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STATE-OF-THE-ART REPORT ON URBAN MIGRATION POLITICS AND AUTONOMY-BUILDING PROCESSES OF CITIES

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PART I

Introduction

Academic discourse has been recently shifting towards acknowledging cities as actors with agency in international affairs, or as "global political actors" in urban governance (Oosterlynck et al., 2019). With more than half of the world's population living in urban areas and this number projected to reach 70% by 2050, cities are increasingly recognized for their role in addressing complex cross-border issues such as migration, global security, climate change, financial instability, and pandemics (UNHCR, 2023). As cities are major destinations for immigration, there is growing recognition of the important role that subnational actors can play in migration governance.

Why are municipalities increasingly involved in the governance of international migration, when nation-states still cling to their so-called sovereign competence? On the one hand, local dynamics are taking place in a context of restrictive national migration policies. On the other, they are driven by the willingness of local actors and municipalities to fill gaps in the local management of migration-related diversity which are left by central governments. The emergence of these gaps result in a lack of accommodations for newcomers, emergency-based migration governance, and a lack of political will at national levels (Vallois, 2019). Nation-states are perceived as failing in their responsibilities to provide basic services. Hence, a rich body of recent research emerged to analyse attempts by cities to build autonomy in the context of urban migration governance (Ridgley, 2008; Paquet, 2017; Furri, 2017; Agustín, Jørgensen, 2019; Collingwood, O'Brien, 2019; Flamant & Lacroix, 2021; Desille, 2022; Kaufmann et al., 2022).

The intersection of urbanisation and migration has brought attention not only to the challenges of dealing with increasingly diverse populations in urban areas, but also to the questions of "how ongoing mobility shapes the nature of political community, participation, and the bases of inclusion and marginalization" (Local Inclusion for Migrants and Refugees, 2020, p. 1). On the policy front, there is a great emphasis on the need to move beyond nation-state-centred approaches that view local authorities merely as policy followers or implementing actors (Bendel et al., 2019; Stürner et al., 2020). This state of the art report brings together literature on urban migration governance with the aim to illuminate three distinct autonomy-building processes: 1) **city diplomacy**, 2) **autonomy-building of municipal actors**, and 3) the **detachment from formal governance by independent actors**.

We identify autonomy-building processes as novel processes spanning multiple scales. These processes may or may not be welcome by central or municipal governments. We argue that investigating such processes can open doors and add complexity to what is generally referred to as 'local' in migration governance. We follow Pécoud (2021, p. 104) in his understanding of **migration governance** as characterised by going beyond nation states and

including non-state actors, spanning different scales, and interacting with multiple global dynamics "such as global capitalism, multilateral regimes or international norms" (ibid.). While this definition is conscious of the multilevel character or migration governance, we aim to expand the focus on autonomy-building processes *by* and *in* cities, necessitating a focus on **urban migration governance**. We define urban migration governance as the governance of migration and migration-related diversity at city-level, including various actors from municipal governments to non-governmental organisations and private persons, encompassing the formulation and implementation of migration-related regulations, but also their contestation. In the context of urban migration governance, there are increasing autonomy-building processes, by completing or contradicting national immigrant policies, which this state of the art report addresses.

The multi-scalar nature of migration governance has led to the growing role of cities in global migration governance. However, cities do not only consist of their local governments but residents and local non-state actors, too, who on their part increasingly participate in the local governance of migration.

Multiple Forms of Autonomy-Building: Finding Common Ground

Autonomy-building processes of cities and local actors emerge in three primary ways and at three major scales:

(1) internationally through city diplomacy,
(2) regionally and locally through autonomy-building from municipal governments, and
(3) locally via the detachment of local actors from municipal and state governments.

City diplomacy occupies the middle ground between state diplomacy, which refers to government-to-government interaction, and citizen diplomacy, which refers to transnational interaction of individuals and private groups (Marchetti, 2021, p. 47). **Autonomy-building from municipal governments** describes processes through which municipalities strive to act independently from national governments, for example by presenting themselves as either welcoming, or by implementing more exclusionary policies. **The detachment of local actors from municipal and national governments**, then, includes practices and processes implemented by local non-state actors ranging from residents acting in organised forms to faith-based, labour or other non-state organisations.

These three areas are the subjects of this state of the art report, which will provide a comprehensive overview of the complexities tied to urban migration governance and the autonomy-building processes of cities and local actors.

The three areas share a number of conceptual connecting points, which shall be presented here before presenting each form of autonomy-building individually in Part II.

Firstly, research on all three forms recognises the agency of cities and local actors in migration governance; **secondly**, it puts forward that urban governance is strongly shaped, as seen in above mentioned quote by Pécoud (2021), by global dynamics such as neoliberalisation; **thirdly**, research also shows that migration remains firmly embedded in multilevel governance and is hence governed at multiple scales, at times leading to a false dichotomy between the local and the national; and **finally**, that while cities become increasingly important in migration governance, there is only so much municipal actors can do within said multilevel governance arrangements.

Multiple global processes lead to the need for increased autonomy at the local level: globalisation, neoliberalization, economic restructuring and increasing urbanisation are interlinked with global migration to cities, and hence demand from local actors increasing involvement in migration governance. Çağlar and Glick Schiller have sought to move beyond a focus on nation-states in examining the relationships between migration, cities, and neoliberalism (Çağlar, 2016; Çağlar & Glick Schiller, 2015, 2018, 2021; Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2009, 2011), arguing that cities have become sites of new governance forms (Çağlar, 2016).

Following their work, we understand the relationship between migrants and cities is mutually constitutive, with migrants actively involved in shaping urban life, inviting a close look at local processes, including autonomy building. Such processes take place "in a particular historical configuration in which states still possess huge legal, economic, social, and political power over localities" (Blank, 2006, p. 882). Simultaneously, the tension between global capital and the territorial state system has generated economic and political possibilities for local actors and spaces to take part in processes that were once exclusive to the formal authority of nation-states (Sassen, 2004). As Curtis and Acuto (2018, p. 9) point out, it is "the contingent interplay of political, economic, technological and demographic trends" that has created "new roles and capabilities for major cities," and it is in this context that cities have started to "translate their new status and changing governance capabilities into political objectives".

This context has been widely shaped by the neoliberal turn in the 1970s, which led to urban transformation in the form of "global cities," as well as the inefficiency of state-centred efforts in dealing with global challenges and the outsourcing of state responsibilities to the local level (Curtis, 2016; Curtis & Acuto, 2018, p. 10).

In such a setting, cities have gained increasing influence at the national and global levels with the overall recognition of this trend by international and diplomatic bodies, resulting in the emergence of **city diplomacy** (Acuto et al., 2021, p. 5).

In connection to the pressure to compete to attract capital and promote urban prosperity to to remain competitive (Çağlar & Glick Schiller, 2018, p. 6), **municipal autonomy building**, municipal governments strive to autonomously navigate the challenges and opportunities of global transformative processes, while remaining constrained by their inability to collect their own

taxes, independently set budgets, or deviate from state-level legal frameworks. As a result, they must balance collaborative, networked efforts with pressing local needs to maintain economic vitality and attractiveness on a global scale (Curtis & Acuto, 2018, p. 14).

This links back to the neoliberalisation of governance in which state responsibilities are increasingly delegated to local and private actors. As Kaya (2023, p. 12) argues in the case of migration governance in Turkey - and equally true for other geographical contexts -, "there is a 'local turn' in terms of increasing responsibilities of local municipalities to integrate refugees ... while the central state actors have gradually opted for withdrawing themselves from being engaged in integration of refugees at the local level" (Kaya, 2023, p. 12). We hence find concepts such as "co-construction" and "co-production" (Hombert, 2021) to explain how cities rely on non-governmental actors and/or outsource responsibilities to associations and residents' groups to set up and/or reshape their reception policies, in accordance with the increasingly implication of public actors in the field of neoliberal migration governance (Darling, 2016), "neoliberal bureaucracy" (Alberti, 2019) and "migration industry" (Gammeltoft-Hansen, Sorensen, 2013).

These processes pave the way for the **detachment of local actors from formal governments**. In the context of the devolution of (social) services and increasingly deregulated markets (Peck & Tickell 2007, p. 27), various forms of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) practices in urban settings emerge as "institutions are incapable or unwilling to address" a host of issues (del Pozo 2017, p. 432). In such settings residents with and without migration backgrounds and local organisations develop strategies to cope, identify problems, and organise to find solutions (Kinder, 2016; del Pozo, 2017; Cremaschi et al., 2020).

In line with the complexities of international migrations, the identified autonomy-building processes encompass local governance forms targeted at different groups of migrants: while literature on city diplomacy remains fairly broad, at times referring to refugees in particular, literature on municipal autonomy building processes and previous work on the detachment from formal governance by independent actors often focus on exiled people and refugees, with the latter paying closer attention to undocumented individuals. We will further discuss what this means for our analysis of local autonomy-building processes in the conclusion.

Cities and migration governance under a multi-scalar approach

Related to these three forms of urban autonomy-building, recent migration research has focused on the multilevel governance of migration and integration. Traditionally, migration governance has been the responsibility of the nation-state, and in the same vein, the issue of migrant integration has been heavily influenced by concepts of national identity (Scholten & Penninx, 2016, p. 92). In the last two decades, a "local turn" emerged in migration studies which enounces that cities are "collective actors shaping the local governance of integration and diversity" (Zapata-Barrero et al., p. 17, see also Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Scholten & Penninx, 2016;

Çağlar & Schiller, 2018; Schammann et al., 2021). This "local turn" is characterised by horizontal or vertical forms in multilevel governance settings. The horizontal dimension involves local authorities, civil society organisations, and immigrant networks in the governance of immigrant policies, while the vertical dimension involves policymaking processes between levels of government (Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017, p. 3). Scholten and Penninx (2016, p. 97) argue that, despite the diversity of patterns in the relationship between national and supra-national institutions or the increasing role of subnational actors, the pattern is more consistent with multilevel governance than either centralist or localist modes. Thus, academic and policy attention has grown around how policies develop at various levels, how these levels interact, what the implications for emerging modes of governance are, and what contradictions and challenges are involved (Zincone & Caponio, 2006).

When the recent emphasis on recognizing cities as actors with agency has raised questions about the complexities of the local, national, and global scales and levels, it is important to avoid simplistic dichotomies of nation-state versus local levels and not replace methodological nationalism with methodological localism (Stürner-Siovitz, 2023, p. 18). Scholars analysing migration governance point out the existence of various modes of governance between different governments levels in multilevel settings (Scholten, 2013; Scholten & Penninx, 2016; Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017). These levels can act in connected or disconnected ways (Ambrosini & Boccagni, 2015; Jørgensen, 2012; Scholten, 2013). Scholars such as Çağlar and Glick Schiller advocate for a shift from multilevel to multiscalar perspectives, viewing cities "not as units of analysis or as bounded territorial units but as institutional, political, economic, and cultural actors positioned within multiple institutionally structured scales of differentiated but connected domains of power" (2018, p. 9). The multilevel perspective considers the complex interrelations between different levels of government. The multiscalar perspective goes beyond fixed notions of governance levels and analyses their mutual constitution in a context of power inequalities across multiple dimensions. Both approaches highlight the limitations of simplistic dichotomies between the nation-state and local government in understanding urban migration governance.

From multi-level to multi-scalar approaches, political, social and urban dynamics related to seeking, claiming and/or achieving autonomy invites to talk about complex tensions between different scales, actors, laws, politics, policies and practices with divergent interests and strategies. At the International scale, through the emergence of city-networks, urban areas across the globe are progressively cultivating the practice of city diplomacy, which encompasses diverse fields: economy, culture, climate change, and migration (Lacroix & Spencer, 2022). Challenging the prevailing state-centrism of international relations scholarship, much work has focused on the role of cities as global actors with multiscalar agency (Acuto, 2013; Curtis, 2016; Davidson et al., 2019; Kosovac & Pejic, 2021). As Sassen (2004, p. 660) argues, "an important feature of this type of multiscalar politics of the local is that it is not confined to moving through

a set of nested scales from the local to the national to the international, but can directly access other such local actors whether in the same country or across borders."

Recent work has furthermore explored how cities act simultaneously at the local, national and global levels, with empirical evidence on various city networks (Bouteligier, 2012; Gutierrez-Camps, 2013; Keiner & Kim, 2007; Kosovac et al., 2021, Beal & Pinson, 2014; Miyazaki, 2021; Stren & Friendly, 2019). According to Thomas Lacroix (2020), two converging dynamics have structured the landscape of current city networks related to migration issues: a bottom-up dynamic of relative spontaneous groupings of cities and a top-down dynamic of networks carried by international organisations and their representative institutions. Thus, he divides them into two main groups (spontaneous networks and co-opted networks) at two scales (national and transnational). City networks have three functions: practical, symbolic, and jurisprudential (Oomen, 2019). These three dimensions are crucial for the Autonomy-building process of the Cities as they allow the adjustment and circulation of urban governance models (Lacroix & Spencer, 2022).

At the local scale, the involvement of municipal governments is influenced by different circumstances, such as variations in the evolution of migration flows, the decision-making structure, and governance structure (Zincone & Caponio, 2006, pp. 272-274). While some local governments engage in pragmatism and coping to handle emerging integration issues, others can surpass the everyday problem-solving to create opportunities for policy innovation by redefining the concepts of integration and inclusion (Jørgensen, 2012) and *in fine* the practices of local citizenship regimes (Bousetta, 2001). This may also result in governance decoupling, where the logic of policymaking differs considerably between the national and local levels, as well as among cities within the same country (Ambrosini & Boccagni, 2015; Jørgensen, 2012; Scholten, 2013).

What is more, while there is widespread recognition of the importance of the local level in migration and integration issues, cities and municipalities frequently face challenges due to their lack of legal competences and financial and structural deficits. There is a growing demand for the development of more systematic forms of cooperation, rather than ad hoc mechanisms, between local, national, and regional levels in the field of migration governance, as well as integration (Bendel et al., 2019; Stürner et al., 2020). Local governments have the potential to develop and execute policies that are tailored to the needs of the newcomer population. Kihlgren Grandi stated that "as the closest institution to residents and the main provider of essential services, city governments are the best-suited entity to assess these inequalities and act to address them" (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020, p. 138). By adopting this approach, local governments could foster social cohesion and enhance the wellbeing of both migrants and the wider community. On the other hand, regrettably, migrants have limited prospects to access the complete potential of urbanisation; frequently, the process of relocating coincides with a range

of additional challenges, thereby exacerbating disparities within urban areas (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020, p. 138).

The Limits to the 'Local'?

The literature exposes urban strategies of completing or contradicting national immigration policies, and shows that cities are increasingly autonomous to respond to the "policy challenge of ethnic diversity" (Ireland, 1994), often perceived as a relevant scale of action, and as a bastion to reorganise a struggle against systems considered unjust (Alexander, 2003; Darling & Bauder, 2019). Concepts such as "municipalism" (Agustin & Jorgensen, 2019; Flamant, 2022) and "policy entrepreneurship" (Garcés-Mascareñas & Gebhardt, 2020) are used to highlight the emergence and, in some cases, the reinforcement of the municipalities as both increasingly relevant scale and actor for urban migration governance. However, reviewing the literature equally calls for caution of the common idealisation of the city as 'rebel cities' or 'spaces of hope' (Harvey, 2000), in which the "urban resistance" in the field of urban migration governance vis-à-vis the central governments is highlighted (Furri, 2017; Mayer, 2018). The governance of migration continues to be centrally regulated, and local actors are both enabled and constrained by regulations at different scales. While deregulation and liberalisation are extensively applied to the domains of housing and labour, for example, migration remains firmly embedded in multi-scalar governance in which integration and migration effects are governed locally, while immigration is governed at (supra-)national scales (Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017). This continuously important role of national governments and the often national perspective on migration with regards to questions of social cohesion and national identity is criticised by the literature as what Glick Schiller and Wimmer (2002) refer to as methodological nationalism. As put by Sassen (1996, p. 59)

> "there is a growing consensus in the community of states to lift border controls for the flow of capital, information, and services and, more broadly, to further globalisation. But when it comes to immigrants and refugees [...] the national state claims all its old splendour in asserting its sovereign right to control its borders." (Sassen 1996, p. 59)

While most work on urban migration governance deals with migration governance *in* cities, it is important to note that the city is *produced* (Lefebvre, 1974) - by neoliberal economic systems, "technocrats" and by how inhabitants are seeing and producing public and private spaces. This perspective paves the way for investigations into the detachment of local actors from formal governance, encompassing local forms of collective organisation around migration-related issues, at times including the intentional non-enforcement of regulations (Ferris, 2011). Such practices are formed of various non-governmental subjectivities, including local, national, and international activists, faith-based groups, migrant organisations, or unorganised residents with and without migration biographies - all engaging actively in governing urban migration from below.

The next part will provide an overview of the three forms of autonomy-building of cities and local actors. Starting with city diplomacy and internationalisation processes of cities, the second section will look closer at cities' efforts to increase their autonomy vis-a-vis central governments. The last section, then, is focussing on local non-state actors and their detachment from municipal and central governments.

PART II

Based on the previous part in which we discussed the commonalities and differences between the three forms of local autonomy-building processes, the next section will look into each of them individually. We will remain in continuation with the previously established logic which moves from cities as actors at the international level, down to municipal autonomy-building, and further down to the detachment from formal governance by local actors.

City diplomacy

What is city diplomacy?

Despite the growing recognition of cities on the international stage, research on city diplomacy in the field of migration governance is thin on the ground. International relations scholarship undermines the role of cities as political actors (Acuto, 2010), while urban studies overlook the governance dimension of cities in migration. Similarly, migration studies, despite recent attention to the local aspect, prioritise integration governance over migration governance, paying little heed to the international level and international city diplomacy (Stürner-Siovitz, 2023, p. 20). Recognizing these gaps, a nascent field of research has emerged in urban studies, partially in international relations and to a lesser extent in migration studies, focusing on the topic of city diplomacy (Acuto, 2013; Acuto et al., 2021; Barber, 2013; Curtis & Acuto, 2018; Kihlgren Grandi, 2020; Kosovac & Pejic, 2021; Marchetti, 2021; van der Pluijm & Melissen, 2007), with a call for engagement among these disciplines (Stürner-Siovitz, 2023).

City diplomacy is commonly understood as "the institutions and processes by which cities, or local governments in general, engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another" (van der Pluijm & Melissen, 2007, p. 6). Cities have a long history of diplomatic engagement, dating back to ancient times such as the Greek city-states and the Hanseatic League (Acuto, 2016, p. 511). Modern city diplomacy traces its origins to the 1913 International Congress of the Art of Building Cities and Organizing Community Life in Ghent, which led to the establishment of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the first global city network (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020, p. 39). Following World War II, cities became increasingly involved on the international stage, driven by the need for post-war urban reconstruction and development through international collaboration (van der Pluijm & Melissen, 2007). Since the early 2000s, city

diplomacy has expanded and diversified, with increased direct engagement in global policy agendas, greater visibility of city representatives on the international stage, and recognition of the global role of local actors (Acuto et al., 2021).

Today, city diplomacy encompasses a diverse range of activities across multiple areas, including business and brand management, cooperation and representation, culture and environment, peace and security, as well as human rights, migration, and development (Balbim, 2016, p. 138; Marchetti, 2021, p. 69; van der Pluijm & Melissen, 2007, p. 19). These activities involve various types of actors, including formal representatives (e.g., mayors and municipal officials), citizens and civil society organisations (e.g., NGOs and associations), economic and business organisations (e.g., companies and corporations), as well as educational and cultural actors (e.g., universities, museums, and religious or sport organisations) (Marchetti, 2021, p. 60). With these actors, cities employ a range of tools to engage internationally, including bilateral or multilateral agreements, projects, networks, events and advocacy campaigns (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020, pp. 10–21). Through these tools, city diplomacy serves various goals that are often intertwined: universal values and local interests. It can be value-based, focusing on conflict resolution, global cooperation, and regional solidarity, or interest-based, aiming to transfer knowledge, stimulate economic growth, and enhance cultural appeal (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020, pp. 9-10). To achieve these goals, city diplomacy typically takes the form of influencing narratives, participating in global agenda-setting, and claiming a role in intergovernmental decision-making processes (Stürner-Siovitz, 2023, p. 113).

Existing scholarship on city diplomacy in migration

The growing recognition of cities as international agents in policy and academic discourses has not been matched by a corresponding advancement in city diplomacy research within the field of migration governance. While earlier studies, such as Miller (1981), and recent research on cities' involvement in immigrant integration and local economic development (Rath & Eurofound, 2011; Rath & Swagerman, 2016), exist, the literature on city diplomacy in the field of migration remains relatively scarce (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020, pp. 137–150; Stürner-Siovitz, 2023). Yet, just like in the city diplomacy literature in other various realms, city networks, seen as vital tools for cities to engage in "global urban governance" (Acuto et al., 2021), have received relatively more attention in the field of migration governance. In the context of migration, city networks refer to "organizations that, through relations established with multiple actors on different territorial scales, precisely articulate the complexity of migration and mobility issues beyond city walls" (Caponio, 2022a, p. 398). Recent research has delved into the realm of migration city networks, focusing on their role in multilevel governance in migration, impact on horizontal and vertical policymaking processes, and potential for positioning cities as international agents in migration governance (Caponio, 2018, 2022a, 2022b; Lacroix, 2022; Lacroix & Spencer, 2022; Oomen, 2020; Stürner & Bendel, 2019; Thouez, 2020). Although this scholarship is concentrated on Europe and North America, there are also instances of city

networks in other regions, such as Africities in Africa and the Host Local Municipalities Network in the Middle East (Lacroix & Spencer, 2022, p. 350). In addition to city networks, many refugee-hosting cities in developing countries, like Istanbul, have established collaborations with various international actors and organisations (Erdoğan, 2017).

Existing research on city diplomacy in migration shows that, similar to other domains, cities encounter obstacles and risks in their international engagement. In general, cities involved in international city diplomacy often face challenges such as limited funding, the need for participation in multilateral forums, and nationalist resistance from central governments (Davidson et al., 2019, p. 3546). Interviews conducted by Stürner-Siovitz (2023) with city representatives further reveal that in the field of migration, obstacles include national opposition to transnational municipal engagement, limited institutionalised access at the global level, scarce municipal resources, and insufficient knowledge of global migration governance structures and stakeholders (p. 185). In addition to these obstacles, Stürner-Siovitz's research also shows the potential risks associated with city diplomacy, such as a progressive city bias, inadequate municipal representation and accountability, and the proliferation of city networks and subsequent fragmentation of the city diplomacy landscape (2023, p. 191). Furthermore, institutional limitations on city autonomy can be exacerbated by different government systems across countries. A case in point is Turkey, which follows a highly centralised unitary government system, where research reveals that district municipalities experience restricted administrative and financial capacities to address the requirements of immigrants and shape migration policies due to the heavy regulation imposed by the central government (Karakaya Polat & Lowndes, 2022; Lowndes & Karakaya Polat, 2022).

Equally important, but less mentioned, is the internal political dynamics within specific institutional contexts of city diplomacy. As Caponio (2022a, p. 399) suggests, city networks are "political arenas" where various actors, including mayors, councillors, city officers, urban policy experts, activists, and network officers, interact. Therefore, Caponio's (2022a) interviews with city network leaders caution against overemphasising the positive impacts of cities exerting global influence, as this may overlook power dynamics within city networks. These interviews reveal that the policy agendas of network leaders play a significant role in hindering or facilitating the scaling up of migration network governance and the development of multilevel migration policymaking.

Why do we need further research on city diplomacy in migration?

While cities can conduct diplomatic activities in various fields, including migration, existing research on city diplomacy has mainly focused on climate change (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003; Fünfgeld, 2015; Kern & Bulkeley, 2009). There is a growing need to explore city diplomacy in the context of migration governance. Addressing this need is important for at least three main reasons. Firstly, cities have historically served as primary destinations for migration, attracting

both rural-urban migrants and international migrants. Migration studies have recognized this phenomenon by examining not only "global cities" like London and New York (Cross & Moore, 2022), but also "'midrange cities', (Sassen, 2002a; Ward & McCann, 2011), 'gateway cities' (Benton-Short & Price, 2008), and 'ordinary cities' (Robinson, 2006)" (Çağlar & Schiller, 2018, pp. 2-3). Furthermore, as Surmacz (2018, p. 11) contends, nation states are inadequate in addressing both global challenges and the diverse needs of communities, whereas cities, operating outside the confines of national interests, have the capacity to establish networks that competing states cannot. City governments, as the closest institutions to residents and key providers of essential services, have the capacity to identify and address inequalities faced by newcomer populations, making them well-suited to develop and implement tailored policies for their needs (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020, p. 138). In this context, cities are now engaged in a broader spectrum of migration-related activities beyond local integration to encompass global activities fostering cross-border connections between communities at different migration stages, which include refugee resettlement, child protection, return and reintegration preparation, diaspora contributions to development (Thouez, 2020, p. 655-656).

Secondly, there is a growing recognition of migration and integration as multilevel policy issues, involving diverse actors and different levels of government (Zincone & Caponio, 2006). Traditionally, migration governance has been regarded as the domain of nation-states, and the concept of national identity has heavily influenced migrant integration (Scholten & Penninx, 2016, p. 92). However, the past two decades have witnessed a "local turn" in migration studies, with this turn taking both horizontal forms, involving local authorities, civil society organisations, and immigrant networks in the governance of migration policies, and vertical forms, through migration policymaking between different levels of government (Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017, p. 3). This perspective concerns that cities are not merely places but dynamic entities actively involved in migration governance in multilevel settings (Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Scholten & Penninx, 2016; Çağlar & Schiller, 2018; Schammann et al., 2021).

Equally significant, the increasing focus on cities as policy agents is connected to the evolving role of cities at the local level within neoliberal governance frameworks. These frameworks are characterised by the growing autonomy of cities from central governments, a topic that is further explored in our Conceptual Paper titled "Cities' Autonomy and Urban Migration Governance." As argued by Lacroix (2022), the growing autonomy of cities since the 1980s has unfolded in a paradoxical context. While local authorities have been granted increased powers, they often face financial constraints that hinder their ability to fully exercise this power at the local level. This phenomenon is not limited to Global North countries but also extends to Global South countries, where political decentralisation has not been accompanied by an equivalent degree of fiscal decentralisation (Lacroix, 2022, p. 1038).

This reconfiguration of the role and capacity of cities at the local level has resulted in another paradoxical trend where the weakening of cities' ability to intervene at the local level

has been accompanied by their growing presence on the international scene (Lacroix, 2022; Lacroix & Spencer, 2022). This constitutes a third compelling reason to investigate city diplomacy in the context of migration. In recent years, international and diplomatic bodies have recognized and underlined the growing role of cities in migration governance at national and global levels (Acuto et al., 2021, p. 5). Most particularly, European institutions have actively supported the development of local integration policies by fostering direct interaction between EU-level bodies and city-level authorities, as well as promoting collaboration among cities. The European Commission has played a key role in this regard by advocating for city networks such as Cities for Local Integration Policies, Integrating Cities, and Intercultural Cities. These networks facilitate horizontal cooperation between cities, enabling the exchange of knowledge and best practices on local integration policies (Scholten & Penninx, 2016, p. 104; Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017, p. 3). Additionally, recent action plans like the Urban Agenda for the EU Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, and global initiatives such as the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR, 2018) and the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM, 2018), point out the importance of multilevel governance that includes the local level in migration and integration processes. To support implementation efforts, a guidance report has been published to share best practices and outline steps for adopting the GCM and GCR in diverse contexts (Local Inclusion for Migrants and Refugees, 2020). Municipalities have also leveraged transnational networks like Eurocities and Solidarity Cities to advocate for enhanced competences and resources, not only in integration but also in migration policies (Heimann et al., 2019). This emphasis on the role of cities in global governance is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which include specific targets for "cities." With these developments, from the early 2000s onwards, the relationship between cities and international organisations has evolved significantly, elevating cities to the status of "strategic partners," particularly in domains where intergovernmental cooperation encounters difficulties (Lacroix, 2022, p. 1039).

Cities' autonomy from central governments

The growing recognition of the role cities play at the international level emerges from, and at the same time reinforces, cities' autonomy process in the field of urban migration governance. This part will focus on the role municipalities play as an actor and scale in this autonomy-building process. Why are the municipalities increasingly involved in local governance of International migration, when nation-states still cling to their so-called sovereign competence? Two main contexts can give us insights.

On the one hand, these local dynamics are taking place in a context of restrictive national migration policies. On the other, they take place in a context in which local actors and municipalities are increasingly willing - or feel obliged - to fill gaps left by central governments. The emergence of this gap has been caused by a lack of housing and accommodation, emergency-based migration governance and a lack of political will at national level (Vallois,

2019). Nation-states are perceived as failing in their reception obligations (in terms of accommodation, for example). In this double context, a relatively recent and rich body of research emerged to analyse the attempts to build autonomy of cities in terms of urban migration governance (Ridgley, 2008; Paquet, 2017; Furri, 2017; Agustín, Jørgensen, 2019; Collingwood, O'Brien, 2019; Flamant & Lacroix, 2021; Desille, 2022; Kaufmann et al., 2022).

What does municipal autonomy mean in urban migration governance?

Etymologically, autonomy refers to the detachment from a level which is considered hierarchically superior. It reflects an asymmetrical relation and a process of conflict between two or several levels, actors, institutions. Far beyond this vague etymological sense, the understanding of political, social and urban dynamics related to seeking, claiming and/or achieving autonomy needs to address the complex conflicts between different scales, actors, laws, politics, policies and practices with divergent interests and strategies. We precisely consider that these conflicts are key to analysing and understanding the emergence of autonomy-building processes of cities. In the social sciences, the autonomy of cities in the field of urban migration governance is based on the conflicts between municipalities and states, as well as the opportunities and actions taken by the local actors to support (or reject) migrant populations who have been identified as vulnerable.

Pospisil (1971) argues that there is a multiplicity of legal levels and legal systems within society. Following this scope, the sociology of law shows the gap between laws, rules and regulations on the one hand, and the incapability of such systems to cover each and every aspect of life on the other, which leaves room for others to interfere and to develop different policies or different implementations. Sally Falk Moore (1973) writes about semi-autonomous social fields to go beyond "complete autonomy" or "complete domination". Semi-autonomous governance in social life is plural, emerging in different (political and social) contexts. Thus, we consider the autonomy of cities not as black or white, but as a relative and plural (spatial, social, economic and political) dynamic. Following Thomas Lacroix (2020), the local processes to build this autonomy in urban migration governance of cities depend on nationals' political systems. Related but not limited to this plurality, a vast literature on cities' autonomy in urban migration governance has emerged.

Why municipal autonomy-building emerges and what the literature has to say about it?

In the course of the two last decades, research in the global North on cities' autonomy in migration studies has gained increasing relevance (Ridgley, 2008; Sanders, 2015; Paquet, 2017; Furri, 2017; Lacroix & Desille, 2018; Spencer, 2020; Flamant & Lacroix, 2021; Kaufmann et al., 2022). In the United States, for example, sanctuary cities emerged from local mobilisations against federal immigration and deportation policies in the 1980s (Ridgley, 2008) to practise "direct" and "indirect" resistance to the national government (Paquet, 2017). In Europe, many municipalities in large sized-cities (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019; Kaufmann et al., 2022) and small

and medium-sized cities (Flamant et al. 2020) increasingly seek autonomy from national governments. Here, the decade that followed the so-called 2015 "refugee crisis" dedicated an important place to the autonomy of cities in terms of urban migration governance. In this European political context, which was highly publicised and dramatised in stark contradiction with the factual situation (Héran, 2017), emerged for researchers as an opportunity to understand a (political) phenomenon then considered as a new momentum for cities (Spencer, 2020; Kaufmann et al., 2022).

Three main elements should be highlighted within the literature on the autonomy-building process of cities in terms of urban migration governance. First, the literature varies depending on national contexts, but aims to understand an ongoing phenomenon: the solidarity with (or exclusion of) migrants by cities . Within the social sciences, work on cities' autonomy in the field of migration studies is motivated by national political contexts seen, following Gourdeau (2018, p.6) as a "*borne chronologique*" (chronological border). In Europe, many studies deal with the role of municipalities in accommodating exiled people, and underlining insufficient places in national reception facilities led to the visibility of camp-like conditions in public space. In addition, literature deals with the relatively rapid increase of arrivals of exiled people in Europe and the rejection by States of migrations coming from the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. Such exclusionary stances by state governments are also subject of investigation in the United States, where academic interest centred around the role of sanctuary cities after former President Trump signed the Executive Order on January 25, 2017, in order to discredit them with accusations of undermining national security and violating federal laws. These processes are unique to forced/undocumented migration.

Second, in addition to these political contexts, the literature is based on a relatively old theoretical framework, mobilising concepts that often refer to the detachment of cities from the national scale (Alexander, 2003; Bazurli, 2019; Desille, 2022; Bazurli & Kaufmann, 2022; Zapata-Barrero, 2022), the shared and negotiated construction of a public policy in a bottom-up approach (Flamant & Lacroix, 2021), and the dynamics of urban resistance (Ridgley, 2008). Thus, we can see concepts such as "co-construction" and "co-production" (Hombert, 2021) used to explain how cities rely on and/or outsource such responsibilities to associations and residents' groups to set up and/or reshape their reception policies, according with the increasingly implication of public actors in the field of neoliberal migration governance (Darling, 2016), "neoliberal bureaucracy" (Alberti, 2019) and "migration industry" (Gammeltoft-Hansen, Sorensen, 2013). This literature connects strongly to our third form of autonomy-building process: the detachment of local actors from formal governance forms. Other concepts are "rebel cities" and "spaces of hope" following the work of David Harvey (2000) to highlight the "urban resistance" in the field of urban migration governance vis-à-vis the central governments (Furri, 2017; Mayer, 2018). Finally, the concepts of "municipalism" (Agustin & Jorgensen, 2019; Flamant, 2022) and "policy entrepreneurship" (Garcés-Mascareñas & Gebhardt, 2020) are used

to highlight the emergence and, in some cases, the reinforcement of the municipalities as both an increasingly relevant scale and actor for urban migration governance.

All of these "new" research issues, at least presented as such, aim to understand the types of and factors influencing public actions implemented by the municipalities to govern locally and differently the reception of exiled persons - which normally lies within the responsibility of . Much literature an attempts to understand public action via the analysis of local governance in the form of the growth or reconfiguration of urban solidarities, the emergence of exclusionary policies or practices at the local level , as well as negotiations with national authorities (Glorius, 2017; Liebe et al., 2018; Friedrichs et al., 2019; von Hermanni & Robert, 2019; Kurtenbach, 2019; Glorius et al., 2021; Nettelbladt, 2021). These issues, which are not necessarily gathered in the same work, highlight the interdependence of scales to understand the autonomy-building process of the cities in terms of urban migration governance.

Third, most of these issues are related to the governance of migration *in* cities. Nevertheless, as a space, the city is produced by neoliberal economic systems, by "technocrats" and by how inhabitants are seeing and practising public and private spaces (Lefebvre, 1974). Few works examine how the autonomy-building process *of* cities in the governance of migration contributes to the reconfiguration of urban spaces. Although some works have made a direct connection between urban and migration studies, for instance by working on housing (Gardesse & Lelévrier, 2020), these two disciplines are rarely used together to study the autonomy-building process of cities. A combining factor in both fields of research is the central importance of space, whether urban or rural, metropolis or small and medium-sized towns, in the way that cities seek and achieve autonomy in urban migration governance.

What are the challenges of the municipal autonomy-building process in urban migration governance?

Cities are perceived as increasingly autonomous in responding to the "policy challenge of ethnic diversity" (Ireland, 1994), and as major scale and actor (Ireland, 1994; Brenner, 1999; Alexander, 2003) to lead migration policies in a context of "dysfunctional nation-states" and a "crisis of democracy" (Castelli Gattinara, 2017; Bazurli, 2019). According to this approach,the city is considered a 'space of hope' (Harvey, 2000), a hope for renewal in the context of states facing crises. Thus, Oscar Garcia Agustìn and Martin Bak Jørgensen (2019) perceive the city as a space of imagination, and invite us to think of new imaginaries, i.e. the city as an open place for all residents in opposition to national policies of exclusion. According to Filippo Furri (2017), the solidarity movement of Mediterranean municipalities with migrants is akin to urban resistance and forges 'rebel cities'. "These are more or less openly opposed to the security evolution (control, anti-solidarity, etc.) and of the reason of State and they embody the tension between different levels of power" (Furri, 2017, p. 6). Much of this literature connects to work on 'citizenship from below,' discussed in the next section.

The plural involvement of municipalities around the world are essentially based on the dynamics of 'policy entrepreneurship' (Garcés-Mascarenas & Gebhardt, 2020) and 'neo-municipalism' (Furri, 2017). Municipalism can be seen as

"a space for radical imagination since the possibilities of producing policies driven by politicians in cooperation with citizens (as a 'democratic rebellion') are already provoking new ways of solidarity that can inspire other spaces (cities) and even change the way we understand politics" (Agustin & Jorgensen, 2019, p. 202).

With this locally-rooted solidarity , municipalities find allies within city-networks, leading to the construction of cosmopolitanism from below. According to Oscar Garcia Agustin and Martin Bak Jorgensen (2019, p. 200), cosmopolitanism from below in the context of urban migration governance "is grounded in the constitutive role of trans-local relations and their capacity to shape a cosmopolitan 'we', which is universal but rooted in practices and solidarity relations." What their emphasis on translocality underlines is the connection between actors across scales and geographical contexts, a point equally discussed in the next section.

Furthermore, contemporary research on cities' autonomy in the field of urban migration governance highlights that urban solidarity movements with migrants have been coupled with a paradigm shift from a "capitalist logic of development" and the depoliticised humanitarian discourse of international cooperation to an approach based on the concept of justice. Taking inspiration from the environmental justice movement, the municipality of Barcelona for instance did not ask itself how to do international aid in the so-called Global South, but how to fight for change and justice within the city itself, within Spain, and within the EU (Hansen, 2019). Urban solidarity expressed by municipalities is therefore seen by some authors as 'a migrant justice movement' (Nail, 2015).

Putting the issue of urban migration governance on the chessboard of justice is useful to not fall into the trap of the idealisation of the city. According to Oscar Garcia Agustin and Martin Bak Jorgensen (2019), cities are not necessarily inclusive or progressive. Moreover, some policies aimed at improving the reception of migrants at the local level may produce injustices and/or feelings of injustice. For example, the dynamics of racialisation in the access to housing and inequalities in the access to public facilities and services resulting from municipal decisions to distribute migrants among different localities (Gardesse & Lelévrier, 2020) are both the result of policies that seek a form of justice, namely to provide accommodation to migrants who are excluded from it. According to Heller, Pezzani and Stierl (2019), the notion of (and struggles for) 'migration justice' must be opened up to other political and social levels, to other scales including local ones, and these struggles can no longer be considered separately from those that exist within society and that do not necessarily concern only migrants.

Between the hopes tied to, and the risk of idealising the city, the municipal autonomy-building process faced two main challenges: First, the autonomous -governance of migration by

municipalities is constrained by their capacity to be resilient (Zapata-Barrero, 2023). Second, the autonomy-building process of cities in urban migration governance is fragile. This fragility is linked to the pressure on housing, particularly in large-sized cities (Flamant, 2021), the excessive personalization of some local actors (Furri, 2017), ministerial reshuffles, partisan opposition at the local level, the dependence on available budgetary resources (Flamant, Lacroix, 2021) and, more generally, the variations in political orientations (Paquet, 2017). At the same time, political actions, as well as research orientations, are focusing on the detachment of the cities from the national governments.

So, what about internal conflicts, emerging from divergent politics and policies, strategies and (no) hopes? Thus, it is important to look beyond municipal governments as only element in local autonomy-building processes, and beyond the classic opposition between national and city level: we argue for a need to dive into the various actors involved in local migration governance, the internal struggles within cities, and for the need to investigate how the autonomy-building processes emerge and/or are restricted by local urban dynamics. Such an approach invites us to pay close attention to non-governmental local actors who act independently from formal governance at municipal or national levels.

Detachment from Formal Governance by Independent Actors

The reduction of autonomy-building processes of cities to the action of municipalities produces significant knowledge gaps and misses out on a political reality in which multiple non-governmental actors shape migration governance locally: inhabitants, associations, landlords, schools, faith-based institutions, actors of public/private transport, and inhabitants. These actors have different, at times divergent, strategies, (social, cultural, symbolic) capital, tools, motives and goals, but often act in reaction to national policies such as dispersal, paving the way for local and sometimes detached forms of governing migration in cities and spaces of small urbanity (Kreichauf 2023, p. 350).

Linked to, but not *exclusively due* to, previously discussed neoliberalisation and the devolution of social services, independent and non-governmental actors are increasingly involved in migration governance, leading to their detachment from formal governance. Such actors include migrant organisations, NGOs, unions, and associations, but also private persons and their increasing involvement in urban migration governance. While the previous section discussed autonomy-building processes by municipalities and their governments, this section looks at non-governmental actors involved in urban migration governance, i.e. local actors without ties to municipal or national governments which are actively participating and shaping how immigration and migration-related diversity in cities are governed locally.

The Detachment from Formal Governance by Independent Actors: Towards DIY forms of Urban Migration Governance?

We refer to the detachment from formal governance by independent actors as DIY urban migration governance. The concept of DIY has only recently been transferred to migration scholarship (see Cremaschi et al., 2020). DIY practices "stem from everyday problems and realities that communities face" (del Pozo 2017, p. 428). Describing a multitude of practices and processes, the existing literature remains marked by a variety of concepts and terms which are often used interchangeably. This leads authors to point towards the conceptual pitfalls within existing research. Devlin (2018), for example, points out that while the philosophical critique of "modernist top-down spatial production" (p. 569) is far from new, ranging from the works of Lefebvre (1992) to Jacobs (1962) and Harvey (2007), empirical work is only just emerging, and criticises that existing work remains marked by conceptual imprecision. For Bayat (1997), DIY activities can form "logical ways in which the disenfranchised survive hardships and improve their lives." (Bayat, 1997: p. 55) The author describes these practices as "mundane, ordinary and [of] daily nature" (ibid.). In the context of migration and superdiverse urban societies, DIY practices have been examined in various forms: from economic activities (Desai et al., 2021; Kloosterman et al., 1998, 1999; Kloosterman & Rath, 2003; Rath, 2002; Solano et al., 2022; Zack & Landau, 2022), housing (Raimondi 2019), educational or health care services, to the broader local contestation of migration governance at higher scales (Artero & Ambrosini, 2022; Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016).

Much literature focuses on informality as a reaction to marginalisation. This section will show that the detachment of local actors from formal governance is not exclusive to marginalised groups. Such detachment processes go beyond individual and informal practices, as they encompass local forms of collective organisation in tackling migration-related issues connected to spheres of daily life such as housing and work. Involved actors range from migrant organisations supporting migrant groups in employment matters, political groups enabling civic participation, to collectives organising housing, and unions fighting for better working conditions of migrants.

Similar to much work on DIY practices in urban scholarship, a critique of neoliberal restructuring can also be found in DIY migration governance literature, especially but not exclusively since 2015, including critical reflections on the privatisation impacting progressively various aspects of the asylum process. For example, building on Peck's (2012) work on austerity urbanism, Darling (2017) provides a first account of "how asylum accommodation processes are reshaped in the context of both national austerity politics and, more specifically, a turn to austerity argued to have been specifically 'urban' in character." (Darling 2016, p. 485)

In this section, we will propose a brief discussion of the detachment from formal governance by independent actors and how it paves the way for forms of DIY urban migration governance. To do so, we investigate different spheres of everyday urban life and the variety of ways in which migration is governed by non-governmental actors in cities.

Where does the Detachment from Governance by Local Actors emerge, and what actors are involved?

We will focus on three exemplary areas in which DIY urban migration governance can be observed: (1) the governance of migrant labour with a focus on attempts at collectivising and organising migrant labour detached from state bureaucratic bodies, (2) the governance of housing and housing as realm of DIY governance, and (3) migrants rights struggle in and through cities. These three areas are deemed particularly interesting for investigating and conceptualising the detachment from governance by local actors, as they exemplify the complexities tied to migration governance at the local level, and help critically reflect under what conditions DIY governance processes emerge in the context of migration, what actors are involved, and just how it differs from urban informality.

Labour

DIY governance of migrant labour emerges where the political and legal contexts allow for or even provoke detached practices. There is overall agreement in the literature that informal economic activity in contemporary cities must be understood as intrinsic part of advanced capitalist development (see initially Sassen 1997, 2009), in which "deregulation and flexibility in the formal economy have restructured the retail sector broadly defined." (Clark & Colling 2019, p. 757) The resulting DIY governance of migrant labour has ambivalent effects: while the sphere of self-employment can be a space of liberation and autonomy, it can also become a source of dependence, marginality, exploitation, and exclusion.

Viewed through the lens of gender, Vaiou and Stratigaki (2008) found in their work on Albanian female migrants in Athens that engagement in informal work may also come as a result of employers who refuse to agree to formalising the work relationship – especially in feminised care work, resulting in employers emerging as local actors who detach themselves from formal reglementations with exclusionary effects for migrants. In a similar vein, research on refugee entrepreneurship from the Canadian context has shown that many refugee women enter self-employment out of necessity to make ends meet, but also that some forms of entrepreneurship can be described as feminised labour, including care work for the elderly or children (see Senthanar et al., 2021). Relevant for our DIY perspective is that while entrepreneurship was a means to omit structural barriers on the labour market, it also posed challenges and barriers due to formal and informal regulations. The authors state, ethnic networks contributed to the success of businesses (ibid., p. 840), inviting a closer analysis of such forms of self-organising collectives.

Other research has closely analysed the informal ways in which participation in market spaces is governed (Jónsson et al. 2023) through tightly knit networks and "norms governing traders' behavior" (ibid., p. 4), but also through clearly defined roles, e.g., market managers with

the power to decide over which traders to issue licences to. Yet other authors investigate the challenges connected to unionising migrant labour in the UK (Holgate, 2005), and other forms of organising migrant labour in the US (Peck & Theodore, 2012). In the case of the latter, such actions "have been at the forefront of the struggle to improve conditions in day labour markets through worker organising and leadership development, assisting government officials in crafting effective policy responses to substandard conditions in day labour markets, and seeking remedies to the problems faced by day laborers […]" (Peck & Theodore 2012, p. 750). Migrant worker collectives and networks, as the previous example showed, can form an important counterforce and means to govern work in informal spaces from below. DIY migration governance is not exclusively a phenomenon in the labour market. These examples show the informal ways in which labour is organised and governed in often detached form from formal processes. Similar processes can be found in the context of housing.

Housing

Housing is a major challenge for newcomers in cities. Informal housing refers to a range of housing arrangements that are outside the formal regulatory framework of housing markets, such as squatting, unregistered tenancies, substandard housing, informal settlements, or unregistered room sharing (see Usman et al., 2021). Informal housing is often associated with poverty and disadvantage, but it is in fact commonly found among all economic strata, especially in metropolitan areas facing housing crises with ever rising costs of living.

Raimondi (2019) investigates squatting practices. Analysing migrant squats in Athens in a multi-scalar perspective from the individual experience to the urban, she conceptualises them as "socio-political formations" (Raimondi 2019, p. 560). Building on Nyers and Rygiel (2012), she understands these squats as forms of 'citizenship from below' on the one hand, and spaces that allow newcomers "to 'opt out' of citizenship as legal status" (Raimondi 2019, p. 560) on the other. Like other authors, Raimondi urges to understand the autonomous housing projects of Athens as embedded in their socio-political and spatial context. For example, one of the investigated squats is located in the neighbourhood Exarcheia, which the author describes as "a peculiar neighbourhood in the centre of Athens, internationally known as an anarchists and leftists area, whose resistance identity is characterised by numerous political squats and *aftonoma stekia* (autonomous centres)." (ibid., p. 565). This spatialization of political resistance in the centre of Athens in combination with the fact that the investigated squats are part of a wider movement, hints towards a distinct DIY urban migration governance character, where housing migrants is governed entirely disconnected from and in opposition to formal structures. Other research on housing hints towards the importance of networks, and at the sometimes elaborate support systems emerging entirely detached from formal processes (Usman et al., 2021), or investigates street politics in a setting of institutional disadvantage (Bayat, 1997). Much of this literature emphasises bottom-up activities marked by an "emphasis on community and local democracy,

and distrust of formal and large-scale bureaucracy." (ibid., p. 55) – a crucial aspect of DIY governance. What much of the work on housing shares is the capacity of DIY practices to provide accommodation and to challenge the 'host'/'guest' narrative commonly encountered (see Raimondi 2019; Squire & Darling, 2013), and how such practices are a response to unregulated housing markets and bureaucratic barriers tied to citizenship status, leading us

(Political) contestation and citizenship from below

Urban and migration scholars pay increasing attention to the city as a site of political contestation. As national exclusionary practices such as bordering play out at city-level (see Darling 2017), it is also at that level that such practices are contested, and mechanisms developed which support migrants in coping with and challenging them (see Varsanyi, 2010). Cities post distinct challenges and opportunities for such efforts (Nicholls/ Uitermark 2016). Nicholls and Uitermark applied Nancy Fraser's concept of "counterpublic" to the urban environment and showed how migrants form such a counterpublic and contribute to the urban as political space for migrant rights. Fraser conceptualised counterpublics as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser, 1990, p. 68). Much critical work engages with the urban as political space, leading to a focus in the literature on the co-production of local reception policies that include residents and non-municipal actors such as NGOs. As previously mentioned, the urban becomes a site of contestation, inspired by ideas of "rebel cities" (Harvey 2000) contesting national policies. However, DIY governance, we argue, emerges when cities do not have the possibility to, or are unwilling to 'rebel' against national governments. As such, such practices must be viewed apart from municipal governments, as a distinct form of governing migration from below. Grundy and Smith (2005, p. 390) consider struggles for belonging and citizenship as "play[ing] out at multiple, interrelated spatial scales." Accordingly, authors engage with practices referred to as "citizenship from below" (see Artero/Ambrosini 2022). Such forms of citizenship beyond the legal concept include political practices ranging from demonstrations to hunger strikes (Ataç, Rygiel, and Stierl 2016; Chimienti 2011; Monforte and Dufour 2013) in support of migrant rights on the one hand, and practices described as "lived citizenship" (Lister 2007), describing day to day practices, on the other.

Where to move from here?

Several conceptual implications can be drawn from our discussion of the literature. A non-exhaustive few of them shall be briefly presented in the following. Firstly, despite a growing debate about the increasing importance of the local in migration governance, central governments continue to be the institutions that determine who is allowed to enter the territory, become a member through citizenship, and under what conditions. Societies further have sets of norms and values newcomers generally are expected to comply with, leading to what Hackl (2022) calls the conditionality of inclusion. In advanced welfare states, it is also central

governments that are expected to guarantee that every member of the nation state is provided for regarding their basic needs: for citizens and non-citizens alike (the latter being regulated through international regulations), this is regulated through elaborate systems based on taxation that allow for spendings in favour of those in need, including social benefits, pensions, education, or care. National and local governments, hence, are key institutions in migration governance. Our literature review has pointed out how DIY governance is at odds with this logic and these expectations. DIY migration governance, as the literature review exposed, can be understood in part as a response to failures of the state, as a result of the continuous outsourcing of responsibilities, and the deregulation of markets which set barriers to some, but open spaces for other practices.

Secondly, much of the literature on bottom-up practices emphasises the need to overcome the dichotomy of formal, i.e. regulated and often associated to be within legal frameworks and social norms, and informal, ie. understood as unregulated and outside said legal and social norms. Such an understanding too often associates informality with urban governance in the Global South, considering similar processes in Global North contexts with bottom-up initiatives in urban governance including practices broadly described as everyday urbanism (Devlin, 2018). What is needed is extending the focus on the differentiated DIY-practices across socio-economic strata (see Devlin, 2018; Roy, 2009; Yiftachel, 2009). A focus on DIY-practices as what Delvin refers to as informality by choice, can help expand the literature by looking at the practices beyond marginalisation and poverty, including thus far less investigated processes.

Thirdly, while the literature discussed in the previous sections focuses on cities and urban areas, the detachment from formal governance by local actors reminds us that DIY migration governance is not an inclusively urban phenomenon: autonomy-building processes within rural spaces and small and mid-sized towns (SMSTs) play an increasing role as small and rural places become increasingly settings of migration governance - not least due to national dispersal schemes. As such, these places become potentially more urban, if we consider urbanity as characterised by density and diversity, and provide important insights into the detachment of local actors from formal governance.

And finally, and most crucially, the detachment from formal governance by local actors is at times romanticised, which neglects the inherent challenges to it and the ambivalent consequences for individuals who participate in these practices. Too rarely discussed are the powerful political potentials that are inherent to the detachment of local actors, inviting us to further investigate what Peck and Theodore (2012) refer to as 'regulation from below' by collectives pushing for more inclusive and just regulations affecting migrants in cities and elsewhere. The next section will tie this paper report together and formulate a number of concluding remarks and avenues for future research.

PART III

Conclusion

This state-of-the-art report has explored and discussed three forms of autonomy building processes of cities at different scales: (1) internationally through city diplomacy, (2) regionally and locally through autonomy-building from municipal governments, and (3) locally via the detachment of local actors from municipal and state governments. We have defined city diplomacy as the international engagement of cities or local governments to represent their interests and establish relationships on the international political stage; autonomy-building from municipal governments as the processes by which municipalities seek to operate independently from national governments; and the detachment of local actors from municipal and national governments as involving the practices and processes undertaken by various non-state actors at the local level.

In our deliverable (D5.1), we have extensively explored the unfolding of these three forms of autonomy building through our conceptual papers, with each paper focusing on a specific form. In this state-of-the-art report, our aim was to foster a deeper understanding of their interconnectedness and the challenges and opportunities they present within the evolving dynamics of urban migration governance. Instead of treating these three forms as independent phenomena, we encourage a holistic analysis of their points of connection and the challenges they encounter or pose. Against this background, we have underlined the following points: Firstly, all three forms acknowledge the agency of cities and local actors in urban migration governance. Secondly, there are broader underlying dynamics driving the emergence of these forms of autonomy building, including neoliberalisation, economic restructuring, and urbanisation, which have contributed to the growing involvement of local governments and actors in migration governance at various levels. Thirdly, migration governance operates within a multilevel framework, blurring the boundaries between local and national levels and challenging the notion of a clear-cut dichotomy. Finally, as cities assume an increasingly significant role in migration governance, it is essential to recognize the limitations faced by actors at the city level within multilevel governance arrangements.

Based on these insights, our conclusions and formulated paths towards future research evolve around three key points: (1) the interconnectedness of governance levels, (2) the multiplicity of local actors engaged in migration governance, (3) the multiplicity of migrations and the conceptual challenges tied to it, and (4) the dynamics of interaction between horizontal and vertical forms of urban migration governance.

>*(1) Interconnectedness of governance levels:* Migration governance operates within a
>multilevel framework, where different levels of governance interact and shape the
>overall governance landscape. It is important to note that this multilevel structure does

not imply that these levels are mutually exclusive or separable, nor does it establish the superiority of one level over another. Rather, it highlights the interconnectedness and interdependencies among various levels of governance, necessitating a critical engagement when investigating urban migration governance.

(2) Multiplicity of local actors: One significant aspect of migration governance is the increasing role of local authorities. Cities are recognized as policy agents in migration governance, actively engaging in shaping policies and practices. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the limitations faced by cities as policy agents, considering the complexities and constraints they encounter in their efforts. By acknowledging these limitations, we can avoid the common tendency in the literature to oversimplify the autonomy-building process of cities solely to the actions of municipalities. It is important to emphasise that various governmental and non-governmental actors play a role in shaping migration governance at the local level, including inhabitants, associations, housing providers such as private landlords and social housing corporations, schools, faith-based institutions, and actors in public/private transport, as well as municipal or national/federal police, among others.

(3) Multiplicity of migrations and the conceptual challenges tied to it: As cities become increasingly relevant sites of arrival and the governance of arrival and migration-related diversity connected to numerous forms of migration - from voluntary to forced migration, spanning individuals with various recognition statuses and rights tied to them - empirical research on autonomy-building processes must address the multiplicities and complexities tied to migration*s*.

(4) Interactions between horizontal and vertical forms of urban migration governance: To better understand the impact of cities in migration governance, it is important to delve into the concept of their "real impact." Exploring how different levels and contexts of migration governance influence the involvement of cities and their capacity to bring about change is an important research area. However, a comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape the impact of cities on migration governance at different levels (e.g., local, national, and international) is still widely lacking. One way to address this gap is to place greater emphasis on exploring the relationship between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of migration governance. This entails examining how migration policy processes within different levels of government interact with policy processes involving local authorities, civil society organisations, and immigrant networks. The nature of this interaction can provide better understanding into whether the "local turn" in migration governance expands multilevel governance towards more effective and inclusionary management of urban governance.

By identifying the points of connection among the three autonomy building processes under investigation, we gained insights not only into their interdependencies but also into the relationship between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of migration governance. In this regard, investigating the simultaneous development or varying degrees of development of these three autonomy building processes at different levels or in institutional settings is a significant avenue of research.

Understanding how these processes evolve in tandem or diverge from each other can shed light on the complexities of migration governance and yield new conceptual and theoretical tools. To do so, it is essential to collect empirical data from diverse cases that highlight contextual variations arranging migration and urban dynamics, including divergences in political, economic, institutional, and other pertinent aspects. As part of our research, we plan to conduct interviews with local actors in three distinct cities, namely Istanbul, Barcelona, and Amsterdam, to advance our understanding of the subject and enhance the scholarly discourse surrounding the relationship between autonomy building processes and migration governance.

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