Political Influence and Third Sector's Umbrella Organizations. A first Comparision between Italy and Spain

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Political Influence and Third Sector's Umbrella Organizations.
A first Comparison between Italy and Spain

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the analysis of the relationship between third sector and state and on the demanding nature of this relationship, with the objective of analyzing the components, requirements and thoughts behind it. In particular, the specific topic refers to the deepening of political influence exerted by the Spanish and Italian umbrella organizations of the third sector engaged in forms of political influence. The collected information has been analyzed with a specific software that uses Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA).

1. Introduction

This paper is aimed, in general terms, at analysing relations between state and third sector, and, in specific terms, at investigating the political influence exerted by Spanish and Italian third sector umbrella organizations. It is a kind of explorative research that favours a comparative approach addressed to Spanish and Italian third sector umbrella organizations, which are engaged in representing and influencing the state policies.

This study, in particular, provides a description of the status of investigation of relations between state and third sector and of the different types of political influence exerted by the latter; it is based on some of the

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most important international theories of third sector, and it attempts to point out, if possible, some of the most significant empirical research.

The analysis favoured a comparative reading of the contributions of third sector, which mainly focused on the claiming nature of its relations with state, in order to analyse the resulting component parts, requirements and remarks. The collected information was examined through a specific software that uses Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA).

2. Conceptual Model

Applying the notion of political influence to the field of third sector organizations means, first of all, facing the matter of advocacy both as a proper mission of such groups, and as a function of representation of their associates (such as in the case of umbrella organizations analysed in this study); secondly, it means arising some issues connected, for instance, with the concepts of legitimacy, participation and representation. Such questions arise right because of the peculiar nature of third sector organizations, since they are social actors that place themselves between two spheres: the private familiar and collective on the one hand, and the general, institutional, public on the other.

Social sciences often overlap some terms such as power, influence and control, defining them as the capacity of an actor[1] to do something that concerns and may refer to another individual, with the chance of modifying the action model concerning future events (Polsby 1980).

Scholars of different disciplines developed several notions of what is "political behaviour" within the organizations. Some defined politics as the behaviour of various stakeholders aimed at influencing the decision-making process (Pettigrew 1973) through the constitution of coalitions and negotiations (Bacharach and Lawler 1980). Others focused on the nature of individual behaviour within the organizations (Burns 1961; Farrell and Peterson 1982; Mayes and Allen 1977; Schein 1977; Gandz and Murray 1980); others, on the other hand, characterized politics as a social influencing process with potential consequences at organizational functional level (Allen *et al.* 1979; Ferris *et al.* 1989), or simply in management terms (Madison *et al.* 1980). Political behaviour was deeply examined also by authors such as Pfeffer (1981) as for the linkage with power, while other exponents such as Schlenker (1980) adopted a psychological perspective, defining influence as the conscious or unconscious attempt to control images that are projected in real or imagined

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[1] The term actor refers both to individuals and groups that act jointly and organizationally.

social interactions. According to other authors such as Sederberg (1984), dealing with political influence from a psychological point of view means considering politics as any intentional attempt to "create, maintain, modify, or abandon shared meanings" among participants of social contexts. These "shared meanings" provide the guidelines to interpret the organizational behaviour. According to Sederberg (1984), in fact, characterizing political influence as intentional attempts to manage or control the meanings shared by others, gives an interesting chance to examine, for instance, how human resources move and place themselves into the organizations.

Wondering how political influence on third sector can be modified means joining politics and third sector into a complex starting context, where the way of facing this process is no more merely political, but it involves both individual and collective interests. Within this dimension, organizations support a "civic space" through the sharing of ideas, the self-discovering, and the awareness of the deep connection between mission and actions.

The relation between politics and third sector was analyzed also from other points of view, focusing sometimes on civic participation (Boris and Krehely 2002; Berry 1999), sometimes on the weak liaison between third sector and governments (Chaves and Monzon 2006; Berry 1999), and, some other times, on strategies aimed at an effective advocacy (Rees 1999; McNutt and Boland 1999).

The main and most significant contributions to the theory of political influence studying third sector organizations chiefly originate from the United States, since there such groups have complicated and dynamic relations with state, above all in the so-called political arena of negotiation. Despite their active participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies, the involvement of such associations in the political process does not come down to this aspect. The strength of the American democratic system, in fact, lies in the freedom that allows people to gather in order to foster their particular vision of common good (Lohmann 1992), as well as to put pressure on the government.[2]

In Boris and Williams's (1998) contribution, advocacy is defined as the protection of rights and the promotion of political interests, even though the stress on rights can be often misconceived.

As far as third sector organizations are concerned, a wider definition of advocacy is necessary so as to include the concept of civic engagement, in order to understand the role played by third sector organizations in favouring the political voice that supports the democratic civic society. Aside from their

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[2] For a closer examination, see Berry 1999; Boris and Krehely 2002; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Rees 1999; Andrews and Edwards 2004.

primary mission, most of them engage in public education, fostering political and civic participation.

National actions of advocacy, for instance, are generally carried out by the representational bodies of these associations, such in the case of umbrella organizations. They are usually great organizations that are committed in the promotion of specific causes.

The development of network analysis allowed a closer examination of social networks of those organizations that carried out advocacy actions (Perrucci and Potter 1989; Donati 2002). Social networks can be conceived both as prerequisites that can influence or facilitate the movement or mobilization, as well as the result of a mobilization activity (Diani 1995). In the last few years, the application of network analysis to social movements and organizations that perform advocacy has quickly increased (Diani 1995; Diani and McAdam 2003; Gould 1991).

The representative organizations of third sector, as social agents, become the most adequate subjects for the management of relational dynamics that may arise within the sector they belong to, as well as in connection with other sectors. In view of an evident change in the structures of modern industrial companies, Perucci and Potter (1989) acknowledge the fundamental role of the networks[3] of organizations in exerting their power, since the network made up by a great number of associations can group enough resources to influence decisively the formation of political process.

The solidity of networks and their duration can be a crucial factor that affects social control. Some networks are mere temporary coalitions of organizations that work together to achieve a goal; consensus is restricted to one or few issues, and conflicting situations may arise (Zald and McCarthy 1987). However, as far as multilevel organizations are concerned (that act on behalf of other associations which share the same interest), duration can be longer and effects more important. These kinds of networks have a greater chance to achieve effects on decisions and to exert influence on significant issues (Laumann and Knoke 1989). The ability to control political agenda is one of the greatest sources of power, since it entails the possibility to establish national resource allocation.

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[3] Different authors named these kinds of aggregation in several ways; Kadushin (1968) defines them as "social circles", Perucci e Pilisuk (1970) call them "interorganizational resource networks", according to Laumann and Marsden (1979) they are collective actors. This diatribe about names reflects an important issue from a research point of view, that is the change of the nature of subjects that are the focus of investigation, introducing additional levels of complexity.

One of the American scholars that most analysed networks among organizations, Galaskiewicz (1985), asserts that the mobilization of organizational resources (necessary to cope with political influence) depends on existing interorganizational networks contextualized in the community of reference, as well as on links among organizations.

In line with the interorganizational linkages theory, Perrucci and Pilisuk (1970) argue that the exchange of leaders and managers[4] makes the access to other organizations' resources faster and more immediate. According to this theory, organizational leadership[5] plays a crucial role in the access to resources and in the positioning within political arenas.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the relationship between third sector organizations and political influence introduces the analysis of some concepts that are highly linked with the social and solidaristic nature of third sector organizations. In their article on the journal "Voluntas", Taylor and Warburton (2003) face the issue of the "democratizing function/capacity" of organizations. In a period in which modern welfares are experiencing a seeming loss of confidence in formal democratic process, along with the decrease in the joining to political parties and in the participation to vote, the role of third sector organizations in fostering democracy seems to be more and more the centre of attention. In some of his contributions, Giddens (2000) stated that third sector can "democratize" society, as well as Putnam's work was particularly influential in underlining the role of associations in strengthening civil norms and confidence that lie at the basis of effective governance (Putnam 1993; 2000). Some scholars proposed the idea of associative democracy as a suitable model for integrating representative democracy (Cohen and Rogers 1992). According to Taylor and Wilkinson (2001), third sector organizations contribute to democratic process in three main manners: i) firstly, by pointing out issues to the public attention and informing about political process, ii) secondly, by guaranteeing that all the several voices are listened to, within a pluralistic democracy, iii) thirdly, by directly involving citizens into public life.

Nevertheless, despite positive judgments, the contribution of third sector organizations in the democratization processes is not universally shared. For example, particularism of third sector, that is to say, attention to specific issues, and the fact that someone can exert greater influence than someone else, has been intended as an obstacle to democracy by certain scholars. Foley

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[4] Perrucci and Pilisuk (1970) define them as interorganizational leaders (leaders that carry out executive duties in more than one organization).
[5] Studies on interorganizational leaders and their capacity of influence were carried out by several authors, among others see Koch and Labovitz (1976).

and Edwards (1999), for instance, criticized the notions of civic society and authorized capital, which are often associated to this sector; they drew attention to the association exclusive potential. Kramer (1987) argued that, far from being the place of democratic organization, third sector provides several examples of strict oligarchic law. However, critics to their democratizing function suggest that third sector organizations could even distort democratic process by fostering particular interests and excluding some organizations from "the rules of the game".

In such a context, multilevel third sector organizations play the role of partners, who are required to be able to transform the general vision of the sector into a medium long term agenda of incidence.

The partner role carried out by multilevel associations is one of their main tasks, since it allows to facilitate the relationship with other social actors, to develop a long term agenda for guidance, to create channels so that different subjects can take part into the debate of the sector, and to channel and make resources more effective.

3.   Model and hypothesis

This article will focuses on that function of the third sector which is not purely tied to delivery service, but it is rather more oriented to political influence and advocacy actions.

Particular empirical attention will be paid to the matter of political influence, by proposing an analysis of the conditions connected with political influence of third sector organizations both in Italy and Spain through the QCA technique (Qualitative Comparative Analysis). There are a few researches that centre on the examination of political influence in third sector umbrella organizations, although one of the main missions of such world is just the political influence aimed at better representing affiliate organizations interests. Those kinds of research have pointed out that some organizational characteristics (management, dimension, age, fund sources, human resources, etc.), as well as some aspects of the organizational culture integrated within the leadership role, and some aspects of the relations within the alliances, can contribute to define a more or less influencing organization. This analysis takes into account some particular conditions, such as ruling class expertise, partners of alliances, cultural orientation of the organization, structural dimension and national context of reference. These conditions contribute, in terms of combinations, to reflect upon the combinations of conditions which make third sector umbrella organizations influencing and, consequently, which see that their positions are adopted and turn from claims into practices.

Hypothesis A: which are the combinations of conditions which make the third sector umbrella organizations influencing and, consequently, which see that their positions are adopted and turn from claims into practices?

The conditions chosen on the basis of the reference literature concern:

1. ruling class expertise (EXP);
2. partners of alliances (ALL);
3. cultural orientation of the organization (CUL);
4. structural dimension (STR);
5. context (CON).

According to QCA, the relation is made explicit in the following expression:

Hypothesis A: So = f (EXP; ALL; CUL; STR; CON)

In particular, this study aims at investigating the hypothesis that follow:

Hypothesis 1: *Organization leader's expertise (EXP)*
So=f(EXP;CON)

Expertise is expressed through the construction of a competence index of the organization's leader, resulting from the average of calibrations of degree[6], years of experience in the organization[7], and previous working experiences into third sector[8].

Hypothesis 2: *Partners of alliances (AL)*
So=f(ETERG;POCO;CON)

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[6] The questionnaire proposes the following scale for degrees: 1= no degree or elementary school certificate, 2=middle school certificate or training course, 3=high school diploma, 4=university undergraduate degree, 5= university postgraduate degree, 6=nr. Calibration was carried out as follows, by considering degree as the point of inflection (.5): population was divided into graduate and non-graduate, according to criteria of belonging to this characteristic.

[7] Years of experience in the organization, included years of voluntary work within the organization itself, were calibrated through the following thresholds produced by the analysis of clusters of the software Tosmana, 9-18, 5-29,5 (see figure in the following page).

[8] Previous working experiences were calibrated through a scale ranging from 0 to 1, in which 1 represents non profit or third sector, 8 public sector, 6 political sector, 0 profit sector. Thus, previous job experiences turn into the characteristic of an experiential curriculum in third sector.

Heterogeneity (ET)

As regards the typology of the subjects with whom the umbrella organization collaborates in order to construct an alliance, organizations were asked to specify what kind of actors were involved in their **last three alliances**. Actors were placed in a scale in which 0 identifies non profit sector organizations (null level of heterogeneity), and 1 represents profit organizations (full level of heterogeneity). The degrees of belonging to the characteristic of heterogeneity were defined according to the four-value scale fuzzyQCA, both for a single and all three alliances.

TABLE 1. Heterogeneity fuzzyQCA values

	fQCA Value	
non profit organizations	0	non heterogeneous (organizations that do not show heterogeneity)
public organizations	0.33	almost non heterogeneous (organizations that show heterogeneity in a single alliance)
political organizations	0.67	almost heterogeneous (organizations that show heterogeneity in two alliances)
profit organizations	1	heterogeneous (organizations that show heterogeneity in three alliances)

The define score is established as follows:

111➔heterogeneous;	1
110➔almost heterogeneous;	0.67
————————————————	.5
001➔almost non heterogeneous;	0.33
000➔ non heterogeneous;	0

Policy community (POCO)

As far as partnerships are concerned, this study aims at checking the presence of public sector as actor in the creation of alliances in order to define these latter as follows:

1. Policy community (alliances imply the presence of political sector) 1
2. Single issue network (alliances do not imply the presence of political sector, but they are oriented towards the object of the alliance) 0

The overall score was determined as follows:

111→policy community	1
011→	0.67
────────────────────────	.5
001→	0.33
000→single issue network	0

Hypothesis 3: *Cultural orientation of the organization*
So=f(STATO;PRAGM;CON)

Cultural dimension of interviewees was defined according to two different dimensions:

Market-State Axis
Questions proposed to the interviewees are placed in a scale ranging from 1 to 6, where 1 groups answers within a market logic (privatization, competition, customer satisfaction, etc.), and 6 collects answers within a state logic (public funding, controlled externalization, etc.). An average of values attributed to each organization was carried out in order to determine the grater or lower closeness to the two logics of thought.

Pragmatism-Idealism Axis
Two kinds of questions were proposed to the interviewees aimed at defining two factors: on the one hand, the expectations about any possible action that public sector should have carried out in order to sustain third sector umbrella organizations; on the other hand, any possible action that umbrella organizations (together with other kinds of partners) should have carried out in order to better guarantee the role of interlocution. Answers were placed in a scale ranging from pragmatism to idealism, according to the closeness or distance that the above mentioned actions showed towards the political platforms of the government in office (PSOE for Spain and Il Popolo delle Libertà for Italy).

TABLE 2. Pragmatism-Idealism fuzzyQCA values

	fQCA Value	
ideals	0	organizations that present three external actions to government platform
almost ideals	0.33	organizations that present three external and one internal action to government platform
almost pragmatic	0.67	organizations that present two internal and one external action to government platform
pragmatic	1	organizations that present three internal actions to government platform

Hypothesis 4: *structural dimension*
So=f(EFFIC;ORGSENIOR;AMPIEZZA;CON)

As regards the structural dimension, the study carried out a collection of data concerning the year of birth of the organization, the number of workers and volunteers of umbrella organization (referring not to macro data, but to the structure of umbrella organization), turnover, and the number of affiliates (called internal network).

Furthermore, an index of efficiency was developed as follows:
Turnover / human resources (workers + volunteers)

4. Method

As far as the analysis of the political influence conditions is concerned, the method of Qualitative comparative Analysis (fuzzyQCA) was taken into account.

The comparative method applied to social sciences, as regards case-study[9] in particular, is defined, at methodological level, as a qualitative technique, and specifically as a technique that tries to identify similarities and differences

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[9] The case-study is therefore an investigative approach that is deeply rooted into social sciences tradition. This method has experienced ups and downs, mainly due to the changeable positions that emerged from the quality-quantity debate in social sciences. Nowadays, in a more tolerant atmosphere towards methodological pluralism, case-study research is rediscovered in the framework of an overall revaluation of qualitative orientations in different disciplines (sociology, social psychology, political sciences, etc.) (Caltabiano 2006).

concerning some particular case-studies (Ragin 2008). Such method is based on some unavoidable methodological pillars, such as:

- Becoming familiar with the cases object of study;
- Examine similar and/or different models that arise from the cases in order understand their diversity (Ragin 2008).

Even though the huge value of its applicability within mainly explorative research was acknowledged, this method is often connected with some critical "methodological stereotypes" which cannot be investigated in this paper. Among the most widespread stereotypes, it is worth mentioning: a) theoretical knowledge (independent of the context) is more well-grounded than practice knowledge (dependent of the context); b) a single case-study cannot contribute to scientific advancement, since it is not possible to generalize starting from a single particular case of study; c) case-study is useful to develop hypothesizes, while other methods are more suitable for checking hypothesizes and building theories; d) case-study tends towards "verification", that is to say, it tends to confirm notions already formulated by scholar, and, finally, e) it is difficult to extrapolate and develop general theories from particular case-studies (Flyvbjerg 1998).[10]

Ragin sums up the main characteristics of the oriented approach into four fundamental points, collected in the book "Redesigning Social Inquiry" (2008): a) set of relations against correlations, b) calibration against measurement, c) configuration of conditions against independent variables, d) analysis of causal complexity against analysis of net effects.

The Case Oriented represents an ideal method for our research, since it combines:

1. knowledge of cases through the analysis of Italian and Spanish contexts;
2. absence of a reference theory entails that the research is not aimed at supporting or confuting a certain theory, but rather at proposing new scenarios and interesting considerations.

Information retrieval has implied distribution, collection and analysis of questionnaires addressed to the leaders of both Italian (tab.3) and Spanish (tab. 4) third sector umbrella organizations.

Umbrella organization *(Reference population)* refers to those realities that include other associative realities, tied by relations and functions that vary according to the cases: the former are placed at a higher coordinative level in comparison with the latter (second or higher level) (Rossi and Boccacin 2006).

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[10] Among the most significant steps of comparative research, we can distinguish: 1) case selection, 2) choice of the theoretical reference framework, 3) analysis of the different models (Ragin 1992).

In order to identify the reference population, attention was paid not on the hierarchic factor of responsibility of managerial functions (distinctive functions between organization and its affiliates); rather the research selected those umbrella organizations that specify their political influence function in terms of representation and communicative channel with other social agencies, in particular with the public ones, and that represent the identity of both Italian and Spanish third sector. The dilemma between hierarchic rank or different type of functions passes through the identification of the specific function of political influence and representation.

The interviewees were required to answer to four questions, placed in a range from 1 to 6, referred to each organization of the population, with the following objects:
1. general judgment on the capacity to exert influence upon political process in order to better represent associates' interests; (Infl)
2. capacity to access to political arenas, conceived as decision-making places and rooms for planning public policies; (A)
3. capacity to clearly define one's own positions; (C)[11]
4. capacity to manage the adoption of one's own positions, fostered as representation of the associates. (S)

In this design, the general judgement on the political influence (Infl) of organizations, defined in compliance with interviewees' representation, undertakes a clear constructive value that is kept under control by comparing this judgement with the solution of the three conditions which make up its dimension, access, clarity and success (A,C,S). The solution, defined as solution of outcome (So), will become the real outcome against which the

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[11] Ferris et al (1989) suggests that influencing behaviour is more suitable for ambiguous environments. Ambiguity can be defined as the absence of information. When ambiguity is great, the individual may have few indications to which he can orient his behaviour. In the author's opinion, the lack of clear behavioural indications leads to a greater chance of fostering one's interest. According to Ferris et al, when situation is ambiguous (that is when there are no clear criteria of evaluation) emphases is often put on the subjective criteria of decision-taking. The importance of ambiguity in the use of strategies of influence has been strengthened by the results of several studies. The degree of formalization in the organizations is closely connected with ambiguity. Formalized procedures are useful to reduce ambiguity, exercising greater controls over behaviour. Mintzberg (1983), in one of his research, demonstrated that political behaviour becomes weaker in formalized organizations.

maps of meanings, built up with the chosen conditions and connected to political influence, are compared.

According to the language of QCA, So = f (C,A,S).

The interviewee was asked to express judgements of influence both on the organizations involved in the study, and on his own political influence, here shifting into the dimension of self-perception.

The conditions connected with political influence were collected in two different manners: those concerning leadership, strategic alliances, state/market cultural orientation, expectations and actions towards governments were collected through the distribution of the above-mentioned questionnaires; conditions dealing with structural data, on the other hand, through the compilation of forms which asked information about organization age, volume of human resources (workers and volunteers), turnover, size, and territorial distribution of the inner network (how many associates). Nine questionnaires were given to leaders of nine Italian and Spanish umbrella organizations between March and September 2010.

Given the reference population of this research, the notion of political influence was developed thorough the same process of creation of the social reality and, consequently, it puts forward personal conditions. The methodological ground of reference fully takes into account the meaning of political influence that the interviewees attributed by answering to the given questions. Such line of thinking can be also found in the construction of the interviews that gave witnesses a wide space both for adding complexity and defining new meanings to analyse.

TABLE 3 – Italian non profit umbrella organizations

Organization	Acronym	Location
Consorzio Gino Mattarelli	CgM	Brescia
Associazione ricreativa e culturale italiana	Arci	Rome
Federsolidarietà	Federsolidarietà	Rome
Associazione per l'autogestione dei servizi e la solidarietà – Auser	Auser	Rome
Centro servizi volontariato	Csv net	Rome
Compagnia delle opere (opere sociali)	Cdo	Milan
Legacoop social	Legacoop sociali	Rome
Associazione nazionale pubbliche assistenze	Anpas	Rome
Associazioni cristiane dei lavoratori italiani	Acli	Rome

TABLE 4 – Spanish non profit umbrella organizations

Organization	Acronym	Location
Plataforma De Ong De Acción Social	Plataforma	Madrid
Federación de residencias y servicios de atención a los mayores del sector solidario	Lares	Madrid
Cruz Roja	Cruz Roja	Madrid
Coordinadora de Ong para el Desarrollo	Coordinadora	Madrid
Confederación Empresarial Española de Economía Social	Cepes	Madrid
Caritas	Caritas	Madrid
Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles	Once	Madrid

5. Results

The privileged witnesses break down influence and give importance to two factors, access to decision-making areas (specifying sense and meaning), and clarity. As far as access is concerned, leaders claim the importance of being in decision-making places, but they highlight the need to have an active and propositional role in those arenas, in order to participate with force to the dynamics that arise during negotiation.

Clarity as well is viewed as a fundamental component to start incisive actions of political influence. Spanish leaders clearly express this concept, while Italian leaders do not, maybe because the current stage of Spanish third sector establishes more definitely the places of negotiation for all the parties at stake. An important contribution is also provided by the debate on social economy that fosters a deep remark on the interlocutory forms of the sector.

Furthermore, Spanish ruling class recognizes and intercepts the successfulness of influence actions not in the capacity to define public agenda, but rather in the ability to hierarchize priorities, that is the possibility to draw the attention of political class on certain issues.

The matter of political influence stakes the dimension of alliances and undertakes a cohesive role within the sector, thus introducing that dimension which acts as a glue among the various interpretations of the concept of alliances.

The analysis of the conditions connected with political influence takes into account the following hypothesis of research:

Hypothesis 1: Organization leader's expertise
HYPOTHESIS

So=f(EXP;CON)
SOLUTION 1: *(~italian*compet)*
COMPETENT ORGANIZATION

The meaning of the above solution can be explained as follows: competence is a condition connected with political influence.

Hypothesis 2: Partners of alliances (AL)
HYPOTHESIS
So=f(ETEROG;POCO;CON)
SOLUTION 2: *(~italian* heterog)*
NON-HETEROGENEOUS ORGANIZATION

The proposed solution point out how non-heterogeneity, thus the alliance with subjects belonging to the same sector, can represent a condition connected with political influence. Non-heterogeneity can be understood as cohesion of system/sector that implies and needs advanced remarks when defining identity and common denominator.

Hypothesis 3: Cultural orientation of the organization
HYPOTHESIS
So=f(STATE;PRAGM;CON)
SOLUTION 3: *(~italian*~state*~pragm)*
CONCRETE ORGANIZATION

The logic of solution points out how political influence is associated with market culture and pragmatism, to such an extent that the organizations marked by these combinations can be defined concrete. Pragmatism is also conceived as an alignment of both agendas (third sector and state ones), but it does not solve a problem arisen by the interviewees, that is the capacity to transform "the schedule of priorities".

Hypothesis 4: Structural dimension
HYPOTHESIS
So=f(EFFIC;CON)
SOLUTION 4: *(~italian*~effic)*
FLEXIBLE ORGANIZATION

HYPOTHESIS
So=f(ORGSENIOR;SIZE;CON)
SOLUTION 5:

(~italian*size) + (~italian*orgsenior)
SOLID ORGANIZATION

The solution points out that the age of the organization and the size of its internal network can be positively connected with political influence. This confirms the theories that consider the age of the organization as deeply related to the reference context in terms of policies that can favour or inhibit, in a sense, the actions of advocacy and influence. The size of the organization, conceived as a weight aimed at social consensus, is important as for the mobilization of resources.

At last, final conditions were renamed according to the solutions emerged from the conditions tested in the next step. Then, tests were conducted on the conditions that define an organization as competent (with a level above the threshold of the index of competence), homogeneous (thus with sectorial partnerships), concrete (with alliances concerning objects in line with national government agendas), flexible (for which the criterion of efficiency should be reviewed), and solid (rooted in the territory and with a wide network of organizations.

FINAL HYPOTHESIS
## PInfl=f(competent;homogeneous;concrete;flexible;solid)

TABLE 5 - Final data base

Idorg	Pinfl	Comp	Homog	Conc	Flex	Solid	min1	min2	Sol
CGM	0	0	0	0	0	0,08	0	0	0
ARCI	0	0	0	0	0	0,9	0	0	0
FEDERS	0,01	0	0	0	0	0,9	0	0	0
AUSER	0,01	0	0	0	0	0,12	0	0	0
CSV	0	0	0	0	0	0,02	0	0	0
CDO	0,64	0	0	0	0	0,31	0	0	0
LEGA	0,01	0	0	0	0	0,53	0	0	0
ANPAS	0	0	0	0	0	0,99	0	0	0
ACLI	0	0	0	0	0	0,98	0	0	0
PLATAF	0,77	0,67	1	0	0,96	0,03	0,03	0,67	0,67
LARES	0	0,58	0	0,01	0	0,02	0	0	0

CRUZ ROJA	0,89	0,67	0,67	0,1	0,09	1	0,67	0,09	0,67
COORDIN	0,84	0,87	0,67	0,1	0,94	0,08	0,08	0,67	0,67
CEPES	0,97	0,96	1	0,01	0,21	1	0,96	0,21	0,96
CARITAS	0,92	0,7	1	0,75	0,02	0,88	0,7	0,02	0,
ONCE	0,99	0,93	0,67	0,67	0,97	0,79	0,67	0,67	0,67

FINAL SOLUTION
Don't Care: -
INTERMEDIATE SOLUTION

	raw coverage	unique coverage	consistency
	----------	----------	----------
solid*homogeneous*competent	0.514050	0.332231	1.000000
flexible*homogeneous*competent	0.385124	0.203306	1.000000

solution coverage: 0.717355
solution consistency: 1.000000
(solid*homogenous*competent) + (flexible*homogeneous*competent)
Homogeneous*competent*(solid+flexible)

FIGURE 1. *Graph of the solution*
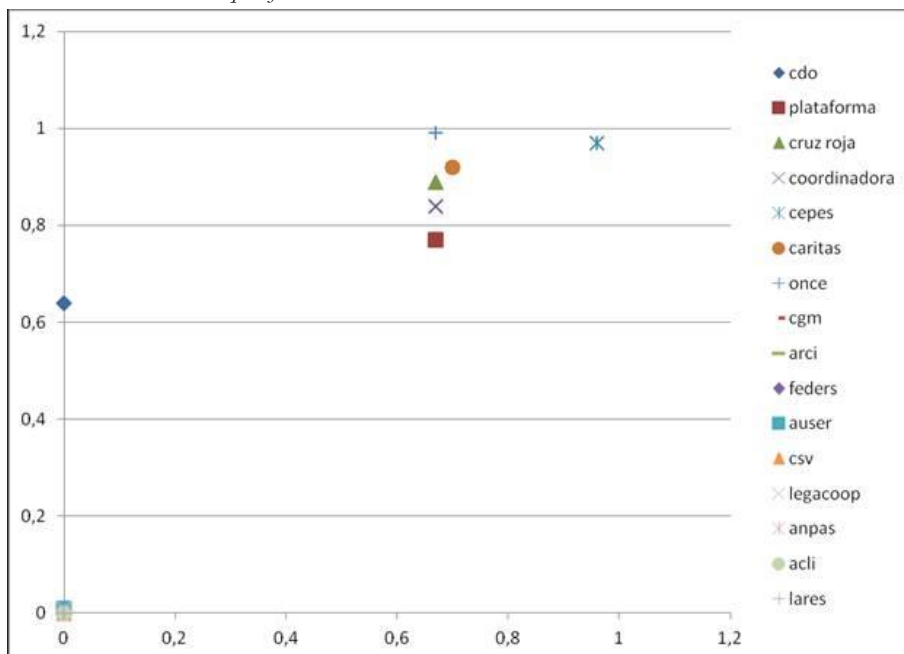
*Homogeneous*competent*(solid + flexible)*

Within the proposed solution, both necessary and *sufficient* parts are present. That is to say, homogeneous and competent are the two necessary conditions of the solution, which imply but do not explain political influence, while solidity and flexibility are the two final sufficient fair conditions. Being sufficient, these latter two conditions explain political influence, but only in the presence of the necessary conditions that allow phenomenon to occur.

Going back to cases and examining the sufficient conditions that led to solution, it can be noticed that half of its organizations are solid: thus they have a certain size (concerning the number of affiliates) and a certain "organizational age", here intended as years of presence on territory, and, consequently, years of work aimed at creating a social position within the reference community (in this case the connection with legitimacy is strong).

As far as Italian organizations are concerned for instance, solidity actually corresponds to the four "older" organizations, whose level of representation reflects the information provided by both Rossi and Boccacin's research of 2006 about multilevel organizations and Colozzi and Prandini's study of 2008 on third sector leaders.

Arci, Federsolidarietà and Acli, in fact, perfectly embody those umbrella organizations which have a clear and explicit function of political influence in terms of representation and communicative channel with other social agencies, public above all (Sorrentino 2002). Moreover, these organizations evidence, also at higher levels, the three distinctions proposed within the research on third sector leaders: voluntary organization, cooperation and social promotion. Besides having a legal value, such distinction probably represents the organizational culture fostered by third sector leadership, and, thus, it points out a different value assumption supported by both the Second Vatican Council and the 1968 student movement. Spanish third sector organizations solidity, on the other hand, highlights the defining dichotomy concerning the distinction between *tercer sector de acción social* and social economy.

The first group includes Once, Caritas and Cruz Roja, that is to say the part of third sector that characterized political transition and was in the front line during Spanish welfare state constitution at the end of Francoist dictatorship. Cepes, on the other hand, represents social economy solidity, thus, the innovative part that includes experiences such as those of *Mondragón* and of *Sociedades laborales*, prominent figures of the Spanish economic crisis in the 1980s.

Interesting data comes from the condition of flexibility, intended as an alternative characteristic to organisational efficiency. As far as third sector

organizations are concerned, the notion of flexibility provides some additional information in comparison with those that could be provided by the concept of inefficiency. Flexibility means concretization of the two essences of third sector organizations: enterprise and political/social movement. It is also a possible way of analysing the complexity of third sector structures that pursue a number of different aims. Flexibility, in addition, allows to interpret structure not only through an "economic operator" logic, according to which profit maximization becomes the fundamental criterion, but it proposes a remark on the peculiarities at stake. Flexibility is not so evident if we consider conditions resulting from final analysis, which may be better understood looking at the table of initial conditions. Arci and Anpas are surely the most flexible organizations, along with Once, while Acli, Cruz Roja and Caritas perform high level of efficiency.

A look to the conditions of homogeneity and competence can help us to better complete the overview. As far as heterogeneity is concerned, and thus the degree of sectorial differentiation of partners with whom alliances are established on objects considered as essential, Arci and Federsolidarietà exceed the threshold, so they have a high level of heterogeneity that excludes them from the homogeneous organizations category; Anpas and Acli, on the other hand, fully fall into the group of homogeneous, as well as the four Spanish organizations. As for competence, on the other hand, and thus those characteristics that most regard leadership, the situation appear to be different, especially in certain organizations. The levels of competence of Federsolidarietà are high, but Arci, for example, is almost totally non-competent, and Anpas and Acli, on the contrary, are borderline cases of the threshold (.5), thus with little explicative power. Spanish organizations still perform high values.

The proposed solution is explicative for all the organizations involved in the study, since all of them are above the diagonal. Being above the diagonal means that the relation between sufficiency and necessity is observed by all the organizations, which consequently prove to be not two separate populations, but rather they represent different degrees of belonging to the overall politically influencing organizations. The choice of constructing a single database and, thus, of trying to examine Italian and Spanish organizations within the same database, allowed to highlight some differences by entering the contextual variable into the analysis from time to time, without taking it for granted.[12]

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[12] This methodological choice was shared and supported by Professor Ragin, who entirely followed the phases of data processing.

By this way, the analysis brings out a particular case such as that of Cdo, which keeps the level of political influence high, but it does not share the solution with the rest of the organizations. In order to clarify the political influence of Cdo, it needs to introduce other conditions and explications that were not considered in this study but that confer it a high value.

Thus, the proposed solution shows some similarities and differences between Spanish and Italian organizations: however, the former result to be influencing, while the latter do not. As far as Cdo is concerned, on the other hand, the explication of influence requires additional investigation.

The graph (fig. 2), that brings out the distribution of cases on solution, highlights two organizations that were considered completely belonging to the group of those totally influencing.

Cepes is the organization that represents the enterprises of social economy. It is the reference point for other organizations such as cooperatives, *Sociedades Laborales*[13], National Health Services, employment agencies[14], job integration agencies[15], fisher corporation[16], and disables associations. Cepes, by definition, was constituted with the main purpose of being the "platform" of institutional dialogue with public body. It integrates social economy organizations for an overall 2.350.000 workers and 11.000.000 affiliates. Economic advancement, protection of affiliates' common interests, and influence in the development of public policies and in both national and international law, are its characterizing purposes that materialize in the three strategic aims of the *Plan Estratégico de la Organización* 2009-2012: social interlocution, external visibility, and internal cohesion. These are purposes that unite levels of internal governance and external representation, that legitimize the organization from inside (representation is carried out by sharing actions and methods with all the affiliates through technical tables of discussion), and make it a cohesive interlocutor towards outside world. In the last few years, the presence of Cepes within the institutional state and international dialogue has greatly developed. One of its strategic purposes is increasing its active presence in the significant places where interlocution takes

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[13] In this kind of enterprise, most of the capital belongs to the workers, who are associates as well. Their modalities of constitution make them similar to commercial companies.

[14] They are enterprises that are made up for 70% by disable people, which develop such a production and competition capacity that allows them to introduce their products into the market.

[15] They are enterprises that are aimed at job integration of disable people through the development and learning of productive and working activities.

[16] They are corporations of public law that represent the economic interests of the fishing sector.

place, in order to influence law constitution and public policies in all of its areas. Through Cepes, Spanish social economy takes part into some important national bodies such as the *Consejo Económico y Social, Consejo de Fomento de la Economía Social MTIN, Cosejo de Cooperación AECID Ministeri Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación* etc. The main institutional activities that characterize its actions gave it a fundamental role in putting forward proposals about economic crisis, in order to sustain and foster the law on social economy and strategies for increasing employment during economic crisis. Moreover, Cepes works in order to improve the funding system of social economy enterprises, thus broadening the objects of its strategic work. Among the alliances that it proposes, the last three suggested by the chairman concern the necessary measures to face economic crisis (access to job, corporative social responsibility, teaching to low-trained people, etc.), law bill on social economy (approved at the end of 2010) and measures for the introduction of disadvantaged people into the job market. The resulting alliances lead to the creation of partnerships with political entities (parties, trade unions), since they fall within the concept of social dialogue that distinctly emerges in the interviewees' words. In the questionnaire the chairman clearly expresses the priority of creating political coordinated lobbies, both at state level and in Autonomous Communities, defining clear purposes, positions and empowering alliances with organizations. The dimension of political influence, as it is conceived in this study, is made explicit in Cepe's words and practices so as to be considered one of the most influencing organizations at national level.

Once, on the other hand, is a no-profit corporation, whose mission is the improvement of the standard of living of blind people. It is an institution that defines itself as social and democratic, which cooperates with state (*Ministerios de Economía y Hacienda, Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad, e Interior*) and public administrations that are part of its objects of work. The solidaristic compromise, as traditional value of Once, materializes through the *Fundación Once para la Cooperación e Inclusión Social de Personas con Discapacidad*, funded with 3% of the incomes deriving from the sale of game products (coupon and lottery). The main purpose of this initiative is the integration of disable people, through employment and education. The chief government bodies are Patronage (made up by 35 people), the Permanent Commission, and the Management Committee. The network activity that involves Once, Foundations, and the group of enterprises Fundosa, is structured with agreements, conventions, and collaborations with public administrations at different levels: local, autonomous communities and state. Such collaborations develop more than 115.000 employments, direct and indirect, and they

independently satisfy the demand of more than 70.000 Spanish blind and disable people.

The supervision and control function on the activities of Once is under exclusive jurisdiction of government, through the *Consejo de Protectorado de la Once*, in which the Ministries of Sanidad y Política Social, Economía y Hacienda, e Interior, along with a wide representation of Once takes part. Such an intense relation with public sphere affects the sector of employment and education as well as the monitoring and checking activities, but it does not imply a financial dependence, as occurs in many other third sector organizations. Most of Once's incomes, in fact, derive from private sources that make it independent from an economic point of view. Economic independence, in fact, is considered one of the most important purposes by organizations' leaders, as well as innovation and visibility.

Both organizations described have a strong representative identity, Cepes as mouthpiece of social economy, and Once as mouthpiece of disability: this factor marks the alliances that they establish as deeply tied to objects. Both Once and Cepes are involved in forms of European representation that makes them significant actors also in an institutional international framework. Both organizations foster the improvement of communication and transparency modalities, conceived as an intense relation with the media and a showcase through which consensus and supports can increase. Both organizations continuously interact and often conclude agreements that intersect both interest systems.

Political influence, as intended in the research, finds a complete explanation in the cases of study. The issues of alliances, relation modalities with public sphere, and identity dimension expressed by the notion of economic independence, preponderantly arise. Two different ways of interacting with state may be hypothesized: Cepes more evidently plays the role of influencing actor on public sphere, which implies, however, both legislative and technical proposals; Once, on the other hand, mainly brings out the consultative dimension through which agreements, conventions, etc. develop, giving wider margin to it "claiming essence". This distinction may suggest that the effective political influence does not depend on the nature of relations, but rather on characteristics concerning an internal thinking activity, which directs strategies, purposes and tools, and that makes the organization a prominent partner. In the attempt to answer to some questions arisen in the *Libro verde del terzo settore* (2010), the analysis resulting from this thesis points out the need for an unique sector representation, aimed at creating and empowering a common thought; the excessive fragmentation of the representation modalities necessarily requires a strong identity at a more

general level, in order to avoid forms of representation lacking of a full awareness of their rights and duties.

Therefore, the purpose of defining the arenas that fall under the jurisdiction of representation highlighted by the Forum, is certainly a challenge to accept, proposing the involvement of the organizations in determining those sector priorities that allow to exert a common shared action.

6. Discussion

Relations between third sector and state, conceived in their most "claiming" connotation of advocacy, point out a new concept of relations as modalities of co-construction of spaces of discussion aimed at the creation of political agendas. Let's hope that reasoning on these issues that unit the sector may fight against the dimension, confused with intermediary nature, that gives broad space to individualism and to the logics that consider third sector tied to the 1980s tradition, based on professionalization, know-out, and outsourcing. In this sense, the claiming dimension encourages to think about mission, ideal nature, motivation, and third sector ruling class which seems to have acquired strong bureaucratization and competence, but which apparently has obscured the ideal origin and support to social basis that transforms managers into organizational leaders. Political influence affects and emphasises some dimensions considered also within empirical analysis and that can be summarized in these three simple concepts: leadership, relation and structure.

In conclusion, the matter of political influence gave the chance to discuss again identity issue, creating a profitable liaison and giving raise to a remark on the meaning of actions and practices carried out. The importance of identity arises not only when reflecting upon thirds sector model which one identifies with (instituting or non- instituting subject, voluntary model or entrepreneurship, social economy or *acción social* etc.), but mainly when this dimension intersects with the representation of both a) the organizations composing the sector, conceived by leaders as a gap between social basis and board, and b) subjects, needs, and issues that lack in public debates and are represented at national levels by umbrella organizations. Right this latter meaning clearly expresses the remarks on political influence that structures its components in internal management (how to involve the various subjects constituting third sector in order to make it uniform and lend the correct weight to the different organizational forms and size of third sector bodies), and external management, addressed to the systemic nature that is considered insufficient by leaders themselves. According to them, the systemic nature seems to be tied to the research of a common denominator, to the

identification of some issues that go beyond the peculiarities of each single organizational form and that become the objects on which cohesion and alliances can be constructed. Such objects have an essential and overriding weight and nature, and they become indefeasible elements for the sector. In particular, some considerations presented in the *Libro verde del terzo settore* (2010) and confirmed by the data on Italian organizations political influence, raise the difficulty connected with the little incidence on public sphere, little social communication and weakness in the relation with politics that autonomously establishes Italian public agenda. Spanish leaders, in fact, more explicitly express requirements, tools, actions, and places where influence occurs, and they outline the importance of social communication and of the presence and use of media as one of the main actions, or rather strategic purposes within their plan (such as in the case of Cepes). Access, clarity and success (the three dimensions that contributed to create the outcome proposed in the QCA analysis) are generally intercepted by leaders, but they are made more explicit by Spanish ones, who stress the importance of decision-making arenas, clarity of positions and arguments to deal with, in order to start influence actions that can be successful only when they manage to hierarchize priorities and, thus, foreground third sector issues and objects to the political class. Italian leaders do not agree with this opinion: they emphasize, on the contrary, a sort of resignation and semblance of normality, the intermittent presence or absence of third sector organizations in places of discussion. It can be assumed that the genesis of Spanish third sector is undoubtedly based on the nature of rights protection, on the claiming character opposed to a dictatorship that made a clean sweep of any free associative expression lying outside those imposed by the regime. Despite the events that bring it closer to Italian context, such character seems to be still close and it apparently led to some remarks on political influence, such as the kind of representation (federal or cross-party) as in the case of Cepes. This association represents different types of organizations which share the manner of carrying out political economy, the social nature, and the meaning of networks and relations that take place, such as in the case of Once, which supports and sponsors groups of enterprises that deal with job integration.

Solidity[17] and flexibility[18], sufficient conditions for political influence, raise again the remark on internal cohesion and community adherence: such conditions can be easily inserted in the whole above mentioned debate on identity and representation, and they conceive the importance of internal dimension in its different meanings (numeric and supporting). Necessary

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[17] Conceived as number and age (senior) of the organization.
[18] Intended as the ratio of turnover to human resources.

conditions, on the other hand, refer to the dynamics of relations and leadership in term of competence. This case, as well, points out the aspects of organizational structure that becomes explicit in the figure of leader, as asserted by interviewees, and in the kind of subjects with whom partnerships are carried out.

What is shared by the outcomes of both analysis seems to be something connected with identity concept, intended as union among structural components (solidity and flexibility), democratizing capacity and legitimacy. These elements express an identity sense that fosters a high synthesis of different cultures and practices, capacity to transform plurality into value, to contaminate and enrich each other in common action: this is a good to preserve, not at all aside from contents and peculiarities, but through the constant check of shared values and purposes. For this reason legitimacy depends on a stable political subjectivity that involves third sector in claiming actions of one's autonomy as integrated social part in the national system.

The role played by the ruling class becomes extremely meaningful; third sector leaders need to perform a "strategic understanding and capacity", a perspective dimension that allows them to read, interpret and foresee trends of change occurring in the civil society and, thus, conditioning the context in which third sector acts.

Efforts and abilities required to third sector ruling class, as representatives, cannot disregard the involvement of all parties at stake, public sphere in particular, as occurring in whatever form of bidirectional relation. Without new forms of participation (non-fictitious) and representation (managed not in a vice-like grip), an authentic and plausible symmetric relation cannot take place. In order to sustain new forms of social representation which have unavoidably enriched that of traditional intermediate bodies, responsibility of national, regional and local public policies lies in the boost towards the achievement of a real active society, in which the connective tissue of citizenship, often attributed to behaviours and private relations of variable number of citizens, reveals itself as "public good".

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