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The production of intercultural urban landscapes, a multi-scalar approach: the case of Ballarò, Palermo

Dr. Federico Wulff Barreiro, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University

Oscar Brito Gonzalez, Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London

Oscar Brito Gonzalez (o.brito@csm.arts.ac.uk)

Central Saint Martins,
University of the Arts London.
Granary Building, 1 Granary Square,
London N1C 4AA

+442075148867

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ABSTRACT.

In the context of the recent migration crisis affecting Europe, and the impact it has had in its public and political landscapes, there is an urgent need to nurture and manage the value of intercultural societies. The quality of intercultural interaction, particularly in the context of public spaces, have a fundamental influence in shaping social and political attitudes about the coexistence of different cultural groups. This paper argues for the role that intercultural place-making has in articulating a meaningful and sustainable inclusion and participation of multiple cultural identities in shaping our urban and public realms, mediating and negotiating an intercultural cohabitation and exchange that could generate social capital and cohesion. The paper proposes a multi-scalar approach to the planning and implementation of intercultural place-making processes, in a way that these may better articulate the intercultural

exchange with complex urban and social settings and networks, so to enhance their insertion and role in the construction of cohesive intercultural cities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The recent migration crisis in Europe has exacerbated ongoing or latent local urban, social and political issues, calling for effective strategies to manage the integration of migrants and refugees in the hosting context. In 2018, about 638,200 people applied for refugee protection status to the European Union member states¹, while in 2017 a total of 2.4 million non-EU citizens immigrated to one of the EU-28 Member States as economic migrants (Eurostat, 2018)². As a response to this critical context, the policies and practices of integration provided by institutional and non-institutional agents have emphasised the provision of services, facilities and legal frameworks to support the basic needs of the newcomers. This has placed additional strains on local resources that are often already insufficient, particularly in countries that have been already struggling with long-standing financial, political, social and urban crises. As a consequence, social and political tensions have emerged and have been instrumentalized by the current rise of the political far-right populism in Europe. The urban realm, and more specifically the public space, as the realm where social interactions occur, have a role in the negotiation of these tensions. This is particularly relevant in cities that are exposed to phenomena of globalisation, where the negotiation and the struggle for the control of the public space is an everyday practice between individuals of communities of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Fenster 2010).

This paper investigates how the production of space could have a role in production of intercultural environments that would allow for the inclusion and cohabitation of different cultures. Drawing from the definitions and proposed strategies for Intercultural Cities by the Council of Europe³, interculturality is defined as the simultaneous, non-hegemonic, coexistence of different cultures where each of these is able to be represented and contribute in the social, cultural, economic, political aspects of their cities. Interculturality is considered an asset, a quality to nurture, adding a dynamic complexity to the life in the contemporary urban settings. The simultaneous coexistence of the different, and even contrasting, cultural groups is not without issues, such as tensions and antagonisms that may produce conflicts and exclusions, affecting the urban, social and political environments, where the ethnic and cultural

¹ see https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics, accessed 27 March 2018

² see http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics, accessed 27 March 2018

³ see <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities>, accessed 27 March 2018

difference is perceived as an existential threat, as evidenced by the political instrumentalisation of the recent migration crises (Yilmaz, 2012).

The paper focuses on the role that intercultural place-making may have in mediating and facilitating the coexistence of cultural diversity, including and fostering the participation of different local and migrant groups, so that it would not only prevent frictions and conflicts, but that would positively contribute to the improvement of the social and urban environments. The participation of local communities in processes of placemaking and how it could contribute to the social cohesion has been explored elsewhere (Bundell-Jones et al, eds. 2005; Awan et al, eds. 2011). Based on the critical analysis of two relevant case studies in Italy, one in Palermo and the other in Reggio Emilia, this paper identifies a gap in the way these processes articulate such endeavours in the complexity of their urban environments. The effectiveness of those processes often enabled, but also limited, by the quality of the bottom-up engagement in immediate, feasible scopes that are however limited in terms of participation, material and temporal scales.

This paper makes the case about the need for an effective intercultural place-making to be part of a holistic, multi-scalar approach, including and articulating different strategies and tactics, and different spatial and temporal scales, including, not exclusively, urban planning, architectural interventions and tactical urbanism, so to create, consolidate and reinforce sustainable and inclusive intercultural interactions and networks in complex urban settings.

The first part of the paper analyses how the intercultural cohabitation and exchange may be affected by the issues pointed by Chantal Mouffe about the impossibility of a non-hegemonic and exclusive consensus and, therefore, of the potential emergence of conflictual antagonism (Mouffe, 2000), and how this could be addressed by the production of a “common symbolic space” (Mouffe, 2012: 613). Based on the ideas of Amin Ash, Henri Lefebvre and others, the paper then explores how the participation in processes of intercultural place-making could facilitate the production of such space, offering the opportunities of interaction between different groups, generating social capital and how this could redefine our understanding of citizenship.

The second part of the paper focuses on the critical analysis of a relevant case study, Ballarò neighbourhood in Palermo. This is a rich multicultural setting, where SOS Ballarò, a group of local activists, have implemented a series of tactical urbanism actions as a response against a widespread

urban dereliction, triggering a bottom up urban regeneration initiative that have led to the creation of local civic assemblies with an increasing urban agency. The analysis looks at some gaps on how effective those actions were in generating proper intercultural place-making processes and outcomes.

Based on the conclusions from the first two parts, and particularly from the issues with the current implementation of the place-making interventions in Ballarò, the third part of the paper proposes a multi-scalar strategy on how to produce Inter-Cultural Nodes, approaching such complex urban environment with a network of connected interventions. The defining aspects of the intercultural nodes are then explained, supported by the critical analysis of Mondinsieme, an Intercultural Centre in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

The paper concludes with the proposal of a multi-scalar design strategy to Santa Chiara Centre, one of the main institutions offering support to a range of different cultural groups in Ballarò, within a complex urban and architectural setting. Based on the conclusions from the previous sections, the proposal aims to realise the potential of Santa Chiara to become a key Inter-Cultural Node, contributing to social and urban regeneration of the area, and as such, demonstrating the value of a comprehensive inter-scalar approach to the production of intercultural place-making.

2. INTERCULTURAL PLACEMAKING AND THE PRODUCTION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND DIFFERENTIATED CITIZENSHIPS

Whilst the challenges of the immigration and diversity often dominate the media and political outlets, these could also bring potential benefits to their hosting contexts. The Council of Europe has developed an Intercultural Cities Programme⁴, according to which "the successful cities of the future will be those best able to harness the talent and energy of their diverse citizens [...] by developing, negotiating and implementing a comprehensive strategy to realise its diversity advantage." (Guidikova and Wood, 2012)

There is a political discourse and emphasis, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon sphere, on the production of multicultural settings where the different cultural identities could coexist, and the differences are celebrated (Guilherme and Dietz, 2015). The emphasis in promoting multiculturalism that might ignore the inherent risks of reinforcing existing social and cultural hegemonies that could, therefore, hinder the effective participation of a diverse range of cultural actors in the public life of their societies.

Interculturalism, instead, recognises the asymmetrical and hegemonical challenges derived from the relation between autochthonous majorities and the ethnic and cultural minorities that are embedded in the multicultural approach, emphasising interactions and hybridity, as dynamic processes that acknowledge and negotiate socio-cultural complexities (Guidikova and Wood, 2012; Guilherme and Dietz, *ibid*).

The inclusion of the difference, a key aspect of intercultural place-making, is likely to collide with the hegemonic conditions and practices from pre-established and dominant cultural settings, potentially exacerbating the antagonistic and conflictual conditions that, according to Chantal Mouffe (1993, 2000) are inherent to the political. The acknowledgment of such inherent antagonism and of the impossibility of a non-hegemonic consensus without exclusion (Mouffe, 2000: 101), which affects any pretension of a multicultural space, provides the basis for an approach supporting an "agonistic pluralism" (Mouffe, 2000: 101-102) where the conflictual antagonism between the different cultural groups may be transformed in an agonistic recognition of the legitimacy of the otherness through the establishment of a "common symbolic space" (Mouffe, 2012: 613).

The production of a common symbolic space, where the differences between the participants could be exposed, discussed and confronted, assumes the capacity of that space to articulate such agonistic

⁴ See also <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities>, accessed 12 November 2018

exchange and citizenship (Connolly, 1995), hence having some implicit or explicit mediating structure, as well as the capacity and resilience of the participants to engage in what could be a challenging contestation. Such assumptions could not always be taken for granted in the complexity and heterogeneity of an intercultural civility, where the main opportunities of exchange are conditioned by the capacity of the citizens to "accommodate diversity in their relations with concrete ethno-cultural others in daily, prosaic encounters" (Van Leeuwen, 2014: 2). This, however, doesn't mean that conflict should be prevented by approaching the production of the public sphere, and by consequence of the public space, as a neutral ground that apparently allows for an intercultural exchange. It is often the case that public spaces are either over-controlled or just spaces of passage without meaningful interactions between strangers (Amin, 2002: 967).

The promotion of the urban conditions for an intercultural exchange could be facilitated by a participative production of intercultural place-making, creating spaces that could foster encounters and interactions between people from different backgrounds, whilst creatively managing and minimising the inherent potential conflicts of such intercultural settings. In this sense, the production of intercultural place-making needs to transcend current contingencies, such as the recent massive migrations, creating sustainable and resilient frameworks and conditions to accommodate and include the simultaneous cohabitation of different cultural identities that characterise the contemporary urban phenomena.

The intercultural interaction in the public realm could be articulated around implicit or explicit shared needs or issues rather than initiated and articulated through a discursive exchange that could be alienating (Van Leeuwen, 2014: 5; Forester, 2009). In this sense, the engagement in place-making processes, such as tactical urbanism, could facilitate such exchanges around tangible goals and, by this, facilitate the production of social capital, defined as the production of "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000: 19). Furthermore, the production of social capital through the people's engagement in intercultural place-making practices could provide with a "concrete experience of social networks' and a sense of belonging, knitting the social fabric (Field, 2003). The production of space, therefore, becomes a medium for social cohesion, emphasising the role of the process and not just the pursuit of the outcome, having an effect in the capacity that the involved communities have to negotiate the conflicts and tensions related to intercultural environments. According to Putnam, the production of "Social

capital enables a community to resolve problems and fosters awareness of the ways in which their fates are interlinked and encourages to be more tolerant, less cynical, and more empathetic." (Putnam, 2000:10).

According to the Council of Europe, "Interculturalism expects a dynamic and constantly changing environment in which individuals and collective express multiple, hybrid and evolving identities and needs"⁵. Such conditions of interculturalism could be better nurtured in the spatial and temporal gaps of the hegemonic control and governance over the spatial, social, financial and political organization of the territory, in interstitial situations of uncertainty (Oswalt et al, 2013: 11). These interstitial conditions could be related to what Lefebvre defined as 'differential space' (Lefebvre, 1991a: 52), which is informed by its use from its inhabitants, by their temporal appropriation of the spatial conditions and, therefore, by the contingent production of the social space. Similarly to the intercultural spaces, the differential spaces are "created and dominated by its users from the basis of its given conditions. It remains largely unspecified [...], thus allowing for a wide spectrum of use which is capable of integrating a high degree of diversity, and stays open for change [...] a kind of 'urbanity' is produced in which the 'lived' and the contradictions that constitute urban life are nurtured" (Groth and Corijn, 2005: 521).

The production of intercultural place-making could also have political implications related to the development of citizenship. For Lefebvre, the right to the city, and as a consequence, the citizenship, could be developed through people's engagement in the production of space by participation in decision making and in its transformative appropriation (Lefebvre 1991a, 1996). Lefebvre argues that "the right to the city, complemented by the right to difference and the right to information, should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (*citadin*)" (Lefebvre 1991b). In that sense, Purcell (2003) relates Lefebvre's ideas with a 'pluralization of citizenships' and the 'politics of difference' that emphasises the possibility and the value of a 'differentiated citizenship' that allows for multiple ways political participation and the simultaneous coexistence of different cultural identities (Carens, 2000), and where the "identity of each member of a political community should not be reduced to what all members share in common" (Purcell, 2003: 575). The capacity of such 'differentiated citizenship' to produce social capital from a collective engagement in intercultural place-making and, therefore, in the production of a 'common symbolic space', may be related to what Hannerz, for instance, defines as urban cosmopolitanism, "an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other. It is

⁵<https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities>, accessed 12 November 2018

an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity" (Hannerz, 1990: 239).

Some of the issues and potentials related to the role of place-making in the development of an intercultural citizenship are acutely present in territories of liminality, such as border states, where the exposure and contact with other different cultural conditions, like those from migration, are likely to be more intense. This is the case of Palermo, Italy, the focus of the analysis and the action research proposed in this paper.

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3. ALBERGHERIA, PALERMO: A COMPLEX MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT

As most of the South of Italy, Sicily has been exposed in recent times to massive waves of immigration. In 2016, a total of 123,706 immigrants disembarked on the island after having crossed the Mediterranean⁶. It's by far the main immigration gateway to Italy by sea and one of the most important to Europe. In Palermo, the Capital of Sicily, the civil society and the local government have adopted a sympathetic approach towards migrants and refugees arriving to the city, in a clear resistance to the political agenda of the far-right and populist Italian national government lead by Matteo Salvini, elected in 2018.

The response of the Mayor of Palermo Leoluca Orlando to this migration crisis was to conceive the 'Charter of Palermo', a political manifesto which frames migration as an inalienable human right, affirming the right to work, education, health care, social assistance, and housing to all refugees and migrants that are arriving to the city, on an equal basis to the locals, as new citizens of Palermo⁷.

Albergheria, the most deprived of the four districts that integrate the historic city centre of Palermo, has, for decades, been subjected to pressing issues of social exclusion and deprivation, urban degradation and criminality (Lo Piccolo, 1996). Since the end of the 90s and the beginning of this century, it also hosts a growing number of migrants and refugees, attracted by the low rents of the area, the strong presence of informal links of mutual help and the engaged support of some independent entities located in the district devoted to helping migrants and refugees, such as the Centro Astalli⁸ or the Centre Santa Chiara⁹. However, this integration process has faced many difficulties in regard to the constraints of the public sector's management and to the social tensions raised with an important part of the local population (Booth and Cole, 1999).

Although the real migration figures published are difficult to be managed as they only evidence the legally registered migrants, it can give however a first approach for understanding the real presence of migrants in this district. According to 2017 statistics of Palermo City Council¹⁰, the historic city centre is

⁶<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/53633>, accessed 6 July 2018.

⁷ About Palermo and its Mayor Orlando, see the documentary broadcasted in 2017 by the French TV channel ARTE: <https://www.arte.tv/en/videos/084352-000-A/italy-palermo-is-different/>

⁸<http://www.centroastallipalermo.it/>, accessed 17 October 2018

⁹<https://cesie.org/en/migration/harraga-inaugurazione-casa-santa-chiara/>, accessed 6 November 2017

¹⁰ Palermo City Council Social Report 2017.

https://www.comune.palermo.it/bilancio_sociale.php?anno=2017&indice=2, accessed 29 November 2018

the area of the city with a higher rate of migrant population reaching 23,9% of its total population, meaning that almost one citizen over four is a foreigner. In contrast, the number of foreigners who reside in the whole municipality of Palermo only represents the 3,8% of the total resident population (Lo Piccolo and Leone, 2008: 366)¹¹. These important migration influxes and growing ethnic diversity in the Albergheria district have led to fundamental transformations in its economic, social and cultural structures. The distribution of the countries of origin of the city's migrant population is complex and highly diversified, with over than one third (35.7%) coming from Central-South Asia, followed by citizens from Western African countries (17.4%), other European Union countries (15.3%), East Asia (11.2%), North Africa (9.9 %) and Eastern Africa (4.5%)¹². These communities have produced a new cultural diversity in the city, which often brings into question the current evolution of the local identity (Lo Piccolo, 2000). This evolving complex multicultural social landscape and the presence of over-layered formal and informal processes of exchange have shaped a unique context for exploring the existing and potential intercultural practices.

Ballarò is a neighbourhood at the heart of Albergheria district, named after Ballarò Market, the most vibrant and oldest historic food market of Palermo historic city centre. Its population is the most heterogeneous of this district in terms of both class and race. In contrast with other areas of Albergheria, another important characteristic of Ballarò concerns the density of institutional and above all associative presence that tries to address its degradation and deprivation issues (Pecile, 2017).

The widespread urban and architectural dereliction in Albergheria has a reciprocal cause-effect relationship with other contextual issues such as the socio-economic marginalisation and stagnation of its inhabitants, uncontrolled waste and parking management, and the issues and conflicts on the management and spatial governance between different City Council departments and with other relevant public bodies¹³. Years of institutional inaction and mismanagement, the economic stagnation as well as other related issues such as the long-standing influence of criminal organisations in the

¹¹ Data from 1st January 2018 <https://www.tuttitalia.it/sicilia/81-palermo/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri-2018/>, accessed 26 August 2018.

¹² <https://www.comune.palermo.it/statistica.php?sel=7&per=2016&cap=3>. Data for 31st December 2016. Graphic 3.9. Foreigners by geographic provenience area, accessed 26 May 2019.

¹³ Such as the IACP *Istituto autonomo per le case popolari della provincia di Palermo* www.iacp.pa.it, accessed 26 May 2018 and the *Sovrintendenza dei Beni Culturali di Palermo* http://www.regione.sicilia.it/beniculturali/dirbenicult/database/dipartimento_2/interrogazione.asp?comune=6231&struttura=5&areaservizio=65&scheda=29, accessed 15 May 2017

territory (Settineri 2013: 36; Cancilla, 1999: 528), has produced the current complex degraded situation, negatively affecting the civic pride and engagement in the area.

Despite years of neglect by the public institutions, Ballarò market is still the major economic and socially inclusive drive of the district, attracting tourists and Palermitans from other districts alike, as a space for intercultural exchange between locals, migrants and visitors. Following Sorgi (2015), Ballarò neighbourhood and his market could be interpreted as a space of intercultural exchange, where differences between Us and the Other, the local and the global, the past and the present are blended, challenged and in an ongoing dialogue.

3.1. BOTTOM-UP PLACE-MAKING AND CIVIC ASSEMBLIES IN ALBERGHERIA, PALERMO

In the recent years, there have been several bottom-up initiatives for the regeneration urban space in Albergheria involving processes of reclamation and production of public spaces through the implementation of tactical place-making interventions. In 2011, two activist groups, *Mediterraneo Antirazzista*¹⁴ and *I Giardinieri di Santa Rosalia-Albergheria*¹⁵, cleared up an interstitial open space in the centre of Albergheria, near Ballarò market, that was originally a Baroque church bombed during WWII (1943) and later became a landfill. Acting as guerrilla gardeners against the widespread urban dereliction and public and social disengagement in their neighbourhood, these activists transformed the space into an informal small square, using humble materials such as pallets for planters and benches,

¹⁴ mediterraneoantirazzista.org, accessed 13 June 2017

¹⁵ <http://giardinieridisantarosalia.blogspot.com/>, accessed 13 June 2017

and called it Piazza Mediterraneo, reflecting on the multicultural character of the neighbourhood.



Fig 1. Piazza Mediterraneo (OBG, 2018)

The involvement of local activists and residents in the reclamation and appropriation of the public space of Piazza Mediterraneo (Fig.1) has facilitated the production of social capital through the experience of how interaction and collaboration around shared goals can have a concrete impact on the improvement of their urban environment, promoting the creation of local social networks and a sense of belonging, hence knitting the social fabric (Field, 2003). The engagement in these spatial practices has facilitated the production of civic pride (Harvey, 1989) and the definition and consolidation of shared civic and political identities and purposes (Collins, 2016: 176), the most important of which could be the foundation in 2015 of SOS Ballarò, a neighbourhood civic assembly of local residents and stakeholders that has become the main third sector agent acting on the urban regeneration of the district. Since 2016, SOS Ballarò has contributed to the creation of other local civic and cultural assemblies such as the Associazione Mercato Storico di Ballarò, that gathers local traders, residents and stakeholders around the regeneration of the historic market of Ballarò, and Ballarò Buskers, an international street arts festival which takes place in the most relevant public spaces of Ballarò, attracting over 15.000 people to the neighbourhood whilst making a case for an inclusive regeneration of the local historic market and

the celebration of the intercultural diversity the area¹⁶. Besides the interventions in Piazza Mediterraneo, SOS Ballarò has been involved in other actions of tactical urbanism for reclamation of public spaces, such as Piazza Ecce Uomo (2016) and Viccolo Gallo (2018).

Whilst these tactical actions have had the above mentioned effect in the production of civic assemblies, such as SOS Ballarò, and bottom-up urban governance in the area, such as the Associazione Mercato Storico di Ballarò, the difficulties in the consolidation of those reclaimed public spaces, being frequently vandalised, appropriated by illegal activities, point to some gaps, issues and limitations in the way these work as acts and processes of intercultural place-making, lacking of a real intercultural traction in terms of how the different cultural groups of the area engage and relate with and through those spaces.

There are some issues that have constrained the intercultural effectiveness of SOS Ballarò tactical urbanism actions, in particular in how intercultural place-making processes hasn't been used for the engagement of migrant communities. SOS Ballarò, and other related civic and cultural actors such as Ballarò Buskers, have tried to animate the multiculturalism of Ballarò public spaces. These, however, have been mainly approached from a multicultural perspective rather than from an intercultural one, where different cultural groups may have taken a clearer and more assertive leadership and ownership.

SOS Ballarò's place-making actions were led and implemented by a group of willing people from a mostly similar social and cultural background, which contradicts the necessary engagement with the complex social and cultural diversity of the district. This lack of diversity is also affecting the composition of the civic assembly, raising issues of legitimacy. This could be considered as an example of some of the potential risks, side-effects or just limitations of social capital. For Coleman, "Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure" (Coleman, 1994: 302), implying that it is more challenging to nurture the production of social capital across groups of different social and cultural backgrounds, with potential exclusions and self-exclusions.

There are complex contextual conditions that challenge the inclusive intercultural engagement in the production of the public space, both in its material and social dimensions. The ingrained informality in the way the public space in Albergheria is negotiated, and the presence of territorial hegemonies from

¹⁶<http://www.Ballaròbuskers.it/bb-festival/>, accessed 2 October 2017.

actors outside the established legality, inform and often constrain the development of the spatial practices of local and, particularly, of migrant communities in the area, limiting their intercultural cohabitation of the public space (Saetalu, 2013).

Amin (2002), analyses the challenges that the urban public realm, often being a place of transit and neutrality, could have to facilitate a meaningful exchange between people from diverse cultural backgrounds; According to Ash Amin (2002: 969), “The ideal sites for coming to terms with ethnic difference are where ‘prosaic negotiations’ are compulsory, in ‘micro-publics’ such as the workplace, schools, colleges, youth centres, sports clubs, and other spaces of association”. Local spaces such as Arci Porco Rosso, Moltivolti and Centro Santa Chiara are social centres focussing on different approaches for celebrating the intercultural diversity and exchange whilst supporting social inclusion of locals and migrants. These micro-public spaces could be described as intercultural spaces as these may host a simultaneous cohabitation of different cultural groups, facilitating the conditions for a “common symbolic space” (Mouffe, 2012), through spatial arrangements and a programme of activities that encourage interactions between different groups, whilst inducing a sense of belonging (Wood, ed. 2009).

Considering the issues with the use of the public space in Ballarò and the relations that different cultural groups may have with the existing intercultural spaces in the area, SOS Ballarò place-making interventions could have been more strategically planned in their insertion within what could be considered as an intercultural urban network pointed by places such as Porco Rosso, Santa Chiara and Moltivolti. In this way, the tactical urbanism interventions could potentially have been more inclusive by including intercultural placemaking processes, and thus developing a closer attachment to the migrants needs and their everyday life (Forester, 2009). This would promote their non mediated engagement in intercultural practices of participation and appropriation of the public realm and, through this, the development of their ‘differentiated citizenship’.

3.2. BALLARÒ 3.0: URBAN SCALE INSTITUTIONAL SYNERGIES

Even considering the above mentioned issues, one of the most significant achievements of SOS Ballarò has been building-up from their initial tactical actions to develop a leading role in the bottom-up urban regeneration and governance at Ballarò, reaching a current synergy with the local government around Ballarò 3.0, a framework agreement for the urban regeneration of the area.

During the last two years (2017-2018), the tangible consequences of the synergy reached between the community and Palermo City Council have been defined at the urban scale of the district with the definition of Ballarò 3.0. framework agreement recently approved by the City Council in March 2018¹⁷. As the result of more than two years of intense work and discussion between SOS Ballarò and Palermo City Council, this framework agreement constitutes the first step for a future urban and socio-economic regeneration masterplan for the historic city centre.

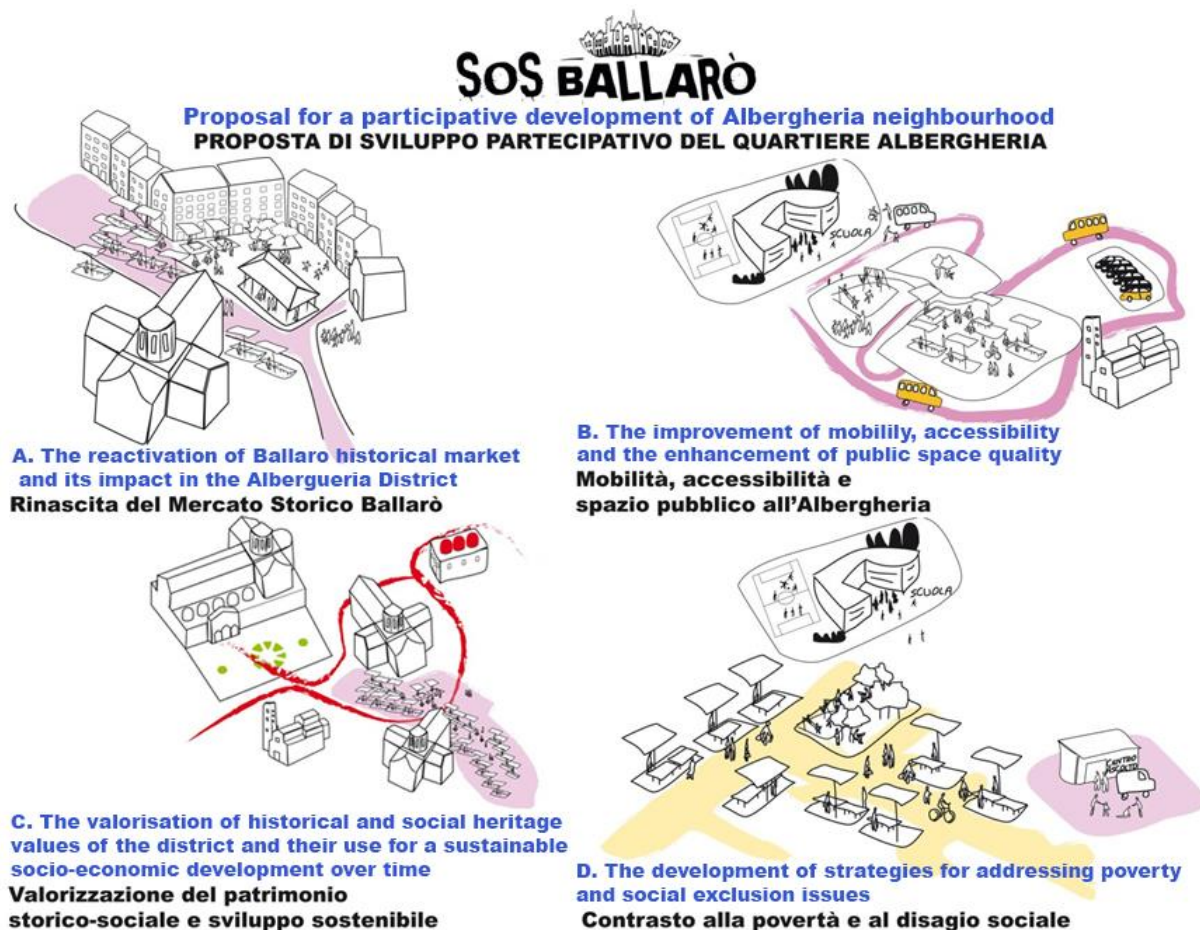


Fig.2. Ballarò 3.0 four strategic actions for the participatory development of Albergheria quarter. , From top left: A. Rebirth of Ballarò's historical market; Mobility, B. Accessibility and public space at Albergheria; C. Enhancement of historical and social heritage and sustainable development; D. Fight against poverty and social unrest;

The structure of this participative agreement has been articulated around 4 main strategic lines (Fig.2):

- A. The reactivation of Ballarò historical market and its impact in the Albergheria district;
- B. The improvement of mobility, accessibility and the enhancement of public space quality;

¹⁷<http://www.sosBallarò.it/trepuntozero/>, accessed 12 October 2017

- C. The valorisation of the historical and social heritage values of the district and their use for a sustainable socio-economic development over time;
- D. The development of strategies for addressing poverty and social exclusion issues;

These 4 strategic lines were specifically defined in actions under the following 4 action-tables:

1. Interventions of Urban Regeneration and Civil Protection;
2. Administrative Interventions for the formalisation of Ballarò and San Saverio markets, the reorganisation of the parking and upgrading of sports areas within the public spaces;
3. Interventions for the improvement of citizenship well-being: Education, Culture, and Environment;
4. Interventions about mobility enhancement and new pedestrianised areas;

4. MULTI-SCALAR APPROACH IN THE ALBERGHERIA

Our European research project, funded by the European Commission, has focused since 2013 on the development of innovative multi-scalar design methodologies for the reactivation of degraded Euro-Mediterranean urban landscapes in crisis, from the 2008 economic crisis to the current 2015-2019 migration crisis¹⁸. Since February 2017, Palermo City Council and SOS Ballarò citizenship assembly have requested the collaboration of our research project in Ballarò 3.0. framework agreement at multiple scales. This has been formally approved by the City Council in the Document for the Strategic Actions of this framework agreement, under the section *Interventions and actions for the reactivation and the valorisation of the Albergheria District*¹⁹. This has been achieved by a thorough theoretical research on the associated multi-scalar spatiality for promoting interculturality (Bhabha, 1996; Landry et al., 2008; Wood, 2009; Bloomfield, 2004, 2007), the analysis of best practices on intercultural urban management and cultural heritage at urban scale²⁰ and the critical analysis of previous experiences on Intercultural Centres at architectural scale (Favaro, 2002, 2008; Seidlová et al., 2017). Key to this research has also been the social and urban analysis developed in Palermo as part of the design research (Fraser, 2013) undertaken by the WSA and CSM Units associated to this research from a connected curriculum approach (Fung, 2017). As a response to this request and drawing on our critical analysis of the

¹⁸NOTE FOR THE REVIEWERS: By 'our research' we refer to a named research project that is rendered anonymous in this manuscript for review.

¹⁹<http://www.sosBallarò.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/sos-Ballarò-3.0.pdf>, accessed 12 October 2017.

²⁰Intercultural Cities Programme: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/good-practice>; <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/cultural-heritage-and-diversity>

previous processes undertaken by SOS Ballarò and reflected in Ballarò 3.0, our research has proposed the following intercultural multi-scalar approach:

- 1.) At the strategic urban scale: The pressing need for promoting multiple intercultural social interactions between migrants and refugees with locals and the exploration of their associated spatialities hasn't been sufficiently addressed in Ballarò 3.0 strategic guidelines. Our research addresses this gap by focusing on the positive impact of Inter-Cultural Nodes (ICN) in their surrounding urban and socio-economic context and on their potential for the articulation of wider intercultural urban networks.
- 2.) At the public space scale: Development and implementation of a second generation of tactical urbanism actions informed by intercultural place-making processes (Guidikova and Wood, 2012; Bagwell *et al*, 2012) and negotiated production of space (Van Leeuwen, 2014), which will be grounded on the previous experiences of SOS Ballarò and other local agents, but also from other related successful intercultural practices in Italy and Europe (Bloomfield, 2007; Guidikova and Wood *Ibid.*; Bagwell *Ibid.*)²¹. These tactical urbanism actions will be associated with the Inter-Cultural Nodes implementation process explained below.
- 3.) At the architectural scale: through the conception and spatial production of a programme of Inter-Cultural Nodes (ICN) as agents for social inclusion and exchange, urban reactivation and economic development. The exploration of their role in the reactivation of the dilapidated heritage of the district and its social re-appropriation by migrants and local communities will also be key.

5. SPATIAL PRACTICES FOR INTERCULTURAL SOCIAL INCLUSION: THE INTER-CULTURAL NODES (ICN)

According to Bhabha (1994) and Bloomfield (2007) approaches, an Inter-Cultural Node (ICN) could be identified as a 'third space'²², a pluralist space which is in-between that develops a relational practice at multiple scales (urban, public space, architectural), where the participants, including locals and all kinds

²¹ See also <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/good-practice>, accessed 30 June 2019.

²² As BLOOMFIELD (2007: 6) argues, [...] "identifying and creating 'third spaces' away from the dualism of either/or, them vs. us – places which have no exclusive belonging to one side or the other, and are actually many sided, a space open to all. Usually these spaces will be open-ended, self-managed and non-hierarchical, encouraging equal participation".

of culturally diverse migrants that have been frequently subjected to exclusion, could collaborate together in creative expression and dialogue on joint projects within shared ethical bounds – such as openness, cultural recognition, equality, anti-discrimination, dialogue and sharing of knowledge (Bloomfield, 2013; Landry and Wood, 2008).

Thus, an ICN is defined by having:

- An underlying philosophy that equal cultural interaction between diverse communities -including locals- (Interculturality) is more desirable than just separation and mere tolerance (Multiculturalism);
- A deliberate and sustained practice designed to facilitate such interaction by various means, such as intercultural tactical actions and intercultural programming and their associated spatialities;
- The notion of ICN implies redefining the complex spatial connotations of integration as an equal and fair cultural interaction and co-operation – as reciprocal and equal exchange and dialogue between a varied range of migrants and locals, ethnic minorities and majority- rather than the integration of the minority – the migrants - into the systems and norms of the majority²³. Therefore, the migrants' integration process is understood here through an equal interaction with locals, rather than as a subjugation to a hosting hegemonic culture (La Barbera, 2015). With this approach, it is the core nature of what 'integration' really means that is challenged and redefined.

Inter-Cultural Nodes are first of all spaces for aggregation, bringing together diverse people of different backgrounds including locals for meeting, socialising and discussing issues and ideas (Amin, 2002). But they are not only that: an ICN should also be able to proactively programme interactions, debates, collaborative projects, promoting the production of a "common symbolic space" for an agonistic exchange (Connelly, 1995), rather than just being a hosting place where diverse groups hold their meetings (Bloomfield, 2013).

Furthermore, a 'node' implies creating a close connection with the surrounding urban and social fabric at multiple levels, in a two-fold process. On the one hand, by promoting the active engagement of new and old citizens and entities already present within and around the ICN in its spatial governance, funding, programme of uses and activities, and spatial production processes. On the other, by implementing ICN-associated tactical urbanism actions for triggering wider processes of intercultural

²³*Inter Cultural Spaces and Centres. Council of Europe, Intercultural Cities. Findings of a Seminar held on 29 & 30 November 2011 at the Mångkulturellt centrum in Fittja, Stockholm, Sweden, www.coe.int/interculturalcities, accessed 18 January 2018.*

urban and social transformation whilst providing opportunities for the production of social capital. An ICN must all times seek to extend its intercultural *ethos* to other places and spaces of the city, seeking for the mutual understanding and the creation of a shared future with the 'Other'.

Inter-Cultural Nodes are conceived as urban and social connectors, addressing simultaneously social exclusion and spatial fragmentation in multiple scales while exploring their mutual complex connotations. The urban and social impact of Inter-Cultural Nodes should be mainly focused in facilitating positive experiences of diverse interaction between locals and migrants that would enhance their mutual sense of wellbeing, safety and sense of belonging to the locality and the city that they are inhabiting (Bloomfield, 2013). Thus, the practice of making Inter-Cultural Nodes is underpinned by a dynamic of building equal and inclusive relationships that tend towards a community of shared practice and fair partnerships, based on the search for a "common symbolic space" where social capital and, thus, mutual empathy can be built. As it has been argued by Landry and Wood (2008), people with an intercultural disposition or background who feel uncomfortable in mainstream hegemonic culture feel at home in the mixed environment of the ICNs.

6. THE INTER-CULTURAL NODES IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS: THE CASE OF MONDINSIEME IN REGGIO EMILIA AND THE ICN TRANSFORMATION OF SANTA CHIARA CENTRE IN THE ALBERGHERIA DISTRICT, PALERMO

According to the ICN conditions explained above, our research has analysed different entities of the district devoted to migrants' support for identifying their potential to become ICNs. Among these, the aforementioned Moltivolti, Arci Porco Rosso and Santa Chiara were the most interesting cases selected by the quality and the scope of their work. A collaborative process of discussions with the local community and the network of local stakeholders has supported the research in focusing on the Centre Santa Chiara, based on its level of complexity, urban impact potential, scope of its mission and in regard to the heritage values of its architectural elements and outdoor spaces. A comparative critical analysis has been developed between the current state of Santa Chiara and Mondinsieme²⁴, a successful Intercultural Centre located in a similar urban degraded context in Reggio Emilia, a city in the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna.

²⁴ While Mondinsieme project (<http://www.mondinsieme.org/>) has been very successful at a strategic and management levels, it fell short in the spatial translations of its programme and in its architectural language. This gap is precisely the main focus of our research on the associated spatialities of Intercultural interactions.

Mondinsieme Intercultural Centre in Reggio Emilia

The role of Mondinsieme Intercultural Centre was strategic in its innovative approach as a new local agent which has been capable to promote a higher engagement of migrants in the life and resources of their host territory.

The main strategic characteristic of this Intercultural Centre has been to promote, build and develop intercultural relations between the local populations and migrants as they become new citizens, aiming for the construction of a new city's project which includes all the inhabitants and not only the locals (Bonora and Giardini, 2004).

Before the implementation of Mondinsieme, the migrants' associations of Reggio Emilia were scarcely inserted within the local relational social fabric and remained in general terms at the margins of the decision-making processes for the urban and socio-economic transformation. To address this, Mondinsieme has built strong links with the local networks by developing several workshops where ideas, experiences and competences were shared between migrants and locals (Favaro, 2002).

Mondinsieme has sought to redefine public space in an inclusive way, incorporating diverse symbols of the plural cultural makeup of the city by introducing inclusive and shared recreational activities drawing on the African background of most of the migrants, like traditional games and sports of different countries across the existing public spaces of the city, multiplying the occasions for intercultural encounters.

The local public sector of Reggio Emilia has a strong tradition of participatory planning and decentralised alliance with civil society. Mondinsieme has pioneered new forms of participation for a second generation of migrants otherwise excluded from decision-making processes, formal politics and institutions. The cultural exchange experimentation in public spaces developed by *Mondinsieme* has now begun to be replicated across other public spaces of Reggio Emilia.

One particularly interesting aspect is the contribution of the Intercultural Centres in the reactivation of degraded historic city centres, by enriching them with new spaces for intercultural reflection and

mediation. This will promote the definition of new knowledge and resources that would be superimposed to pre-existing layers, as assets for the future economic development of these degraded areas²⁵.

On the one hand, the previous Italian experience in Intercultural Centres has been successful in supporting the pressing needs of the new incomers, but on the other they have been unable to foster the interaction between the different targeted cultural communities, failed to integrate the locals in their programmes and resources nor in fostering their users' agency in the urban and socio-economic transformation of their cities (Favaro and Luatti, 2008). By falling short, they have challenged the core meaning of interculturality. This has become very apparent in the Italian context, as shown in the Intercultural Centres of Mondinsieme in Reggio Emilia (Bonora and Giardini 2004: 47) and "Massimo Zonarelli" in Bologna (Bonora and Giardini *Ibid.*: 58), but also the same issue has been identified in other Intercultural European cities such as Berlin²⁶ or Athens²⁷.

7. THE CENTRE SANTA CHIARA IN THE ALBERGHERIA: FROM A MIGRANTS' SUPPORT FACILITY TO ITS TRANSFORMATION INTO AN INTER-CULTURAL NODE (ICN)

For over a century, the Centre Santa Chiara has been the most important entity of the Albergheria aimed for the welcoming, social care and social integration of locals in need. For the last three decades, the Centre has also focused on supporting the pressing needs of migrants and refugees who have recently disembarked in Palermo (Ambrosini, 2009)²⁸. The Centre, which forms part of the Catholic Church and is managed by the Salesian Order, is integrated into SOS Ballarò assembly and hosts its meetings, frequently attended by the Mayor of Palermo Leoluca Orlando and its Councillors. In addition, it hosts a number of third-sector entities devoted to the neighbours' social support and for promoting collaborations amongst them. It also provides space for the spiritual activities of other religious faiths such as the Senegalese Muslim community, which uses the Centre for their Muslim Friday's prayers. Since the beginning of the migrants' influx to Palermo, these new incomers have found in Santa Chiara a reference point, a space where the social inclusion, the creation of opportunities and the full acknowledgement of their rights have been valued and promoted²⁹.

²⁵<http://www.mondinsieme.org/interculturalhub>, accessed 3 March 2019.

²⁶<http://www.refugio.berlin/>; <http://prinzessinnengarten.net/about/>, accessed 17 October 2018

²⁷<https://www.cityofathens.gr/en/intercultural-childcare-centres-0>, accessed 11 February 2019

²⁸ See also <http://www.anymoreonlus.org/prenditicuradinoi/santachiara.html>, accessed 8 June 2019; and <https://cesie.org/en/project/comunita-educativa-palermo/>, accessed 8 June 2019

²⁹<http://www.anymoreonlus.org/prenditicuradinoi/santachiara.html>, accessed 8 June 2019

However, the centre has mainly focused on addressing the short-term emergency needs of the different social groups it supports, but has fell short on incorporating a longer-term strategic vision for producing socially-constructed 'third' spaces that would foster multiple intercultural interactions amongst different communities and between locals and migrants; as such, it is not yet operating as an effective Inter-Cultural Node (ICN). Drawing on the previous experience of Mondinsieme Intercultural Centre in Reggio Emilia, the first step has been to refocus the aim of Santa Chiara by overcoming its current emergency provider condition for becoming an agent for the migrants' empowerment in the socio-economic and urban transformation of their district, in equal cooperation with locals.

Together with Don Enzo Volpe, the Director of Santa Chiara, the religious community, the volunteers and the different user groups of the Centre, our research has focused on the collaborative production of a masterplan which includes strategies and practices to promote and sustain these intercultural interactions. Following the multi-scalar structure of our research³⁰, this has been developed through the conception and the implementation process of tactical actions for enabling its urban impact, by fostering the participation of the different communities in programming intercultural activities and uses overlaid to the pre-existing ones and by the spatial production of aggregation places for encounter, debate, exchange and for the development of collaborative projects.

Strategic Urban Scale

Based on the ICN approach as an urban and social connector³¹, the spatial and programmatic strategies explored and implemented in Santa Chiara have been conceived for addressing the current disconnection of the Centre with its surrounding urban and social fabric. The social reconnection has been developed by strengthening the programmatic relationship of Santa Chiara with other key intercultural spaces such as Moltivolti and Arci Porco Rosso for the articulation of wider intercultural networks. A series of intercultural tactical urbanism actions have been conceived and are in the process of being implemented for the reactivation of the degraded spaces at the front and the rear of the Centre that will enable these wider processes.

The experience of Santa Chiara's transformation into an Inter-Cultural Node has the ambition of being replicated in other spaces of the district that have also been identified as potential ICNs. The research

³⁰ See Section 3.5.

³¹ See end paragraph Section 3.6.

conceives the introduction of these distinctive and complementary Inter-Cultural Nodes into a wider intercultural urban network that would reinforce the connection between current intercultural practices already present in the district. A particular aspect related to interculturality would be prioritised in each of the proposed ICN, with a particular focus on the study of the multiple links between these new nodes and the pre-existing dynamics of this network.

Public Space: Intercultural tactical urbanism actions

The tactical urbanism actions will explore innovative ways of participatory planning for locals and migrants for the redefinition of the Centre's associated urban spaces that will in turn trigger the impact of Santa Chiara Inter-Cultural Node for the permanent urban and socio-economic transformation of the district³². These actions may be described strategically as frameworks for:

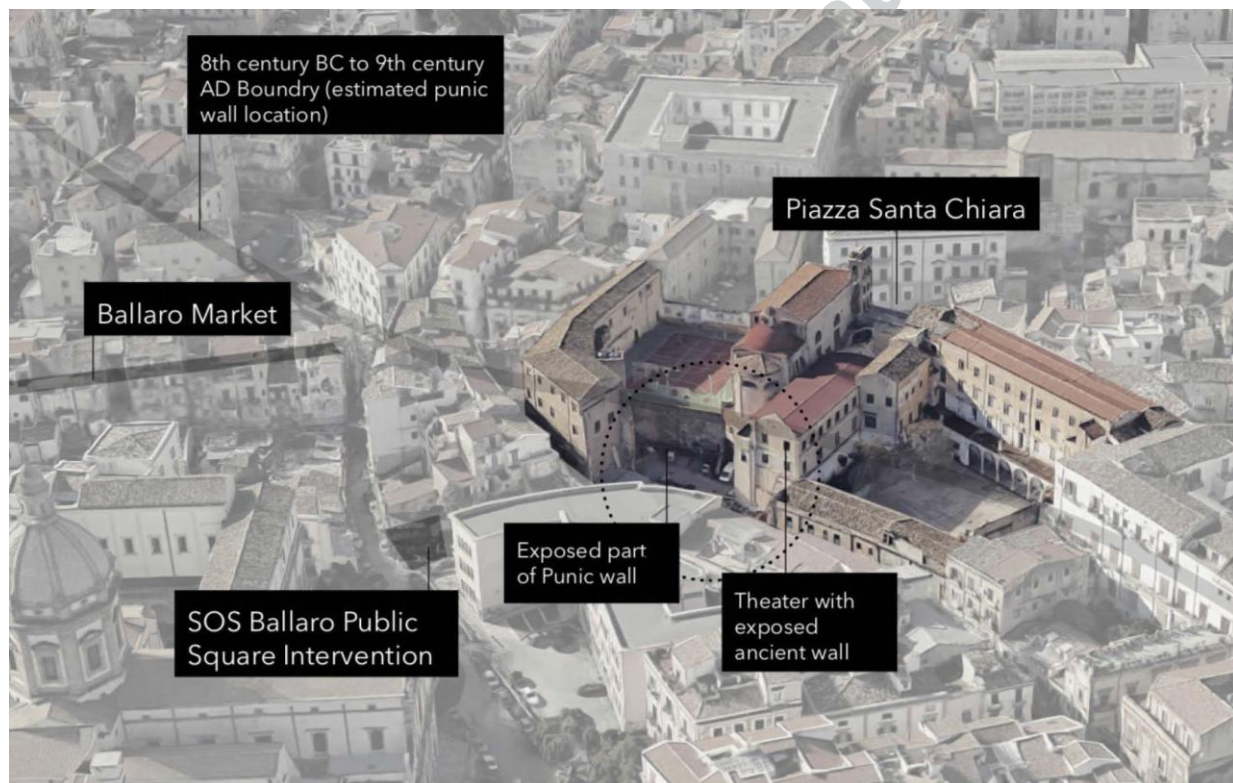


Fig.3. The Urban Articulation of Santa Chiara

³² As analysed above in Mondinsieme Intercultural Centre, Section 3.7.

1) Reclaiming these public spaces and articulating them in sequences both with the internal spaces of the Centre and with the wider pre-existing urban structures around it, such as Ballarò Market and Via Casa Professa (Fig.3);

2) Activating the use of those spaces for enabling their 'third space' condition³³, by implementing intercultural place-making actions, and thus making them attractive for people of different backgrounds to find encounter and minimising those which encourage avoidance, apprehension or rivalry (Guidikova and Wood, 2012);

3) Fostering the participation of the different cultural groups present in the area (migrants and locals, users of the centre or not) in the production and appropriation (in terms of use) of those spaces, by connecting them to the dynamics produced by other pre-existing intercultural spaces such as Porco Rosso, Multivolti and the Senegalese Association ASSO (Firrone and Bustinto, 2017).

Drawing on the previous experiences of tactical urbanism actions implemented in Albergheria³⁴ and on the study of the urban and social impact caused by successful intercultural centres in Italy³⁵, the aim will be to promote an active engagement of the new and old citizens in the spatial governance of the Centre and on the search for its medium-term economic independence from the public sector, with a management and funding based on social economy models. The first step would be the integration of migrants' associations into the pre-existing network of engaged stakeholders of the district for the collaborative conception and implementation of those tactical actions, in the form of the creation of a technical board integrated on an equal basis by migrants and locals, under the umbrella of SOS Ballarò assembly.

The main entrance to Santa Chiara Centre is located in Piazza Santa Chiara, a degraded public space currently invaded by an informal car parking. The potentials for the reactivation of this space are particularly interesting. The headquarters of the Senegalese Association of Western Sicily (ASSO), that has been recently closed off, faces Santa Chiara on the other side of this public space. The members of

³³ For 'Third space' approach, see note 28 of this paper

³⁴ In addition to the experiences of SOS Ballarò analysed above (Piazza Mediterraneo, Vicolo Gallo, Piazzetta Ecce Uomo), the International street art festival Ballarò Buskers (<http://www.Ballaròbuskers.it/>) has already transformed for some days this urban space into a vibrant shared space for all cultures. <https://www.palermotoday.it/eventi/Ballarò-buskers-2018.html>, accessed 26 October 2017

³⁵ See Mondinsieme Intercultural Centre in Reggio Emilia analysed above and Massimo Zonarelli Intercultural Centre in Bologna (Bonora and Giardini, 2004: 58).

this association are engaged with Santa Chiara by organising the Muslim Friday's prayer in the Centre. *La Torre delle Sette Fatte*, a medieval water reservoir that is an important heritage asset of the district, is also located here and could play an important role in the development of a new narrative for this public space, including the intercultural potential of its associated legend (Zipes and Russo, 2013)³⁶. The heritage values of Santa Chiara, founded as a convent in the 14thC (Spatafora, 2003), the Phoenician walls, together with this tangible and intangible heritage element could play an important role as catalysts for future intercultural interactions and for the migrants' appropriation of their hosting territory as part of their future identity³⁷.

³⁶<http://www.edizionikalos.com/il-cortile-sette-fatte/>, accessed 26 February 2019

³⁷Europa Nostra Grand Prix 2019 awarded project "Stewards of Cultural Heritage"<http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/winners/stewards-cultural-heritage-germany/>
<http://www.archernet.org/2019/03/06/stewards-of-cultural-heritage-2/>, accessed 25 February 2020
 See also the AECID (Spanish Cooperation Agency and Development) Workshop Schools project:
<https://www.aecid.es/Centro-Documentacion/Documentos/Publicaciones%20AECID/WORKSHOP%20SCHOOLS%202030%20febrero%202019.pdf>
 , accessed 25 February 2020.



Fig. 4. external Phoenician wall with its associated urban space, currently fenced off.

At the rear of the complex, an urban void owned by the Centre and currently fenced off and invaded by garbage and rubble will be transformed into a semi-public space opened during the day and maintained by the City Council³⁸. Furthermore, this potential semi-public space includes in its background another vertical stretch of the aforementioned 7th B.C. Phoenician wall, that will be a unique attractor both for visitors and neighbours (Fig.4). This urban intervention will offer the possibility of a direct articulation of the Centre with the urban structures of Piazzetta Ecce Uomo and Via Casa Professa, as shown in Fig.3. This will increase the permeability of the complex by allowing the opening of a second entrance, providing a new circulation between the rear and the front, running across the theatre space and enabling the visit of the inner Phoenician archaeological survey (Fig.5). This new circulation will be activated by a series of intercultural activities overlaying to the pre-existing ones, with the aim of

³⁸ A cession agreement of this space is currently in the process of being signed off between Santa Chiara Centre and Palermo City Council, under our research advice.

attracting to the Centre other kinds of users that will engage with current ones, thus offering multiple opportunities for the intercultural social production of these new spaces.



Fig.5. Longitudinal Section across the theatre of Santa Chiara. Peiru Chen, EMUVE Design Research Unit-WSA.

Architectural Scale

Our research has explored strategies to open the Centre to cultural visits and venues with an engaged participation of internal and external locals, migrants and visitors. A key aspect has been the value enhancement of an existing stretch of the 7th B.C. Phoenician defensive walls discovered in 1998 beneath Santa Chiara's 19th C. theatre (Todaro, 2003; Spatafora, 2003).

This stretch forms part of the oldest defensive walls of the city, built by this antique culture of Syrian origin who founded the city of Palermo (Di Stefano, 1998). Migrants and locals from Albergheria or from other neighbourhoods that haven't been involved in the Centre, together with students and tourists, will explore the remains of the Phoenician walls and enjoy the recovered cultural venues that will take place in the theatre space and the Baroque church. Simultaneously, they would also be exposed to the Centre's pre-existing social programme, thus enabling their potential deeper engagement with it. In collaboration with locals, the migrant user groups of the centre would produce and deliver these cultural activities, would be integrated on demand within the cultural visit groups, and would also engage, if needed, as heritage guides to the externals³⁹. The aim will be to foster the migrants' interactions with

³⁹ Palermo City Council has promoted a scheme of cultural visits guided by migrants and managed by the cooperative *Terradamare* as a strategy to appropriate themselves with the cultural values of the city, while giving

different kinds of locals at multiple levels, while facilitating their deeper understanding of the heritage values of the Centre and its district, hence promoting their deeper cultural appropriation of their hosting context.

8. CONCLUSION. TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE MULTI-SCALAR DESIGN METHODOLOGIES FOR INTERCULTURAL INCLUSIVE PRACTICES AT URBAN, PUBLIC SPACE AND ARCHITECTURAL SCALES.

Similarly to what has been analysed above with Mondinsieme's case in Reggio Emilia (Bonora and Giardini 2004), Santa Chiara has operated to date as a mere social service provider aimed at locals and migrants in need, but has fallen short by neither focusing on promoting interculturality amongst such diverse communities nor on promoting their empowerment for the urban and socio-economic transformation of their neighbourhood.

The research has conceived a superimposed programme of uses and activities aiming for the intercultural interaction between the different cultural groups using Santa Chiara, the external visitors and the neighbours. Santa Chiara would become a social engagement attractor through the visit of its impressive -and yet unknown for the general public- heritage assets that might act as catalysts for further intercultural interactions. The aim will be to overcome the current situation of intercultural practices mainly devoted to already highly-engaged individuals and entities, towards strategies that would integrate other wider social groups that were not involved yet into those processes. The design research approach has allowed the exploration of a series of spatial interventions that would accommodate multiple programmes and would promote further these intercultural dynamics, both in indoor and public spaces.

Considering the role of Santa Chiara in the urban and intercultural setting of Albergheria, the reclamation and regeneration of the public and semi-public spaces between it and other places of intercultural interactions is both a need and an opportunity. An essential aspect of the research has shown the urban and political impact, and limitations, of the tactical urbanism actions implemented in the neighbourhood, such as those by SOS Ballarò. The implementation of a second generation of tactical urbanism actions, articulating an urban network between Santa Chiara and other potential ICNs

the external visitors alternative narratives of Palermo as an Intercultural inclusive city, drawing on its syncretic identity. <https://www.terradamare.org/tour-Ballarò-attaverso-miei-occhi/>, accessed 17 May 2017.

such as Porco Rosso and Moltivolti with the direct engagement of both locals and migrants in the material upgrading and the animation of the public spaces of the district, is specifically intended to foster and reinforce processes of intercultural production and hybridization, producing 'third' places that could trigger permanent processes of urban and social transformation.

The investigation described in this paper has explored the role of multi-scalar architectural, urban and programmatic instruments and tactical actions for the urban and socio-economic reactivation of deprived districts with a high density of migrant population and a significant presence of locals. The strategies proposed for the transformation of Sta Chiara, including the participatory regeneration of its adjacent public spaces and the subsequent consolidation of a network of intercultural nodes, are intended to work as a prototype of the potential of intercultural interaction for an alternative urban and socio-economic reactivation of many European deprived urban contexts, where social exclusion and political radicalisation is still unfortunately the norm. The research has explored strategies that would trigger social, economic and spatial processes for the production of social capital, nurture the consolidation and enhancement of local and expanded networks, adapt to the emerging scenarios, and develop a social and financial sustainability and resilience over time for the implementation of those processes.

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