

Alliance

AUTORITÉS LOCALES
SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE POUR UNE
AUTRE GOUVERNANCE DES
Migrations

PANORAMAS OF ALLIANCES BETWEEN LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY :

PALERME

The Migration Alliance is a project founded and run by :



PREAMBLE

For an unconditional welcome and universal citizenship Towards a common ground for territories

The Alliance Migrations¹ aims at a local and global change of course to get out of the dramatic impasse in which the current policies of non-reception lock us. To do so, it works on a French, European and international scale to encourage and promote concrete alternatives led by local authorities in conjunction with civil society in terms of dignified reception, citizenship and respect for fundamental rights.

By relying on inspiring territories, the Alliance Migrations wishes to weave a red thread around 4 main objectives:

- The promotion of alternative policies carried out by the territories
- The multiplication of good practices and cooperation between territories
- The anchoring of the Alliance's project in the field: proof by action!
- In the long term, the support of a common plea for another governance of migrations

This project was initiated in 5 pilot cities: Lisbon, Barcelona, Palermo, Grenoble and Montreuil, where volunteers took part in actions led by local actors and carried out a 5-month analysis.

The work of the volunteers of the Alliance Migrations provides us with an overview of the issues surrounding migration in each of these territories and examples of "good practices" carried out by local authorities in conjunction with civil society. These examples allow us to highlight points of attention, recommendations and prospects for joint projects to strengthen practices in favour of reception and citizenship locally and to build on these concrete alternatives to bring about a change of direction in migration policies.

¹ The "Alliance Migrations", an alliance between local authorities and civil society for a different kind of migration governance, is a process supported by the National Association of Welcoming Cities and Territories (ANVITA) and the Organisation for Universal Citizenship (O.C.U., made up of Emmaus International, CCFD-Terre Solidaire, the Utopia Movement and the Latin American network Espacio Sin Fronteras).

PALERMO

How is the city of Palermo a territory of universal citizenship?

This panorama was realized and written by Anna Tagliabue, on a voluntary mission within the framework of the Alliance Migrations, from October 2020 to March 2021. The mission was supervised by ARCI Porco Rosso, in collaboration with the city of Palermo.

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"We need to change our approach: from migration, precisely, as suffering, to mobility as a right. No human being has chosen or chooses the place where he or she comes into the world; all should have the right to choose the place where to live, to live better and not to die".

"It is necessary to avoid the repetition of emergencies, all of which can be traced back to one structural fact: the impossibility of preventing the displacement of millions and millions of human beings.

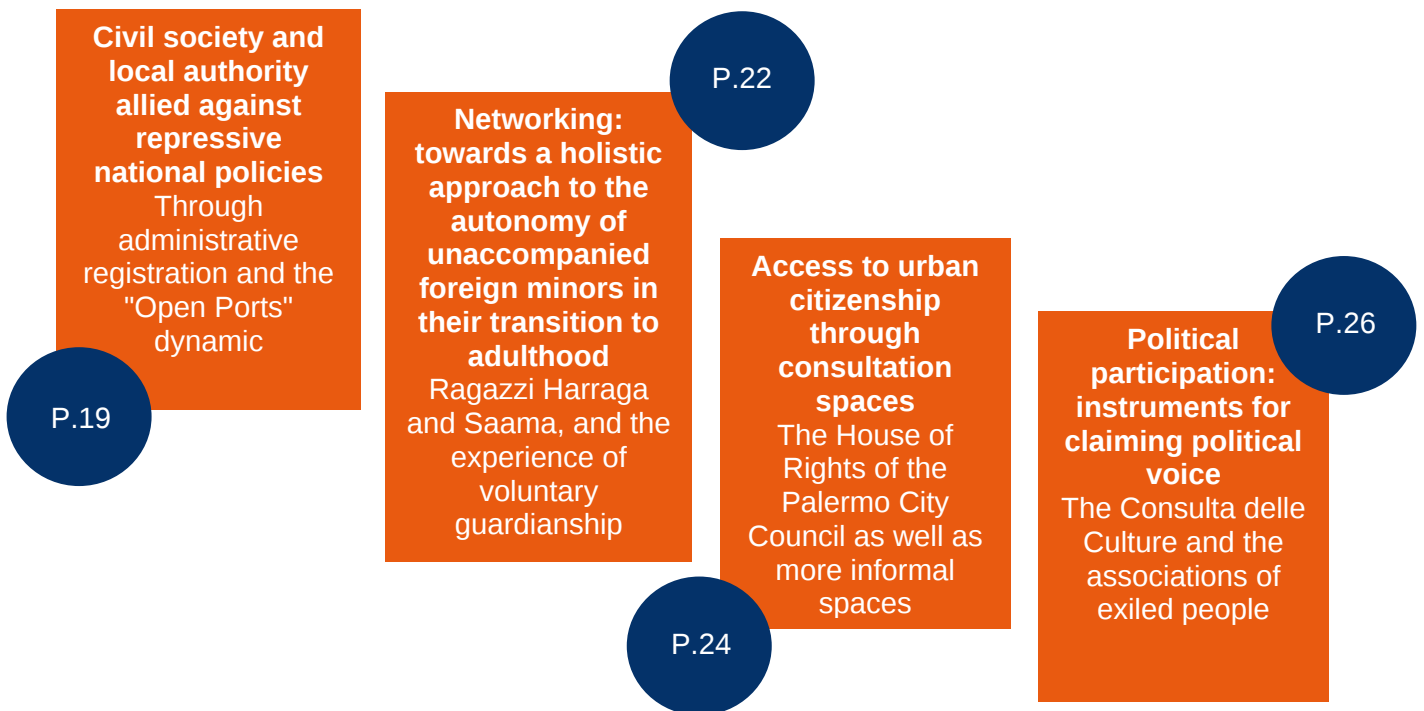
The solution to the emergency situations that exist throughout the world, and not only in the Mediterranean area, cannot exclude the perspective of a project that has as its central element the recognition of the migrant as a person. I am a person".

The Palermo Charter, 2015.

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INSPIRING PRACTICES HIGHLIGHTED



Introduction

Palermo is a city that has been built on its differences. In the heart of the Mediterranean, Sicily has historically experienced a succession of peoples and a mixture of cultures (Phoenicians, Byzantines and Arabs), the traces of which can still be seen today in the Sicilian dialect, the architecture, the names of the neighbourhoods, the culinary culture, the historical markets, etc.

In recent years, since the beginning of the so-called "refugee crisis", due to its geographical position, Sicily has become one of the first regions of arrival of people in exile on European territory. Already in a situation of economic precariousness which, even today, continues to push young Palermitans to emigrate to the north, the city of Palermo has found itself having to manage a humanitarian emergency situation in the face of increasingly repressive European and national policies.

In this context, marked by emergency and general economic instability, what lessons can be drawn from the dynamics of co-construction between civil society and local authorities towards a different governance of migration? In other words, in what way does the city of Palermo constitute a territory of universal citizenship?

I) The Mediterranean: between border(s) and cultural identity(ies)

Palermo, border city and land of migration

Palermo, the fifth largest city in Italy, is the capital of the region of Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean. The relationship between this port city and its migration is complex and is structured on the basis of several factors: geographical position, historical, cultural and economic evolution as well as the complex geopolitical fabric in which it is embedded².

In this perspective, the port has historically covered a central role in the foundation and flourishing of the city. This importance is also attested³ by the etymology of the word "Palermo", which derives from the ancient Greek panormos meaning "good for any anchorage" ("tutto porto" in Italian). In fact, the presence of the two rivers, the Kemonia and the Papireto, created an enormous natural harbour. Today, the port continues to play an important role both in trade and in the arrival of migrants who, crossing the Mediterranean, are rescued by sea rescue NGOs.

Therefore, Palermo can be considered as a border city mainly for two reasons that highlight the specificities of the territory with regard to the migration issue. They will then allow a better understanding of both the variations and the difficulties of a civil society-local authority alliance.

² Filippo Furri, «La città-rifugio: una declinazione dell'accoglienza tra solidarietà e autonomia », REMHU: Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana, vol. 26, April 2018, p. 11-36.

³ To justify the willingness to open the ports to the Sos Mediterranee NGO's Acquarius, Leoluca Orlando, mayor of Palermo, refers to the history and etymology of the word "Palermo": "Palermo in ancient Greek meant 'complete port'. We have always welcomed rescue boats and ships that have saved lives at sea. We will not stop now.

First of all, it is a border city as people arrive. As a result, especially in the vicinity of the port, there are actions that can be defined as "border", which embody national and European migration policies: once off the boats, people are identified and then placed in "first reception" centres (CAS), which are short-term and depend on the prefecture, and/or in permanence and expulsion centres (CPR). On the basis of various elements, such as nationality and/or international agreements with third countries, following identification, some people are notified ("decreto di respingimento differito") that they must leave Italian territory within seven days. They are thus deprived of the possibility to lodge their asylum application. This policy highlights the arbitrary nature of the creation of categories of people who would not be legitimate to stay on the territory, thus trivialising the difference between so-called "economic migrants" and "refugees". In recent years, boats have been transformed into places of confinement. This was the case in 2018 with the closure of the ports and the retention of 163 people on the boat "Diciotti"⁴ or today with the quarantine boats - devices set up on 12 April 2020 to deal with the arrival of migrants during the health emergency⁵.

The tragic shipwrecks in the Mediterranean and the overcrowding of the reception centres in the territory place the city of Palermo in a difficult humanitarian emergency situation. The need to find a dormitory for homeless people or the urgency of inserting people into a first reception centre which does not provide any support, risks reducing the discourse on the reception of exiled people to an exclusively welfare and unidirectional approach aimed at guaranteeing, not always successfully, a simple passive access to the most basic rights.

However, it is interesting to see how the city of Palermo reacts to this emergency context while trying to overcome this dynamic and thus detach itself from a purely emergency approach to migration. Moreover, the proximity to what is happening in the Mediterranean is also a reason that pushes part of the Palermo population to mobilise when it comes to taking a stand against national and European policies concerning, in particular, the closure of ports, rescue operations at sea and border control etc.

In this way, we can see how the Mediterranean is not only conceived as a geographical indication to delimit migratory routes or as a media label to talk about migration, but also becomes an instrument to claim a cultural identity based on heterogeneity and the mixing of cultures - an element raised, with different declensions, both by the municipality and by civil society to plead in favour of the reception of exiled persons.

Secondly, Palermo is a "border city" as people (re)leave. Palermitans want to - and often are forced to - go to work in northern Italy. In the same way, exiled people want to continue their journey to the north of Italy or even Europe either to join their families or to find better working conditions. Therefore, Palermo is also a city of emigration and passage.

If, on the one hand, the presence of the Mediterranean border shows us a dramatic aspect specific to the migratory paths of populations coming mainly from Africa and the Middle East, on the other hand, this face of Palermo as a city of emigration reveals to us not only the presence of complex problems within the territory but also a transversality of the dynamics

⁴ Annalisa Camilli, «Chi sono le persone bloccate a bordo della nave Diciotti», [Online : <https://www.internazionale.it/bloc-notes/annalisa-camilli/2018/08/24/diciotti-guardia-costiera-migranti>]. Consulted 22 December 2020.

⁵ « "Stop alle navi quarantena!": l'appello di oltre 150 organizzazioni italiane e internazionali », [Online : <https://www.meltingpot.org/Stop-alle-navi-quarantena-l-appello-di-oltre-150.html>]. Consulted 22 December 2020.

specific to human mobility: the problem being not wanting to build one's own life somewhere else but not having the choice of staying there.

Multiethnic Palermo

Today, Palermo has a very heterogeneous foreign population. In fact, foreign residents represent 3.9% of the population, coming from 130 different countries. The main countries of origin are Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ghana and the Philippines. These nationalities represent almost two thirds of the foreign population residing in Palermo. The largest community is that of Bangladesh with 5,405 residents (21.2% of foreigners).

A historical look at migration in Sicily will allow us to better understand the reasons for this heterogeneity. The first people arrived in the 1960s and 1970s from North Africa, mainly to work in the agricultural fields. It is from the 1990s, with the Gulf wars, that migratory movements intensify and diversify. Thus, migrants come from Eastern Europe, Asia and North Africa. In 1991, Palermo was the sixth city in Italy in terms of the presence of foreign residents and it was at this time that the local administration began to take an interest in the migratory phenomenon. In 2015, the so-called "refugee crisis", with the Syrian conflict, pushed millions of people to leave their countries. In 2016, 180,000 people landed on the Italian coast. This continues until the middle of 2017, slows down in 2018 and then picks up again in the years 2019 and 2020.

Since March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problems concerning the reception of exiled people who continue to risk their lives in the Mediterranean and who find themselves having to spend the quarantine period in unsanitary conditions, either in first reception centres or in "quarantine boats". Thus, Sicily, after having experienced immigration mainly linked to work or family reunification, is seeing an increasing number of people seeking international protection. A particularly vulnerable category is that of unaccompanied foreign minors. On 30 June 2018, 13,151 unaccompanied foreign minors were present in Italy, of which 43.3% (5,699 minors) were hosted in the Sicily region. In 2020, 3,851 UFM^s landed on the Italian coast and 894 minors⁶ were present on Sicilian territory. Many of the minors, who arrived in Italy in recent years at the age of 16-17, are now young adults and encounter many difficulties in the process of acquiring their autonomy.

As we shall see, the question of the acquisition of autonomy by migrants is central to the rethinking of a sustainable reception model based on rights and not on the instantaneous satisfaction of needs. However, this political objective is all the more complicated when it comes to asylum seekers and UFM^s. Indeed, the procedure to which they are subjected is long and access to their rights is often challenged by national legislation. Furthermore, access to all services is unequal and also depends on the reception structure in which the persons find themselves. Indeed, the national reception system is divided into "first reception" structures, where there are very few services and no empowerment pathways, and "second reception" structures, namely SPRAR/SIPROIMI/SAI where support projects are envisaged. While Decree 113/18 (Security Decree) prohibited applicants for international protection from accessing "second reception" structures, the current amendments, renaming these centres

⁶ Data taken from : "Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati" [Online: <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/minori-stranieri/Pagine/Dati-minori-stranieri-non-accompagnati.aspx>]. Consulted on 20 December 2020.

"SAI", allow them to access them but only to benefit from first level services. As a result, applicants for international protection are still excluded from national work integration projects and, more generally, from pathways to independence. This gap, left by the national reception system, is filled by projects that are coordinated by civil society and local authorities, but which have difficulty in becoming sustainable and becoming a "model".

Therefore, although the media attention is focused on the boats of migrants, in Palermo there are groups of foreign residents of different generations who live together with the local population. The urban configuration of some neighbourhoods reflects, on the one hand, this heterogeneity and, on the other, a transversality of living conditions⁷. Although the peripheries exist with their problems, such as the Zen district or the agricultural fields in Campobello di Mazara, in Palermo some central areas of the city have been transformed by the presence of resident foreigners. One example is the Ballarò district⁸, considered one of the centres of "multi-ethnic Palermo": here 60% of the population comes from far away, from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Maghreb. These neighbourhoods are also alive thanks to the presence of markets (formal and informal), craft workshops and churches - places of social aggregation⁹. Walking through the streets, the division between the local inhabitants and the foreigners is even more evident: colours, smells, dialects are mixed. In spite of this cultural diversity, the poverty and architectural degradation of the working-class neighbourhoods in the centre (Ballarò, Il Capo, la Cala etc.), accompanied by the slowness of an institutional response, pushes the families who live there to accept any living condition. In fact, many people live in a state of marginality, sometimes fuelled by this passivity of the institutions.

There is also the problem, increasingly widespread among young people, of drug addiction, fuelled by the presence of organised crime. Although this is an aspect that affects part of the population across the board, people in an irregular situation are particularly affected by this problem, given the difficulties in accessing medical care. Indeed, invisible in official statistics, without residence and prisoners of the "residence permit-work contract" formula, these people can only enjoy very limited access to rights. As will be seen, residence is very important as a prerequisite for the enjoyment of rights. Despite the large number of empty flats in Palermo, there is a problem of access to housing - which is yet another obstacle to obtaining residence. Indeed, regular residence often requires the availability of accommodation. In general, finding accommodation is extremely problematic, even for people with a residence permit. This is also due to the lack of awareness and prejudice of the local population, which is often not willing to rent rooms to foreigners.

In summary, Palermo is a city marked by a high degree of economic and social precariousness which makes it also a land of emigration. Alongside a mixture of cultures, there is a deterioration of buildings and a slowness of institutional responses. Alongside a desire to carry out inclusion and empowerment projects that are not limited to responding to emergencies, there are problems of vacancy, the black labour market and drug addiction.

⁷ G. Marrone, Palermo. Ipotesi di semiotica urbana, Roma, Carocci, 2010, 294 p. In this book Marrone tells us how Palermo has been socially and urbanistically transformed by migrants and how they have reappropriated certain places. For example, the Hindus, who arrived from Sri Lanka, have adopted the patron saint of Palermo (Santa Rosalia) and every Sunday they walk, often barefoot, to the grotto on Monte Pellegrino. However, another "spatial" aspect should be noted: the fact that migrants occupy certain places, previously "reserved" for Palermo's inhabitants, is a sign not only of the rapprochement between people from different countries and cultures, but also of the lack of spaces dedicated to them.

⁸ The name Ballarò derives from "Balhara", the ancient village where the first Arab merchants arrived in Palermo.

⁹ Inchiesta a Ballarò: il diritto visto dal margine, ed. Clelia Bartoli, Palermo, Navarra, 2019, 189 p.

These aspects highlight the transversality and structural nature of these problems affecting the most disadvantaged part of the population, regardless of nationality, as well as the importance of a civil society-local authority alliance in order to start from a common diagnosis and then pool skills and provide radical solutions.

II) The city of Palermo: a territory committed to the rights of exiled people

A positive view of migration

The narrative of the mayor "who lives in Palermo is a Palermitan"

"When people ask me how many migrants there are in Palermo, I don't answer. Some say 80,000, others 100,000. For me, none. Whoever comes to Palermo is a Palermitan, I don't make any distinction"¹⁰.

This is how Leoluca Orlando, Mayor of Palermo, currently in his fifth term¹¹, This is how Leoluca Orlando, Mayor of Palermo, currently in his fifth term, responded to an interview when asked by a journalist whether he thought it was possible to speak of a "Palermo model" in terms of welcoming migrants. Orlando is a central figure in the promotion of Palermo's image as a "welcoming city" open to the world - as the various networks of cities to which he belongs testify¹². Orlando's positions on national policies are well known. Indeed, the mayor placed the issue of the reception of migrants at the centre of his last electoral campaign after having - for years - focused the discourse on the fight against the Mafia.

It is interesting to note how Orlando's discourse on migration has evolved in recent years, crystallising a paradigm shift in the direction of a positive narrative of human mobility. After the legislative vacuum surrounding the first waves of immigration, the 1990s were characterised by local migration policies that were more in line with a 'socio-assistance' model. Thus, being a "migrant" was considered as a form of poverty among others. It was in the early 2000s that the issue of the social and political rights of migrants became central to the public debate. The Municipality of Palermo began to realise the need to deconstruct stereotypes about foreigners. "Molte genti, una città" ("Many people, one city") is the first intervention project of the Municipality of Orlando on the theme of reception. In connection with the Santa

¹⁰« Palermo città aperta, capitale delle culture e dell'accoglienza », [En ligne : <https://www.domusweb.it/it/speciali/manifesta/2018/palermo-citt-aperta-capitale-delle-culture-e-dellaccoglienza.html>]. Consulté le 23 décembre 2020.

¹¹ Political background: Christian Democracy in the 1980s. Founder of La Rete, a left-wing political party active between 1991 and 1999. From 1994 to 1999 he was also a member of the European Parliament. From 2012 until today, fifth mandate. Since January 2018 Orlando has announced his membership of the Democratic Party (PD).

¹²ReCoSol: Rete Comuni Solidali

World Parliament of Mayors (Orlando as president, based in The Hague)

united for rescue: this is a coalition that supports civilian rescue missions at sea. Coalition formed by German municipalities and associations

Global Answer: a project led by the University of Granada in which the municipality and the University of Palermo participate. It is a project of exchange on "good practices" between cities and universities on the theme of migration with a specific focus on unaccompanied foreign minors.

Chiara oratory, this project aimed to coordinate all the initiatives and services that had been set up for migrants in a disorganised way since 1996.

Then, after a right-wing period with Diego Cammarata as mayor of Palermo, in 2012 Orlando was elected again. It is from this moment that the discourse on migration really starts to change, also in relation to current events. Thus, Orlando reacts to the polarised and simplistic narrative of the media and of some politicians. A narrative that dehumanises migrants and depoliticises their condition, categorising them as either 'criminals' or 'victims'. In this perspective, Orlando's discourse begins to be oriented towards the question of the link between access to citizenship and residence: foreigners in Palermo should be able to enjoy their political rights. In the same way, it also opens its policy to the international scene by joining several networks. However, this international exposure, accompanied by a lack of awareness of the reality of his membership in international city networks, makes civil society, especially associations working in the field, wary of the mayor's display of political will. Despite this mistrust, which, as we shall see, does not prevent civil society from establishing and nurturing a dialogue with the municipality, Orlando has in recent years opposed national policies through both symbolic and real gestures.

From migration as suffering to mobility as a human right: the Palermo Charter

There are several examples of Orlando's rebellion against national policies. Although some aspects will be explored in more detail in the 'good practice' section through two case studies, a few can be cited here.

In reaction to the national policy of *ius sanguinis*, which prevents children with an immigrant background from obtaining Italian citizenship until the age of eighteen, Orlando decided to confer honorary citizenship on more than 2,700 foreigners. In 2015, he co-authored the "Palermo Charter: from migration as suffering to mobility as a human right", a collective text signed by lawyers, intellectuals, representatives of institutions and members of associations. The content of this text shows a radical and common stand against European and national policies. The co-editors call for the abolition of the residence permit, which is seen as a means of controlling foreign populations that only feeds the link between "migration" and "emergency", as well as the recognition of the freedom of movement and the right to residence:

« It is necessary to avoid the repetition of emergency situations, all of which can be traced back to one structural fact: the impossibility of preventing the displacement of millions and millions of human beings. The solution to the emergency situations that exist throughout the world, and not only in the Mediterranean area, cannot exclude the perspective of a project that has as its central element the recognition of the migrant as a person. I am a person. It is therefore necessary to recognise the mobility of all as an inalienable human right. All other considerations, including the concept of 'security', too often inappropriately invoked, must be consistent with this position »¹³.

Moreover, Orlando's narrative, with its slogan "I am a person", aims at underlining the importance of saving human lives by also relying on geographical, historical and cultural elements that would normalise the coexistence of differences as having always characterised the Palermo identity. In fact, Palermo symbolises from a historical, architectural, artistic and

¹³ "The Palermo Charter: from migration as suffering to mobility as a right".

culinary point of view a syncretism between different cultures. In this way, Orlando has contributed to forging this multi-ethnic image of the city. In 2018, together with other Italian mayors, Orlando rebelled against the Salvini security decree by deciding not to apply it in Palermo, continuing to register applicants for international protection (see practices).

The mayor's position is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, since it indirectly allows us to complicate the relationship between local authorities and civil society, which is built on a tension between the sharing of certain principles and internal criticism regarding the lack of effective implementation of the measures announced. In this respect, a historical look at the rebellion of the city of Palermo against national policies will be useful to sketch out hypotheses on how an 'internal dissensus' can strengthen the 'counter-power' of civil society without preventing it from allying itself with local authorities.

On the other hand, the narrative "I am a person" crystallises another tension between, on the one hand, a desire to claim equality for all, as well as the need for cohabitation between differences against the affirmation of a "reception model" that would be only for migrants, and on the other hand, the risk of invisibilising certain discriminations that, due to national and European policies, are specific to the administrative and social condition of foreigners.

The Municipality of Palermo towards urban citizenship

The impact of administrative practices on the lives of migrants

It is not easy to account for the complexity of the dynamics of the Municipality of Palermo, given the presence of a multiplicity of different institutional actors and bodies that are intertwined with those of the Region and the State.

A fundamental element for a better understanding of certain dynamics in access to rights, and not to be limited to the mayor's narrative, is the difference, whose boundaries are blurred, between a 'political municipality' and an 'administrative municipality'. For the latter, we can mention administrative offices such as the prefecture and the questure that deal with the issuing of documents. Although this difference may seem caricatural, not only does it constitute an additional obstacle in the creation of a dialogue with civil society by adding a level of interlocutors, but it also shows the power of administrative practices in access to rights and in the perpetuation of systemic discrimination against the foreign population and, therefore, the need to act at this level as well. Often, associations are confronted with the slowness and, sometimes, the incompetence of the administration. At the registry, foreigners often do not find any linguistic mediator, the list of documents to be brought is always incomplete (in addition to being exclusively in Italian) and often people testify to having been confronted with racist attitudes. Similarly, when in 2018 Orlando decided to oppose the security decree, known as the 'Salvini decree', by continuing to register applicants for international protection so that they could continue to exercise their rights, the administration opposed this by refusing to register some people.

Despite these difficulties, as we will see in more detail, the strength of certain projects, co-constructed by local authorities and civil society, lies in the fact that they start from a common diagnosis of the problems as well as an analysis of the needs. For example, some interesting initiatives take shape and are structured on the basis of the opinions of the people

primarily concerned, whether they are social operators, migrants, etc., who in this way reclaim their place in the development of the projects. In this way, the projects that are part of this approach have been able to highlight the existence of these structural problems and thus develop computer tools to support the administration, such as the digital files for unaccompanied foreign minors or the "Easyright" application for access to rights, which, in the course of its implementation, will act as an intermediary between exiled persons and the administration.

A political paradigm shift: from socio-assistance to citizenship in solidarity

What can be called a 'political municipality' initiates a paradigm shift while nuancing the mayor's discourse on migration. In this respect, the lexicon used testifies to this posture. Indeed, instead of continuing to speak in terms of 'socio-assistance services', the nomenclature changes and now we speak of 'solidarity citizenship sector'. Although the nameplate outside the offices has not yet changed, the policy of the municipality is moving towards a model of citizenship in solidarity that moves away from a purely welfare-based position.

A concrete example of how the municipality is trying to implement projects aimed at the autonomy of people even when it comes to dealing with emergencies is the municipal dormitories and the PON metro project¹⁴. This is a national investment programme for 14 large Italian cities to implement new services to improve the habitability of the city through cooperation between the municipal administration, associations and citizens. In Palermo there are five PON metro dormitories, each accommodating 34 people (before the pandemic). Before receiving people, there is a very important relational work in the street with the homeless - a term that includes many people (exiled people, drug addicts etc.). The particularity of the city of Palermo, compared to other PON metro projects implemented in other municipalities, remains in the fact that people in an irregular situation can access and take part in social inclusion paths through home economics courses and gardening workshops. The latter also took place in spaces confiscated from the Mafia. Once in the structure, after an initial period of observation and analysis of the person's needs, the primary objective is to obtain residence. However, if for homeless people of Italian nationality there is the possibility to apply for virtual residence (a complex and long procedure), for undocumented migrants this is impossible. Although these dormitories are an attempt to facilitate access to the municipality's spaces for undocumented migrants who do not have access to the residence, they remain in a situation of impasse.

In the last few months, faced with the urgency of Covid-19, which has reduced the number of places available in the dormitories, the municipality has created, thanks to the funds of the PON metro, a "control room" ("cabina di regia") of the Social Agency for Housing with the aim of unifying interventions aimed at social inclusion and the right to housing of people in precarious situations, measures that were previously fragmented among several agencies. The focus will be on people with disabilities, young adults and Roma, Sinti and Caminanti families who were left homeless after the dismantling of the Favorita camp in April 2019¹⁵.

¹⁴ For more information: <https://www.ponmetropalermo.it/>

¹⁵ « Campo rom sgomberato dopo 29 anni, Orlando: "Ho pregato con loro nella moschea" », [<https://www.palermotoday.it/cronaca/campo-rom-favorita-sgombero-famiglie-5-aprile-2019.html>]. Consulted

Another interesting example is the House of Rights of the Palermo City Council which, inaugurated in February 2020, crystallises the change of paradigm as well as a political will that will nuance the mayor's discourse according to which "nobody is a migrant". It is a space designed to better coordinate both the services provided by the city council for migrants and the projects of certain associations (see practice 3). However, both the choice of the name "Maisons des Droits" and the presence within it of services "for" migrants (cf. Welcome Refugees) is interesting. In other words, if the political objective is to ensure access to rights for all without creating sub-categories of rights that would be exclusively "for" migrants, on the other hand, the setting up of socio-legal "counters" to accompany exiled people and to fight against discrimination, show a will not to invisibilise systemic oppressions that concern a part of the population that is more disadvantaged by national policies. In this sense, the figure of the linguistic and cultural mediator is highly valued in these spaces as well as within the associations. Some migrants, who arrived in Italy a few years ago, find themselves covering this function after having followed training courses. Thus, sometimes still waiting for papers, these young people assume a fundamental importance in the construction of a society that is sensitive to differences, also highlighting a paradoxical gap between an administrative (in)existence and social and professional life. Much more than an interpreter, the figure of the cultural mediator shows the awareness and the will to understand and maintain diversities without wanting to assimilate them¹⁶.

Finally, the municipality has set up a consultative body for foreign residents, the Consulta delle Culture, in order to move away from the 'miserabilistic' view of migrants that characterised the 1980s and 1990s and to ensure political representation and participation of citizens in exile. This is seen, on the one hand, as an instrument of political participation and, on the other hand, as a means to limit it by creating 'special' bodies for foreigners. This brings us back to the tension between not wanting to reproduce divisions and discrimination and wanting to give more space to those who do not have it.

Civil society: 'networking' to overcome the emergency

The actors operating around the migration issue in Palermo are very heterogeneous as they come from different traditions: there are Catholic organisations that provide services, sea rescue NGOs, large Christian organisations such as Caritas, ARCI associations, collectives of migrants, self-managed social centres and trade unions committed to the respect of workers' rights. The academic world also plays a central role, not only by deconstructing a stereotypical narrative of migration, but also as a subject that is genuinely engaged in the field. This strengthens the network of political and social forces. In this respect, we can mention interesting experiences such as ItaStra, which provides Italian language university courses bringing together young Erasmus students and migrants, but also other realities such as CLEDU, the Human Rights Legal Clinic of the Faculty of Law, which, applying the principle of "street law", organises seminars and provides weekly legal advice, always in connection with the associations of the territory.

30/03/2021.

¹⁶ For more information see my interview with Moussa, a young cultural mediator at Arci Porco Rosso and the Penc ethnopsychiatry centre, who arrived in 2017 from Guinea Conakry. Tagliabue, Anna, "Papers do not define us. - Views from Europe and elsewhere". Online: <http://volontaires.echanges-partenariats.org/2020/11/01/les-papiers-ne-nous-definissent-pas/>

The discrepancy, already mentioned, between the reality of migration and the national legal framework, which arrived later, has left more room for manoeuvre for the associative sector. Thus, both the Christian associations and the trade unions, which were the main non-institutional actors, contributed to the drafting of the first two migration laws of 1986 (Foschi law) and 1990 (Martelli law). In other words, one of the reasons that explains the development of the associative fabric is the political vacuum that has left more space for the claims of associations demanding a legal framework in the face of violations of the rights of exiled persons¹⁷. The majority of associative groups were already involved in other causes in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in the "anti-mafia" struggles. Even today, the struggles against the mafia and against the exploitation of the "braccianti", i.e. farm workers in the fields, are still battles fought jointly by collectives, associations and trade unions.

Today in Sicily, associations play a central role in the provision of services to foreigners in an irregular situation and, as such, act both in opposition to and as a complement to the municipality. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of association projects that aim to break away from this position, which reduces them to being a "complement to the services" and reminds the institutions of their role. An interesting experience is that of the association Arci Porco Rosso, a collective located in the central district of Ballarò, which sees itself as a bridge between reality and institutions and as a laboratory for rethinking the city with several voices. Every Wednesday afternoon there is the "sportello sans-papiers", a social and legal centre whose objective is not only to assist migrants in their administrative and legal procedures, but above all to create links and build relationships of trust in order to be able to direct them towards existing services.

Moreover, the "border city" aspect also has an impact on the configuration of social movements and the dynamics of citizen and association mobilisations. There are local organisations that carry out visits to reception centres in the territory and then write reports on the conditions and rights violations observed. In the same way, many lawyers, especially from the ASGI association, are mobilised to denounce the violations of rights that take place inside these centres.

In Palermo, as in the rest of Italy, the mobilisation of migrants and their organisation in various self-managed collectives is of fundamental importance in the fight for access to rights. In this respect, we can mention the collective rebellion against the "pizzo" - a form of racketeering practised by the Italian mafia - of Bengali shopkeepers in the Ballarò district, who then joined the "Addiopizzo" committee, a network that fights against this system of blackmail. In addition, in recent years, migrant groups have been set up whose actions are closely linked to those of other associations in the area. On 3 October 2020, Stravox, an association composed mainly of people of African origin, under the hashtag #Nonsiamopesci (we are not fish) organised a day of commemoration of the shipwreck that took place on the same day in 2013 near Lampedusa where 368 people died. It was also an occasion to commemorate all victims of European migration policies.

The urgency with which associations are often confronted and, at the same time, the political will to build projects aimed at the acquisition of autonomy for migrants over the long term, pushes civil society to be less reticent about the possibility of cooperating with local authorities. As a result, "networking" becomes the *modus operandi* for organising between

¹⁷ Marie Bassi, « Les acteurs non-étatiques face à l'immigration en Sicile et à Lampedusa », *Après-demain*, N ° 39, NF, Association Après-demain, 2016, p. 36-38.

different subjects. The aim is not to multiply initiatives or organised actors involved in civil society, but rather to link up with each other by creating structures of interdependence and collaboration with the aim of dealing with the complexity of changing social needs. The challenge is to better define common visions and to reflect on a strategy to put the skills of each actor at the service of the community. Thus, several associations have organised themselves among themselves by creating the Forum Antirazzista or SOS Ballarò, citizen networks that support and encourage different projects.

"Networking" between different associative, institutional, private actors etc. is therefore an opportunity to better analyse the status quo, to share competences and to have a holistic approach linked to rights and not only to needs. However, there are points of attention that concern both the construction of the network itself and the sources of the projects.

The balance of power between the network partners.

Since there are actors with different powers, the relationship between network members is never equal. Depending on the starting point, the approach to the network changes. In particular, two important aspects emerged from the interviews I conducted:

- a) The role of the municipality, which is sometimes not actively involved in the projects and is conceived exclusively as a source of funding. In this respect, in Palermo the experiences of **(1)** the House of Rights of the City Council, which makes municipal spaces available and aims to create links with civil society, and **(2)** the "ragazzi Harraga" project, which creates digital files for the Municipality with the aim of providing better support for UFM, are interesting. If in the first case the Municipality has an active role in the construction of a physical space, in the second it becomes not only the constructor of the project but also the beneficiary (breaking away from the model that sees migrants as the only passive beneficiaries of these projects).
- b) The relationship between associations and migrant groups can be problematic. A few years ago, many projects did not really include migrants in the creation process. Today, many "calls for projects" require the presence of migrant associations in order to respond. However, this can sometimes lead to a network being created on the basis of convenience, with a consequent instrumentalisation of migrants' associations, which are often called in at the end, when the project has already been built. In this sense, in Palermo, the experience of the "Harraga" and "Saama" projects, which include a team of UFM and young adults who are called in at each stage to give their opinions, is always interesting. Another interesting example is the way in which a network of actors has enabled the creation of undocumented migrants' collectives (Ikenga, Giovani Gambiani, Giovani Senegalesi, Stravox etc.) which have been supported by different associations in their process of acquiring autonomy.

Gouvernance « call for projects »

This links the activities of associations to "calls for projects" with funding of different kinds. This practice can not only lead to competition between associations, but also makes it difficult to sustain projects over the long term. In other words, if these projects respond to a political will to overcome the security, emergency and welfare paradigm of migration in order to move towards an approach linked to rights and freedoms, the question that arises is how they can effectively be transformed into "models".

The health crisis, a light on the problems and on the perspectives

Although Sicily has not been affected by the virus as much as other Italian regions, the health crisis has exacerbated - and continues to do so - the social and economic difficulties of many people who were already in very precarious conditions.

Similarly, the dialogue between the associations and the municipality is becoming increasingly complicated. If the Municipality has ideas to react to the crisis, such as opening another dormitory or distributing food bonuses for the most disadvantaged people, it is the implementation of these measures, combined with the slowness of the administrative offices, that is complicated.

First of all, the procedure for obtaining food bonuses was not designed for people who do not speak Italian. Thus, a network of associations was activated not only to distribute food to people but also to support them in the administrative procedures for applying for food bonuses. The associations had to take the place of the institutions in a way.

As ASGI points out, the municipality of Palermo, with regard to the request for food aid by foreign citizens, did not set any limits (unlike, for example, the municipality of Ventimiglia), indicating that the aid was intended for all, whether or not they had a residence permit or identity documents. However, the problem remains in the conditions for making access to a certain right effective. Indeed, it was only after four days that the municipality of Palermo decided to open the food bonuses to undocumented migrants, without informing those who had previously been refused because of lack of residence permits.

Moreover, the health crisis has also had an impact on services, such as dormitories, which can now accommodate fewer people and only through a long waiting list. Even if during the summer a dormitory could be opened thanks to the pressure of the civil society, other "smaller" housing solutions, which had been thought according to the "housing first" model,¹⁸ could not take place because of some administrative formalities.

The health crisis not only crystallises existing problems but also makes explicit the need to respond to an emergency situation with a more sustainable solution that does not aim to transform associations into "services" that should replace the state and local institutions but is co-constructed through cooperation between all actors.

Despite the difficulties, the city of Palermo is initiating a change of paradigm that aims to move away from an emergency and welfare approach to migration towards an urban citizenship of solidarity. It also provides possible courses of action. Indeed, the field experience shows us the importance of "networking" between several municipal, associative and

¹⁸ The Housing First model was developed by Sam Tsemberis in New York to end homelessness.

academic actors, in order to be able to pool skills and have a holistic understanding of the needs of the territory, always starting from the first interested parties. In this respect, we should not forget the "administrative" level of the municipality, which is important both to ensure the effective implementation of policy ideas and to highlight how bureaucratic aspects can be invasive and discriminatory in people's lives. In this context, the transversality of the problems affecting the most disadvantaged part of the population not only testifies to a need to unite struggles but also reflects the tension between the will to remove words that naturalise a discriminatory system (difference between migrants and citizens) and, at the same time, the will to recognise and name oppressions that are de facto linked to this status.

EXAMPLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY-LOCAL AUTHORITIES ALLIANCES: places of co-construction of migration policies and participation of exiled people

Civil society and local authorities allied against repressive national policies

A look into the past

The city of Palermo has repeatedly rebelled against restrictive national policies by adopting a committed stance for the recognition of the rights of migrants. Already in 2015, through the Palermo Charter, the city shows a radical position in favour of the freedom of movement and settlement of all. In 2018, two events in particular are pushing Palermo to rebel: on the one hand, the entry into force of decree 113/18 (known as the security decree) and, on the other, the declaration of the closure of the ports. As we will see, in the face of repressive national policies, local authorities and civil society reacted by providing a different discourse, a counter-narrative on migration and by joining forces against the violations of the rights of exiled persons. It is interesting to review the dynamics of the co-construction of a civil society-local authority alliance around two important issues: administrative registration/access to rights and opening of borders.

Administrative registration

In the Palermo Charter it is written that "In Italy, the civil registration of the resident population of a municipality derives from the constitutional right to move and reside freely on the national territory (art. 16 of the Constitution) and is at the same time an essential condition for the practical exercise of other fundamental rights".

On 5 October 2018 Decree 113/18 (known as the Security Decree or also the Salvini Decree) came into force, tightening control measures on migrants and limiting access to rights for applicants for international protection. Indeed, the decree prohibited the registration of applicants for international protection in the civil registry. In response, the mayor of Palermo Orlando reacted by opposing this repressive policy, which only serves to make a large proportion of foreigners invisible, and declared that he wanted to continue to register asylum seekers as well as holders of humanitarian protection - a status that had been abrogated by the decree. Administrative registration is very important as it allows one to obtain a residence certificate as well as an identity card, which is necessary to be able to benefit from public services such as access to health care, professional training, access to social housing, the granting of possible subsidies, or registration with an employment agency.

« Let's open the harbours »

In 2018 and 2019, former Interior Minister Matteo Salvini via the slogan "zero sbarchi" ("zero disembarkations") decides to close the ports to sea rescue NGOs that had already picked up people from Libya. In this way, even if people continued to arrive in Italy, the Open Arms boats "Diciotti" and the ship "Gregoretti" are prevented from disembarking the people on board.

In reaction to the coalition government's anti-immigration decree in the summer of 2019, several demonstrations involving local authorities and civil society took place throughout Italy against the closure of Italian ports to rescue boats. In this respect, there was a strong mobilisation at the port with civil society (in particular with the associative network "Mediterraneo Antirazzista") where associations of exiled people participated. In Palermo, in response to this criminalisation of sea rescue NGOs, a group of Italian associations launched the *Mediterranea* project, a ship, the *Mare Jonio*, for rescues. Other actors, such as the Italian Coast Guard, have also mobilised, notably when the vessel *Diciotti* was sequestered in the port of Catania in August 2018. Similarly, the authorities of several Italian cities have spoken out against the measures taken by the government. This is the case, for example, of the mayor of Palermo, Leoluca Orlando, who declared that Palermo was ready to welcome migrants on the boats, or of the LeU (Libertà e Uguagli) MP Erasmo Palazzotto.

The trial against Salvini is set to begin on 15 September. Accused of having kidnapped 137 migrants rescued at sea by the NGO Open Arms, the former minister replied on the networks that "the defence of the homeland is the sacred duty of every citizen". The municipality of Palermo, together with the municipality of Barcelona, Emergency, Arci, *Mediterranea*, *Accoglierete*, other associations and seven migrants who were on the boat, have joined forces in this trial. The civil party is thus made up of eighteen different actors, which gives the image of a real alliance that is both historical and symbolic.

Perspectives et limits

Orlando's stand against the ban on administrative registration of applicants for international protection was a symbolic and political demonstration of the importance of reacting to repressive national policies, even if the scope for action remains rather limited by Article 117 of the Italian Constitution defining the division of competences between the state, the regions and the municipalities in matters of migration.

Indeed, although legislation on the right to residence is national, the municipalities retain competence over civil registration. Therefore, the Orlando process is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, by deciding to administratively register applicants for international protection, Orlando aimed to be denounced in order to be able to raise the unconstitutionality of this measure. Moreover, other Italian mayors reacted in the same way and some of them actually registered people. This chain reaction also took place for the opening of ports when Salvini closed them - even though in this case border control is an exclusively state competence. These reactions also showed the danger of invisibilising and losing control over a part of the population physically resident in the territory.

An important aspect is the chain reaction in other cities¹⁹. The first to speak out were the Mayors of Palermo and Naples. To this end, ActionAid, Asgi and the mayors of Crema, Siracusa and Palermo decided to launch the #dirittincomune appeal to all Italian mayors to sign a commitment to register asylum seekers at the civil registry, rebelling against the entry into force of the security decree.

If the institutional limits show us the importance of a reaction at the local level to identify strategies of contestation as well as to underline the centrality of an aspect X (in this case residence) both in access to rights and in the administration of the city, in the same way, the internal limits and/or difficulties can also suggest avenues for reflection. In particular, while on the one hand there was support from civil society for the mayor's stance, on the other hand, associations criticised the municipality for not effectively registering asylum seekers. This shows us the fact that civil society retains a critical autonomy while allying with local authorities and reminds us of the importance of acting at the level of the 'administrative municipality' to try to get to the root of structural problems as well as to bridge the gap between political ideas and their implementation.

Networking: towards a holistic approach to empowering unaccompanied foreign minors in their transition to adulthood

Unaccompanied foreign minors are a particularly vulnerable category. Statistics show that in 2020, 3,851 UFM's landed on the Italian coast and on 30 June 2020, 894 were present on Sicilian territory. The majority of minors want to continue their journey to join families in other regions of Italy or EU countries or to find better living conditions. Many of them end up staying in Sicily. Once they have arrived and been identified, they are placed in reception centres, first of all first level (CAS) and then second level (SPRAR/SIPROIMI/SAI).

However, due to overcrowding in the reception facilities, many of them remain in the first level reception centres where conditions are very poor and no pathway to autonomy is provided. Today, the national reception system for minors is unfortunately based on differential treatment depending on the reception structure and the operators working there. In addition to this disparity in treatment, another problem, which is very present in Palermo, concerns the passage to adulthood. In fact, many minors who arrived between 2015 and 2017 and who were 16-17 years old have now become adults. However, at the age of 18, the state considers them to be autonomous (when they are obviously not) and they are therefore supposed to leave the national reception system (unless they have obtained refugee status or subsidiary protection).

Faced with these limitations imposed by national and European legislation (Italy is considered one of the most attentive countries to the issue of minors) on reception, the civil society-local authorities alliance proposes projects and initiatives which, through a holistic approach to the issue, aim at the acquisition of autonomy for minors and young adults so that they can exercise their rights in full awareness.

¹⁹ Interactive map of cities' resistance to the Salvini decree: <http://umap.openstreetmap.fr/ca/map/resistances-locales-au-decret-salvini-resistenze-l-279671#11/38.1938/13.6024>

Ragazzi Harraga et Saama

These were two projects in 2016 and 2019, financed by Fondazione Con il Sud, coordinated by the CIAI (Italian Centre for Child Support) and co-constructed by nine institutional and associative actors and a group of UFM.

The heterogeneity of the network allowed for a pooling of skills, useful for starting an analysis of the national reception system with a "Palermo focus" in order to reach a common understanding of the complexity of the issue. In other words, these projects are based on the link between different actions and actors that revolve around the minor by strengthening cooperation between civil society, local authorities and the private sector.

In the first phase a validation group was created to give feedback throughout the process.

- a) Creation of digital files to respond to the bureaucratic slowness that was accentuated by the absence of a tool for monitoring the progress of minors. The aim is also to facilitate interaction between the actors involved with minors, with differentiated access for each subject (psychologists, educators, schools, administration etc.). With the new SAAMA project Palermo is exporting this model of social files to other cities in Sicily. I have not been able to get any information on the issue of data protection. There should be a collective reflection on the digital "traceability" of these minors.
- b) The second axis concerns the world of work. The starting point is the weak connection between the L2 Italian language courses (CIPIA), secondary schools and the world of work, in a context that is already precarious and that pushes people to accept irregular work. In view of this, these projects aim first of all to strengthen the transversal skills of minors with the aim of creating a portfolio. The member associations also organise themselves to co-animate workshops on different themes: interculturality, rights and active citizenship, theatre and audio-visual production. These courses have also been opened to Italian teenagers. School and extra-curricular training courses were agreed with companies.
- c) The third axis revolves around the problem of housing, linked to the question of transition to adulthood and the consequent exit from the national reception system. Thus, flats for young adults were made available for one year by the oratory of Santa Chiara. Within this oratory a youth hostel was opened (now closed) with the aim of successfully continuing to self-finance the flats after the end of the foundation's funding. The aim was also to enable young migrants to open up to the encounter with travellers and to reverse their relationship by freeing themselves from the position of constantly being those who are "welcomed".

The experience of voluntary guardianship and the "social guardianship" project

"The institution of voluntary guardianship of minors is a real instrument of active citizenship", says Santa Giuseppina Tumminelli, during a telephone interview. A professor of political science at the University of Palermo, she is interested in migration issues and, in particular, in the dynamics of social and political participation of migrants. Before, there was what was called "institutional guardianship", that is to say, lawyers or even, in Palermo, a deputy mayor, became the guardians of a large number of minors. This posed problems in terms of the quality of monitoring. So, from 2015, even before the national ZAMPA law of 2017,

which provides a legal framework for this figure, Palermo set up a system of free citizen guardianships through the organisation of a complex network of citizen guardian training courses. These training courses are run by several institutional and associative players in order to better prepare the meeting between the minor and his or her guardian. This Palermo experience contributed to the drafting of the national ZAMPA law, which institutes voluntary guardianship for UFM. Reflection continues to evolve, particularly on the issue of the long-term monitoring of young migrants. In this respect, in Siracusa with Accoglierete and in Palermo there have been interesting experiences with the institution of social guardianship. The "social guardian" is a figure who, at the end of his or her mandate, coinciding with the passage to adulthood of the boy or girl, continues to play an important role in his or her social inclusion journey. The experiment, which is currently being concluded, aims to support volunteer guardians in the delicate phase of the passage to adulthood of minors, giving them useful operational tools as well as support in facing the "adult world". The Juvenile Court of Messina has officially recognised the figure of the social guardian, which represents an important step for this project.

Interests and limits

It is a holistic approach in several ways. Firstly, because it takes into account the different transitions that young people face. First of all, there is the transition from minor to adult, which is common to people of the same age group regardless of nationality. There is an artificiality in the distinction between minority and majority that emerges from national legislation and which does not take into account the processual nature of this change. Secondly, there are transitions that are specific to the migratory experience: the fact of having to reconstruct oneself in a completely different socio-cultural and linguistic context and the process of working through the traumas suffered during the journey to Europe. Secondly, they are "holistic" in that they target several aspects of the lives of minors who are conceived as adolescents with their complexities and not exclusively as younger migrants who need to be "welcomed". These projects aim to match different actions with different needs.

Thirdly, all these actions imply cooperation (and training) between several actors: social operators, psychologists, cultural mediators who follow the minors. Furthermore, these projects were designed not for them but with them, thus giving an effective place to the primary stakeholders, who are not just beneficiaries but become co-constructors. In fact, all the actors involved, whether they are operators, volunteer tutors or minors, are both beneficiaries and implementers of these projects - which makes it possible to overcome the helper-assisted dichotomy. Furthermore, this strategy of intersectoral dialogue has made it possible to see the municipality not simply as an administrative structure or as a source of funding, but to involve it directly in the implementation of the project.

Limits and perspectives

Given the cross-cutting nature of the issues, local young people should be more involved. Secondly, the dimensions of the territory are also important. If it is a large city, it would be interesting to proceed by "neighbourhoods" in order to guarantee the participation of as many people as possible and to develop a sense of belonging.

Finally, there is the problem of sustainability, especially when these projects depend on calls for projects that last 2/3 years and whose funding amount varies from year to year. It would then be necessary to find ways to finance oneself over time so that the project can continue.

Access to urban citizenship through consultation spaces

Access to urban citizenship is also achieved through the institution of spaces which can facilitate communication between actors. The challenge is therefore to see how local authorities and civil society (including migrant collectives) cooperate in this respect. In this sense, the importance of spaces in accessing citizenship is twofold: on the one hand, to facilitate "networking" and, on the other, to reclaim spaces - public or not - and show another vision of living together.

Palermo City Hall's House of Rights

Inspired by the House of Rights of the Milan City Council, it is a space designed to make access to services easier for migrants and, in particular, for UFM. It is a place built on the idea of cooperation between municipal operators and associations that fight for the rights of all. Several projects have been conceived within this House, which represents a real attempt to give a physical and concrete space to what used to be the socio-assistance sector dealing with migratory issues. Inside, associations such as Welcome Refugees provide socio-legal services and a group of lawyers is also active in the field of discrimination. The "In gioco" project is also hosted by this House. This project is interesting because it brings together peer-to-peer operators, i.e. those who share the experience of migration with the beneficiaries, and who provide job orientation for migrants.

More informal spaces

An urban look, as well as a simple walk, shows us that some areas of the centre have become a mixture of foreign and Palermitan residents. In addition to congregational places such as markets and squares where Mediterranean culture is explicitly manifested, there are interesting experiences, such as "Moltivolti", a multi-ethnic and Sicilian restaurant that is also a co-working space and is located in the Ballarò district. Here, many of the projects are thought out, discussed and questioned over an arancina or a couscous. It is a space where everyone can access and where several actors are connected. There is also a project to accompany young migrants in their associative autonomy.

Interests and limits

It is not easy to access, observe and get a feel for the places of aggregation and cooperation in this context of health crisis. For this reason, I did not manage to go as deeply into this part as I would have liked. This is also in contradiction with the very nature of the city of Palermo, where human relations are warmer and less complicated, and where people live in the streets, taking over squares and green spaces. Covid made it more difficult to talk to the municipality, so during my stay in Palermo the House of Rights was closed. The people were accessible, the projects continued to work, but it was impossible to see the usefulness of this place. What remains interesting is the way in which the associations take over the premises

of the town hall. The Maison des droits is a space that is also accessible to people who are in an irregular situation and represents a real attempt to change the welfare paradigm.

Political participation: instruments for claiming political voice

The Consulta delle Culture and the associations of exiled people

"The Assembly of Cultures of the city of Palermo is the concrete application of a model in which the rights of citizens are linked exclusively to residence". Palermo Charter, 2015.

In 2013 the Palermo City Council established the Consulta delle Culture, a consultative and representative body for all those who have a nationality other than Italian or who have acquired Italian citizenship.

The Consulta, composed of 21 individual members representing seven different geographical areas, elects a president, a vice-president and a presiding board. The President participates in the City Council. In this context, he has the right to speak even if he cannot vote. The City Council appoints three councillors to represent it in the Consulta. In the same way, the Junta selects a delegate. In this way, the administration aims to prevent the Consulta from becoming a separate subject, the aim being to make it a body in constant interaction with the other institutions.

This body has several objectives: to encourage initiatives to promote knowledge of the regulations governing stay, residence, employment, social care, health, education, professional training, transport and the use of public services. In addition, the aim is to promote intercultural encounters and dialogue and to prevent all forms of discrimination and xenophobia. The common objective of these bodies is to promote the citizenship of migrants without the right to vote and to stand for election, by adopting certain rules of representative democracy.

In addition, there are experiences of training and support for the organisation of associations for exiled people. The need to create associations was first expressed by young Senegalese people who did not know how to do so either politically or bureaucratically. Multivolti thus gave life to a project of accompaniment and networking with associations in the territory. Today there are mixed nationality associations and (basically) non-mixed associations.

Interests and limits

As we have seen, moving away from an emergency approach to migration means not only guaranteeing the enjoyment of basic rights, but also thinking about how to access urban citizenship by reclaiming spaces and claiming political voice.

Firstly, the interest of the Advisory Council is twofold. On the one hand, it constitutes a bridge between the municipality and civil society. In particular, it collaborates with the municipality to provide the necessary support to foreigners, associations and self-organised migrant groups in order to allow the effective exercise of any form of participation. On the other hand, it has formalised the reflection on the link between residence and political participation. The Council supports the fact that the principle of residence must prevail over the logic of nationality. Indeed, with this act, the city contributes to the international debate on citizenship, thus contributing to the cultural and political battle that claims the right to political participation

on the basis of residence. However, residence is a central issue in access to rights. This allows us to return to the importance of involving the 'administrative municipality' in the reflection.

Secondly, the experience of support for associative organisation is interesting because it illustrates the principle of "networking" and aims to create the conditions for people, even in an irregular situation, to be able to organise themselves. However, if the Consulta is sometimes seen as a front organisation, migrant collectives have difficulties to last since members have economic imperatives and less time to dedicate to their actions.

First of all, the question that arises concerns the creation of spaces "for" migrants. In other words, does not the Consulta delle Culture risk becoming a ball "for foreigners" who should be able to participate politically in the existing institutional bodies? Similarly, to what extent is the creation of migrant associations useful to their political life compared to participation in other associations that already exist? Do these mechanisms only reinforce and reproduce divisions or do they create spaces and give voice to those who do not have one? Furthermore, in the case of the Consulta, there is also a risk of creating democratic spaces that are devoid of real political issues and that divert attention from the issue of voting rights. Then there is also the question of remuneration for participation: remunerating people's participation in consultative bodies in order to encourage participation and take into account their capacity to invest, taking into account the material realities and the mental and temporal availability of each participant.

Conclusions

Although this is (also) a border reality, the city of Palermo is trying to move away from an exclusively emergency and assistance-based vision of migration through projects that are co-constructed by an alliance of civil society, migrants and local authorities. These good practices are not designed "for" migrants but, in a radical perspective that reflects the complexity of the problems on several levels, are designed "for" and "by" all actors. This makes it possible to move beyond the dualistic model of "beneficiaries" and "builders", to involve all actors in a more concrete way and to rethink living together, without making invisible conditions that are unfortunately still specific to the social, political and administrative condition of foreigners. The important axes that emerged from my fieldwork were the following:

- 1. The importance of a civil society-local authority alliance against repressive national policies ;**
- 2. The need for networking and a holistic approach to empower migrants;**
- 3. Building spaces for dialogue between civil society, authorities, exiled people and access to urban citizenship;**
- 4. The need to guarantee the political and social participation of exiled people.**

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