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Uses of the Social and Solidarity Economy by Palestinians in Berlin: a new perspective on integration and citizenship

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Summary

On the basis of testimonies gathered through fieldwork with the Palestinian diaspora in Berlin, this article uses particular embodied events to discuss and assess the relevance, limitations and tensions in the existing literature on migrants' integration and citizenship processes. In contrast to the tendency in the literature over the past decades to start with a predefined understanding of what integration and citizenship concepts should be, and linking them to migration issues, this research project draws on discussions and testimonies by Palestinians and local actors in Berlin in order to guide our reflection.

More specifically, this paper aims to identify the initiatives and practices of the Palestinian diaspora in the field of the social and solidarity economy, or third sector. In this respect, a more critical approach to integration and citizenship, that embraces the plural spheres of migrants' participation, will allow for a stronger engagement with the politics of belonging. In addition, focusing on how the third sector is used by Palestinians in Berlin will provide an opportunity to probe the plural elements of integration and citizenship negotiation in the host society.

Keywords: Palestinians, Berlin, third sector, integration, citizenship.

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Introduction

Research subject, terminology, context and issues

Beginning with the *Nabka*, or Catastrophe, forced Palestinian migrations have led, through successive global mutations, to the renewal of migratory pathways for these populations, and to variations in their legal and socio-economic status¹. Since 1948, several million Palestinian refugees have been living in exile, having been displaced to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria or Iraq, with specific settlement patterns in each host country, configured by local geopolitical considerations. Moreover, the recent events in the Middle East have profoundly altered the political, cultural, economic, social and religious living conditions for Palestinians in the region, giving rise to new migratory and urban dynamics.

Palestinians are "the oldest refugees in the world", having been forbidden from returning to their homes for almost sixty years². According to a study by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, published in 2013, their total number amounts to 11.6 million people: 4.4 million in the Palestinian territories (2.7 million in the West Bank and 1.7 million in the Gaza Strip, of whom 44.2% in refugee camps), 1.4 million in Israel, around 5.1 million in Arab countries, and 655,000 in other countries. Whilst the Palestinian diaspora is significant in Middle Eastern countries, Palestinians are also present in significant proportions in Europe and North America, where they have extremely diverse legal statuses. In this regard, this population of refugees has dispersed throughout a number of countries in Northern Europe in search of a better future, and Germany is one of the oldest destinations in Europe for Palestinian communities³, as well as being fertile ground for Palestinian mobilisation movements.

The German socio-political and economic landscape⁴ has effectively been marked by different waves of Palestinian migration, which have contributed to shaping this host society. However, the statistical estimates of the number of Palestinians in Germany remain very imprecise. These census difficulties can be explained by different factors: Germany does not

¹ Lex TAKKENBERG, *The Status of Palestinian Refugees in International Law*

² Jalal AL HUSSEINI, Le statut des réfugiés palestiniens au Proche-Orient. Facteur de maintien ou de dissolution de l'identité nationale palestinienne, pp. 37-65

³ Mohammed Kamel DORAÏ, Les réfugiés palestiniens en Europe. Complexité des parcours et des espaces migratoires.

⁴ Michael BORCHARD & Hans Maria HEYN, *The Holy Land and the Germans*

recognise the Palestinian Territories as a State; there is ethnic non-recognition in the data sources; Palestinians are, for the most part, stateless and their status is one of legal limbo⁵; their entry into Europe takes place via the status of refugees, stateless persons, people without defined nationality, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants; they sometimes have passports from their first host countries in the Middle East. Despite these statistical difficulties, we can specify, in the following table, the existence of various waves of Palestinian migration in Germany, with a view to better highlighting the sectors of activity which these communities have occupied over time.

Table 1: Main Palestinian Migratory Waves in Germany

Migratory Waves	Country of Origin	Characteristics	Sector of Activity in Germany and/or Status
After the Second World War, in the 1940s and 50s	Jordan Gaza Strip West Bank	Around 3000 students	Engineers Doctors
1960-1970	Jordan	Workers Students	Job seekers Family reunification
Entry of Palestinian refugees in the 1970s in West Germany (facilitated by flexible asylum policies and better access to the job market) by way of East Berlin: recognition as de facto refugees and not political refugees			
1970-1980	Jordan Lebanon	Refugees (fleeing Black September in Jordan, civil war in Lebanon, the destruction of the Te-Al-Za'ater and Al-Nabatiyah refugee camps)	Entrepreneurship
1990-2000	Iraq Kuwait Lebanon	Refugees Unqualified young people Irregular migrants	Job seekers
Since the 2000s	Gaza	Family reunification	Education
Since 2011	Syria	Refugees	Entrepreneurship

⁵ The term "Palestinian nationality" does not exist in official German sources.

In the context of the German asylum process, these people's requests are generally treated in the same way as those of Syrian refugees with Syrian nationality. The Syrian Arab Republic gave travel documents to a number of Palestinians who arrived in Germany by way of Syria and these were treated as Syrian passports on their arrival in Germany.

These different waves of Palestinian migration bear witness to the integration of Palestinian communities in a migratory dynamic, with the development of practices and activities in Germany leading to various forms of mobilisation. This "makes up the fabric from which solidarity networks are woven and reorganised at the local level, before being projected into the transnational space with the development of emigration to Europe"⁶. In this regard, there is a need for a better analysis of the different lived experiences involved in different migratory pathways. On arrival in Germany, Palestinian migrants can effectively benefit from a degree of support from a number of organisations from the social and solidarity economy (SSE) that mobilise to help and protect them. Migrants themselves can also be at the origin of developing practices in the framework of the SSE.

The aim of this article is therefore to analyse this dual dynamic, in a context that has been particularly marked by the existence of negative perceptions amongst certain sectors of public opinion, with a combination of an "anti-migration" sentiment and critical perspectives on the values of multiculturalism. This aim will be pursued through the analysis of initiatives and practices in the SSE field by members of the Palestinian diaspora, enabling a redefinition of the processes of integration and citizenship. Moreover, by approaching the concepts of integration and citizenship in a critical way, this article aims to connect the kinds of activities developed by members of the diaspora in Germany in the framework of the SSE to social movement theories.

State of current knowledge on the subject

A number of research papers have highlighted the existence of shortcomings in the dialogue between the domains of social movements and the solidarity economy⁷. Nevertheless, it appears just as essential to extend this field of study to the sociology of migration. The articulation between social and geographical mobility is a classic question in the social sciences, that are attuned to the spatial dimensions of social life⁸. However, the social trajectories that accompany migrations are rarely studied in light of this question, based on the study of dynamics created by migrants in the framework of the SSE.

Taking the link between migration and the SSE as the guiding principle, and seeking a better understanding of what the voices and actions of such actors in perpetual movement bring to

⁶ Mohamed-Kamel DORAÏ, L'émigration des Palestiniens du Liban et le processus d'Oslo, page 370

⁷ See Jean-Louis LAVILLE et al., *Mouvements sociaux et économie solidaire*

⁸ Henri BASTIDE, Mobilité de la population et motivations des personnes : enquête auprès du public, III : les facteurs de la mobilité; Alain BLUM et al; Mobilité sociale et migration géographique

European societies, this project used a theoretical approach to social movements⁹ with a view to deconstructing the concepts of integration and citizenship. The protest dimension of the SSE has already been highlighted¹⁰, fulfilling the definition of a social movement that refers back to a phenomenon that acts on society¹¹. Using this theoretical framework as a starting point, and considering that migrants' SSE practices define a new form of social movement, the question is therefore to underscore the importance of such initiatives for the understanding of concepts that are too frequently taken for granted in the literature.

Whilst certain studies have already demonstrated the limits of the concept of integration¹², our aim here is to call into question and go beyond the classical approaches that consider integration as a fixed concept, by using a dynamic approach. This will enable us to demonstrate that the practices of migrants in the SSE field are themselves sources of socio-cultural, economic and political integration. Through the analysis of these migrant practices in the SSE field, this research project therefore aspires to the scientific originality of understanding the articulation between social phenomena and political realities.

Some studies analysing the link between migrations and the SSE consider that the latter integrates migrants, thanks to the support that it provides. The SSE is also sometimes seen as a means of reinforcing development by fighting against exclusion and poverty¹³. Moreover, current research has shed light on the existence of a correlation between integration and development, marked by the transnational engagement displayed by migrants with regard to their home countries¹⁴. Whilst some authors approach the concept of the SSE by focusing on the forms of entrepreneurship that stem from it¹⁵, the SSE has also been the object of various, multidimensional analyses with regard to its institutions¹⁶, its relationship to sustainable development¹⁷, and even as a reflection of a form of local participative democracy¹⁸.

⁹ Diane RODET, *L'économie solidaire comme mouvement social : des dispositifs de qualité pour s'identifier, agir et mobiliser*

¹⁰ Geoffrey PLEYERS, *Horizontalité et efficacité dans les réseaux altermondialistes*

¹¹ Alain TOURAIN, *Production de la société*

¹² Christophe BERTOSSI et al., *The problems with national models of integration: a Franco-Dutch comparison*

¹³ Patrick DEVELTERE, *Economie sociale et développement* ; Juan-Luis KLEIN, *L'économie sociale et solidaire et la lutte contre la pauvreté en milieu local : le cas du Québec* ; Michel RONZY, *Regard sur les pratiques d'intégration en économie sociale et solidaire*

¹⁴ Marta Bivand ERDAL & Ceri OEPPEN, *Migrant Balancing Acts: Understanding the interactions between integration and transnationalism*; OSTERGAARD-NIELSEN Eva, *The Politics of Migrants' Transnational Political Practices*

¹⁵ Sylvain ALLEMAND and Sophie BOUTILLIER, *Economie sociale et solidaire. Nouvelles trajectoires d'innovations*

¹⁶ Bernard GUESNIER, *Poids et place de l'économie sociale et solidaire dans les activités économiques, entre les autres acteurs, selon les échelles territoriales*

¹⁷ Anne-Marie CRETIEU, *Economie sociale et solidaire et développement durable : pensée et actions en conjonction*,

¹⁸ Abdourahmane NDIAYE, *Economie solidaire et démocratie participative locale*

With a view to moving beyond these approaches, this project is part of a dynamic based on initiatives created and carried by migrants in the SSE field, thereby contributing to the redefinition of the process of integration and challenging multiple identity and citizenship affiliations. The debates surrounding integration are often polarised between theories of assimilation¹⁹ and theories of multiculturalism²⁰, whereas examination of the underlying processes allows for consideration of the opportunities created by the migrants themselves through their participation in the host society by means of different initiatives.

In parallel to policies of integration that emerge from public and national policy, the host countries also define the legal status of migrants by granting citizenship under specific conditions. Using the concept of "denizen"²¹, as well as the work of Sayad (1994), this project aims to examine the acts of citizenship and the specific activities that migrants develop in the German host society. By taking distance from the civic dimension of citizenship (traditional legal elements of the definition - rights and duties), we wanted to include a subjective dimension, as a result of the analysis of initiatives set up by migrants in the host society.

Summary presentation of the research

This research, which takes the study of Palestinian migratory movements to Germany, specifically Berlin, as its guiding principle, examines the articulation of these movements with the dynamics created in the SSE field. This field represents an important resource for migrant communities, who are able to develop initiatives and practices that enable integration into the host societies.

More specifically, this study focuses on the diversity of practices developed in the SSE field by a group of migrant communities in Berlin. By focusing our attention on the sum of these activities and initiatives, we are seeking to examine their articulation with processes of integration and citizenship. The research question is therefore based on a will to understand how the diversity of practices initiated by members of a diaspora in Berlin in the SSE field can contribute to redefining the processes of integration and citizenship.

By focusing our attention on theoretical and conceptual models that have too commonly been taken for granted in the literature, our working hypotheses are based on 1) the articulation between integration policies in Germany and the possibility of deconstructing them by examining the processes developed by a group of migrants who have settled in Berlin over the past decades, 2) the need for a new perspective on the SSE field as used by these communities in Berlin, 3) the socio-political integration of the SSE practices of these communities in Berlin. This

¹⁹ Bo PETERSSON, *Stories about Strangers: Swedish Media Construction of Sociocultural Risk*; Milton GORDON, *Assimilation in American Life: the role of race, religion, and national origin*

²⁰ Ellie VASTA, *Accommodating Diversity: why current critiques of multiculturalism miss the point*

²¹ Tomas HAMMAR, *Democracy and the Nation State: Aliens, Denizens and Citizens in a World of International Migration*

work will therefore enable us to deconstruct the theoretical models as well as the conceptual approaches which have long analysed the integration of migrant communities as a problem.

Methodology

Given that a number of migrants develop their activities and occupy spaces on a local level, within urban centres²², this study is based on a micro approach in Berlin, aiming to shed light on macro phenomena. Using a dynamic, critical and pragmatic approach, we aim to deconstruct existing models of integration and to break down the barriers of approaches to citizenship that European societies have built up over time, by considering these processes more as multidimensional realities that also implicate the migrants themselves.

A more inclusive approach is therefore necessary, by means of an analysis of the experiences of migrants, considered as actors and vectors of change, enabling the identification of their practices of integration from a bottom-up, rather than top-down, perspective. Through a consideration of the inherent contradictions in the concepts under consideration, this project aims, by means of a dialectical approach, to explain social phenomena linked to political processes. By means of an empirical study carried out in Berlin, we also wanted to approach migrants' acts of resilience and their diverse initiatives as sociopolitical facts through an analysis of the practices, signs and tools that they develop in the SSE field.

Thanks to a participatory action research method, this project aimed to encourage equivalent and reciprocal participation and interaction on behalf of the researcher and the respondents. Semi-directive and informal interviews were carried out with members of the Palestinian diaspora in Berlin, including men and women from different familial, activist and religious contexts, who had been confronted with a series of migratory pathways. Participant observation was also carried out in organisations in the SSE field where Palestinian activities were developed on the initiative of Palestinian migrants in Berlin, in different domains (socio-cultural: music, folk dancing, art, cinema; but also socio-economic: gastronomy; and political: demonstrations). Finally, a digital ethnography also enabled us to get a better grasp of the intensity of the networks in the Palestinian diaspora, reinforcing the existence of multiform social and solidarity-based processes of integration and citizenship.

Results

The evolution of integration and citizenship policies in Germany

Until recently, thanks to Angela Merkel's 2015 speech, “Wir schaffen das” (“We will get there”)²³, Germany symbolised a policy of openness to refugees. Yet the arrival of a million

²² Teressa JUZWIAK et al., Migrant and Refugee Integration in Global Cities: the role of cities and businesses

²³ Christine BARWICK, L'accueil des réfugiés à Berlin : une question clé aux multiples enjeux

refugees in 2015 (nearly 1.2 million asylum seekers between 2015 and 2016) presented German society with a major integration challenge, despite the country having been engaged in a process of reflection on immigration for over twenty years. The federal government launched an integration plan with an annual budget of 750 million euros. It is an integration model that more closely resembles British multiculturalism than French assimilation. Due to the nature of the federal system, it is implemented in each *Länder*, and also in each commune²⁴.

To understand the evolution of integration policies in Germany, it is necessary to recall the historical construction of migratory policy in German society. The 1950s marked the arrival of the “Gastarbeiter” in the country: migrant workers who were invited to come and work temporarily in Germany²⁵. In the absence of any real integration model at this time, the aim was not so much to reinforce the learning of the German language for migrants, but rather to consider their possibilities of returning by allowing them to maintain their culture and traditions within German society, whilst guaranteeing them equal rights. Upon realising that these migrant workers were going to stay in Germany for the long-term, the country experienced a significant turning point at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, with the emergence of discussions on the integration model, reinforced in the 2000s by a new legal framework on German citizenship. On January 1st 2000, a new law on citizenship extended the *jus sanguinis* (blood right) that had been effective since 1913 to include *jus soli* (right of the soil), in order to facilitate the integration of foreigners²⁶. Limits were also placed on *jus sanguinis*²⁷. In 2005, despite certain ambivalences, “the first law on immigration enshrining the institutionalisation of aid for integration in German law [...] was adopted”²⁸. Since 2007, EU members and Swiss nationals can automatically access dual nationality, a right that has been extended to non-Europeans under certain conditions since the end of 2014 (for example, having grown up in Germany).

Since the 2000s, Germany has therefore been developing a number of initiatives related to policies of integration and citizenship. Since they are non-binding, these policies have contributed to the public debate and informed reflections on methods of integration and citizen participation for migrants. In this regard, with no precise model or policy for integration, Germany is divided “between the demand for advanced assimilation into German culture and the promotion of an integration based exclusively on the constitution and on fundamental rights, with a focus on cultural self-determination and cultural diversity”²⁹. Moreover, the state of the art

²⁴ Roland ROTH, L'accueil et l'intégration à l'échelon des communes en Allemagne, page 6

²⁵ Karin WEISS, Les principes de la politique allemande d'intégration – un modèle pour l'intégration, page 2

²⁶ Riva KASTORYANO, Nationalité et citoyenneté en Allemagne aujourd’hui, page 3

²⁷ From this date onwards, a child born of foreign parents on German soil can be granted German nationality, under certain conditions, including taking the necessary steps to obtain it and renouncing their own nationality.

²⁸ Karin WEISS, Les principes de la politique allemande d'intégration – un modèle pour l'intégration, page 2

²⁹ Ibid., page 3

reveals the integration problems that Germany is facing, with the presence of urban segregation, racist acts, but also an increase in the crime rate³⁰. The country is also under growing threat from the rise of far-right groups, as shown by the most recent national elections. In this context of political fragility, Germany is facing numerous challenges with regard to migratory and integration policies. The slogans “Refugees welcome” and “Wilkommenskultur” therefore give rise to a number of questions.

In the context of this turning point in German migratory policy, which is revelatory of a number of issues involving processes of integration and citizenship, certain activity domains, which are undervalued on the national scale, but also within the European Union, represent an opportunity to galvanise German society’s repertoire of action. Hence, whilst the concepts of integration and citizenship are often analysed in light of public policy and state levels, their analysis in relation to the initiatives developed by migrant communities allow for the observation of other dynamics. The SSE field is particularly interesting in this regard.

The SSE in Germany as the basis of the development of Little Palestine in Berlin

The SSE, which is based on the idea of making the economy work for social cohesion, is naturally concerned by the migrant question. This different, socially useful, cooperative and locally rooted economy can be a fundamental tool for migrant populations wishing to develop practices within European societies. Before focusing specifically on the articulation between the SSE field in Berlin and the development of Little Palestine in two specific neighbourhoods, let us look closely at what this acronym covers and the issues that it raises.

In Germany (as in a number of other European countries), the term “SSE” is not well-known, even though the economic reality of the sector is well and truly present. The expressions “third sector”, “social economy” or “non-profit sector” are imported from European neighbours and do not have any direct (recognised) equivalent in Germany. The concept of the third sector is probably the best suited to the German situation, with the existence of “an intermediary sector [...] in relation to the State (public authorities), “traditional”, for-profit private companies, and the informal sector”³¹. The third sector includes multiple organisational variations such as cooperations between the private and public sectors, non-profit associations, and legally recognised or other private businesses. Third sector organisations emerge when the supply no longer meets the demand³².

Moreover, whereas France recognises four kinds of organisations in the SSE field, Germany has fourteen kinds of organisations belonging to the third sector: foundations, registered associations, social clubs, non-governmental social aid organisations, gGmbH (non-profit limited

³⁰ Valérie DUBSLAFF, Crise des réfugiés et crispations identitaires : l’Allemagne en proie au national-populisme

³¹ Miriam GOUVERNEUR, *L’économie sociale et le tiers secteur en Allemagne et en France*

³² Ibid.

liability companies), gAG (anonymous non-profit corporations), private non-profit organisations, consumer groups, environmental protection associations, movements, civic groups and initiatives, special interest groups (political parties, syndicates...), socio-cultural cooperatives, mutual assistance groups, and religious groups. Since there is no clear legal framework for the German third sector, it corresponds to a Rhine-model or corporatist non-profit sector³³, characterised by strong institutionalisation, significant influence from the Church³⁴ and substantial State funding. The third sector in Germany is therefore governed by three basic principles³⁵: autonomous management (dating back to the 19th century, this principle refers to the creation of non-profit organisations within an autocratic State), subsidiarity (that guarantees independence from the State for social aid organisations although they receive substantial financial aid), and the collective economy (the organisation's aim must not be self-enrichment or the maximisation of revenues).

The forms of organisation, legal statuses, principles and practices in the SSE field vary enormously from one country to the next. Moreover, "as to its definition, the SSE can take different directions. It can be defined by the actors it is made up of (entrepreneurs, individuals, employees, etc), by its organisational forms (anonymous businesses, associations, foundations, mutual enterprises, etc), or according to the activities (occupational integration, fair trade, support for seniors, cultural and/or sporting events, etc)"³⁶. The heterogeneity and diversity of initiatives in the SSE field do not preclude its relevance, but its economic importance remains undervalued.

Given this imbroglio of definitions and lack of clarity, the SSE or third sector therefore needs to be examined, not in terms of its institutionalisation, but rather in terms of the actors who use and invest in it. As a hub of social utility in its own right, the diversity of resources and actors within SSE entities introduces different behavioural dynamics and relationships to the environment. Although the SSE represents around 6.3% of the active population in Europe's 28 member states, and more than 13.6 million paid jobs in Europe, it remains little-known and underused³⁷. If "it is perhaps this diversity that makes the creativity of the SSE"³⁸, this is also the role that migrant communities can play in it.

In Berlin, we therefore sought to examine the integration of different practices and initiatives developed by Palestinian communities in the SSE field over the course their successive

³³ Edith ARCHAMBAULT, Y a-t-il un modèle européen du secteur sans but lucratif ?

³⁴ The third sector emerged in Germany by means of charitable activities on behalf of the churches in response to the lack of State and civic initiatives. A strong cooperation therefore developed between the State, the Churches and organised civil society.

³⁵ Eckhard PRILLER, Annette ZIMMER, *Der Dritte Sektor in Deutschland : Wachstum und Wandel*

³⁶ Sylvain ALLEMAND & Sophie BOUTILLIER, L'économie sociale et solidaire, une définition multidimensionnelle pour une innovation sociale, page 10

³⁷ José Luis MONZON & Rafael CHAVES, Evolutions récentes de l'économie sociale dans l'Union européenne, page 77

³⁸ Bernard GUESNIER, Poids et place de l'économie sociale et solidaire dans les activités économiques, entre les autres acteurs, selon les échelles territoriales, page 15

migratory waves in Germany, to better grasp the role of these key actors. By focusing on the neighbourhoods of Neukölln and Kreuzberg, in the west of West Berlin, we were able to discover the importance of the activities developed by members of the Palestinian diaspora, that covered a wide range of areas and unknowingly constituted part of the SSE field as a result of the driving forces and stakes behind them.

Palestinian communities have come to occupy these neighbourhoods little by little, over the course of successive migratory waves. Long considered to be images of social marginalisation³⁹, they are now described as the most diverse and animated neighbourhoods in Berlin. Turkish kebab shops rub shoulders with Lebanese falafel restaurants, but also Syrian shisha bars and Lebanese corner stores, as well as Palestinian souvenir shops. Several languages can be heard in the streets, from German and Arabic to Turkish and Farsi. These neighbourhoods, which were dynamically occupied by Palestinians who created various forms of activities over the course of their migratory waves, now resonate as spaces of solidarity, socialisation and sociability, where each person's pathway echoes the will to develop this area known as “Little Palestine”.

The multiple repertoires of Palestinians in Germany

The SSE field, which is too often marginalised, therefore represents an important catalyst for the development of various initiatives. Over the course of the multiple waves of Palestinian migrations in Berlin, the SSE has fostered the development of more cooperative, solidarity-based and entrepreneurial practices. Before we analyse what these initiatives embody, let us look at their different characteristics.

Sociocultural practices

First of all, we were able to identify the creation of a number of sociocultural and artistic activities in the city of Berlin. Whether temporary, during music festival periods, or permanent, with the establishment of sociocultural structures, these initiatives have left a non-negligible imprint on the German capital.

In this regard, we carried out interviews amongst Palestinians involved in the sociocultural sector, enabling us to highlight the dynamism and significance of the Palestinian art scene in Berlin. We met a Palestinian from Syria, who arrived in Germany in 2015 and made a short film entitled “We Will Not Forget”, involving members of his family, with the aim of reinforcing the ties between his integration into Berlin society and the memory of the refugee camp, Yarmouk, where he was born.

Berlin is also distinguished by the vitality of the cultural activities set up by migrant communities, and especially Palestinian communities, with the development of a number of festivals and concerts, encompassing traditional folk music as well as new musical genres. We

³⁹ Lucie LECHEVALIER HURARD, *Histoire du quartier de Kreuzberg à Berlin. Rénovation urbaine, mobilisations des habitants et mouvement squat; Visite du Musée de Kreuzberg à Berlin*

took part in a number of sociocultural events in which Palestinian markers were very visible thanks to dress codes and traditional music. These sociocultural initiatives, which take place regularly in Berlin venues in the neighbourhoods of Neukölln and Kreuzberg, contribute to imprinting a strong Palestinian presence on the German capital.

Ethnic entrepreneurship and SSE renewal

Our fieldwork enabled us to extend the meaning attributed to the third sector, characterised by the development of migrant/ethnic entrepreneurship. The Neukölln neighbourhood is particularly affected and the Palestinian presence - more broadly, the presence of communities produced by immigration - is very strong. The neighbourhood is often depicted in terms of its significant unemployment rate, as well as its crime rate, but this characterisation masks third sector initiatives that boost prosperity and dynamism in the city.

Located in the westernmost part of West Berlin, Neukölln has remained part of the capital. Unlike French suburbs, Neukölln is linked to the centre of Berlin, with a metro line leading directly to the city centre, but it is also a dynamic neighbourhood from both a cultural and a socio-economic point of view, where a number of foreign workers have settled over the course of history to rebuild a country torn apart by war. Despite the size of the neighbourhood, more than 40% of residents in Neukölln are immigrants, representing over 160 nationalities, according to German statistics. Neukölln is the preferred meeting-point for a number of Palestinian migrants, but also for Lebanese, Syrian, and Turkish communities. Many of our respondents highlighted the importance of this neighbourhood in the development of their socio-professional activities and their personal growth. Although certain fragmentations were visible, with a specific organisation of the neighbourhood and a certain community self-segregation, Neukölln remains an important, solidarity-based meeting point.

Over time, Palestinian communities have also created their own businesses in Berlin, contributing to the development of "Little Palestine" in the neighbourhood of Neukölln. These entrepreneurs therefore contribute to the development of the third sector, which can be explained by various factors. By creating their own jobs, for example, they are able to bypass certain obstacles encountered as part of the search for employment, such as the lack or non-recognition of qualifications, language difficulties, or simply discrimination on behalf of local recruiters. Migrant entrepreneurship can also be a source of employment for other members of the community, who are given precedence during recruitment phases⁴⁰. Such businesses, developed on the initiative of migrant communities, can also provide goods and services that native entrepreneurs are not in a position to offer. This gives local consumers more choice, whilst simultaneously diversifying the daily life of Berlin society.

⁴⁰ H. G. BURGBACHER, Migrantenunternehmer. Existenzgründung und – förderung am Beispiel. Hamburgs

From a geographical point of view, migrant Palestinian entrepreneurship in Berlin is concentrated in the neighbourhood known as "Little Palestine". It is also characterised by the development of businesses in the food sector (restaurants, cafés, bakers', butchers', supermarkets). We therefore carried out a number of interviews with entrepreneurs working in the food sector. Several shop owners (restaurateurs, owners of cafés, shisha bars and supermarkets) shared their desire to integrate into German society by developing their own practices.

For example, we met the creator of a famous restaurant in Berlin, whose name and reputation resonate far beyond the city itself. The owner of this institution, a 35-year-old Palestinian from Syria, arrived in Germany in 2015. He told us of the numerous difficulties he encountered on his migratory journey (Syria - Turkey - Bulgaria - Hungary - Germany), strewn with obstacles and doubts, and highlighted the role that small businesses created on the initiative of migrants can have on the reunification of German society. Another Palestinian from Lebanon, who arrived during one of the first migratory waves to Germany, enabled us to understand how the solidarity initiatives in the development of Little Palestine emerged in Berlin. Now the owner of a restaurant and a supermarket, this Palestinian, from the Ain Al Hilweh refugee camp, managed over time to breathe life back into this neighbourhood, whilst contributing to the development of a number of other local businesses with other Palestinian entrepreneurs.

The activities developed by Palestinians in the SSE field therefore go beyond sociocultural practices, and the appearance of migrant entrepreneurship, characterised by solidarity values, can be said to have rekindled the third sector in Germany. Although this third sector is suffering from a lack of visibility and a kind of "Balkanisation"⁴¹, this has not prevented Palestinians from investing it with a variety of practices. These initiatives cover a wide range of forms and statuses, giving new meaning to the SSE field, which has become a synonym of the processes of integration and citizen participation.

Conclusion

General conclusion

With regard to the data collected in the field, we can conclude that the diversity of practices initiated by members of the diaspora in Berlin in the SSE field has made the latter a vector and driver of new forms of integration and citizen participation.

Examination of the evolution of immigration policies in Germany, as well as the recent contextual upheaval linked to the arrival of numerous refugees in German society, enabled us to bring a new perspective to processes of integration, by focusing on the role of the migrants themselves. Far from being passively integrated, these migrants make use of a set of resources

⁴¹ Jérôme BLANC, *Une théorie pour l'économie sociale et solidaire ?*, page 123

and capital acquired over the course of their pathways and migratory experiences in order to become key actors within specific spaces.

Moreover, our study bears witness to the need to develop a new perspective on the SSE field, which is too often considered to be marginal and invisible, but which is in fact particularly used by migrant communities in Berlin.

Finally, thanks to the diverse practices and initiatives developed by migrant populations in Berlin, we were able to grasp the sociopolitical and identity values of the SSE, as a driver of integration and citizen participation, but also as a vector of intra-community acts of solidarity.

Conclusion on the case study

More specifically, the case study that we analysed in this research project enabled us to better understand the dynamics at play in Berlin. Rather than approaching the Palestinian question by dealing with conventional forms of political mobilisation implemented to support the Palestinian cause, we wanted to approach it from an original and innovative angle, shedding light on new dynamics.

Integrating autonomy and alter-citizenship

By acting in specific spaces, where Palestinians have settled over the course of successive migratory waves in Germany, migrants have sought to demonstrate their commitment and affiliation to German society whilst maintaining a Palestinian sociopolitical identity through the development of practices in the SSE field. In this regard, the absence of any clear legal status concerning their citizenship, as well as the political vacuum to which they are subjected, create a significant fragmentation within the Palestinian diaspora, leading its members to develop compensatory strategies. “This does not preclude integration, on the contrary, but it leads them to seek out indirect ways to achieve it; the citizen is no longer “a spectator who votes”, as Rousseau said, but an actor seeking to vote through their influence on public opinion or on government decision-making”⁴².

These proofs of citizenship take the form of investment by Palestinian communities over the course of generations and migratory waves in Berlin. “Since the 1980s, the proliferation of so-called immigrant associations has been part of “policies for foreigners” (Ausländerpolitik), which aim to integrate them, as contradictory as it may seem in those terms. In this perspective, the German administration encourages foreigners to self-organise (Selbsthilfe) by means of associations”⁴³. Beyond their associative groups, the creation of entrepreneurial structures and

⁴² Riva KASTORYANO, Nationalité et citoyenneté en Allemagne aujourd’hui, page 9

⁴³ Ibid., page 9

sociocultural events enables Palestinians to play an active role in their integration and their empowerment within German society.

For a new perspective on the SSE by way of migrant communities

The initiatives developed by Palestinian communities in Germany effectively "bear witness to an unprecedented response to social needs (necessity), and aspirations of developing collective affiliations (identity), whilst incorporating a vision of a fair and democratic world (social project)"⁴⁴. By examining the activities developed by members of the Palestinian diaspora in the two main neighbourhoods of Neukölln and Kreuzberg in Berlin, we can confirm that the SSE is indeed a unifying concept for a number of initiatives developed by different actors, and especially by migrant communities.

Beyond the different sectors, from sociocultural practices to migrant entrepreneurship, on a shared territorial basis, the inclusive nature of the SSE field enables Palestinians to develop a solidarity-based citizenship in action. The diversity of practices and activities created by Palestinians in Berlin in the SSE field is therefore a response to imperatives that are economic (necessity), sociocultural (identity) and sociopolitical (social project), which then become the basis for the construction of their integration.

The sociopolitical integration of Palestinian practices in the SSE field

To understand the issues surrounding the SSE field, it is useful to approach it as a socially-constructed object, made dynamic by its status of "non social movement"⁴⁵, which allows for the affirmation of identity projects. Thanks to the practices developed in the framework of the SSE field, Palestinians in Berlin have developed forms of collective action, using different repertoires of action by reinvesting their activist and mobility capital into Berlin society, in the neighbourhood of Little Palestine. In this regard, the analysis of initiatives and activities in the SSE field shows how Palestinians in the diaspora seek to mobilise with the aim of promoting a new sociopolitical agenda, making the Palestinian cause plural and multiform. The emergence of a Palestinian social and solidarity economy, thanks to different entrepreneurial structures, but also by way of sociocultural events, places the Palestinian diaspora in a new dynamic, that seeks to mitigate its fragmentations by resorting to new, unconventional forms of citizen participation.

The plurality of forms of integration into the SSE field by Palestinians in Berlin reveals the existence of multiple Palestinian identities, whose practices are part of a sociopolitical dynamic. More than a field for entrepreneurial and sociocultural activities, the SSE field has become a mobilisation tool for the Palestinian diaspora, who use it to affirm an existence in the German political landscape and to leave a visual imprint on various spaces in Berlin. The proliferation of

⁴⁴ Louis FAVREAU, L'économie sociale et solidaire : contribution éthique au développement d'une mondialisation à visage humain, page 5

⁴⁵ Asef BAYAT, *Life as Politics. How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*

restaurants, shisha bars, tea rooms, supermarkets, and souvenir shops, together with various Middle-East-themed sociocultural events, is not devoid of meaning for Palestinians in Berlin. It allows for an expression of their integration into German society whilst maintaining their political identity as Palestinians.

Unexpected results

These practices, as part of the SSE field, also unexpectedly reveal certain divisions in the Palestinian diaspora in Germany. We were able to observe the existence of a significant diversity of Palestinian migratory trajectories in Berlin, including different years of arrival and places of origin, but also as a result of different contexts. Despite the existence and affirmation of a Palestinian sociopolitical identity, based on a sense of collective belonging embodied by the existence of common symbols in SSE initiatives, the sociopolitical, economic and cultural fragmentations amongst Palestinians who make up a "shattered mosaic"⁴⁶ are also to be found in the diaspora.

This crystallisation of the Palestinian diaspora contributes to the development of generational solidarity, but also to affiliations based on the countries of origin. We were able to observe the ease with which the Palestinians that we met shared information about their countries of origin and the importance that this had in the development of SSE practices. For example, whereas Palestinians from Lebanon, who arrived during the first migratory waves in Germany, have been able to establish links with Lebanese circles⁴⁷, the Palestinians who recently arrived from Syria sometimes felt somewhat sidelined. This bears witness to the importance of taking migratory experiences into account, since they continuously configure the existing forms of fragmentation amongst Palestinians in the diaspora.

Limits of the study

Our choice to focus on one single urban space had its limits inasmuch as other hubs for the development of activities in the SSE field where Palestinians were present were not included in the study.

Moreover, in spite of the methodological choice that we made to focus on the Palestinian case study, a comparison with other initiatives developed by different migrant communities might have been beneficial for this study.

⁴⁶ Nicolas, DOT-POUILLARD, *La mosaïque éclatée. Une histoire du mouvement national palestinien (1993-2016)*

⁴⁷ Ralph GHADBAN, *The Impact of Immigration Policies on Palestinians in Germany*, page 40

Conclusions beyond the case study, and implications

The results of our research have therefore enabled us to bring different perspectives to the topic of the call for fellowships. Beyond the precise case of the study, focused on the initiatives of Palestinian communities in the SSE field in Berlin, we provide an innovative perspective on the topic of "the Social Economy and Migrations". A number of the social needs of exiled populations are currently addressed by structures from the social and solidarity economy. Thanks to the results of this research, we were able to observe several interdependent phenomena, allowing for the deconstruction of classical approaches which are too commonly taken for granted in the field of study concerning the integration of migrant populations.

Whilst many studies bear witness to the importance of the SSE field as a vector and driver of processes of integration, thanks to the institutions that are developed through it, we sought to identify the role of the practices implemented by migrants as sources of the SSE. The initiatives created by these migrants can effectively be identified as belonging to the SSE field, whether in the sociocultural sector or by means of migrant entrepreneurship. In spite of the SSE's lack of visibility, the activities developed by migrants in specific spaces enable them to integrate into a social and solidarity-based dynamic, effectively constructing their integration as well as their citizen engagement.

Moreover, we sought to understand the extent to which the spatial mobility of migrants can be read as the embodiment of social mobility, of movement through space, by means of practices developed in the SSE field. In this regard, we wanted to examine the multiplicity of social positionings amongst migrants, taking into account the reinvestment of their "mobility capital"⁴⁸ within new European societies. The idea was to analyse how the experience of migration, as well as migration itself, can complicate the processes at the heart of the experience of social mobility by means of lived experiences and initiatives developed in the SSE field. We wanted to address the issue of the accumulation, management and reinvestment of various forms of capital in migrant careers and strategies, and as a result, to consider the multiplicity of migrant existences⁴⁹. This enabled us to better understand and interpret the sociopolitical integration of various initiatives in the SSE field, that bore witness to the strengthening of identity projects amongst migrants within their host societies.

These results are therefore innovative in their approach, inasmuch as they are based on an bottom-up perspective, that takes into account and sheds light on the role played by actors who are too often considered to be the causes of societal crises in Europe. The original nature of this research also demonstrates the importance of migrant communities who are still too frequently analysed in light of the so-called migration crisis. The analysis of migrant practices in the SSE

⁴⁸ Joëlle MORET, *European Somalis' Post-Migration Movements. Mobility Capital and the Transnationalisation of Resources*

⁴⁹ Hugo BREANT et al., *Capital social en migration*

field enables us to provide another framework for understanding, highlighting the driving role that these actors can play in the dynamic development of societies.

These research results have different kinds of interdependent implications. From a political point of view, the data suggests that public policy and national authorities should consider migrants as actors and not as problems, seeing them as drivers and vectors of integrational autonomy thanks to their citizen participation in the SSE field. Economic implications also arise, inasmuch as the dynamism of the SSE field deserves to be valued more highly. As a source of employment, a catalyst for integration and citizenship, and a creator of plural identities, the SSE field must be humanised and not merely imagined as a marginal sector of activity. Finally, on the social level, it is important to underscore that this study reveals the importance of not hiding behind the phenomenon of the so-called migration crisis in order to understand societal problems.

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