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Debordering processes and resilient ontological security at the city level: the case study of Barcelona in perspective

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Abstract

Staying within the debate, which links border studies and migration studies, my purpose is to conceptualise a focus that connects two heuristic approaches: ontological security and urban resilience. I will follow the rationale path that the normative foundation of resilience is ontological security. I will state that at the city level the concern on the "security of the self" driving resilience operates at two levels: at the social level, the city council's resilience strategy seeks to maintain cohesion-making; at the individual level, the city council seeks to provide migrants with the minimum inclusive threshold of "the right to have rights"

This paper is the outcome of an exploratory theoretical-empirical research. First, I introduce the theoretical background linking ontological security and debordering processes at the city scale. Then, the conceptual lens linking ontological security and resilience strategies will be justified. Thirdly, the Barcelona debordering processes' case study will be examined with a methodological section leading the presentation of findings. Finally, concluding remarks will draw some paths for further comparative research.

Keywords
Barcelona, Debordering, Migration, Ontological Security, Resilience.

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Introduction: Framing the discussion for this chapter

In this article I ask critical questions about what happens to the so-called borderlands when 'borderings' are displaced to other scales such as the cities that are not usually categorised as "border cities". Staying within the debate, which links border studies and migration studies, my purpose is to conceptualise a focus that connects two heuristic approaches: ontological security and urban resilience. The initial conceptual affinity is as follows: resilience building is a policy strategy for empowering cities and developing urban capacities and learning to govern with the spectrum of uncertainties, hazards and risks related to migration-related stresses. Resilient cities look for ways to face pressure in their legal, institutional and policy infrastructures, with interconnected cultural, economic, territorial/demographic, political and social dimensions (IOM, 2017). Taken broadly, the Word Bank (2016; 19) describes resilience as the ability of a system to adapt to a variety of changing conditions and to withstand shocks while maintaining its essential functions. The driven force of resilience action for many cities is that if they do nothing, the current circumstances may lead to increased spatial slums, precariousness, territorial segregation, discrimination and racism, and increased social conflict, instability, coexistence uncertainty and disturbances in the society. There are also some by-products such as xenophobia, continuous infringement of human rights, and the politics of urban hostility against migrants (da Silva and Morera, 2014; MacKinnon, 2015; Yamagata and Maruyama, 2016). One of the increasing resilient strategies showing cities agency-capacity and their autonomy-building is when we focus on their policy practices towards refugees, undocumented adults, unaccompanied children and vulnerable women (Mallet-Garcia and Delvino, 2020). Namely extreme human situations generated by multiple social stress processes often generated by external factors, such as the state and/or EU bordering processes.

I will follow the rationale path that the normative foundation of resilience is ontological security. I will state that at the city level, this concern on the "security of the self" driving resilience operates at two levels: at the social level, the city council's resilience strategy seeks to maintain cohesion-making; at the individual level, the city council seeks to provide migrants with the minimum inclusive threshold of "the right to have rights".[1]

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[1] H. Arendt summarised magisterially the precondition of human rights, those rights that belong to every person by virtue of existence, as the "right to have rights", interpreted by S. Benhabib (2011, chap. 2) as a direct challenge to nation-states monopoly of distribution of citizenship rights: "This new situation, in which "humanity" has in effect assumed the role formerly ascribed to nature or history, would mean in this context that the right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity, should be guaranteed by humanity itself." (H. Arendt, 1976; 298)

This chapter is the outcome of an exploratory theoretical-empirical research. First, I introduce the theoretical background linking ontological security and debordering processes at the city scale. Then, the conceptual lens linking ontological security and resilience strategies will be justified. Thirdly, the Barcelona de-bordering processes' case study will be examined with a methodological section leading the presentation of findings. Finally, some concluding remarks evaluating this first theoretical-empirical exploration will close this chapter, drawing some paths for further comparative research.

1. The theoretical background: a multi-scalar understanding of ontological security and the debordering processes at the city level

A consolidated literature on bordering and rebordering already exists (E. Brunet-Jailly, 2011; A. Paasi, 2012; D. Wastl-Walter, 2016), but, in comparison, there is a still under-researched area on debordering. These three research avenues are different heuristic angles of analysis in border studies (Newman and Paasi, 1998, Paasi, 2011; Cooper and Tinming, eds. 2019). Taken literally, "debordering" means processes of opening borders by removing existing restrictions. Symbolically it can also refer to tearing up legal, political, social barriers that have been placed by upper power. Some scholars even add normative dimensions that go beyond this descriptive root, including bridging processes when initially two spaces where separated (for instance, Chen, 2013; 1).

Border studies usually uses "border" in two main senses. As a borderland separating two sovereign states, which may coincide with the geographical territory or not, as it happens in the debate of externalisation of borders in migration studies, where borders of one state may be in the borderline of the other state separated by continents and sea (van Munster and Sterkx, 2006; Zaiotti, 2018; Lemberg-Pedersen, 2019). But the debate today is on identifying the multiple border spaces within and beyond the states's territory (Kolossov and Scott, 2013; Laine, 2016; Andersen *et al*., 2016). Today there is a major shift in border studies towards a much more symbolic and vernacular meaning (A. Cooper, *et. al.,* 2016). This involves that borders may be scattered through society, in every-day life (Jones and Johnson, eds. 2016; Cassidy *et al.,* 2018). Inequality, legal status, discrimination, racism, exclusion, power relations, education, social class can be concepts analysed through the border lens. In fact, it is this "spheres of meanings" (Zapata-Barrero, 2013; 5), that make border studies so multi-diffuse.

Alongside this fuzzy meaning, border-presence can be multi-scalar, from states to regions and cities. This may allow us to connect the geographical/territorial meaning with the

symbolic/vernacular meaning. The fact is that states are the main actors of the bordering process, but other level of governments such as cities are often forced to manage the effects in their societal systems. This entails that we may consider bordering process in the legal, social, and political aspects, which are vital both for migrants and cities. Moreover, these local bordering processes frame the relations between migrants and cities. This is the specific focus of this paper and from where we will formulate the key-questions: How do state's bordering processes affect migrant/city relations, and how cities draw and practice debordering strategies? As a premise, these debordering strategies will be interpreted as resilient strategies, and the foundation legitimating these strategies as a certain understanding of "ontological security" applied at the city level.

The local authorities may follow state border dictates in a rigid form, and then accept the limits of migrant rights' inclusion/exclusion established by the state, or not. In this case city officers can follow their assistance and humanitarian views, and even their claim-making against state's border criteria. For instance, this is currently happening in several cities receiving refugees and rescue boats in the Mediterranean, or cities creating welcoming networks with other cities or supporting NGO's initiatives, as it is the case of the Charter of Lampedusa (2014) and the Charter of Palermo (2015). This militant face of cities (Lacroix *et al.,* 2020) has increased since 2015 in the Mediterranean within the so called "Migration and Refugee crisis". It can be framed within the current "local turn" (Zapata *et al.* 2017) debate in migration studies, where cities become actors and then begin to be analysed by their own distinctive initiatives within a multi-level framework of vertical relations with other level of governments and even build alliances horizontally with other social actors and cities. It is this autonomy-building and empowering phase that I am interested in exploring under the focus of resilient cities.

2. The conceptual lens: linking ontological security and the processes of building resilience at the local level

My starting premise comes from the debate that assumes that bordering policies are driven by ontological security (Mitzen, 2006a, Mitzen 2006b, Mitzen, 2018; Johanson-Nogués, 2018)). This creates a logic of inclusion and exclusion, when some migrants manage to enter the territory but are immediately expelled at different degrees from the societal system. This creates stress on local authorities who must deal with micro-politics, short-term and proximity issues, despite migrants being out of the system. Sometimes for humanitarian reasons or simply pragmatic ones since "migrants are here and now". But the reason can also come from the same

society, who claim more cohesion and stability. Local authorities must reach a policy/social equilibrium between migrants' exclusion environment and some part of their population that may interpret these policies towards "others" as contravening their everyday routines as a society. These "hard cases" can be viewed as stressors for local authorities, since institutionally they cannot ignore their situation despite knowing they are outcomes of upper- level bordering processes. For most cities this breaks their policy routines towards migrants, and most cities in such situations are forced to enter into resilience strategies, looking at narratives and practices that most of the time go beyond their own routinized policies' scope. The effort to re-establish policy routines or reboot new ones is what is at the core of the resilience concept. From a conceptual point of view, this is very close to the semantics of "ontological security". Inspired by the core debates around the concept (Da Silva and Morera, 2014; MacKinnon, 2015; Bigg *et al.* 2016), 'resilience' is understood as a policy strategy followed by public authorities to deal with the tense relation between exogeneous/endogenous stressors and policy routines. These stressors can have many sources: institutional pressures or limits, often coming from upper level of governments; social stresses, such as discrimination and racism, precariousness (unemployment, lack of income, poverty), legal status (refugees, undocumented, etc,), age (unaccompanied children), gender (vulnerable women). The current pandemic COVID-19 even acts as an accelerator of these current stressors (Bandarin *et al.* 2020; European Commission, 2015; GRITIM-UPF, 2020; Mallet-Garcia and Delvino, 2020; Içduygu, 2020; OECD, 2020; IOM, 2021; Verhaeghe and Ghekiere, 2021) and in most cases it worsens the current vulnerable situations of most migrants. What interests me to focus on are those factors that are directly/indirectly by-products of State's bordering process. In this case, I look at specific situations where cities must deal with human and social situations generated by external factors originated by the state and/or EU legislation and competence systems, and now aggravated by the pandemic shock. The premise is then that building resilience governance is not an isolated practice, since it necessarily involves breaking current administrative and legal boundaries, and allow for a holistic and integrated urban approach, involving multi-level governance and multi-scalar relations with a multiplicity of public and private actors.

The main argument is that city resilience is pushing cities towards new narratives and practices on debordering practices motivated by their understanding of their Self, and hence, by ontological security. In political theoretical terms, ontological security acts a normative foundation of city's resilience. The full argument can be formulated as follows*:* today there are some structural stressors and acute shocks that most cities must face, which are provoked by States and EU (re)bordering processes, and that force most cities to follow de-bordering

resilient strategies with the purpose to ensure the ontological security of their own system and of the migrants that are placed outside the social and political system.

Before properly developing all the theoretical dimensions of this argument, my first priority is to concentrate delineating the heuristic opportunities in bonding resilience strategy analysis with an ontological security normativity.

2.1. Ontological security applied at the local level

The suggestive notion of ontological security, initially thought of as an approach in international relations, is beginning to have a certain popularity in border studies and migration studies. The seminal idea is that the 'self' constructs its own identity through routines. There is then a clear link between identity and agency since it is not only through narratives but through practices that identity can be deployed. The basic function of routines is to keep a sense of continuity of the self. There is always then a certain relation of identity with temporality and space. The main stressors of routines, and hence on ontological security, are uncertainties surrounding a particular social environment.

Even if the conceptual system of ontological security remains the same at whatever scale of application, the conceptual horizon behind may change. At the individual level, the security of the self may be the system of routines that a person may follow in its everyday-live in its neighbourhood, but also in whatever place the person may have the opportunity to develop its agency (this is in fact the original view set up by Giddens, 1991; Mitzen, 2006). At the State level, this ontological security may take the dimension of legal and policy routines but also the national-flag and the religious traditions that legitimate them (Mitzen, 2006). Hence the normativity founding the same content of national security is key to understand how it may be used in combining critical diagnosis with ideal expectations (Sorensen, 2008).

To my knowledge, this multi-scalar application of the notion has not yet reached the local level. My initial claim is that cities are also subject to ontological security since they also seek to ensure the routinization of their policies. This application can remain at the structural level, as the policy and legal routinizations of their governance, but also, we can give centrality to the main horizon that may picture these social routines. In this view, the main normative drivers of local ontological security are both cohesion-making at societal level, but empowering migrants with the "right to have rights". This means that stressors breaking routines at the local social system and then configuring a scenario of uncertainty, are directly related to these two normative principles. Cohesion, may have many different meanings (Zapata-Barrero, 2022), and it can even be a *passe-partout* concept, but the core concept means togetherness, a

"structure whose parts stick together" (J. Burns *et al.* 2018; 9). In our reading, to share routines among the inhabitants, even if each one may have different ones shaping their identities. This cohesion-based view of ontological security allows us to go beyond the state-dependence view of ontological security, as one related to the national flag. Here the idea of cohesion, of place-making of everyday life routines play a prominent role. If we take the meaning of ontological security as a way of identity-making and identity-keeping, then place-making may replace the national flag for the sense of belonging, as a necessary ingredient (not sufficient of course) for cohesion-making (Kearns and Forrest, 2000; Meha, 2019).

2.2. Resilient policy strategies at the local level

The resilience focus helps us channel and interconnect most of the cities' policy behaviour originated by pressure related to migration that would otherwise be scattered. This focus is then a powerful analytical tool that helps us to articulate different emerging policy trends of the city, specially faced with challenges related to State's bordering processes.

In this context, urban resilience designates the capacity of cities to build empowering strategies to persist/adapt and transform (Biggs *et al.*, 2016) their urban social systems. There is an international policy literature inviting us to analyse how cities are addressing chronic stress and acute shocks (Un-Habitat, 2015; OECD, 2014), there is also a first academic debate on urban resilience (MacKinnon, 2015; Ernstson *et al.*, 2010).

The rough concept of resilience is often used as a synonym for adaptation to an adverse environment, but also the capacity to transform this environment to reach a new structural scenario that may include this external factor into the societal system. These two dimensions give rise to two major meanings: a reactive and proactive meaning. The reactive meaning is ideologically conservative. It designates the fact that the functioning of a system is altered by an external factor and we need to build a strategy to restore the pre-existing routine. The pro-active meaning is much more creative and progressive since it involves looking at transforming the pre-existing environment with renovated routines and/or even new ones. Here, its link with the analytical distinction made by J. Mitzen (2006) between flexible or rigid routines play a prominent role. The rigidity of routines is much more related to the reactive meaning of resilience, and the pro-active to the reflexivity of routines, and the potential to transform routines.

There is no closed definition of urban resilience, but almost all first reports share the idea that what matters are the innovative and creative aspects of narratives and practice. Some even speak about the transformative aspect of urban resilience (Yamagata and Maruyana, eds.

2016), breaking down usual boundaries and traditions, as well as legally established frameworks (UN-Habitat, 2015). One influential report pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation (100 Resilient Cities, 2017) illustrates the importance of re-conceptualizing the urban landscape to include the shocks and stresses of the 21st Century, as well as the need to build overall resilience that can ensure cities thrive amid the uncertainties of the years ahead.

3. Case study: Barcelona's de-bordering processes. Theorizing resilient ontology security at the local level: Sources and Methods

Barcelona is a good example of the debordering processes that can be analysed linking ontological security and resilience strategy building. Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia and it is recognised as being innovative in most of its migration/diversity policies by many international reports (for instance, OECD, 2018). Cohesion-making and empowering migrants with minimum "right to have rights" are the two the main normative principles shaping its policy routes in its resilience strategies.

Documentary analysis and seven key interviews with head politicians, leading policy-officers and advisory experts covering all the spectrum of migration policies (from welcoming policies, diversity and sectoral policies) were approached[2] in a semi-structured interview design requesting them to identify the main challenges generated by external factors that force the city to look at innovative and strategic policies. This fieldwork reached saturation of information in this first exploratory stage. More details on given resilient strategies could be covered through other interviews at lower levels of policy-making and other social sectors identified. Yet, this would not substantially modify the rough core theoretical design and the main framework structure of resilient strategies we have carved. Nor would it affect the system

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[2] The interviews were held between January to April 2021, and with an average of 1hour.
KG: Khalid Ghali Bada, Commissioner for Intercultural Dialogue and Religious Pluralism at Barcelona City Council (28/01/2021).
AG: Aida Guillén, Director of the Citizenship, Rights and Diversity Services Department at Ajuntament de Barcelona (Barcelona City Council) (10/03/2021).
MS: Marc Serra, Councillor for Citizenship Rights, Participation and Global Justice at Barcelona City Council (19/04/2021).
XC: Xavier Cubells, Immigration and Refugee Services Director at Barcelona City Council (10/03/2021).
RS: Ramon Sanahuja, Expert. Former responsible of Welcome policy at Barcelona City Council (2006-2020) (24/03/2021).
DT: Dani de Torres, Expert and Former Commissioner at the European Council for the Intercultural Cities Programme (2007-2011) and Current Director of Intercultural Cities (15/03/2021).
SF: Sonia Fuertes, Commissioner for Social Action at Barcelona City Council (18/03/2021).

of normative justifications and claim-making that will give content to the ontological security notion applied at the local levels.

In concrete terms, I first requested an overview of the main pressures that Barcelona city council encounters, but that they feel are by-products of external forces, basically the State's bordering policies. Then, we navigated issue per issue, and I inquired on which were their main de-pressure strategies. We had already framed the interviewer's first contact informing that we were interested in discussing creative and innovative strategies to maintain or create new policy routines despite limited resources. I even used the catchword used by my first interview "We need a lot of imagination to face situations created by other levels of government". This interview's strategy worked well in provoking engaged information, mixing diagnosis with claim-making, and even justifying "city activism".

Following a participatory strategy and the ethical guidelines of a signed consent form, transcriptions were done and shared with participants to validate (add/delete) information, before properly analysing it. The documentary analysis comprised the main official writings produced by the city council, once I identified the main stresses calling for resilient strategies, most of them mentioned by participants. It also comprised the main issue-related scholarly production on Barcelona migration policies and newspapers commenting on issues and strategies.

In the content analysis of the interviews, apart from identifying pressures calling for resilient de-bordering strategies, I used three meaningful analytical distinctions to articulate the analysis of interviews. The premised pattern is that most of the resilient strategies for building ontological security are the outcome of multilevel tensions between state bordering processes and the city debordering processes. I focused the content analysis in identifying these tensions and seeing how cities find ways to deal with them following the focus of resilient ontological security.

3.1. Framing the first findings within the theoretical-empirical framework

Barcelona is a clear example of how policy innovation is related to resilience and the debordering process, and how ontological security works as a normative principle to justify these practices. AG makes this clearly from the very beginning of the interview: "I believe that the whole story revolves around Immigration Law and its impact on citizenship law. At the local level, we cannot afford to distinguish between the national and immigrant population because many services and the infrastructures of the city rely upon the taxes that all of them contribute with. For us, the main criterion is *who* lives in the city, *who* is a resident.". This

awareness of state pressure clusters almost all the participants.[3] Moved by the ontological security premises, they also recognize they must develop policy engineering and "imagination" to circumvent bordering restrictions.[4]

In general, the main resilient psychology of policy officers generates because they do not only identify problems but are aware they need to provide a quick and effective answer to prevent the escalation of ontology security problems both at the level of social system (cohesion-making) and at the level of the same resilience of migrants (vulnerability and exclusion). There is also an initial shared awareness of the link between knowledge needs as a tool for resilience prevention. For instance, DT signals "we need segregation prevention policies to guarantee the city's cohesion." Therefore, he includes information-making as a key a strategy: "in front of these topics, the most problematic issue is a lack of knowledge" (this statement is reinforced in Ara, 2019).

There is also a shared concern on how to deal with the dichotomy between mainstreaming and specific policies' strategies. For instance, RS insists that all these municipal policies are always devised trying to avoid excessive specificity and to work with what already exist and towards all people. Most often, innovation comes from the specificity policy corner. One example of how the internal resilience logic works in building a policy strategy is provided by MS when he asserts: "We have many neighbours who are very integrated and who are actually part of the city's register ('padró'), access regularly access the city's services and hold a health card, who enjoy a developed associative life and whose children attend school, but they cannot opt for job offers because they have not been properly legalised by the State administration". It is here that from the city council, apart from the legal counselling services, have made public employment offers. It has been offered by *Barcelona Activa* through an adaptation of the employment conditions, which until recently were only 6 months long, adequate for the local population, but not for immigrants. Two years ago, Barcelona city council extended it to a length of one year with the purpose to "legalize these people". Last year, 150 immigrants benefited from it and they were immediately granted work. The development of innovative strategies is then motivated by this resilience and often pushes policy makers towards specific treatment.

Time pressure is also often referred, which means governing by urgency, since some situations cannot simply be on stand-by for weeks. This time pressure is complemented by

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[3] AG: we cannot avoid the Immigration Laws and their impact on immigrant people and their rights.

[4] KG**:** I am afraid that it depends a lot on State law. But this does not mean that meanwhile, we cannot be creative and find ways to circumvent it.

scarce economic, legal, political, and human resources. The most important barrier often referred to are legal frameworks, because legality is the main State resource framing their bordering policies. RS shows us how bordering processes make cities resilient, and this time with clear spatial dimensions: "I would also add something that you have not mentioned, which is the arrival of immigrants through the coasts like the Canary Islands (island to the coast of Africa) and their later transfer to Barcelona and other cities where they find themselves abandoned and in irregular administrative status". This same case is referred by MS, who incorporates an added information confirming resilience psychology as a background of their decisions: "if we know that currently there is an immigration inflow in the Canary Islands or Andalucía (South of Spain), we can already expect it to reach Barcelona in three months. It is not simple at all for a system that has been designed to supply services in circumstances of stability, not of crisis".

This resilient psychology of officers appears several times in the interviews. As an illustration, MS clarifies: "the situation of uncertainty caused by immigration flows has a strong impact on our system and we often have to make a big effort to find resources. We are also limited by contractual frameworks: bureaucracy is increasingly tedious and to make the modification you are often constrained by an end. We have several times overpassed these limits and we have been forced to make a new contract even if the former had not expired, because of a sudden immigration jump".

Together, the awareness of doing lobbying is always in the mind of policy makers and one widespread resilient strategy of Barcelona. This is also part of the resilient psychology that policy officers must manage. RS expresses it very clearly: "We do what we can… because there are issues that are determined by regulations. […] But in the end, the tools that are available to you depend on the legislative framework and here, there is no other choice but political work: reminders, awareness-raising, claim-making". This resilient strategy is a way to incorporate, into the public agenda, challenges that they must face "without being the city council's fault" as XC argues. But activism is also a strategy when the city defends "the right to have rights" of migrants, when they fight to provide migrants with the necessary documents to restore their "legality" and to simply become "legal" in the eyes of the State. With many examples, we can pursue with how this resilient psychology is installed in policy-makers minds by the two-plugged understanding of the ontological security: cohesion-making and empowering migrants with the right to have rights.

The interviews also show us that there are at least four main topics at the top of their resilient agenda, and how policy officers face them with ontological security principles:

inclusion of immigrants into the public administration or the "diversity gap", unaccompanied underage immigrants, irregular migrants, refugees. Most of these pressures are channelled under citizenship policy programmes (Gebhardt, 2016). But before going through them, let us quickly analyse the Barcelona Immigration Plan 2018-2021. All the four stressors are incorporated, and the plan combines actions and claim-making, especially on these bordering issues. Overviewing the former plans, the new Plan 2018-2021 reminds us that in the 2002 Plan, the objectives were to guarantee the people's access to universal resources and services through the mechanism of 'empadronament' (registration in the city's census); spreading the values of diversity and making policies oriented to scaffolding coexistence and preventing conflict (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2018a, 5).

Here we have all the dimensions of ontological security together with one of the key core strategies of resilient policies (pro-active city registration, as I will analyse later): cohesion-building, providing security to vulnerable people, and social conflict prevention. The recognition that the objective is not only empowering vulnerable migrants, but at the same time to avoid that these situations increase conflict, is always present. This risk-management prevention is explicitly included in the section of administrative irregularity: "It is in this way that their situation of administrative exclusion creates real situations of social exclusion and segregation that may jeopardise the citizen coexistence. Therefore, Barcelona city council has had to give answers to it, although with little or no collaboration from the side of the State administration" (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2018a, 29).

The ontological security grounding resilience strategies operates at two levels. Most participants assume that if nothing is done, this can create subjective/objective insecurity in the society. So, the stressful situations are originated not only by the political will to stabilise migrants lack of basic rights, situations that are the result of the State's bordering processes, but the conviction that if nothing is done, social conflict and a general insecurity atmosphere may spread. The example given by MS of the rise of the far right in Andalucía is illustrative. MS says that inclusive policies that secure the rights for all are also an antidote against the entry of the far right in the administration. So, in the same resilience strategies these two levels are present: assistance, empowering policies, but also avoidance that these same situations create security issues that may affect cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

In general, we meet two main arguments, and both are related to the principles regulating their ontological security approach. On the one hand to ensure peaceful coexistence and cohesion, on the other hand to provide migrants with resources, power and autonomy, since

there is a general awareness that their situation of exclusion and vulnerability could increase by bordering decisions of the State.

Ontological security at the local social system level: Interviews show us that the main purpose of innovation is to maintain social cohesion in society (conviviality and peaceful coexistence). RS highlights that "coexistence challenges" are often less voiced because they do not have as much visual impact on the streets as other "burning issues". They mix with the rise of the far right and a radical change in the political and media spectre in Spain, which is out of Barcelona's reach. Consequently, there has been a surge of racist messages everywhere, even within the city of Barcelona, that we did not observe 10 years ago. Instead, now they enjoy a central position in the media and political spaces like the Catalan Parliament.

Some interviewees say that "not doing anything is not only a breach of human rights and vulnerability, but also a matter of survival as social fabric" (SF). DT also confirms all these aspects and it even includes equality as an ontological security resource. XC makes it clear: "our main aim at immigration services is that people are always included in the city's system at least for a period of two years. This means that their children attend school, that they develop certain neighbourhood ties so that they have access to the social services network like any other person. And we give this initial support to ensure their inclusion in the city's reality."

Ontological security at the individual level: Empowering and autonomy-building of migrants are key normative principles in most of the interviewees. They often refer to them as policies against legal exclusion and vulnerability. XC insists that "we want these people to be autonomous, that they get over their migration grieves. And especially, the inclusion aspect: we do not want to support them in a paternalistic way, but for them to develop their own abilities and to contribute in a way or another socially to a city that has limbo historically been at the crossroads of cultures". Speaking about undocumented children RS says, "they need the institutional backup because otherwise, they would end up on the streets too". This is a clear ontological security argument. This means that without city intervention, the security of the child worsens. Other examples appear in newspapers (*El Punt Avui,* 2016), when explaining how most irregular immigrants addressed to CITE are women, because many work in domestic services or care for older people (or even prostitution). Here we understand situations of vulnerability that arise from bordering processes, and most often related to limited rights of the people that make them more vulnerable in the market and other situations and make it difficult for them to plan a life project. Most of these situations require policy interventions, as part of resilient actions seeking to ensure ontological security. Along these lines, SF highlights, for example, that "people must understand that any of us would do the same to save our own lives

when there is nothing to lose. Therefore, anything that we can do will be welcome. […]. When we speak about the coverage of basic rights, we have already overlooked a whole array of issues". This means that local policies must deal with the survival and resilient strategies of the same migrants. SF insists that "it is more difficult to put across the experiences of people who try to survive on informal economic activities and that every night dream of being deported by the police to their countries."

This resilient mindset provides us with very important localizations of where the stressor operates. For instance, SF and others often speak about the situation of some people as being in a "limbo". This is not new for migration studies, and it often affects irregulars and refugees, who are "lost in a limbo" (Numführ & Seasay, 2019; Ukrayinchuk & Havrylchyk, 2020). This "limbo situation" displays the dysfunction between policy structure and legality. It is always an unexpected, unforeseen and an unanticipated situation. A clear by-product of State bordering process, grounded by other understandings of ontological security, based on national control and state security. This shows how strong the effects of the State's bordering process operate for people who manage to enter and become irregulars, or are waiting on an administrative resolution of their refugee request, or even become irregular while being regulars, as an induced situation (there is a special section p. 29-30 in the current Plan 2018-2021). Becoming an irregular immigrant overnight and entering a limbo situation directly nurtures the resilience of local authorities moved by ontological security principles of cohesion-making and empowering minimal rights to migrants. Following this same rational, XC insists: "think that if you are left outside the asylum procedure and fall into a situation of administrative irregularity, you end up on the streets and the State does not help you in any way. It only sends you back to your country. These people will not vanish from our city".

Local debordering processes may also suppose what SF labels as "deinstitutionalization processes", since entering in a limbo as it has been described may also imply being stigmatized: migrants are criminalized by bordering processes. The link between vulnerability and criminalization even reaches the unaccompanied minors (acronym MENA - *Menors d'edat no acompanyats*).

But the main resilient strategy is definitively pro-active administrative registration or "empadronament". This ensures "the right to have rights". This is a very distinctive tool of the Spanish decentralized administration: the possibility to register administrative migrants independently of their legal status. The city council simply ranks administrative recognition

before legal recognition.[5] This is used as a powerful resource for the debordering process, and to implement what in some urban studies literature is called "right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1967; Marcuse, 2014), the right to live in the city, and enjoy all its basic services and place environments despite legal bordering restrictions. Granting registration allows the city council to legitimise further resilient strategies. In theoretical terms we can say it is a primary resilience tool, as it operates as a condition for other resilient sectoral policies (housing, education, work, for instance). As XC informs us, for example, the public health system. The CAPs (Centres for Primary Attention and Health) are allocated as regards the address. "This does not mean that if you are not registered you will not be received, because in Catalonia there is a commitment to take care of everybody and this works to our advantage. But if you want to enjoy a proximity service you need the registration […]. And as for schooling registrations, geographical proximity becomes more fundamental to design the city's schooling map. You need to know the city's reality to defend their rights". In fact, many resources that are granted by the EU are allocated based on demographic records. Along these lines, XC even insists that for him, the city registration is also a housing policy, since the city council registers people who do not hold permanent housing. This city registration has then multifaceted debordering effects. It provides undocumented migrants of opportunities to enjoy a minimum "right of the city".

3.2. Main Resilient stressors directly related to the debordering processes

a) Inclusion of immigrants into the public administration or the "diversity gap"

The legal system in Spain is strict. It does not let public administration incorporate migrants. According to the Basic Statute of the Public Servant [Estatuto Básico del Empleado Público, Art. 57, Law 7/2007] the access to public function (*función pública*) is exclusive to national citizens.[6] This creates a real barrier to manage the "diversity gap" (Zapata-Barrero *et al.*, eds. 2017) between the society and public institutions. Barcelona is fully aware of this bordering restriction. The data from the Council of Europe showed in 2017 (CoE, 2017; Zapata-Barrero, 2019) that this was one of the governance deficits. All the interviews place this issue within their resilient agenda. The m otto is "Public institutions must reflect Barcelona's society". SF convincingly states "I always insist on material conditions but also symbolic ones because no matter how many messages you send to society about diversity, if the institutions

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[5] XC insists: **"**registration into the city's records should be done regardless of the legal status"

[6] In principle, EU citizens can only access it and non-EU citizens can only access the positions of the administration of labor personnel (Not civil servants).

are essentially 'white' or if there is a lot of male power…!". We are thinking about the same public administration, services, or local police (*Guàrdia Urbana*), for instance. Here positive action towards migrants can be interpreted as debordering policies looking at alternative ways to reduce the diversity gap.

It is when speaking about this particular issue that KG stated "Yes, as long as we do not change state laws, we must look for imaginative and proactive alternatives. Sometimes there are things we think that would not work and, in the end, they bear fruit", or even AG says: "You just need to be imaginative and innovative. And if you are discriminated against for your origins, then we can require your language abilities, or we can look for a way to certify your intercultural mediation skills". This involves that most of the strategies go through some light modifications of existing norms. In this case, one of the core strategies is to modify internal norms and include language and intercultural skill abilities as a condition for access, for instance. A legislative change is not strictly needed to give access. But stability and permanence cannot be ensured except only for national citizens.

Of course, this resilient strategy reduces the stress for the governance of diversity, but it is not an emergency in the sense that it can threaten the cohesion of the social system and hence have a direct ontological security impact. But it can influence racism and prejudices in society and illustrate democratic deficits. RS expresses this argument showing how most of the resilient innovative strategies have an international background: "It is said by the EU and Eurocities' charter: 'cities have to mirror the population that they serve'. In Barcelona, less than 1% of civil servants come from a 'diverse' background. This is unacceptable!"

b) Unaccompanied underage immigrants

A second stressor for the Barcelona City Council is the presence of unaccompanied underage migrants, basically males of Moroccan origin. It deals directly with children's human rights (Rinaldi, 2019). This is not new, since Barcelona has been facing with this for several years, but it has become a structural stressor with multi-level governance implications, since underage children are not strictly speaking among the competences of the city, but of the autonomous Government. The number reaching 18 years old, without regularizing their migration status, but losing protection, has duplicated these last few years (Aranda, 2018). There are also social and legal implications. The social arise because visibility creates social reluctance and even neighbourhood concentrations claiming more security in some streets and districts; and legal ones, since here the City Council is fully aware that they are dealing with children human rights protection. In drawing resilient strategies most policy makers are fully

aware they lack instruments and realise that "our Western societies are not prepared to host these unaccompanied children" (SF).

These two ways of labelling the same issue is something that SF underlines: "I would like to stress that young immigrants have often been placed under the umbrella of immigration rather than infancy. This is a big bias because, at the end of the day, there is a large diversity of cases. We always speak of the young immigrant profile that has lived in Tangier's streets, that takes drugs, has a relevant criminal history and that has been waiting for a long time. This young person is not representative, and this is the first idea that is difficult to undo. Some young people migrate as part of a family project, some come from either a rural or an urban background, or even with middle to upper socioeconomic statuses".

RS also highlights that during the pandemic period, Barcelona has been faced with the unaccompanied minors that wander through the streets. The municipality realised that a new centre was needed to serve them and *Barcelona Actua*[7] volunteered to promote it.[8] I may also mention the Detection Service, which depends on the City Council's Department for Children, Social Rights, Global Justice, Feminisms and LGBT. The city gives them accommodation, but first they need to identify them on the street.

c) *Immigrants in administrative irregularity in its whole diversity of profiles and survival economic activities*

Probably, the main stressor for resilience strategies is the presence of immigrants with administrative irregularity (Agatiello and LeVoy, 2016). This is the most flagrant by-product of bordering policies that cities must face, especially those that have a large urban area, such as Barcelona. The city has recently implemented what policy officers and media call a "shock plan", with more than half million euros for actions designated for migrants in a state of irregularity (*El Periódico*, 2020). We are speaking of first stage irregular migrants that will never reach a regular status; or a second stage irregulars, or migrants that were regular at some point of their migratory process but became irregulars. There is also a third way of becoming irregular, and this is the most frequent among Latin Americans who enjoy free-visa access. They usually come as tourists and after 90 days of staying they attain irregular status. These three ways of becoming irregular are directly related to bordering processes: you enter

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[7] Retrieved: https://www.barcelonactua.org/ca/activitats/refugiats-i-immigrants

[8] The *Barcelona Actua Foundation* is a non-profit organization that begun in 2011 as a response to the great economic crisis, with the will to mobilize civil society, as well as to create strong ties between people in situations of vulnerability that need support and people who can offer support.

clandestinely, you enter as tourist or through induced irregularity because you lost your work contract, or you do not meet the residence conditions. Most enter in "survival economic activities", namely activities that are illegal or not welcome, like the everyday practices of migrant street peddlers – 'manteros or top manta' movement (Meness Reyes and Caballero Juárez, 2013; Graaf and Ha. 2015; Moffette, 2020), which has issued several resilient programmes (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2015b and 2017b) and a lot of press releases (for instance, Barcelona Notícies, 2019).

The situation of sudden irregularity is provoked by the Immigration Law, which turns them into people outside the system upon the end of their labour contract. These issues can only be solved through legal means. These people are stigmatized, and society often links irregularity with crime. For all the participants, these bordering processes directly affect their daily work, and it is here that "creativity" and "imagination" drives most of the resilient strategies.

Apart from the specific strategy of pro-active registration of irregulars, some interviews also stand out on how to change the regulation criteria to include irregulars. For instance, the strategy seeking to provide work opportunities to irregular migrants through *Barcelona Activa.*[9] AG insists on how this agency follows strategies to circumvent bordering barriers: "*Barcelona Activa* does not limit access to its programs to people with a residence permit and the employment plans of the city council that was established a couple of years ago, which is common in city councils in general. These programs allow them to decide what kind of profiles they hire".

At the innovative level, there is a government measure to prevent irregularity. It was the first time that a European municipality decided to tackle irregular immigrants through the strategy of active local registration in the city's records, granting them access to the municipal services and legal advice, and providing them with labour opportunities to "legalise" their situation, as a specific *Barcelona Activa* programme does (RS). This program called *Proper* was created in 2013 targeting the growing demand for a new profile of severely social service users affected by the economic crisis with a situation of long-term unemployment who deserve more preventive care, especially migrants in irregular situation. The program provides them with labour opportunities, but it is not public, this it to both "prevent social adverse reactions" and to avoid creating expectations and frustrations within the same irregular migrant

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[9] Retrieved: https://www.barcelonactiva.cat/

community. As the program offers very limited jobs, and most of them within the same public administration. The program expresses a political will to support a policy resilient debordering procedure (see the public report made by Sanz and Pardo, 2015). This follows other important government measures against sudden irregularity (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017a and press releases from Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017b). For this reason and given the large number of people in an irregular situation that is already present in many municipal programs (for instance: OPAI, SOAPI, SASSEP, see references) it was decided to know which people were potentially regularizable through a work permit. This political legalization of migrants is notably innovative. Moreover, there is an explicit two-level administrative procedure in place. To benefit from this program is not direct but also a derivative from any of these programs. What it is important of this specific program is that, as RS and DT theorize, it promotes a new category: the immigrant that can be "legalized" (*irregular regularitzable*) because they fulfil the criteria of a one-year-long job offer. This is then an explicit resilient strategy seeking to set up a mechanism to regularize immigrants in irregular administrative status through public employment offers. *Barcelona Activa* has been recognized as a good practice by the International Labour Organization (ILO).[10]

AG insists that "[…] there are other matters that we cannot indefinitely avoid, like access to social aid or the basic income, which by the way excludes irregular immigrants. So, the city council tries to cover them with social services centres because 'the necessity will not fade away by looking away'. Overall, I would say that everything is related to Immigration Laws and the nationality criterion". MS also insists as an example of innovation under pressure circumstances when there are limited competences and legal barriers: "[The] legislation […] establishes recruitment at origin as the main entry mechanism, although in practice this is not very effective, no matter what the catalogue of professions difficult to fulfil sets. What usually happens is that the mechanism of 'social embeddedness' (*arrelament social*), which in theory is an exceptional measure, becomes the most common one. This creates a lot of discrepancies for us because we find people who have arrived in Spain on an irregular basis, more so now that the entry requirements of many countries of origin have been eliminated. We have families who arrive with a tourist visa and after 90 days they stay here hoping to legalize their situation. Yet, many do not know that they will have to wait 3 years and we do everything possible to register them and we work so that they can access all the services, even if they cannot be

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[10] Retrieved: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/migmain.showPractice?p_lang=en&p_practice_id=182

regularized until after these 3 years.". There are also extreme situations of vulnerability and homeless irregular migrants. SF, for instance, insists that "As for administrative irregularity, throughout the pandemic, we have been working on the balance of services and the mechanisms offered to homeless people. We have noticed that possibly, it is one of the main factors of vulnerability. These people are in limbo right now". The latest data from the City Council confirms that, despite the pandemic, the volume of assisted migrants remains (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2021). Economic resources are also mentioned by MS, when stating that **"**Barcelona used to attend around 1,100 asylum petitions per year back then and now, these numbers have gone up to 10,000 per year. Meanwhile, the resources and staff remain the same. No matter how much political will and budget you have, sometimes, there are structural limitations that depend on things as simple as how many chairs fit in a room or how many available boxes are there to offer individual attention to people."

d) *Refugees*

Since half of the second decade of the 21st century, refugees have become a stressor for most European cities (Spencer, 2020). For Barcelona, they also occupy a top-rank position in its agenda. From the very beginning, Barcelona took an activist position, enhancing a government measure: "Barcelona, refugee city" (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2015a). Which was later reviewed as a clear investment for cohesion-making and citizenship (Barcelona Ciutat Refugi, 2019), as well as for setting the premises for a Refugee city network called Solidarity cities. This initiative was also one of the most numerous street demonstrations in Europe,[11] showing its close alliance between the society and the city government. In this domain, Barcelona has taken a pro-active attitude creating innovative services and policies. In general, these policies seek to go beyond its usual competence limits (they do it because they want to do it, not because they are forced to do it), but also against some State bordering decisions that directly affect the city's ontological security. For instance, XC states that "recently, we have also stepped up into the issues of refugees from the Canary Islands. The City Council asked the State for competences to support all these guys within the Barcelona Refuge City programme. They are in a social services centre like that of *Barcelona Actua* that I have mentioned earlier, but we want it to become an established modus operandi in the future. So far, around 80 youngsters have benefited from it because many do not want to stay here and rather want to

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[11] 160,000 people according to the local police, and 300,000 according to the organizers protested under the slogan 'Enough excuses. Welcome now!. See, among other news from 17-18 February 2017; Mouzo and Congostrina, 2017; Vicens, 2017)

continue their journey to France or other places". Some of these policies/programmes/initiatives are more essential, and some are more capacity-building oriented or empowering, like the language and training issues, which may not be at first glance the first need but is equally important to find a job and get out of this vulnerability, as RS highlights. Barcelona's resilience therefore has an activist solidarity force together with clear debordering policies seeking to avoid extreme vulnerability. For instance, the law allows you to apply for asylum or international protection and during the waiting period, between 2 or 3 years and a half, you are more or less legal, but in a waiting limbo. RS insists that the central government has even accelerated their bordering policies and begun to deny asylum in 3 or 4 months and the number of people in extreme vulnerability has multiplied suddenly. Most of them end up on Barcelona's streets.

In this context, MS insists that in the domain of refuge, Barcelona is the first city of the State and one of the first in the EU to have a municipal programme attending refugees and asylum seekers who have either overpassed the state subsidies and accompaniment services and are not autonomous yet, or those people who simply have been excluded by the state programme. This is a project that Barcelona began in 2016 with 20 or 30 users and now MS informs "we already have 130". [12]

MS, as main responsible of this innovative service, states that "what we want to prove is that municipalities must get involved in the assistance of refugees and it must be done at different levels. I believe that the future of refugee support depends on the decentralisation of the system, which is also a way to foresee the expiration of state services, which would lead to a collapse of the system. This programme has been replicated elsewhere in Catalonia and the State". He is speaking about the innovative Nausica Programme,[13] which frames Barcelona as a Refugee City. This programme is important since it rescues those people that are left outside the State's support (according to RS more than 130 refugees benefit from it today). It has the purpose of supporting migrants that have not yet achieved a degree of autonomy or integration in Barcelona after the expiration of the State's mechanism of accompaniment. And it provides them with housing and employment search assistance. Within their main missions, we can collect building the autonomy and socio-occupational integration of refugees, providing tailored assistance, coordinating the provision of services and interventions across actors and incorporating refugees within the already existing Immigrant Care and Reception Directorate

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[12] This is confirmed in press releases. Ajuntament de Barcelona (2017c).
[13] See the first evaluation in Ajuntament de Barcelona (2018b)

(Direcció d'Atenció i Acollida d'Immigrants). XC also highlights that a part from the Nausica programme, there is the option of activating a temporary guesthouse service for cases of extreme vulnerability, which still does not fix the problem but, at least, it absorbs the shock for those people who were forced to leave their countries without anything because of threats. In general, then, the Barcelona city Council is fully aware of the different pressures it must face to attend the different refugee profiles (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017d)

3.3. Alliances-building and institutions-building as a by-product

Let me now also concentrate my content analysis on the importance of alliances-building and the creation of new institutions as a by-product of these alliances for performing resilient debordering strategies**.** Fieldwork invites us to work the hypothesis that resilience drives most cities to create alliances. Interviews also show us how important it is to design shared commitments on resilience strategies with other administrations. Different levels of governance face the same challenge of tracing a debordering process and have full awareness that most of the stressors they must face come from State bordering processes. For instance, MS highlights that:

> "we still struggle because there are situations that do not depend on cities, but intergovernmental agreements, as the obtention of visas. This is the case of Central America, for example, which generally does require a visa to enter Spain. They enter the country as tourists and later they decide to overstay as irregular immigrants. Then, you also have situations related to countries of origin or armed conflicts, as we saw in 2015 and 2016 with Syria and its surroundings".

AG also points towards these same issues adding some new dimensions justifying the need of drawing a debordering strategy against the effects of the State's bordering decisions. "The mayor always claims that even if immigration and asylum do not fall under our duties, we do have an incumbency with our neighbours and that is why we get involved with these issues and feel that we must grant access to all services and procedures to all people, even to those who do not depend on the local administration; we provide counselling and accompanying to all users".

Most of these alliances show us both how cooperation is translated in practice into coordination (or "common arrangement"). From a multilevel governance point of view, these

alliances happen both at a vertical level, with upper governments, in this case with Catalonia's government (Generalitat de Catalunya), but also with international organizations; and at horizontal levels, with other local administrations, most of them within the same urban area.

A) Vertical Alliances

With the Catalan Government. There is an explicit cooperation with the Catalan government on some strategies that otherwise could not be implemented. The shared resilient background is the fact that some competencies are divided, especially those that trace a vital trajectory, as is the case with unaccompanied minor immigrants. For instance, Barcelona city and the *Generalitat* work together within a shared policy arrangement for managing young undocumented migrants. New services are created together, in coordination. SF insists on this point: "We work closely with DGAIA (*Direcció General d'Atenció a la Infància i l'Adolescència*, Directorate General of Child and Adolescent Care)[14] alternating the logical side of building and lobbying, collaboration and denouncing. In Barcelona, we have the Youth on Streets Detection Service". This service is not specific to migrants, but to all children and teenagers at high risk of social marginalization with the aim of contributing to their personal development. It also exercises the protection and guardianship of helpless children and adolescents. In concrete terms, the local administration can only work with young people that have reached 18 years old, and the *Generalitat,* with underage youngsters, respectively. The social exclusion and situation of vulnerability continues from one age period to another.

International cities alliances that have taken shape under the form of a network is also a common resilient trend. For instance, MS informs that the European Commission opened an urban agenda that gave the possibility to different cities to get in touch with one another and with the Commission itself, like the Commissioner for Regional Policy. It gathered Barcelona, Athens, and Amsterdam among the strongest ones. However, this was in the former mandate. Now, the present government has gone a bit backwards. He also insists that "we see that abroad, the different administrations (the state and municipalities) work hand in hand and resources and competencies are shared. This does not exist here. Here, Immigration and Asylum are part of the State's core competencies, which generates a lack of awareness of the immigrants' needs."

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14   Retrieved: https://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/ca/ambits_tematics/infancia_i_adolescencia/proteccio_a_la_infancia_i_ladolescencia/el_sistema_catala_de_proteccio_a_la_infancia_i_ladolescencia/direccio_general_datencio_a_la_infancia_i_ladolescencia_dgaia/

You can also count on C-MISE (City Initiative on Migrants with Irregular Status in Europe)[15] a space for cities that work with irregular immigrants. Two well-known networks follow it, such as Integrating Cities[16] and Cities of Migration.[17] There are also Eurocities[18] and Solidarity Cities.[19]

B) Horizontal Alliances

National cities networks: The alliances with other Catalan and Spanish cities are also key for Barcelona's resilient strategy. Barcelona belongs to a Spanish city network of refuge cities pleading for Spain's non-compliance with refugee quotas. The network of cities includes Barcelona, Madrid, A Coruña, València, Zaragoza and as many as 25 municipalities which, given the inaction from the state regarding refuge, have joined forces to help address the refugee crisis.[20]

Interviews show us how important the coordination of spaces is among neighbouring cities, most of them belonging to the same urban areas. MS for instance argues that it makes no sense to do anything until we work with the same register policies across municipalities. There are municipalities that refuse to register irregular immigrants. So, this lack of alliance between neighbouring cities may be an added stressor if a cooperative relationship does not exist. AG states this because Barcelona attracts the immigrant populations that are not welcomed in the metropolitan area. There are also *alliances with CSO actors* that cluster most interviews. One sentence pronounced by AG can be taken as a Barcelona's resilient motto: "Barcelona is nothing without its associative fabric". Historically, the municipality has collaborated with the CSO sector and most of the bordering challenges the city encounters are engaged with them. MS insists that social entities provide and make up for those services that the public administration cannot fulfil. They have a lot more information and sometimes, they even coordinate the programmes because they have access to all administrative levels.

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[15] C-MISE is a knowledge-exchange programme supporting European cities in sharing knowledge on city practices and policies responding to the presence of irregular migrant , coordinated by COMPASS (Oxford University) and comprising as core cities Athens, Barcelona, Frankfurt, Ghent, Gothenburg, Lisbon, Oslo, Stockholm and Utrecht (Chair)

[16] Retrieved: http://www.integratingcities.eu/integrating-cities/news/Guidance-on-Municipal-responses-to-irregular-migrants-what-is-your-city-doing-WSWE-AWTMDX

[17] Retrieved: http://citiesofmigration.ca/

[18] Retrieved: https://eurocities.eu/

[19] Retrieved: https://solidaritycities.eu/

[20] Retrieved: https://pladebarris.barcelona/en/noticia/refuge-cities-combine-to-denounce-spains-non compliance 555420

Sometimes, CSOs even mediate between different governments and this mediation strategy is often used as a resilient strategy.

One illustrative example of institutional collaboration is the welcoming service SAIER,[21] born thanks to the Municipal Welfare Council (Consell Municipal de Benestar Social), in the 80s, and initially providing service to the needs of refugees scaping from Pinochet's regime, among others. Together with the programme "Barcelona Refuge City", it has received the recognition of OECD[22] as innovative strategies. The SAIER is a network of services provided by five leading social organizations: two leading trade-unions services for migrants and refugees (CITE and AMIC), Red Cross and the Barcelona bar association, and a specific linguistic service provided by Consortium for language normalisation (*Consorci Per a la Normalització Lingüística*).

What we notice as a mainstream trend clustering all the interviews, is that in building resilient strategies, Barcelona city does not feel alone, but mobilizes its CSOs network to perform its airbag function in front of these stressors. For instance, the cooperation with the Red Cross for implementing their refugee's strategies is key since the Red Cross also plays the double function of bridging city authorities with state authorities. ACCEM[23] is an NGO working to improve the refugee's quality of life providing legal advice and following up asylum processes, together with management of housing centres for unaccompanied children and migrants. Probably, the intervention of XC summarises this collaborative practice with multiple actors to perform resilient strategies: "We work very collaboratively with the entities and CSOs because it would be impossible without them". And among them, there are the trade unions, like CITE (CCOO) and AMIC-UGT and *Col·legi d'Advocats* (lawyers bar association) for any pleas, etc. When any theme that falls outside the support functions is identified, like gender violence, we activate the internal services of the city council like the Office for No Discrimination (Grigolo, 2010)[24] or Irídia (Center for the Defence of Human Rights)[25], in cases of institutional violence. And from these, we are able to provide more tailored services". Mentorship is also referred by SF. There are experiences of mentorship through the social fabric

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[21] Retrieved: https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/novaciutadania/ca/servei-datencio-immigrants-emigrants-i-refugiats-saier

[22] Retrieved: https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretsidiversitat/en/noticia/the-saier-and-barcelona-refuge-city-leading-projects-in-europe_491462

[23] Retrieved: https://www.accem.es/

[24] Retrieved: https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/oficina-no-discriminacio/ca.

[25] Retrieved: https://iridia.cat/en/

and Catalonia is a pioneer in all this. The way you communicate with society, how you work on mentorship or with host families.

4. Concluding remarks evaluating this first exploration and master lines for further research

There is already a huge literature on a typology of cities (welcome cities, gateway cities, intercultural cities, refugee cities, etc. (see Scholten *et al.* eds., 2018). In this case the category of "border city" becomes a heuristic perspective within the symbolic meaning of border. It is this concrete approach I have followed. The main purpose of this paper has been twofold. First to theoretically link two heuristic analytical tools: ontological security and resilience, applied at the local level. Second, Barcelona fieldwork has explored the policy strategies that cities have adopted to cope with uncertainty and pressure situations basically due to State bordering policies. These strategies are interpreted as debordering strategies and resilience is its main driver.

Resilience is the notion that helps us categorise the effort of local authorities to provide to the migrants and to the social environment the routines in a system that have been broken/or maybe they have never had the opportunity to enjoy. Resilience in cities towards bordering stressors can be interpreted as driven by local ontological security.

The fieldwork has followed several interconnected premises: a) When uncertainty arises or routines are disrupted into a social system, we enter into the domain both of ontological insecurity and resilience; b) The EU/State (re)bordering processes may directly affect the ontological security of the cities; c) Ontological security applied at the city level is mainly understood in policy terms as cohesion-making (societal level) and "the right to have rights" at the individual level; d) "Debordering" strategies, or the policies seeking to surpass the State's bordering barriers, may be focused under the approach of resilience strategies; e) We enter into the current debate on ontological security arguing for a multi-scalar approach, namely that a part from state and individual levels, the conjunction and tensions that may arise between different coexisting understandings of ontological security: the state, and the local levels is unexplored. This multi-scalar approach of ontological security is a theoretical by-product contribution of this paper that may require further theoretical advancement.

Resilient ontological security applied at the local level is a promising focus of analysis that may be applied at other cities and even comparatively. The purpose is to identify innovative and transformative strategies that cities follow to face stressors coming from bordering processes. This theoretical focus may help the same resilient cities ensure their own

understanding of ontological security (cohesion and the "right to have rights" of migrants), in circumstances of uncertainties and risks, under shocks and stresses created by the same state bordering processes.

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