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Edited by Pierluigi Musarò, Nikos Papastergiadis, Laura Peja

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PIERLUIGI MUSARÒ* - NIKOS PAPASTERGIADIS** - LAURA PEJA***

REIMAGINING NARRATIVES ON MIGRATION
The Role of Media, Arts and Culture in Promoting Transcultural Dialogue

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This special issue – stemmed from a three-year-research program funded by Università Cattolica that provided encounters, reaserch networks and opened perspectives and collaborations –[1] starts from the assumption that migration is a historical and natural phenomenon, but its definition is political, linked to the time frame and socio-economic context, and influenced by the media, as the infrastructure that constitutes the world, in material and symbolic ways. Today, both social interaction and cultural reproduction pass through the media. Whether analog or digital, media contribute to the process of construction of reality by people, as well as to the formation of shared imaginaries and social representations. By suggesting to us what and how to think, old and new media – together with a multiplicity of institutions, subjects, sources, tools and communicative practices that coexist rather than replace each other – shape our common sense of the world[2]. Sometimes fueling fear of the other and legitimizing its criminalization, sometimes stimulating curiosity and empathy[3] toward the other and the elsewhere.

Migration has been a phenomenon throughout human history. From the very beginning of human existence, humankind has had both the reason and the means to travel from one place to another[4] . Migration has always been part of human life as it is an essential part of humanity's processes of adaptation to different social and physical environments[5] . However, as a result of economic hardship, conflict and globalization, in the last decade there is an obsession with immigration, even in the case of a reduction in arrivals. The "migration crisis", instrumentally constructed by politicians and media

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[1] The program was a "university interest project" for the years 2016-2019. *Migrations | Mediations. Arts and Communication as Resources for Intercultural Dialogue.* (P.I. Ruggero Eugeni) about which see: https://www.migrations-mediations.com.

[2] N. Couldry, *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism*, London: Sage, 2010.

[3] F. Colombo, *Imago pietatis. Indagine su fotografia e compassione*, Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2018.

[4] S. Castles, M.J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

[5] M.L. Bacci, ed., *Demografia del capitale umano*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010.

which benefit from it, feeds on the fears of citizens and deepens divisions by providing simple (static) and exclusive answers[6]. Hence, migration becomes a "weapon of mass distraction" for political leaders with respect to other issues and to protect particular interests.

In the last decade, the representation strategies and discursive practices enacted by a wide range of state and non-state actors have been presenting irregular migrants crossing borders as an 'emergency' to be managed in terms of a wider social, cultural and political 'crisis'. These media representations of migration and asylum seeking as a 'crisis' have outstripped the reality of the situation[7]. The current crisis – usually framed as "a state of exception"[8] that needs emergency legislation and intervention – has now been increased by the fears connected to the health crisis due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Often supporting the image of migrants coming to Europe as bearers of the disease, the pandemic has seen an intensification of controls in the European countries as well as around Europe's borders, legitimising further borders externalisations[9]. As a consequence, the public anxiety about migration and asylum-seeking in Europe is increasingly shaped by the political rhetoric that depicts Europe as an endangered continent besieged by people fleeing conflict or seeking economic opportunity to ensure a better life. Institutional and political actors have stoked public fears and security concerns, endorsing a range of emergency narratives, aggressive policing and militarized border control, which in turn has generated a fertile breeding ground for xenophobic, populist reactions.

The answers to citizens' fears were thus converted in physical and symbolic fences and walls to block immigration, undermining respect for human rights both in domestic and foreign policies. The outsourcing of the management of migrants to third countries – such as the EU-Turkey agreement signed in March 2016 and the Memorandum of Understanding between Italy and Libya signed in February 2017 – as well as the failure to sign the Global Compact on migration by various European countries are only some of the distorted outcomes and shortcomings of this system. The 'securitization of migration' has shaped the common understanding of what or who represents a (potential) threat[10]. Narratives of threats and security risks have been used to justify measures, policies and laws that were once considered to be extreme, unjustified and inhumane. We could call it a 'crimmigration approach' that not only frames migrants as symbolic threats but also extends to legal and illegal attempts to push migrants outside of the territories[11].

The media play a key role in this process. In the dominant Eurocentric discourses on migration numerous myths and misconceptions prevail, such as the claim that the biggest migration flow is the South-North migration (accompanied by terminology

[6] M. Ambrosini, *L'invasione immaginaria. L'immigrazione oltre i luoghi comuni*, Roma: Laterza, 2020.

[7] N. Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012; P. Musarò, "Mare Nostrum: The Visual Politics of a Military-Humanitarian Operation in the Mediterranean Sea", *Media, Culture & Society*, 39, 1 (2017): 11-28.

[8] G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

[9] E. Giacomelli, P. Musarò, P. Parmiggiani, "The 'Invisible Enemy' and the Usual Suspects. How Covid-19 Reframed Migration in Italian Media Representations", *Sociologia della Comunicazione*, 60 (2020): 119-136.

[10] D. Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 27, 1 (2002): 63-92.

[11] D. Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012.

invoking ideas of out of control 'floods' or an invasion) whereas, as demonstrated by several studies, intra-regional migration is far more prevalent than inter-regional migration[12]; as well as the politically driven image of migrants as single, male, unskilled and dangerous is contested by the 'feminization' of the international migration framework[13], with a steady increase in the numbers of migrant women entering the EU in the past two decades[14] and a growing awareness of their economic contributions in Europe history: for long presented only as vulnerable subjects and economic burdens, female migrants are at last recognised as active builders of Europe with economic means, belongings, assets and social networks[15]. Even though unregulated movements across national borders constitute only a minor part of the mobility between states in the EU, it is one of the most spectacularized themes that is covered by the media. With the diversity of media platforms, the multiplication of formats for representation, and the complex feedback loops between reporting and public opinion we have witnessed the emergence of new voices but also the consolidation of old stereotypes. This over-mediatization of the phenomenon leads to a consistent discrepancy between the perception and the reality of the issue[16], and this distance has fueled populist agenda and elevated the political status of migration issues. In this expanded media field it is therefore crucial to "deprovincialize" the media imaginary[17] and critically examine the ways in which political attitudes towards migration are framed[18].

Returning to the Eurocentric discourses we note that the inflows of refugees and asylum seekers have been often described catastrophically, representing their arrival as a major contemporary challenge and often as a threat[19]. The crisis narrative, with its securitised, depoliticising and technocratic approach, has helped populist, right-wing political parties push their anti immigration agendas[20]. Although the "migrant crisis" is constructed in its historical and symbolic frame, its consequences are real. De-humanising migrants and asylum seekers, these narratives legitimise inequal power relations connected to the right to move and mask unjust and hegemonic treatments[21]. Within this general situation, new forms of poverty, exclusion, social desegregation and gender inequalities are emerging all around the world.

[12] D. Ionesco, D. Mokhnacheva, F. Gemenne, *The Atlas of Environmental Migration*, London-New York: Routledge, 2017.

[13] K.M. Donato, D. Gabaccia, *Gender and International Migration. From the Slavery Era to the Global Age*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2015; S. Shekhawat, E.C. Del Re, eds., *Women and Borders. Refugees, Migrants and Communities*, London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2018; F. Anthias, G. Lazaridis, *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe*, Oxford: Berg, 2000.

[14] See the data available in the website of the Migration Data Portal https://www.migrationdataportal.org/about) managed and developed by IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC).

[15] On this see for example the work of the transdisciplinary network of European researchers (Cost Action CA19112) *Women on the Move*, www.womenonthemove.eu/.

[16] For further information, visit: http://www.cattaneo.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Analisi-Istituto-Cattaneo-Immigrazione-realtà-e-percezione-27-agosto-2018-1.pdf. For updated data on the Italian situation, see ISMU Annual Report on Migration, now in its XXVII edition: Fondazione ISMU, *Ventisettesimo rapporto sulle migrazioni 2021*, Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2022, open access at: https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa/catalog/book/757.

[17] T. Miller, J. Arroyave, "Worlding Media Studies" in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of World Theory*, edited by J. Di Leo and C. Moraru, London: Bloomsbury, 2021: 355-366.

[18] L. Zanfrini, *The Challenge of Migration in a Janus-Faced Europe*, Cham (CH): Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

[19] E. Balibar, *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

[20] R. Wodak, *The Politics of Fear: What Right Wing Populist Discourses Mean*, London: Sage, 2015.

[21] S. Goodman, A. Sirriyeh, S. McMahon, "The Evolving (Re)Categorization of Refugees throughout the 'Refugee/Migrant Crisis'", *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 27, 2 (2017): 105-114.

The distorted representations of migration generated a "moral panic"[22] which has been concretised in a series of direct and violent attacks towards "newcomers" and hate speech[23]. More generally, across and beyond countries of the Global North, a generalized "atmosphere of hostility" has led to shrinking forms of social protection and increasing precariousness for all those classified as outsiders, with the passing of legislation that denies them access to work, housing, services, and education. This tendency has been only exacerbated by the global rise of nationalist and populist political forces, which has turned the scapegoating of migrants – not only those with a foreign passport, but anyone racialized as others – into a distinctive target of public discourse and action. Through various forms of cooperation in surveillance, risk analysis and deportations, amongst border control agencies both within and beyond the EU, this form of policing operates "before, at, and after the border", punctuating the above-mentioned trajectory with the aim of turning the environments it traverses into spaces of hostility for people on the move. This and other similar strategies of border control have locked in a connecting logic the "natural" borderlands located at the fringes of the Global North to urban geographies in Europe, the United States, Australia, and beyond. As Pezzani highlights, rather than a singular occurrence, it is a multiplicity of hostile environments that have sprung up across "natural" and civic spaces alike[24].

On the other hand, since the rise of modern nation-states, borders have played an important role in ordering society because they have the power to define territories and delimit the geographies of nations. This is also visible at the level of the imaginary, by shaping national identities of people and their perceptions of the world[25]. From this perspective, borders and the process of bordering are not only social phenomena, but they are also political, which makes the border a strategy to control both imaginary and real space. Borders can function not only as territorial markers, but also as mediators of social constructed processes[26]. Borders are part of the practices that both produce norms of exclusion across bodies and also give voice to the would-be migrants sustaining projects of geo-political sovereignty.

This process of bordering contributes to normalizing the extraterritorial border by negatively stereotyping migration, or even by criminalizing it. Hence, the reporting of the European or Australian ways to tackle the "migration crisis", that focus on their endeavour in terms of risks, death, prohibitions, acts of breaking the law, and failure of arrival – are not just an attempt to criminalize migration, but also part of how the media contribute to shaping the border "landscape" [27]. For example, the portrayal of their identities in binary of either 'desirable' or 'undesirable' is linked to what Chouliaraki and Musarò term the "narrated" border, which, in turn, is part of the wider "mediatized

[22] S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and the Lockers*, London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1972.

[23] F. Faloppa, *#ODIO. Manuale di resistenza alla violenza delle parole*, Turin: Utet, 2020.

[24] L. Pezzani, "Hostile Environments", *e-flux* 2020, https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/at-the-border/325761/hostile-environments.

[25] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso, 1991; M. Agier, *Borderlands: Towards an Anthropology of the Cosmopolitan Condition*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016.

[26] N. Vaughan-Williams, *Europe's Border Crisis: Biopolitical Security and Beyond*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

[27] P. Cuttitta, "Borderizing the Island. Setting and Narratives of the Lampedusa Border Play*"*, *Acme. An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 13, 2 (2014): 196-219; L. Chouliaraki, M. Georgiou, "Hospitability: The Communicative Architecture of Humanitarian Securitization at Europe's Borders", *Journal of Communication*, 67, 2 (2017): 159-180.

border"[28] – a regime of reception characterized by the fusion of caring compassion for and military protection from mobile populations. In other words, assuming mediatization as a process in which "the media exert a particularly dominant influence on other institutions"[29], we can describe the mediatized border as a techno-affective network of mediations around migrants and refugees, where emotions of fear and empathy co-exist through digital connectivities, ritualizing relationship with the other through discourses of difference and superiority. Therefore, it can be concluded that these processes exacerbate the discrepancy between people in need, and people in "power".

On the other side, this discrepancy can be reduced by phisical experiences of proximity: bodily closness to the 'other' provokes and reshapes the identities and the idea itself of borders. Practices involving bodies, participatory projects constitute shared spaces of action within which subjects experience both mutual presence and new forms of presence in and of the space[30]: they create a level playing field that allows symbolic appropriation of spaces through their reinvention and their refunctionalization in places. Performative practices transform barriers into landscapes, borders into bridges[31].

Borders are also intimately involved in the relationship between mobility and (in) justice[32]. Mobility is experienced in dramatically different ways across the globe. States still control their borders and the movement of people across them, and so, despite the rhetoric of globalisation, "the bulk of the world's population lives in closed worlds, trapped by the lottery of birth"[33]. Thus, the freedom to move has become a stratifying factor of today's world[34] and those groups whose spontaneous mobility is considered suspect may be subject to enforced immobility.

As Wihtol de Wenden argues, although the end of the Cold War invoked the generalisation of the right to leave a country, the right to move is one of the least respected in the world[35]. A look at the passport index[36] is indicative of the vast disparities in mobility experienced across the globe. The low passport ranking of many "countries of origin" (rankings are based on the number of destinations their holders can access), and a highly restrictive visa system, which has exorbitant costs, means that regular channels for cross border migration are extremely limited. As recent research has shown, border controls have, in many cases, simply rerouted migrants towards alternative, often more dangerous routes[37]. This is evident in the destiny of people living in many poor countries who face dangerous journeys to the Global North, across geographies that have become

[28] L. Chouliaraki, P. Musarò, "The Mediatized Border: Technologies and Affects of Migrant Reception in the Greek and Italian Borders", *Feminist Media Studies*, 17, 4 (2017): 535-549.

[29] S. Hjarvard, "The Mediatization of Society: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change, *Nordicom Review*, 29, 2 (2008): 105-134.

[30] C. Falletti, G. Sofia, V. Jacono, eds., *Theatre and Cognitive Neuroscience*, London-Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2016.

[31] G. Schininà, "Here We Are, Social Theatre and Some Open Questions about its Developments", *The Drama Review*, 48, 3 (2004): 17-31.

[32] B. Anderson, *Us and Them? The Dangerous Politics of Immigration Control*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; R. Andersson, *Illegality, Inc. Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*, Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014.

[33] P. Hirst, G. Thompson, *Globalization in Question*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.

[34] Z. Bauman, *Strangers at Our Door*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016; S. Mezzadra, B. Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

[35] C. Wihtol de Wenden, *Le droit d'émigrer*, Paris: CNRS, coll. "Débats", 2013.

[36] https://www.passportindex.org/.

[37] S. Sassen, *Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996; V. Squire, "Desert 'Trash'. Posthumanism, Border Struggles and Humanitarian Politics", *Political Geography*, 39 (2014): 11-21.

deathscapes as a result of unjust border controls. The restrictions on mobility have therefore not reduced movement but increased the likelihood of exploitation and large costs in securing passage via irregular means. In this sense, "mobility justice"[38] is one of the crucial political and ethical issues of our day. In Sheller's view, power and inequality inform the governance and control of cross-border movement, creating an overarching mobility (in)justice in the world.

In this context, the negative representations of migrants depict them as unwelcome "invaders"[39], crystallize power imbalances, dehumanize migrants, and legitimize the imperialist gaze of those who have established the rules of the game of mobility[40]. Even when media reports are not reliant on stigmatic tropes there is still a tendency to convey the idea of solidarity through the prism of the "ironic spectator"[41], namely a form of solidarity more based on the body and eyes of who is helping rather than on the conditions that have led to power imbalances.

In order to go beyond this depoliticised politics, that is based on detached forms of compassionate care and technocratic control, it is essential to enhance an alternative vision of solidarity that is capable of recognizing the other as a human being and unveiling the harsh oppressive conditions of the global and local structures of injustice. The goal of stopping migration is not only an unrealistic prospect, but more fundamentally produces deleterious effects in the everyday lives of millions of vulnerable people on the move, worsens the conditions under which migration will take place in the near future, and harms the lives of migrants already established in Europe[42].

If we step out of the hegemony performed by the gaze of the Global North, frightened by anxieties and concerned exclusively with the impacts on the society of arrival, it becomes easier to recognize that migration is a constitutive feature in our world. It provides an optic for experiencing existence of the world and understanding being in the world. Migrants (often denied by discourses and policies on migration), and the communicative flows with which they interpret and re-interpret their migratory experience can also furnish a new perspective for viewing the dynamics of cultural and social change.

In this light, migration appears as a "total social fact", as Sayad defines it[43]. A phenomenon to be investigated beyond its economic or demographic function because, far from involving only the individuals who migrate, it acts on society as a whole, bringing with it atavistic fears, risks of exploitation and ethnic or religious fundamentalism, but also giving rise to new movements of revolt, facilitating the creation of new transnational social spaces and the spread of new practices of cultural hybridization[44].

Studying people on the move therefore means analyzing the societies involved in migration – the limits of the nation-state and the contradictions inherent in the definition of a national identity – calling into question the categories of thought with which the social and political world is constructed[45].

The act of migrating therefore has much to do with the migratory imaginary, shaped

[38] M. Sheller, *Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in an Age of Extremes*, New York: Verso, 2018.
[39] M. Albahari, *Crimes of Peace: Mediterranean Migrations at the World's Deadliest Border*, Philadelphia: PENN, 2015.
[40] N. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
[41] L. Chouliaraki, *The Ironic Spectator*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.
[42] E. Balibar, *Europe, crise et fin?*, Paris: Le Bord de l'Eau, 2016.
[43] A. Sayad, *La double absence. Des illusions de l'émigré aux souffrances de l'immigré*, Paris: Seuil, 1999.
[44] N. Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012.
[45] E. Piga Bruni, P. Musarò, eds., "Viaggio e sconfinamenti", *Scritture migranti*, 14 (2020).

both by the gaze of a North agitated by fears and by the gaze of a South nourished by expectations. In order to understand the reality of migration, it is therefore fundamental to investigate the behavior of migrants together with the narratives that precede or follow it. Hence, we recognize that the role played by the media in the description of migration has consequences on the development of a migrant imaginary.

Thus, moving away from othering and alarmist, depoliticised representations of the others, many of the articles included in this special issue call for the need to challenge current narratives and discourses and to create and construct alternative ones.

Assuming narratives as sense-making tools that help individuals and collectives to frame and understand their experiences, some of the articles echo the lesson of Silverstone[46] about granting the duty to provide asylum or of 'media hospitality' to the other, who expresses him or herself, precisely, not only through the possibility of enunciation (in his or her power of speech), but also through the right to be listened to. Giving the other the possibility to present and self-represent him or herself implies symbolically recognising him or her as a person, as a subject who is a bearer of rights (and duties), as a potential actor of positive social change, as an agent of social development[47].

Media, arts and culture have many important roles to play: making us communicate with each other in an immediate way, artistic and cultural expressions allow us to understand our similarities as well as our differences. Recent discoveries in neuroscience are only the last step of a long chain of thought that psychology, psychoanalysis, philosophy, and anthropology have developed to clarify the central role of the (basically theatrical) interaction between the self and the Other for the constitution of human being and the pivotal role of performance for a human being who is not a substance given, but an action that develops. The nature of being human is dramatic: "our sense of who we are, how we relate to the world, and how we learn is conducted through the medium of drama"[48]. And – very apropos – Prentki observes: "wherever we look across these landscapes of division and otherness, we see tribes of mistrust who lack the dramatic capacity of empathy; that specifically dramatic quality of turning the imagination into scenarios for action, of asking the fundamental question of all dramatic process: 'what if?'"[49].

Successful strategies of inclusion tend to pass first and foremost through bodies and mainly bodies in action, bodies that perform, whatever type of performance it may be, bodies that encounter and interact with each other, also using media. The practices of participatory audio-visual writing and production have proved to be among the most flexible tools for expressing the irreducibility of migrant subjectivity. Moreover, audiovisuals can preserve memories previously excluded by the dominant political logics[50].

[46] R. Silverstone, *Media and Morality: On the Rise of the Mediapolis*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006.

[47] M. Moralli, P. Musarò, R. Paltrinieri, P. Parmiggiani, eds., "Participation and Resistance through Arts and Culture, Studi Culturali", 18, 2 (2021); P. Musarò, P. Parmiggiani, "Beyond Black and White: The Role of Media in Portraying and Policing Migration and Asylum in Italy", *Revue Internationale de Sociologie*, 27, 2 (2017): 241-260.

[48] T. Prentki, "Migrante Players", in *Playing Inclusion. The Performing Arts in the Time of Migrations: Thinking, Creating and Acting Inclusion*, edited by R. Carpani and G. Innocenti Malini, *Comunicazioni sociali*, 1 (2019): 23-32 (24).

[49] *Ibid.*, 31.

[50] Several institutions have encouraged the creation of digital archives that can be consulted online, where video testimonies, autobiographies, private images and life stories, useful for the recognition of minorities, are collected. Among the most important international cases, the American website myimmigrationstory.com; Australia Lebanese Historical Society of Victoria; the joint project of Globalnet21 and the Migration Museum Project in Great Britain; the Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration in France.

Embodied practices may constitute an opportunity for decolonial approaches. Performances function as "vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity"[51] that can constitute a safeguard against hegemonic cultural frameworks. Performance as "a process, a praxis, an episteme, a mode of transmission, an accomplishment, and a means of intervening in the world" [52] could enrich even the historiographical perspective: the opportunity not to 'write it all down in text' necessarily and not to reduce gestures and embodied practices to narrative description can open to countermemories, repertoire of non-hegemonic practices that might escape the dominance of the written word and rational thought[53].

This critical perspective on the role of the media and wider understanding of the agency of migrants can be coupled with the recognition that the arts have been transformed by migration and mobility[54]. In particular, the recent cultural and aesthetic transformations have offered another way of seeing identity, politics and society. The EU Member States and the EU itself have been summoned to meet these challenges. There has been growing appreciation of the ways in which media, the arts and performative practices are able to facilitate intercultural dialogue among migrant and host communities[55] – thereby empowering their participation in social life; promote an understanding of the affirmative role of cultural diversity (different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage) within European societies; and question the boundedness of identities and cultures. These critical processes lead us to address the possibilities of a transcultural dialogue – one that opens up the ideas of belonging and sets up new positions for speaking that are not confined to pre-existing ethnic and national identities.

Opportunities have finally emerged in cross-media productions to challenge both the assimilationist logic and the process of Othering, with the reclaiming of identities that have already internalised their ethno-cultural roots[56]. On another side, performing arts design a space in which to explore who we are, individually and collectively, and how to negotiate and renegotiate the dialogical relationship of self to other, in a long lasting challenge to the opposition between 'attending' and 'acting'[57].

Media, performing arts and culture can foster innovative practical actions, and also alternative imaginaries on social phenomenon and spaces of collective participation. Indeed, different "liberal" and "applied" arts (film, visual art, theatre and performance,

[51] D. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003: 2. A critical reading of some experiences of performing arts and migratory processes is in the special issue of *Comunicazioni sociali* edited by R. Carpani and G. Innocenti Malini *Playing Inclusion. The Performing Arts in the Time of Migrations.*

[52] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 15.

[53] L. Peja, *"Post-ist" Challenges, Female Migration and Performing Memories as a Historiographical Method*, paper presented at the IFTR Conference "Theatre Ecologies: Environment, Sustainability and Politics", Galway, 12-16 July 2021.

[54] C. Ianniciello, ed., *Migrations, Arts and Postcoloniality in the Mediterranean*, New York: Routledge, 2018; A. Ring Petersen, *Migration into Art: Transcultural Identities and Art-Making in a Globalised World*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017.

[55] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *How Culture and the Arts Can Promote Intercultural Dialogue in the Context of the Migratory and Refugee Crisis: Report with Case Studies, by the Working Group of EU Member States' Experts on Intercultural Dialogue in the Context of the Migratory and Refugee Crisis under the Open Method of Coordination*, Publications Office, 2017, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/468525.

[56] A. Cati, M. Grassilli, eds., *The Migrant as an Eye/I. Transculturality, Self-Representation,, Audiovisual Practice*, *Cinergie,* 16 (2019).

[57] J. Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, London-New York: Verso, 2009.

dance, photography, crafts, architecture, design, etc.) as well as emerging cross-media forms (interactive and social media, games, street art, circus and performative practices, etc.), have a pivotal role to play in this direction.

As the mentioned EU Report on culture and the arts in intercultural dialogue highlights, "apart from the *non-material* qualities of arts and culture, the sector is also a field of economic activity, of learning, as well as of direct societal interaction"[58]. It is a doubly attractive sector as a first mover in the current situation in both aspects: the wish to engage in an intercultural dialogue about values, histories and expectations, as well as the wish to lead productive, self-empowered lives.

There are many examples of projects[59] that focus on the interplay between social and aesthetic processes rather than the production of artistic products. Their scope of ambition is framed by the perdurance of hospitable relations in micro-politics. On a wider scale we also witness the formation of new transnational institutions such as *L'Internationale* – a collaborative venture between seven European museums[60]. In each of the individual artistic projects and across these new institutional art programs we note the effort from the cultural sector to address the ethical deficits and rekindle the inclusive dimensions in the European political agenda. The networking of the cultural commons is in some way attempting to do the foundational work of solidarity that the mainstream institutions are now reluctant to embrace.

Despite this high potential for opening up new perspectives the policies in the EU are caught in old traps: national cultural policies limit the scope of cultural productions by institutionalizing the process of Othering through rhetorical discourses and hegemonic representations; the vitality of emergent projects and practices are often vital but fragmented and contained within specific areas and territories; the skills and professional figures associated with these processes are poorly defined and have no particular training centres; and finally, the evaluation methods of the initiatives are variable and lack consistent protocols. The combination of all these factors provides an obstacle that blocks the extremely lively and promising potential in this sector. To this end we believe that new forms of scholarship that can integrate the theoretical foundations from cultural studies and new methods from critical discourse analysis can not only expose the imbrication between racist discourse and everyday perspectives, challenge the prevailing normative approaches, but also highlight the hybrid worlds that are now being forged by the discourses produced by migrants.

On this basis, this special issue of *Comunicazioni sociali* has assembled a diverse range of international scholars to discuss these issues using interdisciplinary methods and transdisciplinary perspectives. Many of the case studies in this special issue are in Greece and Italy. For most of the twentieth century it was the migration *from* these countries that was central to their national identity. In the twenty first century it is the migration *to* these countries that is challenging the hegemonic notions of cultural and

[58] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *How Culture and the Arts Can Promote Intercultural Dialogue in the Context of the Migratory and Refugee Crisis*, 15.

[59] One is the work of Vessel that is led by Viviana Checchia, Nicoletta Daldanise and Anna Santomauro https://www.vesselartproject.org/en/istituto-per-l-immaginazione-del-mediterraneo. Vessel is dedicated to translating the theoretical projects on the South by Franco Cassano (*Southern Thought and Other Essays*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2012) and Boaventura de Sousa Santos (*Epistemologies of the South*, New York: Routledge, 2014) into lived experiences of collaborative artist networks and public constituencies.

[60] N. Papastergiadis, *Museums of the Commons*, London: Routledge, 2020.

national identity[61]. The contemporary narratives on migration cannot repeat the old top-down perspectives.

If the idea has clearly emerged that a different narrative of migration is needed, a "concurrent project to reframe the discourses on migration and diversity in contemporary societies"[62], on the other hand, in his contribution to this special issue, Marco Binotto argues that the effectiveness of these alternatives is closely related to the ability to apply *reframing strategies*. These strategies succeed in modifying elements of discourses, stories, symbols or examples of a narrative present in the debate and therefore can lead to the reformulation or resemantisation of the frame in which it is inserted, while most common *counter-framing strategies* simply react, and, making sense only in relation to something else, end up paradoxically strengthening the adversary and proposing the same mental schemes and examples. The paper offers a methodology to analyse the media discourse and a specific set of definitions and some tools useful for analysing the impact of arts, campaigns and media activist action.

Drawing on a conceptual framework informed by cultural studies and critical discourse analysis, Marina Morani's article proposes the analysis of stories of Italians of immigrant background published on intercultural digital media platforms. These alternative media, which are largely not-for-profit enterprises, had the peak momentum of their establishment between 2008 and 2013, when public debates and campaign initiatives about the citizenship law reform gained visibility and support from a range of stakeholders committed to a progressive agenda of social change. They include collective blogs, web-zines and news portals where contributors of various immigrant backgrounds mix with practitioners of solely Italian descent. This study is based on a mapping of 34 intercultural digital media initiatives between 2000 and 2020 and focuses on the content category devoted to the narration of personal stories that broaden, challenge, and subvert the dominant regime of representation of immigration in Italy, where there have traditionally been very limited and limiting notions of 'Italianness'.

Community media in Germany are instead the scope of the study proposed by Judith Purkarthofer, Nadia Bellardi, Esther Domke and Özge Zar. These independent, non-commercial media in Europe take the form of local radios, TVs and online multimedia projects. They provide digital media skills and ethical journalistic training to a variety of age, language and minority groups, including people with special needs. The term 'community' refers in fact to local, geographic communities, minority ethnic and language communities, as well as to communities of interest (for example, LGBTQI+ activists, artists, musicians). They are organised from and directed to the community, and aim to enable citizens to take control over their own representation, produce media content that is representative of a diverse society, and raise issues often overlooked by commercial and large-scale public-service media. The explorative, qualitative approach of the paper, focused on agency and strategies of migrant media producers in Germany, enables insights into discrimination at play in society at large but also in 'alternative' spaces and raises complex issues such as the fact that an established 'space of inclusion' could become a site of exclusion when that space lacks recognition from the outside.

In order to tune in and follow the way migrants in these locations see themselves and forge new narratives about the dynamics of their mobility and their transnational

[61] Miller, Arroyave, "Worlding Media Studies".

[62] M. Schramm, S. Pultz Moslund, A. Ring Petersen, *Reframing Migration, Diversity and the Arts: The Postmigrant Condition*, New York: Routledge, 2019: 8.

forms of identity, we recognize that it is vital that scholars create new approaches and experiment with different combinations.

Some articles published in this special issue have adopted collaborative research techniques. They have crossed the traditional boundaries that separate artistic practice and scholarly research as they sought to present new modes for articulating the voices of agents that have direct experience in asylum and migration and developed a more reflexive awareness of the role of the scholar in this field. One of the benefits of this approach is that it debunks the old myths that migrants are dupes and that they are condemned to silence or at least reduced to minor place in the margins of society. It has also sought to overcome the status of victimhood and the politics of pity.

What commonly lacks is in fact an intercultural approach. Even the communication of European organisations working with migrants and refugees in art-based educational projects often shows mechanisms of "post-humanitarianism". This is the case of the examples studied by Alix Didier Sarrouy and Rita Grácio, where two similar music organisations in two different European countries (Sweden and Greece) use symphonic music as a tool for the education and inclusion of underage migrants and refugees. The multimodal critical discourse analysis of their web-based strategies reveals that their organisational communication does not dialogue with neither migrants and refugees nor with potential listeners/audiences, but only with potential donors in the host countries and internationally, using their multicultural contexts as an asset to persuade people to join the orchestra (as volunteers or as teachers) and to make donations. Children and young people, the target of the music education programs, instead, are presented only as the receptors of Western musical knowledge, without any reference to the musical agency they may have or to a sharing of each one's original culture in an intercultural experience.

An interesting challenge to victimised representations of refugees is the multimedia project presented in the paper by Mariia Shaidrova, Marta Pagliuca Pelacani, Noemi Mena Montes. They focus on performative and collaborative research based on a participatory exhibition that took place in Palermo in 2021 with transdisciplinary methodologies aimed at producing engaging academic knowledge where the relations of power inherent in the positions of the authors as white women and academic researchers, as well as curators and contributing artists, become one of the explicit objects of the research inquiry. They use a participatory methodology based on the notion of *collage* as a tool to encourage dialogue between artists, researchers, and the communities they work with. Developed in collaboration with a few artists and a number of Nigerian women with a direct experience of human trafficking and migration, the project allowed a self-presentation of these women as attractive, independent and strong, challenging the stereotypical image of victims they can usually hardly escape: victims of sexual exploitation, of their outdated belief systems, of their migration journey.

In an effort to open up new dialogic and empathic modes of representation scholars have both questioned the validity of traditional stances that assert the imperiousness of critical distance and explored the techniques of collage and feedback that were advanced by the artistic avant-garde and pioneers in anthropology[63]. More recent ethnographic advances that include action-observation and epistemic partnerships in knowledge for-

[63] J. Berger, *The Moment of Cubism and Other Essays*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969; G. Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, London: Jason Aronson, 1972.

mation are also welcomed[64]. These approaches will complement the new empirical uses of cultural indicators[65].

Similarly, we appreciate the adoption of visual tools, such as maps, which traditionally have been deployed to survey territories and regulate the movement of peoples, that can now be deployed to open new pathways of communication, reveal chains of affective connection, and make visible processes that otherwise escape detection. The tools that were used for surveillance and control can be appropriated to give credence to the poetics of belonging and a spur for the telling of migrant stories[66].

Aware that, apart from notable exceptions, theoretical critiques of traditional ontological conceptions of maps have often refrained from proposing illustrative examples of such analysis, Giacomo Toffano and Kevin Smith try to relate the theory to the discussion of three cases of cartographic production that trouble the traditional "ontological status" of maps. Investigating how refugee cartography evolves beyond the mere geolocation of migration flows, seizing maps' possibilities to decipher and tell stories, their study explores fictional maps distributed in different media formats – performative art pieces, comic book tables, silkscreen prints – all conceiving fictional maps to engage with emotion and subjectivity in the narration of refugee stories. As contingent practices that come into being every time producers and readers engage with them, maps are perfectly suited to encourage a narrative process that can help to reveal intangible elements such as imaginaries, emotional, affective, and memorial trajectories. Therefore mapping emerges as a compelling practice that can give expressive life to questions such as (non-) belonging and the sense of home that are crucial issues in the scholarship of refugee studies.

While we acknowledge that there is still much work to be done in refining the applications of such concepts and tools, we are pleased to introduce some vital steps in this direction enriching a line already opened also by other issues of *Comunicazioni sociali*[67]. For instance, the impact of the artistic practices in community settings is often easy to miss and just as easy to overstate. Many projects are ephemeral and focused on transient relations. Most artistic projects are confined to small gestures in specific spaces[68]. It is difficult to find appropriate markers that demonstrate enduring shifts in understanding and habits. However, there is a growing commitment to both gathering data and developing new approaches for identifying strategies of resistance and recognising the collaborative efforts to reconfigure public meanings[69].

Matina Magkou, Katerina Protonotariou, Eirini Iliopoulou propose an interesting reflection on the potentialities of collective and participatory artistic practices as spaces for community engagement and conviviality in the urban space. They analyze two cases of site-specific artistic practices taking place in two squares in the city of Athens, in a period of prolonged crisis. Central to this exploration is the notion of *site*, as a stage to understand artistic practices as facilitators of experiences in which borders between languages, communities and cultures are transcended, transgressed and transformed.

[64] G. Marcus, *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

[65] A. Yue, S. Brook, R. Khan, "Developing a Local Cultural Indicators Framework", *Culture and Local Governance*, 3, 1-2 (2011): 133-149.

[66] R. Dominguez, C. Fusco, "Performance Art in a Digital Age", in *Complex Entanglements: Art, Globalization and Cultural Differ*ence, edited by N. Papastergiadis, London: Rivers Oram Press, 2003: 108-121.

[67] N. Carpentier, J. Sumiala, eds., *Arts-Based Research in Communication and Media Studies*, *Comunicazioni sociali*, 1 (2021)

[68] W. Bradley, C. Esche, eds., *Art and Social Change*, London: Tate Publications, 2007.

[69] G. Shollete, *Delirium and Resistance*, London: Pluto, 2017.

As grassroots initiatives contributing to transcultural dialogue and urban co-existence, these experiences call for a more systematic and comprehensive 'culturally sensitive' approach also on the side of institutions and policymakers that fully recognises culture as a driving force for peaceful co-existence.

The extent to which such practices have transformed public culture is obviously debatable, however, we believe that attention to the role of the arts as a catalyst in social change should not be missed.

One of the wider aims of this special edition is an examination of the process of artistic creation within the framework of aesthetic cosmopolitanism. The constitution of micro and macro-cosms in art is a big bang aesthetic moment, filled with horror and delight. It is our contention that the cosmos in art is also interlinked with the imagination of the *polity* in cosmopolitanism. Zooming into the aesthetics and zooming out onto the politics of cosmopolitanism is a dance with chaos and order. Through the examples gathered in this collection we believe that the aesthetic institution of world making is coeval with the social need for conviviality and widest possible forms of cosmic co-existence.

Where arts are considered as a space of performative citizenship and aesthetic practices as an imaginary constitution of cosmopolitanism, Audience Engagement can be framed as a way to pursue this type of 'world-picture making process' where cultural diversity is considered. Going beyond the idea of Audience Engagement as a mere marketing process, Giulia Allegrini e Roberta Paltrinieri discuss an ongoing Audience Development project funded by the Creative Europe program, aimed at developing a bond between cultural operators in the field of dance and performing arts and their local communities through a discussion on gender in the European dance system. The paper presents a number of insights emerging from the "exploring" phase of the project (the interviews, the working sessions in small groups, the participative observation during the co-design process) and, focusing on some analytical dimensions, questions Audience Development as a rhetoric discourse based on 'neutral' conceptualization and challenges the application of Audience Development as well as the role of cultural organizations and audience developers in overcoming hegemonic representations, highlighting the necessity to give space to multiple and divergent interpretations and go beyond the 'patronizing' approach that can often emerge in processes of participation and collaboration.

Hospitality and cosmopolitanism, security and salvation are at cross-roads. To step out of the stigmatic associations with cosmopolitanism we must not only cease the trade in caricatures, but also widen the conceptual frame beyond the normative paradigm[70]. Even when cosmopolitanism has been deployed to explore the context of contemporary art, the emphasis has been on the polity and not the cosmos of art. The political function of aesthetic cosmopolitanism has been situated in both materialist and idealist frameworks. For instance, Smith's mapping of contemporary art is reliant on the division between base and superstructure. Hence, the function of art as superstructure is to bring forth to the world an allegory of its own material existence in the base of contemporaneity[71]. However, this materialist theory of contemporary art is complicated by its own empirical observations. Smith's detailed portraits of contemporary art show that the world picture is not just a reflection of the condition of contemporaneity, but

[70] L. Chouliaraki, *The Ironic Spectator*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.
[71] T. Smith, *Contemporary Arts: World Currents*, London: Laurence King Publishing, 2011.

also a manifestation of contested and hybrid world pictures. Multiplicity in the world of contemporary art debunks the Enlightenment version of universalism, and the diasporic consciousness of contemporary artist is not reducible to the alienation complex in modernity. This suggests the emergence of a more baffling and "larger cosmopolitanism"[72]. However, we also note that artists, whether they are engaged in collective projects that make direct interventions in the social terrain or speculating on the widest possible forms of belonging, they are in effect both upholding ancient ideals of hospitality and extending their vision of their connections across all the dimensions of the cosmos. Again, we note that it is difficult to register and calibrate such endeavours within the conventional scholarly terms, but we also believe that an expanded approach on migration and media will inevitably wander into such unchartered fields. It is to our peril to ignore such worldly excursions.

[72] *Ibid*., 253.

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COUNTERING OR REFRAMING MIGRATIONS
Frames, Definitions, Strategies to Imagine New Metaphors and Narrative for the Media Agenda

Abstract
For decades now, the framing of migrations in public discourse and news media appears to be stuck within a limited number of recurring stories. Therefore, the need emerges to find new perspectives in policies and a narrative more useful to understand the social change produced by migratory processes and offer new interpretations. The effectiveness of these alternatives is closely related to the ability to analyse the structure of the dominant frames and the metaphorical connections of the hegemonic narratives. Additionally, the contribution aims at offering a methodology to analyse the media discourse, a specific set of definitions and some tools useful for analysing the impact of arts, campaigns and media activist action and, at least, to design new and more effective ones. For this objective, the article addresses three needs: *a)* refining the *description of the dominant narratives*, by proposing a heuristic scheme to define key metaphors, and general as well as specific issue frames; *b) completing this structure* with the *possible strategies* for minority voices, by defining the relationship between the dominant narratives and those that, over time, have been constructed to counter them (counter-narratives), as well as those that are built to provide new sense and narrative-reframing; *c) evaluating* these possibilities by placing in this scheme some examples of counter-frames to verify their argumentative effect and possible effectiveness. In this third part the article analyses some artistic interventions or civil society campaigns developed in the Italian or international context to investigate their position in this scheme and to answer the following research questions: are these proposals built only as simple *counter-frames*, that is, do they only react, reformulating only one of the aspects of the narrative present in the agenda? Or are they *reframing strategies*, that is, they offer a different discourse with respect to fundamental frames, key metaphors and basic analogies or dualities. In other words, starting from the analysis of the framing structure the goal is to investigate and measure the agency capabilities.

Keywords
Public discourse; migration; immigration; frame; critical discourse analysis.
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For decades now, the framing of migrations in public discourse and news media appears to be stuck within a limited number of recurring stories[1]. In several countries, the pub-

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[1] T. van Dijk, *Racism and the Press. Critical Studies in Racism and Migration*, London: Routledge, 1991; S. Palidda, *Racial Criminalization of Migrants in the 21st Century*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011; J. Ter Wal, ed., *Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media. An Overview of Research and Examples of Good Practice in the EU Member State, 1995-2000*, Vienna: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and

lic debate and the news media coverage analysed in the scientific literature of the last decades confirm this broad and lasting convergence. In Italy too, the media and political representation of migratory phenomena appears to be blocked[2]. Therefore, the need emerges to find new perspectives in policies and a narrative more useful to understand the social change produced by migratory processes and to offer new interpretations.

In fact, over the same period, in Italy, as in many other countries, wide-ranging, dispersed and tenacious forces have worked to affirm a culture of difference, pursue coexistence, strengthen solidarity and, last but not least, strive for more adequate policies and information on migration[3]. Increasingly, the idea emerges that a different narrative of migration is needed, a "concurrent project to reframe the discourses on migration and diversity in contemporary societies"[4]. The effectiveness of these alternatives is closely related to the ability to analyse the structure of the dominant frames and the metaphorical connections of the hegemonic narratives.

Additionally, the contribution aims at offering a methodology to analyse the media discourse and a specific set of definition and some tools useful for analysing the impact of arts, campaigns and media activist action; and, at least, to design new and more effective ones. For this objective, the article addresses three needs: three steps, corresponding to the three paragraphs into which the text is divided, each of which is linked to a specific need for *analysis*, *definition,* and *verification-illustration* of this attempt.

The *first need* is to complete and refine the description of dominant narratives, the analysis of frames and their packages, the mapping of meanings and examples. Over time, various research works and reflections have tried to outline their scope, characteristics and evolution. In particular, starting from this attempt, a heuristic tool will be constructed to define their structure, as well as complementary and alternative forms.

The *second need* will be to complete this structure with possible strategies for minority voices, defining the relationship between the dominant narratives and those that have emerged over time as possibilities for *counter-narrative*s. From this first outline, it will be possible to analyse the relationship between existing narratives, those that have been constructed over time to counteract them (*counter-narratives*) and those that propose to restructure them (*reframing*). The theoretical attempt here is to put things in order and to construct a set of definitions of the actions against dominant frames.

The *third step* of the article will analyse some artistic interventions or civil society campaigns developed in the Italian or international context to investigate their position in this scheme and to answer the following *research questions*: are these proposals built only as simple *counter-frames*, that is, do they only react, reformulating only one of the aspects of the narrative present in the agenda? Or are they *reframing strategies*, that is, they offer a different discourse with respect to fundamental frames, key metaphors and basic analogies or dualities. In other words, starting from the analysis of the framing structure the goal is to investigate and measure the agency capabilities.

Xenophobia (EUMC), 2002; R. Wodak, *The Politics of Fear*: *What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*, Los Angeles: Sage, 2015.

[2] M. Binotto, M. Bruno, V. Lai, eds., *Tracciare confini. L'immigrazione nei media italiani*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2016; M. Bruno, G. Peruzzi, "Per una sociologia delle rappresentazioni mediali delle migrazioni: An Introduction", *Migrant Worlds*, 2020; A. Pogliano, *Media, politica e migrazioni in Europa: una prospettiva sociologica*, Roma: Carocci, 2019.

[3] E. Bond, G. Bonsaver, F. Faloppa, *Destination Italy*: *Representing Migration in Contemporary Media and Narrative*, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015; M. Colucci, *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia: dal 1945 ai nostri giorni*, Roma: Carocci, 2018.

[4] M. Schramm *et al*., *Reframing Migration, Diversity and the Arts: The Postmigrant Condition*, New York: Routledge, 2019, 8.

1. ANALYSIS: DOMINANT NARRATIVES, METAPHORS, FRAMES

In the last decades, the great fortune in the scientific debate of the frame as a concept or even "fractured paradigm"[5], offers us a useful tool to analyse the power of media, narratives and discourses to define reality. The concept of the frame will be used here to identify and describe those interpretations or storylines that *make sense of the facts*, the frame "organises them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to be emphasised while ignoring others"[6]. This concept makes it possible to carry out what is proposed here, namely to reconstruct the traits of certain unitary narrative structures, built around different trans-media discursive spaces – for example, policies, news media, conversations on social media – and which unravel by developing different stories and discourses in such a way as to maintain a framework of meaning (metaphors, symbols, mythologies) and argumentation (causes, consequences, solutions) that is linear and anchored to the same cultural perspective[7]. Van Gorp points out that a frame analysis can be useful both to identify the frames that are dominant and "to distinguish them from other, alternative frames, in order to be able to explain the persistency of these frames"[8]. One of the main characteristics of counter-framing, of any counter-narratives, is that they "only make sense in relation to something else, that which they are countering"[9]. It identifies a "positional category, in tension with another category", so to analyse the former we need to build up a good knowledge of the latter, of the narrative constructed as master or dominant. In this sense, the attempt here is to "supplement"[10] and "defragment"[11] the literature and analytical framework to better understand the framing on migration issues but also to propose a dialogue between the efforts of media analysis and political framing with that of social movements and innovation and mobilisation strategies. Moreover, as shown by the vast literature on the subject, several common elements can easily be found in the framing of migration: the same frame and argumentative packages can be found in political communication, in news media[12] and in social media[13].

To this end, we propose to focus on a few frames by structuring them into sub-frames or ramifications of the same broad interpretative scheme. Elsewhere we have presented a

[5] R.M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm", *Journal of Communication*, 43, 4 (1993): 51-58; R. Vliegenthart, L. van Zoonen, "Power to the Frame: Bringing Sociology Back to Frame Analysis", *European Journal of Communication*, 26, 2 (2011): 101-115.

[6] W.A. Gamson, "News as Framing: Comments on Graber", *American Behavioral Scientist*, 33, 2 (1989): 157, https://doi.org/10.1177/000276428903300206.

[7] B. Van Gorp, "The Constructionist Approach to Framing: Bringing Culture Back In", *Journal of Communication*, 57, 1 (2007): 60-78, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00329.x.

[8] *Ibid*., 63.

[9] M. Bamberg, M. Andrews, *Considering Counter-Narratives*: *Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense*, vol. 4, John Benjamins Publishing, 2004, x.

[10] A. Pogliano, "Media, Migration, and Sociology. A Critical Review", *Sociologica*, 1 (2017): 27.

[11] S. Lecheler, J. Matthes, H. Boomgaarden, "Setting the Agenda for Research on Media and Migration: State-of-the-Art and Directions for Future Research", *Mass Communication and Society*, 22, 6 (2019): 700, https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2019.1688059.

[12] R. Benson, *Shaping Immigration News*: *A French-American Comparison*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013; T.A. van Dijk, *Racism and the Press*. *Critical Studies in Racism and Migration*, London: Routledge, 1991; B. Van Gorp, "Where Is the Frame? Victims and Intruders in the Belgian Press Coverage of the Asylum Issue", *European Journal of Communication*, 20, 4 (2005): 484-507, https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323105058253.

[13] A. Silvana de Rosa *et al*., "Twitter as Social Media Arena for Polarised Social Representations about the (Im)Migration: The Controversial Discourse in the Italian and International Political Frame", *Migration Studies*, 1 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnab001.

structure of two or three problem frames[14] and news frames[15] – the *arrival* and *invasion* frame and the *crime news and security frame* – traced in the last 20 years in the news media and politics of the Italian context consistent with and very similar to those proposed by other research works in Italy in the same period[16] as in other European or Western countries, a result accentuated during the recent "European refugee crisis"[17]. The proposed framework is constructed by ordering the frames by level of generality, and positioning on the one hand the maximum breadth constituted by the *key metaphor* and on the other hand the more circumscribed *news frames* specific to the immigration theme present in information or media content, passing through *general frames* present in culture and the media.

The *key metaphor*. It constitutes the basic analogy used to define a problem or to propose a public policy, as found by Gusfield in his research on the definition of public problems[18] or by Lakoff in his study of the foundations of American political language. These metaphorical patterns are immediately understandable because they are often linked to everyday situations, bodily and physical functions, or at least to analogies deeply rooted in common sense[19]. The different frames are aligned starting from the association between nation and circumscribed space, the established analogy between country and domicile, homeland and home.

General frames. Around each key metaphor there is a wider metaphorical space intrinsically linked to it. Often this is built around pairs of opposites or metaphorical oppositions: some of these can be found at a deep level in the history of social systems, such as the opposition between *us and them, in-group and out-group,* or in the primal experience of entering or leaving a place or territory, with the opposition between *inside and outside,* and that, directly related to the latter, between *opening and closing*. Some of them refer instead to historically founded antitheses such as *war and peace* or *conflict and agreement* or rather between *competition and cooperation*. On the other hand, they may be even more deeply rooted in the socio-cultural history of society, such as that between *order and chaos*, between a state of calmness and movement or, more directly, between a space ordered by respected laws as opposed to an anomic space where disorder or, worse, corruption and crime dominate. Each of these frames can be traced

[14] Binotto, Bruno, Lai, *Tracciare confini.*

[15] M. Binotto, "Framing Migrations: Frames and Representations in Italian News Media", *Mondi Migranti*, 2, 2 (2020): 47-62, https://doi.org/10.3280/MM2020-002003.

[16] M.G. Galantino, "Migration as a Risk for Security. Risk Frames in the Italian News on the Libya War and Its Aftermath", *Mondi Migranti*, 2017, https://doi.org/10.3280/MM2017-003011; F. Mazzara, *Reframing Migration*: *Lampedusa, Border Spectacle and the Aesthetics of Subversion*, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019; Pogliano, *Media, politica e migrazioni in Europa*.

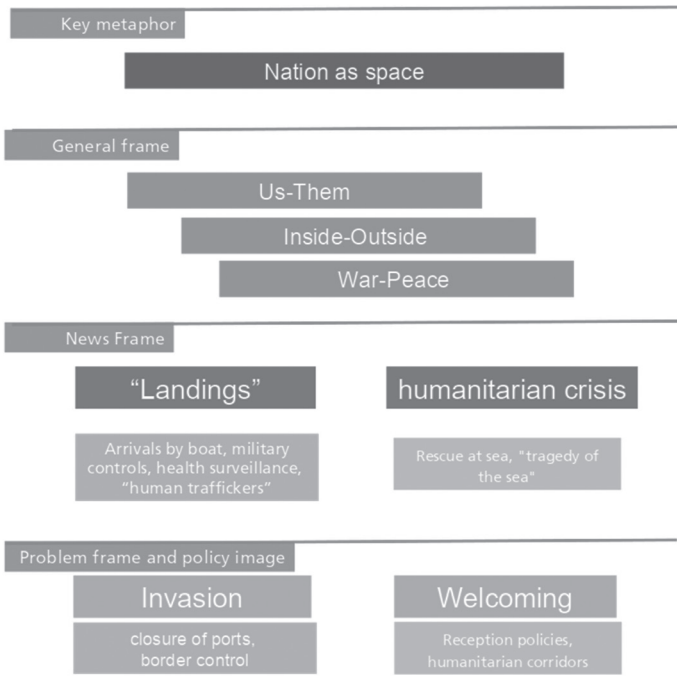
[17] Benson, *Shaping Immigration News*; L. Chouliaraki, M. Georgiou, "The Digital Border: Mobility beyond Territorial and Symbolic Divides", *European Journal of Communication*, 34, 6 (2019): 594-605; J.-M. Eberl *et al*., "The European Media Discourse on Immigration and Its Effects: A Literature Review", *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 42, 3 (2018): 207-223, https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2018.1497452; M. McAuliffe, W. Weeks, K. Koser, "Media and Migration: Comparative Analysis of Print and Online Media Reporting on Migrants and Migration in Selected Countries", in *A Long Way to Go*: *Irregular Migration Patterns, Processes, Drivers and Decision Making*, ANU Press, 2017: 277-315; L. Viola, A. Musolff, *Migration and Media: Discourses about Identities in Crisis*, Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture (DAPSAC), Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2019.

[18] J.R. Gusfield, *The Culture of Public Problems: Drinking-Driving and the Symbolic Order*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

[19] G. Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*, 2nd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

back to different eras, societies and, above all, correlated with a wide range of issues and themes.

Figure 1 - *Map of metaphors and frames on arrivals by sea*



Specific frames. This brings us to the key factors that are closest to the subject matter. These are the news frames, those constituting the Alignment Processes in the framing approach of social movement studies or those found in *policy images,* in policy studies or in the public agenda[20]. They are synthetic images of a particular spectrum of arguments characterised by origins, causes, responsibilities and, of course, solutions. In the case of *entry into the country* (Figure 1) it is easy to observe the prevalence of policy proposals oriented towards its containment, increased controls and refoulement, easily summarised by the term *invasion*[21]. Here we can observe the positioning of the only alternative constructed to these narrative devices over time: the accentuation of the pietistic aspect typical of the spectacularisation of pain in the news media and the voices oriented towards the need to "save lives"[22]. In the case of *crime*, this is firmly anchored in the journalistic genre of the crime or judicial chronicle, one of the most recurrent

[20] D.A. Snow *et al.*, "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation", *American Sociological Review*, 51, 4 (1986): 464, https://doi.org/10.2307/2095581.

[21] E. Burroughs, K. Williams, *Contemporary Boat Migration*: *Data, Geopolitics, and Discourses*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

[22] L. Chouliaraki, P. Musarò, "The Mediatized Border: Technologies and Affects of Migrant Reception in the Greek and Italian Borders", *Feminist Media Studies*, 17, 4 (2017): 535-549.

ways of representing people of foreign origin in recent Italian and European history[23]. It should be noted that on this issue there are no other information and policy frameworks to counterbalance the emphasis on security and Law & Order solutions, or they have disappeared from the Italian debate (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - *Map of metaphors and frames on (foreign) crime*

2. STRATEGIES: ARGUMENTS, COUNTER-FRAMING, REFRAMING

Having completed the easiest part of the journey, tracing the starting point, i.e. the analysis of the frameworks already present in the public debate, it is now more difficult to set out on the less explored part of the same space. Frames are provisional, negotiated and conflicting definitions of the situation. This is evident from the circumstances in which they are observed and the disciplines that analyse them or study the phenomena

[23] M. Maneri, J. Ter Wal, "The Criminalisation of Ethnic Groups: An Issue for Media Analysis", *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum*: *Qualitative Social Research*, 6, 3 (2005); Ter Wal, *Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media. An Overview of Research and Examples of Good Practice in the EU Member State, 1995-2000*.

of counter-framing or "frame transformation"[24]. One of the earliest definitions of frame comes from research into a social and political conflict, Todd Gitlin's analysis of the 1960s on the student and peace movement in the USA and the role played by the news media in representing it[25]. Goffman himself, author of the first sociological use of the concept, devotes several pages to describing the circumstances and consequences of "breaking the frame", the unexpected moments of lost "command over the formulation" of a situation[26].

The conflictual dimension in the definition of frames emerges forcefully in all three of the areas covered by the topic being examined here. The very definition of immigration as a "problem to be solved" places the analysis of its framing within the constructionist approach to social problems, in which – starting from its original explication provided by Herbert Blumer – it constitutes "a focal point for the operation of divergent and conflicting interests, intentions and objectives"[27]. Similarly, framing becomes a strategy for defining public policy: firstly in the political confrontation between different interpretations that try to make their own solutions and priorities prevail on the political-media agenda and then, in that case, to preserve the *policy image* that has prevailed[28]. Fundamental to this process is therefore the confrontation in the media arena to make a certain interpretation of the facts prevail (*News frame*).

In the face of an extensive discussion of these processes, or of their effects, and of the now abundant spectrum of tools and methods for analysing framing[29], the availability of typologies for studying precisely the work of reframing, and of useful definitions to distinguish them, appears much more scarce. We therefore attempt to elaborate a taxonomy useful for analysing and, subsequently, designing communication interventions.

Dominant narrative/frame. It is easy to start with the framework that manages to impose itself as prevalent in the public debate or among policy proposals. This is usually a precise definition of the issue anchored in a key metaphor and in a stable and well-established cultural resonances[30]. Each of these "grand narratives" corresponds to one or more *news frames*, precise media narratives built around recurring scripts, news formats, news-facts and established journalistic sources[31].

[24] Snow *et al*., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation": 473; D. Snow *et al*., "The Emergence, Development, and Future of the Framing Perspective: 25+ Years since Frame Alignment", *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 19, 1 (2014): 23-46.

[25] T. Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

[26] E. Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974, 379.

[27] H. Blumer, "Social Problems as Collective Behaviour", *Social Problems*, 18, 3 (1971): 301.

[28] F.R. Baumgartner, B.D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2nd ed., Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.

[29] D. Chong, J.N. Druckman, "Framing Theory", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10, 1 (2007): 103-126; D.A. Scheufele, "Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing Revisited: Another Look at Cognitive Effects of Political Communication", *Mass Communication & Society*, 3, 2-3 (2000): 297-316, https: //doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0323_07; Vreese, "News Framing: Theory and Typology".

[30] M. Bruno, *Cornici di realtà. Il frame e l'analisi dell'informazione*, Roma: Guerini, 2014; W.A. Gamson, D. Croteau, W. Hoynes, T. Sasson, "Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 18 (1992): 373-393.

[31] R. Benson, *Shaping Immigration News: A French-American Comparison*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013; R.M. Entman, *Projections of Power*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021; C.H. Vreese, "News Framing: Theory and Typology, *Information Design Journal*, 13, 1 (2005): 51-62.

Counter-frame. It contrasts an existing frame by proposing opposing components in different elements and devices but keeping the fundamental structures, the key metaphor and the basic analogies or dualities similar. Benford and Hunt[32] define them as attempts by opponents "to discredit, undermine, rebut, and otherwise neutralise the movement's claims, myths, collective identity, and interpretive frameworks"[33]. This is the procedure most widely questioned by those who – like Lakoff himself – propose this conceptual tool precisely in order not to limit themselves to opposing a proposal by re-proposing its terms and metaphors with the paradoxical result of strengthening the adversary: they continue to use "their words" and, in this way, activate the same mental schemes.

Reframing. It is a communicative proposal that tries to modify some fundamental elements of discourses, stories, symbols or examples of a narrative present in the debate in order to lead to the reformulation or resemantisation of the frame in which it is inserted. This different illustration of the narrative scheme can go in two directions: tactical or strategic. Here we recall the distinction originally set out by Michel de Certeau and often used by groups and movements of guerrilla communication and cultural jamming, centred precisely on the practices of redefining or contrasting dominant messages. This subdivision, based on military language, is based on actions "determined by the absence of a proper locus"[34]. Minorities, dispersed and adopting guerrilla tactics since they are unable to control the confrontation space, are forced to "invent themselves by poaching in countless ways on the property of others", using the loopholes and gaps offered by the adversary[35]. *Tactical reframing* thus uses the narratives defined by a stronger opponent to construct a different story from its very ingredients without, however, being able to capitalise on this achievement by redefining all or most of its components. On the contrary, *strategic reframing,* starting from some elements of the hegemonic narrative, reformulates it (or at least attempts to do so) by shifting the deep frames on which it is based or its constituent elements.

3. AGENCY: RESISTANCES, TRAPS, POSSIBILITIES

The usefulness of the map, as already mentioned, lies in its ability to offer a clarification of the communication directions already taken by the various actors, as well as possible alternatives. A few examples – taken from the recent Italian mediascape or other contexts[36] – may better illustrate its advantage.

[32] S.A Hunt, R.D. Benford, "Identity Talk in the Peace and Justice Movement", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 22, 4 (1994): 488-517.

[33] R.D Benford, "An Insider's Critique of the Social Movement Framing Perspective", *Sociological Inquiry*, 67, 4 (1997): 418.

[34] M. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, 38.

[35] *Ibid*., XIII.

[36] The examples proposed come almost exclusively from the United States where it is easier to have structured campaigns or initiatives analysed in the scientific literature. In this contribution the examples are used only to give substance to the proposed scheme, they are therefore chosen to illustrate the communication characteristics. While it was not possible to include contextual variables in this analysis, these are relevant dimensions and would require much more in-depth analysis than possible on this occasion.

Counter-framing. For this purpose we take up the strategies of *counter-discourse* and "*positive" discourse analysis*[37] used by Felicitas Macgilchrist[38] to analyse the public debate in and about Putin's Russia: *a)* inversion or denial, *b)* complexification*, c)* parody. In the first case, the opponent merely opposes different contents, symbols and arguments of the opposing frame. The *inversion* can start from or be limited to one of the elements of the argumentative or framing package, trying to show its limits, aporias or inconsistency. The most common and well-established attempt manifested in the Italian debate is adopted both by the media (news frame) and by political forces or civil society (policy image). This is the aforementioned use of the *humanitarian frame* to describe landings and, more generally, the entire migration phenomenon. If the dominant narrative focuses on the role of the migrant person as a *threat*, this is contrasted with describing the same figure as a *victim* of the situation[39]. Several authors have noted that re-evaluating the role of the migrant or asylum seeker as a victim, or even using the image of the "slave", may have a positive effect but hides other risks. There are cases where this type of reframing has been effective, but only in particular conditions or for a well-defined type of person[40]. Indeed, any process of victimisation based on ethical assumptions has to take into account the dominant discourses on the topic and on public or social policies and the risks that any narrative based on moral issues poses[41]. Bruno and Pogliano investigated these choices in depth and expressed themselves quite clearly: they led to "emphasising the inferiority and misery of the new arrivals", emptying them of any possibility of *agency* and reducing them to a passive state[42]. It is no coincidence that this strategy, built with social campaigns such as the one that chose the symbol of the Red T-shirt (#MagliettaRossa) and promoted by the Italian NGO *Libera Contro le mafie* in July 2018 to "stop the haemorrhage of humanity" or the demonstrations of people "with raised hands dyed red", have proposed again language and symbolism of the sole and emergency priority of "saving lives".

The first was promoted by Libera Contro le mafia, a historic Italian NGO, founded in 1995, "an umbrella group" that unites a large number of organized civil society for the purpose of combating the mafias[43]. In July 2018 he launched a campaign on social media and called an event inviting people to wear a red shirt. The symbol explicitly recalls the worldwide attention brought from the image of Ālān Kurdî washed up on a Turkish beach in 2015, and soon "became a *memento mori* of the West's frozen inhumanity"[44]. The founder and president is Luigi Ciotti, a charismatic Catholic priest with a progressive orientation, Libera, from its birth, has produced initiatives in addition to

[37] J. Martin, D. Rose, *Working with Discourse: Meaning beyond the Clause*, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003.

[38] F. Macgilchrist, "Positive Discourse Analysis: Contesting Dominant Discourses by Reframing the Issues", *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines*, 1, 1 (2007): 74-94.

[39] M. Bruno, *"Framing Lampedusa". The Landing Issue in Italian Media Coverage of Migrations, between Alarmism and Pietism*, London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016; P. Musarò, "Mare Nostrum: The Visual Politics of a Military-Humanitarian Operation in the Mediterranean Sea", *Media, Culture & Society*, 39, 1 (2017): 11-28.

[40] L.H. Fujiwara, "Immigrant Rights Are Human Rights: The Reframing of Immigrant Entitlement and Welfare", *Social Problems* 52, 1 (2005): 79-101, https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2005.52.1.79.

[41] J.A. Holstein - G. Miller, "Rethinking Victimization: An Interactional Approach to Victimology", *Symbolic Interaction*, 13, 1 (1990): 103-122, https://doi.org/10.1525/si.1990.13.1.103.

[42] M. Bruno, "Framing Lampedusa", Pogliano, *Media, Politics and Migration in Europe*, 95-99.

[43] R. Pickering-Iazzi, "The Italian Antimafia", *New Media, and the Culture of Legality*, University of Toronto Press, 2017; U. Santino, *Mafia and Antimafia: A Brief History*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2015, 106.

[44] Y. Ibrahim, "The Unsacred and the Spectacularized: Alan Kurdi and the Migrant Body", *Social Media + Society*, 9 October 2018, https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118803884.

those against crime and corruption, also regarding broader issues strongly oriented by humanitarian values and respect for humans rights. In fact, the chromatic reference is explicitly linked to Kurdî's photography and to the theme of arrivals by sea in the campaign's manifesto:

> Red is the colour that invites us to stop. But there is another red, today, which even more peremptorily asks us to stop, to reflect, and then to commit ourselves and to act. It is that of the clothes and T-shirts of children who die in the sea and that the sea sometimes pours onto the beaches of the Mediterranean. Little Aylan, three years old, was dressed in red, and his photo in September 2015 aroused the emotion and indignation of half the world. The three children who drowned the other day off the Libyan coast were dressed in red. Others will be dressed in red by the mothers, in the hope that, in the event of a shipwreck, that colour will attract the attention of rescuers[45].

The reasons and objectives of the campaign refer directly to Italian and European policies, but implicitly to the government majority protagonists in those months of strong criticism of NGOs engaged in research and rescue missions in the Mediterranean:

> These children are dying, while Europe plays the blame game with the problem of immigration – that is, with the lives of thousands of people – and in order not to face it in a politically worthy way it comes to blame those who provide aid or those who wish for a welcome capable of combine security and solidarity. It is necessary to counteract this haemorrhage of humanity, this rampant cynicism fuelled by the entrepreneurs of fear[46].

Finally, the reference to the humanitarian frame combined with that of rights is even more evident in the final sentences of the appeal:

> Because putting yourself in the shoes of others – starting with those of children, who are the heritage of humanity – is the first step to building a fairer world, where we recognise ourselves as being different as people and equal as citizens[47].

The second initiative, on the other hand, arises from an "informal network" of groups and individuals created to carry out rapid demonstrations (flash mobs) in front of the Ministry of the Interior. Indeed, at the same time, as interior minister Matteo Salvini "declared Italian ports 'closed' to rescue ships, consistently vetoing or delaying the disembarkation of migrants on the Italian territory to showcase his tough stance on irregular migration"[48]. The initiative, born in Rome in July 2018, has expanded over time by proposing a long list of political objectives summarised by a simple yet iconic symbol presented with these words: "We did it with hands dyed red to denounce that never was it so dangerous to cross the Mediterranean as it is now"[49].

[45] "Una maglietta rossa per fermare l'emorragia di umanità", https://www.libera.it/schede-549- una_maglietta_rossa_per_fermare_l_emorragia_di_umanita.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid*.

[48] E. Cusumano, F. Bell, "Guilt by Association? The Criminalisation of Sea Rescue NGOs in Italian Media", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47, 19 (2021): 4293, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2021.1935815; E. Cusumano, M. Villa, "From 'Angels' to 'Vice Smugglers': The Criminalization of Sea Rescue NGOs in Italy», *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 27, 1 (2021): 23-40, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-020-09464-1.

[49] "Mani rosse" Facebook group, https://www.facebook.com/groups/200931003936816/posts/200934797269770/.

In both cases we find the conceptual pairs of harshness and permissiveness, goodness and badness, #openports vs. #closedports, confirming the purely defensive character of these strategies: they lend themselves to the accusation of do-goodism and make it impossible to propose a different definition of the issue, one that puts forward other causes, responsibilities and solutions.

The second strategy, *complexification*, does not oppose elements but adds them by trying to propose information, specifications or particular cases. In this way, an attempt is made to provide a broader and more multifaceted view of the subject, or simply one that is more in keeping with the dimensions and characteristics of the phenomenon. It is the privileged strategy of scientific expertise, as well as of several civil society organisations up to some political forces such as the largest party of the Italian left, the Democratic Party. Pivotal examples are initiatives such as *Open Migration*, which aims to use the "power of numbers": a path that "using skills, data and knowledge wants to contribute to forming opinions and awareness on migration"[50]. It is again Lakoff who criticises this kind of Enlightenment-style framing strategies more clearly. It is now evident to many how, if contextualised in another frame, even the best arguments or the most solid data will prove ineffective. In the field of storytelling it is necessary to "start with the recognition that the currency of a story is not necessarily truth"[51].

The third strategy uses *parody*, opposing a derisive or paroxysmal discourse that, through the use of irony, is supposed to ridicule or reveal the contradictions and distortions of the attacked discourse. On this instrument, to Jameson's well-known literary criticism[52] we can add Christine Harold's, directly used in cultural activism and cultural jamming: "parody derides the *content* of what it sees as oppressive rhetoric, but it fails to attend to its *patterns*"[53]. A perfect example in these terms is *Solo in cartolina* (*Only on Postcards*, Figure 3). Also in this case it is born from a phrase pronounced by the then Minister of the Interior and leader of the right-wing Lega party, Matteo Salvini, as part of his initiative against rescue operations in the Mediterranean: "This year the NGOs will only see Italy on postcards"[54].

Founded in the August 2018 by a little group of young "designers, copywriters and creatives", a "few friends" who adopt the name of Creative Fighters, it presents itself as "a campaign of denunciation against deaths at sea, supporting all those who every day save the lives of migrants off our coasts"[55]. The campaign invited the public to the creative engagement by an online contest: to create and propose to the campaign an image to react to that sentence by Salvini. A "Call to the Arts!" (Chiamata alle Arti!) – a play on words between art and arms – for an "epistolary uprising" (#SommossaEpistolare) to send the minister summer postcards with "Love and kisses".

The entire campaign is professionally structured through the now usual steps of contemporary campaigning. The contest receives within ten days proposals from ordinary people, but also from celebrities and famous illustrators. These are voted

[50] "Mission", https://openmigration.org/missione/.

[51] D. Canning, P. Reinsborough, J. Smucker, *Re: Imagining Change: How to Use Story-Based Strategy to Win Cmpaigns, Build Movements, and Change the World*, Oakland, CA: Pm Press, 2017, 20.

[52] F. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Duke University Press, 1991.

[53] C. Harold, *Our Space: Resisting the Corporate Control of Culture*, Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007, 31.

[54] "Scopri la campagna", www.soloincartolina.it/campagna/.

[55] *Ibid.*

by 12,300 people in an online survey, the 10 most voted postcards are printed and presented to the public in two main events in Rome and Milan and delivered in a mediagenic event in front of the Ministry of the Interior on 3 October.

Figure 3 - *"Solo in cartolina" campaign:"Lampedusa the Black Pearl of the Mediterranean"*
by Alberto Casagrande and Ilaria Cairoli

As an act of sabotage of the rhetoric it opposes, it certainly helps to counteract other meanings, to reveal their unfoundedness and to propose different visions of reality. At the same time, however, it strengthens its reputation without offering any genuine original content. The creativity demonstrated by the more than 300 postcards proposed, most of them innovative and well developed, has the paradoxical result of expanding that message, producing an imaginary and rhetorical variety but making it more complex than its intentions, moving stereotypes as much as conversations, enriching it – despite itself – with meanings, giving it a depth it probably did not have. While it produces dissonance between the lightness of the original sentence and the tragedy of the deaths at sea, it reiterates the centrality of that debate, of the confrontation between pity for those deaths and the need to stop the voyages.

Reframing. The use of irony is, in any case, one of the privileged paths in the process of reformulation and "getting out of the frames"[56]. Often paradox, mockery and humour are used to overturn an argument or propose a different point of view. From the United States come two examples of communication where irony and the use of popular icons have been used to create a displacement effect. In the first, the image of Superman and, in particular, his story as an alien who arrived *illegally* on earth soil is used to redefine the image and definition of the illegal immigrant. The contrast is between the unblemished hero with whom all Americans are invited to identify and the *folk devil* represented by the migrant. In the second, the image of *Dora the Explorer*, a popular television series produced by Nickelodeon at the beginning of the century, is reused in a satirical way (Figure 4). The images produced use one of the most exploited techniques of cultural jamming, the *estrangement*. In this case it means modifying "existing forms, events,

[56] G. Bateson, "The Position of Humor in Human Communication", in *Motivation in Humor*, London: Routledge, 2017: 159-166.

images and ideas, changing their normal functioning" in order to cause confusion and thus "allow the public to temporarily distance itself from the situation"[57]. The image of the television character, reproduced within the scenes of violence or escape typical of the crossing of the Mexican-US border, tends to produce both a feeling of familiarity and annoyance. The discomfort is accentuated by recognising a known, albeit drawn, face: the migrant disappears from the anonymity of the non-person in a situation where a positive behaviour desired by the programme – learning through travel and knowledge – is prevented, even brutally. From a pedagogically suggested gesture on TV, exploration becomes a risky behaviour, an act to be blamed and fought against.

Figure 4 - *"Dora the Explorer is an Illegal Immigrant"*

These examples, although they have undoubted qualities, merely reformulate, even if radically, only one aspect of the narrative on the agenda. As is often the case with *reactive* initiatives born on the web or spread through social media, it is clear that the context – the debate on the construction of the wall on the southern border of the USA or its crossing – or the substance of the debate – the legal status of migrants, "sans papier" or "illegals" – is not changed. This observation characterises such interventions as *tactical reframing*: they manage to offer a different definition of the actors in the field, allowing them to be seen with different eyes, but it does not change the subject under discussion, the alternative between inside and outside or that between regular and "clandestine". The use of irony narrows the scope of the operation, to deconstruct or reformulate an ongoing debate by changing the perception of some of its elements within the same interpretative framework.

On the other hand, there are not many examples of *strategic reframing* in a landscape where in most countries – at least referring to the prevailing scientific literature – it does not seem possible to get out of the spatial dimension of this epistemological as well as metaphorical framework[58]. One of the few examples in Italy comes from the campaigns to reform the rules for conferring citizenship. This theme appears to be the one most likely to produce radically different narratives from the common ones. Significant in this sense are the communication activities produced by

[57] L. Blissett *et al*., *Comunicazione-guerriglia: tattiche di agitazione gioiosa e resistenza ludica all'oppressione*, Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2001.

[58] P. Novak, "Back to Borders", *Critical Sociology*, 43, 6 (2017): 847-864, https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920516644034.

the movement *Italiani senza cittadinanza* (*Italians without Citizenship*) during the discussion of this law in the Italian Parliament. While many other campaigns focus on arrival and spatial metaphors related to entry, the latter focuses on people who *have already arrived* or, rather, have not arrived at all. The reframing work is carried out without too much difficulty precisely from biographies and self-narratives in which the dichotomies typical of the prevailing framing appear displaced and challenged. As in the case of the *Dreamers movement* in the United States, the concrete image of the young student, the established professional or the neighbour, gives substance to figures otherwise rendered anonymous by the media and the political debate[59]. The consequences of immigration are represented as normality as opposed to emergency, as 'ordinary' difficulties of presence, as "natural" consequences of stability, "simple" issues of coexistence to be resolved. The same political and media agenda is forced to move away from the reassuring binomial of the security theme or the chronicle of landings as from conventional professional and legal stereotypes.

Figure 5 - *Biography of "Italians without Citizenship"*

4. CONCLUSIONS

The article took three steps with the aim of finding different narratives to understand the social change proposed by migration flows. If the first need was to refine the description of the dominant narratives by proposing a heuristic scheme, the second step was to complete this structure with possible strategies for minority voices, and finally to evaluate these possibilities by placing some examples of counter-framing and reframing in this scheme to verify their possible effectiveness. The usefulness of this general outline allows us to meet the objective of the article: tracing the potential and limits of the strategies developed in the public and political discourse to counter the dominant ones.

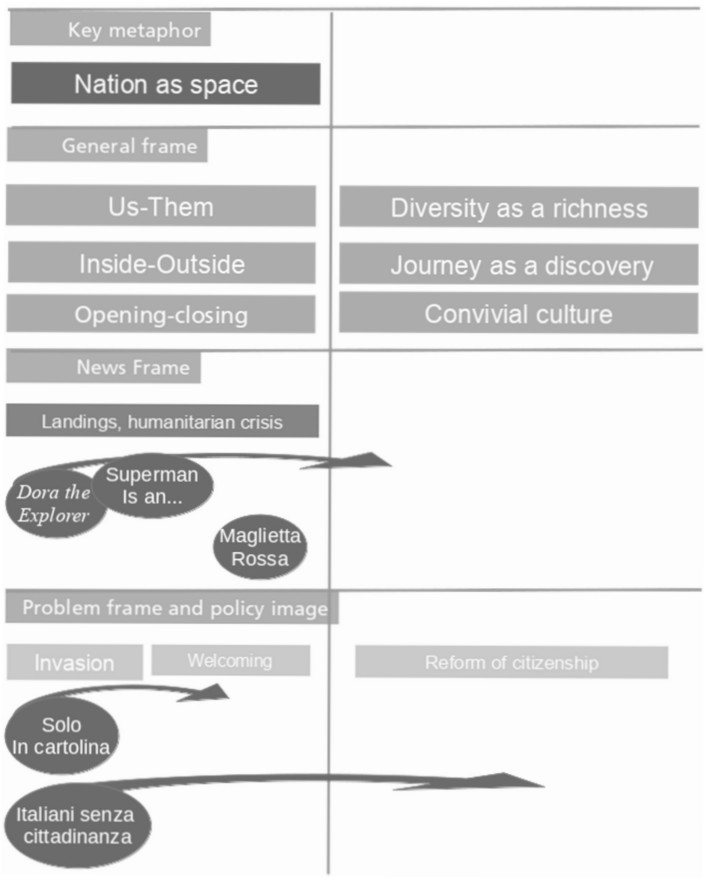
As shown by the last map summarising them (Figure 6), these proposals are often *counter-frames*, they act reformulating only one of the aspects of the narrative present in the agenda, with respect to fundamental frames, key metaphors and basic analogies or

[59] S. Costanza-Chock, *Out of the Shadows, Into the Streets! Transmedia Organizing and the Immigrant Rights Movement*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014; W.J. Nicholls, *The DREAMers*: *How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigrant Rights Debate*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013.

dualities. A typical example of this strategy is, as we have seen, the humanitarian frame, so often found in research on many countries.

Also the different *reframing* proposals seem to be directed mainly around tactical rather than *strategic* choices, they offer a different discourse but seem to fail to change the issue on the agenda or to propose different general or problem frames or other media frames. All too often these efforts have focused on a "resistance" effort. A consequence, denounced by the scholar and activist Stephen Duncombe, of confining oneself to a sphere of "pure negation"[60], unable even to imagine something different. Combining serious arguments and research with imagination and, why not, a touch of irony, in order to propose communication choices that can change the cards on the table, shift the discourse, reinvent words and meanings. Transforming the world by changing the point of view on the world.

Figure 6 - *Map of examples and strategies of opposition to dominant narratives*



[60] S. Duncombe, *Dream: Re-imagining Progressive Politics in an Age of Fantasy*, New York: New Press, 2007.

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MARINA MORANI*

MAKING THE 'NEW CITIZEN': (SELF-)REPRESENTATION NARRATIVES OF ITALIANS OF IMMIGRANT BACKGROUND ON INTERCULTURAL DIGITAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Abstract
The study critically examines the personal stories of Italians of immigrant background – or 'new citizens' – published on intercultural digital media platforms. It explores how and to what extent these individual narratives broaden, challenge, or subvert the dominant regime of representation of 'immigration' in Italy. Drawing on a conceptual framework informed by cultural studies and critical discourse analysis, the paper finds that the strategic, organising idea of the 'new citizen' articulated through a set of recurring discourses, while on the one hand seeks to challenge hegemonic portrayals of 'the immigrant subject', on the other hand strategically draws on neoliberal aspirations and essentialist interpretations of formal citizenship to legitimise a collective project of socio-political inclusion. The analysis informs final reflections on the potential, limitations and ongoing transformations of collective inter-cultural tactics of (self-)representation towards more inclusive and diverse discourses about cultural identity, citizenship and belonging.

Keywords
Intercultural digital media; representation; citizenship; cultural identity.
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1. INTRODUCTION

While mainstream media coverage of (im)migration and ethnic minorities has been extensively examined in different contexts, comparatively fewer studies have focused on alternative media narratives seeking to challenge or transform dominant discourses of immigration and cultural diversity. Italy's intercultural digital media represents one area where the possibilities for the construction of an alternative cultural politics of (self-) representation have been practiced. With the term 'intercultural digital media', the study considers alternative media outlets involving contributors of diverse immigrant backgrounds as well as of single Italian heritage. With peak activity in the early 2010s, these platforms aimed to offer more inclusive and diverse media spaces and representations and were established with the support of a range of public and private institutions and organisations.

As a media form that has received limited scholarly attention compared to the extensively researched field of 'ethnic minority media', intercultural digital media have

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the potential to restore agency, visibility and voice to Italians of diverse immigrant backgrounds. This study, drawing on doctoral research[1], aims to explore and understand how and to what extent the stories published on the platforms broaden, challenge, or subvert the dominant regime of representation of 'the immigrant subject' in Italy. Informed by cultural studies and critical discourse analysis, the article focuses on the strategic, organising idea of the 'new citizen' and ways in which it is articulated in the personal stories and testimonies of residents and citizens of immigrant background published on the platforms. The analysis reveals that the portrayal of the 'new citizen' is underpinned by three key discursive constructions: the *deserving citizen*, the *unrecognised citizen* and the *transcultural citizen.* The study argues that these intersecting discourses, while on the one hand seek to portray the 'new citizen' in contrast to 'othering' and stigmatising representations surrounding the 'immigrant subject', on the other hand strategically draw on neoliberal aspirations and essentialist interpretations of formal citizenship to *legitimise* inclusion of Italians of immigrant background inside the boundaries of the nation. The study concludes with a discussion on the potential, limitations as well as ongoing transformations of the construction of inter-cultural tactics of (self-)representation of under-/mis-represented groups and individuals in society reclaiming agency, voice and representation as equal citizens.

2. CHANGING THE REGIME OF REPRESENTATION: FROM 'IMMIGRANTS' TO 'NEW CITIZENS'

Despite the fact that Italy has a significant long-settled population of residents and citizens of immigrant background, the mainstream media coverage of 'immigration' has largely been concerned with the highly sensationalised 'sea-landings' of migrants and asylum seekers to Italy's Southern ports[2]. Discursively inserted into the undifferentiated category of *immigrati* ('immigrants'), individuals of immigrant or ethnic minority background have traditionally been invisible or voiceless in news reports, while their 'foreignness' tended to appear newsworthy in crime stories as either victims or perpetrators[3]. The anti-immigration political rhetoric has routinely mobilised populist arguments pointing to alleged incompatible values between Italians and 'the others', fuelling public concerns about national security, economic resources and national identity. This has perpetuated an essentialist conception of 'Italian-ness' as 'white', 'catholic', and grounded on an 'ethno-centric' view of citizenship of colonial heritage[4]. Criminalising and 'othering' frames, however, have coexisted with the rhetoric of solidarity across the media and political arena depicting 'the immigrant' as a victimised subject, low-

[1] M. Morani, "New Italians and Digital Media: An Examination of Intercultural Media Platforms", Ph.D. diss., University of Cardiff, 2017. A seminal idea of this article was presented in Italian at the XXVI International Conference of Film Studies: *Migrations, Citizenships, Inclusion. Narratives of Plural Italy, between Imaginary and Diversity Politics*, Roma Tre University, 6-8 May 2021.

[2] See for example M. Bruno, "The Journalistic Construction of 'Emergenza Lampedusa': The 'Arab Spring' and the 'Landings' Issue in Media Representations of Migration", in *Destination Italy. Representing Migration in Contemporary Media and Narrative*, edited by E. Bond, G. Bonsaver, F. Faloppa, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015: 59-83.

[3] See for example M. Mansoubi, *Noi, stranieri d'Italia: immigrazione e mass media*, Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 1990.

[4] G. Giuliani, *Race, Nation and Gender in Modern Italy. Intersectional Representations in Visual Culture*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

skilled and recipient of acts of solidarity[5]. At the same time, 'pro-immigration' arguments pointing to the positive benefits of immigrant workers to the national economy have been mobilised across the political spectrum and have served to legitimise periodic policies of labour market integration[6].

Overall, the portrayal of residents and citizens of immigrant background has been largely subsumed into the highly politicised, polarised and all-encompassing discursive field of 'immigration' with limited opportunities for a wider range of voices, stories and representations. Yet, over the last decade, several media monitoring initiatives across professional bodies and third sector organisations have contributed to an increased awareness of the need for more robust ethical standards in the media coverage of immigration and ethnic minorities in Italy[7]. Furthermore, in the early 2010s, young residents and citizens of immigrant background were gaining unprecedented visibility in the public arena as a campaign for a reform of Italy's citizenship law aimed at relaxing citizenship eligibility requirements or children of non-EU immigrant parents was being advocated and discussed across institutional and civic arenas. Yet, studies show that while in the time following the reform announcement the demands of the so-called 'second-generations' were significantly reported in the national media, the voices of the potential beneficiaries of the reform remained largely silent and their representation was informed by either 'othering' or 'assimilationist' approaches[8].

Despite some tentative progress, recent reports note how in Italy's mainstream media organisations the voices, experiences, and perspectives of Italians of immigrant or ethnic minority background are still under-represented across news and entertainment programmes[9]. In a comparative study, Meli showed that Italian broadcast producers display limited awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion beyond an assistentialist logic of 'equal opportunities'[10]. This results in slow progress towards delivering content that is innovative, creative and inclusive of a wide range of experiences, stories, and perspectives.

2.1. *The cultural politics of 'new identities': reclaiming spaces for self-representation*

Stuart Hall's influential work on the identity politics of marginalised and racialised subjects in the context of post-war Britain, provides a useful framework to understand the resisting practices and discourses of self-representation of under-/mis-represented groups in society[11]. According to Hall, a popular strategy adopted in popular culture to

[5] M. Binotto, M. Bruno, "Spazi mediali delle migrazioni. Framing e rappresentazioni del confine nell'informazione italiana", *Lingue e Linguaggi*, 25 (2018): 17-44.

[6] M. Corte, "Noi e gli altri. L'immagine dell'immigrazione e degli immigrati sui mass media italiani", *Prospettiva EP*, 1 (2002).

[7] The work of NGO *Associazione Carta di Roma* has been instrumental in implementing and disseminating deontological guidelines towards ethical and more accurate media coverage of immigration and diversity.

[8] D. Sredanovic, F.G. Farina, "Can Youth with a Migrant Background Speak? Representation, Citizenship and Voice in Italian TV and Press Journalism", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 36, 6 (2015): 693-709.

[9] Diversity Media Report, Diversity Lab, 2021. Available at: https://integrazionemigranti.gov.it/it-it/Ricerca-news/Dettaglio-news/id/1788/La-rappresentazione-inclusiva-dei-media-italiani-Pubblicato-il-Diversity-Media-Report-2021

[10] A. Meli, *Europa, Media e diversità. Idee e proposte per lo scenario italiano*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2015

[11] S. Hall, "New Ethnicities", in *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies,* edited by D. Morley and K.H. Chen, London: Routledge, 1988: 441-459.

subvert racial stereotyping of black citizens and communities is the construction of a new positive collective identity by borrowing on the repertoire of the portrayal of the dominant white subject[12]. This entails that the racialised subject can be admitted into the mainstream "but only at the cost of adapting to the white image of them and assimilating white norms of style, looks and behaviour"[13]. Similarly, marginalised communities might temporarily and *strategically* adopt an essentialist collective identity that homogenises the multiple and diverse cultural, 'ethnic' and political affiliations and experiences of its members to pursue a project of socio-political inclusion.

As identities at the margin of the institutional, public and media arena, young Italians of immigrant background have, over the last decade, mobilised to reclaim citizenship, voice and visibility in society. Since the early 2000s, a number of collective projects such as citizenship reform advocacy campaigns, grassroots networks, anti-racism campaigns and alternative media initiatives have expressed the urgency to advance new narratives about Italians of immigrant background[14]. As an attempt to move away from 'othering' discourses about 'immigrants' or 'foreigners' in Italy, new expressions such as *nuovi cittadini* ('new citizens') – or *nuovi italiani* ('new Italians') started circulating across various intersecting discursive arenas: political, institutional, civic, grassroots, and academic.[15] Whether these naming practices and associated narratives drawing on an essentialist notion of national identity are super-imposed or are strategically deployed to pursue a collective agenda of citizenship rights advocacy remain open to investigation[16]. A crucial terrain where 'new' discourses of citizenship and self-representation narratives have been practiced is the alternative digital media sphere.

Italy's intercultural digital media represent a varied alternative media landscape which includes collective blogs, webzines and web portals involving contributors of various immigrant backgrounds as well as practitioners of solely Italian descent. With the intent and potential to engage a broader audience beyond the particularistic interests of specific 'ethnic minority' or 'immigrant' communities[17], intercultural media assign importance – at least in principle – to the practice of more inclusive and diverse media spaces for people sharing a sense of membership to the national community. The establishment of these platforms in Italy had its peak momentum between 2008-2013 when public debates and campaign initiatives about the citizenship law reform gained visibility and support from a range of stakeholders committed to a progressive agenda of social change. Although intercultural digital media are largely not-for-profit enterprises, their establishment might have been facilitated by access to funding from public and private institutions including local government, media companies, third sector organisations, private foundations[18].

[12] S. Hall, "The Spectacle of the Other", in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by S. Hall, London: Sage, 1997: 225-279.

[13] *Ibid*.: 271.

[14] P. Musarò, P. Parmiggiani, "Beyond Black and White: The Role of Media in Portraying and Policing Migration and Asylum in Italy", *International Review of Sociology*, 27, 2 (2017): 241-260.

[15] See for example L. Turco, P. Tavella, *I nuovi italiani. L'immigrazione, i pregiudizi, la convivenza*. Milano: Mondadori, 2005.

[16] See M. Antonsich, "What's in a Name? Children of Migrants, National Belonging and the Politics of Naming", *Social & Cultural Geography*, 2021: 1-19.

[17] See for example M.D. Matsaganis, V.S. Katz, S.G Ball-Rokeach*, Understanding Ethnic Media. Producers, Consumers and Societies*. New York: Sage, 2011 and for the Italian context: M. Maneri, A. Meli, *Un diverso parlare. Il fenomeno dei media multiculturali in Italia*., Rome: Carocci, 2007.

[18] For a more detailed overview of the media landscape of intercultural digital platforms including their political economy, see M. Morani, "Introducing Italy's Intercultural Digital Media: Mapping the Landscape", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 2021: 1-22.

This study draws on a systematic mapping[19] identifying and mapping 34 intercultural digital media initiatives between 2000-2020. In particular, the article focuses on the content category devoted to the narration of personal stories of Italians of immigrant background to explore the practiced possibilities to advance alternative representations of 'the immigrant' subject in Italy re-lexicalised as 'new citizen' or 'new Italian' across many of the platforms. In particular, the paper will explore the following research questions:

(RQ1a) What kind of narratives are articulated in the personal stories published on intercultural digital media?

(RQ1b) How and to what extent do they promote an alternative inter-cultural politics of (self-)representation?

3. METHODOLOGY

The article draws on a sample of 20 stories of 'new citizens' retrieved from five intercultural media platforms: *ALMA.blog*, *Italiani+*, *Migrador Museum*, *Yalla Italia*, and *Prospettive Altre*[20]. The personal stories of Italians of immigrant background represent a specific topic category commonly featuring across intercultural websites[21]. This largely encompasses auto-biographical stories as well as third-person narratives drawing on interviews with the protagonist of the story. The five initiatives were sampled on the basis of all being active during the same period of time (2012-2015) and offering variation in terms of formats and genres. The extracts of the stories – originally in Italian – used to illustrate the analysis, have been translated into English by the author of this article to facilitate international readership. Stories and extracts have been selected through purposive sampling to provide thematic and genre variation. Table 1 indicates, for each platform, the section from the menu bar of the website from which the stories were retrieved for analysis.

Table 1 - *Sample and sections from which stories were retrieved*

Platform name	*Section title*	*N stories*
1. ALMA.blog	*Nuovi cittadini* / new citizens	3
2. Migrador Museum	*Storie* / stories	3
3. Italiani+	*Ritratti* / portraits	5
4. Yalla Italia	*Senza Filtro* / without filter *Doppia vita* / double life	5
5. Prospettive Altre	*Società* / society	4
Total		20

[19] See *ibid*.

[20] Except for ALMA.blog (https://collettivoalma.wordpress.com/) which is still accessible yet no longer updated, the other platforms are no longer active and can be partially retrieved through the Internet Archive: Italiani+: https://web.archive.org/web/20141010173752/http://www.italianipiu.it/;

Yalla Italia: https://web.archive.org/web/20141218151849/http://www.yallaitalia.it/;

Prospettive Altre: https://web.archive.org/web/20140312115036/http://www.prospettivealtre.info/;

Migrador Museum: https://web.archive.org/web/20160201180229/http://www.migradormuseum.it/.

[21] For a systematic examination of the platforms' agenda and topic categories, see Morani, "Introducing Italy's Intercultural Digital Media: Mapping the Landscape".

The analysis of the stories is influenced by the theoretical and analytical framework of critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA). CDA is informed by a view of discourse as social practice both influencing and influenced by socio-cultural, political and economic processes within society[22]. Cultural texts – including media texts – represent crucial sites for uncovering the often-hidden ideologies and unequal power relations that are enacted, reproduced, and resisted in and through discourse[23]. A vast body of scholarly work in CDA has focused on institutional, political, and mainstream media discourse and how certain social groups – including 'ethnic minorities' – are (mis)represented within the hegemonic structures of society[24]. Yet, fewer studies have considered counter- or alter-hegemonic discourse as the primary objects of critical analytical inquiry. By focusing on stories seeking to subvert or broaden the dominant regime of representation of 'immigration' in Italy, this study recognises that allegedly progressive cultural projects and alternative media agenda are still operating within – as well as might strategically benefit from – hegemonic socio-political discourses, interests, and ideologies in society.

The stories of 'new citizens' articulate modes of belonging and lived experiences that seek to advance more positive and inclusive narratives about citizens and residents entertaining multiple cultural affiliations in contemporary Italy. These representations and re-formulations of cultural and national identity are profoundly influenced by macro-social and discursive practices as well as deep-seated sedimented ideologies[25]. A CDA-informed approach to textual analysis attempts to show links between language choices and socio-cultural (discourse) practices[26]. At the micro-level, the analysis presented in this study pays attention to the selection and use of linguistic resources including lexical choices, rhetoric tropes, sentence structure as well as omissions to expose the connotative meanings, wider discourses and ideologies associated to such choices[27]. Furthermore, the analysis accords significant attention to thematic and narrative patterns across the texts examined. As stories narrating personal life journeys through sequences of unfolding events, the analysis will show how the selection of certain discursive constructions, themes, and narratives may (strategically) mobilise certain meanings and connotations embedded in established discourses and practices[28].

Overall, the analysis seeks to critically examine the extent to which the discursive choices made by text producers to propose alternative narratives of 'immigration', citizenship and national identity transform or challenge the hegemonic regime of representation.

[22] N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman, 1995.

[23] T.A. van Dijk, "Critical Discourse Analysis", in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, edited by D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, H. Hamilton, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001: 352-371.

[24] See for example T.A. van Dijk, "Discourse and Migration", in *Qualitative Research in European Migration Studies*, edited by R. Zapata-Barrero and E. Yalaz, Cham: Springer, 2018.

[25] See R. Wodak, M. Krzyzanowski, "Multiple Identities, Migration and Belonging: 'Voices of Migrants'", in *Identity Trouble: Critical Discourse and Contested Identities*, edited by C.-R. Caldas-Coulthard and R. Iedema, London: Palgrave, 2007: 95-119.

[26] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*.

[27] D. Machin, A. Mayr, *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction*, Los Angeles: Sage, 2012.

[28] A. Hansen, D. Machin, *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

4. STORIES OF 'NEW CITIZENS'

The analysis of the stories is organised around three key recurring discursive constructions surrounding the representation of the 'new citizen': *i)* the 'deserving citizen'; *ii)* the 'unrecognised citizen'; *iii)* the 'transcultural citizen'. For analytical clarity, each category is individually presented. However, they should not be considered categorically distinct as more than one can be found entwined in the same story. Each discourse is analysed in each of the following sections and illustrated with extracts from the stories published on the respective intercultural digital media platforms.

4.1. *The deserving citizen*

The first discursive construction emerging from the analysis of the stories places emphasis on the professional achievements of the 'new citizen'. Through the narrative of the 'success story', the protagonist is portrayed as a determined hard-working individual committed to a career dream.

The story of young rapper Michael Efe (aka Lil Wiser) is introduced in structural opposition to hegemonic narratives of migration to Italy. The deployment of figurative language serves to create a contrast with mainstream media representations of migrants and asylum seekers arriving via sea to Italy's Southern coasts: the "smell of a rubber dinghy" and "salty taste" metaphorically evoke sensationalist images of overcrowded boats and de-humanised subjects. In contrast, Michael's story begins with a migratory journey from his native Nigeria via legal routes and unfolds as a tale of self-realisation:

> *Young Rapper Lil Wiser: "The Pursuit of Our Dream Keeps Us Afloat"*
> Well, this time the story you are about to hear neither tastes salty nor has the smell of a rubber dinghy. It is the story of an ordinary victory, the dream of a fifteen-year-old who left his native Nigeria to follow his mother and, also, his dream. His name is Micheal Efe – aka Lil Wiser – and when, ten years ago, he boarded a plane to Italy, he was already dreaming of becoming a musician.

The rhetoric trope of "victory" selected to define Michael's success story recurs in many stories of 'new citizens'. It signifies achieved emancipation from a subaltern condition resulting from hegemonic expectations about 'immigrants' in Italy as subjects with reduced agency and narrow career options. The oxymoronic expression "ordinary victory" reveals the tension between an aspired normalisation of positive stories of (economic) migration and the exceptionality of such narratives within dominant public and media discourses. The protagonist of the story is presented as an exceptional individual whose remarkable qualities of determination, hard-work ethos and commitment set him apart from his peers:

> Often, young people are fired up by ideals destined to vanish like darkness swallowed by dawn. However, this is not the case with Michael. In Italy, he attended high school, wishing to master his Italian to perfection. And he succeeded. As soon as he turned sixteen, he started working hard, very hard. He took up unskilled jobs as a manual labourer. But despite the hard work, Michael never abandoned his dream. [...]. With commitment and determination, he managed to make himself known in the Italian music scene.
> (*ALMA.blog*, 17/11/2014)[29]

[29] Retrieved from: https://collettivoalma.wordpress.com/2013/03/04/lil-wiser/.

Commitment towards one's lifelong dream, hard work and determination are viewed as key ingredients for an entirely self-made success. Accomplishment is symbolised by admittance to "the Italian music scene", indicating achieved inclusion into the symbolic and material boundaries of the nation. This suggests, inclusion is granted to those *deserving* subjects exhibiting remarkable talents and qualities of resilience and self-entrepreneurialism. The discourse of resilience is deeply entwined with the narrative of success. The story of Jamal Ainane, a Milanese fashion entrepreneur, is another tale of upward mobility. The disadvantaged background experienced in the native Morocco is positively re-evaluated to showcase the strength of character, altruism, and resourcefulness of the protagonist:

> *My Vindication is not a Revenge*
> My biggest fortune? Coming from a poor background. Very poor. I should also mention two further disadvantages: I was exploited and underrated. In Italy all this has changed. What it hasn't changed is my attitude towards life […]. You see, despite the hard times, I have always smiled, even when I wanted to shout with rage; I would always offer a helping hand to my co-workers without ever asking for anything in return; I have always given and never asked.
> (*Migrador Museum*, 16/08/2014)[30]

The re-lexicalisation of issues of poverty and labour exploitation as "fortune" denote a proactive response to the "disadvantages" experienced by the protagonist. Yet, emphasis placed on the individual capacity to overcome 'challenges' deflects attention away from collective socio-political responsibilities towards structural economic and social problems.

A number of stories attribute social desirability to entrepreneurial careers and emphasise qualities of self-reliance, creativity and resourcefulness of the protagonists culminating in awards and professional accomplishments[31]. Within these narratives, the 'immigrant background' is not an impediment to success. In contrast to stigmatising attitudes towards 'difference', belonging to an 'immigrant' or 'ethnic minority' community here signifies transcultural capital bearing career potential[32]. Cultural diversity can even revamp the 'Made in Italy' sector through the contribution of young talented entrepreneurs with multiple cultural affiliations. In the story titled "Malindu Perera, Ambassador of 'Made in Italy' in Sri Lanka", the Sri Lankan-Italian identity of the protagonist is viewed as a fortunate professional "advantage" for the young food export entrepreneur and his business: "I was lucky enough to grow up in-between two cultures and this can only be an advantage for both countries to which I belong"[33].

The theme of entrepreneurial activity is closely linked to the articulation of citizenship claims. Drawing on the 'pro-immigration' argument which predicates acceptance of 'immigrants' based on their economic contributions, the 'stories of new citizens' are

[30] Retrieved from: https://web.archive.org/web/20160430075120/http://www.migradormuseum.it/2014/08/16/il-mio-riscatto-non-e-una-rivincita/.

[31] See C. Hawthorne, "Making Italy: Afro-Italian Entrepreneurs and the Racial Boundaries of Citizenship", *Social & Cultural Geography*, 22, 5 (2021): 704-724.

[32] A. Triandafyllidou, U.H. Meinhof, "Beyond the Diaspora: Transnational Practices as Transcultural Capital", in *Transcultural Europe: Cultural Policy in a Changing Europe*, edited by U. H. Meinhof and A. Triandafyllidou, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006: 200-222.

[33] Retrieved from: https://web.archive.org/web/20140311154916/http://www.italianipiu.it/ index.php/personaggi/848-malindu-perera-ambasciatore-del-made-in-italy-in-sri-lanka.

conditioned by a set of expectations and assumptions of what constitutes a citizen *deserving* of inclusion within the boundaries of the nation.

Interestingly, signifiers of 'material wealth' or 'ambition' are omitted from the stories of 'new citizens' denoting the intention to stay away from unintended connotations that could lend weight to the idea of immigrants acting for their own self-interest at the expenses of the national community. In her story, Lifang Dong, a successful lawyer of Chinese origins, feels compelled to "return" her professional skills and services to the wider community by engaging in projects of solidarity. However, the rhetoric of 'giving back' implies a subordinate and unequal relation between the new citizen and society, conditioning 'acceptance' upon being a 'model citizen' who has paid their debt to the society which welcomed them[34].

> *Lifang Dong: First Female Italian Chinese Lawyer*
> [...] "Seeing the hard work and sacrifices that my parents made, certainly helped me to have an entrepreneurial spirit and DIY attitude stronger than normal people." [...] She now returns part of this wealth by taking on social causes: "For example I offer legal advice through seven Italian-Chinese associations which I'm a representative of. I have not studied and worked only for myself but also for my family and for many immigrants who have not been as fortunate".
> (*Yalla Italia*, 23/09/2014)[35]

Lifang Dong is another 'new citizen' who exhibits an outstanding "entrepreneurial spirit" and a proactive attitude towards life. She exhibits altruism and empathy though self-identification with those coming from a similar background who haven't been "as fortunate". However, societal responsibilities for not distributing opportunities equally among people from 'ethnic minority' or 'immigrant' communities are not explicitly addressed.

Overall, the success story of the 'new citizen' is strategically constructed to challenge hegemonic discourses of 'the immigrant' as a subaltern subject with limited agentic power. However, in doing so, it relies on – rather than dismantles – hegemonic assumptions about 'model citizenship' as attributed according to a hierarchy of 'deservingness' rather than as a discourse about social justice and citizenship rights. The construction of the 'deserving citizen' thus draws on the neoliberal imaginary of individual success as well as on hegemonic arguments about immigrant contributions to the national economy to *persuade* of the inclusion of Italians of immigrant background as *legitimate* citizens of the 'nation' in its essentialist conception.

4.2. *The unrecognised citizen*

A number of stories of 'new citizens' draw attention to the tension between individual aspirations of self-realisation and barriers of access to full participation and opportunities in society. Exclusion from fundamental structures and services of society due to lack of Italian citizenship can restrict people's life choices and career options. "Viorica, known as Viola" is the fictional story of a hard-working woman from an unspecified

[34] See N. Shukla, "Editor's Note", in *The Good Immigrant*, edited by N. Shukla, London: Penguin Books, 2017.

[35] Retrieved from: https://web.archive.org/web/20170629162551/http://www.yallaitalia.it/2014/09/lifang-dong-primo-avvocato-donna-italo-cinese/.

non-EU nation living and working in Italy. Non-recognition of the protagonist's qualifications significantly hinders professional opportunities and aspirations. Facing both stigmatising attitudes and social exclusion, the protagonist lives a precarious existence:

> *'Viorica', known as 'Viola'*
> Viorica calls herself Viola, because she does not like the stares, the smiles and the jokes that arise anytime she introduces herself [...]. Viorica/Viola was convinced it was enough to be competent and have the qualifications demonstrating it, even if not recognised. She thought that prejudices, narrow-mindedness, stereotypes, belonged only to the first generation of immigration of ten, fifteen years ago [...]. Meanwhile, time was going by and the necessity to find employment was increasing.
> (*ALMA.blog*, 04/07/2014)[36]

The story uses an introspective tone and the structural barriers faced by the protagonist are described through internalisation: "Viorica/Viola was convinced... She thought that...". This attributes responsibility to her own personal and individual (mis-)judgement concerning issues of socio-cultural discrimination and exclusion rather than to societal structures of systemic inequality and collective discriminatory attitudes. Yet, despite profound disillusion, the story ends with a sense of hope resuming the rhetoric of individual success through resilience: Viorica/Viola is gradually managing to turn her life around through determination and hard work.

While wider issues of discrimination and racism are rarely explicitly referenced and called out in the stories, the issue of the restrictive pathways to citizenship acquisition for youth of non-EU immigrant background frequently recurs in the stories. In the story-interview[37] of Phaim Bhuiyan, a young video-maker from Rome of Bangladeshi origin, defines the Italian citizenship "a denied right". The interviewee-protagonist also points to the existence of a disconnect between a fully embraced 'feeling' of national belonging (*to feel* Italian) and lack of recognition as Italian citizen at institutional-legal level ("documents identify him as a foreigner"). This results in a series of practical difficulties as well as a sense of social precariousness[38]:

> *To Be, or not to Be Italian. A Young Video-Maker Recounts his Tor Pignattara"*
> [...] I find that this issue of citizenship is a denied right**.** This is well expressed by one of the two youths who I interview in my documentary: one of them says that despite being born and raised here and feeling Italian, documents identify him as a foreigner. Not to mention the difficulties arising from having to renew the [temporary] residence permit, in the absence of a national passport. I myself have applied for citizenship recently, on my eighteenth birthday, and I'm still waiting to finally be recognized Italian in all respects.
> (*Prospettive Altre*, 20/11/2013)[39]

In these stories, professional aspirations and entrepreneurial activity are closely tied to the articulation of citizenship claims signalling the persuasive intention to demonstrate deservingness of citizenship status based on creative-economic contributions to society.

[36] Retrieved from: https://collettivoalma.wordpress.com/2014/07/04/nuovi-cittadini-10-viorica-anzi-viola/

[37] Culturally diverse neighbourhood in the outskirts of Rome.

[38] See M. Fortier, *Uncertain Citizenship: Life in the Waiting Room*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[39] Retrieved from: https://web.archive.org/web/20140416012928/http://www.prospettivealtre.info/2013/essere-o-non-essere-italiani-phaim-giovane-videomaker-racconta-la-sua-tor-pignattara/.

Non-recognition of citizenship rights can also be presented as a deeply personal issue of a precarious sense of identity and belonging. In the story titled "I Feel, I Am, and I Would Like to Be", a young Milanese woman of Sri Lankan origin tells her story in the first person and reflects on her identity. Lexical choices are used to define the unsolved tension ("eternal conflict") between a fully professed sense of national belonging ("I feel deeply Italian") and social-institutional unrecognition ("but *I am not* [Italian]... It would be more accurate and simpler to say that *I am a foreigner*"). 'Italian-ness' is therefore reclaimed as a professed 'feeling' of belonging which does not meet recognition at juridical (due to lack of citizenship) or social level leading to a precarious and conflicting identity duality:

> *I Feel, I Am, and I Would Like to Be*
> [...] In conclusion, I feel deeply Italian, but I am not. I feel Milanese, but perhaps it would be more accurate and simpler to say that I am foreigner. I do not know if I feel a second-generation, but surely, I must be [...]. My life has always been – and probably will always be – an eternal conflict between the person I feel and who I am; today, nearly twenty-one, I'm just surrendering to this bipolarity that always divides me.
> (*Yalla Italia*, 29/05/2014)[40]

Processes of exclusion from legal access to citizenship are internalised and *accepted* as an inevitable condition of being an Italian of immigrant background. The expression "surrendering to this bipolarity" deflects responsibility from society in redressing citizenship rights inequality and places the burden of unrecognition and its consequences on the shoulders of individuals expected to exhibit acceptance and resilience. This suggests a careful politics of moderation and persuasion conditioned by dominant expectations of what constitutes a model 'new citizen': someone who embraces and celebrates unquestioned 'Italian-ness', does not deconstruct its colonising and essentialist assumptions and avoids overt confrontation with the hegemonic state in reclaiming citizenship *rights*. The narrative remains deeply personal whereby the identity struggles of the 'new citizen' are internalised and dealt with at individual level as intimate sentiments of ongoing precariousness and ambivalent conflicting feelings of belonging and unrecognition. This is a discourse deeply intertwined with the success stories of 'deserving citizens': only by focussing on personal aspirations and objectives through hard work and resilience, equality and recognition can be eventually reclaimed.

4.3. *The transcultural citizen*

Several stories articulate a discourse concerned with transculturality or hybridity within cultural identity. In various stories, the diverse cultural origins and the multiple cultural affiliations are emphasised as an important aspect of the new citizen's identity and experiences. In the story of Phaim Bhuiyan, previously examined, the interviewee-protagonist acknowledges the importance of his Bangladeshi origins *alongside* a fully professed 'Italian-ness': "I feel Italian, but at the same time I care a lot about my origins". The two juxtaposed identities *occasionally* result in a hybridised sense of cultural identity: "Sometimes I feel I am also something else, something indefinable, inexplicable, prob-

[40] The story can be only partially retrieved at: https://web.archive.org/web/20171005202548/http://www.yallaitalia.it/2014/05.

ably a sort of synthesis between the two". While multiple affiliations are recognised as 'juxtaposed', very rarely 'Italian-ness' as an essentialist mode of identification is questioned, de-colonised or reclaimed as inherently and historically inclusive of diversity.

The 'moment of rediscovery or search for roots' is a common turning point in the narrative of many of the stories exploring cultural identity[41]. It reveals the working of hegemonic societal pressures to 'assimilate' or conceal those traits of 'ethnic' or cultural 'difference' that are deemed to be incompatible with an essentialist notion of 'Italian-ness'. The protagonist of the previously analysed story titled "I Feel, I Am, I Would Like to Be" reflects on the time in which she visited the country of her mother, Sri Lanka, for the first time:

> I learned Italian in about a year and just as quickly I forgot my native language, thanks to the teachers who had categorically forbidden me to talk to my mother in Sinhala. I got to know Sri Lanka the first time seven years after I arrived in Italy, in a summer that I still remember as one of the most beautiful of my life, entirely devoted to the search for the roots of the language, the culture that I had lost along the way [...].

Again, internalised language tends to attribute responsibility for assimilationist pressures on the individual rather than on dominant societal expectations informed by a narrow view of national identity and belonging (*I forgot* my native language... *I had lost* along the way"). Teachers are not objects of direct blame or criticism as their intervention is accepted with a gentle, matter-of-fact tone ("*thanks to* the teachers...")[42]. This suggests reluctance to openly and explicitly call out the working of assimilationist ideologies.

Articulated within the discursive construction of the 'deserving citizen', some of the stories frame the process of roots-rediscovering as 'career capital'. In her story-interview, Karima (aka Anna Maria Gehnyei) – a music artist of Liberian origin who has just released her debut album titled '2G' – defines cultural origins as "pillar of success":

> *Karima: Through Music I Found My Roots. They are All 'in 2G'*
> But at some point, in my career as a vocalist I felt the need to belong to another context, I was not recognizing myself in that situation. I felt the call of my roots. [...]. In her songs there is politics, culture, identity and demands, but above all there is a plea: "I am convinced that the second generation can do it, can manage to achieve important results here, but without denying their origins, because these are the pillar of their success.

The discourse of success is once again deeply intertwined with notions of cultural identity and multiple belongings. A self-enterprising attitude and the capitalisation of 'difference' can grant acceptance and recognition as 'citizen'[43]. Earlier in the story, Karima explicitly calls for young Italians of immigrant background to abandon self-victimising attitudes and start embracing 'citizenship':

> "In [my album] '2G' there is my whole journey, there is awareness and in particular a message to the second generations: stop self-victimizing yourselves. A verse of the song says: "Do not blame the colour of your skin". For too long we have experienced the legacy of

[41] S. Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities", in *Culture, Globalisation and the World System*, edited by A.D. King, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991: 41-68.

[42] In the original Italian: "*complici* le insegnanti...".

[43] See Hawthorne, "Making Italy: Afro-Italian Entrepreneurs and the Racial Boundaries of Citizenship".

> colonialism and the people have felt entitled to abuse, but now it is time to put an end to victimization, to react peacefully and to feel citizens".
> (*Italiani+*, 18/04/2014)[44]

Self-victimisation is here presented as a hurdle to becoming 'citizen'. Semantic choices suggest dismissal of the issue racial discrimination ("do not blame the colour of your skin") which is casted as a problem that should be processed at individual level through resilience rather than as a collective intervention against a system of institutionalised inequality hindering equal opportunities and participation in society. An invitation to "react peacefully" connotes the suggestion to embrace a moderate cultural politics of participation which avoids upsetting or disrupting the hegemonic power of the 'nation'. Overall, the discourse of multiple transcultural affiliations is channelled into a vision of national identity that heavily draws upon deep-seated expectations about 'immigrants' in Italy as subjects whose access to citizenship is predicated upon the extent to which they can provide valuable cultural-economic contributions to society without aspiring to question or transform the *status quo*.

Transculturality at societal level is also explored as interconnectedness of human experiences across different socio-cultural and geographical contexts[45]. Some of the stories reflect upon '(im)migration' as a universal human experience though a cosmopolitan lens that broadens common understandings of the migratory phenomenon. This includes stories establishing a similarity between the experiences of Italians of immigrant background in Italy and those of Italians of single heritage as immigrants abroad. These narratives show the migratory experience as a two-way phenomenon and invite a self-reflective viewpoint recognising 'Otherness in Us and Self in the Other'[46]. The platform *Prospettive Altre* features a section titled "Stories of New Migrants: Young Italians in the World" which presents stories of "young people leaving the *Bel Paese*" due to "low wages, inattentive politics, gerontocracy, unemployment and the lack of reward after years of study". These stories mirror the narrative of the 'success story' with a focus on the self-determination, hard work ethos and resilience of those Italians of single heritage who have migrated abroad. Yet, while these narratives highlight *sameness* of motivations, expectations, and experiences between 'economic migrants' in the world, *difference* is hardly explored. For example, the privileges associated with an Italian (EU) passport and a non-racialised identity are side-lined in favour of the pursuit of a discursive strategy seeking to illustrate the universality of the migration experience and its cultural-economic value.

Overall, the analysis showed that the transcultural identity of the new citizen is explored both at the level of cultural identity as well as at societal level as interconnectivity of human experiences. Many stories draw attention to the fact that diversity of origins can 'co-exist' with a fully professed Italian identity. Yet, while there is an attempt

[44] The story is no longer available on *Italiani+* via the Internet Archive. However, it can be retrieved here: https://expresolatino.net/noticias/para-saber/karima-con-la-musica-ho-ritrovato-le-mie-radici-sono-tutte-in-2g/.

[45] V. Marotta, "The Multicultural, Intercultural and the Transcultural subject", in *Global Perspectives on the Politics of Multiculturalism in the 21st Century: A Case Study Analysism*, edited by F. Mansouri and B.E. de B'béri, New York: Routledge, 2014: 90-102.

[46] E.G. Berrocal, "Building Italian-ness through the Logic of the 'Other is Us' and the 'Self in the Other'. An Anti-Nationalist Approach to the Italian Debate on a New Citizenship Law", *Bullettin of Italian Politics*, 2, 1 (2010): 69-90.

to 'celebrate' the multiple cultural affiliations of 'new citizens', 'Italian-ness' is rarely deconstructed, de-colonised or narrated as inherently trans-cultural.

5. BEYOND 'NEW CITIZENS': RE-THINKING INTERCULTURAL TACTICS OF (SELF-)REPRESENTATION

Intercultural digital media are deeply situated within the socio-cultural context of their emergence. The demands of young Italians of immigrant background – and, in particular, the campaign for citizenship reform – deeply inform the cultural politics of representation of these initiatives[47]. As a response to mainstream media practices and discourses, these platforms have – or had at the time of their existence – the potential to construct more inclusive, diverse and pluralist representations about an increasingly culturally diverse Italian society.

The analysis of the personal stories articulated in the platforms has shown that 'the new citizen' is *strategically* constructed in opposition to negative stereotypical representations of 'the immigrant subject'. While seeking to subvert the dominant regime of representation, the recurring narrative attributing success to exceptional individual talent, hard work, self-determination, and resilience draws on a persuasive rhetorical frame of *acceptance* conditional upon *deservingness*. Expectations of 'model citizenship' are borrowed from hegemonic discourses on the economic value of 'immigrant contribution to the national economy' alongside neoliberal aspirations of upward mobility and self-made success. This suggests a careful inter-cultural politics of moderation and negotiation whereby the 'new citizen' is tactically inserted into the 'old' frame of the 'good immigrant' whose acceptance and recognition as a *legitimate* citizen in society is granted upon demonstrating *assimilation of* the values, interests, lifestyles, and expectations of the 'nation'[48].

This strategic integrationist tactic, I argue, is informed by a project of socio-political and institutional inclusion such as the citizenship law reform as a common civic project advocated by the content producers and stakeholders of the platforms. Yet, a cultural politics of representation channelled into a project of citizenship rights advocacy implies that certain representations, stories and voices may be excluded. For instance, the voices of those questioning a nation-centric view of citizenship and national belonging or the stories of those 'new Italians' who despite hard work and good intentions 'haven't made it' because of structural inequalities in society. I therefore argue that the perpetuation of the trope of the 'good immigrant' neither lead to real equality[49] nor it does contribute to a truly transformative inter-/trans-cultural politics of representation. De-colonising essentialist notions of national belonging and reclaiming a wider spectrum of voices, representations and experiences of what it means to be 'Italian' within a diverse and inclusive interpretation of identity could provide a way forward.

Although the phenomenon of intercultural media output has slowed down significantly compared to its peak years, it is still an active and rapidly evolving media landscape. A few initiatives launched in the last few years seem to practice a broader intersectional representational agenda which might include informed discussions of societal structural inequalities and a better understanding of institutional racism as a

[47] Morani, "Introducing Italy's Intercultural Digital Media: Mapping the Landscape".
[48] Hall, "The Spectacle of the Other".
[49] See N. Shukla, ed., *The Good Immigrant*, London: Penguin Books, 2017.

key factor in hindering equal participation and representation in society. Furthermore, recent studies have suggested that young Italians of ethnic minority or immigrant background have signalled a preference for hyphenated labels of self-identification rather than homogenising collective categories[50]. While the 'new citizen' as a tactical model of self-representation to advocate citizenship, visibility and inclusion might have lost its momentum, attention devoted to the personal stories and achievements of Italians of diverse backgrounds is still very much alive in a new generation of digital media platforms significantly relying on social media communication.

In examining the challenges towards the construction of an inter-cultural politics of representation, this study has the potential to inform further investigations concerning evolving tactics and public discourses in Italy and in other contexts practicing the collective construction of more inclusive and diverse modes of self-narration and representation.

[50] Antonsich, "What's in a Name? Children of Migrants, National Belonging and the Politics of Naming".

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"WE DO SOMETHING BECAUSE WE THINK THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR SOCIETY AND THAT WE SHOULD BE HEARD"
Agency and Strategies of Empowerment of Community Media Producers in Germany in Light of Experiences of Racism

Abstract
Media practices are often dominated by hegemonic discourses, and members of marginalised groups tend to struggle to get access to professional media production opportunities. In this paper, we present a study on agency and strategies of migrant media producers in Germany with a specific focus on experiences with racism, visibility of marginalised voices and negotiations of belonging in alternative spaces. Community media are media that are independent, non-commercial, organised from the community, and directed to the community. Their aim is to enable citizens to take control over their own representation, produce media content that is representative of a diverse society, and raise issues often overlooked by commercial and large-scale public-service media. Racism is understood in this study as a practice based on hierarchical oppositional distinction and connected to the practical effects of this distinction. Discriminatory practices denote the exclusion of individuals or groups because of prevailing prejudices linked to certain discrimination categories like age, sex, origin, appearance, language, sexual or religious orientation. Eight media producers living in Germany with refugee/migration backgrounds participated in two group discussions and an interview. The focus of the conversations were experiences of racism, individual experiences in Germany regarding acceptance, experiences with community media, perception of the public or mainstream media, structures within the radios and media projects, possible wishes, and strategies for dealing with racism in media, the topic of multilingualism and feedback of listeners. All recordings were transcribed, and the analysis focused on individual agency and strategies, (lack of) institutional support and social evaluations. The explorative, qualitative approach enabled deeper insights into the complex ways how discrimination is at play in society at large but also how these practices are encountered in 'alternative' spaces. On the one hand, the analysis reveals the effects of intersectional positions that media producers navigate when attempting to reach representation for themselves and for topics they find important. The results underline the importance of informal networks to access resources. On the other hand, forms of recognition for education and competencies (particularly those acquired outside of Europe) need to be in place for media producers to realise their potential.

Keywords
Community media; discrimination; media access; strategies.
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Link to related programmes (in several languages): https://colourfulvoices.net/.

Link to the radio broadcast (in German): https://rdl.de/programmhinweis/sondersendung-community-media-als-ort-der-teilhabe.

1. INTRODUCTION

While media reporting often focuses on sensationalist images of people crossing borders, the participation of migrants and refugees as media producers is rarely visible. In this paper, we present a pilot study on agency and strategies of migrant journalists in Germany, focusing on experiences with racism, visibility of marginalised voices, and negotiations of belonging in alternative spaces. The participatory approach of community media has led to long-lasting experiences with multilingual and interactive formats: since the 1980s they have developed contents as alternative spaces, and they have supported underprivileged or marginalised groups in media expression and media literacy, including through digital production tools. Moreover, in the last years, many community media developed an active policy and new approaches to involve newly arrived refugees and strengthen their access to local networks of communication. The relevance and continuity of this work – for migrants and non-migrants – is however only partially documented and mainly on a local scale. Therefore, we consider exploratory national results from this paper a relevant contribution to understanding how media pluralism can be achieved and how media practices can become accessible for persons with diverse experiences[1].

In this paper, we start out with an overview of media representation of refugees and migrants, followed by a brief introduction highlighting the differences between public and commercial mass media and community media on the other hand. The following section introduces our particular research context in Germany, in many ways typical for central European countries' approaches in dealing with migration, and in the last sections, we finally present the strategies of empowerment that are the result of our research and discuss their effects.

2. MEDIA AND REPRESENTATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES: EXPERIENCES OF RACISM AND EXCLUSION

> *All in all, I wish for society [...] to know about migrants that are on the streets and who are interviewing, who are producing radio shows, who are part of [...] media.* [see excerpt 4 below]

[1] See also U. Doliwa, J. Purkarthofer, "Community Media's Role in Changing Centre-Periphery Relations through Participatory, not-for-Profit Journalism", *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, 17, 2 (2021): 161-182.

This first quote from a German media producer of migrant background already sets the scene for what is the aim of this contribution: to understand why and by which means migrant and refugee media producers manage to access the media landscape. Research on media and migrants or refugees typically covers two fields[2]. On the one hand, it deals with experiences of racism and exclusion through media representation of migrants and migration in the mass media (as it is done through discourse analysis of media reports) and on the other hand, it researches participation of migrants and refugees in media production (drawing among others on sociological studies).

Research on media representation of refugees and migrants has seen a number of reporting cycles, most recently linked to the horrendous events at the Polish-Belarussian border and the war in Ukraine. Before that, the debate around media and migration witnessed a resurgence after the events of 2015, when, due to the war in Syria and to conflicts and crises in other parts of the world, European countries have been faced with the arrival of increasing numbers of refugees and migrants. Due to the high number of research publications on this period, we use it as one example here – knowing that the processes that guided the media decisions back then are still in effect. When reporting on arrivals of refugees and migrants to Europe throughout 2015-2016, media have played a central role in framing these events as a 'crisis'. This perspective contributed to negative and sometimes hostile attitudes amongst the public toward the newcomers. The report *Media Coverage of the 'Refugee Crisis': A Cross-European Perspective*[3] is one of several studies which examined the narratives developed by print media and how they contributed to the public perception of unfolding events, shifting from careful tolerance to a securitisation of the debate and a narrative of fear. Throughout, there has been a limited opportunity in mainstream media coverage for refugees and migrants to present their own views and concerns, and little attention was paid to the individuals' suffering or the global and historical context of their displacement. Refugees and migrants are often portrayed as an indistinguishable group of anonymous and unskilled outsiders who are either or at the same time vulnerable and dangerous. The dissemination of such biased or ill-founded information contributes to perpetuating stereotypes and creating an unfavourable environment not only for the reception of refugees but also for the longer-term perspectives of societal integration. In accordance with other research, the authors Myria Georgiou and Rafal Zaborowski find that divisive narratives focusing on threats to the security, welfare and cultures of European societies have contributed to the spread of hate, hostility and disinformation related to migrants and refugees in the eight European countries of their study.

In the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations' report on migrant voices in British media[4] , the authors further noted that nearly half of all articles framed migration as a threat, and migrants as 'villains', actual or potential. Only rarely are migrants interviewed as experts of their profession – be it engineer, schoolteacher, architect, or doctor. The report also points to other studies that have found the same effect concerning female participation in the media: women are overly represented as victims and those affected by policy

[2] For a recent overview, see K. Smets, K. Leurs, M. Georgiou, S. Witteborn, R. Gajjala, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Media and Migration*, London: SAGE, 2019.

[3] M. Georgiou, R. Zaborowski, *Council of Europe Report: Media Coverage of the 'Refugee crisis': A Ccross-European Perspective*, Council of Europe DG1(2017)03. https://edoc.coe.int/en/refugees/7367-media-coverage-of-the-refugee-crisis-a-cross-european-perspective.html (Accessed 11.10.2021).

[4] H. Crawley, S. McMahon, K. Jones, *Victims and Villains: Migrant Voices in the British Media*, Coventry: Coventry University - Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, 2016. URL: http://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/research-directories/research-news/2016/victims-and-villains/ (Accessed 11.10.2021).

decisions. They are seldom invited to give expert opinions. For Germany, Müller[5] brings the results of several research groups together and comes to the same conclusion as the British colleagues: migrants are under-represented, linked to criminal acts more often than the case numbers would justify, and female migrants are almost absent in the media. Even if traditional media is making efforts to improve portrayal of people of different backgrounds or from underrepresented groups, such as women or persons with disabilities, the overall picture is still quite unsatisfactory[6]. According to Joy Francis, Trustee of the Media Diversity Institute and core member of Words of Colour, despite global social movements like Black Lives Matter, "*The pace of change remains 'snail-like'*"[7].

A more recent area of research is linked to the use of smartphones, digital tools and social media by refugees and diasporic communities[8]. Whereas these studies offer interesting perspectives in relation to self-representation and access to different types of media content, the impact of such media practices on mainstream public opinion remains limited.

As the treatment of migration by the mass media directly impacts both social debate and public opinion, media professionals should offer an accurate picture of immigration, avoiding sensationalism, trivialisation, or paternalism. In addition, informing about the cultures of origin of the main migrant communities and the normal aspects of the migration phenomenon in society can contribute to overcome refusal and diffidence[9]. Journalists can play an important role in avoiding the spread of xenophobia by communicating universal values shared across cultures. However, until a more substantial involvement of all minorities (ethnic, religious, cultural, or other) in the media is achieved – as media professionals and as established sources of information – representation of diversity is bound to remain partial. Studies on organisational structures of media production give insights into the participation of migrants and refugees[10] . The focus on diverse editorial groups is driven by the assumption that diversity will increase balanced reporting and equal representation of migrant and refugee topics[11]. The same assumption is prevalent regarding other marginalised groups, such as women or persons with disabilities.

European projects[12] started to engage with training for journalists to set a focus on

[5] D. Müller, "Die Darstellung ethnischer Minderheiten in deutschen Massenmedien", in *Massenmedien und die Integration ethnischer Minderheiten in Deutschland*, edited by R. Geißler and H. Pöttker, Bielefeld: transcript, 2005: 83-126.

[6] GMMP, *6th Global Media Monitoring Project* (GMMP 2020) https://whomakesthenews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/GMMP-2020.Highlights_FINAL.pdf (Accessed 22.2.2022).

[7] J. Francis, *Diversity and The Media: Ten Years In Review*, 2022. https://www.media-diversity.org/event-on-9-february-diversity-and-the-media-ten-years-in-review (Last access 22.2.2022).

[8] See among others K. Kaufmann, "Wie nutzen Flüchtlinge ihre Smartphones auf der Reise nach Europa? Ergebnisse einer qualitativen Interview-Studie mit syrischen Schutzsuchenden in Österreich", *Sws-Rundschau*, 56 (2016): 319-342. and K. Leurs, S. Ponzanesi, "Connected Migrants: Encapsulation and Cosmopolitanization", *Popular Communication*, 16, 1 (2018): 4-20.

[9] N. Bellardi, *Interview with the Council of Europe. Speak out against Discrimination*, 2009. https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/anti-discrimination-campaign/ressources/Interviews/interview_bellardi_en.asp (Accessed 11.10.2021).

[10] M. Lünenborg, K. Fritsche, A. Bach, *Migrantinnen in den Medien: Darstellungen in der Presse und ihre Rezeption*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2014 and B. Röben, "Migrantinnen in der Medienproduktion", in *Handbuch Medien und Geschlecht*, edited by J. Dorer, B. Geiger, B. Hipfl, V. Ratković, Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2019: 11-12.

[11] R. Geißler, H. Pöttker, eds., *Massenmedien und die Integration ethnischer Minderheiten in Deutschland*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2005 and C. Horn, "Mehr Vielfalt in die Medien. Journalisten mit Migrationshintergrund in Deutschland - eine quantitative Befragung", *Communicatio Socialis*, 45, 1 (2012): 3-17.

[12] European Commission, *Media4Diversity: Taking the Pulse of Diversity in the Media*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2009. DOI 10.2767/12042 and Council of Europe, *Media Diversity Inclusiveness Outcomes Survey. Does It Have an Impact?*, 2014, https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/mars/mediane/source/index/OSIOCHRU-MDI-Does-it-have-an-impact-OK.pdf (Accessed 11.10.2021).

balanced reporting but also to foster participation and exchange with different groups and members of society. Council of Europe's projects such as *Media against Racism in Sports* (MARS) and *Media in Europe for Diversity Inclusiveness* (MEDIANE) found that diversity is best represented and communicated by those who embody it, so it needs to enter into newsrooms and even more in decision-making posts. Facilitating the recruitment of media professionals of different backgrounds or minority groups should be an objective of traditional media. Minority associations also need to be proactive, for example, by producing and updating lists of qualified professionals and freelancers to be diffused through trade unions and universities.

A successful example at the national level is the German initiative *Neue deutsche Medienmacher*innen* (literally New German Media Producers), an association of diverse journalists aiming to represent change in the German media landscape, imagined as homogeneously white and upper-class. NDM hold workshops and training and have produced glossaries to enhance reporting on diversity issues (migration, racism but also gender issues etc.). Furthermore, since 2018 the Berlin-based organisation Mediendienst Integration coordinates the *Media and Migration in Europe*-network[13], an informal community bringing together nearly 80 members across 19 countries. As an expert network, MME has the know-how to support media in doing a better job covering migration: it can provide up-to-date information, link journalists to practitioners and researchers in the field, and share best practices of fact-based coverage.

In the recent edition of the Media Pluralism Monitor[14], evaluating the four areas of fundamental protection, market plurality, political independence and social inclusiveness of European media landscapes, the situation for Germany is generally rated at low risk, but access to media for minorities scores above the average and tends towards a medium-risk evaluation. Access to media for women is effectively rated at high risk, with a significant lack of women in management positions accounting for parts of this evaluation[15]. In light of these results, we are particularly interested to see how participation for migrant and refugee women is reflected upon by media producers in our sample and which strategies are effectively employed to gain access and persevere in a professional media environment.

3. FINDING SPACES TO SPEAK UP: COMMUNITY MEDIA

Media practices are often dominated by hegemonic discourses, and members of marginalised groups tend to struggle to get access to professional media production opportunities[16].For many members of migrant communities, the lack of proper infrastructure, money, and trained personnel signify major drawbacks for them to broadcast information on their realities. In addition, they are rarely considered and addressed as relevant

[13] M. Otwinowski, "We Need to Support Migration Journalism", *Media Migration in Europe*, 2021, https://mediendienst-integration.de/artikel/we-need-to-support-migration-journalism.html (Accessed 11.10.2021).

[14] MPM, *Media Pluralism Monitor 2021*, https://cmpf.eui.eu/mpm2021-results/ (Accessed 11.10.2021). For the German results: https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/71947/germany_results_mpm_2021_cmpf.pdf (Accessed 11.10.2021).

[15] MPM 2021, 16-17.

[16] See N. Bellardi, B. Busch, J. Hassemer, H. Peissl, S. Scifo, *Spaces of Inclusion: An Explorative Study on Nneeds of Refugees and Migrants in the Domain of Media Communication and on Responses by Community Media*, Council of Europe, 2018 or K. Leurs, E. Omerović, H. Bruinenberg, S. Sprenger, "Critical Media Literacy through Making Media: A Key to Participation for Young Migrants?", *Communications*, 43, 3 (2018): 427-450. https://doi.org/10.1515/commun-2018-0017.

parts of the audience[17]. However, access to media and the real possibility of involvement in media production and consumption can empower disadvantaged social groups. By enabling this access and providing the necessary training, community media play a crucial role in encouraging participation of migrant and ethnic minority groups along two dimensions: participation by becoming part of the audience and participation by becoming part of media production[18]. According to *Spaces of Inclusion*, this, in turn, supports their social inclusion and democratic rights.

Community media are media that are independent, non-commercial, organised from the community, and directed to the community[19]. In Europe, they take the form of local radio, TV and online multimedia projects. They provide digital media skills and ethical journalistic training to a variety of age, language and minority groups, including people with special needs. The term 'community' refers to local, geographic communities, minority ethnic and language communities, as well as to communities of interest (for example, LGBTQI+ activists, artists, musicians, etc.). The aim of community media is to enable citizens to take control over their own representation, produce media content that is representative of a diverse society, and raise issues often overlooked by commercial and large-scale public-service media[20]. In this way, community media can be seen as communities of practice[21], connected not necessarily through a shared national or language background, but rather through shared knowledge about media practices and citizen journalism skills. Community radio activists from around the world, especially from Latin America, Iran and Kurdish-speaking regions, have been involved in European community media projects as 'migrant producers' for many years, enriching these projects with experiences of activism from their countries of origin. Topics such as social justice, human rights and gender equality are high on the agenda of many minority groups, and community media is a very effective outlet to address these issues and network with global social movements.

Programs in the languages of minorities and migrants started appearing in European community radios in the 1980s. Underrepresented and marginalised by private and public service media, migrant groups identified alternative media projects as a relevant channel to reach out to their communities. Producers were either individuals or associations, aiming to share relevant information and news in their shared languages and clearly addressing the diaspora community as their target audience. Community radios reflected the diversity of the multicultural cities in which they were based, with several cultures and languages coexisting next to one another but not necessarily communicating with one another. To foster dialogue between the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as with a broader audience, some European community radios later started developing specific training formats to promote multilingual programming and exchange. In the late 1990s, a group of radio activists from Austria, Germany and Switzerland began promoting closer cooperation between radio producers of different cultur-

[17] B. Busch, J. Hassemer, "Section II: Study Based on Interviews with Refugees", in *Spaces of Inclusion*, edited by N. Bellardi *et al*., A Council of Europe report prepared by COMMIT – Community Media Institut.: 14-26.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] N. Carpentier, *Media and Participation: A Site of Ideological-Democratic Struggle*, Bristol: Intellect Books, 2011.

[20] J. Purkarthofer, "You Can't Tell My Story for Me! Community Media as a Means of Expression in Multilingual Local and Globalised Contexts", in *Transnationalizing Radio Research*, edited by G. Föllmer and A. Badenoch, Bielefeld: transcript, 2018: 59-64.

[21] J. Lave, E. Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355.

al and linguistic backgrounds through multilingual programming. It became evident that intercultural programming could bring several benefits to volunteer-based organisations like community radios: stronger cooperation between different groups within the radio, a shared sense of responsibility for the organisation as a joint project and the facilitation of participatory processes.

Nowadays, most community media deal with digitalisation and cross-media – in different ways and with different intensity. Stations are represented on the internet with their own websites. The terrestrial and cable programs are offered as livestreams and podcasts. Social media are used as promotion channels, but also as networking instruments. In Austria, for example, many particularly successful young producers who first found their audience on the internet later became active in community media[22]. The use of digital tools is an integral part of the media literacy training provided to marginalised and non-marginalised groups, including a more critical use of social media, drawing attention to issues such as data privacy and copyright.

Through the EU-funded project New Neighbours, a further step could be taken in 2019-2021. Exchange and learning took place between community media intercultural editorial teams in Austria and Germany and community media in other EU Member States (in this case, Spain, Italy, and Slovenia) where community radios/TVs are active but struggle with resources to train and involve migrants. Through these exchanges and dedicated training, participants collected relevant recommendations for planning new intercultural editorial groups involving migrants and refugees. One of the project outcomes was a multilingual storytelling podcast (ChiacchieRE) produced by Fondazione Mondinsieme in Reggio Emilia, an area with over 100 different nationalities and almost twice the percentage of migrants compared to the Italian average of 9%. The intercultural centre Mondinsieme has been promoting active participation through various activities, including journalism, communication, and social media projects. As a result of New Neighbours, a test phase for a local community station also started, based on the recognition that a *physical meeting place* for different migrant groups was needed to pursue the intercultural programming further – regardless of the technical platforms used for content distribution.

Despite the availability of other (media) channels for self-representation, what community media offer is still unique. Social media platforms might allow voicing of individual opinions and networking around specific issues but aren't necessarily representative of the points of view of communities. As structures with physical meeting places, community media remain a crucial point of contact, mediation, and training. Community radios also offer self-organised spaces for encounters between generations and cultures and spaces of participation. The radio premises generally play an important role; in rural areas, they often fill a gap as meeting places for many people who would not otherwise meet at any other location. The radios also invest time, money, and space in a variety of social events that are not directly linked to radio production: some even claim that it's 80% about community, 20% program. The radio tries to provide human contacts and exchanges, for example, by organising parties in asylum residences or through side events and invitations, to build trust with those sceptical towards media after having experienced authoritarian regimes. As an Austrian media producer states, the radio offers space and opportunities and tries to be "an open and accessible place, a

[22] Okto-TV, *BürgerInnenjournalismus 2.0. Perspektiven und Strategien von Community-TV*, Wien: Medienhaus Wien, 2014.

learning place". Networks are established and maintained through "private and personal relationships, through the radio program itself, open editorial meetings, cultural events that we host and side projects we are involved with"[23]. The radio offers an open space also to non-radio related projects and ideas.

Finally, community media can act as catalysts for further (multi)media initiatives and projects led by migrants and refugees. Several refugee journalists are currently working in community radios, hoping to later continue a professional career. Research projects in Switzerland and Austria showed that regardless of whether they later pursued a 'professional' media career, migrants have been able to engage on equal terms in society and improve their professional and social integration skills thanks to their work in community radio[24].

4. Research context, methods and data

Research on racism has long been marginal even in the social sciences[25], and research on community media was equally considered a peripheral topic with few but very devoted researchers[26]. Recently, however, research on both topics intensified, with a heightened awareness for diversity and thus also increasing funding opportunities. In 2020, public funding was made available in Germany to start the first national monitor on racism, and the DEZIM Institute (German Center for Integration and Migration Research, https://dezim-institut.de/) was tasked with the research. In addition to a large-scale survey, a call was launched for short-term projects acting as pilot endeavours to explore research on racism in different universities. This pilot study – *Strategies of Recognition. Community Media as a Space for Potential Participation and Perspectives on Experiences with and Counter-Strategies to Racism*[27] – was one of 34 pilot studies of the National Racism Monitoring of the *DEZIM*, funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Between November 2020 and March 2021, the authors were able to work on experiences of racism: after an initial research phase on the media context in Germany, a small empirical study with research participants who are actively involved in alternative media projects followed in December 2020. Eight people living in Germany, each with a refugee/migration background, were recruited over networks and contacts and took part in two group discussions and one interview. Most participants were between 25 and 35 years old. Men and women were equally represented, and all had either completed their university studies or were still in the process of finishing their

[23] Radio B-138, *Wirkungsradios. Freie Radios im ländlichen Raum*, Kirchdorf/Krems: B138, 2016. https://www.radiob138.at/index.php/downloads/category/3-wirkungsradios?download=33:wirkungsradios-freie-radios-im-laendlichen-raum-up7-4 (Last accessed 22.2.2022).

[24] L. Vasella, *Das Lokalradio als Weltempfänger. Eine Untersuchung zur Integrationsleistung von Sendungen für sprachkulturelle Minderheiten*, Bern: Dept. for Social Anthropology, Univ. Bern, 2007.

[25] S. Kooroshy, P. Mecheril, S. Shure, "Rassismus in der Migrationsgesellschaft", in *Rassismuskritische Bildungsarbeit*, edited by K. Fereidooni and St. Hößl, Frankfurt/Main: Wochenschau: 15-33.

[26] i.e. C. Atton, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Alternative and Community Media*, London: Routledge, 2015; O. Bailey, B. Cammaerts, N. Carpentier, *Understanding Alternative Media*, Open University Press, 2007; R. Day, *Community Radio in Ireland. Participation and Multi-flows of Communication*, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2008; G. Föllmer, A. Badenoch, eds., *Transnationalizing Radio Research*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2018.

[27] J. Purkarthofer, N. Bellardi, E. Domke, Ö. Zar *Briefing Notes: Strategies of Recognition. Community Media as a Space for Potential Participation and Perspectives on Experiences with and Counter Strategies to Racism*, Berlin: DEZIM, 2022.

higher education. The interview and one group discussion were carried out in English according to the wishes of the interlocutors; one group discussion was carried out in German. Subsequently, the recordings were transcribed for analysis. The focus of the conversations were experiences of racism, individual experiences in Germany regarding acceptance, experiences with community media, perceptions of public service and commercial media, structures within studios and media projects, potential wishes, and strategies for dealing with racism in media, multilingualism, and listener's feedback. All recordings were transcribed, and the analysis focused on individual agency and strategies, (lack of) institutional support and social evaluations. Racism is understood in this study as a practice "that is carried by a symbolic scheme of hierarchical oppositional distinction and is connected to means that make this distinction practically effective"[28]. Discriminatory practices denote the exclusion of individuals or groups because of prevailing prejudices linked with certain discrimination categories like age, sex, origin, appearance, language, sexual or religious orientation.

The explorative, qualitative approach enabled deeper insights as well as individual, diverse emphases. Similarities and differences have been elaborated in the process of building categories[29]. Four categories were deemed particularly relevant in the data (subcategories presented in order of frequency):

• Community Media characteristics (including access, belonging, boundaries/hurdles, participation, and networking);

• Exclusionary mechanisms (such as material resources, language, access, and symbolic resources);

• Discrimination strategies (like origin, appearance, language, and names);

• Counterstrategies (in the form of participation, networking, awareness-raising, gaining access, intercultural activities, and education).

In the following section, we will elaborate in particular on the final category, namely strategies to access media and to persevere despite institutional and interpersonal racism.

Our analysis and the interview and group discussions results were returned to the participants for feedback and comments. Within the context of community media, a special program was arranged and broadcast by one community radio in March 2021, including interviews with the authors and first results of the research. In this paper, we focus on participants' strategies to make use of their media experience to learn, speak up, and build their careers, ultimately aiming at success in the media. The goals of the participants are, however, quite different, and thus the strategies cannot be interpreted as ways towards the exact same goal.

We are aware that the participants' experiences in our study are limited in scope, speaking about Germany and from a particular type of media context. However, we follow Rodriguez et al.[30] and others in critical pedagogy who highlight the need for locally grounded experience to understand broader social challenges. To avoid unjust bias towards certain national and cultural contexts, we argue for constant monitoring to

[28] Kooroshy, Mecheril, Shure, "Rassismus in der Migrationsgesellschaft": 17.

[29] Cf. A. Karabulut, *Rassismuserfahrungen von Schüler*innen. Institutionelle Grenzziehungen an Schulen*, Cham: Springer, 2020.

[30] C. Rodríguez, D. Kidd, L. Stein, eds., "Creating New Communication Spaces", Volume I of *Making Our Media: Global Initiatives toward a Democratic Public Sphere*, Cresskill, NJ: Euricom Monographs, Hampton Press, 2010.

ensure long-term changes in structures and sustainable development of a more inclusive media landscape overall.

5. STRATEGIES OF ACCESS AND PERSEVERANCE: SUCCESS IN COMMUNITY MEDIA

In this section, our goal is to present findings related to strategies of access, and we have structured it as follows: we will start with experiences of racism before presenting opportunities of action and alliances, and we close with the media producers' evaluations of their paths and the professional and societal goals they want to achieve.

5.1. *Everyday racism*

All participants recall instances of racism linked to their origin, appearance, or language. While reports about corporal violence are rare in this selection (which might be due to the topic and setting), many speak about experiences that highlight differences in an unjustified manner. In excerpt 1 below, the participants report questions that they have been asked – implying that their life before the flight was genuinely different than that of German acquaintances.

> Excerpt 1:
> *Yes, for example, do you have this, do you have PlayStation, do you have this, do you have that… Such things that are asked, that are hurting a little bit and you think, yes, I come from a country that had everything. There was war, and these people had to flee, it doesn't mean that they didn't have money, cars, houses, apartments.*
> (Group discussion 2, translated from German)

Others speak about seemingly well-meaning compliments, like speaking good German. However, by commenting on a person's language skills, the underlying message is that these skills are unexpected, as they are considered foreign - particularly hurtful to those who have grown up in Germany and learned German as (one of) their first language(s).

5.2. *Opportunities to speak up: action and alliances*

While instances of everyday racism are frequent, most participants stress the generally favourable conditions in community media. These particular environments are described as a 'friendly bubble', and fellow media producers are perceived as less racist than other member of society. For some of the participants, this leads to the conclusion that it is vital to raise awareness within these institutions and not to overlook the ones who can act as supporters:

> Excerpt 2:
> *I think that this situation got the society to know that the racism is real, and people should maybe take care about this. Also, they should be* vorsichtig *[careful] they should take care not to continue. Also, they should take care in institutions in everyday lives in also, in everyday relationship, in every relationship.*
> (Group discussion 1)

While allies and alliances are desperately needed, excerpt 2 also calls for caution when it comes to the role of institutions in continuing exclusionary practices. In relation to media production, funding and the distribution of resources were important topics. Excerpt 3 gives an example of the very practical hurdles one has to overcome:

> Excerpt 3:
> *With Migration Self Organizations, it is always an issue that you have projects, and you have like a funding for projects, and this funding ends and this funding gives you the possibility to bring people in. For example, for me, if I want to do something, I need to have a space, and I need to have* Kinderbetreuung *[child care]. Because otherwise, it makes no sense to invite mothers for this [...]. Or for me even too or for a refugee mum to travel to interview other mums, this is money. Or to give people education like how to use this.*
> (Group discussion 1)

European funding has been made available over the last years to promote diversity and inclusion, and often, migrants were asked to join these projects as participants in a voluntary capacity. However, they are usually invited to contribute contents – often exploiting their own histories and stories – while the organisations employ non-migrants for paid training and management positions. The unequal distribution of power that comes with such arrangements was a cause of concern for the participants in our study, as they all were and are qualified media producers themselves. Some were finally able to secure paid positions at radio stations and cultural institutions over the years, but they describe the struggle to reach those positions. These findings were also confirmed by another recent study, exploring the role of community media in working towards the recognition of participatory, not-for-profit journalism, more diverse discourses and enhanced participation, especially in relation to minorities[31]. Real and imagined language barriers and institutional hesitations lead to slow employment. In mainstream media, the recognition of skills is still very much dependent on having been to the few German journalism schools that traditionally cater to a non-migrant public, due to access barriers linked to language requirements and the missing recognition of previous studies. Through internships and skills acquired and recognised in community media, some participants were able to start working with private and public service media, thereby drawing on networks they have built while still in the non-commercial sector. Personal recommendations prove to be very relevant door openers, and these contacts are hard to establish initially in a new place.

What is also apparent in excerpt 3 is the intersectional nature of exclusionary practices and the gendered effects of discrimination. While some women describe particular solidarities, for many female media enthusiasts, gendered expectations (i.e., related to speaking up and pursuing a highly visible professional career) make it harder to develop their full potential. Pan-European networks are seen as one highly relevant strategy to make the best use of resources and promote each other's work across borders.

5.3. *Professional and societal goals*

Most participants in our study have either finished their university studies or are still involved in education. Their professional goals are thus ambitious, but they are also

[31] Doliwa, Purkarthofer, "Community Media's Role in Changing Centre-Periphery Relations through Participatory, not-for-Profit Journalism".

concerned with the effects of their work in society. The following three excerpts (4, 5 and 6) speak to this goal:

> Excerpt 4:
> *All in all, I wish for society […] to know about migrants that are on the streets and who are interviewing, who are producing radio shows, who are part of German media. And that this is supported, for example by German media, the big media companies, radio, TV, so that we are represented better.*
> (Group discussion 2, translated from German)

In excerpt 4, the representation of migrants is explicitly addressed as part of the contents but in particular as part of the content creators. Finding a space in private and public media for migrants to act as responsible media producers, be the ones with the microphones and cameras, and report about others from their perspective is seen as a necessary development to ensure better representation and coverage.

In the following excerpt 5, however, the focus is also on the satisfaction to create media contents – even if external recognition is not a given. Being satisfied with one's work is described by several participants as one strategy to persevere despite throwbacks.

> Excerpt 5:
> [...] *one should, as I said, try to get recognition, and one should/ one should not just stand there and don't do anything about it. One should be active, even if it is not rewarded in this very moment. It's also for oneself to be satisfied with what one does.*
> (Group discussion 2, translated from German)

Ultimately, as expressed in excerpt 6, the goal is visibility in society – as migrants but also apart from the migrant role, as members of society at large.

> Excerpt 6:
> *The main thing is to contribute our perspectives and to empower ourselves, also because we are doing something that we think is important for society and that we should be heard.*
> (Group discussion 2, translated from German)

Participants express their wish to develop their capacities, ranging from specific media skills to transferable knowledge like project management and leadership. Projects that include different national and European partners can act as a form of capacity building, but often enough, these projects are only temporary and bring little sustainability to build a career. Through participation in projects, media producers can gain recognition and collect symbolic resources: language skills, including for example the skills necessary to apply for European project funding, but also knowledge about national and international funding schemes and support structures. For many, these activities can help to secure semi-regular income and provide means to pursue a career in the media.

In addition, the networks founded in such projects can give access to additional material and symbolic resources, like credibility and reputation. This is true in particular under the condition that project planning is respectful of people's resources and abilities and avoids tokenistic and pseudo-inclusive practices. These practices can be understood as such: depending on funding policies, certain target groups are identified, and funding is made available under the condition of inclusion of these groups. Be it women, refugees or members of Roma minorities, the participants are typically targeted as part

of groups and their needs are rarely taken into account – instead, they are defined as 'deviant/divergent' from society at large and processes or othering come into effect[32]. Several of the participants in our study report that they were approached as refugees or migrants for the purpose to cooperate on media projects, finding their role to be rather unsatisfactory and often unpaid. In contrast, they voice the need for inclusive projects that rely on the knowledge of minoritized groups already in the planning and then management of projects, giving equal access to the paid project positions and intellectual outcomes of the project.

6. CHALLENGING SPACES: "WE ARE NOT JUST CHANGING THE BUBBLE"

Drawing on the results from this small-scale study, we are aware of the limitations regarding the national context and the diversity of persons involved in community media and other media outlets. However, the explorative, qualitative approach enabled deeper insights into the complex ways how discrimination is at play in society at large but also how these practices are encountered in 'alternative' spaces. On the one hand, the analysis reveals the effects of intersectional positions that media producers navigate when attempting to reach representation for themselves and for topics they find important. The results underline the importance of informal networks to access resources. On the other hand, forms of recognition for education and competencies (particularly those acquired outside of Europe) need to be in place for media producers to realise their potential. Personal recommendations are still relevant in media practice, and access is thus a key element to entering this profession.

Changes are needed in formal settings when it comes to recognising formally acquired competencies (not the least in immigration offices and employment agencies), but private companies and associations also need to revise their hiring policies to value abilities over a narrow set of formalised education trajectories. Learning from the experiences of the research participants, as well as from the findings of other recent studies[33], it becomes obvious that also 'alternative spaces' need a form of monitoring with regard to exclusionary practices and policies that might hinder women, persons of colour and/or persons with disabilities from having equal access. "When planning projects we should avoid tokenism – the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to be inclusive to members of minority groups. We should be aware of the fact that when we are talking about the empowerment, the financial inclusion is also one of the issues"[34]. As explored in the Spaces of Inclusion study, even if conditions for accessing community media appear favourable, access must constantly be renegotiated at the individual level. Therefore, it is relevant to ask for each media-related project, how accessible it really is to non-professionals, and how much it responds to the needs of a specific audience. In the dimension of professional development, it is important to keep in mind the precarious positions entailed in volunteer work. Questions to be derived from this are: how can transition into regular media-related employment be facilitated? Which

[32] See among others A. Fresnoza-Flot, "Othering Mechanisms and Multiple Positionings: Children of Thai-Belgian Couples as Viewed in Thailand and Belgium", *Civilisations*, 68 (2019): 139-162.

[33] Busch, Hassemer, "Section II: Study Based on Interviews with Refugees"; Doliwa, Purkarthofer, "Community Media's Role in Changing Centre-Periphery Relations through Participatory, not-for-Profit Journalism".

[34] Doliwa, Purkarthofer, "Community Media's Role in Changing Centre-Periphery Relations through Participatory, not-for-Profit Journalism", 172.

resources can be provided for such a transition (within or outside community media)? In terms of institutional representation, it should not be forgotten that an established 'space of inclusion' could become a site of exclusion when that space lacks recognition from the outside. A political strategy that acknowledges the needs of refugees and enhances their access to basic communication rights must also seek their recognition as agents and audiences in the mainstream media.

Different communities find their space in community media – linked by language or ethnic origin, gender or sexual orientation, political ties, lifestyle, or artistic and musical tastes – and with distinct social, religious or cultural backgrounds. With such a diverse backbone, the challenge for most community media organisations remains how to create a 'sense of community' across the multitude of sub-communities and languages – some community radios airing programs in more than 20 different languages[35]. Ideally, gathering allies, skills and networks in those alternative spaces can enable persons to move on to other employment or take up other roles within the organisation. However, for this to be effective, changes are needed on a broader societal level – the importance of professional mentors (and their networks) becomes apparent in the discussions.

[35] N. Bellardi, "Escape from the 'Filter Bubble': Intercultural Tips and Tricks for Journalism and Communication", *Medium*, 2016. https://medium.com/@nadiabellardi/escape-from-the-filter-bubble-intercultural-tips-and-tricks-for-journalism-and-communication-cd5eb8ffa468 (Accessed 11.10.2021).

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ALIX DIDIER SARROUY* - RITA GRÁCIO**

THE ONLINE COMMUNICATION OF ART-BASED EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH UNDERAGE REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN EUROPE

Abstract
Communication is one of the critical issues organisations working with migrants and refugees in Europe must face. Our research question is how do art-based education organisations' projects working with underage migrants and refugees communicate online? There is a gap concerning three key discursive approaches that we wish to tackle when communicating about these populations: miserabilism, even-image, and gender-neutrality. We propose to analyse them by focusing the research on a case study of two music organisations in two different European countries – the Swedish Dream Orchestra and El Sistema Greece. Through a multimodal critical discourse analysis of their digital communication, the results show that both organisations use their multicultural contexts as an asset to persuade people to join the orchestra (as volunteers, as teachers) and to make donations. However, they do not present intercultural and transcultural alternative approaches. These findings are important to question the choices made when communicating about such ethically and emotionally-charged social phenomenon as the social inclusion of underage migrants and refugees through art-based educational projects in Europe.

Keywords
Online communication; art-based education projects; migrants; refugees; underage.
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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main issues when dealing with migrants and refugees in Europe is related to communication. A telling example is that of language barriers and cultural differences between arriving migrants and the local hosts. In response, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations' Refugee Agency, has promoted reports and guides to prepare its humanitarian staff for properly communicating with the incoming multicultural populations[1]. Other examples are related to the choice of words and images to label displaced people (e.g. exiled, migrant, refugee); to who has the power to do such labelling (e.g. politicians, journalists, third-sector organisations, international organisations, researchers, etc.); to what are the social, political, legal consequences and struggles over those choices[2]. Organisational communication is thus a key element in such sensitive social matters as migrations in Europe nowadays. We postulate that for the two art-based education organisations we use as case studies in Sweden and Greece, it contributes to advancing their mission of social integration of refugees and migrants through music, but the communication choices tend to reproduce certain defaults based on emotion and that must be questioned.

Communication scholarship has long recognized that communication is constitutive of organisations[3], as well as the importance of mediations, such as websites, blogs, social media in communication processes[4], which applies to nonprofit art-based education organisations like the ones in our case study. Given that we live in a growing mediatized world[5], the organisational communication field has been studying web-based communication strategies of projects dealing with refugees and migrants[6].

On one hand, the literature on the use of arts towards social integration of refugees has been fruitful in analysing the processes of production and reception of artistic initiatives, privileging face-to-face interaction[7]. However, it has overlooked the organisational communication of art-based education projects working with and for migrant youth in Europe. On the other hand, the fields of cultural economics, arts marketing and cultural management have devoted some attention to digital communication of art-

[1] UNHCR, Munich University of Applied Sciences, *Effective and Respectful Communication in Forced Displacement,* 2015. Accessed September 3, 2021. https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/573d5cef4.pdf.

[2] M. Krzyżanowski, A. Triandafyllidou, R. Wodak, "The Mediatization and the Politicization of the 'Refugee Crisis' in Europe", *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 16, 1/2 (2018): 1-14. Accessed September 3, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/15562948.2017.1353189.

[3] L. Putnam, K.J. Krone, eds., *Organisational Communication*, London: Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2018.

[4] J.G. Wirtz, T.M. Zimbres, "A Systematic Analysis of Research Applying 'Principles of Dialogic Communication' to Organisational Websites, Blogs, and Social Media: Implications for Theory and Practice", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 30, 1/2 (2018): 5-34. Accessed August 27, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/1062726X.2018.1455146.

[5] A. Hepp, F. Krotz, eds., *Mediatized Worlds: Culture and Society in a Media Age*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Accessed August 27, 2021. DOI: 10.1057/9781137300355.

[6] L. Chouliaraki, A. Vestergaard, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Humanitarian Communication*, London: Routledge, 2019.

[7] S. Musca, "Crisis in the Making: Public Theatre, Migration and Activist Aesthetics", *Comunicazioni Sociali*, 1, (2019): 42-51. Accessed August 29, 2021. DOI: 10.26350/001200_000042; R.K. Raanaas, S.Ø. Aase, S. Huot, "Finding Meaningful Occupation in Refugees' Resettlement: A Study of Amateur Choir Singing in Norway", *Journal of Occupational Science*, 26, 1 (2019): 65-76. Accessed August 29, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/14427591.2018.1537884.

based education organisations but have overlooked the communication in multicultural contexts[8].

Our research question is how do art-based education organisations' projects working with underage migrants and refugees communicate? We propose to start answering by focusing the research on a case study of two similar music organisations in two different European countries – the Swedish Dream Orchestra and El Sistema Greece. Our empirical analysis will focus on the digital communication of these two programs as they use symphonic music as a tool for the education and inclusion of underage migrants and refugees.

We find that the organisational communication of these two orchestras does not dialogue with neither migrants and refugees nor with potential listeners/audiences, but with potential donors in the host countries and internationally: donors of time (volunteers), donors of expertise (musicians, from local professional ones to high-profile international musicians), and donors of money (sponsors, international funding agencies). The organisational communication of these two orchestras might be at odds with the music program itself, jeopardizing the social inclusion potential of the orchestra. We discuss the implications of our findings to the field of refugee studies and music education.

In the next sections we will presen t our theoretical framework, followed by our case study, the methods used, and the results found. We wrap up with a conclusion.

2. REPRESENTATIONS OF UNDERAGE MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Music education programs for refugees and migrants involve the constant sharing of space between people with extremely diverse sociocultural backgrounds. The reality lived daily by directors, teachers and students is a multicultural one. Reflection on how to communicate about it, either face-to-face or online, either in interpersonal interactions or in institutional communication, is crucial.

To set a framework for the analysis of the communication of music education programs aimed at migrants and refugees, we provide a review of controversial themes regarding their representation. This enables us to understand how the communication of these music education projects relates to broader issues, assess to what extent the discursive strategies of arts organisations' communication reproduce or subvert more mainstream discourses on migrants and refugees. We then conceptualize multi-inter and trans-cultural views, which helps us tackle the issue of migrant and refugees' representation.

The way migrants and refugees are socially constructed through discourses by words and images in several outlets (e.g. policy documents, news, international organisations, arts-based projects, academic literature, etc.), has produced a vast amount of literature. We identified three main problematic themes when representing refugees and migrants: the "even image", the miserabilist perception, and the gender-neutral approach.

Firstly, migrants and refugees each tend to be portrayed through an "even image" based on the collective, at the expense of the agency of individuals, especially of mul-

[8] T.A. Kirchner, J.B. Ford, S. Mottner, "Entrepreneurial Marketing of Nonprofit Arts Organisations", *Social Business*, 3, 2 (2013): 107-122. DOI: 10.1362/204440813X13747454648777; D. O'Reilly, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Arts Marketing*, London: Routledge, 2014.

ticultural underage refugees[9]. Concerning the choice of concepts during the 2015 migration crisis that caused a massive flow of people towards Europe, mainly coming from the Middle-East, Central Asia and sub-Saharan countries[10] has shown how chosen nationalities, such as the Syrians were labelled by some governments and by the media as "refugees" because of what they condemn as a dictatorship in the respective country, while others were labelled as migrants. Moreover, such application of the word refugee as a distinctive tag was used before any legal procedures and applied to the collective of moving Syrians, a procedure known as *prima facie*. Refugees from Afghanistan for instance didn't benefit from such treatment but were also under an "even image" perception, starting with the umbrella label "Afghans", to present a multitribal and multireligious population in which, for instance, Shia minorities, such as the Hazara, are persecuted.

Secondly, there is also a "miserabilist" perception of refugees[11]. This is a reductionist approach, limiting the acknowledgement of the diversity of individual biographies and the richness of the cultures of origin. A miserabilist approach also seems to focus on a limited time frame, based around the migrant and refugee experience, forgetting all other aspects of the concerned individuals. There is a life before and after the migration experience, one must be open to it for more accurate communication.

Thirdly, migration and refugee studies, as well as social sciences literature on the topic, are not fully attentive to the particularities of gender, and even less so about non-normative sexuality[12]. This shortcoming might be explained in terms of "equality approaches" in secular societies or lost amid the "even image". Nonetheless, it erases experiences according to gender, namely related to the family's culture of origin, especially religion and customs.

Hence, the way art-based education organisations represent refugees and migrants calls for scrutiny. To do so we will complement our conceptual approach by applying the work done by the French philosopher and sociologist, Jacques Demorgon, who has extensively written about three connected concepts that are operative for the analysis we propose: multicultural; intercultural; transcultural.

3. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO RETHINK THE REPRESENTATION OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

The "multicultural" approach sets instruments of thought and perception of the other, to incite mutual recognition and respect but having defined spaces for each culture[13], which

[9] J. Kühnemund, "Attempts of Visibility and Recognition", in *Topographies of "Borderland Schengen". Documental Images of Undocumented Migration in European Borderlands*, edited by J. Kühnemund, Bielefeld: transcript, 2018: 179-216. Accessed August 28, 2021. DOI:10.14361/9783839442081-006.

[10] K. Akoka, "Distinguer les réfugiés des migrants au XXème siècle: Enjeux et usages des politiques de classification", in *Définir les réfugiés,* edited by M. Agier and A. Madeira, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2017: 47-68 (65).

[11] A. Flipo, "Entre misérabilisme et injonction à la mobilité. Dominocentrisme et dominomorphisme dans l'étude des migrations internationals", in *Migrations, circulations, mobilités. Nouveaux enjeux épistémologiques et conceptuels à l'épreuve du terrain,* edited by N. Ortar, M. Salzbrunn, M. Stock, Aix en Provence: Presses Universitaires de Provence, 2017: 47-57.

[12] E. Pittaway, L. Bartolomei, "Enhancing the Protection of Women and Girls through the Global Compact on Refugees", *Forced Migration Review*, 57 (2018): 77-79.

[13] J. Demorgon, *Complexité des cultures et de l'interculturel. Contres les pensées uniques*, Paris: Economica, 2004, 22.

Taylor has conceptualized as "politics of recognition"[14]. In its noun form, *interculturality* represents a social fact that happens as soon as two or more cultures share a territory, whatever the moral and practical quality of its results. The reciprocity of actions and non-actions influences all involved cultures at individual and collective levels. This is where the author proposes to distinguish between "adjustment *interculturality*" (based on mutual adaptation) and "engendering *interculturality*" (based on new collective creation)[15].

Conceptually, after multicultural and intercultural, the next step is "transcultural". It can signify what is transversal to different and even distant cultures but again, Demorgon complexifies the approach by differentiating between sharing biological and practical features, "infracultural *transculturality*", from sharing symbolic matters related to beliefs and spirituality, "supracultural *transculturality*"[16]. Borrowing on Piaget[17], Demorgon operates the conceptual neologism of *equilibration*, meaning the action of trying to reach a certain equilibrium between the three conceptions, in which the awareness of what is transcultural[18] in a historical time frame perspective has a key role to play for reaching *interculturation*, the process of co-construction in intercultural social settings[19]. For such awareness to be transmitted through art-based education organisation's communication in multicultural contexts, the fields of history, sociology, and anthropology may provide fundamental tools, revealing cultural bridges and explaining path differences.

4. THE SWEDISH DREAM ORCHESTRA AND EL SISTEMA GREECE

As a case study of art-based education organisations working with migrants and refugees we choose two music education projects: the Swedish Dream Orchestra and El Sistema Greece. Based in Gothenburg, the Swedish Dream Orchestra (SwedishDO) was founded in 2016 and specifically aimed at the recently arrived underage refugees. It started as a specific project of the main music organisation, El Sistema Sweden, but has taken full independence since 2021. It benefits over 300 students from eighteen countries nowadays.

The second program we focus our attention on is based in Athens and was also founded in 2016. El Sistema Greece (ESGreece) has the mission of providing free music classes to underprivileged youth, namely migrants and refugees. It has over 2500 students, in five different locations, including two refugee camps. These two art-based education programs were chosen because they were specifically created to respond to the 2015 migrant crisis in two very different societies, in opposite ends of Europe. The fact that they use music-learning as a tool for social integration, was a key element in our choices since we had previously worked on similar projects in Portugal (Orquestra Geração), France (Demos), Brazil (Neojiba) and Venezuela (El Sistema), in the field of music sociology[20].

[14] C. Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, edited by A. Gutmann, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994: 25-74.

[15] Demorgon, *Complexité des cultures et de l'interculturel. Contres les pensées uniques*, 23.

[16] *Ibid.*, 25.

[17] J. Piaget, *The Equilibration of Cognitive Structures: The Central Problem of Intellectual Development*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

[18] Demorgon, *Critique de l'interculturel: l'horizon de la sociologie*, Paris: Economica, 2005, 149.

[19] *Ibid.*, 57.

[20] A.D. Sarrouy, *Atores da educação musical: etnografia comparativa entre três núcleos que se inspiram no programa El Sistema na Venezuela, no Brasil e em Portugal*, Famalicão: Edições Húmus, 2022.

Even if they are independent institutionally, financially, and methodologically, both music programs are inspired by the acclaimed and contested El Sistema[21], a Venezuelan music-education program started in 1975, that has followers in over sixty countries. Originally it applied to national socioeconomically disadvantaged children and youth, not to refugees or migrants[22]. Having closely experienced El Sistema and the possibilities of music learning as a tool for social inclusion, the leaders of the SwedishDO[23] and ESGreece have decided to adapt such original motivations and methodologies to new very specific contexts.

These organisations are run in European countries with two different migrant and refugee contexts. One of the main differences is that most underage music students in Greece are accompanied by family members and are based in camps[24]. In Sweden, many more minors are unaccompanied, mostly those arriving during the 2015 migrant crisis, with a majority from Afghanistan and Syria[25]. Protected by national laws and the UN Convention on the Rights of Child, they were placed in safe accommodations under social workers' and municipalities' responsibility, having to go to school to learn a trade and Swedish language in three years to gain more chances of an authorized residency once they become adults.

There is a growing body of scholarship on El Sistema inspired music education projects in general[26] and on those focusing on migration issues[27]. Nonetheless, on one hand, they overlook its organisational communication, with exceptions such as the analysis of two videos on El Sistema Sweden's website[28]. On the other hand, these studies do not focus on the work of El Sistema inspired programs with migrants and refugees in Europe. The marketing studies on orchestras' communication are rare and mostly focus on audiences, not on the digital organisational communication itself[29]. Moreover, the fact that in

[21] G. Baker, *El Sistema: Orchestrating Venezuela's Youth*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014; B. Bolden, S. Corcoran, A. Butler, "A Scoping Review of Research that Examines El Sistema and Sistema-Inspired Music Education Programmes", *Review of Education*, 9, 3 (2021). Accessed September 9, 2021. DOI: 10.1002/REV3.3267.

[22] In 2014, El Sistema Venezuela worked in partnership with UNHCR in an inclusive program for the immigrants arriving from Colombia. Interview of Janet Lim, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner. Accessed February 13, 2022. https://www.acnur.org/noticias/noticia/2014/12/5b0c22f1b/.

[23] Dream Orchestra's music teaching leaders have recently published a book on the specifics of this program and of its pedagogical methods: F. Verhagen, R.D. Alvarez, *Dream Orchestra: A Learning Model*, Gothenburg: B4PRESS, 2021.

[24] H. Cabot, "The European Refugee Crisis and Humanitarian Citizenship in Greece", *Ethnos*, 84, 5 (2019): 747-771. Accessed September 9, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/00141844.2018.1529693.

[25] U. Wernesjö, "Across the Threshold: Negotiations of Deservingness among Unaccompanied Young Refugees in Sweden", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46, 2 (2020): 389-404. Accessed September 4, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2019.1584701.

[26] A. Creech, ed., *El Sistema and Sistema-Inspired Programmes: A Literature Review of Research, Evaluation, and Critical Debate*, Sistema Global, 2016. Accessed September 4, 2021. https://sistemaglobal.org/literature-review/.

[27] C. Lenette, N. Sunderland, "'Will There Be Music for Us?' Mapping the Health and Well-Being Potential of Participatory Music Practice with Asylum Seekers and Refugees across Contexts of Conflict and Refuge", *Arts & Health*, 8, 1 (2016): 32-49. Accessed September 4, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/17533015.2014.961943; S. Vougioukalou, R. Dow, L. Bradshaw, T. Pallant, "Wellbeing and Integration through Community Music: The Role of Improvisation in a Music Group of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Local Community Members", *Contemporary Music Review*, 38, 5 (2019): 533-548. Accessed September 4, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/07494467.2019.1684075.

[28] A.-K Kuuse, M. Lindgren, E. Skåreus, "'The Feelings Have Come Home to Me': Examining Advertising Films on the Swedish Website of El Sistema", *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, 15, 1 (2016): 188-215.

[29] V. Gosling, G. Crawford, G. Bagnall, N. Light, "Branded App Implementation at the London Symphony Orchestra", *Arts and the Market*, 6, 1 (2016): 2-16. Accessed September 4, 2021. DOI: 10.1108/AAM-08-2013-0012; D. Patmore (2014), "The Marketing of Orchestras and Symphony Concerts", in *The Routledge Companion to Arts Marketing*, edited by D. O'Reilly, Routledge, 2014: chapter 35.

our case studies the orchestra members are mostly underage migrants and refugees, brings a new complexity concerning communication since there are constant ethical issues and a risk of image exploitation[30].

5. METHOD: MULTIMODAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Websites are *loci* of the digital organisational discourse, with a wide world reach. Via these websites, organisations present their identity and activities to the public, and, at the same time, through website design, they configure their users, as they communicate to an implied audience.

Website communication is multimodal (e.g. text, image, video/moving image, hyperlinks). Hence, we use multimodal critical discourse analysis[31] to analyse websites. We follow the understanding that its visual information produces "ways of seeing"[32], which create particular social and power relations[33], as some people/things/actions are seen while others are made invisible.

Due to a lack of literature on art-based education organisations working with refugees/migrants' digital communication, we also draw on the literature on humanitarian organisations' digital communication[34], and non-profit organisations' digital communication[35] to empirically study the Swedish Dream Orchestra (SwedishDO) and El Sistema Greece (ESGreece). Humanitarian organisations studies have shown that, along with mass media, the Internet is a widely used tool to launch campaigns for migrants, which aim to promote positive intercultural attitudes, doing public advocacy for the migrants' cause[36]. We draw on this literature as humanitarian organisations, such as SwedishDO and ESGreece, are nonprofit organisations (NPOs) working with underprivileged people and for social inclusion causes. We also draw on arts marketing literature, with a focus on symphonic marketing (as cited above).

The data set consists of a mapping of the elements on the websites of both organisations, the SwedishDO (https://dreamorchestra.se/) and ESGreece (https://elsistema.gr/). This mapping was conducted by manually accessing and extracting information on each website during the summer of 2021. Adapted from previous studies[37], we collected

[30] J. Kędra, M. Sommier, "Children in the Visual Coverage of the European Refugee Crisis: A Case Study of the World Press Photo 2016", *Journal of Applied Journalism and Media Studies*, 7, 1 (2018): 37-58. Accessed September 7, 2021. DOI: 10.1386/AJMS.7.1.37_1.

[31] G.R. Kress, T. Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, Routledge, 2020; D. Machin, *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

[32] J. Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Pinguin Books, 1990.

[33] G. Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*, Sage, 2016, 260.

[34] Chouliaraki, Vestergaard, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Humanitarian Communication*.

[35] J.G. Wirtz, T.M. Zimbres, "A Systematic Analysis of Research Applying 'Principles of Dialogic Communication' to Organisational Websites, Blogs, and Social Media: Implications for Theory and Practice", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 30, 1/2 (2018): 5-34. Accessed September 8, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/1062726X.2018.1455146.

[36] Y. Moskovich, A. Binhas, "NGOs Helping Migrants: An Israeli Case Study of Counterculture", *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 35, 9/10 (2015): 635-648. Accessed September 8, 2021. DOI: 10.1108/IJSSP-11-2014-0109.

[37] K. Lovejoy, G.D. Saxton, "Information, Community, and Action: How Nonprofit Organisations Use Social Media", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17, 3 (2012): 337-353. Accessed September 8, 2021. DOI: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01576.x; L. Stein, "Social Movement Web Use in Theory and Practice: A Content Analysis of US Movement Websites", *New Media & Society*, 11, 5 (2009): 749-771. Accessed September 8, 2021. DOI: 10.1177/1461444809105350.

data on the following themes: information-sharing (e.g. information about the organisation's mission, values, events, news, reports, etc.), community building (e.g. giving recognition to people/entities outside the organisations, acknowledgement of other entities' events); and action-oriented (e.g. sections and/or messages that aim to get viewers to take action for the organisation, from donating money to attending concerts). These are considered the main organisational functions when using web-based communication. For each of these items, we analyzed which words, images (such as photographs and videos), and hyperlinks are present on the website, as they are here understood as the discursive elements that fulfil those organisational functions.

Because the photographs were a very prominent element on the websites, and focusing on social semiotic resources, we conducted a separate analysis of the photographs on the following dimensions: the gaze, positionality/angle of interaction, distance, collectivization/individualization, attributes, absences[38]. The gaze refers to the fact that people depicted might be looking at the viewer, meaning there is interaction with the viewer – it might be pleading, seductive, friendly, etc. – or not, in which case the depicted people are, to some extent objectified. Positionality is given by the angle from which we view a person: horizontal, vertical oblique. A horizontal angle shows "face to face" interaction, and a side-on (profile) view can mean more detachedness. The vertical angles are often indexed to looking down or looking up to someone. Distance is a signifier of social relations, hence, if short distance and intimacy are indexed by close shots/close-ups, long shots reflect non-intimate relations and even anonymity. The kinds of people represented can be individuals or groups: pictures that show only one person are individualizing (individualization), and those which show groups or crowds are homogenizing the people depicted. There are combinations: even if a person is alone, it can have their traits less recognizable through a long shot; or the people can be homogenized in different degrees, such as wearing the same clothes, performing the same actions, striking the same poses. Categorisation of people can be conducted through cultural attributes (e.g. dress, hairstyle, adornments) or biological attributes (e.g. stereotyped physical characteristics, ethnic-racial stereotypes), or both. Finally, we also analyzed the absences: who and what (e.g. instruments) are not on the photographs.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. *A comparative analysis of the web-based communication*

The menu structure of both websites is similar, as well as the visual structure, with high-quality photographs in every website's section heading. On both websites, we can find the following categories: organisation's mission, goals, members' profile.

In the case of ESGreece, the website is available in two languages: English and Greek. However, in social media, the content is available in Greek only (although some platforms have an automatic translation tool, enabling the translation to virtually any language). This seems to indicate that ESGreece's social media is targeted at local Greek audiences, whereas the website is targeted at both local and international stakeholders. SwedishDO has made more languages available as the website can be read in Swedish,

[38] D. Machin, *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

English and Spanish. The same goes for their social media accounts, in which they publish content in all three languages.

The use of Spanish as a language in both the website and social media seems to be a way for SwedishDO to perform its affiliation with El Sistema Venezuela. This is confirmed by the fact that the teaching and artistic directors, as well as the website maker/keeper, have previously worked for El Sistema in Caracas. Both websites present the organisations as global players in the international arena of music programs inspired by El Sistema's teaching methods, adapting them to each country and its specific immigration contexts. SwedishDO has a section with News, whereas ESGreece has a section with Stories. Both these sections have the rhetorical function of showing the implementation of (globalist) music education programs in the local contexts.

Even though compared to ES Greece, there is more diversity of languages available in the website communication of the Swedish DO, the former as chosen to employ the word "inclusion" and the latter "integration". These much-worked concepts in social-science literature, have developed notions with particular symbolic weighs: integration may be perceived as an inwards movement, leading to acculturation; inclusion may be perceived as an acceptance of the difference, looking for a compromise that sets an acceptance of the other without disowning its original culture[39]. On the other hand, ESGreece's communication choices, namely in the pictures and in the use of certain words, reveal a more inclusive approach. This raises the question of how and why such concepts, integration and inclusion, are chosen and applied in the organisation's communication. For instance, visiting the two websites, it is noticeable that ESGreece benefits from a bigger team, having a communications manager such as Sevi Matsakidou, presented as "the person behind the *words* of El Sistema Greece, having studied theatre, communications and semiotics".

6.2. *Not an even image, but a musical collective made of individual people*

The metaphor of the orchestra as a family and as a microcosmos of society emerges in both organisational discourses, through text and images. The main difference is that ESGreece displays a more collective presentation of the organisation: the photographs show more people playing, they are often photographs taken top-down, capturing the orchestra as a whole. It also shows more often an important actor that was missing from most SwedishDO photographs: the audience. This reinforces the broader collective display of the organisation.

Both websites have a section for presenting the teachers, where we can find a photograph and a biography of each one. However, whereas in SwedishDO the teachers are portrayed by a frontal close up, in ESGreece, they are portrayed acting at distance, playing or teaching, and often we can see the students in those photographs. Both websites present detailed information about their music programs and their pedagogies, too. Whereas the pedagogical programs in ESGreece are segmented by the musical activity itself (e.g. Instrumental lessons, Music theory, Choir, etc.), in SwedishDO, they are

[39] A.C. Korteweg, "The Failures of 'Immigrant Integration': The Gendered Racialized Production of Non-Belonging", *Migration Studies*, 5, 3 (2017): 428-444. Accessed September 10, 2021. DOI: 10.1093/migration/mnx025; A. Lems, "Being Inside Out: The Slippery Slope between Inclusion and Exclusion in a Swiss Educational Project for Unaccompanied Refugee Youth", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46, 2 (2020): 405-422. Accessed September 10, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2019.1584702.

segmented considering the students' ages (e.g. Vivaldi program, from 3 years old, Mozart program, from 6 years old) and the size of the musical group itself (e.g. Full orchestra or smaller Working groups). This textual and visual display of information shapes the construction of ESGreece's image as a more collective musical project, where group interaction is key, whereas SwedishDO individualizes both teachers and their students.

We argue that in both websites the musical group that is the orchestra as a family, reproduces the "common humanity" discourse[40], the "oneness" criticized by post-colonial readings of humanitarian approaches, as the orchestra becomes that common humanity musical space. This is conveyed textually, for instance, paraphrasing a SwedishDO's teacher: "we are all on the same ground, either you're a professional musician or an amateur". In ESGreece, more than music proficiency it is the unity of social status that is highlighted: everyone can join the orchestra with the aim of "bringing people together, no matter their background, language and religion" (in *Proud of Our Story*).

On both websites, there is a use of direct quotes. In ESGreece these quotes are placed on the main page, whereas in SwedishDO they are spread throughout the different sections. In SwedishDO quotes are identified only by the person's first name and their role in the project (e.g. musicians and played instruments, teachers, parents and volunteers). This is a form of music individualization – instead of identifying one's cultural origin, they identify the person's musical role. This is also a way of individualizing through the musical role in the orchestra. In both websites, they do not include other information, which reinforces the trope that one is a member or a student, regardless of their biographical experiences, whether that background is musical (e.g. professional or amateur), religious or geographical.

It is the collective character of orchestral music playing (i.e., Let's play music together is SwedishDO's website's signature, and we highlighted the collective dimension of ESGreece) which enables individualization in the new collective (i.e., becoming a legitimated member in Sweden or Greece societies), but not personalization at all levels. For example, according to what's portrayed on the websites, there does not seem to be a musical choice beyond the symphonic repertoire and the symphonic instruments available.

6.3. *Not "miserables", but in-need learners in a musical collective*

On SwedishDO's website it is stated that the students are underage refugees only, whereas in ESGreece, the orchestra is said to be for refugees, migrants, and Greeks. However, in SwedishDO, the children and young people are seldom referred to as refugees or migrants, but as "vulnerable" or "excluded". Most often they are referred to as "orchestra members". Hence, they are not represented as threats, which is another issue when representing refugees although we argue that they are, to some extent, represented as "passive" (but not victims), and in need of help.

Underage refugees and migrants are constructed as learners through textual and visual dimensions (symphonic orchestral members/instrument learners). However, it is not revealed if they had previous music knowledge, skills, or genre preferences. The

[40] L. Chouliaraki, "PostHumanitarianism: Humanitarian Communication beyond a Politics of Pity", *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13, 2 (2010): 107-126. Accessed September 10, 2021. DOI: 10.1177/1367877909356720.

involved minors are often portrayed as if, apart from the traumas of the forced migration, they were "blank pages", artistically speaking. They may choose the instrument, from those available in the symphonic orchestra, and that seems to be the only musical agency they have.

Whereas in ESGreece children are referred to as "true artists", in SwedishDO the children and young people are positioned more often as learners-only. Because in ESGreece the audience is shown (unlike in SwedishDO) it also reinforces the idea of the students as "artists", as arts need an audience, in the same way, they need a venue for concerts.

In terms of the visual choices, in SwedishDO there is recurrent imagery of children attentively and quietly listening or, at most, interacting with a teacher, positioning such a figure as the bearer of musical knowledge, and as the active element in the photographs. Passivity is also reinforced by images of the children and young people playing in an apparently quiet and effortless manner, contrasting with representations of the energetic teacher and the recurrent media representations of El Sistema's orchestras and its enthusiastic players. Nonetheless, this projection of "passiveness" is relative, as learning is an action and demands individual agency. Interpretation may be guided by the communicator but it is largely influenced by each one's perception tools and pre-conceptions.

Children and young people are also constructed as learners through visual imagery in SwedishDO, as in the photographs the audience is absent during the rehearsals, but also on stage and after the concerts. The only photographs showing the audience's presence are associated with "action" (in *Invite Us*) and information (in *Where We Rehearse*).

Children and young people are individualized in the way they are represented on the website, as the viewer is always able to watch their faces and expressions through videos and photographs. In this sense, we can say that children and young people are humanized, unlike in other media representations. At the same time, they are collectivized musically, when they appear in the orchestra photographs, without even being identified by their names – which is common in the visual representations of orchestras, and hence they are no different from other symphonic orchestras.

Concerning miserabilism, the discourse of helpless/in-need is also part of the SwedishDO history, as this orchestra was created "especially for those who needed it the most: the unaccompanied minors escaping from countries in conflict" (in *About us*). The discourse of helpless/in-need is also implicit in the website's calls to action, an action that is undertaken by the website viewers, who are people not in need (unlike the in-need music students). More specifically, the appeals to "*Support our work*", and the appeals to donate, textually position children and young people as "in need", both musically (e.g. needing instruments), and extra-musically (e.g. home, safety, medical support, job). Regarding the musical necessities, these are visually represented by violins reproducing this instrument's high symbolic capital, one that could "convince" of full legitimacy towards integration.

On both sites we have several calls to action: to donate (e.g. money, instruments), to become a member of the orchestra, to join as a volunteer, to connect via social networks and to subscribe to newsletters. Concerning the SwedishDO, another reason presented in the *Support our work* section is that in Sweden companies must have Corporate Social Responsibility, which is a legal mechanism that enables funding. This type of mechanism can be said to have a visual "post-humanitarian" appeal. According to Lilie Chouliaraki the "post-humanitarian" form of appeals addresses the morality of the "Western self" to achieve solidarity with the displaced people. Hence, if it is the

displaced people as a collective in need, it is also the West collectively that must be solidary.

6.4. *Male gendering of teachers, and the feminization of the students*

When paying attention to gender representations, we note that there is a binary gendering of staff in SwedishDO: the section *Teachers* is headed by a male figure, the artistic director, but female teachers outnumber male teachers. Also, volunteers and applicants are visually represented as female, as if the social reproduction of care[41], was also characterised by image selection. In SwedishDO female children and young people are portrayed more often with religious symbols, namely, the hijab. It is telling that one of the main page heading photographs shows six children playing their instruments and, in the middle, is a young girl with a hijab, holding a clarinet, whereas on her left side every other youngster is playing the trumpets, and on her right side, they are playing the trombones. Hence, the gender becomes distinctively associated with a religion visible by its outfit customs and that female representation of Islam becomes a symbol of "otherness" that may be integrated. In SwedishDO, not only girls show more often wearing a hijab, as those pictures are highlighted and placed as headlines. That is not the case in ESGreece, where girls are not portrayed using hijabs.

Regarding gender and phenotypes, in ESGreece we can see more pictures of girls with darker skin tones, whereas in SwedishDO the girls portrayed have lighter skin tones but are more often portrayed wearing a hijab. If, on one hand, this is a way of legitimating these music programs as multicultural spaces, on the other hand, they are also stressing cultural differences based on ethnicity, an issue that has been pointed out in previous studies[42].

7. AN ORCHESTRAL REPRESENTATION OF UNDERAGE MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES AS A PATHWAY TO *INTERCULTURATION* THROUGH ONLINE ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

The digital organisational communication of arts organisations is an overlooked topic, which we explored, due to the constitutive nature of communication in organisations. More specifically, we aimed at answering the question of how art-based education projects for underage migrants and refugees communicate. We proposed an empirical study of the web-based strategies in two specific music education projects: the Swedish Dream Orchestra (SwedishDO) and El Sistema Greece (ESGreece).

Because websites are not accessible in the native languages of refugees and migrants, only in the host country language and in English and Spanish, we might say that the websites are not fully accessible to the people to whom SwedishDO and ESGreece target their music education programs for. In the context of the labour market integration

[41] E. Kofman, "Rethinking Care through Social Reproduction: Articulating Circuits of Migration", *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 19, 1 (2012): 142-162. Accessed September 11, 2021. DOI: 10.1093/sp/jxr030.

[42] Å. Bergman, M. Lindgren, E. Sæther, "Struggling for Integration: Universalist and Separatist Discourses within El Sistema Sweden", *Music Education Research*, 18, 4 (2016): 364-375 (371). Accessed September 11, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/14613808.2016.1240765

of young refugees and asylum seekers, studies show that language is one of the biggest barriers[43]. Hence, to potentiate integration in music education projects, websites could be also made available in the mother tongues of refugees and migrants, Arabic and Persian being the most common in both cases.

If websites configure their users, given this language issue, the refugees and migrants themselves do not seem to be perceived as the main website users. Textually, the website seems to configure its users as donors: donors of time (appealing to volunteers), financial donors (appealing to funders and sponsors), and donors of expertise (appealing to music educators and professional musicians). Mostly it is the image of girls and women using their hijab and holding a violin that serves as a token to capture possible donors' attentions. More than darker skins or than young middle eastern boys holding instruments, the female presence wearing Islamic veils and playing in an orchestra serves as a strong statement based on the high symbolic characters – the peaceful girls/women; the Islamic religion being compatible with European artistic and social integration; the possibility of sharing the same orchestral space between genders; among others.

Refugees and migrants are visually represented in a broad positive manner, that contrasts with negative depictions of migrants (i.e., as victims, as miserable, as threats, as totally passive, as an even mass of people). Visually, they are represented as learning and playing music, confirming their status as engaged music students, committed orchestra members, and "true artists". The claims to integration through music are provided by these seemingly positive visual representations, and by direct quotes from orchestra members and their families. However, there is a lack of evidence to support the claims of integration in the context of the policy-making and stakeholders' pressure towards an adequate impact evaluation of arts, which can translate into funding. Given this context, the website itself might act as a proxy for that evidence.

We conclude that the websites subvert the mainstream "even image" of refugees, as well as the miserabilist approach. However, it still represents refugees as "in need", not only of non-artistic assistance (e.g. home, transportation, job, and salary) but also of musical support. Both websites have a visual and written discourse of integration possibilities based on respect in multicultural contexts, but we argue that there is a lack of intercultural and transcultural[44] approaches to communication.

What Chouliaraki[45] has conceptualized as "common humanity" is used as an emotional argument to convince all sorts of donors, but the results reveal that it mostly serves as a ground to push the migrants and refugees towards the host country's culture. The communication is mostly made in one direction, inward, with a lack of equitable exchange in terms of music instruments, genres, social codes. Demorgon's conceptualisation of *transculturality*, as what is shared between cultures at infracultural and supracultural levels[46], is only observed in the communication choices when the culture of the underage migrants and refugees is needed to enhance the possible union between differences (e.g. the hijab in the multi-gendered and cultural orchestra) or to create emo-

[43] S. Udayar *et al.*, "Labour Market Integration of Young Refugees and Asylum Seekers: A Look at Perceived Barriers and Resources*", British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 49, 2 (2021): 287-303. Accessed February 16, 2022. DOI: 10.1080/03069885.2020.1858023.

[44] Demorgon, *Complexité des cultures et de l'interculturel. Contres les pensées uniques*, Paris: Economica, 2004.

[45] L. Chouliaraki, "Post-Humanitarianism: Humanitarian Communication beyond a Politics of Pity", *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13, 2 (2010): 107-126. Accessed September 10, 2021. DOI: 10.1177/1367877909356720.

[46] Demorgon, *Complexité des cultures et de l'interculturel. Contres les pensées uniques*, 25.

tions (e.g. refugee children holding a symbolically legitimated violin and therefore legitimising themselves in the arrival culture).

In the communication of both organisations, instead of an intercultural approach, implying sharing each one's original culture with others (*interculturation*), and revealing common points (*transculturality*), children and young people are presented as the receptors of western musical knowledge. The orchestra is a musical space for modelling non-musical behaviours, namely citizenship behaviours, informed by supposedly shared national and European values (e.g. pluralism). To learn how to play a western instrument in a symphonic orchestra is symbolically equated with becoming a European citizen or, at least, it may serve as a communication tool helping the organisations as well as the individuals, to come closer to each's integration goals (e.g. financial, organisational, societal, relating to citizenship, language and independence).

Analysing the overall web-based communication choices, there is a definite lack of "engendering *interculturality*"[47], one that would result from the daily creative and equilibrated union[48] between cultures in art-based education projects, influencing the ways of teaching, learning, playing and communicating. A type of "third-culture", engendered by daily intercultural experiences, insisting on inclusion rather than solely on integration, doesn't come across in the communication of both organisations.

Nevertheless, to avoid a shallow analysis over this observation, further research is needed to tackle it, namely, to understand how and why art-based education programs working with underaged migrants and refugees might be caught in a communication posture that is more centred on acculturation than on what Demorgon names "interculturation"[49], based on a two-way inclusion effort, one that could be effective in the actions and clear in the communication.

[47] *Ibid.*, 23.
[48] Demorgon, *Critique de l'interculturel: l'horizon de la sociologie*, 149.
[49] *Ibid*., 57.

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USING COLLABORATIVE EXHIBITION-MAKING TO ENGAGE WITH THE REPRESENTATIONS OF NIGERIAN WOMEN IN PALERMO: *ILOI* AS A CASE STUDY IN THE APPLICATION OF A PARTICIPATORY 'COLLAGE METHODOLOGY'

Abstract
Contemporary representations of Nigerian women in Italy result, as is often the case with black women, in the reproduction of stereotypical images such as those of refugees. The patronising view informing research of migrant communities hinders the development of an open and engaging dialogue with them. In this article, we discuss the ways in which the participatory multimedia exhibition *Iloi* challenges dominant ways of representation through its employment of a *collage methodology*. The exhibition was co-created by a collective formed by a group of Nigerian women based in Palermo, two international art professionals and three academic researchers based in the Netherlands. Collage, a process of knitting together experiences, objects, history and futures, reflects the complexity of human interactions. Thus, this article proposes the use of a performative and interactive methodology geared towards making migration research more inclusive and reflective.

Keywords
Artistic research; Nigerian women; performative social sciences; participatory exhibition; representations.
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1. INTRODUCTION

In her treatment of the 'migrant' in research, policy and public debate Bridget Anderson poses the poignant question: "If everybody moves, when does movement become migration, whose movement counts as migration and why?"[1]. If in the social sciences the word 'migrant' mainly refers to someone who perceives themselves (or is perceived) as out of place or racially othered, in the realm of political debate the 'migrant' is a person whose movement or presence is often considered a problem[2]. Public debate

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[1] B. Anderson, "New Directions in Migration Studies: Towards Methodological De-Nationalism", *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7 (2019): 1-13 (2). Accessed on March 24, 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0140-8.

[2] *Ibid*.: 2.

around human mobility across the central Mediterranean route has long been prey to what Anderson defines as the ideologically charged lexicon of migration[3]. In the last decade, the Mediterranean's changing geopolitical landscapes have engendered a series of border-crossings labelled 'migration crisis'. As a result of this perceived humanitarian 'emergency', controversial policies have been activated across European borders. On the EU policy level, these reactive tendencies have resulted in the creation of a "funding regime" for academic and humanitarian initiatives departing from a common understanding of human movements as problematic[4].

In her treatment of Italian reception systems, Barbara Pinelli points to the ways in which the grammar of asylum protocols shapes the representational categories according to which black women on the move are understood. Border regimes are in fact "only willing to recognize refugees through preconceived ideas of salvation and as cultural, dehistorical subjects"[5]. The construction of this image of an "ideal victim" is rooted in colonial history and serves the exclusionary purposes of border policies by allowing for the rejection of subjectivities that deviate from this established norm[6]. Academic and artistic treatments of people on the move often contribute, in the case of black female subjects, to their embedment within the frame of reference of vulnerable victims worthy of asylum/salvation, not acknowledging their subjectivity. In this article, we approach humanitarian discourse through an interdisciplinary toolkit aimed at denaturalising the fixed "categories of culture, gender and women"[7]. Through tools borrowed from performative social sciences, anthropology and artistic research, we propose the idea of *collage.* As an interdisciplinary method of research, *collage* is aimed at displacing its objects of study and thus reconfiguring some of the humanitarian and disciplinary *postures* that affect migration research and policy. According to artist and researcher Kathleen Vaughan, the term "collage methodology" embraces both artistic work that engenders discussion and learning as well as a methodology within which multiple academic fields are juxtaposed with a particular attention to the position of practitioners[8]. Performative social sciences (PSS) are not new to the usage of the term *collage* in relation to qualitative research. According to Brian Roberts, the 20th century Avant Garde *collage* technique represents a valuable inspiration for current research, in that its interactive components challenge the linearity of research processes by troubling the positions occupied by respondents, audience and researchers[9]. Adopting from PSS the notion of "conducting research by exploring artistic practices" and from artistic research the idea of collage as a method, this paper hopes to make a small contribution to the effort of enlarging the boundaries of research advocated by performative approach-

[3] *Ibid*.: 3.

[4] *Ibid*.

[5] B. Pinelli, "Death and Salvation of Refugee Women on European Borders: Race, Gender and Class of Bodies of Power", *Anthropology Today*, 37 (2021): 17-20 (20). Accessed March 24, 2022. https://doi-org.tilburguniversity.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/1467-8322.12630.

[6] N. Christie, "The Ideal Victim", in *From Crime Policy to Victim Policy*, edited by E.A. Fattah, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1986: 17-30.

[7] Pinelli, "Death and Salvation of Refugee Women on European Borders: Race, Gender and Class of Bodies of Power": 18.

[8] K. Vaughan, "Pieced Together: Collage as an Artist's Method for Interdisciplinary Research", *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 4 (2005): 27-52 (40). Accessed October 10, 2021. DOI: 10.1177/160940690500400103.

[9] B. Roberts, "Performative Social Science: A Consideration of Skills, Purpose and Context", *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 9 (2008): 1-44 (4). http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0802588.

es to the field of anthropology[10]. Tackling this shared aim of PSS from an approach stemming out of the fields of anthropology, artistic research, and migration studies, this paper argues for the use of *collage* as a method of *research-creation* to reconfigure the relations between researcher and subjects in migration scholarship through participatory exhibition making practices.

During June and July 2021, the authors of this paper were involved in the creation of *Iloi*, a participatory conceptual exhibition that took place in Palermo, Italy. The aim of the exhibition, partnered by the Centro Cooperazione SUD SUD, was that of problematising fixed categories and positions of power within migration research. Guided by the principle of *collage*, we proceeded to weave together our team's different experiences in the production of an experimental ethnographic fabric. Riddled with gaps, silences and pulled threads, *Iloi* represented a "moment of undisciplined, interdisciplinary flux" that engendered valuable understandings of the ambivalence of participation in both research and exhibition making practices[11].

2. Addressing the origins of "pitiful" representations of black women

The perception of Nigerian migrant women in Europe, and in particular in Italy, is closely associated with the trafficking of human beings for sexual exploitation[12]. Such perceptions are nourished by the stereotypical images of innocent and helpless women portrayed by journalists and artists[13]. According to Pinelli, these images are engendered in order to fulfil the needs of post-WWII humanitarian protocols. Identifying women and children as "ideal sufferers" in need of salvation enables the legitimization of humanitarian exceptionalism[14]. As a result, migrant women are directed towards internalising certain values and proper behaviours in order to construct their "ethical moral selves" as worthy of assistance[15]. These victimising representations of migrants direct agency away from them by making a spectacle of their experience. Taking the term spectacle to mean, in line with Guy Debord, the process of turning lived experiences into a representation, we once again identify a well-known problem in the power relations underpinning the staging of the spectacle of migration[16]. By mediating between migrant communities and Western observers, documentary photographers, academics, and employees of the humanitarian sector become directors of the experience turned spectacle, thus reducing migrant subjects to the subordinate role of performers of their own representation according to Western imagination. Offered the lead role within the larger

[10] *Ibid*., 4.

[11] W.B. Worthen, "Disciplines of the Text: Sites of Performance", in *The Performance Studies Reader*, edited by H. Bial, London: Routledge, 2004: 10-25.

[12] A. Jedlowski, "Migration, Prostitution and the Representation of the Black Female Subject in Nigerian Video Films about Italy", *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, 4, 1 (2016): 9-23.

[13] E. O'Brien, "Ideal Victims in Trafficking Awareness Campaigns", in *Crime, Justice and Social Democracy. Critical Criminological Perspectives*, edited by K. Carrington, M. Ball, E. O'Brien , J.M.Tauri, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013: 1-12. Last accessed October 17, 2021. DOI: https://doi-org.tilburguniversity.idm.oclc.org/10.1057/9781137008695_21.

[14] M. Ticktin, *Casualties of Care*, University of California Press, 2011, 4-59.

[15] Pinelli, "Death and Salvation of Refugee Women on European Borders: Race, Gender and Class of Bodies of Power": 18.

[16] G. Debord, *La société du spectacle*, Paris: Gallimard, 1992, 10.

spectacle of migration, migrant women are staged as "icons of suffering", ahistorical and homogeneous[17].

Working at the intersection between journalism and art, documentary photography has long been contributing to the creation of such icons, understood as fixed representational categories. In relation to the specific case study of migrant Nigerian women, this paper takes the 2021 exhibition *Oriri* as a productive illustration of the relation between representational regimes and the politics of border-crossings. On June 26, 2021 the photo exhibition *Oriri* (spirits/nightmares in Bini Language, Nigeria) opened in Palermo. The project collected photographs of black Nigerian women captured from behind, from the side, or in dim light. The artistic staging of photographs incorporates migration as an object of its storytelling and provides the public with a perception of it as an experience whose character is nightmarish. As demonstrated by Pinelli's work on the gendered grammar of asylum policy, the willingness of migrant women to recount their experiences of violence is constituted as the currency requested to obtain entrance into receiving communities. Because, as observed by Fassin, "gender torment and sexual harassment receive favorable attention, arouse sympathy, raise little questioning, and, ultimately, often benefit from a positive assessment" migrant women are pushed to tailor their subjectivity to the needs and affordances or asylum applications[18]. Reproducing the images and experiences of women whose migration journey is marked by violence, *Oriri* contributes to disciplining migration according to the demands of humanitarian discourse.

According to both Chouliaraki and Boltanski, humanitarian interventions driven by the *observation* of suffering constitute the phenomenon known as "politics of pity"[19]. In this constellation, the emotional responses engendered by pity take on a political character by becoming a script that ascribes specific behavioural roles to the actors involved in the aforementioned enactment of migration as a spectacle. Building on the work of Hanna Arendt, Boltanski argues that pity produces a set of relations in which blame is directed towards perpetrators and appreciation granted to those perceived as victims[20]. This construction makes apparent two important issues of positioning: on the one hand, the fixity of categories that underpin the representational discourse surrounding migration studies, and on the other, the need for visible victims. In the context of migration discourses surrounding the issue of European border politics, we can recognise in the position of a dispenser of pity the observing western subject. The possibility of feeling pity towards another rests upon the collateral necessity of inhabiting a space different and more privileged than that occupied by the pitied. The subjectivity the West constitutes as its other, the less fortunate non-western asylum seeker, is thus actively produced by an inverted act of projection of Western European self-perception. The representational systems in which the West conceives of itself and its others are steeped in colonial heritage. Within them, Western Europe inhabits the spaces of safety, well being and security resulting in the production of an *other* that is automatically relegated to the spaces of wretchedness, violence and poverty. The idea of the *other* as a suffering subject produced by these representations, becomes, in turn, a canonical standard. The

[17] Pinelli, "Death and Salvation of Refugee Women on European Borders: Race, Gender and Class of Bodies of Power": 18.

[18] D. Fassin, "The Precarious Truth of Asylum", *Public Culture*, 25, 1, (2013): 39-63.

[19] L. Chouliaraki, "Post-Humanitarianism: Humanitarian Communication beyond a Politics of Pity", *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13, 2, (2010): 107-126.

[20] L. Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 3-15.

characterisation it produces turns into a script to be abided by all those considered as disadvantaged. Underpinning this unspoken demand are Ticktin's observations on the expectation of "true suffering" as embodied by, and limited to, purity and innocence[21]. The failure to comply with such a stereotype of the 'ideal sufferer' has both political and societal consequences[22].

A refusal to constitute themselves as hypervisible subjects, meaning transforming their private, confusing and disquieting lived experience into a spectacle of visible and understandable character, can bring migrants to be pushed back at the border[23]. This experience, according to the research on Italian reception centres carried out by Pinelli, appears to be highly coded along the lines of class, race and gender. In particular, this last marker seems to be pivotal in structuring migrants' experience of humanitarian aid: because of the parameters set out by the political construct of migrant subjectivities as beneficiaries of Western pity, women and children become ideal sufferers. Their perceived, or constructed, purity generates a legitimisation ground for humanitarian exceptionalism enacted at the border: although everyone deserves help, the scarcity of resources makes it necessary to define parameters able to produce stable categories and define *more deserving* subjects.

The result is a "humanitarian posture" according to which black women with a history of trafficking are understood as affected by a lack of proper (aka Western) conceptions of liberty and justice[24]. In assuming the lack of these moral values, humanitarian personnel justifies its attempts at disciplining them into 'deserving refugee women' and simultaneously denies their agency as subjects by failing to acknowledge the ways in which the women may already conceive of themselves.

A practical example in this respect, is Literat's study on the production of selfies by refugees. In it, the author demonstrates that this form of self-presentation on behalf of refugees engendered negative reactions among Western observers (e.g., on social media). The image of the refugee with which the users whose selfies were observed in the study failed to align, was a product of the visual canon of suffering outlined above. In Literat's investigation, observers struggled to accept the refugees' freedom to represent themselves differently than as victims[25]. In the context of black women on the move, the display of suffering in the name of public awareness constructs and nourishes their stereotypical image as victims – of sexual exploitation, of their 'outdated belief systems', or of their migration journey[26]. When failing to portray themselves in accordance with these images of the innocent, the hurt and the feminine, they are denied entrance in what Benedict Anderson would identify as the receiving country's *imagined community*[27].

Thus, successful integration of migrant women in their receiving polities is often conditional upon their willingness to accept Western misrepresentations of themselves as perpetual victims. This acceptance entails the wavering of what Éduard Glissant de-

[21] M. Ticktin, "A World without Innocence", *American Ethnologist*, 44, 4 (2017): 577-590. DOI: 10.1111/amet.12558.

[22] Christie, "The Ideal Victim": 17-30.

[23] Pinelli, "Death and Salvation of Refugee Women on European Borders: Race, Gender and Class of Bodies of Power": 18.

[24] *Ibid*.

[25] I. Literat, "Refugee Selfies and the (Self)Representation of Disenfranchised Social Groups", *Media Fields Journal*, 12 (2017): 1-9.

[26] L.P. Beutin, "Black Suffering for/from Anti-Trafficking Advocacy", *Anti-Trafficking Review*, 9 (2017): 14-30.

[27] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, New York: Verso Books, 2006, 6.

scribes as a fundamental human right: the right to opacity[28]. The idea of a right to opacity stands for that right to not be transparent, apprehensible and clearly categorizable by the gaze of another. At the intersection of border politics and the migration spectacle, the right to opacity comes to define the rarely respected right to not expose one's personal experience of violence in order to obtain humanitarian assistance. The representational economy that constitutes migrant black women as pitiful subjects is thus produced by a cyclical movement across three distinct poles: academic discourse in migration studies, artistic treatments mediating public discourse and ultimately, asylum guidelines shaping international protocols. The pitiful representation of black migrant women produced by this cycle indirectly obstructs the path towards integration. Refusing the imperative to identify and behave as 'good victims', those who demand the freedom of representing themselves as attractive, independent, strong women are denied assistance and excluded from the repository of hypervisible subjects interrogated in the making of new policies that structure future humanitarian aid. As a result of this imperative to "become 'other' to belong", those who own the freedom to represent themselves are pushed to the fringes of local societies[29]. Consciously or unconsciously, academic researchers partake in the construction of victimising images reflecting these *politics of pity*. Having good intentions, we often assume that traumatic experiences should be studied and that they should be studied *by us*[30].

3. Displacing objects: towards the practice of collage methodology

Because of its aims and the commitments entailed by its funding, migration research often culminates in directing agency away from the very communities it wishes to help[31]. Developing this critique a step further, Stierl dwells on the increasing intimacy between migration policy and migration studies scholarship. The demand for new solutions to the perceived problems caused by migration across European borders becomes a reason to fund the work of scholars working in migration studies. This causal relationship, however, often produces a 'harmful' cycle of knowledge production[32]. As cleverly explained by Garelli and Tazzoli, the harm done by migration research can be identified in its *disciplinary posture* by which, as scholars, "instead of making the discipline of migration studies we are disciplining the field"[33]. In this optic, the demands of migration scholarship and policy come to shape the field they should instead be *informed by*. The possibility for research to become the source of harm is thus actualised as a reality: it is research that directs its object to shape itself so as to fall into a specific, already fixed, representational category. Following Stierl, in order to remain valuable, studies surrounding migration must depart from an ethical consideration of their impact and understand the possibility of doing harm as a rarely avoidable reality[34].

[28] E. Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation*, Paris: Gallimard, 1990, 209.

[29] S. Hall, "Un-Settling 'the Heritage', Re-Imagining the Post-Nation: Whose Heritage?", *Third Text*, 13 (1999): 3-13 (13). Accessed October 22, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/09528829908576818.

[30] H. Cabot, "The Business of Anthropology and the European Refugee Regime", *American Ethnologist*, 46, 3 (2019): 261-275.

[31] *Ibid.*, 275.

[32] M. Stierl, "Do No Harm? The Impact of Policy on Migration Scholarship", *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 2020: 1-2.

[33] G. Garelli, M. Tazzioli, "Challenging the Discipline of Migration: Militant Research in Migration Studies, an Introduction", *Postcolonial Studies*, 16, 3 (2013): 245-249. DOI: 10.1080/13688790.2013.850041.

[34] Stierl, "Do No Harm? The Impact of Policy on Migration Scholarship", 16.

Keeping this in mind, we began to engage in a dialogue with the community from a careful consideration of our position as researchers-artists. Making efforts to acknowledge the inequalities inherent to our positions and attempting to co-produce knowledge rather than extract it, became important guidelines in the creation of the *Iloi* as a participatory exhibition. The making of *Iloi* therefore stemmed from the need to devise a method of research able to remain vigilant and reflexive, questioning the field of anthropology and the anthropologist's position with it. Finding important inspiration in the methods of the performative social sciences (PSS), the doctoral research that had formed *Iloi*'s back bone began to move towards the field of artistic research with the writing of a project for a participatory exhibition. The idea of organising an exhibition and therefore treating the research as an event came from the wish to develop a relationship between *Iloi*'s various participants whose character could be performative and fluid[35]. From the very beginning of *Iloi,* participatory exhibition making was thus conscripted in the hope of "engaging reflexivity" through a method underpinned by artistic, ethnographic and performative practices[36]. Bringing participants on board, we hoped, could become a way to change the previously scripted dynamics of interaction between the community and Shaidrova as occupying, respectively, the positions of objects of study and artist-researcher. The practical make-up of this 'bringing on board', however, would only attain a clear meaning *in making*. The basic underpinnings of organising an event together with the participants entailed in fact a long period of negotiations surrounding *Iloi'*s character: the idea of an exhibition was initially received without enthusiasm, or interest. What Shaidrova had proposed to the respondents was to work together on the making of an exhibition within which both participants and researcher could talk, on their own terms, about their experience of each other. However, it remained unclear whether the participants had any real interest in this project. Because the power relations that had structured their communication until then were rigidly underpinned by the *disciplinary posture* of ethnographic research, Shaidrova felt unable to understand whether the participants were agreeing out of a real wish to participate, or if their assent was a way to comply with a perceived obligation voiced by her request. This ambivalence of purpose, which we began to identify as a fundamental ambivalence of participation, meant that we began to question, as a team, the purpose of our endeavour. What, and *who,* was *Iloi* for? As questions like this hung above the construction of the physical grounds of the exhibition, we noticed that the participants' position had undergone change. The preparation of the exhibition naturally began to incorporate the preparation of an opening event. In seeing this and being consulted about ideas and wishes for the opening event, the participants started to engage differently with the curatorial team: they became more outspoken and present on the grounds of the exhibition. This changing of hearts brought us to realise that up until that moment our communication with the participants around the performative element of the exhibition had taken place within the wrong frame of reference. The cadre of 'exhibition' as a commonly understood Western event meant little to nothing for the participants. However, once it became clear that the exhibition would also entail a party, the interest for the party, its organisation and possible components completely obscured all other topics of engagement.

In witnessing the change of dynamics realised by the participant's interest in the party and its organisation we were faced by some important theoretical questions. How

[35] R. Gillian, "On the Relation between 'Visual Research Methods' and Contemporary Visual Culture", *The Sociological Review*, 62, 1 (2014): 24-46.

[36] Cabot, "The Business of Anthropology and the European Refugee regime": 275.

to account for the simultaneous relevance of these two frames of reference? The ambivalence of participation became, in this sense, a lense through which *Iloi* may be understood as a process of *research-creation*: an approach to collaborative exhibition making aimed at incorporating different modes of knowing and knowledge systems within a construction that embraces ambivalence[37]. Although fights seemed to erupt on a daily basis, both among the participants and within the curatorial team, things also managed to fall back together, albeit in varying degrees of dissonance. The question of food for example (what food should be served during the exhibition, by whom it should be prepared, how, when, and in which culinary tradition) was a major point of conflict a few days before the exhibition's opening. Our first discussion of food became in fact a serious problem. This element, which the curatorial team had barely considered, emerged as having utmost importance according to the Nigerian collaborators of *Iloi.* It became clear that without food, there could be no 'party' worthy of this name. In discussing the practical implementation of catering with the participants, a multitude of relations started to come undone which had hitherto remained hidden within the larger dynamics of *Iloi* as a group. Shattering our naive ideas of collaborative exhibition making, the power relations entailed by traditional party preparations within Palermo's Nigerian community restructured *Iloi*'s group dynamics. It became clear that albeit presenting as a united front in their collaboration with the curatorial team, the participants' experience of making *Iloi* as a 'collaborative' process had been very different. The preparation of food entailed a specific position within the participants' understanding of 'party' as a celebration and a performance of status and power. This condition, of which the curatorial team had remained unaware until that moment, forced us to change the way in which we perceived ourselves and the participants performing the roles of collaborators in *Iloi.* Although collaborating with each other, the process of exhibition making had obviously entailed a degree of power imbalance: there was discontent. Some participants felt hurt, others, annoyed. Playing out with the larger scheme of relations identified by Tony Bennet's in his treatment of "the exhibitionary complex", the imbalances of power highlighted by the dispute over food had been an integral part of *Iloi* as a participatory process[38]. In acknowledging them and tending to what could be resolved, we also understood that some conflicts may not attain resolution. Collaboration is a very human process. Conflict, as one of the major drivers of human relations, is a prerequisite of agency: without conflict, it is impossible to have our opinion be heard in a condition of dissonance.

What had caused the issue of food to attain such importance within the making of *Iloi* was the impossibility to truly translate each other's attachments to specific word/concepts: 'exhibition' and 'party'. This conflict of meaning could not be resolved: attempting to do so would have only denatured the terms in the hope of some form of compromise. Different experiences of *Iloi* ended up simply layering on top of each other. Being simultaneously understood according to multiple systems of reference, the different experiences of *Iloi* came together in a mode akin to *collage.* According to Roberts, *collage* is an attractive method for PSS practices because it challenges the boundaries of research by troubling the traditional positions of researcher, participants and audience[39]. The linearity of relations prescribed by research through its immanent power structure, in which knowledge is extracted from the participants' lived experi-

[37] *Ibid*.: 32.
[38] T. Bennet, *The Documenta 14 Reader*, Munich: Prestel, 356.
[39] Roberts, "Performative Social Science: A Consideration of Skills, Purpose and Context", 3.

ence and subsequently mediated, in a process beyond their immediate influence, by the researcher, is fundamentally altered in *collage.* Within this method for interdisciplinary research, the 'performative' element is inherent to the relations it produces: the researcher performs themselves and their position differently, which in turn produces a difference of engagement with participants. In the interdisciplinary constellation that *collage* represents as a PSS method, each discipline provides a different set of tools and none of them is prevalent: rather, each tool and theoretical lense set allows itself to be overshadowed on one side, only to take up more space later.

Understanding the extent to which we had been 'doing harm' in *Iloi* meant acknowledging the ways in which our positions of power within the exhibitionary complex had resulted in the taking up of a specific *disciplinary posture.* As described by Garelli and Tazzoli, the curatorial position of power which we occupied had brought us to "discipline" the field of our research: in realising we had tainted our own ideals surrounding the process of participatory exhibition making, we were faced by the imperative of embracing a different conception of the latter. Having constantly witnessed varying degrees of ambivalence in our relations with participants and each other, we began to understand participation as an inherently ambivalent endeavour. Respecting the different subjectivities and experiences coalescing into *Iloi* as an exhibition making process thus required us to become comfortable with the practice of embracing ambivalence. Relinquishing the idea that we could engage in any participatory process while 'doing no harm', we began looking for a different method to understand our position as researchers and collaborators. It had become clear, during the process of making *Iloi,* that what was really valuable among the many things being produced under the exhibition's scope, was in fact the mode of producing them. The act of coming together – be it in dialogue, silence, conflict or agreement, attested to a willingness to be *there.* Precisely in virtue of their ambivalence, the dynamics engendered by participation ensured that *Iloi*'s creation process remained in a state of constant reconfiguration, thus becoming itself the subject of research.

4. *ILOI*: THE ROLE OF COLLAGE IN RESEARCH-CREATION

With her usage of the term *research-creation*, which represents one of her most fundamental contributions to the fields of artistic research and contemporary social art practice, Stephanie Springgay refers to events "that are both sites to problematize research and a means to work with different publics around the knowledge flowing through the research event"[40]. Recognising in *Iloi'*s outcomes and modalities the character of a research event in line with Springgay's definition of *research-creation*, we began to lean on the scholarship provided by the fields of performative social sciences (PSS) and artistic research to expand the boundaries of anthropological research that had previously underpinned the exhibition's inception. Finding interesting precedents in Pinelli's work on "the ways the images of these women [black refugee women in Sicily] stifles a recognition of their political subjectivity" we wondered how the context of an exhibition space constructed through participatory methods could problematise our own research into the representational categories assigned to black refugee women. Hoping to engen-

[40] S. Springgay, "On the Need for Methods beyond Proceduralism: Speculative Middles, (In) Tensions, and Response-Ability in Research", *Qualitative Inquiry*, 24, 3 (2018): 203-214 (212). https://1d0o.i.1o1rg7/71/01.101778/10074718070740147476044 64.

der direct and indirect collaborative processes, we thus set out to create *Iloi* as a physical space and a research event aimed at the self-reflective production of knowledge *on* and *of* itself.

With respects to what concerns the element of 'the performative' in interdisciplinary *research-creation* processes, the search for conceptual tools that problematize the different angles entailed by ethnographic research has a long genealogy. According to Roberts, this 'performative turn' in which performance and its study come to supply to PSS the majority of its tools, should be considered as dating back to Burke's treatment, in the 1940s and 50s, of the element of drama in social relations[41]. In our borrowing from PSS to construct a methodological framework able to aid our understanding of *Iloi* as an event of *research-creation,* we privileged the interdisciplinary application of the technique of *collage* which Roberts considers as a tool to challenge "the linearity of the research" and its dissemination processes[42]. In stretching this consideration of *collage* from a simple tool for PSS research to the funding frame of our entire methodology, we hoped to produce a methodological framework within which displaced objects (meaning different methods of looking, positioning and creating) are taken as equally valuable sources of knowledge. This initial displacement, which layers theoretical tools of different academic origins, embraces tension as immanent to the methods of anthropological research. Born in 1912 as an innovative artistic practice, the notion of *collage* began to be scholarly appreciated, after 1989, as a "knowledge practice" of revolutionary value[43]. In its various applications as a method of research in the fields of artistic research and performative social sciences, *collage* still maintains some direct ties with its original practice as an artform: within the frame of *collage,* objects are displaced with the precise aim of creating a feeling of "strangeness", which is in turn responsible for generating reflection in the audience[44]. When applied to academic knowledge, *collage* comes to stand for a methodology that "deliberately incorporates non dominant modes of knowing and knowledge systems" while embracing its inherent inability of translating from one system to another[45]. An interesting example of the interdisciplinary value of *collage* as a research method is Monica Kostera's work in the field of organisational studies. Applying the method of *collage* to storytelling techniques in the field of management, Kostera enriches the PSS understanding of this methodological tool by showing how performances are constantly evolving: in her work 'the story' emerges as a "living performative" – a constantly evolving event in the process of becoming[46].

In line with this understanding, we thus refer to *Iloi* as an artistic 'event' in the hope that this term may simultaneously account for both its process of creation, as well as the context of its display[47]. Composed of nine works of conceptual art and an evening of live performance, the exhibition was created over a period of one year. The works, some of which were co-created *in situ* through participatory practices, while others were otherwise produced by the artists/participants of *Iloi'*s collective, thus represented an instance of collaborative *research-creation.*

The extent of the collaborative character that produced the works constituting *Iloi* was different in the case of each work. An example of varying degree in which col-

[41] Roberts, "Performative Social Science: A Consideration of Skills, Purpose and Context", 5.
[42] *Ibid.,* 4.
[43] Vaughan, "Pieced Together", 31.
[44] *Ibid*.
[45] *Ibid*., 32.
[46] M. Kostera,"The Narrative Collage as Research method", *Storytelling, Self, Society*, 2, 2 (2006): 22.
[47] Gillian. "On the Relation between 'Visual Research Methods' and Contemporary Visual Culture", 25.

laboration took place in the context of the actual creation of artworks is the process that brought to the mixed technique collage titled *Follow me.* This work, which had stemmed from an idea of Shaidrova and on which the artist/researcher had begun to work by herself, became a collaborative piece right before being moved into the exhibition's spaces. Reflecting on questions surrounding migratory movements and experiences of migration connected to sea faring, Shaidrova produced the image of a boat in mixed technique and glued it to a white canvas. Her initial idea was to step on the canvas with her footprints, an action in which she asked the participants to join her. Considering this request, the participants decided not to join Shaidrova's initial idea of placing their footsteps as walking away from the boat. Instead, they welcomed the empty space that had been left on the canvas and proceeded to handwrite their favourite motivational quotes on it. For example:

> *Keep walking, don't look at your feet, don't look back, just walk.*

Instead of complying with Shaidrova's request to place their feet on the canvas as if walking away from a boat, the participants altered the canvas according to their own wishes, a moment that became pivotal in our coming to understand *Iloi* as a process of *research-creation.* Through their artistic contribution to the exhibition, the participants had enriched the knowledge of migration experiences *Iloi* yielded, while still maintaining a strong subjectivity and protecting their right to opacity. The spectacle of migration journeys across the Mediterranean sea route often relies upon a specific script according to which the harshness of the journey puts moving subjects in peril. In this staging of the migration experience of refugees landing on Sicilian soil, the descent from the boat takes up a mythic character of salvation. In choosing to not dwell on these memories, or making the experience of their journey to Sicily a relevant part of their preferred storytelling, the participants demonstrated the importance of choosing what about themselves should be communicated within *Iloi*, how and *by whom*. Through the process of their coming into being and the fluxus of knowledge engendered by their display, the artworks thus became an integral part of the research process that had brought Shaidrova to turn her migration studies doctoral research into an exhibition. The eight Nigerian women who joined *Iloi*'s collective, not all of them wishing us to disclose their names, did so in the roles of participants and colleagues. Albeit more fluid than the rigid positions of respondents they occupied in Shaidrova's PhD research, the roles of the women within *Iloi'*s exhibitionary complex continued to be problematic. The hierarchy of power inherent to exhibitionary complexes remained in fact a powerful element in the making of *Iloi,* engendering miscommunications on a vast scale. The authority embodied by the curatorial team remained, despite the participatory character of the exhibition making process, a clear limitation to the interaction between *Iloi'*s members. Being accustomed to performing a certain image of themselves for the benefit of the scholars and humanitarian personnel that had directed them towards Iloi, the participants struggled to trust the curatorial team. Despite seeming to have understood that *Iloi* did not demand them to perform a subjectivity in line with the pitiful repertoire of black female refugee subjects, some participants still seemed to maintain, up until the very day of *Iloi*'s opening, a logical degree of mistrust towards the curatorial team's plan – as we argued above in our treatment of the humanitarian and disciplinary postures, this condition was likely to be funded in their experiences of Italy's reception apparatus. An example of this being the case of a participant who had been thoroughly involved in the performance's making: they designed their own performance clothes, went to several fitting appointments,

showed up to the opening night adorned in traditional Bini beads, and yet, at the very last minute, expressed a wish not to take part in the choreography they had been rehearsing with the others. Surprisingly, after witnessing the others perform, the same participant walked up to the curatorial team and asked to have the DJ play one more song, so that they may also exhibit their dance choreography. It is obviously impossible for us to make any conclusion as to whether the participant's decision to perform was motivated by a resolution of their mistrust towards us as collaborators, or simply by a wish to celebrate the moment together with the others. Since the present survey of *Iloi* is limited to the preparation that lead to the exhibition event and the period during which *Iloi* was open to the public, we cannot make informed guesses about the participants' reflections on this experience. All we know about the way they conceived of their participation was what they told us in conversation, or shared with the public of *Iloi* during their speeches on opening night. As a result, this article may not be read as an accurate transcript of all the different experiences that resulted in *Iloi'*s ethnographic fabric, nor would it wish to attain such an aim. Rather, we believe that the value of this work should be found in its survey of *Iloi* as an event that employed the practical application of *collage* as a method for *research-creation.*

5. CONCLUSION

In this article, we discussed the significance of weaving together theoretical tools borrowed from the disciplines of artistic research, ethnography and performative social sciences into an interdisciplinary framework we refer to as *collage methodology*. Through the analysis outlined above, we presented *Iloi* as a process of *research-creation* through which participatory exhibition practice meets ethnographic and artistic research in the creation of an event of methodological significance. Our article began with a chapter surveying the representational challenges faced by black migrant women in the context of migration research and political discourse. Outlining the ways in which migrant women are requested to perform the roles of victims and suffering subjects, we introduced the dimension of border policy and asylum protocols into our problematising of the representational regime according to which the spectacle of migration is constructed. We then continued by outlining the ways in which such challenges are reconducible to the idea of a *politics of pity,* with a particular focus on how this produced black refugee women as pitiful subjects. This paragraph resulted in an examination of the ways in which academic research in the field of migration studies reflects this attitude and directly contributes to harming the communities it prefixes itself to help by reinforcing these images of ideal suffering. Problematising such a state of affairs and the ways in which migration scholarship disciplines the field and engenders a state of hypervisibility, we built our argument for the necessity of participatory exhibition making practices on the basis of Glissant's call for everyone's right to opacity and self-expression. Surveying different examples of research on the (self-)representation of migrant subjectivities, we demonstrated that retaining the right to ambivalence represents an important stake in the maintenance of agency over one's self-representation.

Building extensively on the work of Barbara Pinelli, the article analysed *Iloi*'s method for *research-creation* according to its ability to denaturalise what Pinelli identifies as the main fixed categories underpinning the representational regime of migration: race, class and gender. Taking as a guiding principle the idea of prefixed postures identified by Pinelli and Garelli and Tazzioli, who describe, respectively, a humanitarian

and disciplinary posture, we proceeded to reflect upon the practical process of making *Iloi.* Our analysis of the exhibition making process highlighted the ways in which the ambivalence of participation that characterised *Iloi* helped in bringing to the fore issues relating to self-performativity and representational agency[48]. Through a method of *research-creation* funded upon the use of *collage* as a tool for PSS practice, we observed a significant degree of interactivity in the power relations inherent to the exhibitionary complex and researcher/respondent relations. The expansion of *collage* from a tool of artistic research and performative social sciences to the funding element of an interdisciplinary methodology engendered acts of border crossing in the context of *Iloi*'s academic and artistic practice. Working towards this goal, our efforts in creating *Iloi*'s physical display were thus geared towards designing a space where stories could collect, circulate and contaminate one another. The extent to which this aim could be realised and with what outcomes was the object of our project of *research-creation.*

Creating and displaying *Iloi* as a participatory collaborative exhibition was a process characterised, for better and for worse, by a state of fluidity. As reminded us by performance studies scholar Diana Taylor, "Humans do not simply adapt to systems. They shape them"[49]. It is precisely in this subversive manifestation of humanity, conceived as the ability of crossing and redefining boundaries, that the authors of this article locate the biggest treasure of the event constituted by *Iloi*. We thus believe our research to have made a convincing argument for the need of epistemologies that simultaneously value the layered knowledge production yielded by multiple systems of meaning-making. In the midst of an ever changing flux of power dynamics, role playing and interpersonal exchange, *Iloi* testified to the value of all that which in research remains unscripted, untranslatable and unfinished[50].

[48] Garelli, Tazzioli, "Challenging the Discipline of Migration: Militant Research in Migration Studies, an Introduction": 224.

[49] *Ibid*.: 7.

[50] *Ibid*.: XVIII.

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FICTIONAL REFUGEE CARTOGRAPHIES: A REAPPRAISAL OF CARTOGRAPHIES BEYOND TRUTHFUL REPRODUCTIONS OF LANDSCAPE

Abstract
This article attempts to simultaneously connect fiction, emotions, and (im)mobility in migration maps. It presents the works of three cartographers that conceive fictional maps to engage with emotion and subjectivity in the narration of refugee stories. Inspired by non-representational theory, the article reflects on how such fictional maps question the ontological foundations of cartography. The study supports that the case studies challenge three different dimensions of such ontological basis. The map in *Im Land der Frühaufsteher* problematizes an understanding of cartography as a reproduction that merely attempts to mirror natural realities. The second, *Crossing Maps*, exemplify a processual understanding of cartography: a means to co-create relationships and human bounds, going beyond the idea of the map as an artifact that has to deliver spatial information. The third, *Constellations,* shows how cartographies can be considered as objects having no inborn ontological security and that are, on the contrary, constantly recognized and reappraised in a contingent interaction between creators and users.

Keywords
Non-representational cartography; fiction; emotions.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Maps have long been considered as systematic, objective depictions of space, therefore having little or no relation to the realm of emotions. They have been frequently associated with scientific objectivity and considered "natural" endeavors to represent geographical landscapes, usually responding to practical necessities[1] Over the last three decades, though, the epistemological assumption of cartography as an objective form of knowledge has been substantially challenged by a consistent body of literature stress-

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[1] J. Cristofol, A. Guilló, "Alternative Cartographies", *antiAtlas Journal*, 1 (2016).

ing maps' character of products – and reproductions – of power relations[2]. Drawing on these premises, researchers have later supported an understanding of maps as productive – and not just representative – of realities[3]. Others have gone even further and, with post-representational cartography, have performed a thorough rethinking of maps' nature, criticizing their ontological security by stressing their processual character of "contingent, relational, and context-dependent" unfolding practices[4].

Formulating mapping as a processual – more than representational – practice troubles traditional understandings of maps, not just by countering their power laden spatial representation, but by resisting their ontological premises of objective, professional, product-oriented exercises. In this spirit, this article attempts to exemplify such a broad understanding of mapping, opening the landscape of cartography to embrace a wide-ranging array of spatial practices: performative, participatory, imagined maps that powerfully transcend the mere physical reproduction of spatial representation. Beyond some notable exceptions[5], theoretical critiques to traditional ontological conceptions of maps have often refrained from proposing illustrative examples of such analysis. Aware of this, we attempt to relate the theory to the discussion of three cases of cartographic production that trouble the traditional "ontological status" of maps as natural reproduction of geographical landscapes.

This article attempts a simultaneous connection between fiction, emotions, and migration in maps. Such a connection is prompted by understanding a becoming, unfolding nature of maps, as contingent practices that come into being every time producers and readers engage with them[6]. In this light, maps are perfectly suited to encourage a narrative process that can help to reveal intangible elements such as imaginaries, emotional, affectual, and memorial trajectories[7]. Mapping, considering these premises, emerges as a compelling practice that can give expressive life to questions such as (non-) belonging and the sense of home that are crucial issues in the scholarship of refugee studies[8].

2. IMAGINED MOBILITIES IN REFUGEE CARTOGRAPHY

This article welcomes the call for a new mobility paradigm. It does so primarily by focusing its attention on the migratory paths of refugees, illegal migrants, and asylum seekers. It recognizes such figures as key subjects to understand affordances, restrictions, and limitations of contemporary global scale movements of people. Their elaborate journeys often connect peripheries with global cities, using different modes of

[2] J.B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map", in *Classics in Cartography*, edited by M. Dodge, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2011: 271-294; M.S. Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

[3] J. Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping, and the Geo-Coded World*, New York: Routledge, 2004.

[4] R. Kitchin, M. Dodge, "Rethinking Maps", *Progress in Human Geography*, 31, 3 (2007): 331.

[5] G. Peterle, "Carto-Fiction: Narrativising Maps through Creative Writing", *Social & Cultural Geography,* 20, 8 (2019): 1070-1093; M. Tazzioli, "Which Europe. Migrants' Uneven Geographies and Counter-Mapping at the Limits of Representation", *Movements*, 20, 1 (2015).

[6] Peterle, "Carto-Fiction: Narrativising Maps through Creative Writing": 1070-1093.

[7] S. Caquard, W. Cartwright, "Narrative Cartography: From Mapping Stories to the Narrative of Maps and Mapping", *The Cartographic Journal,* 51, 2 (2014): 101-106.

[8] D. Alinejad, D. Olivieri, "Affect, Emotions, and Feelings", in *The SAGE Handbook of Media and Migration*, edited by K. Smets *et al*., London: SAGE Publications, 2020: 64-73.

transport, with significant repercussions on their personal security[9]. Such movements involve moments of intense mobility and periods of restriction, detention, and severe immobility, suffering personal relations of exploitative character. Interestingly for the present paper, Urry's conceptualization of mobilities goes beyond a merely corporeal travel to include imaginative movements: journeys performed "through the images of places and peoples"[10]; such mobilities happen across multiple print and visual media and are, as such, examinable through different methods, including the investigation of texts.

With such premises, the article navigates the productive domain of refugee cartography, a sphere of mapping that has long been a symbolic battlefield between conventional and counter-cartographies. Since the so-called "2015 EU migration crisis", possibly as a consequence of the intense and unprecedented mediation of the phenomena, the domain has witnessed the emergence of a "slowly growing collection of brave and inspiring attempts to come up with different cartographic visualizations"[11]. New cartographers attempt to challenge the hegemonic production of maps that often *dehumanize* individuals by framing migrants and refugees as *problems*, migration as a *crisis*, or crossing borders as *a transnational crime*[12]. Map makers strived to resist such framings, creating maps that cast light on migrants' and refugees' personal perspectives while underlining enduring patterns of global injustice. In such a creative environment, some producers move beyond mere representational resistance to perform an essential ontological objection to traditional cartographies, a phenomenon that this article tries to chart and capture.

It is thus worthwhile to consider the symbolic and aesthetic aspects of mapping alongside and in conjunction with their political dimensions. In doing so, we follow Leurs et al.'s suggestion to study both "the politics and poetics" of refugee maps[13]. Proceeding on two parallel analytical levels, in this article we reflect both on aesthetic and creative aspects of emerging refugee cartography (poetics) as well as on symbolic representations and how it relates to power relations, institutions, and migration policies (politics). While the latter is well ingrained in the discursive investigation of maps in a context of power relations in the spirit of critical cartography, with the former we intend to go beyond investigating maps as mere representations of a physical world (*mimesis*), and – borrowing De Certeau's reflection on *poiesis* – to explore their potential to generate new realities[14]. Such an understanding resonates well with our aim to investigate mobile subjects frequently confronted with forced immobility: individuals that have to shift their aspirational mobility to an imaginative, creative dimension.

On this, Perkins has illustrated the profound dichotomy historically dividing the critical approach that problematizes the mapping process and its power-laden nature, and research that investigates cartography works as a form of applied knowledge[15]. While avoiding ostentatious statements of reconciliation of profoundly distinct strands, this article draws great inspiration from van Houtum and Bueno Lacy's work on Fron-

[9] J. Urry, "Mobilities and Social Theory", in *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, edited by B.S. Turner, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009: 477-495.

[10] J. Urry, *Mobilities*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007: 47.

[11] H. van Houtum, R. Bueno Lacy, "The Migration Map Trap. On the Invasion Arrows in the Cartography of Migration", *Mobilities*, 15, 2 (2020): 209.

[12] R. Risam, "Beyond the Migrant 'Problem': Visualizing Global Migration", *Television & New Media,* 20, 6 (2019): 566-580.

[13] K. Leurs, I. Agirreazkuenaga, K. Smets, M. Mevsimler, "The Politics and Poetics of Migrant Narratives", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23, 5 (2020): 679-697.

[14] M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013: 15.

[15] C. Perkins, "Cartography: Mapping Theory", *Progress in Human Geography*, 27, 3 (2003): 341-351.

tex's "migration map trap"[16]. In a critical spirit, the two authors recognize how map production is often controlled, governed, and systematized, respecting a hierarchical order of appearance that is ubiquitous in the media sphere[17]. At the same time, later in the text, they provide an outlook of alternative, creative cartographic efforts to deviate from the hegemonic iconography, giving extensive descriptions of their visualization and narrative strategies.

Inspired by van Houtum and Bueno Lacy's invitation to cast light on such creative attempts, we aim to investigate how refugee cartography evolves beyond the mere geolocation of migration flows, seizing maps' possibilities to decipher and tell stories, and engage with the emotional dimension of such spatial narrations[18]. The present study explores fictional maps as a means to engage the emotional dimension of spatial experiences[19]. It includes maps that, despite being distributed in different media formats – performative art pieces, comic book tables, silkscreen prints – all conceive fictional maps to engage with emotion and subjectivity in the narration of refugee stories. Proposing an in-depth study of three such projects – *Constellations, Crossing Maps,* and *Im Land der Frühaufsteher* – we investigate fictional maps from a multimodal perspective (studying the interplay between text, images, composition, and colors in the communicative effort), from a narratological perspective (investigating the combination of factual and fictional storyworlds), and, lastly, we reflect on their ontological critique of cartography solely conceived as a truthful reproduction of landscape.

3. THE SPATIAL EMOTIONAL TURN

Our exploration of fictional cartographies is firstly rooted in what can be called a spatial-emotional turn in social and cultural studies. Broadly speaking, this turn can be seen as a move away from the traditional understanding of emotions and space as non-cultural or non-social phenomena. Quite on the contrary, this turn emphasizes the interactions between emotions and space: both elements considered as productive factors of cultural and social relations.

In classical social and cultural theory, the role of emotions has long remained underexplored[20]. This historical omission possibly has to do with a dichotomous conception of emotion versus rationality: a hierarchical division based on the primacy of reason over "the crudeness of senses"[21]. This celebration of rationality over emotions is well present in Kantian universalism, a philosophical tradition that conceived a neat hierarchical separation between the two. According to this view, emotions are constructed "as irrelevant to judgment and justice, but also as unreasonable, and as an obstacle to good judgment"[22]. In sociology, the full commitment to rationality – and the early demise of emotional factors among others – inspired functionalist migration theories that have

[16] van Houtum, Bueno Lacy, *The Migration Map Trap.*

[17] M. Georgiou, "Does the Subaltern Speak? Migrant Voices in Digital Europe", *Popular Communication*, 16, 1 (2018): 45-57.

[18] S. Caquard, W. Cartwright, "Narrative Cartography: From Mapping Stories to the Narrative of Maps and Mapping", *The Cartographic Journal*, 51, 2 (2014): 101.

[19] Peterle, *Carto-Fiction*: 1073.

[20] A. Reckwitz, "Affective Spaces: A Praxeological Outlook", *Rethinking History*, 16, 2 (2012): 241-258.

[21] K. Wahl-Jorgensen, *Emotions, Media and Politics*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019, 23.

[22] S. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019, 546.

long represented the mainstream lens to study mobility. In particular, push-pull models explain human movements starting from the assumption that people are utterly *rational* decision makers and motivate their journey with the aim to optimize income and utility[23]. Against such reasonings, the approach rooted in the autonomy of migration has proficiently questioned "the individualized subject laboriously calculating the cost-benefit ratio of his/her trip and then starting an itinerary with fixed points of departure and arrival"[24].

Problematizing the essentialist division between emotions and rational political processes, an emerging body of literature recognizes how this separation is often a symptom of a "culturally specific and ideologically laden" western epistemology[25]. The emergence of an interdisciplinary emotional turn thus gradually inverts the trend, with plenty of researchers exploring emotions, affects, and feelings as promising niches of research[26]. Emotions are increasingly recognized as crucial in shaping social and political realities. Scholars note their pivotal role "in the way we make sense of ourselves and the collectivities and communities we inhabit"[27] and how emotions can animate active participation in politics, being a generative force in the conception of social alliances[28].

Another necessary building block for our current discussion is the so-called spatial turn in social sciences, which has led scholars to pay more attention to questions of physical, virtual, and symbolic space and place in relation to social reality. Social sciences have, for a long time, favored time over space as their epistemological compass to study social processes[29]. From the 1980s, though, the spatial dimension of analysis has started exceeding its traditional domains of application, namely geography, architecture, and planning, progressively finding relevance in fields such as sociology, philosophy, history, or literary criticism[30]. Advancing this turn in media and migration, Salovaara-Moring investigated how the spatial trope "Fortress Europe" has been instrumental in the diffusion of a dichotomous conception of foreigners as *others*[31] Such a metaphorical construction of a spatial border provides a defined distinction between *us* and *them*, showing how media discourses can display originative agency in propagating and mainstreaming specific political-economical conceptions of space.

While stemming from different scholarly debates, the emotional and spatial turns have been brought into a fruitful dialogue. Thrift – despite not distinguishing between emotions and affects[32] – supports a spatial politics of affects, encouraging research to

[23] H. De Haas, "A Theory of Migration: The Aspirations-Capabilities Framework", *Comparative Migration Studies*, 9, 1 (2021): 8.

[24] D. Papadopoulos, V. Tsianos, "The Autonomy of Migration: The Animals of Undocumented Mobility," in *Deleuzian Encounters: Studies in Contemporary Social Issues*, edited by A. Hickey-Moody and P. Malins, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007: 225.

[25] Alinejad, Olivieri, *Affect, Emotions, and Feelings*: 287-309.

[26] e.g., R. Waerniers, L. Hustinx, "The 'Affective Liminality' of Young Immigrants in Belgium: From Ruly to Unruly Feelings on the Path towards Formal Citizenship", *Citizenship Studies*, 24, 1 (2020): 57 - 75.

[27] Wahl-Jorgensen, *Emotions, Media and Politics*: 1.

[28] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

[29] M. Foucault, "Of Other Spaces", *Diacritics*, 16, 1 (1986): 22-27; E. Soja, "Taking Space Personally," in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, edited by S. Arias and B. Warf, London: Taylor and Francis, 2008: 11-35.

[30] Y. Blank, I. Rosen-Zvi, "Introduction: The Spatial Turn in Social Theory", *Hagar* 10, 1 (2010): 1-6.

[31] I. Salovaara-Moring, "Fortress Europe. Ideological Metaphors of Media Geographies", in *Geographies of Communication The Spatial Turn in Media Studies*, edited by A. Jansson and J. Falkheimer, Göteborg: Nordicom, 2006: 105-122.

[32] S. Pile, "For a Geographical Understanding of Affect and Emotions: Commentary", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 35, 1 (2010): 7.

carefully account for emotions with particular interest to "cities" as the urban locations of such engagements[33]. Similarly, Reckwitz introduces the multidimensional notion of affective spaces (or spatial-affective atmospheres), a useful research paradigm to account both for the emotional relations between subjects, and the spatial settings in which relations are embedded[34]. Addressing the spatial-emotional "blind spot" is particularly relevant when discussing media and migration. Researchers note how this is a field in which the study of the spatial dynamics of emotional experiences has persistently remained marginal[35]. Such a void seems to persist despite a wide recognition that the conditions of transnational migrants could evocatively expose the spatial-emotional dimension of migrants' embodied experiences. In this spirit, the present article investigates refugee cartographies in response to Alinejad and Olivieri's invitation to deepen the connection between emotion, media, and situated bodily practices when researching spatially mobile individuals[36].

4. On fiction, cartography, and emotions

This article presents the work of map makers that conceive fictional cartographies to narrate refugees' lived experience. Nevertheless, before delving into the corpus of such fictional atlases, it seems appropriate to examine academic literature that has confronted the emergence of such an inventive strand of mapping. From a careful review of previous writings on the topic, three parallel debates seem to segment the academic production in interlinked spheres: studies investigating the storytelling potential of cartography, works that explored maps of fictional worlds, and academic investigations that focused on the links between cartographies and emotions.

Storytelling and Non-representational geography. In the spirit of non-representational geography, authors conceive a relational way to understand storytelling. Cameron notes how geographical stories can express highly personal, intimate elements and still – in the interaction with the audience – exceed their domain to reflect more significant societal and political phenomena. Their relational character, therefore, forces a departure from considering geographical stories as directly conveying messages and accepting that "their normative, emotional, and moral effects" have to be subject of a process of interpretation and mediation[37]. In this spirit, Lorimer invites focusing on "small stories" as spaces of knowledge. He indicates stories that concern a local, routinary, intimate life dimension as being particularly apt in accounting for spatial experiences and expressing subjectivities that are often marginalized in hierarchical media order of appearance[38].

Cartography and the story. The storytelling potential of cartography did not go unno-

[33] N. Thrift, "Intensities of Feeling: Towards a Spatial Politics of Affect", *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, 86, 1 (2004): 57-78.

[34] Reckwitz, *Affective Spaces*: 254.

[35] D. Alinejad, S. Ponzanesi, "Migrancy and Digital Mediations of Emotion", *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23, 5 (2020): 621-638.

[36] Alinejad, Olivieri, *Affect, Emotions, and Feelings*: 287-309.

[37] E. Cameron, "New Geographies of Story and Storytelling", *Progress in Human Geography*, 36, 5 (2012): 574.

[38] H. Lorimer, "Telling Small Stories: Spaces of Knowledge and the Practice of Geography", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 28, 1 (2003): 197-271.

ticed for long in critical geography, a field in which numerous scholars already examined the maps' potential to spatially render personal experiences or to provide a subjective understanding of places. Researchers note how, progressively, cartographers explore the relationship between maps and narratives. Cartwright observes how the use of mapping practices to tell stories enjoys a new popularity in contemporary artistic practices[39]. Bulson introduces "literary cartography", addressing the active role of maps in the narrative structures of certain novels[40]. In this vein, an emerging body of literature begins to investigate how cartographies can tell stories, taking distance from the audacious attempt to be simple reflections of the natural world to engage with spatial realities in a more creative atmosphere[41].

Navigating academic research between literature and cartographic studies, Rossetto refers to Cooper and Gregory's mood maps[42], warning on the intricate relations involving authors and readers when engaging with maps related to spatial experiences. Such knotty entanglements complicate a phenomenological appreciation of "the fluid, embodied and experiential engagement of both authors and readers with the spatiality of literature"[43]. Similarly, scholars recognize how the intersection of geography and narrative studies went beyond a conception of space as a static narrative container. For instance, Hones moves towards a framework that sees text, space, fiction, and location as indissoluble and co-productive[44]. Such a conceptualization urges scholars to focus on how fictional settings emerge in an interactive process between "authors, narrative voices, and the readers" and are therefore utterly contingent and insecure[45].

Cartography and fiction. The relationship between maps and reality is at the core of a substantial amount of studies exploring cartographies of fictional worlds. Scrutinizing fictional maps, Barbara Piatti recognizes their knowledge generating potential. For Piatti, blending two apparently antithetic media production domains (cartography and literary fiction) can work effectively to shed light on "the production of places, their historical layers, their meanings, functions and symbolic values"[46]. Peterle proposes the notion of *carto-fiction*, a concept that indicates a combination of fictional writing and cartographic practices to envision and think over maps in "an autoethnographic and self-reflexive perspective"[47]. This composite of creative texts and cartographies would, therefore, help explore ways urban spaces are experienced, perceived, and rendered in maps: a useful framework to narrate the intimate and the subjective dimensions of maps.

Cartography and emotions. Naturally developing out of the debate on the carto-fictional blend, scholars investigated the spatial significance of emotions in cartographic prac-

[39] W. Cartwright, *Cartography and Art*, Berlin: Springer, 2009.
[40] E. Bulson, *Novels, Maps, Modernity: The Spatial Imagination 1850-2000*, London: Routledge, 2009.
[41] S. Caquard, "Cartography I: Mapping Narrative Cartography", *Progress in Human Geography*, 37, 1 (2013): 135-144.
[42] D. Cooper, I. N. Gregory, "Mapping the English Lake District: A Literary GIS: Mapping the English Lake District", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 36, 1 (2011): 89-108.
[43] T. Rossetto, "Theorizing Maps with Literature", *Progress in Human Geography*, 38, 4 (2014): 517.
[44] S. Hones, "Literary Geography: Setting and Narrative Space", *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12, 7 (2011): 685-699.
[45] *Ibid*.: 697.
[46] B. Piatti, "Cartographies of Fictional Worlds", *The Cartographic Journal*, 48, 4 (2011): 222.
[47] Peterle, *Carto-Fiction*: 1091.

tices[48]. Gartner finds relevant correlations between users' emotional response to spaces and the ability to orientate into the environment[49]. Marković's research revolves around the concept of landscape, exploring different cartographical representations of landscape-rooted emotional spaces. Emotional cartography, in such conception, comprises original maps that attempt to provide tangible renderings of the immateriality, going beyond what is immediately visible to delve into what is absent, concealed, or imperceptible at first sight[50].

Caquard and Griffin try to systematize the fuzzy corpus of literature investigating the relationship between maps, mapping, and emotions. Their review points out three main themes emerging in the research, i.e. three different dimensions of the recent emotional turn that has concerned both cartographic practices and academic research[51]. Firstly, the researchers identify cartographies that are made to collect emotions connected to places. Secondly, the mapping process can be generative of emotions, in such a way that they become productive agents in the shaping of cartographies. Finally, maps can generate emotions when exposed to audiences, evoking passionate reactions among the readers.

The previous sections have explored the corpus of academic literature that has inspired the investigation of fictional cartographies engaging with emotions in the narration of refugees' quests. Before presenting the analytical outlook of the three case studies, the following section will clarify the methodological structure of the paper and introduce the research objectives that have directed the investigation.

5. METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Alternative, counter maps emerge prominently into the landscape of refugee cartography. Yet, few studies have tried to link theories on new ontological conceptualizations of mapping to concrete examples of fictional and emotional cartography. To address this gap, we performed exploratory research oriented to the development of grounded theory[52]. We considered the following research objectives as leading pointers to empower the investigation:

1. to outline a multimodal account of how refugee cartographies engage with emotions in the account of spatial mobility stories;

2. to investigate how map makers reconcile factual and fictional storyworlds to question the notion of truthful and objective cartography;

3. to discuss how such fictional emotional maps challenge ontological conceptualizations of cartographies as natural reproductions of nature.

The exploration is presented as a series of three case studies. The framework of the Exploratory Research proves particularly useful since we take distance from a con-

[48] e.g., A.L. Griffin, J. McQuoid, "At the Intersection of Maps and Emotion: The Challenge of Spatially Representing Experience", *Kartographische Nachrichten*, 62, 6 (2012): 291-299; A. Poplin, "Cartographies of Fuzziness: Mapping Places and Emotions", *The Cartographic Journal*, 54, 4 (2017): 291-300.

[49] G. Gartner, "Putting Emotions in Maps – The Wayfinding Example", Accessed on May 4, 2021. URL: http://www.mountaincartography.org/publications/papers/papers_taurewa_12/papers/mcw2012_sec3_ch08_p061-065_gartner.pdf 65.

[50] N. Marković, "How to Read 'Emotional Cartographies': Rethinking (Carto)Graphic Representation and Semantics", *Abstracts of the ICA*, 1 (2019): 1-2.

[51] S. Caquard, A. Griffin, "Mapping Emotional Cartography", *Cartographic Perspectives*, 91, 1 (2019).

[52] R. Stebbins, *Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001.

firmative type of research, attempting on the contrary to reach developments of new theory emerging from data[53]. As is often the case in exploratory studies, the technique of snowball sampling empowered the completion of a tentative mapping of the field of fictional refugee cartography[54]. After identifying possible candidates for the analysis, we recruited other candidates investigating similar objects from the same creators, in the same distribution sites, and issued by the same publishers. The exploration of web repositories of counter cartographies such as antiatlas.net/[55], edited volumes such as This is not an Atlas by the Kollektiv Orangotango+[56], or attending conferences such as the "Assembly: Chronicles of Displacement" by the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art[57] turned out to be particularly useful for the completion of the sample. The snowball sampling technique allowed the charting of 23 examples of alternative cartographies that, from a preliminary examination, took a distance from traditional attempts to reproduce geographical views of natural entities.

This primary selection induced a reflection of the use of fiction in narratology, considered in the world-based conception of Ryan as the attempt to construct an imaginary world that is "told to be imagined"[58]. Such a conception opposes fictional to factual statements that are, in this dichotomy, "told to be believed" in a distinction based on the endeavor to authentically reproduce real worlds. For Walton, a fictional discourse produces an imaginary world that pretends to be real and that readers should mentally construct and envision[59]. On the contrary, factual discourses – those told to be believed – attempt to perfectly approximate the actual world in an open effort to minimize the distance between the storyworld and the physical reference world.

In this stage, the use of fiction emerged therefore as a possible common denominator of a substantial number of cases in the data, appearing as a productive first category to empower the exploration. The operationalization of the first category prompted us to consider the examination of the literature on narrative, post-representational geography and with reference to the works of scholars interested in the storytelling, narrative, literary dimensions of cartography. In a constant iteration between such literature and the data, maps' engagement with emotions emerged as a helpful second category to empower the exploration, and inspired a further selection of the samples. Borrowing a conceptualization from the scholarship on emotional cartography, in this stage of our research we have operationalized the concept of emotion as "embodied experiences" that can emerge in the interaction with the environment[60]. Emotions are, in this light, conscious and expressed through concepts (e.g. anxiety, hope, joy), and seen in an open opposition to affects: the latter often understood as pre-conscious and therefore inexpressible[61].

In the article, we discuss three case studies that emerged from such mapping. Their choice is intended to reflect the different ways cartographies engage with fiction-

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] R. Swedberg, "Exploratory Research," in *The Production of Knowledge*, edited by C. Elman, J. Gerring, J. Mahoney, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020: 17-41.

[55] *antiAtlas des frontières*. Accessed February 9, 2022. https://www.antiatlas.net/.

[56] S. Halder, B. Michel, *This Is Not an Atlas: A Global Collection of Counter-Cartographies*, Sozial- Und Kulturgeographie, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2018.

[57] "Assembly: Chronicles of Displacement", Art Event & Exhibition in Singapore, November 16, 2020. https://sagg.info/event/assembly-chronicles-of-displacement/.

[58] M.L. Ryan, "Truth of Fiction versus Truth in Fiction", *Between*, 9, 1 (2019): 2.

[59] K.L. Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.

[60] Caquard, Griffin, *Mapping Emotional Cartography*: 4.

[61] Pile, *For a Geographical Understanding of Affect and Emotions*: 7.

al, made-up storyworld and with the emotional dimension of refugees' journeys. Even more, the three maps challenge a traditional ontological conceptualization of cartographies to three different degrees, providing suitable raw material to present a reflection on the nature of the practice. For each of the analyzed cases, the investigation proceeds under a threefold analytical lens. Firstly, the cases are introduced with a brief denotative investigation that, in the spirit of multimodal analysis[62], elucidates how map makers make use of interactions and combinations of different modes of communication to engage with a cartographic storytelling and with the expression of emotions. Secondly – in a narratological perspective – the investigation focuses on their conception of fictional narrative spaces, or storyworlds, that vary substantially in relation to their distance to the reference physical world. Finally, inspired by literature on non-representational geography, the analysis focuses on ontological repercussions of investigating cartographies that extend beyond the domain of natural reproductions of the physical world.

As stated before, this paper draws particular inspiration from works of non-representational theory. In doing so, it looks at storytelling in geography not just as discursive reflection and framing of relations of power, adding to that dimension an effort to recuperate "the living, feeling, experiential and relational dimensions of being"[63]. Such an effort entails considerable methodological challenges linked to researching such fleeting and contingent elements of migration[64]. Yet, while non-representational theory has often stressed the significance of "inexpressible affects"[65], this paper welcomes emotional cartography's attention to the meaning-making potential of expressed emotions.

In this light, the researchers are aware of the contingent and experiential character of their production, and at the same time persuaded that the investigation of the emotional dimension of mappings with multimodal analysis produces insightful analysis on "how modes of representation mobilize, produce and seek to shape emotions"[66]. In the spirit of exploratory research, this first analytical stage provides solid ground for further generalizability of the conclusions, obtainable possibly through the concatenation of future analytical steps. While the exclusive association of post-representational geography to specific research methods is debated in the scholarship[67], a further stage of ethnographic analysis could supply an authentic viewpoint to accurately grasp the complex subjective engagements between authors, readers, and maps[68].

6. ANALYSIS

The previous sections have introduced the theoretical building blocks empowering the present exploration of refugee fictional cartographies. Firstly, the spatial-emotional turn prompts us to examine the creative production of map makers focusing on the interactions between emotions and space occurring in the conception, production, and

[62] K.L. O'Halloran, B.A. Smith, "Multimodal Text Analysis", in *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, edited by C. Chapelle, Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.

[63] E. Cameron, "New Geographies of Story and Storytelling", *Progress in Human Geography*, 36, 5 (2012): 587.

[64] P. Vannini, *Non-Representational Methodologies: Re-Envisioning Research*, New York: Routledge, 2015.

[65] Pile, *For a Geographical Understanding of Affect and Emotions*: 7.

[66] L. Bondi, *Emotional Geographies*, New York: Routledge, 2012: 10.

[67] Vannini, *Non-Representational Methodologies*: 11.

[68] Pile, *For a Geographical Understanding of Affect and Emotions*: 5.

consumption of any media work. Secondly, the debates around literary, fictional, and emotional cartography set the theoretical scene to the study of maps that engage creatively with spatial realities, rejecting the limiting connotation of natural reproduction of geographical sceneries. Finally, non-representational geography inspires a reflection on the nature of maps, assessing fictional cartographies' ontological alternatives to the traditional conceptualization of map-making.

6.1. Im Land der Frühaufsteher*: maps as productive of a fictional storyworld*

Denotative investigation. The first example connects with attempts to evoke emotions through maps' aesthetic features revealing a typically absent intimate dimension of spatial experience[69]. In this respect, the emotional appeal of maps and their effect on users is certainly not a novel segment of studies. Van Houtum and Bueno Lacy convincingly explained the emotional "cleansing" effect of the maps produced by governmental agency Frontex: spatial visualizations in which bold continuous red lines reproduce refugees' pathways from their departure countries to Europe. The multiple arrows pointing to Europe hide the emotional and material asperities besetting refugees' trails, making it seem as if they could move "with the same nonchalance as any middle-class tourist"[70]. Conversely, fictional cartographers that are conscious of the emotional appeal of maps can overturn the emotional cleansing, causing rich, vivid, subjective place-related emotional refugees' accounts. The comic book *Im Land der Frühaufsteher* by Paula Bulling contains a cartography that powerfully exemplifies this relationship between maps, fiction, and emotions[71]. In a full-page illustration already analyzed by Singer, a knotty long path through a dark forest isolates the Halberstadt asylum center from the closest train station, evocatively rendering the struggle to escape the monotony of living isolated in the refugee shelter[72]. The refugees are portrayed as several miniature characters proceeding slowly through a fictional maze, while the large distance they cover on foot deliberately seems to be attempting to induce a sense of alienation and solitude to the reader, articulating the confusion of exploring a new country. The fictional maze visually magnifies the distance between the refugees and the urban context, a portrayal that evokes the embodied experiences of despair, vulnerability, discomfort, and fear in navigating such a spatial setting. The composition, following Lorimer's argumentation, tells a "small story" that involves a local, ordinary, emotional dimension of life experience that, nonetheless, reveals significant geographical knowledge. On the one hand, the design seems intended to provoke the immersion in purely personal, mundane, emotional spaces. On the other, it generates connections to power relations in mobility settings, producing a metaphor that narratively condemns the segregation of foreign *others as* immobilized bodies at the peripheries of our urban realities.

Fictional/factual storyworlds. Considering the fictional dimension of the production, Bulling merges elements that can be considered as truthful and verifiable in the reference world with elements that pertain to the domain of fictional invention. According to

[69] Caquard, Griffin, *Mapping Emotional Cartography*.
[70] Van Houtum, Bueno Lacy, *The Migration Map Trap*: 8.
[71] P. Bulling, *Im Land der Frühaufsteher*, Berlin: avant, 2012.
[72] R. Singer, "Cute Monsters and Early Birds: Foreignness in Graphic Novels on Migration by Shaun Tan and Paula Bulling", *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 11, 1 (2020): 90.

Ryan, the distance between the world of fiction – the storyworld – and the actual reference world can vary substantially[73]. The Halberstadt asylum center (ZASt) is an existing hospitality facility located in the German state of Saxony-Anhalt, and it is arguably located in the extreme periphery of the urban landscape: these elements of Bulling's storyworld factually correspond to a physical reality. At the same time, Bulling intentionally designs an intricate knotty path that develops from the asylum center and connects it to the train station. Here, the fictional element composes an imaginary storyworld, and invites the reader to imagine it for its own sake. The audience is not prompted to believe in a truthful reproduction of the path, but to imagine it and share the frustration of being immobilized in such remote areas. A fictional storyworld appears therefore as conceived to visualize refugees' immobility, and – following Urry[74] – to criticize refugees' forced mooring at the urban periphery.

Ontological implications. Bulling's map prompts some pertinent consideration on the ontological implications of such cartographies for the nature of the practice. As described in the previous section, Bulling's map does not fully mirror an existing nature. Instead, it deliberately produces a "made-up space", creating a fictional storyworld to convey the spatial isolation of certain individuals at the urban periphery. Bulling's map departs from a natural and realistic reproduction of territorial space to create an imaginary world used as a means to convey a political message that condemns the spatial segregation. Ontologically considering this design as a map, therefore, problematizes ideas of cartography as merely the natural mirror of nature. However, such a critique is limited to a representational scale, as the ontological construction of the map still appears as being securely tightened to be a stable product of spatial representations that reproduce an earthly landscape as it would appear if one looked at it from above.

6.2. Crossing Maps*: de-naturalizing the mapping process*

Denotative investigation. *Crossing Maps*[75] results from participatory mapping sessions that involved a collaboration between refugees, artists, and academics, giving light to embroidered pieces of cloth, and colorful felt pen sketches, but also to audio recordings that bear witness to refugees' recollection of their trips[76]. In *Crossing Maps*, the narrative effort counters the "normative" refugee-officials interactions taking place in governmental settings. Asylum seekers are normally requested to produce "verifiable" stories – chronological and sequential accounts of their movements that are instrumental to the grant of statuses. Criticizing the normative terms of such "truth seeking" accounts, in *Crossing Maps* refugees are invited to develop emotional alternatives: they are asked to use different colors on their embroidery, choosing them according to the emotions evoked by different stages of their journey. Emotions are here rendered chromatically, with the use of green for tranquility, red for danger, orange for fear, purple for stress. On the one hand, such a project might raise concerns over the epistemic violence related to

[73] Ryan, *Truth of Fiction versus Truth in Fiction*: 2.
[74] Urry, *Mobilities*: 155.
[75] F. Fischer, L. Houbey, M. Moreau, S. Mekdjian, A. Amilhat-Szary, "Cartographies Transverses", *antiAtlas des frontières*, Accessed February 9, 2022. https://www.antiatlas.net/fischer-houbey-moreau-mekdjian-amilhat-szary-crossing-maps-cartographies-traverses/.
[76] S. Mekdjian, M. Moreau, "Re-dessiner l'expérience: art, science et conditions migratoires", *antiAtlas Journal*, 1 (2016).

the expectation on the refugees to do emotional labor to produce the cartography[77]. At the same time, the attempt to use the mapping process as a relational tool to build triangular relationships is significant. It involves the maps, the academics, and the refugees, who – according to the cartographers – are given freedom of representation and are not asked for any narrative consistency[78]. Going back to Cameron's considerations on the political dimension of the story in geography, storytelling can constitute "a situated practice of transformative change", not only because of its representational content, but at a more elementary level by creating relations between people, places, and objects to perform alternative and marginal subjectivities[79].

Fictional/factual storyworlds. In *Crossing Maps*, the mapping process critiques the symbolic violence of officials-refugees interviews, and directly questions the notion of "truth" in refugees' narrative as a particularly restrictive and subjugating imposition[80]. Any formal attempt to a factual depiction of a migration trail is challenged, questioning the single way that leads to a "complete, accurate and truthful map", and embracing mapping as a contingent and relational practice[81]. Intentionally, the distance between the reference world and the storyworld is never explicitly revealed in the map making process, giving light to a composite mix between narrative elements to be believed – that appear as pertaining to the domain of factuality – and elements for the audience to be imagined that relate to a fictional world. As in Peterle's exploration in carto-fiction, the process of map making is envisioned as an almost ethnographic process of narration in which imaginative engagements that create, transform, and influence space are mixed with realistic elements such as the referral to real locations, circumstances, and individuals[82].

Ontological implications. In *Crossing Maps*, the cartographers direct their attention away from the outcome, the latter intended as the creation product that conveys spatial representations about the world. In this respect the authors declare themselves to be inspired by the equivalence principle of Filliou: "well done = poorly done = not done", making explicit their indifference to the physical outcome of this cartography[83]. Their interest lies, contrarily, in the process of mapping as a practice of appointing emotions on a map: a co-mapping, a collaboration that attempts to create maps with the refugees rather than creating maps about them. The products are therefore seen as entirely instrumental, simple means to establish interpersonal relations with little regard to their representational content. Maps are "meeting places" and relational tools, intended as a means to establish non-hierarchical relations, in a stark contrast to the authority relationship during interviews with government officers. Ontologically, the creators of *Crossing Maps* perform a processual understanding of maps and in this way de-naturalize the historical evolution of cartography[84]: beyond cartography as an institutionalized profession, a scientific practice, and form of knowledge, enlarging the ontology of maps to embrace performative, participative, and spontaneous effort that transcends understanding mapping as just the production of a tangible outcome.

[77] G.C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", *Die Philosophin*, 14, 27 (2003): 42-58.
[78] Mekdjian, Moreau, *Re-dessiner l'expérience: art, science et conditions migratoires*.
[79] Cameron, *New Geographies of Story and Storytelling*: 575.
[80] D. Fassin, C. Kobelinsky, "Comment on juge l'asile. L'institution comme agent moral", *Revue française de sociologie*, 53, 4 (2012): 657-688.
[81] Kitchin, Dodge, *Rethinking Maps*: 333.
[82] Peterle, *Carto-Fiction*.
[83] Mekdjian, Moreau, *Re-dessiner l'expérience: art, science et conditions migratoires*: 1.
[84] Pickles, *A History of Spaces*: 17.

6.3. Constellations*: contesting maps' ontological security*

Denotative investigation. Bouchra Khalili's *Constellations* represents another example of a composite engagement with fictional maps and emotions.[85] After inviting migrants to retrace their journeys with a marker on an atlas, Khalili translates their individual journeys in the form of star constellation prints. Contesting *normative* geography with a universalistic utopian narrative, the artist reflects on how to produce subjective intimate cartographies of mobility that challenge the restrictive, exclusive, and bio-political conceptions of national borders. Khalili's use of colors, dots, and lines to produce an astronomical landscape lends itself to different allegorical interpretations. Firstly, stars are reference points that can guide the movement in spatial settings – like seas and oceans – where landmarks are absent. Secondly, the stars epitomize Foucault's "heterotopia": sites that are both existent in reality, but are also symbolic representations of utopia, therefore embodying the aspirational and imaginary perfect destinations for refugees and migrants[86]. As noted by Pugliese, Khalili's project communicates "the everyday concerns, emotions and events" that constitute the lives of clandestine subjects[87]. Once again, emotions intersect a cartographic production engaging with the immaterial dimension of such mobilities. Khalili enquires about what is usually absent, hidden, or obscure in cartography and deploys spatial-emotions on the map through the symbolic design of stars, attempting to lead the audience into utopian landscapes by articulating refugees' longing, hope, or wonder.

Fictional/factual storyworlds. As in *Im Land der Frühaufsteher,* Khalili mixes elements that could find confirmation in the physical world with imaginary elements that entirely pertain to the fictional world. The maps are firstly drawn on geographical atlases: while being recorded on camera, refugees go over their journey to Europe, and retrace their stops with a marker, joining with lines the cities that served as intermediate stages of the trip. Here, the storyworld matches with the reference world; the narration is therefore "told to be believed", and has physical correspondence to the geography of borders and cities. Khalili afterwards re-mediates such traced paths, creating star constellations in silkscreen print. The storyworld here departs from a perfect correspondence with the reference world to the fictional invention of constellations of stars and planets, produced to convey the emotional landscape described above. Once again, Urry's conceptualizations of mobility and mooring help to understand the creation of a fictional storyworld that magnifies physical distances in the reference world. Constellation draws attention to refugees' immobility, a mooring in which the aspiration to move and reach must be transported to the imaginative dimension.

Ontological implications. By transforming maps that are hand traced on an atlas into silkscreen prints of star constellations, the artist re-territorializes what used to be earthly maps as imagined galaxies in the cosmos. The artist plays with the spatial instability of the fictional setting, and – redeploying the maps in the new context of the outer space – she transforms cartographies into simple plotting of colors, dots, and lines. Such a trans-

[85] B. Khalili, "The Constellations Series. 8 Silkscreen Prints", 2011, Accessed May 4, 2021. http://www.bouchrakhalili.com/the-constellations/.

[86] Foucault, *Of Other Spaces*.

[87] J. Pugliese, "Technologies of Extraterritorialisation, Statist Visuality and Irregular Migrants and Refugees", Griffith Law Review, 22, 3 (2013): 571-597.

lation denaturalizes maps' ties to the representation of any natural geographical reality, towards the inclusion of imaginative, more-than-representational practices. Khalili's constellations - simple dots, colors, and lines – appear to have no ontological security: their stable attachment to a spatial representation is made obscure and uncertain, raising questions about the extent to which they can still be regarded as maps. Understanding these maps as having no ontological security prompts us to reflect on the identification of (all) cartographies as such. Therefore, this identification is referred back to a process of reciprocal interaction between maps, creators, and readers. Following Kitchin and Dodge, "A map is never a map with ontological security assumed; it is brought into the world and made to do work through practices such as recognizing, interpreting, translating, communicating, and so on"[88].

7. DISCUSSION

The article intended to provide the results of an exploratory study performed in the domain fictional cartography, developing three case studies that deepened maps' engagement with factual and fictional storyworlds, along with a consideration of their potential to fruitfully engage with emotions. Doing this, the article welcomed Caquard's invitation to investigate the multiple hybridizations happening "between cartography and creative disciplines; between the grid map and the story map; between fiction and reality; between the map and the territory"[89].

The exploration has found a promising niche of fictional cartographic productions that combine maps with fiction and emotions to promote a progressive agenda of refugee narratives. Refugee maps, it emerges, reproduce Urry's imaginative mobilities by using fiction to construct made-up worlds that are told "to be imagined". Furthermore, they engage with emotion to perform a subjective, mundane dimension of storytelling that implicitly problematizes refugees' coerced immobility, and their marginalization at the peripheries of our urban reality. Doing this, they conceive cartographies that go beyond systematic, objective depictions of space and embrace ontological understanding of cartographies as unstable entities that have no inborn ontological security: communicative objects that are constantly subject to a recognition and interpretation in an interaction between creators and users.

Fictional element. The analysis of the three cartographies highlights their attempt to generate fictional storyworlds. Where factual contents claim to "naturalistically represent real-world events", such fictional storyworlds explicitly highlight the creative construction of their storytelling and narration: they are imaginative, inventive artistic productions in alignment with literary works[90]. Here, the use of fiction appears as deliberately employed to deliver emotional alternatives that open up maps to the portrayal of refugees' mobility. The three cartographers flaunt and exaggerate their fictional "made-up" nature, performing an ironic critique to "truthful" and verifiable accounts that asylum authorities compel refugees to produce. These mappers, conscious of the natural epics of refugee cartography, imagine and create fictional maps to express the spatial-emotional elements of refugee journeys. They reject the idea that their product

[88] Kitchin, Dodge, *Rethinking Maps*: 335.
[89] Caquard, *Cartography I*: 140.
[90] E. Keightley, "Fictional Media Content", in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, edited by W. Donsbach, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2008: 2.

has to naturally represent the real world, preferring to focus on the creation of evocative fictional storyworlds that resonate well with their engaged, participative and critical activism.

Re-subjectivization of the space. The multimodal investigation of the three productions exemplifies an emerging spectrum of fictional cartographies attempting to perform a re-subjectivization of space through a deeper visual and textual engagement with spatial-emotional landscapes. By visualizing fictional knotty paths, co-creating knitting embroideries that chromatically render emotions, or re-mediating journeys into constellations of stars, the maps attempt to overthrow traditional communicative modalities often embedded in institutional maps and data visualization. The denotative analysis highlights how maps seek to resist and challenge bio-political conceptions of refugees as utterly threatening or vulnerable individuals. On the contrary, the maps appear as original attempts to produce deeper awareness of spatial experiences, engaging with emotions and subjectivity. They reveal "small stories" with personal aspirations, anxieties and wishes, and exhibit an intimate perspective on human mobility, inviting users to a subjective appraisal of refugee migratory routes, while at the same time stimulating a critique of refugees' immobility: a condition in which mobility is deferred to an imaginary world. Taking inspiration from Griffin and McQuoid's prognosis that "the time is ripe for cartography to open up its practice to whole new worlds of the human experience, including emotions", such maps reproduce what is often missing, invisible, or suppressed in institutional refugee cartography, engaging with a mundane, personal, and local dimension of storytelling[91]. In this light, while such stories do not straightforwardly expose and counter power relations, discourse, or ideology inherent in traditional mapping practices, they still use storytelling as a political means of transformative change, performing alternative and marginal subjectivities that are often absent in traditional geographical representations. The fictional refugee cartographies exemplify, then, one possible way to take distance from western methodological conceptions that foresee a neat separation between emotions and rational political processes. In her seminal book, Ahmed powerfully posited how a cultural politics of emotions could create community coalitions to marginalize *other* bodies[92]. She illustrated how xenophobic communication strategies used emotions such as love (i.e. for an ideal homogeneous nation) and anxiety (i.e. towards a multicultural future) to advocate their exclusionary agendas. With the opposite intentions, fictional cartographies engage with emotions to promote a re-subjectivization of the refugee, overturning a political use of emotion that has unfortunately long remained a field dominated by exclusionary and xenophobic movements.

On the nature of cartography. On the one hand, the analysis rooted in multimodality and narratology has prompted an appraisal of how maps visually and narratively attempt to counter what is traditionally represented in conventional cartographies of migration: the hegemonic production that has often *dehumanized* individuals by framing refugees as *problems* and migration as a *crisis*. On the other, drawing from non-representational geography, this article attempted to go further and elaborate on ways such fictional maps challenge ontological conceptualizations of cartographies as natural reproductions of nature. In these respects, the three cases illustrate a spectrum of practices that, to different degrees, problematize such natural ontological conceptions of cartography. The case

[91] Griffin, McQuoid, *At the Intersection of Maps and Emotion*: 291.
[92] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

studies have supported how the map in *Im Land der Frühaufsteher* can problematize an exclusive understanding of cartography as merely a reproduction that attempts to mirror natural realities. *Crossing Maps'* analysis has suggested a processual conceptualization of cartography as means to co-create relationships and human bounds, going beyond an idea of the maps as products that merely have to deliver spatial information. With *Constellations,* we advanced the hypothesis of cartographies as objects that have no inborn ontological security but that, on the contrary, are constantly recognized and reappraised in a contingent interaction between creators and users. Drawing on the three maps' inherent critique of a traditional ontological understanding of cartography, we could speculate that such practices transcend the domain of counter-cartography, intended as an alternative mapping practice interested in exposing and countering power relations in cartographic production[93]. More than a decade ago, Kitchin and Dodge warned that most prevalent conceptualizations of counter-mapping failed to challenge maps' "ontological status"[94]. In their views, most counter-cartographers would still envision the possibility to produce a truthful reproduction of the space, obtainable when a map opposes or clears the relations of power that traditionally adulterate its production. The refugee cartographies presented in this article, on the contrary, appear to go beyond attempts to counter inherent power relations, questioning the ontological foundations of the practice itself.

[93] Harley, *Deconstructing the Map*.
[94] Kitchin, Dodge, *Rethinking Maps*: 332.

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SITE-SPECIFIC ARTISTIC PRACTICES AS POTENTIAL WAYS OF URBAN CO-EXISTENCE AND TRANSCULTURAL DIALOGUE: THE CASE OF TWO ATHENIAN SQUARES

Abstract
In Greece during the last decade, in a context of crisis and precarity, artistic practices significantly increased their presence in public space often aiming at engaging the social base and touching upon the inclusion of different communities. Athens became the epicenter of such practices. The main objective of the paper is to explore grassroots arts and culture initiatives' role in stimulating community-engaging practices in intensively diverse public spaces, thus contributing to transcultural dialogue and urban co-existence. The paper employs two different artistic urban projects, UrbanDig_Omonia and Victoria Square Project on two Athenian squares, Omonia and Victoria, as case studies in order to elaborate on the contribution of artistic interventions and transcultural dialogue in 'difficult places'. This is realised on two interrelated levels: *i)* through community-based artistic interventions, that serve as the 'ice-breaker' for transcultural dialogue to diverse communities of 'locals' and 'foreigners'; *ii)* through continuous community engagement practices that serve as evaluation praxis and provide evidence-based reflections that could feed into cultural and social policy making. It further points to the role of artists and cultural managers as mediators among cultures.

Keywords
Artistic practices; public space; community engagement, transcultural dialogue; Athens; immigration.
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1. INTRODUCTION

In Greece since the last decade – in a context of fear, crisis and uncertainty – artistic practices have significantly increased their presence into the public realm, interrupting the 'Us' and 'Them' discourse and touching upon the co-existence of different communities. Athens became the epicenter of such practices. Through a study of artistic urban projects in two squares of Athens, we aim to explore how grassroots artistic practices in public space, by bringing together refugees, migrants and host communities, serve as an 'ice-breaker' and as critical tools for transcultural dialogue. Central in our exploration

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is the notion of *site*, of the shared public space. We observe that the community engagement practices put in place by such artistic initiatives, turns into an evaluation praxis in itself, both in terms of serving an artistic research process, as well as of giving feedback on their relevance. Such community engagement processes remain an unexplored body of knowledge that could be informative for cultural and social inclusion policy-making.

Following this introduction, part two reviews the literature in relation to the notion of the Self and the Other in a process of identity formation and introduces the concept of space as an backdrop to the interpretation of transcultural encounters. Part three sets the reader into the socioeconomic context of Greece during the last decades to better understand the emergence of site-specific artistic practices and of power rhetorics on the 'Us and Them' spectrum due to an extended period of crisis. Part four touches on our methodology and introduces the two case studies of site-specific artistic practices unfolding in two squares in the city of Athens. Before our conclusion, part five discusses our findings, where we suggest exploring further such practices to inform evidence-based cultural and social inclusion policies.

2. THE 'SELF' AND THE 'OTHER' ON SITE

In contemporary public spaces, as squares, where human interactions are territorially situated, 'Us' and 'Them' co-exist on site. As Bromley[1] puts it,

> The 'there', the 'then', and the 'them' have forced their way into visibility by becoming 'here', 'now' and almost, but not quite, 'us'.

Otherness can be seen as a form of social exclusion and symbolic value[2]. Necessary for the production of meaning and the formation of culture, they are often considered a threat and a source of hostility or aggression. This 'divided legacy'[3] of otherness makes difference so important. While 'interactions of a new order and intensity'[4] imposed by globalisation have enabled a new era of 'neighborliness', in most cases co-existence is still not a lived experience. Authors talking about a cultural turn[5], a conviviality turn[6], a cosmopolitan turn[7], a mobility turn[8], a diversity turn[9], have all touched upon the ways the intensification of encounters has changed profoundly the way we approach our iden-

[1] R. Bromly, *Narratives of Forced Mobility and Displacement in Contemporary Literature and Culture*. *Studies in Mobilities, Literature and Culture*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, 35.

[2] L. Romero-Rodriguez, S. Civila, I. Aguaded, "Otherness as a Form of Intersubjective Social Exclusion: Conceptual Discussion from the Current Communicative Scenario: Conceptual Discussion from the Current Communicative Scenario", *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society*, 19, 1 (2021): 20-37. Accessed February 20, 2022. DOI: 10.1108/JICES-11-2019-0130.

[3] S. Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Sage Publications: Open University Press, 1997.

[4] A. Appadurai, *Modernity At Large,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, 27.

[5] K. Nash, "The 'Cultural Turn' in Social Theory: Towards a Theory of Cultural Politics", *Sociology*, 35, 1 (2001): 77-98.

[6] A. Wise, G. Noble, "Convivialities: An Orientation", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 37, 5 (2016): 423-231. Accessed February 20, 2022. DOI: 10.1080/07256868.2016.1213786.

[7] U. Beck, E. Grande, "Varieties of Second Modernity: The Cosmopolitan Turn in Social and Political Theory and Research", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61, 3 (2010): 409-442.

[8] T. Faist, "The Mobility Turn: A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences?", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36, 11 (2013): 1637-1646.

[9] M.-L. Berg, N. Sigona, "Ethnography, Diversity and Urban Space", *Identities*, 20, 4 (2013): 347-360. Accessed February 20, 2022. DOI: 10.1080/1070289X.2013.822382.

tity and that of the 'Other'. Most importantly, intense mobilities lie 'at the centre of constellations of power, the creation of identities and the microgeographies of everyday life'[10] and lead to an asymmetry in power relations. Researchers have studied the discursive construction of the 'Other' on a square[11], or how commonplace diversity is performed in super-diverse contexts[12] and there is a wide literature on everyday encounters with difference and intercultural conviviality[13]. Other studies examine the role of artistic practices in public space, such as graffiti and street art[14], in articulating *outsidered* aesthetics and communicative culture that challenge power systems, or performing arts and urban sport in the public space from the migrant performance's perspective[15]. They all point to power struggles over the definitions of place and culture and the constitution of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'[16].

In our current study, space becomes important as we examine practices and social performances triggered by artistic practices on two squares in a prolonged crisis-hit Athens. We see squares, as 'common places of social diversity in which difference is not essentialised, but rendered a routine and unremarkable feature of everyday encounters'[17] in the public space. They are the 'physical meeting spaces of cultural, political, economic, social and individual trajectories'[18] and spaces where negotiations of relations among different groups take place[19]. In a previous article[20], we argued that sports and art can compose a common cultural language that operates as a tool for communities to co-create urban space, especially among culturally diverse groups. Here, the notion of *site*, of space offers a stage to understand artistic practices as facilitators of experiences 'in which borders between languages, communities and cultures are transcended, transgressed and transformed'[21]. We approach transcultural encounters encouraged by artistic practices on public spaces, as part of the *lived space* – in Lefebvre's[22]

[10] T. Cresswell, "Mobilities I: Catching up", *Progress in Human Geography*, 35, 4 (2010): 550-558.

[11] C. Dyers, F.J. L. Berg, N. Sigona, "Ethnography, Diversity and Urban Space", *Identities*, 20, 4 (2013): 347-360. Accessed February 20, 2022. DOI: 10.1080/1070289X.2013.822382. T. Cresswell, "Mobilities Wankah, "'Us' and 'Them': The Discursive Construction of 'the Other' in Greenmarket Square, Cape Town", *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 12, 3 (2012): 230-247. Accessed February 20, 2020. DOI: 10.1080/14708477.2012.659186.

[12] S. Wessendorf, *Commonplace Diversity: Social Relations in a Super-Diverse Context*, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

[13] G. Noble, "Cosmopolitan Habits: The Capacities and Habitats of Intercultural Conviviality", *Body and Society*, 19, 2-3 (2013): 162-185. Accessed February 20, 2022. DOI: 10.1177/1357034X12474477.

[14] M. Christensen, T. Thor, "The Reciprocal City: Performing Solidarity-Mediating Space through Street Art and Graffiti", *International Communication Gazette*, 79, 6-7 (2017): 584-612. Accessed February 20, 2022. DOI: 10.1177/1748048517727183.

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[17] A. Baker, A. Crawford, N. Booth, D. Churchill, Everyday Encounters with Difference in Urban Parks: Forging 'Openess to Otherness' in Segmenting Cities, *International Journal of Law in Context*, 15, 4 (2019): 495-514. Accessed on February 15, 2022. DOI: 10.1017/S1744552319000387.

[18] S. Santos Cruz et al., "Inquires into Public Space Practices, Meanings and Values", *Journal of Urban Design*, 23, 6 (2018): 797-802. Accessed February 19, 2022. DOI: 10.1080/13574809.2018.1525289.

[19] A. Madanipour. *Public and Private Spaces of the City*, London: Routledge, 2013.

[20] D. Chatziefstathiou, E. Iliopoulou, M. Magkou, "UrbanDig Project: Sport Practices and Artistic Interventions for Co-Creating Urban Space, Sport in Society", 22, 5 (2019): 871-884. Accessed September 20, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/17430437.2018.1430485.

[21] W. Baker, C. Sangiamchit, "Transcultural Communication: Language, Communication and Culture through English as a Lingua Franca in a Social Network Community". *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 19, 6 (2019): 471-487. Accessed February 15, 2022. DOI: 10.1080/14708477.2019.1606230.

[22] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (1974), Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

terms – , which is 'a place of critical exchange', a significant spatial moment of action and 'spatialisation'[23] of social life.

3. ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND PUBLIC SPACE IN A COUNTRY IN CRISIS

During the last fifteen years, Greece has been confronting two significant and prolonged crises: the financial crisis and the refugee and migration crisis. The financial crisis that began in 2008 forced the country into fiscal adjustments, extensive reforms and austerity measures. Unemployment also hit high numbers. At the same time, the large-scale arrival of refugees in the mid-2010s, in which Greece operated firstly as a transitory country and then as host country, posed an additional challenge to Greek society: that of identity confrontation, through constructions of narratives of otherness and xenophobia. The term *crisis* used to refer to the migration flows, has been criticised[24] for being 'instrumental in specific contexts for specific actors and about specific migrant groups'[25], often to legitimise other (political) actions responsive to this 'crisis'[26] and its 'asymmetrical pressures'[27]. Here it is used to encompass a series of interrelated events that explain the contemporary reality in Greece where we ended up 'discussing money when the question was about xenophobia- and vice versa'[28].

Contemporary migration towards Greece started more intensively in the 1990s when populations from the post-communist states of the Balkan region started moving to Greece. In the 2010s, refugees from the world's conflict zones, including Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, replaced these populations. A peak moment was during 2016 when – following a gradual restriction of access to the Balkan route – hundred thousands of people entered and crossed the country. Many of them began to occupy the urban centre of Athens 'to remain less visible often ending up in situations of extreme poverty and precariousness'[29].

The presence of immigrants on the Greek public space resulted in a direct encounter with the 'Other'. The far-right party Golden Dawn injected to a large extent anti-refugee and 'othering' narratives accentuating a perceived sense of threat from migration that found many followers and produced a number of confrontations within Greek society. Although a big part of the Greek population demonstrated solidarity and compassion with migrants[30],

[23] R. Shields, *Love and Struggle*: *Spatial Dialectics*, USA, Canada: Routledge, 1999.

[24] S.A. Aguiton, L. Cabane, L. Cornilleau, eds., "La fabrique et le gouvernement des crises", *Critique Internationale*, 85 (2019).

[25] C. Cantat, H. Thiollet, A. Pécoud, *Migration as Crisis. A Framework Paper*, 2019, MAGYC available at: https://www.magyc.uliege.be/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/D3.1.-Migration-as-crisis.-A-frameworkpaper.pdf. Access-ed February 14, 2022.

[26] E. Blanchard, C. Rodier, "'Crise migratoire': ce que cachent les mot", *Plein droit*, 111, 4 (2016): 3-6. Accessed February 10, 2022. DOI: 10.3917/pld.111.0003.

[27] I.-P. Karolewski, R. Benedikter, "Europe's Refugee and Migrant Crisis. Political Responses to Asymmetrical Pressures", *Politique européenne*, 60, 2 (2018): 98-132. Accessed February 15, 2022. DOI: 10.3917/poeu.060.0098.

[28] M. Drymioti, V. Gerasopoulos. "Entangling the Migration and the Economic 'Crisis': Claiming What's Rightfully Greek", *Entofoor, Race-ism*, 30, 2 (2018): 49-69.

[29] D. Dalakoglou, "The Crisis before 'The Crisis': Violence and Urban Neoliberalization in Athens", *Social Justice*, 19, 1 (2021): 24-42 (24).

[30] C. Cantat, *The Politics of Refugee Solidarity in Greece. Bordered Identities and Political Mobilization*, Working paper series 2018, 1. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publicatio/336022821_The_Politics_of_refugee_solidarity_in_Greece_-_Bordered_identities_and_political_mobilization. Accessed 20 September, 2021.

often the public opinion has been that immigration has been bad for Greece, has contributed to the decline of the living standards, costing the welfare state and draining resources that could be spent on Greeks. The 'Us' (Greeks) and 'Them' (non-Greeks/ foreigners) dichotomy was presented as a great threat to Greek identity, especially due to the fact that migrants are mainly non-Orthodox. Anti-migrant rhetoric and racist violence was transformed in official political and media discourse[31]. For example, in their analysis of newspaper articles of different political affiliation during the period around the Greek general elections in 2012, Lees and Alfieris[32] observed that Greek *public space* was often in juxtaposition with and under threat of 'people from the fringes of the society', 'people in the margins, specified mostly as foreigners'.

During these years, there was a boom in the creative scene[33]. Artists became more productive, proactive and provocative in the ways they express themselves[34]. Especially Athens became the epicenter of such practices[35] that would fall under what is described as 'community arts'[36], 'participatory art'[37], 'socially engaged art'[38], and 'social practice'[39]. Several initiatives were bottom-up and rather ephemeral. Others emerged into cultural spaces in areas of the city. In a spirit of setting the conditions for such initiatives to thrive, the City of Athens' adopted an urban policy agenda, supporting bottom-up and participatory responses to crisis, through solidarity movements[40], social and solidarity economy[41], creative entrepreneurship[42] and participatory placemaking[43] through a number of projects[44].

[31] A. Triandafyllidou, H. Kouki, "Naturalizing Racism in the Center of Athens in May 2011: Lessons from Greece", *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 12 (2014): 418-436. Accessed February 15, 2022. DOI: 10.1080/15562948.2014.932477.

[32] C. Lees, A. Alfieris, "Racist Discourse in the Years of the Greek Financial Crisis: Evidence from the Greek Press", *Journal of Greek Media and Culture*, 5, 1 (2019): 45-67. Accessed September 20, 2021. DOI: doi.org/10.1386/jgmc.5.1.45_1.

[33] S. Tsiara, "Contemporary Greek Art in Times of Crisis: Cuts and Changes", *Journal of Visual Culture*, 14, 2 (2015): 176-181. Accessed September 15, 2021. DOI: 10.1177/1470412915595587.

[34] Z. Zontou, "UrbanDig Project: Theater for Neighbourhoods (in Conversation with George Sachinis)", in *Re-Defining Theater. Communities: International Perspectives on Community-Conscious Theater-Making*, edited by M. Galea and S. Musca, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2020.

[35] E. Hamalidi, "Public (?) Art in the Urban Area. Some Thoughts about the Greek Example with Eemphasis on the City of Athens", in *Art-Space-Views of Development in Greece of the Crisis*, edited by A. Loukaki and D. Planzos, Athens: Limon, 2018 [in Greek].

[36] A. Goldbard, *Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development*, New York: The Rockfeller Foundation, 2000 and Id., *The New Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development*, Oakland, CA: New Village, 2006.

[37] C. Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, London: Verso, 2012.

[38] F. Matarasso, *A Restless Art. How Participation Won and Why It Matters*, Lisbon-London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2019.

[39] S. Jackson. *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*, New York: Routledge, 2011.

[40] D. Vaiou, A. Kalandides, "Practices of Solidarity in Athens: Reconfigurations of Public Space and Urban Citizenship", *Citizenship Studies*, 21, 4 (2017): 440-454. Accessed September 10, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/13621025.2017.1307605.

[41] A. Arampatzi, "Social Solidarity Economy and Urban Commoning in Post-Crisis Contexts: Madrid and Athens in a Comparative Perspective", *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 2020. Accessed September 16, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/07352166.2020.1814677.

[42] M. Lavanga *et al*., "Creative Entrepreneurship and Urban Space: Exploring the Location Preferences of Creative Professionals in Athens during the Economic Recession", *The Greek Review of Social Research*, 153 (2020): 5-36. https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.22340. Accessed 20 February, 2022.

[43] N. Karachalis, "Temporary Use as a Participatory Placemaking Tool to Support Cultural Initiatives and Its Connection to City Marketing Strategies: The Case of Athens", *Sustainability*, 13, 4 (2021): 1652. Accessed February 15, 2022. DOI: 10.3390/su13041652.

[44] A first example of such projects was *This is Athens-Polis* (2018-2019), a placemaking initiative that invited citizens and creatives of Athens to co-create the city through temporary interventions in the public space and the reopening of closed shops in abandoned areas of the city. One of the areas of intervention was

4. METHODOLOGY

Our methodology builds on the case study approach[45], used with an instrumental purpose in mind. We explore two "site-determined, site-oriented, site-referenced, site-conscious, site-responsible, site-related"[46] cases to understand how grassroots artistic practices in public space cultivate transcultural encounters and urban co-existence. The choice of the selected artistic interventions, UrbanDig_Omonia and Victoria Square Project, was motivated by their relevance to the subject matter, as the locations where they took place are representative of a larger pool of challenges experienced by the city as explained above.

4.1. *UrbanDigProject_Omonia*

UrbanDig Project (UDP) is developed by the performing arts company, Ohi Pezoume, established in Athens in 2004. UDP consists in an interdisciplinary platform that uses research, community and artistic practices to provide ground for people's interaction in the city with the aim to (co)-create a site-specific performance that constitutes the festive finale of a complete UrbanDig Project.

The public cuts in support to creative initiatives after 2008, resulted in the organisation examining 'how co-creation could open up powerful new ways of making art at a time of insecurity and suffering'[47]. *Dourgouti Island Hotel Project* [48] was one of the first showcases of the collective's work in this direction. Omonia, which in English stands for 'Concord' – is a square located in the center of Athens that has been the subject of a large palette of urban development experiments and reconstructions throughout the years. It is often referred to as a place of filthiness, aesthetic failure and danger. With *UDP_Omonia* the collective placed itself between 2015 and 2017 on the square, exploring the spatio-temporal context of the last decade marked by economic crisis, increased migration flows and social unrest.

4.2. *Victoria Square Project*

Victoria Square Project (VSP) defines itself as a 'social sculpture'[49]. It is a venue and project initiated by the artist Rick Lowe, an American artist who became known with his Row Houses where he transformed an abandoned African-American neighborhood

Theatrou Square, a 'home' to various immigrant groups. A second project was Curating the Limbo, a EU funded project in the framework of the Urban Innovative Actions programme that aimed in actively supporting refugees to exit the 'limbo' state caused by long-time inactiveness and uncertainty through participatory activities bringing them also closer together with other Athenians.

[45] R.E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995.

[46] M. Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002: 1.

[47] Matarasso, *A Restless Art. How Participation Won and Why It Matters*, 180.

[48] D. Chatziefstathiou, C. Ananiadis, G. Sachinis, "Dourgouti Island Hotel Project: An UrbanDig Project", *Universal Journal of Management*, 6, 3 (2018): 91-97. DOI: 10.13189/ujm.2018.060302. Accessed September 12, 2021.

[49] In the '70s, the German artist Joseph Beuys defined 'social sculpture' as an art practice that takes place in the social realm, requires social engagement, and leads to the transformation of society through the release of popular creativity.

in Houston, Texas into a land of artistic and social experiments. VSP is located a few meters from Victoria Square, a 'low-key crossroads for people of myriad nationalities, newly settled or passing through Greece'[50].

What started as an ephemeral project upon invitation to Lowe to participate in documenta14, the international art exhibition that was hosted in Athens in 2017, developed into an artistic space of belonging within a community in Athens that has become polarised in response to the refugee crisis. A few decades ago, Victoria was one of the best and most sought after neighborhoods in Athens by the bourgeoisie at that time, but slowly lost its past glory mainly due to its abandonment by its original inhabitants and its 'occupation' by various 'tribes'[51]. In 2020, amidst the Covid-19 crisis, dozens of refugees continued to sleep rough at Victoria Square following a Migration Ministry decision to bring thousands of successful asylum seekers to the mainland in an effort to decongest the island camps.

For the UDP case the paper builds on material collected during the period 2015-2017 as part of an extended artistic research process around the square which included thirty-six semi-structured interviews to 'users' of the square and participants in the UDP activities, as well as focus groups, historical/ aspirations/ sensory and skills mapping processes and artistic activations in an artistic-research and community engagement experiment. The process can be seen both as an artistic research and as an arts-based research retro-alimenting each other along the way[52]. Authors, as members of the UrbanDig collective, had been involved in the UrbanDig_Omonia project, both as researchers and data collectors, as well as facilitators, and performers. All three authors of the paper, in their research capacity complemented the artistic research work of the collective. This resulted in various outcomes, including an unpublished master thesis[53] exploring Otherness and co-existence in Omonia and a commissioned research project[54] on the dynamics of resilience that emerge on the square.

The second case study, that of Victoria Square Project, remains a bit less explored in terms of data collection, however it complements the fieldwork to offer a different illustration of the subject matter. The exploration is also more recent. The data explored include the results of a participatory mapping exercise undertaken by the UrbanDig team on Victoria Square in December 2018, complemented by semi-structured interviews conducted during July-September 2021 with two members of the VSP staff and one free-lance project manager.

[50] More information available at: http://victoriasquareproject.gr/. Accessed September 12, 2021.

[51] D. Athinakis, "I gerasmeni plateia Viktorias kai oi fules tis", 12.12.2017 *Kathimerini,* December 12, 2017. Accessed September 23, 2021. https://www.kathimerini.gr/society/938866/i-gerasmeni-plateia-viktorias-kai-oi-fyles-tis/ [in Greek].

[52] N. Carpentier, J. Sumiala, "Introduction: Arts-Based Research in Communication and Media Studies", *Comunicazioni sociali*, 1 (2021): 3-10. Accessed February 15, 2022. DOI: 10.26350/001200_000125.

[53] K. Protonotariou, *Towards a Pilot Grid for a Vibrant City: Artistic Practices as Potential Enablers of Co-Existence through the Case Study of UrbanDig Omonia*, Unpublished master thesis for the master programme on Architecture and Design, National Technical University of Athens, 2018 [in Greek].

[54] UrbanDig Project, *Urban Resilience Indicators: Defining Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the case of Omonia Square and Market*, Athens: 100 Resilient Cities, 2017 (unpublished document commissioned in the framework of the Athens Resilience Strategy).

Image 1 - *Miss Omonia* (photo by Irini Vosgerau)

Image 2 - *Omonia Station 1* (photo by Irini Vosgerau)

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1. *Constructions of Otherness and co-existence*

Our research showed that both squares are representative of the construction mechanisms of the 'Self' and the 'Other' imaginary in the backdrop of a crisis-hit Athens. Omonia is seen as a place of transit and of merged identities within a high acceleration of everyday life and exchange. In the collective consciousness Omonia is a hangout and a crossroad, a meeting place and a hideout"[55]. If Omonia is associated with the public imaginary as a place of *transit*, Victoria square became a (temporary and permanent) *home* for thousands of immigrants during the last years. Poor infrastructure on and around the squares and fear of the 'Other' have been the two elements that were highlighted by most informants during our research.

The first one (poor infrastructure) is related mostly with the material space. Omonia is described as dull and dirty: "*There are no clean toilets. People piss on the streets. The whole atmosphere makes you feel dirty. Unbearable in gloomy days*" (worker of mobile telephone company on Omonia square). The harvesting of a participatory mapping run by UrbanDig project on Victoria Square in December 2018, revealed similar findings: "*abandonded shops*" and "*degradation*". At times, a comparison between the two squares was also attempted *it is nice to sit and feel safe, a meeting point with friends, many immigrants but it is better than Omonia* (immigrant working on Victoria square). This understanding of the material space contributes to a construction of fear by the dominant public discourse (state, media, land market) and the construction of stereotypes both as a product and as producers of social behaviors nurtured by certain concepts (criminality, migration, terrorism, drugs, death, etc.) and institutions (state power, police, media etc.).

The second one (fear of the 'Other') confirms what we have explained above: the wide feeling of uncertainty and precarity among Greek society resulted to a sort of 'cultural trauma' on collective memory and identify, self-image, as well as on the image of the Other[56]. Migrant communities are blamed for this 'bad fate' of the autochthon population, especially unemployment. The discourse of informants during our research was also revelatory of this aspect. A Greek young man that took part in the participatory mapping on Victoria Square said, "*there are no many jobs for others than people from Pakistan and Banghladesh*". Socio-spatial stereotypes create feelings of 'desirability' and 'avoidance' towards specific components of an urban area. These feelings can propel stigmatised regions into a vicious circle of public disinvestment, social degradation, and more stereotyping[57]. Visitors to the final performance of UDP_Omonia that were questioned as part of the evaluation of the event as well as participants of the community mapping in Victoria Square, reproduced mostly the stereotypical public discourse and dominant narratives regarding the dangerous city center and the 'Other'. Fear is not only observed among Greeks, but also on different immigrant groups. "*We only go around*

[55] T. Andriopoulos, "Omonia Square as a Limit and a Narrator", *Athens Social Atlas*, 2015. Accessed September 13, 2021. https://www.athenssocialatlas.gr/en/article/omonia-square/.

[56] A. Monnier, "La crise grecque sous l'angle du 'trauma'?", *Mots. Les langages du politique*, 115 (2017): 73-88. Accessed February 22, 2022. DOI:10.4000/mots.22956.

[57] S. Matei, S. Ball-Rokeach, S. Ungurean, "Communication Channels, Spatial Stereotyping and Urban Conflict: A Cross-Scale and Spatio-Temporal Perspective", *Journal of Dispute Resolution*, 1 (2007): 195-204.

Omonoia, because we are afraid of the foreigners on the square. [...] I am afraid even though nothing ever happened to me" (Bulgarian woman).

We observe that trying to understand Self/ Other nexuses[58] is a process of negotiation between the self (conceived as a reflexive agent), the Other (who comes as a demand for care and responsibility) and the established structures of social, cultural and economic recognition. A Syrian refugee on Omonia said "*I am a guest here. And as such I honor my hosts. We know we are among abnormal rogues sometimes, but we feel there is nowhere else to go*". "*Greeks don't mingle*", say some Pakistanis on Omonia square, while the owner of a small restaurant argued that "*In the past all professionals were friends. Nowadays, I don't think so any more, since things became hard for all of us*". It seems that the different communities are used to each other's presence, but there is not a meeting point. A shop owner on Omonia square mentioned: "*Most of them are foreigners that don't have anywhere else to go […]. Syrians, Iraquis, you know […]. They are waiting […] They are quiet, they don't enter into trouble […]. They often buy from our shops that we have cheap things*". A Greek shop owner in one of Omonia's galleries mentioned: *"Inside the gallery it is like if you were in a village, in a small community, we all love each other*". One could say that the 'locals' on the two squares – both Greeks and immigrants – tolerate each other in a unique 'ecosystem of survival'[59].

5.2. *Artistic practices as the ice-breakers*

Our research showed us that the need for art and the central motivation to conceive and realise a performance or another artistic activity, turns out to be a powerful key to unlock several doors and enter the 'personal space' of the community. To put that simply, the artistic identity of the projects is a trustful 'answer' to the often anxious question 'who are you?'.

For example, 'Miss Omonia' was a dance performance inspired by 'mapping' through community engagement processes what is 'beneath the visible' on Omonia square. The intervention consisted into an interaction between a trumpeter, 'resident' of Omonia that collects the voices of visitors in a 'tent of silence' and a wandering woman looking for a new home in the public space of Omonia and trading her voice for this. It caused a certain 'shock' unfolding interrelations among the locals and between them and the 'strangers'. 'Trobadours' was a data-mining method gathering narrative interviews from shop owners around Omonia of various cultural backgrounds in return for the composition of a story-specific song. 'Hotel Transit' on Xouthou Street, a small pedestrian street few meters from Omonia Square activated through an aspirations pantomime and artistic installation on the street engaging Greek and migrant communities.

All these activities facilitated interaction and engagement- often non-explicitly intentional. To exemplify this, we explain one of the processes that took place in Omonia. During the preparation phase for the last performance, there were rehearsals taking place on the square. During this time, young immigrants mainly from Pakistan and Afghanistan contributed, by their own initiative, as they could: they took care or carried things from one place to another, helped with putting together the scenography etc. The continuous presence of the UrbanDig team on the square allowed the cultivation of

[58] I. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988.

[59] UrbanDig Project, 2017.

human relationships. One of the shop owners offered water everyday to the members of the artistic group, as a gesture of gratitude: "*You are here doing theater everyday for us for free*", he said.

It is this continuous presence on site that cultivates the relationships and facilitates the encounter. In VSP case, the existence of a physical space a few meters from the square and the variety of activities organised, mobilise the wider neighborhood but also visitors. VSP is currently running a curatorial programme under the title *Who Is the Contemporary Athenian?* as an attempt to 'identify concretely the elements that define an inclusive Athenian society today beyond labels like 'immigrant', refugee, first or second generation, Greek etc, but under the common ground of the neighbors and co-citizens[60]'. Other activities deploying artistic means include the educational programme Victoria NOW, an interdisciplinary program of modern creation familisaring different audiences with immigration, identity and co-creating collective works that reflect the contemporary identity of the neighborhood, or the #Next Stop Victoria project that ran in 2020. Aiming to contribute to the formulation of a new collective narrative in Victoria, the project brought together different communities, with local history and cultural heritage as a vehicle, taking as a starting point the imprints of Greek-German relations preserved in the urban landscape and the collective memory of the region. VSP has recently also started an artist-in-residency programme and curated an exhibition of a public artwork at the end of 2021 by Albanian artist Adrian Paci on the square under the title 'We apologize'[61]. These projects and presence on the square produce the curiosity of neighbors and passers-by. The projects and production coordinator explained that when she started working for VSP, often those passing by were asking "are you a place for refugees?" and she said:

> *"no, we are a place for everyone […]. It was a concept that was not so familiar. But little by little I realise that there has become a kind of a reference to the neighborhood and that themselves want to be in a place that is part of accepting different groups in the neighborhood"* (interview with VSP projects and production coordinator).

5.3. *Performing utopia*

In both initiatives, often the artistic interventions, aim to represent the multicultural community, giving the possibility to all those involved throughout the artistic research process to express their needs and aspirations in relation to society[62]. On the Victoria Square community mapping, participants were asked what would they wish to see on the square. Besides infrastructure and safety related improvements, answers included "*children on the square on a creative co-habitant*", "*a community library and co-work-*

[60] Taken from project description available at: https://www.victoriasquareproject.gr/2020-2030. Accessed September 12, 2021.

[61] It is interesting to read the disclaimer of the exhibition to understand the way these artistic initiatives respect the public space and its inhabitants: "Please accept our sincere apologies for any inconvenience that may arise from the presence of the installation in Victoria Square. We understand that even a small shift from our everyday itinerary and routine may be annoying, and we acknowledge the difficulty in coexisting with what is 'new', 'other', or "unknown" – qualities that may indeed challenge the things we take as given in our everyday lives". Consulted on https://www.victoriasquareproject.gr/post/we-apologize-by-adrian-paci. Accessed February 22, 2022.

[62] G. Verschelden, E. Van Eeghem, R. Steel, S. De Visscher, C. Dekeyrel, "Positioning Community Art Practices in Urban Cracks", *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 31, 3 (2012): 277-291.

ing spaces for artists", "*common activities, multilingual and multicultural*", "*more union", and "things like the ones you do to bring people together*". On Omonia square, those shop owners that participated in the Troubadours activity, were emotional that their story was sang. When interviewed to share their impressions after the end of the project, they used words as "*satisfaction*', "*I was touched*", "*my phycology changed*", "*I felt again as a child*", "*the opinion of people on the area improved for the better*", *or* "*the dull colour of Omonia changed for a while*".

In the same time, the artistic interventions introduce other Athenians, other visitors, to the multicultural character of those corners of the city. As Giorgos Sachinis, the director and co-founder of the performing arts company and of the project has put it[63]:

> We train ourselves in employing our artistic tools and vocabulary to introduce a community-in-the-making to each other, to inspire trust, to un-lock empathy, perception, imagination about a neighbourhood.

Visitors (16 people, 11 women and 5 men, all Greek) that assisted to the final performance of the UDP in Omonia, were asked whether their opinion about Omonia changed after the performance. Sixty three percent of them had replied that their vision of the square was negative to very negative. After the performance, thirty-seven percent of them replied that it shifted to a more friendly and safe vision: "*I saw some corners through a different perspective*", "*dynamic, not dangerous, friendly*", "*empathy*", "*familiarisation*" were some of their answers. All of them had identified the multicultural aspect of the square as a negative element prior to their visit.

Our research showed that by using public space as a surface for interaction and communication, artists and cultural initiatives create alternative spaces in the city that operate in *material space* requiring *physical presence and activity,* they develop within the realm of *imagination*, facilitate ideals and mental constructions and become vehicles for community engagement and participatory action across cultures. Artistic initiatives in multicultural sites unlock empathy, perception and imagination and create the conditions for urban co-existence. They open doors to the community and engage with it, as people and communities trust the project's modest artistic mission and are responsive to it. At the same time, they create bridges, sometimes ephemeral, others more lasting, where different stakeholders come together who perhaps wouldn't collaborate if it weren't for a ludic and artistic process and/ or result. Thirdly, they empower communities, especially the less privileged and collaborate to turn the people's *perceived* and *lived* notions of space into something that will be viewed and heard by many (stories, temporary architectural interventions, performance). In such a framework, artists and cultural operators become mediators of global realities, bridging 'everyday otherness' in a community, while art is not a sterilised process but an ongoing, continuously unfinished reporting from the front of the (un) measurable, the (in-)visible, the (un-) real.

[63] Zontou, "UrbanDig Project: Theater for Neighbourhoods".

Image 3 - *Mapping practices on Victoria Square by UrbanDig project*

5.4. *Continuous community engagement as evaluation praxis*

There is little 'evidence' – in Belfiore's[64] critical understanding of the word – about how participatory and socially engaged arts practices, such as the ones described in our case studies, are being evaluated and assessed-especially in relation to their contribution to transcultural dialogue – and on whose terms[65]. Keeping in mind that the cultural and artistic sector has been confronted with questions of 'integration' and the 'intercultural opening' of establishments, especially in the context of refugee movements[66], it is necessary to look for the right tools and evaluation frameworks. We claim, however, that it is the community engagement mechanisms deployed by such initiatives on the ground themselves, which serve as an *evaluation praxis*. Community engagement as evaluation praxis allows the organisations to understand the impact of their activities on the populations addressed and to re-orientate their work if needed to make it more relevant. At the same time, data gathered during the community engagement processes could serve

[64] E. Belfiore, "Is It Really about the Evidence? Argument, Persuasion, and the Power of Ideas in Cultural Policy", *Cultural Trends*, 2021. Accessed February 22, 2022. DOI:10.1080/09548963.2021.1991230

[65] S. Hope, "Cultural Measurement on Whose Terms? Critical Friends as an Experiment in Participant-Led Evaluation", in *Making Culture Count*, edited by L. MacDowall *et al.*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015: 282-297.

[66] A. Moser, "Cultural Management and Policy in the 'Migration Society'. Inequalities and Starting Points for a Critical Reorientation", *European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy*, 10, 1 (2020): 4-18.

as the 'evidence' needed for cultural policymaking, as well as wider strategies of social cohesion and inclusion.

Community engagement of such artistic initiatives as evaluation praxis goes beyond an accountability paradigm of evaluation. It consists in a practice embedded in the unfolding of events and activities that guarantees continuous feedback and nurtures the evolution of projects. A community engagement officer is appointed by both UDP and VSP as part of their work on the ground. In the case of UDP, the community engagement officer appointed for the duration of the project has the responsibility to connect with the local communities, cultivate them and create spaces of exchange and encounter and keeping quantitative records, e.g. numerical data of participation and cooperation in the activities or data on the profile of those engaged, as well as the diversity of those addressed through a skills and interests mapping that puts together the 'anthropogeography' of the project. Evaluation- related elements that are being explored throughout the community engagement practices include knowledge transfer (what's new?), appropriation (what changed regarding feeling of comfort, active participation, desire to continue?), networking (have improbable and cross-sectoral bridges been constructed?), and special purpose (finally, has the action succeed in its specific local goals?). The evaluation methods deployed serve both as evaluation and community engagement methods and include facilitated discussions for feedback (round tables, one-to-one interviews, world cafés, assemblies), mapping processes (production of maps with reference to certain questions: e.g. mark your favorite spot before and after the action to measure both familiarisation / appropriation with public space) and also the behavioral effects of knowledge gained about the space through the action, thus constituting an element of artistic research in the same time.

The difference in the case of VSP is the existence of a physical space that is the base of operations for the organisation's work. Interviewees explained that documenting their projects development enters into a dialogical relation with residents and users.

> "*We document the process by observing and interviewing residents. This has often made us change ideas. Our progress is documented daily in the project's diary. It is a relational process for us. When you are about to position an art piece on public space, you are an invader – it may be relevant to some while to others no. And you need to know"* (interview with VSP General Manager).

The existence of a permanent operations space allows VSP to have a more long-term approach to their community engagement work. A staff member dedicated to community engagement has been appointed during the last years to work exclusively on this and all the 'evidence' collected serves both to inform the artistic processes but also understanding their relevance to the community.

> "*This person does constant research in the public space when we want to take action. We don't want to create a firework, we want to understand the audiences, how to approach them, their needs, their age groups, and to cope with this multicultural aspect [of the neighborhood] by structuring our approach and in the same time nurturing our own artistic practices"* (interview with VSP projects and production coordinator).

Although the potential complementary value of the third eye perspective of an appointed external evaluator was acknowledged by one of the co-initiators and project man-

agers of #Next Stop Victoria as a missing part in their internal evaluation exercise[67], the empirical knowledge of those implementing and being engaged in the project was underlined by most interviewees as of utmost importance. The same interviewee also suggested that the best way to capture the impact of the project is to collaborate with community representatives themselves, turning them into *actors* and not *subjects* of the evaluation praxis.

6. CONCLUSION

Through the above two case studies, we have explored how artistic initiatives have been inviting to see the space, the site as a source of imagining alternative ways of being in the city, beyond those defined by existing relations of power, contributing to turning Athens into a 'museum of possibilities'[68]. Through a process of re-negotiating the public space as common good and a space of participation and concord, these artistic initiatives familiarise audiences to 'Otherness' and catalyse new relationships with space, guided by what the 'locals' (both Greeks and non Greeks) reveal about public space as *lived space*.

What distinguishes grassroots artistic practices in the public space is that they seem to seek something more than attracting audiences: they aim at engaging the social base and targeting 'difficult places', here meaning places semantically charged with notions of migration, crisis, violence, and abandonment. Art's 'ice-breaking' potential in engaging with space, different communities and different stakeholders is still to be further explored, however the two case studies offer an entry point to this. Within this framework, new responsibilities arise for those who work in culture, especially in a city where no formulated cultural policy or strategy has been articulated, mostly due to 'a failure of successive city administrations to recognise the important role of culture in the economic and social wellbeing of the city and to the city's pluralistic identity'[69]. Although trying to 'find new ways of communicating and programming, and to involve new players with different cultural backgrounds in cultural institutions'[70] has been a topic of discussion, the potential of the encounters on urban public space and their mobilisation through artistic practices are underexplored into cultural policy discourse. While, as Wessendorf[71], suggests, although such 'encounters in public associational space do not necessarily enhance deeper cultural understanding, the absence of such encounters can enhance prejudice', therefore a better understanding of their contribution to transcultural dialogue is needed.

[67] I. Gratsia, A. Angeliki Tseliou, *Seeking German Traces in Victoria Square. Methodology – Tools – Outcomes*, 2020. Available at: https://bc8080c8-277e-49ee-b767a3c140d54b0e.filesusr.com/ugd/871fc3_ ec602db8e4354738bf01741e 7010da24.pdf. Accessed September 30, 2021.

[68] M. Mouliou, "Athens as a Museum of Possibilities: Reflections on Social Innovation and Cultural Production", *Museum International*, 71, 3-4 (2019): 16-27. Accessed September 13, 2021. DOI: 10.1080/13500775.2019.1706943.

[69] R. Palmer, *Athens City Resilience through Culture. British Council and 1000 Resilient Cities Report*, British Council: Athens, 2018. Available at: https://www.britishcouncil.gr/en/programmes/arts/athens-resilient-city. Accessed September 30, 2021.

[70] B. Mandel, "From 'Serving' Public Arts Institutions to Creating Intercultural Contexts: Cultural Management in Germany and New Challenges for Training", *ENCATC Journal of Cultural Management and Policy*, 6, 1 (2016): 5-12 (9).

[71] S, Wessendorf, "Being Open, but Sometimes Closed. Conviviality in a Superdiverse London Neighbourhood", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 17, 4 (2014): 392-405.

Approaching diversity constitutes a challenge for every contemporary city, raising the question of how resilient the city is. In order to tackle this question there is a need to involve in the debate all relevant actors and their different perceptions, while turning 'neighborhood tensions into opportunities for meaningful interaction and social change'[72]. The contemporary city calls for a more systematic and comprehensive 'culturally sensitive' approach that recognises that culture is a driving force for peaceful co-existence.

[72] L. Crane, "The Arts as Community Citizen: The Value of Being a Good Neighbor", *Building Communities, not Audiences. The Future of the Arts in the United States*, edited by Doug Borwick Winstons-Salem, 2012: 87.

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AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Abstract
Audience Engagement is a challenging concept. There is no one shared definition and can be an ambivalent term especially when put in relation to the aim of 'diversifying' audiences. The article aims to contribute to the understanding of how Audience Engagement can be both framed and implemented as a process which is able to foster and give value to cultural diversity. To this end, we firstly provide a framework of culture and arts as a space of citizenship while discussing key issues that set the stage for an understanding of Audience Engagement as a process of cultural participation and promotion of cultural diversity. In the second part of the article we present an ongoing action-research, implemented in the project "Performing Gender- Dancing in Your Shoes-DIYS" (Creative Europe 2020-2023). The initial insights presented in this essay enrich the understanding of Audience Engagement, by shedding light on the role of co-creation and of cultural operators (organizations and artists) in the mediation of a "constitution of a cosmopolitan imaginary".

Keywords
Audience Engagement; cultural participation; cultural citizenship; mediation; co-creation; aesthetic cosmopolitanism.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Audience Engagement is a challenging concept. There is no one shared definition. It is an "expression used in practice and literature in a very different and not codified way, like the many expressions that belong to the semantics of Audience Development"[1].

Engagement itself is a "loose and vague concept[2], particularly when used in isolation. Complementary to this, scholars have underlined how the field of cultural policies is characterised by a risk of deliberate ambiguity[3], since the excessively vague use of

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[1] A. Bollo *et al*., *Study on Audience Development. How to Place Audiences at the Centre of Cultural Organisations*, EU Commission, 2017, 55.

[2] B. Walmsley, *Audience Engagement in the Performing Arts. A Critical Analysis*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 9.

[3] C. Gray, "Ambiguity and Cultural Policies", *Nordic Journal of Cultural policy*, 1, 18 (2015): 66-80.

terms makes it difficult to discuss the outcomes of a policy. This is especially a risk when Audience Engagement is put in relation to the aim of 'diversifying' audiences.

Moreover, we argue that Audience Engagement run the risk of being conceived as a mere way of marketing audiences to 'fill the theatre', often under pressure to attract financing.

In this contribution we do not set out to provide a conclusive definition of Audience Engagement, nor are we interested in pursuing a prescriptive approach. On the contrary, the article aims to contribute to the understanding of how Audience Engagement can be both framed and implemented as a process which is able to foster and give value to cultural diversity.

This research assumes that engagement is not only a matter of reaching out to audiences, rather it is a process that deeply intersects issues of social and cognitive justice[4], and cultural citizenship[5].

To this end, we firstly provide an overview of a number of perspectives that can contribute to framing culture and arts as a space of performative citizenship[6] while discussing key issues that set the stage for an understanding of Audience Engagement as a process of cultural participation[7] and promotion of cultural diversity.

In the second part of the article we will present an ongoing action-research, implemented in the project "Performing Gender- Dancing in Your Shoes-DIYS" (Creative Europe 2020-2023). In particular, we discuss a number of initial insights, concerning meanings and practices of Audience Engagement that are emerging in this phase of the project.

2. Art and culture as a space of citizenship

"While citizenship is defined as the formal, legal frameworks that underpin belonging to a nation, cultural citizenship refers to the informal, cultural dimensions that facilitate belonging and enable one to contribute to, and shape, the dominant culture"[8].

There are different modalities in which these informal dimensions of citizenship can be performed. Our attention focuses in particular on the sphere of arts and cultural expression as a space of cultural participation and, in a recursive way, of enactment of citizenship[9] and cultural diversity.

To shed light on this view we will refer to a number of complementary perspectives.

The first concerns what Dahlgren[10] defines as *civic cultures*, cultural resources that citizens can tap into in order to participate and 'become citizens'. Civic cultures are also

[4] B. De Sousa Santos, *Another Knowledge Is Possible. Beyond Northern Epistemologies*, London: Verso, 2007.

[5] G. Allegrini, "Prospettive di analisi della dimensione culturale del welfare di comunità", in *Welfare culturale. La dimensione della cultura nei processi di welfare di comunità*, edited by G. Manzoli and R. Paltrinieri, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2021: 91-114.

[6] E. Isin, G. Nielson, *Acts of Citizenship*, London: Zed Books, 2008.

[7] R. Paltrinieri, "Il valore sociale della cultura per lo sviluppo delle comunità e dei territori: cosa significa partecipazione culturale", *PANDORA*, 8, 9 (2019): 122-125.

[8] R. Khan *et al*., *Multiculturalism and Governance. Evaluating Art Policy. Engaging Cultural Citizenship*, Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 2017, 4.

[9] L. Iannelli, P. Musarò, eds., *Performative Citizenship. Public Art, Urban Design, and Political Participation*, Milano: Mimesis International, 2017; P. Hildebrand *et al*., eds., *Performing Citizenship. Bodies, Agencies, Limitations*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

[10] P. Dahlgren, "Reinventare la partecipazione. Civic agency e mondo della rete", in *Comunicazione e civic engagement*, edited by R. Bartoletti and F. Faccioli, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2013: 17-37.

part of a broader civic environment which operates as an enabling environment, since it can structure the opportunities of participation. Social capital, the organisational resources of a group or a community, but also including institutional trust, are factors that can inform this type of civic environment.

The second concerns what Appadurai[11] defines as "cultural capacities to aspire" which determine the possibility of re-appropriation of representations and the creation of alternative scenarios about how issues, categories, solutions are socially and discursively constructed. This process deeply intersects with a process of *imagination*, that can set up a transformation of cultural and cognitive repertoires, questioning which types of representation are reproduced, opening up new meanings and actions. These capacities are not distributed evenly in the society due to social inequalities, and they are also strictly connected with the possibility to dissent.

A complementary perspective is the idea of "le partage du sensible", elaborated by Rancière, which is concerned with how ideas, abilities and experiences are distributed and shared. Indeed, as stated by the author: "Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time"[12]. In this sense politics consists in the reconfiguration of the distribution of the sensible through the setting up of "scenes of dissensus"[13].

As underlined by Papastergiadis[14] imagination is a "world picture-making process". And "through the perpetual function of the imaginative world picture-making, aesthetic is always cosmopolitan".

The term Cosmopolitanism has been conceived "as both the product of an idea of world and ideal form of global citizenship"[15]. However, various interpretations of universalism have been developed by different theoretical approaches to cosmopolitanism. As the author points out a key contribution comes from a critical approach, since it tries to address the terms of equity and also to sharpen the focus on the logic of exclusion, thus rethinking universality through diversity. This interpretation sees universalism as based on an essential multiplicity and thus on the idea of dialogue[16] and mutual interaction between context-bound positions. Universalism in this perspective is shaped by "the interminable process of cross-cultural dialogue". The focus is therefore on dialogue between alternate interpretations. This version of universalism is key to frame a critical theory of cosmopolitanism since it postulates an "iterative process where cosmopolitanism is conceived not as a state that is comprised of fixed categories, but as the ongoing activity through which multiple identities communicate with each other within an arena of mutual recognition"[17] .

As stated by the author, it should however overcome a "deliberative" interpretation of cosmopolitanism and look at the "signs of an aesthetic cosmopolitanism". Thus, the

[11] A. Appadurai, *Le aspirazioni nutrono la democrazia*, Milano: Et al. Edizioni, 2011; *Il futuro come fatto culturale: saggi sulla condizione globale*, Milano: Raffello Cortina Editore, 2014.

[12] J. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*. *The Distribution of the Sensible*, London: Continuum, 2004, 13.

[13] J. Rancière, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, London-New York: Continuum, 2010, 69.

[14] N. Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, Malden: Polity Press, 2012, 90.

[15] *Ibid*., 81.

[16] E. Balibar, *Politics and the Other Scene*, London: Verso, 2002.

[17] Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, 88.

focus is on the "aesthetic interest in others and difference" and on the "imaginary constitution of cosmopolitanism through aesthetic practices"[18].

3. Audience engagement, cultural participation and the promotion of cultural diversity

Audience Engagement is usually considered as a part of a broader strategy of Audience Development. The latter term was originally used in the field of cultural marketing. Nowadays it is broadly seen as an approach aimed at placing the public at the centre of everything the organization does and at making the arts widely accessible[19].

The European Commission has invested heavily in promoting cultural access through the Creative Europe project (2014-2020).

Within that framework Audience Development has been defined as:

> a strategic, dynamic and interactive process of making the arts widely accessible. It aims at engaging individuals and communities in experiencing, enjoying, participating in and valuing the arts through various means available today for cultural operators, from digital tools to volunteering, from co-creation to partnerships. Audience development can be understood in various ways, depending on its objectives and target groups.

Access is also connected with the different types of publics to be reached[20]. These include:

• Audience *by habit*: people who habitually attend and/or participate in cultural activities. Here different strategies are possible, like audience education or taste cultivation to increase and diversify content and attendance.

• Audience *by choice*: people who are not used to participating due to a lack of opportunities or inadequate financial resources.

• Audience *by surprise*: people who are hard to reach/indifferent/or even hostile who do not participate in any cultural activity for a complex range of reasons, related to social exclusion factors, education and accessibility.

This classification encompasses three main aims. The first aim is *Widening*, which entails increasing audience numbers through attracting a public with the same socio-demographic profile as the current audience and attracting new audiences. The second is *Deepening*, which refers to enhancing the experience of the current audiences and/or encouraging them to discover more complex art forms.

Finally, *diversifying* refers to attracting people with a different socio-demographic profile to the current audiences, including people with no previous contact with the arts.

This interpretation of Audience Development sheds light on a number of significant aspects: the necessity of taking into consideration *different types of publics*, the importance of implementing *different modalities of participation*, the focus on the *access* to culture, the *relational dimension* implied in Audience Development – between cultural organisations and publics.

[18] *Ibid.*, 89-90.

[19] Bollo *et al*., *Study on Audience Development.*

[20] The classification reworks the proposal of Kawashiwa: N. Kawashima, "Beyond the Division of Attenders vs. Non-Attenders: A Study into Audience Development in Policy and Practice", Working Paper, Coventry: University of Warwick, 2000.

As part of this type of Audience Development process, engagement in literature is defined in two main ways.

The first considers it as a step in the Audience Development process[21]. The first step is the *reach* phase (*outreach*), aimed at attracting existing or potential publics mainly through promotional activities which are designed to break down material barriers, as well as symbolic barriers, by working on the overall organization of the cultural offer, by focusing on information and communication, on times, costs, and venues of the offer.

The second step is properly the *engage* phase which aims to activate a significant context of fruition, of interaction and of experiencing art, through different activities that range from art education (e.g. encounters with the public before or after a performance), co-curating (e.g. a board consisting of young critics) and co-creating[22].

The second definition refers to the idea of a "ladder" indicating ever-increasing degrees of involvement[23].

Brown and Novak-Leonard[24] propose an Audience Development spectrum based on the distinction of two main phases. The first is defined as receptive and ranges from the idea of being a spectator in strict sense of the word to the creation of an enabling environment for engagement through various activities, mainly in the field of art education, The second is the participative phase, based on three main types of activities:

a) *crowd sourcing,* which basically refers to a consultation or in making a contribution as participants with ideas and creative contents, to an already defined artistic product;

b) *co-creation* which coincides with participatory artistic practices, thus with contributing to an artistic process curated by an artist;

c) activities that coincide with the idea of 'the *audience as artist*', where audiences can take the control of the artistic process. Thus, these three types of activities foresee three different levels of "creative control": *curating*, *interpretative* and *inventive*.

We argue that the interpretation of engagement as outlined here poses a number of issues that need to be critically addressed in order to avoid a mere marketing approach and to favour engagement in relation to cultural diversity. In particular: the issue of access and its relationship with cultural participation and mediation; the role of cultural organizations and the way of framing the relationship between them and the audiences.

These issues will be discussed in the following sections of the article.

3.1. *Access, mediation and cultural diversity*

Access can be an ambivalent term. Indeed, it can be informed by different types of paradigms, which are often in tension with one another: the idea of the *democratization*

[21] A. Bollo, "Cinquanta sfumature di pubblico e la sfida dell'audience development", in *I pubblici della cultura. Audience Development, Audience Engagement*, edited by F. De Biase, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2014: 163-180.

[22] We will deeper analyse co-creation in the second part of this contribution.

[23] This idea of 'laddering' the intensity of involvement is consolidated in the literature on participation. See: S. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation", *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 35, 4 (1969): 216-224; N. Carpentier, "The Concept of Participation: If They Have Access and Interact, Do They Really Participate?", in *Performative Citizenship. Public Art, Urban Design, and Political Participation,* edited by L. Iannelli and P. Musarò, Milano: Mimesis International, 2017: 25-49.

[24] A.S. Brown, J.L. Novak-Leonard, in partnership with S. Gilbride, *Getting In On the Act. How Arts Groups Are Creating Opportunities for Active Participation*, San Francisco: James Irvin Foundation, 2011, 15-18.

of culture, that focuses on the *access to an existing culture*; and the idea of *cultural democracy*, which is based on the promotion of creativity through the appropriation of the means of cultural expression and of cultural production, as well as the idea of culture as a place for the recognition of "otherness"[25].

These ideas regarding the democratization of culture can also be seen in relation to an interpretation of access mainly as access to the cultural offer, thus stressing a more passive role of audiences in consuming arts.

The concept of cultural democracy, on the contrary, helps to shift from an idea of 'access to cultural offer' to 'access to *cultural experience*', thus opening up a more active role of audiences.

From this point of view the consumption of culture is understood as an interactive meaning-making process, involving a symbolic and narrative dimension. This also means that we can consider Audience Engagement as a process which is able to foster cultural participation, framed as the possibility of participating in knowledge production[26], and as a process which is able to promote "the imaginative world picture-making" mentioned in the first part of the article.

This understanding of access can deeply influence the practices of Audience Engagement.

Indeed, it suggests rethinking the way in which cultural organizations see themselves in their relationship with audiences.

The (out)reach activities, or the activities oriented towards enabling the engagement described above, can foster a more diversified cultural consumption. However, it is from the perspective of cultural participation that a further step can be implemented, asking cultural organizations to look at themselves in a more decentralized way, not only in relation *to*, but also in relationship *with* audiences.

This position of cultural organizations can be translated into two main practices of engagement. The first concerns the activation of *contexts for the engagement*, by considering how much participation 'makes sense' in different types of places. In urban sociology this perspective coincides with an ecological approach that sheds light on the relationship between participation and the social interactions that occur at different spatial scales, the latter seen as 'relational environments'[27].

In the field of arts and culture Brown and Novak-Leonard[28] propose we take a look at the "ecosystem of culture", which is made up of different types of venues seen in relation to each other: purpose-built arts venues; community spaces such as schools, places of worship, recreational facilities, libraries and other neighbourhood venues; outdoor public spaces such as parks, sidewalks and streets; virtual spaces, including websites, blogs, posts and games; the home.

A second practice of engagement refers to *mediation*. Mediation in the art field[29], and in the context of Audience Engagement, is usually framed as *mediation of art*. Ac-

[25] L. Bonet, E. Négrier, "The End(s) of National Cultures? Cultural Policy in the Face of Diversity", *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 17, 5 (2011): 574-589.

[26] R. Paltrinieri, G. Allegrini, *Partecipazione, processi di Immaginazione Civica e sfera pubblica*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2020, 33-90.

[27] D. Ciaffi, A. Mela, *La partecipazione. Dimensioni, spazi, strumenti*, Roma: Carocci, 2006, 81-124.

[28] Brown, Novak-Leonard, in partnership with Gilbride, *Getting In On the Act. How Arts Groups Are Creating Opportunities for Active Participation*, 7.

[29] For an account of Audience Development in the field of intercultural dialogue see: P. Musarò, *Atlas of Inclusion. Performing Arts, Intercultural Dialogue and Audience Development*, in *Right to the City, Performing Arts and Migration*, edited by R. Paltrinieri et al., Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2020: 66-86.

tivities of art education or co-curating activities mentioned above are part of this view. The attention is on the development of capabilities in codifying, de-codifying, negotiating meanings, and in the appropriation of aesthetic principles of an artistic practice or performance. This is also called the "work of the spectators"[30] based on the idea of the "performativity" of being a spectator[31].

Alongside this interpretation of mediation, we can identify another perspective which looks at art as a *space of mediation*. This perspective can be found in particular in the debate regarding heritage studies. According to Pecci [32]cultural heritage can be seen as "mediator of relations" where differences can be explored. A step further is proposed by Grechi[33] indeed, she underlines that what is needed nowadays is a process of "re-mediation", by welcoming a change of the medium that means to set up a change of the relationship between objects, spaces, bodies, publics, cultural operators. In this sense remediation can creatively become a way to produce counter- narratives and also to make visible invisible narratives.

3.2. *Culture of engagement and the role of cultural organisations*

The issues explored up to this point suggest that Audience Engagement should be framed as a broader process of fostering cultural citizenship and participation, in which a key role is played by cultural organisations. It has been also stressed that a number of critical aspects should be addressed in terms of paradigms and practices. Thus, we can maintain that there is a need to examine the 'culture of engagement' performed by cultural organizations and influencing the practices of engagement.

In particular, this culture of engagement should frame the publics not simply as the "focus" of the organization's attempts to develop effective Audience Development strategies, but as *partners* in a process of *exchange* that takes place in the cultural and artistic fields[34].

On one hand this view goes beyond an "audience focused" approach mainly oriented to a product-target vision, while on the other it does not coincide with a totally "audience led" approach based on the idea of "audience as artist". On the contrary Walmsley proposes an idea of audience centered organizations that are engaged in fostering artistically-led process, based on "an open culture of engagement by developing 'artistic exchange relationships' with audiences and treating them as creative partners"[35].

Finally, this culture of engagement entails attending to a multiplicity of relationships – between cultural organizations and the various publics, but also those between organizations, artists and publics – in horizontal terms. In this perspective it is possible

[30] M. Reason, A.M. Londelof, eds., *Experiencing Liveness in Contemporary Performance: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, London: Routledge, 2016.

[31] L. Gemini, R. Bartoletti, S. Brilli, "Il lavoro dello spettatore dal vivo: capitale culturale ed esperienza. Il caso del pubblico del Rossini Opera Festival", *Sociologia della comunicazione*, 56 (2018): 43-64.

[32] A.M. Pecci, "In between. Riflessioni situate su pratiche partecipate di mediazione dei patrimoni culturali", in *Rimediare, Ri-mediare. Saperi, tecnologie, culture, comunità, persone*, edited by F. de Biase, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2020: 151-162.

[33] G. Grechi, *Decolonizzare il museo. Mostrazioni, pratiche artistiche, sguardi incarnati*, Milano-Udine: Mimesis, 2021, 31.

[34] Walmsley, *Audience Engagement in Performing Arts*, 10.

[35] *Ibid*., 234.

to refer to the idea of 'Ecology of culture', as a metaphor [36] that underpins a non-hierarchical view, based on the interdependence of elements that make up a system of culture, and incorporating concepts of collaboration and reciprocity.

4. "PERFORMING GENDER-DANCING IN YOUR SHOES": AIMS AND METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

"Performing Gender-Dancing In You Shoes" (PG-DIYS)[36], is a three-year Audience Development project, funded by the Creative Europe program. It is aimed at developing a bond between cultural operators in the field of dance and performing arts and their local communities through a discussion on gender in the European dance system. The project is coordinated by Gender Bender- Cassero LGBTI Center based in Bologna (Italy) and the partnership includes 11 cultural organizations (dance festivals, LGBT+ associations, universities, production centres) from 8 European countries – France, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom.

In particular, it has the following aims:

1) improving the access to creative works in the field of dance, focusing on youngsters, the elderly, migrants and underrepresented LGBT+ groups, adopting an intersectional perspective;

2) exploring which kind of Audience Engagement practices can promote empowerment of marginalized groups and forms of solidarities, thus developing tools, languages and best practices that are able to create a space where cultural diversity can be experienced;

3) involving cultural organizations, dance makers, audience communities, policy institutions and academics in co-design and co-creation processes to deconstruct social and cultural dynamics, such as privilege and power[37];

4) pursuing a capacity building of cultural organizations, particularly in relation to a co-design and co-creation approach, as well as through the sharing of practices with local bodies and other cultural organisations;

5) promoting awareness of gender related issues (such as power relations and structures) and of the value of a co-creation approach at policy level in the field of art and culture.

In this context the Italian University partner – the Department of the Arts of Bologna University and its cultural laboratory, DAMSLab – is carrying out an action research[38] with the double aim of elaborating approaches to Audience Engagement based on co-design and co-creation, and able to value differences; understanding the social impact of those practices. The research foresees 4 main steps.

0. Planning: sharing the research plan as well as key concepts and assumptions;

[36] J. Holden, *The Ecology of Culture*, Report commissioned by Arts and Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value Project, Swindon, Wiltshire, 2015.

[36] http://www.performinggender.eu/

[37] The project foresees a yearlong community dance practice that will lead to a production approach, with the involvement of one rooted community dance maker per partner and a travelling dancemaker. After a residency in their own country, they will make a residency abroad.

[38] K. Lewin, "Action Research and Minority Problems", *Journal of Social Issues*, 2, 4 (1946): 34-46; P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Continuum, 2007. In this context we can also refer to a Public Sociology practice: G. Allegrini, "Sociologia pubblica e democrazia partecipativa. Una proposta di analisi critica", *Quaderni di Teoria Sociale*, 1 (2019): 61-84.

1. Exploring: collection of data by each partner concerning their specific context of intervention, previous experiences of co-design and co-creation, participative observation during the project meetings; in depth interviews and working sessions in small groups[39].

2. Action-Observation: translation of the shared knowledge into action; progressive understanding and systematization of practices; in-depth case study "Gender Bender – Cassero" with a participative observation of the overall process of Audience Engagement and through qualitative tools such as focus groups and interviews; social impact assessment[40] within the approach of the Theory of Change[41], with an ex ante, itinere and final quantitative and qualitative data collection.

3. Sedimentation: co-design sessions of a final handbook, among the partner and with local communities; systematization of data for social impact analysis and dissemination activities.

It should be stressed that the project is still ongoing. In this contribution we want to shed light on a number of insights emerging from the "exploring" phase, in particular in relation to the interviews and the working sessions in small groups, and from the initial part of the "action" phase – in particular concerning the participative observation during the co-design process with the Italian partner Gender Bender-Cassero and the two Italian dancemakers. Thus, we are not aiming to provide a systemized presentation of results, but an outline 'sketch' of a number of key issues and dimensions. In the following section we will present and discuss our initial findings, in the context of what have been discussed above.

5. AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT AS MEDIATION OF IMAGINARY CONSTITUTION OF COSMOPOLITANISM

In the theoretical part of the article we propose to look at the arts as a space of "performative citizenship" and aesthetic practices as an imaginary constitution of cosmopolitanism. From this perspective we also proposed to frame Audience Engagement as a way to pursue this type of "world-picture making process" where cultural diversity is considered.

The PGDYS project has embarked on this path of reframing Audience Engagement. In particular, we maintain that the project is fostering an understanding of Audience Engagement as *a mediation of an imaginary constitution of cosmopolitanism*. This implies an auto-reflexive posture of cultural operators, which is being played out on a daily basis in the PGDYS project.

The following analytical dimensions concerning the role of cultural organizations

[39] The interviews revolved around how the cultural organisations interpret Audience Engagement, how they have already experienced co-creation processes, how they see their role in these processes. A number of key issues emerged from the interviews which have been discussed in working sessions in small groups with artistic directors, audience developers and project managers in relation to the project. These sessions have been conducted with the "World café" methodology.

[40] Social impact of arts is a contested concept in the literature. There is no space for a satisfactory account of this issue here. Key references of the debate are: E. Belfiore, "Art as a Means of Alleviating Social Exclusion: Does It Really Work? A Critique of Instrumental Cultural Policies and Social impact Studies in the UK", *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 8, 1 (2002): 91-106; J. Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value. How Culture Has Become a Tool of Government Policy*, London: Demos, 2004; F. Matarasso, *Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts*, Stroud: Comedia, 1997.

[41] S. Hearn, A.L. Buffardi, *What Is Impact. A Methods Lab Publication*, London: Overseas Development Institute, 2016.

and the practices of Audience Engagement which emerged from the research constitute a first outline of this reframing path.

5.1. *Human-centred approach*

In presenting the idea of a culture of engagement we stressed that cultural organizations should be audience centred, thus playing a role in a type of exchange that occurs in the artistic field between creative partners.

More specifically an interpretation of the role of cultural organizations has emerged from the interviews that seems to go further. This is the idea of a *human-centered approach* based on dialogue and horizontal relationships:

> […] even when you are just programming you are doing a human specific approach when you put different values on top instead of the ones more related to a transactional relationship, in which hierarchies are staying in place and in which you can talk about topics but are strictly "for the artist" and audiences or people living in your cities are "targeted" as audience.
> We are trying to make these relations between the three parts (organization, artist and audiences) more hybrid. Re-arrange power, trying to recognize hierarchies and questioning them, we try to build trust as a pre-condition and the process is more important than the outcome (Interview, Boulevard Festival, NL).

This new arrangement cuts across different activities, from programming to production, deeply influencing the relationship with the artists:

> […] with the artists we were more intimates in the conversation, more in the process, figuring out the process together. Normally they present the project to us and we talk about very pragmatic results, we take in the program and sell the ticket. They shared a lot of personal thoughts […]. We had a lot of conversations […], so these conversations were really human, and the process was growing and growing, and everybody had to wait, our producer had to wait, the marketing staff also, the financial control as well, everyone had to change the way of thinking, so the organization had to change the structure in a way. Everybody had to adjust a little bit. Maybe this is also the human part of it. You have to have the patience, the confidence, the loyalty to the artist and the other way around. This is very human! (Interview, Boulevard Festival, NL).

A key aspect of this approach is the *focus on the process instead of the product*.

> One aspect is the work we do with dance choreographers to see what we create can lands, how we can connect with people in a broader sense […] and it's more about the energy of artist, way of thinking, way of working, way of coping with social issue, and it is less thinking in the finished production. We see that a lot of choreographers we worked with have the necessity to share their process and this is in itself also the product. So is a kind of a continuous research they are doing and what they are really aiming for is "how I can get people involved in the same processing, material, in finding answer to question" […] (Interview, Dans Brabant, NL)

Concerning the relationship with the audiences, this way of working results in the implementation of outreach activities geared to take care of relationships, instead of 'marketing audiences', as described in the first part of our contribution:

> And in connection with audience: to reach the people, going in the cities, with flyers putting them in the houses, local newspapers, we had to drink a lot of coffees, we had to do a lot of things to make people encounter […] (Boulevard Festival, NL)

This overall interpretation of the role of cultural organisations and of the practice of Audience Engagement involves a dimension of *values*:

> […] people being valued, working from what is the room and who is in the room and what they are bringing to the process; the working with artist is really about understand how to do that […] this person-centered approach has to do with understanding how you bring partners to the table and you then develop those relationships, is something about the co-organization of values (Interview, Yorkshire Dance, UK).

The values dimension also appears important in relation to the broader system of the dance sector, where practicing *solidarity* can be played out, in some way deeply influencing the market in the direction of its *humanization* and pursuing *collaboration* rather than competition, in the perspective of an "ecology of culture" that we referred to at the initial part of this article:

> […] with this new landscape (the contemporary dance system) we felt that the choreographers were in a vulnerable position in the whole structure […] we started a way to organize more stable position for choreographer and by sharing with them also the policy and making them responsible for projects […] it's another way of thinking, way of organizing, of dealing with questions […] we are now inviting them to take part in our artistic board, are choreographers with which we cooperated for long time […] in the beginning we said that we were there to support the choreographers in finding stable and independent position and we worked with them until they found their own structure, own money, but we also saw that then there will be a concurrency, that is not bad, but we say that now the aim for us is not to make them independent, but to create a field where 'we are strong together' […] here we share, so it is not about independent position, but is about a position in the field […] is a circular way of thinking and working then a linear (Interview, Dans Brabant, NL).

5.2. *Community, belongings and assemblages*

A second analytical dimension concerns the interpretation of community not as a permanent entity, but rather as a temporary community, enhanced by different types of encounters that can develop different modalities of belonging. Related to this interpretation, is an inspiring perspective elaborated by one of the partners, which sees the formation, through the project's community dance practice, of a "Company of people" where multiple identities can communicate with each other (Interview, Yorkshire Dance, UK).

This idea of community recalls the idea of an "interpretative community"[42] engaged in meaning-making and imagination processes. As stressed in the working sessions this process also implies the creation of spaces for divergent meanings, while also working to build a dialogue, 'dancing in other shoes'.

A key related concept that informs the whole project is that of embodiment, which underlines the connection between performative act and gender constitution, thus rec-

[42] Walmsley, *Audience Engagement in the Performing Arts*, 236.

ognizing that the body bears cultural meanings. "The body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities"[43]. This implies viewing acts as constituting meanings. Butler[44] maintains that "the acts by which gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts", thus the attention from this perspective is on the "ways gender is constructed through specific corporeal acts, and what possibilities exist for the cultural transformation of gender through such acts". The exploration of this process of embodiment is therefore oriented, in the project, to create an encounter of differences.

This idea of community has also been widely discussed in the co-design meetings between the Italian partner Gender Bender-Cassero and the two choreographers (one rooted and one traveller).

In particular, one of the issues discussed is the difference between the idea of a community of people that decide to work together because they have common interests, and a community that "recognizes the intentions through the doing together" (Field notes, co-design meeting) thus "a community that is in the way of becoming a community", constructing in this way "cultural instances and relations" (Field notes, co-design meeting). Or, as stated during the interview "an alliance that is based on the process". This idea of community is also seen as linked with the "permeability" of the organization itself in the relationship with the city (Gender Bender-Cassero, interview).

A path to take in this direction that came up during the co-design meetings is the idea of working through a *progressive assemblage of possible encounters* between different groups, places in the city, and also welcoming moments of conversations, acting, and doing things together. As Papastergiadis points out the concept of assemblage "alludes to the multiplicity and heterogeneity of agents that intersect and interact within a social space without presuming that this collision of differences leads to either their assimilation into the pre-existing hierarchy or the elimination of their differences. On the contrary, assemblage allows attention to focus on the critical and creative trajectories that arise from the incorporation of external agents"[45].

This reframing of communities as a place for multiple forms of belonging and encounters through transformative acts and assemblages can enrich what we have stressed above when discussing art as a space of performative citizenship.

5.3. *Questioning "co-creation": the combination of autonomy, collaboration and mediation*

In a previous part of the article we referred to co-creation as one of the practices that inform the participative dimension of Audience Engagement, underlining that different types of agency can be pursued in Audience Engagement. We also argued that to orient the engagement of audiences as active subjects it is necessary to frame access to culture as access to cultural experience, the latter involving an interactive meaning-making process, a symbolic, narrative dimension. Ultimately, this means that a broader process of cultural participation understood as participation in knowledge production is at stake.

It is under this aspect that the concept of co-design and co-creation has been widely

[43] J. Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", *Theatre Journal*, 40, 4 (1988): 520-521.

[44] *Ibid*., 521.

[45] Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, 189.

discussed in the action research. The former has been defined as a type of collaboration at the level of planning activities. The latter as an active involvement in the artistic process of creation, thus foreseeing a dialogue between the artist and the communities, at the level of artistic composition and at the level of co-production of meanings and representations.

The view that co-creation can be an ambivalent dimension has also emerged[46]. In particular, it has been stressed that "there is a difference between evaluating the structure and influencing the process" (Working sessions in small groups). From this point of view a challenging question has been posed: "how much are we ready to run the 'risk' of co-creation?", having in mind that a radical principle of co-creation should be respected: "Nothing for us without us".

Finally, the idea of co-creation has been put in relation to a constantly changing relationship between autonomy (of the artists and of cultural organization as well) and collaboration that implies power sharing between artists and communities.

The perspective explored among the partners is really close to what Kester[47] underlines with the idea of *dialogical aesthetic*, that is informed by a process-based approach aimed at activating a context rather than providing a content.

It also sheds light on another potentially ambivalent dimension, that is of the *mediation*. In the first part of the article we stressed that mediation of art is one of the practices often used to facilitate access to culture. While this is an important way to create an enabling environment for participation, we also proposed a shift toward culture and art as a space of mediation, we could say as a relational arrangement.

However, in both cases the scientific debate on participation has stressed that it can also be an arrangement for control and "governmentality"[48].

By taking this risk seriously during the action research the role of audience developer foreseen by the project has been discussed (Working session in small groups). In particular, it has been stressed that the practice of mediation doesn't means working the divergences out but welcoming them and creating safe contexts for active listening. Curiosity and trust are two words used to describe this process of mediation.

This perspective resounded in the word used by one of the Italian choreographers: "I don't' want to pass down my artistic language, or in the words of Donna Haraway I don't want to look at the mirror and see myself, I would like to be surprised and discover the process with the participants" (Co-design meeting Gender Bender-Cassero).

Using the words of Papastergiadis[49], this understanding of the role of artists can be framed as a "shift from the position of the artists as a producer to the artist as a collaborator in the construction of social knowledge". And from this perspective we can also say that "Artists and public participants are engaged in the mediation of new forms of cosmopolitan agency".

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

[46] G. Allegrini, "Artistic Practices and the Constitution of Public Sphere: An Explorative Inquiry, in *Right to the City, Performing Arts and Migration*, edited by R. Paltrinieri et al., Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2020: 124-141. See also: C. Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, London: Verso, 2011; C. Bernardi, G. Innocenti Malini, *Performing the social. Education, Care and Social Inclusion through Theatre*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2021.

[47] G. Kester, "Conversation Pieces: The Role of Dialogue in Socially-Engaged Art", in *Contemporary Art Since 1985,* edited by Z. Kucor and S. Leung, Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

[48] E. Swyngedouw, "Governance Innovation and the Citizen: The Janus Face of Governance-beyond-the-State", *Urban Studies*, 42, 11 (2005): 1991-2006.

[49] Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, 11-12.

This contribution explores the relationship between Audience Engagement and the promotion of cultural diversity.

Firstly, we proposed a number of perspectives to frame arts and culture as a space of performative citizenship, and as a process involving an imaginary constitution of cosmopolitanism through aesthetic practices.

From this perspective we discussed Audience Engagement as a process of cultural participation and the promotion of cultural diversity, proposing a route toward going beyond Audience Engagement as a mere marketing process.

We also examined the potential ambivalence that Audience Engagement can bring. In particular, we discussed the dimension of *access*, arguing that It should be informed by an idea of cultural democracy, based on valuing cultural diversity, instead of an idea of democratizing an existing culture. The idea of cultural democracy can also encourage a shift from the idea of 'access to cultural offer' to 'access to *cultural experience* ' which involves an interactive meaning-making process and a symbolic and narrative dimension, thus recognizing an active position of audiences. This way of framing the access lay the groundwork for un understanding of Audience Engagement as a process of cultural participation, meant as participation in meaning making and knowledge co-production.

We also argued that it is necessary to critically question the broader culture of engagement, fostered by cultural organizations. In particular, we maintained that they should be able to see themselves in a 'decentralised perspective' and engaged in multiple types of relationships – with artists and publics – within a creative exchange, based on values such as reciprocity and collaboration.

Finally, we reworked these perspectives through the insights that emerged from the action research implemented in the context of an Audience Engagement project.

Even though this project is still in progress, we argue that these insights have already opened up a path for a reframing of *audience engagement as production and mediation of a cosmopolitan imaginary*[50], by giving space to multiple and divergent interpretations and by going beyond the 'patronizing' approach that can often emerge in processes of participation and collaboration. The project will be analysed further by pursuing this line of thought.

It will also involve investigating the collaboration between the different actors as a collaborative artistic network engaged in a redistribution "of agency in the production of social meaning"[51], or as in the words of Rancière[52] in the reconfiguration of the partition of the sensible or in Appadurai's[53] words in the redistribution of the capacities to aspire.

[50] *Ibid*., 158.
[51] *Ibid*., 159.
[52] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*. *The Distribution of the Sensible*.
[53] Appadurai, *Le aspirazioni nutrono la democrazia.*

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1897: LA NASCITA DEL CINEMA IN GIAPPONE
Cinematografo Lumière contro Vitascopio Edison: protagonisti, ruoli e strategie pubblicitarie

1897: The Birth of Cinema in Japan: Cinematograph Lumière vs Edison Vitascope: Protagonists, Roles and Advertising Strategies

Abstract
Cinema took its first steps in Japan in the last years of the XIX century, when the first American and French-made devices to project moving images were imported. The protagonists of this auroral phase were some young Japanese businessmen who saw a great potential in this new type of entertainment. Thanks to them, the land of the Rising Sun opened up to this Western wonder that conquered the public by building a bridge between two so different cultures. This article intends to outline the roles, actions and the first advertising strategies that marked the birth of the 7th art in Japan.

Keywords
Japanese cinema; Kinetoscope; Cinematograph; Vitascope.
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1. L'ARRIVO DEL KINETOSCOPIO IN GIAPPONE

Il primo strumento in grado di fare cinema è il Kinetoscopio[1] inventato nel 1889 da Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931) e realizzato dal suo collaboratore William Dickson (1860-1935) nel 1892. Non si tratta ancora di un sistema di proiezione, ma di un dispositivo ottico limitato a un uso individuale che consente di vedere per alcuni minuti un breve filmato attraverso uno spioncino azionando un'apposita manovella.

Questa invenzione viene rivelata al pubblico nel 1893 durante la prestigiosa Fiera Mondiale Colombiana di Chicago inaugurata quell'anno per celebrare i quattrocento anni trascorsi dalla scoperta dell'America. A questo evento è presente anche un commerciante giapponese, Takahashi Shinji (1851-1915), titolare di una rivendita di polvere da sparo a Kobe. Comprendendo il potenziale commerciale di un simile strumento cerca di acquistarne immediatamente un esemplare, ma senza successo. Ci vorranno

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[1] Sugli albori del cinema giapponese si vedano, tra gli altri, J.A. Dym, "Benshi and the Introduction of Motion Pictures to Japan", *Monumenta Nipponica*, 55, 4 (2000): 509-536 e P.B. High, "The Dawn of Cinema in Japan", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 19 (1984): 23-57.

ancora alcuni anni di attesa (fino all'11 novembre 1896) affinché riesca a riceverne due esemplari grazie all'intermediazione dei fratelli Brühel, titolari di una società di *import-export* a Yokohama attiva soprattutto nel settore dell'orologeria.

Una volta ricevuto il prezioso apparecchio, Takahashi si attiva per mostrarlo subito al pubblico e monetizzare così l'investimento appena compiuto. Per conferire un alone di maggiore importanza al suo primo spettacolo con Kinetoscopio, il 17 novembre organizza un'anteprima privata riservata ad alti dignitari governativi e ufficiali dell'esercito a cui viene invitato addirittura il principe Akihito Komatsu (1846-1903), appartenente a uno dei rami cadetti della famiglia imperiale giapponese, che in quei giorni si trova a Kobe. In questa occasione Ueda Hoteiken (1849-?), considerato come il primo *benshi*[2] della storia del cinema giapponese, intrattiene gli invitati e illustra loro le meraviglie del nuovo dispositivo che attraverso un ingegnoso meccanismo mostra ai suoi fruitori scene mai viste prima di vita occidentale come *la Danza della farfalla* o la *Danza serpentina* eseguite da Annabelle Whitford Moore (1868-1961)[3]. L'eco di questo evento riservato si diffonde immediatamente, generando così nella popolazione grande curiosità e interesse per la nuova invenzione americana. Pochi giorni dopo, il 25 novembre, la prima di una serie di esibizioni aperte al pubblico si tiene a Kobe presso lo Shinkō Club. La campagna pubblicitaria di supporto è imponente: i muri della città vengono tappezzati con sgargianti manifesti che evidenziano come anche sua altezza imperiale il principe ereditario abbia onorato questo spettacolo con la sua presenza.

Takahashi mette in vendita i biglietti a un prezzo molto simile a quello degli spettacoli teatrali anche se, in questo caso, si tratta di trascorrere solo un paio di minuti a osservare le immagini attraverso un oculare per poi lasciare il posto ad altri utenti. La spesa è di 30 sen per l'esibizione di Kobe e di 20 sen per quella tenutasi poco dopo a Osaka. Per avere un termine di paragone si pensi che, in quegli anni, un biglietto per un incontro di *sumo* poteva costare circa 50 sen, quello per visitare un museo o uno zoo per tutto il giorno meno di 4 sen, mentre quello per un teatro aveva prezzi variabili tra i 25 sen e i 5 yen a seconda della fila[4].

Nonostante si tratti ancora di una proiezione limitata a una visione individuale e non collettiva, lo spettacolo di Kobe del 25 novembre viene considerato da alcuni come l'inizio del cinema in Giappone. In particolare proprio nella città di Kobe, a partire dal 1963, il 1 dicembre (quindi con lo scarto di qualche giorno) viene celebrato come la Giornata del cinema in ricordo di questo evento[5].

2. Inabata Katsutarō e il Cinematografo Lumière

Di cinema vero e proprio, in realtà, è più corretto parlare solo con l'introduzione in Giappone dei primi dispositivi ottici occidentali pensati per la visione contemporanea da parte di più persone: il Cinematografo Lumière e il Vitascopio Edison.

[2] Il *benshi* (letteralmente "colui che commenta") è una figura centrale del cinema muto giapponese. La sua funzione è quella di raccontare e spiegare quanto viene proiettato su schermo e intrattenere il pubblico. Questa figura professionale è nota anche come *katsuben*, dalla contrazione dei termini *katsudō* ("azione") e *ben* ("eloquenza").

[3] Conosciuta con il soprannome di *Peerless* ("impareggiabile"), Annabelle Whitford Moore è una ballerina e attrice americana apparsa in molti dei primi film muti realizzati dagli Studi Edison.

[4] Lo yen viene introdotto dal governo Meiji per creare un sistema monetario simile a quello europeo e sostituire quello eccessivamente complesso del periodo di Edo. La nuova legge monetaria viene varata nel 1871 e introduce un sistema di suddivisione decimale così articolato: yen (1), sen (1/100), e rin (1/1 000).

[5] J. Da Silva, "Cronology of Japanese Cinema. 1896", *EigaNove*, 2013. Consultato il 5 settembre 2021. http://eiga9.altervista.org/chronology/chronology1896.html.

Per quanto riguarda l'arrivo del primo un ruolo fondamentale è quello svolto da Inabata Katsutarō (1862-1949)[6], pioniere dell'industria tessile giapponese che scopre il Cinematografo dei fratelli Lumière durante un suo viaggio d'affari in Francia. La sua vita è il simbolo stesso della nuova politica giapponese di apertura all'occidente che, dopo i due secoli di isolazionismo Tokugawa, guarda sempre più con rinnovato interesse alle novità tecnologiche prodotte all'estero come strumento da utilizzare per il progresso della nazione. Siamo in un periodo storico in cui il governo centrale è ormai consapevole che, per diventare uno Stato moderno e un protagonista della politica internazionale, il Giappone deve giocoforza aprirsi all'Occidente attuando un percorso di riformismo moderato che si concretizza nel principio del cosiddetto *wakon yōsai* ("spirito giapponese, tecnologia occidentale")[7]. L'effetto più concreto di questa nuova politica è la volontà di formare una nuova classe di cittadini giapponesi che sia in grado di apprendere la conoscenza occidentale, soprattutto in campo tecnologico, e di utilizzarla per contribuire attivamente alla modernizzazione dello Stato senza con ciò dimenticare o porre in secondo piano lo spirito, la tradizione e il rispetto dell'autorità che da sempre contraddistinguono il popolo giapponese[8].

Nato a Kyoto da una famiglia che gestisce un negozio di pasticceria tradizionale, Inabata ha solo quindici anni quando nel 1877, dopo aver frequentato con profitto la scuola locale Kyoto-fu Shihan Gakkō (oggi Università dell'educazione), viene selezionato insieme ad altri sette studenti per studiare in Europa. Il giovane viene inviato in Francia, nella città di Lione, per apprendere le più avanzate tecniche utilizzate nell'ambito della tintura e quindi fare rientro in patria con un bagaglio di conoscenze utili per modernizzare l'industria nazionale attiva in questo settore. A Lione Inabata frequenta la prestigiosa scuola tecnica La Martinière dove stringe amicizia con un compagno di classe di nome Auguste Lumière (1864-1948), il maggiore dei fratelli Lumière, futuri inventori del Cinematografo.

Animato da un grande senso di responsabilità e dall'orgoglio derivante dal compito che il governo giapponese gli aveva affidato, il giovane Inabata non solo si applica in maniera esemplare allo studio, ma decide di mettere in pratica quanto appreso a lezione lavorando in un opificio in maniera tale che l'utilizzo delle nuove tinture sintetiche e la loro lavorazione non abbiano davvero più alcun segreto per lui. Dopo tre anni di lavoro in fabbrica si dedica quindi allo studio della chimica e, una volta laureato (sono ormai trascorsi otto anni dalla sua partenza), è pronto a fare ritorno in patria. È il 1885.

Rientrato in Giappone si occupa per diversi anni di insegnare ad altri quanto appreso durante il suo soggiorno francese fino a quando, nel 1890, decide di aprire a Kyoto la sua azienda, la Inabata Senryōten, come importatrice esclusiva di coloranti e macchinari per la tintura e tessitura di una delle principali industrie francesi. È l'inizio di un'avventura imprenditoriale di successo che dura ancora oggi. Durante un viaggio d'affari in Francia, dove si era nuovamente recato per visionare dei macchinari, Inabata incontra il suo vecchio amico Auguste Lumière che gli parla della sua ultima invenzione, il Cinematografo e lo invita a una proiezione riservata. Colpito da quanto visto Inabata decide

[6] H. Komatsu, "The Lumière Cinématographe and the Production of the Cinema in Japan in the Earliest Period", *Film History*, 8, 4, *International Trends in Film Studies* (1996): 431-438 (432-433).

[7] Il termine, che significa fusione tra lo spirito giapponese e l'insegnamento occidentale, indica un binomio in cui due culture diverse vengono in contatto tra di loro e si fondono mantenendo però ciascuna le proprie peculiarità. Sul concetto di *wakon yōsai* si veda T. Najita, "On Culture and Technology" in *Postmodernism and Japan*, edited by M. Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, Durham: Duke University Press, 1989: 3-20.

[8] D. Głownia, "The Zigomar Scandal and the Film Censorship System in Japan", *Silva Iaponicarum*, 31 (2012): 11-33 (20).

di stringere un accordo per portare il Cinematografo in Giappone. In questo straordinario dispositivo, infatti, l'industriale giapponese non vede solo una nuova possibilità di investimento, ma soprattutto un mezzo per mettere in comunicazione due culture così diverse tra di loro come quella occidentale e quella orientale. Un intendimento che si sposa alla perfezione con la visione dei Lumière che nel loro Cinematografo vedono soprattutto un mezzo indispensabile per registrare *actualités*, ossia momenti di vita quotidiana e avvenimenti reali, nonché un mezzo innovativo per la diffusione della cultura e della conoscenza scientifica.

L'accordo viene siglato in poco tempo. Inabata acquista un certo numero di cinematografi e una cinquantina di brevi pellicole. Le condizioni proposte dai Lumière mostrano in maniera inequivocabile come i due fratelli siano ben consapevoli dei vantaggi di natura economica che l'accordo con Inabata avrebbe comportato. In primo luogo, pretendono che venga loro riconosciuto il 60% dei guadagni ottenuti con gli spettacoli su suolo giapponese. In secondo luogo impongono che un loro dipendente e tecnico di fiducia, il ventitreenne François-Constant Girel (1873-1952)[9], accompagni Inabata in patria con il duplice ruolo di sovrintendere alla promozione e occuparsi di tutte le problematiche di natura tecnica collegate al funzionamento del Cinematografo. L'operatore, inoltre, per conto dei Lumière, avrebbe dovuto anche riprendere momenti significativi di vita giapponese realizzando filmati da inviare poi in Francia per arricchire il catalogo della casa madre[10]. Il giovane Girel parte alla volta del Giappone il giorno 6 dicembre 1896 e approda al porto di Kobe un mese dopo, il 9 gennaio 1897, dove si incontra con Inabata che era già rientrato diverso tempo prima.

In preparazione del primo spettacolo aperto al pubblico che si sarebbe dovuto svolgere a metà febbraio, si rende innanzitutto necessario effettuare una serie di prove preliminari in maniera tale che tutto sia perfetto per il lancio ufficiale. Il problema principale da affrontare è quello relativo all'energia elettrica necessaria per far funzionare il Cinematografo. In Giappone questo tipo di energia non è ancora così diffusa come in Europa o negli Stati Uniti e solo da pochi anni si è iniziato ad utilizzarla nella città principali come Kyoto, Osaka e Tokyo. In primo luogo viene dunque realizzato un trasformatore con l'aiuto dell'ingegner Hasegawa della compagnia elettrica di Kyoto (che mette anche a disposizione uno dei suoi locali attrezzati) e dei tecnici dell'azienda Shimadzu. I tentativi per raggiungere un risultato soddisfacente si protraggono per circa una settimana fino alla fine di gennaio.

Una breve anteprima viene quindi tenuta nel giardino della stessa compagnia elettrica di Kyoto tra l'11 e il 14 febbraio 1897 per mettere a punto gli ultimi dettagli, senonché l'assalto di curiosi impazienti di vedere dal vivo questo nuovo prodigio della tecnica si rivela così imponente da distruggere addirittura il negozio di verdura che si trova proprio lì accanto. Tutto lascia dunque presagire un enorme successo per il debutto ufficiale del Cinematografo previsto al teatro Nanchi Embujō di Osaka il 15 febbraio 1897[11], data questa riconosciuta formalmente come la nascita del cinema in Giappone.

[9] L. McKernan, "François-Constant Girel", *Who's Who of Victorian Cinema* (2021). Consultato il 5 settembre 2021. https://www.victorian-cinema.net/girel.

[10] I filmati girati da Girel durante la sua permanenza in Giappone che dura poco meno di un anno (dal 9 gennaio 1897 fino a dicembre dello stesso anno) rappresentano un'importante testimonianza della vita in Giappone a cavallo del XIX e XX secolo e hanno permesso al pubblico europeo e statunitense di scoprire per la prima volta usi e costumi di una terra lontana e con una cultura profondamente diversa da quella occidentale. Dopo il rientro in Francia di Girel i Lumière invieranno in Giappone un altro operatore, Gabriel Veyre (1871-1936).

[11] Le repliche continueranno fino al 28 febbraio 1897.

Inabata ha organizzato ogni cosa nei minimi dettagli con gli impresari Miki Fukusuke e Okuda Benjirō la cui esperienza e contatti si rivelano fondamentali per la buona riuscita dell'iniziativa[12]. Il programma della serata (che cambia ogni giorno per offrire qualcosa di nuovo) inizia alle 17.00 e termina alle 23.00, con la proiezione di almeno 8 dei titoli più noti prodotti dai Lumière come *L'arrivée d'un train à la gare de La Ciotat* (1896) e *Baignade en mer* (1895). La campagna pubblicitaria a supporto è ben orchestrata e contribuisce non poco ad accrescere la curiosità del pubblico. Per l'occasione viene ingaggiato anche un celebre pittore di locandine, Nomura Yoshikuni (1854-1903), e manifesti sono affissi per tutta la città di Osaka.

Il giorno prima dello spettacolo, però, nuovi problemi tecnici che Girel non riesce a risolvere per poco non causano un disastro che rischia di far saltare lo spettacolo. Un sovraccarico di elettricità provoca una pioggia di scintille che quasi incendia il teatro. Si decide così di trasportare il Cinematografo fuori sull'alveo asciutto del fiume in attesa che un ingegnere della compagnia elettrica di Kyoto sopraggiunga per risolvere definitivamente il problema.

Superato quest'ultimo ostacolo la magia del cinema va in scena e per la prima volta un pubblico pagante giapponese assiste meravigliato alla proiezione di scene di vita occidentale che fino a quel momento aveva potuto solo immaginare con la fantasia. Spetta al *benshi* Takahashi Senkichi[13], anch'egli coinvolto per l'occasione, il compito di contestualizzare e spiegare al pubblico i cortometraggi mostrati su schermo, nonché raccontare in dettaglio il funzionamento del Cinematografo e la storia della sua invenzione. Il successo del Cinematografo è straordinario e il giorno seguente, il 16 febbraio, i principali quotidiani pubblicano resoconti molto positivi.

Alcuni giorni dopo la prima di Osaka, nuovi spettacoli con il Cinematografo vengono tenuti a Kyoto e in altre città del Giappone orientale ottenendo un riscontro altrettanto eclatante. Chi però non è altrettanto entusiasta è Inabata che, probabilmente stanco per le fatiche della promozione e per tutti gli inconvenienti tecnici che ha dovuto superare, sta meditando di ritirarsi da questo settore per occuparsi integralmente del suo *business* principale, quello della tintura. Come se ciò non bastasse all'orizzonte si è pure presentato un nuovo e temibile avversario: il Vitascopio Edison. La concorrenza dunque si annuncia serrata ed è necessario trovare qualcuno che abbia la forza, il tempo e i mezzi per dedicarsi totalmente al nuovo mercato del cinema e alle inedite sfide che si stanno prospettando.

Inabata individua il candidato ideale in Yokota Einosuke (1872-1943)[14], fratello minore di Masunosuke, suo amico di vecchia data. Yokota, che è proprietario di un'attività di *import-export* a Kobe, è l'esatto opposto di Inabata e proprio per questo potrebbe

[12] All'epoca questi spettacoli non vengono ancora chiamati cinema, ma "immagini fotografiche automatiche". Per questo la società fondata da Inabata con Okuda prende il nome di Società per le immagini fotografiche automatiche. Cfr. Komatsu, "The Lumière Cinématographe and the Production of the Cinema in Japan in the Earliest Period": 433.

[13] Takahashi era stato apprendista del famoso attore *kabuki* Kataoka Nizaemon IX (1839-1872). In realtà la prima scelta di Inabata era stato Ueda Hoteiken, ma questi aveva rifiutato adducendo come scusa che non conosceva il francese e dunque non poteva commentare con cognizione di causa i filmati che sarebbero stati proposti. In realtà, lo vedremo, questo tipo di problema non viene da lui evidenziato quando viene chiamato come *benshi* per il lancio del Vitascopio. Cfr. Dym, "Benshi and the Introduction of Motion Pictures to Japan": 519.

[14] Su Yokota si vedano P.B. High, "Umeya Shokichi: The Revolutionist as Impresario", in *Tagen Bunka to Mirai Shakai Kenkyu Project*, Nagoya: Nagoya University Press, 2005: 120-121, disponibile online all'indirizzo https://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/proj/socho/mirai/mirai-high.pdf e L. McKernan, "Yokota Einosuke", *Who's Who of Victorian Cinema* (2021). Consultato il 5 settembre 2021. https://www.victorian-cinema.net/yokota.

essere la persona giusta al posto giusto. Mentre Inabata ha studiato e si è perfezionato in Francia, Yokota ha cercato fortuna negli Stati Uniti facendo i lavori più umili e disparati. È uno dei tanti giovani giapponesi che vengono etichettati all'epoca come *Ame-goro*, termine che potrebbe essere tradotto come "giramondo", in questo caso con riferimento esclusivo all'America (*America rollers*). Lavapiatti a San Francisco e venditore porta a porta nel Midwest, ha avuto modo di girare gli Stati Uniti da costa a costa facendo molte esperienze e conoscenze.

La sua curiosità e intraprendenza lo hanno portato a intuire negli ultimi ritrovati della tecnologia americana il potenziale per una nuova opportunità di *business* da sfruttare sul mercato interno, sempre affamato di novità provenienti dall'Occidente. È così che, quando nella metà degli anni Ottanta rientra in Giappone, porta con sé nientemeno che una macchina per i raggi X che aveva avuto l'opportunità di vedere in azione alla Fiera Mondiale Colombiana di Chicago del 1893.

A dispetto di quello che avrebbe dovuto essere l'utilizzo in campo medico, Yokota si serve di questo macchinario per creare un originale spettacolo itinerante basato su questo e altri dispositivi tecnologici funzionanti a elettricità che vengono mostrati in una rudimentale baracca di legno pomposamente intitolata "La sala dei misteri". L'originale *show* ottiene un grande successo in tutte le città visitate da Yokota che sfrutta il suo innato fascino di imbonitore per attirare folle di curiosi. La sua reputazione arriva così fino a Inabata che presumibilmente a febbraio del 1897 stringe con lui un accordo per la cessione dei cinematografi, delle pellicole in suo possesso e dei relativi diritti siglati con i fratelli Lumière.

La prima decisione di Yokota è quella di organizzare uno spettacolo con il Cinematografo a Tokyo, se non che scopre ben presto di essere stato anticipato dalla concorrenza che è già pronta a mostrare nella capitale l'ultimo ritrovato della tecnologia americana: il Vitascopio di Edison[15].

3. IL VITASCOPIO EDISON

La storia dell'arrivo del Vitascopio Edison in Giappone è per certi versi molto simile a quella del Cinematografo. Quelli che cambiano, infatti, sono solo i protagonisti, mentre le dinamiche rimangono sostanzialmente identiche.

Più o meno negli stessi giorni in cui Inabata riceve il Cinematografo dei Lumière, un commerciante giapponese, Araki Kazuichi (o Waichi), rivenditore di articoli elettrici nella città di Osaka, importa il primo Vitascopio[16]. Araki era stato negli Stati Uniti qualche anno prima, nel 1894, dove aveva avuto modo di visionare uno dei primi esemplari di Kinetoscopio. Rimasto stupito dalle potenzialità di questo apparecchio aveva progettato di acquistarne uno se non che, quando due anni dopo si era recato nuovamente oltreoceano per perfezionare l'affare, aveva scoperto il Vitascopio che ampliava

[15] A differenza del Cinematografo che può non solo proiettare immagini ma anche registrarle come una moderna telecamera, il Vitascopio è unicamente un proiettore. Inoltre, pur presentando il marchio di Edison, questo dispositivo non è una sua invenzione come il precedente Kinetoscopio. Il Vitascopio, infatti, era stato inventato da Thomas Armat (1866-1948) e Charles Francis Jenkins (1867-1934) ed Edison, intelligentemente, ne aveva subito acquistato i diritti per poi produrlo e venderlo sotto il suo nome. Cfr. Dym, "Benshi and the Introduction of Motion Pictures to Japan": 513.

[16] A. Toki, K. Mizuguchi, "A History of Early Cinema in Kyoto, Japan (1896-1912). Cinematographe and Inabata Katsutaro", *CineMagaziNet!*, 1 (1996). Consultato il 5 settembre 2021. http://www.cmn.hs.h.kyoto-u.ac.jp/NO1/SUBJECT1/INAEN.HTM. Su Araki non sono disponibili ulteriori informazioni biografiche.

notevolmente le potenzialità offerte dal precedente dispositivo. La decisione di recarsi direttamente nei famosi laboratori Black Maria di Edison a West Orange, nei pressi di New York, era stata quindi immediata.

Una volta ricevuto tutto il materiale anch'egli, come Inabata, si trova subito ad affrontare il problema relativo all'alimentazione del dispositivo che richiede un tipo di corrente elettrica continua che a quel tempo in Giappone non è ancora molto diffusa. È noto che per risolvere l'*impasse* e fare una prova generale del funzionamento del Vitascopio Araki abbia tenuto nel gennaio del 1897 una piccola anteprima presso la fabbrica di fuochi d'artificio di Osaka che aveva un generatore di corrente continua. Non è noto, invece, come il Vitascopio sia stato alimentato per il debutto ufficiale[17] che si svolge presso il teatro Shinmachi Enbujō di Osaka il 22 febbraio 1897. Come già avvenuto per il lancio del Kinetoscopio l'anno precedente il ruolo del *benshi* è affidato a Ueda Hoteiken che illustra un variegato programma composto da diversi cortometraggi, tra cui spicca *The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots* (1895), la prima ricostruzione cinematografica di un evento storico, nonché uno dei primi filmati con effetti speciali in grado di sconvolgere letteralmente gli spettatori[18].

Il secondo protagonista dell'arrivo del Vitascopio in Giappone è Arai Saburō (1867ca-?)[19] che diventa il principale concorrente di Yokota. Terzo figlio di una famiglia di *samurai* della prefettura di Niigata e senza la possibilità di succedere al padre, viene adottato da un grossista. Trasferitosi a Tokyo studia inglese e nel 1884, quando ha solo 18 anni, decide di partire per gli Stati Uniti. Come Yokota anch'egli a un *Ame-goro*. Approdato in California si guadagna da vivere facendo diversi lavori e nel frattempo studia orticultura e legge, perfezionando il suo inglese. In occasione della Fiera Mondiale Colombiana di Chicago del 1893 si fa apprezzare come *designer* di una casa tradizionale giapponese con giardino che diventa una delle attrazioni più visitate dell'evento.

Nel 1896, quando presumibilmente Inabata sta trattando con i fratelli Lumière il contratto per il Cinematografo, Arai si reca agli studi Edison di West Orange, nel New Jersey, dove acquista due esemplari di Vitascopio e una serie di film per la cifra di 3.000 yen (circa 1.500 dollari). Le pratiche per l'importazione vengono svolte da Shibata Chūjirō, un dipendente della società di *import-export* che Arai aveva aperto da qualche anno a Ginza, un quartiere di Tokyo[20]. Ad accompagnare i due esemplari di Vitascopio c'è Daniel Grimm Krouse, un operatore messogli a disposizione da Edison per gestire le proiezioni e risolvere eventuali problemi di natura tecnica che puntualmente si presentano. Anche Arai, infatti, deve per prima cosa risolvere la questione dell'alimentazione elettrica. La soluzione viene trovata modificando un motore a gas acquistato da Jūmonji Shinsuke, un amico che gestisce l'omonima compagnia di *import-export*[21].

Come Yokota anche Arai punta immediatamente sulla capitale riuscendo ad anticipare il rivale di pochi giorni. L'idea iniziale è quella di affittare per lo spettacolo il rinomato teatro Kabukiza nel quartiere di Ginza, luogo d'elezione per gli spettacoli

[17] Dym, "Benshi and the Introduction of Motion Pictures to Japan": 514.

[18] Il cortometraggio è caratterizzato da una significativa ripresa in *stop-motion* con l'attore che interpreta la regina (Robert Thomae, segretario e tesoriere della Kinetoscope Company, uno dei tre gruppi esterni che commercializzavano il Kinetoscopio di Edison e i suoi film) sostituito da un manichino che viene decapitato e la testa che rotola al suolo per poi venir mostrata al pubblico dal boia.

[19] L. McKernan, "Arai Saburo", *Who's Who of Victorian Cinema* (2021). Consultato il 5 settembre 2021. https://www.victorian-cinema.net/arai.php.

[20] Dym, "Benshi and the Introduction of Motion Pictures to Japan": 514.

[21] *Ibid.* Alcune pubblicità dell'epoca sottolineano come l'energia elettrica per alimentare il Vitascopio fosse fornita da Jūmonji Shinsuke.

tradizionali di *kabuki*. Una scelta potenzialmente vincente che avrebbe conferito all'esibizione del Vitascopio un prestigio unico. Questo teatro però è il regno incontrastato del famoso attore Ichikawa Danjūrō IX (1838-1903)[22]. Custode della tradizione e pugnacemente conservatore il celebre attore, all'apice della sua fama, non vede di buon'occhio tutte le recenti novità tecnologiche occidentali. Le chiama con disprezzo "cose spedite, portate dalle navi", quasi a volerne sottolineare la provenienza straniera, in contrasto con quanto di meglio la vera tradizione giapponese ha da offrire in termini di intrattenimento. Quando arriva la richiesta formale di Arai la risposta che Ichikawa Danjūrō IX dà al suo impresario è perentoria e non ammette repliche:

> Se tu insisti ad andare avanti con questa cosa, dovrai prendere una pialla e raschiare totalmente il palco prima che Danjūrō lo calpesti nuovamente![23]

Ad Arai non resta dunque che ripiegare su un teatro meno prestigioso e la scelta cade sul Kinkikan, nel quartiere di Kanda, che viene prenotato per il 6 marzo 1897. L'occasione è comunque irripetibile e Arai decide di investire nell'evento tutti i suoi fondi prendendo pure a prestito altro denaro. Innanzitutto di fronte al teatro viene installato un generatore a gas per garantire la corrente elettrica necessaria al funzionamento del Vitascopio. Tutti lo possono vedere e questo fatto contribuisce non poco a innalzare il livello dell'attesa.

Anche la campagna pubblicitaria è imponente. A gestirla viene chiamato Akita Ryūkichi, titolare dell'agenzia pubblicitaria Hiromeya[24]. Le mura di Tokyo vengono coperte da manifesti che annunciano pomposamente l'evento come una delle più incredibili e recenti meraviglie della scienza contemporanea. Per l'occasione Akita scrittura anche una banda musicale *jinta*[25] che promuove l'arrivo del Vitascopio suonando su un'imbarcazione che procede lungo il canale di Sanjiken che collega il quartier generale della compagnia di Arai con il teatro. Uno spettacolo che richiama una grande folla la quale, a sua volta, viene sommersa da una vera e propria doccia di volantini pubblicitari. Alla stessa banda è affidato anche il commento musicale della proiezione. Il ruolo di *benshi* viene affidato, invece, al giovane Komada Kōyō (1877-1935) che all'epoca ha soltanto vent'anni. Avvolto nel suo *kimono* nero è lui la stella della serata grazie all'eloquio e a una presenza scenica che fa da perfetto collante dei cortometraggi mostrati. Il successo dello spettacolo è strepitoso e la polizia deve addirittura intervenire per contingentare gli ingressi visto il gran numero di persone che preme per entrare a teatro.

Visto il grande risultato conseguito da Arai con il suo Vitascopio, la sfida per Yokota si presenta decisamente impegnativa. L'obbiettivo, infatti, è di replicare se non superare il successo ottenuto dall'avversario. Lo spettacolo con il Cinematografo è in cartellone presso il teatro Kawakami il giorno 8 marzo 1897, solo due giorni dopo quello tenuto da Arai.

Anche Yokota investe molto sulla pubblicità. Mentre Arai, nella sua campagna, aveva annunciato il Vitascopio come l'ultima meraviglia della scienza, Yokota decide di solleticare il patriottismo del pubblico con dei manifesti dal sapore nazionalista.

[22] L. McKernan, "Danjuro IX (Kawarazaki Gonjuro I)", *Who's Who of Victorian Cinema* (2010). Consultato il 5 settembre 2021. https://www.victorian-cinema.net/danjuro.

[23] High, "The Dawn of Cinema in Japan": 26.

[24] Dym, "Benshi and the Introduction of Motion Pictures to Japan": 515.

[25] La musica *jinta* è quella tipica delle bande musicali, molto ritmata e di forte richiamo. Ispirata alle sonorità delle bande militari europee questo tipo di musica ben si presta a finalità di tipo commerciale. Cfr. D.G. Hebert, *Wind Bands and Cultural Identity in Japanese Schools*, New York: Springer, 2012, 34-35.

Il Cinematografo, infatti, viene presentato come un tributo personale che i fratelli Lumière hanno voluto fare al fiorente potere e alla grandezza dell'impero giapponese[26].

Oltre a ciò l'impresario adotta una furba politica sul prezzo dei biglietti che vengono proposti a un prezzo inferiore rispetto a quanto fatto da Arai. Se i biglietti per i posti di prima classe per il Vitascopio costavano 90 sen per poi ridursi a 25 per i posti di terza categoria, Yokota opta per una tariffa fissa di 20 sen che avrebbe sicuramente favorito gli spettatori meno abbienti.

Per l'occasione, inoltre, non viene ingaggiato nessun *benshi*, ma è Yokota stesso che sale sul palco per commentare i filmati proiettati. Vero e proprio maestro dell'intrattenimento, si presenta in scena in abito da sera, con un papillon nero e un bastone dall'impugnatura d'argento. Il suo eloquio è così veloce che molti non riescono a capire bene cosa stia dicendo, ma non importa[27]. Il suo fascino è tale che le parole passano in secondo piano. La scelta di ridurre il prezzo di ingresso si è rivelata vincente e il teatro è pieno in ogni ordine di posto tant'è che, anche in questo caso, la polizia deve intervenire per contenere la folla.

Il successo del Cinematografo è straordinario e rappresenta il primo passo di Yokota per una sfolgorante carriera nel mondo del cinema che proseguirà già nelle settimane seguenti con una strategia di base opposta a quella di Arai. Quest'ultimo, infatti, ritiene che il cinema sia una novità più indicata ai ceti sociali elevati. Per questo, con una certa ostinazione e dopo diversi tentativi, riesce nell'intento di programmare uno spettacolo al teatro Kabukiza cui partecipano i personaggi più in vista di Tokyo e addirittura il principe ereditario e futuro imperatore Taishō (1879-1926)[28].

Yokota, invece, si focalizza su un pubblico più popolare per il quale organizza un vero e proprio spettacolo itinerante a prezzi abbordabili. Già dal mese di aprile, solo un mese dopo il debutto a Tokyo, una grande tenda viene issata in un campo bruciato dal grande incendio che aveva colpito il quartiere di Asakusa nel 1896. Chiamata pomposamente "La sala del Cinematografo", nonostante la struttura provvisoria che d'inverno risulta particolarmente fredda e piena di spifferi, questa diventa la prima tappa di un *tour* che tocca le varie province e regioni del Giappone (da Tohoku fino a Hokkaidō) che vengono raggiunte in modo capillare da apposite squadre costituite da circa dieci membri ed equipaggiate di Cinematografo, bobine e tutte le attrezzature necessarie per organizzare proiezioni sul posto.

Come se la competizione non fosse già abbastanza intensa, negli stessi giorni in cui Yokota e Arai si sfidano a Tokyo, un altro protagonista fa la sua discesa in campo. Si tratta di Kawaura Ken'ichi (1868-1957)[29] della Yoshizawa Shōten. Entrato attraverso il matrimonio nella benestante famiglia Yoshizawa da cui eredita l'omonima azienda, Kawaura è un uomo d'affari scaltro e capace. Si dice che abbia il tocco di re Mida perché tutti gli affari a cui si dedica si rivelano un grande successo[30]. Aveva iniziato a farsi conoscere vendendo riproduzioni di stampe *ukiyo-e* ai collezionisti europei e americani, per poi dedicarsi alla produzione di vetrini colorati a mano per lanterna magica che ven-

[26] High, "The Dawn of Cinema in Japan": 26.

[27] *Ibid.*: 27.

[28] Arai in seguito abbandona il mercato del cinema e lavora per una compagnia di assicurazione. Si trasferisce quindi negli Stati Uniti dove si occupa di progettare il Japan Village all'esposizione di St. Louis nel 1904. Nel 1906 si trasferisce in Texas dove diventa un coltivatore di riso per poi ampliare l'attività con vivai e giardini.

[29] L. McKernan, "Kawaura Ken'ichi", *Who's Who of Victorian Cinema* (2021). Consultato il 5 settembre 2021. https://www.victorian-cinema.net/kawaura.

[30] High, "The Dawn of Cinema in Japan": 27.

deva soprattutto a scuole e gruppi civici. Aveva poi creato un'organizzazione capillare in grado di gestire spettacoli itineranti di lanterna magica per tutto il Giappone, dalle zone rurali più sperdute fino ai centri urbani più densamente popolati.

Ad un certo punto, grazie a una serie di fortunate coincidenze, entra in possesso di un Cinematografo. Siamo nel gennaio del 1897, proprio nello stesso periodo in cui Inabata riceve dalla Francia i materiali inviatigli dai fratelli Lumière. Tra le sue tante amicizie Kawaura annovera anche un certo Scipione Braccialini (1850-1937), generale d'artiglieria e consigliere italiano dell'esercito giapponese[31]. È quest'ultimo che nei primi mesi del 1897 si presenta negli uffici della Yoshizawa con un paio di portatori locali che salgono le scale trasportando una grossa cassa al cui interno è stivato un Cinematografo Lumière con diverse pellicole. Non è noto come Braccialini ne fosse entrato in possesso[32] ma Kawaura, subito notando una certa affinità con gli spettacoli di lanterna magica che già organizzava, coglie al volo quest'opportunità e si prepara a entrare da protagonista anche nel mondo del cinema.

Secondo quanto riportato da Nakagawa Keiji, uno dei primi *benshi*, la Yoshizawa e la compagnia di Arai Saburō erano entrambe consapevoli del fatto che ciascuna di esse avesse disponibile una macchina per proiezioni (rispettivamente un Cinematografo e un Vitascopio). Per questo motivo avrebbero scelto di accordarsi ed evitare così una concorrenza che sarebbe potuta essere deleteria per entrambi, soprattutto perché già c'era un terzo agguerrito concorrente come Yokota in campo[33]. Arai, come visto, tiene il suo spettacolo a Tokyo il 6 marzo 1897, mentre la Yoshisawa di Kawaura esordisce al teatro Minatoza di Yokohama il 9 marzo.

Anche in questo caso l'esibizione ottiene un enorme successo. Il teatro è pieno in ogni ordine di posto, ma l'esibizione si svolge in un modo decisamente singolare. Essendo Kawaura e il suo *staff* abituati agli spettacoli di lanterna magica in cui i proiettori vengono posizionati dietro lo schermo (e non davanti), pensano ingenuamente che anche il Cinematografo funzioni allo stesso modo. Le prime prove condotte con il dispositivo dei Lumière collocato dietro lo schermo si risolvono però in un fallimento perché dal lato del pubblico le immagini non sono ben visibili. Anziché optare per la soluzione più ovvia, ossia spostare la macchina di fronte allo schermo, un uomo con un bidone pieno d'acqua viene impegnato ad assicurarsi che il telo di stoffa su cui vengono proiettate le immagini sia sempre completamente bagnato in modo tale da lasciar filtrare da dietro il massimo possibile di luce.

Il 1897 è dunque un anno fondamentale per l'esordio del cinema in Giappone. Se nei primi mesi dell'anno svettano le figure di Inabata, Yokota, Arai e Kawaura, alla fine di quello stesso anno è invece Araki Kazuichi (Waichi) a ritornare in auge dopo la prima presentazione del suo Vitascopio a Osaka. L'occasione gli è data da un nuovo *stock* di pellicole ricevute direttamente dagli studi Edison che gli consente di programmare uno spettacolo con filmati inediti. Tra questi ne spicca uno in particolare intitolato *The Kiss* ("Il bacio", 1896) che già aveva suscitato un certo scandalo oltreoceano. Il breve

[31] Nato all'Isola del Giglio Braccialini, dopo aver fatto carriera nell'esercito italiano ricoprendo anche il ruolo di insegnante di balistica, viene inviato in Giappone nel 1897 in qualità di istruttore per le locali scuole di artiglieria. Cfr. F. Zampieri, "Prof. Ing. Scipione Braccialini. Generale d'Artiglieria. Scienziato ed Inventore. Critico della Relatività di Einstein", *Circolo di PsicoBioFisica. Amici di Marco Todeschini* (s.d.). Consultato il 5 settembre 2021. https://www.circolotodeschini.com/app/download/11980321912/Braccialini%20Fascicolo.pdf?t=1614436755.

[32] Se acquistato direttamente dai fratelli Lumiére non si capisce come questo sia stato possibile dal momento che Inabata ne aveva già acquisito i diritti per il Giappone.

[33] Dym, "Benshi and the Introduction of Motion Pictures to Japan": 514, nota 12.

cortometraggio della durata di circa 18 secondi diretto da William Heise propone la rievocazione del bacio tra May Irwin e John C. Rice tratto dalla scena finale del *musical* teatrale *The Widow Jones* (1895) di John J. McNally. Si tratta della prima scena di bacio nella storia del cinema, una grande novità per quei tempi anche negli Stati Uniti, Paese in cui la morale (cattolica e soprattutto protestante) e il senso del pudore proibivano e condannavano il bacio in pubblico (c'era addirittura il rischio di procedimenti giudiziari), figuriamoci poi se amplificato dalle dimensioni dello schermo di un cinema e dalla ripresa che indugia sulle labbra degli attori[34]. La situazione in Giappone si preannuncia ancora più delicata dal momento che, per ovviare alla brevità del filmato, questo viene montato a ciclo continuo congiungendo l'inizio e la fine della pellicola in maniera tale che la scena del bacio si ripeta una dozzina di volte per alcuni minuti.

Il riscontro di pubblico è travolgente e *The Kiss* diventa in pratica il film di maggiore successo proiettato fino a quel momento in Giappone. Fortunatamente per Araki non esiste ancora una legge che disciplini i contenuti dei cortometraggi (sarà solo una questione di tempo prima che sia promulgata), ma la polizia ha comunque la facoltà di intervenire per bloccare spettacoli che vengano ritenuti offensivi per la pubblica morale. La situazione è dunque estremamente delicata e ogni proiezione risulta inevitabilmente a rischio di censura. Un giorno Araki, dando un breve sguardo alla sala come sempre strapiena di persone, nota come la prima fila sia tutta occupata da poliziotti. Intuendo la possibilità di un intervento delle forze dell'ordine durante la proiezione è sul punto di bloccare lo spettacolo, ma il *benshi* Ueda Hoteiken lo rassicura dicendogli che la situazione è perfettamente sotto controllo. Da abile e furbo intrattenitore, infatti, ha escogitato un piano che si rivelerà risolutore. Arringando come sempre il pubblico con il suo fluente eloquio, Ueda introduce il film raccontando come sia costume, per i vecchi amici, salutarsi dandosi reciprocamente una pacca sule spalle. In Occidente, invece, l'usanza è quella di salutarsi dandosi un bacio. Il cortometraggio *The Kiss* non è quindi un film come gli altri, bensì un documentario che racconta usi e costumi tipicamente americani[35].

La competizione è dunque ufficialmente aperta. Diversi sono i protagonisti sulla scena, come diverse sono le macchine utilizzate in questi primi spettacoli. Una sfida che nel giro di pochi anni diventerà sempre più serrata con il cinema che si affermerà come uno degli intrattenimenti più apprezzati dal pubblico e le prime società attive nel settore che si struttureranno fino a dare vita a un vero e proprio *studio system* sulla falsariga di quello statunitense.

[34] High, "The Dawn of Cinema in Japan": 29.
[35] *Ibid.*

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DISTURBING TIMES OF SERIES IN THE AGE OF OTT 3

Abstract
With the advent of various Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime video, television series are no longer bound by its set temporal relation with its viewers. This paper identifies four temporalities imbibed within the TV series and analyses the changes in them. It argues that TV series is marked by liveness, embeddedness, anchoring, structuring of social time and a mediatic sequence; and these are being reformulated by OTT.

Keywords
Television; OTT; seriality; temporality.
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On May 26 2013, the US network FOX's series *Arrested Development* (FOX, 2003-2006; Netflix 2013-) made its return to Netflix after seven years and promptly triggered the act of "binge-watching"[1]. What followed was a race amongst critics and fans. Some watched it overnight, while others took it into the weekend. This is one of the many examples that illustrate how the phenomena of binge, or "continuous watching" became so dominant a practice on OTT[2]. Netflix now even points out the exact number of run-hours needed to binge-finish a series of many seasons; Amazon Prime has a category called "Binge-Worthy." Furthermore, television producers are discovering that releasing a series one episode a week, such as the new *Star Trek Discovery* (CBS, 2017-), on OTT does not garner enough viewers. Thus, the season-wide availability of *Arrested Development* may be indicative of a further evolution of television as a medium, or as Markus Stauff posits, its constant reinvention[3].

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[1] J. Jurgensen, "Binge Viewing: TV's Lost Weekends", in *The Wall Street Journal*, July 2012, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303740704577521300806686174. Also see, P. Brembilla, "This Cultural Creation of Binge Watching, I tempi del consumo personalizzato", in F. Cleto - F. Pasquali, eds., *Tempo di serie*, Milan 2018. Brembilla points out a Netflix sponsored survey that found out that more than 61% users already participated in binge-watching and were hoping for a more complex plot.

[2] OTT is an abbreviation of "Over the Top" (as of another platform, hence the moniker). It refers to online streaming services that deliver video content on almost all kinds of video enabled devices. We have employed OTT in the generic sense of such content-delivery and not focused on the differences of Amazon Prime, Netflix, Disney Plus etc. "What is the definition of Over The Top (OTT)?", last modified May 25, 2021, https://www.adjust.com/glossary/ott-over-the-top/

[3] M. Stauff, *Das neue Fernsehen: Machtanalyse, Gouvernementalität und digitale Medien,* Münster: Lit, 2005: 17.

In other words, OTT is reworking out television's relation to the spectator, its structuring of social mores, and the manner it establishes the temporal rhythms of life. For example, Lynn Spigel points out TV's pivotal role in formulating the US post-war nuclear suburban family unit[4]. The complete living-room in America was realigned to face the TV in the '60s. And such restructuring by TV happened across different broadcast spectrums and in different countries.

Furthermore, television is not bound by a shared screen or a shared space. TV does not occur in space, but rather is the *space of occurrence*. What happens on broadcast TV is always *an event*, in a single social time-and-space, and binding all spectators[5]. By the 80s, this became even more potent due to intertextuality, that is, television series began referring to other television series. A rather late example, *The Big Bang Theory* (CBS, 2007-19), at least in its first three seasons, continuously referred to other series such as *Star Trek* (NBC, 1966-69) or *Deep Space 9* (Syndication, 1993-99). Amazingly, at its point of "live airing", the audience could easily have watched some of these other shows, albeit in reruns, and may as well be sitting next to Sheldon (one of the characters of *Big Bang Theory*)! Television is not a frame through which to "escape" into another world, but rather the world-reference *through* which to observe. Lorenz Engell succinctly summarizes,

> [Television] shaped entire ways of life, introduced and accompanied the age of consumption, and given the nuclear family their economy, morality, daily routines, and everyday knowledge. It […] defined political power structures […] exponentially increased the number of images produced. It has created and established temporal structures –from daily and weekly rhythms to the basic understanding of actuality and eventfulness to the practices of expectation and memory[6].

Television formulates, structures, and participates in a lived temporal world. Generations are marked by such shows as *The Brady Bunch* (ABC, 1969-74), or *Friends* (NBC, 1994-2004).

Binge watching is but one indicator of the manner television as a medium is changing. With OTT the space of occurrence is now the event of availability. This paper analyzes such changes in temporality under four categories. *Time One* is the internal time spanned within the narrative. *Time Two* is the social lived time of the viewers, that is the period of its "airing". These broadly overlap with narrative theory. Gérard Genette posits three forms of narrative-temporal relations: 'story,' 'discourse,' and 'narrating.' Story is the sequence of events in the presented fictional world ('diegetic' time), discourse the time spent in presentation and reception of these events in its active form – here it will be the act of broadcasting and the act of watching – while narrating is the time of the narrating act which describes the spatio-temporal position of the narrative voice[7]. Other narrative devices employed in TV series also strengthen such a reading. The series *Dallas* (CBS 1978-1991), for example, passes off the character Bobby Ewing's death (S8, E30) and the subsequent events as just a dream of another character. It is only under-

[4] L. Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Post-War America*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992: 39.

[5] Marshall McLuhan argues that selective addressing is not possible on television. M. McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage*, Toronto: Random House, 1967: 125.

[6] L. Engell, "On the Difficulties of Television Theory", in M. Stauff, ed., *Thinking through Television*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019: 17-18.

[7] G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse. An Essay on Method* (1972), Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980.

stood by the viewer to be otherwise. This is the classic *mise-en-abîme* where the diegetic space alludes to yet another interiority, but accessible largely, or often only to the viewer "outside"[8]. *Time Three* is the mediatic sequence. And lastly, *Time Four* is that of lived life, the 'actual' aging of both the viewer and the actors during the airing span of a serial.

1. TIME ONE

In the sitcom *How I Met Your Mother* (CBS, 2005-14) the main protagonist, Ted Mosby, sits down to narrate to his children in 2030 the story of how he met, well, their mother. The story flashbacks by twenty-five years, and with this, the narrated time is set. But contrary to expectations, the narrative does not unfold in a straight-forward manner; rather it meanders[9]. However, at the start of almost every episode there is a return to that moment of 2030 – it is the finality towards which the sitcom is always moving, and this "reset-to-zero" anchors the temporal span in spite of the multiple subplots, new characters, flashbacks, and flash-forwards. This also allows viewers to remain immersed in the narrative, even when they miss an episode. This fixed narrated time (of twenty-five years) can be denoted as Time One A. The stretchable actual run-time of nine seasons can be denoted as Time One B. One can read Time One A as story-time and One B as discourse time within the framework of Genette's narrative theory[10]. The reset-to-zero too, for example, too is a narrative trope not specific to TV series – it can also be found in serialized narratives, such as *Thousand and One Nights*[11].

It is possible, however, to suggest that camera-space has a distinct nature. For example, it is always in a present[12] and the portrayals of past-and-future in flashbacks and flashforwards still have this sense of presence. Therefore, sometimes a film deploys a black-and-white or sepia image to denote a past event, or visual cues such as a "uniform" to denote a future one. Time to some extent can be depicted non-verbally say as the camera image turns day to night – but this only depicts a duration of the changing present. It is only with narrative that the other two tenses get denoted. Such distinctiveness of an ever-present[13] can be illustrated by *How I Met Your Mother,* where the narration appears to be immanent in the present – even though the story is narrated from a point in future. This inexorable logic of the camera-space can perhaps also be illustrated by TV's news coverage. Newspapers narrate with sequence of actions, causalities, analyses, and statements. In the utterance of the anchor TV news does this too. But the camera-space stipulates a liveness of the "event." Thus, there is the reporter at the 'scene,' or in "conversation" with the anchor to mark a sense of the present or live. And sometimes there are just re-enactments.

[8] For Meier Sternberg, "the play of suspense/curiosity/surprise between represented and communicative time" defines narrativity. Meier Sternberg, "Telling in Time (I): Chronology and Narrative Theory", in *Poetics Today*, 11, 4 (1990): 902.

[9] C. Bryant, K. Wright, "How I Met Your Mother 'Last Forever"', in L.D. Howard, ed., *Television Finales: From Howdy Doody to Girls*, Syracuse University Press, 2018: 173-178.

[10] Genette, *Narrative Discourse. An Essay on Method.* See also S. Chatman, "Genette's Analysis of Narrative Time Relations", *L'Esprit Créateur*, 14, 4 (1974): 353-368.

[11] U. Marzolph, "Making Sense of the Nights: Intertextual Connections and Narrative Techniques in the Thousand and One Nights", *Narrative Culture*, 1, 2 (2014): 239-258.

[12] A. Sesonske, "Time and Tense in Cinema", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 38, 4 (1980): 419-426 and "Cinema Space-Variations on the Real World" in D. Carr - E. Casey, eds., *Explorations in Phenomenology*, The Hague, 1973: 399-410. Also see A. Nahum García Martínez, "A Storytelling Machine: The Complexity and Revolution of Narrative Television", *Between*, 6 May 2016: 18.

[13] S. Cavell, "The Fact of Television", *Daedalus*, 111, 4 (1982): 75-96.

A far more significant aspect is the pause in-between episodes. In the catenation form of the series, each episode, ideally, is both stand-alone and a mini cliff-hanger that binds it to the next episode. The cliff-hanger motif is most powerfully evoked at the pause in-between the seasons. One of the most renowned season-finale was J.R Ewing's death in *Dallas* (CBS, 1978-91). It created a roar with "Who Shot J.R?" (S3, E25) which extended to such outlets as a popular t-shirt slogan, magazine covers, a comedy show and even political campaigns[14]. Thus the pause in-between of the week or season-break in a TV series is unlike that of the chapters of a novel, where the reader can continue reading or stop and pick up later. The ellipse is embedded in the life of the spectator, and as demonstrated by *Dallas*, in the larger social milieu. During the week-long pause, while the spectator is performing her daily chores, the characters of the series (away from run-time) presumably are too. If she is preparing for Christmas, so are they. Furthermore, the weekly and season cliff-hangers of the TV series induce an anticipation of the events of the next "airing". This in turn facilitates actual interactions in social circles. "Did you watch the finale of *Friends* last night?" becomes as topical as "the weather on Sunday." Amanda Lotz observes that 'Water cooler talk' is propelled by the immediacy to discuss last night television stories next day at work[15]. The ellipses of TV series cement one's membership to the group, and often becomes its *raison d'être*.

In the lived temporality of the spectator, this concatenated structure of the series is then an open diegesis that allows viewers to construct an overarching story-world using information they accumulate from their own lives as well as their continuous history of viewing[16]. The embedded viewer develops an empathetic relation with the characters[17] and over a longer span this allows for a life-like complexity unlike any other medium[18]. In fact, here the episodic narrative couples with the "relatable" characters. Thus, Time One in Broadcast TV is both immanent in the series and part of the larger world. This occurs even when the narrative is not in the same time-period of the airing, as that of the period drama[19]. The reverse is also possible. *The Simpsons* (FOX, 1989-) has run for 31 years, but the narrative time has remained an ever-present now, with characters not having aged a day. And yet it has remained embedded in the life of its audience. Engell's observation summarizes this,

> (O)ne of the main ontological features of television is the familiarization of the world, which leads to the erasure of the exteriority of the world (Anders,1956). Television thus becomes a question of space – namely, the relationship between some 'inside' and some 'outer world'[20].

[14] "Commentary: The 'Dallas' Shot That Was Heard Round the World: Television: Three Hundred Million Viewers Found out 'Who Shot J.R.?' 10 Years Ago This Week on the Soap Opera that Embodied the '80s.", *Los Angeles Times*, November 23, 1990, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1990-11-23-ca-5345-story.html.

[15] A.D. Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*, New York: New York University Press, 2014: 62.

[16] J. Mittell, "Film and Television Narrative", in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007: 164.

[17] T. Bridgeman, "Time and Space", in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007: 53.

[18] The empathetic act of reading can be traced back to Mikhail Bakhtin, but here the intermingling of lived and read is far more then within a text. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 84-258.

[19] Television series still follow Meier Sternberg's arguments about the workings of time (events, developments, changes of state) in some time-medium, verbal and/or otherwise, but not perforce in their original order of time. Meir Sternberg, "Telling in Time (I): Chronology and Narrative Theory", in *Poetics Today*, 11, 4 (1990): 902.

[20] Engell, "On the Difficulties of Television Theory": 194.

This erasure of the exterior world of the spectator and the interior world of the series, through the "lived" moments of the segmented limbo, as well as intertextuality, is what sets Broadcast TV series as distinct.

Does this embedded presence come through on OTT and "binge" watching, that is, beyond that of the narrative structure? The embeddedness of the weekly ellipses, cliff-hangers and the drama generated by season endings are now attenuated. OTT allows the viewer to push ahead seamlessly. Or pause at will. Temporality within the narrative persists but is not so easily "live". Similarly, erasure of the distinction between "inside-outside" may occur or may not. Lastly, a pause in-between can range from unanticipated minutes to weeks. It is in complete control of the viewer. And so, even the framing of advertisement breaks, and placements have disappeared. In all this OTT (re)structures Time One to be not dissimilar to other literary works. Alberto N. Garcia coined the term "TV novels" for broadcast era, but it now appears more relevant to OTT streaming[21]. In fact, both Broadcast TV and OTT platforms have even begun experimenting with a hybrid between film and series, as a limited long series as in evident in the *Mandalorian* (Disney + 2019) or True Detective (HBO 2014-) – each season is a composite one long episode.

Overall, with OTT, Time One's embeddedness is now personal.

2. TIME TWO

The specificity of Time Two, as the social lived time of the viewers, is its *airing* time, the point at which it went "live" With this, Broadcast TV does not just structure itself but also the daily and weekly routine of the spectator and the overall social rhythm. In India, the TV serialization of the epic *Ramayana*, first aired in 1987, had a captive 82% audience. Streets would be empty, shops closed, doctors unavailable, all activities, public and private, paused during this airing. It structured all social rhythms. It was so powerful that the state network recast the series during the Covid lockdown[22]. Similarly, *all* Brazilian TV sets were tuned to the finale of *Roque Santeiro* (1985-86). 100%!

We have discussed the correlation of the week-long ellipse of the series above. Similarly, airing time structures viewers' weekly activities, as they set out to be home or meet in a social gathering to watch their chosen series at *its* chosen particular time. Inversely, broadcasters also worked out the airing time to match the social norms. In some countries Sunday is prime-time, and in others it is Thursday. *Ramayana*, for example, aired on Sunday mornings; *Roque Santeiro* aired from Monday to Saturday at 8:25pm, but not on Sundays.

One had to be in "time" for the airing, otherwise "what did I miss?" would be followed by self-admonishment. The reruns or the teasers during the week do assist, but the actual act of watching is an event in itself. The liveliness of the series is of the same valence as sports telecast or such events as Apollo's moon landing. The characters Ross and Rachael's breakup in the series *Friends* or the superlative goal scored by Messi are

[21] A. Nahum García Martínez, *A Storytelling Machine: The Complexity and Revolution of Narrative Television*, Italian Association for the Theory and Comparative History of Literature, 2016, p. 12. http://hdl.handle.net/10171/41400.

[22] https://www.outlookindia.com/blog/story/india-news-ramanand-sagars-ramayan-then-and-now-politics-of-an-epic-kind/4161/retrieved November 2021. As per Wikipedia, this series garnered more than 650 million viewers over the decades.

similar 'happenings' (*geschehen*). One could always record it, but it had occurred *so* last night.

Airing time is then a shared time for a social group, even when not in the same specific space or in front of the same screen *or* a social group in any other way. Thus, television is essentially a "single screen" at a "single time" and in a way with a "single" audience. This synchronicity is different from cinema, even though films have precise Friday night release dates. Cinema still allows a certain window to catch the film. This then is TV's *liveness* of Time Two that it *structures* and *anchors* social and personal time.

With OTT this liveness is diminished. By its very nature, streaming is any screen, anytime, and personal. Couples fight when one goes on to the next episode without waiting for the other. The ensuing social interactions have also changed, the *liveness* is gone. Consequently, there is no immediacy of *next day*. Now, the ensuing discussion is best exemplified by social media – it is similar to groups around vintage cars or killer bikes. In other words, OTT allows personal *idiosyncratization* to modify *Time Two*. Content is now consumed almost "privately"[23] – or at best, as in literature or cinema. Furthermore, OTT allows one to be nostalgic, say, focus on the 90s, like in old phonograms. The hinge of the series with the present is severed[24]. We may watch TV series, but on OTT it is unlikely to watch the world with us.

3. TIME THREE

Time Three is how the technical features of the medium affect temporality. Broadcast TV prescribes a clear sequence: Teaser/Commercial Break/Recap/Intro/Main body/credits. One could switch channels, but not the sequence. Another aspect of this mediatic time is that it is not dependent on the viewer. It never stopped running, whether the viewer tuned in or not. Thus, while channel surfing, say in the 90s, one could feel that these different channels "lived" with each other just as much with the spectator, or with intertextuality, even without the spectator. The broadcast was always on, with the viewer, or without. It was a mediated world in itself.

DVR did intervene to some extent, but the temporality of the series was not overpowered by it. For one, DVRs were dependent on "airing". If you were recording a series, you could only do so *at* the time of airing, and one episode at a time. So, both embeddedness and anchoring remained. And so did the mediatic sequence prescribed by the broadcast.

With OTT this mediatic sequence has changed. For one, there is omission of recap and in-between pauses, and perhaps most importantly there is only a five-second window between two episodes. And all these are now at the behest of the viewer's fingers. In Broadcast TV, recap was a necessary device given that the temporality of the TV was embedded within the temporality of the viewer, and thus came with the ellipse of a day or a week. Also, the narrative structure was so defined that if one missed an episode, with recap and reset-to-zero one could still manage to move on with the series. OTT's series' temporality is completely in control of the viewers; there is no missing out, and

[23] T.M. Sodano, "Television's Paradigm (Time)Shift: Production and Consumption Practices in the Post-Network Era", in M. Ames, ed., *Time in Television Narrative: Exploring Temporality in 21st Century Programming*, Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 2012.

[24] D. Johnson, "Party Like It's 1999: Another Wave of Network Nostalgia," in *Flow*, April 2015, http://flowtv.org/2015/04/party- like-it's-1999.

therefore no recap is necessary. If a recap of an earlier season is required, say when a new season becomes available, it is done outside the sequence of the series, as some viewers may have just begun watching the earlier season and will seamlessly move to the new one. If there is still recap embedded in an older series, on OTT it now seems impertinent. Similarly, new series totally eschew reset-to-zero, such as *The Mandalorian* mentioned before, or even in the US Netflix mock-documentary series *American Vandal* (2017). The narrative of these 'made-for-OTT' series is akin to one large episode, broken for convenience or convention into smaller ones[25]. Even new Broadcast TV series are changing their narrative structure. The Hannibal series (NBC 2013-15) eschews the weekly cliffhangers to adopt a more series-based writing[26]. With this the 'run-time' of Broadcast TV is also not so easily stretchable in the manner it was earlier. Even when new characters are introduced, they tend now to be within the overall narrative, and not episodic, say as in *Seinfeld*.

In other words, OTT appears to foster an authorship of mediatic time: the viewer can pause, play, rewind, fast forward, leave, restart at will and convenience[27]. But perhaps the most important new function is the average five to ten seconds countdown during the credits at the end of the episode after which the interface will automatically move to the next episode; and at the end of the series, to the next series. But now, Netflix, for example, has a machine-driven pause, which confirms whether the viewers are actively watching or not. This is in sharp contrast to the world of broadcast, with its inexorable live continuity, without end, even when the viewers switched off.

Engell argues that with every upgradation, a medium makes something possible that was not possible before. That is, media is fundamentally generative, actualized and opens a horizon of possibilities[28]. This is very much manifested in the evolution from Broadcast TV to OTT. DVRs provided some control and allowed a modicum of de-anchoring. OTT has taken this control to the level of a new structure; the viewer can choose which content to play, when to play and how to play. Each OTT service now is a repository, library, archive with a "home" and "search" rather than the inexorable world of Broadcast TV. Thus, one could also argue the opposite of Engell's statement, that with every generative move, something is lost. For, with the changes in mediatic time – as in the changes in liveness, embeddedness and anchoring of TV in the rhythm of life – the nature of series is losing something.

4. TIME FOUR

In his landmark essay, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*[29], Walter Benjamin makes some seminal observations about cinema. It would be a challenging exercise to speculate how this landmark essay would have included

[25] Brembilla, "This Cultural Creation of Binge Watching, I tempi del consumo personalizzato". Brembilla coins the term *Being Bingable* and points out how *Fargo* (Fox 2014-) and *True Detective* (HBO 2014-) are better suited to OTT than say the episodic *Seinfeld*. Each season of these series are fixed number of episodes of what in effect is conceived as one long film. She notes, "True Detective diventa infatti la serie di punta del nuovo servizio stand-alone di streaming online di HBO, HBO Now, mentre i diritti di Fargo vengono acquisiti da Hulu".

[26] Brembilla, "This Cultural Creation of Binge Watching, I tempi del consumo personalizzato".

[27] Furthermore, while DVR/Tivo too provided similar although more limited control, there is a sense of liveliness with OTT. DVR media was always after the event.

[28] Engell, "On the Difficulties of Television Theory", 30.

[29] W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, translated by J.A Underwood, Penguin Books Limited, 2008. This essay has many versions in different languages.

television. Benjamin points out that unlike theater, in cinema the actor performs for a mechanical device. The camera does not hold still. It moves, changes angle, draws closes-up, calls in multiple cameras to examine various facets and so on. There is also cut and repeat. What emerges for presentation then is stitched and edited together, and the viewer lends it temporal unity and narrative continuity. Benjamin summarizes that "the audience's identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera"[30]. As always with Benjamin, one could rephrase this; that neither the actor, nor the audience face each other as they do in theater, but they face the camera in *almost the same manner*. In other words, the camera may as well be examining the viewer instead of the actor.

Benjamin further argues that the actor cannot not take difference personas for different roles in front of the camera, as they could in the direct immediacy of theater. Now the actor presents only herself and holds together her own inner persona for this surgical splitting, stitching, editing and examination of the camera. Benjamin dramatically adds, "for the first time – and this is the effect of the film – man has to operate with his whole living persona yet forgetting his aura"[31]. And one could easily add, so does the spectator.

Here is the lineation of a Time Four: TV is the device of both series *and* life. Because, unlike cinema, in a television series an actor does not present his "living persona" for a short period. *She lives and ages there*. For a series that usually spans considerable time, say more than six years, actors spend the majority of their time, usually eight hours a day, in front of the camera. Thus, unlike the *living persona* presented to cinema, what camera now records are the (Benjaminian) traces of life *as it writes* on the face and persona of the actor[32]. And *concurrently* the same also occurs in the persona of the viewer. As Chandler's hairline recedes through the seasons on *Friends*, it also marks the passage of lived time for the viewers[33]. It is the lived life that correlates on both sides of the camera. Thus, unlike cinema, in broadcast television it is not so much the actor but life (*Erlebnis*) that get presented, and viewed; and at least theoretically, contemplated.

In other words, the mediatic devices of the camera in Broadcast TV structures life – it examines and demands that the spectator too "operate with his whole living persona yet forgetting his aura". Although written in another context, here Bernhard Siegert's assertions can also be interjected:

> Humans as such do not exist independently of cultural techniques of hominization, time as such does not exist independently of cultural techniques of time measurement, and space as such does not exist independently of cultural techniques of spatial control[34].

This changes with OTT. Binge-watching *collapses* what would otherwise have been the lived years of a series. Years can be watched in days or weeks – certainly not years. Whereas life may still be narrating the story-world of the series, in its reception this link has been broken. Now, just as the camera was a surgical instrument, the remote in the

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] "The trace is the appearance of a closeness, as far as what it left behind may be. The aura is an appearance of a distance, as close as that which evokes it may be. In the trace we get hold of the matter; in the aura it takes hold of us". W. Benjamin: *Das Passagen-Werk. Gesammelte Schriften*, Band V: Frankfurt am Main, 1983: 560.

[33] This is different from the aspect of aging usually covered in scholarship. Cf. C. Lee Harringto, "Time, Memory, and Aging on the Soaps", in M. Oró-Piqueras, A. Wohlmann, eds., *Serializing Age. Aging and Old Age in Tv Series*, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015: 25-47

[34] B. Siegert, *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and other Articulations of The Real*, New York 2015.

functions of stopping, repeating, dropping, forwarding, surfing reworks out the lived Time Four.

5. CONCLUSION

It may perhaps be too early to write a definitive conclusion on the changes wrought by OTT. Some have already claimed the death of what was once called a controlling, ever gazed upon cathode-ray device; something towards which Neil Postman expresses undiluted abhorrence[35]. But for now, it is more productive to begin by considering OTT as continuation of an ever-evolving medium. Also, technological advancements rework out previously dominant media, as, for example, television did with radio. Thus, the conclusive mapping of OTT will also be a remapping of Broadcast TV. For example, Brembilla posits that there are two viewers now, one for OTT and one for Broadcast TV[36]. This paper has argued within the medium, and that OTT transforms the relation of the viewer to seriality, and that this is predicated on the shifts in the nature of temporality. What with Broadcast TV was essentially 'one screen-one time-one audience' has now fragmented and become the "now-available". OTT is in the process of transforming television as writing once did language or as the typewriter did writing or the Word-process did the typewriter.

In summary, there are at least five transformations traced in this paper. First is the collapse of the temporal ellipse between episodes, what we have termed its *embeddedness*. Consequently, its coupling with life has now been reformulated. Second, the discourse time is now the product of the viewer's authorship. Even when the viewer does not disturb it with the remote, she chose not to do so, and so remains the author of it. Third is the *anchoring* and *structuring* of a common social world by the series. Airing was an event in the world-writ-large. The "now-available" on OTT does not do the same. Fourth, with the new technical features of OTT there is a new mediatic order of things. Fifth – and this is the opposite conclusion of the manner in which mass-media is normally considered – with OTT contemporary humanity may have lost yet one more chance of contemplating itself. Or at least the traces of life presented by the camera are being reformulated. In Benjaminian terms, it may at least raise the need for another storyteller of life[37].

[35] N. Postman, "Amusing Ourselves to Death", *A Review of General Semantics*, 42, 1 (1985).
[36] Brembilla, "This Cultural Creation of Binge Watching, I tempi del consumo personalizzato".
[37] W. Benjamin, *The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nikolai Leskov*, in H. Eiland, M.W. Jennings, eds., *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, 3: 1935-1938*, Harvard University Press, 2006.

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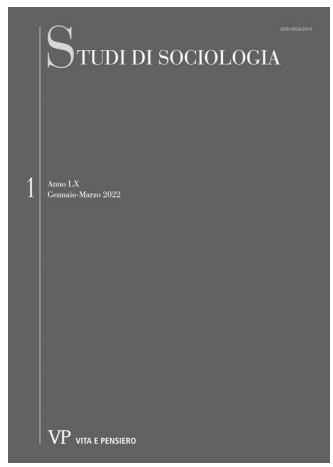

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