new migration wave. According to the statistics, from 2003 to 2009 the number of temporary Italian residents in Australia has more than tripled (Khoo, Hugo, & McDonald, 2011: 555). This data shows even more the lack of involvement and connection between the young generation of Italian-Australians and these new migrants. Other networks involve these newcomers. As many respondents affirm, the new social networks such Facebook, blogs and so on, can include and understand the present issues of these 'new' Italians in Australia better that the traditional networks. Furthermore, the partnership that FILEF in Sydney established

with non-profit and grassroots associations (Refugee action coalition Sydney, GetUp!, National Italian-Australian Women's Association) shows a general trend that migrant organisations started in these years.

To sum up, it is possible to assert that even more the economic reasons was the socio and political context in the 1970s and in the 1980s that facilitate the cooperation between post-1958 generation of Italians and the second generation in Australia. FILEF in those years was historically a visible meeting place for them.

7.4 The legacy of FILEF in Australia

The deportation of Salemi which triggered a leadership crisis may partially explain the decline of FILEF Melbourne. Yet activities by FILEF continued throughout the 1980s showing that participation in it, albeit in different way, was still ongoing. In Melbourne the politicisation of activities was more influent among supporters and the Labor Party was more involved. In Sydney, where the effort was more related to the new demands of the Italian community gave for the supporters, at least for few years, more and until the early 2000s the possibility to be involved. However, the trajectory and evolution of FILEF Melbourne and FILEF Sydney have to be seen complementary and not in contraposing terms.

The legacy of FILEF can be seen also in the biographies of the respondents. Most of them are involved in academia, politics, union leadership, multicultural offices, and in politics at local, and state government levels. In other words, despite the decline of FILEF the integration of these former activists shows that activism is not generally organisation-specific which confirms Tarrow's analysis of the activism of the post-1968 generation.

> Most former activists of the 1960s continued to be active in one or another form of social movement, public interest group, or political activity; others moved from direct-action social movement organisations into service organisations, self-help groups, and parties and interest groups that had a family relation to their original movement homes (Tarrow 2011: 223).

This trend was common among the supporters of FILEF. Most of them have been involved in women right associations, green politics and service organisations.

When I stopped out of FILEF, I actually thought that the only role at that time that FILEF had was really to provide those Italians who identified with being Italians rather than regional Campania or Calabria. People who are identified as Italians and with progressive ideas needed somewhere to go. But that could be a social thing. It did not have to be FILEF in a great big political way. What I meant by that is there were a lot of people who would come along to FILEF, but few people that were organising at that time (…). That's why I wanted to go somewhere else in terms of political involvement, where I felt that I could actually contribute more, but it is not FILEF that needs to change.[132]

Historically, FILEF was numerically small compared to other organisations terms. It is argued that no more than 400-500 members where involved in FILEF throughout its history, although, its general connections were much broader. For example the welfare office and the community programs in the schools saw a broader involvement that cannot be defined numerically. One FILEF activist asserted that

The activities of FILEF in Australia aim at exercising an influence on various sections of the community (workers, women, young people, students and teachers) so as to break the ideal hegemony of the ruling class and determine within them and particularly among migrants, a willingness to struggle for change. It can be said therefore, in this sense, that FILEF is a 'movement of opinion' and that the organisation's activity is not mainly directed towards its members, but through its members, to the community. This being fundamental objective, it follows that being a member of FILEF is not an absolute pre-condition to involvement in its activities, that different people participate in different activities, in different periods of time, even though there are people who necessarily have a continuous commitment in the organisation; it also follows that FILEF, in line with its Unitarian concept, tends to offer and seek cooperation with other groups that pursue similar objectives in the community (…). The number of members or even of participants in general meetings is not a suitable index of the degree of

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[132] Vera Zaccari, interview with author, 22 November 2013, Upper MacDonald (NSW) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

political participation promoted by FILEF and of its influence in the community.[133]

This last statement, although referring to the past decades, can be assumed as a key point for FILEF now and in the future. Has FILEF been considered a movement of opinion, as Pirisi argues? According to the former activists, FILEF in nowadays has to be a meeting place not only for the well-integrated Italian community but also for the broader Australian society. FILEF needs to be a place

> where there are moments of reflection, seminars, and public meetings about civil rights for instance. Because the political and social needs of immigrants arrived in the 1960s and 1970s, do not exist anymore. Today's environment issues, refugees, newcomers are basically the new challenges in which FILEF can assume a role. There are several battles but there are battles that while in the 1970s were specific for the Italian communities today are battles for society in general. The 1970s was the decade of the Italian community. But today a group of the Italian community participates actively in the life of Australian society (...). We have to work in Australia's mainstream; we cannot work outside of the Australian society. In this way I can see a role for FILEF in which we can discuss, process, and in which we can focus on new ideas that contributes to the political and social debate of the host country.[134]

There is also a strong connection between the activism of the respondent and Giacobbe's thoughts and recollections about FILEF. Francesco Giacobbe, who was elected to the Italian Senate in 2013, embodies contemporary political transnationalism between Italy and Australia. At the same time, according to him the evolution of Italian and Australian politics demands new spokespeople for the Italian community. Until the

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[133] See 'An evaluation of the concept of pressure group, as a tool for political analysis. The experience of FILEF a mass organisation of Italian workers' written by Pierina Pirisi (FMA).

[134] 'Dove ci siano momenti di riflessione, momenti di elaborazione e continuare con le battaglie sui diritti civili perché non ci sono più le battaglie del rispetto del contratto di lavoro per gli emigrati come negli anni '60 e '70. Oggi c'è l'ambiente, ,i profughi, i nuovi arrivati che malgrado non sia emigrazione sono presenti molte contraddizioni da risolvere anche tramite la FILEF. Ci sono diverse battaglie ma sono battaglie che mentre negli anni '70 erano specifiche per la comunità italiana oggi sono più battaglie per la società in generale. Gli anni '70 era la comunità italiana per se, oggi invece è un gruppo della comunità italiana che partecipa in maniera attiva alla vita della società australiana (...). Bisogna lavorare nel mainstream dell'Australia, non si può lavorare ai margini. Vedo quindi un ruolo dell'organizzazione della FILEF dove si discute, si elabora, si cercano nuove idee si contribuisce al dibattito politico e sociale' (Francesco Giacobbe, interview with author, 20 February 2013, Leichhardt, NSW audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

1980s INCA, FILEF and COASIT were significant protagonists. The new 'fluidity' of Italians abroad as well as the needs of the younger generation requires different support related to identity, culture, and civil rights rather than worker rights which have been achieved.

Tarrow (2011) argues that the de-politicisation of political associations has to be contextualised within global changes starting in the late 1990s.

Indeed, there are two limits that FILEF has shown over the last four decades. First, as argued above, it is the definitive settlement of Italians in Australia which renders specific migrant association such as FILEF obsolete. The second limit is that historically the attempt to break the monopoly of Italian organisations did not succeed because FILEF was not considered representative of the whole Italian community. The number of *impegnati* or intellectuals that were involved in FILEF was relatively small compared with the whole community. In the following years, the Australian parties increased the role of ethnic branches. The Labor party was considered the spokesperson for migrant's needs and the natural space for their involvements.

Fedi described the decline of FILEF in Melbourne in the following terms:

> FILEF declined because was also too close with the Labour Party. At the beginning with the leadership of Sgrò and later on with all of the supporters of FILEF who were involved in the Labor Party too. Over the years many of them have used the FILEF in one way or another, but then they gone. Most of them followed their legitimate political interests, but forgetting the connection that they had with the FILEF.[135]

The influence of Australian parties is confirmed also by Carlo Carli who a FILEF activist in the late 1970s-early 1980s:

> Io sono passato nel Partito Laburista nei primi anni '80. Mi sono reso conto che se vogliamo avere una vera influenza nella realtà australiana, ci si deve riferire al partito di governo e in quel tempo era il periodo del Partito

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[135] 'La FILEF è andata in crisi anche, ma non solo, per un legame troppo stretto con il Partito Laburista, che prima si concretizzava con Sgrò e poi con tutti gli altri che erano iscritti alla FILEF ed erano attivi nel Partito Laburista. Nel corso degli anni molti hanno utilizzato la FILEF in un modo o nell'altro, ma poi si sono dispersi, seguendo legittimi interessi politici, diretti e personali ma dimenticandosi il collegamento che avevano con la FILEF' (Marco Fedi, interview with author, 15 October 2013, Carlton, VIC audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

Laburista. Questa scelta l'hanno fatta anche altre persone della FILEF come Stefano De Pieri, Joe Caputo.[136]

In this process the traditional welfare organisations such as COASIT and several patronages and welfare associations increased their influence, going as far as incorporating even former activists of FILEF.[137] A political conclusion was, as Pascoe highlighted, that the ALP did not need FILEF as a 'channel for Italo-Australian interests' at least from the 1980s onwards (Pascoe 2014: 127).

In addition, looking at the broader context the political system and the role of political parties in Australia are historically different compared with the Italian. Pascoe asserted that

> Whereas the Italian system allows for clear party identification at all levels of government, the Australian tradition is to steer toward public service neutrality in the operation of its agencies. Thus although both the PCI (Communists) and the MSI (the Right) have organisations in Australia (FILEF and Lega Italiana, respectively) neither has direct entry into the Australian machinery of government (Pascoe 1987: 231-232).

To sum up, it is clear that the role of FILEF in Australia has to be seen almost exclusively in historical terms. The integration of the Italians in Australia shown by the members and the supporters of FILEF of yesterday and today demonstrate the historical limits of FILEF in Australia, beyond its formal presence in Sydney and Melbourne. However, the 21st century which is considered the 'century of migration' has raised questions about the social role of migrant organisations. Globalisation opened new opportunities and challenges for FILEF and other organisations. The evolution of FILEF from vanguard organisation to a modern social movement is the clearest evidence of the recent evolution in the social framework of recent years.

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[136] Carlo Carli, interview with author, 26 April 2013, Coburg, (VIC) (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).
[137] See for example the case of Umberto Martinengo editor of *Nuovo Paese* between 1976 and 1978 and later on coordinator of education programs at COASIT in Melbourne (Battiston 2004).

7.4 A periodisation of the FILEF experience

To summarise, the case of FILEF in Australia has shown three main historical phases since its establishment. There were several similarities between the two branches of FILEF in Melbourne and Sydney. However, some differences also emerged showing diverging historical paths (of decline in Melbourne, of transformation in Sydney). The purpose of an overview of the three main historical periods of FILEF provides a final discussion and possible themes for future research.

The first period started with the establishment of FILEF in 1972 and ended with the deportation of Ignazio Salemi in 1977. As demonstrated, this first period was the most politicised in FILEF's history. The establishment and growth of FILEF leadership rested on the political support offered by the PCI, represented locally by Salemi, and from the PCI in Italy, by Giuliano Pajetta, member of the PCI Central Committee and head of the PCI emigration office, and by Dino Pelliccia, coordinator of FILEF in Rome. With Salemi and labour activist Giovanni Sgrò, FILEF, especially in Melbourne, was able to create a fruitful partnership with the Australian trade unions for the better involvement of Italian workers in union activities.

Salemi led a group consisting of two generations. First, the post-1968 generation of Italians that was able to import to Australia their political activism and to share it with the second generation of Italian-Australians. Second, a cohort of first generation of old activists such as Mario Abbiezzi, Salvatore Palazzolo and Nicola Vescio in Sydney; Emilio Deleidi, Franco Lugarini and Vincenzo Mammoliti in Melbourne. The latter were antifascist, communist supporters and broadly speaking left-wing members in Australia.[138] Similarly, the PCI cells established in the 1970s, often in the houses of these supporters in the working class suburbs of Melbourne, brought old generations of Italians closer to the younger generations. The political ideas imported by Salemi and also by the post-1968 generation found a favourable context in which Gramsci's theories were followed and studied by second generation Italian-Australians. Most of the respondents, in fact, were fascinated by the lucid analysis of Gramsci on cultural hegemony in society and the role of intellectuals. Eurocommunism was promoted by PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer who for a decade was the most prominent leader among the second generation of Italian-Australians. He brought Gramsci's ideas to prominence.

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[138] In 1979 Fabio Cavadini, made a film doc called 'The other side of the coin' about the Italian workers in Sydney. Among these there is a part dedicated to Mario Abbiezzi and his leadership.

The radical political changes in Italy and in western countries was one of the major factors of interest among the second generation but also one that caused friction with the old generation which had a different opinion regarding political systems and worker's struggles.

Salemi's biography shows how his leadership within FILEF represented an example of cultural hegemony amid Italian migrants. Salemi but also the activists of the first period of FILEF were, according to Gramsci's view, among those workers who had a clear notion of the world. After all, by looking at the biographies of these activists it is possible to see how they could not possibly be formed as traditional intellectuals, but closer to the Gramscian idea of permanent persuaders.[139]

To summarise, FILEF under the leadership of Salemi and Sgrò and with the first generation of supporters was able to establish new expectations in and new services for the Italian community. This was one of the clearest examples to establish, or at least to attempt, a kind of hegemony among the Italian migrants. This tentative of hegemony was supported by the PCI, the most important Communist party in the West taking the idea of cultural hegemony based on Gramsci thought.

It is worthwhile to summarise this first period by reporting an extract from the editorial published in the first issue of *Nuovo Paese* in 1974

> In the promoting its actions FILEF maintains the necessity of uniting around the broadest spectrum of workers and therefore always seeks the collaboration of associations, groups, committees, trade unions and various other personalities. Faithful to its principles in aspiring forwards civilization and progress FILEF intervenes when it feels necessary to clarify even the major Italian, Australian and International problems, because it is natural that the solution of migrants in society as workers depends on the orientation of governments and events in the political arena. The workers, migrants or not, are part of society and they must play an adequate role in it.[140]

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[139] The term 'permanent persuader' is the mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, (...) but in active participation in practical life (Hoare & Nowell-Smith 1971: 10). Furthermore, Humphrys (2009) explains this Gramsci's term of 'organic intellectuals' as 'workers who have a clear conception of the world and the aims of their movement' (2009: 174).

[140] FILEF in Australia, *Nuovo Paese*, 1 May 1974, p. 3.

The main focus of FILEF during that period was not only journalistic but also to proactively assist migrant workers. As argued, FILEF 'tried to complement rather than compete with union operations' (Lever-Tracy & Quinlan 1988: 155).

However, FILEF in Australia was able to succeed thanks to a favourable Australian political and social environment. Success was however short-lived as different Australians governments had different views which affected funding of left-wing associations like FILEF. The campaign to prevent the deportation of Salemi in 1976/1977 worked as a brilliant promotional operation for FILEF (Battiston 2012: 73), but exposed FILEF to the accusation of being a radical organisation.

The second period is marked by the emergence of a new leadership across FILEF branches. Several aspects attracted the involvement of new members. First of all, in Melbourne and in Sydney, the role of the FWG increased noticeably. Whereas in Melbourne their efforts were related to workplaces and the childcare sector (Anne Sgrò Children's Centre) in Sydney an important focus was placed on cultural activities with the creation of FTG. These activities, led by second generation activists, helped the post-1968 generation to better integrate in Australia. This cultural engagement was part of the new networks established in those years. These networks were not linked to the traditional ones. As Gabaccia, Castles and Hugo argued in their studies, the role of families, religious and political institutions were gradually losing their predominance. Given the fact that 'as fewer labourers left Italy, the elite migrants who had remained a small component of Italian migrations for centuries again became more visible' (Gabaccia 2003: 164). However, as it has been seen in previous chapters, the background of the post-1968 group fits only partially with elite migrant's definition offered by Gabaccia. Some came from low socio-economic backgrounds and had a medium level of education. More importantly, the host country facilitated their integration, their education and professional skills far more comprehensively than for previous generation. As argued by Audenino & Tirabassi (2008), this process started in the 1970s and was relatively different to the experiences of those migrants who arrived in the 1950s.

FILEF was for the post-1968 migrants an important platform linking them with the second generation. FILEF as a meeting point was aimed at cultural growth; and increasing the presence of progressive associations among the conservative Italian institutions. FILEF and other associations of that time were collaboration tools for them.

The newcomers, as recalled by them, were looking, at least at the beginning of their migration experience, for something closer to their political ideas than to migrant services. FILEF was considered a part of their life in which they could express their ideas and their activism. FILEF offered several tools offered to engage the young generation as well as the newcomers.

The launch of *Nuovo Paese*, in 1974, the launch of the Anne Sgrò Children's Centre in 1984 in Coburg (Vic) and the creation of the FILEF theatre group in Sydney were three clear examples of involvement and collaboration between different generations of Italian-Australians. On the one hand, the activism of these new generations was supported by the multicultural approach of the Australian government; on the other hand the background of this generation was shared by the old generation. Sgrò in her memories said that the 'FILEF Women's Group was not just concentrating on childcare. The group had expanded to include young women from Italy and more second-generation women, as well as older campaigners' (Sgrò 2015: 224). In the case of the FILEF Theatre Group in Sydney a new collaboration was established with artistic directors, writers and actors not exclusively of Italian background but also with Anglo-Saxon ancestry.[141] As argued the success of these generations could not have been achieved without a new political and social environment which started in the 1970s and continued in the course of the 1980s in Melbourne and Sydney. For example, support from local, state and federal governments was necessary. For the Anne Sgrò Children's Centre a grant from the Federal government, Coburg Council and *Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups* was essential. In the case of cultural activities in Sydney, the help of Australian Arts Council which supported the Grant in Aid for the expenses of the artists, actors and directors of FTG was crucial. This brief summary demonstrates that the group of women in FILEF was the major support for these activities in a multicultural context in which was Australia on that time.

The third period started in the early 1990s and was influenced by global themes. Those decades, clearly showed the limits of political, welfare and cultural associations such as FILEF. During this phase lack of generational succession affected the association considerably.

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[141] See also the case of Pram Factory, a theatrical collective established in the 1970s in Carlton (Vic) which was a clear example of a new way cultural performance in opposition to the script-based, director-dominated conservative norm (Robertson 2001).

Only a partnership with non-profit organisations, and grassroots organisations, gave FILEF the opportunity to maintain a role or at least a visibility in the community. In addition, the political environment in Australia was now less favourable than in the past. In this context, the differences between the Melbourne and Sydney branches became noticeable. The Melbourne branches close affiliation with the Labor Party highlighted the role FILEF as well as other left-wing organisations had in the political life of the host country, as exemplified by the ethnic branches of the ALP (see Sgrò and Carli). On the other hand, it became clear that a close collaboration with a political party could have a negative impact in the case of changes in government, such as in the period between the 1970s and 1980s.

As argued in the previous chapter, the new mobility trends of the last twenty years (skilled migration, working holiday visa holders and so forth) have affected all migrant organisations. In this context Caltabiano and Gianturco study applies FILEF:

> Le istituzioni sociali ereditate dalla modernità industriale come la famiglia, la chiesa, il sindacato, i meccanismi di rappresentanza democratica le subculture politiche e le ideologie, quantunque non scompaiono, non sono più dei baluardi capaci di regolare le *biografie a patchwork* ordite e subite dalle persone (Caltabiano e Gianturco 2005: 26).

This confirms that the newest generation of migrant are less politicised compared with the post-1968 type. Most of them, according to the current FILEF leaders, have a great mistrust of the Italian political systems, which features as one of the most important causes of their expatriation (Caltabiano e Gianturco 2005: 26). This distrust is reflected in the organisations that still see themselves in the Italian parties and are directed by the old generation of activists. Basically, for these newcomers a political affiliation can be detrimental for their integration into the host society. While in the past the local party branch, a cultural association or any type of social clubs was a common meeting place, the current places of engagement of the newcomers are usually education institutions, clubs, or international social movements.

It is useful to reflect on what King wrote in 2002:

> In the new global and European map of migration, the old dichotomies of migration study – internal versus international, forced versus voluntary,

temporary versus permanent, legal versus illegal – blur as both the motivations and modalities of migration become much more diverse … including migration of crisis, independent female migration, migration of skilled and professional people, student migration, retirement migration and hybrid tourism-migration. These relatively new forms of migration derived from new motivations (the retreat from labour migrations linked to production), new space time flexibilities, globalisation forces, and migrations of consumption and personal self-realisation (King 2002: 89).

The complexity of new temporary migration affects even statistics on residency, labour and visas, as Tirabassi and Del Prà (2014) stressed in their recent study. According to the leaders of FILEF this flexibility and complexity also prevents a lasting collaboration between newcomers and migrant associations.

To summarise, there are several contemporary factors that inhibit new involvements. Rather than focusing only on economic conditions, it is also necessary to investigate sociological aspects such a research for a better quality of life, partnership motivations, education and so forth. These motivations, as argued in the previous chapters, did already exist among the newcomers of the 1970s and 1980s, with the main difference being the level of politicisation between the earlier and the more recent arrivals since the 2000. It is clear that not only the dissolution of USSR but also the other global changes affected left-wing associations such as FILEF. In those years it is possible to notice among these organisations that what was the main focus in the developed countries such as the worker rights, it was not represented by the traditional bodies which are unable to give a support to the new patterns of jobs. FILEF tended to focus more in cultural activities rather than in the industrial sector how it is was in the past. So, this organisational evolution was affected not only by the ageing generation but also by the new practices of the global workers.

Finally, another factor to affect FILEF (in the last decade or so) was the Italian expatriate vote. In this case, the main risk is moving from a policy focused on the Australian context to one that focuses on Italian politics. The political transnationalism of the expatriate vote has different implications. According to Ricci 'il voto degli italiani all'estero allontana un pezzo consistente della collettività da un processo di

integrazione in loco e quindi anche di ingresso nelle istituzioni'.[142] The candidatures, although discussed in the community, must to be accepted by Rome, thus shifting the centre of political decisions in the host country to home country (Mascitelli & Battiston 2008). The historical hostility of the left-wing parties and the progressive associations about the expatriate vote started to decrease in the 1980s and ended at the end of last century. In addition, it is important to remember that at present the two representatives elected for the Africa-Asia-Oceania-Antarctica constituency in the House of Representatives and in the Senate (Marco Fedi and Francesco Giacobbe) are both ex-activists of FILEF of the 1980s and 1990s. The election of these two MP is a clear fact of this political change. As Mascitelli and Battiston (2008) argued other aspects such as the first European parliamentary elections in 1979, and the new focus of the PCI no longer related exclusively to the USRR where just two causes of this. According to them 'by the 1990s the so-called Italian community seemed frozen out of the Australian political life and began to turn away from involvement in Australian politics and look more towards Italian representation and politics within the homeland' (Mascitelli & Battiston 2008: 78).

However, the debate appears to be more complex. Even among FILEF supporters there is no common view. For some, the statement of Ricci and the political shift argued by academic studies give partial emphasis on the role played by the expatriate vote. Especially for the second generation it seems that the expatriate vote does not address the needs of the Italian-Australians and their quest for belonging. This assumption is also reflected in the traditional Italian institutions such as COMITES and the CGIE which are seen as unrepresentative of the new generations of Italian-Australians. Regarding these latter institutions the general opinion of FILEF was historically complex. According to the supporters the main risk was the politicisation of these bodies which affected the overall participation of FILEF members. In the 1980s, when the COMITES were established, according to Fedi, FILEF Sydney had already decided to move away from the Italian political context and to be more involved in the Australian context.

> before the establishment of COMITES in Sydney they were already aware it
> would be an institution too politicised and less able to offer supports and

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[142] Rodolfo Ricci, interview with author, 26 June 2014, Rome, Italy (audio file and full transcription in possession of author).

services to the Italian community. I think, looking after few years, that they were right especially because these committees do not have authority and representativeness among the community. (…) nevertheless FILEF was always aware that it was necessary a broad committee for all Italian overseas.

The autonomy of FILEF in Australia was already recognised in the late 1980s by FILEF in Rome. The peculiarity of FILEF in Australia was reinforced by the new destination of Italians, the level of integration and increased social mobility. Compared to Germany where until the late 1990s migrant workers were considered guest workers (*Gastarbaiter*), Australia showed more similarities to Canada and USA rather than to Europe. The influence of Italians in the local community and councils was always recognised by the local and state governments, whereas in countries such as Germany it was banned.

7.6 Conclusion

The challenges for FILEF in the last fifteen years show the level of autonomy of FILEF in Australia, and the different settlement patterns of Italians compared with the European context. The political crisis in the early 1990s and the global challenges affect more FILEF in Italy and Europe more than in Australia. The integration of Italians in Australia is shown by the profile of FILEF supporters. The end of the massive Italian emigration in Australia is partially offset by new waves of emigrations. The 21st century appears as the century of migration. The growth of domestic and international migration is increasing and thus challenging old and new associations in sending and receiving countries.

In this context, FILEF attempts to engage with the global challenges of this century focusing on new mobility and Italian newcomers. The new migrations, on one hand show directly the main problems in the countries of immigration, on the other hand are a challenge to the traditional organisations that fail to have a generational change inside. A periodisation of the FILEF experience reflects the broader evolution of the Italian community and highlights the expectation of the second generation as well as the macro political factors affecting progressive associations such as FILEF.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study has been to address how FILEF, an organisation established in the early 1970s to give voice to Italian migrants of left-wing persuasion, has survived in Australia against countervailing pressures, political changes and historic watersheds. The approach towards addressing this theme has been to examine critically FILEFs current standing and activities, examine its inter-relationship with Australian society, and explore the trajectory of some of its prominent leaders, where they are today, and what they say about their organisation. The reason why this study is important is to address how this organisation has survived and continues to profess its objectives in the way it did in the early 1970s. The limited literature on this subject has also informed this study that the objectives of this organisation were closely bound to political expressions from former Italian immigrants who have on the whole moved on in their personal journey.

What is most evident from the interviews and the data collected is the very personal view of the FILEF protagonists. Each had a personal reason to be part of FILEF, each had a political story to tell and each indicated how their association with FILEF influenced their life. They also told a story of the perceived impact FILEF has had on the Australian political landscape. What most of the protagonists, or for that matter the literature, have been unable to tell us is how this organisation has survived, continues to bear the name of the organisation, produce a newspaper and act as though the organisation was as viable as it was in the early 1970s.

The approach undertaken in this research has been to critically scrutinise the brief history of the organisation in the context of the political changes of last four in order to ascertain its real impact on the members and the changing political terrain. A balance sheet of achievements might indicate this has been a relatively influential group for its adherents and, possibly to a lesser extent, on the Australian political landscape. FILEF was never a mass organisation and its main approach towards giving voice to Italians of left-wing persuasion was to pressure, influence and support existing campaigns, events and organisations – such as the Australian Labor Party. In effect their physical existence as an organisation was tentative and at times marginal, yet they

persisted in giving the appearance of being alive and well. The data as indicated in the previous chapter underscores the fact that FILEF was particularly active from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. The reasons provided for this assessment were many and included the end of the Cold War, the loss of importance of the Italian Communist party, the decline of Italian migration and the need to adapt to the politics and pressures of their newly adopted country.

The original contribution of this dissertation is the multidimensional aspects of the FILEF experience as an organisation as well as in the biographies of its members. The historical events that affected the Italian community in Australia from the 1970s are reflected in the history of FILEF and among the activists. The dramatic growth of organisations for migrant workers' rights saw FILEF as a pressure group with other community based organisations. During the 1970s and 1980s the attention of FILEF was mostly focused towards youth, education and women's rights. But the political context of the post-1980s changed rapidly and dramatically and was a watershed in some respects for organisations such as FILEF, its members and its leaders. By this time the first and second generation of Italians were well integrated into Australian society and the focus shifted from "pure" politics to cultural identity, single issue campaigns such as nuclear disarmament, environmental issues, and Aboriginal rights. These also became matters of interest for FILEF and ultimately were adopted into the aims and strategy of modern social movements around the globe.

8.2 Answers to research questions

The aim of this dissertation was to address and where possible answer the research questions that have led this research through the case of FILEF in Australia. The first question was:

What role did FILEF play in the post-war period? FILEF in its four decades of history has worked across multiple aspects and fields of Australian society. As a worldwide organisation, FILEF needed to achieve recognition and be a legitimate actor on the political spectrum and amongst political institutions. In the early period of its existence FILEF was more engaged in the immediate needs of Italian migrant workers and their families. This was achieved through the establishment of welfare support and collaboration with social and political organisations in Australia such as unions, the Labor Party and local governments. However, its success and the support it achieved

were not always in relation to its efforts and were not reflected throughout the Italian community in both Melbourne and Sydney. The organisation faced political rivalry with other traditional welfare associations as well as distrust from the Australian political system—in part because of their left-wing association and ideas. This played detrimentally on the recruitment from amongst the first generation of migrants. At the same time with the social turmoil impacting on Australia and leading to involvement of second generation Italians, FILEF was encouraged to develop new strategies. The partnership between the most politicised migrants led to a certain level of growth and success in the years that followed.

How did FILEF survive in Australia for over forty years despite the radical changes which affected community-based organisations such as FILEF?

In his study Battiston asserted that 'FILEF has continued to influence the life trajectories of many activists, leaving deep traces in Australian political and cultural life'.[143] In this thesis it is also argued that the evolution of FILEF needs to be seen in the context of the theories of social movement and not solely from the perspective of individual integration of its supporters. The evolution of FILEF examined in this study showed how a small association was able to survive forty years, despite the fact that it suffered numerous threats. Over the decades several of the activists left the association and other internal and external factor affected the sustainability of this organisation. One factor which impacted FILEF considerably was the management of its monthly newspaper *Nuovo Paese.* This was a major burden on the scarce resources of the organisation and on the formal leadership of the FILEF branches. Around *Nuovo Paese* a group of young activists developed and consolidated. Once the editorial staff moved from Melbourne to Sydney and later on to Adelaide, FILEF lost some of its visibility among the Italian migrants who were mostly concentrated in large centres such as Melbourne and Sydney. Members of FILEF remembered the role their newspaper played in occupying a certain political vacuum and space fondly: while small in size compared with other ethnic media, it stood tall in stature for what it stood for. The literature on the question of ethnic media sustains that it can have at least two significant effects: legitimacy by State governments and creation of a community. Unlike the case of more conservative Italian media outlet *Il Globo,* the aim of *Nuovo Paese* was not just to provide commentary but to create a more progressive community

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[143] Battiston 2012: xiii.

opinion. In the case of *Nuovo Paese* the disappearance of the Italian Communist Party impacted the financial support which was no longer forthcoming. This affected the sense of community within FILEF. In addition, the moves of the editorial office to Adelaide led to the departure of many from the editorial board. For Melbourne and Sydney this increased the lack of representation and sense of belonging. Bearing in mind the political contribution that the left-wing newspapers made in Italy, it is possible to conclude that *Nuovo Paese* never reached that political ambition in Australia. Alongside the role played by *Nuovo Paese* it could be argued that the attempt by FILEF to be a mass organisation in Australia failed due to the impossibility of replicating the political and social context which had developed in Italy after the Second World War.

The disengagement of FILEF activists across Australia was related to a series of causes and not solely due to the leadership crisis within the organisation. The change in the primary political activity with less direct action as well as the disengagement of many members due to personal reasons (some of them returned to Italy in the 1980s for good). This thesis has shown that the legacy of FILEF has to be viewed not only at the level of influence within Australian society but also on the level of the individual FILEF activists as actors in a broader sense.

The theoretical approaches presented in chapter three have not provided the blueprint anticipated at the beginning of this study. Ad concluding remarks it is safe to say that none of these approaches can exhaustively help in answering the research questions of this study. FILEF was a unique organisation, in Australia at a particular time. It was a product of its own making, following little in the way of a predefined direction. During its existence this organisation remoulded its aims and the involvement of its activists. The attempt by FILEF to be a pressure group as posited by Levy-Tracy and Quinlan (1988) failed to be realised and only in marginal ways followed the theoretical indications of this approach of the migrant worker club. Moreover this theoretical blueprint fails to address how FILEF was able to survive. The slow disappearance of the Italian workforce in the factories as well as the de-industrialisation in Australia only partially impacted on FILEF's *raison d'etre*. Nor can FILEF be considered a pure grassroots organisation. The bureaucratisation of FILEF and its activities over time became evident and in part essential due to the support from left-wing parties. The objective of FILEF from the start was to be a mass organisation; however, only in the more recent activities of this organisation can we see hints of

grassroots activities (less politicised) and as a consequence grassroots theories suggested by Smith (2000), Chetkovich and Kunreuther (2006) as well as the social movements approach proposed by Tilly (1984).

This study has defined three historical phases in FILEF's existence. The first phase was the establishment of FILEF in Australia in the early 1970s. It was a period of turmoil with high levels of political engagement. The establishment of FILEF in this period suggests that the theory of the immigrant worker club and pressure group as proposed by Levy-Tracy and Quinlan (1988) could provide a closer understanding of how FILEF saw its historic role. This suited FILEF and allowed for it to engage in extensive networks and activities. The second period identified is the period of the 1980s. In this context the theory of Smith (2000); and Chetkovich and Kunreuther (2006) which suggest that organisations like FILEF often pursue a community activity approach as a Community Voice may be applicable. This holds true to some extent in FILEF's transition. What further entered the change process of this phase was the fact that the Italian community had changed, that the leadership of FILEF had also changed and political circumstances were equally changing. This was slightly more evident in Sydney than in Melbourne. The first and second periods (1970s–1980s), described in chapter five and six, saw FILEF as an active agent seeking to influence the Italians of the first generation in the workplace, and fighting for their rights, making demands and seeking to be a mass organisation among Italian workers. Tarrow pointed out, "people engage in contentious politics when patterns of political opportunities and constraints change" (Tarrow 2011: 28-29). In this case, FILEF in the 1970s and early 1980s took advantage of the new political context in Australia. In addition, the experience of the post-1968 generation was also a key factor for FILEF to increase its visibility. FILEF sought to influence the progressive political parties as well as the unions, noticeably during the Salemi leadership.

The third phase (and the last one) began in the 1990s. The global context of this change can be located in the changed geo-political world with the end of the Cold War. Tilly (1984) described the political evolution for organisations like FILEF as being depoliticised organisations based around single issue campaigns which included the environment, women's issues, refugees, sexual equality and others. The link between FILEF's Australian branches and Italy is no longer as strong as it was. Moreover, there is an absence of ideological and political identity especially given the disappearance of

the Italian Communist Party. This ultimately accelerated the autonomy of FILEF in Australia and possibly around the world. Additionally, the growth of other ethnic communities, new global challenges, and the dramatic development of new economies altered the DNA of FILEF and deprived it of its essential elements. Being part of a set of organisations not focused exclusively on Italian communities any more but being subjected to new global challenges in the present time is the role that has been assumed by this organisation of late.

All three phases evidenced changed circumstances and political terrains. The last period has probably impacted most on FILEF as its primary place of influence, the factories and the workplace, were undergoing major change. Workplaces not only disappeared from society but also from the broader political debate of left-wing political parties. With the reduction and later on the definitive cut of Australian government funds, FILEF had to redefine its aims and goals. FILEF needed to enlarge its networks to carry extra influence and presence in Australia. Not only was the terrain which FILEF worked in disappearing, the organisation was also challenged by other Italian welfare organisations and "Italian voices" competing for the Italian migrant audience. These included institutions such as COMITES, COASIT, CGIE, and Italian social and cultural clubs.

As one of the conclusions of this study it would not be possible to assume that FILEF was not just a political association or organisation. The various historical periods in which FILEF worked have revealed a multiplicity of actions. This evolution provided a way for FILEF to maintain its presence in Australia. At the same time, its decline goes beyond the decline of political parties in Italy and in Australia in the late twentieth century. FILEF in this later phase began to assume the same role as single issue NGOs, environmental organisations, asylum seekers, and local agencies. Associating with the role of NGOs is not a strategy adopted by FILEF only but a phenomenon commonly observed across left-wing organisations, and probably for similar reasons. In effect individual rights became the central political struggle and collective actions moved to the background. Basically, the current role of FILEF has to be seen in the multiplicity of its interventions which encompass international issues as outlined above as well as Italian issues. The arrival of newcomers and the education of the third generation in Australia are the main concerns of current FILEF's leaders.

The aim of this study has been to explore the nature of FILEF and its evolution with a particular focus on the mechanism of its survival. It also explored the history of a group of Italian migrants by providing theoretical and descriptive accounts of their experiences through their participation in the organisation. The trajectory of these migrants in Australia was remarkably different compared with the experience of many other Italian migrants in Australia. Most of FILEF's members were not victims of poverty, and economic factors were not the main reason to immigrate to Australia. The different conditions between Italy and Australia affected not only the choice of this group to emigrate but also their way of integrating into Australian society. The majority of the group arrived in Australia between the late 1960s and the early 1980s when the social and economic conditions had already changed.

Two aspects encouraged their integration: firstly, the contribution of the earlier Italian migrants to the establishment of FILEF in Australia facilitated the public raising of concerns and views by the immigrants of the 1970s and 1980s, even though theirs were different concerns to those of the 1950s. The second aspect was the end of a major phase of Italian emigration which coincided with the end of the White Australia Policy. Australia shifted its immigration attention to new population sources, primarily from Asia. The rapid growth of these new communities since the 1970s created a major change in the social fabric of Australia.

FILEF exploited the opportunities provided in the early 1970s by an Australian political agenda which supported a new multicultural approach. FILEF equally was well placed to meet the needs of the new generation of Italian migrants that had only recently arrived in Australia. Despite the small number of activists that joined FILEF from its establishment, this association was able to improve the integration into Australian society of Italians as well as pursue their own personal careers, especially by the more active members. A number of them became what would today be called "professional politicians" including a career in their home country. One of the conclusions from this study relates to the different periods of this organisation which can be defined as one related to the biographies of the respondents and one related to the history of the organisation.

The decline of FILEF in Melbourne highlights a different context of activity and perception of the tasks facing the membership. The Melbourne perception contrasts with the considerations of the leaders of the Sydney FILEF. Belonging to FILEF and

identifying with the organisation was stronger in the Sydney branch, where minimum members appreciated FILEF as a meeting place to share their thoughts and ideas. There is little doubt that even when participation declined in Sydney there was still a sense of collective memory predominant among the individuals interviewed in the Sydney branch of FILEF. On the other hand, in Melbourne responses to the interviews highlighted what members perceived as real historical achievements made by FILEF (such as the election of Giovanni Sgrò to the Victorian Parliament). But it also highlighted difficulties faced by an organisation lacking economic and human resources.

The FILEF of today as demonstrated by this study is a changed and evolved entity. From being a reactor to Italian migrant demands in its early manifestation it is a broader cross-discipline outlook which now defines this association. FILEF's members eventually gravitated to different fields of society, often pursuing very personal ends. Despite internal conflict and crisis within FILEF, the new activities which emerged in the sphere of politics, social ventures and culture demonstrate how this association reinvented itself to become something very different from its early days.

This study has arrived at the conclusion that the real FILEF story is one which addresses not just the historical political role of FILEF in Australia but one which is rich in personal stories, depicting the needs and hopes of a society at a particular time. This objective was partially achieved by associations, collective actions, political and social partnerships such as that achieved by FILEF. This study on FILEF has sought to contribute to the issue of how collective action can assist different generations of migrants, in this case Italian migrants, in integrating in the host country. What emerged in this research was a new profile of migrant, the activist who directly contributed to Australian and Italian political reality. This shows that even a numerically small association can assist with integration in the host and home countries, that migrant activism can be a successful integration strategy. This example of migrant activism in Australia could be considered ultimately to be the most significant contribution made by this study.

8.3 Contribution to the literature

This thesis develops and contributes to the literature in relation to the contextualisation of Italians abroad and their desire to find strength and a voice by associating with a left-wing association, spread across many emigration nations. The focus here was on post Second World War Australia. This study sought to codify migrant activism from its outset in the 1970s. Specifically, this study illuminates and contributes in a detailed manner the world view, political strategies, activities, and day to day political tasks this organisation engaged in. This study focused most of its attention in Australia on the two largest cities as this was where most members of this organisation resided - Melbourne and Sydney.

This study also contributes to defining a set of historical periods of FILEF activism. This periodisation corresponds in large parts to the major decades' – from the 1970s to the present time – long periods where different aspects of this organisation resonated. Moreover, the subject of this study has paved the way for future scholars by examining and identifying the different roles adopted by FILEF, the role of its leaders, as well as the contribution of specific group of migrants and their adaptation to their new host country.

According to the respondents in the data collection and interviews of this study, FILEF was considered a unique association in which most of the supporters developed a sense of belonging. Initially this belonging was to the Italian Communist Party and its fragile presence in Australia. Over time this identity diminished largely due to the activists developing their grassroots approach, partially as a strategy to find a replacement for the initial identity and partially due to the slow disappearance of the Italian Communist Party. The Italian Communist Party dissolved in 1991. The grassroots activism of FILEF does not mean that the ideological and organisational support from the Italian Communist Party should be underestimated. Instead it confirms the synthesis of recent studies (Fortier 2000, 2006) in which the experiences in ethnic organisations affect collective belongings. This study has sought to highlight the fact that FILEF was considered a political and cultural meeting place for Italians despite differences in backgrounds, education and age.

This study has extended the literature on the role of migrant activism in Australia. It has provided a fresh and new picture of different generations of migrants as social and political actors in contemporary events and especially in Australia's social

and political maturity. This study provides a clearer understanding of the way FILEF survived in those years and how it was forced to change its political belonging and adapt more to the political context of the host country. The dramatic changes undertaken by FILEF demonstrated in this study offer a contribution about the decline of the traditional migrant organisations and their new political manifestation in Australia compared to the migration and its expression of the previous migration cohort. The main contribution this study makes to the literature on FILEF is that which addresses the period of the 1980s and 1990s. FILEF emerged as a meeting point of the post-1968 generation and the second generation of Italians in Australia. The collaboration between these two groups is an illuminating example of the new generations as well as contemporary migration processes affecting Italy and Australia. The inability to replicate this collaboration among the new generations (newcomers and third generation respectively) is one of the reasons for the decline of FILEF in more recent times.

8.4 Limitations and areas for further research

As argued in the previous chapters, very few studies exist on the theme of FILEF in Australia or elsewhere. The aforementioned research questions have as such guided this study in its approach and in defining the sub-themes which encapsulate the role of FILEF and especially its ability to survive over the forty years after the turbulent decade after its establishment. The gaps in the study and therefore its limitations are partially related to the lack of traceable activity and evidence regarding the connection between the FILEF head office in Rome and FILEF branches in Australia such as Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane. Another limitation of this study is the lack of information on equivalents in other countries and other ethnic organisations that faced social and political realities like those faced by FILEF. It means that this study was in no position to undertake comparative studies with other organisations and nor even studies of other migrants who were seeking to express a political voice from among the Italian community.

This study examines primarily the political activism of a particular group of activists in Melbourne and Sydney from the late 1970s to the present. For future research further locations should be included in a comparative study which may attempt to investigate the activism of FILEF in major Australian cities compared to the experiences of similar activists in traditional countries of Italian immigration such as

USA, Germany, Belgium, France, Argentina and Brazil. A comparative study between different FILEF branches should explain, for example, similarities and differences of activism in those countries, the level of assistance provided to them in comparison with the Australian assistance. Furthermore, studies on the level of collaboration experienced with the head office in Rome and the level of support within the local Italian communities. A comparison of this kind would also allow an examination of the different home country based political parties, diverse roles played by representatives of Italian left-wing parties in Europe and the Americas, and the similarities and differences with the Australian case. Finally, a broad study regarding FILEF as a worldwide voluntary association could focus on variances in levels of activism and politicisation depending on host country settings.

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Appendix 1 List of interviewees

Arena, Franca	(2 April 2013, Sydney)
Burani, Edoardo	(5 July, Modena, Italy)
Caglieris, Chiara	(17 July, Lido di Pomposa, Italy)
Caputo, Joe	(22 May 2013, Melbourne)
Carli, Carlo	(26 April 2013, Melbourne)
D'Ambrosio, Lily	(11 February 2014, Melbourne)
Di Biase, Bruno	(19 February 2013, Sydney)
Diele, Donato	(19 December 2013, Melbourne)
Diele, Maria	(19 December 2013, Melbourne)
Fedi, Marco	(15 October 2013, Melbourne)
Giacobbe, Francesco	(20 February 2013, Sydney)
Greco, Gaetano	(30 May 2013, Melbourne)
Guarino, Vittorio	(11 November 2013, Melbourne)
Jenkins, Harry	(7 May 2013, Melbourne)
Lavezzari, Carmen	(15 February 2013, Sydney)
Licata, Renato	(18 January 2013, Melbourne)
Lo Bianco, Joseph	(4 March 2014, Melbourne)
Magnano, Lino	(13 February 2014, Melbourne)
Malara, Roberto	(28 April 2013, Melbourne)
Marcello, Claudio	(14 February 2013, Sydney)
Musolino, Renata	(15 October 2013, Melbourne)
Palma, Cecilia	(15 November 2013, Melbourne)
Panucci, Frank	(18 February 2013, Sydney)
Paris, Rosalba	(20 February 2013, Sydney)
Pasquini, Vittoria	(20 February 2013, Sydney)
Pirisi, Pietrina	(5 July 2013, Modena, Italy)
Raco, Francesco	(16 February 2013, Sydney)
Ricci, Rodolfo	(26 June 2014, Rome, Italy)
R., A.	(5 April 2013, Sydney)
Sedmak, Sonia	(4 April 2013, Sydney)
Sgrò, Anne	(20 March 2014, Melbourne)
Sgrò, Giovanni	(20 March 2014, Melbourne)
Spinoso, Gianfranco	(11 January 2014, Melbourne)
Zaccari, Vera	(22 November 2013, Sydney)
Zangalis, George	(31 January 2014, Melbourne)

Appendix 2 Ethics Clearance and Statement of Compliance

To: Dr Simone Battiston, FBE/ Mr Luca Marin

Dear Dr Battiston,

SUHREC Project 2012/279 The changing role of Italian migrant grassroots organisations in post Second World War in Australia: The case study of the Italian Federation of Migrant Workers and their Families

Dr Simone Battiston, FBE/ Mr Luca Marin

Approved Duration: 21/12/2012 To 30/03/2015 [Adjusted]

I refer to the ethical review of the above project protocol undertaken on behalf of Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) by SUHREC Subcommittee (SHESC4) at a meeting held on 30 November 2012. Your responses to the review as e-mailed on 12 and 14 December were reviewed by a SHESC4 delegate.

I am pleased to advise that, as submitted to date, the project may proceed in line with standard on-going ethics clearance conditions here outlined.

- All human research activity undertaken under Swinburne auspices must conform to Swinburne and external regulatory standards, including the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and with respect to secure data use, retention and disposal.

- The named Swinburne Chief Investigator/Supervisor remains responsible for any personnel appointed to or associated with the project being made aware of ethics clearance conditions, including research and consent procedures or instruments approved. Any change in chief investigator/supervisor requires timely notification and SUHREC endorsement.

- The above project has been approved as submitted for ethical review by or on behalf of SUHREC. Amendments to approved procedures or instruments ordinarily require prior ethical appraisal/ clearance. SUHREC must be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter of (a) any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants and any redress measures; (b) proposed changes in protocols; and (c) unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

- At a minimum, an annual report on the progress of the project is required as well as at the conclusion (or abandonment) of the project.

- A duly authorised external or internal audit of the project may be undertaken at any time.

Please contact the Research Ethics Office if you have any queries about on-going ethics clearance or you need a signed ethics clearance certificate, citing the SUHREC project number. A copy of this clearance email should be retained as part of project record-keeping.

Best wishes for the project.

Yours sincerely

Kaye Goldenberg

Secretary, SHESC4