PRECARIOUS HOUSING IN EUROPE

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Migrants and precarious housing

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4 Migrants and precarious housing

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In this chapter we focus on precarious housing as experienced by migrants, who are among the social groups most severely affected by precariousness, particularly (but not only) in terms of accessing adequate housing. This happens even though many migrants have been living in Europe for many years and Europe has a significant history of immigration. Housing precariousness also affects people with a migrant background who acquired citizenship by birth (in those countries where the *ius soli* normative principle is in place) or through naturalization processes that differ from country to country depending on the legislation in force.

In the first part we will introduce some key terms that are crucial to understanding the main challenges that different groups of migrants face in accessing adequate housing. We will explain some of the main categories used to refer to migrants, which reflect specific conditions and legal statuses produced by the European migration regime that is to say a set of national, European and international laws regulating the arrival and residence of foreigners in Europe. This is not just a categorization exercise: each legal status is associated with specific rights and entitlements (or lack thereof) that strongly influence the level of precariousness that migrants can experience. We will thus explain the main obstacles that migrants face as a result, and the formal or informal housing options they may find accordingly. We will show that people with a migrant background, including foreign-born individuals who have acquired citizenship, hence who are 'nationals', can experience similarly precarious situations and trajectories determined by factors other than the legal status.

Following this, we delve into the barriers that different groups of migrants face in accessing public and private housing markets. In terms of public policy, we focus on i) housing policies, to understand if and how they are (un)able to guarantee migrants' right to adequate housing and equal treatment; ii) reception policies, which include forms of accommodation but not housing in the strict sense, aimed at providing shelter to asylum seekers and refugees. In presenting these policies we also point to the related critiques that have been made of such approaches. As far as the private housing market is concerned, we highlight how discriminatory attitudes and exploitative conditions push migrants into precariousness.

Finally, we will describe informal housing options, that is to say options that are adopted by migrants when public policies and the private real estate market do not meet their housing needs, i.e. squatting, informal settlements in camps, informal subleasing arrangements.

4.1 The labelling of migrants and their representations

Defining and understanding who can be considered "a migrant" is not as easy a task as it might seem at first glance. According to Eurostat, immigration can be defined as "*the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country.*" Similarly, the European Migration Network (EMN) Glossary[1] defines "**migrants**" as people "*who are outside the territory of the State of which they are nationals or citizens and who have resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate*". This definition is very broad and includes individuals such as European migrants, (some) international students, non-European migrants, regular/documented and irregular/undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, rejected asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, and victims of trafficking.

A first observation we can make about migrants from this definition, is that normally they are not citizens of the country in which they live. Etymologically, the concept of citizenship derives from the Latin word *civis* (citizen). As in the Roman city, being a citizen means — at least in the formal sense — being entitled, as a member of a nation-state, to an exclusive set of rights, privileges, and responsibilities. An arbitrary logic underpins the opposition between

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[1] EMN Glossary is an online resource of terms related to migration and asylum in Europe. Unless otherwise specified the definitions in this chapter draw from EMN Glossary (available at this link: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-glossary_en and included in the e-module attached to this chapter).

'national' and 'non-national' and all discriminations against immigrants are linked back to this fundamental differentiation enacted by law, as a supreme justification of discriminations (Sayad, 2006; Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2003; Brubaker, 1992). As Joppke (2010) sharply observes, citizenship is formal and institutional and is far more immune to charges of "prejudice". Yet, non-citizens are more likely to experience precarious conditions in many areas of everyday life. Exclusionary drives against migrants are formally rooted (and justified) on the assumption that non-citizens should be entitled to limited rights.

However, non-citizens are a very heterogeneous group, and the rights to which each migrant is entitled depend *in primis* on their legal status. Before introducing the main categories into which migrants are subdivided, we have to consider that it is not always possible to clearly distinguish among them. Furthermore, the same person can easily shift from one status to another during their life-time and stay in any country of destination. In many cases there are overlaps in categories. For example, an unaccompanied minor can also be an asylum seeker; a rejected asylum seeker can become undocumented; a victim of trafficking can both be documented as well as undocumented.

A crucial element for the migrant population concerns the possession (or not) of a valid permit to live in the given country, i.e. a document issued by the competent national authority to a non-national stating the right to reside in the concerned state during the period of validity of the permit. Being in possession of a permit, that might be issued on different grounds (e.g. for work, study, family reunification, international protection etc.), implies having access to given rights. Similarly, the absence of a permit or visa often means the removal or lack of such rights. Migrants who hold a valid residence permit are defined as "**regular**" or "**documented**". This category includes migrant workers and their families, international students as well as people with refugee status (or other forms of European or national protection, such as subsidiary and humanitarian protection). When referring to migration in Europe, as we are doing in this chapter, it is also important to keep in mind that the European Union established freedom of movement for citizens of all member states. As a consequence, there is a relevant difference between mobile EU citizens and third-country migrants, formally defined as "third countries nationals" (TCNs), as they are entitled to differential residence permits. As of January 1 2020, the number of regular migrants from third countries living in EU Member States was 23 million, representing 5.1 % of the EU population (Eurostat).

In the global context, "**irregular**"**/** "**undocumented migrants**" are non-nationals who enter and/or stay in a country without a regular document or permit. In the EU context, this category may include TCNs who entered a European country without a regular document, overstayed a visa or failed to leave after being ordered to do so. The irregular population also includes people born to irregular migrant parents, since most European countries do not have birth-right citizenship (*ius soli*). The number of undocumented migrants cannot be accurately captured by statistics as this is a population on the margins of legality and, as such, a population that is resistant to survey processes. As a result, the size of undocumented populations across Europe can only be estimated. According to a Pew Research Center Report (2019), TCNs living in Europe without authorization reached a peak, between 4.1 million and 5.3 million, in 2016 and has been decreasing since then.

Another broad differentiation applied to migrants relates to the different reasons to migrate. For example, looking for better life opportunities or fleeing from serious threats to their life and liberty (i.e. escape from human rights abuse). Among these, forced migrants include asylum seekers and holders of (inter)national protection. In the global context, an **asylum**

seeker "*is a person who seeks protection from persecution or serious harm in a country other than her own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments. In the EU context, [it is] a TCN or stateless person who has made an application for protection under the Geneva Refugee Convention and Protocol in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken*". The application for asylum can lead to a positive or negative outcome. A negative outcome implies the rejection of the application and can lead to removal or the becoming irregular within a country. A positive outcome can lead to the status of refugee or subsidiary protection or humanitarian protection.

In line with the refugees convention signed in Geneva in 1951, the **refugee status** is recognised to a person who, "*is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group*", or a stateless person, who "*being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it*". The basic principle that lies at the core of this definition is that of non-refoulement that forbids a country receiving asylum seekers from returning them to a country in which they would be in danger of persecution. However, this principle is hardly mentioned or considered in public discussions.

Subsidiary protection can be granted to a TCN or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to their country of origin — or in the case of a stateless person to their country of former habitual residence — would face a real risk of serious danger. **Humanitarian protection** in the EU is a form of non-harmonized national protection.

The above terms associated with categories of migrants and legal statutes are critical in understanding migration related issues and have consequences for social inclusion and access to housing. Research on migration in the EU has documented hierarchies of more or less included migrants, created by a) the complexity of co-existing migration, integration, labour and human rights policies and b) tensions between the practices of different levels of governance, with some cities granting access to social membership even for those who are labelled as "illegal" by the nation-state. This "complex stratification" (Carmel & Paul, 2013) is further intensified because of the multidimensionality of migrant civic, economic and social rights as well as discretionary practices on the street-level (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2020). Even though we try to work with these established categories in the following section and demonstrate the consequences they have for accessing housing markets in Europe, it needs to be stressed that the boundaries among them are often blurred. Additionally, although these terms are useful, they should be used with critical awareness, because categories de facto produce labels that have become politicised (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Zetter, 1991), particularly in recent years. Studies on asylum applicants in Europe demonstrate that the production and reproduction of labels (Van Aken 2005; Isin 2008; Zetter 1991) correspond to unequal treatment with respect to access to rights and regularization of the legal status (Fassin 2012; Pinelli 2015), work and housing (Manocchi, 2014; Marchetti 2020), and it can be associated with violations of human rights.

Besides bearing in mind how the legal status of migrants affects access to housing, it is important to highlight that not all migrants living in Europe are perceived as such. As Delgado (2010, p.26) observes, "the migrant does not exist except as a conceptual figure". In the

social imaginary of western countries, where immigration is often perceived to be a problem, the epithet 'migrant' is often applied to people perceived as having a series of negative characteristics and, as Balibar (2007) states, always conceived as figures of "lack" (of status, rights, residence permits, etc.) with respect to citizens. According to Delgado, two characteristics define who is classified as a 'migrant'. First, migrants are those who are recognised, and recognisable, as being 'different' in some way to citizens, as marked by aspects of otherness, foreignness or as 'outsiders'. This may be due to legal status, race or ethnicity, religion, language, or cultural norms. These all mark individuals as potential migrants. Second, Delgado argues that migrants are marked by their relatively poverty and low economic status,[2] one effect of which is that migrants are more likely to require the support of public assistance and services, and thus are seen as competitors for resources perceived as scarce (Delgado, 2010).

This combination of socio-cultural difference and economic insecurity, shapes which social groups are understood as migrants, and the forms of stigma that are often attached to such labels. Perceived socio-cultural distance from citizens (regarding, for example, religious beliefs and practices, ways of dressing, uses of public spaces) play a key role in shaping perceptions of who is a migrant and how migrants are treated and viewed. Most significantly, racism remains a fundamental driving force in many forms of anti-immigrant and xenophobic sentiment, with those perceived as 'migrants' often coded in racialised terms. Despite legislation to protect rights and address prejudice, racial discrimination and abuse remain persistent features of European societies, with distinctions of class, access to resources, and treatment by public authorities being embedded in systems of racial inequality and privilege. These dynamics further shape how different social groups are understood in relation to migration, with migrants from white settler countries (such as Australia, Canada, or the US) often being positioned as 'desirable' or 'high value' migrants to the detriment of others. These groups are more likely to be seen as 'assets' as opposed to 'threats' to European societies. For other migrant groups, stigmatisation through press coverage, the criminalisation of migration, and harassment from authorities, can combine to focus attention on migrant groups perceived as 'dangerous', 'illegal', or 'unwelcome'. The upshot being that these migrants are exposed to greater vulnerability, both to discrimination in access to housing, but also to exploitative labour conditions, physical and sexual abuse, and hostility from authorities. Thus, whilst migrants may face forms of precariousness in housing that are distinct from those facing citizens, there are multiple differences between migrant groups and their treatment, as distinctions of race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion, all combine to pattern how, and if, migrants experience discrimination.

Box 4.1: Asylum seeker flows to Europe

The number of asylum seekers in Europe has risen considerably in the period 2011-2020. The number of asylum applications has risen from 225,000, in 2008, to 471,000, in 2020, with a peak in 2015 (1,282,000) and 2016 (1,221,000). Afterwards, a constant drop has been recorded, with a total of 471,000, in 2020 (Eurostat, 2021). In 2017, Germany was the largest recipient of asylum claims, with a total of 198,300 (a 73% decline from a total of 722,400, in 2016 and a total of 441,900, in 2015), followed by Italy, with 126,500 (UNHCR, 2017).

2015 was characterised by a notable increase in flows, with respect to previous decades. With the growth of arrivals, the theme of asylum seeker and refugee reception gained significant political attention, both at European and national levels. This time frame has been referred to as the year of the "refugee crisis"

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[2] Foreigners of higher status and with more economic means are not only hardly considered as migrants, but their arrival is often even actively promoted as part of internationalisation strategies.

or "humanitarian crisis", causing confusion on whether the crisis was caused by refugees or governments (Glorius & Doomernik, 2020). It was rather a "migration reception crisis" (Rosenberger & Mueller, 2020), in fact, as it concerned the challenges faced by governments and administrations in dealing with asylum seeker arrivals not only in 2015 but also in the following years. The concept of "crisis" has been associated with the quantitative dimension of flows and the implicit understanding these new arrivals would represent a "burden" to nation states, as they would require welfare service provision and engagement to support migrants' inclusion into society (Scholten & Van Ninsen, 2015). Yet this perspective frames recent events as a "crisis" predominantly for European nation-states and their political systems, while overlooking the global dimension: while European media have been mostly focused on asylum seeker movements within Europe and the perception of a large segment of public opinion is that Europe is the region mostly affected by refugee mobility globally, refugee figures internationally highlight that the majority of refugees are hosted in the Global South. In addition, critical scholars like Andersson (2016) have demonstrated how an emergency frame, "in repeatedly presenting the migratory situation as an 'unprecedented crisis', enables a two-faced reactive response of 'humanitarian' action and more policing" and is complicit in the "tragedy" it tries to fight (ibid, p. 1060).

Asylum seeker flows are not a new phenomenon, nor were they a new phenomenon in 2015. In the early 1990s, asylum was increasingly politicized and problematized as an alternative form of economic immigration to Europe (Huysmans, 2000). Growing flows had been recorded years earlier, in 2011, with the outbreak of the civil uprisings associated with the Arab Spring. If we go further back in time, countries such as Italy, but also the Netherlands and the UK, faced the arrival of asylum seekers from the Balkans in the late 1990s, following the Balkan conflicts, that resulted in a million asylum seekers seeking refuge (see for example Rosenberger & Mueller, 2020; Bona, 2016). Similarly, we can think of how the international refugee regime began in the wake of the Second World War, as the Geneva Convention was introduced in 1951, granting the right to asylum for those displaced by conflict and persecution.

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Box 4.2: The routes of forced migrants

Asylum seeker and refugee movements concern the whole world. At the end of 2019, almost 80 million people were displaced worldwide (UNHCR, 2019). This figure includes asylum seekers (4.2 million) and refugees (26 million), but also internally displaced people (IDP) (45.7 million), by far the largest group. This IDP group includes people who never cross the borders of their own country and undertake internal migration movements.

As far as Europe is concerned, asylum seeker movements have followed 5 main routes: The Eastern land route, the Western Balkan route, the Eastern Mediterranean route, the Western Mediterranean route and the Central Mediterranean route that has been the deadliest with over 16,000 casualties. The majority of movements have originated from 5 countries, all characterised by political unrest, including: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar (UNHCR, 2019). Another relevant figure regards the total number of refugees hosted worldwide. The largest hosted group is in Turkey (over 3 million), followed by Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda and Germany, the only EU country figuring in the top-5 list (ibidem). Although European media have been mostly focused on asylum seeker movements within Europe and the perception of a large segment of public opinion is that Europe is the region mostly affected by refugee mobility globally refugee figures internationally highlight that the majority of refugees are hosted in the Global South.

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Figure 4.1: **Map on numbers of migrants for the main migration routes in 2015 and 2018**
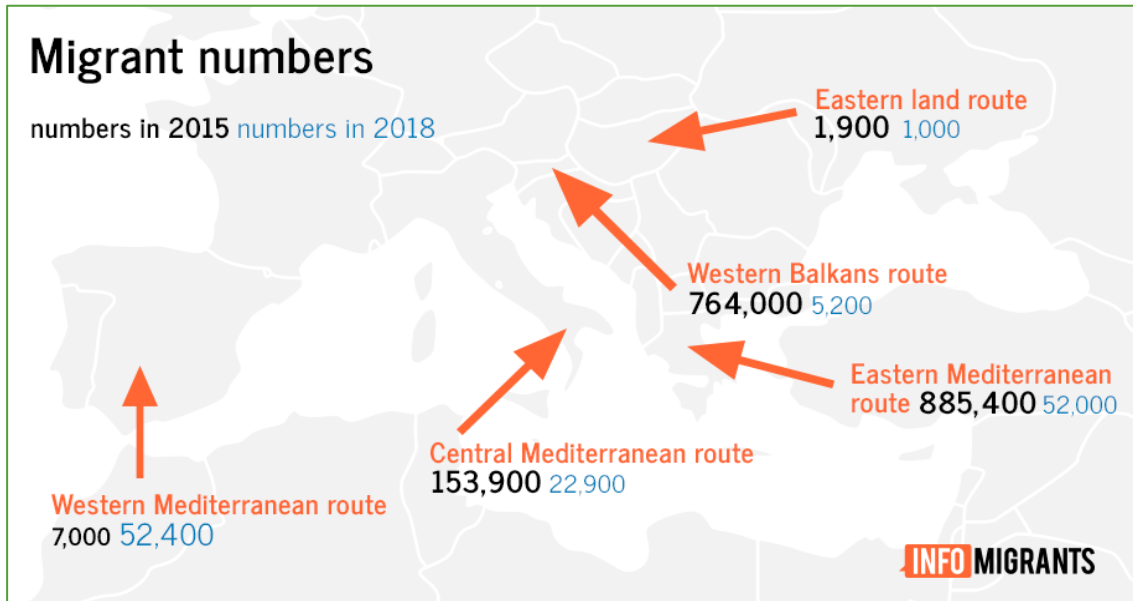
Info Migrants, 2019[3]

4.2 Migrants' integration and barriers in accessing housing

As stated throughout this book, we consider housing a basic right for all individuals. For migrants, housing is, if possible, even more important since it is among the primary assets in their process of socio-spatial inclusion and rooting in their host country (Ager & Strang, 2008). Housing is a fundamental resource for other social activities as it constitutes an important anchor for developing a sense of belonging to a place and a society, especially for those arriving from outside. As Muñoz (2018) suggests, with specific reference to Buenos Aires, accessible and adequate housing is essential not only to ensure people's well-being, safety and health, but also to provide them with a stable base from which to interact with others, feel at home and start or consolidate the process of integration. Without access to stable affordable housing, that allows long-term engagement in homemaking practices and access to urban services and resources, the right to the city cannot be enjoyed (ibidem).

Housing is thus not only a mere physical space, but a place affecting relationships (with the neighbourhood and with the wider socio-spatial urban fabric), positive as well as negative perceptions and forms of stigmatisation and actual chances of inclusion. For migrants, it is also the private space from which coming into contact with the "host" society, negotiating over time, through successive "thresholds of domesticity" (Boccagni & Brighenti, 2017), spaces of survival, autonomy, recognition and sometimes well-being. Being able to access adequate housing is thus only the first, but essential, step towards home-making. For these reasons, we can affirm that access to housing is a fundamental right.

Box 4.3: International Framework protecting migrants' rights

The right to fair treatment, equal opportunities and not to be subject to discriminatory acts, practices and behaviour irrespective of citizenship is safeguarded by several legal instruments, starting from the Constitutions of most European States [e.g. the Italian Constitution which not only upholds the principle

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[3] Available: https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/15005/changing-journeys-migrant-routes-to-europe

of 'equal social dignity' (without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, personal and social conditions) in Article 3, but also provides that one of the 'tasks of the Republic' is 'to remove economic and social obstacles that effectively limit the freedom and equality of citizens'. The legal status of foreigners in each Member State is then governed by a set of laws which must comply with the international conventions and treaties to which they have adhered.

We recall here below some of the most relevant International/European norms affirming the universal right to adequate housing:

- The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)* is a multilateral treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966, that came into force in 1976. In article 11, it recognizes "the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family" explicitly including in this the right to adequate housing

- *The 1949 ILO Convention No. 97 on Migrant Workers* which in Article 6(a) requires states who ratified it "to apply, without discrimination in respect of nationality, race, religion or sex, to immigrants lawfully within its territory, treatment no less favourable than that which applies to its own nationals". Among various matters, "accommodation" is explicitly included.

- *The Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin* applies to all persons, as regards both the public and private sectors, including public bodies, in relation to: "access to and supply of goods and services which are available to the public, including housing" (Art. 3.1.h). EU member states differ in how they have transposed the EU anti-discrimination directive into national law. In the German context, with little prior anti-discrimination legislation, the housing lobby introduced a clause to the national law. It allows for exceptions that serve to maintain "the stable social relations of inhabitants and balanced patterns of settlement and economic, social and cultural relations" (Münch, 2009).

Specific reference to rights to housing of children, considered as a particularly vulnerable group, is made by the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). According to Art. 27:* 1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. 2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development. 3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.

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Having introduced the difference between documented and undocumented migrants, we will now outline the different housing options that are available to these groups. These include both formal and informal forms of housing. With **formal housing** we refer to both social/public housing and the private real estate market either for renting or purchasing. Due to the numerous barriers and obstacles that migrants face in accessing formal housing – as we will explain below – they are often pushed into more precarious accommodation, that is sometimes illegal or at the edge of legality (examples include squatting, occupations, self-construction, subleasing, informal guest-host relations, etc.). This is what we mean by **informal housing**, a category that encompasses all those housing options that fall outside governments' regulations and laws governing real estate transactions. It needs to be said that the structures of European housing markets — and therefore the availability of affordable housing — vary widely across the continent, as noted and discussed in Chapter 1.

In the matrix below, we summarise the main housing options for documented and undocumented migrants. Precariousness occurs in different forms in each one of the quadrants.

Table 4.1: Matrix on housing options for documented and undocumented migrants

Housing typology	Documented migrants	Undocumented migrants
FORMAL	Chances to access: ▪ *public/social housing* ▪ *private real estate market* ▪ *reception centres/shelters* Possible problems: • *overcrowding* • *poor quality/ old/unhealthy facilities*	Few possible solutions: ▪ *public/private dormitories* ▪ *civil society practices (house sharing, hosting in private accommodation)*
INFORMAL	Risk to end up in: ▪ *self-built shelters (slums)* ▪ *squatting (in public/private buildings)* ▪ *illegal subletting* ▪ *homelessness*	No other options than: ▪ *self-built shelters (slum)* ▪ *squatting* ▪ *illegal subletting* *homelessness*

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At least in theory, documented migrants can access the formal housing market (both private and public), since having a regular residence permit is the main prerequisite for signing a legal contract for renting or buying a housing unit. Undocumented migrants on the other hand hardly have any other choice than seeking informal options. However, there are barriers that contribute to excluding even documented migrants from the formal housing market: from insufficient income and purchasing power to overt discrimination in spite of the EU anti-discrimination directive (see also Chapter 1 on housing marking discrimination).

Migrants' vulnerability to housing precariousness is connected not only to their legal status but also to other crosscutting variables, such as their country of origin, economic status, age, gender, race, and religion. The interrelationship of these varied factors in vulnerability is known as "*intersectionality*" and, more recently, migration scholars have further developed this account of multiple and overlapping forms of vulnerability, diversity, and difference, specifically with reference to urban contexts, under the framework of "*superdiversity*" (Vertovec, 2007). Structural factors can further exacerbate (or alleviate) the barriers that migrants face in accessing adequate housing, including the characteristics of the welfare state, of the real estate and labour market, the absence (or presence) of social networks to rely on or of key institutions and stakeholders that hinder (or promote) migrants' inclusion and equal opportunities.

Regarding formal housing, while the real estate market might be exclusionary, discriminatory and even exploitative (i.e. asking higher rents to foreigners than to nationals), in the public sector challenges are caused by the lack of policies paying specific attention to the housing needs of non-citizens. Public policies can also be discriminatory. This is the case when public housing authorities intentionally introduce criteria excluding migrants from social housing, such as the number of years of residence in the concerned country (or even region, or city). While such "locals first" waiting lists are officially colour-blind, they nevertheless structurally discriminate against many immigrants for whom it may be impossible to fulfil this minimum requirement (see also 2.1.2). Regarding informal housing, besides representing the only

option for many migrants in difficult socio-economic conditions, it also exacerbates their socio-spatial exclusion fuelling a vicious circle of marginalization.

4.2.1 Public housing policies and social housing

In this section, we look in closer detail at public policies supporting (or discriminating against) migrants, considering both social housing and other forms of public support instruments, such as rental vouchers, rent subsidies etc. Before delving into the topic, it should be recalled that people's entitlement to welfare services normally depends on welfare regimes: the social-democratic regimes (typical of northern European countries, such as Scandinavian countries) are considered more generous, and tend to perform better in terms of migrants' social protection, as compared to the liberal regimes with lower state intervention, conservative corporatist regimes based on insurance contributions or traditional family or community orientated regimes of Southern Europe (Morissens & Sainsbury 2005; Sainsbury, 2012). Other variables that are relevant to determine welfare entitlements relate to immigration policy and incorporation regimes (Morris, 2002; Sainsbury, 2012). The former refers to norms regulating immigrants' access to residence permits, work permits, and citizenship, and their participation in economic, cultural and political life. The latter comprise specific rules for migrants with specific legal status: asylum seekers, refugees, family members, unaccompanied minors, and victims of trafficking. In other words, there is a stratification of rights across migrants' groups, based on their legal status: refugees' rights are often similar to those of citizens, yet asylum seekers' rights are much more limited (Sainsbury, 2012).

Despite the great differences across Europe in public housing policies, traditions and housing stocks, migrants – and TCN in particular - are often affected by higher levels of vulnerability to precariousness compared to the native-born population. Eurostat data on the integration of migrants in the EU-27 (Migrant integration statistics – housing)[4] provide a picture of the disadvantages in housing conditions affecting documented migrants. In 2019:

- the home ownership rate among TCNs was much lower than that registered for nationals, i.e. 71% versus 36% for citizens of other EU Member States and 24 % for TCNs[5].
- TCNs were more than twice as likely to live in an overcrowded household as national citizens. The **overcrowding rate**[6] was 16.6 % for national citizens, somewhat higher (22.0%) for migrants from other EU Member States and noticeably higher (36%) for TCNs.
- The **housing cost overburden rate**[7] for national citizens was 8.8% versus 18,8% for migrants from other EU member States, and up to 24,7% for TCNs.

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[4] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migrant_integration_statistics_-_housing
[5] All Eurostat data referred to in this paragraph refers to the population aged 20-64 years.
[6] The overcrowding rate is the ratio between the number of rooms and number of household members. It is often closely connected to other social exclusion and deprivation indicators, in particular those related to income.
[7] i.e. the percentage of the population living in households where the total housing costs ('net' of housing allowances) represent more than 40% of disposable income ('net' of housing allowances).

More generally, for several years Eurostat data has revealed that TCNs living in the EU are at a higher "risk of poverty or social exclusion"[8]. In 2019, 45% of TCNs were in this group, compared with 26% of migrants from other EU Member States and 20% of national citizens.[9]

Although migrants – and TCNs in particular – clearly appear to be highly vulnerable, the figures noted above show how precarious housing also affects a significant proportion of national citizens too. Not surprisingly, positive discrimination, i.e. policies targeting migrant populations (or ethnic minorities), normally fuel conflicts, intolerance and discontent among citizens, who feel that –due to their status as citizens – they should have a priority over 'outsiders' in receiving public support and services. In this regard, it should be noted that any (redistributive) public housing policy is financed through taxation and that, although they are not citizens, migrants also contribute to the economies of the countries in which they settle, through their work activities, and through the taxes they pay like all other workers. In some European countries, particularly those where immigration is a more recent phenomenon, migrants are on average much younger than other groups in the population, meaning that they contribute more to taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits (e.g. for health services or pensions).

Based on the principle of non-discrimination, at the core of all European democracies, public policies have a crucial role in facilitating access to adequate housing for all disadvantaged groups (migrants included) as well as in reducing housing precariousness and the risk of eviction. They do so through measures, such as social housing and targeted subsidies alleviating housing costs.

The 2016 European Commission's analysis of statistics on housing and migrant integration[10] showed that in a few countries, housing subsidies alleviated the housing cost overburden. The gap between immigrant and native-born households has been greatly reduced after adjustment for subsidies in Finland; it diminished significantly in France, the Netherlands and the UK. However, available subsidies had no real effect for immigrants in countries such as Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

Nevertheless,

1) public housing policies (in general) do not appear to be a priority for European public authorities, as indicated in the 2020 FEANTSA Report on housing exclusion[11]. Europe's government expenditures on housing are split between support for housing construction and housing-related social benefits (in the social protection budget). In both cases the percentage on total expenditure is minimal: the European expenditure for funding the construction of housing and public utilities accounted for 1.3% of the total governmental expenditure in 2019, and the public expenditure on housing in

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[8]Eurostat includes in this group those who are at least in one of the following three conditions:(i) at risk of poverty after social transfers (income poverty), (ii) severely materially deprived, or (iii) living in households with very low work intensity, and provides indicators to measure each one of these conditions
[9]https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210202-2
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migrant_integration_statistics_-_at_risk_of_poverty_and_social_exclusion&stable=1
[10]https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intdossier/immigrant-housing-in-europe-overview
[11] Fifth Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe, Foundation Abbé Pierre – FEANTSA (2020)

2017 accounted for 1.97% of the total spent on social protection benefits, going up to 2.10% in 2018 and 2.15% in 2019[12].

2) Forms of "institutional discrimination"[13] against non-nationals are not so uncommon in Member States' policies, often fuelled by populist pressures that use migrants as a scapegoat for most social, security and economic problems and for the (perceived) decline of the welfare state.

European countries are very different both in terms of the situation of the housing sector and in terms of their migration history. Next, we will present an overview of how public housing policies can be more or less inclusive towards migrants. We provide examples drawing from Italy, the Netherlands and the UK because these countries exemplify some of the main models of housing policy in northern and southern Europe.

The marginality of the public housing sector in Italy

In general, the Italian housing market fits into the Mediterranean model (similarly to that of Greece, Spain and Portugal), which is characterised by high levels of home ownership (for which Italy, with 70% of homes owned, is second only to Spain) and by a structural weakness of the social housing sector (Tosi, 2017; Alietti & Agustoni, 2018). However, contrary to other Mediterranean countries, the public housing sector in Italy does at least exist. It was promoted through dedicated national plans after World War II, aimed at providing housing but also at pushing the national economy through the development of the building sector. Since the mid 1960s, investments have been greatly reduced. A large number of public housing units have been sold in the past few decades and part of the remaining housing stock is not assignable because it is obsolescent or fails to meet contemporary building standards and regulations (74% of it was built before 1981). These are among the main reasons why the amount of available public housing is today far below the overall demand. The arrival and growth of the migrant population took place within this chronic crisis in the housing welfare within which competition among the poorest segments of the population for access to this scarce good has always been high. According to Federcasa (the Italian federation for public and social housing), in 2016, there were only 2.2 million people (out of a total of 60 million) living in public houses in Italy – 3 to 4% of the whole housing market – of which nearly 12% were non-Italians. A figure that, although higher than the incidence on the total population (8.3% in the same year), one would expect to be much higher given the chronic wage gap between Italians and migrants (on average 24%, but up to 35,5% if only non-EU citizens are taken into consideration), the concentration of migrants in less qualified and less well paid jobs (in which 37% of foreigners versus 8% of Italians are employed) and the relatively higher number of children in migrant families compared to Italian ones (Idos, 2019).

In terms of laws and regulations establishing eligibility criteria for access, since the late 1990s competence over public housing has been devolved to regional authorities. Some Regions – particularly those led by the "Lega", a centre-right xenophobic party– that has been focusing its electoral campaigns and political discourses on the slogan 'locals first' and 'let's stop the

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[12]Eurostat (2019) ESSPROS social protection data, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/social-protection/data/database

[13] Institutional discrimination means "discriminatory policies and practices favourable to a dominant group and unfavourable to another group that are systematically embedded in the existing structure of society in the form of norms." (Open Education Society Dictionary, available at www.t.ly/KUzW)

invasion' – have introduced ad hoc criteria, formally neutral but with the implicit (publicly touted) aim of excluding migrants from the waiting lists for public housing. Among the most common criteria introduced by regional administrations are the obligation for applicants i) to prove that they have been residing in the country – or in the region itself – continuously for at least 5 or even 10 years[14]; ii) to present certificates issued by a public authority in their country of origin stating that they do not own property there. While the former excludes not only "newcomers" but also all those who cannot prove that they have lived in the country or region for so long (because they may have spent some periods as undocumented, as is often the case, or spent some periods commuting between Italy and their country of origin; or moved among Italian regions), the latter is very hard to be obtained because in most cases such certification simply does not exist in countries of origin, while in others migrants (particularly those who left their countries due to persecution) are not in the position to return and gain such a document.

Although some recent judgments of the Constitutional Court have declared similar criteria unconstitutional, on the grounds that they are discriminatory, the approach of 'discriminating by law' is widespread in housing and in other welfare fields. In addition to these barriers, patently designed to exclude them, migrants have to deal – like Italians – with the general scarcity of adequate and affordable housing itself, for which there is always a long list of eligible households.

Social housing in The Netherlands (Ilse Van Liempt)[15]

The Netherlands is known for its high proportion of affordable social housing. As early as the mid-1800s the first 'charitable' housing was built, mostly by owners of factories for their workers. Later housing associations were started divided by the 'pillars' that were socially dividing Dutch society at the time (Liberals, Socialists, Catholics and Protestants). Each pillar built housing for its own members in the first instance. At the end of the 1800s, this model was resisted and the state was pressured to do something about poverty and to become responsible for providing access to housing. The idea of 'public housing' emerged in response. The Housing Act, in 1901, marked the transition to government supported housing in the Netherlands.

In practice, however, public housing turned out to be not so much a national government task but rather a municipal task. No national regulations were introduced on public housing, contrary to the United Kingdom, for example. After the First and Second World Wars, municipalities started to build their own houses as the need for housing became very urgent, considering that many houses had been destroyed. Soon funding became a problem and when governments started to invest less and less in the construction of housing, the private sector stepped in more prominently.

Since the 1970s, housing policies increasingly focused on home ownership. Mortgage interest deduction and public housing became less of a priority. Still today, however, almost

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[14] Sometimes, the regional legislative framework on public housing also leaves a certain margin of freedom to municipal authorities (who are the ones in charge of periodically issuing the call for applications for social housing located in their territory) to further tighten this criterion, e.g. by increasing the number of years of residence required.
[15] More historical details on the Dutch context are available in Box 4.4.

one in three houses in the Netherlands is a social housing unit and you can find social housing anywhere, including in the centre of many large Dutch cities.

The Dutch social rental sector is one of the largest in Europe and considerably bigger than those in France (19% of the total), the UK (15%) and Germany (only 5%) (BPD, 2016; Whitehead et al., 2016). Municipalities in the Netherlands also actively promote social rental housing. This ensures that low-income households can remain in the city and it "keeps urban segregation within bounds". But there are allocation issues, with some social rental housing being occupied by households earning too much relative to their rent. Policy measures have helped reduce this mismatch in recent years, but the percentage of high-income tenants with low rents was still 18%, in 2015 (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2016).

At the same time, social housing is being demolished or sold, especially in the centre of towns, locations where profit can be made. Since the 1990s, housing corporations have become independent and privatized and there are no municipal housing companies any longer.

There is a large body of studies which has investigated the housing positions and careers of non-Western migrants who have entered the country some decades ago, particularly from the Mediterranean countries such as Turkey and Morocco and/or post-colonial countries like Surinam and the Antilles (Bolt et al. 2008; Groot et al., 2013; Kullberg & Kulu-Glasgow, 2009; Özüekren & Van Kempen, 2002; Zorlu et al., 2014). Most of these studies show a large and persistent gap in rent and homeownership. Other Dutch studies point out the higher level of homeownership among high skilled labour migrants (Bontje et al., 2016; Sleutjes & Musterd, 2016). There are no specific obstacles for migrants to get access to social housing, in theory, but waiting times can be long. The average waiting time in the Netherlands for a house from the social housing sector differs across regions but in the largest cities it can amount to up to nine years. In practice, this means that newcomers to the Netherlands have a hard time getting access to social housing because they have not built up sufficient waiting time. This, combined with an already shrinking social housing market, means that those who have already established themselves in the housing market are better off than those who are new to the system.

The UK housing context and migration (Jonathan Darling)[16]

In response to concerns over how immigration would impact welfare services, the 1971 Immigration Act limited access to homeless services and welfare on the basis of immigration status and access to housing was restricted for migrant groups, both in the private rental sector and in social housing. A combination of overt discrimination by housing officers and associations, and a stock of social housing not able to meet the needs of new migrants, served to push migrants into the private sector throughout the 1970s and 80s. Here discrimination also impacted migrants' ability to access mortgages and to find properties outside lower value inner city neighbourhoods (McKee et al., 2021). The decision to sell off social housing through the 'Right to Buy' policy throughout the 1980s served to both diminish social housing stock further and to increase waiting lists for accommodation, whilst also benefiting primarily white working-class households who had gained social housing places decades earlier due, in part, to the racialised discrimination of social housing allocations (Ginsburg, 1992). The 'Right to Buy' policies were intended to encourage upward social

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[16] More historical details on the UK context are available in Box 4.4.

mobility through enabling social housing tenants who had lived in a property for a significant period of time to purchase the property at a reduced cost, thereby providing added security to tenants, and enabling investment in often marginal housing markets. One effect was to produce a new group of homeowners and to meet a desire for homeownership among lower income residents, with those qualifying often being longstanding tenants from white working-class backgrounds. For those unable to access the 'Right to Buy, the effect was to sustain a system in which social housing became increasingly limited in supply and very often out of reach for new migrant communities.

In the UK, social housing is provided by a combination of local authorities and non-profit housing associations. In 2018, social housing made up 17% of dwellings in the UK, a significant reduction from the post-war development of social housing and a factor further increasing pressure on housing allocations. As a result, since 2013, local authorities have been advised to prioritise applicants for social housing who can demonstrate 'a close association with their local area', often meaning a residency requirement of at least two years in an area (Guentner et al., 2016, p.398). In practice, many councils in London now have five-year residency qualification requirements, thus further limiting access not only for migrants but also British-born citizens who may seek to move for employment or training purposes. Whilst strict residency requirements are relatively recent in legislative terms, they have been informally practiced since the late 1980s as demand on social housing was argued to lead housing officers to make discretionary choices on housing allocations, often at the expense of new migrant communities (Lukes et al., 2018; Guentner et al., 2016).

Unlike a number of other European countries, the UK has had no formal settlement policies for migrants, with the exception of recent moves to disperse asylum seekers (a system we discuss further in section 4.3.3). Instead, patterns of migrant distribution in the UK are associated with labour market opportunities, social networks, and community connections. Historically, migration has been to larger towns and cities, initially to work in industry and more recently in the service economy. With access to social housing severely limited, migrants continue to be disproportionately concentrated at the lower end of the private rental sector in the UK, often in weak positions to negotiate the housing market and enduring overcrowded and unjustly expensive housing (Powell & Robinson, 2019). Indeed, the most recent UK census highlights that ethnic minority households in the UK are more likely to live in overcrowded housing, damp housing conditions, and to rent from a social or private landlord (McKee et al., 2021).

Most recently, the structural inequalities of housing in the UK have been made starker as a result of government policies to create a 'hostile environment' for migrants in an effort to encourage voluntary returns for visa over-stayers and those in the country without a legal right to remain (Webber, 2019). Such 'hostile environment' measures have been shown to have highly discriminatory impacts for all migrants, not only those without regular legal status. A clear example is the role that the 'Right to Rent' plays in the UK Immigration Act 2016. This act requires landlords to check the immigration status of their tenants, and prohibits landlords from offering tenancies to those not living legally in the UK. Failing to check immigration status, or offering tenancy to unqualified tenants, entails significant fines for landlords and even the threat of up to five years in jail. Right to Rent provisions also allow for the immediate eviction of tenants found not to have legal documentation, thus undermining housing security (McKee et al., 2021, p.94).

The Right to Rent highlights two factors shaping the precariousness of housing opportunities for migrants in the UK. First, research has highlighted that those on low incomes, without British passports, and those from ethnic minority backgrounds feel the discriminatory effects of the UK Immigration Act 2016 most acutely. For example, the Residential Landlord Association found that in a survey of 3,000 of their members, 44% were less likely to rent to someone without a British passport as a result of Right to Rent. 53% were less likely to rent to someone with limited time to remain in the UK, and 20% were less likely to rent to an EU national (Mykkanen & Simcock, 2018). It is in these wider impacts that the Right to Rent makes housing increasingly precarious for all migrant groups, not simply those named as the targets of a 'hostile environment'.

Second, the Right to Rent illustrates the complexities of housing policy and migration in the UK, as it is a legal provision that applies only to England, and not in the devolved nations of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (McKee et al., 2017). For whilst immigration policy is a matter reserved under the control of the UK government in Westminster, control over housing policy is devolved to administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, thus creating a tension between housing rights and migration policy in these nations (Crawford et al., 2016). The effect is to create a situation in which the tenants' rights of migrants in the devolved nations can be more forcefully protected than those in England, thereby exacerbating the unevenness of precarious housing conditions in different parts of the country.

4.2.2 Access to the private housing market

In the previous section we discussed the challenges migrants' face in accessing public housing; for the UK, we also introduced public policies preventing migrants' access to the housing market. It is easy to understand that the weaker (or the more discriminatory) public housing policies are, the more migrants have to turn to the private housing market to find a dwelling. In this sense, migrant groups often follow similar patterns, and challenges, of housing market access that exist for other low-income groups, including citizens. Yet, the private housing market varies across countries and it is a sector that provides various opportunities, from luxurious rental apartments at high costs to run-down overcrowded flats. In some countries, like Germany, the sector includes actors such as large institutional landlords, with a social mandate, that provide for their employees, as well as the church and arms-length municipal housing associations. Their stock is considered "private" because it is not social housing and limited to certain target groups, but nevertheless affordable (Münch, 2010, p. 178).

Obstacles and conditions

Of course, the economic situation is the first factor that determines people's ability to access adequate housing in the private market. While migrants share the same difficulties as other groups in terms of affordability, we must bear in mind that many migrants are confined to low-income jobs, so their risk of ending up in precarious housing is greater. Another basic issue for accessing housing, as mentioned, is the legal status, since it constitutes a prerequisite for signing any formal rental or purchase contract.

Migrants' level of knowledge/experience of how the housing market works in destination countries is also a key competence that favour access to housing and the permanence in a given dwelling, either with a rental contract or after purchase. A clear understanding of which

formal/informal channels should be used to search for affordable housing and sufficient knowledge of how housing costs should be calculated, are essential for migrants to make sustainable choices. For example, in most European countries, in addition to the cost of renting a flat, there are also other costs which can be very high (e.g. flat rates for the maintenance of shared condominium spaces; electricity, water and gas bills; various taxes and fees i.e. for waste collection, property taxes etc.) and these should be considered to prevent the risk of insolvency and eviction. Securing accommodation may require a deposit to be paid in advance. Overall, local housing market rules and customs may differ markedly from the rules that apply in migrants' countries of origin, hence knowledge of them or assistance from social networks or institutions to obtain this information is particularly important for newcomers. Familiarity with the banking system and with the procedures and requirements for loans and mortgages is also relevant, particularly in countries with large shares of home-ownership housing.

Even when they are endowed with sufficient economic and cultural capital, migrants frequently encounter additional obstacles in accessing the private housing market, mainly stemming from their being perceived as outsiders and aliens. As anticipated, not all migrants are perceived in the same way: based on ethnicity, religion, country of origin, etc., some groups are considered (by landlords and real estate agencies) as more 'culturally distant', problematic, less reliable and thus fewer desirable tenants than others. Therefore, different attitudes (discriminatory or even xenophobic) can be adopted with migrants depending on different factors, ranging from their economic situation to the composition of their household, their country of origin, their level of language fluency, their (alleged) religion, and their race or ethnicity. Prejudices and stereotypes about the capacity of people from certain countries or cultural backgrounds to adequately take care of the housing unit are also quite common and can contribute to landlords' reluctance to rent to migrants.

It must be stressed that migrants' difficulties in finding housing has often fuelled exploitative practices. Some unscrupulous landlords have rented their dwellings to migrants at far higher prices than the market value. This is why migrants can end up in overcrowded flats in order to share the costs and make them affordable. Examples of inter-community exploitation are also evident, i.e. migrants informally subletting part of their house to fellow immigrants (regular or irregular) for out-of-market prices, including unhealthy and/or improper spaces. Cases are also reported in which the same bed is rented twice, during the night-time and during day-time, to different migrant workers, as to maximise rental profits. This phenomenon was common during 19th century industrialisation, but was long considered to be a legacy of the past. Although it is illegal today, even on the highly regulated German housing market there are instances where mobile workers from other EU Member States like Romania and Bulgaria end up renting mattresses at high costs in overcrowded flats or sleep in shifts.

Spatial concentration

Limited access to decent affordable housing is sometimes connected to the spatial concentration of migrants in (often, but not always, deprived) neighbourhoods of many European cities, where the incidence of the foreign population can be significantly higher than in the rest of the city. The situation in these neighbourhoods, and how they are perceived by the overall population vary greatly from place to place, and this depends as much on the urban structure of the cities as on the characteristics of migration flows. The way in which these areas are named already tells us the connotation (negative, neutral or positive) that

people attach to them: ethnic neighbourhood, ethnic enclave, multicultural neighbourhood, periphery, banlieue, ghetto.

Similar neighbourhoods might suffer from socio-spatial stigmatization or benefit from their attractiveness as 'exotic' places, where ethnicity and diversity are commodified to attract tourism, leisure and consumption. It is the case for places such as Kreuzberg ('Klein Istanbul') in Berlin, Brick Lane ('Banglatown') in London, la rue du Faubourg Saint Denis ('Quartier Indien') in Paris, or the Zeedijk ('Chinatown') in Amsterdam (Aytar & Rath, 2011). Socio-spatial stigmatisation is however more frequent – particularly in northern Europe – and problematic, as it can contribute to further marginalisation (Galster, 2013). In Southern Europe, ethnic concentration is less frequent.

The main reasons leading to the spatial concentration of migrants comprise a mix of pull and push factors, including for example:

- *more affordable costs* which, however, also corresponds to lower quality of the dwellings;
- *migration chains or social networks* that make it easier to find housing where other migrants live and make these places more attractive in terms of familiarity;
- *house owners may be more open to rent to foreigners* if the neighbourhood is already mixed; the growth of migrant residents make properties less appealing for natives; dwellings are old, deteriorated, with low standard and migrants are nevertheless keen to rent them; they can make high profits in renting at much higher prices than market ones, turning a blind eye to the fact that migrants are pushed to informally sublet and live in overcrowded conditions;
- *proximity with "ethnic" shops and cultural facilities,* where products and services of migrants' countries of origin can be found.

Studies of ethnic neighbourhoods point to both negative and positive aspects of the "social mix".

The *negatives* include:

- higher affordability due to lower housing quality and often lower urban quality too, besides a scarcity of services. Such neighbourhoods are often stigmatised and labelled as dangerous. Although these labels are constructed, for example by media, when conditions of deprivation emerge, social risks and marginalisation are likely to derive or grow.
- The risks of self-segregation that prevents social inclusion.
- The vicious circle of deprivation (including declining property values) and what in the US is known as the "white flight". In the case of Europe, it is often observable with natives moving out from neighbourhoods where the number of foreign residents is growing.

For migrants, concentration can also be an advantage in that:

- migrants can rely on networks (family, friends, national, religious, etc.) for support and mutual help;
- the commodification of ethnicity (e.g. China-towns, Bangla-towns etc.) may contribute to the creation of job opportunities and foster migrants' entrepreneurship;
- migrants might benefit from greater opportunities for socialization, stemming from the multicultural composition of the population.

Box 4.4: Historical trajectories of labour migrants' and "guest-workers"' housing in Germany, Netherlands and the UK (by Sybille Münch)

Germany and the Netherlands: from dormitories to private historic buildings

The development of migrants' housing careers in West-Germany is closely linked to the history of the recruitment of so-called guest workers. Until the mid-1970s, accommodation was mainly provided collectively by employers, testifying that foreign workers' presence was understood as provisional (Schildmeier, 1975, p. 29). In the Netherlands, the housing situation of migrants from the colonies must be distinguished from that of the recruited labour migrants. Before 1973, "guest workers" were mainly accommodated in hostels provided by their employers (Kesteloot & Cortie, 1998, p. 1848). Family reunification, after the recruitment stop, led to people moving out – mostly into private housing (Blauw, 1991, p. 51). The hostels were closed in the mid-1980s (Blok Commission, 2004). Migrants from the colonies started their housing careers under different conditions, as the state supported them from the beginning. Indonesians, for example, were considered easy to integrate and well educated, but given the particularly acute housing shortage at the time of their arrival, they were provided for in guesthouses (Blauw, 1991, p. 45). Moluccans considered their stay as temporary. Since the Dutch government also assumed a short-term situation, they were accommodated in segregated hut villages on the outskirts of the cities, which were not dissolved until the 1980s (op. cit., p. 47).

The UK in the 1960s: discrimination and the slow opening of social housing

Unlike the situations in Germany and the Netherlands, there was no state-organised recruitment of guest workers in the UK, but the demand for labour was met by citizens of former colonies. Hence boarding houses for immigrants played a minor role. Nevertheless, according to Rex (1981, p. 27), they did exist, especially from 1963 to 1965, before entry regulations were tightened. In the post-war years, newcomers, without information about the workings of the housing market and discriminated against by society, moved into the poorest areas of the inner cities. Housing shortage was an issue. Landlords charged inflated rents or refused potential flats. At that time, signs saying "No Coloured, No Irish, No Dogs" were commonplace (Phillips & Karn, 1991, p. 67). The social housing sector remained closed to many ethnic minorities until the late 1960s (see below).

The Netherlands and the United Kingdom: acquiring property as a fall-back solution

In the UK and in the Netherlands, restrictions on access to the social housing sector pushed ethnic minorities into substandard owner-occupied housing. Due to discrimination and disastrous housing conditions in the private sector, some migrants in Britain preferred to buy cheap, run-down housing in the inner cities. It was sometimes insinuated that the decision for home-ownership reflected a certain culturally conditioned preference, for instance among immigrants from Pakistan (Dahya, 1974, p. 97). However, it is more likely that the acquisition of residential property reflected a reaction to structural conditions. As Asians settled mainly outside London, particularly in the north of England, they could access the greater supply of cheap housing here (Flett, 1984, p. 53). Overall, however, for many, home-ownership was against their interests in the long run, as it denied them access to the higher-quality social housing stock, which could have been bought at much more favourable conditions in the 1980s, as a result of tenant privatisation (the already mentioned "right to buy") (Ward, 1984, p. 4).

"Emergency purchases" of cheap housing can also be observed in the Netherlands, in the 1970s (Schutjens et al., 2002, p. 646). Many guest workers began their housing careers in the run-down homes of the inner cities. Turks and Moroccans, in particular, felt compelled to buy a house in the old stock in order to meet requirements for family reunification. In doing so, some households paid up to three times as much in loans as the autochthonous Dutch paid for their rent (Blauw, 1991, p. 54). In contrast to Britain, where this decision still shapes the housing situation of many migrant households today, the housing situation of migrants in the Netherlands improved with the opening up of the Dutch social housing stock, in the late 1970s (Schutjens et al., 2002, p. 653). Many moved from their own house to the social sector in the 1980s/90s, because they could no longer pay the loans due to the economic crisis, or generally preferred the better-equipped social housing conditions (Bolt & van Kempen, 2002, p. 406).

Germany: The 1980s under the sign of urban renewal and housing shortage

The housing situation of migrants in Germany in the 1980s was characterised by the shortage of housing for low-income households (Kreibich, 1990, p. 184). In the mid-1980s, a majority of housing associations and especially cooperatives with very few migrants among their tenants faced a minority of municipal companies and regional subdivisions of the non-profit Neue Heimat, which housed what was perceived at the time as a very high proportion of over 15% foreigners. According to Laumann (1984, p. 64), municipal companies turned out to be the most accessible to foreign tenants. As a result of the first waves of urban renewal and associated gentrification, the residential locations of migrants had meanwhile shifted from the old redevelopment areas to the unmodernised low-rise flats of the 1950s and stigmatised high-rise areas of the late 1960s/early 1970s, which were inhabited by poor German families in precarious conditions from homeless settlements.

The influx of East German emigrants and Ethnic Germans ("Aussiedler") from Eastern Europe (200,000 Aussiedler came to Germany in 1988 alone) and the founding of families by the baby boomers further increased the tension in the housing market at the end of the 1980s (Kreibich, 1990, p. 189). "Der Spiegel" (13.2.1989) reports that "anger and resentment" among natives were intensified because, in 1988, the federal government decided to launch a billion-euro housing programme, especially for Aussiedler.

The housing situation in Germany remained problematic for migrants because it could affect their residence permits. Sufficient living space had to be proven in order to obtain or extend a residence permit. This became a source of insecurity and further exploitation, as migrants signed false rental contracts in exchange for bribes or were forced to pay overpriced rents (Gude, 1990, p. 242). The possibility of improving their housing situation by claiming housing benefit was hardly used by foreigners, as drawing social welfare benefits could lead to deportation, and many households wrongly assumed that receiving housing benefits had similar consequences under residence law (Gude, 1990, p. 253). This also applied to the Netherlands: while migrants from the former overseas colonies quickly improved their housing situation by receiving housing benefits and were, therefore, able to afford the comparatively high rents in new housing estates, the former guest workers only took advantage of the subsidies from the 1980s onwards (Blok Commission, 2004).

The Netherlands in the 1980s: gradual access to social housing

A turning point in the housing situation of minorities in the Netherlands was the opening of the social housing sector in 1981. This step was of particular importance because the social housing sector provides the majority of housing, especially in the large cities with a high proportion of migrants (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007, p. 16). At the same time, as Blauw (1991, p. 54) concedes, housing conditions had not improved. Turkish and Moroccan households, in particular, moved into public housing built in the 1950s and 1960s, when the housing shortage led to the construction of many but particularly poorly equipped flats without central heating or private bathrooms. Housing associations allocated poorly equipped flats to minorities, although it is not clear whether this was due to the preferences of former guest workers, the greater availability of these flats or a hidden strategy of the municipalities or housing associations (loc. cit., p. 55). The development of the housing situation in the 1980s is also ambivalent because, on the one hand, the economic crisis and the resulting high unemployment undermined the social mobility of migrants and prevented them from entering better-equipped housing (Kesteloot & Cortie, 1998, p. 1849). On the other hand, urban renewal ensured the upgrading of the older neighbourhoods in which many immigrants lived (Blok Commission, 2004).

Continuity of poorer housing conditions in 1980s Britain

While housing conditions improved in the Netherlands and Germany as a result of welfare state interventions, no significant progress was made in the liberal British welfare state. Even in the 1980s and in the early 1990s, the housing situation of migrants changed little, with South Asian migrants experiencing the worst housing conditions, many as involuntary owners of pre-1919 houses. In addition, many migrants lived in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, which was totally unsuitable, especially for families (Huttman, 1991, p. 217). In the mid-1980s, however, West Indians, in particular, benefited from the redevelopment of many slums they inhabited, from which they emerged with the right to transfer to new social housing (Ward, 1984, p. 7). Yet, according to the 1991 English Housing Condition Survey, over one-fifth of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis still lived in what was characterised as the worst housing conditions in the inner cities. Black Africans were five times more likely than whites to live in accommodation where they did not have access to a bathroom or indoor toilet or had to share facilities. This was a consequence of their over-representation in the private rented sector (Phillips, 1998, p. 1692).

In the UK, as in Germany, it was argued that the poorer housing situation of ethnic minorities could be explained by their motives for migration, which was to save as much money as possible during their stay in the UK to then return to their country of origin. It was assumed that the comparatively poor housing conditions did not pose a problem for those concerned since they appreciated the modern equipment of their dwellings with electricity and their connection to the sewage system, and privacy was unknown to them anyway (Dahya, 1974, p. 82). Flett (1984, p. 55f.) objected that Dahya's account referred only to a specific group of Pakistani peasants who had been in the UK for a short time only. Moreover, since return has become more and more of a myth among migrants in the UK, their housing needs have become similar to those of the majority society. In Germany, the assertion that the poorer housing supply of migrant households was due to a lower willingness to pay rent or even an intention to return to their country of origin can be buried as a myth: despite the generally poorer housing provision, foreign families pay significantly higher rents than German families. This difference in rent payments cannot be explained by the size of the dwellings, as foreigners on average rent smaller dwellings than German tenants, and therefore the difference in rent payments for the rent per square metre increases (Die Beauftragte, 2005, p. 104).

Sybille Münch

4.3 Housing of asylum seekers, refugees and highly vulnerable migrants: lack of housing and precarious reception and accommodation options

It should have become clear by now that immigrants or ethnic minorities have been facing precarious housing conditions in Europe for decades. More recently, the arrival, reception and accommodation of asylum seekers and refugees has become more salient in many European states. At a broad level, national governments are responsible for immigration law and set the rules for entrance and residence. However, the provision of services in many European states is mostly delegated to the local level and local government systems in Europe vary widely, based on the distribution of competencies in service provision, the political power of the local level in relation to upper-level government and the importance dedicated to local democracy (Heinelt et al., 2018). When it comes to the accommodation of asylum seekers and vulnerable migrant groups in need for protection - such as victims of trafficking or unaccompanied minors - it is local entities that are faced with concrete needs (Glick-Schiller & Caglar, 2011; Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Glorius et al., 2019). Some have made efforts to offer welfare services to migrants, even when undocumented (Ambrosini, 2018; Ataç et al., 2020), others have protested against asylum seeker arrival to the point they have refused to provide accommodation (Campomori & Ambrosini, 2020). There is considerable divergence in the levels of support offered to asylum seekers across European countries and even between cities and local authorities in those countries.

Reception includes the right to be accommodated in a reception centre for a limited period of time (normally between 6 months and a year). It cannot be associated with the right to housing. We will explain in more detail how reception works in the section on asylum seeker reception systems in European countries. Following this period of reception, the trajectories of asylum seekers vary depending on the outcome of their asylum application, but all asylum seekers are exposed to a high risk of housing precariousness and many experience housing precariousness throughout their lives. If they succeed in entering reception, asylum seekers and refugees often face inadequate accommodation conditions. At the same time, they can get stranded, after the reception period is finished, or earlier, and become homeless.

4.3.1 The main perspectives of analysis

The precarious accommodation conditions of asylum seekers and refugees can be analysed from different theoretical perspectives, by looking at spatial, temporal, material and mobility dimensions. From a spatial perspective, scholars have focused on the arrival of asylum seekers. Various countries have operated a system of dispersal, that is to say the allocation of quota of asylum seekers for reception in local territories. We will come back to this and the challenges associated with this system later. Some studies have also focused on the characteristics of the locations in which asylum seekers are hosted. There are many examples of reception organised in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and refugee camps located in remote centres (Phillimore & Goodson, 2006; Spicer, 2008; Doomernik & Glorius, 2016; Campesi, 2018) with little or no access to public transport which makes it more difficult to reach welfare offices, relevant urban services, job opportunities, and support networks. The presence of large collective centres in peripheral and poor neighbourhoods may further

add to critical issues already affecting these areas, such as pre-existing elements of urban disadvantage and social distress, thus exacerbating residents' perceptions of insecurity and discontent. Not to be underestimated is also the fact that asylum seekers can become the scapegoat of residents' complaints, particularly when poor media narratives fuel prejudices and local authorities do not proactively seek to communicate with residents and manage expectations.

The poor location of reception facilities can spring from logistical issues, such as the prompt availability of large buildings only (i.e. former barracks in Italy under public ownership). It has, however, been also connected to a political move to "hide away" reception problems, while blaming them on migrants, or explicit attempts by policy-makers to "diminish pull-factors" for migration (cf. Münch, 2010). In these cases, poor quality accommodation and precarious conditions have been argued to act as tools of deterrence for states that are keen to avoid responsibility for supporting refugees (Darling 2011).

The precariousness of asylum seeker reception conditions is manifest, in material terms, if we look at the quality and type of accommodation provided to them. Although the Reception Directive states that minimum standards must be granted, no details are given on what minimum standards should include and there is no homogeneity of standards across Europe, particularly following the multiplication of actors involved in reception and the lack of standardisation between these actors (Darling, 2016; Semprebon, 2021).

Scholars have talked of the "campeization" of reception (Kreichauf, 2018) to argue on the growing tendency to open large remote spatially isolated camps with low standards of accommodation and exclusionary infrastructures that have de facto come to represent a specific "camp-border" form of urban development (Diken and Laustsen 2005). These camps can be considered as "spaces of exception", characterized by the lack of respect for human rights (Diken and Laustsen, 2005; Edkins, 2000; Hyndman, 2000). From a political point of view, they have been repeatedly justified with the rhetoric of "emergency", associated with the unexpected rise of asylum seekers arrivals since 2015. However, this rhetoric has been continuously adopted over many years, in spite of decreasing arrivals and an increasing level of experience and expertise in reception among European Member States. Asylum seekers tend to be considered as a temporary population, and accommodation for them, similarly to housing for migrants, often takes the shape of temporary, residual, confined infrastructures (Kibreab, 2007). The precariousness of asylum seeker reception is further embedded through the lengthy nature of many asylum procedures, meaning that asylum seekers face extended periods of time in precarious and uncertainty conditions. As such, asylum seekers find themselves living in a state of "permanent temporariness" (Vosko et al., 2014).

Besides the low standards of reception, asylum seeker accommodation in some countries, such as Italy and Portugal, is characterised by forms of containment (see Esposito et al., 2020) and reception workers' approach can fluctuate between assistance and control (Szczepanikova, 2013; Pinelli, 2017) and asylum seekers can be treated as infants (Malkki, 1995).

As already mentioned, research has long recognised that housing is a central element in migrants' path towards inclusion, as much as employment and access to services (see Ager & Strand, 2008). Yet, housing as opposed to collective accommodation is not granted to asylum seekers, nor is accommodation always provided, even less for refugees upon completion of the reception period, suggesting that asylum policies can be understood as policies of "disintegration" rather than "integration" (Hinger & Schweitzer, 2020). Ideally,

refugees would find housing in the rental market but the post-reception period is fraught with obstacles both for those who are granted the status of refugee or another form of protection and even more for those who have their application rejected, as they are stripped of legal entitlements resulting in restricted (if any) access to the job market, basic services and health care too. Migrants whose asylum application is rejected may still wish to stay in the country or to move to another country. However, without a regular residence permit, migrants cannot move freely across Europe, for example, nor can they have a regular employment contract, nor can they have access to the private or public rental market.

Whilst all asylum seekers and refugees are classified as vulnerable individuals due to their experiences of persecution, conflict, and often highly traumatic journeys to reach safety, specific groups of refugees may present distinct needs in terms of reception and support. It is the case of women victims of trafficking with children. Anti-trafficking projects are not always equipped to host mothers with their children and local entities may be resistant in hosting them as it is particularly expensive (Semprebon et al., 2021 - box 4.5). This is also the case for unaccompanied minors, who present vulnerabilities not only when arriving as children, but also when they reach maturity and their legal status becomes that of an adult, bringing with it fresh challenges in terms of the right to remain in Europe (Oxfam, 2021; Humphris & Sigona, 2017; Semprebon et al., 2021).

Box 4.5: The conditions of Nigerian lone mothers exploited in the sex industry and victimised by trafficking networks in Italy[17]

The conditions of Nigerian (but not only) lone mothers exploited in the sex industry and victimised by trafficking networks have been very challenging to deal with for anti-trafficking professionals and practitioners, particularly in recent years. An increasing number of young women with children have approached social protection programmes asking for assistance but the system was not prepared. In line with the administrative rules concerning the funding of anti-trafficking projects, no coverage can be provided by the Italian Department for Equal Opportunities with respect to services for children, as according to the Italian normative framework children are under the (administrative and budget) responsibility of municipal social services. Coverage for lone mothers can be therefore provided only for the mothers as vulnerable adults. Specific budget for lone mothers was provided in some anti-trafficking projects, for example in the Veneto Region for the period 2017-2018. The same budget was not available in the following years and yet this target group requires a support and what is more a specific type of support calling for adaptation of operative strategies. Adaptation includes the involvement of a team of multiple social workers and professionals, who deal with children, lone mothers, people victims of trafficking respectively, in order to address the specific needs of lone mothers in terms of parental support and child welfare.

An example of the complexities involved in the protection of lone mothers with children is provided by the case of a young Nigerian lone mother aged about 20. In January 2020, she was going through a difficult time, because of an unsuccessful process of labour inclusion, strong feelings of loneliness and lack of relational resources. The social worker who was responsible for her case mostly focused on the child and the capacity of the mother to deal with her. She was prone to provide some daily support for the mother and to consider foster care for the child, because she perceived a high risk of child mistreatment. From the point of view of the cultural-linguistic mediator, the mother rather needed extra support because of the lack of relational resources that severely compromised her capacity to deal with her precarious situation. Eventually the mother was transferred with her child in one of the very few apartment-shelter in the region dedicated to lone mothers. The transfer was very positive for both the woman and her child. The woman explained she was feeling more at ease. She enjoyed more intimacy and quietness - (than in the reception centre where she had been hosted that she lamented was always very chaotic and noisy), benefited from more support for weaning and child rearing and could count on babysitting help during working hours. The presence of other mothers was also positive as they could build some relational resources that made them feel less lonely and grow them more confident with respect to their life plans.

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[17] The content of this box draws from the e-book "Semprebon M. et al. (2021) *Coping with the evolving trends of trafficking before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Insight from the N.A.Ve Anti-trafficking Network*. SSIIM UNESCO Chair, University Iuav of Venice" Available at: https://www.insightproject.net/project/publications/ Last access: 01.12.2021.

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Analysis of the housing precariousness of asylum seekers and refugees can be made through another, more symbolic perspective: that of "deservingness". Frontline social workers take discretionary decisions in regulating access to reception, based on their own perception of whether a person is an "authentic" or "bogus" refugee (see for example Hardy & Philipps, 1999). This can be explained not only by the high level of autonomy they are de facto granted in their decisions but also by the fact that local authorities are prone to prevent migrants from taking advantage of the reception system if they are not entitled to benefit from the available services (Norman, 2006, p. 46).

Finally, the housing precariousness of asylum seekers must be considered in light of their restricted mobility. Upon arrival in Europe, asylum seekers have been subjected to rules concerning the right of movement, both to enter and circulate in Europe, hence access to accommodation is affected by this. Regulations include in particular the *Schengen Agreement* and the *Dublin Regulatio*n. The former, signed in June 1985, is a treaty that abolished European internal borders and granted free circulation within the so-called Schengen area. The latter is a European law defining member states' responsibility for asylum claims. According to the main principle of the Regulation, it is the first State in which asylum seekers enter (and have their fingerprints taken) that should process asylum applications. The European Reception Directive also states that European countries should ensure access to protection, including food and clothing, health, education and support for employment seeking. There is no reference to housing, but to reception that involves accommodation.

The Dublin Regulation has been fiercely contested by EU Member States. Southern European countries (i.e. Italy, Greece and Spain) are *countries of first arrival*, because of their geographical position (bordering with the Mediterranean Sea, one of the main migration routes to Europe) and have thus lamented their heavier responsibility. They have also been *transit* territories for migrants who wished to reach different *final destinations*, often in Northern Europe (France, Austria, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries). In face of these movements, Italy, Greece and Spain have often adopted a "*laissez-passer*" attitude (Ciabarri, 2015; Finotelli, 2013): controls at borders with other EU countries have been "loosened" to let migrants transit and ease migratory pressures on their own territory. Southern European countries have also experienced the return of some migrants, following the activation of the Dublin procedure involving the return to the country of first arrival. Some returns have been blocked because the reception conditions in some countries were considered inadequate to grant protection to migrants (for example, Italy and Greece). Further movements are connected to *resettlement*, that, in the EU context, refers to the transfer, normally based on a request by UNHCR and on the need for international protection, of a refugee, from a third country to an EU Member State.

Many scholars have criticised the European approach to forced migration. In particular, the Dublin Regulation, has been argued to severely restrict the mobility of asylum seekers and has failed to protect them (Kasparek, 2016; Morano-Foadi, 2017; Lavenex 2018). Similarly, the *hotspot* approach (Tazzioli, 2017; Vradis et al., 2018; Tunaboylu M. S. & van Liempt, 2020), introduced in 2015 to cope with increasing migratory pressure being faced by some

frontline countries in Europe, has been widely critiqued. This approach consisted in the setting up of operational support to these countries to speed up the procedures of migrants' identification and fingerprinting and thus asylum claims. While it did not succeed in supporting countries, it has severely curtailed migrants' right to asylum, due to inadequate assistance. Migrants who performed autonomous journeys towards northern Europe experienced further violations of their rights as some border locations transformed into "*internal hotspots*", with the introduction of systematic border enforcement practices internally, often highly repressive and restrictive in nature (Denaro, 2016 on Milan; Semprebon & Pelacani, 2020 on Bolzano and the Brenner; Collins, 2021 on Serbia).

Following this overview, we will now describe how reception systems work in Europe, by comparing similarities and differences in some selected countries and by pointing out the critical issues emerging from empirical research, alongside the impacts and potential impacts on the beneficiaries of these systems.

4.3.2   The various phases of reception

Asylum seeker and refugee reception is articulated in different phases that are connected with asylum procedure. In principle, for each phase specific and different accommodation facilities are provided. Yet each phase is characterised by forms of accommodation precariousness, that is thus widespread across the entire reception process. Even without considering the worst cases of overcrowded and inhuman centres, many other facilities only offer basic shelter and basic hygienic services.

The first phase is the *first reception and identification phase*. Various types of reception facilities, named differently across countries have been used, including also "hotspots centres" at southern European shores, in Italy and Greece. As set by law, the period of permanence in these centres should be brief, no longer than 48 hours, since accommodation is provided in a detention-like condition.

Many reports have explained that the hotspots are overcrowded and characterised by very poor hygienic conditions. The UN Human Rights Committee (Amnesty International, 2018) has criticised *the de facto* prolonged permanence of migrants in some hotspots. Concerns have been generally raised particularly for vulnerable asylum-seekers (EPRS, 2018). Visits to Italian hotspots by NGOs testified to the insufficient bed capacity of some centres, for example on the island of Lampedusa, and conditions similar to detention, although migrants in hotspots should not be detained. Migrants who were held in hotspots centres have also testified to these conditions by sharing pictures of bathrooms without doors, mattresses without sheets, very dirty facilities, and other insanitary conditions (ASGI, 2019). Concerns over conditions within hotspot centres have also been raised in Greece, particularly in the Aegean Island camps, that international human rights organisations have referred to as "hell on earth" (Migreurop, 2017). The overcrowding of the centres is an evident example of the many violations of human rights, as are the lack of food and basic hygienic services, lack of safety arrangements, of access to medical and local services orientation, not to mention psychological aspects such as isolation and frustration that can lead to extreme consequences, including suicide attempts (FEANTSA, 2020). Adding to this, during the pandemic, lack of hygienic conditions and overcrowding have contributed to the transmission of the COVID-19 virus and, in some cases, the unlawful, arbitrary and discriminatory adoption of a quarantine period (HRW, 2020).

In the *reception and accommodation phase*, migrants who express the intention to apply for asylum are normally transferred to dedicated reception facilities, where they will be accommodated while they wait for a decision to be taken on their application. While the first phase is relevant for countries of first arrivals, this second phase regards a wider range of EU countries.

In this phase, facilities include a wide range of centres, from large centres to smaller housing units.

The majority of EU Member States (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Slovak Republic) make use of collective centres. At the same time, many (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Norway) also make use of private houses and flats, as standard accommodation or alternative forms of accommodation (see for example Zill et al., 2020) (EMN, 2014). In these instances, asylum seekers are generally accommodated closer to the local community and in less segregated conditions.

Yet, the Reception Directive states that Member States may, exceptionally and for a short period, set alternative modalities of reception, when the capacities that are normally available are exhausted. The Directive was written before 2015, thus not at a time of "crisis" and yet it has become one means for countries to justify an approach based on a constant state of emergency and exception. This is how extraordinary centres have been institutionalised, often with a lowering of the standards of accommodation. This has been notable in the cases of Greece, Italy, Spain and France.

Italy provides an emblematic example of how extraordinary centres have become the customary mode of reception. From a quantitative point of view, places in extraordinary centres still prevail. An extraordinary system parallel to the ordinary one has thus been created and consolidated over time.

Extraordinary and ordinary facilities are often managed by the same social cooperative and standards may be similar in practice. In France, for example, the main difference between them (that are called HUDA and CADA, respectively) lies in the level of support that asylum seekers receive. Emergency reception only involves accommodation, hence legal assistance, food, medical assistance, French classes are not always provided in HUDA. However, differently from extraordinary centres in Italy and Greece, living conditions are adequate. The French system does not have the capacity to provide accommodation to all asylum seekers entitled to reception, thus placing an emphasis on other forms of accommodation. With the number of available places within the national reception system largely insufficient to meet demand, many applicants have been left out of the system: in 2018, only 44% of registered asylum seekers were given access to a reception place. This means that many asylum seekers are left stranded, in a state of "institutional abandonment" (see Box 4.7) and have no other solutions but to rely on night shelters or become homeless (AIDA, 2020b). In the UK, an emergency approach has been particularly evident since the beginning of the current pandemic. As people could not be evicted from properties, institutional buildings, such as military barracks, have been used to contain people, with much criticism on their unsafe conditions and the risks of COVID-19 infections that these facilities pose.

Having said this, some critical issues have been identified with specific reference to extraordinary centres, including a lack of transparency and a centralised system of monitoring. The lack of an adequate monitoring system, adding to the repeated call of readily available places for reception, favoured the entrance into the system of third sector associations often short of adequate professional skills[18] and the opening of reception centres in disused buildings and isolated locations, not integrated in the urban fabric and often unfit for residential use. Darling (2016), highlighted, with reference to the UK, how the privatization of facilities, following the devolution of implementation on the side of public authorities, has resulted in fragmented, often low, standards of accommodation quality in the UK. Details have been reported regarding other elements that point to housing precariousness: overcrowded dorm rooms without windows, poor quality infrastructure, lack of toilets, and bad sanitary conditions.

While material conditions of reception are often the main critical aspects reported with reference to large collective centres, not all of these facilities are necessarily overcrowded. Yet despite this, large centres can hardly grant conditions of dignity, decency, safety and respect for privacy, because of forced cohabitation in shared spaces (see Box 4.7). The forced cohabitation of people with different religious and national backgrounds can also be challenging.

Box 4.6: The refugee centre at the former Berlin Tempelhof airport

> The refugee housing facilities at Berlin's former Tempelhof airport presents an example of how collective centres, barely ensure dignified housing conditions. This large refugee shelter, built inside several hangars of a massive aviation hub, was organised as an emergency solution to accommodate forced migrants, at the height of the reception crisis, in late 2015. In October 2015, this centre hosted more than 2,500 migrants (Knight, 2016; Sanderson, 2017). While at the beginning the hangars comprised bare rows of tents, later thin partitions were built to organise the centre into smaller rooms, hosting 10 to 12 people each. Still, these rooms were characterised by no privacy and no space to socialise; "overhead lights were turned off and on at set times and the noise of thousands of people echoed off the metal roof" (Besner, 2018). Privacy was thus not guaranteed and only basic needs were provided for, far from ensuring adequate dignified housing conditions.
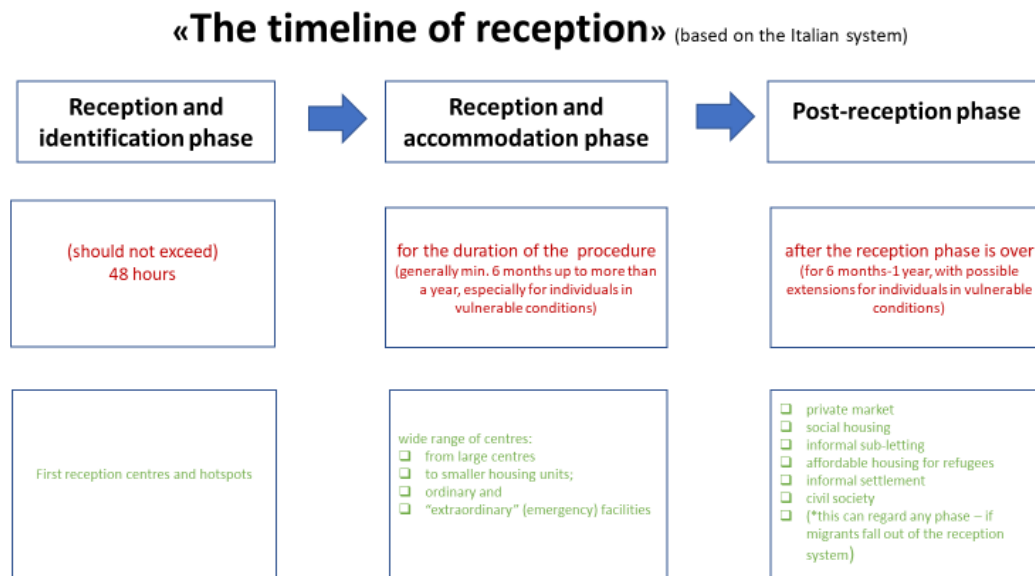
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Box 4.7: The refugee centre "la Bulle" and the makeshift camp in Porte de la Chappelle (Paris)

> In November 2016 the tented humanitarian centre for migrants and asylum seekers, known as "la Bulle" (the bubble), was opened in the north of Paris, near Porte de la Chappelle neighbourhood. The centre was meant to take in 50-80 people a day (the estimated number of migrants who arrived in Paris daily, most of whom from the dismantled 'Jungle' of Calais) and to offer short-term accommodation before people could be transferred to more permanent shelters. However, the capacity of this centre (about 450 people) was not enough to cover the significantly higher number of people who needed accommodation, owing to the lack of places in other institutional facilities (Meltzer, 2017). In general, if there was no place available in reception centres, asylum seekers were placed on a waiting list. While waiting, they ended up sleeping rough. This is why many people who were hoping to access the Bulle centre, camped out around the centre itself and on the boulevards of Porte de la Chappelle. On average 300-400 people a day (and up to 1,000 on crowded days) stayed in this makeshift camp, made of tents, mattresses, and cardboard boxes. The camp was violently dismantled many times by police (Camilli, 2017).

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[18] Some cases were also reported of associations that only searched for profit, sometimes with criminal intentions.

Figure 4.2: The timeline of reception

«The timeline of reception» (based on the Italian system)

Reception and identification phase → **Reception and accommodation phase** → **Post-reception phase**

(should not exceed) 48 hours

for the duration of the procedure (generally min. 6 months up to more than a year, especially for individuals in vulnerable conditions)

after the reception phase is over (for 6 months-1 year, with possible extensions for individuals in vulnerable conditions)

First reception centres and hotspots

wide range of centres:
- from large centres
- to smaller housing units;
- ordinary and
- "extraordinary" (emergency) facilities

- private market
- social housing
- informal sub-letting
- affordable housing for refugees
- informal settlement
- civil society
- (*this can regard any phase – if migrants fall out of the reception system)

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4.3.3   Policies for asylum seekers and refugees

In 2015, in coincidence with the "migration reception crisis", the European asylum system was close to collapse in several EU Member States. National systems, hidden behind the shield of unpreparedness to deal with increasing migration flows, demonstrated a chronic lack of investment in reception, which in some countries has resulted in permanent gaps in reception capacity, regardless of fluctuations in arrivals (for more information see AIDA, 2020). The failure of asylum and reception policies has often been the consequence of Member States' disengagement with forced migrant reception and of the lack of solidarity and coordination among them (Crawley, 2016). The impact has been felt most acutely by asylum seekers and their right to housing and reception.

Accommodation and the right to reception

Accommodation is a crucial element of asylum seeker and refugee reception. It is a right embedded in the Common European Asylum System. Guaranteeing access to dignified living conditions for these groups of migrants is certainly a demanding policy issue, considering the transitory and temporary character of reception, but it is a duty of Member States.

The Common European Asylum System (CEAS)[19], introduced in 1999, contains specific provisions on the reception conditions to be granted to asylum seekers and refugees, drawing also from the Geneva Convention. Specific standards are prescribed in the Reception Conditions Directive 2013/33 /EU (art. 17). The main objective of the Directive is to ensure minimum standards are granted in all Member States, not only in terms of access to accommodation, but also to food, clothing, healthcare, education and employment. Yet,

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[19] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en

the Directive does not specify what "adequate standards of living" means, nor does it indicate any parameter to adjudicate these standards. As a result of this, the material conditions of reception vary significantly across EU countries.

Significant differences are evident in terms of implementation, regarding both reception system organisation and standards. These divergences are associated with the following factors: different experiences in migration management; asylum and migration governance systems and the specific roles assigned to actors, at different territorial levels (from national to regional to local); the specific socio-political characteristics of each country, including the respective welfare systems; the different migratory pressure experienced by each state, depending on their geographical position along migration routes, and pressure in terms of asylum applications.

In various countries reception is organised on the basis of a dispersal system or resettlement scheme, as we will explain next.

Systems of dispersal

A logic similar to that of European relocation, has been also adopted within national territories for the dispersal of asylum seekers. This approach has been adopted by several countries, including Austria, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and France.

While the European Union has been promoting the broadening of social rights, including the social protection of immigrants, at national level political debates have been often focused on a logic of "burden sharing" (Robinson et al. 2003), that is to say avoiding concentrations and "dispersing" asylum seekers throughout national territories. The aim here is to share the social and economic costs associated with reception across a range of regions and local authorities. Dispersal is also argued to support opportunities for integration and enhance peaceful cohabitation with established residents and citizens, especially where work is undertaken to address the fears, echoed by media and popular narratives, of cultural, ethnic and religious differences that can shift the "boundaries" between citizens and non-citizens (Holmes & Castaneda, 2016). Dispersal often represents the first step in the reception process.

Because of mandatory restrictions, in Germany asylum seekers are required to stay in the Federal State in which they apply for asylum and are provided accommodation, for the entire duration of the procedure, unless authorised to do otherwise (Aida, 2020a). Similarly, in Italy, asylum seekers are assigned to a specific facility in a given locality. They cannot choose where to stay, nor can they express any preference about it, nor are they allowed to leave the facility, if not temporarily and upon authorisation (Aida, 2021). Ultimately this limits their freedom and it can also have negative impacts on their employment opportunities, whereby they are accommodated, as it often happens, in remote localities.

In these territories (that are likely to be characterised by forms of decay), welfare systems are often reported to be non-performing or in distress and thus ill-prepared to face the specific needs of asylum seekers. Dispersal policies rather than effectively redistributing and sharing the costs of and efforts for inclusion, tend to paradoxically reconfirm the rhetoric that considers asylum seekers as a burden, while also making their living conditions more precarious.

Dispersal policies are usually set on the basis of available accommodation places rather than on matching needs with available services and opportunities. The specific needs of asylum

seekers, or the presence of existing refugee community groups, are not considered. Exceptions are made, sometimes, for unaccompanied minors, vulnerable individuals, and families who are normally accommodated in dedicated facilities. Places are often more readily available in areas suffering from economic and demographic decline, but dispersal policies do not include the provision of resources to address any lack of service and/or quality standards of facilities and their external environments, in a myopic vision that does not consider that additional services could also be beneficial to the wider community (Phillimore and Goodson, 2006; Phillips, 2006; Darling, 2016).

How do the systems of dispersal work? In Italy it is based on a system of quotas. Depending on the number of inhabitants in each regional territory, asylum seekers are distributed throughout the country, by means of a centralised organisational mechanism. This was established with the main intention to ease the pressure of arrivals experienced by southern Italian regions. This approach can be understood in a logic to "suburbanise" reception policies and encourage mayors to "take up the burden of reception". In Germany, asylum seekers are distributed throughout federal states through the EASY (Initial Distribution of Asylum Seekers) quota system, based on tax receipts and the size of the population of each state (Königstein key). According to the Asylum Act, asylum seekers can only stay in the district where the reception centre to which they have been allocated is situated. By contrast, in the UK, there is no formal distribution mechanism or quota to establish the number of asylum seekers dispersed to different towns, cities, and regions. Instead, dispersal is driven predominantly by the availability of low-cost housing, leading to concerns over the concentration of asylum seekers in areas of longstanding socioeconomic disadvantage and a reliance on poor quality private sector housing (Darling 2016). As a result, dispersal in the UK is a source of considerable political tension, as some regions argue they are subject to unfair distributions of asylum seekers by comparison to others.

Dispersal has been criticised on several grounds. First, it does not grant the freedom of choice to asylum seekers on where to live. It is a form of "forced arrival" (Kreichauf, 2018). Second, it can cause disconnection from networks of co-ethnics (Larsen 2011), precisely because people cannot choose where to go. Third, dispersal is associated with decentralisation processes, whereby central governments devolve responsibility to local authorities, but economic resources are not always adequate, nor do central governments always ask for accountability (Boswell, 2001; Robinson et al., 2003; Wren, 2003; Darling, 2017). Fourth, dispersal has been narrowly managed in terms of the physical allocation of asylum seekers within states, with an approach based overwhelmingly on control rather than participation (Boswell, 2001; Griffiths et al., 2005; Darling, 2016). This has led to forms of marginalization, disjointed from any vision of longer-term inclusion, as the interests of nation-states are placed above those of asylum seekers (van Liempt & Miellet, 2020).

Dispersal has been also associated with tensions over asylum and asylum seekers. A case in point is that of Glasgow. During the early 2000s, when the dispersal of asylum seekers was still relatively new in the UK, the city of Glasgow in Scotland became a focal point for community tensions over asylum (Coole, 2002). Glasgow was a key dispersal location during this period and limited information was provided to existing residents about asylum seekers, the support they received, and the challenges they faced. This information vacuum quickly prompted rumours that asylum seekers were being unfairly prioritised for services and fuelled resentments towards new arrivals. A rising number of incidents of hate crime and harassment followed, including the racist murder of one asylum seeker in the city (Coole, 2002). In response, the local government established a series of integration networks across the city,

designed to address rumours, encourage communication across difference, and enable communities to meet and learn from one another (Wren, 2007). Whilst by no means eradicating these tensions around asylum, over time these networks and forms of dialogue were effective in lessening these tensions and enabling Glasgow to be a more supportive environment for asylum seekers.

The case of Glasgow illustrates well that the lack of knowledge of migratory movements, migrants' experiences and the difficulties migrants face, can contribute to the growth of prejudices towards asylum seekers and refugees. Such tensions and concerns are exacerbated in contexts where reception facilities are isolated or hidden from view, fuelling suspicion and anxiety among communities. On the contrary, when accommodation is organised in smaller apartments in inhabited building blocks in small to large urban centres, processes of social inclusion have been facilitated as well as the more general well-being of asylum seekers. Similar reflections have been made about the dispersal system in Italy (Semprebon, 2021).

The resettlement scheme

Resettlement is one of the durable solutions that the UNHCR identified for the protection of refugees. The other two solutions include repatriation and local integration. While the latter are based on international law, resettlement is not and does not represent a 'legal obligation' (Hashimoto 2018).

Resettlement can be understood as a policy instrument for managing migration through the promotion of active collaboration between states and non-state actors (Geiger & Pecoud, 2010; Hashimoto, 2018). Its main goal is associated with the sharing of reception responsibility among Member States.

As Böhm et al. (2021) explain, since 2000, EU Member States also started considering resettlement as a feasible form of intervention for refugee protection and encouraged member states to implement resettlement schemes. Such schemes gained momentum in 2015, alongside the hotspot approach, in the attempt to alleviate the migratory pressure experienced particularly by Greece and Italy. The plan was to relocate 160,000 seekers of international protection within two years. Yet, according to the 11th report on relocation and resettlement, released by the European Commission in 2017 (COM(2017)212), the total number of asylum seekers relocated, as of April of the same year, corresponded to only 16,340.

While in 2000 five European countries had a resettlement program in place and pledged about 3000 cases, in 2014, following the introduction of the non-binding Joint European Refugee resettlement program (JEURP), seven more countries introduced relevant programmes. A total of 7,500 individuals were resettled in the EU in the same year (Krasniqi & Suter 2015). In the period 2017-18, other countries engaged in resettlement, including Bulgaria, Lithuania, Estonia, and Slovenia) thus resettling a total of at least 34,000 individuals (SHARE Network, 2019).

According to the system, people who are recognised as having a "clear" need for international protection should be resettled in European countries on the basis of defined quotas per country. The resettlement process consists of a selection procedure, predeparture orientation and continues with reception in the destination country and integration in the community. The reception phase related to the first week of arrival, with variations across

contexts (Böhm et al., 2021). Contrary to asylum seekers, resettled refugees already have a defined legal status and do not undertake an asylum process but they may similarly experience lengthy periods of reception (Kaya & Nagel, 2020).

The resettlement procedures and the associated rights and entitlements differ between the countries and so do the forms of reception. In France, resettled refugees are entitled to housing for a minimum of one year. Resettlement in the UK is still rare in absolute numbers and it often privileges certain groups - most notably Syrians. Here two resettlement schemes operate, one focused on resettling Syrian refugees and one concerned with a wider range of refugees classified as particularly 'vulnerable' by UNHCR (Karyotis et al. 2021). In both cases, refugees are provided with an initial period of five years leave to remain in the UK, with support for language training and support to gain employment. Housing these refugees is the responsibility of local authorities, who receive funding to support accommodation for up to five years, meaning that most refugees are initially housed in social housing. This resettlement system stands in stark contrast to the asylum system, in which asylum seekers do not receive similar levels of support, training, or accommodation. A stark contrast in treatment, housing opportunities, and standards, thus exists between asylum seekers and resettled refugees in the UK.

The Netherlands - as Sweden, Finland and Denmark - has had a regular resettlement program for some time (Krasniqi & Suter, 2015). In this country, resettled refugees receive immediate permanent social housing. However, it is often the case that if insufficient places in social housing are available, refugees are accommodated in reception centres. Fostering care and respect for difference when refugees encounter the local community are valuable components of reception, facilitated by volunteers and civil society (Karakayali, 2017; Frazer, 2020). At the same time, Van Liempt and Miellet (2020) observed that responsibility for integration is shifting away from the state towards the resettled refugees.

The post-reception phase and the open policy issues for integration

What happens when the period of reception finishes either for asylum seekers or resettled refugees? They still face various challenges, both in terms of housing and in a range of other areas. Resettled refugees, asylum seekers who are granted asylum and rejected asylum seekers are face several challenges. Rejected asylum seekers are de facto no longer assisted by institutional actors and can be deported. Resettled refugees and asylum seekers who are granted asylum often encounter similar problems to migrant residents who have been in the country for several years and have a long-term residence permit. Thus, they must either search for accommodation in the private market or apply for social housing. With considerable variations across localities, housing opportunities in the private market are rarely affordable, particularly where refugees or rejected asylum seekers have not found employment and are restricted from accessing large parts of the labour market. The transition from the reception system to the post-reception period can be difficult because of language barriers, limited knowledge of the housing market, as well as forms of discrimination (Nimführ & Sesay, 2019; Borevi & Bengtsson, 2015; Bolzoni et al., 2015; Fox O'Mahony & Sweeny, 2010). These are all reasons why many forced migrants may end up sharing a flat with co-nationals, sometimes in situations of exploitation and exorbitant rents. Some become homeless or resort, more or less temporarily to informal settlements. It must be stressed that in some countries, such as Germany, refugees are also constrained in their search for accommodation (and work) as they are required to remain in the same federal state that

hosted them during the asylum procedure unless they can demonstrate they have regular employment or are starting a traineeship or education in another state (BAMF, 2021).

In countries such as Italy, specific projects have been funded, to offer affordable housing solutions to refugees, but this is based on a project-logic, whose sustainability is reliant on securing continuous precarious funding. It is in this context, but also beyond it, that some initiatives have been built by civil society to address forced migrants' housing needs. These cannot be considered as alternative housing solutions, although they can provide positive experiences for migrants and fill some aspects of the void left by national policies that hardly take the needs of refugees into account – let alone rejected asylum seekers. Examples include the network "Refugee Welcome" and that of Sanctuary cities. The next section is devoted to some of these experiences.

4.3.4   The role of civil society organisations (Jonathan Darling)

Civil society organisations have had a crucial role in supporting refugee integration. Their relevance is underlined in all phases of the policymaking process. Third sector actors deliver various forms of services and support to migrants, ranging from language courses, health care, clothing, food, shelter/reception, legal advice, political advocacy and moral support. Studies focused on civil society, in the local governance of migration, have often stressed its role in terms of outsourcing, but also complementarity with the public sector (Mayblin & James, 2018). While some third sector actors can openly fight exclusionary policies, others choose to avoid attacks on policymakers and rather contest them through their practices, such as by providing services that are lacking (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015). In terms of complementarity, civil society organisations have provided additional key resources and services to 'local welfare', complementing those channelled by public welfare systems. A clear example is provided by religious organisations (e.g., Caritas) that have been crucial partners for local authorities in several countries concerning not only structural poverty but also the reception of asylum seekers (Itçaina 2015). Another example is exemplified by the experience of Sanctuary cities and the Refugees Welcome projects in different European countries. A growing focus on political activism and advocacy under the banner of sanctuary can be seen to varying degrees across Europe in the last twenty years. Next, we will focus on how these developments have sought to impact upon, and improve, housing conditions.

A proliferation of cities across Europe have declared themselves, in varying ways, places of sanctuary. Whilst distinct in their practices and approaches, each of these movements advocate for the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, often through a language of hospitality (Bauder, 2017; Darling, 2017). For example, the UK City of Sanctuary movement explicitly seeks to inculcate a 'culture of hospitality' whereby refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed in towns and cities (Darling, 2010; Squire, 2011). This grassroots movement focuses on intercultural events, awareness raising and providing volunteering and training opportunities for refugee and asylum groups. In doing so, they practice a model of hospitality based on opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to interact with the cities in which they are accommodated. Elsewhere in Europe, networks of cities have begun to work together as 'cities of refuge' or 'solidarity cities' in order to support the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, often in tension with national governments and policies that restrict the rights of refugees (Bauder & Gonzalez, 2018; Kuge, 2019; Kreichauf & Mayer, 2021).

Sanctuary work of this kind can be valuable in addressing housing precariousness in three principle ways. First, through pushing local governments and municipalities to support

asylum seekers and refugees in their housing needs, irrespective of government policies at national levels. As noted throughout this chapter, asylum seekers and refugees face risks of homelessness at various stages of the asylum process. In particular, European countries have increasingly used the enforced eviction of asylum seekers who have exhausted their appeal rights in an effort to deter asylum seekers, removing all support and using destitution to encourage voluntary returns (Ataç et al., 2020; Könönen, 2018). Such policies have led to the growth of destitute populations reliant on charities for survival. Yet, in some instances, municipal actors have used the label of 'sanctuary city' to extend support and accommodation services 'in spite of, and to a degree mitigating, restrictive national legal and policy frameworks' (Spencer & Delvino, 2019:27). In the Netherlands, for example, Kos et al. (2016: 356) suggest that local governments are increasingly finding ways of 'cushioning, bypassing, resisting and counteracting various aspects of exclusionary asylum policies', through extending services and support in part prompted by supportive refugee movements such as Refugees Welcome (Baumgärtel and Oomen 2019). Similarly, in Vienna, Ataç et al. (2020) argue that the city government's focus on solidarity with refugees has been translated into forms of temporary accommodation for otherwise homeless migrants. Whilst Barcelona's designation as a 'city of refuge' has been mobilised to develop a coalition of European cities working together to improve refugee reception conditions (Garcés-Mascareñas Gebhardt 2020).

Second, this European strand of sanctuary has tended to emphasise the role of asylum seekers and refugees as contributing to the social and cultural life of their 'host' communities. In this way, sanctuary movements might be seen to represent part of a wider 'refugees welcome' movement of grassroots support for refugee rights across Europe, a movement that gathered momentum in response to the 'refugee crisis' of 2015. Focusing on how welcoming actions may shift public opinion towards refugees, sanctuary movements have tried to change attitudes towards refugees with the aim of improving integration opportunities and encouraging refugees' access to housing and labour markets (Gill, 2018). For example, in Sweden, Lundberg and Strange (2017) illustrate how a range of initiatives to promote welcoming are taken by different cities. In Stockholm, groups wanting to align themselves with Refuge Stockholm, were given a list of requirements to meet before being able to be part of the movement. These included providing free or discounted services to undocumented migrants and not demanding social security numbers for services. To be part of Refuge Stockholm organisations were required to offer opportunities for refugees to be involved in their activities, mirroring some of the practices of the UK's City of Sanctuary where volunteering was seen as a valuable resource to feel part of city life (Darling & Squire, 2013). Similarly, in Malmo, city officials worked with sanctuary groups to gain access to the library and ensure that undocumented individuals could borrow books despite lacking formal residency status (Lundberg & Strange, 2017: 357).

Third, the growth of sanctuary cities and the wider refugees welcome movement in Europe has helped to support and develop grassroots responses and organisations that assist asylum seekers and refugees in their housing needs. Thus, alongside the forms of squatting and occupation discussed earlier, a range of housing community projects, charities, and hosting schemes exist within Europe to support asylum seekers and refugees into longer-term and more secure accommodation. For example, Refugees Welcome International is a European-wide network that matches refugees with flat share and housing opportunities and uses donations and fundraising to support the costs of accommodation. At the same time, community hosting schemes, in which homeless asylum seekers and refugees are offered

accommodation in a spare room or unused property, offer similarly grassroots forms of accommodation provision and support (see box 4.8). Even though they are often temporary in nature, these initiatives indicate the diversity of approaches to supporting asylum seekers and refugees in their housing needs across Europe, with developments at the community and the urban level often more supportive of providing shelter, security, and accommodation than policies at national or European levels.

Box 4.8: The No Accommodation Network

> The No Accommodation Network (NACCOM) is a network across the UK aiming to prevent homelessness among asylum seekers and refugees (NACCOM, 2017). NACCOM brings together a range of small voluntary organisations who run night-shelters for destitute asylum seekers, host refugees and asylum seekers in spare bedrooms, and in some cases have even been able to purchase property to enable asylum seekers and refugees to have a more secure future. At the same time, NACCOM target policy change through campaigns to end destitution and raise issues of migrant homelessness with local authorities, MPs, and government ministers. Whilst less radical than the forms of migrant squatting seen elsewhere in Europe, the work of activists to house asylum seekers and refugees through NACCOM displays similar critiques with respect to the exclusionary drives of accommodation policies. Grassroots networks that host people who would otherwise be homeless, show how efforts to welcome and support asylum seekers and refugees have extended far beyond state-centred models of resettlement and dispersal, to form networks that stand in solidarity with those seeking refuge (Darling, 2020).

Jonathan Darling

4.4 Informal forms of housing

In this section, we aim to provide an overview of practices and strategies of informal housing for and by migrants in Europe. As described in the previous section, people in search of international protection can be confined in camps upon arrival or resort to informal housing when in transit to other destinations. However, as shown in the matrix at the beginning of this chapter, migrants who are living in European countries for longer periods are also often forced into informal housing situations. As mentioned, this is the result of multiple and overlapping factors, including: lack of inclusive urban policies and housing provision; legal barriers (precarious legal status and limited rights of non-citizens); economic barriers (poverty/lack of economic resources and access to housing subsidies or income support); cultural barriers (lack of support networks or of access to formal support structures); spatial barriers (forms of segregation leading to stigmatisation and the mismatch of housing demand and supply); and discrimination, either overt or implicit.

The phenomenon of housing informality is particularly complex when it regards migrants, as not only their legal status but also a wide set of other crosscutting variables determine their inclusion in - or exclusion from - the formal housing system. For example, the informal (sub)letting of (often sub-standard) apartments, rooms or even of a mattress for day or night use, is a recurring form of informal housing. This precarious and overcrowded arrangement is the result of migrants being pushed to marginalisation by the barriers they face in accessing the formal housing market. However, these practices are often "invisible" to institutions. As we will see, other forms of informal housing are more visible. What is important to keep in mind when exploring this issue is that all of these informal housing severely undermine European democracies as they demonstrate their incapacity to guarantee the universal right to adequate affordable housing for all.

Next, we explore various spatial configurations of housing informality among migrants in Europe. Several terms are used to describe these informal spaces, including camp,

settlement and settling. Adjectives include: informal, irregular, illegal or makeshift. In general, these informal spaces can be classified into four main categories: 1) squatting, in unassigned public housing or abandoned buildings; 2) ghettos, in rural areas; 3) camps; 4) (forms of) homelessness.

4.4.1 Migrants and squatting

Migrant squatting is not a new social practice in Europe and it involves the occupation of buildings for residential purposes. It emerged after World War II as a consequence of the shortage of housing caused by destructions; internal migration towards industrial cities from rural or poorer areas; mass international migration flows of migrant workers from European countries and third countries. Little accurate quantitative data is available on the phenomenon, as the majority of studies are qualitative in nature. However, what should be stressed first and foremost is that squatting is a strategy enacted by people with a migrant background (and not only) as a survival mechanism, where neither housing nor accommodation are available to them. Furthermore, squatting has been carried out by political movements who claim the right to housing for all, thus intersecting with the housing needs and the precarious housing conditions of migrants.

The historical relationship between migration and squatting is often overlooked, despite a long history of squatting for housing related to migration (Cattaneo & Martinez, 2014). A notable exception is the work by Mudu & Chattopadhyay (2018) whose book "Migration, Squatting and Radical Autonomy" offers a collective effort to reflect on how the intersection of migrants' needs, radical struggles and squatting call into question the manufactured consensus of "who belongs where". They highlight how squatting has been thought as an alternative to dominant anti-immigrant policies. Similarly, recent work by Dadusc et al. (2019), has focused on migrants' self-organised strategies in the collective squatting of vacant buildings, describing it as an "essential part of the 'corridors of solidarity' created throughout Europe by grassroots social movements that, together with migrants, have devised non-institutional responses to oppose the violence of border regimes".

Squatting is primarily understood as an illegal practice of re-appropriation of vacant spaces that results in the creation of venues for social and political struggles (Hodkinson & Chatterton, 2006; Cattaneo & Martínez, 2014), that in turn leads to the constitution of 'hybrid political subjectivity between migrants and non-migrants' (Raimondi, 2019: 568) and brings the voices and needs of migrants to the fore (Dadusc et al., 2019). Some high profile examples of squatting by migrants include the Metropoliz in Rome (Grazioli & Caciagli, 2018) and the City Plaza in Athens (Raimondi, 2019). These have shown that strong and horizontal forms of self-management are possible and foster forms of mobilisation where diverse social and political struggles converge.

Deanna Dadusc's (2019) suggests that autonomous forms of homemaking, such as those enacted by the "We are here" grassroots movement in the Netherlands, marked an important shift in migrants' struggles against reception shelters. They have comprised acts of protest as well as the performance of resistance.

It must be explained that squatting very rarely involves migrants alone: in most cases, the occupied buildings are also inhabited by young citizens, who share with migrants similar precarious housing conditions and often join their struggle to claim their right to housing. This is how, by living in occupied buildings, migrants can grow aware of their right to housing and being engaged into forms of mutual aid and solidarity.

4.4.2 Migrant "ghettos" in rural areas

In recent decades, in many countries of Europe, migrants have represented a significant share of the workforce employed in low- paid and 'dirty' jobs in the agricultural sector, especially in areas characterised by intensive production and low levels of mechanisation (see, among others, Corrado et al., 2016, Gertel & Sippel 2014).

According to Brovia & Piro (2020), the majority of the scholarship dealing with migrant living arrangements focuses on urban contexts. Less attention has been devoted to studying migrants' presence in rural areas, although there are some exceptions (Kordel et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the literature dealing with migrant workers in agriculture is contributing to filling this gap by coupling the interests in farm workers' labour conditions with an attention toward their living arrangements (Torres Pérez 2011, Gadea et al., 2014, Gertel & Sippel 2014, Corrado et al.,2016).

According to a recent policy report, migrants, in Europe, represent 14.5% of the total population living in cities, in contrast to 10.2% living in towns and 5.5% in rural areas (Natale et al., 2019). These aggregated figures indicate that migrants tend to be overrepresented in cities, with respect to towns and rural areas. Yet, when unpacking the data by single Member States, strong differences can be observed, as well as a tendency of settling in rural areas. Such tendency is particularly pronounced in Italy and Spain. The temporary and often irregular nature of migrants' employment in agriculture, often associated with exploitation, has made it particularly challenging to quantify needs (ibidem). On their side, local authorities may not be equipped to deal with migrants' inclusion. As Semprebon et al. (2017) observe, it is often emergency situations that push institutions (and other actors) to intervene. Local and national policy-makers often fail to improve the workforce's living conditions, since they do not consider the farm workers' presence as structural.

The report by Natale et al. (2019) contributed to raising awareness on the poorly studied phenomenon of migration in rural areas. Seasonal migrant workers are available to work in poor conditions for long hours and low wages and this is crucial to the neoliberal agro-food industry. In southern Europe migrant labour is employed for harvesting tomatoes, strawberries, oranges and other seasonal fruits and vegetables, whose cost has to be kept as low as possible (although it increases in each step of the supply chain). As a result, migrants are exposed to inhumane working conditions and are charged for transport, meals and undignified accommodation by the intermediaries (or gang-masters) or unscrupulous employers.

The temporality of the employment coupled with low and uneven salaries, and the shortage of renting opportunities has forced many migrant farm workers to look for cheap and informal living arrangements near to the areas of agricultural production. This fosters the mushrooming of numerous informal settlements in the countryside made of self-constructed shacks or tents, with poor access to water and other services. These settlements, usually known as 'ghettos,' are spread out lodging from a few dozen to several thousand migrants (Brovia & Piro, 2020).

Several labour market analyses indicate that the estimated proportion of rural employment, which is largely filled by migrant workers, has been increasing over time. Between 2011 and 2017, an estimated increase of 4.3% to 6.5% was recorded, in Europe - with respect to the total population employed in the agricultural sector (Natale et al., 2019). This tendency is

driven by Spain, Italy and Denmark. In these countries, the percentage of migrants employed in agriculture is higher than that of migrants employed in other sectors.

In face of this scenario, rural migrants fare worse for most indicators of integration, not only compared to citizens but also compared to migrants living in cities and towns. Several studies (for a review see Rye & Scott, 2018) provide ample evidence indicating how poor working conditions and the dependency on the role of intermediaries for recruitment are defining characteristics of employment of migrants in agriculture that point not only to precariousness in employment but in housing too. According to Perrotta and Sacchetto (2014, p. 77), many workers address housing needs in one of three ways: "a) they live in reception centres set up by the local institutions, which are usually open only for a limited number of documented migrants; b) Eastern Europeans in particular find shelter in uninhabited houses in the countryside, which are often without electricity, water and heating, c) many African migrants with and without documents live in large "ghettos" - as the migrants themselves call their living area (i.e. concentrations of several hundred workers living in self-built shacks, abandoned houses, factories and other derelict buildings)".

More generally, migrants' settlement in rural areas is associated with relevant residential and territorial aspects. Migrants may settle in these areas or peripheral areas (rather than in large cities) as they may be more affordable, regardless whether employment is available in agriculture. By doing so they may impact on demographic trends of depopulation. At the same time, Natale et al. (2019) recall the phenomenon of the "temporary, seasonal and circular forms of migration" to highlight that while there can be pull factors associated with employment opportunities in agriculture, migrants may stay in rural localities for temporary periods only. Examples are given by the authors on the situations of migrants from Ukraine to Poland, but this phenomenon regards also migrant workers from Bulgaria, Romania. Considering the temporary and circular nature of these movements is relevant as they are embedded in the housing as well as employment precarity of migrants and are strictly connected to the legal precarity generated by seasonal visa requirements.

4.4.3   Camps: formal and informal entanglement

What makes the failure of national housing, reception and integration policies in Europe evident is the presence and growth of camps that have developed at border or junction areas along the main migratory routes. Despite being similar in their structure of makeshift settlements, the main difference between rural ghettos and camps are the reasons pushing migrants to live there. The former are built by migrants who need to settle near (or inside) the place of work, usually for the harvest season(s); the latter are camps built along migration routes either by (local, national or international) authorities or migrants themselves. Such campas rise close to major natural or artificial borders, heavily patrolled to keep migrants out. They often end up stranded in these locations for long periods.

Migration movements and the institutional incapacity to deal with them have resulted in the establishment of campsites all over the world. Some have existed for decades, like Zatari, a large-scale camp in Jordan; others, like the UNRWA camps and the settlements of the Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Lebanon, or the makeshift camps around Calais date back to the 1980s (Dembour & Martin, 2011). There are some critical differences between official and unofficial camps.

Official camps are (in theory) temporary settlements built to host refugees and asylum seekers. They often comprise container housing units and/or tents. Refugee camps usually

accommodate displaced people who have fled from their home country, but some camps also host internally displaced people who flee from a given locality but remain within the same country. Camps are normally built and run by a government agency, or the United Nations, or international organizations (such as the International Committee of the Red Cross), or non-governmental organizations. In the EU, these camps are de facto places of detention where migrants are confined until their request to enter the EU territory is examined (see Box 4.9).

Unofficial camps, such as Idomeni in Greece or the Calais Jungle in France, emerged spontaneously and the migrants who settled there were largely left without any support by governments and international organisations - while civil society actors and activists have often acted to provide basic aid. Living conditions in camps are extremely precarious as evident in the cases of Greek camps (Moria, Oreokastro, Katsikas, Idomeni, and other camps on the islands of Lesbos, Samos, and Chios). They include inadequate shelter, hardly any running water, overcrowding, waiting times spanning over several hours to get food and access toilets, lack of access to healthcare services and education (for children), and limited or no access to legal support. The spread of camps across Europe gained more attention in the public and political debate during the 'migration reception crisis'. Since 2015 and 2016, camps have been an integral part of the European political and geographic landscape: they have proliferated along the Balkan route and at the internal and external borders of some EU Member States. When migration flows started decreasing, after a peak in 2015, some commentators expected that such informal camps would dissipate as quickly as they had appeared. On the contrary, the number of makeshift camps is still significant throughout Europe. Yet, it is difficult to determine precisely how many exist to date in the European Union (Mediterranean Institute for Investigative Reporting, 2021).

Box 4.9: Spaces of detention in Europe

Migreurop is a network of activists and researchers defending migrants' rights. Launched in 2002, during the European Social Forum in Florence, this network has been denouncing the multiplication of administrative detention centres for foreigners, including camps, civil law prisons, and detention facilities. It has also raised awareness among civil society actors on the detention of undocumented migrants as a key tool of the European migration policies. Cartography has been repeatedly used by Migreurop to represent this and other phenomena.

The authors

Figure 4.3: Map of the encampment in Europe and its consequences on refugees' itineraries
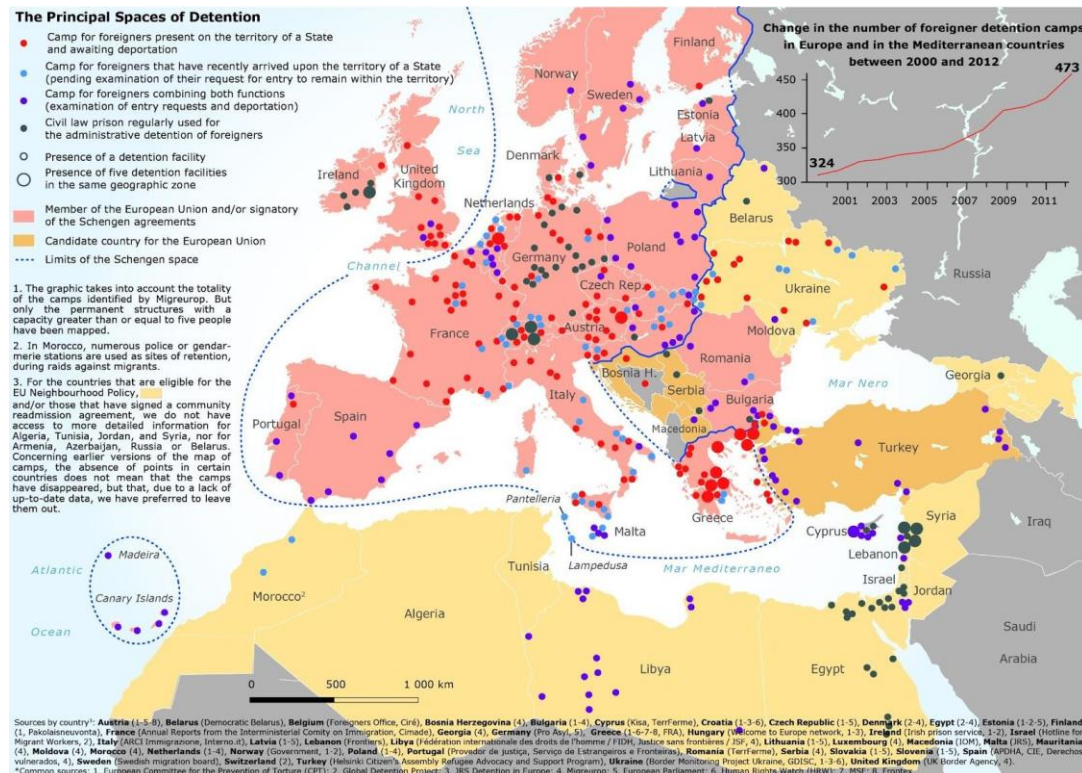
Migreurop

It is important to examine the factors underpinning the emergence of informal camps set up by migrants, which are similar to those that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) identifies, as causes of the establishment of informal settlements worldwide: i) a flow of people into a certain area; ii) bad planning and administration or dysfunctional regulatory frameworks; iii) large forced migrants flows; iv) poverty and lack of housing (partly as a product of the other factors) (Tsenkova et al., 2009).

Informal camps are therefore the result of the absence of adequate reception and housing policies and facilities. They represent a self-made response to the basic need for shelter. Migrants or displaced groups tend to gather and open encampments also for social reasons: self-constructed shelters increase the feeling of safety and increase visibility, hence they open possibilities to receive external relief (Corsellis & Vitale, 2005, p. 115). Camps that are built in situations of emergency usually last longer than the (prolonged) emergencies around which they are created, thus resulting in novel socio spatial forms like 'city-camps', squatter camps or urban slums (Agier, 2002; Tsenkova et al., 2009).

Huq and Miraftab (2020) reflected on the intersection between two specific bodies of the academic literature: one on informal settlements (informal and insurgent grassroots practices) and one on reception camps (spatial practices and the governance of refugees) and contributed to the theorization of these expanding and overlapping spaces of global displacement. As they explained, "although camps and informal settlements are not the same, they can resemble to and blur into each other as they evolve in context-specific ways". Informal settlements may host displaced refugees and asylum seekers, while camps may accommodate impoverished citizens in cities. If we look at informal settlements through the camp literature, we can better understand the spatial forms that the reception crisis has

assumed (Archer & Dodman, 2017). Huq and Miraftab argue that "in spaces where urban humanitarian crises are concretely manifest, the lines between citizen and refugee - and between informal settlement and camps - become blurred. Within informal settlements, impoverished and stigmatized dwellers are held in a limbo of citizenship-in-wait and in-situ displacement" (353).

Camps and informal settlements' temporalities are key to understanding the claim-making practices among citizens and refugees in relation to state and humanitarian governance. Camp dwellers wait for local integration, third-country settlement, or return and repatriation to their country of origin. Picker & Pasquetti (2015) observe that waiting, in cases of protracted displacement, is a temporal dimension that is "detached at once from the future, and from linearity, instead solely reduced to an indefinitely permanent temporary dimension" (684).

Box 4.10: The Jungle of Calais

> The Calais Jungle (known officially as Camp de la Lande) is a refugee and migrant encampment close to Calais, in France, at the border with the UK. It was open from January 2015 to October 2016. Other camps had been named "jungles" in the previous years, but this particular settlement drew global media attention in 2015, when its population grew rapidly. Migrants stayed at the camp while they attempted to enter the United Kingdom, or while they awaited for their French asylum claims to be processed.

The authors

4.4.4   Homelessness

Due to different policy frameworks and approaches, there are many challenges in establishing a common definition of homelessness in Europe. FEANTSA (The European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless) and the European Observatory on Homelessness developed a European Typology of Homelessness and Social Exclusion (ETHOS) that is used in policy circles and is cited widely across Europe (Busch-Geertsema, 2010). It is a broad definition with four categories that span from more to less acute homelessness situations, including: rooflessness, houselessness, insecure housing and inadequate housing. More detailed analysis of homelessness will be provided in the next chapter. In the remaining paragraphs, we would like to stress three broad concerns in relation to migrant homelessness at EU level: i) a growing share of migrants among the homeless population, in particular people living rough and houseless people using emergency and low-threshold services; ii) evidence of the presence of refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants among homeless people, in the most acute homelessness situations; iii) migrants who be exposed to a disproportionate risk of homelessness, compared to other individuals, although they are not recent migrants.

In 2004, ETHOS published the book "Immigration and Homelessness". This was the first comprehensive analysis of the impact of integration policies on the homelessness sector in EU Member States. From then onwards, the issue remained central as far as migrants are involved. A substantial share of the homeless population includes in fact migrants and in particular undocumented migrants, but also EU migrants, unemployed migrants with a long-term residence permit, asylum seekers and holders of international protection that can fall into a state of institutional abandonment. In some countries, such as France

and Italy, approximately half of the users of homeless shelters are of migrant background (FEANTSA, 2016).

Despite the size of the problem, the homeless sector still struggles to define its role and responsibility vis-à-vis homeless migrants, particularly undocumented migrants. Views and experience of migrant homelessness differ between EU Member States but there is growing evidence that it is a Europe-wide social issue, particularly in larger urban areas (Daly, 1996; FEANTSA, 2002; Edgar et al., 2004; Harrison et al., 2005). Edgar et al. (2004) suggested that a combination of relative disadvantage in labour markets and in housing markets, coupled with prejudices, racism and discrimination, have contributed to creating the conditions for housing exclusion and homelessness. Furthermore, although entitled to protection and reception, asylum seekers as well as refugees often end up in precarious housing conditions with a high risk of experiencing situations similar to those of homeless people. Both groups can get trapped in the vicious circle of long-term homelessness.

The sixth FEANTSA report highlighted that extreme poverty and homelessness have gained further ground and are affecting new segments of the population, since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous editions of the report had already highlighted the dramatic increase in homelessness and the diversification of homeless people profiles, suggesting that the pandemic has de facto worsened existing poor conditions. In 2019, FEANTSA and the Abbé Pierre Foundation had estimated at 700,000 the minimum number of homeless people in the European Union, sleeping rough or in temporary/emergency accommodation on any given night (FEANTSA, 2020).

At a glance

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