

CHAPTER 6



MIGRANTOUR STORIES

You cannot understand what happens on this planet called Porta Palazzo. You don't know! You are far away, and Casablanca is a city, our planet is instead a square. It is our republic where we have rain and good weather. The largest market in Europe is ours, our *souk*. We sell everything, including dignity, religion, our homeland. . . . The Italians already call it the *kasbah*, but for us it is Bab al-Kssar, which makes the memory more vivid of Bab Marrakech in Casablanca, Bab al-Hadd in Rabat, Bab Ajjlud in Fez, Bab Mansur in Meknes, Bab El-Oued in Algiers. The Door opens onto the market, Satan's place, as our Prophet says, and here we are all devils, who make their own laws.

—Mohammed Lamsuni, *Porta Palazzo Mon Amour*

The other day I went shopping in Porta Palazzo, when at the corner between Piazza della Repubblica and Via Milano I came across a group of tourists. French? No. Germans? Neither. American? Not even. Japanese? Neither. They were even more exotic tourists. Italians. In fact, at that moment, it seemed almost normal to me, even though until just a decade ago it would have been unimaginable. So I went on. But then, from the corner of my eye, I caught a glimpse of something that first slowed me down and finally stopped me. I turned around. I looked closer. Yes, no doubt about it. The guide who was illustrating the wonders of Porta Palazzo to the group of compatriots was a North African girl wearing a chador, who, among other things, expressed herself using perfect Italian.

—Giuseppe Culicchia, *Torino è casa nostra*

The excerpts above are taken from the books of two Turin authors who in recent years have contributed to building the local imaginary about Porta Palazzo. The two writers are, each in their own way, Mediterranean. The first extract is a passage from *Porta Palazzo Mon Amour*, one of the first works to acquire a certain fame in Italy as part of the so-called 'migration literature', works written in Italian by immigrant citizens. The author of the book is Mohammed Lamsuni, who was born in Casablanca, Morocco, in

1950 and who arrived in Turin through France in the early 1990s. Lamsuni is a resident of Porta Palazzo and was very active about twenty years ago in the city's public debate on migration. He narrates a story about a crude, rough Porta Palazzo and he is always on the side of the oppressed, illegal immigrants, exiles and all the defeated who find themselves in this square looking for a last chance for redemption, survival and to possibly fight back.

The second text is taken from *Torino è casa nostra* (Turin is Our Home), by Giuseppe Culicchia, a well-known writer throughout Italy. Culicchia is one of the many Turinese children of the generation of internal migrants who arrived in the city after the Second World War from the South, with his family from Sicily. In his book, Culicchia tells the story of the city through the metaphor of the house, linking each neighbourhood with a room. Porta Palazzo for him is the kitchen in which the food and food products that immigrants have brought into the city create a host of flavours, smells and recipes that boil in the cauldron of the neighbourhood. As another Turinese writer, Edmondo De Amicis (1898), wrote at the end of the nineteenth century, Porta Palazzo has always been 'the belly of Turin', which swallows and digests everything. But the most interesting aspect for us is that ten years after Lamsuni's cry of painful rebellion, another voice fell on Culicchia's ears while shopping at Porta Palazzo. This was the voice of a tourist guide wearing a veil accompanying a group of Italian tourists through the market stalls.

Having outlined a profile of the history of mobility that has transformed Turin over time through the microcosm of Porta Palazzo, and keeping in mind the reflections on the opportunities, challenges and criticalities of conviviality practices in this context, I will now broaden the scale of my analysis. In this chapter, I will first show how visits to Porta Palazzo were devised and accompanied by first- and second-generation migrants residing in the area, as in the case of Amira, whom we already met in the previous chapter in front of the entrance to the Peace Mosque and whom we encountered again in the excerpt shown above. I will then reconstruct the process that led this decade-old initiative to be replicated in about twenty other European and Mediterranean cities, and recently also in rural and border territories. Throughout this journey, I will constantly question how anthropology can contribute to public and applied projects that are potentially catalysts for meaningful and transformative encounters between residents, migrants and tourists. One question to explore is whether it is even possible to create projects that allow for dissonant and abrasive voices such as Lamsuni's and those of his dispossessed protagonists of planet Porta Palazzo to be heard, as invoked in the opening excerpts of this chapter. At the end of the chapter, I will revisit the debate that has developed in recent years between anthropologists who approach this crucial question from very different standpoints.

The World in a City: From Slumming to Multicultural ‘Tolerance’

Firstly, I have to admit that, despite being an anthropologist by profession, I have found myself frequently visiting as a tourist those urban areas which stand out for their aesthetics and social fabric, strongly connected to cultural diversity and international migration. A good starting point to discuss this ambivalent experience is to reflect on what James Clifford argued in his *The Predicament of Culture* (1988). Focusing on one of the lesser-known writings by Lévi-Strauss (1977), entitled *New York in 1941*, Clifford turns the New York memories of the French anthropologist into a ‘chronotope’ for modern collecting of art and culture, within which we could perhaps recognize ourselves, thereby stirring within us the memory of those times when we found ourselves walking between the shops and restaurants of Kreuzberg in Berlin, the Raval in Barcelona or the Brick Lane area in London.

It should be noted that the Lévi-Strauss who wandered through New York in 1941 is more than the famous anthropologist; he was also, above all, a migrant and refugee who fled from Vichy France without citizenship thanks to a hectic boat trip from Marseille to Martinique (Jennings 2002). The encounter with the city which is symbolic of the ‘new world’ disorients him:

New York was decidedly not the ultra-modern metropolis that I had expected, but an immense, horizontal and vertical disorder attributable to some spontaneous upheaval of the urban crust rather than to the deliberate plans of builders. (Lévi-Strauss 1985: 258)

It is in this juxtaposition of layers, in the condition of permanent bewilderment having been suspended in the fantastic and chaotic mixture of the past and future anticipations, that the young French exile learns to wander:

New York (and this is the source of its charm and its peculiar fascination) was then a city where anything seemed possible. Like the urban fabric, the social and cultural fabric was riddled with holes. All you had to do was pick one and slip through it if, like Alice, you wanted to get to the other side of the looking glass and find worlds so enchanting that they seemed unreal. (Lévi-Strauss 1985: 261)

Lévi-Strauss appears to Clifford as a *flâneur*, delighted and amazed but at the same time disturbed by the chaos of simultaneous possibilities that unfold before him. One moment we find him immersed in the traditional Chinese opera, ‘under the first arch of the Brooklyn bridge, where a company that had come long ago from China had a large following’ (Lévi-Strauss 1985: 266); and a moment later, just after a short walk or a quick ride on the underground, we see him go round a corner to find himself in a different world, with its language, customs and cuisine.

I cannot elaborate on the analysis of Lévi-Strauss's text, of which there is already an accurate exegesis (Debaene 2010). I believe, however, that these brief passages are sufficient to outline the area of interconnections which, eighty years later, we too are called to confront. These interconnections look at the interweaving of the migrant's *regard éloigné* with that of the anthropologist and the tourist, the recognition of the cognitive, aesthetic and political experience of walking through the city and the wonder (and as well as the dismay) at the entropic landscape of a human Babel shipwrecked at the same time and in the same place, in which different cultures are reduced to shreds and to decontextualised fragments that are reconfigured in forms that are sometimes creative, spurious and commodified (Clifford 1988).

The anthropologist's gaze, as we mentioned in the Introduction by recalling the provocative reflection of Malcolm Crick, is certainly able to return deeper and denser reflections than that of the occasional tourist. However, it often rests on the same landscapes. It is, therefore, not surprising that those same streets of Manhattan in which Lévi-Strauss was lost and which today are crossed by the millions of tourists who visit Chinatown and what remains of Little Italy, were at the end of the nineteenth century the scene of so-called 'slumming' tourism.

The first tangible trace of this practice dates back to 14 September 1884, the day on which an article in the *New York Times* appeared with the title: 'Slumming in this town. A fashionable London mania reaches New York'. The subtitle was equally explicit: 'Slumming parties to be the rage this winter – Good districts to visit' (*The New York Times* 1884). The fashion that was spreading in New York that autumn had for some time been a pastime of the gentlemen and women of Victorian London. It involved 'going through slums' and seeing how the poor and immigrants lived, walking through the degraded neighbourhoods of East London, such as Whitechapel and Shoreditch, fuelled by the voyeuristic desire to observe 'people of whom we had heard, but of whom we were ignorant as if they were inhabitants of some strange and distant country' (Heap 2009: 17). This refers to 'slumming', a neologism that unequivocally identifies the process that at the end of the nineteenth century transformed the districts of large immigrant-heavy metropolises with serious social problems into tourist sites for the first time (Koven 2004).

An interesting reference to slumming can be found in *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum* (Whyte [1943] 1993), one of the most brilliant urban ethnographies related to the second generation of the School of Chicago. William Foote Whyte's study, based on Cornerville, the slum in which the Italian immigrant community lived in Boston's North End, was the result of research conducted between 1937 and 1940 and published three years later. In the introduction, he writes:

To the rest of the city it is a mysterious, dangerous, and depressing area. Cornerville is only a few minutes' walk from fashionable High Street, but the High Street inhabitant who takes that walk passes from the familiar to the unknown. . . . Respectable people have access to a limited body of information upon Cornerville. They may learn that it is one of the most congested areas in the United States. It is one of the chief points of interest in any tour organized to show upper-class people the bad housing conditions in which lower-class people live. Through sight-seeing or statistics one may discover that bathtubs are rare, that children overrun the narrow and neglected streets, that the juvenile delinquency rate is high. (Whyte [1943] 1993: xv)

This kind of urban tourism was immediately interpreted as ambiguous and problematic but also had the potential to make a positive difference at the political level. For many wealthy bourgeois, the walks in the slums remained nothing more than a voyeuristic pastime, an entertainment for which the spectacle of poverty was the subject of an itchy curiosity for savagery, promiscuity and exoticism. In this sense, slumming can be considered to be derivative of the colonial and racist approach to diversity that characterized encounters with ethnic and cultural otherness in European cities through the so-called Universal Expositions that were common at the time. 'Great events' held in the main metropolises, from Paris to London, from Barcelona to Chicago, had real 'human zoos' with living 'specimens' of the indigenous populations of Africa and Asia colonized by the European powers. They were exposed to the gaze of millions of visitors inside cages, enclosures and specially set-up scenarios (Blanchard, Boëtsch and Jacomijn Snoep 2011).

However, visits to the slums for other people took on a different value. Think of what happened in New York. In a short time, the living conditions of immigrants, who lived miserably in Chinatown, Harlem and the Lower East Side of Manhattan where visitors went to see 'the Jews and the Italians', had become central to public attention and political debate. The precarious living conditions within the tenements were told of and photographed by Jacob Riis, a journalist of Danish origin who, in 1890, published *How the Other Half Lives*, a memorable report that deeply shook the conscience of his fellow citizens. The tours in the areas where the other half of New Yorkers lived inspired the 'problem-solving' spirit of researchers, philanthropists, intellectuals and politicians, giving rise to the birth of charitable institutions and important reforms in the social welfare field, as Theodore Roosevelt (Riis 1971) recognized some years later.

In the East End of London, too, the practice of slumming is at the origin of one of the most significant critical literary works to denounce the living conditions of those 'people of the abyss' whose hardship was associated with the industrial revolution and the triumph of capitalist society in the city of London. In 1902, Jack London, then twenty-six years old, arrived in the



FIGURE 6.1. A walking tour in the Lower East Side, Manhattan, New York, 2015.
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British capital determined to carry out a reportage on the slums of the city. He initially went to the Thomas Cook & Son travel agency, who had largely invented modern organized mass tourism, to hire a guide to accompany him in the East End. This was the beginning of a journey that would go far beyond slumming, and would lead Jack London to immerse himself for three months in the depths of poverty, with an approach that we could define as strongly ethnographic, sharing the miserable living conditions of his informants and finally re-emerging with a soul-rattling account (London 1903).

In the early twentieth century, the first urban areas known for leisure and entertainment due to their cultural diversity were the so-called 'Chinatowns'. The Chinese neighbourhoods, which had emerged by the end of the nineteenth century in the Americas, and then in Europe and Oceania following the growth of emigration flows linked to the crisis of the Qing empire (Santos, Belhassen and Caton 2012), were highly conspicuous compared to the surrounding urban fabric and for the strong concentration of commercial activities. During the twentieth century, their high degree of aesthetic elaboration and particular style of architecture made them into a symbol of 'ethnic neighbourhoods' as places of consumption of diversity (Wong and Chee-Beng 2013). A recognizable feature of these areas became the commercial offerings of shops and restaurants where visitors could buy exotic products, consume unusual foods and drinks, and participate

in events and shows related to different cultural traditions, like the Chinese New Year. The first and best-known Chinatown to be fully integrated into the tourist and cultural identity of a large metropolis was in San Francisco. Founded in 1848 by migrants from the Guangdong region, it grew rapidly in the following decades due to the continuous flow of people who arrived here during the Californian 'gold rush', and then for the employment opportunities due to the building of the transcontinental railway that, thanks to the Chinese workforce, would join the west and east coasts of the United States. In Chinatown, cultural associations, temples and other places of worship were created, although initially with a negative reputation due to its association with violence, crime, gambling and prostitution. While visitors were attracted by this perceived place of perdition, it was after the almost total destruction of the first Chinatown by the earthquake and the great fire of 1906 that the neighbourhood became a real mass tourism destination. The reconstruction of the 'New Chinatown', mostly by entrepreneurs of the Chinese community but also by external investors, was in fact carried out with the specific objective of making the area attractive for visitors, building new buildings 'in oriental style' and attractions for 'ethnic tourism' (Rast 2007). In 1947, the Chinatown of San Francisco was the first Chinese district to go through a process of heritagization, via a series of regulations that, in light of its tourist and historical interest, prescribed specific rules to preserve its architectural style and 'authentic' atmosphere (Li 2012).

What happened in San Francisco was certainly not an isolated case and it set off a series of similar practices later. In 1938, Vancouver in Canada had officially opened its Chinese neighbourhood to tourism after special permission was granted. Eventually, in the 1970s, Melbourne created a regeneration plan for its own Chinatown to relaunch itself as a tourist destination on the domestic and international market. In New York, in 1992, local politicians, businessmen and artists founded the Chinatown Tourism Council to market guided tours of the neighbourhood and develop the tourist potential of events and holidays such as the Chinese New Year (Lin 1998).

I have focused on Chinese neighbourhoods in American and Australian cities because I believe that studying what has happened in overseas Chinatowns can help us to better understand the processes that have developed more recently in Europe and in the Mediterranean region, to a large extent in a less visible way. The touristification of 'ethnic districts' has become more evident in the last twenty years and a growing number of ethnographic insights show how the dominant narrative of these areas as 'no-go zones' for tourists has come to compete with other narratives that promote the attractiveness of these areas for alternative tourism.

Among the most attentive observers of this phenomenon is Jan Rath who, together with other colleagues, has put together a rich body of studies and

reflections focusing on the active role of immigrant entrepreneurs in the transformation of cities. As Volkan Aytar and Jan Rath (2012) argued in the introduction of a collective volume of case studies concerning, among other cities, Istanbul, Brussels, Milan, Lisbon and Berlin:

The growing tourism and leisure industries in these neighbourhoods offer opportunities to natives and immigrants, skilled and unskilled, and males and females alike. They participate as organizers of cultural events, as web designers, as owners of cafes, coffee shops, restaurants, travel bureaus, hotels, souvenir shops, telephone and Internet shops, but also as waiters, cooks, dishwashers, and janitors . . . Together, they engender 'globalization from below' and create mainstream but unique products in terms of innovation, production, and consumption . . . In our globalizing world – where local difference and place identity are increasingly important – heritage and cultural diversity have become crucial components of the cultural capital of post-industrial societies. (Aytar and Rath 2012: 2)

In order for ethnic and cultural diversity to become part of an urban area's tourism, a variety of elements must therefore work together to combine the economic dimension of the market, the political dimension of the work of institutions and local administrations, and the active participation of commercial and cultural organizations of immigrant communities. According to Hall and Rath (2007), eight elements in particular can be identified that come into play at different levels depending on the case: (a) political regulation and structure; (b) spatial confinement; (c) growth coalitions, consisting of public and private operators that contribute to the marketing of place branding; (d) immigrant entrepreneurship; (e) ethnic infrastructure; (f) accessibility; (g) safety; and (h) target marketing (Hall and Rath 2007: 16–19).

It is indeed an ambivalent process. On the one hand, immigrant entrepreneurs' agency is highlighted, and tourist narratives stress their strategic management and representation of the neighbourhoods where they live and work as places where tourists can 'visit to see the whole world in a city'. Such accounts challenge the dominant discourses that describe those districts as dangerous and degraded (Rath 2007). In this sense, despite the narratives painting immigrants as those who are forever on the social margins of the city, passively awaiting integration policies, tourism constitutes an arena in which immigrants demonstrate that they are active and central to the practice of 'city-making'. They show that they are people capable of negotiating with political and institutional actors and developing their own vision of society's future (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018). On the other hand, numerous studies show how public administrations and investors with significant financial capital have the power to implement policies 'from above' and channel resources to initiate gentrification processes, which in many cases can exclude the immigrants who live there from the benefits brought

by the visitor flows. Ultimately, this can lead to immigrants' progressive marginalization, if not expulsion, from the areas redeveloped for tourism (Shaw, Bagwell and Karmowska 2004). From this perspective, as well as from an economic point of view, the subordination of migrants is reaffirmed and consolidated at the cultural level by the processes of folklorization and trivialization of their otherness. As Wendy Brown (2009) astutely observes, the superficial consumption of 'the other' leads to tolerance, a liberal democratic discursive depoliticization of both the sources of political problems and solutions to them. The uncomplicated celebration of 'diversity' and 'difference' effectively silences contestation and conflict, and therefore any further campaigns for justice and equality.

There is even a wide space of possibility between the risk of residents being socially excluded and the trivialization of cultural otherness, and the opportunity for the inclusion and active participation of migrants as subjects capable of generating economic benefits from tourism flows and producing a self-representation of the complexity of territory and heritage. As we will see in the next section, this is a complex and stimulating field where anthropology, in my opinion, can optimize its unique potential as a discipline.

Moving through the Migrant Urban Landscape

Let us return once again to New York to show how the discussion on urban tourism related to cultural differences can also be connected to the theme of 'house biographies' which I wrote about in the previous chapter. This nexus will help to illustrate the birth of the 'Migrantour' project on which I will now focus.

In the Lower East Side of Manhattan there is an institution that has inspired the Turin initiative. This is the Tenement Museum, a cultural institution dedicated to the history of migrations that have transformed, over time, those same territories where Lévi-Strauss once walked and where tourists visit slums. Here, inside the old house located at 97 Orchard Street, you can visit a series of apartments that preserve the personal items, furniture, photographs and memories of the different generations of Italian, Russian, Polish, German, Swedish and Irish immigrants who lived in those rooms at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is through these living spaces that the curators and guides of the museum, professionals with a historical and anthropological background, can become narrators of the biography of the building and of some of the residents who have lived there over time (Dolkart 2006). But the visit to the interior spaces then continues with a walk round the neighbourhood that surrounds the museum, which

is even more important for our argument. This is a path that shows how migrations are not only a matter of memory, but a living and current reality that continues to transform the city today.

My personal commitment to devising a project that would address the question of narrating the intersection of migration and urban change stems precisely from the perception of the limits and ambivalences of museumification processes. In 2010, together with fellow anthropologists Carlo Capello and Pietro Cingolani, I was commissioned to curate an exhibition that the Museo Diffuso di Torino (Widespread Museum of Turin) had planned to set up on the history of immigration in the city. The exhibition was part of the events for the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy and was meant to be shown inside a museum that is located near the Porta Palazzo district and that has a strong vocation for civil rights. Together with my colleagues I enthusiastically accepted the position of curator and for over a year I worked on the collection of testimonies, images, data and archival documents. The research facility was markedly ethnographic and allowed us to explore all the districts of the city, often in the company of immigrant citizens from whom we collected interviews and whom we asked to guide us to places that were significant to them (cultural associations, places of worship and assembly, spaces for leisure and entertainment, shops, markets, workplaces, their homes, etc.). The exhibition was inaugurated with the title 'Turin-Earth. Città e nuove migrazioni' (Turin-Earth. City and New Migrations) and it showed us how difficult it was to display the complexity of the processes we had observed. Although the exhibition made use of cutting-edge multimedia and digital tools, from interactive maps to workstations that allowed visitors to 'dialogue' with the testimonies of migrants by asking questions, as well as more classic strategies such as the use of significant objects collected in the field, it was clear to me how challenging it was to make the exhibition a real 'contact zone'. With this well-known definition, James Clifford (1997) wanted to evoke the possibility that museums become real arenas for interaction, making possible intercultural dialogue and the encounter between visions that could also be dissonant. Thinking of an exhibition or a museum of migration as a 'contact zone', therefore, posed strong questions on how to offer space and dignity to the plurality of voices that we had heard in the city, including those that were isolated or different from the dominant narrative that we, as curators, proposed (Capello, Cingolani and Vietti 2011).

Thinking back to the Tenement Museum that I had visited a few years earlier in New York, and to other rather informal experiences that I had encountered in different contexts (such as the visits organized by the anthropologist Gordon Mathews together with African migrants within the Chungking Mansions in Hong Kong, a context that I mentioned in the

previous chapter), I therefore considered proposing a new concept to Viaggi Solidali (Solidarity Travel). Viaggi Solidali is a tour operator from Turin with whom I was then collaborating to develop responsible tourism initiatives. The new idea that brought these strands together would involve some of the immigrant citizens I had met during the research for the exhibition and other activities that I carried out in Turin (for example teaching Italian in evening schools for foreign adults or working as a trainer for the city's Intercultural Centre). By designing the right training course, we could create and conduct walks around the Porta Palazzo district and in other areas that would allow the museum to be 'open air', allowing people to enter the city, experience it and view it from a different perspective.

These were the very first steps of a project that still exists today and is now widespread and known in many European countries as 'Migrantour. Intercultural Urban Routes'. This collective enterprise has been possible thanks to the collaboration between relatively diverse entities, including diasporic associations, non-governmental organizations, tour operators, social cooperatives, university departments and communication agencies and others, who have developed it over thirteen years. With the assistance of funding and support from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the European Commission in two periods (2014–2015 and 2018–2019), the project was launched in about twenty other cities: Milan, Genoa, Florence, Rome, Naples, Catania, Cagliari, Parma, Pavia and Bergamo in Italy, Marseille and Paris in France, Valencia and Barcelona in Spain, Lisbon in Portugal, Brussels in Belgium, Copenhagen in Denmark, Ljubljana in Slovenia and Utrecht in the Netherlands. Since 2021, through an Erasmus+ programme, a phase of experimentation has begun, and continues today, called 'Rural Migrantour', which aims to replicate the project outside large cities in small towns and rural, mountain and border areas. Currently, the itineraries of Rural Migrantour are being tested in Borgata Paroloup in the Alps on the border between Italy and France, in Camini (in Calabria, Italy), in the area of Svilengrad (in Bulgaria, on the border with Turkey), in Kostanjevica na Krki (in Slovenia, on the border with Croatia) and on the island of Kythera (in Greece, south of the Peloponnese).

Throughout the Migrantour city network, one or more local partners have carried out free training courses aimed at migrant citizens. These individuals are then invited to undertake a highly collaborative and participatory course with the aim of designing and implementing potential urban itineraries in different city districts, once they become 'intercultural guides'. This is the training course that, as we saw in the ethnographic sketch at the beginning of Chapter 5, led Amira to accompany a class of students in the courtyard of my condominium and inside the Peace Mosque. It is a path that has been completed by over six hundred intercultural guides in the last decade and

has allowed the creation of about fifty different urban itineraries in which more than forty thousand people have participated throughout Europe, including tourists, citizens and students.

I will go into more detail later to show how the crucial moment of the encounter with the participants of the walks takes place. Before that, I would like to focus on the more general meaning of the initiative and the role that anthropology has played in its development, with particular reference to the ways in which intercultural guides participate in the creation of the itineraries and their contents.

I have summarized the logical framework of the project in the diagram below (Figure 6.2). The area of the encounter between residents, intercultural guides and tourists is inscribed at the centre of the graph by the four conceptual pillars of Migrantour: migration, tourism, heritage and the urban environment (which has now come to include several rural areas). Here, it is not necessary to add anything else to the discussion about the two forms of mobility to which this book is entirely dedicated, or on the theme of the city, which I have reflected on in these last two chapters. But I would like to say something more about the fourth pillar – heritage.

As cultural anthropology shows, for example with the case of Lampedusa and the cult of the Madonna of Porto Salvo discussed in Chapter 4, the notion of heritage must always be understood as a process. It is the result of an unforeseen outcome from the transformative dynamics that involve clashes, negotiations and redefinitions of meaning. Heritage-making is inherently a political process, since deciding what should be remembered within a society is closely linked to issues of power and identity.

Introducing the important collective work *Museum and Migration: History, Memory and Politics*, Laurence Gouriévidis (2014) noted that migration is no longer a ‘non-place of memory’ for many European countries. By amalgamating the well-known categories discussed by the historian Pierre Nora (places of memory) and the anthropologist Marc Augé (non-places), Gouriévidis highlights how migrants, after having long been excluded from the public discourse inherent to cultural heritage debates, have gradually gained visibility in the processes and places involved in the creation of the collective identity of national communities (Basso Peressut and Pozzi 2012). However, in many cases, migration stories, memories and representations maintain a peripheral positioning and a marginal role in historical, cultural and social narratives (Hintermann and Johansson 2010). In the case of migration in the Mediterranean, taking up the concept proposed by Ashworth and Tunbridge (1996), we could talk about a real *dissonant heritage*, able to counter the dominant discourses that identify migrants as a threat to be controlled and possibly rejected, or as needy and deprived victims who need to be rescued and saved.

The monument 'Port' created by the Greek sculptor Costas Varotsos and inaugurated in Otranto (Apulia, Italy) in January 2012 is a good example of the political meaning and implications of the processes of heritagization of migration in the Mediterranean region. The project emerged from the combined efforts of some stakeholders of Italian civil society, the Albanian diaspora and on the request of the relatives of the victims who wanted to save the wreck of *Katër i Radës* from being demolished. The *Katër i Radës* was a boat full of Albanian migrants that was rammed and sunk by the Italian Navy corvette *Sibilla* on 28 March 1997. The building of the monument was accompanied by a series of theatrical and artistic workshops realized in local schools and became an opportunity to denounce how the Otranto Canal tragedy, in which eighty-one people died in a shipwreck, had been denied and quickly forgotten by the 'official history' of immigration to Italy. The creation of this memorial also symbolically represented the exit from that long period of invisibility and silence for the Albanian community in Italy. It was a period characterized by a collective amnesia of the memory of migration which was not being passed down the generations (see Chapter 1 of this book), and finally ended with the flourishing of a specific voice of the Albanian diaspora in the public arena and well represented by the numerous novels published by Albanian writers abroad.

The story of the Otranto monument allows us to reflect on one of the central tenets of the Migrantour project, 'heritage community'. The project aspires to effectively implement the 'Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society', signed by the Council of Europe in Faro, Portugal. This convention foresaw the recognition and strengthening of 'heritage communities' composed of people 'who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they desire, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations' (Council of Europe 2005: 2). Migrantour promotes imagery of first- and second-generation immigrants as a group with a 'plural identity' and a 'right to [benefit from] cultural heritage' and 'take part in the selection of new cultural expressions aimed at belonging to the notion of cultural heritage' (Zagato 2015: 147).

The training course for intercultural guides is therefore thought of as a path to bring out and consolidate a 'community of practice' (Wenger 1998) capable, at the end of the route, of becoming a 'heritage community'. The realization of intercultural itineraries takes place through a series of collaborative activities aimed at promoting the exchange and sharing of knowledge and points of view among course participants, project staff members in each city and professional trainers (such as anthropologists, sociologists, historians, storytelling experts and tour guides), who are asked to contribute to this course through a series of seminars and workshops. New skills and knowledge are generated via these multifaceted interactions.

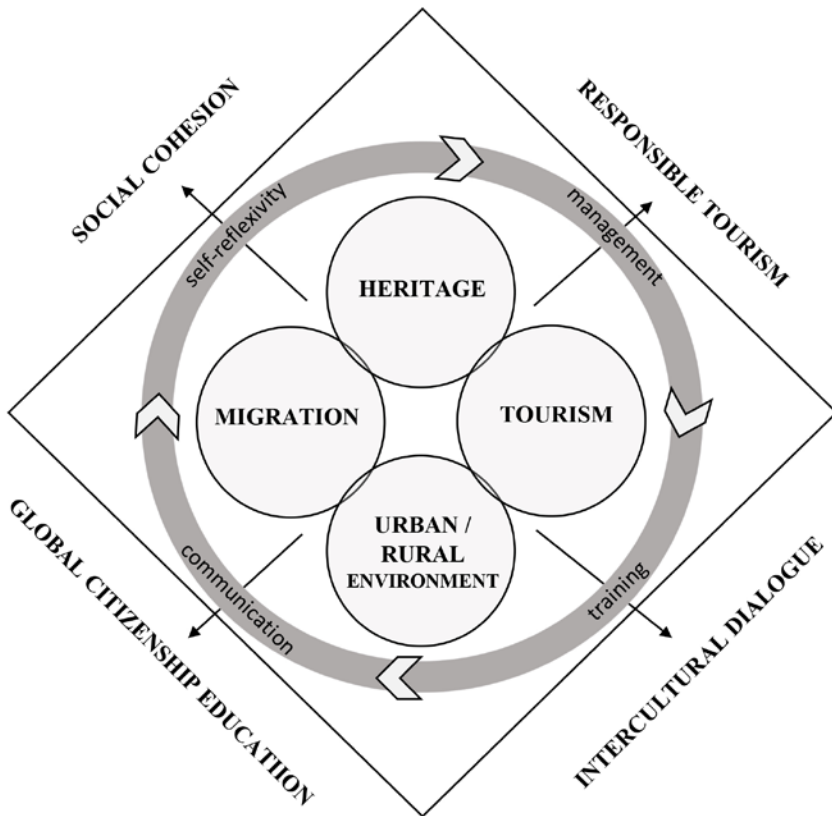


FIGURE 6.2. Migrantour explained through a diagram showing premises, processes and outcomes. © Francesco Vietti

The process begins with guides-in-training drawing a series of mental maps (Lynch 1960) through which they express their experiences of and relationships within the city they live in. These maps show their daily routes, the places they usually visit, and landmarks that are significant to them. With their own mental maps, based on experiences prior to joining Migrantour, in hand, they then exchange information with one another, overlaying their personal routes to develop a shared map of significant places. Once this common base has been generated, they carry out ethnographic fieldwork by engaging in participant observation, undertaking qualitative interviews with residents and creating a visual archive documenting the changes that have taken place in their residential areas over time. Finally, the guides' personal narratives and the fieldwork material are rooted to specific places in the area covered by the guided walking tour in which they can most effectively resonate with each other.

The tangible and intangible heritage presented during the walks is interpreted as the outcome of social action (Harrison 2010) that involves interactions between the intercultural guides' subjective point of view, the experiences of those who live and work in the neighbourhoods, and the elements of the urban landscape. The intercultural reading of urban heritage mainly takes place according to two strategies: (a) the search for new, unprecedented meanings that may suggest a different reading of already consolidated elements of urban heritage; and (b) the valorization of elements which are not usually considered significant in terms of cultural value, but which rather undergo processes of devaluation and invisibility.

To revisit the Porta Palazzo neighbourhood, I would like to emphasize how this work on the first urban itinerary of Migrantour Torino was created over ten years ago. Let us take one of the stops that have been included in the two-hour walk that takes place in the area, namely the 'Dar Al Hikma' Arab cultural centre.

The first suggestion to have one of the itinerary stops at this location was presented by Amira, the intercultural Italo-Tunisian guide we have already met. The reason the young lady visits the centre is because it houses a *hammam*, which is appreciated by North African families living in the neighbourhood. During the training course, Amira spoke about the importance of her time spent in the *hammam* and she led the other participants in discovering this place, finding points of connection with their previous experiences, and in particular with the memories of Tanja, who is of Russian origin, and who used to do the *banja* in Russia. This is a type of sauna with body care practice, known for its relaxation and socialization. The group of guides who were in training then decided to collect other interviews from the managers of the *hammam*. They learnt that many Italian women also frequented the place in recent years and that the *hammam* and the entire Arab cultural centre was housed in a building originally intended as a 'public bathhouse' for the neighbourhood. Furthermore, interviews with internal migrants from southern Italy, who had arrived in Turin in the 1950s and 1960s, showed that they had also used this shower service as they did not have a bathroom at home. The Migrantour guides thus understood that the history of this building could have interesting implications for the historical migration to Turin. Thanks to subsequent archival research, it has been possible to develop an intercultural reading of this urban space. We have included this particular place in the wider story of the construction of Turin's public bathhouses, which were once present in all districts of the city but which today have almost completely disappeared or been transformed into buildings with other functions. A particularly significant aspect is linked to the actual decision to create this service, with the construction of the first bathhouses taking place in the mid to late nineteenth

century. The Municipal Council of Turin's documents from 16 December 1868 showed that when the decision was made to build the 'establishment of bathhouses for the use of the poor, and especially for children and young people, who are not always able to go to bathe in the waters of the two rivers near Turin', it was to improve the hygiene and public health conditions of the city, which at that time were lacking and a source of frequent epidemics. In the words of the municipal councillor who put forward the proposal at the time, Turin should have taken the example of the healthy 'use in the East, imposed by the religion of Mohammed, of taking frequent baths', a practice that made the cities of North Africa and the Middle East decidedly healthier than those in Europe (Archivio Storico della Città di Torino 1869). As it is now told to tourists, citizens and students during the Migrantour walks at Porta Palazzo, the new use of the public bathhouse of Porta Palazzo as a *hammam*, triggered by the demand from North African immigrants and now increasingly appreciated by other groups of residents, has allowed this place to resume its original function, showing the value of the authentic architectural and cultural heritage of Turin. Given that the 'heritage community' of Migrantour involves an exchange dynamic between the intercultural guides and the members of staff and the trainers that can flow in either direction, this path of rediscovery of the importance of public bathhouses in the history of mobility in Turin has also taken on a very personal perspective. It allowed me to rediscover a familial memory that was long forgotten. Only now have I realized that even my grandmother, born in 1926, had her own memories of making use of these public bathhouses as a child.

Intercultural Guides' Voices

Walking together through the 'migratory landscapes' of contemporary cities is not as easy as it seems. Iain Chambers, looking at Naples and other Mediterranean urban contexts and beyond, has clearly highlighted how the 'migratory landscape' is interwoven with colonial violence and post-colonial liberation struggles, poetics and politics of identity and otherness, of memory and oblivion and of tensions and divisions between different symbolic regimes:

In the oblique gaze of the migrant that cuts across the territory of the Western metropolis there exists the hint of a metaphor. In the extensive and multiple worlds of the modern city we, too, become nomads, migrating across a system that is too vast to be our own, but in which we are fully involved – translating and transforming what we find and absorb into local instances of sense. (Chambers 1994: 14)

The encounter between intercultural guides, residents and tourists during the Migrantour walks therefore requires a deep reflection on the complex interweaving between 'representation' and 'representativeness'. Who has the right to represent who? Who has enough power to represent themselves, and to what extent are Migrantour's stories presented and perceived as representative of the condition of those who inhabit the city?

For some of the migrants who have embarked on the path to becoming intercultural guides, this work represents a building block to attempt a reconstruction of their own self-representation, which is consistent with their intellectual and professional path interrupted due to their forced migration. As Gili, who in Congo Brazzaville was a lawyer and today works for Migrantour Bruxelles, says:

I was used to being respected for my work, and I also had self-esteem before leaving. When I arrived in Belgium I had to learn to shut up, to be ashamed of what I had become in the eyes of the people I met on the street. I can say that I have walked for a long time with my head bowed down. With Migrantour I started to look up again. It's not something others did for me and it wasn't the only thing that happened. It was part of a change, of a process that I did for myself and to myself. But now I can say that when I guide people around Brussels, and show how some of the buildings and monuments in the city are linked to the racism and violence that took place in my country during the colonial occupation, I am once again proud of the person I am. Some of the people in the group listen to me carefully while others are forced to listen and get annoyed, but it doesn't matter. My voice reaches everyone loud and clear.

In the case of second-generation young people, the training course and then becoming an intercultural guide is part of a process of reflection on their family origins and their cultural 'roots'. To a certain extent, this is similar to what happens for Italian-Albanian young people with summer holidays in their parents' country (as we have seen in Chapter 1). Ali, who came to Italy from Pakistan with his family when he was just five years old, considers the path that led him to work for Migrantour Bologna:

Until I was eighteen I felt I was only Italian. Then someone, through legal definitions, made it clear to me that I was not an Italian citizen. The strange thing is that I did not even feel like I was a Pakistani citizen. What could I do? Today I have come to the conclusion that I cannot ignore these two languages, cultures and identities that belong to me. For this reason, during the walks, I like to present the current society, made up of different people who share the same places, but sometimes also the same fears. Conflicts always arise from the fact that we do not know each other, so meeting each other, starting to talk to each other, is vital.

For other guides, doing this work instead meant deconstructing representations of themselves and others that had formed before and after migration.

This was the experience of Viorica, a guide for Migrantour Genoa originally from Romania:

Meeting with the other guides also helped me to question myself. For example, before attending the training course, I admit that I had a lot of prejudice towards Roma people, a negative feeling I had developed in Romania and that I brought with me to Italy. Basically, I did not want to be confused with them. During the training I had to work on this attitude and, only thanks to this path that I have taken, now, when I talk about the Roma community during the walks, I'm sincere and credible, starting with admitting that I also had prejudices and speaking openly about how I've tried to overcome them.

Often it is precisely the moment of meeting with tourists that stimulates moments of reflection for the intercultural guides and leads them to reconsider the previous phases of training and the intentions with which they had initially joined the project. This process clearly emerges from the testimony of Ahmed, a French immigrant citizen from the Comoros who arrived in Marseille fifteen years ago and is now a Migrantour guide:

I had taken drama classes in the past, so I felt confident speaking in public. During the training for Migrantour, I thought that all-in-all it was a simple job. I hadn't taken it too seriously, just for fun. I am a musician so during the walks I could also play around and entertain people with different languages so to speak. Instead, when I started to guide the tours in the Noailles area I realized that it was much more complicated. People ask you a lot of questions, even tough ones, to a point where, the first few times it happened, I used to get a little annoyed or I didn't feel like answering. I remember well that after the third group I took around I had thought about quitting, because I felt uncomfortable. But then after a few weeks I got back on track. It wasn't just because of the money I could earn, but because I realized I had a responsibility. After all, I was in a privileged position because, with the things I told them, I could make people change their minds, make them see things from a different point of view, make them have doubts, make them think.

As these words show, the meeting with tourists can also be an unpleasant and even disturbing experience, in which it can be difficult for intercultural guides to find the right distance to manage their emotional involvement and decide what and how much to share with the participants in the walks. This is also why, in the initiative's early history, Migrantour network members often opted to engage in 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak 1990) – the provisional acceptance and tactical use of essentialist foundations for identity categories as a strategy for collective representation to advance a clear political goal. Although sensitive to the challenges posed by this strategy, Migrantour guides were encouraged to bring together a collection of symbolic foods, crafts, photographs, anecdotes and so on that could evoke the stories gathered during their training course. These objects manifested cultural

differences attributed to different immigrant communities during tours, first by mediating the encounter between the guides and tour participants, making the experience manageable and acceptable for both parties, and, second, by mobilizing a counter-narrative emphasizing migration's role in enriching cities' cultural heritage in the face of dominant discourses stigmatizing 'ethnic neighbourhoods' as notorious and dangerous places. During Migrantour's initial development and in the initiative's spread throughout different European cities, there were times when network partners and guides experimented with the delivery of content during the walks, producing a range of results that have sometimes provoked criticism by both the tour participants and the researchers analysing Migrantour's impact. In some cases, the effects of the initiative ran contrary to intentions, effectively consolidating new stereotypes and folklorizing cultural differences in ways that led some walking tour participants to perceive themselves as 'looking at immigrants' as if they were in a 'human zoo', rather than having opportunities for mutual dialogue and exchange.

Migrantour network members must constantly reflect on the risks of simplifying and trivializing, even unconsciously, the themes dealt with during the tours. They are increasingly committed to avoiding producing normalized, pacified and singular representations of the neighbourhoods featured in the walking tours, discussing with the intercultural guides how to allow for the emergence of contradictions, conflicts and resistance in their narratives. Consequently, inequalities and relationships of subordination and domination related to the neoliberal distribution of power, which concern tourism's (and Migrantour's) impacts on people and the cities they live in, are highlighted more explicitly during the training courses and the tours.

Marisol, an Italian-Peruvian guide for Migrantour Milano, says:

The itinerary we offer in Via Padova has changed a lot over time. In the early years our motto was 'Via Padova is better than Milan', in the sense that they wanted above all to show everything that was most beautiful in the neighbourhood. Ten years ago, the newspapers spoke about this area because of violence, fighting, and drug dealing. So, it was logical that we foreigners who live there wanted to show the beautiful side of integration, multicultural schools, ethnic food and so on. Year after year, however, we have also added other issues. For example, we have reflected on the theme of the house, on the fact that we are in the richest city in Italy, where there are many redevelopment projects, but at the same time there is a huge problem for all the people who are evicted because they cannot pay the rent and bills and have no place to stay. Many are immigrants, but some are also Italians. It is a problem that unites us all. For this reason, today the Migrantour itinerary begins with a stop at the Self-Managed Social Centre in Via dei Transiti, which at grass roots level, and in an activist way, tries to support those in difficulty. They organize free Italian language courses, and an after-school nursery for children in the neighbourhood whose families are in difficulty, as well as services for migrants and citizens who have lost their homes.



FIGURE 6.3. Questioning urban borders. Camilo, a street artist from Colombia and intercultural guide for Migrantour, during a walking tour in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2022. © Francesco Vietti

I am indebted to my geographer colleague Meghann Ormond for directing me towards the best analytical framework for interpreting the ramifications of the encounters that take place during the Migrantour walks. Ormond is very experienced as a researcher on the connection between tourism and education, and in recent years she has been the creator and coordinator of the ‘Roots Guide’ project. This has led to the creation and publication of a highly interactive and reflexive tourist guide about the Netherlands based on the experiences and narratives of citizens with an internal and international migration background, aimed mainly at Dutch internal tourists. After discussing these issues during the first edition of the ‘Mobility and Heritage in the Mediterranean’ summer school in Malta in 2019, we embarked on a shared path of reflection on the two projects in which we were involved (Ormond and Vietti 2022).

This was how we noticed that Migrantour and Roots Guide had faced similar problems in trying to overcome the approach of ‘multicultural tolerance’ (Brown 2009), which is often reproduced by tourism structures such as guides and organized tours. A way to avoid this pitfall is to pursue in the fullest way what Hannah Arendt (1977) defined as a fundamental prerequisite to

developing informed individual judgement and enabling adequate deliberation and collective action in democratic societies. This can be achieved by recognizing the many perspectives that are active in society and supporting the mutual recognition of such perspectives. Such ‘multi-perspectivity’ is the requirement of any truly political thought, as Arendt wrote:

This process of representation does not blindly adopt the actual views of those who stand somewhere else, and hence look upon the world from a different perspective; this is a question neither of empathy, as though I tried to be or to feel like somebody else, nor of counting noses and joining a majority but of being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not. The more people’s standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinion. (Arendt 1977: 241)

For Arendt, the key to expanding one’s global outlook is ‘not to see through the eyes of someone else, but to see with your own eyes from a position that is not your own’ (Biesta 2016: 187). This qualifies as the practice of ‘visiting’ (Arendt 1992). Exploring other people’s point of view will therefore mean paying ‘considered attention’ to, and engaging with, the ‘stories of an event from each of the plurality of perspectives that could have an interest in telling them’, while also having one’s sense-making interrupted and reflexively embracing the ensuing disorientation that grapples with ‘how the world looks different to someone else’ (Biesta and Cowell 2012: 59).

Our ability to develop judgements about the world and others passes through our interpersonal relationships. It is not only ‘our choice of company’ (Arendt 2003: 145–46) – that is, the range of others’ viewpoints with which we choose to engage and surround ourselves – that matters, but so does the context and manner through which we are exposed to our company’s viewpoints. As Meghann Ormond observes (Ormond and Vietti 2022), the challenge facing projects such as ‘Migrantour’ and ‘Roots Guide’ will be to set conditions for the guides and the tours they design to become ‘good company’, in the sense that they are the mediators to engage and interact with the reality of the place and to cultivate its political perspective. The role of the intercultural guides for Migrantour can therefore be analysed alongside that of other groups (e.g. homeless, Black, LGBTQ, etc.) that carry out their work in social and responsible tourism initiatives seeking ‘to empower voices that are marginalised or ignored in authorised [heritage] discourses about places and the people within them’ (Campos-Delgado: 490). This enables a shift away from an emphasis on ‘tolerance’ (Brown 2009) and towards acknowledging what anthropologist Anna Tsing (2005: 4) calls ‘friction’ – the awkward, unequal, unstable and creative qualities of interconnection across difference. It is a disorientation fundamental to Arendtian ‘visiting’ as civic learning (Arendt 1977).

This ‘disorientation’ emerges in many of the testimonies of students, citizens and tourists who have recently taken part in Migrantour walks. As Laura, a teacher at a secondary school in Rome said, classes participating in the initiative take on the function of destabilizing and challenging the assumption that migration is a phenomenon that only concerns ‘others’, and which cannot be part of ‘our’ future, thus overturning the usual perspective of her young students:

With each passing year, I bring more and more classes to experience Migrantour, because compared to a few years ago the opportunities to really work on intercultural themes have decreased as if we had reversed course. Migration is spoken of only with regard to the landings of illegal immigrants. No one thinks of the hundreds of thousands of second-generation children who attend school every day. It is also important for the children of Italians to be aware that Italy has a long history of migration behind it and that their own future could lead them to emigrate to live and work in another country.

For Sergio, who was born in Turin but has lived for many years in a town in the Alpine valleys of Piedmont, visiting Porta Palazzo through a Migrantour itinerary meant questioning the image of the neighbourhood usually conveyed by the media, although he was not entirely able to arrive at a new and coherent idea of what is currently happening there. It is a feeling of uncertainty and doubt that indicates how the walks can only be understood as a first step towards a further phase of reflection, contemplation and engagement, which all participants in the walks should undertake, each having to reckon with their ‘modesty’ (to recall the category proposed by Richard Sennett, discussed in Chapter 5):

I grew up in the neighbourhood, but I have lived outside Turin for many years. I signed up for the tour because Porta Palazzo is always on regional news, so I wanted to see the news with my own eyes. I liked the tour, but I’m still thinking about many of its aspects, because it reversed everything I expected to find, both beautiful and ugly, in the neighbourhood.

Beyond Migrantour: Applied Anthropology, Ethics, Politics and the Market

Let’s return to the conceptual outline I presented in the previous section. We said that the four ‘pillars’ (migration, tourism, heritage and urban/rural environment) circumscribe the encounter between intercultural guides, residents and participants in the Migrantour walks, accentuating the concept of ‘heritage community’. Through the voice of the intercultural guides themselves, we then investigated the extent to which the encounters promoted

by the project are considered a significant experience by the participants involved. Recalling what we discussed in the Introduction, we wondered if these meetings could fall into the category of ‘transformative encounters’ that have the power to permeate and shift the boundaries of (in)visibility, (il)legality and difference that usually separate tourists and migrants and instead open up the opportunity for sociocultural exchanges (Cabot and Lenz 2012: 178).

The next component of this scheme starts from the circular element that connects the various dimensions which anthropology contributes to the project: *reflexivity, organization, training and communication*. The circularity of the diagram indicates how these phases are not to be understood in a successive and unilateral way, but represent moments connected to each other and to which the project constantly returns, not necessarily in this order.

Anthropologists have been involved in the project with different roles and responsibilities from the very beginning, and are now an important part of Migrantour’s working groups across Europe. I held the position of scientific coordinator of the initiative during the start-up phase in Turin and then in the two European design phases (2014–2015 and 2018–2019), while numerous other anthropologists have also contributed, covering all the different tasks necessary for the implementation of different activities at differing stages. For example, we have anthropologists who had to abandon their profession because of emigration, and who now work as intercultural guides, like Maria Eugenia, originally from Venezuela, who has been guiding students and tourists for Migrantour Genoa for many years. Anthropologists are in many cases the ‘local project coordinator’, as in the case of Giacomo Pozzi, an expert colleague in urban anthropology and housing rights issues, who coordinated Migrantour Milan. In some places, Migrantour has been developed by associations or anthropological collectives, such as in Slovenia, where Migrantour Ljubljana is implemented by Terra Vera, an association created and directed by the anthropologist Jana Milovanović. In several other cities, the project has been managed by collaborations between museums and anthropology departments, with the involvement of their students. In Paris, Migrantour has been collaborating with an MA course in Anthropology and Ethnology at the University of Paris-Descartes and the students have been ‘tutors’ on the project, collaborating with the intercultural guides in training when mapping the territory and creating the itineraries. As Pia, one of the students involved, explains:

Participating in the design [of the tours] is an enriching experience on a personal and professional level. In fact, each stage of the construction of the itinerary has allowed us to refine and put into practice knowledge acquired at the university. Furthermore, the doubts, changes and difficulties we have encountered on the ground have prompted

us to reflect and redefine our specific way of acting. For me, it was the first contact with the world of work as an anthropologist.

These few examples show how anthropological knowledge and methodologies have contributed to the organization and training phases of the project. These same examples also highlight an interesting twist that had not been foreseen in the early stages of the initiative: not only could anthropologists intervene as trainers for the migrants involved in the course, but their relationship with the intercultural guides and their participation in the project could become a formative opportunity for their students.

The innovation and replicability of Migrantour has increased its visibility and impact over the years, winning awards for the project on an anthropological level (such as the prize awarded by the Italian Society of Applied Anthropology in 2019), as well as recognizing the project for good practice in the tourism sector (the Silver Medal of the World Responsible Tourism Award of 2016). The increasing number of newspaper articles, collaborative proposals, interviews with the media, comments from local and national politicians, as well as the increasing number of project partners have made the other two issues mentioned in the outline (communication and reflexivity) increasingly crucial over time.

I believe that these are two fundamental aspects that allow us to reach the last level of Migrantour's concept as a project and at the same time take us beyond this specific initiative to question our position on problems that concern the public and applied dimension of anthropology in a transversal way. Migrantour and other projects that insist on the link between migration and tourism, such as the aforementioned Roots Guide, aim to benefit different areas. I wanted to mention four main ones: *social cohesion*, *responsible tourism*, *intercultural dialogue* and *global citizenship education*. These four fields are evidently crossed by ethical and political tension towards a desirable future in which social justice prevails over inequalities and tourist practices are more conscious and sustainable from an economic, cultural and social point of view. Also, people have opportunities for interaction and exchange with a high degree of respect and mutual recognition and the new generations develop tools and skills to become more aware of the intersectionality of the different forms of power and exclusion in the global world.

Is all this really possible? Does the road taken by Migrantour lead in this direction, or is it rather more likely to lead us astray and produce further damage, perhaps unwittingly and despite the best intentions (Iandolo 2021)? Can Migrantour indicate some of the opportunities and risks that anthropology faces when confronted with the overwhelming forces of the state and the market? When it tries to navigate through global capitalism,

how does it combat it with ethical codes, experience of negotiation with financiers and institutions, personal involvement with partners in the field and inexhaustible (self-)critical spirit?

These were some of the questions that led to a rich debate in the journal *Antropologia Pubblica* (Public Anthropology), with several Italian anthropologists reflecting, from significantly different positions, on the various implications of the project for applied anthropology. It was a valuable debate from which Migrantour has greatly benefited and from which I would like to propose some particularly significant steps for the path that I am developing in this book.

Speaking on the subject, Miguel Mellino (Mellino and Vietti 2019), an expert anthropologist in post-colonial studies, has made clear the need to pay particular attention to the contiguity between security and xenophobic policies on the one hand, and humanitarian, progressive and multicultural rhetoric on the other. Building on Didier Fassin's thoughts (2010), Mellino sees that the logics of the 'open city' and the 'closed city' are not at all antithetical but represent two aspects of the same 'order of discourse', two interdependent outcomes of a single exploitation regime that has been consolidated in the context of a broader post-colonial and neoliberal management of territories and populations (Mellino and Vietti 2019: 124). Taking up the definition of racism proposed by Michel Foucault, Mellino invites us to place this very issue at the centre of our reflection: racism should be taken as a historical-structural component of European societies, as the material and objective enclosure within which all the interactions between migrant and 'indigenous' populations are shaped, and not only as an ideological or cultural deficit to be filled with more ethical representations. The racial hardness of European post-colonial cities, as Mellino effectively defines it, cannot be softened simply by moral or pedagogical anti-racism, but must necessarily be accompanied by other processes of subjectivization through which migrants raise their voice (ibid.: 125). If applied anthropological initiatives such as Migrantour act in the urban space without being fully aware of the growing 'social and economic racialization' of the metropolitan territories, they risk having two undesirable effects: (a) to once again consign migrants to a role (specifically that of intercultural guides, as has already happened with the somewhat similar figure of the cultural mediator), which although intended to be an empowerment tool ends up confirming the same subordination (in terms of race, class and gender) that in theory it intends to fight; (b) to reduce anthropology to a simple 'marketing technique' in which the knowledge and methods of the discipline are used as 'extractive technology' (of stories, world views and heritage elements) at the service of market demands, although possibly a 'fair and supportive' market such as responsible tourism. Here Mellino refers to his training as

an anthropologist originally from Argentina to recall the rich tradition of an applied anthropology embedded in activist thinking and geared towards the emancipation and subjectivization of the most oppressed and marginal sociocultural groups. It is also by recovering this political and epistemic baggage that has settled in the history of the diffusion and decolonization of the discipline in the southern hemisphere, writes Mellino, that anthropologists can remove the temptation to use subjects (in this case migrants) to legitimize a discipline, its 'professionals' and its position within the 'institutional' field of knowledge (ibid.: 127).

Giacomo Pozzi, the Milanese urban anthropologist mentioned previously, has directly and personally experienced the difficulty of putting into dialogue his own committed and activist position on the issue of the right to housing and his role as local coordinator of Migrantour Milan in 2018–2019. For Pozzi (Ceschi and Pozzi 2019), the reflection on applied anthropology initiatives such as this should move from the theoretical plane of general political planning to that of analysing micro-practices implemented by the various actors in the field. From this point of view, Migrantour, despite not radically (and we could say 'subversively') critiquing the dominant political and economic system, offers a 'transgressive' contribution. In its daily work it strives to shift the boundary that prevents the voices of migrants from being heard and is considered authoritative in the political area of cultural heritage in contemporary Europe. When meeting with tourists, students and citizens who participate in the walks, the intercultural guides take the floor, not in any 'given' or 'granted' manner, but in a way that is 'desired' and finally 'achieved', to challenge 'modestly' the reproduction mechanisms that lead to inequalities (ibid.: 130). The reference to 'modesty' as seen with Sennett resurfaces here, but for Pozzi this instead recalls the attribute that Michael Herzfeld chose to define anthropology. This discipline is 'modest' because it is:

concerned with practice rather than with grand theory, [that] may ultimately have a more lasting effect in the world. This is a view of anthropology as a model for critical engagement with the world, rather than a distanced and magisterial explanation of the world. (Herzfeld 2001: x)

The acceptance of being located in the 'ties of the world' in an indissolubly implied form (Fava 2017) and the awareness that these ties can be divergent in their objectives does not necessarily coincide with a less incisive anthropological action (Cornwall 2019). According to Pozzi's intuition, Migrantour can, from this point of view, provide an example for all those applied anthropology initiatives that could intervene in the social field as if they were a 'negative worker'. Taking up the concept of 'negative worker' formulated by René Lourau (1970) and transposed into the field of anthropology by

Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1995), we can in fact describe a ‘class traitor’ (ibid.: 419–20). A professional who, although working in an institution, displaying a certain relationship between classes in a hegemonic position, is placed in a conflicting relationship with the hegemony itself that s/he embodies, privileging the protection of the subordinate groups that s/he meets and with which s/he works. Migrantour is located in the field of intervention rather than the field of analysis (Lourau 1975), within structures of power and market forces in a necessarily ‘conciliatory’ but at the same time ‘negative’ position, in an attempt to force from within the mechanisms of reproduction: aestheticization, exoticization and representation of migrations (Ceschi and Pozzi 2019: 131).

Of course, this is not an easy position to take. It is neither stable nor devoid of ambivalence. In this regard, Sebastiano Ceschi (Ceschi and Pozzi 2019), an anthropologist with extensive research experience in the field of international migration, believes that the dichotomous approach that sees a radical and militant anthropology opposed to a ‘compromised’ anthropology that accommodates the logics of power and the market is actually overcome by our dramatic present, which rather calls all anthropologists to unite their efforts and intentions to face the current political and cultural situation. In fact, while twenty years ago the idea to build a cosmopolitan society characterized by transnational relations seemed desirable and enjoyed some support (also from a neoliberal economic paradigm perspective), the last decade in particular has brought exposure to the most ferocious forms of repressive governance for migrations and the construction of new borders. This new phase is particularly visible in the Mediterranean region where, as Ceschi points out, in the wake of the so-called ‘refugee crisis’, a fierce anti-humanitarian and anti-solidarity movement has been consolidated. This is ruthlessly hyper-capitalist and clearly racist/nationalist, which, in addition to radicalizing previous governmental practices, also denies the safeguards of civilization that have been laboriously built over time by Europe, such as the right to rescue and reception, to dignified treatment and the right to asylum (ibid.: 136).

In this context, there is therefore a need to create new spaces and new ideas to bring together forms of protest and opposition that have different histories and origins, but common objectives of struggle and action. This stance specifically requires anthropologists to use their analytical and self-reflexive skills to ‘cultivate the ambivalence’ of the social world and the need for the careful study of contradictions, while operating within such ambivalences and contradictions (Berliner et al. 2016). Applied anthropologists often find themselves living ‘in contradictions’. This is often an unpleasant condition, but can prove to be generative for our discipline, as Kierans and Bell have noted:

Cultivating an analytic of ambivalence might be our best strategy for understanding what is going on – and arguably teaches us more about the character of social relations than a prefigured moral stance can. (Kierans and Bell 2017: 38)

According to Ceschi (Ceschi and Pozzi 2019: 138), this task can be viewed as a theoretical and applied dynamic capable of holding together the *pars destruens* and the *pars construens*, but without losing the necessary ability to politicize one's own gaze which, for contemporary migrations, means not giving up an ethical-anthropological vision of man and of the interhuman, the utopia of an egalitarian and supportive worldliness for all (Mbembe 2019: x). To do this, it can be crucial to develop the ability to 'jump in and out' (act and exit) of the logic of the dominant system in a strategic and pragmatic way; to work from the inside to try to really change the state of things, but also to know how to stop, reject and decline when the margins of manoeuvre become too narrow, confusing or inadequate.

A further crisis situation that forced Migrantour to rethink and go beyond itself and the limits highlighted so far was the Covid-19 pandemic. Vincenzo Luca Lo Re (2020), an anthropologist with specific training in the history of the Mediterranean and who has studied the social, cultural and economic dynamics of the San Berillo district in Catania, Sicily, has reflected on this theme from the privileged point of view of a member of 'Trame di Quartiere'. This is a 'neighbourhood cooperative' that has been operating in this area of the city for many years and since 2019 has also started to create the itineraries of Migrantour Catania. In this regard, Lo Re stressed that the question of how to use urban spaces and promote forms of transformative actions in the face of social distancing measures and the blocking of economic and social activities in the pandemic era was a central topic to understand how a cultural and social process such as Migrantour could continue and expand its spectrum of action. Referring to the so-called 'entangled social approach' formulated by Olivier de Sardan (2005) with reference to development policies, Lo Re urges us to go beyond the level of planning actions to try to build and intertwine social processes. This means that the Migrantour project acquires meaning as long as it is not an isolated initiative and confined to the field of tourism and heritage, but rather enters into a broader framework of interventions that concern other processes in place in the territory. They act as 'mobilization' actions to trigger further initiatives, even partially different from the initial objectives of the project. Catania, for example, is a city with a relatively small percentage of foreign residents (4 percent of the total population), but with a high number of asylum seekers and refugees hosted in first reception centres. The purpose of the Migrantour walks was mainly oriented to provide a complementary service to people who had just arrived in the city and who needed to better know the resources available in

the neighbourhood (i.e. the offices of the associations that offer assistance). The 'long-standing' migrants, involved as intercultural guides, have thus entered into a relationship with other 'newcomer' migrants, giving them support in the difficult path of knowing the territory and its resources (Lo Re 2020: 200).

Irene Falconieri (2020), a Sicilian anthropologist at the University of Messina who also followed the developments of Migrantour Catania, notes how the project in this city benefited from the close relationship that Trame di Quartiere had built with the inhabitants of the San Berillo district well before the intercultural walks started. This allowed residents, including Italians, to be involved in a transversal way, overcoming the perception that an activity reserved only for 'immigrants' was being promoted. 'Walking together' in the neighbourhood has thus become both a practice of knowledge of space and a research tool through bodily experience to encourage new kinds of relationships among the residents of the neighbourhood (Falconieri 2020: 214). From this point of view, Migrantour walks can be considered a component of a wider effort to encourage renewed 'social encounters' after the prolonged period of lockdowns and social distancing protocols related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As Falconieri rightly notes, anthropologists are always aware of the risks that come with the application of one's own knowledge and methods adopted to trigger some form of social change. Any long-term and structured intervention should be designed as a continuous perfecting process, taking note of errors and adjusting to the critical issues that emerge gradually through careful analysis (Falconieri 2020: 215). In this regard, while rereading the debate that has seen Migrantour as a case study for broader reflection on some critical issues of public and applied anthropology, and thus ending this third and last part of the publication, I would like to recall what Erve Chambers, an American anthropologist with extensive research experience in the field of the anthropology of tourism, wrote several years ago about the internal conflict that anthropologists have to live with in a perpetual state of needing to validate their work and also continuously deconstructing their own certainties. This is a lesson not only for those engaged in Migrantour, but also for all those who seriously want to deal with the applications of the knowledge of our discipline:

We are engaged in a struggle to demonstrate our worth in a world that seems disinterested if not hostile, and we are at the same time obligated to chip away at every foundation of our enterprise. Having begun to convince others that there is a valuable certainty in our work, we are ourselves less sure of where that certainty lies. This, I suggest, is a good course to be on, even if discomfoting. It is the stirring of our critical sense. (Chambers 1987: 329)

Camini, Calabria, August 2019

Camini is little more than a handful of stone houses perched on the first peaks of the Calabrian hinterland, a few kilometres from the Ionian Sea coast. Its name in ancient Greek is Καμίνιον, Camèno in Greek-Calabrian. We are in the ancient Greek area on the Italian peninsula, and the archaeological remains of Kaulonia nearby testify to the ancient history of Greek colonization, dating back to the seventh century BC. According to the myth, this area witnessed the clash between Kaulon, son of the Amazon Clete, and the Achaeans led by Typhoon. . . .

Camini is not very well known, but many visitors, just like me and my family, are attracted by the nearby Riace, just a couple of kilometres away. That same Riace became famous all over the world for an incredible intertwining of heritage, tourism and migration. In fact, in the stretch of sea in front it, the famous Bronzes were found in 1972, which have recently attracted a large number of tourists to Reggio Calabria and the Ionian coast of Calabria. But a few years later, the sea brought another unpredictable transformation to Riace. With the reception of a first group of Kurdish refugees who arrived in Italy in 1998, Riace gave life for twenty years to a form of 'widespread reception' of migrants that became a model at national and international levels and has made its promoter, the mayor Mimmo Lucano, a point of reference for activists and supporters of the experience of 'cities of refuge' throughout Europe.

Today Camini seems to have somehow taken the baton from Riace. Many asylum seekers and refugees have arrived here thanks to the initiative of Jungi Mundu, a local cooperative that has been fighting for many years against the depopulation of the town and who have created initiatives and projects that allow the local people to stay here. The village of Camini, like all the small towns in this part of Calabria, has seen its population decline due to emigration for decades. From 1,300 inhabitants in 1921, it went down to 700 in 2011, and the emigration routes to the cities of northern Italy or foreign countries such as Germany remain the most likely future for the town's few young people.

Yet, in the last few years, something has changed. The classes of the elementary school have new pupils; in the central square of the town, a bar-pizzeria has reopened; the shops have new customers; and an increasing number of tourists are hosted in the stone houses of Camini that, one after the other, are being renovated and reopened after being long abandoned. This is all thanks to the many new citizens of Camini, migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Sierra Leone and other mostly African countries, who have been hosted in the town since 2014 initially thanks to a SPRAR project (the widespread protection system for asylum seekers and refugees

implemented nationally as an alternative to that of large reception centres), some of whom have decided to stay and live in Camini. As a result of this, some of the inhabitants of the town who had emigrated have decided to return, attracted by the possibility of finding a job in the cooperative.

This afternoon we were guided through the streets of the town by Raya, a Syrian girl who arrived here with her family, and who has been attending secondary schools in Italy for four years now. 'I study at the professional institute for tourism, I really like to learn languages and I would like to be able to work as a tour guide in a few years!', she told us while accompanying us in discovering the different craft activities that have been started in the town thanks to the collaboration between the 'old' and the 'new' inhabitants: a bakery, a textile workshop and a ceramic workshop.

'Raya, you would be a really good intercultural guide for a project called Migrantour. . .'; I told her at the end of the walk, wishing her the best for her studies and her future. I wonder if we would be able to introduce our initiative to this locality sooner or later. But even if that's not the case, it's nice to see that Migrantour does exist in other names.

NOTE

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to discuss various aspects of the Migrantour project in contributions published in both Italian and English. I have explored these implications in the field of applied anthropology (Vietti 2018) and compared it to other activities developed in Europe in relation to global citizenship education (Ormond and Vietti 2022). Throughout the chapter, these various contributions in which I have previously presented these reflections will be recalled from time to time. The most recent and comprehensive discussion of the project is included as a chapter (Vietti 2023a) in the volume *Intersections of Tourism, Migrations, and Exile* edited by Bloch and Adams (2023).