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"YOU CAN SEE IT IN HIS EYES THAT HE IS WILLING TO WORK". THE AMBIVALENT USE OF WORK IN PROMOTING INTEGRATION FOR MIGRANTS. A CASE STUDY FROM NORTHERN ITALY

ABSTRACT: This article presents and analyses the use of work in promoting integration for asylum seekers and refugees in Lombardy (North of Italy). The research materials, collected from a larger research project involving asylum-seekers, refugees, professionals, and researchers, highlight how two main discourses operate in complementary fashion in integration practices based on career guidance and traineeships. Work is on the one hand a potential enabling factor that allows migrants to enter a relational space based on solidarity but, at the same time, it may represent a barrier, filtering out those who are welcome and those who are not. These two effects intersect, depending on a multiplicity of factors embedded in the institutional integration system. Narratives collected on this network will be used to explore how mechanisms of recognition and exclusion are related not only to an economic logic but to values connected to a certain kind of work culture. This is a dimension that is often neglected by social operators whose practices are continuously exposed to the risk of constructing, unconsciously, the "integrable" migrant.
KEYWORDS: integration, borders, guidance, governmentality, recognition.

Introduction:
a local/global context along the borders of integration

This paper describes the ambivalent use of work in promoting integration for asylum-seekers and refugees in the North of Italy drawing on data generated along a larger research project involving asylum-seekers, refugees, native citizens, professionals, and researchers. The project was realised from October 2018 to March 2020[1] in a chaotic period characterized at the beginning by two *Decreti Sicurezza* (Security Decrees) – two acts with force of law regarding anti-migration that have been the subject of a hard political debate in recent years[2] – and at the end by the first wave of the COVID-19

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  [1] The project was founded by Fondazione Alsos with the scientific direction of Prof. Laura Formenti, University of Milan-Bicocca.
  [2] *Decreti Sicurezza* (Security Decrees), wanted by the former interior minister Matteo Salvini (leader of the right wing *Lega* party) are a package of laws that came into force in 2018 and 2019 and that removed humanitarian protection, rendering it more difficult to obtain Italian citizenship, and criminalized NGOs who save migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. They were replaced in 2020 through new decrees on migration by the Italian cabinet that are in distinct contrast to the former

pandemic. This changing situation did not allow us to systematically analyse the role of work in promoting integration. At the same time, the data generated during the research outline a fragmented and ambivalent reality offering possibilities for reflection even if not of a thoroughly systematic kind. Before moving into our interpretative analysis of practices related to adult education and guidance included in local reception projects**,** we will briefly present the global (national, UE)/ local (regional) context.

1. *The discourse of civic integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the host country*

The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound, widespread impacts on migrants, refugees, and displaced persons, as well as on migration patterns at local and global levels. When the pandemic started, the historically high number of refugees and asylum seekers who came to the European Union in the period of 2015-2017, were still challenging our society in term of social inclusion as an emergency involving people who leave their homes in search of a better life. In these last years, the macro-politics of our migration society (Hoggan & Hoggan-Kloubert, 2022) have been dominated by the questions of safety and control, made explicit by public policies, and, as Michael Foucault would say, internalized by citizens (Foucault, 2004) to become common sense. So, a good number of 'measures' adopted by social operators and adult educators working with migrants adhere, consciously, to a predominant narrative unfolded between instances of social integration on the one hand, and sharpened state control of the borders, on the other (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013) which simultaneously perform functions of demarcation and territorialization (Balibar, 2002). "If you want to enter the State territory, or if you want to remain in it, you have to show your desire to integrate in it" (Carbone, Gargiulo & Russo Spena, 2018, translation ours). This remark expresses in a very concise and explicit way the idea that governments of many European and so-called democratic States (e.g., Germany), share about the policies of hospitality and integration of non-citizens (Bennett, Wal, Fabiszak & Krzyżanowski, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2012). According to this vision, globally expressed with the term civic integration (Kostakopoulou, 2010), the physical presence of foreign subjects – not recognized as citizens – within the perimeter of the national space is useful, and therefore appreciated, when meeting certain requirements, modulated within the values and needs of the local population. The beneficiaries of civic integration policies are expected to adapt to regulations, especially to those regarding the job market, and to develop the specific competences to deal with it (Mezzadra & Neison, 2013). Civic integration, then, is a clearly political vision for a "safe, orderly and regular" migration (GCM, 2018) that results in the construction of

regulations because it was the new government's intention to return to a "system of reception and integration" for migrants.

specific social policies and the creation of shared narratives and 'saturated stories' (e.g., 'monological' stories pointing, in a reductionist and straightforward way, to a simple result). The beneficiary subjects are 'othered', somehow regarded as lacking those features and characteristics that would make them suitable for a certain context (from language knowledge to a more general knowledge of the culture of the host country). So, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees must go through educational actions that aim at reducing their 'deficit' from 'normality'. The latter concept is especially problematic: the generalized categories of 'migrant', 'asylum-seeker' and 'refugee', are dramatically insufficient to represent a variety of people with different stories, trajectories, life projects, needs. It reinforces negative discourse where the othered are represented as a danger or needy people. The experience of creation of the other is shaped by physical and symbolic segregation, linguistic barriers, and misrepresentations (GEM, 2018).

2. The Italian way of civic integration: the protection system and its recent reforms

Europe's migration crisis has had a considerable impact in term of numbers in Italy from 2015 to 2017. When our research was started in Italy we had a protection system for asylum-seekers and refugees called SPRAR (2002-2018)[3] that was counted among the best practices at a European level, and it is within this system that the most interesting projects were implemented (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016; OECD, 2016), but for political reasons SPRAR was terminated at the end of 2018. In fact, 2018 was the year of a dramatic turn in the public discourse and reception system for refugees (Luraschi, Massena, & Pitzalis, 2019) and the rules introduced by the Security Decrees, the so-called "Salvini Decree" (Arnone & Sicomo, 2018), that the system of protection was to be reserved for migrants who had already obtained a status of protection and for unaccompanied minors, not for asylum seekers that become invisible. Going into further detail, since the end of 2018 the National Plan for integrating beneficiaries of international protection has been opting for a multi-level governance model, which encourages the initiatives of local entities, intermediate bodies, and civil society organizations, a model consistent with contemporary international trends (OECD, 2018). After the end of our research, in December 2020, the Italian government modified the security decrees, creating a new reception system called SAI *Sistema di Accoglienza e Integrazione* (Reception and Integration System) that reintroduced the integration of asylum seekers. The aim of this integration system is to provide support for everyone (refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied foreign minors) in the reception system, through an individual programme designed to enable beneficiaries to regain

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[3] SPRAR *Sistema di protezione per richiedenti asilo e rifugiati* (Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees), https://www.retesai.it/english/.

a sense of independence, and thus enjoy effective involvement in life in Italy, in terms of employment, housing and access to local services and social interaction as well as scholastic integration for minors[4]. At the same time, the Italian situation is continuing to pass through a phase of radicalization starting from political discourse where othering is a communication strategy (Passerelli & Tuorlo, 2018) in which migrants are identified as belonging to groups that are ethnically, if not racially, different from the Italians (Di Cesare, 2017). Experts claim that the 'Italian way' of civic integration distinguishes itself by a particular rhetorical emphasis on cultural difference and the necessity of forcing non-citizens to be 'suitable' for communal life (Faso & Bontempelli, 2017). It is also for this reason that civic integration governs people and their behaviour, intended as a vertical logic, beyond measures addressed to newcomers and extending to the entire 'migrant' population, including the long-residing segment (The Independent, 21st November 2018) and their native-born children.

According to *the twenty-sixth Italian Report on Migrations 2020* "immigration continues to be a divisive issue both in the political establishment and among the Italian population" (Cesareo, 2020: 8), and "the pandemic has forced us to urgently rethink the issue of migration". In fact, it has highlighted how vital immigrants are to our society: "They are highly requested in the agricultural sector (especially during the harvest season), in home care for the elderly and the disabled, as well as in catering and in construction" (Cesareo, 2020: 7). Therefore, the ambivalence between prejudices towards migrants and their usefulness in the world of work is increasingly evident.

3. Description of our project's "Unexpected subject"

The project is called "Unexpected Subjects" and is made up of compositional research (Formenti, 2018; Formenti & Luraschi, 2022) with migrants and host communities that was started in September 2018 and ended in March 2020 and was funded by an Italian charity. The areas where migration and inclusive education have been explored and analysed are in Lombardy, in the cities of Lecco, Monza-Brianza and nearby villages. We mainly focused on local projects and activities aimed at supporting positive exchanges between migrants and the host society, as well as to raise awareness of the benefits of diversity.

Our research explores the migrants' transitions inside and outside the reception system as a learning, perhaps transformative (Mezirow, 1991) experience. We are not interested in examining the efficiency and efficacy of career guidance, we are more interested in using systemic approaches and a transformative perspective (Formenti & West, 2018; Fleming, Kokkos & Finnegan, 2019) to investigate the processes of recognition

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[4] SAI, https://www.retesai.it/english/.

(Honneth, 1995) involved in career guidance for asylum-seekers and refugees. In this sense, our first action along the research process was identifying the reciprocity of the actors of the network we were going to consider:

– young adult migrants hosted in reception centres as asylum-seekers and refugees,
– social workers and educators engaged in reception centres (locals or with migrant backgrounds),
– an educational service in the province of Lecco that provides work placement with internships and work grants for migrants,
– coordinators of social cooperatives that manage reception centres and promote, in agreement with local councillors, voluntary work activities for migrants and natives on their territory (for example, supporting children who walk to school, environmental clean-up actions),
– local volunteers, usually retired people, active in welcoming activities or informal support for migrants who are looking for work in the local area,
– employers providing traineeships for migrants in their companies,
– local councils promoting activities to generate a sense of social inclusion for migrants.

One of the best practices that we have analysed consists in a local alliance between a non-profit consortium and local enterprises committed to the idea of supporting migrants, with the aim of providing access to the labour market (Eurofound, 2016). This idea is perfectly consistent with the local culture: the area, in fact, is one of the richest regions of Italy, characterized by a great number of small and medium enterprises and a strong work ethic. In fact, pro-business culture is one of the main assets of this area, raised upon the *Italian economic miracle* (the period of strong economic growth in the years from 1950 to 1963, see Crafts & Toniolo eds., 1996). Lecco and Brianza lie between Milano and the lake region at the foot of the Alps, in the largest industrial area of Italy, where the relationship between work engagement and work identity is a component of the daily lives of local people (Sviluppo, 2011).

We examined the potential for promoting social integration and emancipation through work, and, at the same time, the risk of transforming work into a new kind of border. Sandro Mezzadra & Brett Neilson (2013) thematize the proliferation of borders in today's world and advise considering them not only as obstacles that exclude but also as devices of inclusion and, more specifically: "devices of inclusion that select and filter people and different forms of circulation in ways no less violent than those deployed in exclusionary measures" (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013: 7). To explore these two sides of work, we present a plurality of voices belonging to the main actors involved in the integration practices (entrepreneurs, social workers, and migrants).

Theoretical framework and methodology

The article analyses relational and recognition processes emerging from interviews through a theoretical framework based on systemic theories (Bateson, 1972; Von Foerster, 1981; Glasersfeld, 1995) and Axel Honneth's perspective of recognition (Honneth, 1995). In systemic theories, individuals are part of a wider set of systems and relationships. According to Gregory Bateson (1972), living in a place is a relational, compositional, and ongoing process, so the experience of refugees and asylum-seekers unfolds in relation to the physical and social space, in daily interactions with others, and with the public discourse (Formenti & Luraschi, 2020, 2022). All refugees and asylum-seekers are part of a larger network generated through the interaction and the movements with others and the environment (Luraschi, 2021). We investigate the paths of asylum-seekers and refugees hosted in residential units: Silvia is in the field while Andrea is a member of the research team supervising the epistemological and methodological aspects of the project, and we combine a range of qualitative methods (auto/biographic, cooperative, and ethnographic). So far, we have collected:

- ten qualitative interviews using the auto/biographical method (Merrill & West, 2009) with different actors of welcome programs in the cities of Lecco and Monza-Brianza during the start-up phase of our research (October 2018- February 2020),
- four dialogical workshops using the compositional method (Formenti, 2016; Luraschi, 2020) with, in total, thirty asylum seekers and refugees from different backgrounds and experiences to investigate the migrants' movement and their informal relations in the Lombardy area (April-May 2019),
- two cooperative workshops using the cooperative method (Heron, 1996) with social workers to explore their idea of 'integration' (January-March 2019).
  The participants are distributed as follows:
- regarding the interviews: 3 coordinators of social cooperatives, 2 guidance counsellors working for an educational service, 3 employers and 2 volunteers engaged on the SPRAR system, selected by opportunistic sampling.
- regarding the dialogical workshops: 30 refugees and asylum seekers involved in our study are resident in Lecco and selected by snowball sampling. They come from twelve different countries, and they had already lived in Italy on average for two years. They participated in the research in four different groups based on the closeness to their home.
- regarding the cooperative workshops: 15 social workers who work with the refugees and asylum seekers. Their backgrounds range from educational or psychological science and some of them have also a migratory background.

The aim of our study is to open possibilities for individual and collective transformation (Formenti & West, 2018). For the interviews we used the auto/biographical method in order to highlight the collective dimensions of social discourses (Merril & West, 2009; West, 2016) on migration; for the compositional workshop (Formenti 2016; Luraschi 2020) – compositional means participants are invited to explore creative activities (e.g. writing, drawing, physical movements) – we use an embodied method for sharing participants' points of view in groups (Formenti & Luraschi, 2022; Luraschi & Del Negro, 2019); and for the cooperative workshop we used a participative method for stimulating dialogue in an educational context (Heron, 1996). All these materials have been transcribed and analysed through the interpretative lenses of Honneth's recognition theory (1995). In this article we present the analysis of different transcribed conversations:

– an interview with a coordinator of social cooperatives (Greta),
– an interview with a guidance counsellor (Simone),
– an interview with an employer (Laura),
– a conversation with a refugee during a compositional workshop (Sadio).

These materials have been chosen to represent the variety of the different subjects we worked with, discovering that some of them do not interact directly with the others. This fact, in our view, makes it even more important to highlight cultural similarities and differences among professionals who, though not having a common practice, must coordinate with each other.

Attitude to work: the cultural background

According to our analysis, one of the assumptions that represents common ground, and a potential source of coordination is a certain kind of work ethic that is distinctive of the Lombardy area. To put it as one of the research participants said during an interview: "Brianza is known for the high quality of work and for our dedication and passion for working" (Simone, guidance counsellor in Lecco).

The first professional interviewed was Greta. She is an educator, coordinates various reception services for migrants in the province of Monza-Brianza and she is also a manager of social services and integration in a small town in this area. She states that the idea of career development for refugees, including the topic of job search and career counselling intervention, is very limited and needs to be developed rapidly. During the conversation she explains her point of view about the importance for jobseekers of acquiring an informal relationship with the territory:

Greta: The fear of the 'black' is there, but it doesn't manifest for the 'black' friend, this discrepancy between what is declared and what is perceived is very strong in Brianza!

Silvia: Where do you see this discrepancy between what is declared and what is perceived?

Greta: This year we've assigned internships to those who were about to get out, with the aim of concluding the project with people who were close to the end on one side and gain time for our guests on the other. With the latter we focused much more on elevating the level of Italian so they could attend middle school. We are starting to offer a series of professional courses. When the process is so long, it becomes fundamental for them to find a job, especially for those who need to send money home.

Kiemo, for example, found his internship on his own. This guy went around 'harassing' everybody, in the positive sense of the term, and found a gardener who even made him a contract for the whole summer. He's just finished.

Silvia: My intention is to explore how they've moved. Are there phases that all of them go though and that can be mapped, or do they each have their own personal path?

Greta: There is one phase that all of them deal with and it's the fear of the 'Boat' before or while they sleep, it's like they relive the trauma of their journey. Another phase is the flattening: after the initial rush of good will, everything changes because the process is too slow (it takes two years only to wait for the commission). A source of help in dealing with this dullness can come from a strong local community which the newcomers can cling to, as well as from the activities that we offer, none of which is compulsory except for the Italian course.

(Greta, coordinator of social cooperatives, November 2018, Vimercate MB, our translation)

In Greta's words we can immediately understand how work is central for integration practices on the territories, to avoid boredom and desperation.

Recognition processes: an instrumental solidarity?

As a result of the analysis process one of the most important themes recurrently identified by the researchers was related to recognition processes embedded in integration practices. Having selected all the transcription excerpts which we tagged as 'recognition', we started connecting the materials with theory, to have a support in constructing our interpretations. We drew on Honneth's theory of recognition as we found it – to a certain degree – particularly coherent with our theoretical frame and we valued its potential in enriching the thickness of our results. Honneth's theory identifies three levels of recognition processes. One is based on an affective relationship and represents the source of self-confidence; another is based on legal acknowledgement of rights and represents the source of self-esteem, and the last one relies on social intersubjective recognition promoting the perception of being a valuable and esteemed member of our society.

In an ideal world, following Honneth's perspective, these levels of recognition would be disposed in a linear process starting from a good relationship, passing through legal acknowledgement of one's rights to obtain, finally, a valuable place in society. It is thanks "to the cumulative acquisition of basic self-confidence, of self-respect, and of self-esteem – provided, one after another, by the experience of those three forms

of recognition – that a person can come to see himself or herself, unconditionally, as both an autonomous and an individuated being and to identify with his or her goals and desires" (Honneth, 1995:169).

However, the world is not ideal and Honneth himself is aware of this fact, so he highlighted how the three patterns of recognition are often "intertwined in an undifferentiated manner" (Honneth, 1995:129). This potential embeddedness of these three patterns was the starting point of our analysis: as we pointed out, in fact, in refugees' experiences the integration and relational processes take place (paradoxically) while they are waiting for a legal acknowledgement of their rights. Moreover, if we take for granted that affective processes between people coming from very different cultures are not always easy to trigger, it seems that at the centre of the 'struggle' for recognition would be posed the possibility of being considered a valuable and esteemed member of the 'host' society.

An example of this possibility is offered by Laura, farm manager (Figure 1), telling how one of her migrant apprentices distinguished himself in a valuable way thanks to his ability in repairing a work instrument:

We still have the hayfork that Goytom, one of our first migrant apprentices, repaired for us. He was cleaning the stalls when the fork broke, and, because he needed it to finish his job, he repaired it himself – he did it in such a perfect way that it still works today. [...] I used to feel moved by his manners: he was always willing to give us a hand; whenever he saw me pushing the wheelbarrow, for example, – I am sixty-five years old and I still do all the activities on the farm without any problem – he always said "No, *mama*, let me do that" and he took care of the hard work. I had never seen any of our other employees do something like that.
(Laura, farm manager, February 2019, Cremella LC, our translation)

Figure 1 – Laura guided the researchers to visit her farm, February 2019, Cremella LC, PH Paco Liro

Another example is offered by Simone, a guidance counsellor working for an educational service involved in supporting migrants' traineeships. Silvia, who conducted

the interview, had a long conversation with Simone in his office in Lecco. During this conversation, he invited Silvia to visit Laura' farm because she has a long experience with internships for migrants. The previous interview with Simone is also particularly interesting, in our view, as it shows how recognition dynamics go beyond the very instrumental level, potentially triggering unexpected processes:

[...] The enterprise bet on Endurance – contrary to all my expectations, as he doesn't speak Italian and seemed to have some hearing problems – and so his internship began. Endurance was placed in a pig farm, where employees also take care of the butchering and the meat processing. As the case was a peculiar one, my presence in the company as a guidance counsellor was constant, so I was able to witness how things were going.
[...] From the beginning Endurance was paired with a deaf-mute Romanian worker to prepare skewers and salami. For mysterious reasons, these two people found their own non-verbal way to communicate, so the Romanian guy carried the other around, taught him the job and helped him grow. A couple of weeks ago, Endurance's one-year internship was about to end, and I was worried that he wouldn't be able to find a new job after this experience, but the company managers had a different plan for him. They shared with me that in their opinion Endurance could do 60% of the other employees' work, yet they knew that with no job he would probably end up in the middle of the street, perhaps become a petty criminal because it would be extremely difficult for him to find a new occupation; for this reason, they decided to offer him a contract for a job on call. When they told Endurance, I saw pure happiness on his face.
During his year-long internship, in full accordance with the reception operators, we went with him to get further tests for his health condition and submitted a request to obtain recognition of his invalidity for work purposes – this could hopefully turn his temporary job on call contract into a permanent contract for employees from sheltered groups. Once he receives this recognition, in fact, the company could perhaps hire him benefiting from tax allowances.
(Simone, guidance counsellor, December 2018, Lecco, our translation)

Simone was aware of the significance of this experience, stressing, during the interview, the fact that it represents a choice not based on working potential but, rather, on recognition of common values

I am reporting this story to show you that the managers of this enterprise believed in Endurance and bet on him – on a person who seemed damaged at first and who had never worked in Italy before – because they saw that he had the desire to work. You could see it in his eyes that he was willing to work.
(Simone, guidance counsellor, December 2018, Lecco, our translation)

In Honneth's view, social conditions for esteem are based on what count as a valued contribution to society, so they rely strongly on cultural values. Solidarity occurs only through shared perspectives on values and is based on an individual contribution to a shared project. Simone seems particularly aware of this dimension:

[...] It's not usual hearing an entrepreneur who has received a migrant saying, "let's give him a hand, this is a poor man, he has been through a long journey", while I've heard many people saying "I can give you a job, then we'll see".

[…] As a matter of fact, it is the entrepreneur himself who helps the asylum seeker to find accommodation, who helps him take care of the bureaucratic paperwork to get a house and a permit to stay. The entrepreneur invites him over for dinner, helps him create a network of acquaintances in the area, for example by introducing him to the local priest or to the sports club, in a very informal way. Today, most of the entrepreneurs say to me "I did it because I felt like doing it, not because I want the name of my company written in capital letters in the front page of the papers, or because I want a medal for it; I just did it because this man is a person. And whether he comes from Ghana, or New Zealand, or Norway, he is the one I found at my door, the one I got to know, and the one I have to help". Of course, this happens to the people who want to work, because for the migrant who is – as we call it in Brianza – a *lazzarone* (i.e., a slacker, a layabout) the door is closed, and on with the next. I'm simplifying it, just to put it clearly. (Simone, guidance counsellor, December 2018, Lecco, our translation)

So, we can see the emergence of a form of solidarity exclusively based on 'fitness' in relation to migrants' attitudes on one side and the 'culture of work' of the host country on the other side. The selection between those who are welcomed and those who are not goes beyond a mere economic and instrumental reasoning, permitting "abilities and traits of the other to appear significant for shared praxis" (Honneth, 1995: 129).

The possibility of creating a specific solidarity does not hide the fact that – lacking a general recognition of civil rights – forms of disrespect are taking place. During a compositional workshop, Sadio, a refugee from Senegal (Figure 2) tells us about the lack of respect he experienced at the workplace.

Figure 2 – Sadio draws a map of his everyday movements before telling his experience on workplace, May 2019, Barzanò LC, PH Paola Ravasio

After he has drawn his movements within the territory, he tells the group:

Sometimes the boss is sly: I work five days, and he only reports two in my wages. And if I work eight hours, he reports two or three in my wages. […] Milking the animals is an exhausting job and it's non-stop. You must usually work all day without a break. But the problem was

not the hard work, the problem was that the job was off the books...if everything is in order, you work and get paid for eight hours, and that's fine. [...] But you need respect in the job. I had to leave this job months ago because of these kinds of issue with my boss. [...] Now I am still at home without a job.
(Sadio, refugee from Senegal, May 2019, Barzanò LC, our translation)

This risk of exploiting migrants, despite openly welcoming statements, is a real risk during integration processes but is not always seen and properly considered in all the points of the network. Simone, for example, seems to rely on the dignity of the individual migrants to counteract hypothetical cases of exploitation:

The typical entrepreneur from the areas of Lecco and Brianza, whose main goal is to make profits, tends to believe that it is better to hire a migrant worker, because they work hard, even ten hours per day, and they can be paid a lesser wage. Yet the reality is quite different: when the migrant workers realize how the job works, they are not willing to be hired under these conditions. [...] I don't want to use the word "exploited", because, except for some rare cases, the possibility of "exploiting a foreign worker" doesn't exist in our territory.
(Simone, guidance counsellor, February 2019, Cremella LC, our translation)

Conclusions

A preliminary analysis of our research materials identifies two main complementary discourses operating in integration practices based on work. Working practices are represented on the one hand as an enabling factor and on the other as a barrier (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013): these two aspects of work are continuously intertwined, the one shifting into the other and through dynamics that are not always easy to highlight. For example, in a very reductionist sense we could expect that work would be an enabling factor for integration simply based on economic reasoning and productivity considerations. On the contrary, the preliminary research results seem, rather, to suggest that work can create a space for recognition based on shared values in a way that is relatively independent from a vision based merely on economic productivity. Honneth's theory of recognition gave us a useful frame to overcome a simplistic utilitaristic vision and grasp some of the many ways in which integration based on work practices could raise forms of solidarity permitting "abilities and traits of the other to appear significant for shared praxis" (Honneth, 1995: 129). This interpretation entails, of course, excluding mechanisms for those who do not 'fit' the specific work ethic embedded in one context. In this sense, to be acknowledged as a 'worthy individual' suitable for integration, the respect for explicit rules and a generic commitment to accept a new culture seem insufficient (e.g., by learning the new language). The game seems more subtle: migrants must behave in ways that are coherent with the local ways to give meaning to a certain social practice (in this case, working activities). Thus, governmentality processes,

leading those looking for adaptation towards the risk of a passive acquisition of others' stereotypes, are strictly intertwined with daily interactions where messages of suitability are continuously exchanged. Of course, these messages are not totally explicit, so their 'decoding' entails a constant activity of interpretation (and misunderstanding).

Another point of reflection, mainly related to social professionals working with refugees (educators, psychologists, social workers etc.), is clearly the dimension of social esteem. If recognition processes are based on representations of individuals sharing attitudes and values, how is it possible to support refugees in their struggle for integration? How is it possible to avoid the risk of enhancing a mechanism of governmentality inviting the other to acquire certain habits just because they sound appealing based on a certain kind of 'integrable' identity? How many messages do social operators convey because of a shared culture (of work in this case) that they don't realize completely precisely because they are embedded in their culture?

These dimensions may be neglected by professionals who are in general more focused on the pragmatic effects of refugees' work experience, such as the acquisition of skills. Work, as an integration factor, cannot be reduced only to its pragmatic and utilitarian elements, as it creates a complex .web of cultural collaborations and misunderstandings (Sclavi, 2007) triggering positive or negative processes related to recognition, misrecognition, solidarity, or forms of disrespect..

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