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# CITIES AND MIGRATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

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*Abstract:* Cities and migration is a topic which cannot be studied by one discipline, and which is enriched by a multi-level approach. It crosses, inside the area of migration studies, urban studies (geography, political science, and sociology), migration flows and stocks (mobility, settlement, and integration for demographers), public law and international relations (governance, international agreements, and cooperation). It is also relating to new actors, sometimes non-State actors, along with public policies. Sociology, political science, anthropology, geography, philosophy, history are questioned by a problematics which often opposes hospitality in towns and hostility from the migration State in an international landscape of crisis and emergency. The contradictions between the various levels in the decision-making process (local, municipal, regional, national, international) are many, although this topic gained visibility with the recent hospitality and solidarity developed by cities, sometimes transgressing national laws and policies facing with security, dissuasive and repressive approaches of Nation States. As migrants are more and more coming from urban areas to other urban areas in the South, as well in the North, cities are central actors in a multi-level approach of decision-making processes of flows and of living together. Cities are also the main space of Integration, highlighting discriminations, institutional racism, and other forms of exclusion but also emergence of close solidarities and creativity. The growing visibility of migrants in daily life is also questioning various forms of cohabitation.

*Keywords:* cities, migrations, multi-level approach, hospitality, hostility.

## CITIES AND MIGRATION, AN INTRODUCTIVE OVERVIEW

The city is at the center of problematics relating to the Town, because, at a global scale, the growing urbanization on the planet also involves migrations. Some global cities are hosting them at South and at North but in most cases in precarious conditions in slums, so called “ethnic” districts, suburbs, inner cities, and camps. Global cities which are the epi-

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centers of the world's decision processes in economics, finance, political summits, are often expelling from their centers all those who are living from the resources of the town, but at the bottom level (Sassen 1996, 2014). This trend is increased by the difficult access of many newcomers to a legal status, with zones deprived of rights: so called "jungles" for asylum seekers, border cities, transit zones, with ghettos at the peripheries.

But the city can also be a welcoming place of hospitality, organized in city networks for informal trade for newcomers in mobility alike Berlin and Vienna after the fall of the Berlin wall in the 1990's, Istanbul with its informal markets and circular migrants. Urban actors are also diversified, in the management of cities confronted with migrations: the European Union with its regulation of circulation and refugee crises, Nation States with their military pressure at the borders, municipalities, humanitarian NGOs, associations and mere citizens engaged in welcoming migrants with advocacies to be presented to public decision makers. The cases of Palermo, Barcelona, Strasburg and other cities are well-known. Small cities are also involved, but the cost of hospitality for its citizens is often a transgression of the law with the multiplication of "*délits de solidarité*", consisting in helping illegals to cross the border and to welcome them. The cases of Cédric Hérou, a farmer in the French Alps condemned by Justice then relaxed by the Constitutional Council, the Highest Court in France, according to the principle of "*Fraternité*" highlighted in his benevolent behavior. A film, *Libre* was issued after the successful decision of justice. The other cases of Domenico Lucano, the mayor of Riace in Italy and of the inhabitants of Briançon are now confronting justice with ethics.

In some places, welcoming migrants with the help of NGOs and sometimes with European funds can be an opportunity to find jobs in solidarity management mixing public and private sectors in regions of unemployment or desertification of rural areas alike in Sicily (Bassi 2015), Nord-Pas de Calais or Greek islands. Cities are also initiating a civil society of solidarity networks with migrants, involved at grass-root local

level for unaccompanied minors, illegals, asylum seekers and families.

The city can also develop networks at international dimension when they are included in environmental crises, such as Dacca in Bangladesh and other ones settled at sea level, such as the New Orleans during the disaster of Katrina, Mumbai or Kolkata and many others (Gemenne et al 2018). Some international agreements of co-development between Northern and Southern cities involved in immigration and emigration can also try to develop a better management in southern societies confronted with rapid urbanization, as for rubbish treatment, access to clean water, urban social housing, uses of remittances and improvement of daily life in urban areas and not only in rural ones.

We are so discovering, due to globalization and localism, the new facets of cities and migration, coming back to Immanuel Kant who was stressing on hospitality as a universal duty of a citizen in a cosmopolitan world (Kant 2006), followed by Zygmunt Bauman (2000) with his notion of liquid modernity (de Wenden 2013). The area of cities and migrations is enlarging with multilevel forms of policies and actors trying to manage them, with conflictual options.

## CITY NETWORKS

Do cities govern the world, and will they do it the future? This question was already asked in mid-nineties by Saskia Sassen in her seminal work about the *Global city*, focusing on the weakening of Nation States and the strengthening of transnational networks in economics, finances, and trade with the examples of London, New York, and Tokyo. The question is here raised about migrations and networks built by cities beyond Nation States in order to rule migrations at local, national and international levels through integration policies and global governance. In their book on *City networks*, Thomas Lacroix and Sarah Spencer (2022) are asking the question: will cities govern the world with another role in integration policies and in Global Governance of migrations, in reaction with

national and international policies? The governance from below, studied at meso-level of city networks is a good place to observe the large diversity of situations, shown in this very original approach of migration policies, thanks to new actors and new fields found in cities.

Little research has been devoted to cities as actors of migration policies in hospitality, and on their expertise in governance at multi-scale levels from below in reaction with national and international policies from the top. At meso-level of city networks, there is a great diversity of situations. In her work on multilevel decision-making processes, Tiziana Caponio (University of Turin) stresses on the ambiguous horizontal dimension of meso-level governance (MLG). She writes that the horizontal level of towns as new actors of migration policies at local, national and international scale has been “poorly conceptualized and de facto considered as subordinated to vertical, intergovernmental relations of a secondary relevance”. Migration, city networks at the crossroads of vertical and horizontal policymaking dynamics are undertheorized, according to her. The theorization of the horizontal dimension of the relations between the State and the society as key element of analysis needs to be deepened according to three agendas: EU, national and federal levels, city-city relations to define good practices and relations between welcoming communities and intercultural cities. The collaborative, multi-level and inter-sectorial governance can be analyzed in several stages including networks, activists, and the structuring role of the political context on the cities in their migration strategy.

## SMART CITIES AND CITIES OF RELEGATION

However, if global cities have also been qualified “smart cities”, attracting high qualified migrants from all over the world, they are also creating cosmopolitan forms of citizenship beyond Nation States thanks to newcomers from poor countries and lower social backgrounds. In his book *L'étranger qui vient. Penser l'hospitalité*, Michel Agier (2019: 84) quotes Jacques Derrida:

Si nous nous référons à la Ville plutôt qu'à l'Etat, c'est que nous espérons d'une nouvelle figure de la Ville ce que nous renonçons presque à attendre de l'Etat [...]. Ce qu'en l'appelant de nos vœux la ville refuge, ce n'est plus simplement un dispositif de nouveaux attributs ou de nouveaux pouvoirs ajoutés à un concept classique et inchangé de la ville. Il ne s'agit plus seulement de nouveaux prédicats pour enrichir le vieux sujet nommé "ville". Non, nous rêvons d'un autre concept, d'un autre droit, d'une autre politique de la ville.

Urban policy has been, namely in France settled at the center of integration policies since the nineties, but it was thought as a State policy implemented at local level, with few international outputs and without cities as actors of these policies. The arrival of refugees with the so called "refugee crisis" of 2015 and before (in 2011) has highly shifted the approach. It now asks how far cities are changing migrants' incorporation and how migrants are changing the City. The rise of the right to mobility as a human right, the ethics of hospitality, the rules of solidarity because these cities are experiencing informal ways of life, illegality of statuses, of passage ("transmigrants") without settlement, and of lasting provisional ways of life with difficulties due to borders, bureaucracy, fear of extreme rightist votes, bring contradictions between the national rules and the will of global cities to attract high level migration and practices of hospitality from below.

These questions are all the more acute as the urbanization of the planet is, along with migration and environment, one of the key issues of this century. The Town is placed at the center of these concerns, because, at global level, the urbanization movement of the planet (with 70 per cent urban inhabitants in Africa in 2050 against 70 per cent rural ones in 1950) includes migrations: more educated, urban, opened to new technologies of information and communication and also prey of traffickers due to their dream of a future abroad. They may be attracted by Global cities, but at the margins: in relegated districts. Saskia Sassen analyses its consequences about migration in her book *Expulsion* (2014). Most poor people are also de facto excluded from cities, relegated in camps (Agier 2014), border cities, transit zones, slums, inner cities. This process is accelerated by the difficulties of migrants to get a legal access



and status in their long travels, creating new peripheries which hardly look like cities: “*encampement*” (camps) of refugees (according to the word of Agier 2014). Transit zones studied by Alain Tarrius and Mehdi Allouïa (2009), with “transmigrants” alike in Morocco or in Calais, in France (the so called “jungle”) are often dismantled but always rebuilt. Border cities alike Tijuana in Mexico or El Paso, are also threatened by ghettos with communities reconstructing their way of life.

### SANCTUARY TOWNS AND WELCOMING CITIES

But we also find sanctuary towns for welcoming newcomers, when hospitality is framing networks of solidarity between them. Urban actors have diversified themselves: European Union, States, municipalities, NGOs, associations of citizens and foreigners completing national policy if the State itself does not bring trouble in their advocacies and action. The example of Palermo, named a cosmopolitan city by its mayor Leoluca Orlando (often referring to the Palermo Chart) or other networks including Strasburg can be quoted with many other examples. Another case is Riace, a town of Calabria, in southern Italy, where the mayor, Domenico Lucani was prohibited to stay in his town by the State and then condemned because he allowed to undocumented migrants newly arrived to work in cooperative activities to facilitate their insertion. Grande Synthe, led by its mayor Damien Carême, near Dunkerque until his election to the European Parliament in 2020, tried also to imagine another hospitality for new comers, in opposition with common stereotypes of some mayors and local authorities and he created the ANVITA (Association Nationale des Villes et Territoires Accueillants, including 53 territories)<sup>1</sup>: all the less migrants are welcome, all the less they will come, whereas most migrants are attracted more by the presence of compatriots from their country or region who can facilitate their travel than by social services, usually absent. They are helped by the emergence of civil society solidarity towards city networks on irregular migration, focusing on pragmatism on a sensitive multi-level governance issue.

Sometimes, hospitality in cities, beyond ethics, can be an opportunity for national unemployed populations to catch new jobs in the management of associations for migrants and funding expertise at local, national and even European level which would never had been granted without the arrival of new comers. In Lyons, Nantes and Strasbourg, local authorities have been involved in migration-related city networks. In the United States, sanctuary cities have ambivalent relations with national policy. Strasbourg got the label of hospitality city (“ville accueillante”) since 2018, with a goal of inclusion thanks to its council of foreigners settled for a long term. With refugee flows, some cities have had to manage the dismantling of the settlements such as Grande Synthe, Saint-Denis (near Paris), Lyons (1<sup>st</sup> district) or Briançon with the conflict between welcoming activists (accused of “*délit de solidarité*”) and policemen, while refugees are hesitating between staying, coming back or going further. The network of welcoming cities is now a world network, with a global parliament of mayors and 14 networks of refuge towns. The multilevel approach helps to analyze and compare

In Germany<sup>2</sup> some towns led a crucial role in welcoming refugees during the 2015 crisis, as complementary or alternatives with the State, with the help of citizens in their homes, building networks of social relations and understandings. They became a driving force for the governance of immigration in Germany. In this federal country, the towns have some autonomy in integration policies for the implementation of European recommendations at local level. They participated to resettlement programs for refugees and contributed to open the labor market to refugees and asylum seekers, trying to avoid the “*duldung status*” (nor able to be legalized nor expelled), separating the social questions from the legal status, with the help of non profit associations such as Caritas. In Berlin, the city subsidized housing for 750 euros per months for each applicant, in the city of Halle, the town rented 700 flats for newcomers, according to the topic of housing for all as a priority. However, in this country, immigration was not a debate during the last elections of the chancellor after Angela Merkel.



City networks can also include the role of universities which facilitate network socialization through knowledge exchange on integration and inclusion. Knowledge exchange, brokered by a University partner can become a creator for city networks' socialisation. As policy agents, city networks help to formulate and to implement immigration and integration policies.

### CITIES ARE NEW ACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In the Mediterranean region, big cities have created transnational and international networks of knowledge and management of migration. Ricard Zapata (University Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona) speaks about "the local turn" about Migration governance from below in Mediterranean cities as resilient and regional ones. Taking the example of Barcelona, he shows that urbanized Global cities confronted with migrants' settlement led to opportunities of Mediterranean governance from States to cities (Euromed partnership, Palermo Chart of 2015, Palermo/Izmir partnership) but also including reliance with the management of illegals, unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers. A Med-net thinking was born, framing a Mediterranean regional building, where cities can be a focus for promoting an alternative regional migration governance not only focused on the Mediterranean but also inside the Global Compact Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

Cities are also developing between the South and the North, a diplomacy of towns with decentralized cooperation, to avoid the polarization of national debates and conflicts between migrants' associations and local elites of the South while promoting human development preferably to western development models. Some examples in Senegal and Mali with the help of their diasporas and migrants' associations are focusing on the autonomy of the local level preferably to the national one for local development in regions of emigration to show the good practices (according to the PNUD recommendations).

At a larger scale, big cities can also become subjects of international relations if they are involved in huge international challenges as environment. They take a world dimension when they are victims of environmental crises and when they become the focus of great international challenges: Bangladesh and its capital, Dacca is always threatened by floods due to its location in a delta receiving the waters of huge rivers (Gange and Brahmaputra), which also attracts a high density of population due to the fertility of the earth for agriculture. If the rise of waters goes on, many big cities in the world settled at the level of the sea, mainly in Asia, will have more environmentally displaced people and a lot of deaths, those poorest who did not find options for internal mobility in their country (Kolkata, Mumbai). No internal status exists to environmentally displaced people, which led Bangladesh to develop a soft diplomacy in UN international areas with the support of experts to prepare advocacies about the future of those big towns, even if it does not give clear benefits<sup>3</sup>. International law, State sovereignty and urban policies are involved Another case highlighting big cities is New Orleans, during the Katrina disaster: the poorest stayed on the place, due to the lack of resources and the others left to other regions in the US, although the city tried to shift its population with less poor people. The policy making confronted the Federal State, the state of Louisiana and the town (Gemenne et al. 2018). The multi-level analysis is particularly relevant in this case.

Big city networks are also creating further mobilizations by political shifting of level potentially leading to policy change. The rising importance of cities as international actors have an impact on the Global Compact on migration at world level. Cities have also organized themselves through associations and networks exchanging local knowledge, local action redefining governance such as: individual mayors as global leaders (example of Mayoral Forum 2014 and of GCM 2018 in Marrakech); city mobilization as answers to humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants within national contexts; city-city solutions for regulated inter-state mobility. The impact of migration appears thus at local, national and international level, migration policy influences various levels of governance and

global comparatist approach when Covid-19 has activated coalitions of towns, cities and countries for the undocumented, for example. Cities and mayors as cross border problems solvers may also, such as in the 20 cities participating in the GFMD Dialogue, are treating with climate, urban questions, GCM and facilitate cooperative localism, anti-discrimination practices and strengthening networks (Thouez, in Lacroix, Spencer 2022).

### CITIES BETWEEN STATES AND GRASSROOTS LEVEL FOR GOVERNANCE OF MIGRATIONS

For somebody who begun to study the rising politicization of migration from mid-seventies to mid-nineties, the enlargement of field research on migration in political science is phenomenal. In a context where the strength of civil society on States has declined for traditional actors such as trade unions, churches and even firms, cities are now welcoming migrants, although entrance belongs to the competence of States. Non state actors have acquired significant roles and sometimes key roles from below to top level decision making, thanks to multilateralism including a great diversity of partners with non-State actors. Horizontal forces, thanks to city networking are also acquiring through transnationalism, multilevel forms of governance exchanging expertise and ability to work in emergency situations, including universities, activists, and migrants.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In Belgium, the network “Communes hospitalières” includes 126 towns and villages and 747 welcoming towns have been identified in Europe.

<sup>2</sup> Sophie Hinger, University of Osnabrück, IMIS, Conference at CERI organized by Thomas Lacroix on Cities and Migration, 10/9/2021.

<sup>3</sup> Alice Baillat, Ph D Sciences Po, on the soft diplomacy of poor Nation States alike Bangladesh involved in environmental risks.

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