From Emergency to Integration? The Spatial Controversy of Reception Centres in Italy

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Abstract

The Mediterranean migrant/refugee crisis is stressing the capacity and capability of the EU reception system to guarantee adequate standards of living to asylum seekers, as for the provision of housing, threatening the protection provided by the right of asylum. The study analyses the spatial phenomenon of reception centres, formally instituted by host countries to accommodate needy applicants of international protection during the asylum procedure, which are spreading in the European borderscapes to immediately supply "n. places" for the "n. arrivals". Within the global challenge of housing and integrating migrants and refugees, the topic of reception centres is carried out characterizing the temporary status of the asylum seeker and the controversial nature of hospitality, affecting reception and its spatial practice. The mapping controversies method was used to read the spatiality of reception in the European and Italian contexts, where case studies were selected in the city of Florence. Results depict the heterogeneous spectrum of spatial solutions for reception, which reflects the lack of shared/qualitative standards and of strategic/contingency scenarios able to meet basic human rights and inclusive urban development. Finally, the study collected innovative spaces of reception, raising in the architectural discourse and looking at those directions.

Keywords

Asylum seekers · Reception centres · Mapping controversies · Urban reception · Integration

1   Introduction

Even larger populations are forced by human disasters to escape from their homes, and to start a certain displacement and/or an uncertain migration path, in search of safety: according to the international and human right of asylum, a person exposed to persecutions in the own State has the right to ask protection in another State, which has the duty to provide for it.

The global nature and dimension of causes and consequences of forced migration, and their respective exacerbation, is threatening the traditional durable solutions for the refugee displacement, as voluntary repatriation in countries of origin, local integration in host countries and resettlement in third countries (UNHCR 2015): displacement root causes are becoming gangre-

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nous in places of origin, transits across countries are even more difficult due to even more restrictive migration policies and the securitization, and resettlement, as selection and transfer, cannot cover the dimension of the phenomenon, remaining as the best solution.

In practice, only three no-durable solutions are available for refugees: encampment, destitution in urban areas or risking their lives in a perilous journey to another country (Betts 2016). The last is the forced choice of millions of displaced people in the Middle East and Central/North Africa, who are fleeing emergencies crossing dangerously the Mediterranean Sea and reaching the Southern European borderscapes, where they are waiting for asylum.

The study focuses on reception centres, temporary settlement and housing solutions provided by arrival States to accommodate needy asylum seekers during the asylum procedure, spreading in the European Union context of the ongoing Mediterranean refugee/migrant crisis, and analysed in Italy.

Reception centres represent an intermediate settlement and housing solution in the transitional living of refugees, where ideally their emergency as forced migrants should end and their integration as new citizens could start. Nevertheless, they constitute a controversial space, young in the architectural discourse (Hauge et al. 2017), called to address both fundamental human rights in emergency and long-term integration perspectives (Fig. 1).

2 A Global and Urban Challenge

As huge human right deprivation, forced migration produces an immediate and protracted housing emergency: the transitional living of internally displaced people and, beyond borders, of asylum seekers and refugees.

Reaching the dramatic quote of more than 65 million of worldwide displaced people (UNHCR 2015), forced migration is even more recognized as a crucial global challenge for the sustainable development: considering the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the theme is transversal to different Sustainable Development Goals, calling for interrelated actions covering broad social, economic and environmental aspects (Taran 2016). The increasing urban dimension of the refugee crisis (the 60% of worldwide refugees are settling in urban areas; UNHCR 2015) is particularly stressing the SDG 11 on "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

Addressing this goal, the New Urban Agenda adopted in United Nations Conference Habitat "Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for All" in 2016 (UN HABITAT 2016) recognizes the need to handle migrants and refugees within the multiple forms of discrimination faced by vulnerable groups (Call for Action 20). Envisioning a sustainable urban development for social inclusion and ending poverty, the Agenda states the commitment:

Fig. 1 Reception centres: asylum process, legal status and challenges
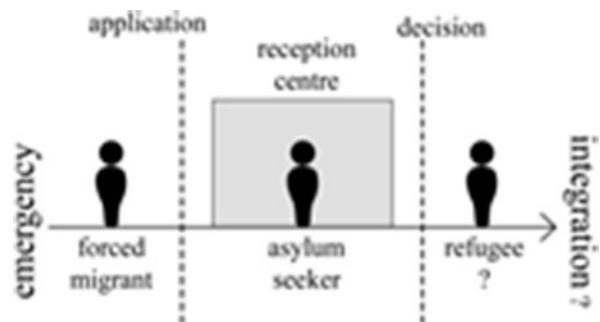
to ensure the full respect for human rights and humane treatment of refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants, regardless of migration status, and support their host cities in the spirit of international cooperation, taking into account national circumstances and recognizing that, although the movement of large populations into towns and cities poses a variety of challenges, it can also bring significant social, economic and cultural contributions to urban life (…) to strengthen synergies between international migration and development, at the global, regional, national, sub-national, and local levels by ensuring safe, orderly, and regular migration through planned and well-managed migration policies and to support local authorities in establishing frameworks that enable the positive contribution of migrants to cities and strengthened urban-rural linkages. (item 28, UN HABITAT 2016)

Focusing on the physical dimension of cities and settlements, the paragraph "Planning and managing urban spatial development" outlines the participatory and inclusive process of all inhabitants, not discriminating the migrant populations (item 104).

The issue of migrants and refugees in urban areas is specifically addressed prospecting the raising of a shared awareness of how inclusive planning can improve their management and protection in the access to services, opportunities and spaces: it is a call to looking forwards urban enabling environments that can contribute to the resilience of communities and drive to a sustainable urban development (HABITAT 2015).

In the Europe of the ongoing Mediterranean migrant/refugee crisis, the "Urban Agenda for the EU" – Pact of Amsterdam signed in 2016, and looking at the EU 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, considers as priority theme the inclusion of migrants and refugees. According to the Agenda:

the objectives are to manage integration of incoming migrants and refugees (extra-EU) and to provide a framework for their inclusion based on willingness and integration capacity of local communities. This will cover: housing, cultural integration, provision of public services, social inclusion, education and labour market measures, chances of second-third generations, spatial segregation. (European Commission 2016)

Focusing on asylum seekers, Eurocities's "Statements on asylum in cities" (2015) recognizes the need to tackle asylum seeking not as an emergency but as a structural issue of human rights and the role of cities in arrival, transit and destination countries in Europe in addressing its social, humanitarian and financial challenges. As places where asylum seekers wait for a decision on their refugee status and where services are provided, cities must guarantee basic protection and the reception and integration of newcomers.

Looking at reception as an early integration phase, the Migration Policy Group (2016) identified the bottlenecks of urban reception in the implementation of EU reception standards, in the dispersal policies and in the knowledge/data gaps.

As a stress factor, forced migration is a challenge for urban resilience: cities, as agents of change, must embrace and incorporate human flows into urban planning, adapting and transforming for a successful reception and integration of newcomers, in long-term perspectives (100 RC 2016).

3 The Space of Reception

Following the influencing Lefebvre line of thought (1991), space is definitively a social product, with a necessary political nature: the social and political dependency appears particularly evident in the spatial production of reception. Even the Foucauldian biopolitical reading of space and architecture as power devices (Rabinow 1984), pervasive in the architectural discourse on total institutions (Brunon-Ernst 2016), suggests reception centres as "asylum devices" of nation States' policies. National asylum policies in fact can also produce detention centres for asylum seekers: in this case the objective of sheltering is covered by the incarceration one, resulting in more controversial spatial productions (Cairns 2004).

With the aim to characterize the distinguishing marks of reception centres, the political

nature of asylum needs to be considered: the ref- ugee status is a concession, such as reception conditions. According to the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, considering human life in its double dimension of *zoe* (biological life) and *bios* (political life), the condition of the refugee, characterized by the lack of legal protection by any State (human rights are protected by law, and law is applied to citizens), creates a "space of exception", between inclusion and exclusion, where life is reduced to the biological one, a "bare life" (Darling 2009; John-Richards 2014). The deepness of such thought is entering in the broad architectural discourse (Boano 2017), but has already emerged in the space of exception par excellence: the refugee camp (Katz 2017; Tan 2016), immediate and protracted emergency settlement and housing solution, assuming today the dimension of cities.

Speaking on asylum, Derrida (2001) defines cities as refuges par excellence against insolvent and failed national States, where a more equal right of asylum can be guarantee, as in *sanctuary cities*. Nevertheless, cities are dooming refugees in informal settlements and substandard housing conditions, overlapping the existing ones of the urban crisis. Camps and cities are two opposite but converging spaces, which represent both the extremes and the core of the space of reception.

The focus on asylum seekers, more worrying than refugees (Baumann 2005), enriches the bio- political theme with the narratives of the "guest" and of the "illegal" (Rozakou 2012), origin of approaches between solidarity and hostility, result- ing in a never unconditionally hospitality (Freise 2004). Referring to the provision of reception cen- tres, Szczepanikova (2012) outlines their double nature of control and assistance, which produces prolonged spatial confinement and social segrega- tion. Similarly, Darling (2016) denounced that asylum seekers in the global North are dispersed just to share the burden, to accommodate and not integrate, creating a policy-imposed liminality which results in forced networks with aliens in hostile new surroundings. The space of reception reflects the controversy (Fig. 2) of

> a shared uncertainty, a black boxed situation not stabilized and fixed but open to the negotiation of the actors. (Venturini 2010)
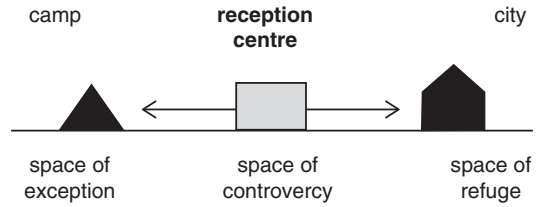
Fig. 2 Reception centre as space of controversy

4   Mapping the Spatial Controversy of Reception

Deriving from Science and Technology Studies, the "mapping controversies" method appeared as the most appropriate to uncover the controversy of reception and its spatial production.

The method derives from the actor-network theory, which has the advantage to consider inanimate artefacts as active actors influencing the social system: Latour himself looks at space as a mediator of the social system (Latour 2005). Its codification for the architectural discipline by Yaneva (2012), as a navigational tool to describe architectural objects, processes and practices, represented a unique occasion to look at architecture both as reflecting and generating society.

With the objective to reveal the spatial contro- versy of reception, the method was borrowed to follow the controversy of reception (socio-politi- cal aspects), from the European to the Italian level, and to document its spatial outcomes (reception centres): the ongoing mapping of reception centres in Florence has the objective to look at the controversy of reception at urban level.

4.1   European Union as Common Area of Asylum

In addressing the international right of asylum, European Union is a common area of protection, object of a 20-year-old process of harmonization of national asylum procedures and standards.

In the last years, European Union attested the peak of asylum applications, which reached the number of 1.2 million/year: most of the requests

were directed to Germany (40%), followed by Italy (10%) (site: frontex).

The huge sea arrivals of summer 2015, whose dramatic images of disembarks and deaths highly impacted the public opinions, exacerbated the social and political debate on welcome refugees: Member States' national policies had the power to break the unity of the Union (Brexit), still united to augment controls (Hotspot approach) and externalize the problem (accord with Turkey), but definitively weak to sustain shared choices (internal EU borders, Schengen Area suspension) and each other's (relocations, as internal EU resettlement, are not working). The result is a multiform and diffuse humanitarian crisis, whose spatial production is becoming manifest across Europe in informal settlements of various temporariness and precariousness, appearing and disappearing along the forced migrants' routes.

The Directive 2013/33/EU (recast), laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection, states reception conditions to guarantee adequate standard of living for applicants during the period of examination of the procedure for international protection. Even if for the Directive states only basic material reception conditions as food, clothes and housing in kind or via vouchers and a daily pocket money (art. 2), it declares that they must be protective of the physical and mental (news of the recast) health of the applicants (art. 17).

The housing provision in kind can take form of premises at borders or in transit zones, accommodation centres (defined as any place used for the collective housing of applicants; art. 2) or private houses, flats or other premises adapted for housing applicants: in any case, housing solutions must consider the specific needs of vulnerable groups. Moreover, in duly justified cases and for a reasonable period, as short as possible, Member States may exceptionally set different modalities for reception, whatever covering the basic needs and vulnerabilities (art. 18).

Comparative reports at European level (ECRE 2016; FRAME 2015; EMN 2014) testified housing reception conditions differentiated (between and within States), inadequate (low standards of living) and insufficient (in term of capacity): moreover, the widespread turn on emergency solutions is worsened by the length of asylum procedures, which prolongs the permanence in reception (average of 1.5 years).

Looking at the AIDA database (site: asylumineurope) on Member States' housing conditions in reception, the interpretation of the Directive remains highly divergent (the same distinction between first-line and second-line reception is not provided by the Directive, while is reported in many States), producing a heterogeneous spectrum of housing solutions, scattering in the emergency facilities.

Reflecting the controversy, according to the last comparative report:

> emergency or makeshift accommodation solutions are not designed to guarantee an adequate standard of living for people engaging with the asylum process,

but at the same time

> the year 2015 has shown a commendable ability and readiness on the part of many receiving states to rapidly and creatively enlist spaces for the temporary accommodation of large numbers of newly arrived (ECRE 2016).

Moreover, even if the European Asylum Support Office (EASO 2016) on monitoring housing conditions recognizes as quality-factor location, distribution, safety, common spaces, sanitary conditions and maintenance, Member States do not have duties to report data: the information gap reveals a crucial shortcoming (ECRE 2016).
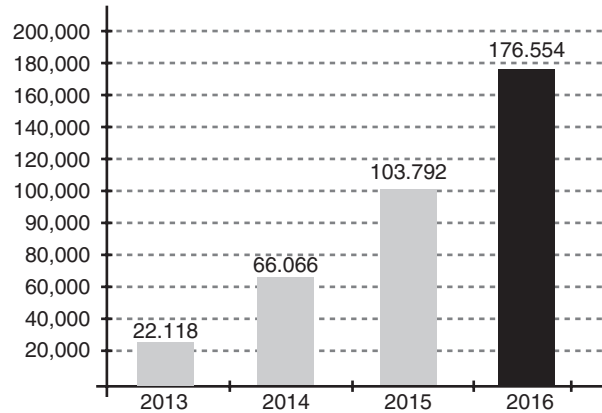
4.2   The Italian Reception System

For its geographical position of door of Europe from Africa, Italy is highly impacted by mass and mixed fluxes of forced migrants arriving mostly from the Central Mediterranean Route, the most dangerous and deadlier in the world, due to human traffic. As first arrival country, according to the EU Dublin Regulation III, Italy is responsible for the examination of the asylum procedures.

Fig. 3 Sea arrivals and
instituted reception
centres (1998–2015)
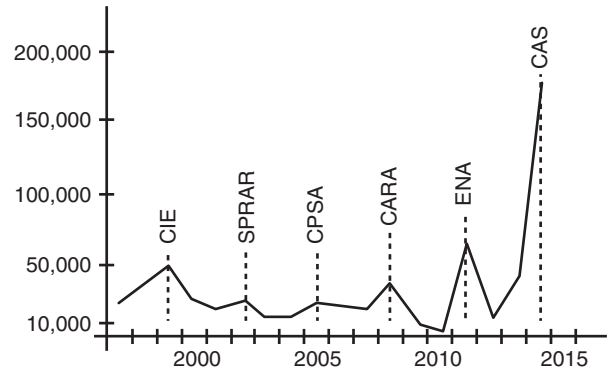
Fig. 4 Reception trends
in Italy (2013–2016).
(Source: interno.gov)

The Italian reception system is characterized by the juxtaposition of different reception models and centres, result of historically emergency-based asylum policies on reception, as mere answer to the sea arrivals (Fig. 3).

According to the last law on reception (D.lgs. 142/2015), addressing the 2013 EU Reception Directive, the Italian reception system is articulated in two ordinary levels: the first reception of arriving migrants takes place in governmental centres (art. 9), while a second level of reception (SPRAR), managed at local level, hosts applicants during the overall asylum procedure (art. 14). In case of lack of places in secondary reception, first-line centres can continue to supply for reception, and in case of temporary depletion of places also there, the government can provide for emergency facilities (art. 11).

Parallel with the huge sea arrivals of the last years, the capacity of the Italian reception system grew increasingly, reaching the quote of 176.554

places at the end of the 2016 (site: interno.gov) (Fig. 4).

4.2.1 First-Line Reception Centres

First-line reception takes place in governmental reception centres, activated by the Ministry of the Interior and managed, through public tenders, by the public or the private social sector: to this day, there are 15 of these centres hosting the 8% of the total presences (Asgi 2016).

Even if the Italian normative states different types of governmental centres (also the detention ones), public tenders follow a unique regulation (DM 21 November 2008) which defines generic reception standards, with no reference on minimal requirements for facilities (only a recent fire-prevention normative is specifically intended for reception centres).

Governmental centres are collective centres, former buildings of different types previously used for other purposes, and reconverted in col-

lective accommodations (UNHCR 2010), for high capacities (hundreds/thousands) and usually located in border zones or peripheral urban areas.

During the last years, governmental centres are changing their nature and their denominations to follow the changing scenario of arrivals and asylum policies, also if more of them persists in the same facilities with the same problems.

The Hotspot approach of the 2015 EU Migration Agenda is threatening the aid nature of CPSAs (*Centri di Primo Soccorso e Accoglienza*), not changing the inadequacy of their spaces: the new Hotspot in Pozzallo, for example, was a CPSA when it was abandoned by NGOs for the unsustainable overcrowdings in the precarious physical conditions of the former dock in the harbour (MSF 2015).

CDAs (*Centri di Accoglienza*) and CARAs (*Centri di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo*) persist as first-line centres, providing for the missing places in the secondary-line, even if recognized as negative reception models by a Parliament inquiry in 2014. One of the persisting worst practice, reported for the inquiry by Medu (2015), is the CARA of Mineo in Sicily, a former US military base isolated in the countryside (8 km from the nearest urban area). Beyond organizational problems, the facilities' inadequacy, together with the overcrowdings and the protracted staying, concurred to the human rights' violations faced by the guests: spatial segregation and assistance-based life are reducing people to numbers, nourishing violence, dangerous informal economies and link with the local black work (as the rural *Capolarato*).

The last national plan on reception (Ministero dell'Interno 2016) intended to overcome the model, proposing regional Hubs with a maximum capacity of 100 people.

4.2.2 Second-Line Reception Centres

The SPRAR reception system (*Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati*) was born as a spontaneous reception experience of voluntary organizations at local level to face the lack of appropriate governmental responses in the first nineties. The result of those initiatives is the ongoing solidification of a networked system,

formally instituted in 2001 by the Ministry of the Interior, UNHCR and the Anci association of municipalities (*Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani*).

SPRAR system proposes an integrated reception based on the idea to go further the mere food-clothes-housing material supply, offering customized paths to autonomy and social integration, which comprise work and housing. The activation of a reception project is responsibility of an urban authority, which involves third sector associations to connect with the territorial and urban networks of social services and spaces.

The SPRAR operative manual details the reception standards, also referring to minimal requirements for the facilities, regarding the location in urban area, adequate hygienical services (1x6), maximum capacity for rooms (two to three in flats, four in collective centres), the presence of at least a common space for leisure activities and the possibility to personalize spaces (SPRAR 2017).

According to the annual report, the 83% of the SPRAR facilities are flats, mostly rented in the private market, followed by collective centres, with a total average of seven beneficiaries per facility (SPRAR 2016). Beyond housing, the other activities connected with the integrated reception (as language courses, cultural and legal mediation, work training and social integration) are distributed in the urban area, usually overlapping the existing social spaces (such as churches, schools and associations' centres).

The choice to activate a SPRAR at municipal level has two opposite outcomes: on the one hand, the local dimension is recognized as ideal to undertake integration objectives; on the other hand, it is clearly political: even if the trend is positive (+26% of places in the last year), less than half of the Italian municipalities are hosting the SPRAR, creating a huge imbalance (SPRAR 2016).

SPRAR system numbers many recognized best practices: according to the national plan on reception (Ministero dell'Interno 2016), it is the feather in the cap and the pivot of all the Italian reception system, to be implemented.

Nevertheless, at the end of 2016, SPRAR system hosted 24,000 people, covering only the 14% of the total presences (site: interno.gov).

4.2.3 Emergency-Line Reception Centres

The turn on emergency facilities is not new in the Italian tradition, persisting as the ordinary answer in case of mass arrivals, since the firsts in the nineties.

In 2011, the big influx from the MENA area (Middle East and North Africa) consequent to the Arab Springs was solved with the operation "North Africa Emergency" (ENA). According to Garelli and Tezzioli (2013), the planning was scattered, and the implementation decentralized, externalized and unregulated; moreover, the governmental choice to delegate the management of reception to the national civil protection represented an eloquent consideration of the migrants' arrival as a natural calamity. After two years of activities, ENA facilities were closed, and 19,000 guests dismissed with an exit bonus of 500 euros, remaining in the streets: Italy was in official breach of the right to housing (Swiss Refugee Council 2013).

In 2014, just one year later, the Minister of the Interior stated the "temporary" need of supplemental places for the reception of asylum seekers, and delegated its territorial offices (*Prefetture*) to find and activate centres with first-line reception standards (DM Novembre 2008), through public tenders or direct assignments. During the last years, CAS (*Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria*) system grew increasingly in the whole Italian territory, sheltering the 80% of the national presences. CAS reception conditions were investigated by a voluntary monitoring activity, *InCAStrati* or "to get stuck", which

revealed the diffuse lack of minimal sanitary requirements in the facilities and the negative answers of *Prefetture* to give data (LasciateCIEntrare 2016).

The distribution of places in the reception lines previously described (Table 1) shows the impressive incidence of CAS: the emergency line is ensuring the survival of the Italian reception system.

Furthermore, the insufficient capacity of the reception system (Asgi 2016) is emerging in the even more increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees living in informal settlements, from squatted buildings to camps, which are scattering in the entire national territory, in particular in big cities and near first-line reception centres (MSF 2016).

4.3 A Case Study: Reception Centres in Florence

The case studies analysis of reception centres in the city of Florence was intended to contextualize the urban challenges but also simplifies the variability of mesoscale contexts that can influence reception, as the regional one. Based on "the fair collaboration between the different levels of govern" (D.lgs. 142/2015, art. 8), regions are called to support the national reception system, managing the redistribution of migrants and the modalities of access to the crucial services in their territories (as the health system).

Since the North Africa Emergency in 2011, the Tuscan regional policy on reception was oriented to a wide distribution of migrants, avoiding the concentration in governmental reception centres and taking advantages of the

Table 1 Reception centres in Italy

Reception centres	First-line	Second-line	Emergency line
Denomination	Hotspot/Hubs/CARA	SPRAR	CAS
Main facility type	Collective centres	Flats	No data
N. of facilities	15	2.457	7.005
N. of guests	14.694	23.822	137.218
Distribution of guests	8%	14%	78%

Data retrieved from site: interno.gov and Asgi (2016)

well-rooted and diffused third sector network of associations. In the same year, the previously described CARA of Mineo in Sicily hosted alone more than the double of all the guests in the Tuscan region.

A monitoring activity promoted by the region produced important data to understand the spatiality of this previous emergency-line reception, as the georeferentiation of reception centres[1] and data on their capacity and locations. According to the report, in 2012 the Tuscan ENA emergency system hosted 1,500 people, distributed in 126 facilities: the 40.5% collective centres, the 36.5% flats and 23% touristic facilities (many available only seasonally). Operators declared a total capacity of 1,901 places, with an average of 15.3 people/facility, augmenting to 19.3 in collective centres. Regarding the locations, 1/4 of the facilities resulted characterized by a high distance from the urban areas: the report, recognizing the threat of isolation, also suggests how it can be overcome in the presence of well-organized reception model. Moreover, the high incidence of collective centres, showing the limits of decentralization, underlined the necessity of these facilities to cope with emergencies (Bracci 2012).

In the same period, the ordinary second-line reception of the Sprar system hosted less than 200 beneficiaries (SPRAR 2013): its inadequate capacity fuelled also in Tuscany the turn on CAS emergency-line reception when arrivals augmented in 2014. In line with the national data, the Tuscan CAS emergency line increased eightfold compared to the previous ENA, reaching 11,600 presences; in parallel, the SPRAR system augmented only fourfold its capacity to 860 places: Tuscan centres accommodate the 8% of the presences in the national reception system (site: interno.gov).

The Tuscan experience on diffuse reception was gathered in a "White Book on reception" (Regione Toscana 2017), which contains programmatic policies to address an integrated reception model, with SPRAR system as reception standard to adapt the CAS system.

Case studies were selected in Florence, the main city of the Tuscany region, famous touristic destination for its great Renaissance, circumstance that should enrich the controversy of reception with the refugee-tourist nexus (Röslmaierm 2016).

According to the SPRAR database[2], the ordinary second-line reception in the city of Florence is directed by two urban entities (the municipality itself and "Società della Salute"), responsible for the reception projects of 206 beneficiaries (1/4 of the regional presences). The SPRAR management involves several and specialized third sector associations, working in network to cover all the aspects of reception (as housing, legal assistance or integration). The 73% of the SPRAR beneficiaries is distributed in two reception centres, both identifiable as large-size collective centres and selected as case studies.

Looking at the emergency line in the city of Florence, CAS reception centres are directed by *Prefettura di Firenze* (local office of the Ministry of the Interior), which provided in the last three years with several and temporary public tenders to assign the service of reception. Beyond the weak first-line reception standards (DM Novembre 2008), the only reference to the spatial characteristics of reception centres regards the calculation of the number of guests per facility, retrieved from the regional standard for touristic reception and referring to the lower level (youth hostels). In line with the regional policy, a point mechanism considers as main influencer the "territorial sustainability", regarding the proportion between actual presences in reception and the resident population: no points are given for the spatial quality of the reception.

According to the data retrieved in May 2017 from *Prefettura di Firenze*, the CAS system is sheltering 622 asylum seekers in 23 facilities: the 72% of them are hosted in large-size collective centres, where the average capacity reaches the quote of 75 people/facility (Table 2). Another interesting data regards the public ownership of

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[1] http://mappe.rete.toscana.it/webstat/index.html?area=emergenza_nordafrica

[2] http://www.sprar.it/progetti-territoriali

Table 2 CAS reception centres in Florence

Type of facility	N. of facilities	N. of guests	% of guests
Flat	12	86	14
Small collective centre	3	40	6
Medium collective centre	2	47	8
Large collective centre	6	449	72
Total	23	622	

Data gathering followed the SPRAR operative manual (2017), which defines the type of facilities according to the capacity and the organization model: flats (<10 people) and collective centres of different sizes (small <15 people, medium <30 people and large >30 people)

three facilities, large-size collective centres, ensuring the reception of 219 asylum seekers (1/3 of the total hosted by the city).

At the city level of Florence, reception revealed a high incidence of large-size collective centres both in the SPRAR and in the CAS system, representing the selection criterion for the case studies: Villa Pieragnoli, Ex Centro Paci, Centro Slataper and Villa Pepi.

Following the mapping controversies method, data were collected to look at actors and networks in the spatial controversy of reception at the urban scale, considering the facilities used for reception as focal no-human actors analysed.

A geo-referenced map (Fig. 5) localized the reception centres in the city of Florence, reporting data on reception line, typology, management, capacity, occupancy and property, and it is collecting information (photos, news) on the single facility (former use, conditions) and its urban context (neighbourhood, transport and public spaces).

For each case study, a field research was conducted to analyse the reception centre's documents (internal reports and regulations, technical drawings), visiting the centres (photos, notes) and interviewing the directors (history of the centre, management and organizational models). Data gathering (Fig. 6) is taking into account actors (broad users and facilities) and networks (activities and urban system) of reception centres, with the aim to identify who (users) and what (activities) both in the structure of reception (facility) and in its infrastructure (urban system).

4.4   Reading the Data

The Italian reception system has the double function to supply for the asylum seeker's housing emergency (first-line reception) and to mediate the refugee's housing integration (second-line reception): nevertheless, actual conditions reveal difficulties to meet both.

The insufficient expansion of the SPRAR system nourished and is still nourishing the proliferation of temporary facilities, revealing a reception system in a chronical housing emergency: the lack of and the undifferentiated use of reception centres represent a threat for the respect of fundamental human rights and for the achievement of the goals of inclusion of migrants and refugees. Low-quality standards and externalizations without monitoring are fomenting the idea of reception as a business and not as a public service, representing an obstacle to the transparency of public funds and an invite to the raising of populisms against welcome refugees.

The controversy of reception, with its strong basis on the biopolitical discourse origins a transitional space of exception, which has the possibility to become a space of refuge.

Reception centres as spaces of exception are total institutions where the private sphere cannot be protected, life is assistance-based and everyday life is void and repetitive. Empty spaces filled with beds and a food catering, or distance from urban areas, can produce alienation and segregation: the possibility to use these centres for the overall duration of the asylum procedure (years) represents a serious threat for the psychophysical well-being of the vulnerable person, as a perpetuation of the trauma he/she is escaping. Moreover, the fluctuation of arrivals provokes immediate overcrowding, worsening the conditions: centres are not ready to work in contingency also because facilities are not planned and designed to be flexible. Actual first-line collective centres, and emer-

Fig. 5 Geo-referenced map of reception centres in the city of Florence

gency facilities with the same standards, do not represent a sustainable and resilient solution: the inevitable spatial conflict has a negative impact both for the vulnerabilities and for the tricky social relations at work within and outside the centres.

The best practices of the diffuse reception in the SPRAR system are showing the positive side of reception as space of refuge: the integrated planning of local actors, experts of their territories, is connecting beneficiaries both with social services, opening the possibility to emancipate in work and housing, and with social spaces, where integration with local communities should physically start.

Recognized by the Tuscan region, the emerging need to drive a reconversion of the CAS emergency line to the SPRAR standards, for the creation of an integrated reception system, will require the necessity to tackle reception at the urban scale.

The analysis of reception centres in the urban context of Florence revealed the general predominance of large-size collective centres. The data was interpreted because of the limits of the rented flats housing solution in dense urban areas, where the access to house is more unaffordable: it should be verified analysing other urban contexts, as in shrinking cities, where the wide housing availability suggests different typologies of reception centres and models.

Fig. 6 Example of data sheets on a case study

Such consideration was suggested by the case study Ex Centro PACI (SPRAR), which was born within a national program to experiment reception centres in metropolitan cities. In these contexts (Ex Centro PACI is located in the inner centre of a new city expansion), the high capacity of the centre can be mediated by the presence of a well-structured urban system, whose services (as transport system) and spaces (as public spaces) can supply as reception infrastructure.

Still regarding the urban dimension, the SPRAR case study Villa Pieragnoli testifies how the problem of the distance from the urban area can be overcome with a well-rooted reception experience: the quiet community life of the isolated centre benefits by a territorial provision of reception services (such as language and work training), filling the everyday life of beneficiaries.

Considering the CAS case studies, the lack of standards for reception facilities immediately emerges in the overcrowding of the rooms, resulting in evident spatial conflicts. The limited activities provided in the emergency reception model increase the void time in the centre: this is the case of Villa Pepi, public-owned centre, whose potential spaces suffer the unplanning, inevitable due the short-term contracts in the emergency line.

The CAS case study Centro Slataper, resulting from a very controversial history, revealed an innovative typology of collective centre, characterized by the sharing of the same building

for other housing emergencies (for homelessness) and social spaces (for associations): beyond standards, the cohabitation is enabling positive networks of encounter, also facilitated by the dense urban context in the proximity.

5   The Raising of New Spaces of Reception

Parallel with the mainstream production of reception centres, and in line with the described urban directions, experimental and innovative settlement models and housing solutions for asylum seekers and refugees are emerging, showing different ways to tackle the problem, even as an opportunity. The most representative is the platform Refugees Welcome (site: refugee-welcome), based on the idea to directly match the refugees housing demand with the citizens offer in their private houses.

In Europe, the theme of how to accommodate asylum seekers and integrate refugees was object of an increasing architectural attention, exposed in the Venice Biennale "Reporting from the Front" (Aravena 2016) and in the Oslo Architecture Triennale, "After belonging" (Casanovas et al. 2016). In the occasion of the Venice Biennale, the curators of three European states (Germany, Finland and Austria) proposed reflections that can be related to the specific theme of architecture of reception centres.

To face the influx of one million of refugees in 2015, German architects were called to design a huge number of temporary houses in emergency, also in special dispensation to regular housing standards: wooden prefabs, container settlements, and readaptation of pre-existing buildings were collected in a database organized by the DAM Architecture Museum (site: makingheimat). Another important contribution by the German Biennale team was the contextualization of the Doug Saunders' "Arrival City" in the German refugee/migrant crisis (Cachola Schmal et al. 2016), which suggests the importance to consider the spontaneous nature of migrant settlement processes.

The Finnish Museum of Architecture organized the architectural competition "From borders to Home" to find innovative temporary housing solutions for refugees, to contextualize in the short and long-term perspectives (site: mfa). The design outcomes, proposed at the Venice Biennale, speak of the advantages of temporary architecture, the readaptation of vacant offices for incremental housing solutions and the use of social network to connect refugees with the new urban context.

For Austria, the Biennale was the occasion to directly experiment design solutions in existing reception centres: the ephemeral solution of special parasols for interior showed that little spatial interventions can solve huge problems in collective centres, as the lack of privacy: the same objective was reached with the dislocation of wooden modules in former offices; another project showed the potential of furniture to address the social needs of cooking and working in reception centres (ortefuermenschen).

As first Italian innovative approach, Salus Space is a project in the municipality of Bologna, winner of a 5 million European fund in the Urban Innovative Action program (site: uia-initiative). UIA program had the objective to test innovative ideas for interconnected urban challenges: the first call matched the European Urban Agenda's priorities themes of urban poverty, integration of migrants and refugees, energetic transitions and local economy (European Commission 2016). Innovation, participation and transferability were considered as key factors for the selection. Salus Space is a project of urban regeneration based on the requalification and readaptation of the abandoned and squatted Villa Salus, near the city centre, to realize temporary housing and collective social spaces, in an experimental new space of welcome, welfare and well-being. The project is object of a process of participative design which involves a large range of heterogeneous stakeholders: the multiplicity of local points of view (municipal authorities and third sector agencies) is considered a unique occasion to experiment innovative social and spatial solutions (site: saluspace).

6   Conclusions

The structural phenomenon of forced migration will determine even more human flows in transit, just calling for the respect of their rights: it is a civic imperative offering safe spaces, welcoming and inclusive.

International, European, national and local organizations and institutions recognized the challenges posed and are envisioning urban strategies to tackle with the phenomenon: emergency-based logics should not be more justified.

Case studies testified both the emergency of reception and its potential for integration: echoing the converging narratives of camps and cities, reception is an irreducible space of exception but a possible space of refuge. The spatial controversy or reception, between emergency and integration, needs to be addressed solving the oppositions: contingency/necessity, informality/formality and conflict/mediation.

As the recent architectural incursions are showing, the general failure of the mainstream approaches can be overcome with the potential of the avant-garde ones: regenerative sustainability (Hes and Du Plessis 2015), temporary urbanism and architecture (Bishop and Williams 2012) and temporary uses (Oswalt et al. 2013), sustained by a diffuse design for social innovation (Manzini 2015), represent the perspectives to look at design as a game changer in the provision of urban spaces for reception.

As tactical urban pioneer, the need of reception has the potential to disclose the latent possibilities of the urban built environment to offer spaces both for hospitality, to address housing emergencies, and for social meeting, to sustain the formation of a new society. Such potential should be discovered integrating design experts in the definition of reception urban systems: a strategical evaluation of public underused facilities, as *reception structures*, and their relationship with urban services and public spaces, as *reception infrastructure*, should support a shared comprehension of urban reception scenarios between actors, as basis for planning, also in contingency, participative design processes and/or tactical design actions, involving the becoming community.

Reception should be a strategical space, where controversies can be mediated: after all, only the physical encounter reunites each other in the common humanity.

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