Article

The Trajectories That Remain to Be Told: Civic Participation, Immigrant Organizations, and Women's Leadership in Portugal

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Abstract: This study focuses on migrant women and their civic participation in civil society organizations and/or immigrant associations. Despite women's migration having a long global history and being of academic interest, extensive knowledge of this situation has increased substantially in recent decades; research on the civic participation of immigrant women in Portugal is still incipient. The structural conditions affecting these women's mobility processes remain overlooked, concealing their vulnerabilities. Additionally, success stories of migrant women, which could serve as inspirations for others, are often invisible. This exploratory research examines the role of female immigrant leaders and the demands they face in facilitating immigrants' integration into Portuguese society. Eight qualitative interviews were conducted with diverse immigrant organizations in Portugal, advocating for immigrant rights and promoting integration through various strategies. The results reveal that migrant women's experiences and participation in leadership roles are shaped not only by their migrant background and their qualifications but also by the difficulties they encountered upon arrival in Portugal. These leaders tend to focus on constraints, particularly regarding the organization's sustainability, rather than emphasizing opportunities for civic participation. Nevertheless, this study also reveals that participation in IOs leads to increased autonomy and a heightened sense of empowerment for these women. It grants them a voice, visibility, and recognition both in the host society and their own communities. Overall, the study sheds light on the significance of recognizing immigrant women's contributions and challenges, as well as the crucial role played by immigrant organizations in promoting integration and advocating for immigrants' rights in Portugal. It also emphasizes the need for the government to financially support these organizations.

Keywords: immigration; organizations; women; citizenship; participation; leadership; Portugal

1. Introduction

Immigrant organizations (IOs) (Bloemraad et al. 2022) play an important role in society. IOs are defined as a collective group with a shared history, common goals, or a unifying identity that facilitates ongoing interactions or activities over time. The organization's presence is grounded in a defined purpose or mission, and its persistence requires a nominal structure or standard operating procedures, resources, and a network of affiliates for its sustainability (Bloemraad et al. 2022). They may be a nonprofit or a voluntary organization.

Ideally, civil society can accommodate and foster collective identities while promoting intergroup dialogue. Berry and colleagues (2006) consider that governments should provide support for migrant and ethnocultural community organizations to promote their ethnic identity and to encourage the active participation of immigrants in the daily life of the national society. They also assume that it is crucial to develop policies and programmes

for the general population to encourage their acceptance of cultural diversity and the participation of diverse peoples in the life of the larger society, in the belief that 'being involved in both cultures (integration) served to promote better psychological and sociocultural adaptation' (Berry et al. 2006, p. 327).

Some countries, like Portugal, assumed these added values and supported them in their formal edification (ACM 2015), assuming that they are inalienable rights and a driving force for civic participation and democratic learning. However, the theoretical and empirical knowledge of the transnational character of IOs led by women remains invisible. Migrant women's citizenship and how they have actively fostered social inclusion constitute a reflection and analysis that have not been studied and problematized, especially if we focus on the Portuguese context. Many studies have been conducted on IOs to understand their formation and maintenance by highlighting migrant groups' cultural characteristics and their experiences, needs (Horta 2002; Jardim and da Silva 2019; Sardinha 2009), and dynamics, and the importance that this assumes in the inclusion process, but not from a gender perspective. In addressing the gap in research on immigrant women who lead IOs (e.g., presidents and executive directors), it is important to incorporate expanded concepts of citizenship and civic participation within our theoretical framework, including immigration issues, gender dynamics, rights, and women's leadership in these organizations. Using a qualitative study, we focus on exploring immigrant women and their leadership roles in IOs. This paper seeks to capture the complexity of the tasks of women leaders of IOs and to identify the main gaps, constraints, and challenges in leading this kind of organization, contributing to migration and gender studies. The analysis will elucidate their sense of active citizenship, engagement, and participation in civic life, the relationship between gender, work, and political issues, and the state of these organizations in the country.

1.1. Immigration, Women, and Collective Action

International immigration has increased substantially in recent decades in Portugal. The country is currently a destination for immigrants from a considerable diversity of origins, languages, cultures, education, and backgrounds (Topa 2016), as well as at the level of the complexity of senses, meanings, and realities (individual, family, and social) (Oliveira 2022). Between 2016 and 2021, the number of foreign nationals legally residing grew steadily from 397.731 to 698.887, of whom 48.5% are women (SEF 2022).

In this article, we use the concept of the immigrant to characterize the action by which a person establishes their usual residence in the territory of an EU member state for a period that is or is expected to be at least 12 months, usually having previously been a resident in another EU member state or a third country (European Commission n.d.; IOM 2019). This is a concept used also by the Portuguese government (Oliveira 2022). Portugal follows the global trend of feminization (Jerónimo 2019; Oliveira and Gomes 2018) and/or the so-called genderisation of migration (Gil 2017; Yamanaka and Piper 2006). It can be seen that, within the foreign population, the number of women has always been high, but it has increased steadily during recent decades (Oliveira 2022). Certain nationalities of women, such as Angolan, Brazilian, Ukrainian, and Cape Verdean, still stand out with greater relative importance in the total number of residents of that nationality (Oliveira 2022). In terms of age, 60.4% of foreign women were concentrated in the age range of 20–49 years in 2020 (61% for foreign men), with these women being slightly more qualified than foreign men and registering percentages higher than the latter in higher education levels (12% have completed higher education) and medium education levels (27% have secondary and postsecondary education). However, in general, 28.6% still have the third level, and 16% are at the first educational level (Oliveira 2022). In fact, between 2011 and 2020, foreign workers with medium–higher education levels (with at least secondary education) increased over this decade, a gain of 123% for foreign workers with secondary and postsecondary education and 164.6% for workers with a bachelor's degree, graduate, or higher education (Oliveira 2022). Exact figures are difficult to obtain,

owing to the phenomenon of irregular migration, which, by its nature, is impossible to measure (Freedman 2008). However, the existing data challenge us to understand this situation and to discuss immigration dynamics from a gender perspective.

In the present day, the reasons that sustain women's migrations have another level of complexity (Morokvasic 1984). They are no longer being motivated solely by the search for a better life or family survival/reunification, as happened in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; in the contemporaneous world, women's immigration has become more autonomous and independent of family, institutional, and emotional networks (Oishi 2002; Topa 2016).

The settlement of immigrant communities in Portugal has also led to foreign groups taking important steps toward collective mobilization in defence of their causes, rights, and needs (Marques and Góis 2015; Sardinha 2009). Immigrant women have needs that may not be encompassed within the representation of immigrant men. Although immigrant women are often embedded in social interactions that place them at a social disadvantage or in intersectional discrimination (Dias and Gonçalves 2007; La Barbera 2012; Topa 2016), they do not assume a passive role (Miranda 2009). In Portugal, immigrant women have been active participants since the beginning of the feminization of migration pathways, developing various forms of resistance, and gendering the public space (Malheiros et al. 2010), albeit with little public visibility (Albuquerque 2005; Dornelas and Ribeiro 2018).

1.2. Civic Participation and Immigrant Organizations

Civic participation is broadly defined as any "voluntary activity focused on helping others, achieving a public good or solving a community problem, including work undertaken either alone or in cooperation with others in order to effect change" (Zani and Barrett 2012, p. 274). This can include membership in community organizations, church organizations, helping neighbours, or boycotting, among others (Zani and Barrett 2012).

The creation of IOs and participation in them are forms of civic and political engagement that act in the service of collective/community interests and social welfare (Pajnik and Bajt 2013; Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008; Zani and Barrett 2012). Nonprofit or voluntary organizations play an essential role in delivering social services, facilitating legal support, and advocating for policies that benefit immigrant communities. Additionally, they contribute to enhancing the religious, cultural, and recreational aspects of immigrants' lives (ACM 2015; Bloemraad et al. 2022). It is also a space for nongovernmental action, not at the service of market rules and profit (Sardinha 2009). In some cases, these organizations aim to contribute to meeting the very basic needs for the survival of the community, but, in other cases, they collaborate mainly in citizen training and political participation to promote human self emancipation and modify the structures that generate inequalities (Boje 2021; Cerqueira and Lamy 2017a).

Despite the great differences and some controversies between these organizations, their role as an integral part of civil society is recognized and legitimized. Furthermore, the dynamics of migration have contributed to them proliferating and becoming a space for citizen action.

The recognition of migrants as political and civic actors is relatively recent, and the gendered nature of these dynamics needs to be further investigated (Gabrielli et al. 2017; Kofman et al. 2000; McIlwaine and Bermúdez 2011; Yamanaka and Piper 2006). The participation of immigrant people in the public space, especially in decision making and leadership, is fundamental for their integration into society (ACM 2015). Therefore, participation in the logic of citizenship is an indispensable condition for building a more diverse society and for the exercise of democracy. In this sense, civil society organizations (of diverse types) allow immigrant people to act as social agents and participate in the processes of development of public policies that affect all dimensions of their lives (Fennema and Tillie 2001). Simultaneously, civil society organizations can foster habits of cooperation and 'public-spiritedness' (Putnam 2001, p. 338), foster social capital, address problems collectively and develop self organization in the public sphere, in addition to individual

autonomy (Alencar 2018; Warren 2001), which can be central to more active political participation. In the Portuguese context, the political, social, and civic mobilization of immigrants occurs essentially through civil organizations (Teixeira and Albuquerque 2005). Jardim and da Silva (2019) draw on various studies on IOs and their role in society to explain that they are central spaces for socialization, education, information, solidarity, and mediation with the society in which they find themselves, as well as for preserving and demonstrating their culture. Migrants' civic leadership develops as they assume that they are agents who can make a difference in their communities (Ahokas 2010; Ehrlich 2000; Watkins et al. 2012). Leadership can be considered by these women as a process of social influence (Albuquerque 2005; Omolayo 2007) in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of other immigrants to achieve common goals. They foster civic participation and function as sources of transnational contacts.

However, immigrants' opportunities for collective action and political activism are limited for various reasons. The increasingly restrictive immigration and asylum regimes of European states mean that many migrants now have no regular residence status or work permit in their host country. This irregularity limits activism, as it is more difficult and dangerous for migrants to occupy a visible place in the public sphere. They face specific barriers to achieving their rights, for example, concerning their more invisible labour-market presence within the sphere of domestic and care work (Freedman 2008). Immigration policies reinforce this position of dependency and the public–private divide which traditionally maintains migrant women and girls outside of the political arena (ENMW 2022). Moreover, employment conditions may also make it more difficult for migrants to organize or gain support from trade unions for any collective action. Even those migrants who do have residence documents may not benefit from full political rights, and this limited citizenship status can also be seen as a break from their political activism.

Immigrant women form a group that faces more than one type of marginalization from their identities as women and immigrants. Immigrant women have specificities that may not be encompassed within the representation of women or male immigrants. Their status as women can present further barriers to participation, such as different gender norms governing women's public life, and their multiple identities (e.g., nationality, colour, and age) can affect how they are perceived through the dominant culture's stereotypes (Crenshaw 1991; Topa 2021). For migrant women, unequal gender relations may add other obstacles to activism and civic participation, as they may be moving beyond their traditional gender roles in taking on active political stances (Freedman 2008). The European Network for Migrant Women report identifies that the principal obstacles to migrant women's political participation are driven by four principal frames: migrant women's precarious situation; the inertia of individuals and institutions; cultural underpinnings of discrimination and the doubt about migrant women's capacity and agency conceptualizing them as key agents of change at the social, political, cultural levels, and economic change (ENMW 2022).

Despite obstacles and difficulties in their collective action and mobilization, migrant women's activism and civic participation in Europe are clear; they are able to mobilize, claim recognition of their rights within the workplace, and obtain the legal right to live and work in their host country (Chuang and Le Bail 2020). Over time, women have demonstrated their value and abilities in addressing the challenges imposed by social dynamics (Pierli et al. 2022), deploying their powers to promote equality and social justice in a variety of ways (Cohen and Huffman 2007).

Migrant women's activism within Europe has tried to show both the obstacles to such activism and how migrant women have attempted to overcome these obstacles to impose themselves in the political sphere both at the national and the European level (Freedman 2008). One of the major issues for migrant women's activism in the coming years will be the increasingly restrictive asylum and immigration policies now being imposed within Europe. The challenge will be to try and find commonalities and efficient ways of organizing which

will allow migrant women to overcome the differences between them to provide a voice which might have an impact on European policymaking.

The immigrant associative movement has taken advantage of the European Union's political space, both in terms of the possibilities provided by the community support frameworks (Boje 2021) and in terms of the development of work methodologies related to the establishment of partnerships between nongovernmental organizations (aiming at social cohesion), to which IOs belong, and the state (Rudiger and Spencer 2003).

1.3. The Portuguese Context, Constraints and Challenges

All knowledge must be thought of in a situated way (Haraway 1988; Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002). In Portugal, talking about immigrant collective action presupposes talking about the history and dynamics of immigration in the country. The associative movement of immigrants in Portugal has gone through three major phases: (a) the first phase began in the mid-1970s with the arrival of a large contingent of African migrants from the former Portuguese colonies, at which point several informal associations were established in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area that welcomed the new arrivals and where the immigrant population was becoming concentrated. The underlying goal of these first organizations was to facilitate the settlement of fellow countrymen in the absence of official integration measures. The lack of integration policies led the associations to find ways to facilitate the settlement of the newcomers and to meet their first needs (for example, to resolve their legal status and to get a job and a house). At this stage, associations did not have, however, the experience of making political claims due to the urgency of solving more basic needs and the recentness of the movement. For the same reason, there was no intervention directed at tackling migrant women's problems. Actions were carried out for the whole population to facilitate their integration into the host country. On the other hand, women who participated in associations/organizations were not yet conscious of the need to organize themselves around concrete problems which only they had. Ethnic issues were above gender issues because racism and social discrimination in African communities needed a more urgent resolution (Albuquerque et al. 2000). (b) A phase of boosting the intervention of associations as agents of socio-economic integration for immigrants marked the first half of the 1990s, with a rapid increase in the number of associations. This is the period in which the associations took the first steps into political intervention in terms of demanding citizenship rights for immigrants and their descendants and investing in carrying out more integrated, long-term projects. (c) A phase of maturation of the associative movement began in the mid-1990s, in which the associations achieved formal recognition by national and local political institutions of their role as agents that represent immigrants in the public space and as agents of development for the communities of immigrant origin (Albuquerque et al. 2000). The year 1999 marks the approval of the Legal Regime of Immigrant Associations (Decree-Law No. 115/99, 3rd August), existing since the 1970s.

The flows of Lusophone African immigrants and the adoption in the early 1990s of European immigration policies, the Schengen Agreement (European Union 1991), and the Maastricht Treaty (European Union 1992), based on border control to restrict immigration flows and irregular immigration, made these organizations gain visibility.

Although international research has also emphasized disinterest and apathy towards politics in these communities (Martiniello 2005), as well as low levels of civic and political participation compared to nonimmigrants (Couton and Gaudet 2008), it is clear that there are still several difficulties; they face to complex personal, social, political, and cultural factors that are interconnected. The Portuguese situation does not seem to be very different from other contexts. It is characterized by a diversity of forms of civic and political participation of immigrants (Teixeira and Albuquerque 2005), where women are still disadvantaged in relation to men in various domains of civic and political participation (Paxton et al. 2007).

Over the years, Portugal has ratified several international and regional normative and legal frameworks (United Nations 1981; United Nations 1995; Council of the European

Union 2004; Council of Europe 2011) that emphasize the responsibility of ensuring migrant women's equal participation in political and public life. IOs (diverse civil society organizations, such as NGOs, associations, groups, and religious organizations) constitute a part of the political and social scene as partners of political power at the national and local levels, acting as social entrepreneurs. However, many of them had no special orientation about women's issues. Only recently, problems that directly affect ethnic minority women living in Portugal have been included in its list of activities (e.g., precarious jobs, domestic violence, barriers to accessing public services, and intersectional discrimination) (Sardinha 2009). This lack of guidance and visibility undermines more equitable decision making, compromises governance that materially responds to gender-equality goals, and does not enable an accurate picture of the composition and specificities of migrant communities. These organizations intervene in three major socioeconomic, cultural, and political–legal domains. Their work is developed in such diversified areas as school support for children and youth, legal support, Portuguese and foreign language/culture classes, free-time activities, and cultural/recreational events. Awareness and information initiatives directed at Portuguese society, political intervention actions, within the scope of immigration issues and the fight against discrimination, and development projects in the countries of origin are also part of the agenda (ACM n.d.).

These organizations mark different ways of fighting against isolation and discrimination (Albuquerque 2013; Araújo et al. 2015; Komito 2011). The listing of strategies, on the part of those who travel through them, is reflected in the search for spaces of solidarity, where it is hoped situations of proximity can be found that offer conditions for those who want to live together, spaces where the rights of migrants, without lacks of mutual understanding, and without being confronted with the rigid mutism that comes from misunderstanding or being faced with situations of rejection and ostracism (Araújo et al. 2015). Although there are not many studies on the civic and political participation of immigrants, especially of immigrant women, the existing research suggests that Portugal seems to have created the necessary conditions for participation (Ramalho and Trovão 2010).

They have been a powerful tool for maintaining and strengthening the identity of foreign communities that are settled outside their country and can be used as consultation bodies for those making policy decisions in this area (Rocha-Trindade 2010).

This has often been the mechanism for the establishment of associations of migrants, internal or international, reflected in the very significant existence of the corresponding structures, spread throughout the country (Araújo et al. 2015; Rocha-Trindade 2010).

Recently, WIDE+ conducted a review of EU funds channelled to projects led by migrant women. This review paper, titled "Marginalizing Migrant Women's Associations in EU Policies: Tracking EU Funds" (WIDE+ 2022), concludes that groups working at intersecting forms of marginalization, like migrant women, are not considered relevant stakeholders in EU programmes. While there is available EU-level funding to advance gender equality, the financial flows simply do not reach civil society, women's organizations, and migrant women's associations.

There seem to be several constraints and challenges facing this type of organization, some related to what is experienced in other geographical contexts and others close to the Portuguese situation in terms of organized forms of collective and civic participation.

The limited size of immigrant organizations seems to be one of the challenges they face, as has been studied in other contexts (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013). They are small structures, often only with recourse to volunteers and, in other cases, with few human and financial resources, aspects that can hinder the implementation of activities, collective mobilization, and change in public policies (Ribeiro et al. 2016). One can thus speak of the nonprofessionalization of these organizations and to what extent this could be beneficial.

Another topic of great importance in the discussion is the nondependence on government funding or other types of funding that prevent ongoing activities from being extended over time and even being dependent on government agendas. It seems to be one of the major challenges facing the various civil society organizations of diverse scope in the Portuguese

context (Cerqueira et al. 2017), and it seems to us that it may exist in this context as well. This issue has to do with the institutionalization of many of these organizations that generate controversy, namely due to the responses that are closely linked to state agendas.

Often related to the previous point is the need to create or foster partnerships with other organizations and social actors that engage in the same field of civic and political action. In the case of other human-rights organizations existing in the Portuguese context, the need to create or deepen synergies on a transactional level has been recognized, since problematizing the social inequalities that are often experienced by these people requires a global knowledge that is attentive to national specificities (Cerqueira et al. 2017).

Another aspect that should be brought into this discussion is the relevance of communication in the context of organizations of this nature. These need to communicate to publicize their projects, obtain collaborations and donations, volunteers and associates, activists and sympathizers and raise awareness about the major issues that drive them (Lara 2008, p. 29). As nonprofit organizations, whether they are structured more formally or more informally, they need to communicate what they do, mobilize civil society for their causes, and use advocacy strategies with the government. Therefore, here we refer to the aspects of internal and external communication, as well as to the increasingly pressing use of digital platforms, including social networks and other channels of communication. Even within the Portuguese context, several studies highlight their relevance, systematized, for example, in the work of Cerqueira and Lamy (2017b, 2019).

1.4. The Current Research

As research on immigrant-women leaders in Portugal and elsewhere is still scarce (Milkman and Terriquez 2012), this article aims to identify and understand, from the perspective of immigrant women leaders in Portugal, the opportunities and challenges they face in their civic engagement and roles in running an IO to facilitate immigrants' integration into Portuguese society. Given the objective, the research question of this study is—What are the opportunities and constraints that immigrant women leaders encounter in their civic participation in Portugal and in running an IO?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants

A total of eight semistructured interviews were carried out with immigrant women who were leaders of immigrant organizations in Portugal. Six of them were Brazilian women, one Ukrainian, and one Santomean with an age range from 24 to 56 years old. Regarding marital status, five are single, one is divorced, one is married, and one is a widow. Just one of the participants had dependent children. In terms of education, five women had a university degree and the others had secondary studies. At the time of the interviews, two were studying, three were in paid employment, and one was unemployed. Regarding the length of stay in Portugal, this ranged from 3 to 27 years (Cf. Table 1).

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of participants.

Participants	Age	Nationality	Employment	Qualifications	Marital Status	Years in Portugal	Type of OI
1	28	Brazilian	Student	master's degree	single	6	Collective
2	35	Brazilian	Student	bachelor's degree	single	3	Collective
3	24	Brazilian	Student	bachelor's degree	single	3	Collective
4	41	Brazilian	Employed	PhD	single	4	Collective
5	36	Brazilian	Employed	master's degree	single	12	Association
6	54	Brazilian	Employed	bachelor's degree	divorced	27	Association
7	53	Ukrainian	Employed	bachelor's degree	widow	21	Association
8	56	Santomean	Employed	secondary studies	married	27	Association

2.2. Procedure

Initially, we contacted several Portuguese IOs and outlined the intentions of our research and the inclusion criteria. Participants were eligible to participate in the study if they identified themselves as being women; immigrants; leaders of civil society organisations, such as NGOs, associations, and informal groups that intervene directly or indirectly with migrant people; aged eighteen or over; and residents in Portugal. The aim was to access experiential experts using a nonprobabilistic, intentional, and convenience sampling method (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). We had 8 positive responses to participate in the study. All participants were given details about the main study objectives, as well as guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity.

The interviews were scheduled to accommodate the availability of the interviewees and all took place online, via Microsoft Teams, between December 2021 and February 2022. The interviews were held online because it was more convenient for respondents who were in different places. The average interview length was around 50 min. We recorded the interviews with the prior informed consent form of interviewees and then completed full transcriptions and analytical procedures.

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and upheld all ethical standards for scientific research, particularly those related to confidentiality and human welfare. It also respected the General Data Protection Regulation to safeguard participants' rights and privacy.

2.3. Instrument

A sociodemographic form and an individual semistructured interview script were used to collect data. The interview script was developed through a comprehensive literature review and consisted of five distinct sections: (1) characterization of the association/NGO (e.g., history, goals and characterization of the association's members and target audience), (2) characterization of association/NGO services (e.g., What are the activities and services carried out by the association? What partnerships has the association established with the community?), (3) leader's background (e.g., When did you start your civic participation in Portugal? Tell us a little about your trajectory until you got here?), (4) challenges and opportunities of these type of organizations (e.g., In your view, what are the main challenges facing NGOs that target immigrant communities? What positive advances do you think have been made?), and (5) characterization of the target women immigrants and main potentials and difficulties in Portugal (e.g., In your view, what are the main challenges that immigrant women face in Portugal? In your view, what are the main potentials that immigrant women find in Portugal?).

2.4. Data Analyses

The thematic analysis carried out involved different decision-making processes in an exercise of continuous and reflective communication about the main goals related to the ongoing research (Braun and Clarke 2006).

3. Findings and Discussion

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and were later reviewed by the scientific research team. The analysis of the collected data was carried out by using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2012). Thematic analysis emerged as the most appropriate approach, enabling "identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 79). We follow Braun and Clarke's (2006) proposal using a set of six phases to guide the whole analytical process: (1) become familiar with the data (close and repeated reading of the material, allowing in-depth knowledge of the data and drawing first insights); (2) generate initial codes (organize the data in a meaningful and systematic way); (3) search for themes (identification of a certain level of standardization of the data about the research questions posed and the purposes of the study); (4) review themes (themes are modified and developed, split them further, or discard ones that are not central); (5) define and

name the themes; and (6) produce the report. In the write-up phase, the researcher writes the themes into the wider report (including the literature review, discussion, etc.). This involves weaving the analytic narrative into a persuasive story that uses informative and vivid data extracts as evidence. The thematic analyses conducted were influenced by the constructionist perspective. This viewpoint diverges from essentialist approaches that simply document life experiences. Instead, it centres on comprehending events, realities, meanings, and experiences as products of prevailing social discourses. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize that this perspective goes beyond mere reporting and considers the interplay between existing discourses and the shaping of these phenomena. The entire analysis was also framed within an intersectional grid, taking into account that the development of these discourses is shaped not only by the context but also by individuals' diverse identities.

This section will focus on the description of the results collected through the analysis of the transcripts of participants' interviews. Applying this technique, we aimed to understand the trajectories of these women in civic participation and to identify IO dynamics and triggers. From this analysis, we identified three main themes (Cf. Table 2) that we will present and discuss.

Table 2. Themes.

Women's migration pathways, civic participation, and leadership
Immigrant organizations: goals, dynamics, and constraints
Intersectional discrimination of immigrant women in Portugal: a trigger that can potentiate or constrain civic participation

3.1. Women's Migration Pathways, Civic Participation, and Leadership

The women interviewed chose Portugal for different reasons. The Brazilian participants came to Portugal looking to start different levels of study programmes while the Ukrainian participant came looking for better living conditions and labour opportunities. She was fleeing the terrible socioeconomic situation of her country, due to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union's system in 1992, which led to 120 million people living in poverty. In the case of the Santomean participant, Portugal was chosen because of the common language and, therefore, by the influence of relatives who were already in the country.

While some had decided autonomously on their migration process (five), others came due to their husband's decision (two). For the majority of participants, the decision to migrate was equivalent to self-assertion and independence in their migratory journey. But even in the cases of women who migrate to follow their husbands, this does not mean that their migration experience does not gain a different and independent meaning later on, as we will realize.

These realities show that immigration is a heterogeneous phenomenon, defined by variables of origin and variables of destination, the goals, and the conditions in which migration paths occur (Lechner 2012; Oishi 2002).

Coming from different backgrounds, these women had academic qualifications that ranged from the second grade to higher education. Some of them had the opportunity to conclude their degrees in Portugal (two). At the occupational level, three participants were studying in Portugal, and, for the others, the employment situation was more relevant (five). At the moment of the interview, all of them had their administrative situation legalized.

Concerning their involvement in civic participation, these women underline different reasons. The participants from Brazil had already been involved in civic movements in their country of origin.

> *I have always been involved, in some way, in the associative movement. From an early age, I come from a family that is very involved in the associative movement. (P5)*

Others want to fight for a better life for immigrants living in Portugal and want to uncover invisible situations and needs of immigrant communities and see the opportunity in a collective to develop scientific knowledge within society. The creation of a network was central for the future, specifically during pandemic crises.

> *FCT opened a funding possibility for civil society to apply for research projects. (…) we (…) tried to apply for this project. (…) We didn't get the funding, of course. Yeah, but we decided to do it. We thought, if we didn't do this research for, as a, as a, with a perspective, even a militant perspective, we wouldn't get out of the place, if we hoped to get funding. It's to research black women here in Portugal, mainly because we don't have the issue of essential ethnic data, etc., and we decided (…) And I think that's how our collective organisation started (…). (P1)*

> *In the beginning we thought about doing the research, but then we evolved and matured to understand ourselves as a collective, you know. …When this research is over, we experiment with other things. (P4)*

The Santomean woman decided to join with other women, seeking to take steps towards improving their lives or at least attempting to mitigate the difficulties and constraints imposed on their social integration. At first sight, this associative movement, devoted to supporting tasks, gives some meaning to the idea of community as a group of people related to each other by ties of belonging to a distant land, ties that are imperative from the point of view of solidarity.

> *In the beginning, we came together …. We were 22 Santomean women with the will to do more for our people …people that were living here and facing many difficulties. (P8)*

Many of them (five) had created their own IO with other migrant women who had the same ambition and goal. Others (two) decided to join previous IOs already existing in the country. The Ukrainian participant said that her decision to create the IO was supported by a Portuguese teacher who had helped her. However, joining the voluntary sector, participating in the public sphere, and creating a community was crucial to these women at multiple levels, particularly the personal and political.

> *The intellectual maturation of the theme we are producing, because many times, in our meetings, in our interviews, we come across situations of women's subjectivity, and more so, of our own, that we have to stop, that we have to reflect, think. …Sometimes we have to look for other differences to take care of ourselves and try to take care of our women (P1).*

These interviews highlight the fact that associative work is part of the process of integration of these women in Portugal. Their high level of qualifications, knowledge, skills, values, and motivation seem to allow and empower them to be more sensitive to the importance that migrant activism and political participation assume in protecting and fighting for their fundamental rights (ENMW 2022; Zani and Barrett 2012). On the other hand, they awaken them to their capacity to lead these processes autonomously or collaboratively to make that difference in society.

Some progressed within the organization, others decided to join various organizations, with civic participation being a fundamental part of their lives. The leadership position came because of their commitments and active engagement, but also skills and knowledge.

> *I started as a volunteer at the secretariat of this association (…) When I finished my thesis, a few months later, a part-time position opened up in the secretariat, (…), and then I came to work here, (…) in that position. Then I moved to customer service, still part-time (…) in 2015. I started coordinating a project. (…) In 2017 I was elected president of the association, and since then I've taken over full coordination (P5)*

As it was clear that social networks are composed of social capital and resources that come from the networks themselves, and also from resources, opportunities, or lack of them that arise from the host society, they wanted to actively participate in civic and political movements and try to change some structural situations (Ehrlich 2000; Omolayo 2007).

The association joined the Portuguese Women's Platform to have access to other forms of struggle but also other crucial information and opportunities. (P8)

These women engage in processes of change, affirm, and differentiate themselves, negotiate, antagonize, become accomplices, play, rebuild themselves, and develop identity strategies of being with their particularities, not only for the benefit of themselves but also for the benefit of their communities (Ehrlich 2000; Miranda 2009). Immigrants' participation is a matter of a sense of belonging, a matter of ownership and a realization of potentials and possibilities through social engagement; it is also fostered by removing obstacles and developing existing means to facilitate their social integration (Ahokas 2010; Albuquerque 2005).

Regardless of women's previous condition in Portugal as immigrants, gender plays an important role in the way it intersects with other markers of identity, such as ethnicity, and structures social relations both in the host and sending societies (Tastsoglou et al. 2005; Craveiro et al. 2020). Participant 7, for example, explained that she was not treated according to her educational qualifications and professional experience. She felt like a foreigner, an 'Other', who was discriminated against.

Some of these women report having experienced difficulties in their integration, which often translate into obstacles in access to education, skills development, and the labour market. These often translate into the performance of low-skilled, poorly paid professional activities, deprived of social protection and in unregulated and segregated sectors of the economy (Dias and Gonçalves 2007; La Barbera 2012), where participating in IOs constitutes an opportunity to make a difference.

3.2. Immigrant Organisations: Goals, Dynamics and Constraints

These collective strategies of civic participation have various objectives. For the Ukrainians, the creation of the association was not planned but was the suggestion of a Portuguese man worried about the social conditions of Ukrainian immigrants in the north of Portugal. However, the process was very difficult.

When we arrived, (. . .) without knowledge of anything, of the language, of the traditions, of the Portuguese laws, that's why when we started. We found many difficulties in the integration (P7).

Some give support in many different forms, including psychological, finding a home, communication of the rules and logic inherent in society, familiarization with the bureaucratic processes of legalization, social support; access to employment, education, housing, and health; knowledge about culture and language; and social ties and connections and the absence of discrimination (Alencar 2018; Jardim and da Silva 2019).

3 major areas of activity, (. . .) above all: the political part, of a dvocacy, lobbying . . . social prevention, which in the past was more focused on assistance to migrants and, legal assistance, guidance and referrals. Nowadays it is already very different (. . .). We have everything from guidance and counselling offices to employment support offices. In recent years, we've also tried to work more holistically, in other words, working with hate speech, working with combating Fake News, but also other group projects, such as group. . ., which is a mutual aid group, as well as others, now we have a project that we're working on with migration in Brazil (. . .) (P5)

Cultural aspects were also highlighted by the interviewees.

It's a cultural association, (. . .) and in the meantime, they also provide social support in neighbourhoods. . . They teach children how to use various instruments and they also give support to the elderly. (P6)

It should also be noted that some IOs are working towards gender equality and feminism, some with an intersectional approach.

Is a collective of women researchers, feminists, anti-racist and anti-fascist. . . and anti-capitalist too. (. . .) Having an intersectional perspective, we tried to bring together these other layers, in the analysis of work, the gender issue, the rationalization issue (. . .) (P3)

Thus, bringing different points of view into migratory studies is crucial for most participants. We are talking about strategies for the decolonization of knowledge and the participants seem to point to this line of discussion (Collins 2022).

> *It is a way for us to propose some academic deviations, which we don't have so much space for, because we have more difficulties with this more participatory dimension, some questions that we criticize a lot in the Eurocentric academic debate, and in the space of X we try to experiment with these other ways of also doing research. (P1)*

They also undertake other kinds of activities, for example,

> *we contribute with other people, from other collectives, other women, other associations, anyway. We contributed to a video, and we have done several academic and non-academic events as well. (P4)*

Another purpose is giving formation to and developing social support groups,

> *Women who felt alone, who couldn't leave their homes, who experienced frustration, only for women, of the Portuguese language, right? (P6)*

These strategies make it possible to avoid feelings of loneliness (Komito 2011), allow for the creation of new skills and knowledge, and enable language proficiency, which is one of the crucial skills for successful integration and can increase levels of wellbeing through an increase in feelings of self efficacy (Alencar 2018; Dornelas and Ribeiro 2018; Watkins et al. 2012).

To the political and lobbying nature, it represents,

> *When you sit in an assembly of the republic at a public hearing and give an opinion, you occupy a space of representation, or representativeness, because the associative movement is also political. (P5)*

Working in partnerships with other structures, other voluntary immigrant people, as well as governmental ones (P5), are pointed out as something essential for IO functionality, an aspect already highlighted in other research work on human-rights organizations in Portugal (Cerqueira et al. 2017).

> *In partnership with professionals, especially immigrants, and teachers from different areas, we grant them space for a symbolic amount that they pay, and we have tried to support the art class in this way (P5).*

For this type of organization, communication is a crucial dimension, as has been mentioned in several studies (Cerqueira and Lamy 2017b, 2019). If, on the one hand, they recognize its pertinence and demonstrate some changes, on the other they perceive a lack of professionalization, largely due to the scarcity of human and financial resources in the area.

> *Communication is the one that we always leave aside, mainly because the financed projects do not cover this type of expenditure. (P5)*

> *In terms of communication with migrant people (…), now we have created the habit that every Monday, we share the activities of the week, (…) Everyone who is registered gets it, the partners and the ACM replicates (…). It ends up reaching more people. In terms of communication more here in a dvocacy, which is also a type of communication, right? (P5)*

The use of digital technology is crucial to these IOs because the participants considered it very useful, providing sociopolitical, economic, and cultural integration in the destination or host country, allowing information about rights, citizenship, support services, and cultural practices of the host country to reach more people (Dekker and Engbersen 2014). These channels, spaces, and platforms, characterized by being spontaneous, free, quickly accessible, and easily managed (Dahlgren 2013), support certain struggles, allowing them to expand and even become stronger.

Another dimension to note about IOs is that they enable not only the creation of a sense of belonging but also constitute a resilience factor in the face of the situations of adversity often experienced in the country (Araújo et al. 2015). In recent years, they became

aware of a difference in immigrants' needs due to political changes, but also due to changes in immigrants' profiles.

> *With the election of Bolsonaro (. . .), we feel a very large arrival of more people who question public policies, not only in Brazil, but who come to us (. . .) want to know how they have a residence permit, but how they participate, how they complain, what is their right. (P5)*

> *A very specific profile, which is of a group between 20-something and 40-something, qualified. . ., with higher education, (. . .) People bring some baggage, and then, in this, we feel this age group a lot, between, my age, a little bit earlier, that comes for the Masters and ends up staying, entire families, couples, both qualified professionals, that come to see what happens. Many women, even though the number of women has decreased a little in the last SEF data, here in the house 75% of our work is done by women to women (P5)*

Concerning constraints, political problems were mentioned, namely the lack of ethnic–racial data (P4), structural racism (P1), the weak position of the immigrants in this country (P4), and a place to speak (Ribeiro 2018) in positions of power (P5).

> *I think the creation of the secretary of state in the last PS government was a good policy, however, it repeats the pattern of all, of always, that it's only academic people, Portuguese, who is in charge, who represent, but than it follows the flow. . .and doesn't really reflect what the associative movement claims. (. . .) I think it's more for English eyes rather than the interest of building a participative policy (. . .) associations only found out about the creation of the secretariat when it was published in the newspaper and this reflects a lot. (P5)*

Another difficulty has to do with the issue of access to financing. There are high and low points.

> *Now we are, I joke with the team, I say (. . .). Enjoy this rich, glamorous phase. (. . .) that from December it will come, because the new financial framework is not coming yet (P5).*

They face increasingly specific demands. The state hopes that civil society organizations can supplement or take over the welfare obligations that the state institutions are not able to manage. States have a clear conscience that the economic basis for the welfare state is rapidly declining; social problems are becoming increasingly differentiated and, thus, more difficult to solve through the existing universal welfare schemes (Boje 2021). However, these demands are very difficult to fulfil considering the flexible and fluctuating group of volunteers/professionals and the lack of conditions.

> *It's cyclical. . .The sustainability of immigrant associations, similar to poverty, and domestic violence, (. . .) have no specific support for the maintenance, or prevention of these associations. I keep repeating the same point because our work is not about projects, it's about services and they are constant services, so we can't be tied to funds. (P5)*

This endangers the maintenance of the qualified professionals who work there, as well as the services they offer to immigrant communities. The state does not support the maintenance of these organizations in the long term, and they are dependent on government funding (Cerqueira et al. 2017).

The qualification of their professionals also emerges as a problem that some IOs have managed to solve with great cost, and wage issues remain a major problem.

> *It's not because we are in the third sector that we have to earn 750 euros for a full-time job. (. . .) The organisation's policy, when it bids for projects, already provides for decent salaries. (P5)*

Participant 5 pointed out that many paid professionals who work in organizations have precarious labour situations. This is one of the main issues because IOs have a very limited number of active volunteers and professionals. Professionals run the organizations, and, in some cases, members pay their annual fee but have no personal contact with nor influence on the organization and its activities. Dissatisfaction with their remuneration and security situation can leave organizations largely vulnerable in their mission.

However, most IOs work only with volunteers (P4, P7, and P8), and have to combine it with paid work in other completely different areas (P4, P7, and P8) or with scholarships (P1, P2, and P3) to survive. This is pointed out as the main constraint they face with clear consequences for IO dynamics and activities (Ribeiro et al. 2016).

Another problem is their capacity to provide support to irregular immigrants who arrive in the country or who had their situation regularized but, for various reasons, no longer have it, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

> (...) many women who accompany their relatives to Portugal for health treatment are in a very complicated situation in terms of regularization and there is no support... some are left homeless... and we try to help but with great difficulty (P8).

This difficulty was very evident during the pandemic, making it difficult to refer people to support structures (e.g., health, social security, and habitation). Women seem to be more affected by the socioeconomic context, which is often reflected in an unstable and precarious employment situation, single parenthood, childcare, difficulty in obtaining social protection, poor housing conditions, low income, and psychological stress associated with social exclusion (Topa 2021). In terms of COVID-19, the consequences of the pandemic differ through the interaction and overlap of multiple vulnerability factors, ranging from gender, 'race'/ethnicity, age, class, socioeconomic status, geography, disability, sexuality, religion, migration/refugee status, and other structural conditions, including poor housing, employment, and political and environmental stressors (Topa 2021).

Another future danger pointed out is the political changes and proliferation of far-right discourses that could have serious impacts on IOs and immigrant communities.

> There was a path before the 30th January and another after the 30th (with the CHEGA election), and I think that here the policies that already existed for the participation of immigrants' associations will have to be further promoted.(...) The chance of you having social problems is much higher, and I think that here is the place of associations, if before we claimed the space of speech and sustainability...after the 30th of January (...) we fight so we don't disappear. (P5)

3.3. Intersectional Discrimination of Immigrant Women in Portugal: A Trigger That Can Leverage or Constrain Civic Participation

For the immigrant women interviewed, contact with Portuguese society led women to be confronted with numerous constraints and difficulties that make effective integration more complex. These constraints go back not only to cultural issues, climatic differences, and the fact that they miss their extended family but also to language difficulties, as well as to their professional integration. Other aspects mentioned by the participants refer to the difficulties in coordinating family/personal life and work. These women have no family support and the social support structures (such as kindergarten and schools) cannot respond to the demands that the market makes of them (Neves et al. 2016; Silva 2015).

> They suffer, because, for example, those who have small children, from school, from nursery school, had to leave work, they could work, but they had to leave work because the children can't be alone at home. If they lost their jobs, they lost money. (P7)

Furthermore, they continue to accumulate domestic work with the issues of paid work, which leads to an overload that leaves them in situations of vulnerability, but which are not always recognized due to the internalization of social gender roles. Even when they are highly educated, this is not reflected in their professions, leading to precarious situations (Craveiro et al. 2020).

> Many of them have a degree (...) and yet they continue in precarious jobs, working in restaurants, many, or in call centres, some simply can't even get a job, right, so, they lost their jobs in the pandemic, so we see that even with the increase in education, this increase doesn't bring a guarantee of a job, or that the income is compatible, and many who are in heterosexual relationships, they feel that housework is greater pressure on them. That they see it in a natural way, that automatically it's a feminine activity, that they need to

take on, they don't see it as possible violence, and they even think that it's a responsibility that should be assumed by them. (P2)

We can see from their discourses that, if coming to Portugal enabled a great educational valorization, as the years went by and experiences succeeded each other, the evolution in labour terms regressed, not only in terms of pushing immigrants towards less attractive sectors of the professional market but also due to the lack of recognition of the competences of many women. In fact, even those who had higher academic qualifications and who came with very high expectations of high salaries and a substantial improvement in their quality of life were disappointed and had to dedicate themselves to other professions to survive (Topa 2016). This is in line with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE 2020), where it is perceived that the main gender inequality issues related to migratory status in the EU fall into labour-market participation, administrative work and the informal economy, family reunification, international protection, and gender-based violence.

It is also worth highlighting the impacts of sexism, racism and migratory status on immigrant women's daily lives in the interviewees' discourses. They even experience situations of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination in multiple contexts (Craveiro et al. 2020).

The lives of these women are always crossed by misogynistic and racist attacks on those who are immigrants because we also interviewed Portuguese women. We have noticed that when the bureaucracy of the state is an impediment for these women to gain access, and when they are immigrants, some Portuguese women have also reported this difficulty in accessing the social rights of the state because of the bureaucratic challenges. But the immigrants, they come with an even stronger argument, so much so that I can't access them, and sometimes, the people, the people who know some, some side of the legislation think this is wrong because they could have access to health care, which was denied. (P1)

Brazilian communities feel the impact of stereotypes, some crystallized by Portuguese media (Minga 2018). These are reflected in housing difficulties and the devaluation of Brazilian universities and Brazilian Portuguese as a language. Moreover, Brazilian women continue to be sexualized. The various means of discrimination in the public space also take place on social networks.

Our traumas are not outdated, (...) you know that. Like, Bragança's mother is today, (...) the xenophobia based here on the characteristics, that is, the Intersectionality here it applies in a way (P5)

Although it is recognized that the role of women is changing, stereotypes do not seem to be changing, and this has repercussions on discriminatory practices,

especially this qualified group...that idea of the Brazilian service woman suddenly falls to the ground...because we have engineers, psychologists, nurses..., and then the country still fails to recognize in those women the value...The value, without looking at the mothers from Bragança, for example (P5)

The discrimination with which they come into contact, which occurs not only in the work context but is generalized to various social contexts, is visibly intersectional discrimination. In other words, it is discrimination which oscillates, considering the different identities belonging to these women, with a clearly differentiated weight being attributed to them, as already stated by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991).

In line with what several studies have identified, participants recognized that the pandemic had worsened immigrant women's lives, leaving them in a situation of greater vulnerability (Casquilho-Martins et al. 2022; Topa 2021).

The pandemic was a step backwards from what had already been achieved. The post-pandemic situation will be quite critical. I think it will be even worse, from what we have been observing within the quantitative research that exists (P4)

Intersectional discrimination is recognized as a clear constraint for women's participation in the civic and political system (ENMW 2022; Freedman 2008) but also as a trigger to

be more aware of what needs to be done for women's rights ([Chuang and Le Bail 2020](#)), to combat discrimination, and improve the welfare of the community.

Some participants acknowledge that in their place of leadership, they are often treated better. The notion of privilege and the social status they occupy refer to the concept of a place of speech ([Ribeiro 2018](#)). However, they also recognize that their identity belongings are crucial to their actual position and to different demands that they could suffer.

> *I'm a white woman, a qualified white woman, and I feel that I've been spared many things because of that (. . .) The space that I occupy in the media, I wouldn't occupy if I were a black Brazilian woman. I have this awareness. (P5)*

Participants are aware that they might be discriminated against or privileged because of one or more characteristics that are part of or are perceived as part of their identity, including gender, sex, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, social status, disability, and religion among others.

4. Conclusions

This study comprises a lens on how immigrant-women leaders represent immigrant civil society organizations and what might constitute obstacles or difficult situations. It simultaneously allows for reflection on the experiences of immigrant women in civic participation, engagement in public causes, and other dimensions of life.

The social networks expressed in IOs, as has been highlighted, have been central for the insertion and integration of immigrant communities in the country, but also to create new forms of participation, integration, and identity formation in the host society ([Sardinha 2009](#)). Civic participation is understood by these leaders as much more than mere formal political engagement. It involves adopting a political discourse, claiming rights, and actively seeking support among coethnics, other migrants, the media, NGOs ([Araújo et al. 2015](#)), and the transformation of the majority society. They have an important role in the integration process and a positive impact on women's lives.

These women see in IOs the possibility of creating self-organized communities, which constitute mechanisms of reception, information, communication, and support during immigrants' entry and residence in the country and to mediate and represent their interests in contact with state and other institutional mechanisms. The results of our study highlight that, in Portugal, IOs have the role of being interlocutors and intermediaries in the gathering and allocation of opportunities and resources or as mediators in the identification and containment of social problems.

Portugal promotes non-EU immigrants' political participation in policy and practice and supports immigrant civil society and consultative bodies ([Solano and Huddleston 2020](#)), although there are still some structural problems in the way it does it. IOs remain voluntary and autonomous under state regulations to permit the coexistence of diverging individual and collective interests ([Odmalm 2004](#)); the financial survival and maintenance of these organizations are very difficult. The interviewees consider that communication with the various publics is central, but it seems to be an aspect that they are unable to give due attention to due to a lack of financial and human resources. The study highlights the need for investment and professionalization in this area.

It seems that the future evolution of IOs will depend on the dialogue between the actors in the process of social integration of immigrant populations and the capacity of the associations/organizations/groups to balance the expectations of the communities with the demands of their political interlocutors and internal structure. This challenge seems even more pressing at a time when we are witnessing a war in Europe that is already having an impact also in terms of immigration dynamics and in a time where political rights forces are gaining force. In these contexts, sexism, racism, and xenophobia even tend to proliferate, aspects that are already experienced in the daily lives of the interviewees.

Another important finding in this study is that this participation leads to greater freedom and a sense of empowerment, giving them voice, visibility and recognition in the host society and within their communities, not only because they encounter different

problems that affect migrant populations living in Portugal, but also because they give them access to new constructions of gender (Miranda 2009) and other social inequalities. In fact, one aspect that was emphasized was precisely intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991), how this affects them in their daily lives and how it puts them in situations of greater privilege or oppression.

Although it was difficult to recruit immigrant-women leaders of an immigrant organization, the interviews conducted with the sample of eight women were extremely rich with regard to their trajectories, experiences, and perceptions about being a migrant, participating in the community and the society in which they have chosen to live. However, there are some limitations to this research study which should be acknowledged. The study included only immigrant leaders from some countries of origin living in Portugal and did not cover all IOs in the country led by women. The interviewees have secured legal status and have a high level of education, which certainly limits our understanding of how the leadership experience in IOs impacts immigrant women in general. Therefore, these findings may not be generalized to other social circumstances. Furthermore, it will be crucial to broaden the demographic and legal status of the interviewees in future studies to understand the role of IOs in their lives and establish the broad connection between migrant activism led by women and feminist activism.

This study, which contributes to gender and migration research, also brings other questions. To what extent do IO activities enable the visibility of the conditions of migrant people and, in particular, the empowerment of women? To what extent may they help new balances in gender and social relations? To what extent can active citizenship represent a source of power, social innovation, and influence? These questions could be answered by future studies.

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