National Case Study
Thematic Study on Urban Intercultural
Spaces and Movements (WP 7)

Italy

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1. Introduction

1.1. Topic Area of Research

According to the general work-package framework, the goal of the research is to investigate: a) the migrant's use of the urban spaces and the changes of the city, b) formal and informal practices in local communities and neighborhoods in which intercultural interactions takes place, c) migrant's citizenship practices in their local and transnational lives. Based on a gender perspective analysis, we would like to, above all, highlight the agency of the migrants (Mezzadra 2001; 2004) while criticizing the rhetoric (now widespread in Bologna and in Italy) that overlaps migration and security problems in the city. However, focusing on the subjectivity of the migrants also means criticizing the image of migrants as pure victims (Mohanty 2003). In fact, "securitarian" and *victimhood* discourses (Puwar 2003) risk to being two sides of the same coin.

Moreover, in order to investigate how migrants and migrant mobility transform urban spaces, we aim to analyze their labor conditions, as well as their legal status; this is to say the material situations in which they live in the city.

In order to develop this research, we will concentrate our qualitative interviews in five parts: I) migratory biography; II) labor, education and family conditions; III) uses of public spaces in the city and in the neighborhood; IV) participation to association, formal and informal groups, etc.; V) transnational practices and projects.

The fieldwork case study is a quite central and fairly large neighborhood called "Bolognina", which is part of the administrative neighborhood Navile. Bolognina is a historically working-class neighborhood, a traditional meeting point in the city and it has also played a symbolic role in recents events in Italian politics. For example, in 1989, the imminent dissolution of the Italian Communist Party was announced here. Ever since the early '90s, Bolognina has been the most populous migrant zone in Bologna. The largest ethnic groups come from China, Morocco and the Philippines, followed by a wide variety of other sending countries: the main ones include: Bangladesh, Albania, Ukraine, Moldova, Pakistan, Eritrea, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Serbia, Egypt, Peru, and many others. However, the so called "irregular" and "clandestine" migrants are excluded from official statistics. Nevertheless, they are a structural presence in the social, productive, and economic fabric, as well as in the everyday life of urban spaces. This is also a methodological question and problem for any kind of research.

Starting from Bolognina, we are trying to follow migrant trajectories and movements through the city, illustrating the transformations of gender relationships, urban spaces, citizenship and the labor market. The main zones of our fieldwork are squares, parks, markets, shops, social centers and associations: these are the places in which we managed to register the highest degree of migrant presence and traffic. Although the research is based mainly on qualitative interviews as well as focus groups and participant observation, we are also collecting quantitative data in order to describe the changes of migrant composition in Bologna and the transformations seen in it's urban spaces.

1.2. Case Study

The fieldwork is being done in Bolognina, an area at the core of the administrative neighborhood Navile. In this section, we will offer some dates and demographic trends of the neighborhood and some of the most important project that will affect its structure over the next few years.

Topological and demographic overview

Source: Comune di Bologna

This picture shows the administrative area of Navile, Bolognina is located in the lower-right corner. It can be easily observed that is the most densely urbanized area of the neighborhood and the closest to the Bologna city Centre, that is immediately below, just outside this picture. The area is inserted among two highways (A14 Bologna-Taranto, North-West), the Fair District (to the East, outside of the picture), and the national railway and the main train station of Bologna that separate Bolognina from the city centre (South, outside the picture).

The neighborhood has historically been a working-class neighborhood, with the presence (until the 1980s) of many industries (such as Officine Minganti and Casaralta) and the former

vegetable market and stock exchange. The process of deindustrialization and the removal of industries from the city has left many disused areas (especially the area of vegetable market and many lots surrounding via D. Creti), while others have been recovered with the conversion of former industries into commercial malls (like the former Officine Minganti structures). A consistent number of public housing structures are also present. With the building of the new City Hall, new residential lots and the project of a new station, the neighborhood is now facing a rapid transformation towards gentrification due to his strategic position close to the city centre, the train station and important national and local roads. Nevertheless, the neighborhood has maintained it's working-class structure up to the present time and the presence of migrants should be considered from this point of view. Historically, it is only with the beginning of the 1980s that the presence of migrants becomes relevant in the city of Bologna, following the Italian national trend. It will suffice to mention that in 1992 the average migrants population of Bologna was still not above 1.4% of the total population while migrant presence almost doubled between 2002 and 2008. We will now present some recent data in order to give a picture of the present situation (as of December 2008):

Total population:
Bologna: 374,944
Navile: 64,593
Bolognina: 32,751

Migrant population:
Bologna: 39,480
Navile: 8,969
Bolognina: 5,594

Percentage of migrants in the total population:
Bologna: 10,5%
Navile: 13.9%
Bolognina: 17%

Percentage of residents of the area in the total city population:
Bologna: 100%
Navile: 5.8%
Bolognina: 8.7%

Percentage of migrants living in the area in the total migrant population:
Bologna: 100%
Navile:
Bolognina: 14%

We can thus notice that while Bolognina counts for only 8,7% of the total population of the city, more than 14% of the total migrants population lives in this neighborhood. Data shows Bolognina as being the first area of the city for migrant presence, followed by S. Donato (12,5%), S. Vitale (11%), Borgo Panigale (10,6%) and Reno (10%), with other neighborhoods being below 10%. It is worth noting that Borgo Panigale and Navile are the two neighborhoods where the migrant population is mostly composed of men, while S. Stefano and Saragozza show a significant presence of women (60% and 55% respectively).

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If we consider that the latter two are richest neighborhoods, we can observe that this different distribution among genders reflects a different composition of migrant labor, with domestic workers (mostly female) on one side and service or industrial workers (mainly male) on the other. The map below summarizes the distribution of migrants over Bologna's neighborhoods:
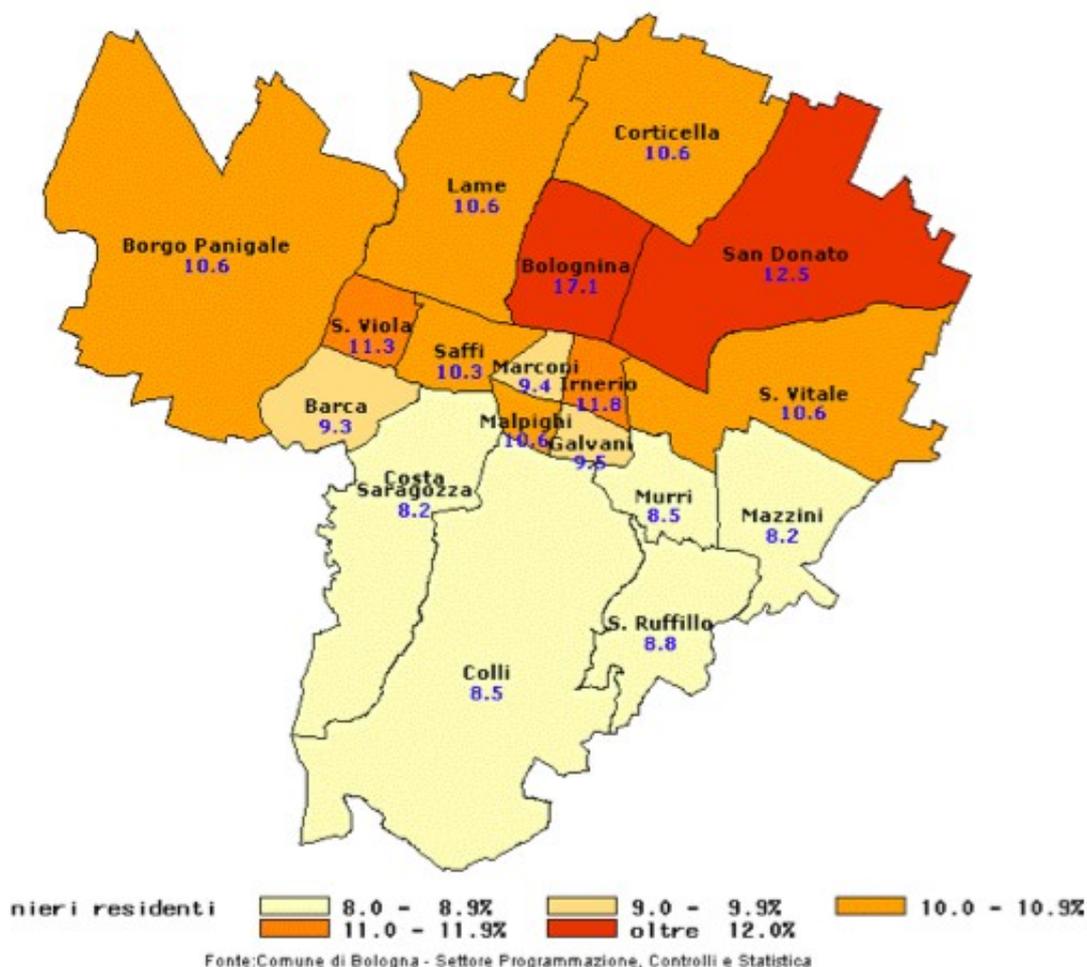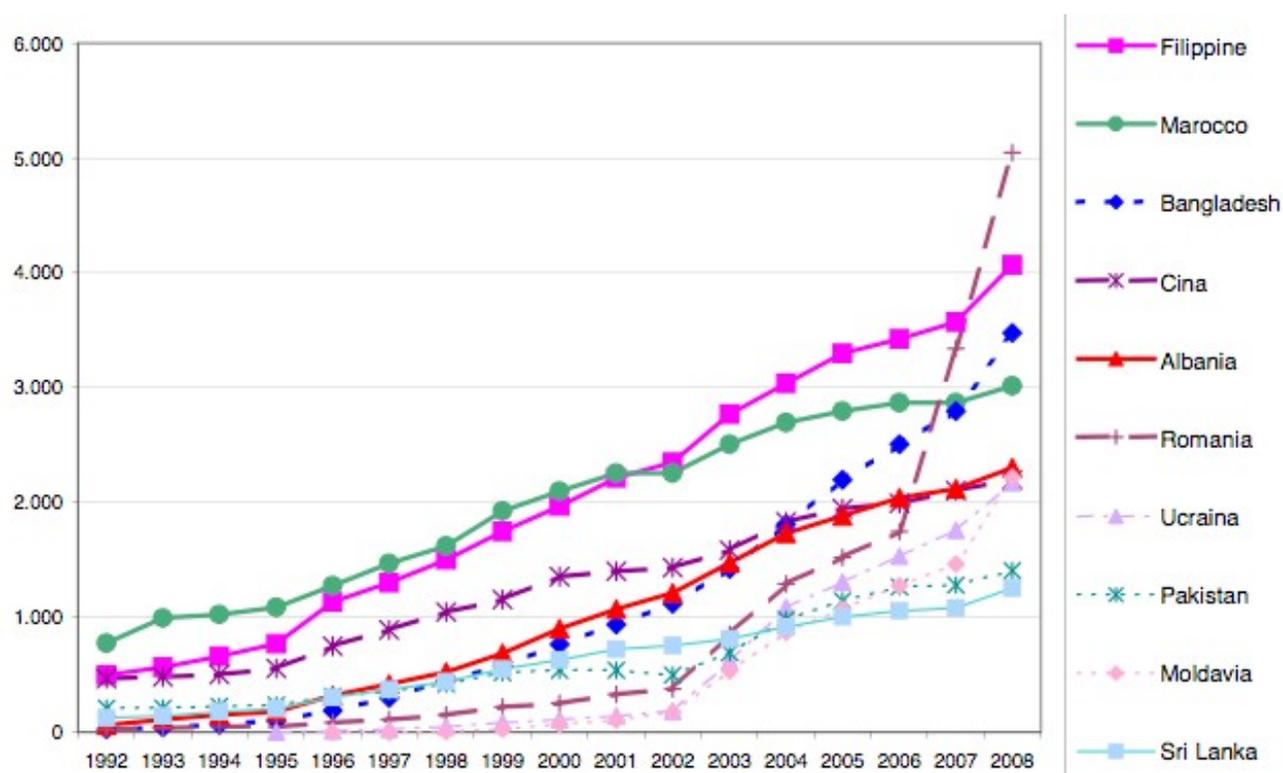

Source: Comune di Bologna

Intercultural and social dynamics

The research hypothesis is to consider Bolognina, due to his strategic position and social composition, a transport and metropolitan hub that includes more than 15 bus lines in the area around Piazza de l'Unità, the living center of the neighborhood, crossed every day by thousands of people and a high percentage of migrants. It thus can be considered an "extended neighborhood": rather than a isolated suburban area (akin to the French *banlieue*) or a peripheral area of the city, it is a deindustrialized neighborhood that remains working-class due to a rising migrant presence – both legal and illegal – and occupies a central position in the social dynamics of the city. As we have seen, this higher percentage of migrants must be considered in respect to the rest of the city while recognizing that there is nothing like a ghetto and we still remain in an area overwhelmingly populated by Italian residents. Still, we can notice from a direct observation the presence of urban interstices:

single buildings, rows of buildings, some streets or streets corners that are sites of problematic relations. In any case, we must also recognize a relatively generalized social peace between Italian and migrant population and among migrants communities, together with a quickly changing perception of what is 'local'. Residency, citizenship and sociality are sometimes like overlapping layers, at other times like separated dimensions and they are shaped in the case of migrants by work and legal status. To complete this picture, the graphic below show the historical dynamics of migrants' presence in the City of Bologna by nationality of citizenship (in thousands/year, first 10 nationalities). Their distribution inside Bolognina by nationalities is still being elaborated:

Source: Comune di Bologna

Present Transformation of the Neighbourhood

In recent years, the Navile neighborhood has been the subject of many public projects of different natures: from housing to sport venues, transportation projects, green areas and cultural institutions such as libraries. The map below shows the different projects presently active: completed projects are in green, financed projects yet to start are in orange while projects waiting for funding are in red.
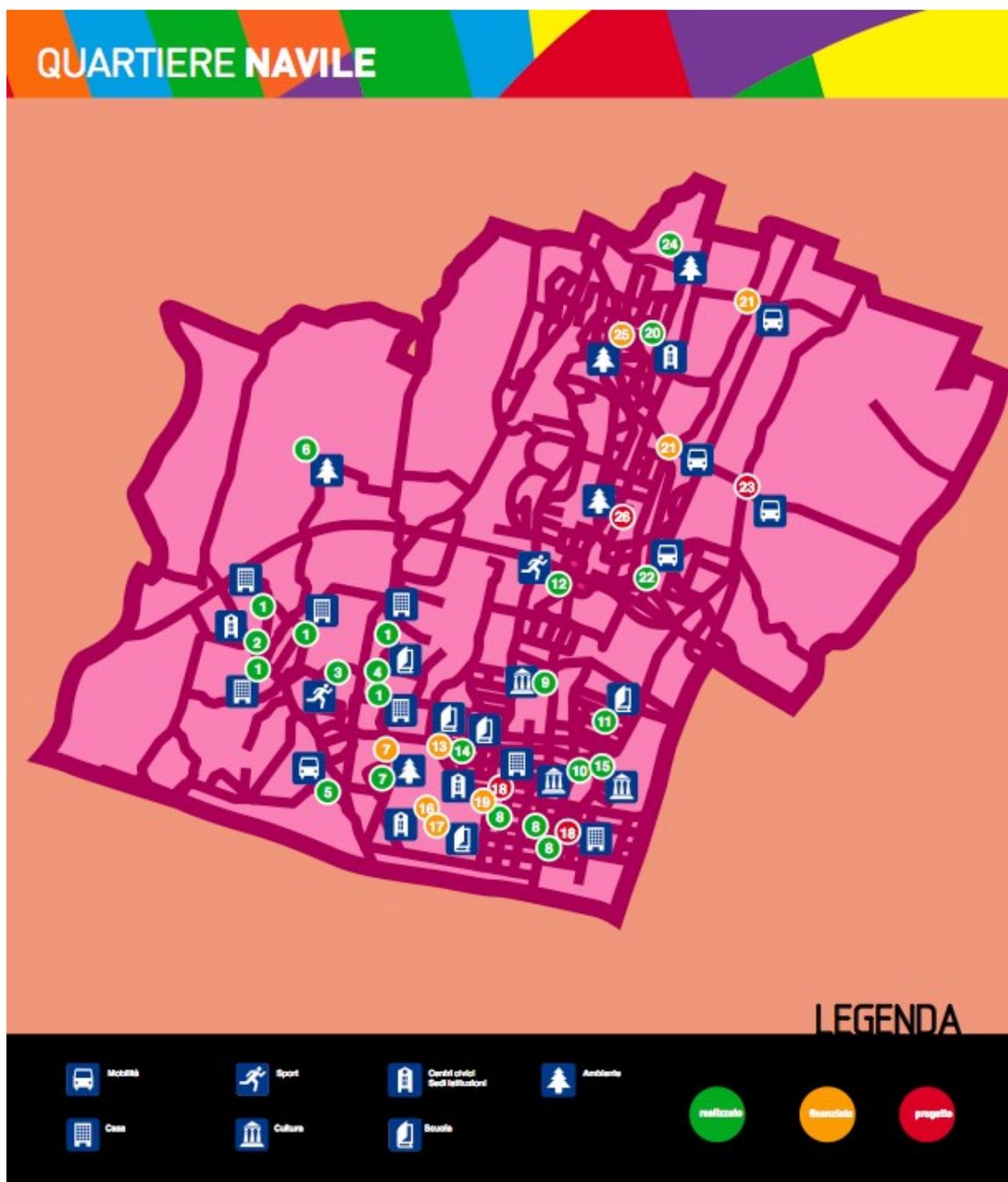
Source: Comune di Bologna

Among those projects, three (all based in Bolognina) are particularly relevant for the future of neighborhood, two public and one private:

1. The new City Hall – Completed at the end of 2008, the project involved a complex of modern buildings where the offices of the Bologna City Hall were transferred to in July 2008. The old City Hall building, in the centre of the city, will remain the seat of the representative bodies but the majority of administrative offices are now in these new buildings, stimulating many other administrative activities and offices to move into the area. Together with these offices, a market, a pharmacy, restaurants and bars are part of the complex too. It is also worth mentioning that these new buildings are turning part of the formerly abandoned area

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of the vegetable market into a highly active area. The two pictures below show the area (in green the new buildings) and a close view of the buildings:


2. The new national railway station – Bologna is an important railway junction that connects northern Italy with southern Italy. With the construction of new high-speed train lines, opening on January 1st, 2009, Bologna will become the principal stop between Milan and Rome. A public project for a new station is underway and is already under construction, affecting the living condition of the southern area of Bolognina (with vibrations, noise, static problems for the buildings). Although presently these construction are affecting the neighborhood in a negative way, it is easy to foresee that, once the new station is completed, it will represent a value for the entire area, connecting it directly with the high-speed national railways along with the presence of a modern and widely recognized architectural project of international acclaim. The whole area surrounding the station, now relatively devalued, will be valorized by this project. The pictures below show an aerial view of the project; one can also notice in the second picture how the new City Hall (low-right corner) is close to the new train station.

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3. The "Trilogia del Navile" private housing project – The third project we'd like to consider is a totally private initiative which involves the construction of luxury housing in the eastern side of the former vegetable market area. Together with the new City Hall and the new train station, it will fill the whole area, changing its social composition and urban dynamics. The project involves three different areas with new buildings and parks and, together with luxury housing, it will also include offices and green areas. For these reasons, the project is presented as a private project useful for the whole community. Nevertheless, it is easy to predict rising prices of housing and the surrounding commercial activities that will affect negatively part of the working-class population now living in this area. The two graphics show a large view and a close view of the project:

Residential project: main view. Source: www.trilogianavile.it
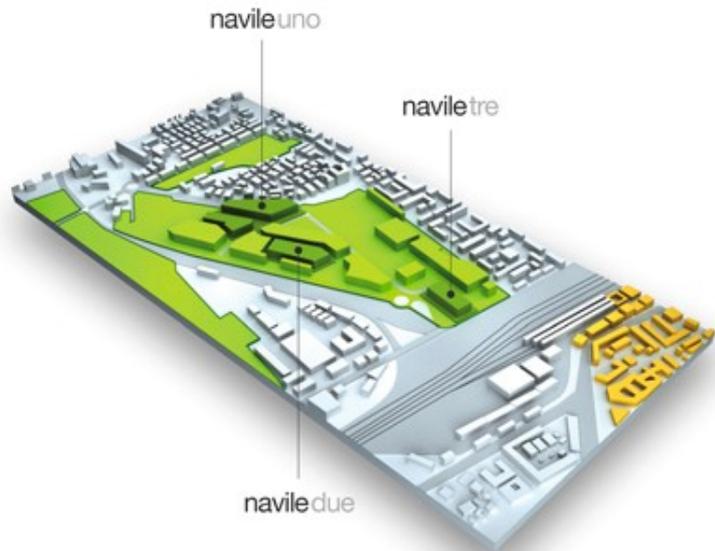
Residential project: close view. Source: www.trilogianavile.it

In conclusion, with this overview we would like to stress the dynamic dimension of the neighborhood. It easy to augur a process of gentrification, with entire areas now considered as suburban while still being very close to the City centre that are becoming an administrative centre and will include housing, new commercial activities, transport hubs, etc. Methodologically, that means that we should focus of the dynamic processes that involve migrant communities living in the area rather than suggest a stable relation between these communities and the neighborhood. For this reason, we would like to stress movement rather than stability and we are confronted with three crucial and open questions: how will our findings be affected by the predictable changes that involve the neighborhood? How will the relation between the neighborhood and the city change? How will the "extended neighborhood" transform itself?

1.3. Research Methodology

Fieldwork in Bolognina began in January 2009, continuing through until February 2010. In the first period (January-March 2009), we elaborated an interview outline and research tools, we collected informal conversations, we established a network of contacts with migrants, associations, formal and informal groups and scholars. We planned the places of the participant observations and the general calendar and pace of the study. Beginning in April 2009, we started with the in-depth interviews. In July 2009, we started with the participant observations.

During the trajectory, Bologna Unite grew in size due to students – as well as an international Ph.D student – taking part in the research. Let us briefly underline the composition of the group of research: the main researchers are two white men, between the ages of 30 and 35; the collaborators are three white women, between the ages of 24 and 28; and the international Ph.D student is a black man, under 30 years of age. From a methodological point of view, the composition of the group is important: it constitutes the first determination of the possibility to construct relationships with migrants, particularly in respect to female migrants.

Another very important factor are the channels through which the people are contacted. In this regard, we can identify three typologies of contact: the first one is formed by direct contact; the second one is the networks of our direct contacts; finally, the third one is the people we contacted during the participant observation. All in all, we choose the people to interview in order to have a good picture of Bolognina area, differentiating of the actors with regard to: gender; sending country; social and labor condition; legal status; education; migratory biography; length of permanence in Bologna; zones of residence.

In this framework, beyond interviews and observation, the drafting of the final outcome was a collective and continuous discussion within the Bologna group. Moreover, this collective form of work permitted to enlargement the network of contacts with other migrants, associations, and key informants.

Finally, we began to discuss our first hypotheses and the state of our fieldwork in various local occasions: during public meetings, conferences, and lectures in the university. This aimed at making the research a participative process, involving different figures and spaces in the city.

Participant observations were held in the following spaces:
Piazza dell'Unità
Park (via del Lavoro)
Food market (via Creti)
Social center XM (via Fioravanti)
Barber shop "Salon Marrakech" (via Albani)
Associazione Annassim (which works with the migrant women, particularly from Maghreb)
Coordinamento Migranti (a self-organized coordination of Italian and migrant workers)

Informal conversation around Piazza dell'Unità, Zonarelli centre, and during some migrant festivals.

In-depth interviews:
25 migrants of whom:
5 women from Morocco
2 women from Tunisia
1 woman from Egypt
1 woman from the Ivory Coast
1 woman from Iraq
1 woman from Sri Lanka
1 woman from Bangladesh
1 woman from Colombia
2 women from Romania
5 men from Morocco
1 man from Tunisa
1 man from Bangladesh
1 man from Senegal
2 men from Cameroon

Interviews with 8 key informants:
2 social researchers in Bolognina;
1 member of "Osservatorio Migranti – Comune di Bologna"
4 members of "Annassim" Association
2 members of "Coordinamento Migranti Bologna"

2. Fieldwork Findings

2.1. International Migration and Urban Transformations

In the next ten years 50% of the present population of Bologna will change: this data highlights migration as a structural element of the contemporaneity, that it is definitely transforming the cities all around the world (Sassen 1991). In fact, migrants have already changed the Bolognina neighborhood. Walking through these streets, is enough to see the urban signs of the migrants' presence: from the various shops (butcheries, barbers, greengroceries, hairdressing and beauty salons, etc.) to the market or the squares. The migrants' presence have revitalized, rejuvenated and gave a new life to the neighborhood.

Yet, there is something else: to talk of neighborhood is no longer a linear subject. In fact, it is better to say – as one of the first verified hypotheses of the fieldwork – that since it is a structural aspect of contemporaneity, migration problematizes the traditional concept of neighborhood and local space. The fieldwork highlights the explosion of the neighborhood-form, in which there is a tight coincidence between place of residence and citizenship, place of family, place of sociality, and often workplace. Nor is Bolognina a sort of "ghetto," or an ethnic enclave. The buildings are not segregated. The new hierarchies in the contemporary cities are not designated between "inside" and "outside", but in the shared urban spaces.

In our interviews, people design a new idea of the neighborhood: it has become an *urban hub*, continuously transformed by mobility – transnational mobility, and local urban mobility through the city. The migrants live and transit in Bolognina spaces, including when they have a house and work elsewhere. They meet in the squares, in the parks, or at the barber shops regardless of their place of residence or work. The local is immediately changed by the transnational practices, habits, and mobility.

In the context of the economic crisis, many migrants have to move, sometimes to different neighborhoods. This is the case of a man from Morocco: "*With the economic crisis I lost my job but I don't want to go back to Morocco. Maybe it's better to move towards the north to find another job; but I know some friends in Turin or in other northern cities and they say that the situation is hard there. So I moved to a neighborhood in the suburbs of Bologna but everyday I go to the centre to meet my friends and other people.*" In the end, from the interviews we find the emergence of a *desire of the city* among migrants, regardless of the zone of a migrant's house. That is to say, mobility is not only from one country to another, but towards a new world identified in most cases with the city. In many cases the migrants came from other urban spaces; other times they came from the countryside, looking for the cities. Altogether, many migrants want to live in urban spaces and living in the urban spaces, they transform them. Therefore, the question of the crisis is central to understand the recent transformation of the city and the ways in which the migrants live the public spaces. For example, it is evident in the problems to find a house: "*If you ask for a public house, the first place is always for the Italian people, even if we have children*," says a woman from Sri Lanka.

The research of the city, as well as the whole mobility process, is permeated by the ambivalent mix of exercise of self-determination and violence. The case of Uria is quite exemplary, as we find similar stories in other interviews. She came from Morocco, where she get a diploma in French and has been employed doing different jobs (dressmaker, embroideress, secretary, etc.). When her husband became unemployed and their marriage went into crisis, she decided to go abroad, leaving her two children behind. Her first work possibility was in Switzerland, but the job offered by other Moroccan people was "*dishonest.*" Through another friend, a Morocco woman, she arrived in Nicotera, a small village in Calabria, with a contract to work in a bar. In reality, she became a careworker, looking after an old woman ("*13 hours every day, without a day off during the week, and without insurance contributions*"), while also working for free in the woman's daughter's bar. Despite the hard conditions of exploitation, she built a good relation with some of the family where she worked ("*we're still in touch*"), and she learned Italian. However, she was looking for another place, "*another world,*" which is to say, new and different living conditions. Therefore, she decided to abandon the small village and the family to go in the city: first Milan (when her brother lived), and then Bologna. She was frightened because she knew of violent stories of other Moroccan women "*kidnapped*" by men. Finally, when she met a friend of her in Bologna, she said: "*I want any job as long as I can escape from Nicotera!*"

When Uria arrived in Bologna ("*I arrived in a city at last!*"), she found a pullout bed in a kitchen, paying 300 Euro rent each month to another Moroccan woman. She then had many other jobs (from domestic work to the restaurants), and meanwhile her husband rejoined her in Bologna: "*When he arrived he found an house and everything was simple. But I did all this without help.*" The story of Uria, as well as a lot of migrant women, is very important to rethink the classical concept of family. The desire of another world, frequently identified in new cities, is also a desire of a new gender relationship, based on the exercise of female autonomy.

Moreover, the story of Uria allows us to put in question any mythological idea of the community networks. In fact, her maximum is: "*Often the people from your country cheat you, and Italians exploit you!*" Indeed, the same stories come from a man and a woman from Bangladesh: with the crisis they are both unemployed and they rent a very small house owned by a man from the same country, paying a lot of money. Since they have problems with their residence permits they are easily blackmailed. Hence, the possibility to live the city is strongly conditioned by their legal and work status. Someone – for example a woman from Egypt – says that she spends time with very few people from her country: she prefers to frequent Italians. This is seen as a form of integration and sometimes of differentiation among migrants.

In other words, there are at least two kinds of networks in the city, related to its *borders*. On the one hand, a network based on the community: it is quite stable, producing a preexisting identity in new spaces, multiplying the borders within the city. On the other hand, there is a network that is an outcome of new forms of life and sociality, questioning the borders both of the city and its internal communities. Of course, there is a partial overlapping and a continuous relationship between these two forms: the movements of the migrants in urban spaces are also the movement between these two kinds of networks. The new urban transformations geographies and maps (Antonelli and Scandurra 2005) are continuously changed by these combinations – and conflicts – of movements.

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2.2. International Migration and the Use of the Public Spaces

If there is a diffused desire for the city in migration, the use of the public spaces is seen by many migrant women as a symbol and a practice of independence and autonomy. This is the case of Amina: she is 29 years old and comes from Morocco, she has been in Italy for 15 years: "*I want to live my freedom in Bologna, and to go independent around the city*." But, Amina says, this doesn't mean that Italian cities are spaces of freedom: "*I'm really bothered by the obsession for the veil in Italy, and not only in Italy. It's impossible to say that this is a free country if a woman cannot dress as she pleases, even if it is dressing with a veil. In Morocco, you can find everything, from the miniskirt to the veil. So in Morocco there is more freedom than in Italy!*"

The question of the veil is one of the most mentioned in the interviews with the migrant women. It is one of the main object of the "Italian glance" in the public spaces. Amina says: "*The veil is a great problem for the women who are looking for a job. In many cases the employers don't hire you if you have a veil, or they forbid you to wear it. And the women are forced to remove their veil, because they need to work. But this is a pain, an imposition, a deprivation of their freedom.*"

But the Italian glance with regard to the veil in the public spaces has changed. at least in the opinion of Ransura, a woman who comes from a small village very close to Hammamet: she has been in Italy for five years, and she was looking for a city. "*I dress the handkerchief* [veil]. *I have noted a change in the glances of Italian for some months, since there is the economic crisis: now they look at me as a person they want to go away, not desired. […] I asked to a social worker for an help: I don't want money, but only help to find a municipal house, because I want to continue to live in the city. She answered: what do you want? What are you doing here? Why you don't go back in your country?*"

The buses are a good viewpoint from which to analyze the quality of the relationship between Italian and migrants in the public spaces, as well as the increasing of the forms of racism. Here it is possible to analyze the *relations of glances* (Du Bois 1903) between migrants and Italians – hence the relations of power too. Najat, a woman from Morocco, says: "*The public transportations allow me to reveal the realities of the migrants and Italian, and their interactions. When I take a bus I'm pestered by glances, threatening glances, mainly recently with the economic crisis. […] I heard a lot of people who say that the foreigners don't pay the ticket. Some days ago the inspector asked for the ticket: I have the monthly ticket, while the Italian who said this had no ticket!*" A woman from Egypt tells similar everyday stories: "*When a migrant takes a bus the Italian people say: 'they take the bus and don't pay the ticket!' But they don't know if I pay or not. Or they held their handbags tight. My children ask: 'why they do this?', and I try to answer that they are old people, and to not worry about them.*"

In front of these "*threatening glances*" and provocations the migrants are not passive victim, as the "philanthropic glance" draws them. The images of *victimhood* (Puwar 2003) is broken when the migrant women took the voice. This is the case of Najat: "*Some months ago I was on the bus towards Piazza dell'Unità, there was a woman from Pakistan or Bangladesh who was moving slowly; an Italian man shouted: 'come back to your country!' I tried to not react, but I heard two Italian women who said: 'in their countries they travel with the asses.' Then*

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I answered: 'maybe they travel with the asses, but in your country the asses take the buses!'"

All in all, from great mobility, a element of *autonomy* emerges. Migrants are the subjects who are searching: searching for a better condition of life, for a different identity, or for another world. As we have seen, in most cases they are looking for the city. The people who arrive from an urban area in the sending country, don't settle for living outside the city. A woman from Marrakech says: "*I don't like to live outside the city, because I come from a city*". The life in the city is more expensive, but it's more exciting. In many cases, there is a research for the centre of the city: quite possibly some migrants find a houses in other neighborhood, but they spend time in Bolognina as a space of sociality. Migrant workers say that they don't have much time to frequent the urban places; particularly, beyond the work time, often women have to care for the house, the family and/or children. Incidentally, there are some everyday meeting points: one well known social space is Piazza dell'Unità. "*See you in Piazza dell'Unità!*" has become a sort of greeting among migrants.

The search for urban spaces is also related to the attempt to escape the provincial behaviors, both of the sending and host countries. This is clear on the question of the language, as Najat highlights: "*If you don't speak Italian you're isolated. When I arrived in Italy I spoke only English and I was isolated, I didn't find anybody with whom to communicate. I lived in a small village quite far from Bologna, I got lost and I didn't ask for information. Now the young Italian guys are learning a little more foreign languages, but still very few. Finally I arrived in the city: it's always problematic to find people who are not provincial, but it's a little better than in the countryside! And you have to think that, when I worked in an ironing room, my boss had a very wrong idea of Morocco: he thinks that we travel with the camels. But in Marrakech there are definitely more cars and buses than in Bologna!*"

Urban spaces are places of *translation* (Sakai and Solomon 2006; Mezzadra 2008), that is to say, of creation of new transnational languages and forms of interaction, as well as conflicts. For example, we did some interviews and participant observation at the Salon Marrakech, a barber shop in the centre of Bolognina, very close to Piazza dell'Unità. There are people from Maghreb, as well as other African or Asia countries. Some Italian men use Salon Marrakech, because it is cheap, and it has established itself as a social space in Bolognina for quite some years. Moreover, among the clients of the barber shop there are also some Afro-Americans, who are players on local basketball teams: the owner of the salon even has a book on "Afro haircutting styles". However, getting their hair cut is not the only aim of the people you find at Salon Marrakech: it is not only a shop but a sort of public space. There are migrants who live in Bolognina but those also who live in other neighborhoods. They go to the salon to chat, to meet, to discuss soccer championships or their problems. And sometimes they cut their hair. The language continuously shifts (at least) between Italian, Arabic and French while sometimes other languages can be overheard. In short, Salon Marrakech is one of the many examples in the contemporary cities of a *transnational urban space*: it is not only the addition of different community, cultural or linguistic belongings, but it is a new space that is at the same time the hybridization and something beyond the sum of their constituent parts.

Likewise, urban spaces are "*places of splitting in two*". These are the words used by Leila, a woman from Iraq, with a degree in engineering. She is 39, her father from Iraq and mother from Turkey; Leila and her Kurdish husband are political refugees in Italy. Leila says: "*My sons, mainly the boys, have a great capacity of splitting in two. As if they have two*

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personalities, without being schizophrenic. If they're at school or they go around the city they're Italian, they play with the other children and they speak Italian; as soon as they come back at home 'alsalamu alaikum', they speak in Arabic and they're a whole with me and their father." Leila talks of a sort of *double consciousness* (Du Bois 1903; Gilroy 1993), embodied in the *two-ness* of her sons, of being at the same time Italian and Arabic, or rather, being neither Italian nor Arabic.

Urban spaces and its uses are a good mirror to analyze the process of construction of a double identity, or possible imagined identities (Anderson 1983). According to Leila, in this process there is a gender difference: "*Despite the fact that she's very young, I've the impression that it will be very hard to educate my daughter. Despite family and frequent trips to Iraq and Turkey, she's very influenced by her schoolfellows. She's only 6 and she's asked for new dresses and designer shoes. Maybe this is a way of being a 'peer.' Of course, I cannot satisfy her desires, I have to explain what their consumeristic and homologated desires mean. With the males I've not so much problem, because they're critics with regard to youth behavior and consumerism. Instinctually, they don't like the girls who go to school or who meet them in the square with their navels showing.*" At the same time, beyond teaching the traditions and behaviors of their "*culture*", the goal and task of Leila – "*in my role as mom*" – is "*to contribute so my sons are more and more Italian, they have to love this country. Because if they love Italy, they can take advantage of all the opportunities of this country and this city and contribute to its democratic and social development. This is the reason because I love Italy too, despite the fact I cannot renegade my identity as Iraqi woman. In fact, I'm very proud of my identity.*"

The city is a space of hybridization and translation. Two-ness becomes the production of something new that is not the simple sum or conflicts of two identities because both sides of the *double consciousness* are put in question. Yet, to stitch up the wound of the *double absence* (Sayad 1999), many migrant women try to use the private space of the family to reinforce the "*traditional identity*", and the public spaces to reinforce the "*Italian identity.*" This means the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (Du Bois 1903). In fact, in the everyday life of the city these identities are displaced. Citizenship is more and more detached from a supposed community belonging. The goal of Amina – to have the Italian citizenship – is not to show a proof of integration, but "*in this way I can move more easily between Italy and Morocco.*"

Often identity in the use of urban spaces is stereotyped: for sure by the Italian, sometimes by migrants. This is the case of a woman from Colombia: "*We know that the Arabian women prefer to stay at home because of their culture; since there is no mosque, they have no meeting places. The women from Colombia use the house for parties and for food, because this is their culture,*" and so forth with other supposed cultural essences. These stereotypes are dissolved in the concrete encounters in the city. For example, in the shops and in the squares (some of the places of our participant observation), you can see a mix of languages and the blurring of some identity borders, as well as the possible construction of new borders. A woman from Tunisia says: "*I go to the park in via del Lavoro* [where we had the interview]*, or to the Guido Rossa park. Here, I've the possibility to meet a lot of Arabian friends, and not so much Italian ones. Anyway, I'm free to speak the language I want.*"

The park is an important place to observe the forms of interaction among children and among their parents too. A woman from Egypt comments: "*The children always dispute,*

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because they're children. But if an Arabian children disputes with an Italian one, the mom of the former doesn't say anything. And this is the beginning of the problems. The Italian parents follow their children more than the Arabian ones, because they're afraid. I don't know why, maybe they mollycoddle their sons too much. This is another problem. I think as an Italian about many things, but the children have to be responsible from when they're very young."

Sometimes, living these urban spaces, migrants also spend time at various associations. For example, this is the case of the association Annassim: it is an association of Italian women who work with migrant women, mainly from Maghreb (it organizes language classes and job training and it is a place of meeting and discussion); it is located in the intercultural centre Zonarelli, along with many other associations. We could say that there is a use of the associations by the migrants which often exceeds the purposes of the Italian: in fact, the association is a place in which the migrant women can take a break from family relations, learn Italian, find friends and build a new sociality. Generally, a lot of migrant women use the urban public spaces to increase their personal freedom and independence. This is the story told by Yasmina (one of the woman who frequents Annassim). She came from a rural area of Tunisia; coming to a city has meant finding new possibilities, or, a *process of empowerment*. Here in Italy, she decided to drive the husband out of her home because he had bad and sometimes violent behaviors. She has two sons and she is aware of the difficulties of her condition: without family and relatives and with a precarious job. Nevertheless, she is definitely resolute to continue her path. Based on these stories, we have to rethink the classical concept of migrant family strategies because sometimes this presupposes a cohesion of the family, unlike what we find in the case of Yasmina and many other migrant women. On the contrary, often the migration means to putting into question family unity and its power relationships.

Yasmina says: "*Today, no country can give security: neither Italy nor Tunisia can guarantee a better future. But I want to follow the things I like to do.*" In fact, sometimes city life is dangerous too. One might ask, what does the *security for a migrant* mean? This argument cames up many times in our conversations. The discourse of security is often used – by the center-right national government, as well as the center-left Bologna government – against the migrants. It means the link between migration and problem of security, between migrants and potential delinquency. In the discourse on migrants, mainly from a gender standpoint, security is the possibility of a good life, of welfare and the right to choose where you want to live. This is the case of Najat: "*We, the migrants, are the most insecure people in the city but they want to believe that we're the source of the insecurity. For us insecurity is to not having a stable job and an income, not having a home; besides, now if you look for a home, the owner tells you explicitly that they don't want rent to immigrants. There is nothing stable, you have to live on a day-to-day basis, maybe tomorrow you're no longer be in the city because the residence permit is tied to your job. They say: 'it's right, because if you don't work, how can you live? But what cares? Maybe I've a relative who gives me the money, or I have family money. But the migrants are the only people who have to be transparent in everything, if they want to live here they even have to show what they eat! This is insecurity.*"

To complete the framework, we propose five typologies of urban spaces in Bolognina, and we'll verify and improve them in the last two months of fieldwork:

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Square model: it's a space of transit, meetings, sociality, play, with an interethnic and intergenerational composition which changes at different times of the day;

Park model: its peak attendance is in the late afternoon, before sunset, mainly by families: if the children play outside their "belonging," parents are more careful in respect to ethnic and social divisions;

Shop model: in so-called "ethnic shops" the composition is quite homogenous, but they're open to other migrants and mainly to Italian buyers;

Social center model: it is partially similar to the square model, but with a particular attention to maintaining an open space of transcultural exchanges and hybridization. For example, the social center XM24, one of the spaces used for participant observation, is really a meeting place for migrants and it has a language school. It is less formalized than the associations and it is full fledged public space. One might say it is a new conceptualization of the public space in the contemporary city;

Religious space model: with the worsening of the crisis, insecurity, racism and fragmentation, these places are often seen as identity and material shelter: they unite the ethnic differences in the faith identity, but they often reproduce in a different paradigm the social hierarchical divisions. It is not a case that some migrant women say they become believer only in the arriving country.

The framework of the international mobility, city transformations and the use of public spaces poses a *methodological question*. Traditional ethnography may not suffice to clearly analyze these changes. Since these new characteristics are based on constant mobility, ethnography has to become mobile too. Since the "local" does not exist in its traditional form but as an immediate expression of transnational practices, we have to imagine a multi-sited ethnography within urban spaces. Put clearly, we have to follow people's movements, their links, their intersections. For example, migrants who don't have legal documents have to find specific ways through the city: they design a new cartography. Based on this, we can also understand the different and changing *times* of urban spaces. What this means is that the researcher has to follow the interviewed subjects throughout his/her trajectories over the cityscape in order to draw new urban maps. In fact, in contemporary cities migrants are *space invaders* (Puwar 2004), in the double meaning of the concept. On one hand, they are seen as space invaders by a part of the local population; on the other hand, they invade the urban and public spaces, re-thinking and re-signifying places that were not already there. In brief, they build a new concept of public space. Following these trajectories means – following Lewis Mumford's suggestions – drawing the maps of an *insurgent city*, an immediately a transnational city.

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2.3. Relationships between Labor and Public Spaces

As stated in the introductory notes, a strict relation between Bolognina's industrial past and its popular present characterizes our study. The memory of its industrial past reflects on the local residents, particularly among those that witnessed the period of deindustrialization and the subsequent abandonment of most of the factories that used to constitute the soul of the neighborhood. However, most of the migrant population came after of at the beginning of this process. The oldest migrant community, the Chinese, silently followed the transformation of the neighborhood while more recent migrants came after that big shift had already happened.

Today, the whole area is under a *process of transformation* that will transform it in the new administrative centre of the City: the modern glass and iron crafted building of the municipality stands to indicate the future fate of Bolognina. Again, this transformation is happening without any involvement of the migrant and working-class communities that live in the neighborhood. Most of the migrants we have interviewed have spent part of their life in this neighborhood and all of them have a clear idea of what Bolognina means for migrants in the City of Bologna: it means a friendly place, where they can find a home to rent, a room to share, fellow migrants, shops and so on. Somewhat problematic is the fact that this seems to happen completely separated from the dynamics that are calling the neighborhood back as a fundamental part of the City of Bologna as a whole.

This is not at all a specific fate that involves only migrants. On the contrary, this has been a long-term process of segregation between the public policy and political discourse and the social reality and demographic dynamic of Bologna. It seems that in here, in the last 20 years, things just happened and nothing really changed. The influx of migrants' population came in over the last 20 years, they where able to benefit from the City's functional public services and utilities but, while those services and utilities remained substantially the same, the social and geographic topography of the city changed noticeably. Looking at the relation among migrants and the urban landscape from this point of view has been one of the most useful keys to analyze and develop our interviews and participant observations during these last few months.

One of the main questions when thinking about the relationships between labor and public spaces could be thus formulated: how is the history of a neighborhood, so historically characterized by a strict correlation between the productive structure and his social composition, reflected in the ordinary experience of migrants that now cross its public spaces? A second important question is: how does the migrant experience tell us something about the way in which this spatial and social static composition has changed over the last years? Keeping these two points of inquiry in the background, we'll now proceed to interpret the outcome of this research.

One point is immediately evident: the *relation between labor and public spaces* changes completely depending on labor conditions and, particularly for women, on the fact of having a job or not. Let's take for example one of the women we interviewed. Uria – as we have seen – is a domestic assistant for elderly and sick people. She works for a cooperative with a regular contract and she's quite satisfied with her job, "*It's quite easy to explain my day. I go out early in the morning and I go work. I take the bus at around 6.40-6.45 a.m., every day*

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my assignment can be in a different place. By this time I know the people that take the bus around that time. My job is always between one home and another, I see many families and often I forget my problems".

Once, asked if she passes by Bolognina during her days, she answered: "*Oh, yes, every day. You can find the Muslim butcher's shop, the market. I pass by piazza dell'Unità almost every day, first when I go to work; I often commute there, then when I came back home with my daughter after school. During the summer we stop for an ice cream or a slice of pizza near the bus stop. Some days I pass by four times*". As we said above, this is not an idiosyncratic pattern: Piazza dell'Unità is well known among migrants and a common statement among them is "*see you Piazza dell'Unità!*" However, the relation with labor changes: for many commuters the busy bus stops at the two corners of the square are fundamental to reach their jobs but for some it is difficult to enjoy the social dimension of the space. When asked is she spends time talking with other migrants nearby, she states: "*I have no time for that. I know many women meet there, but they don't work. Those are women that don't need to work and they meet every day... I have no time for that.*"

When we consider the relation between labor and the use public spaces we need to take into account *different dimensions of labor*: for women with a family and children, domestic work is just as important as their job. Most of the other women interviewed use public spaces as part of their domestic dynamics, for example going to parks with their children during the warmer seasons. There is a place where they meet and find other women and have the opportunity to get out of their homes and make new friends. This dynamics, nevertheless, is more complicated than it appears at first glance.

We can notice the many roles labor plays in the life of the people we interviewed. On one side, labor shapes the relationships between migrants and public spaces but the informality of many labor relations leave migrants the opportunity to build complex networks of relations and movements inside the city that exceed simple labor relations. On the other side, labor plays a key role in the definition of social relations for migrants. This aspect is involved in all social relations while also having an impact on gender relations. For example, for migrants that come from a cultural environment with a strict division between men and women, labor can be a site where other dynamics take place. As one woman from Morocco said, "*here is different from Morocco, I work with males, my husband works with women... if I see him chatting with a woman she can be a colleague, we don't have to be suspicious*". Especially for women, having a job plays a crucial role in gender relations: it means autonomy and, if not a complete autonomy, the definition a proper space of independence from the will and the power of males. This space is always negotiated but it is crucial for women that have migrated alone or before their husbands.

We have to take into account that most of the women we met during our fieldwork are women with a high degree of independence; they can talk freely with everyone. This is not the case for migrant women in general and we can see how those women are aware of that and how they consider other women's attitudes. "*In our culture there are women who cannot speak with men, working or not. There are women that live inside their home, they have everything they need, good dresses, food, once in a year they can go holiday somewhere. But if they go out, they can go only with their husband.*" Thus, this sense of dependence must not be oversimplified and the case of Uria is illustrative: she came alone and she spent most of their life struggling to find work, a place to sleep, toiling hard in order

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to unify her family and to meet legal requirements. Now, tired and reflecting on her life, she sighs, "*I would like to have a husband that does everything for me, I would like to stay home and do nothing, only my domestic duties*".

Spaces of socialization, working place and residence are related in complicated way, depending on personal history and experience and the specific moment in a person's life. This fact, while true for everyone, is particularly true for migrants and affects their experience of the city and the sense of displacement of many native born people. A sense of displacement, it must be said, that is often a displacement vis-à-vis the transformations of social and urban dynamics more than directly caused by migrant presence. However, it is also true that migrant presence is, for many residents of Bologna, the face of these transformations. Fabien, a male from Cameroun in his 40s, observed this complexity in the relation among space of sociality and the workplace. In terms of lodging, community plays a role in creating aggregation of migrants in particular areas of the neighborhood and the city, while "*work is different… you go where you find a job and that is not related to the place where you leave. Then, after work, most migrants go back home because they can only find places to gather but in the area where they live. Generally speaking, these three things, labor, residency and sociality, are not related*".

Nonetheless, this very relation can be seen from a very different point of view, tracing different social maps, *a cartography of the city not necessarily overlapping with the spatial topography* (see http://www.iger.org/mappeurbane-d-30.html). We must thus recognize different spatial and temporal layers. For example, one of the interviewee points out that "*in the workplace, friendships are created for a portion of time*". Job produces a *sociality*, sometimes this sociality reflects itself in the use of public spaces and in the social relations outside it, as one of the interviewee said "*I've met many of my friends in the workplace*", but many times it is just a part of this *complex network* and, in an hostile landscape, can be recognized as a site of safety that provides a sense of familiarity.

Many migrants came to Bologna as a final point of a longer trajectory, or by chance, and they seem pretty conscious of the fact that Bologna is a fortunate place. This doesn't means that they are totally satisfied by the life they are living in the city, but they know other places are even more problematic. The job market is the first *concern* for migrants, or it *becomes* the first concern once they are faced with Italian law. The Bossi-Fini law contains, among its various provisions, the "contratto di soggiorno"; this legal figure fundamentally unifies job contracts and residency permits and the contract must be stipulated by the employer before the concession of the residency permit. For many migrants that came here years ago, this has meant a radical worsening of their social security.

Economic reasons and legal reasons push migrants to accept every kind of job, a common phrases during interviews are "*there is no choice*" and "*I did every kind of job*". The absence of family or the fact that families are often involved in the migration project in the sense that there are then many expectations from the people that sent them abroad as kind of investment, thus leaving migrants often feeling like they have "*their families on their shoulders*". One male said "*I did everything, I did leafleting, porter, bricklayer, bouncer, then I learned to fix computers and things began to change*". Almost all migrants have experienced of the harshness of a law that can throw its shadow on migrant life at any moment; for many, they relate this to a sense of insecurity and precariousness.

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The very first experience of this harshness haunts migrants during their whole lives. Thus, remembering the past, one can say "*we go to a lot of trouble, also with the law. If an immigrant earns 5 thousands euro a year he cannot not renew his permit. So we look for money in every way, it forces you to work in mills, in the field and there you have to work for nine, ten hours a day*." But then this can always reverberate in the present, leading some to say, "*you are never safe, immigration laws always change, and one day can came out a new law that says "no", also if you have all the documents… you are always precarious*".

During a long interview, this *precariousness* brings many migrants to overlap this question with all other questions in relation to their urban environment. Especially due to the economic crisis, we have noticed this throughout many of our interviews. There is a mixture of economic anxiety and legal precariousness that, for many, directly threatens their lives and makes mobility almost useless and often impossible as a consequence of legal uncertainty (it must be remembered that most Italian migrants face the problem of an inefficient bureaucracy, leaving many waiting for months for documents resulting in the impossibility to travel or find new jobs). Mobility is thus always present as a possibility, but a sense of realism brings many to wait here rather than move elsewhere, following a rational construction: "*For what I know,*" said participants in a discussion that was born from an interview inside a barber shop with a group of Maghreb men, "*in other places it is worse. Because, you know, also your fellow Italians have come to Bologna looking for a job, from Naples, or Calabria or Sicily. How can I think of moving there looking for a job? If they come here looking for a job, it is useless to move there for the same. Here, northern Italy, is a world known for jobs, from Bologna you can move northern… Milan, Turin. The problem is that if you call someone there and you ask him: 'how are things there?' they answer is still worst than here. So it is useless also to go there looking for a job. If the people cry, how can you go there? Do you get it?*"

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2.4. International Migration, Public Policy and Social Movements

Despite what has been said, *illegality* is always a possible condition in a migrant's life. Most of the interviewees spent part of their life as illegal immigrants because of expired permits (having arrived with a tourist visa to then extended their stay), or because they arrived illegally by sea and never acquired a regular status. This is the case of M., 26 year old male from Morocco who arrived directly to Bologna from Morocco four years ago. He has always had a job and he describes a reality far from the mainstream portrait of illegal immigrants. He is quite proud of his life that he considers honest and describes how he relates with police: "*Once they stopped me in the street, and I asked if they have problems with me. They asked back if I have documents, and I replied, 'I wish!' They said, 'here is a problem...', but then they move on.*" Sometimes, he said, police try to provoke him (deflating his bike wheel for example), but most of the times they are too busy to take care of a simple illegal immigrant.

Certainly, for many illegal migrants the specter of deportation is always present but the heterogeneity of the experiences show that more than being a question of legality or illegality, the law acts as a placement agent of migrants inside the society. Inside this scheme that has been called of *differential inclusion* (Mezzadra 2004), illegality is just one position among others. Work is still the place where we can observe how this differential inclusion operates: M. says that his working conditions are the same as other employees and he considers himself lucky. However, he also recognizes that if a controversy arises, he is in a weaker position than other employees because of his illegal condition. Other interviewees, in a different legal position, said the same, showing that for migrants deportability and illegalization are processes that work both for those who have a legal status and for those who don't (De Genova 2005). This is reflected in the way different migrants think of their relation with public policies or social movements.

Almost all the interviewees complain about the absence of public policies dedicated to the city's growing migrant presence. While Bolognina is recognized as a meeting place and where freetime can be spent, they complain about the absence of social aggregation spaces. This is particularly true for those more involved in activities such associations or social projects. As we already pointed out, many know the Zonarelli centre, a polyvalent structure run by the municipality where migrants' association can ask for space for meetings or organizing parties and other activities. Zonarelli centre is positioned slightly outside Bolognina, in the San Donato neighborhood. From the point of view of migrant dynamics, there is no sharp distinction between these two areas of the city, one difference being that some of the buildings that surround this structure are constituted by public housing projects which creates the perception of a problematic situation. For examples, Hend, a woman from Morocco we met there, complains about the dynamics among children and the sense of lack of understanding between Italian and migrant children while at the playground.

A long-time integrated women, Hend is married with an Italian man and acknowledges that because of her culture and social background she enjoys the company of her Italians friends rather than with other people from Egypt, her country of origin, or other Maghreb countries. She notices and condemns the attitude of many migrant women: "*Children always argue... they are children... but if an Italian child argues with an Arab child what I don't like is that they [Arab moms]... why they don't wake up and say something at their children? In this way, Italians moms think "look... Arabs don't care about the education of their children. But if*

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a child does something bad with them, they suddenly wake up and say, 'look after your kid!' And that's how trouble starts". At the same time, she complains that Italian mothers are too protective, while children "*must be able to look after themselves*".

Yet, when asked about the roots of these problems, she answers that cultural disagreements are only the most visible part and public policies also play an important role. She adds, "*Italian parents don't like to have foreigners in their children's classes, Arabs or whatever. But when in a class you have 25 children and only 3 of them are Italians… I think here in the neighborhood they made a mistake putting all these public housing structures together. If you want the people to live together, you should not put all these in one corner. Here in the street you can see 4 buildings, 9 floors each, with 5 apartments on each floor; moreover, there is Via del Lavoro and all the area behind its. The only Italians you can see there are elderly people, or Italian migrants from Sicily… you see… they put together Arabs Moroccans with Italian Moroccans*" [Moroccan is a derogatory term northern Italians use against immigrants from southern Italy].

Beyond these complaints, the creation of distressed areas is not the main problem that migrants face. The main issue at stake is the absence of public spaces able to respond to this demographically shifting situation. Almost all the interviewees expect something from the municipality or the neighborhood: a common grievance is that they live in the city, but the city doesn't give them places to meet or organize their activities. It is worth noting that there is slight difference between migrants involved in institutional paths, others that aren't and people that in some way are included in other kind of collective activities such as autonomous groups or social centers.

The ones that complain the most are migrants who are quite integrated and who have a long history of involvement in association activities and in relations with local authorities. We can quote two of them, males, one from Senegal and one from Cameroon. "*We are struggling to have spaces,*" says Malik, "*but there are only two neighborhoods in Bologna that have an immigration help desk. Therefore, if you have a problem you go there but then they can act only inside that neighborhood. That doesn't work. We need changes, action. There are too many words that aren't followed by actions, we need those spaces!*"

Fabien: "*There aren't many public spaces for migrants in this town but in some way something has been created over time, for example the Zonarelli center. Then you have parties organized by your community, and there you can enjoy your time. The municipality organizes activities at Zonarelli center, but other spaces are created by communities themselves through informal meetings or inside small businesses run by migrants, or at the barber shops…*" While there is a general complaint about the lack of possibilities, there is also a double recognition of the efforts made by the municipality in order to involve migrants in some activities and of autonomous practices through which migrants themselves actually "*create*" new spaces.

The same thing can be observed when we talk about housing and the way in which migrants distribute themselves in this part of the city: "*Community links are important. Bolognina as a migrants' neighborhood started when Chinese began to buy apartments here. The Chinese community is quite strong and has became a sort of facilitation for those who are looking for a place to stay. Then, when other migrants came to the city, they found that in many places Italians where reluctant to rent to foreigners, particularly if black. And they found Chinese landlords. [...] Now in many buildings here there are migrants and that makes things easier*".

The interviewees not directly involved in activities like associations have a larger view in many cases. We can observe how although the legal environment is the same, for this second group of people this seems to be an immediate issue, while for others the "integration" project seems to be a path towards a better future. Their legal condition doesn't disappea but it stands in the background of the discourse about "integration": people that believe in "integration" stress the role of culture, community and education. This very last point, education, can be seen from different angles depending of these different sensibilities. On of the interviewee that is involved in multicultural projects related the non-recognition of migrants' degree in Italy as part of the cultural problem and lack of integration. Others, instead, relate their problems directly to the law and to a more general racist environment that surrounds migrants.

This environment, with relatively few severe incidents, express itself throughout a series of micro-attitudes that, as we have seen, permeate migrants' everyday experience, from other people's gazes to their relation with the authorities and police enforcement officials. The ones with a longer experience have seen this situation worsening: "*Once they use to release permits in 20 days, when I asked to bring here my husband in 1998, they replied in 25 days. Today you can wait two years and then they gave you an expired permit. Nowadays there are many problems for foreigners. You cannot organize your life, you cannot go back home for holiday, because with the receipt they gave you is difficult to cross the border.*"

This kind of silent situation consumes the life of many migrants day by day and is ready to come out at any moment during the interview. If someone just mentions the issue, the attention of passersby is immediately caught. That was the case when a couple of people joined an interview inside a barbershop. "*Policeman are not stupid, they don't waste their time with you if you act honestly, they look for people involved in drug trafficking or things like that,*" someone said, but then when asked about their relations with the police headquarters and offices, they say: "*You can ask them, not us: why is it ok when we work hard then once we have a problem nobody cares?*" With the economic crisis, ordinary problems threaten migrant's lives on a daily basis: "*They say bring us your pay stubs and if you have lost your job. Good-bye! Go back to your country! But I've worked here for ten years, my entire contributory taxes are in the hands of the Italian state… if you say, 'go back to your country,' then we have to regulate some accounts before. But they say, 'I'm sorry, if you don't have a pay stub there is nothing we can do…,' yes… now… and before? All that came from Rome, from the law.*" Three other people, when they heard this, confirmed and explained their problems, all of them where hit by the crisis and all of them complained both about the law and about the inefficiency of Italian bureaucracy.

Confronting these problems, many migrants feel the real issue at stake is not urban public spaces – they are able to build their own spaces – but this hostile legal environment. Some of them have participated in meetings in front of the government offices in the city, others have taken part in bigger demonstrations in Rome and in Bologna to challenge the Bossi-Fini law, working, for example, with the Coordinamento Migranti. On this topic, some complain about the lack of positive outcomes from these demonstrations, other lament about the poor participation by migrants themselves in this kind of social movement. Najat: "*Many migrants, if you say we have to demonstrate for our rights, they answer that government does whatever it wants, and it is useless to demonstrate. They are defeated people.*"

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Some see unions as a possible way to act but they complain that unions have acted very little for migrants rights. Najat is a metalworker and member of the metalworkers union (FIOM) has been very active in the last years, organizing strikes for metalworkers' contracts and working conditions. We asked her what she expecta from the union: "*You feel they back you, but the only thing they do is help you in bureaucratic questions. But they've done nothing to guard migrants' rights*". When asked what a union should do for migrants, she answers: "*I speak as worker in general, and then as immigrant: I didn't hear the CGIL do anything to vindicate workers in this crisis. [..] They came to my factory a few times, they organized an assembly, they made their speeches, collect memberships, but then nothing has changed. [..] I heard about the last strike on the TV. [..] I always went on strike but I'm the only one who does at my workplace, this last time I didn't even know there was strike, nobody came to tell us.*" Yet we know migrant numbers are growing in trade unions, mainly in the CGIL (the largest left-wing union) and CISL (a catholic union) and, even though for our interviewees the union works as an helpful office, they don't see in the union a possible solution of their problems.

2.5. Migration, Transnational Practices and Belonging

Most of the interviewees come to Italy quite accidentally and not by choice. Many of them decided to move from their country more to see new places and to change their lives, rather than because of poverty. In the case of Yolanda, she moved for "*destiny and curiosity*," because she met a man in Peru and then she decided to follow him to Italy. Italy was not part of her programs before this accident. Najat wanted to change his life, to see Europe and, while waiting for a visa to Norway, she got a visa for Italy and then moved here alone. Between these two cases there are a heterogeneity of motivations and expectations, among which there is curiosity, war (in the case of Sri Lanka), hardships in life, love, familiar motivations, etc.. This confirms the idea that, even inside global dynamics that involve the labor market and North-South geopolitical relations, the choice to migrate is always a subjective experience, explaining why it is insufficient to only look to the economic and political context to understand the migratory experience.

As we have seen before, migrants themselves often create sociality and almost all the interviewees remember their first experience in Italy as being complicated. A common idea of Italy is a perceived ignorance and a lack of curiosity for what Italians don't know. Migrants move, they came here with an experience of movement, they often don't know the language or customs but what they meet here are other people that have the same ignorance about the world but who have never moved from home (one interviewee said: "*I met people that live in a village in the country side of Bologna and they have never seen the centre city*!"). Prejudice about Africa plays a role in the definition of the first encounter, for example, as one interviewee tells of her first employers who thought that people travel by camel in Morocco, her reply being that "*in Marrakesh there are more cars than here in Bologna!*"

As another woman said, "*I'm sorry to say it, but Italians have no idea of the world outside, their mentality is closed. At the beginning I felt lost, the language was a problem and nobody here knows other languages like English or French... I thought, "I have to go back", but then I realized that that would have been a defeat for me.*" The difficulty of the first period in Italy sees many keeping the possibility to going back open, but it is a possibility that rarely becomes true. Going back would be the defeat of the subjective project: everyone moves for some reason and the only real return without defeat would be the fulfillment of that project. This happens sometimes when people are able to build a house in their village or city, or open a small business there.

Migrants from Morocco tell stories about portions of their villages that become "Italians" because former migrants moved back bringing Italian characteristics with them, such as the name of the shops to opening a pizzeria or a coffee shop. Putting together different indications coming from the interviews, we can trace a double map that brings elements of the countries of origin to Italy and taking Italian elements back in those countries. This is particularly true when – as often happens – familiar or communitarian links create a connection between a particular village or city neighborhood in the country of origin and Bologna. Adopting a transnational perspective, we can here trace a topography of presence and not absence: if it is true, as states A. Sayad (1999) for example, that a sense of displacement is created, it also true that migrants operate a redefinition of their presence both here and there.

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This redefinition is reflected, for example, in the case of a man from Senegal who describes his experience as hard but then says that he finally found himself here, discovering his African identity once here in Italy: "*Leaving your home opens up your eyes. Once I left my house, I found my real identity, something I was unable to see while in Senegal. Here I discovered I'm an African and what that means and I'm happy to be an African and I thank my parents because I was born in Africa.*" Most migrants have multiple belongings, many of the interviewees see themselves, after few years, as Italians, but undoubtedly their sense of "Italianness" is different from the one experienced by Italian citizens themselves. Again, the law plays a role in the definition of this belonging: migrants are always pushed back to their own separate identity by institutional marks of separation – one example are the lines they have to wait in to apply for the renewal of their permit.

This complex situation brings many to build a presence that is not separated but is in some way autonomous from public discourse: their sense of belonging to the city or neighborhood is thus different from that of Italians but, like a network with many nodes, often overlaps with it in specific points. While cultural dimensions play a role, the main problem from migrants is their precarious presence. Najat describes this situation, saying: "*Even if you are here, it doesn't mean you belong to this country, you don't have the serenity to think 'I'm here and I can plan my life here,' because today you're here, tomorrow you never know. No, you live day by day.*" In the world used by Fabien, from another perspective, we can see the role that small bureaucratic steps, such as residency – meaningless for many Italians – assume a sense of belonging for migrants: "*To be a resident of Bologna means to be recognized and to belong to the territory. For me, when I got residency, it was like 'oh, finally you are part of this society.' Then to obtain everything after, from the permit to the long-stay permit, they check your residency status. Getting residency is an important bureaucratic moment and it is culturally important. It means: 'I am from Bologna.'*"

Different perceptions of belonging bring about different *imaginations* about the social and political role migrants can play here. For many, this sense of double absence leads to a political silence, always awaiting the day of repatriation. As Hend said: "*They came here with the idea to take, take, they want everything because they think I'm here for that. But then, if you don't work, there is nothing for you for free. They say once you have citizenship everything becomes easier, but that's not the case.*" And she continues: "*They come here to make money, not to live [...]. Many people have the idea of going back to their homeland. They dream about their own house in their homeland. But then, I ask myself, why do I have to stay here, sacrificing myself to build a house that I don't know if I'll be ever able to see?*"

Najat instead has a very different perspective: "*I don't think it is right to dream about home. If I'm here, I'm here. Many have spent more than ten years here, ten years are a lot and you can't go back and think to restart everything from the beginning. I have to decide: or live my life here, or in Morocco, I don't have to kid myself. And when I go back to Marrakech I'm a foreigner, my accent has changed too.*" The precariousness migrants living here leads some to say: "*It makes no sense to build your life here, because you work hard, maybe you buy a home and then you can be deported from a day to another and that makes no sense.*" These different attitudes have a great impact in the way migrants conceive their possibility to have an impact on Italian society and politics and to be involved in social struggles.

For some, this sense of distance creates the idea that Italians rule here, that there is no space for them to have their voices heard, that people live "*here, but with their head at*

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home." But others think that "*since I'm here, I have to fight here for what I want*." For them, political subjectivity is the moment in which the double absence can be turned into a presence, building new forms of participation – not only the institutionalized forms such as associations – and of common activity both with other migrants and Italians. In this sense, the hybridization and mixture of identity and political consciousness can be seen as a way to imagine new forms of identity that are not already given. In this context, precariousness transforms itself and it can be turned into the rights they lack from the problems that prevent them from organize their lives: as one of the interviewee said, precariousness is a problem for both Italians and migrants, but "*migrants have no right to precariousness*." How can we understand this statement? We can interpret it in a positive way through the forced identity that "methodological nationalism" and the discourse of rights related to citizenship: facing the legal obligation to have a job, precariousness as a right means the freedom to organize their lives from a subjective and autonomous perspective.

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3. Conclusions

Transnational mobility is a structural date of contemporaneity. Based on this assumption, migration problematizes the traditional concept of neighborhood and local space. The fieldwork highlights the explosion of the neighborhood-form in which there is a intricate relationship between place of residence and citizenship, place of family, place of sociality, and often the workplace. Bolognina, the space of our case study, has become an *urban hub*, continuously transformed by mobility – both transnational mobility and the mobility within the city.

In the interviews we find a *desire* for another world by migrants: it is frequently identified in the search for *new cities*. With women migrants, it is also a desire of a *new gender relationship*, based on the exercise of *female autonomy* and *independence*. On this way, we have to rethink the classical idea of family strategy: in fact, migration is determined by complex factors and it is a process of empowerment through changing power relations.

In our interviews and participant observation, we have found it very important to focus on the *relations of glances*. This is a good standpoint to analyze relations among migrants and Italians and power and gender relations.

Urban spaces are places of *translation*, or the creation of new transnational languages and forms of interaction as well as conflicts.

Traditional city borders are changing: old borders are being blurried, new borders are continuously built and put in question.

The discourse of security is often used against the migrants. Yet, what does *migrant security* mean? This question comes up many times in the interviews. In migrants discourse, mainly from a gender standpoint, security is the possibility of a good life, of welfare and the right to choose where you want to live.

In contemporary cities, migrants are *space invaders*, in the double meaning of the concept. On one hand, they are seen as space invaders by a part of the local population; on the other hand, they invade urban and public spaces (institutional and non-institutional, formal and informal, public and private), by re-thinking and re-signifying places that were not originally intended for them. They building new concepts of the public space. Following these trajectories means drawing the maps of an *insurgent city*. In other words, an immediately a transnational city.

Today, the whole area is under a *process of transformation* that will transform Bolognina from an industrial area into the new administrative centre of the city: the modern glass and iron crafted buildings of the municipality foreshadow the future fate of Bolognina. Yet this is happening without any involvement of the migrants and working-class communities that leave in the neighborhood.

One of the main questions when thinking about the relationships between labor and public spaces could be thus formulated: how is the history of a neighborhood, so historically

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characterized by a strict correlation between the productive structure and his social composition, reflected in the ordinary experience of migrants that now cross its public spaces? A second important question is: how does the migrant experience tell us something about the way in which this spatial and social static composition has changed over the last years?

The *relation between labor and public spaces* changes completely depending on labor conditions and, particularly for women, on the simple fact of having a job or not.

Job produces *sociality*. Sometimes this sociality is reflected in the use of public spaces and in the social relations outside it, but many times it is just a part of this *complex network* and, in a hostile landscape, can be recognized as a site of safety that provides a sense of familiarity.

The labor market, especially with the current economic crisis, constitutes the first *concern* for migrants, or it *has become* the first concern since they are faced by Italian legal obligations. The Bossi-Fini law contains, among its various provisions, the "contratto di soggiorno"; this legal figure fundamentally unifies job contracts and residency permits and the contract must be stipulated by the employer before the concession of the residency permit. For many migrants that came here years ago, this has meant a radical worsening of their social security.

In fact, *illegality* is always a possible condition in migrant life. Certainly, for many illegal migrants the specter of deportation is always present but the heterogeneity of the experiences show that more than being a question of legality or illegality, the law acts as a placement agent of migrants inside the society. Inside this scheme that has been called of *differential inclusion*, illegality is just one position among others.

Migrants themselves often create sociality, an autonomous sociality.

tThe law plays a role in the definition of this belonging: migrants are always pushed back to their own separate identity by institutional marks of separation – one example are the lines they have to wait in to apply for the renewal of their permit.

Different perceptions of belonging lead to different *imaginations* about the social and political role migrants can play in Italy.

Despite the crisis and its difficulties, the migrants we interviewed don't return to their own countries. We could interpret their strategies of resistance as *new citizenship practices*, in other words, a kind of transnational citizenship.

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