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PARTICIPATORY DESIGN FOR SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN INNOVATION

Collaborative practices with migrant communities

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INTRODUCTION

Welfare and humanitarian systems were originated on aid strategies, where mainly financial support was provided to the ones in need. This approach is now stressed under the contingencies of a global economic depression. Beside resources limitations, a change and diversification of populations and problems is also occurring. Mass migrations toward Europe seems to show its fragilities and hypocrisies: European national states, once proclaimed tolerant and respectful of human rights, are now facing a crisis of what, after the conflicts of the 20th Century, were considered their fundamental values.

Media and politics are prompting social conflicts where economic migrants and refugees represent the scapegoat of a system based on inequalities. Criminalised or victimised but always excluded from the most basic rights, migrants are now a very central issue in the global discourse. However, to date the institutional activities as well as the general debates have been based on simplistic narratives and emergency measures. History showed us more then once what kind of disruptive consequences exclusion and discrimination have on society, for instance fomenting extremism or racism.

In such a crucial time, supranational and local authorities have been asked to provide solutions to modern challenges such as migrant reception and integration. National states have often delegated responsibilities to the third private sector, which mainly work for maximizing its profit, while the European Union have concluded agreements with third countries in order to externalize its borders. Despite the numerous declarations on the importance of human rights, both of these actions are actually

financially driven. Not considering their moral implications, it is likely that these solutions will not lead to any good in the long run.

Participatory design could be the right tool to introduce in this context as it provides a new perspective on problem solving while it enhances a stronger and inclusive democracy. This methodology was first applied in Scandinavian countries to protect workers from work deregulation, however it quick expanded to other social fields such as immigrants' exclusion. To ensure an effective access to the decision making process also for the most vulnerable populations, their active participation to the ideation of solutions can represent a first step. This requires the beginning of new collaborations with the different members of society as well as a wide work of awareness and knowledge sharing. The core of this approach is the importance given to the users' empowerment and participation as well as the co-responsibilization of the whole society toward its challenges.

Participation contributes to the development of a more inclusive welfare and humanitarian system where human capital is developed and promoted in order to ensure emancipation. Participation to community work also means collaboration with the others. Researchers, designers, social workers, private sector, citizens and migrants need a space where to develop a creative debate toward a joint effort to address common issues, encounter between people with different backgrounds is promoted. Encounter hopefully would lead to a change in the mainstream narratives about poverty and migrations as it allows to overcome stereotypes and prejudice.

This work analyses the application of participatory design in the context of migration as a way to restore dignity and empowerment. In particular, it will be examined its importance in building stronger inclusive communities through the practice of working

together. The strengths and weaknesses of the methodology will be explored through practical examples and reflections to outline possible future solutions will be carried out. The approach will be contextualized as during the work will be always considered that geographical, political or legal boundaries can interfere with the developments of these kind of projects.

CHAPTER 1

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

Summary: 1.1 Overview – 1.2 Definition – 1.3 Political and sociological history – 1.4 Methodology and tools – 1.5 Toward vulnerability – 1.6 Creating together: beyond multiculturalism

Italian abstract

La progettazione partecipata è un approccio di progettazione volto al coinvolgimento attivo di tutti gli interessati per garantire che i prodotti/servizi sviluppati soddisfino i reali bisogni degli utenti. Questa progettazione guarda al prodotto in sviluppo anche dall'ottica degli utenti, alle loro normali pratiche nel contesto di utilizzo, e a come questi potranno poi trarne beneficio.

Simonsen & Robertson (2012) considerano la progettazione partecipata come un processo complesso di mutuo apprendimento dove i partecipanti ricoprono il duplice ruolo di utente e designer. Questo approccio di progettazione è quindi fortemente orientato alla cooperazione e all'interazione sociale: non sono i soli designer a prendersi cura dello sviluppo del prodotto, ma gli stessi utenti. In questa visione, gli utenti primari sono i primi ad accedere al prodotto finale e devono essere considerati una delle più importanti fonti di informazione per uno sviluppo corretto, ed essere quindi coinvolti per primi nel processo di progettazione e di test (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Ståhlbrost, 2008). L'utente non è un designer professionista, ma può portare la sua esperienza nella pratica e beneficiare delle competenze dei designer che lo possono guidare per la definizione degli obiettivi e le possibili modalità per raggiungerli.

Ci sono alcune ragioni che chiariscono l'importanza della partecipazione in questa metodologia. Pragmaticamente il processo di apprendimento reciproco permette a utenti e progettisti di sviluppare insieme possibili soluzioni: si condividono idee e si immaginano possibili scenari futuri, si identificano problemi e obiettivi, e infine si cercano di creare soluzioni efficaci. Diverse conoscenze - esperienza di progettazione (designer) e esperienza d'uso (utente) – vengono condivise, e se combinate consentono risultati migliori, meno limitati e più completi. La partecipazione garantisce che i progettisti comprendano direttamente dagli utenti lo scopo e l'uso delle possibili soluzioni nel loro contesto reale, e quindi ottenere una migliore qualità nei risultati.

Ragioni etiche e politiche sono alla base della progettazione partecipata: lo scopo principale è favorire la democrazia attraverso l'empowerment di voci che non sarebbero ascoltate in altro modo. La ragione principale per la partecipazione è quindi la possibilità di realizzare innovazione e democrazia attraverso una maggiore responsabilizzazione e indipendenza delle persone. Competenze e conoscenze vengono valorizzate al fine di stimolare un coinvolgimento nel processo decisionale. Questo contribuisce a creare un atteggiamento più favorevole verso il cambiamento, con risultati più positivi e in generale più duraturi (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Ståhlbrost, 2008).

Da un punto di vista storico, le radici della progettazione partecipata si possono ricondurre all'insieme di idee progressiste che si diffusero durante gli anni '70 e '80. In Europa e negli Stati Uniti, tra le comunità locali o nei luoghi di lavoro, i cittadini iniziarono ad essere particolarmente coinvolti nelle questioni locali di diritti umani e di politica, reclamando un ruolo di rilievo nel processo decisionale. Durante questo periodo divenne chiara la necessità di un diverso approccio nella risoluzione dei problemi, in particolare per ciò che riguardò i rapporti sbilanciati tra i lavoratori, la gestione e il capitale.

Un punto di forza della progettazione partecipata è la sua capacità di infrastrutturazione: la possibilità di costruire un processo a lungo termine in cui la comunità sia attivamente impegnata e il design costantemente esposto a cambiamenti e adattamenti, che la rende viva e duratura. Tuttavia le difficoltà e gli insuccessi, non mancano nelle esperienze partecipative, in particolare per quanto riguarda la sfera economica o organizzativa. Come sottolineato da Schulman (2010), il maggior ostacolo per lo sviluppo di una soluzione efficace ai problemi sociali è ancora l'assenza di un efficace interconnessione multilivello tra design thinking, politiche sociali e istituzioni. A questo riguardo vi è ancora un vasto spazio di miglioramento.

Da un punto di vista metodologico, la progettazione partecipata è un approccio piuttosto recente ed è spesso caratterizzato dallo studio di nuove tecniche e strumenti. Un insieme di procedure standard è infatti improbabile che sia adatto per la grande varietà di contesti sociali e geografici a cui può essere applicato questo tipo di progettazione. Tuttavia, è possibile definire alcune linee guida che siano generalmente adattabili a vari progetti e che costituiscono il nucleo della progettazione partecipata.

Bratteteig, Bødker, Dittrich, Mogensen, e Simonsen, (2013) hanno identificato tre temi principali: equalizzazione dei rapporti di forza, apprendimento reciproco e co-realizzazione. Una preoccupazione principale è di consentire a tutti i partecipanti di potersi esprimere alla pari durante il processo di collaborazione. Il rischio di applicare un approccio paternalistico, in cui i progettisti e ricercatori assumono unilateralmente tutte le responsabilità e le decisioni, dovrebbe essere neutralizzato con l'acquisizione di un approccio maternalista o, meglio, fraternalista (Thorpe & Gamman, 2011).

L'apprendimento reciproco è un altro elemento cruciale quando si tratta di equilibrare le influenze tra i diversi soggetti interessati, per imparare gli uni dagli altri e acquisire una visione d'insieme. Creare fiducia verso i progettisti ed empatia verso gli utenti attraverso la pianificazione di un adeguato periodo di apprendimento e la costruzione di relazioni fornisce un punto di partenza positivo. Al fine di garantire un buon livello di coinvolgimento nel design, con la possibilità di visualizzare soluzioni innovative (co-realizzazione), la prototipazione diventata la tecnica più rilevante. La prototipazione può essere implementata nel contesto di studio e consente di realizzare soluzioni di prova già dalle prime fasi di progettazione, accrescendo le possibilità di effettuare modifiche e aggiustamenti durante lo sviluppo.

Durante le sessioni di progettazione vengono solitamente delineate tre sfera di attività: una parte di narrazione, una di creazione ed una di esecuzione. Nella fase di narrazione i progettisti cercano di ottenere una panoramica della vita dell'utente. Per quanto riguarda la fase di creazione, attraverso una prototipazione partecipata i vari soggetti sviluppano una possibile soluzione progettuale. Durante la fase di esecuzione viene chiesto ai partecipanti di immaginare possibili scenari futuri o di rappresentare i risultati del progetto attraverso la recitazione; questi scenari possono essere sviluppati nel contesto reale per testare quanto precedentemente prototipato (Bratteteig et al., 2013).

Nel contesto storico di uno scontro tra la società civile e l'establishment economico, così come quello politico, la progettazione partecipata è stata sviluppato per garantire che i lavoratori potessero rispondere a decisioni unilaterali e dannose. La ricerca di una società più democratica e le esigenze per affrontare diverse problematiche sociali ha spinto l'applicazione della progettazione partecipata al di fuori del suo contesto originale.

I progetti che riflettono quest'approccio alla progettazione sono stati applicati in contesti diversi, ma tutti condividono alcune caratteristiche simili, sviluppandosi in scala urbana, coinvolgendo attivamente i cittadini e partendo da un'iniziativa di design. Molti di questi progetti coinvolgono le comunità in attività che stimolano un cambiamento ambientale o economico.

Indipendentemente dalle varie difficoltà che la progettazione partecipata deve affrontare quando si tratta di lavorare con le comunità emarginate, è rilevante ricordare che le sue radici affondano nella ricerca democratica per dare voce a chi altrimenti non avrebbe possibilità di esprimersi. Agenti sociali il cui lavoro mira al cambiamento, come organizzazioni indipendenti, università, movimenti politici e urbanisti trovano in questo approccio uno strumento per sfidare le gerarchie esistenti. In un'accezione più ampia, questa metodologia mira ad una duratura trasformazione della società. In questa prospettiva uno sforzo comune per affrontare le questioni sociali contemporanee contribuirebbe a condividere le responsabilità all'interno tutta la società, promuovendo una maggiore consapevolezza civile.

Secondo lo psicologo Erik Erikson la cooperazione è "il fondamento dello sviluppo umano, imparando a stare insieme prima di imparare a stare in disparte". Fin dalla nascita si acquisiscono le competenze che permettono di interpretare il comportamento degli altri, mentre durante la crescita si sviluppa la propria individualità, riconoscendo ciò che è parte del singolo e ciò che non è, ciò che si ha sotto controllo e ciò che su cui è necessario scendere a compromessi per una convivenza pacifica (Sennett, 2012). La comunicazione con l'altro è una costante nella vita di ognuno fin dai primi giorni ed è quindi fondamentale capire come trovare un terreno comune di comprensione per costruire rapporti duraturi e costruttivi. Questo è particolarmente vero quando si tratta di impegnarsi con qualcuno che è geograficamente, culturalmente o anche economicamente distante.

Le società occidentali hanno cercato di costruire un legame e un'identità omogenea basata sul concetto astratto di nazionalità: un senso di appartenenza che dovrebbe provenire dalla condivisione della stessa lingua, cultura, tradizione, religione, storia. Tuttavia ogni società è sempre stato esposta, in una certa misura, all'influenza di altri. Definizioni collettive e rappresentazioni influenzano le pratiche umane, mentre le pratiche cambiano in continuazione creando, a loro volta, nuove definizioni. Detto questo, l'idea di una cultura monolitica e l'ambizione di costruire una identità sociale comune diventa difficile da sostenere.

L'Europa contemporanea, in un'epoca di migrazioni globalizzate, sta assistendo alla sperimentazione di differenti approcci per affrontare le sfide poste alla sua identità. La gestione della diversità culturale è un tema sempre più centrale nelle agende governative e ogni paese europeo ha sviluppato il proprio peculiare modello.

Sistemi basati sulla polarizzazione di uguaglianza e di differenziazione, due concetti pieni di significato morale, creano un paradosso. I modelli teorici spesso non considerano la pratica, con le sue disuguaglianze strutturali e gli scontri interiori che caratterizzano la società. Finiscono col favorire una parità ideologica mentre creano una differenziazione strutturale che porta alla discriminazione nei confronti delle persone più vulnerabili: donne, immigrati, anziani (Basso, Perocco).

Dal momento che la negazione dell'esistenza di conflitti all'interno delle società non può avere risultati positivi, un nuovo approccio è diventato sempre più urgente. Secondo molti sociologi, tra cui Ulrich Beck (2002), gli individui vivono oggigiorno in una società cosmopolita dove globale e

locale non sono sempre facili da discernere e l'identità non è più legata ad un territorio. A parere di Beck è fondamentale impostare il proprio schema di valori, tuttavia egli suggerisce la necessità di capacità critiche e conflittuali, al fine di essere aperti alla diversità.

La progettazione partecipata potrebbe quindi uno strumento per superare il multiculturalismo, sostenendo il dialogo in una democrazia agonistica. La democrazia agonistica, come Björgvinsson et al. (2012) spiegano, abbraccia l'esistenza di un dibattito anche conflittuale in una società impegnata in quanto questo può mettere in discussione l'autorità principale, producendo innovazione sociale.

Per creare degli spazi di confronto, l'interesse dei cittadini deve essere sostenuto e la capacità comunicative devono migliorare. In particolare, alcune ideologie che si stanno attualmente diffondendo nelle società di tutto il mondo, populiste e aggressive, insieme ad una generalizzata chiusura al dialogo con l'altro, dovrebbero essere messe in discussione da prospettive diverse. Le comunità hanno bisogno di unirsi, discutere e superare le sterili lamentele; vi è un urgente bisogno di immaginare insieme nuove soluzioni per un futuro migliore e la progettazione partecipata potrebbero svolgere un ruolo importante in questo contesto.

1.1. Overview

The world we live in, with its growing complexity and interconnections, push us develop new, more effective ways to address issues and social challenges. Traditional ways of designing policies and services are often proving not to be adaptable enough to a changing society. This can result in a misunderstanding of the actual needs of communities and in a lack of resilience. The quest for a more accessible decision-making process and the right to have a voice in the building of a common future leads to the development of a different design process that require active participation from population.

Participatory design is an answer to this quest. It is based on the pursuit of *equal power relations*, as vulnerable communities can find in it a way of expression, moreover it is characterized by the implementation of *democratic practices* which involve people's education and engagement (Simonsen & Robertson, 2012). The elaboration of solutions requires the use of *situation-based action*s as it implies no abstraction but the understanding of actions, through the direct work with people in the actual setting the actions occur. To achieve positive results different actors need to find ways of working together and, through *mutual learning*, understand each other. To help the designing process to reach these goals as well as to foster the creation of *alternative visions* of possible solutions, specific *tools and techniques* has been developed.

1.2. Definition

Participatory design has been defined by Simonsen & Robertson (2012) as:

> "A process of investigating, understanding, reflecting upon, establishing, developing and supporting mutual learning between multiple participants in collective reflection-in-action. The participants typically undertake the two principal roles of users and designers where the designer strive to learn the realities of the user's situation while the users strive to articulate their desired aims and learn appropriate technological means to obtain them"

Cooperation and social interaction are therefore the grounds of this design method where the process that leads to the final results is itself designed. The creative process does not stand without a constant work of reflection-in-action (Schon 1983): here the actors are required to prototype, test, comment, reflect and make adjustments through action. After different stages of experimentation, practice and evaluation the final service is completed and implemented and the users will own it and further adapt it.

Participatory design needs to take in consideration how the users actually act: the design process and its outcomes evolve through its implementation and the observation of actual practices. The methodology has therefore been developed in order to enhance practice through the development of specific tools and activities. This involves cooperation and interaction with others, designers need to consider and support this but also to make possible for people to possess the design products and develop new positive practices out of it.

Primary users are the ones that mainly will access to the final product/service and must be considered as one of the most relevant sources of information. Lead users shows a problem that will probably spread in the next future and therefore they are the first

ones involved in the design and test process (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Ståhlbrost, 2008). These are generally the groups that participate to the design process through various activities and interactions with prototypes. The user is not a professional designer but it can bring its experience in practice and benefit from the designer expertise that can guide him for what concern the definition of the goals and the possible ways to reach it. It becomes therefore important to develop the work within the local community, as when the practice is exported to different communities the risks of failing arise. With the participation of different figures such as professional designers, users, researchers, authorities, business partners etc. the responsibility over the results of the design is ideally equally shared. Decisions are taken together through discussions, and goals are set or achieved by shared agency. This introduces the concept theorized by Thorpe & Gamman (2011) according to which the designer must be responsive more than responsible. Designers and researchers could indeed assume a paternalistic attitude, trying to take all the responsibility to solve problems they cannot possibly deal with just relying on their limited resources. Stepping over other actors' responsibilities and overestimating their professional capabilities has often negative impacts on the project outcomes. When pursuing social meanings, it is therefore necessary for designer to be responsive: knowing how directly cooperate with the community, understanding when leading is necessary and being always aware of their role/knowledge in order to step back when it is required.

This overturning position in the power relations between designers and users differ significantly from other types of design methodologies and it represent a major break with traditional design assets. Erlbaum & Kyng (1991) critiques the traditional design as connected to the rationalist western philosophy and its predominant

cultural/political/economic values according to which it is necessary to find general rules to apply to a fix set of situations. It is a top-down based system that does not acknowledge the variable social aspect of human activities.

> "Traditional methods are far from actual practice. They emphasis on step by step procedures and prevent creative and cooperative sparks between system designers and users"

In a capitalistic society, where the main goals are stimulating consume and making profit, traditional aesthetic driven design requires the users to be mainly passive and driven by the market. However, a similar approach has been adopted by socially useful design, despite the fact that it finds its motivation in addressing social needs toward social change, while profit is not always considered a main concern. Being profit a minor aspect, the agreement on common goals becomes fundamental for the contribution of the participants: negotiating the terms of the project for what concerns economical aspects and power relations is critical. In order to achieve positive results that can be translated in flexible and enduring solutions to address social challenges, it is although crucial to activate and involve every relevant stakeholder. It occurs democratic consensus, constructive debate, direct agency from all the actors and the mobilization of their human capital to create the conditions for the solutions produced to settle (Thorpe & Gamman, 2011).

Participatory design therefore stands against this traditional approach as it involves direct experience, social agency and empowerment activities. The right to participate is fundamental. However, participation levels are not always consistent and it is possible to identify other types of design user centred that cannot be defined as truly participatory. In *design for users,* designers as well as researchers collect data and

information about users' behaviour through interview or questionnaires. Users are not actively participating out of giving information about their routine and commenting on the prototypes. The most frequent situation occurs when designers and users work together -*design with users*- but structured hierarchies and power relations among them still persist. Positions and role differences sometimes are more defined, sometimes are more blurred: usually designers manage the process, in particular its early stages and its organizational aspects while users are more active during the evaluation or the context based activities. *Design by users* is instead distinguished by designers supporting users to reach a direct involvement in product design. Context knowledge is not the users' only resource as they are pushed to develop their innovative ideas (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Ståhlbrost, 2008).

This kind of participation imply a complete involvement of the users in the methodology as their position is not limited in giving opinions or answering questions but they are required to actually participate in the creative process. Therefore, users start to actually work on the design process in order to represent themselves and their community. During the activities they get to reflect deeper on their desire and opinions which are constantly challenged or supported by other participants (Simonsen & Robertson, 2012). Nevertheless, even in a participatory context, the degree of participation that actors will grant to the design process can vary. The involvement, for examples, could just be symbolic, if users' contribution is not really being valued, listened or understood. Sometimes involvement takes only the shape of a weak control, when users evaluate the progress at the end of each phase of the process. In the best and purer participatory cases users are an active part of the team and might even finance the process or depend on it for their organizational existence.

There are few reasons that clarify why participation is considered essential in this methodology. Pragmatically the process of *mutual learning* allows users and designers to learn possible solutions together: they share ideas and imagine possible futures, they identify problems and goals and then look to create successful solutions. They share different knowledge: design expertise and use experience, that if combined allows better results, as less limited and more complete. Time is a crucial aspect to take into account as users need to acquire enough knowledge of the possibilities available and designers needs to comprehend the context. Designer needs therefore to facilitate the training of people while appreciating the knowledge they represent. Time is also needed for prototyping and see how the practices change through the organized activities (Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, & Blake, 2012). Economically, participation ensure that designers understand, through the user, what the purpose and the use of the possible solutions in their actual context and achieve better quality in results. However, due to participatory design's origins, ethical and political reasons are considered the most important: the main purpose of it is indeed foster democracy through the empowerment of voices that wouldn't be heard otherwise. The main reason for participation is therefore the possibility to achieve innovation and democracy through people's empowerment, valuing their skills and knowledge in order to involve them in the decision making process. This contribute to create a more supportive attitude toward change. The results are more positive and generally enduring (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Ståhlbrost, 2008).

1.3. Political and sociological history

The roots of participatory design rest on the set of the progressive ideas that spread during the '70s and 80's. In the western world the need of a more equal society where power could be evenly distributed and social questions addressed was demonstrated passionately in different ways. The philosopher John Dewey believed that producing democratic practices would have lead to the active engagement of the population. In particular, he valued the bottom-up participation, characterized by its experience based knowledge, which in combination with designed tools that directing and making it meaningful create a knowledge that can be used to achieve crucial results in society.

In Europe and in the US among local communities or in the workplaces, citizens started to be very involved in local issues, human rights and policy making, claiming for a major role in the decision process. During this period it got clear that a different approach in problem solving was needed, in particular for what concerned the unbalanced relations in the workplace between workers, management and capital. Political economy and democracy are therefore the grounds of participatory design as its purpose laid in confront the power structures of capital and governments.

The first experiments of participatory, or cooperative, design, commenced in Scandinavia, where in the 70's, due to the development of new technologies, worker's position was deteriorating. Tasks were automatized, workers de-skilled and wages cut. The management's strategies of different industries were to standardise or simplify tasks and practices in order to make the workforce redundant or replaceable.

In Scandinavia workers were although entitled to be informed of changes in their situation and they were also allowed to participate in determining their work conditions.

In this context a history of close cooperation between workers and trade unions opened

the doors to a more enlarged collaboration with professional designers, researchers and other professional figures (Simonsen & Robertson, 2012), in order to give to the workers the relevant knowledge on information technologies and to strengthen their position in the bargaining table. The aim of this new kind of partnership was not limited to the workers' empowerment but it aspired to realize new solutions, shared between the workers and the management. It was clear that technology would have inevitably brought changes in the workplace and in our lives but it was also believed that through the encounter of different factions it would have been possible to smooth and equalise the process.

In Scandinavia this type of collaboration took the shape of participatory design and made possible a change in the procedures and relations in the workplace. At its early stages the methodology has been mainly developed to address the negative expansion of new technologies in the workplaces, therefore it was mainly IT oriented.

One of the first experiments in participatory design was carried out in Norway between 1970-1973, by Nygaard and Bergo, with the involvement of the labourer of the iron and metal field (NJMF project). Before participation of workers was often limited to a merely informative role, while managers and specialists were the figures actually involved in the process.

The Iron and Metal project became instead a collaborative project, knowledge based, that started gathering together researchers, workers, employers' federation and the labour movements in an equal position. Initially the participation of the workers was not significant but during the first experimentation researchers learned the importance of adapting their initial plans to the change of circumstances and in particular to their progressively increased knowledge of the context. They soon realized that without an

effective participation of the workers the result of the project was to remain limited to a research document. The knowledge created from it was not shared with the workers so they could not use it as a resource for taking action and change their condition. The design process was therefore changed in order to produce the activation of the workers and to create actual solutions to their problems. The new design purpose was therefore to create a new knowledge useful for the workers so they could elaborate solutions to present at the bargaining table. To achieve this result goals were identified and discussed among the workers and the designers, taking into account that actions would have been fundamental. The final results of the project should have been indeed constituted by the actions, developed with the researcher's support, and taken by the workers to strengthen their position. In 1975 the Norwegian technology agreement was signed by the trade unions and the employers' federation, this achievement was a relevant outcome for the Iron and Metal Project.

In the '80s the participatory experimentations went further: in the previous collaborations the activation of different stakeholders was mainly knowledge based while later on the inclusion of workers involved the actual design and implementation of new technologies. Projects UTOPIA (1981-1984) and Florence (1984-1987) and others after are characterized by this approach. The final goal was to create technological alternatives in order to fight the monopoly and technology companies as well as journalists were engaged. However, because of funding obstacles the interest for this kind of action faded and the design resulted in never commercialized prototypes (Simonsen & Robertson, 2012).

Different problems emerged at this point, issues that will be recurrent in participatory design and still now represent a challenge for the methodology: first of all, the difficulty

in activate and preserve engagement, secondary the scarcity of financial resources and lastly the apparently irreconcilable views and power relations. However, this period also marks the beginning of a more direct involvement of workers in the joint effort of imagining and experiment future alternatives.

An additional step was taken in the early '90s when participatory design bonded indissolubly with ethnographic research and acquired its main tools and practices, which are based on a direct observation of people's behaviours in their original context.

The beginning of the twenty-first century marks the beginning of a more spread awareness regarding the inadequacy of the old models of problem solving, mainly characterized by a top-bottom approach. Social, economic and ecological challenges became far too complex to be addressed by a single point of view, with limited insight on events. User centred designs, such as participatory design, started to become more and more central and currently it is used and considered by politicians and independent organizations. When it comes to innovation in social field this kind of methodology, that requires quick and repeated prototyping among with a sharing of perspectives, has proven to be more effective.

In Europe and in the US social innovation based on community empowerment and engagement is now a priority: President Obama in 2009 founded the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation stating that:

> "The bottom line is clear: Solutions to America's challenges are being developed every day at the grassroots - and government shouldn't be supplanting those efforts, it should be supporting those efforts"

In the meantime, the European commission has set programs based on innovation and social inclusion and some of the governments of the member states are following the example sustaining the work of charities, organizations and entrepreneurs.

A valued strength of participatory design is its capability of infrastructuring: a willingness to build a long term process where community is actively engaged and the design is constantly exposed to changes and adaptations, which makes it alive and enduring. People gain skills and tools that are meant to last (Hillgren, Seravalli, & Emilson, 2011).

However, difficulties and failures are not missing from the participatory experiences, in particular for what concerns the economical or organizational sphere, naivety and lack of long time commitment from some stakeholders. As pointed out by Schulman (2010) the major obstacle in developing effective solution to social issues is yet the absence of an effective multilevel interconnection between design thinking, social policies and institutions. In this regard there is still space for the improvement of new collaborations.

1.4. Methodology and tools

Participatory design is a fairly recent approach to design and it is often characterized by the study of new ideas to implement in its methodology and tools. A general set of procedures is indeed unlikely to be suitable for the large variety of social and geographical context where participatory design can be applied. However, it is possible to define some guidelines that are generally adapted to various projects and constitute participatory design main core.

The organization of the activities to undertake during the design process, the selection of the scope, the perspective on design, technology and user participation, the

guidelines on how and who involve, the tools used to support the techniques developed for carrying out the activities and, finally, the distribution of responsibilities among the participants define the participatory design methods. Consequently, the number of techniques and tools elaborated is way larger than the number of methods that are part of the methodology of participatory design.

Bratteteig, Bødker, Dittrich, Mogensen, & Simonsen, (2013) identified three major issues in participatory design: equalization of power relations, mutual learning and co-realisation. A main concern is always to allow all the participants to have a say in an equal way during the collaborative process. The risk of applying a paternalistic approach, where designers or researchers unilaterally assume all the responsibilities and decisions for the final users, should be neutralized by the acquisition of a maternalistic or, better, a fraternalistic approach (Thorpe & Gamman, 2011). The maternalistic approach applies a progressively decreasing level of participation and guidance from the designer; in this way the user has the time to acquire some relevant knowledge and skills before taking over the design process. However, the line between a healthy support and the creation of an over-dependence is not always easy to detect. On the other side, the fraternalistic approach, which is the most preferable but often the hardest to recreate, relies on a perfectly shared agency and concern among all the actors.

Mutual learning is another crucial element when it comes to equilibrate influences among different stakeholders, as they need to learn from each other and acquire all the different points of view. Create trust towards the designers and empathy towards the users through planning an adequate period of mutual learning and relationship building provides a positive starting for the design project. Beyond mutual learning, to ensure a good level of involvement in design, with the possibility of visualize innovative solutions

(co-realisation), prototyping become the most relevant technique. Prototyping can be implemented in the context of study and it allows to trial designed solutions at their early stage, enhancing the possibilities to make changes and adjustments sooner. Participatory design is although applied in the community and social innovation field, where a quite long-term approach in prototyping is required (Hillgren et al., 2011).

The Young foundation cited by Hillgren et al. (2011) suggest in this case a slow prototyping technique where:

> "Slow prototyping takes an idea and refines it slowly throughout extensive user testing before a final version is delivered. Slow prototyping can accommodate a gradual scaling up process - making sure that the final version can be adaptable to accommodate the nuances of specific geographical areas or communities of need" (Young Foundation, 2011)

The importance of creating enduring connections among different actors and the long-term social enrichment that originates from the establishment of new roles and resources for the community, are the reasons that explain why a more slowly design might be necessary. This kind of design work, long-term oriented, is what lead to a continuous growth of the project, in particular after the design phase is ended. The constant prototyping for reaching a common goal can increase the need of collaboration and strengthen relationships and practices that will stay in place and evolve during time. Some tools, or techniques, have been therefore developed through time in order to achieve these results of participation and connection. Since the 90's participatory design started to acquire some of the procedures traditionally belonging to the field of ethnographic research: in particular, the study of people's activity in their everyday settings and the focus on how people actually behave, not how they are supposed to.

The study of users in their actual context, compared to the setting of experimental labs allows a better understanding of social practices and leave space for the discovery of unexpected ones (Simonsen & Robertson, 2012).

During the design sessions three sphere of activities are usually delineated: a narrative, a making and an enactive part. The first two parts consist usually in interviews and observations while the third one uses more physical or visual tools, in order to recreate a model of what actors imagine and expects, helping them in visualizing it. During the narrative phase the designers try to get an insight in users' lifestyle through the use of traditional tools, such as questionnaires or shadowing, and some different techniques, such as the use of probes. Mattelmäki & Battarbee, (2002) introduced the use of specially designed probes in one of their studies: the probes consisted in a package containing disposable cameras, maps, postcard, instructions and stickers. The aim of this particular package was to help the users involved in document their daily experience and reflect upon it. The probes actually proved to be inspirational for the users, that found them useful to express themselves and to add a playful vibe to the study. The material produced was therefore analysed by the researchers with the user first, producing a dynamic collage of ideas, and later on with the designers. Before that the researchers held a workshop for the designers with the main goal of stimulating empathy and interest for the users in the latter. The use of probes as a design tool, can therefore produce a material that is inspirational for both, designers as well as users, and, more important, it helps in creating a deeper connection between the actors. Other techniques that enhance these results are the narration of personal stories through different media, open-ended presentations where the audience can give an

interpretation or workshops that require active participation from the attendants (Visser & Kouprie, 2008).

For what concern the making phase, besides probes, other two tools have been developed: participatory prototyping and generative tools. Through participatory prototyping the various actors use a variety of materials (e.g. paper, clay, wood, plastic, computer programmes…) to create a concept of what they conceive as a possible design solution. The generative tools, similar in their composition to the cultural probes, consist of a set of visual component that stimulate creativity in the non-designer actors. These tools are generally used to prepare the participant to the enacting session.

During the enacting phase people are asked to imagine possible future scenarios or represent the design results through acting. When the design process is not yet concluded applying improvisational theatre techniques could help in finding new inspirational ideas. The audience, the actors and the directors are all engaged in suggesting and improvising new solutions for a future scenario setting. These scenarios could be set in the real-use context where it could be possible to test what has been previously prototyped (Bratteteig et al., 2013).

During all the phases of the design is crucial, for the researcher or the designer, to do not underestimate the importance of nonverbal communication. The ability to interpret silence, facial expressions or brief sentences can expand the understanding of reluctant participants. Because of its application to various and often sensitive social contexts, participatory design methods and tools cannot alone guarantee success. Many other factors come into play and the designers' attitude and knowledge acquire a massive relevance, in particular considering that without the designer methods and tools cannot take place. The role of the designer as a facilitator should not be underestimated when

it comes to research and develop new strategies for participatory design (Akama, 2014) (Light & Akama, 2012).

1.5. Towards social vulnerabilities

In a context of a historical clash between civil society and the economical, as well as the political establishment, participatory design was developed to ensure that workers could stand against unilateral and detrimental decisions. The main challenge was to ensure that workers would not have lost their rights and resources although without willing to fall into reactionary opposition to change. The first approaches to an enlarged collaboration were made in relation with information technologies and now this is still an important field in participatory design. However, the quest for a more democratic society and the needs to face diverse social issues pushed the application of participatory design methodology outside its original context.

In the course of time the reasons for participation evolved from “having a say” in the design process to make sure that context expertise would not get lost. Final user’s creative and organizational capabilities are enhanced in order to make them co-designers. This transition raised the importance of human capital and communities’ empowerment while marking the interconnection between participatory design and social innovation. Social innovation can be referred to bottom-up initiatives, where mostly informal groups of people co-decide what they need and co-design how to achieve the common goal. A new definition to interrelate participatory design and social innovation has been introduced by Manzini & Rizzo (2011), referring and modifying Ehn’s (2008) previous work:

> "Participatory design is a constellation of design initiatives, taken for and with the participants in the projects, aiming at the construction of socio-material assemblies where social innovation take place."

Where design initiatives are meant to be a set of activities based on the use of design devices such as prototypes, mock-ups, design games, models, sketches and other materials that allows the development of social innovation or debate.

Some projects that reflects this set of beliefs have been tested in different contexts, however all of them share few similar features such as being developed in an urban scale, engaging citizens in participation and starting with a design initiative (as designers or researchers are involved). Many of them engage communities in activities that stimulate environmental and economical change: for instance, "Feeding Milan" and "Chongming Sustainable Community" were an Italian and a Chinese design projects aiming at the creation of a sustainable metro-agricultural model while "Amplify" and "Dott07" in the US and in the UK created a hub where citizens could improve or experiment ideas.

Nevertheless, the application of participatory techniques has been largely applied to the most vulnerable populations in society. In European cities the elderly are involved in the design of activities aimed at improve their motor or technological skills; marginalized young adults conceived various physical, educational and art driven activities; many small organizations aiming at giving support started to apply participatory design principles.

A set of participatory laboratories oriented toward social innovation and the creation of new services has been set across Europe in the last decade. The peculiarity of these labs was, once again, the application of activities to a real context, the collaboration among different actors such as users, researchers, technicians, private companies and other

citizens. Pioneers in applying this methodology with marginalized populations, were the Malmo Living Lab projects such as “The neighbourhood” and “The stage” (Björgvinsson, Ehn, & Hillgren, 2012).

The first MLL project, “The stage”, was established in 2007 in this quite dynamic university city in Sweden, also home for a high number of immigrant from the Baltic region, Iraq, Afghanistan and different African countries. The immigrant population in Malmo is although quite segregated in some neighbourhoods and one of the main goals of the project was to facilitate the creation of new long-term relationships along with to challenge the prejudice among different groups. To achieve these results the experiment commenced with the infrastructuring of a network composed by cultural producers, grassroots organizations, technicians, media companies. The desire was to change the stereotyped image of immigrant youth and these actors could work as a connection among cultural and spatial parts of Malmo. The participant of a hip hop grassroot organization, mainly first and second generation migrants aged between 12 and 25, tried to make themselves known in the city through the development of a small box installed on public transport that could be used to share their art. Moreover, with the collaboration of professional designers, IT experts and entrepreneurs they expanded an existing video-game based on the city map, including the areas they live in, in order to engage diverse people in the exploration of that new area and create new interconnection with locals.

“The Neighbourhood Living Lab” was instead initiated with the collaboration of Malmo University and “Herrgard Women Association” in 2009. The independent association consisted of Afghan, Iranian, Iraqi and Bosnian women (400 people among women and children) and had the potential to become an active resource for society. With the

support of the researchers they offered their language, cultural and cook skills to help the municipality in addressing the needs of refugee orphans. In addition, there has been an attempt to connect the association with a large network of businesswomen in order to obtain a more professionalized and sustainable organization (Björgvinsson et al., 2012).

In this latter case the difficulties were multiple; in particular the interaction between the researchers and the women rose the question on what level of participation or guidance is best to apply: where is the balance between the support the designer should give and the risk of weaken the user confidence? In this case it is clear how important is, to achieve the equality among actors, to be able to define an approach that finds a balance between a maternalistic and fraternalistic methods (Thorpe & Gamman, 2011).

An important aspect to consider, when it comes to apply participatory design tools in cooperation with marginalized communities, is the knowledge of such communities by the other actors. A major difference could emerge when designers and researchers go out of their local community. For instance, geographically or culturally distant groups could present different dynamics among individuals and society and this could result in a different perception of participation, comparing to the one western researcher are used to. Language barriers are also sometimes underestimated but when it comes to create a deep bond of trust and understanding among actors, they could result crucial in prevent the reach of positive achievements. Participatory design tools could also need relevant adaptations in certain kind of contexts, for example where knowledge is generated in a complete different way, as in oral cultures.

A good example of these struggles can be found in the co-designing work with southern African rural communities conducted by Winschiers-Theophilus et al. (2012) for the

purpose of designing a technological instrument to preserve and transmit rural heritage to urban emigrants.

Regardless the various difficulties that participatory design has to face when it comes to work with marginalized communities it could be relevant to remember that its roots sink in the democratic quest to give voice to who would otherwise be unheard. Social agents for change such as independent organizations, universities, political movements and urban planners find in it an instrument to challenge existing hierarchies and the hegemonic domination on innovation. In a wider perspective the methodology aims at enhancing a large scale, grassroot, enduring transformation of society itself. In this perspective a common effort in addressing contemporary social issues would contribute to share responsibilities within the whole society and to foster a more conscious civilization.

1.6. Creating together: beyond multiculturalism

According to the psychologist Erik Erikson cooperation is “the foundation of Human development, in that we learn how to be together before we learn how to stand apart”. This statement is explained by child psychologists as the new born child needs for its survival to learn how to adapt and interact with who takes care of it (Sennett, 2012). Since birth we acquire the skills that allow us to interpret other’s behaviours, while during growth we develop our individuation, recognising what is part of us and what is not, what we have control on and what we need to compromise with, in order to coexist. Communication with the other is therefore a constant in everyone's life since the early days, therefore it is crucial to understand how to find a common ground of

comprehension to build enduring and constructive relations. This is especially true when it comes to engage with someone who is geographically, culturally or even economically distant. The sociologist Richard Sennett (2012) acknowledges the challenge of confronting with someone who has radically different behaviours and ambitions, however, he also recognizes the danger that comes after segregation in societies.

Sennett (2012) argues that if in our personal development we learn how to deeply listen and understand who we interact with, we will be using successfully our sympathetic and empathic capabilities. The identification with the other and the comprehension of its problems through personal imagination or experience, namely sympathy, drive us in overcoming differences and be willing to help the other. However, this kind of impersonation, as an interpretation of the other's situation through ours, could prove not to be adequate as erring of arrogance. In this case a step forward would be consider with humility what the other actually needs, listening properly as it speaks for itself.

The ability to activate these cognitive capacities is harder when the encounter takes place between people who perceive themselves as deeply distant, for instance when communication occurs with a foreigner or a stranger. The notion of the stranger has been defined in the well known essay "The Stranger" by G. Simmel (1950), as a sociological category located within the community but at the same time distant from it. The stranger is not willing to stay outside the borders of communities, leaving them untouched, as a spectator or a visitor would do. The stranger lives and acts inside the community however, because of its different origins is not part of it. This ambivalent position is one of the keys to understand the controversial feelings toward the stranger and the resulting obstacles in communication: the duality of homogeneity and diversity, as the construction of the self and the other, become less clear when we have to face

doubts about our own identity. Human history has always been characterized by changes that undermine our projection of society: currently events such as the siege posed to the patriarchy, the constant process of secularization, the decrease of a certain ideological bipolarity and globalization are darken some of our certainties.

Western societies tried to build a bonding and homogeneous identity based on the abstract concept of nationality: a sense of belonging that should originate by the sharing of the same language, culture, tradition, religion, history. The definition of culture itself is quite tricky, as it is easily attributed to the most various representations of communities (Villa & Tognassi, 2012). To the anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor culture can be defined as:

> "...that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

However, every society has always been exposed, to a certain degree, to the influence of others, without considering its intrinsic tension toward change. Collective definitions and representations influence human practices, while practices change constantly creating, in turn, new definitions. Said that, the idea of a monolithic culture and the ambition to build a common social identity over it become difficult to sustain.

Contemporary Europe, in an era of globalised migrations, is witnessing the experimentation of different approaches adopted to face the challenges placed to its "identity". How to manage cultural diversity became increasingly central in the governmental agenda and each European country developed its peculiar model.

The functionalist model, applied in Germany, is based on the assumption that the foreigner will be in the country and inside its society for a limited period of time. The

immigrants are therefore selected for specific tasks and social circles that discourage a permanent settlement. In France the assimilation approach is based on the principle of the equality of every citizen in front of the Republic, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, religion and culture. This imply the use of common language and practices in the public sphere while it leaves freedom in the private sphere. However, this equality was not translated into facts: citizens with different ethnicity or ethnicity do not have access to the same opportunities as white French nationals, moreover social and spacial segregation is causing an increasing tension within society. An opposite strategy was applied in the UK, where diversity is embraced and cultural communities are politically recognized and encouraged (Basso & Perocco, 2003). This multicultural state protects cultural identities from discrimination but it also caused the creation of segregated groups unable to communicate. Multiculturalism is indeed based on the recognition of differences and it foster a differentiation in rights. The risk is to stimulate the growth of segregation based on ethnic differences.

Establish systems based on the polarization of equality and differentiation, two concepts full of moral significance, create a paradox: alternating the two results in recognizing as equal who is different, denying its diversity and recognizing different who is equal, determining its difference. Choosing among one of these approaches, which basically characterized the multicultural or assimilation model and what stays in between, cannot help in solving this controversy. Theoretical models often do not consider practice, with its structural inequalities, and the inner clash that characterize society. Eventually they end up fostering an ideological equality while creating a structural differentiation that arouse discrimination against the most vulnerable: immigrants, women, elders (Basso, Perocco).

Having proved that the denial of the existence of conflictual instances within societies does not lead to any good, the need to develop a new approach has become more and more urgent. According to many sociologists, among whose Ulrich Beck (2002) we live in a cosmopolitan society where global and local are not always easy to discern and identity is no longer linked to a territory. We need to overcome the construction of a nationalistic identity and to accept the conflictuality and the differentiations intrinsic in society: the other is both different and equal. In Beck's opinion it is crucial to set our personal value scheme, however he suggests that we should also have critical and conflictual abilities in order to be open to diversity. This would mean to possess certainty but, at the same time, to be able to be open to understand the other's.

A similar concept was expressed by Sennett (2012) when discussing the abilities we should activate in inter-communications: when we develop sympathetic skills of listening we entertain a dialectic form of conversation where we eventually come to a common understanding. However:

> "[Inexperienced anthropologists and sociologists] They are sometimes too eager to respond, going wherever their subjects lead; they do not argue, they went to show that they are responsive, that they care."

Again, avoiding the conflict does not necessarily results in a productive process or relation. Nevertheless, if we start to rely more on empathy we will be engaged in a dialogic conversation where eventually, we might not reach a consensus, however we would become aware of each other's point of view and we would expand our understanding.

Participatory design could therefore become an instrument to overcome multiculturalism, endorsing dialogue in an agonistic democracy. Agonistic democracy,

as Björgvinsson et al. (2012) explains, embrace the existence of varied and tolerant disputes among an engaged society as they can challenge the main authority, producing innovation. The creation of public “thinging spaces”, originally occasions where Nordic people were gathering to debate and take political decisions, would allow the expression of different instances among communities.

To create these confrontational but open spaces, the interest of citizens must be endorsed and communication skills must improve. In particular, the ideology that is currently spreading in societies worldwide, a blind and aggressive belief in closure toward the dialogue with “the other”, should be challenged by different perspectives. Communities need to gather, discuss and stop complaining palely; there is an urgent need to imagine together new solutions for a better future and participatory design could play an important role in this context.

CHAPTER 2

REFUGEES AND GLOBALISATION

Summary: – 2.1 Glimmers of light – 2.2 The potential of a participatory approach in a liquid society – 2.3 Ending the non-person narrative – 2.4 Active welfare and social innovation: why our approach should change – 2.5 New technologies, new possibilities?

Italian abstract

L'acquisizione di maggior influenza e potere da parte di movimenti politici della destra estremista sta oggi minando la struttura della società e della democrazia stessa. Forze xenofobe e reazionarie stanno entrando nelle istituzioni politiche in tutto il mondo e l'Europa non è un'eccezione: i partiti e le organizzazioni tradizionali stanno affondando a causa dei fallimenti economici, della cosiddetta "crisi" dei rifugiari e da una situazione di stagnazione politica. Diversi mass media stanno approfittando di queste tensioni sociali e stanno promuovendo la sua radicalizzazione attraverso fuorvianti informazioni di parte.

Come nella profezia che si auto avvera di Merton (Merton, 1948), queste rappresentazioni falsate stanno diventando reali nei loro effetti: sostenere regimi e politiche discriminatorie sta già scatenando scontri e frustrazioni, in un circolo vizioso. Arjun Appadurai, antropologo sociale-culturale, offre un'analisi critica sui risultati della globalizzazione sul nazionalismo di stato ed il nazionalismo etnico. Gli stati-nazione hanno storicamente legato il loro dominio con il mito di una identità collettiva, sulla base di valori familiari intimi come legami di sangue, terra, linguistici o di tradizioni comuni. La convinzione che questo ideale di etnia possa creare coesione tra i cittadini ha di fatto portato alla produzione di gruppi antagonisti e a movimenti di contro-nazionalismo.

La rivendicazione da parte di partiti di destra di una tutela dei "valori tradizionali" e la retorica di "noi contro di loro" può essere interpretata come una lotta anacronistica contro il cambiamento. La globalizzazione sta influenzando un mondo che ora è più complesso e interconnesso che mai: una maggiore circolazione di persone, merci e informazioni sta rimodellando la struttura delle istituzioni e della società in generale. Le migrazioni contemporanee sono complesse, ma hanno delle cause specifiche. I migranti stanno portando verso l'Europa il lascito dell'Occidente che per anni si è cercato di nascondere: povertà di massa, guerra, perturbazioni economiche e sfruttamento non possono più essere ignorati.

Questi problemi sembrano schiaccianti, così complessi che quando si cerca di affrontarli altri sembrano scatenarsi, cadendo in un circolo vizioso di immobilità e di impotenza. Tuttavia ci sono molti progetti in tutto il mondo mirati a definire nuove pratiche contro la negatività delle tendenze dominanti, creando innovazione e crescita sociale e mostrando diversi modi di affrontare i problemi sociali attuali.

C'è la necessità di modificare questo paradigma che spinge a vedere i problemi pure dove ci potrebbero essere risorse. L'abitudine a considerare le persone in condizioni difficili come vittime

o criminali non può avere riscontri positivi. Al contrario, la creazione di ponti attraverso le comunità potrebbe rappresentare l'inizio di un approccio migliore, permettendo di aiutare le persone e attivare i cittadini a tutti i livelli della vita sociale.

La vasta analisi che Zygmut Bauman (2000) ha elaborato riguardo alla società contemporanea è attualmente riconosciuta come una delle più acute e illuminanti mai prodotte. Bauman evidenzia una serie di criticità che pervadono la società capitalista, come ad esempio l'individualizzazione estrema, ed il forte protezionismo delle comunità.

Tuttavia l'applicazione di metodologie partecipative potrebbe supportare la risoluzione di alcuni dei problemi posti da Bauman. Il processo di individualizzazione ci ha lasciato senza difese contro la complessità della vita e richiede all'individuo di assumere tutti i rischi sociali/economici che il capitalismo comporta. La ricostruzione di una coscienza sociale che va oltre la ricerca del vantaggio personale è fondamentale. La progettazione partecipata, come strumento di aiuto attivo permetterebbe di creare nuove situazioni di dialogo, di incontro e di condivisione.

Attraverso uno sviluppo condiviso di prodotti/servizi che mira ad un'innovazione sociale, o alla ricchezza generale della comunità, sarebbe forse possibile sfuggire a comportamenti consumistici passivi, vitali per la riproduzione del sistema capitalistico. L'attuale sistema si basa su una crescita economica insostenibile e una visione del futuro orientata principalmente al breve termine: fast fashion, fast food, posti di lavoro temporanei e relazioni instabili sono ora gli standard. Nel mondo occidentale molti movimenti sono in crescita per arginare questo approccio di vita. A tal proposito la progettazione partecipata, orientata verso l'innovazione sociale, si propone di rinnovare ciò che già esiste o di creare prodotti/servizi che durino nel tempo. Si tratta quindi dello sviluppo di soluzioni flessibili e adattabili ai cambiamenti, specificamente progettate per le (e dalle) comunità locali con esigenze specifiche, ma accettando che soluzioni e comunità possano cambiare nel corso del tempo.

In riguardo alla società liquida, Bauman evedenzia anche l'aspetto della conformità. La tendenza a ostracizzare chi o ciò che è diverso, interpretato come un agente di cambiamento e di rottura, è causata dalla paura di perdere prerogative personali. Con l'avvento di correnti securitariste è andato ad affermarsi un concetto distorto di comunitarismo. Il concetto di comunità in realtà tende a indicare un'idea ristretta: i suoi membri sono caratterizzati da elementi comuni che dovrebbero contribuire a rendere la comunità più "sicura". La sensazione di sfiducia e insicurezza verso il diverso è un altro aspetto che la progettazione partecipata si propone di affrontare. Infatti richiede un impegno da parte di tutto lo spettro della società. Porre le basi per una comunicazione di pace, rende possibile lo sviluppo di una società competitiva vibrante, essenziale per l'innovazione e lo sviluppo.

Un primo passo da compiere al fine di superare la realtà conflittuale e controproducente in cui viviamo, sarebbe di smantellare il velo di ideologia e di falsa rappresentazione che copre gli immigrati, a partire dalla retorica moralistica e paternalistica che descrive gli immigrati solo come vittime (Villa & Tognassi, 2012). Gli immigrati vivono in questa duplice condizione di essere troppo visibili come categoria, ma invisibili come persone: "una persona esiste solo in quanto la sua umanità non è revocata o annullata" (Dal Lago, 2004). Come non-persona, un rifugiato o un immigrato economico viene rimosso dalla considerazione della sfera giuridica, politica e relazionale. Il suo aspetto biologico, rappresentato dal suo corpo umano, è riconosciuto, ma la sua vita sociale e morale viene negata attraverso diversi mezzi.

Bauman ben descrive questa de-umanizzazione come effetto collaterale del progresso economico e della globalizzazione (Bauman, 2013b). Il sociologo interpreta la colonizzazione del 19esimo secolo come un modo per espellere la popolazione povera, e di sfruttare terre non modernizzate al fine di ottenere più risorse e profitto. Il destino delle popolazioni indigene è ben

noto: decimazione e sfruttamento in nome del progresso hanno definito la loro storia. Tuttavia, con la fine della colonizzazione queste terre sono ancora sfruttate per la produzione di merci a basso costo per i paesi ricchi. La popolazione di questi paesi è stata lasciata convenientemente alle spalle, ed è ora considerata dalla retorica comune come inutile o come una minaccia per la ricchezza occidentale. Queste vite sono inutili ai nostri occhi, rifiuti prodotti dal capitalismo (Bauman, 2013b).

La presenza dei profughi ha smascherato la contraddizione delle istanze morali e filosofiche dei diritti umani universali in contrapposizione alla primaria importanza della sovranità nazionale. L'ideale della esistenza di un insieme sacro di diritti naturali è ingannevole: i diritti sono riconosciuti da comunità ben definite e un essere umano si distingue come tale da una vulnerabile, poco dignitosa, non-persona per la sua appartenenza a queste nazioni (Isaac, 1996; Arendt, 1959). Nonostante la creazione di entità sovranazionali, atte a tutelare i diritti inalienabili di ogni individuo, i rifugiati e gli immigrati lottano ancora per vedere i loro diritti riconosciuti.

Politiche e leggi restrittive sono state applicate in tutta Europa riguardo la gestione dell'immigrazione, legittimando di fatto l'inferiorizzazione e spersonalizzazione di tutta la categoria. Bauman spiega che "la legislazione precede la realtà", nel senso che sono le leggi a determinare ciò che è illegale e a tracciare una linea tra ciò che è accettato in una comunità e ciò che non lo è (Bauman, 2013b). L'indesiderato diviene in questo modo un fuorilegge da scacciare e si afferma un doppio standard nell'applicazione della legge.

Quando si tratta di attuare i principi della dignità umana, il profitto economico e altri interessi pratici possono imporsi. Le delibere sulle norme in materia di immigrazione e politiche di integrazione devono inevitabilmente tenere in considerazione benessere e situazione economica. Tuttavia, spinte economiche e ragioni morali potrebbe infondere la volontà di cambiare il modo in cui il nostro welfare è attualmente organizzato: da un sistema passivo e assistenzialista ad un welfare generativo e partecipativo. Questo approccio inizia ora ad essere sperimentato in Europa e potrebbe essere implementato nel sistema di accoglienza e nelle politiche di integrazione. A questo proposito è importante considerare il fatto che l'Europa ha progressivamente ampliato i suoi confini al di fuori dell'Unione attraverso accordi multilaterali con paesi terzi; nuove politiche dovrebbero essere facilitate ovunque in opposizione a un approccio securitario e opprimente.

Negli ultimi decenni l'idea di un processo di innovazione sociale, guidato dalla partecipazione della comunità, si è diffusa come possibile strumento per affrontare le sfide contemporanee. Ancora una volta uno dei principali motivi che giustificano questo cambiamento è in realtà economico: in un periodo di crisi finanziaria, le amministrazioni pubbliche e gli enti locali sono stati spinti a cercare nuove strategie, al fine di garantire risparmio ed efficienza per i loro servizi.

In un sistema olistico in cui l'individuo e la sua comunità sono centrali, le potenzialità personali sono rafforzate in modo da diventare utili alla società. Promuovere le capacità individuali, al fine di consentire ai singoli di perseguire pro-attivamente i propri obiettivi di vita creerebbe idealmente un miglioramento positivo nella qualità della vita e lo sviluppo della società.

In questa direzione l'Unione Europea si è mossa verso un diverso approccio al welfare. Lo stato sociale attivo facilita i cittadini nello sviluppo di competenze necessarie per affrontare i rischi della vita, attraverso l'ideazione di servizi locali e personalizzati (Lodigiani, 2008; Vandenbroucke, 1999). La progettazione di questi servizi richiede la creazione di un sistema di cooperazione verticale ed orizzontale, oltre alla partecipazione diretta nel processo di progettazione. La cooperazione orizzontale richiede l'interazione di diversi corpi, come istituzioni pubbliche, enti privati, aziende o organizzazioni sindacali. La cooperazione verticale richiede un buon livello di comunicazione tra gli operatori sociali e gli attori politici locali. Nuovi problemi e esigenze sono definiti e affrontati insieme, permettendo una comprensione più profonda di una società complessa e la possibilità di affrontare questioni generali, più che individuali (Brunod, 2004).

La progettazione partecipata si rivela essere una metodologia efficace, dove operatori sociali diventano progettisti e interagiscono direttamente con il contesto locale attraverso un dialogo con la società. La gerarchia tradizionale è messa in disparte, in modo da permettere a molteplici voci di esprimere i problemi della comunità. La mobilitazione e la responsabilizzazione delle comunità mira anche alla produzione di innovazione sociale. Generalmente definita come un mix di nuove idee benefiche per la società, innovazione sociale è un termine piuttosto generale. Per l'Unione Europea, con innovazione sociale si intende "lo sviluppo di nuove idee, servizi e modelli per affrontare meglio i problemi sociali; si invita il contributo di soggetti pubblici e privati, compresa la società civile, per migliorare i servizi sociali " (UE, n.d.).

L'idea sottostante l'innovazione sociale è di produrre un cambiamento positivo duraturo nelle società, possibilmente attraverso la prevenzione piuttosto che la cura. La popolazione è quindi chiamata ad esplorare nuove soluzioni ai problemi sociali, di conseguenza la tradizionale distanza tra progettisti e utenti si restringe.

Questo insieme di nuovi approcci dovrebbe essere applicato alle sfide più urgenti dei nostri tempi. L'entità senza precedenti delle migrazioni di massa causate da disastri economici, sociologici e ambientali, deve essere affrontata con nuovi strumenti all'interno e al di fuori dell'Europa.

Ad oggi diversi stati nazionali così come diverse realtà locali, con diverse esigenze e organizzazioni interne, gestiscono le strategie di accoglienza e integrazione dei migranti con pratiche estremamente eterogenee. L'attivazione dei rifugiati, in coordinamento con il lavoro di progettisti, ricercatori e altri soggetti privati e istituzionali, deve essere riconosciuta per avere un impatto positivo sulla vita e le aspettative dei rifugiati così come sull'efficienza e efficacia del servizio umanitario.

L'innovazione sociale non è necessariamente originata dalla tecnologia, tuttavia, non si può ignorare il fatto che al giorno d'oggi la tecnologia stia modellando quasi ogni aspetto della vita. La tecnologia civica si propone di attivare i cittadini e promuovere la partecipazione dal basso attraverso la co-creazione e l'implementazione di strumenti innovativi, al servizio del bene pubblico (Laurenellen McCann, 2015). Operatori sociali, ricercatori e progettisti dovrebbero riconoscere il potenziale della tecnologia applicata ai servizi sociali e umanitari.

Insieme a cibo, riparo e salute, essere collegato al web è diventato fondamentale per rifugiati e persone in movimento. Gli smartphone supportano gli immigrati nell'organizzazione del loro viaggio, a tenersi in contatto con la famiglia o con gli amici e a diffondere informazioni sulla loro situazione (Brunwasser, 2015). Una comunicazione costante e la capacità di collegamento con le persone che si trovano in vari stati permette la creazione di un capitale di rete, cruciale nel perseguire un progetto di migrazione.

Oltre ai migranti, la digitalizzazione sta investendo operatori sociali/umanitari e volontari in molti settori. Lo scambio di informazioni e la possibilità di creare una rete efficiente di servizi coordinati sono migliorati, insieme alla possibilità di fruire di nuovi strumenti utili nel campo. Tuttavia, l'uso delle nuove tecnologie dell'informazione richiede un addestramento mirato, in grado di sviluppare le competenze e, di conseguenza, di creare personale più competente. La tecnologia non può e non deve sostituire il prezioso lavoro umano, che, con la sua sensibilità, è necessario per il lavoro sociale e umanitario. D'altra parte, la comunità cooperante dovrebbe liberarsi di alcuni comportamenti reazionari e di impegnarsi di più, aggiornandosi per scoprire e adottare strumenti innovativi.

2.1. Glimmers of light

The increasing power gained by parties or political movements that belong to the extremist right wing, is nowadays undermining the structure of society and democracy itself. Xenophobic and reactionary forces are entering in political institutions worldwide and Europe is not an exception: here traditional parties and organizations are sinking after the economical failure, the so-called refugee crisis and a political deadlock. Various mass media are taking advantage of these social tensions and are promoting its radicalisation through a biased, if not false, misleading information. As the Bulgarian newspaper Kapital quoted (Internazionale, 2016):

> "Mass media directly contribute to the development of a xenophobic public opinion. All the main television channels have become platforms for racism. At this time, nationalism sells on screen as much as sex, if not more."

Our perception of reality is affected by numerous deceptive representations and it turns out to be distorted and partial. The tools we have for understanding modernity seem to shrink in front of the superficiality of the mainstream view. However, like in Merton's self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948), these falsified representations are becoming real in their effects: sustaining discriminatory regimes and policies is already fostering future clashes and frustrations, in a vicious circle. Arjun Appadurai, social-cultural anthropologist, offers a critical analysis on the results of globalisation on state nationalism and ethnic nationalism. Nation-states has historically linked their domain with the myth of a collective identity, based on intimate familiar values such as a blood connection, a shared land, a common language or traditions. The belief that this ideal of ethnicity could create cohesion among citizens was not proved right, de facto it has led to the production of antagonistic groups and counter-nationalism. Recently the political

recognition of minorities, often behind the name of multiculturalism, has fostered a strengthen in majorities that clumped against a perceived differentiation of rights and benefits (Appadurai, 1996).

The current claim from right wing parties and movements for the protection of a set of "traditional values" and the rhetorical of us against them can be interpreted as an anachronistic fight against change. Globalization is influencing a world which is now more complex and interconnected than ever: a greater movement of people, information and goods is reshaping the structure of our institutions and societies. Supranational institutions, such as the EU and the UN, are influencing our everyday life, while political or social events that seems miles far from us can affect our lives more than imagined before. The stream of news, often selected by the media providers, affect our vision of the world and it can cause the implosion of nationalistic movements that feels threatened by a world that looks precarious and out of control.

Trying to stop change means not to face the consequences of centuries the West spent interfering on the world balance and supporting a system based on global and local inequalities. There seems to be a lack of historical conscience and awareness related to the current events. Contemporary migrations are complex but have causes. The migrants are bringing to Europe the bequest of what for years west has tried to hide. Mass poverty, war, climate change, economic disruption and exploitation can be no longer ignored. Unfortunately, power and economy are forces that tend to turn populations against each other, in a war between poor. Human history is subjected to constant change but it should not be possible to forget that this "evolution" is based on our past. Human evolution consist also in a collection of horrors and injustices through centuries of history. In order to stop this accumulation of wrongness is necessary to

change now, to start to evaluate something different, something kind and graceful such as embrace and democratic knowledge.

Walls won't contain change, possibly they will make it slower but more painful and dramatic. Nevertheless, societies are subjected to change since the beginning of human history and paralysis has never been an option nor has ever brought much good.

Bad news compose now the most of the news we get. this could result in a blindness toward change and imaginative solutions.

As in Calvino's imaginative cities Aglaura, described in the book "Città invisibili" (Calvino, 2012)

> "You would like to say what it is, but everything previously said [..] imprisons your words and oblige you to repeat rather than say."

Problems look overwhelming, so complex that when someone try to address them other problems seems to be generated, falling in a vicious circle of immobility and powerlessness. Nevertheless, there are many projects and actions around the world that would deserve more attention. In the attempt to define new practices against the mainstream negativity, they create social innovation and growth. These projects could show us different ways of approaching current social issues and could be part of a joint effort where problems are tackled down by different sides. These glimmers of light need to spread on media and on policies agendas. Projects needs to be sustained and to attract more participation, not to be prevented by an oppressive bureaucracy or political ideology aimed at vote recognition.

We also need to shift the paradigm that push us to see pure problems where there could be resources. The habit of considering people in difficult conditions as victims or criminals is not going to led to any good. However, creating bridges through

communities, giving the opportunity to empower people and activate citizens in all level of social life -school, elder care, work, leisure…- while uprooting the stereotyping might be the start of an improved approach.

Some, among citizens, strangers and institutions are currently working in this direction. To give them more space and visibility might be the beginning of a change. Show more often what of positive is happening might inspire others and contribute to create a virtuous circle. Let's make this glimmers of light shine more and spread.

2.2. The potential of a participatory approach in a liquid society

The vast analysis Zygmut Bauman (2000) elaborated on contemporary society is currently renowned as one of the sharpest and enlightening produced. His work on liquid modernity, or late modernity, has the merit to bring up the predominant features of the globalised world we live in. Bauman raises a series of criticality that are pervading capitalist society, such as an extreme individualization, inconsistency and a progressive securitization of communities. Many aspects of our society resemble the main characteristic of a fluid, put by the author in contrast with a solid: it changes continuously under pressure, it makes bonding ties weaker and it celebrates the dynamic image of time over the more static of space.

However, a wide application of participatory methodologies could address some of the problems arisen by Bauman. The undesired process of individualization has left us defenceless against the complexity of life and it requires the individual to take on all the social/economical risks and negativity capitalism involves.

> “Ours is, as a result, an individualized, privatized version of modernity, with the burden of pattern-weaving and the responsibility for failure falling primarily on the individual's shoulders. It is the patterns of dependency and interaction whose turn to be liquefied has now come. […] The other side of individualization seems to be the corrosion and slow disintegration of citizenship. [...] And so public space is increasingly empty of public issues. It fails to perform its past role of a meeting-and-dialogue place for private troubles and public issues. On the receiving end of the individualizing pressures, individuals are being gradually, but consistently, stripped of the protective armour of citizenship and expropriated of their citizen skills and interests” (Bauman, 2000)

The recreation of a social awareness that goes beyond the search for personal benefit is crucial. Despite a pervasive feeling of isolation, acting only for ourselves or our communities of interest, without taking into account the public good might be counterproductive. Recent outcomes of globalization are in fact showing how deep is the interconnection level we have reached. The perseverance in basing our action on inequality and opportunism at the expense of the other, creates tensions and conflicts that will affect us all. Being open to an exchange of perspectives, share responsibilities and develop a network of new connections in a complex society is not easy, but necessary. Participatory design, as an instrument of active welfare/aid allows us to create these situations of dialogue, encounter and sharing.

Through an engaged development of products/services aiming at social innovation, or for the general wealth of the community, perhaps it becomes possible to escape the passive consumerist behaviours, vital for the reproduction of the capitalist system.

> “The common interpretations of compulsive shopping as a manifestation of the post-modern value revolution, the tendency to represent the shopping addiction as an overt manifestation of dormant materialistic and hedonistic instincts, or as a product of 'commercial conspiracy' that is an artificial (and artful) incitement to pursue pleasure as the foremost purpose of life, capture at best only part of the truth. Another part, and the necessary complement of all such explanations, is that the shopping compulsion-turned-into-addiction is an uphill struggle against acute, nerve-breaking uncertainty and the annoying, stultifying feeling of insecurity.” (Bauman, 2000)

According to Bauman relationships, actions and objects slip through our fingers faster and faster. The current system is based on an unsustainable economic growth and a vision of the future mainly oriented to the short term: fast fashion, fast foods, temporary jobs and unstable relationships are now the standards.

We are driven to desire disposable goods, obtained with resources we do not have. This is not sustainable. In the West several movements are growing to stem this life approach (e.g. slow food and fashion revolution). Participatory design, oriented toward social innovation, aims to renew what already exists or to create products / services that are able to last. It is about the development of flexible solutions adaptable to the changes, specifically designed for local communities with specific needs, however accepting that they can change over time.

The design process is performed locally, in public spaces shaped as modern agora of discussion and agency. Cities need to be claimed back by their population and stop to take the guise of amusement park for travellers or shopping tourists. Spaces requires a

process of re-appropriation, in contrast to the constant establishment of non-places that characterize late modernity.

Non-places are spaces alien to their original geography. They are replicated throughout the world presenting standard architecture and functional characteristics (e.g. Airports, food chains, shopping centres, hotels...). These places give to the individualized citizen a feeling of safety and ease: they are predictable, empty, meaningless.

Compliance is in fact another predominant aspect in the liquid society. The tendency to ostracise who or what is different, interpreted as an agent of change and disruption, is caused by the fear of losing personal prerogatives. This fear is stimulated while stimulates an escalating securitization of world politics.

> "Voters and elites - a broadly conceived middle class in the United States - could have faced the choice of approving government policies to eliminate poverty, manage ethnic competition, and integrate everyone into common public institutions. Instead, they chose to buy protection, fuelling the growth of the private security industry." (Bauman, 2000)

With securitarism, a distorted concept of communitarianism has born: the concept of community, as indicated by Bauman (Bauman, 2013a), actually tends to indicate a restricted idea of community. Its members are characterized by common elements that should contribute to make it "safe". Exclusion and homologation become the base of a society where rights and benefits are theoretically universal but practically discretionary. The closure in detached communities, sometimes even physically separated (see ghettos, construction of walls…) creates a fictitious perception of safety.

> "Community defined by its closely watched borders rather than its contents; 'defence of the community' translated as the hiring of armed gatekeepers to

> control the entry; stalker and prowler promoted to the rank of public enemy number one; paring public areas down to 'defensible' enclaves with selective access; separation in lieu of the negotiation of life in common, rounded up by the criminalization of residual difference – these are the principal dimensions of the current evolution of urban life." (Bauman, 2000)

The feeling of mistrust and unsafety toward the difference is another aspect that the participatory design aims to address. Indeed, it requires a commitment by the whole spectrum of society. To lay the basis for a peaceful communication, for example through a better awareness of the needs and perspectives of those who are different, makes possible the development of a vibrant competitive society, essential for innovation or development.

These actions should be taken with the involvement of everyone living in a given society, including institutions. The disconnection between the latter and the population is the umpteenth challenge posed by liquid modernity.

> "The time-honoured question of democratic politics – how useful or detrimental is the way public figures exercise their public duties to the welfare and well-being of their subjects/electors? -has fallen by the board, beckoning to public interests in good society, public justice, or collective responsibility for individual welfare to follow them into oblivion" (Bauman, 2000)

Reconciliation must take place on a more equal democratic basis. With the use of a participatory approach, equality in decision making is enhanced in a way that also the most vulnerable or marginalized groups have a chance to discuss with the authorities and other private actors.

Ascertain that the social, political and economic environment in which we live is unfair because it is based on exploitation or waste, it is necessary to act for change. While most of the world suffers, look away and retreat into falsely peaceful and greedy communities is becoming increasingly difficult. Immigrants in Europe are now the clear evidence of this situation. The challenge they are posing is causing an epochal crisis for national and supranational institutions.

2.3. Ending the non-person narrative

A first step to take in order to overcome the conflictual and counter-productive reality we live in, would be to dismantle the veil of ideology and misrepresentation that covers the immigrants. Starting from the moralistic and patronising rhetoric that describes immigrants just as victim to their opposite criminalization (Villa & Tognassi, 2012). Being covered by this coat of preconception is just one of the aspects that makes this a category of non persons, of not truly seen. Immigrants can live in this dual condition of being too visible as a category, produced in the desire of them to disappear, but invisible as person.

"A person exists only if its humanity is not revoked or cancelled" (Dal Lago, 2004)

As a non-person, a refugee or an economic immigrant is removed from consideration for what concerns his juridical, political and relational sphere. Its biological aspect, represented by his human body, is acknowledged but its social and moral life is denied through different means.

Bauman well describes this de-humanization as a collateral effect of "economical progress" and globalisation (Bauman, 2013b). The sociologist interprets colonization of

19th century as a way to expel the unwanted exceeding poor population from industrialized countries to not modernized lands, and to exploit the different level of capitalistic development in order to get more resources and profit. What happened to the native populations is well known: decimation and exploitation has been their history in the name of progress. However, since the end of colonization these lands, not officially to conquer any more, are still used to produce cheap goods for rich countries. The population of these countries has been left behind, as more convenient, and is now considered by common rhetoric as chronically redundant, useless and a threat to our wealth. These lives are worthless at our eyes, a waste produced by capitalism (Bauman, 2013b)

> "A person can socially exist just as a juridical-political person, in other words a system of right and duties" (Kelsen, 1967)

An immigrant, as a non person, is often an unwilling outlaw, determined as such by precise legislative decisions. Before the first world war rights were attributed to a people, more than to the individual: the belonging to a state was an exclusive condition to access to be a social and juridical entity. In lack of a supranational authority with this duty, basic human rights supposed to protect any individual, were actually guaranteed only in light of a national state to enforce them. After the wars the massive number of displaced and stateless people, made clear the need of a new system of juridical protection. In order to ensure the protection of universal human rights supranational institutions such as the Organization of the United Nations -with its International Court of Justice-, the European Union - and its Court of Justice of the European Union- or the European Court of Human Rights were founded. In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN followed by the convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951. The

years that followed the second world war were characterized by a bipolar geographical and ideological division as well as a process of decolonization and industrial growth. Political doctrine and labour demand made possibly easier to enforce these individual rights. However, at the end of the century the downfall of the USSR created a shock in the political balance: capitalism became the main ideology with its economic deregulation and competition, new conflict erupted creating new refugees and Islam and terrorism rose as the new great enemies of civilization.

As Hannah Arendt questioned: “What is humanity out of rights and community belonging?”. As she explained, refugees unmasked the contradiction that lies beneath the moral and philosophical instances of universal human rights, that is the importance of national sovereignty. The ideal of the existence of a sacred set of natural rights is deceptive: rights are recognized by definite communities and a human is distinguished as such from a vulnerable, undignified non-person by its membership to these nations (Isaac, 1996) (Arendt, 1959).

Despite the creation of supranational entities, entitled to protect the inalienable rights that make an individual as such, refugees and immigrants are still struggling to see their basic rights recognized.

> “Politics is filled with more poignant irony than the discrepancy between the efforts of well-meaning idealists who stubbornly insist on regarding as 'inalienable' those human rights which are enjoyed only by the citizens of the most prosperous and civilized countries, and the situation of the rightless themselves" (Arendt, 1973).

Recently, attacks against treaties and conventions have been carried out by nationalistic governments. In Europe the principle of seeking protection from persecution has been

often bypassed or ignored[1]. Restrictive policies and laws have been applied all over Europe for what concerns the immigration management, legitimizing de facto the inferiorization and depersonalization of the entire category. Bauman explains that "legislation precedes reality" in the sense that laws determine what is illegal and trace a line between what is accepted in a community and what is not (Bauman, 2013b). In this sense the act of migrating without documents has been heavily criminalized and the possibility of obtaining the right documents made almost impossible. The unwanted became this way outlaws to discard. A double standard in law application has been affirmed as a constant feature. For instance, in the UK, when a British detainee reaches his conditional release date he is directly released while a foreigner will spend the rest of the sentence, and usually more in detention, often while fighting against the threat of deportation (BIDUK, 2015). The creation of immigration detention centres, that positioned themselves at the outskirts of legality is a statement of the willingness of getting rid of specific groups. The ethnic composition of the people generally detained in these centres is as well explanatory of the inclusion-exclusion mechanism of economic globalisation.

Refugees and immigrants' lives are frequently put on pause, in particular if allocated in a centre, waiting for their bureaucratic situation to be resolved. Like in a limbo, the wait for a tribunal decision on an application for international protection, or the attainment

1 Examples are the agreement established by the EU or its members with Turkey, Libia, Morocco and Tunisia that foresee financial and know how services in exchange of a merciless border control. The restrictive interpretation of human rights such as family unit and the superficial analysis of asylum application move in the same direction.

of a working visa, can take years. These periods of stasis and uncertainty contribute to undermine the immigrant energy and moral while contributing, once again, to lower their position in society. Postponements and waits are for hierarchically inferior classes as the more important a person or a group is, the less they will have to wait for their desires to be satisfied (Bauman, 2013b). For immigrants there are few resources to rally and none recommendation to push, to exit this outcast condition can take a long and massive personal effort.

The rhetorical image tailored on the image of immigrants, the denial of rights we give for granted, the frustration of continued waits in non-places at the borders of societies must be summed to the difficulty in entering the labour market. Discriminations, law restrictions as well as occupational segregation are indeed problems frequently encountered by immigrants. The mainstream charges posed to immigrants can be summarized in their attitude toward laziness and their intentions to fraud our welfare. However, the most of the immigrants that travel to Europe, do so with the desire to build a new dignified life where work is a necessary component. Without employment and resources to ensure the attainment of a subsistence level, immigrants, as other vulnerable categories, are at risk of social exclusion and stigmatization. Institutional and independent actors usually respond to this challenge with a dichotomized approach divided between assistentialism and exploitation, clearly neither of them is adequate.

It is crucial to exit the pervasive perspective that reduce immigrants to the status of outcasts, scapegoats to take advantage of or mere bodies stripped out of everything, idealized creatures to patronize and give our benevolence. This attitude is leading Europeans to face an identity crisis, as it seems that political decisions are going dramatically against some fundamental values which were thought to define its

community. In a period of welfare dismantling, economical crisis, walls rebuilding and euro scepticism human rights have not found a regular enforcement. When it comes to implement principles of human dignity, full of ethical meanings, economic profit and other practical interests could come in the way. The deliberations on immigration regulations and integration policies, inevitably needs to keep in consideration the welfare and economic situation they encounter. However, economical, among with moral and efficiency reasons could actually instil the willingness to change the way our welfare is currently organized: from a passive and aid system to a generative and participatory welfare. This approach is already being tested along Europe and it could be implemented in the immigration reception system and in integration policies. In this regard is relevant to consider the fact that Europe has gradually expanded its borders out of the actual Union through multilateral agreements with third nations. Usually these agreements offer military and economic support in exchange of strict immigration control. This to say that innovations and new policies should be facilitated everywhere, in opposition to a securitarian and oppressive approach.

Nina Simone beautifully reminds us with her words the energy and power that can be found in people, even when deprived of everything but their bodies (Simone, 1968):

> “Ain't got no home, ain't got no shoes
> Ain't got no money, ain't got no class
> Ain't got no friends, ain't got no schooling
> Ain't got no wear, ain't got no job
> Ain't got no money, no place to stay”
> [...]
> “But what have I got?
> Let me tell ya what I've got
> That nobody's gonna take away”
> [...]
> “I got my arms, I got my hands
> I got my fingers, got my legs

I got my feet, I got my toes
I got my liver, got my blood"

"Got life, I got my life"

This potential is often wasted by the current structure of traditional immigration services. It could be endorsed by a shift of paradigm, where users' capabilities are enhanced and agency appreciated.

2.4. Active welfare and social innovation: why our approach should change?

In the last decades the idea of a welfare and social innovation process, driven by community participation, has spread as a tool to address contemporary challenges. Once again one of the main reasons that justify this shift are actually economical: in a period of financial crisis, public administrations and local governments have been pushed to look for new strategies, in order to guarantee savings and efficiency for their services.

Welfare models created after the second world war, during the economic boom, required a higher level of public spending, in the form of benefits and state support. In addition to the financial concern great changes occurred: women entered the labour

market, diminishing their role of familiar carer[2], population got older, globalisation made states strictly interconnected and mass migrations increased.

European governments became therefore forced to rethink and question the way state help is set (Bonoli & Natali, 2012). With the aim to produce solutions that could be effective in the long run, more than in the only view of elections legitimation, local administrations implemented innovations in traditional services. In a holistic system where the individual and its community are central, the personal potentials and capacity are enhanced and strengthened in order to become useful to society. Promoting individual capabilities, in order to enable individuals to pro-actively pursue their life goals would ideally create a positive improvement in quality of life and development of society. Indeed, along with human capital, social capital should increase subsequently as it can be defined as a set of relational and valuable resources of a community.

In this direction a different new approach of welfare has been implemented by the European Union. The active welfare state facilitates citizens into the developing of these skills and resources, necessary to face life risks, through the ideation of local and personalized services (Lodigiani, 2008) (Vandenbroucke, 1999). The design of these services requires the creation of a system of vertical and horizontal cooperation, along with a direct participation into the design process. Horizontal cooperation demands the interaction of different bodies such as public institutions, private entities, companies or trade unions. Vertical cooperation expects a good level of communication among social

2 However, the bargain of familiar and home care still sits on women's shoulders, doubling the amount of work they are expected to take on.

workers and local political actors. Social workers and operators, along with designers and other parties will have the delicate tasks to activate participation from public administration and citizens, often exposed to risk and frustrations. New problems and needs are defined and addressed together, allowing a deeper understanding of a complex society and the possibility to address general issues, more than individual (Brunod, 2004).

Participatory design methodology is in this instance applied, as social workers become designers themselves and interact directly with the local context through a dialogue with society. Traditional hierarchy is therefore put aside, in order to let multiple and differentiate the voices that express the problems that community encounters. Problems that must be individuated usually occurs whenever a socially recognized disadvantage distances certain categories from a more desirable condition in society. The individuation and discussion of problems can be underestimated, in spite of its relevance when it comes to find solutions, as there is always the risk from designers to be excessively technical or abstract.

The mobilization and responsibilization of communities also aim at the production of social innovation. Generally defined as a mix of new ideas beneficial for society, social innovation is used as a quite general term. For the European Union social innovation means:

“Developing new ideas, services and models to better address social issues. It invites input from public and private actors, including civil society, to improve social services.” (EU, n.d.)

The idea below social innovation is to enhance an enduring positive change in societies, possibly through a perspective of prevention instead of remediation as it is more

effective and affordable. However recent politics tend to focus more on theatrical actions, that might ensure votes in the short run, more than in a long term strategy based on population activation and awareness. Population itself is therefore called to explore new solutions to social issues, therefore, the traditional distance between who design or provide a service and the users shrinks. The governments of the Union should be committed to enhance and support social innovation and economy, allocating resources and funds to social bodies that are willing to provide the service.

The expected areas of action are where services for vulnerability are not yet available or insufficient. Citizens can challenge social and economic establishment through social investment, that creates an economical value for society. In this way society itself is regenerated through an empowerment and an innovation that create resources (Morel, Palier, & Palme, 2012).

This set of new approaches needs to be applied to the most urgent challenges our times are facing. The unprecedented entity of mass migration due to economical, sociological or environmental disasters, needs to be addressed with new tools inside Europe, where an efficient integration must be organized, and outside Europe, where displaced people are forced to live for a significant period of time.

The European Union is constantly working on the development of a possibly coherent legal frame for the bureaucratic management of refugees and immigrants within the Union. However, a common reception scheme inside Europe has been overlooked. Different national states as well as different local realities, with different needs and internal organization, have been managing the actual migrant reception and integration strategies with extremely heterogeneous practices. In particular, the period between the request of international protection and its outcomes, crucial for the integration of

the immigrant in the national society and for its future autonomy, is often poorly organized. This situation can occur despite the national and international commitments accepted by the single nations to consider certain minimum standards. These are often unheeded, for instance, when it comes to ensure the respect of the legal time frame expected for the steps following an application for international protection. The Dublin system[3] contribute to create obstacles and delays for the ones who wish to move to north Europe because of economic or familial reasons.

The periods of wait, maybe spent in an isolated or overcrowded centres or on the streets, can be extremely long and painful. These difficult months usually comes after extreme experiences, like a life threatening travel or torture, that influence the immigrants psyche and attitude causing a condition of vulnerability and solitude.

The immigrant is often not properly informed on what to expect and is left with very little decisional power on its life while days go by meaningless. Providing food and shelter proved not to be enough when it comes to work with immigrants and asylum seekers: it is necessary to develop a service that allows to overcome the traumatic past and imagine a possible future. A forced and protracted period of inactivity can alienate the individual, unable to be independent and provide for itself, completely dependent on other decisions and benevolence.

3 The Dublin system consists of the Dublin Regulation and the EURODAC Regulation. A fingerprinting database, to track undocumented migrants in EU, along with the Dublin Regulation determine what Member State is responsible to process an asylum claim.

A similar situation, where the immigration management has been organized around passive and aid strategies, can be found in the refugee camps sited outside Europe. The top-down approach to humanitarian crisis has been conceived similarly to the welfare system. It is based on a financial support and protection given from governments and international institutions to the vulnerable.

For what concerns aid for refugees, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the main body that direct and organize relief for the displaced. However, as for the welfare state, this management strategy can be inefficient, unsustainable and generate dependency.

While the aid is set for emergency situations refugee camps are anything but temporary: immigrants waiting for resettlement can spend there several years and some camps have become actual cities (e.g. Za'atari camp, in Jordan). During this period of deadlock, for the refugees the possibility of work is very low, this despite the desire expressed by the most is to be able to provide for themselves independently. Unfortunately, the situation is as such because of government's regulations and the deeply rooted representation of refugees as vulnerable, resourceless victims, more than proactive individuals (Betts & Omata, 2012). Once again, the traditional paternalistic strategy ends up wasting funds and the precious skills of the users, while creating a vicious circle of insecurity and negativity.

Humanitarian innovation:

> "Understands innovation not as novelty or invention but as the adaptation of products or processes to a particular context. It is based on the recognition that there may be alternative, untapped solutions and solution-holders 'out there' that can provide new and better ways to approach the different sectors that

> comprise humanitarianism – water, sanitation, nutrition, communications, livelihoods, shelter, and health, for example. Furthermore, it is based on the recognition that sometimes private actors – including refugees themselves and businesses at the local, national and global levels – may offer creative and sustainable alternatives to state-led humanitarian dependency." (Betts & Omata, 2012)

The agency of refugee, in coordination with the work of designers, researchers and other private and institutional actors, must be endorsed as it can have a positive impact on both: refugees' life and expectations as well as the humanitarian service efficiency and effectiveness.

2.5. New technologies, new possibilities

Social and humanitarian innovation are not necessarily originated by technology, however, we cannot ignore the fact that nowadays technology is shaping almost every aspect of our lives. Civic technology aims to activate citizens and promote grassroots participation through the co-creation and implementation of innovative tools, serving the public good (Laurenellen McCann, 2015). Civic technology can be included in participatory design methodology as it requires cooperation among different agents, institutional as well as private, and advocate a vibrant democracy.

Social workers, researchers and designers are now urged to acknowledge the potential of technology applied to social and humanitarian services and take the most out of it. To do so a better communication among these actors is required in order to create a common knowledge and a comprehensive understanding of its potential.

A cross-organisational approach would allow this necessary exchange of information and capabilities. Although it would probably require the presence of innovation intermediaries to mediate between the social/humanitarian sector and the technology specialists. Some companies have been developing in order to provide this kind of service, Innovation Exchange, NineSigma, Big Idea Group offer platforms where companies and organizations can actually encounter and start cooperating (Ramalingam, Scriven, & Foley, 2009).

Technology is having a great impact on migration flows and immigrants. Global distribution of news and world representations has recently become quicker and pervasive, pushing people from all over the globe to risk their life in order to pursue the dream of a better condition. The development of new means of communication and transportation are encouraging people to move, enlarging the world flows of migration. The exponential development of technologies inserts itself into a complex and disjunctive globalized context: Appadurai (1996) indicates in his theory on Global cultural flows the existence of a "Technoscape", a rapid movement of mechanical and informational technology worldwide that inter-cross and interfere with the other flows[4]. Technology is therefore influencing the way people migrate, manage money across countries, convey ideologies and are represented by media.

4 The other flows individuated by Appadurai are: the ethnoscapes (migration of people), the mediascapes (use of media that affects our understanding); the financescapes (movement of capital) and the ideoscapes(the flow of ideas).

Along with food, shelter and health, being connected to the web has become fundamental for people on the move and refugees. Smartphones (with charging stations) help immigrants in organizing their travel, keeping in touch with family or friends and spread information about their situation (Brunwasser, 2015). Constant communications and the ability to link with people located in various states allows the creation of a "network capital", crucial in pursuing a migration project.

> "In this modern migration, smart phone maps, global positioning apps, social media and WhatsApp have become essential tools. Migrants depend on them to post real-time updates about routes, arrests, border guard movements and transport, as well as places to stay and prices, all the while keeping in touch with family and friends." (Gillespie et al., 2016)

Experiences are constantly shared through social media while maps and GPS allows migrants to rely more on themselves instead of stand on traffickers. Access to smart phones can makes the difference when help is needed: when there is coverage it can activate more effective and quicker rescue operations. Photos and memories are kept safe on digital archives and potentially allows people to provide evidences of their previous life. It does not matter if phones get lost or damaged as information and accounts are linked to the web rather than to the physical devices.

Social media or the web in general, with an infinite content of different cultural output, clearly provide a way of entertainment and socialization. For these reasons access to SIM cards and internet connection is highly demanded and the humanitarian and reception scheme needs to acknowledge it. The blindness showed by many, when judging refugees because of their smartphone possession or Wi-Fi claims, is clearly a cruel demonstration of a lack of understanding and empathy.

Identification is another critical aspect for many people across the world, quite underestimated by western citizens. For migrants the issue is controversial: the ability to prove who they are, often represents a huge obstacle, in particular when applying for regularisation. On the other hand, they need to protect themselves from government's surveillance. However, migrants' physical documents often get lost, are destroyed or seized by traffickers. Having information about their previous and possible future history could be useful when providing relief services.

Technological innovators have been trying to address this challenge through the development of a digital identity system with the participation of refugees. The distribution of data and information is a very sensitive issue when it comes to this vulnerable category, placed in a grey zone, waiting to be accepted or rejected by foreign governments. Technicians needs to work on multiple fronts, to ensure the protection, privacy and utility of the product. It is primary important for a secured digital identity, in order to be effectively implemented and accepted, to be developed by migrants communities in collaboration with IT designers (Cheesman, 2016)[5]. This kind of projects cannot work when they are imposed from above, as they require a high level of trust that needs to be patiently built through collaboration.

Generally, there has been a lack of interconnection between the work of technology experts, social/humanitarian workers and users. The absence of the immigrants'

5 In June 2016, the United Nations held a summit called "ID2020" on digitizing legal identity. Representatives of governments, NGOs and tech companies participated, however refugees were not yet included. The aim of the conference was to discuss the possibility to provide legal identity for everyone by 2030.

involvement in design process can be linked to the arrogant assumption of some experts "to know better" or to the misconceive image of refugees we are delivered. The knowledge about migrants use of technology is still quite limited and tends to underestimate the great impact it actually has.

Being able to address and modify the narrative on migration, expressed through different media, should be one of the challenges technological social innovation should take on. It influences the perception that the public opinion has on this particular issue, therefore it has effects on the decisional process. Citizens can indeed reward or reject given political choices on migrations regime through vote. Information and its production has never been so accessible as it is now, thanks to the great development of communication technologies.

This situation gives the possibility to change the current negative discourse on migrations: from the common view of immigrants as a burden or a source of conflicts to the appreciation of the agency and positivity that has been ignored so far. Migrants proved to be agents of innovation and change, we need to learn how to direct this potential into a beneficial development (World Humanitarian Summit secretariat, 2015).

The civic tech community is more and more engaged in many projects that involve the various steps of migration. The challenge has been taken on, however it is crucial always to remember to ensure the respect of some fundamental criteria. The direct involvement and participation of migrants needs to be a priority, however building trust can require an effort. Trust must be repaid by transparency on the use of information. It is mandatory that security and protection of data are always guaranteed.

Another aspect to take into account when planning a participatory project related to technology is its accessibility to people with very different backgrounds: costs,

distribution, technological and general literacy must be evaluated. Designers or technician needs to have a broad view on the project they are willing to undertake: there must be an assessed need to address and no other similar services already available. If similar services or products where provided but failed to obtain positive results, it would be sensitive to question why a new similar project should have better outcomes. Considering existing resources to adapt and innovate makes the projects more sustainable socially and economically.

Adaptability, paired with a long term commitment, is generally another aspect that cannot be neglected: situations in migration field change very quickly, due to laws revision, lack of consistency in governments or administrative powers, change of routes, etcetera (Gillespie et al., 2016).

Aside of migrants, digitalization is investing social/humanitarian workers and volunteers in many sectors of their job. The exchange of information and the possibility to create an efficient network of coordinated services is enhanced, along with the possibility to benefit from new tools, useful in the field.

Mobile communication has obviously been a milestone and it is now followed by the spread of social media. These can be used as platforms where is possible to connect citizens with the activities, events or ideas originated by the organizations, moreover it is possible to manage donations and other kind of resources. Updated legal news can be easily found on the web as well with the careful use of on-line language translation services. These can provide a quick, even if often quite superficial, help in informal situation when language is a barrier. The possibility to share cultural representation promote encounters and build a bridge between people with different backgrounds.

However, the use of new information technologies requires a focused training, able to develop skills and, therefore, more competent employees. Technology cannot and should not substitute the precious human work, with its sensitivity, needed for social and humanitarian work. On the other side, the aid worker community should get rid of some reactionary behaviours and engage more, updating itself to discover and adopt beneficial innovative tools.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDIES

Summary: – 3.1 Putting words into action – 3.2 UNHCR Innovation – 3.3 The reception system(s) in Europe – 3.4 Integration in Europe

Italian abstract

Oggigiorno le pratiche partecipative sono spesso incluse in progetti nazionali e internazionali per l'innovazione sociale. Ci sono molti buoni esempi di volontari e operatori che attraverso la collaborazione con gli immigrati sono in grado di impostare un servizio mirato ed efficace sia sul territorio europeo che al di fuori dei suoi confini.

I progetti non sempre hanno un risultato positivo per via di una serie di motivi: disorganizzazione, carenze finanziarie, scelte progettuali sbagliate o cause esterne. Anche in questi casi, come in quelli di successo, è essenziale prevedere momenti di riflessione. Durante questi momenti il processo di progettazione può essere ridiscusso, come anche le pratiche scelte ed i loro effetti. Purtroppo, la divulgazione di queste esperienze, a prescindere dai loro esiti, è limitata a settori specifici e difficilmente raggiunge il pubblico. Tuttavia gli eventi di restituzione sono fondamentali per stimolare i cittadini alla pro-attività e al dinamismo. Oltre alla possibilità di evidenziare gli aspetti critici e positivi del design attraverso nuovi occhi, si dimostrerebbe all'opinione pubblica che oltre le parole, vengono di fatto attuate delle soluzioni.

Nel 2012 l'UNHCR ha creato *UNHCR innovation*. UNHCR innovation è nato allo scopo di sviluppare una unità di innovazione interna all'organizzazione e laboratori di innovazione in tutto il mondo (Betts, 2014). In generale, il progetto UNHCR innovation mira ad individuare nuove soluzioni per il trattamento dei rifugiati e per affrontare i loro problemi. Questo ramo dell'organizzazione pone i rifugiati al centro del progetto. Essendo i rifugiati gli individui più indicati per identificare i propri problemi, sono i primi ad essere coinvolti nello sviluppo di soluzioni. Questo viene fatto attraverso un processo *user-centred*, dove i rifugiati ricoprono il ruolo di consulenti e utenti finali. Mediante un processo di progettazione partecipata i rifugiati divengono quindi dei co-designer. I campi principali in cui questa metodologia è stata (e viene) applicata sono: alloggi, risorse, salute e educazione.

Fornire alloggio è uno dei primi compiti intrapresi dall'UNHCR in situazioni di emergenza. Oggi più di due milioni di persone vivono in campi profughi. Tale numero richiede un grande impegno e coordinamento per fornire servizi adeguati e la dimensione dell'UNHCR consente di ottenere risultati che difficilmente potrebbe essere perseguiti da piccole organizzazioni indipendenti. Tuttavia è difficile elaborare soluzioni efficaci durante crisi umanitarie in cui in breve tempo devono essere gestiti migliaia di sfollati.

Da un punto di vista pratico, nelle prime fasi di intervento vengono distribuite delle tende, che devono però presto essere adattate a periodi di permanenza prolungata. Di solito, quando le situazioni divengono più stabili, vengono sviluppate soluzioni migliori, come prefabbricati dove i migranti possono andare a vivere temporaneamente. I rischi gestionali maggiori si verificano quando i campi rurali, inadatti a essere mantenuti per lunghi periodi, diventano una risorsa fondamentale. In questo modo soluzioni temporanee diventano stabili, e le persone che vi abitano finiscono per vivere in isolamento dalla società ospitante. D'altra parte, quando questi campi vengono localizzati in aree urbane spesso il risultato è un'esacerbazione della povertà, della vulnerabilità e della criminalità.

In vari progetti la partecipazione dei rifugiati in soluzioni abitative temporanee ha dimostrato di essere efficace per ragioni operative ed economiche. Anche l'impegno del settore privato è stato fondamentale per la condivisione di *know-how*, personale e risorse per la costruzione di alloggi adeguati.

Il reinsediamento dei rifugiati non interessa solo le persone, ma anche l'ambiente. I bisogni dei rifugiati, come per ogni altro essere umano, riguardano alloggio, cibo, acqua, ma anche luce e riscaldamento. Queste risorse possono essere portate dall'esterno, ma possono anche essere recuperate dai rifugiati nei dintorni dei campi. Tuttavia, la loro presenza e intervento può avere un forte impatto ambientale. Dal momento che i rifugiati vengono spostati in regioni abitate da altre persone, è lecito supporre che decine di migliaia di persone possano influenzare le risorse complessive disponibili, come acqua o legna da ardere.

I paesi ospitanti generalmente guardano questi comportamenti come minacce per l'ambiente. Il rischio è che i rifugiati vengano percepiti come individui che minano l'equilibrio delle risorse disponibili. A questo proposito, l'UNHCR innovation ha posto l'obiettivo di sviluppare soluzioni verdi all'interno dei campi, concentrandosi su un uso sostenibile delle risorse. Non si tratta solo di ridurre i consumi, ma anche di progetti di conservazione e produzione, per sostenere la visione dei governi ospitanti riguardo al possibile inserimento dei rifugiati nelle politiche ambientali nazionali.

I campi profughi sono in genere sviluppati su diversi chilometri quadrati, ospitando migliaia, se non decine di migliaia, di profughi. La dimensione dei campi richiede un elevato impegno di gestione. Ciò riguarda diversi fattori, e l'assistenza sanitaria richiede una particolare attenzione. Garantire un adeguato livello di assistenza sanitaria nei campi può essere difficile, in particolare quando questi si trovano in aree rurali. Il problema principale è procurare materiali, quali attrezzature mediche e medicinali, reso complesso per via delle difficoltà di impostazione e controllo di una comunicazione con il resto del mondo.

Altri problemi riguardano la gestione interna del campo. In primo luogo ci sono le barriere linguistiche che complicano la comunicazione tra rifugiati e personale del campo. Una conseguenza è la comunicazione limitata di informazioni mediche, dall'educazione sessuale alla prevenzione di malattie come la malaria.

A questo proposito, l'UNHCR ha sviluppato diverse strategie. Come prima soluzione, l'organizzazione supporta la condivisione delle conoscenze mediche per facilitare la prevenzione e l'individuazione di problemi di salute (UNHCR, 1995). In aggiunta a questo, i piani di gestione dei campi considerano il coinvolgimento dei rifugiati nella formazione professionale, al fine di dare supporto al personale medico. Questo coinvolgimento non serve semplicemente a sostenere il lavoro del personale medico, ma mira a stabilire servizi di assistenza sanitaria di base gestiti direttamente dalle comunità. La loro partecipazione è attuata su vari livelli: formazione medica di base, creazione di centri medici, coinvolgimento nella gestione e coordinamento del campo. Questo approccio ha lo scopo di garantire un programma di assistenza sanitaria culturalmente

appropriato, accessibile e conveniente, e che supporta le persone nel processo di riappropriazione della propria vita (UNHCR, 1995).

Una bassa percentuale di rifugiati ha la possibilità di acquisire un'istruzione primaria (circa il 50%), e la percentuale scende per la scuola secondaria (circa il 22%). Meno dell'uno per cento riesce ad ottenere una laurea. A volte i paesi ospitanti non consentono ai rifugiati di accedere all'istruzione, molto più spesso non vi sono sufficienti risorse umane e finanziarie per fornire il servizio. Come per altre risorse scarse, la formazione può essere la causa di tensioni tra rifugiati e cittadini (UNHCR innovation, n.d.).

I risultati di questa disparità influenzano il futuro di più di una generazione. Nel futuro, sarà infatti più difficile per un'elevata quantità di persone, ora nei campi o città dei paesi d'accoglienza, entrare nel mercato del lavoro. Nella prospettiva degli stati ospitanti, il capitale umano rimane congelato; una perdita importante per le comunità d'origine e per le società ospitanti. In particolare, le aree che sono già alle prese con una scarsa innovazione e ricerca subiranno presto uno squilibrio nel mercato del lavoro, principalmente costituito da lavoratori poco qualificati.

Per risolvere questo problema cruciale e valorizzare un progetto formativo a lungo termine, l'UNHCR innovation ha sviluppato una rete di collaborazioni con prestigiose università (come la Sorbonne), istituzioni private e imprenditori volta a fornire una formazione di alta qualità via web.

L'Unione Europea presenta diversi approcci per il primo soccorso e l'accoglienza dei migranti. Le strategie messe in atto sono varie in accordo alle esigenze organizzative, che tendono a variare tra i vari continente, a causa di motivi geografici, politici ed economici.

Gli immigrati arrivano in Europa attraverso percorsi diversificati. Il loro controllo e identificazione è stato (ed è) uno dei principali obiettivi di governi e istituzioni internazionali. Il numero di persone che giunge in Europa dal Medio Oriente e Nord Africa è fortemente aumentato dall'inizio della crisi degli ultimi anni. La distinzione tra migranti economici e rifugiati ha acquisito grande rilevanza. Il rifiuto sistematico di migranti senza documenti ha alimentato una crescita esponenziale delle domande d'asilo, in quanto rappresenta uno dei pochi modi per regolarizzare la propria presenza.

Nei campi profughi al di fuori dell'Europa vi è la possibilità di fare domanda a programmi di reinsediamento. Questo consente ad un numero molto limitato di rifugiati di essere reinsediati in un paese terzo, che accetta le loro domande vista l'impossibilità di tornare al paese di origine a causa di gravi minacce all'incolumità personale. Tuttavia, molti migranti si rifiutano di essere identificati, volendo proseguire liberamente il viaggio verso la destinazione scelta. I confini del continente sono sempre più chiusi e le difficoltà per coloro che, senza documenti, decidono di intraprendere un viaggio attraverso l'Europa si moltiplicano; come conseguenza, i campi informali costruiti da persone bloccate lungo i confini sono in aumento.

Soluzioni di progettazione partecipata non sono state applicate ampiamente in questo campo, ma gli infiniti periodi di attesa possono essere decisivi per il futuro atteggiamento dei rifugiati. Le situazioni personali possono differire notevolmente; alcune persone possono essere costrette a vivere in strutture isolate, senza alcun piano di convivenza con la popolazione locale, mentre ad altre un tetto non viene garantito. Nonostante spesso le istituzioni non siano disposte a investire risorse a supporto di questo percorso dei migranti, alcuni progetti indipendenti sono nati, proponendo un approccio partecipativo nella costruzione e gestione dei campi (formali e non), ma anche nel trattamento psicologico delle persone che si trovano ad intraprendere questo duro percorso.

Dopo l'insediamento in un nuovo paese europeo, forse per un piano a lungo termine, gli immigrati e i rifugiati necessitano di entrare nella vita sociale e del lavoro. Il processo di integrazione può

essere duro e alcuni ostacoli potrebbero sembrare insormontabili: lingua e/o abitudini diverse, isolamento, mancanza di risorse finanziarie e discriminazione.

I governi stanno cercando di fornire servizi volti ad affrontare l'esclusione e la vulnerabilità di questi individui, tuttavia, a causa di una mancanza di fondi e di soluzioni innovative, i risultati non sono sempre positivi. ONG e associazioni di beneficenza cercano di colmare queste mancanze nell'intervento governo con risorse limitate e un ampio uso di volontari.

Tuttavia, l'integrazione di rifugiati e migranti rappresenta un obiettivo importante per le politiche sociali. In base alla normativa UE questo campo è di competenza nazionale. Tuttavia, a partire dal 2004 i membri dell'Unione Europea hanno deciso di fare uno sforzo per coordinare le politiche nazionali in materia di integrazione e seguire una serie di principi condivisi. Nel corso degli anni sono state realizzate una serie di linee guida, come ad esempio il "Quadro comune per l'integrazione dei cittadini di paesi terzi" (2005) o il recente "Piano d'azione per l'integrazione dei cittadini di paesi terzi" (Commissione Europea, 2016).

I principi fondamentali comuni, teoricamente rispettati dai membri europei, richiedono uno sforzo biunivoco dalle istituzioni nazionali e dagli immigrati, a cui si chiede di imparare la lingua e di acquisire una conoscenza civica generica del paese ospitante. Quest'ultimo dovrebbe sostenere una partecipazione attiva nel settore dell'istruzione e del lavoro, garantendo parità di accesso a beni e servizi. Il recente piano d'azione sull'integrazione conferma queste linee guida e le inserisce in un quadro funzionale che gli Stati membri possono seguire per lo sviluppo di politiche e azioni in questo settore.

Indipendentemente da valori e piani europei, l'attuale politica nazionale spesso si allontana dalle linee guida UE. Partiti ed ideologie, più orientati verso il protezionismo e l'euroscetticismo, stanno guadagnando una buona base elettorale. Questa direzione sta portando a tagli finanziari applicati a fondi destinati per l'integrazione. Ciò comporta una maggiore pressione, responsabilità e insicurezza per gli operatori e per le organizzazioni indipendenti. La sfida della partecipazione investe amministrazioni locali e cittadini, in primo luogo. La volontà di superare una logica basata sulle esigenze personali, verso una prospettiva sistemica che veda la società come un corpo interconnesso, ha bisogno di essere coltivata. In Europa ci sono numerosi progetti volti a soluzioni di lavoro paritario tra cittadini e immigrati che mirano a rafforzare l'integrazione e a costruire città più ricche e più felici per tutti. Integrazione significa anche che gli immigrati possano attivarsi in prima persona per affrontare diversi tipi di sfide, arricchendo la società stessa. Le istituzioni devono pubblicizzare e partecipare maggiormente a queste esperienze al fine di ampliare l'interesse per tali attività.

3.1. Putting words into action

Participatory practices are now often included in national and international projects for social innovation. These projects are sometimes supported by the institutions, with financial and human resources, while sometimes they have to overcome some obstacles to establish themselves.

There are many good examples of volunteers and operators that through collaboration with immigrant users are able to set up a targeted and effective service in Europe and outside its borders.

The projects have not always a positive outcome, this could be due to a variety of reasons: disorganization; funds shortage; poor design choices or external causes. Even in these cases, as in the successful ones, it is, however, essential to provide moments of reflection. During these moments the design process can be questioned along with the chosen practices and their effects.

In order to improve and not to repeat mistakes previously made by designers or other figures, it is good to explore the scope of the project and the history of the context it is set in.

The reporting of these experiences, regardless of their outcomes, is rather limited to specific sectors and struggles to reach the public. However, restitution events are fundamental to stimulate citizens' pro-activity and dynamism. Beside the possibility to highlight the critical or positive aspects of the design through new eyes it would demonstrate to public opinion that other than words, actions are taken.

Besides the acknowledgement of a critical and complex situation, the creation of diffused constructive spaces should be planned in schools as well as in university

lectures. Besides the outrage shown in media and political forums, further actions and specific projects should be taken as inspiration.

For what concerns immigration, publicizing these experiences become even more relevant, because of its pervasiveness and urgency. Aid and integration operations are not and can not be exclusively implemented on an emergency level. These should not be so often criticized of a lack of respect for fundamental rights and dignity.

Many, in and outside Europe, are now trying to exit this paternalistic, aiding and ineffective approach. The participation of migrants, (refugees / displaced / resettled / economic) assisted by the involvement of workers, citizens, entrepreneurs, universities and institutions, can be applied to different stages or paths of migratory experiences. For instance, in camps managed by UNHCR, in the European reception centres as well as in situations of social and labour integration.

3.2. UNHCR Innovation

In 2012 UNHCR created UNHCR Innovation. The aim of UNHCR Innovation is to develop an innovation unit in-house and innovation labs around the world (Betts, 2014). In the perspective of this organization, innovation is a strategy for change that relies on new modalities and products. The general belief is that the solutions should come from both inside and outside the organisation, involving directly the communities. In the perspective of UNHCR innovation the involvement of the end users, the refugees, is fundamental: they are the main individuals for specifying problems and to identify solutions that will be relevant to the context of local cultures and markets (UNHCR

innovation, n.d.). The projects developed by the organization follow a bottom-up approach, where refugees themselves take care of problems and solutions.

UNHCR Innovation uses a three-step approach to actualize innovation:

- Amplify: the organization identifies existing projects and shares methods and tools for innovation among the various operations of UNHCR;
- Connect: once the organization identifies the operations, it enhances the connection between innovators within UNHCR to resources, to one another, and to an external network of partners and mentors;
- Explore: where internal solutions are not adequate to the needs, or other external solutions are more efficient, UNHCR looks for ways to adapt existing innovations to refugee-specific contexts.

In practice, a key element of UNHCR Innovation has been reaching the private sector actors. Their involvement has been mainly oriented to set funding and networks, to share innovative solutions and encourage their intervention on the grounds of philanthropy, social responsibility and the desire to innovate. During the years the partners have included Hewlett Packard, IDEO, Vodafone and IKEA Foundation, as well as universities such as Oxford and Stanford.

In general, the project of UNHCR Innovation is to identify innovative directions in the treatment of refugees and their problems. Classic approaches have been related to pre-defined problems using solutions provided by external actors and sometimes neglect the skills, talents and aspirations of communities themselves. This branch of the organization places refugees at the centre of the project. As they are the most qualified in identifying their problems, they should be the first actors involved in the development of solutions. This can be done through a user-centred process, where refugees cover the

role of consultants and end-users; or, as will be shown in the following examples, it can be done through a participatory design process, where refugees are empowered to the role of co-designers. The core fields where design and innovation is deeply needed are generally: shelter; resources; learning and health.

3.2.1. SHELTER

> "Shelter is the foundation stone for refugees to survive and recover, and should be considered a non-negotiable human right. As we tackle worldwide displacement on a level not seen since World War II, no refugee Should be left outside." Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Providing shelters is the first of the principal tasks undertaken by UNHCR in emergency situations. Today more than two million people live in refugee camps scattered in different states[6]. Such a number requires a great commitment and coordination to provide adequate services. The dimensions of UNHCR allow the achievement of objectives that could hardly be pursued by small independent organizations. In the first instance, during an emergency, acting quickly is needed: plastic tents, tarpaulins – a resistant, waterproof cloth –, first aid tools and guidelines are distributed. Nevertheless, it is difficult to elaborate decent solutions during humanitarian crisis in which in some short time thousands of displaced must be allocated. Tents given as aid at the time of reception often has to evolve and adapt to prolonged periods of permanence, displaced people often need improvement in their housing situation. Usually, when situations are

6 "Over 2.6 million refugees currently live in camps worldwide and have been displaced for over five years, some for over a generation" http://www.unhcr.org/nobody-left-outside

more settled, better solutions are developed and transitional houses built. These houses are made with different materials, depending on the context, while sometimes they consist in a rearrangement of existing buildings. The risk occurs when rural camps, unsuitable to be held for long periods, become fundamental for people who end up living in isolation from the host society. On the other hand, when these camps are in urban settings they tend to exacerbate poverty, vulnerability and crime. Peripheral slums are consequently enlarged.

The participation of refugees in the construction of the transitional houses has proven to be successful for operational and economical reasons. The engagement of the private sector has also been fundamental in sharing know-how, personnel and resources for building adequate housing. The UNHCR projects aim to achieve liveable camps, possibly connected with host communities, with which cohesion is promoted.

Ampain Refugee Camp (Ghana): iFellow Shelter Project

The history of the camp began in March 2011, when thousands of Ivoirians have taken refuge in Ghana. They were fleeing from the second civil war that broke out after the elections of November 2010. The camp is still sited in the Western Region of Ghana, where 5,177 people live in about 130 thousand square meters. Its management is divided between the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO), the Ghana Refugee Board and UNHCR. Religious organizations (such as the National Catholic Secretariat, the Christian Council of Ghana and Adventist Development and Relief Agency) provide fundamental services such as health, water and food, shelter, education and training.

Among the major difficulties encountered in the camp[7] one is the precariousness of the shelters. Since 2011, the 80% of camp population still lives in unsafe plastic tents. Because of lack of external resources, most of the tents has not yet been replaced by more dignifying housing.

> "Their rooms are leaking, their tents are decaying, their bamboos are rotting. Some of them can not even sleep properly any more" Yusif Sidik, Senior Field Assistant (Sidik, 2015)

In collaboration with local partners, refugees and UNHCR have initiated actions that will bring to the construction of new facilities for the camp population. The idea behind the project is to provide an efficient design easily viable by refugees themselves with the use of local resources. With these purpose agreements with local providers of raffia palm sticks have been initiated. However, during these early stages UNHCR operators realized that the refugees were overly dependent on local workers for what concerned the construction, due to the lack of tools and knowledge. To stimulate an active participation of refugees has been essential to ensure a greater coverage of the project. To sensitize them to the need to undertake professionalizing activities, a workshop was organized. During this workshop refugees have been required to build mock houses for each other with paper, scissors and glue. After these struggling experiment they realized the importance to undertake a course. A training centre has been built in 2016 where now lectures and meetings are hold.

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7 Solid waste, lack of activities for children and teens, difficulties in providing education, lack of employment and lack of legal support are the main critical issues identified by the UNHCR (UNHCR, 2016a).

The first training was then provided and some refugees have now started to build their own houses. UNHCR provides sand and cement, materials that have been negotiated after a series of dialogues with the refugees. The project is only at its beginning, however it is promising: not only allows residents to significantly improve their living conditions but also adds to human capital. The skills learned are in fact then redistributed among the inhabitants through peer training. Hopefully, if the project will prove to be successful, it will be exported and adapted to other contexts.

3.2.2. RESOURCES

The resettlement of refugees does not only affect the people, but also the environment. The needs of refugees, like any other human being, concern shelter, food, water, but also light and heating. These resources can be brought to the camps, but these can also be retrieved by the refugees from the surroundings. However, their presence and intervention can have a strong impact on the environment. Since refugees are moved in regions inhabited by other people, it is legitimate to assume that tens of thousands of people may affect the overall available resources, such as water or firewood. Regarding the latter, there are practical examples of complete deforestation in the surroundings of refugee camps, dictated by the practical need to have material for building shelters, for cooking or simply for heating (Harper, 2016).

The host countries generally look at these behaviours as threats to the environment. The risk is that refugees are perceived as individuals who undermine the balance of the available resources. In this regard, UNHCR Innovation has set the goal of developing green solutions within the camps, focusing on a sustainable use of resources. This is not just about reducing consumptions, but also preservation and production projects, to

support the vision of host governments for how refugees can fit into their national environmental policies.

> "Instead of focusing on the river that runs past the refugee camp, let's look upstream - literally and figuratively. We need to concern ourselves with energy and the environment in a much more complete way: a more serious, sustainable and respectful way." (Harper, 2016)

Za'atari refugee Camp (Jordan): grey water gardens

Za'atari refugee camp has been opened in summer 2012, in order to host the Syrians fleeing from the civil war. The camp is located near Mafraq, Jordan, spread over approximately 5km2 and with around 85'000 inhabitants. It is mainly managed by UNHCR, with the support of actors like Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF and Oxfam.

Since its creation, the camp has been the focus of many discussions about innovation. The need to find innovative solutions for the management of the camp has been mainly justified by the social origin of refugees. The population of the camp has shown over the years difficulties to accept canonical proposals. For example, the construction by UNHCR of common bathrooms was perceived negatively; the refugees removed the toilets and built private bathrooms. In other cases the refugees have reused the available resources in accordance to their needs: the tents were relocated next to relatives; the wooden floors of the caravans supplied by UNHCR have become material for furniture; the porches of the shelters have been turned into shops.

For this reason, many UNHCR solutions have undergone a rapid process of personalization, adapted over the years to this appropriation by refugees. This solution has also led to side effects; for example, the continuous rearrangement of housing has complicated the planning of the water system. However, in general the refugees have

been able to take advantage of the available resources to provide services and create communities, transforming the camp in a town (Betts, Bloom, & Weaver, 2015).

In the context of the Za'atari camp, a project that has followed a participatory design approach is that of grey water gardens. The project was developed in response to a problem similar to those described above. UNHCR, in view of the construction of a sewage and pipeline system, built communal wash rooms. The refugees, not accustomed to perform these daily activities in public, decided not to use the wash rooms and found ways to do laundry outside of their shelters. The problem identified by UNHCR was the management of this grey water, not contaminated with faecal material, but still dangerous because of stagnation and possible attraction of malaria mosquitoes. UNHCR proposed to the inhabitants of the camp to use the waters for the creation and management of gardens. The project was articulated on various stages, with the participation of UNHCR operators and refugees. In the first meetings it was decided that the gardens should have been developed at each shelters. Moreover, plants were chosen according to the climate. The refugees were then instructed by the operators regarding the creation and management of the gardens. However, given the large number of shelters, more than 20’000, the project followed a train-the-trainer approach: the refugees became experts in turn, instructing neighbours in the development of their garden. At the end of 2015, the project reached the half of Za'atari camp and it was completed at the end of 2016. The solution for water disposal was dictated by the absence of a sewage and pipeline system; however, due to the enthusiasm with which refugees responded to the grey water garden project, UNHCR decided to retain the gardens even when these will become superfluous.

3.2.3. HEALTH

Refugee camps are usually developed over various square kilometres, hosting thousands, if not tens of thousands, of refugees. The size of the camps requires a high management commitment. This relates to various factors, including the need for primary goods such as water, food and housing. Among the essential resources, healthcare requires special attention.

Ensuring an adequate level of healthcare in the camps can be challenging, particularly when these are located in rural areas. The main problem is procuring materials, such as medical equipment and medicines, made complex due to the difficulty to set and control a communication with the rest of the world.

Other issues concern the internal management of the camp. In the first place there are the language barriers that complicate the communication between refugees and camp staff. One consequence is the limited communication of medical information, which could range from sex education to diagnosis of diseases such as malaria.

In this regard, UNHCR has implemented different strategies. As a first solution, the organization supports the sharing of medical knowledge to facilitate the prevention and detection of medical problems (UNHCR, 1995). In addition to this, the management plans of the camps take into consideration for the involvement of refugees in vocational training, in order to give support to medical personnel. This involvement not only serves to support the work of the medical staff, but it aims to establish primary health care services managed directly by the communities. Their participation is done at all levels: basic medical training; creation of medical centres; involvement in the management and coordination of the camp. This approach is aimed at ensuring a healthcare program that

is culturally appropriate, accessible and affordable, and empowering people in the process of retaking control over their lives (UNHCR, 1995).

UNHCR Innovation has not looked solely to the healthcare service, but to the infrastructure necessary to support it. Some major projects have included the development of technological tools to facilitate communication between refugees and operators. In this regard, one of the main projects developed in collaboration with Cisco is the design of a Refugee First Response Centre (Goldapple, 2016). The basic concept is to create a technology for instant communication with translators, considering that their presence in the field could not be taken for granted. Interestingly, these solutions have been oriented to oral communication, written language been avoided due to the different levels of literacy.

The storage and share of the information of refugees is another essential element for the development of effective health services in the various camps. In this regard, the RAIS project had the goal of creating a digital identity of people to keep track of their medical history. Also in this case the refugees have influenced the design. Initially developed for Iraqis fleeing the war and moving to Jordan, this tool underwent a second development after the arrival of Syrians in the kingdom. The high number of people, but above all the different needs of refugees, led to a redesign of the system. Implemented for the first time in 2014, RAIS is employed in Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon, and has supported helping over 1.6 million displaced people (UNHCR, 2014).

3.2.4. LEARNING

The disparity in education and professional training increases drastically when considering displaced people (UNHCReducation, n.d.). A low percentage of refugee can

get primary education (around 50%) while an even lower number attend secondary school (about 22%). Less than one percent succeeds to obtain a graduate degree. Host countries sometimes do not allow refugees to access education, while often they do not have enough human and financial resources to provide the service. Similarly, as other scarce resources, education can be the cause of tensions between refugees and citizens (UNHCRinnovation, n.d.).

The results of this disproportion will affect the future of more than one generation. It will be more difficult for a great amount of people that now live in camps or cities in host countries to enter the labour market. Besides the raising of obstacles in reaching a good quality of life for these individuals, societies will lose as well. Human capital is indeed kept frozen, a major loss for communities of origin or the host societies. In particular, areas that are already facing scarcity in innovation and research will be affected by the unbalance of a labour market, as it will consist in an overwhelming number of low-skilled workers. In this way the vulnerability of these populations is fostered, along with the difficulty of integration with the host communities. Girls and women are the most affected by the lack of educational resources, for them the achievement of good skills and knowledge often results in a higher degree of autonomy from the oppressive patriarchal systems.

To address this crucial issue and enhance a lifelong learning, UNHCR Innovation has set up the Learn Lab.

Currently, the core of the experiment is the project “Connected Learning”. The goal is to create a net of partnerships with prestigious universities -such as the Sorbonne-, private institutions and entrepreneurs to provide a high quality education via web.

Rwamwanja, Kyangwali and Kampala (Uganda)

Uganda hosts more than 507.000 displaced people that are fleeing from violent conflicts, mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. The Government has a favourable approach toward refugees: it allows freedom of movements, allocate protected lands for agricultural or settlement use and offer basic educational, legal and health care services. UNHCR collaborate with the government in order to ensure inclusive connections between refugees and host communities (UNHCR-Uganda, 2016; UNHCRreport, n.d.). Economy seems to benefit from the exchange of knowledge, goods and entrepreneurial spirit among the two parties. Investments and funds are therefore oriented more toward socio-economic security than humanitarian aid.

UNHCR, in partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency, activated in Rwamwanja camp a series of trainings sessions related to rice cultivation and trade. The skills refugees have learned allowed them to start independent business and transmit the knowledge to the rest of the population, Ugandan included. Immigrants have in this way the possibility to become active members of society, in a more equal condition (UNHCR-news, n.d.).

Another initiative that directly involved refugees' participation in close contact with Uganda's citizens was the enactment of a theatrical show in Kampala. For a month university students, refugees and a theatre professor elaborated the concept and the script. The show, that toured all Uganda, was supported by UNHCR under the initiative of an NGO (InterAid Uganda). The aim of the show was to perform refugees' stories to stimulate the empathy of the audience, fight prejudice but also show the positive sides of a new life in Uganda. Through the show, the encounter between the host and

displaced community was made possible, along with the discussion about negative stereotypes that define the media image of refugees.

> "This group is a perfect example of the benefits that can be gained from allowing refugees to flourish within local communities. When refugees and their hosts live together, work together and play together, they thrive together. This serves as an example for other countries around the world for successful ways to bring about social cohesion." UNHCR Representative to Uganda Neimah Warsame (UNHCR-news, 2016)

Aside formal education, partially provided by government and independent institutions, non formal education directly provided by refugees to children or peers is enhanced by UNHCR (Bonfiglio, 2010). The development of small local business oriented toward information technology could open the possibility of a larger access to web education (Betts et al., 2015).

3.3. The reception system(s) in Europe

The European Union presents different and variable approaches to the first aid and reception of immigrants. Implemented strategies are various, as needs and organization tend to vary among the continent, because of geographical, political and economical reasons.

Immigrants arrive in Europe through diversified paths. Their control and identification has been one of the main focus of governments and international institutions. The number of people arriving in Europe from the Middle East and North Africa has increased after multiple crisis in the last years. The distinction between economic

immigrants and refugees acquired great relevance. The consequence of the systematic rejection of undocumented migrants fed an exponential growth of asylum applications, as it represents one of the few ways to regularize the stay.

In refugee camps outside Europe there is the possibility to apply for a resettlement scheme. This allows a very limited number of refugees[8] to be resettled in a third country which agreed to host them, as they cannot go back to their country of origin because of a continued danger or have urgent needs that cannot be fulfilled by the current host country.

Resettlement is provided within Europe itself, as a consequence of the new Hotspots strategy. Introduced by the European Union, in partnership with UNHCR in May 2015, the new scheme is presented as an improved management of the reception system in the countries that face major arrivals of undocumented immigrants: Greece and Italy. Buildings and camps already designated for migrants' reception were activated for the hotspots strategy. Identification and control is still one of the main features provided, in order to reallocate refugees in the European quota scheme. Within the first 48 hours after the arrival immigrants are identified and subjected to medical checks. UNHCR provide legal and cultural mediator staff to explain the asylum seekers what to expect. After being identified people are moved to the reception facilities spread on the national territory, waiting to be resettled. This wait can be prolonged, depending on the state

[8] Less 1% of refugees access to the resettlement scheme: "The main beneficiaries of UNHCR-facilitated resettlement programmes were refugees from Syrian Arab Republic (53,305), The Democratic Republic of the Congo (20,527), Iraq (11,161) and Somalia (10,193)" directed to US, Canada, Australia and Nordic countries" (UNHCR, 2016b).

required to accommodate them. So far this period of wait has been incredibly protracted as the majority of European states are not complying with the Union measure and the rate of acceptance is generally very low (Harris, 2016).

However, many migrants refuse the identification as their desire is freely continue their journey to the destination they choose themselves. Borders in the continent are more and more secured and impervious. Few countries, such as England and France or Austria are planning to build new fences and walls, Bulgaria already did while Schengen Treaty is constantly under siege. Difficulties for whom, without documents, decide to undertake a travel through Europe are multiplying and informal camps built by people stuck along borders are increasing.

Participatory methodology has not been applied widely in this field, however the frustrating and endless periods of wait can be decisive for the future attitude of refugees. Personal situations can differ greatly, some people are forced to live in isolated facilities, without any planned cohesion with the local population, while some other cannot find any shelter and live in the streets. Despite often institutions are not willing to put many resources at this stage, few independent projects has popped up.

These projects try to address shelter precariousness and lack of agency.

3.3.1. More than shelters

Camps are never an ideal solution for immigrants' settlement, however sometimes they become the reality even inside of Europe. In the north of France, in Greece and along the Balkan route migrants gathered creating spontaneous camps. These situations should not be tolerated as they are detrimental of migrants' health and dignity. So far, the actions undertaken by the authorities have not been very constructive, usually

implying dismantlement without providing safer options. Many organizations intervened to facilitate the life in these camps, as, unfortunately, they seem to be more permanent than expected.

In this regard, MORE THAN SHELTERS (MTS), an independent organization, is working on innovative architectural and social design concepts for humanitarian needs (MoreThanShelters, 2016). The general mission of MTS is to transform the camps from survival space to living spaces that take into account the real needs of people, from food and water, to privacy. MTS is particularly oriented to the involvement of refugees. The work of the organization is based on a methodology of participatory design aimed at social innovation. MTS considers essential the contribution of residents in the effective planning of systems, structures and products; participation makes possible sustainable development where the refugees are encouraged to shape their future.

One of the most important projects of MTS was the development of DOMO, a modular shelter system for use during humanitarian crises. The DOMO design followed a process where standardization - needed for rapid production - was balanced considering the socio-cultural context and needs of the affected populations. DOMO has been designed considering the customization and extension of the structures according to user needs, with greater versatility from the classic tents and containers.

One of the first phases of the development of DOMO took place in Hamburg, in a pilot study with 1200 refugees arrived in the German city. After the completion of the design of the DOMO system, one of the main fields of application has been Greece, particularly the island of Lesbos. During 2015 more than 2 000 refugees per day arrived on the island. The high number of people led to drastic situations such as lack of shelters, water and food. MTS Collaborated with volunteers, as well as with local civilians to improve the

conditions of the self-organised camp PIKPA, one of the three of the island. The use of DOMO shelters helped support better living conditions for refugees.

3.3.2. MapFugees

In Europe, the refugee camps do not differ much from the ones located in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and more. Even if in the European context they are created as temporary solutions to an "emergency", there are examples that shows how these became the normality for some refugees. In Calais and Dunkirk, before their forced dismantlement in summer 2016, the general infrastructure - result of a collaboration between the camp communities, volunteers and NGOs - reached the level of small towns. This should not surprise, considering that the Calais “Jungle” was started at the end of the 90’s. The residents attended classes at school, could go for shopping in local markets and listen to music in the camp theatre.

One of the problems of these communities is the distribution of information about the facilities and services provided in the camp (Mapfugees, 2016). The camps usually have an intricate network of streets and buildings, due to the lack of a general urban planning and the rapid continuous growth. The result is that NGOs, residents and institutions have difficulties in gaining an overview on the camp. The effects on the camp include delays in the delivering of aids, but also the difficulty in finding proper locations for new facilities, and structure the camp planning accordingly. In this regard, there are repositories of information, but usually there is no public access. More in general, the existing maps are customized according to the needs of the NGOs and do not necessarily address the needs of the refugees. These needs do not exclusively concern primary

resources, such as food or water, but more practical assets like street names, signposting and rapid updates of free Wi-Fi hotspots and mobile charging stations.

MapFugees is an independent project developed by volunteers and aimed at a coordinate digitization of buildings and shelters, roads, water points, toilets, showers and kitchens, as well as communal facilities, electricity points and public spaces. The project started in the beginning of 2016 and covered the refugee camps of Calais and Dunkirk in Northern France. From the technological point of view, the project relied of open software in order to develop a product freely accessible. One of the main focuses was the development of a system that could be extended and maintained by the residents. In this regard, the volunteers planned on-site training for camp residents on field mapping, to contribute on the short-term to the creation of the maps, but also on the long-term to contribute to keeping the maps updated.

The project was developed on several stages through a participatory design approach, from the first communication among the volunteers and camp residents and the technology setup to the production of printed maps and the processing of GIS data. The first application of the project clearly ended with the dismantling of the camps, but underlines two facts. Firstly, it highlights the need to develop services that are not purely related to the satisfaction of basic needs, but also "secondary" needs like the distribution of knowledge in the camp. Secondly, the project shows how some issues could be best addressed with the assistance of refugees. Their participation could support the development of customized solutions, but also a long-term perspective due to the appropriation by the refugees of the developed solutions.

3.3.3. Ipso cultural context, International psychosocial organisation

Many migrants face unimaginable experiences through their route, often coming from a traumatic past. However, the need of psychological and socio-cultural support is too often underestimated and ignored. The participatory project of Ipsocontext aims to step up to fill this void (Ipsocontext, 2016). This German independent organization is specialized in mental health and cultural dialogue. Between 2016 and 2017 it started a new project based on migrants' participation. The organization is currently providing professional training in psychology and cultural mediation to people with different migration background. The goal is to form psychosocial counsellors, through a year long training that include a self-reflective process. During the course both professionals and trainees will share their knowledge: the locals will learn precious information thanks to an insight in the migration experience and the confrontation with a different culture. At the same time trainees will access to specialized skills and to the possibility to use them in the German market. Moreover, communication with newly displaced people will be facilitated because of a common cultural background and experience. The service is also provided online, making it more accessible. This gives the chance to newcomers, which are facing isolation and loss, to contact a professional figure that has been through similar situations.

3.4. Integration

After the settlement in a new European country, perhaps for a long term plan, immigrants and refugees are often required to put an extra effort to enter social or labour life. This process of integration can be tough and few obstacles could seem insurmountable: from a different language or habits, to isolation, lack of financial/community resources or discrimination.

Governments are trying to provide services that aims to tackle rising exclusion and vulnerability, however, because of a lack of funding and innovation the outcomes are not always positive. NGO and charities try to supply to this governmental void with their limited resources and the extensive use of volunteers.

However, refugees' and immigrants' integration should represent a major goal for social planning and policies. This field is a national competence according to the EU legislation. However, since 2004 the European Union members agreed to make an effort in coordinating their national policies and to follow shared principles on integration matters. During the years a set of guidelines have been implemented, such as the "Common framework for the integration of third-country nationals" (2005), "Common Basic principles on Integration" (2004, 2014) (UE European Commission, 2004), the establishment of The Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs (to coordinate and direct initiatives for integration) and recently the "Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals" (2016) (U£ European Commission, 2016).

The common Basic Principles, theoretically respected by the European members, call for a double sided effort: from the immigrants, that are expected to learn the language as well as a generic civic knowledge of their host country, and from the national institutions. The latter should support an active participation in education and employment while

ensuring equal access to services and goods. Additionally, to stimulating interactivity among different communities:

> "The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration" (UE European Commission, 2004)

The recent Integration Action Plan confirms these guidelines and insert them in a functional framework that Member States can follow for developing policies and actions in this area.

Regardless European values and plans, actual national politics often distance themselves from the EU guidance. Parties and ideologies. more oriented towards protectionism and euro-scepticism, are gaining a good electoral base and consensus. This direction is leading to financial cuts applied to the funds intended for integration. These result in a major pressure, responsibility and insecurity for the local operators and the independent organizations. The challenge of participation invests local administration and citizens in the first place. The will to overcome a logic based on personal needs, toward a holistic perspective that appreciates society as an interconnected body needs to be cultivated. Around Europe there are countless projects that involve the peer work of citizens and immigrants that aim to strengthen integration and build wealthier and happier cities for everyone. Integration also means that immigrants would start to use their agency to address different kind of challenges, enriching society itself. Institutions needs to publicize and participate in these experiences more, in order to expand the interest in these activities out of its regular circle.

3.4.1. EU for social innovation

European Union is moving toward social innovation. The aim of EU is to promote grassroots movements addressing the main current social challenges, in order to support new solutions directly proposed and developed by citizens. Nowadays, one of the main challenges that EU is trying to address is the cohesion in a diverse society, with particular attention on the integration of immigrants.

Starting from 2012, the European Commission has run the European Social Innovation Competition (European Social Innovation, 2016). The competition is directed to all European countries, promoting the development of solutions to the problems affecting the society, such as sustainability and climate change, urbanisation, democratic participation, public services and healthcare.

The call for 2016 was on integrated futures, focusing on the recent increase in number of refugees and migrants arriving to Europe and the long-term challenge of integration in society. The competition encouraged the development of innovative approaches to build communities, and more importantly to support the contribution of refugees and migrants. The call focused on themes such as education, employment, human rights, cultural diversity and access to health services.

Among the proposals that passed the various stages of selection, some stood out for their approach particularly focused on the active involvement of refugees and migrants in the implementation of their solutions. One of these initiatives is Sharing the Earth. The problem identified by the creators of the project is the long waiting time for asylum seekers in France, a procedure that lasts a minimum of 16 months. During that period of time migrants, on average very young, can not work; it is thus a phase of stagnation

in which these young people have no chance to make a contribution to society. Sharing the Earth has the goal of developing activities of organic market gardening run by asylum seekers, encouraging the development of new skills, new bonds with the local community and more in general to start a new life in France.

Another interesting project is REMIT (Refugee and Migrant Integration Training), proposed by a British social enterprise (LU, 2016). REMIT is aimed at facilitating the integration of refugees and migrants through awareness-raising workshops for communities and service providers. In particular REMIT is based on a train-the-trainer approach, where refugees and migrants are trained, manage and adapt this program. The general goal then is to start a network of people, developing these workshops between various communities to promote and support integration.

Similarly, Capital Digital (Capital Digital, 2016) is another project relying on a train-the-trainer approach. Located in the poorest neighbourhoods of Brussels, 15-20 y.o. migrants and asylum seekers are trained in basics of programming and pedagogy Using these skills, the young migrants teach programming to younger generations (9-12 y.o.) of the neighbourhoods. The goals of the project are twofold. Firstly, the young students are encouraged to enhance their IT skills through a playful and didactic experience. Secondly the young teachers have the chance for a first work experience, connect with others in a constructive way and enjoy the role of educators.

3.4.2. CUCULA

Access the labour market is often problematic for refugees. Beside the difficulties of learning various new skills or losing the recognition of their diplomas, they found themselves fighting against stigma and a general situation of high unemployment.

CUCULA - Refugees Company for Crafts and Design - is a project that started in Berlin in 2014 aimed at supporting refugees to build their own professional future (CUCULA, 2016). CUCULA started from the story of five migrants, fled from West Africa due to the ongoing armed conflicts. The five refugees moved to Libya; after the outbreak of war they arrived in Italy. Because of the low prospects of work, they finally moved to Berlin. CUCULA was born to give a new perspective of life to this people. The overall aim of CUCULA was to start a project, co-managed by the refugees, to develop a working and educational path for a future autonomous life. The philosophy of CUCULA is to achieve results together, with designers, refugees and partners. The goal of the project is to create a culture that goes beyond the notion of 'victimhood', encouraging refugees to unfold their self-efficacy and to open up a perspective for a self-determined life.

In practice, CUCULA is divided into two parts following an action-oriented approach: workshop and education. CUCULA workshop consists in the manufacture of furniture. The refugees, along with some local designers, have developed a series of objects inspired by the work of the Italian designer Enzo Mari. In the lab, the team realizes chairs, table and cabinets that provide an income for the self-sustainment of the project. In CUCULA the concept of participatory design comprehends even the practical design of the objects: the furniture is built also reusing materials from boats landed on Lampedusa, an initiative proposed by the refugees. In general, CUCULA counts strongly on individual

motivation, with the goal that one day the trainees (the refugees) could work independently. The second part of the project concerns a program of education, which includes the teaching of German and legal advice. In 2016 the educational project included 15 refugees.

3.4.3. IDEAL/Themis

Language learning is usually one of the first steps that the European policies envisage for integration. Local governments provide local language courses for foreigners through accredited institutions. Often these are flanked by charities and volunteers that expand the service and customize it according to the needs of the context. Not all immigrants have prior literacy, in particular women, which are often less integrated into the host society. Moreover, possible learning disabilities are rarely recognized in these standard classes. The teaching, thought as a bridge to greater autonomy and communication with the local community, becomes cause for frustration and further alienation. In particular, the need to acquire writing skills and the arguments of the lectures, usually not contextualized and with no particular application in real life, may constitute a block.

IDEAL (Integrating Disadvantaged Ethnicities through Adult Learning) project is targeted to people with low literacy that without proper support have low chances to achieve an appropriate language proficiency. IDEAL programme has born as a project under the patronage of the European commission and aimed at the empowerment of non-western immigrant women without basic education experience (Van't Rood & Nieuwhboer, 2016). In contrast to the classical frontal lessons, IDEAL has no linguistic prerequisite. The primary purpose of the project is to enable women to achieve a linguistic level that

would allow interacting on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations and short conversations.

IDEAL is based on participatory didactic methods, in contrast to teacher-centred programmes. The students are active participants in teaching: they influence the content and the activities of the course. The main goals of the lectures and crucial topics are identified within the group of learners. In this regard, IDEAL is characterised by two key principles, learning about things that matter and learning by exposure to different perspectives. Focussing the lectures on topics of interest for students, these latter are encouraged to interact with other people belonging to their own cultural group. In addition to this, the lessons include meetings with local in order exposure to habits and language of the receiving country and to further stimulate learning.

These examples are an infinitesimal fractions of the activities that are brought on by immigrants, citizens and professionals. The level of participation can vary but it always represent the leading thread, demonstrating that a shift in our approach to immigration can and is happening.

CHAPTER 4

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Summary: 4.1 Re-gain a future perspective through emancipation – 4.2 Considerations on critical aspects – 4.3 Interactions among institutions and communities – 4.4 Participatory design in the political arena

Italian abstract

La diffusione di pratiche collaborative o di partecipazione mira al cambiamento di un sistema di welfare storicamente radicato in Europa sulla base di aiuti e assistenzialismo. L'urgenza delle sfide sociali e la scarsità di risorse hanno determinato una tendenza a interventi sociali rapidi, superficiali e poco studiati. In tal proposito, recentemente un insieme rilevante di servizi sociali, inclusi quelli relativi alle migrazioni, sono stati delegati al terzo settore e enti privati. Questi molto spesso applicano un approccio mirato all'efficienza economica e ad una ferma gestione d'impresa; dare la priorità a questi fattori rischia di compromettere un eventuale processo di innovazione sociale ed umanitaria. Quando si tratta di immigrati o altre popolazioni vulnerabili, una strategia olistica di riabilitazione viene ignorata, anche se sarebbe in grado di garantire la generazione di meccanismi virtuosi per il benessere comune.

La dipendenza da interventi esterni contribuisce a formare un atteggiamento negativo verso le responsabilità sociali, in quanto gli individui si aspettano che altri affrontino problematiche che in realtà li riguardano direttamente. Le soluzioni risultano inadeguate perché vengono elaborate da soggetti esterni con informazioni limitate; criticità e punti di forza relativi al contesto, oltre che connessioni sociali, sono trascurati.

Quando si tratta di lavoro sociale o umanitario con gli immigrati, il servizio fornito spesso presenta una caratterizzazione di primo aiuto. In Europa, richiedenti asilo e rifugiati riescono in genere a soddisfare le proprie esigenze di base. Tuttavia, la mancata conoscenza di servizi sociali o umanitari e le restrizioni burocratiche e sociali scoraggiano una maggiore emancipazione. Il desiderio e la capacità di aspirare a un futuro diverso sono atrofizzati.

Gli immigrati desiderosi di uscire da una condizione subordinata dovrebbero prendere in considerazione di intraprendere un percorso di emancipazione. La progettazione partecipata e la collaborazione con altri attori della società potrebbe essere essenziale per questo percorso. I sentimenti di alienazione e di impotenza sbiadiscono perché diventa possibile intervenire direttamente nella società. Quando le basi della cooperazione si basano sulla responsabilità comune e il rispetto reciproco, assieme ad un quadro istituzionale favorevole, diventa davvero possibile per immigrati o rifugiati prendere la situazione in mano e costruirsi un futuro.

Come per altri casi pratici, l'applicazione di metodologie partecipative può incontrare distorsioni ed ostacoli, talvolta difficilmente sormontabili, che possono invalidare i risultati. Quando si esce

dal campo della teoria e si entra in quello della pratica, ci si allontana necessariamente da un approccio che è più ideale che realistico. La progettazione partecipata mira a innescare un processo costruttivo. Tuttavia è fondamentale riconoscere distorsioni e limiti che possono inficiare la collaborazione, rendendo un progetto fallimentare.

Prestare attenzione alla formazione di una rete sociale attiva e paritaria è probabilmente un primo passaggio imprescindibile. La mancanza di eguaglianza tra soggetti all'interno delle varie fasi del progetto, dalla pianificazione all'applicazione e valutazione, si accompagna spesso a diversi livelli di partecipazione. Molti progetti che vengono inseriti e discussi come partecipati presentano effettivamente uno scarsissimo livello di collaborazione tra i diversi attori. Ciò determina una mancata corresponsabilizzazione, dove gli utenti sono coinvolti solo superficialmente e le decisioni sono in ultima istanza prese da chi ha avviato il progetto.

Frequentemente le dichiarazioni di partecipazione paritaria e corresponsabilizzazione si limitano alle parole; di fatto permane all'interno di molti progetti uno squilibrio di potere e di responsabilità. Coloro che investono nel progetto o per cui ne reperiscono i fondi, che solitamente non rappresentano gli utenti finali, possono sentirsi maggiormente coinvolti ed in una posizione di maggior influenza durante momenti decisionali. In questi casi il tempo speso nell'individuazione di obiettivi condivisi acquisisce fondamentale importanza così come una chiara definizione delle responsabilità e delle possibilità di successo.

Spesso il reperimento e la gestione dei fondi rappresenta motivo di preoccupazione o conflitto tra le parti. Quando ad esempio le risorse non bastano o non vengono garantite, il progetto può essere costretto a fermarsi, vanificando gli sforzi precedenti. La frustrazione di aver "sprecato" tempo ed energie facilmente va ad inficiare future istanze partecipative. Anche in questo caso il limite si trova in una partecipazione mancata o derogatoria: non si fallisce insieme, perché non si è lavorato insieme in primo luogo.

Una fase di rielaborazione sulle motivazioni del fallimento può aiutare a chiarire cosa non abbia funzionato e costruire nuove basi per futuri progetti. Questo momento di riflessione viene troppo spesso a mancare e talvolta viene volontariamente inibito per questioni politiche o d'immagine.

Grandi ostacoli contro cui un'applicazione della progettazione partecipata per popolazioni vulnerabili come quelle migranti spesso sono rappresentati da politiche, leggi e burocrazia. Si tratta di variabili in costante cambiamento che chiaramente possono influire sulla resilienza dei progetti avviati o direttamente sulla loro elaborazione. La richiesta di documentazione e il rispetto di standard legali può anche cambiare di stato in stato rendendo concretamente impossibile esportare alcune idee. Per questa posizione ai margini della legalità, sempre più spesso ricattabile e precaria risulta difficile elaborare progetti effettivamente inclusivi e partecipativi nel lungo periodo.

Infine rimane il rischio che enti o amministrazioni approfittino delle pratiche di partecipazione per tagliare servizi e de-responsabilizzarsi. L'aziendalizzazione ed esternalizzazione dei servizi ha creato una tendenza a considerare gli utenti come clienti individuali e passivi. Si mira prevalentemente alla massimizzazione del profitto o alla ricerca del consenso di specifiche popolazioni e comunità. Di conseguenza si tralascia, o addirittura si avversa, la creazione di spazi agonistici di dibattito su cui si basa l'evolversi di una società civile.

Un'ultima criticità è l'effettiva mancanza di comunicazione tra le parti. Si parla molto di collaborazione e lavoro di rete ma la sua applicazione è tutt'altro che scontata. Un esempio potrebbe essere la grande partecipazione in occidente del settore tecnologico nell'ideare soluzioni per la crisi migratoria. Tuttavia l'organizzazione di numerosi *hackatons* ed eventi di innovazione non ha previsto l'invito di operatori, ONG appartenenti al settore umanitario e sociale, e rifugiati. Questa mancata interconnessione tra campi diversi non dovrebbe sorprendere visto l'assenza di collaborazione tra enti simili in primis. Una collaborazione verticale permette di elaborare un progetto partecipativo basato su due aspetti differenti che vanno intercombinati:

l'aspetto ideativo/creativo e quello più pratico e razionale della progettazione. Gli interventi sociali necessitano di un lavoro di ricerca e di rappresentazione per individuare problematiche e possibili risposte. Quindi, seppure l'attivazione degli utenti deve essere un mezzo ed un obiettivo imprescindibile, il coinvolgimento di altre figure di supporto e d'indirizzamento non può essere tralasciata. Questo aiuta a capire fattibilità e problematicità da un'altra prospettiva, magari meno emozionale, e permette il radicamento delle pratiche future.

Nel corso degli ultimi decenni è cresciuta una sensazione di distacco tra le istituzioni e la società civile. Lo sviluppo di sistemi di governo a più livelli, sulla base di amministrazioni locali, nazionali e sovranazionali ha forse creato un crescente senso di confusione nei cittadini. D'altra parte la moltiplicazione dei soggetti aventi diritto a partecipare al tavolo delle trattative, insieme con un più alto numero di richieste, sta mettendo le istituzioni sotto una grande pressione. La progettazione partecipata, così come molti altri approcci al benessere sociale, richiede la creazione di una forte interconnessione tra le istituzioni e gli altri attori sociali. Altrettanto importante per la metodologia è riconoscere in ogni parte della società la stessa dignità e rilevanza.

Considerando l'evoluzione generale e il funzionamento di un sistema sociale, appare chiaro come problemi circoscritti possano avere conseguenze su tutto il tessuto sociale. Per quanto riguarda l'immigrazione questo concetto non potrebbe essere più chiaro. Gli effetti di secoli di sfruttamento coloniale, la violenza, la globalizzazione economica e culturale, si stanno ora concretizzando attraverso migrazioni di massa. A livello locale comunità politiche e civili si stanno muovendo verso la marginalizzazione e discriminazione degli immigrati. Tuttavia, l'applicazione di un doppio standard non limiterà la sua influenza sui più vulnerabili, ma interesserà indirettamente tutti. Le istituzioni potrebbero quindi servire da collegamento per facilitare le comunicazioni e abbracciare un cambiamento positivo.

Quando la classe amministrativa capirà l'importanza dell'effetto sistemico di approcci partecipativi e collaborativi nel risolvere i problemi, allora sarà il momento di pianificare misure concrete per garantire un'attivazione *bottom-up*. *L'empowerment* e la responsabilizzazione sociale degli individui e delle comunità deve diventare uno dei primi obiettivi delle politiche sociali per l'innovazione. Attivazione sociale non significa una irresponsabilità delle istituzioni, significa la garanzia di pari accesso al processo decisionale a tutti i settori della società.

Diventa quindi importante trovare nuovi metodi di comunicazione con i cittadini. L'attenzione ai problemi sociali, non limitati alle questioni relative alla migrazione, dovrebbero essere affrontati dalle agenzie istituzionali nel dibattito pubblico. Come Appadurai (Appadurai, 2011) evidenzia, ogni discussione sul futuro si riassume in termini economici, ma non culturali. Le capacità di creare e immaginare sono drenate e trascurate, a favore di una critica distruttiva. È tempo di prevedere momenti di immaginazione costruttiva in spazi inclusivi diversi da quelli amministrativi, come potrebbero essere scuole, centri di ricerca, luoghi di aggregazione sociale, forum virtuali appositi o eventi culturali. Questa potrebbe essere una delle prime azioni che le istituzioni potrebbero adottare per affrontare la co-responsabilizzazione.

Le istituzioni potrebbero quindi coprire un ruolo essenziale nello sviluppo della responsabilità sociale e per la creazione di nuove pratiche positive. Tuttavia lo sforzo deve essere condiviso, e la società civile dovrebbe agire di conseguenza. Al fine di evitare di una completa dipendenza dalle risorse governative, le comunità dovrebbero anche imparare a lavorare in maniera indipendente.

Rimane difficile applicare principi di emancipazione e collaborazione in un clima politico globale che sembra sempre più cieco, contribuendo alla perpetrazione di un sistema fondato su disuguaglianze. Un primo passo verso una soluzione deve essere la sensibilizzazione dei cittadini.

La possibilità va colta anche dagli immigrati, per affrontare le sfide facendo fronte comune. La forza di questi gruppi dovrebbe essere cercata nella loro diversità e inclusività.

L'incontro permette di andare ad intaccare la narrativa distruttiva predominante. La difficoltà di partecipazione in azioni rivendicative è tuttavia forte per i migranti. Negli anni si è infatti costruito un sistema basato sulla precarizzazione e sul ricatto. Si crea così timore di possibili ripercussioni che inibiscono le possibilità partecipative; una costante esposizione alla possibilità di deportazione e alla discrezionalità delle amministrazioni favorisce l'accettazione delle posizioni di subalternità. É proprio per questo che gli individui in una posizione migliore, come chi ha regolarizzato il proprio status, dovrebbero rivendicare eguaglianza ed integrazione anche per coloro che ancora versano nell'incertezza.

Il fronte del diritto dell'immigrazione e dei diritti umani è tuttavia il principale ambito in cui si richiede un grande sforzo congiunto. La situazione dei rifugiati e dei migranti economici non può essere risolta senza un radicale cambiamento del sistema legislativo occidentale. I progetti partecipativi attuati da UNHCR, Europa per l'innovazione e ONG sono certamente utili, ma rispetto alle falle del sistema fungono solo come piccole toppe. Se questo sistema discriminatorio dei diritti, insieme a quello politico ed economico, non verrà cambiato le prospettive rimarranno negative.

4.1. Re-gain a future perspective through emancipation

The spread of collaborative or participatory practices aims at the decreasing of a welfare system, historically rooted in Europe, based on aid and assistentialism. The urgency of social challenges and resources scarcity determined in social work a tendency towards quick, superficial, scarcely designed interventions. These operations expect the users to be passive and the systemic effects on society are generally neglected. Recently a relevant bunch of social services, included the ones related to migrations, have been delegated to the third sector or private parties. These actors often apply a business-like approach where primary objectives are economic efficiency and firm management, goals that might not enhance process of social or humanitarian innovation. When it comes to immigrants or other vulnerable populations, a holistic strategy of rehabilitation is ignored. This would be able to ensure resilience and the generation of virtuous mechanisms for the common well-being. De Ambrogio, Dessi, & Ghetti, 2013). Dependency on external interventions contribute to shape a negative attitude toward social responsibilities, as individuals expect others to face problematic that actually concern them directly. Solutions result inadequate because they are elaborated by outer entities with limited information; for instance, a series of crucial aspects of the context such as its criticalities or strengths as well as its social connections are overlooked. Concurrently the occasion for nurturing practical and imaginative personal skills is lost and these abilities become progressively dormant, wasted.

The development of emancipatory attitudes should always be considered among the main goals of humanitarian and welfare services. The psychologist Abraham Maslow explained that the fulfilling of physiological needs such as food, shelter and safety leave space to the development of further ambitions that are generally more complex

(Maslow, Frager, Fadiman, McReynolds, & Cox, 1970). Every individual has desires that goes beyond mere survival threshold which are yet considered equally important. The quest for a sense of belonging, self confidence or personal realisation requires from the individual and society hard work and a consistent commitment. The aim is also to maintain the achievements through time, to allow a process of progressive improvements among communities.

When it comes to social or humanitarian work with immigrants, the service provided often present a first aid characterization while further instances result ignored. In Europe, asylum seekers and refugees generally manage to address their basic needs. However, the lack of insight of social or humanitarian services along with bureaucratic and social restriction discourage a greater emancipation.

The desire and ability to aspire to a different future are atrophied. The system develops passiveness and often creates profit for private ventures through the delegation of services. Generally, the solutions provided are not sustainable in the long run as they are not elaborated with clear future strategies. Creatively imagine a better future is an exercise that we all should practice more often as it allows us to build new positive practices and to progressively discard negative ones (Appadurai, 2011). It is an activity that requires patience and time. Combined with individual or community empowerment as well as spirit of initiative it can lead to emancipation and permanent change. Assistentialism, corruption, exploitation and disparaging narratives are aspects of a globalised society that cannot be addressed by immigrants without action.

Immigrants willing to exit a subordinate condition should consider to take up an emancipatory journey to overcome dependency and to hinder stereotypes. Participatory design and collaboration with other actors in society can be an essential

part of this path. The role of operators or designers in a participatory process, initially can be the one of a mentor: supporting and orienting towards independence. While the work moves forward, the individuals strengthen their self-esteem and proficiency awareness. The feelings of alienation and powerlessness fade because it become possible to directly intervene in society.

Through prototyping or staging feasible futures is possible to actually experience differences and practise community goals. When these kind of experimentations, usually grass-roots, prove to be successful, a localized and specific example is set. A precedent can be thereafter recognized and adopted by institutions, becoming part of officially recognized practices (Martini & Torti, 2005).

Emancipation of migrant communities is possible; however, it requires a multi-level approach. Firstly, there must be a strong creative and motivational force driving the immigrants toward action. The possibility to match this willingness with the one of other social actors, such as volunteers, ONG, social workers or private entities is essential in boosting a coordinate activism. Institutions and administrative bodies represent a further brick for an effective innovation process. The latter can provide financial and organizational skills while learning new strategies to address social challenges.

When the foundations of cooperation are based on joint responsibility and mutual respect, along with a favourable institutional frame, it really becomes possible for immigrants or refugees to take matters in hand and build a future.

4.2. Considerations on critical aspects

The application of participatory methodologies can meet distortions and obstacles, sometimes readily surmountable. These may invalidate the results of the projects and mutate its cooperative nature. Leaving the theoretical field for the actual practice often means to move away from an approach that is more ideal than realistic. The different contexts in which different social actors attempt to realize participatory experiments present indeed different characteristics, both critical and positive. The participatory design aims to enhance and improve the latter, in order to trigger a constructive process. However, it is critical to recognize distortions and limitations that may affect the collaboration, making a project fails.

Paying attention to the formation of an active and equal collaborative network is probably a first essential step. The lack of equality between subjects within the various phases of the project, from planning, implementation and evaluation, is often accompanied by different levels of participation (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Ståhlbrost, 2008; Martini & Torti, 2005; Simonsen & Robertson, 2012). Various projects that are presented as participatory actually present a very low level of collaboration between the different actors. Often they are limited to the use of questionnaires or to sporadic meetings and focus groups. This results in a lack of co-responsibility, where users are barely involved and decisions are ultimately taken by those who initiated the project, often top-down.

In this regard, relating to the cases examined in the previous chapter, it can be noticed that participatory instances are often not promoted by immigrants themselves. Usually, in fact there are organizations at the local level to undertake inclusive projects. The cases in which migrant communities organize themselves to collaboration are currently rare but valuable experiences. Perhaps the project I-fellow shelter and CUCULA, among the

experiences previously analysed, represent how the agency can be found directly at the user level. Also interesting is the case of the Za'atari camp, where the initiative of refugees has proved difficult to manage at times. Some extra effort was indeed needed to channel it into sustainable solutions for everyone. Generally, the experiences listed above were based on an initial exchange of expertise. Operators or organizations provided specific and useful training to immigrants who then returned it to the community by practical activities and teaching (e.g. Training sessions in Uganda's Rwamwanja camp, MapFugees, Ipso Cultural Context, Capital Digital).

Participation can not be taken for granted, it probably represents one of the most sensitive aspects and it is critical to develop and maintain it. While designing projects the attention is divided between the organizational aspects and the final goals. It is important to find a balance between these two perspectives so that an overview of the problem does not get missed and at the same time a close cooperation between all stakeholders is maintained (design and evaluate social).

Frequently statement of equal participation and co-responsibility are limited to the words, in fact an imbalance of power and responsibility remains within many projects. For example, in cases such as "More than shelters" a particular attention to the needs of displaced people has been proved. However, the actual design work and decision-making power was poorly distributed and the end-users have been able to contribute mainly by providing information.

Those who invest in the project or that obtain the funds can easily feel more involved and in a position of greater influence in decision-making moments. Often the position of lenders is not covered by end users and this can represent an obstacle to the establishment of egalitarian dynamics or effective division of roles and responsibilities.

To stem these problems, external participants must find a strong motivation in the project. In these cases, the time spent in identifying shared goals acquires fundamental importance as well as a clear definition of responsibilities and chances of success. CUCULA is a good example, regarding this process of co-responsibility: both German citizens and refugees are dependent and have invested in the idea they designed. They collaborated to the birth of a company and its development, including the financial administration, on equal terms.

Often the sourcing and management of funds is a cause for concern or conflict between the parties. The management of resources is rarely shared in transparency and this may cause difficulties in building a relationship of mutual trust. Moreover, when resources are scarce or are not confirmed it might become impossible to continue the work, crippling previous efforts. The frustration of having "wasted" time and energy can easily affect future participatory instances. Once again, the limit is represented by a lack or derogatory participation. Failure is not shared among the participants, as they have never worked together in the first place.

A phase of reprocessing the reasons of failure, shared by all the social actors involved, can help clarify what did not work and build new foundations for future projects. This moment of reflection is too often overlooked, and sometimes is voluntarily inhibited by political or image issues (De Ambrogio et al., 2013). For instance, the funds allocated by European projects, including the ones of social innovation, have to be guaranteed through stringent requirements and detailed reports. The implementation, strictly linked to specific guidelines and pre-stated objectives, often poorly coincides with a participatory and prototyping process. The act of changing the path or fail is considered in a punitive perspective. Understandably, in order to not lose the promised funds, the

respect the agreements are required. Sometimes the original design of a project can collide with unexpected events that drastically turn the table. This would require greater flexibility. However, the economic and contractual pressure can push toward the need to demonstrate the attainment of the intended purpose even if this did not happen, distorting the results. To learn from past experience and from certain errors would be extremely useful not be pressured to hide them but rather to re-elaborate them aiming at designing new solutions.

Further limits of participatory design for vulnerable populations such as migrants often are represented by policies, laws and bureaucracy. These are variables in constant transformation that clearly can affect the resilience of the projects and their design. The request for documentation and compliance with legal standards may also change from state to state or region to region, making the export of some ideas actually impossible. For example, projects such as "The Welcome card" [9] or the idea of a global citizenship can run aground because of the data protection needed by migrants or because of their status, often in a grey zone of law. Because of this position at the edge of legality, increasingly borderline and exposed to blackmail, it is difficult to design projects effectively inclusive in the long run. For many the future remains too uncertain.

When it comes to community or ONG involvement it must be considered the risk that authorities and administrations could try to take advantage of participation practices to

9 “A project that aims to provide a "Welcome Card" to every asylum seeker, who has registered an asylum application within a EU country. Using RFID technology, the "Welcome Card" allows refugees to check on their application status when pairing the card to a card reader within the refugee centre they live in, or the Immigration Office they are visiting. It is also an opportunity to access information, while acting as a temporary identification card to access language courses, public transport, and cultural sites and events.”

cut services and de-take responsibility. Clearly this would distort the nature of the idea of participatory design, based on the sharing of experiences and commitment aimed at building a future together. Furthermore, recent cuts have been applied to the social welfare. These financial measures were taken at states and international organizations level and not always they have led towards generative policies (Martini & Torti, 2005). The corporatization and outsourcing of services has actually created a tendency to consider users as individual passive customers. The main goal became maximizing profits or the search for consent from specific populations and communities. Accordingly, the creation of agonistic spaces for debate, essential for the evolution of a dynamic society, is neglected or even opposed.

The conflict that may develop in the course of collaborative experiments lies halfway between being an opportunity and a limit for the methodology. It can bring to positive outcomes when opposite views are managed carefully. In order to overcome division or enhance a better mutual understanding, the ability to mediate between different actors with different aspirations play an important role. Regarding participatory practices, conflict may represent the reason of the involvement itself. Indeed, participation can be induced by the urge of claiming or demand something. Often the requests are directed against institutions. The importance of access to public spaces, where protests can turn into change and actions, is fundamental in particular for marginalized populations such as migrants (Appadurai, 2014).

However, it is clear that a purely demanding attitude can easily inhibit cooperation between the parties, proving to be destructive. For this reason it becomes crucial for designers, researchers or operators to master cross-cultural and mediation skills to facilitate activities. Especially when working with immigrant communities the various

communicative and cultural traditions that lead to the construction of participation and consensus are to be considered (Appadurai, 2011). It can be a deep specific research, however it should not be omitted in view of similar social work. It should also be kept in mind that finding a common agreement is not always possible, however, proper solutions can not be found if they are not continuously investigated. A last critical aspect is the lack of an effective communication between parties. Collaboration and networking among social actors is broadly discussed, however its application is far from being granted. An example could be the western technology industries' great involvement in designing solutions for the refugee crisis. Numerous hackatons and other awareness events where innovation was designed in collaboration were organised. Despite the big concern though, the involvement of operators, NGOs of the humanitarian and social sector and refugees has not been considered enough (Kasperen, 2016; Srivastava, 2016).

> "While part of the civic tech community has been engaging in discussions of how to help, the current thrust of technology responses approaches refugees only as victims. Technologists too often take refugees out of the equation by having the solutions be "about them" as opposed to developed "with them." But you can't "hack a solution" if you don't have all stakeholders at the proverbial table, with refugee interests and contributions at the centre of your efforts." Srivastava, 2016, Open Migration

This lack of interconnection between different fields should not be surprising considering the low level of cooperation between similar institutions in the first place. Unfortunately, the different projects struggle to actually achieve successful collaborations among bodies that act in different sectors and on different spatial scales;

supranational, national and local. A vertical collaboration allows to design a participative project based on two different aspects that should match: the conceptual and creative part of the ideation as well as the more practical and rational part of the design. Social interventions require research and representation works that allows to identify problems and possible solutions. Therefore, even if users' activation should be a mean and an essential objective, the involvement of other support and guiding figures can not be omitted. This allows to reach a better understanding of problems and feasibility as different perspective, perhaps less emotional, are joint.

4.3. Interactions among institutions and communities

During the past decades a feeling of disconnection between institutions and civil society has been exacerbated. The development of a multi-level governmental system, based on local, national and supranational administrations has possibly created an increasing sense of confusion in citizens. On the other hand, the multiplication of subjects entitled to participate at the bargaining table, along with the higher number of demands, is putting institutions under a great pressure.

Participatory design, as well as many other approaches to a social welfare, requires the establishment of a strong interconnection among institutions and other social actors. Equally important for the methodology is to recognize to every part of society the same dignity and importance.

Gestalt holistic psychology or the System theory (Luhmann, 1995) suggest that society should be thought like a whole system immerse in a specific environment. Abstracting

and only considering its single part entails the loss of the real meaning of it and it become a struggle to understand it.

Considering the general evolution or functioning of a social system it appears clear how circumscribed problems can have consequences on the whole social body. For what concerns immigration this concept could not be clearer. The effects of centuries of colonial exploitation, violence, economic and cultural globalisation are now materializing through mass migrations. The poverty and instability created in parts of the World considered far are now starting to knock at the West's door. At the local level political and civil communities are acting toward the marginalisation as well as discrimination of immigrants. However, the set of a double standard will not limit its influence to the vulnerable but it will affect, at least indirectly, everyone. The rise of extremism and inequalities, the feelings of social and economic insecurity along with the dismantling of human rights and social welfare are already taking place.

Isolating and act against a social group cannot be considered as a solution to modern challenges. If ethical values are not taken into consideration, the fact that there will be dramatic repercussions on the whole communities still remains. This clearly explains why it is now so important to change direction and aspire together to a common better future. According to Luhmann societies are essentially based on communication (Luhmann, 1995). Aspirations, possibilities, obstacles and practices are partly shared by the most of social actors (Appadurai, 2014). Institutions could serve as a link among these, facilitating communications and embracing positive change.

Communication for the social and humanitarian work, both vertical and horizontal, currently represent a sore point as it is inadequate despite the development of modern tools that should facilitate it. This situation clearly affects the possibility to work

together on equal terms as it forbids the possibility to vulnerable populations to express their needs and ideas to institutions. When the administrative class will understand the importance for the whole system of participatory and collaborative approaches in problem solving, then it will be time to start planning concrete measures to ensure this bottom-up activation. Empowerment and social responsibilization of individuals or communities needs to become one of the first objective of social policies for innovation. The neo-liberal approach, according to which the state should limit its intervention, must be revised as it is translated into disengagement and entrustment of social work to the market or the volunteerism. Activation does not mean an irresponsibility of institutions; it means to allow equal access to the decision making process to all parts of society. It is a necessary tool for welfare to work effectively not a substitute.

It becomes important to find new methods of communication with citizens (Martini & Torti, 2005). The attention to social problems, not restricted to the issues related to migration -that today are extensively but poorly discussed- should be covered by institutional agencies in the public debate. As Appadurai (Appadurai, 2011) highlights, talks about the future remain nowadays mainly in economic terms but not cultural. Our ability to create and imagine are drained and neglected in favour of a destructive criticism.

Vengeance participation is spontaneous and generated by the power and economical gap that divide classes. This kind of participation cannot stand as a link between social bodies but serve to deepen the fracture. With this disenchanted attitude citizens underline issues that concern them but still expect just institutions to intervene. Collaboration and co-responsibility are far to be realized. The aim is therefore to overcome a vengeance participation and to promote social responsibility instead. It is

time to begin to foresee moments of constructive imagination in inclusive spaces other than administrative ones, as could be schools, research centres, places of social gathering, apposite virtual forums or cultural events. This could be one of the first actions that the institutions could take to approach co-responsibilization.

When it comes to work with immigrant communities it should not be underestimated the importance of cultural mediation. Indeed, it can be crucial to set up a dialogue for mutual understanding that goes beyond misleading preconceptions (doing community work). For this work small groups and grass-roots organizations gain an inestimable value, in particular when they are also composed by the vulnerable parties. This allows a better work among communities as there is familiarity with the participants and their strength or weak points. These organization needs to be encouraged in their work by institutions as they represent their main connection with communities.

Moments of encounter and debate organized by different communities can be great occasions to join different resources in a common network. Vulnerable populations can access to information, methodologies and relational connections usually out of reach. The enrichment of exchanging different perspectives and experiences stays at the ground of the capacity to aspire and design possible futures. It allows indeed to apprehend a more complete understanding of society's mechanism and to elaborate comprehensive strategies.

Institutions could be helpful in directing part of their informational resources to develop a wide communication net also considering the possibility to integrate various designed solutions together, without overlapping and wasting opportunities. For example, this could be applied to the collaborations brought on by tech start-ups (Bock, 2016) that benefits from governmental or administrative counselling and support. It also helps to

actually connect technicians and designers with users and social operators. Moreover, it could stimulate reflections on the effects of products on society through targeted and objective researches.

Institutions could hence cover an essential role in the development of social responsibility and for the establishment of new positive practices. However, the generative effort needs to be shared and it civil society is required to act accordingly. In order to avoid being completely dependent on governmental schedules and resources, communities should also learn to work independently while communicating within participants. Communities activation and work can serve as a mean of actualization of political ideals or research analysis. With the institutional consent, through practising and prototyping solutions social parties can actually build what in many frameworks remains on paper.

However serious obstacles remain for what concern collaboration between institutions and civil society. The sourcing of funds and the management of budgets, for example, are prerogatives that administrations are unlikely to re-distribute or disclose. This does not apply only for public finance but also for international authorities, private companies, foundations and charities. Bureaucratic and technical issues also characterize the involvement of institutions in participatory projects. An enlarged collaboration is justified by the need of creating stability, however it could result in an obstacle to the coordination of collaboration.

The design of resilient solutions or projects suffers from political turnover and variability. In particular, when it comes to work on vulnerabilities and inequalities, emotional and ideological strategies are enforced. Immigration is now a hot topic, often exploited by administrations for other interests. A change of party in the local or national governance

can results in the end of many successful projects, just because of political reasons. This is very frustrating and it mines the longevity and effectiveness of an inclusive social work.

4.4. Participatory design in the political arena

Which steps should be taken in order to apply emancipatory and collaboration principles, considering that the global political arena seems more and more blind and cynical as it contributes to the perpetration of a system based on inequalities or violence?

It became clear the importance to act on different levels. A first inescapable move must be citizens' awareness. Currently various actions of protest have been carried out, in support of the most vulnerable and right-less groups. This is a chance that must be seized also by immigrants: it could be the right moment to gather in associations and face challenges united. The strength of these associations should be searched in their diversity and inclusiveness. To ensure these characteristics it is important to reiterate the benefits of cooperation on the whole system, as it could help in engaging third actors. The presence of various sectors of society allows the training and exchange of skills that might turn out to be extremely useful in the design and development of actual projects. Through integration in local groups and organizations spread on the territory it become possible to reach citizens and involve them in events of collaboration and encounter. Once again inclusion of diversity can be highlighted as it makes possible to enlarge influence to groups that would be otherwise out of reach. Building bridges towards apparent differences represents a way to undermine the disruptive narrative that is now predominant. The voices of the most marginalised or discriminated must rise. The whole

society, with its communities of interest in the first line needs to stand up against islamophobia, racism, sexism and any other forms of abuse.

It is yet complicated, for immigrants in particular, to join protests and social organizations. Through years it has been developed a system based on precariousness and blackmailing. It has been instilled a sense of fear of possible repercussions that inhibit participation. A constant exposure to the chance of being deported and to the administration discretion fostered the acceptance of a subordinate position (Basso, 2010). Perhaps this situation should induce to work for integration and equality who is in a more stable condition, such as who has regularized his immigration status. The aim is to offer help and support to the ones that are still living in the uncertainty and to create new visions for the future. Activism and participation are gifts that everyone could practice, not necessarily to gain a comeback. The sociologist Marcel Mauss introduces this concept in his essay “The Gift” (Mauss & Cunnison, 1954), where he discusses the importance of the action of donating as a symbol of concern and trust toward the others to restore a sense of community.

It is in fact all about acting locally without forgetting the fact that we are all immersed in a globalised context. The erosion of civil rights concerns everyone, citizens, regular immigrants and sans papiers of every ethnicity. Racism and the consequential inability to work together on equal terms unfortunately is not a western prerogative but it is never a successful approach in the long run.

On the contrary it would be better to gather together in a horizontal global net for mutual support that would allows to elaborate influence tools to defend a plural democracy. A great example could be the one provided by the institution of transnational associations for micro-credit. As previously discussed, budgeting is a

critical point when it comes to design participatory projects, as it structurally limits an equal collaboration. However, training vulnerable populations to save money for future actions proved to be an effective mean of empowerment. It allows a higher degree of emancipation from the global financial and political mechanism while it encourage political activism through the possibility to take action for specific goals (Appadurai, 2011). Among these practices can also fall strategies of participatory budgeting that empower people in processes of participatory design where institutions and private ventures are assisting.

However, the front that requires the greatest joint effort is the one that concerns human rights and immigration laws. As previously discussed, bureaucratic and legal restrictions prevent the realisation of various projects that involve migrants. The situation of refugees and immigrants in general cannot be truly solved without a radical change in the western legal scheme on migration. Participatory design enforced by UNHCR, Europe for Innovation and ONG are precious examples for future practices, however they just serve as small patches considering the huge gaps of the system. Future perspective for migrants will remain negative if a discriminatory legal set, along with the economical and political ones, will not be changed.

> "Benevolence is important, but it is insufficient. [...] It makes us merrily help the survivors or those ones lucky enough to be seen by us, allowing a collective amnesia about the millions who cannot make it to our shores. It is dangerous because it blinds us towards the consequences of immoral policies and treaties which main aim is to secure us in a fortress. A human deprived of rights, suspended from law, is just a bare body, who at most can hope to receive some compassion, a shelter, some relief from suffering and at worst can be let die. For

a human to be a human, benevolence should be the beginning of the story but the end must be rights" Ruba Salih (Salih, 2016)

Enhancing migrants' independence and agency can be fair, however, considering the humiliating and limiting superstructure they live in, it often turns out to be pointless, hypocrite.

CONCLUSION

These thesis has provided information about the application of participatory practices to society and institutions as an ethical and efficient solution to modern challenges. The various positive aspects of participatory design have been analysed and presented through actual successful cases or hypothetical examples. First of all, a plural democratic system benefits from the increasing responsibility of communities. Immigrants can undertake this path to exit their subordinate condition and request equality. It represents also a way to enter society on a peer level, with the knowledge that everyone expertise or knowledge can be useful to intervene and ideate solutions. The establishment of spaces of agonistic debate, encounter or creativity hubs allows the experimentation of future positive practices. These are often grass-roots and highly resilient as the community agreed and collaborated to their enforcement. However, the final results of these collaborative experiences are part of a general process of knowledge sharing and social responsibilisation that contribute itself to enrich societies. Occasions such as trainings, talks, exhibitions or other moments of gathering enhance the increasing of human capital. With the right support from institutions this can turn into a facilitation in the transition from aid toward a generative welfare.

For what concerns the current migration crisis, these experiences acquire even more value. When professionally mediated, confrontation with the other allows local communities to overcome irrational fears or prejudices. It also gives the precious chance to access to different points of view, skills and traditions. With the practice of collaboration and encounter on an equal base, immigrants can regain dignity, ambitions and the necessary information to enter into a new foreign society. The spreading of

these spaces and projects boost the capacity of communities to experiment new future practices and create innovation. Institutions should not see these agency as a threat but as a chance to rebuild trust and collaboration with population.

The sharing of responsibilities and the activation of society cannot be seen as delegation, an economic alternative to aid. In order to overcome the dependency and fragility that can be linked with aid resources still need to be allocated for enforcing participation and emancipation of vulnerable people. Participatory design does not provide a cheaper option in the short term but it allows savings in a long period perspective. People in a vulnerable situation can find space in a community that stimulate action and encourage variety of skills. The support of an inclusive net, where different figures of society collaborate, allows to overcome marginalization toward autonomy. Participation can therefore encourage a positive cycle from which all society can benefit.

However, the ideal application of the principles of participatory design often needs to face reality's fortuity and power structures. Difficulties on the implementation of participation, in particular based on equal terms, are commonly found. Commitment and power concentration often belongs to the ones that administrate founds. Management of funding is rarely brought on in transparency and this can undermine trust. For what concerns migrants and refugees, taking agency can encounter various obstacles. In particular, the legal, political context create a climate of mistrust and disengagement. This is true in particular when the project is provided top-down, more than from local independent organisation, deeply rooted in community.

Indeed, the possibility for immigrants to actively participate in society's innovation and to provide support for newcomers through inclusive projects fades against a global system based on exclusion and individualism. Until immigrants will not have access to

equal opportunities or treatment, will be constrained by bureaucracy or penned in apposite camps it will be difficult to imagine any kind of positive future. In such a situation, possibilities of emancipation and collaboration will be hardly sustained.

A great amount of time, patience and commitment will be required from immigrants and citizens in order to influence governments in the law and policy making process. Participation needs to be ensured on a double level. On the local level, through projects that affects communities' life and concur to create a set of positive practices that can inspire better futures. On the political level, through activation and initiatives that can pressurize institutions to work against discrimination, for an effective inclusive democracy.

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