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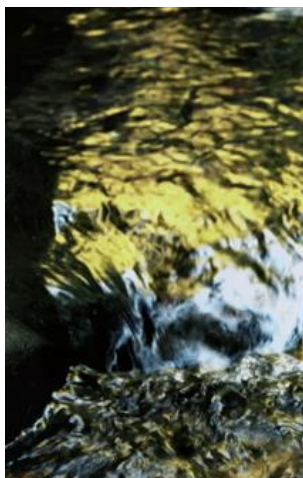MIGRANT INTEGRATION IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

Sept. 2022

Post-2014 migrants' access to housing, employment and other crucial resources in small- and medium-sized towns and rural areas

in Spain

Country Reports on integration

By Reinhard Schweitzer and Blanca Garcés Mascareñas

Barcelona Centre for International Affairs

REPORT
https://whole-comm.eu

Abstract

This report looks at post-2014 migrants' access to housing, employment, and other relevant resources in different small and medium-sized towns and rural areas in Spain. Primarily based on interviews conducted in six selected municipalities, it provides an overview of 1) the concrete barriers that post-2014 migrants are facing in relation to housing and employment; 2) the local actors who are involved in, and/or seen as responsible for, facilitating their access; 3) any concrete local measures or practices that help or hinder this access; and 4) the specific target groups of these measures, initiatives or practices. The findings suggest that across the rather diverse range of localities (located in four different regions), housing and employment are perceived as the most significant challenges that post-2014 migrants are facing. Their difficulty to find and secure adequate housing primarily reflects local dynamics of (limited) supply and (increasing) demand but also a significant degree of discrimination based on their ethnicity and/or precarious legal status. Irregularity is also frequently mentioned as the main barrier in terms of employment, and as a problem that cannot be solved at the local level. The employment situation of post-2014 migrants also reflects the general economic and labour market situation in each locality, whereby they usually fill very specific and often seasonal demands for (mostly low-paid and precarious) labour. In both spheres, the role of local administrations is rather limited, whereas private actors (local employers, property owners, real estate agents, etc.) and third sector organisations (especially NGOs and migrant associations) are attributed a very crucial role. Notably, none of the six localities has any formal housing or employment policy that specifically targets post-2014 migrants. Instead, both issues are being addressed through mainstream measures and support structures (housing subsidies, employability and training programmes, sheltered employment, etc.). Apart from housing and employment, the report also looks at the issue of residential registration as an important municipal competence and precondition for accessing many fundamental rights and services provided at the local level. Overall, the differences between the six selected localities are rather subtle, and mostly linked to local dynamics of supply and demand within the housing and labour markets. Of the four explanatory factors that guided the case selection – structural conditions, immigration history/experience, population size, and political leadership – it is the first that seems to explain most of the apparent variation.

Contents

1. Introduction

Whole-COMM focuses on small and medium sized municipalities and rural areas (SMsTRA) in eight European and two non-European countries that have experienced and dealt with the increased arrival and settlement of migrants after 2014. More particularly, the research project explores how these communities have responded to the presence of "post-2014 migrants"[1], that is, which policies have been developed and implemented and how these policies shape and enable migrant integration. Taking an innovative Whole-of-Community research approach which conceives of migrant integration as a process of community-making, Whole-COMM pays particular attention to the interactions between multiple actors involved in local integration governance (for example, individuals, public and non-public organizations, institutions and/or corporate entities). Moreover, the project looks at the embeddedness of local actors in multilevel frameworks in which regional, national and EU policies and stakeholders may play a decisive role in shaping local integration policymaking, considering both potential collaborations as well as tensions between actors at different government levels.

Work Package Four (WP4) focuses on local policies, initiatives, and practices addressing post-2014 immigrants' access to housing, employment and other crucial resources or services.

Following the Whole-comm approach, we assume that the multiple actors involved in integration and community-making processes may have different interests, strategies, resources, and power positions; and that mutual adjustment (between newcomers and long-term residents) and social cohesion do not necessarily represent the only/overall rationale guiding their various efforts; instead, the interplay between different actors (and their various interests and rationales) may also lead to exclusion and inequality. This interplay and the resulting measures can thus be analysed in terms of what Collyer, Hinger and Schweitzer call the 'politics of', or 'negotiation around', '(dis)integration'[2]. As these authors point out, integration/disintegration or cohesion/fragmentation should not be understood as simple binary categorisations but as processes that are intertwined and often coexist within and across policies and everyday practices.

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[1] The group of migrants that arrived in (Western) Europe after 2014 is very heterogeneous, "but mostly comprises migrants that left from areas of political and humanitarian crises" (Working Paper 1 2021, 1-2). The majority of 'post-2014 migrants' entered thus as asylum-seekers but may have obtained different legal statuses by now (see for more detail Working Paper 1 for the Whole-COMM project).

[2] Collyer M., Hinger S., Schweitzer R. (2020) Politics of (Dis)Integration – An Introduction. In: Hinger S., Schweitzer R. (eds) Politics of (Dis)Integration. IMISCOE Research Series. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25089-8_1

By looking at how a wide range of actors (private actors, civil society actors and street level bureaucrats) foster but sometimes also hinder migrants´ access to adequate housing, work and other crucial resources or services, we hope to better understand (and be able to compare) these local politics of (dis)integration across different local and national contexts.

The choice of focusing on housing and employment follows two main rationales. First, they are key resources for granting fundamental rights and sustainable integration. Second, they are not exclusively dependent on local administrations but involve a diverse range of actors, thus allowing us to fully apply the whole-of-community approach. Housing is (partly or, in some cases, almost completely) in the hands of private actors, from big owners (including banks and international investment funds) to small ones. Work depends on employers, which again are very diverse ranging from big to small (including family) employers, from private to public employers and across different economic sectors. In both cases, between migrants and these private actors, we find a broad range of intermediaries (CSOs, trade unions, real estate agencies, civil society organisations, social networks, etc) and a diverse (and sometimes even contradictory) set of policies and programmes (at the national, regional, and local levels). Apart from housing and employment, WP4 is also interested in local policies, initiatives or practices that affect post-2014 migrants´ access to other relevant resources and services, which might be specific to each national context.

To assess the role (and understand the interplay) of the different actors in relation to migrants' access to housing, work, and other services and resources, WP4 identifies and analyses:

- major **obstacles/challenges** that are reported to exist in each locality for post-2014 migrants, particularly focussing on those that are perceived as being particular to each locality;
- the **actors** (public, private, and civil society) involved, and their concrete role (e.g., as initiator, promoter, implementer, critic, etc. of a concrete policy, initiative, or practice).
- concrete **local policies, initiatives, and practices** that intend/help to overcome these obstacles. There might also be certain policies, initiatives and practices that have exclusionary effects (whether intended or unintended) and thus aggravate existing obstacles and inequalities in terms of access to adequate housing and employment.
- the **target groups of local policies, initiatives, or practices**: who is entitled to particular services and how is this entitlement justified[3]. This question will allow us to delve into the main deservingness frames regarding migrants' access to housing, employment and other key resources and services.

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[3] When explaining who is the target of a specific policy or practice, also those who are excluded (e.g., because they are covered by other policies or because they are simply left out or perceived as less vulnerable) are automatically identified (whether implicit or explicitly).

1.1. Methodology

The cases for the research project were selected based on a set of variables, namely:

Population size	Medium town: 100,000 – 250.000 Small town: 50,000 – 100,000 Rural area: 5,000 - 50,000 and low population density
Presence of a reception center AND/OR Reception facilities	Time period: 2014-2017
Number of currently residing migrants	Time period: arrived after 2014
Share of Foreign Residents	Time period: in 2005 (SF2005)
Variation of Unemployment level	Time period: 2005-2014 (VARUN)
AND/OR Unemployment Levels	Time period: 2005 and 2014
Variation of number of inhabitants	Time period: 2005-2014 (VARNI)
Regional variation	For example: East / West or North / South, choosing localities from different regions
Local politics	Parties in government and local political tradition, choosing localities with different political traditions (conservative / progressive)

The variables 'SF2005', 'VARUN' and 'VARNI' were used to identify **four** types of localities:

Type A	Characterized by a recovering local economy and an improving demographic profile and migrants' settlement before 2014
Type B	Characterized by an improving economic and demographic situation and no remarkable arrivals of migrants before 2014

Type C	Characterized by demographic and economic decline and migrants' settlement before 2014
Type D	Characterized by economic and demographic decline and no remarkable arrivals of migrants before 2014

In **Spain**, a total of six municipalities have been selected (see sections 2.2 – 2.7 for a more detailed description of each of them). The empirical data on which this report is based have been collected during fieldwork periods of around one week in each of the localities, and mostly consist of structured interviews with a wide range of local actors, including "policymakers" (i.e., representatives of the local government and municipal officials), "street-level bureaucrats" working in relevant departments (social services, housing, etc.), representatives of trade unions, NGOs and local associations working with/for migrants or refugees, as well as various "private actors" (particularly private employers and/o their organisations, and real estate agents). Overall, 74 interviews were conducted with a total of 87 respondents. Most of the interviews were conducted face-face during the field visits, whereas 10 of them had to be conducted online (either due to COVID or for reasons of agenda). All interviews were conducted in Spanish and (all but one) were audio-recorded and subsequently summarised (partially transcribed and translated to English). Additional – mostly quantitative – data was collected through an online survey sent to all interviewee participants (one per interview), and of which (by the end of April 2022) 44 have been returned. The information obtained was also complemented by a review of relevant and policy documents and legal provisions. The category 'post-2014-migrants' was explained to research participants as covering non-EU citizens who arrived and settled in Spain after 2014, independent of whether or not they claimed asylum or otherwise regularised their residence; it thus explicitly includes migrants with no or precarious residence status.

2. Context & cases

2.1. General information on the relevant national and regional context/s

2.1.1. Housing

Spain has one of the lowest rentership rates among European countries, with just 23% of households renting their homes. In smaller urban areas, this percentage is less than 15%. This was not always the case. In 1950 the percentage of owners and renters was equal. In the 1960s rising incomes and homeownership subsidies led to higher homeownership rates. In the 1990s policies reducing tenant protections and in the 2000s easy access to mortgages in the context of the housing bubble further aggravated this imbalance. Since 2008 the rental market has gradually grown due to job insecurity and low salaries (particularly for young people and immigrants) and banks being more cautious about granting mortgages. As a result, renting has increased, among Spanish-headed households from 16 percent in 2007 to 20 percent in 2018 and among households led by citizens of other EU countries from 54 percent to 60 percent. Almost 85 percent of non-EU immigrants live in rented accommodation. This percentage is nearly 70 percent among people aged 16 to 29 (Ouasbaa & Viladecans Marsal 2021).

Rental housing has traditionally been owned by individuals. This is no surprise as housing has traditionally been the main object of family investment. In the past years, more professional landlords have entered the market, including foreign capital firms. In 2018 private firms devoted to the rental housing business represented around 10% of the national rental market and much more in big cities (e.g., 25 percent in Barcelona). Short-term rental markets (e.g., Airbnb rentals) have increased exponentially in the last years, particularly in big cities (e.g., Madrid and Barcelona) and touristic places. This has risen prices and contributed to the expulsion of former inhabitants from city centres.

House prices rose exponentially from 2000 on. After a short hiatus starting with the 2008 economic crisis, prices rose again. The situation is very different in rural areas, where the recovery in the real estate sector began later and was much slower. As a result, regional divergences in the affordability of housing are high. While house prices have risen spectacularly in the last twenty years, the average income per household has done so only very moderately. In consequence, households' investment on housing is relatively high. For the rent, it is estimated that approximately 4 out of 10 Spaniards allocate more than 40% of their salary to pay the rent, in contrast to 25% of Europeans (Ouasbaa & Viladecans Marsal 2021).

Though the Spanish Constitution acknowledges the right of all citizens to have decent and adequate housing and establishes that the government must ensure that this right is made effective, there was no institutional framework to provide affordable housing to citizens. For

instance, public housing is very scarce in Spain, representing only 2.5 percent of all housing. Only 1.6 percent live in public rental, compared to 9.3% on average in the European Union. Regional governments own 62 percent of public rental housing while local governments own the remainder. The central government has recently launched a "20.000 Plan" to build 20,000 social housing rentals in the next years. Regionals governments, such as Catalonia and Madrid, have also launched their own plans (Ouasbaa & Viladecans Marsal 2021). The impact of such plans remains limited given the big mismatch between existing resources and needs. In consequence, most citizens continue to rely on the private market for their access to housing.

The last Housing Plan (2018-2021) removed subsidies to promote homeownership and instead established new subsidies to assist people under age 35 either rent or purchase a home in smaller municipalities (fewer than 5,000 residents). Regarding housing subsidies for renters, all regions have launched programmes for low-income people. However, only 2.5 out of every 1,000 people receive this subsidy while the need again is estimated to be much higher (Ouasbaa & Viladecans Marsal 2021). In 2020, Catalonia became the first region to establish a rent control programme for large municipalities with a "tight housing market" conditions but this measure was declared unconstitutional due to the alleged Catalan government limited competences on the matter.

As for asylum seekers, housing is granted through the state reception system, first in one of the government's refugee reception centres or in reception facilities managed by social organisations and, after six or nine months, in independent (private) housing with rent and maintenance assistance. Although the state is obliged to grant them minimum living conditions, a survey conducted in Catalonia shows high levels of residential exclusion (see Ribera, Delclós & Garcés 2020). First, because 26.6 percent of the interviewees had slept rough in at least one occasion since their arrival in Spain. This was higher among men (35.9 percent) than among women (14.3 percent) and among Sub-Saharan asylum seekers (40,5 percent) than among those from the Middle East (31.2 percent), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (30.8 percent) and Venezuela (9.1 percent). Second, housing instability results as well from high levels of residential mobility and short-term rent contracts. Since 2021 the Minister of Interior improved its capacity to evaluate asylum procedures, which in practice meant faster procedures and for rejected asylum seekers sooner precariousness (NIEM 2022).

2.1.2. Employment

The main factor triggering immigration to Spain was the growing imbalance between an autochthonous labour force that had slowly been raising its "job acceptability level" and the persistent demand for workers in low productivity sectors with high levels of informal economic activities requiring a cheap and flexible labour force. After the 1990s, this imbalance on the labour market was further aggravated by two other factors: economic growth from 1995 to 2001 with an increased demand for labour involving almost 670,000 new jobs per year; and the decline by approximately two million people of the new native workers entering

into the job market after 1992 due to the demographic decline of the cohorts of those born after 1976 (Garcés-Mascareñas 2012: 112).

As a result of these transformations, the number of legal foreign residents in Spain went from 250,000 (0.75 per cent of the total population) in 1985 to almost 900,000 (2.18 per cent) in 2000, 1.9 million (4.48 per cent) in 2004, 3 million (6.7 per cent) in 2006, 3.9 million (almost 10 per cent) in 2007 and 5.5 million (12 per cent) in 2008. This phase of growth was interrupted in 2008 due to the economic crisis, which led to rising unemployment reaching 25 per cent in 2012. As a consequence, net migration became negative in 2011 and so did population growth from 2012 onwards, with Spain losing more than 200,000 inhabitants in 2013 (Oliveau et al 2019). However, after 2014 immigration flows started to recover again, with a pick of more than 750,480 arrivals in 2019. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic led to a new reduction of immigration flows. In 2020 there were almost 5.5 million foreign residents in Spain, representing 11 percent of the total population (NIEM 2020). The main countries of origin were Morocco (760,715), Rumania (665,905), UK (300,640), Colombia (297,934), Italy (280,152), Venezuela (187,205), China (197,188), Germany (138,952), Ecuador (132,637), Honduras (109,500) and France (117,080) (INE, 2021).

Immigrants' incorporation into the workplace take place in a dualised labour market. In contrast to Spaniards, the foreign-born population is mostly concentrated in the secondary sector, in jobs with minimal educational requirements and low salaries. The specialisation into certain job niches brings about acute occupational segregation, not only regarding the autochthonous population but also among workers of different origins. It is thus no surprise that migrant workers were particularly hit by the 2008 economic crisis. This was particularly the case for male foreign workers in the construction sector. While many of them lost their job when the real estate bubble burst, a large percentage of women working in the service sector or as domestics were better able to resist the effects of the crisis, though they often paid the price of having to accept precarious jobs or going back to work in the informal economy. Unemployment levels began to fall after 2014 but not equally for all origins. For instance, Moroccan men – though the figures improved from 49.4 per cent of unemployment in 2013 to 30,4 in 2019 – continued to be a long way from the figures for immigrants born in Ecuador – from 46.8 to 19 per cent – or for Romanians – from 43.6 percent to 16.2 - (Domingo et al. 2020).

Finally, the Spanish case cannot be understood without taking into account the role of irregular immigration both with regard to the migration regime as well as in terms of migrants' integration into the labour market. As for the migration regime, we could argue that irregularity is part and parcel of Spanish immigration policies. In the early 2000s most immigrants arrived with a tourist visa, found work and subsequently legalised their stay in the country. While regularisations have frequently been interpreted as the best illustration of the "failure" of immigration policies and, more generally, the state's loss of control, regularisations in the Spanish case should be understood primarily as a de facto entry policy. Basically, because the end result was deferred "entry" – deferred since the condition for every

regularisation is a period of illegal status – of however many immigrant workers were required by the employers. As González-Enríquez (2009) noted, this is nothing more than a cheap recruitment model in the place of destination. Cheap because the costs and risks of the migratory process were shouldered by the immigrant and cheap – we would add – because in political terms it was possible to have a high-numbers policy without putting it in writing and thus without needing to justify it.

In terms of immigrants' integration into the labour market, the highly dualised and informal labour market produce high levels of labour precariousness, which in the case of foreign workers turns as well into legal precariousness as both regularisation and renewal depend on having a (formal) job offer. This is why the economic crisis had a tremendous effect not only in terms of immigrants' unemployment but also on the system of continuous regularisation known as 'arraigo social' (in place since 2006) and the process of residence renewal (Domingo et al. 2020).

Finally, asylum seekers automatically gain access to the labour market after six months. This measure seeks to promote autonomy as soon as possible. This autonomy, however, depends again on the labour market. In periods of economic growth, integration into the labour market is much more feasible and allows to compensate rather limited allowances within the reception system. In periods of economic crisis, finding a job (and a formal job) is increasingly difficult. This is particularly the case for asylum seekers who do not speak the language or with limited educational and professional skills. In all cases, a highly segmented and informal labour market translates into high level of precariousness.

2.2. Locality 1 (Catalonia, type A, small)

Locality 1 is a small agro-industrial town located in the north of Catalonia that has a long history as the economic engine of the district and surrounding area. As such, it has always attracted a significant amount of immigration – initially from the South of Spain and since the end of the 1990s from various other countries (the most numerous groups are India, Morocco, China, Romania, Gambia, and Honduras. This is well reflected in the very high share of foreign population (21,7% in 2020, well above the national and regional average and comparable to some of the country´s major cities) which is also highly diverse. In spite of this, and in stark contrast to the localities in Andalusia, several interviews describe the local society as rather "closed" and traditional/rural/conservative (e.g., SP-1-04, 05, 06, 10) and some highlight a clear "divide" between locals and foreigners (SP-1-10).

The most important pillars of economic activity are the industrial and services sector, as well as agriculture and forestry. Especially the textile, metallurgic, leather, wood and paper, and furniture industries have a long history in the area; as has the meat industry which still plays a very important role, particularly as a sector that heavily relies on foreign workers. The town is also an important tourist and weekend destination with many hotels and restaurants, so

also the hospitality sector has significant weight. The local economy is going well, unemployment rates are significantly below the national and regional average and also the pandemic has had relatively little negative effect, given the dominance of the food industry and the role as a destination for mostly local and day tourism.

Since 2011 the locality has been governed by Conservative parties, the current government is in power since 2019 and formed by the Catalan nationalist party Junts per Catalunya (Together for Catalonia). The locality´s population has constantly been growing over the last decades, most significantly during the 2000s, which coincides with, and is mostly the most significant period in terms of immigration. In spite of the relatively small size and "village character" (e.g., SP-1-01) of the locality, it suffers from quite significant residential segregation – many interviewees identify a "classic immigrant quarter" – that goes back to earlier waves of immigration, and which is being addressed through policies in different areas, like the active mixing of pupils in the local schools. The locality/district is quite well known for its social and community services and active approach to maintain social cohesion, including significant spending on its social and community services.

2.3. Locality 2 (Castile & Leon, type B, small)

Locality 2 is located in an area known as "Spanish Laponia" due to its extremely low population density. One of the characteristics and main challenges of this area is the shrinking and aging of the local population, which is making it increasingly difficult to provide important public services (like schools or public transport) but also to keep local supermarkets and restaurants open in every locality, especially on the countryside. It is quite a remote area where it is difficult to get to and around without a private car. Of all the localities in our sample, it is by far the most difficult one to reach by public transport (any larger city including the regional capital is at least a three-hour train or bus ride away).

The main economic activity in the locality is agriculture, livestock, and hunting, which represents 13.35% of employment. The automotive industry represents 7.45% of the economic weight, closely followed by the hotel and restaurant sector representing 7.47% of the affiliates. Finally, the wood, cork, and furniture manufacturing industry account for 3.12% of the economy. Given the aging population – the share of people over 85 is among the highest in Europe – also (domestic) care has become a relevant sector of the local economy. For young people, on the other hand, it is a lack of attractive employment opportunities that makes more and more of them leave the area and move to other parts of Spain or other countries, in order to study or find work in other sectors; and many of them never return. Similar to locality 1 (and 3, and in contrast to localities 5 and 6), the local culture/community was described by several interviewees as rather closed and difficult to enter by "anyone coming from outside", even just other parts of the country.

Unsurprisingly (and in stark contrast to locality 1) the locality and surrounding towns and villages have never attracted much immigration. As a result, the share of foreign residents has traditionally been low and even though there has been a notable increase in recent years it continues to lie below the national average, and the same is true for the unemployment rate, which is significantly lower than in most other parts of the country. As a result, the relatively few local companies struggle to find workers locally (but also from other parts of Spain where unemployment rates have been much higher in recent years). On several occasions, this lack of local labour supply has been compensated by hiring and brining workers from other (mostly Latin American) countries (SP-2-04, SP-2-05), and also the regional government has long seen immigration (policy) as a measure against depopulation. The locality and province only started to receive more significant numbers of refugees and asylum seeker around 2016/17 when several NGOs opened reception facilities in the city and province. In August 2021 the city government – formed by the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) that has been in power since 2007 – renewed its commitment (first made in Sept 2015) to act as a city of refuge and to receive refugees from Afghanistan.

2.4. Locality 3 (Catalonia, type A, medium)

Locality 3 is a medium-sized town in Catalonia. Many interviewees, including a local politician, describe the city as "divided" and thereby refer to both a high level of residential segregation (which is also noted in local schools) and a significant and very visible degree of socioeconomic inequality:

> *There is a very clear and strong residential segregation in this city – the areas where immigrants live are obvious and visible, and well-known, there are some streets that are basically of the immigrant communities, where people from here hardly go anymore. And then there are also zones where rich people live… and where you will hardly find any immigrant family (SP-3-02).*

While there are some very poor neighbourhoods in the city, others like the historical centre attract many tourists and the city´s overall economic situation is quite good. Since before the economic crisis the unemployment rate has remained well below the national average. Unemployment mostly affects the services sector, which accounts for around two thirds of the local economy, while industrial production (mostly food, paper, metal, machinery, textile, and electronics) accounts for the rest.

Since 2011 the city has been governed by Conservative parties (before that, the Socialist Party had been in power for more than 30 years), the current government was formed in 2019 by the Catalan nationalist party Junts per Catalunya (Together for Catalonia). Like in locality 1 (and also locality 2), the local society was often described as rather closed and conservative. When asked about immigration, many interviewees pointed to the adjacent municipality, which is often perceived as part of the city and has one of the highest shares of foreign

residents of the whole country, a strong ethnic/Arab party, and generally is an exceptional case in this sense). Compared to that the locality itself has received less immigration – and from relatively few very particular countries (Honduras, Gambia and Morocco), as several interviews highlighted – but also here the share of foreign residents is significantly higher than the national average (and has been since long before 2014).

The municipality was among the first Spanish localities to declare itself a city of refuge (a commitment that has been renewed in August 2021 regarding the arrival of refugees from Afghanistan), and already in 2015, the City Council activated a series of municipal services (in the areas of housing, schooling and social and labour-market integration), and offered 10.000 Euros of funding in response to the arrival of refugees to the city. Several NGOs provide reception places for asylum seekers throughout and around the city, including an initial reception centre for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. At the beginning of 2016, a local volunteer and advocacy platform was founded and – in contrast to similar initiatives in other localities – is still active today. Interviewees agree that the most significant migration-related challenge the city has faced since 2014 was the arrival of unaccompanied foreign minors, which suddenly increased after 2016 (especially during 2017/18) and caused significant demand for local emergency social assistance and homelessness services (once they left the mainstream care system as young adults).

2.5. Locality 4 (Valencia, type C, rural)

Locality 4 is the smallest of the selected cases, and the only one located at the Mediterranean Coast. During the summer months it attracts a lot of (national as well as international) tourism, making the provision of tourist services the main economic activity (78% of the economy). The second-most important sector is construction, which accounts for 17% of the local economy. There is very little industry in (and around) the municipality, mostly consisting of small-scale agricultural processing companies. Historically, the local economy was mostly based on agriculture and fishing, both of which have lost importance due to the tourism boom that started in the 1960s, but the town is still surrounded by irrigated agricultural land and has retained a certain village character and rural lifestyle during the winter months. The local population has grown significantly less than that of most other Spanish municipalities, while unemployment levels have remained slightly above the national average. The strong dependence of the local economy on (summer) tourism creates significant fluctuation of unemployment over the year, which is seen as a significant local challenge. Also, the share of foreign residents is slightly higher than the national average and much of the immigration that the locality has received over the last decades has been seasonal: the booming tourism industry attracts many foreign workers every summer, while the harvesting season (from October to February) attracts agricultural workers, who usually reside in small districts near the municipality where the crops are located.

In terms of immigration and integration, interviewees describe the locality as "a friendly town without major problems" that has never received a significant wave of immigration. As a result, no (immigrant) "ghettoes" have formed but the foreign population is quite equally spread across the municipality (including the city centre). Only recently, xenophobic sentiments and welfare chauvinism seem to be on the rise among parts of the local population (SP-4-01), a development that has been addressed by the city council through the organisation of various programmes/events in favour of cultural diversity. Several interviewees suggested that the long tradition as a tourist destination, as well as own experiences of emigration to other more prosperous European countries, has helped locals getting used to foreigners and to "become more tolerant" (SP-4-09, SP-4-10). Like in locality 2, one of the main challenges is the shrinking and aging of the local population, a development that has been kept at bay only thanks to immigration, as several interviewees highlight. This has not only allowed local schools and other public institutions to be kept open but also to sustain the remaining agricultural production, which locals are less and less willing to work in.

Since 2015 the local government is formed by the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) in coalition with a Valencian nationalist left party called Compromís, before that it had been governed by the conservative People's Party (PP) during three legislative periods (since 2003). The change of political leadership thus coincided with a rise in the number of arrivals of especially Syrian refugees to Europe, some of whom have been received in/by the locality, where one of the major refugee-serving NGOs (which currently provides a total of 217 places in the whole region) has been present since the 1990s. According to the NGO, only around 15% of the foreign residents in the locality are asylum seekers or refugees. Furthermore, since 2019 the NGO also provides accommodation for newly arrived (irregular) migrants under the humanitarian protection programme, which is also financed by the national government.

2.6. Locality 5 (Andalusia, type D, medium)

Locality 5 is the largest municipality in the sample and the one with the highest population density. Many local actors highlighted the striking lack of residential segregation, both in terms of immigration and socioeconomic status. The city has a long history as a major port city that has been open to trade and visitors from many other parts of the world, especially Latin America. As a result, locals still feel very much connected to Latin America and praise their society as the most open and welcoming of the whole country. One interviewee explained it like this: "The local population of this province [and especially the city] has traditionally been open, close to the sea, connected to the world… so it's a rather welcoming atmosphere, generally speaking, and in spite of the dire economic situation" (SP-5-03).

In fact, locality 5 is one of the Spanish cities that was hardest hit by the 2008 economic crisis, from which it never fully recovered. It still has one of the highest employment rates in Spain (and the whole of Europe). Its main economic sector is tourism, followed by fishing and a depleted shipyard industry. While mostly generating seasonal employment, the recent

tourism boom puts a significant strain on local housing offer, as do the increasing numbers of foreign students (mostly EU but also parts of Spain) coming to the city, whereas the local/resident population is shrinking (and has been since the 1980, when the city had close to 160,000 inhabitants). Between 2005 and 2014 alone, the city lost more than 7% of its population due to the fact that many locals – including several of my interviewees themselves – have moved to one of the surrounding towns and villages even though they continue to work in the city.

The municipality is characterised by a very low share (and diverse mix) of foreign residents (around 2%, the lowest of all selected cases and far below the national average), mostly from Morocco, followed by various Latin American countries. This lack of direct exposure to what elsewhere has been perceived the "refugee crisis" partly explains why both its local population and political leadership have been very open to the reception of refugees, as one interviewee argued:

> *For example, when the war in Syria broke out, the city gov was quick to declare to declare the city a city of welcome… but that didn't have any practical implication. It was an important and necessary pronouncement but not much more than talk in the end. It also reflected the view of the majority of the population… but it was also clear that it wouldn't lead to a significant number of arrivals (SP-5-01).*

This (at least rhetorical) openness might also have to do with the fact that since 2015 the city has been governed by a left-wing coalition, following 20 years of conservative (PP) government (1995-2015). It was right after the change of government, the city was among the first Spanish cities to join the network of refugee hosting cities, and about 100 families in the city welcomed asylum seekers into their homes. Currently, the city council collaborates with CEAR by providing several flats for the reception of asylum seekers. On the whole, however, the number of refugees who are actually living in the city remained comparatively low and of the relatively few people who pass through another local reception facility that is part of the humanitarian protection programme, hardly anyone stays in the city, mostly because there are no jobs.

2.7. Locality 6 (Andalusia, type D, small)

Locality 6 is a small town off the Mediterranean coast but nonetheless an important destination for day visitors and tourists. The municipality is the main economic power in the interior of the province, with a higher per capita income than coastal cities and with an evident evolution of the production model from agriculture to an increasingly powerful industrial manufacturing sector. While its unemployment rate lies slightly above the national average, its economic situation is much better than in most of the region. Within the province it is the municipality with the highest employment rate (68% among working age people). This gives

the municipality the ability to spend quite a lot on social policies and local welfare support, as several interviewees highlighted, including the head of the social services dept (SP-6-04) as well as responsible member of the local government, who explained that "we happily fund the NGOs to do their important work the area of integration, and luckily, we do have the economic ability to do so, as a city government (SP-6-02).

The town is characterised by relatively little residential segregation (the issue was noted more in terms of socioeconomic status than ethnic origin/background) and was described as "a very quiet and safe city" with a very low crime rate (SP-6-04). Nonetheless, population growth remains significantly below the national average, as does the share of foreign residents living in the city (the largest groups are Brazilian, Romanian, and Moroccan, followed by British citizens), even though their number has recently been growing considerably. The transition from agriculture to industry (and services) also changed the profile of immigration, from temporary agricultural workers who used to return to their country of origin at the end of each harvest season, to people escaping conflicts and/or poverty. Accordingly, the local population is just starting to get used to immigration und the resulting cultural diversity, as the local councillor noted:

> [*Locality 6] is not a small city, it's quite big for this region… but it still has a kind of village-mentality… and to change this mentality isn't easy. But slowly slowly it is changing. Immigration has been a relatively recent phenomenon compared to larger Spanish cities. So, the people here first had to get used to it before they could open up and welcome the newcomers. So, in this sense the small size and rural nature of the city is not helping (SP-6-02).*

Since 2011 the municipality has been governed by the conservative Partido Popular (PP), following almost 30 years of PSOE. The locality represents an interesting case regarding the reception of asylum seekers, since it was the first municipality in the region where a reception centre was established (in 2016) in response to the so-called "refugee crisis" of 2015. Already in 2015, the conservative municipal government set up a partnership with the regional and national governments as well as various NGOs to accommodate 330 asylum seekers in the town and neighbouring municipalities.

3.   Access to housing

Many interviewees across most of the selected localities (particularly localities 1, 3, and 5) mentioned housing as the single-most important barrier or at least difficulty that post-2014 migrants are facing. It is also important to note, however, that in all of these cases, affordable housing is very difficult to find in general, and was described as a significant problem also for the local population, and especially young people. In principle, immigrants and refugees (or newcomers in general) face the same difficulties but some of them do affect foreigners more strongly than locals. The president of an employer organisation in locality 5, where the scarcity of housing is particularly extreme, put it this way: "It´s very difficult to find a place to live even for people from here, so many of them have moved outside of the city. And when it´s difficult for the locals, it's impossible for the immigrants (SP-5-14). As will be discussed in more detail below, there are various reasons for the lack of affordable, good-quality housing, some of which are of a general nature (affecting all the selected localities in a similar way), while others are more specific to certain localities.

One aspect that is closely related to housing access and policies, and that clearly sets the localities apart, is the **degree of residential segregation**, which is not simply depending on population size. A lack or comparatively low level of residential segregation has been highlighted by interviewees in locality 4 (rural), as well as localities 2 and 6 (small), but also in locality 5 (medium, but somewhat exceptional in this sense, see section 2.6). Also locality 1 (small) is an exception in this sense since in spite of its relatively small size and "village character" (e.g., SP-1-01), it suffers from quite significant residential segregation – many interviewees identify a "classic immigrant quarter" – that goes back to the earliest wave of immigration (from Andalusia). Also the second locality in Catalonia (locality 3, medium-sized) is described as highly segregated in terms of both ethnicity/origin and socioeconomic status of the population:

> *There is a very clear and strong residential segregation in this city – the areas where immigrants live are obvious and visible, and well-known, there are some streets that are basically of the immigrant communities, where people from here hardly go anymore. And then there are also zones where rich people live… and where you will hardly find any immigrant family (SP-3-02).*

This not only limits newcomers (geographically) in their search for adequate housing but it also affects the way in which long-term residents more generally perceive immigration and the challenges or opportunities it creates for the locality, with more segregation usually leading to more rejection towards immigrants.

Primarily based on interviews conducted in each of the selected municipalities, this chapter provides an overview of 1) the concrete barriers that post-2014 migrants are facing in relation to housing; 2) the local actors who are involved in, and/or seen as responsible for, facilitating

their access; 3) any concrete measures (taken at the local level) or street-level practices that either help or hinder this access; and 4) the specific target groups of these local policies, initiatives or practices.

3.1. Main challenges / obstacles

What most interviewees identify as the main problem that (post-2014) migrants face in relation to housing is a **lack of affordable flats and houses**. In some municipalities – particularly locality 5 (type D) – the lack of housing in combination with a lack of job opportunities is what effectively limits the number of migrants (and refugees) that end up staying the city. Other localities – particularly locality 1 (type A) – are instead characterised by a strong imbalance or gap between the demand for foreign workers and the limited supply of housing, as a real estate agent pointed out: "There is a huge demand and very limited supply of affordable housing… and so if they can the owners will first rent to locals, people from here. But the problem is that the local industries need many workers, and these workers have to come from outside" (SP-1-06).

A large part of the problem is that since the economic crisis very few new homes have been built. In locality 1, according to official data, only 22 new homes were finished in 2019, and 61 in 2020. The increasing demand for (rented) accommodation in combination with the very limited supply has led to a **steep increase in rental prizes**, which many interviewees described as an obstacle that in principle affects newcomers as well as locals but **in the case of foreigners it tends to intersect with other barriers**, as a local representative of a national asylum NGO in locality 2 observed:

> *In terms of housing, [the major barrier for post-2014 migrants] is mostly a question of affordability! There is also some reticence on the part of some owners but primarily it's the price, which makes housing inaccessible. Then there are some who use certain additional requirements in order to exclude certain people (SP-2-03).*

In locality 1, for example, the average rent within the municipality rose from around 350€ in 2015 to almost 470€ in 2020, an increase of more than one third (official data). This also reflects another important characteristic of the Spanish housing market: The general **lack of social (publicly subsidised) housing**. In Spain in general, the share of public housing is much smaller than in most other European countries, and this was recognised by several interviewees (in localities 1, 2, 3 and 4) as well as in official documents (locality 1, locality 3) as a significant shortcoming and challenge in terms of social cohesion and immigrant integration. A real estate agent described the concrete situation in locality 1:

> *Another part of the problem is the lack of social housing: There are only like 100 flats in the whole town… and that aggravates the problem. So, there are many people here who work and earn less than 1000 Euros, but there are no flats that*

> *cost less than 400. The obstacle is also there for locals, especially young people…*
> *the problem of housing is a general problem (SP-1-06).*

According to official data, during the whole year of 2020 only four of the 1,452 people inscribed in the municipal housing register (waiting list), could be offered a subsidised flat. A similar picture was presented by representatives of the local housing department in locality 5, where in addition to the very low number of available homes also the number of foreigners on the waiting list is very low (reflecting the low share of foreign population, see section 2.6).

The already limited supply of housing is further reduced by the fact that for various reasons many **owners are not interested in renting their property**, and/or because the quality of the flats and houses is too bad to even fulfil the minimum legal requirements in terms of health and safety. These issues were mentioned by several interviewees, including a local bureaucrat working in the registration office of locality 2 (A), the responsible member of the local government in locality 3 (B), and the former director of social services in locality 4 (C):

> *(A) At the same time, there is quite a lot of empty flats and houses, that the owners simply do not want to rent out… but not only to foreigners! But generally, because they don't need the money… or whatever (SP-2-07)*

> *(B) In the end people end up occupying empty housing. There is a problem with some buildings, the owners of which are not willing to rent them as social housing even though the local government has tried and made offers – but they are looking to sell (SP-3-05).*

> *(C) One of the gravest problems of this town [in relation to housing] is the often very poor state of the housing that exists […] the local administration recently made a study and found that 30 per cent of the housing in the town centre is basically in ruins and completely abandoned (SP-4-03).*

As will be discussed in the next chapter (on employment), immigrants in general and particularly those who arrived more recently and from outside the EU often work in the lowest-paid and most unstable segments of the economy and thus face a **significantly higher risk of poverty** than the rest of the population. As a result, they are often forced to live in overcrowded and/or substandard housing, particularly if they are in an irregular situation, as several interviewees pointed out, including a local housing officer in locality 5 (A), a legal advisor and NGO representative in locality 3 (B), and a street-level bureaucrat in locality 2 (C):

> *(A) The barrier is the scarcity of housing, but … immigrants tend to be affected even more strongly because of the lack of legal protection especially those in an irregular situation. So, they are somewhat more exposed to abuse and exploitation… if you have less access to public support systems you depend even more on whatever you are being offered… (SP-5-04).*

(B) *[Housing] is a general problem, in the whole region! But for people in irregular situations, it is particularly difficult – they basically have to rent rooms, not flats, even whole families will sub-rent a single room (SP-3-01).*

(C) *Housing is very expensive here… and we do realise that often people (immigrants) come to register also several of their family members in the same flat… so they often share with quite a few others… and that's probably for that reason [because it is the only way they can afford the rent] (SP-2-07).*

In several of the selected municipalities, and particularly the two medium-sized towns in the sample (localities 3 and 5), the problem is further aggravated by an **additional (and growing) demand for touristic and/or student flats.** In the absence of effective regulation, and especially in combination, the two developments can put significant pressure on local housing markets, as a real estate agent in locality 5 explained in an informal conversation: According to him, around 80% of the flats he rents out are rented by (mostly foreign) students from October to June, and during the summer months they are (often privately, via platforms like AirBnB) rented to tourists. So these flats are all fully furnished and rented at prices that include everything but that locals are generally unable to afford. Since in the summer months the prizes are around four times higher than during the rest of the year, the vast majority of homeowners he works with have chosen this business model, which allows them to rent to well-paying costumers without ever having to give them longer-term contracts (SP-5-08). Arguably, this situation is not only hugely beneficial for the owners, but also the agencies, who will have new customers (who they can charge a commission) for the same flat every year.

The same issue also affects locality 4 (rural, type C) where the price difference is so large that even without students many property owners have adapted their business model, as the president of a local employer organisation pointed out[4]:

> *It is a very touristic municipality where rental prices oscillate throughout the year and vary a lot between the high season (June-September) and the low season (October-May). Due to this fluctuation, which in many cases generates variations of more than 600 per cent between the two seasons, it makes it much more attractive to rent out your property only during the holiday period. This way you make so much money in the summer that you are not interested in renting all year at a much lower price (SP-4-09).*

Another important barrier that particularly affects foreigners, and which some of the statements quoted above already alluded to, is the issue of **racism and racial discrimination**. Interestingly, this issue was mentioned particularly often in localities 1 and 3, the two Catalan

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[4] This has also been confirmed by a local real estate agent interviewed in the same locality (SP-CU-12).

municipalities (both type A) – which of course does not say anything about the real scale of the problem, compared to other localities (presumably it is a problem everywhere). What is notable, however, is that in these two localities (and in the Catalan context more generally) racial discrimination in the housing sector ("racismo inmobilario") has lately become a very prominent issue that has been on the agenda for many years. For example, in locality 1 it has already been identified as a problem (and significant barrier to integration) in the local "Citizenship and Integration Plan" of 2008 (on p.31). According to the local coordinator of an NGO working in locality 1, the difficulties that migrants face at the local housing market are "very much an issue of racial discrimination! And it´s an issue that does not seem to be changing" (SP-1-01), even though it is not new. A real estate agent who has been working in this area for decades, and who is involved in a recent initiative involving the local government and local associations, put it like this:

> *In [locality 1] there is a lot of racism, and most property owners do not want to rent to immigrants. The chances of finding a flat – only to rent! It's not a problem if you want to buy a property – will depend on the colour of your skin: If you are black, it is very difficult that someone will want to rent their flat to you. After that come the Moroccans and the Indians, and then the Chinese. Immigrants from Eastern Europe generally don't have this problem[5]. […] The underlying Problem is that locals haven't yet gotten used to the existing diversity (SP-1-06).*

This is an interesting statement considering that locality 1 is characterised by a particularly long history of immigration and exceptional degree of cultural diversity (see section 2.2). Also in locality 3, the issue of "housing racism" has recently gained a lot of public attention, as an NGO representative (and legal advisor) noted:

> *There is also a lot of racism in this area [of housing]: people who say they don't want to rent to people from Morocco, for example, even when they have a job and regular earnings and all their papers are in order. There has been a lot of movement around this issue, a lot of pressure from the civil society… but it's difficult to address (SP-3-01).*

Notably, in other localities, especially those in Andalusia (localities 4 and 6), most interviewees said they do not perceive racism as a widespread phenomenon let alone generalised practice (e.g., SP-6-04A), although some of them did refer to instances of discrimination towards more specific groups, like young asylum seekers from sub-Saharan countries, as the director of the refugee reception centre in locality 6 noted:

> *The local* population hasn't found it easy to get used to the presence of our clients here in the city. It´s not that they openly reject them but for example, it

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[5] Note that several interviewees perceived that discrimination affects different groups to different degrees, following a clear racial hierarchy (e.g., SP-1-08).

is difficult for them to find housing independently, or even if we are there as intermediators! In this sense there is rejection. And *whenever there are two or three incidents/problems… people start to talk (SP-6-07).*

A real estate agent working in that same locality (6) highlighted that in practice, the **very tight housing market is conducive to discriminatory practices among property owners**: According to him, the very limited supply and growing demand for housing in the municipality give the owners a lot of power to choose who they want to rent to, and "so they tend to come to the agent with a very clear profile of who they want to rent to, and that´s often people from here" (SP-6-08).

While some interviewees – especially real estate agents – were surprisingly open in admitting that racial discrimination is very common in this area, others did try to present or justify these practices as a way of avoiding conflicts caused by cultural differences and thereby ensuring good conviviality, as exemplified by the following quote from an interview with the director of an estate agency in locality 3:

> *Depending on where people come from, they have certain customs and behaviours that do not fit with our customs and behaviours, and for that reason some owners prefer not to rent to people who don't have the same customs, in order to avoid problems and conflicts further down the line, because if you see things differently there will be misunderstandings and that will lead to problems of conviviality… And sometimes the community of existing neighbours are of a certain homogenous status and want to preserve this status and level in the building… so they object to people from other cultures and other economic status. It's not that people here are racist, but what happens is that they want to avoid conflicts… For example, immigrants from certain countries have certain alimentary habits and preferences that bother people from here, because of the smell, and so on. Maybe the flats here are not well adapted to this, because the kitchen window goes to a space where others dry their clothes… (SP-3-12).*

What becomes clear from many of these accounts is not only that race and class intersect to produce exclusion from the private housing market, but also that there is a vicious cycle through which migrants´ difficulties of finding adequate housing can increase prejudices and discrimination against them, which further increases their exclusion. The following statements of a social worker in locality 2 (A) and two street-level bureaucrats in locality 1 (B, C) illustrate this link between (low) socioeconomic status and immigrant origin:

> *(A) From what we hear it is extremely difficult to find housing for low-income migrant families! For both reasons: the high costs, and the rejection on the part of many owners (SP-2-12).*

(B) *A concrete problem of this specific neighborhood is that many people [immigrants], often families, live in quite small flats and so the kids spend most of the time outside playing in the square and the surrounding streets, which for other – mostly older – residents causes a nuisance (SP-1-10).*

(C) *Part of the problem is that because it is so difficult, especially for foreigners, to find a flat, those who do find one often end up sharing it with lots of family members, and that creates new problems, with the neighbors, etc. And this reenforces the problem because to avoid these problems people [who own properties] are even more reluctant to rent to foreign families (SP-1-07).*

In a similar way, interviewees also pointed at instances where "bad experiences" with previous migrant tenants have led to more prejudices and rejection against foreigners more generally, as a real estate agent in locality 3 remembered in relation to a flat that the owner had let to Caritas (via his agency) and that was used to temporarily accommodate foreign care leavers:

> *The [other] owners are desperate. Everybody is now against this one owner. But if these youngsters ("chicos") would behave like our young people… and wouldn't destroy everything and insult the neighbours… then there wouldn't be a problem. But they don't behave normally, like local youth. Because they feel rejected by this society and they behave accordingly. The idea was good… to give them a chance to adapt to our way of life… but the result was horrible. Also, because these neighbours, when they now see a Moroccan, they assume they are all like that, and won't even think about relating to them [in a positive way] (SP-3-12).*

Even where property owners do not explicitly exclude foreigners as potential tenants, discrimination often works more indirectly, by setting extremely high standards in terms of minimum monthly income and job stability, which are much more difficult to fulfil for (especially recent) immigrants who are even less likely than locals to find a permanent/full-time job and/or be able to prove that they have worked for a minimum of three months, as is often established by agencies (e.g., SP-6-08).

This already points at another significant barrier in terms of post-2014 migrants´ access to housing: the often **very strict and hard-to-fulfil requirements set by real estate agencies or property owners**. While in most cases these conditions apply to every potential tenant, they are more difficult to fulfil for immigrants, as several interviewees, including two real estate agents working in localities 1 (A) and 2 (B), readily admitted:

(A) *The strict requirement that tenants must earn at least three times the rent, is a decision of the agency, and it disproportionately falls on immigrant workers… who will hardly have a permanent contract… when 85% of all work contracts here are temporary! But the owners basically need to avoid the risk of renting their valuable property to someone who will not (be able to) pay them… (SP-1-06).*

> *(B) [When he has migrant clients] I already know more or less what to look for…
> what type of flat, and what type of owner… that is, someone who will be OK
> to rent to this kind of customer. Because normally the owners are looking for
> someone who rents long-term and has a stable job (SP-2-09).*

The **close link between (access to) employment and housing** was also highlighted by an NGO representative in locality 1, where according to her, "especially in the main sectors, like the meat industry, contracts are often weekly, which obviously makes renting a flat very difficult, even in the absence of discrimination (SP-1-01)*.*

Quite frequently, these very demanding formal requirements are being justified with reference to the general **housing legislation (in Spain)**, which according to several interviewees (still) affords stronger legal protection to the tenant than the owner of privately rented property[6], as was highlighted by estate agents in locality 1 (A) and 3 (B):

> *(A) The timeframe is a problem… because normal rental contracts are for five
> years in Spain. So, the agency imposes a series of strict requirements […] This
> is necessary because the Spanish justice system doesn't work: it is very
> difficult to evict a tenant who doesn't pay the rent anymore due to financial
> problems, especially if they can evidence special vulnerabilities. They easily
> end up staying several years until they can be evicted. […] In this agency we
> do rent to foreigners, but only if they fulfil these requirements (SP-1-06).*

> *(B) The high risk and lack of security for the owner in case the tenant stops paying
> the rent is the main reason why many owners are reluctant to rent to people
> who cannot prove high regular income. But that affects everyone,
> independent of origin! … even though finding a long-term or even permanent
> job here must be more difficult for an immigrant than a local (SP-3-12).*

As the latter interviewee added, it is also much more difficult for immigrants to instead rely on a financial guarantor, since "we cannot accept a person… like the tenants´ parent, who lives in Egypt, for example, as the guarantor" (SP-3-12). Unsurprisingly, and as will be discussed in the next section, most migrants and particularly those in irregular situations do not find housing through real estate agencies but rather depend on personal networks and/or the help of NGOs.

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[6] For example, the tenant automatically acquires the right to stay in the flat of house for five years if they want, whereas the owner can only terminate the contact before that if he or his/her children need the flat or house for their own use.

3.2. Actors involved (WHO)

While the central actors in relation to post-2014 migrants´ access to housing are certainly the migrants themselves, the focus of this report is on other local actors who facilitate – or, in some cases, rather hinder – their access to private and public housing.

The **role of the local administration** is rather limited since it primarily concerns access to social housing. In general, the public housing system (incl. the register according to which social housing is being assigned) is a competence of the regional government, but it is being implemented and managed at the local level, either by a dedicated housing department or, as in the case of locality 5, by a public company that manages all the flats owned by the local and regional administration within the municipal borders (SP-5-04). In general, eligibility is strictly based on (legal) residence status, socio-economic need, and length of residence in the municipality. Across all municipalities, interviewees working in this area highlighted the absence of discrimination between locals and foreigners, but sometimes admitted that a certain discrimination against newcomers is in fact built into the system, as the following excerpt from an interview with a senior official (A) and a social worker (B) in locality 5 illustrates:

> A: Regarding access to public housing their [immigrants´] integration is complete, because they have exactly the same access, rights, and guaranies as any person who has been born in the city and is inscribed in the same register… so, there are basically no requirements for people to access municipal housing… everybody can inscribe themselves into the register and will be put on the waiting list. But we then select people from that list based on several criteria: they need to be registered in the municipality for at least one year… and the longer they are on the list the higher their chances [to be offered a flat].

> B: And so, the possibility to actually get a flat is very small… especially for newcomers… since it´s based primarily on the length of residence/registration in the municipality (SP-5-04).

A bit later in the interview the local official explained in more detail how the waiting list system works in practice:

> A: And we also evaluate each individual case: when we have a flat with three bedrooms, we will filter the waiting list for families formed of 4, 5, or 6 persons. And so, the system shows us the families that fulfil these requirements, and they will be ranked on the basis of their economic situation, their social conditions, and their current living conditions… to make sure that the most urgent cases come first. So, things like a disability, having many children… being at risk of eviction or paying a very high rent with very low income… all these things matter in determining the rank (SP-5-04).

At the time of field research (Jan 2022), the local government was planning to slightly reform the access policy in order to facilitate access by particularly vulnerable immigrants, as the responsible local councillor explained:

> *…until now no extra points have been assigned to immigrant families… just for being foreigners. Right now, we are working on a reform of this register… it has not yet been presented to the city council, but what we will propose is to give a certain preference to those immigrants who are living on the street or in a reception centre – they will be considered a group of special protection / vulnerability. Not ALL migrants but those in this specific situation. That's what we are going to try. This will obviously also need some additional sensibilisation work towards the rest of the population, and it might raise criticism, but they will have to understand that this is a reasonable positive discrimination of a particularly vulnerable group (SP-5-11).*

Just like in relation to integration more generally (see WP3 country report Spain), a much more central role than that of the local government is being played by the various **NGOs working with or for migrants and refugees.** In all of the selected localities, these organisations act **as crucial intermediaries** between their (former) clients and the private housing market, as has been mentioned by several real estate agents (who had been contacted by NGOs in past) as well as many NGO representatives.

In some cases, the organisation formally rents the property from a private owner in order to provide more independent accommodation to asylum seekers, as was the case in locality 1, where a real estate agent who was renting several flats to one of the major asylum NGOs described the involvement of that organisation as "absolutely necessary because the owners wouldn't rent directly to the newcomers" (SP-1-06). Another agent, interviewed in locality 2, remembered a concrete case where another NGO acted as a financial guarantor, and that even so it had not been easy for him to "find the right kind of owner" (SP-2-09).

In (many) other cases NGO representatives themselves described their involvement as less formalised but equally necessary, as the following quotes from interviews with NGO representatives working with foreign care leavers (A and B, in locality 3) and with asylum seekers in locality 6 (C) and 5 (D) illustrate:

> *(A) The housing issue is usually solved through a lot of asking around in our private networks… sometimes there is a family or group of friends who help us… but it is increasingly difficult. We do not enter as intermediary, but the youngsters get the money and rent their own room! […] But we do mediate and appear as supporting the young person, we often introduce them [to the owner], and we introduce us, so that they know that there is a work plan and professional accompaniment… and that obviously gives them also some security (SP-3-06).*

(B) Once they have a job, we try to support them in finding a place to live. And often that's the most difficult thing. There is rejection against them as foreigners, as young people, in all senses. So, we must rely a lot on personal networks, and act as intermediaries between them and the estate agency, sometimes the owners… convince them and play with their consciousness… often they are really just misinformed, and there is a lot of mistrust. What we cannot do is act as guarantors, we can only mediate (SP-3-08).

(C) There are people who act as mediators and are dedicated to finding flats or rooms for those clients that must leave our centre… we have these few contacts and always get in touch with them. They are either estate agents or simply people who privately mediate in the housing market […] and [they] already know us, and know that we as an organisation are behind these migrants… and that there is a state-funded programme covering the rent and so they are less suspicious… […] We also have some good contacts directly with owners… and so we can sometimes arrange that our clients pass these flats from one to the next so that the owner doesn't have to take care of finding new people (SP-6-07).

(D) Our role as intermediary is very important! If we can tell the owner that this is our client and that he will receive this amount of money for the next year, it helps a lot. Without us, these guys would never find a flat here, never! …although through their personal networks they will probably find some place to stay at least temporarily, like on a friend´s couch… (SP-5-02).

As the last statement also emphasizes, another very crucial role is played by **personal, ethnic, or family networks, which migrants – especially in the most vulnerable situations – tend to fall back on**. This was also often highlighted by representatives of the local administration, including the head of social services in locality 2 (A) and the social worker responsible for immigration issues in locality 6 (B):

(A) A very important role is that of their own (ethnic) community and networks… especially for migrants in irregular situations – they are usually accommodated by some friends or family, and through them is how they find work in the informal sector… so this is also a kind of integration I would say (SP-2-02).

(B) I think that usually they find somewhere to live through their personal networks… not the estate agencies… they tend to rent privately and get the contacts from within their networks. I usually don't ask for the [rental] contract… only the immigration office needs that... but to me they have never mentioned any [real estate] agency! (SP-6-04B)

Even though only few post-2014 migrants seem to rely on **real estate agencies** to find independent housing, their role nonetheless warrants consideration, since they effectively **act as filters for private landlords**, whose (often openly racist) preferences and stereotypes they thereby help to reproduce.

One agent (interviewed in locality 1) whose agency arranges around 120 rentals every year but only two or three of them to "black people", as he said, also explained that this is "not because we don't have the right flats, but because the owners tell us that they don't want to rent them to foreigners, very openly. And since they pay us to act as the filter… it is on us to play this role" (SP-1-06). While he was aware that these practices violate anti-discrimination laws, he is also aware that if he does not comply with the owners´ wishes "they would just go to another agency, if we say we cannot have discriminatory practices" (SP-1-06). Similarly, an agent interviewed in locality 3 very openly stated that "if a Moroccan wants to rent a flat and has a job and can prove the necessary income, we still cannot rent him the flat if the other people who live [in the building] do not want someone with a lower cultural level. So, in that case as an agency, we cannot do anything, we have to follow the expectations of the owners" (SP-3-12).

Notably, these (rather shocking) statements are not isolated exceptions but in line with other research conducted in this area more specifically. According to one such study, more than 72% of the agencies surveyed (in four different provinces across Spain) readily accepted fake clients´ wishes to openly exclude foreigners as potential tenants, and more than 80% accepted more indirect measures like raising specific documentary requirements in order to exclude non-nationals (PROVIVIENDA 2020).

In light of this, it is no surprise that other local actors, including civil society organizations, perceive private agencies much more often as part of the problem rather than the solution. Only a few interviewees mentioned agencies that clearly are exceptions to the rule:

> *It's very difficult to find rooms or flats through agencies… there is only one in the whole city that is collaborating and really helpful, but it's a very particular person, very socially engaged, a real exception! He helped us to find two places… where he had to mediate and negotiate and convince the owners… and explain to them. Usually they say no immediately – we already gave up trying, we don't even contact them anymore nowadays (SP-3-06).*

Those **very few real estate agencies that are not only aware of the problem but also willing to actively try and combat racism** within the private housing market, highlight that they

thereby constantly risk losing clients, and that it requires a lot of personal conviction and additional effort[7]:

> *We have to do a lot of work convincing at least some of the owners. […] Some people cannot be changed, but there are always some who can be influenced, and that's what we try to do by doing this work… we talk to the employer for example and can then say that they are very happy with the work that the potential tenant is doing [to make up for the lack of a permanent contract], but this is only successful in a handful of cases per year, very few… (SP-1-06).*

Notably, this kind of work seems to be slightly easier and more successful in smaller localities, where "contact is much more direct and personal, and people don't come to the agency ´X´ but they come to the person working in that agency, and that person is then the one who talks to the owners, who he knows personally… This doesn't happen in Barcelona, for example" (SP-2-09).

Overall, private actors are perceived/presented as reluctant to assume responsibility for, or get involved in, facilitating post-2014 migrants´ access to adequate housing. **Private employers**, for example, only seem to be willing to get involved in very exceptional cases, usually when they need immigrants as workers. The following two quotes from interviews with the human recourses manager of a company working in the countryside close to locality 2 (A), and the president of an employer organisation in locality 5 (B) exemplify this:

> *(A) The companies in the city don't want to be responsible above all for the housing issue because they say it's not their job. If anything, they put them in touch with a local Peruvian organization and [hope] that they take care of all the rest… In the end, it comes down to some financial support on the part of the company… they must have some flexibility to advance some of the pay in order to pay the deposit for their flat, for example – we do that on a regular basis. And once in a while people do leave us… and we sit on the costs, it has happened a couple of times, but we are happy to assume this risk (SP-2-13).*

> *(B) If they have papers, we are very happy to employ them, there is no kind of discrimination of any kind, they would be highly welcomed! And maybe with the help of the local administration we could also find a way to solve the housing problem – find them some public housing so that they can live there while they work for us… (SP-5-14).*

The two statements clearly reflect the expectation that whoever does not find housing through the private market will be helped either by the local administration or a third sector

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[7] Note that a similar (singular) case of successful convincing was also mentioned by an agent interviewed in locality 6 (SP-A-08).

organisation. For the local coordinator of one such organization (in locality 1) "part of the problem is that the companies that make huge profits and benefit from the fact that there are many migrants coming to [the locality] and often working in exploitative conditions, don't do anything to provide adequate housing" (SP-1-01). A similar point was also made by the mayor of the same municipality (SP-1-03).

3.3. Policies, initiatives, and practices that foster/hinder access (WHAT)

When local actors are asked what is being done in order to facilitate post-2014 migrants´ access to housing, many point to **social housing, as a mainstream measure that apart from "solving the general housing problem" also contributes to a better integration of immigrants**. A street-level bureaucrat (and previous local councillor) in locality 1 highlighted – like many other respondents – the important role that public housing can play for integration, but also the recent lack of investment in this area:

> *The local government used to respond to this [the lack of housing] by building social housing, but in the last 5-6 years I am not aware of any new social housing being constructed. But in previous years, under better economic conditions, there was more investment in this area, including explicit efforts to ensure mixing and diversity and thus avoid ghettoization. This has been very good for the integration, also of newcomers (SP-1-07).*

Also interviewees in other municipalities – especially those most strongly hit by (and still not fully recovered from) the economic crisis, highlighted the large amount of money that local authorities (have to) spend on **housing subsidies**. In locality 5, the responsible member of the city government (A) and a local official (B) both mentioned subsidies for privately rented accommodation as an important measure that does not specifically target but *also* benefit many immigrants:

> *(A) As a local authority we also provide a lot of financial support to subsidise rents, around 3 million per year, much more than most other local governments! And this also includes many migrant families (SP-5-11).*

> *(B) Housing is a huge problem in general! We are helping around 25% of the population with subsidized rents! That's a lot, and it costs a huge amount of money. And still, families in vulnerable situations, not just migrants but also locals… find it hugely difficult to find suitable places to live (SP-5-12).*

Similar initiatives were also mentioned in locality 3, where the responsible official noted that "the municipality is currently paying temporary alternatives (hotels, temporary accommodation, etc.) for a large number of families… many of whom are foreigners, but obviously not all" (SP-3-07). She also mentioned a project proposal (that had been written but

never taken further) through which the local authority would be enabled to act as a guarantor for families without sufficient resources.

Most interviewees agree that more social housing and public subsidies alone cannot solve the underlying problem, and some more specifically recognized the risk of these measures leading to more rejection towards immigrants, as a local housing officer in locality 1 suggested:

> *But the basic problem here is the lack of rented accommodation! And here, one solution that has been proposed would be more social housing, but I think that's a mistake. Because if you provide more social housing, you create ghettos, and the stigma that the local administration only gives social housing to specific groups [immigrants]. I think we have to fight for more supply (in the private market), for everyone! Only that will lead to less discrimination… because then the owners cannot just rent to the ´perfect couple´… (SP-1-08).*

One thing that became very clear across all the localities, is that **local governments and administrations are very keen not to be seen as devising any policies or measures that target immigrants in particular**, even if these measures are being implemented via NGOs. A good example of such collaboration between the local administration and third sector organisations was mentioned in locality 5, by both a social worker in the public housing company (A) and the responsible councillor (B):

> *(A) We also have some agreements with NGOs, currently two of our flats are used by the Red Cross to help people escape homelessness… and one more flat we are about to let to them to work with care leavers… but neither of these are explicitly dedicated to foreigners… The way this works is that the NGOs propose a project… and we let them use these flats for a symbolic [very low] price (SP-5-04).*

> *(B) …one of [these agreements] has just been approved with the Red Cross, for care leavers, usually foreigners. The first flat will be passed to them very soon, as a transition flat. Because the moment of finding their first own flat or even room in this city is very very difficult! For this we have to make an exception from the general rule and procedure for assigning social housing, which normally follows the official register. And it's also why we are now changing the ordinance to be able to give preference to these young people [see above] (SP-5-11).*

Apart from (more) social housing, various local actors (especially NGO representatives) call for **stricter rules for the (private) housing market**, particularly in terms of housing quality (e.g., SP-1-01) but also to limit the excessive rise in rental prices. In locality 3, the housing department recently commissioned a study in order for the local housing market to be officially recognised as extremely tense, which is a formal requirement for local authorities in Catalonia to take more radical steps, like establish legal limits to rent prices. One of the reasons for taking this step – according to a street-level bureaucrat – was that "there are so

many people in the city who live in situations that we define as ´non-housing´… and that's increasingly seen as a problem of the city" (SP-3-07).

As already mentioned (in the previous section), the problem of sub-standard housing was identified by many local actors (across all selected municipalities) as a widespread additional problem, and one that disproportionately affects migrants with no or precarious residence status. In this context it is important to note that **measures taken in order to increase the quality of available housing** (like stricter rules or intensified control) can effectively make it even more difficult for some immigrants to find a place to live. A real estate agent interviewed in locality 1 provided a concrete example for this:

> *Some people exploit this situation [the excessive cost of rented accommodation] and rent sub-standard flats, that do not fulfil the formal requirements… and they often don't make proper contracts… so this is where many immigrants live, I suppose. Some years ago, a new law was made [Note: at the level of Catalonia] that limited the number of people that can be registered in one flat… before that there would be a hundred people registered in one place, just to be able to regularize… now that's not possible anymore (SP-1-06).*

Another kind of **measures taken in some of the selected municipalities aim to address the problem of racist discrimination**. Particularly in locality 1, where racism in the housing sector has become a very prominent issue during the last couple of years, various local actors including parts of the local administration have mobilised to address the problem locally. According to an NGO representative, it was "in reaction to a series of complaints by second-generation immigrants whose parents came from sub-Sahara Africa" (SP-1-01) that the local housing office commissioned a university to study the phenomenon in detail. A local politician representing a left-wing opposition party in the city council also highlighted the important role of a local advocacy organisation in raising the issue, while criticising the response of the local government:

> *The issue of racism in [relation to] the access to housing… has been brought up by a local group called [name of the organisation] … only then did the Ayuntamiento take up the issue, but for a long time behind closed doors. They are working on this now… but in internal working groups and the results have yet to be published… (SP-1-13).*

One of the people leading this work within the local housing department was aware that the issue is not new (nor specific to the locality) and keen to emphasize that "at least now" it is being addressed:

This year we have initiated a project [...] in which many different actors participate[8]. We are in the second phase now, the first one consisted in detecting the motives of the discrimination, and the methods [mechanisms] through which it works. And now we are proposing concrete actions to be taken against the various causes of discrimination. Generally speaking, it is a cultural problem, to do with the ways in which people use the common areas and so on... an issue of understanding the rights and obligations of every member of a community that lives together... Some 50 years ago, the same kind of discrimination was happening against immigrants from Andalucía, exactly the same (SP-1-08).

When asked what these "concrete actions" might be, she went on to explain:

Now we are looking for solutions... we just had a meeting to develop ways to strengthen the sensibilisation of the population, and next week... we will focus on the resolution of conflicts and strengthening of social cohesion in the city and its neighbourhoods... in these areas we are also going to propose actions. And the last two lines of work are: provide spaces for meeting and exchange, and to look at urban planning and housing policies (SP-1-08).

While (at the time of fieldwork) the concrete measures and actions to be taken in four of the five identified aeras of work (resolution of conflicts, social cohesion, meeting spaces and exchange, urban planning) were still to be discussed and defined, this had already happened for the area of "sensibilisation", as a real estate agent who is actively engaged in the same project proudly emphasised:

We are trying to put up a system where the local government formally certifies that someone who already did rent a flat in the past is a "good tenant" and as such, will have it easier to find a new place. And then we are also planning to set up campaigns that showcase "success cases" of owners who rented to Moroccans or black people and who are very happy with them and never had any problems. There is a working group... and this is one of the things we are planning to do. But none of this is easy (SP-1-06).

It certainly remains to be seen if and how these "ideas" will be put into practice, and whether they can actually contribute to real change. What is arguably missing in the list of measures, is a concrete procedure for reporting discriminatory behaviour and explicit commitment to act upon cases where property owners breach existing anti-discrimination legislation.

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[8] Later she names the six groups of actors involved: The owners and housing associations, the people affected (represented by a local advocacy group), various NGOs, different professionals and local officials, local political parties, and neighborhood associations (ibid).

3.4. Specific target groups (FOR WHOM)

As has become clear from the previous subsections, the difficulty of finding adequate and affordable housing is presented as a problem not just affecting immigrants but also other parts of the local population (especially young people and those with fewer economic resources) and **most of the measures through which the issue is being addressed locally are designed to serve local residents based "on the level of need rather than origin"**, as interviewees in all six localities highlighted. While (post-2014) migrants are generally described as "part of the target population" (e.g., of general housing policies) many interviewees were keen to emphasise that this was not because of their origin but because they are local residents who face financial difficulties. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that one central criterion for assigning social housing, is the length of residence within the municipality and this puts newcomers – independent of where they come from – at a disadvantage compared to someone who was born in the locality.

In none of the six localities has there been any formal local policy (in relation to housing) designed specifically for post-2014 migrants, nor for non-citizens more generally, nor other relevant groups like asylum seekers. In many cases, when specifically asked this question, respondents described the lack of such targeted policies as the result of a conscious decision taken in order to avoid (or at least not enhance) negative sentiments among the local population towards immigrants. The only exception from this general approach was the plan (yet to be discussed and implemented) mentioned by government officials in locality 5, whereas immigrants who are either homeless or living in temporary accommodation are to be given additional points when determining their place on the waiting list for access to public housing (see subsection 3.2).

Overall, **two categories of foreigners were identified as particularly difficult to support in their search for adequate housing: rejected asylum seekers and (unaccompanied) foreign care-leavers**, both of which find themselves in a situation where they have to leave a temporary accommodation financed by the state (in the case of asylum seekers) or the regional authority (in the case of care leavers) and are suddenly left on their own. Especially the former – **rejected asylum seekers** – will also be in an irregular situation, i.e., without residence and work permit, and very limited access to public support, as the following quotes from interviews with local representatives of asylum NGOs in localities 2 (A) and 6 (B) illustrate:

(A) *When people´s asylum claims are rejected, they have to leave the accommodation provided… and usually a referral is made to social services. But they cannot provide support because these people will be in an irregular situation. And so, the only places available would be the emergency*

accommodation managed by Caritas, but these are very limited [12 places, usually occupied]. In these cases, it is often the church communities, including the evangelical church but also the mosques, that provide some support to these people, outside of the formal reception system (SP-2-03).

(B) Once they have left the programme after a negative decision, what we can do is continue to provide some legal advice and psychological support and also labour orientation… anything that is information provision we can still do for them… but we cannot offer housing anymore. So many end up on the streets and/or end up leaving to another country or city… or they rely on basic social services support for some time, like the soup kitchen… Because it is difficult to find a place in general, but the difference is that usually people have more time [to find a flat]. Our clients need to find something from one week to the next (SP-6-07).

Here, the **recent reform of the asylum/reception system that changed the way asylum seekers are being accommodated during their procedure** is putting those whose claims are eventually rejected (which is the case for the vast majority of applicants) in an even more difficult position, as a representative of Caritas in locality 2 explained:

None of these people returns… they stay and will find ways to support themselves. [Before] if they already entered the second phase… so they are living in their own flat (piso de autonomia) paid by the state, they can stay in that flat if they find a way to pay the rent… but they lose the financial support. The problem is that the rents here are extremely high and can usually not be afforded, relying just on informal earnings (SP-2-11).

The other category of migrants at particular risk of homelessness are **foreigners who arrived in Spain as unaccompanied minors** and have to leave the public care system when they turn 18. Especially in the two medium-sized towns in the sample (localities 3 and 5) this group was very often described as very challenging especially by representatives of public institutions and support services, as a municipal social worker in locality 5 highlighted:

The only increase lately has been of unaccompanied young people mostly from Morocco, who arrived around 2017-18 and during the following years ended up on our streets. So suddenly they accounted for almost half of the homeless people in the city – this was a notable change, and a novelty. Because they were all young men, between 18 and 20 years, who had arrived as minors, most of them from Morocco. At the beginning they were absorbed by the youth services but once they turned 18, they left these centers and ended up in the street (SP-5-01).

A social educator working for both the municipality and a local NGO in locality 3, described in much more detail how local actors had responded to this situation, which is one of very few instances where clearly targeted measures were taken by a local authority to address such a specific issue and target group:

… it became a real problem for the city, and it was recognized as such. This was when the first project was created, specifically for care leavers who ended up on the street. It was a very basic service provided through an NGO: a place where they could shower, and get something to eat, and some very basic emotional and legal support. It was open only during four hours per day and financed through a small grant from the provincial government. At the time we attended 25 youngsters, between 18 and 25, all of them foreigners. And over time this project has grown and become much broader … and it was taken over by the local authority and more people were employed. Nowadays there is a part that looks for solutions in terms of housing… and another part that is financed between the local and regional government and provides more substantial support: They receive a monthly payment to cover their rent (usually a room in a shared flat) and a work plan is developed to lead them into stable employment… as a push for them to escape this situation of social exclusion. Often the problem is the lack of legal status which obviously complicates all of this, but it doesn't mean they are excluded from the service! The project is quite new, it started in April [2021], and we are already seeing the first successes, the first people have exited the program with a normal job that pays their rent (SP-3-06).

When asked about the concrete conditions that people have to fulfil in order to qualify for support under this project, he highlights the quite significant room for discretion that both the local and regional government give to the professionals implementing the project (both in terms of formal access requirements and timeframe):

The formal requirements are few… they [the beneficiaries] must be between 18 and 25, and in a vulnerable situation… living on the street or under precarious circumstances. It´s mostly our evaluation of their willingness to stick to the work plan… what we need is this acceptance and commitment on their part. But there is no requirement in terms of administrative status… some of our current clients are waiting to be regularized… and that is left open by the regional government, and I think on purpose. […] They also established one year as the maximum timeframe for individuals to be supported in the program, but we evaluate each case… and if it´s necessary, people stay longer than that. It can be one and a half or two years; in many cases it has only been a couple of months and that was enough to give them the necessary push to become self-sufficient! It always depends on the person… and the way the project is being implemented gives us this possibility, with the backing of the local administration (SP-3-06).

That this is not necessarily always the case becomes clear from another example (mentioned by a representative of a local pro-migrant organization in locality 6), where a similar shift from private to public provision of a temporary housing solution for a specific target group did result in stricter access rules:

More recently a reception flat for single migrant women with children has been opened at the initiative of several NGOs including us… at first it was run by the church and ultimately taken over by the municipality. There are only 4 or 5 places, and it´s only temporary accommodation and while the church-run service was open to any woman, since it's financed by the local gov it only accepts people in regular situation! The problem is that since it´s only temporary, up to 6 months, people need some exit strategy… i.e., some prospect of finding a job and thus being able to pay for independent housing (SP-6-03).

As all of these statements also show, is that while lack of legal status does not explicitly exclude migrants from the private housing market, it does make it much more difficult to afford privately rented housing, since it does represent a huge barrier in relation to accessing employment, as will be discussed in the next section.

CASE	WholeCOMM typology	Major obstacle(s)	Actor(s) involved	Measure(s)	Target group(s)
Locality 1	Small/ Type A	Racism	Property owners, NGOs and personal networks, real estate agents, local housing department,	Project to address the problem of racism Pre-2014: more investment in social housing	(mostly) non-migrant population; all (disadvantaged) local residents
Locality 2	Small/ Type B	High rent	Property owners, NGOs and personal networks, real estate agents, (some) employers/companies	housing subsidies (especially for people moving to rural areas)	All (disadvantaged) local residents
Locality 3	Medium/ Type A	Racism, high rent, lack of supply	Property owners, NGOs and personal networks, real estate agents, local housing department,	Steps taken to limit (private sector) rental prizes; Specific project for (foreign) care leavers;	All (disadvantaged) local residents; Young people leaving the care system;
Locality 4	Rural/ Type C	Tourism	Property owners, NGOs and personal networks, real estate agents,	No concrete measures mentioned	
Locality 5	Medium/ Type D	Lack of supply, high rent, tourism	Property owners, NGOs and personal networks, real estate agents, housing company (public-private)	(planned) reform of public housing register (extra points for vulnerable migrants); (mainstream) housing subsidies	Immigrants who are homeless or living in temporary accommodations; All (disadvantaged) local residents
Locality 6	Small/ Type D	Lack of supply, high rent	Property owners, NGOs and personal networks, real estate agents,	(mainstream) housing subsidies	All (disadvantaged) local residents

Table 1: Case-by-case summary of results/findings regarding the area of Housing

4. Access to employment

Finding a job is very often seen as one of the most basic pre/conditions for a successful integration of migrants, not only because it allows them to maintain themselves and their families without relying on public support, but also because the workplace constitutes a crucial site of interaction with other people including long-term residents. At the same time, finding employment is often described as the most challenging aspect of the whole integration process, and one where many migrants face significant barriers, some of which are related to their individual characteristics while others can be linked to certain (structural) characteristics of the national or local labour markets and/or legal frameworks.

Mostly based on interviews conducted in the six municipalities, and following the same structure as the section on housing, this chapter provides an overview of 1) the concrete challenges that post-2014 migrants are facing in relation to employment; 2) the local actors who are involved in, and/or seen as responsible for, facilitating this access; 3) any concrete measures (taken at the local level) or street-level practices that either help or hinder this access; and 4) the specific target groups of these local policies, initiatives or practices.

4.1. Main challenges / obstacles

The employment situation of (post-2014) migrants very much reflects the general economic and labour market situation in each locality and/or province under study. In localities or areas of very high unemployment (particularly localities 5 and – to a lesser degree – 6 and 4) migrants tend to find it particularly difficult to get any job, since the **very scarce job opportunities** will easily be filled by local jobseekers, as a representative of an employer organisation (A) and a municipal social worker (B) in locality 5 explicitly noted:

> (A) *Generally speaking, there is still a very high share of unemployment, this region never recovered from the economic crisis… and so nobody is looking for workers, and when they do there are many locals who tend to be better trained and already speak the language and all that… the immigrants as you know tend to work in those sectors where workers are missing, and here that's generally not the case (SP-5-06).*

> (B) *Here in the city hardly anyone finds a job, and if there is a job then some local will get it. The whole issue of migrants taking jobs away doesn't really exist here (SP-5-01).*

In localities where the economy is growing and unemployment rates are low (like in localities 1 and 3), or where there is a lack of workers in general – due to population degrowth (like in locality 2) – or at least in certain sectors of the local economy, migrants´ labour market

integration is described as rather easy and quick, even though certain barriers always exist. Interestingly, **the pandemic has sometime been mentioned as a window of opportunity** for post-2014 migrants by creating acute labour shortages:

> *One of the very few positive things about COVID has been that because of the quarantines and so on it created much more rotation of personnel and so people with very little experience also got a chance. And in some cases, the experiences were so positive that some employers – including several retirement homes – later got back to us and requested the same people to train them and offer them a longer-term contract (SP-1-11).*

Overall, **the one barrier that has been mentioned most frequently by local actors across all six localities, is migrant irregularity**, i.e., the fact that many post-2014 migrants (including rejected asylum seekers) live in the locality without a valid residence and work permit. This is not only perceived as a major barrier in terms of access to employment[9], but also as a source of extreme vulnerability (e.g., labour exploitation, dangerous working conditions, etc.). Many local actors – particularly local officials and members of government – describe this as "the main underlying problem" which they, however, are unable to resolve locally because regularisation is a national level competence, and in addition, usually hinges on access to employment. As one interviewee in locality 1 put it, "in order to work you need papers, and in order to get papers you need to work – so this cannot work" (SP-1-06). The director of the local employment office in locality 1 pointed out that many "employers think that immigration and especially irregular migration is something that only affects big cities, and so we have to build a consciousness among them that also here it is a reality, even though we are such a small town" (SP-1-02).

What somewhat alleviates this obstacle is the fact that in Spain in general, and within certain economic sectors in particular, **the informal labour market (still) continues to play a significant role**, as a local representative of one of the major trade unions in locality 1 emphasized:

> *An important aspect is that there is a lot of informal work, in general; and that many of the jobs that exist here [in the locality] are of low quality, stability, and status; and do not require professional qualifications. This leads to lots of work accidents, for example, and all kinds of exploitation, but certain immigrants [he refers to Sub-Sahara Africans specifically] work very well within this system: they*

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[9] As such, it was most often mentioned by private employers and representatives of employer organisations, who frequently highlighted the very high fines that they would risk if they did employ migrants in irregular situations.

quickly adapt, and they accept these conditions… and so […] they find jobs quite easily (SP-1-04).

Other respondents noted that for post-2014 migrants it is much more difficult to find work "in the black market" and thus without the necessary permits and official documentation than it used to be for the immigrants who arrived before the economic crisis, when "employers didn't face such a high risk of fines" (SP-3-01). There are still certain sectors of the economy, however, where irregularity is much less of a problem and where migrants irrespective of their residence status can still find work quite easily (though usually on a temporary basis and often under inhumane conditions). Describing the situation in locality 4, the president of a local employer organisation noted that "in the summer [tourist] season it is easy to find a job, with or without papers, and in agriculture you can always work anyway" (SP-4-09). Notably, locality 4 was the municipality where irregularity was least frequently mentioned as a barrier in terms of post-2014 migrants´ labour market access, whereas in larger municipalities (especially localities 5 and 3) the absence of agricultural production was mentioned as an additional barrier. Importantly, **irregularity is not just a barrier to accessing the formal labour market, but also in relation to further education and training**, where irregular migrants´ exclusion is less explicit but nonetheless notable, as the following quotes from interviews with the director of a Private Vocational Training Institute (A) and the manager of a care company (B) in locality 6 illustrate:

> (A) *The professional training courses usually also include a period of internship with some company, and this can be difficult when the person doesn't have a residence and work permit… even though they are not workers, strictly speaking, so they don't need a work permit, nor to be paying social security, which they wouldn't be able to… but the INSS[10] would still have to be informed… and so it's a bit complicated (SP-6-06).*

> (B) *In the case of interns, the rules are not that strict, because these people are not part of the work force, they are in training… and so they can do an internship independent of their legal status. Just at the time of making them a work contract we need them to be regularized! And that's the thing… the internship is usually meant to lead to employment in the company… (SP-6-09).*

The explicit exclusion of irregular migrants (including rejected asylum seekers) from the formal labour market often also creates **barriers for people in more ambiguous situations or with provisional residence and employment rights** – like asylum seekers, who after six months automatically obtain a provisional work permit. Part of the problem is the provisional nature

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[10] National Institute of Social Security.

of the permits issued, in combination with the exceptionally high rejection rate, as a representative of a major employer organisation in locality 2 highlighted:

> *We had huge problems because we had inserted asylum seekers in one of our companies but when they then get a negative decision, they have to throw them out again. This is an increasing problem – there was a time when it worked better because here were more positive decisions, but lately most of the decisions are negative. And so, the company has to get rid of them... so that blocks integration: once we would have them integrated... we have to stop this process and we leave them in limbo (SP-2-05).*

Several other interviewees complained about the very **complex and frequently changing immigration regulations and the corresponding lack of awareness and understanding** on the part of many street-level bureaucrats, public officials, and private employers. The following statements of an NGO representative (A) and the director of the local employment office (B) in locality 1, and a private employer in locality 6 (C) illustrate this problem:

> *(A) This organization did a lot of work in [the locality] with private companies, to explain what the different statuses and documents mean... The problem with these provisional rights is that... for example, people are denied cashing a check at the bank because their document says ´provisional´; and many employers think they cannot employ people for that reason, even though they could... (SP-1-01).*

> *(B) In general, the problem is that there is such a huge number of different [immigration] documents... that almost like every day someone comes in with a new kind of document... It is a real chaos (SP-1-02).*

> *(C) There are some very specific cases where the situation is not that clear, and where we will work quite intensely with the NGO that is behind that person to find a way... It's a legal issue that must be resolved so that they can be insured and all that. Some days ago, a former worker of ours came to ask us for help with her application for regularization... In all these cases most of the work is done by the NGO in question... but we also do our best to help that person wherever we can, we never create any obstacles, but obviously there are some legal limitations that we just have to accept and respect (SP-6-09).*

Compared to the sphere of housing, the issue of **racism and discrimination** is much less commonly mentioned by local actors in relation to post-2014 migrants´ access to employment. Only a handful of interviewees – including NGO representatives in locality 5 (A) and 6 (B) and the manager of a local company in locality 6 (C) – remembered instances of rejection against migrant workers, notably all in the context of domestic or care services and on the part of clients rather than employers:

(A) *We have a small job referral service where we collect job offers and mediate between the families who are looking for a care worker and those of our clients looking for such jobs… and we very often hear the phrase "I am not racist, but… if you have someone who is white and doesn't wear a headscarf it would be better…" (SP-5-07).*

(B) *There is still some work to do in relation to the Muslim population, especially the acceptance of the headscarf on the part of employers… that is still something that they find difficult, to employ women wearing the headscarf, especially in visible positions [like restaurants], but especially in the care sector. The typical phrase is always: "I am not sure if my mother/father will accept that…" (SP-6-03).*

(C) *Ae haven't had any major problems [regarding racism] but there are of course exceptions: the client who tells you straight away that they don't want the person we sent them because she isn't Spanish, that's how explicit they are, that she has too dark skin… this kind of thinking that you think is a thing of the past but once in a while it still happens… although less and less. Some people are just not yet very used to this multiculturalism and diversity of our society… and it might feel strange to them that a foreigner comes here to work in their house… (SP-6-09).*

The last respondent thereby also highlighted the particularity of the domestic/care sector, which on the one hand, implies a much closer and more personal relationship between worker and client (compared to, for example, the food processing industry). On the other hand, and in the context of an aging population and few locals (especially young people) willing to work in this area, it is a sector that struggles to find enough workers to meet a fast-growing demand. Arguably, this dependence on immigration explains why, as the same manager was keen to emphasise, "in these cases, the company is always on the side of our workers. We protect their rights and status. So, we tell the client 'look this is the worker that we have, and we don't make that differentiation…', and that's it" (SP-6-09)[11]. Also more generally, the level of racism is being described as a function of supply and demand and thus reflecting the overall economic/employment situation in a given locality (or country), as an NGO representative in locality 1 noted: "What has changed is the level of racism: there was none when foreign

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[11] Note that there is a striking difference between this reaction and the reaction of real estate agents to similar racist demands from their clients (the homeowners), which they readily accept and reproduce. Also at the macro-level, the level of racism is being described as a function of supply and demand and thus reflecting the overall economic/employment situation in a locality or country, as an NGO representative in locality 1 noted: "What has changed is the level of racism: there was none when foreign workers were urgently needed, but it became worse since the economic crisis, notably worse!" (SP-1-11).

workers were urgently needed, but it became worse since the economic crisis, notably worse!" (SP-1-11).

Like in the sphere of housing, **exclusion is not always exercised in a straightforward way but sometimes happens via formal requirements that are set "for everyone" but are more difficult to fulfil for immigrants**. The director of the local employment office noted this with regard to language requirements: "Many job offers come with the notice that a very good command of Catalan is required – which is also a form of discrimination, since basically, it's a way of saying 'just send me people from here'" (SP-1-02).

An additional barrier, which is closely linked to and can be reinforced by (actual or perceived) rejection on the part of the long-term residents, is the **lack of personal networks** (local social capital) **and knowledge of the internal workings of the local labour market**. This was mentioned by several interviewees, including the director of an employer organisation in locality 3 (A) and an NGO representative in locality 6 (B):

> (A) *Especially among young people, and especially those from Morocco and these regions… there is a tendency of forming groups among themselves… and so they interact little with others and that makes it more difficult for them to have the necessary network later to find good jobs and so on (SP-3-14).*

> (B) *Nowadays it's very important to present yourself well in the job interview, to be well prepared, speak the language, also that people know you or you have good references… that can be more difficult for a foreigner of course (SP-6-01).*

The **lack of language skills** was often mentioned as a barrier for those post-2014 migrants who do not come from Spanish-speaking countries; especially in Catalonia (localities 1 and 3), where also migrants from Latin America have to learn the local language (Catalan), and in locality 2, where the service sector is particularly relevant (and less immigrants find work in agriculture or industrial production). The director of a semi-private local employment service in locality 1 explained why:

> *The language is an obvious barrier: here we are very Catalan, and so every job that involves dealing with clients will require a high level of Catalan – that's part of the problem in the case of public service. It is less of a problem in the industrial sector, there it depends more on the managers. As long as they can make themselves understood it is often enough. But at least a very basic level of either Spanish or Catalan they still will require (SP-1-12).*

This is also often the case where language skills are not required to facilitate external communication (with clients) but internal communication within the company, where it would not (always) have to be such a strict requirement, as the CEO of a medium-sized e-commerce company in locality 3 argued:

Many other companies […] expect good Spanish skills from day one, and in part this also has to do with the labor legislation: it is an obligation that every worker understands the basic information regarding health & safety at work – but it doesn't say that it must be provided in Spanish! So, you can, if you want, provide this information in the workers´ own language… to comply with the law. We sometimes rely on other workers who share the same language… as translators… so there is a way resolve this issue – it doesn't have to be a barrier (SP-2-13).

Closely related to language skills, is the question of post-2014 migrants **(formal) education, training, and/or work experience**. Some interviewees complained that most of the immigrants who struggle to find a job in their locality are "very simple people" with "limited resources and low levels of education" (SP-1-02), as one of them put it, and so they often do not "fit the profile" that local companies are looking for. This is also how representatives of employer organisations in locality 3 (SP-3-14) and 5 (SP-5-14) framed the problem.

Importantly, however, in many cases it is really a matter of **homologation, i.e., official recognition of previous education or training** that immigrants completed before migrating, as many interviewees pointed out, including representatives of public employment services in locality 1 (A) and 6 (B):

(A) *Once they have the papers, we focus very much on further education and training ("formaciòn"). Quite often the problem is one of homologation: that people have a professional training, but their title is not being accepted… and so they work in a job far below their level of qualification (SP-1-02).*

(B) *A major problem is that often people come here without having homologated their prior studies and qualifications… and so they come here and have nothing official… and so they can only work as cleaners or in the care sector or in agriculture… where no training and qualification is needed. So, we always start form that: make sure that the first thing people do is homologate their titles […] But the problem is that they come here with very little money and so they need to find a job quickly – any job! – and so they don't have time to do all these things, and so they get stuck in these lowest segments of the labor market (SP-6-05).*

The director of a private training institute also mentioned this issue as a barrier to accessing any further education (which in turn, would increase employability), and as particularly affecting forced migrants:

Especially for the people who have fled their country it is very difficult to have or obtain official certification of their prior studies from their countries… via their embassy and so on… they often cannot or don't want to contact them. So often people are highly educated and trained… but cannot homologate it (SP-6-06).

Importantly, this is not just a matter of people working below their qualification but can also turn into an additional barrier to being selected for a job, as an employer in locality 3 noted, based on his own experience:

> *What happens is that sometimes people come and accept job offers for very simple jobs even though they have very high qualifications… because here their titles and experience don't count, and so they must find something less qualified. But I am aware that if I employ a telecommunication engineer to pack my parcels that it will not be out of choice but necessity [that they apply for this job]… and that as soon as he finds a way to make his qualification count, he will go somewhere else (SP-3-10).*

There are also certain sectors of the economy within which some **migrants' religious beliefs or traditions** become a barrier, as was mentioned by an NGO representative in locality 1 (A) and the representative of an employer organisation in locality 2 (B), both in relation to Muslim workers:

> *(A) With the Meat industry being the main source of employment, especially for immigrants, there is a particular barrier for Muslims who according to their faith cannot work with pork (SP-1-01).*

> *(B) For example, we were offering courses for people to start working in social-sanitary care, and some women from Arab countries did participate in the course, so we spent the money on their training, but then they refused to clean men, for example, just because they were men… And so, they will not be able to work in a retirement home because there will always also be men! (SP-2-05).*

In the absence of any efforts (on the part of the employer) to overcome or at least alleviate this barrier, it is on the migrant worker to fully adapt/assimilate in order to do be accepted, as the experience of an employer in locality 6 suggests:

> *We have some workers from Morocco, who are Muslim… we have three or four… and we haven't had any problem with them… because they don't wear the headscarf for example… when they came here for the interview you already realized that they were quite "westernized" and already didn't cover their hair… so they have adapted. They have integrated perfectly you can say, into society and in the company, perfectly (SP-6-09).*

Through all these mechanisms, **post-2014 migrants are not completely excluded from the local labour market but channelled into very specific (low-paid) segments of it**. This segmentation follows both ethnic and gender lines, as many interviewees (across all six localities) highlighted, including the director of a local employment service in locality 1 (A), a

social worker in locality 6 (B), as well as a local official (C) and a trade union representative in locality 2 (D):

> (A) *Until now most immigrants occupy the most basic jobs, in the factories, on the fields, and so on, while they hardly ever enter public services for example, nor other higher-level positions. We are trying [to facilitate that] but it´s difficult (SP-1-12).*

> (B) *The Latin Americans come to work in care, 90% of them, the Romanians… 90% of them work in agriculture… the Chinese and Pakistanis have their own shops… only the Moroccans are maybe the ones who don't always work… (SP-6-04).*

> (C) *A: If they are women, they work in the care sector, mostly for elderly people, because we are an ageing society, and also cleaning, and childcare… The men mostly work in construction, and outside of the city in agriculture. B: In terms of the employment sectors, I would emphasize the cleaning sector, where many women, especially from Maghreb countries, work. Because it is easier to accommodate their visible cultural difference [she refers to the veil], much easier than in the elderly care sector, where it´s mostly women from Latin America (SP-2-02).*

> (D) *For example, the majority of the people who clean the streets are Africans. Here in [locality 2] this is very visible. They are employed by the municipality in this case, and it's obviously a job that is not very attractive… it doesn't require much training or studies… even if some of them have studies! The kinds of work they do is the work that locals don't want to do… it's what is left to them (SP-2-10).*

Interestingly, several of the NGOs and migrant associations that provide job-training and practical guidance to immigrants explicitly focus their training offers on these same sectors (e.g., care work or cooking classes for migrant women) and thereby arguably contribute to this segmentation (e.g., SP-6-01, SP-5-07).

At the same time, the perceived **absence of these specific sectors – e.g., of agricultural production** in the case of the two medium-sized towns (localities 3 and 5) – was **described by some interviewees as a barrier in terms of migrants´ access to employment**. In other cases, particularly locality 4, the extreme seasonality of the local labor market, with huge demand for cheap and flexible labor (only) during the summer months, facilitates migrants´ access to the labor market at least during this period. While this might allow them to sustain their (precarious) livelihood throughout the year, it does not help their longer-term integration, as a trade union representative noted:

> *Migrants´ integration here in [locality 4] is quite good, but only when there is high demand in the tourism sector. During the rest of the year, the labour market in*

the municipality does not allow integration to take place… since many immigrants must go to other towns in the region or the surrounding villages to find a job for the rest of the year, mainly in the agricultural sector (SP-4-14).

Also in other municipalities (and across all categories of actors) it was frequently mentioned that **the kind of work that post-2014 migrants tend to find is not only not conducive to their social relations but often precisely hampers their integration in other spheres** (beyond the labor market). This has to do with the extreme precariousness, very low pay rate, and long working hours of these jobs, but also with more specific characteristics (like in the case of in-house domestic care workers), as highlighted by social workers interviewed in locality 5 (A) and 1 (B):

(A) *The only really relevant sector of work [for immigrants] is the care sector, which is a kind of work that does not allow much interaction with the rest of society… it does not facilitate integration, rather the opposite, it makes integration beyond the labour market impossible (SP-5-05).*

(B) *It's true that there is a lot of work, but much of this work doesn't really allow you to live an independent live, or you have to work 12 hours a day, like a slave. Until recently most of the meat industry businesses forced their workers to be self-employed, and work like slaves to be able to earn enough money to make a living. These huge companies often contract people only during the months that they need them… and they will never have any security. So, we are creating a section of the population that is very vulnerable and kept at the margins. How and when are they supposed to become integrated? (SP-1-10).*

4.2. Actors involved (WHO)

Like in relation to (public) housing, **the regional administration also plays a central role in the sphere of employment**. According to a bureaucrat working at the local employment office in locality 6 (in a programme financed by the regional government), "the whole area of employment services is a competence of the regional government" (SP-6-05). At the level of municipalities, where these programmes are being implemented, many different actors work together and, in general, respondents agree that **there is a good level of cooperation, especially between public and third sector, in some cases also including the private sector**. The latter was specifically highlighted by a representative of an employer organisation representing around 60% of all companies in the province of locality 2:

There have been many refugees coming in various phases, and they have been received and dealt with by the three NGOs that work in this area, especially during the reception phase. And we collaborate very well with these organizations – normally they call us in order to collaborate – quite regularly we

offer courses and do presentations regarding labor insertion, how to find a job, etc. (SP-2-05).

Public and private actors thereby often fulfil complementary roles, as the director of the local employment office in locality 1 (A), a local official in locality 2 (B), and an NGO representative in locality 5 (C) emphasized:

> (A) *Here in [name of the locality] there is a lot of collaboration with other entities. And quite often there is the possibility to work specifically around individual cases, together with other actors. All the work done at the employment office is with people in regular situations (with NIE), all other cases will be referred to other [private] entities, usually Caritas or CEPAIM (SP-1-02).*

> (B) *The NGOs in charge of International Protection have been doing a lot of work, also in terms of language training and social and labor insertion! And the local authority collaborates with them, and also with employers' organizations like the chamber of commerce. For example, we directly finance personnel that provides employment advice. So, the NGOs do most of the direct work with the [migrant] families, and we have these links with the local business community to support this work… To give another concrete example: Caritas has a social enterprise – and the Municipality concedes them a small warehouse where they run a project called [XX], through which jobs are being created for people with difficulties accessing the labor market (SP-2-02B).*

> (C) *We are part of the labor market orientation service: there is one specific person employed by the regional public employment service, within the program 'Andalucía Orienta', but who works here in our premises and with their (mostly migrant) clients… but also here they have to be regular migrants (SP-5-07).*

In the latter case, the idea behind having a local NGO function as a sort of extension to the local employment office, is precisely to bring the public employment service "closer" to the migrant population.

In all localities[12], NGOs and other third sector organisations play an important role as intermediaries, either between migrants (as jobseekers) and public (employment) services, or directly between migrants (as potential workers) and local companies/employers. The following statements of NGO representatives interviewed in localities 2 (A), 1 (B), 5 (C), and 6 (D) illustrate the importance of this role:

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[12] Especially in localities with less/shorter experience of immigration and cultural diversity.

(A) *When the first refugees arrived here, the local companies were completely unaware of the issue and the work permits and paperwork and all that, so we and other NGOs did – and are still doing – a lot of work to change that, to sensibilize them… not just the employers but also the employment agencies[13], which actually sign the contracts in the end… so that they understand all these papers … like of recognized refugees for example, or asylum seekers who have a work permit after six months… but only until the decision [on their asylum case], so it is temporary… Nowadays all these actors understand much better all these things (SP-2-03).*

(B) *We also act as a link and intermediary to the private sector: We make contact and try to sensibilize also the employers, because we note that if they have never had this type of worker, they will never contract them (SP-1-11).*

(C) *The companies at the beginning were very sceptical obviously, and it was difficult to get them on board but slowly slowly they are more interested and open to participate. But that doesn't change the fact that there are very few jobs in [locality 5], and that many jobs are offered under very bad working conditions… some of the job adverts that reach us – especially for private carers – we don't even pass on or publicise because they offer ridiculous wages, or exploitative conditions. So here we act as a kind of filter. Because many employers abuse the situation of immigrants, the fact that they need a job, not only to survive but also to not lose their papers! (SP-5-03).*

(D) *It has been a long and challenging path and experience to try and convince local companies to take on young migrants as part of their internship programmes and so on… in general. It has been part of our work as an organisation… this kind of sensibilisation… of employers who had never worked with immigrants before… [she refers to the time before 2014]. This had let to some notable change… nowadays there are migrants in these programs and the companies are very open to them, partly also because obviously they needed workers! (SP-6-03).*

The fact that NGOs have this role was also often recognised by employers themselves, but they were seldom the ones who initiated these relationships. For example, the president of a local migrant organisation in locality 3 remembered that the organisation had "sometimes been contacted by individuals or employers of Colombian origin or with Colombian roots, who wanted to somehow help the newly arrived… through our association" (SP-3-03). More

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[13] Also local actors in locality 1 mentioned the important role of (temporary) employment agencies as additional filters/barriers: "The problem with the factories here is that they work a lot with subcontractors *('empresas de trabajo temporal', ETT)* and these sometimes act as gatekeepers, because they don't want certain profiles, especially again, older people and women with children and little language knowledge" (SP-1-11).

frequently, it is the NGOs that initiate these collaborations, as the Human Resources manager of a company located in the same province as locality 2 highlighted:

> *The NGOs have a very important role as intermediaries in this sense … in referring people that they work with, send their CVs… they are much more active in this sense than the public employment service. These organizations tend to get in touch with us directly, also in relation to people´s regularization through a work offer [´arraigo social´] (SP-2-13).*

The **willingness of employers to engage with NGOs in order to help newcomers´ access the local labour market clearly sems to depend on the economic situation**, i.e., is a question of supply and demand (of/for workers). A private employer interviewed in locality 3 remembered that he had "once been contacted by a local NGO… in relation to possibilities of helping someone find a job" (SP-3-10) but at the time they did not have any vacancies, and (in general) he added that "there are many people here (locals) who need a job so I am not necessarily going to make an extra effort to look for a project that helps migrants to regularize their situation, through my job offer…" (SP-3-10). The HR manager of a large private provider of sociosanitary care services in locality 6, in contrast, explicitly described this collaboration not only as "a contribution to the integration of immigrants" but also as absolutely necessary for the company, given that 30% of its workforce are foreigners, and most of them have been contracted via one of the NGOs:

> *The NGO that runs the refugee reception center quite regularly refers people to us who look for work… and we also have a collaboration agreement with other two NGOs in the city, the Red Cross and one that mostly works with Latin American migrants, also via them we have employed many people already. How it works is I tell them how many workers I need; they send me the CVs… and we do a job interview, and when they pass, they will be contracted. The initiative has been mutual: we had already been collaborating once in a while previously, and both parts saw it as beneficial to establish a more formal relationship. Just yesterday we had a meeting with the Red Cross to reinforce that collaboration. We will go there and give a presentation to their clients… present our company… also in this case the interest is mutual (SP-6-09).*

Several interviewees pointed out that particularly **large employers can/could serve as positive examples and "pathbreakers"** for other local employers and should thus lead the way in this sense, as the director of a local employment service in in locality 1 mentioned, in relation to a collaboration between a local foundation and one of the largest employers in the region: "I think, and hope, that once the largest employers here do employ more migrants this will also serve as an example for the smaller companies…" (SP-1-12).

A minor role (compared to NGOs) is played by trade unions (through their local branches), which tend to feel much less responsible for (and able to help with) post-2014 migrants´ access

to employment, than the horrible conditions under which many of them work. Also this is a very challenging task, as local representatives of two different unions in locality 1 pointed out:

> *There is a lot of informal work… and that is mostly due to a lack of documentation. Particularly in the care sector. So, they come to the trade union asking for help, but there is not much we can do. We could press charges against the employer, but that is usually not what the employee wants, because they depend on the job. That's an immense problem! And it's very difficult for us to help these persons (SP-1-04).*

> *Then there is the problem that sometimes when one person of a certain ethnic group comes to us and complains about an employer, other members of the same group put pressure on him to let it go because they fear that they could all be fired as a result… provides an example (from the meat sector) where an employer had told other workers that they risk losing their job if their colleague pursues such claims (SP-1-05).*

It is also important to note that **local employers (and/or their representatives) sometimes also actively contribute to limiting migrants' possibilities to sustain their livelihoods**, as was the case in locality 4, where a major employer organisation played an important role in mobilizing against (irregular) street vending, thereby contributing to the criminalisation of this activity. A representative of this organisation recounted that in order to protect local businessmen from "unfair competition", the organization not only "activated a constant surveillance plan with video cameras" that were then offered to the police in order for them to identify "the heads of the mafia", but also organised "a massive demonstration against the street vending mafias in which many people from the hospitality industry, merchants, businessmen from the hotel sector and people from civil society in general joined" and which according to him had pushed "the city council to allocate more resources to the persecution of street vendors in the municipality and expelled the mafias" (SP-4-09).

4.3. Policies, initiatives, and practices that foster/hinder access (WHAT)

Like in relation to housing, also **post-2014 migrants´ access to employment was very often described by local actors as an issue that is being (and should be) addressed through mainstream policies and support measures** that are available for any local resident who is struggling to find a job. These general employment services are provided through local employment offices but are a competence of the regional administration. What they have in common – and this has been highlighted by people working in this area in all of the six localities – is the **strict exclusion of migrants in irregular situations**, since only people with a valid residence and work permit can formally be inscribed as unemployed and receive the corresponding financial and practical support. Local officials and street-level bureaucrats

working in these offices were generally keen to emphasise that migrants who fulfil these formal requirements are treated in the same way as people facing "other difficulties" finding employment, like a low level of education, lack of work experience, or some kind of disability.

Only few respondents mentioned **instances where more specific efforts were made, or initiatives taken (or at least considered), to better address the situation of certain groups or categories of migrants** living in the locality. One example was given in locality 1, where an interviewee who works at the local employment office mentioned that since many of their clients were from Gambia, she asked at the local Caritas office whether there was some "reference person" of Gambian origin, who could help the employment office to run information sessions for this specific collective: "Because it´s not the same whether this information and guidance is provided by someone from here or someone who shares the migrants' experiences… someone like that could probably help them much better" (SP-1-02). She added that this was no official initiative or policy but merely "an idea that I had… it just came to my mind, but it´s very difficult [to put in practice]".

While this can be seen as an attempt to provide a more inclusionary service, the same interviewee also highlighted the **importance of the local – and not just the national – language**, and pointed out an internal policy meant to "incentivize" the use of Catalan on the part of their service users:

> Many newcomers do not make this effort [to learn Catalan] … especially if they already speak Spanish… and for others it is very difficult. But the employment office has a policy of communicating with service users in Catalan[14], precisely in order to emphasize the importance of the Catalan language (SP-1-02).

While she presented this as an attempt to make newcomers aware of the importance of learning the local language, and thereby "help" them improve their position within the local labour market, it can very easily work, or at least be perceived, as an exclusionary practice, and (in practice) drive people away from interacting with institution.

Another particularity of **Catalonia** (apart from the language issue) is the so-called **Initial Reception Service** (*´Servicio de Primera Acogida´*) directed at anyone moving to a municipality in the region. One of the three components of this service (that was established and is financed by the Catalan government) focusses specifically on employment and is delivered by the local employment offices. This component consists of a total of 15 hours of information sessions (in groups) covering practical issues like how to look for a job, write a CV, etc., as well as legal information regarding labour rights, salary, taxes, social security payments, etc. Notably, and unlike any other service that public employment offices provide, these "courses"

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[14] Note that when arranging the interview all the emails I received from them were in Catalan, even though I always replied in Spanish (which led all other respondents to switch language).

also include migrants without valid residence permit, as the same interviewee was also keen to highlight:

> *At the end the participant receives a certificate, which can also help for their [clients] regularization, if necessary. To be honest, I am not aware of any case where this certificate had specifically led to regularization, but at least they are not excluded… Because without a NIE they cannot be formally registered as unemployed with the Employment office. So, this is the only service that we can offer to people in irregular situations (SP-1-02).*

The exclusion of migrants in irregular situations is less strict when it comes to initiatives taken by NGOs like Caritas or the Red Cross which in several of the selected localities are involved in, or themselves run, **social enterprises dedicated specifically to facilitating labour market access for disadvantaged groups** of people. While these facilities/services are not targeting post-2014 migrants, they make up a significant share of the target population, as the following account of the coordinator of the local Caritas branch in locality 1 suggests:

> *Apart from the employment training and advice service, Caritas also has a job placement company [´empresa de insercion laboral´] and through it has been trying to create jobs, in tailoring, a cleaning service, work in the foodbank, etc. The idea is to offer jobs to people with difficulties entering the normal labor market, in some cases also to help with regularizing status. We also have projects of communal work, where the aim is to foster a feeling of belonging to society and the city, and make sure that clients are aware of all the services and recourses that exist, like the local library, etc. (SP-1-11)*

In fact, finding a job is not just a matter of having the right qualifications but also of having (the right) personal contacts, which was also highlighted as a strategy by a social worker interviewed in locality 3, who said that in his work with foreign clients he always tries to "help them build networks and connections to locals rather than within their own communities because this helps a lot in order to find work" (SP-3-09).

As mentioned in section 4.1, one barrier that was identified by local actors (especially in locality 6) was **discrimination against foreigners**, and some of these same actors also mentioned concrete measures through which they were trying to address this problem (which in no case was perceived as significant as in relation to housing). The director of a local employment service in locality 1 mentioned that she felt "like it's our responsibility to sensibilize the local companies" and to thus sometimes go beyond their formal role as a training provider:

> *Some people have the impression that they don't find a job because of racism, and we know that sometimes this is true, we are aware of this problem. And if people are our clients and did a course with us for example, then we would make the contact, and accompany them to the job interview, for example, and that also helps… sometimes they face more racism if they go alone (SP-1-12).*

Also in **locality 3**, the local administration seemed to be aware of the fact that many local employers still have negative prejudices towards foreigners in general, and post-2014 migrants (i.e., more recent newcomers) in particular. The street-level bureaucrat responsible for immigration and integration issues in the city mentioned a concrete idea that might help to change this (but has not been implemented yet): "We are now thinking about ways to foster this collaboration [with the private sector] and the involvement of local companies e.g., by creating incentives like some kind of label, like "welcoming business", or something like this, but they are just ideas" (SP-3-11). Another project that has been realized in the same locality (3) primarily aimed at curbing informal employment and improving the working conditions under which many (especially irregular) migrants are employed, as a member of the local council/government noted:

> *For example, we have realized that many female migrants especially from Honduras work in the private (in-house) care sector and do so without employment contracts… so we now have done a project that shows to the families who employ these workers that it isn't that difficult to employ them properly, and thereby help them to regularize their situation. So, we basically provide this information… because in many cases the problem is lack of information (SP-3-05).*

While the local politician did not remember the name of the project, it was also mentioned by other interviewees including a local trade union representative, who pointed out a shortcoming:

> *The regional government even offered funding to the employers of these workers to cover part of the ancillary wage costs, so that they would employ them formally, but this measure basically put the responsibility on the workers who had to ask their employers to participate in this program... many of them got scared and instead fired the workers… so in the end, in many cases this was counterproductive! (SP-3-13).*

A trade union representative interviewed in **locality 4** referred to the same problem, which in this case had been addressed by setting up "a mediation office so that those people who are working irregularly can improve their employment situation and be hired in accordance with the law without having to take legal action against their employers, and without even having a work permit" (SP-4-14).

A similar initiative was also mentioned in **locality 5**, by a representative of the NGO that has been doing the same thing – although more informally, and without implication of the local administration:

> *Sometimes we also get involved more directly in the process of regularization… by mediating between the worker and their employers so that they offer them a contract once they qualify [having resided in the country for three years]. Because often the family is happy to employ them informally but when they would have*

to cover the additional costs for their social insurance, they fire them… so we have to put some pressure on them, on behalf of our clients (SP-5-07).

Another project – also implemented in **locality 3**[15] – goes in the same direction and even a step further, in that it **helps migrants in irregular situations to fulfil the requirement of having an employment offer** for one year in order to regularise their status. A local official explained how the project works in practice:

The project is aimed at people ready to regularise their administrative situation, who only need the work contract. In part the problem is that here [in the city] the subdelegation of the national government is extremely slow and so even if they have an employment offer this [regularisation] process takes like four months or more, so the employers will lose their patience, they cannot wait that long. […] So, what we do in the project is look for people [employers] who are willing to go through this process if we facilitate and accompany it, especially in terms of legal advice. There is a concrete cooperation with the Red Cross, which arranges an internship [with the future employer] to cover the period of time they are waiting for their papers, and through this the relation with the future employer can be maintained (SP-3-07).

While the project as such is publicly funded (by the provincial government) its success and sustainability hinges on the participation of local employers, which is difficult to obtain even with the active support and legal advice provided to them (for free) by the project, as both the local councillor (A) and the street-level bureaucrat (B) responsible for this project, noted:

(A) For the project [name of the project] we obviously rely on local companies willing to employ these people! Without their cooperation, the project wouldn't have been possible. But the project is very new, and we don't know yet how well the response will be. It definitely helps that they know that we as a local authority and also the Red Cross in this case, are behind all this and will help them through the process… (SP-3-05).

(B) In some cases, this kind of cooperation hasn't worked that well, we had companies that wanted to participate, and the NGO sent them people to do an internship there but, in the end, we realized that what the company was looking for was a worker [that they didn't have to pay], not an intern… so there was some misunderstanding (SP-3-11).

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[15] The idea was born within the municipal Council for Social Cohesion (see Country Report WP3); the project is led by the municipality, in partnership with the local branch of the Red Cross.

In **locality 1**, several interviewees referred to a similar program that is also run locally by an NGO (but financed by the regional government) and offers its beneficiaries a one-year contract in order for them to fulfil this particular requirement for regularization.

4.4. Specific target groups (FOR WHOM)

As becomes clear from the previous sections, there are **no formal policies and very few concrete initiatives that target "post-2014" or other specific categories or segments of the migrant population** in order to facilitate their access to employment in the six localities under study. Under the general condition that they have a valid work (and thus also residence) permit, foreign residents are included in the general employment policies and mainstream provision of related services and resources. Very much like in relation to social housing (see chapter 3), many interviewees explicitly highlighted this lack of specific "migrant services" and justified it by pointing out that **foreigners are not excluded from the support systems that are in place for all local residents**. The following quotes from a local official (A) and a street-level bureaucrat (B) in locality 2, and a municipal job counsellor in locality 6 (C), illustrate this very common portrayal:

(A) *On the part of the employment service there is nothing, not even a call or anything, that would be specifically – let alone exclusively – for immigrants! They are included as normal users of the service. They simply fall under the label "socially excluded group" [´colectivo en exclusión social´], just like people from here that also have difficulties finding work… (SP-2-04).*

(B) *The municipality provides some courses and workshops around employability – and they are not explicitly targeting immigrants, but they are open to them, and I think that they are overrepresented… but they [these services] are aimed at people with difficulties accessing the labor market, more generally (SP-2-07).*

(C) *The requirements are the same: to be inscribed as unemployed – so in the case of immigrants this means they need to have a work and residence permit! Whether a client is an immigrant or not doesn't really make a difference for us… sometimes the locals are also, or even more, difficult to work with and to find work for. If any immigration-specific issue arises, we refer them to the NGOs to help them resolve it (SP-6-05).*

As clearly reflected in the last of the three statements, immigrants are not *per se* perceived as (more) problematic than other clients, and whenever there are specific difficulties – usually related to immigration status and the corresponding legal and documentary requirements – there is one or several NGOs that are seen as responsible for resolving these problems.

Especially **migrants in irregular situations** are thus usually the target of complementary services provided by (or better: through) civil society organization that therefore tend to be funded by the local or regional administration (rather than the national or EU level), as the responsible member of the local government in locality 6 highlighted:

> *We have a collaboration with [name of a local NGO] that also has an employment project that is specifically for migrants and that is open also for migrants in irregular situations. The more formal and EU funded projects for labor inclusion usually involve a period of internships and of professional certification and so that means that it can only be directed at people with residence and work permits (SP-6-02).*

That said, also the people working at or in direct cooperation with local (public) employment offices were sometimes confronted with migrant irregularity and felt that they had little room for maneuver in these cases. The following three accounts illustrate the spectrum of (perceived) discretion among these local actors. The first two are of interviewees working in local employment services – in localities 6 (A) and 1 (B) – that they describe as "extensions" of the employment office[16], whereas the last one comes from the director of the employment office in locality 1 (C):

> *(A) To come here they need to be in the official system. Only in some exceptional cases we have attended people in terms of specific training offers… people who do not yet have the right to work but are in the process of regularizing their situation and obtaining a work permit and so in the meantime we can refer them to do some training courses… so that once they have the right to work, they can enter the labor market more easily… these people when they register with the service, they simply indicate that they cannot look for work yet but that they would like to do some training, and so we attend them in this more limited way… they usually come [to us] through one of the NGOs (SP-6-05).*

> *(B) We also realize that there is more and more demand for our service from people in irregular situations, and we cannot attend them here directly… […because] to be registered for our service people need to have a NIE, but also those who have theirs being processed we can already start to work with. But depending on how far away they are from getting their papers it will be a more reduced service. That's why we rather refer them somewhere else.*

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[16] One of them describes this institutional relationship like this: "All this is financed by the regional government, through a funding agreement with the municipality… so our contract is with the municipality. This contract allows us to provide services also to irregular migrants… as long as these are just what we call pre-employment services" (SP-A-05).

> *Our policy is to leave no one outside – if we cannot do more it will be [one of the three NGOs working in the locality] (SP-1-12).*

> *(C) The Employment office has a bit of an outsider role in the case of migrants in irregular situations, because in these cases there is not much we can do. Sometimes entities like [name of an NGO] would ask us to register someone who doesn't have papers and we have to say no, because we cannot (SP-1-02).*

Especially **irregular migrants who have arrived recently and are thus not yet "close to regularising" their stay, completely rely on NGOs**, who have more flexibility in defining not only the target population but also the content of their (own) services, as the following statements by NGO representatives working in localities 1 (A) and 5 (B) illustrate:

> *(A) The foreigners' law is so strict and restrictive that for example, I sometimes had to provide "labour market orientation" for people who had no work permit… so give suggestions on where to maybe find a job in the black market… which sectors might work better… how to get in touch, etc. …Also because sometimes people come here and think in a few days they will have their papers and be allowed to work, but in reality, it takes months, often years, and so you need to help them find something temporary. […] So, we tried to be like mediators between these people and potential employers… (SP-1-11).*

> *(B) For people in irregular situations, we offer our own courses and services through our own funding. Now for example we will start a training course for care workers … even including a period of internship at local care homes (we have established a cooperation with them for that) – but also here: the internship can obviously only be done by those in regular situation! But the course… all the theoretical stuff… is open to everyone. We also had courses for cooking, kitchen helpers, supermarket workers, etc. adapting to the labor market needs and the profiles we have among our clients (SP-5-07).*

Another specific category of post-2014 migrants that was frequently mentioned as facing particular challenges and/or deserving special attention or treatment in relation to employment are **young unaccompanied migrants** (who usually arrive in the country as minors and are left in very precarious situations once they leave the public reception system upon turning 18). As discussed in more detail in Country Report WP3, this has been identified as a problem especially affecting the two medium-sized towns (localities 3 and 5) as well as locality 1, which due to its relatively good employment situation has also attracted a sizeable number of young people in that situation (mostly Moroccan citizens). According to the director of the local employment office there (locality 1), they are "the only category of irregular migrants who can be registered and who can thus access the employment service" since "they get an

exceptional permit and a provisional NIE until they turn 18" (SP-1-02). At the end of this period of provisional regularity, however, they very often fall back into irregularity. In order to avoid that, a special programme was put in place by the regional government, through which "the municipality or other local entities can give them a work contract for one year to enable them to apply for regularisation" (ibid.). In 2021, according to the same interviewee, the municipality had made "eight or nine such employment offers" (SP-1-02) to young foreigners who would otherwise have lost their residence permit.

A recent legislative change at the national level has made it significantly easier for local authorities and third sector organizations to support these young people in their difficult transition to adulthood, as a social educator working in locality 3 explained in detail:

> *Those who are care leavers have it a little bit easier now, with the latest change of the law. Until then… they would all lose their residence permit as they turned 18 because they were required to earn some 2.400€ per month in order to get it renewed. And so, all of them lost their permit, and with it the right work. Now the requirement for the renewal is to earn the minimum income [410€] … and they also keep the work permit, so if they have some small job, even if it´s temporary, they can work… this has been a very important positive change of the national legislation, which has been discussed for over a year and finally entered into force in November [2021] (SP-3-06).*

He quickly added, however, that this chance has not completely solved the problem of finding a (more stable) job for this particular client group:

> *Even if they have residence and work permits now, it's still very very hard to find a job! So, until this day, all our clients started in some protected job, like [he names a social enterprise run locally by Caritas] or things like that. We have not managed to place a single one of our clients directly in the normal labor market, without passing through some sheltered work. We continue to try… but very often those employers willing to employ them are looking to exploit them… they offer horrible conditions. And they would be happy to accept almost anything. So, we are focusing now very much on their training, to help them get internships and so on, but it is all very competitive (SP-3-06).*

What becomes clear also from this relatively particular situation is that **without private employers willing to give disadvantaged groups a fair chance, these initiatives will not lead to sustainable outcomes**. Local NGOs and pro-migrant groups are very aware of this fact and developing innovative strategies to sensibilize local companies for the difficult situation of many migrants including unaccompanied young foreigners, as a legal advisor and representative of one such organization in locality 3 noted:

> *We and other NGOs actively participated in this effort, we produced a video with testimonies of three of the young people and some of the other actors involved. And this was presented in a meeting with employer organizations… and we as an*

organization would be willing to take care of the legal aspects of this… to make sure that the employers don't have to deal with this. Because otherwise this is what usually scares them and discourages them from trying to employ foreigners in precarious situations. And recently these efforts have led to a formal cooperation agreement with this employer organization (SP-3-01).

CASE	WholeCOMM typology	Major obstacle(s)	Actor(s) involved	Measure(s)	Target group(s)
Locality 1	Small/ Type A	Lack of legal status / documentation; Lack of (formal) education / training / work experience	Private employers; Regional employment services – through local employment offices; NGOs (as intermediaries)	Mainstream employment support/programs (considered use of 'cultural brokers') Regional reception program: language & employment support for newcomers; Local job placement company (Caritas)	All jobseekers, focus on disadvantaged groups, exclusion of irregular migrants; All newcomers (incl. irregular migrants)
Locality 2	Small/ Type B	Lack of legal status / documentation; Lack of (formal) education / training / work experience; Lack of language skills;	Private employers; Regional employment services – through local employment offices; NGOs (as intermediaries)	Mainstream employment support/programs	All jobseekers, focus on disadvantaged groups, exclusion of irregular migrants;
Locality 3	Medium/ Type A	Lack of legal status / documentation; Lack of (formal) education / training / work experience;	Private employers; Regional employment services – through local employment offices;	Mainstream employment support/programs;	All jobseekers, focus on disadvantaged groups, exclusion of irregular migrants;

		Lack of language skills;	NGOs (as intermediaries)	Regional reception program: language & employment support for newcomers; Small projects to improve working conditions in specific sectors / and to support regularisation	All newcomers (incl. irregular migrants); domestic care workers (and their employers)
Locality 4	Rural/ Type C	Lack of jobs/opportunities (seasonal demand)	Private employers; Regional employment services – through local employment offices; NGOs (as intermediaries)	Mainstream employment support/programs Mediation office to curb informal employment and exploitation	All jobseekers, focus on disadvantaged groups, exclusion of irregular migrants;
Locality 5	Medium/ Type D	Lack of jobs/opportunities; Lack of legal status / documentation;	Private employers; Regional employment services – through local employment offices; NGOs (as intermediaries)	Mainstream employment support/programs	All jobseekers, focus on disadvantaged groups, exclusion of irregular migrants;
Locality 6	Small/ Type D	Lack of legal status / documentation; Lack of language skills; (some) racism;	Private employers; Regional employment services – through local employment offices; NGOs (as intermediaries)	Mainstream employment support/programs	All jobseekers, focus on disadvantaged groups, exclusion of irregular migrants;

Table 2: Case-by-case summary of results/findings regarding the area of EMPLOYMENT

5. Access to other resources and services

5.1. Residential registration

In Spain, inscription in the Municipal Register ('*el padrón*') is both a right and formal obligation of every newcomer who takes up habitual residence within a municipality. It constitutes official proof of residence in the municipality (but also the country) and a precondition to accessing many rights and services provided at the local level, including healthcare, schools, libraries, etc. Legally speaking, registration does not give any rights by itself, but it facilitates effective access to these rights. The local administration is formally responsible and legally obliged to register everybody – including all foreigners – who lives in the municipality and to keep this information updated. In principle, this also applies to homeless people, who in many municipalities can be registered via social services or a third sector organisation (like Caritas), which certify the person´s effective residence within the municipality (though without a permanent address).

Importantly, a resident's administrative situation (regular or irregular immigration status) does not influence this right/obligation. Not having a residence permit does not constitute an obstacle since registration can be done with any (valid) passport. Particularly for migrants in irregular situations (but also for regular, including long-term, residents), the '*padrón*' serves as official proof of the duration of their residence in Spain (e.g., for regularisation under the '*arraigo*' system), as well as within a particular municipality (e.g., for accessing social/subsidized housing). In the case of all foreigners who do not have a permanent residence permit (or are EU citizens), the the inscription in the register will expire automatically after two years unless it is actively renewed before the end of the two-year period. Inscription (as well as renewal) has to be done in person at the municipal registry office, which will require the following documentation: The registration form, a valid ID, and a proof of address. The latter can be a property deed, rental contract, or a utility bill (water, electricity, telephone, etc.), or, alternatively, written authorization of the homeowner or main tenant.

The so-called '*empadronamiento*' is not only the primary prerequisite for accessing any municipal services, but – in the case of immigrants – also the starting point and trigger of any formal integration measures, like the Catalan reception service ('*servicio de acogida*'). The major of locality 1, for example, highlighted that it is "as soon as somebody comes and registers in the municipality, [that] they are offered various kinds of information sessions, regarding the healthcare system, cultural institutions, the labour market, etc…" (SP-1-03). While all post-2014 migrants (independent of their status) have the right, and equal access, to local registration, they sometimes face significant barriers.

5.1.1.   Main challenges/obstacles

The most common obstacle mentioned by local actors in relation to post-2014 migrants' registration in the six municipalities under study is the **inability to fulfil certain documentary requirements**, either because their ID is invalid (e.g., their passport expired) or not accepted by the local authority, or because they lack (or cannot prove) a permanent/stable address. This kind of problem was mentioned most frequently by local actors in locality 5, where the coordinator of a local pro-migrant association gave some concrete examples of what he perceived as a subtle but nonetheless deliberate form of exclusion:

> *The local government has no policy against immigration, but for example, the administration makes it quite difficult for people to register. So even the people that live here in our centre, and who might have no ID or passport, but they have a deportation order or other police document that identifies them… are not accepted by the local administration [and cannot] register. Even though we certify their address, but they want to see an official identity document! And this is something that the Ayuntamiento has the competence to do, they could allow that, but they don't. It has pretty much always been like that. The bureaucrats are very bureaucratic about it and the politicians don't want to change the rules (SP-5-03).*

This was also confirmed by a senior official working in the city´s social services department:

> *What is also our responsibility is the local registration, and that can be difficult if the person lacks documentation… very complicated. Sometimes the young [unaccompanied] migrants for example are accommodated by an NGO and they [the NGO] contact us to see if we can register them, but when they don't have documents, it's difficult, for example, when the passport is lost or in their country… (SP-5-15).*

While this interviewee refers to the lack of ID, not (proof of) legal status, other interviews in the same municipality – including a local housing officer – pointed out that this obstacle **particularly affects migrants in irregular situations**:

> *Many people live here in an irregular situation, and they […] can register, in principle, because that's a general obligation. But often they cannot in practice, because the family they live with – and often also work for – don't let them, or because they cannot prove to the local registration office that they live at a certain address – they require concrete documentation, and official authorisation from the person who owns or rents the flat (SP-5-04).*

Notably, and as discussed in more detail below, also **private landlords play an important role in this context**, since it is them who must authorise the registration of their tenants (if the

latter do not have utility bills in their name, for example). This requirement overlaps with another **regulation that limits the number of people registered at the same address**, as a local official in locality 6 mentioned:

> *There is no problem as long as there are not very many registrations at the same address… because that is sometimes the problem… that this population often moves around quite a lot, or they have already left the city without de-registering… and so sometimes there end up being too many people and we cannot register any more… These are isolated cases, but they do exist. Apart from that, everyone can register, and without any problem (SP-6-04).*

Even though local registration, at least in theory, is a relatively simple and straightforward process that does not require very much communication (unless it is one of these "more complicated cases" where documentation is incomplete and/or additional information required), several interviewees – especially street-level bureaucrats who are directly involved in the registration process – also mentioned **language barriers** as a complicating factor.

5.1.2.   Actors involved

The principal actor responsible for municipal registration is the **local registration office**. In more complicated cases, where official documentation is missing or people are homeless (or at least do not have a permanent address), **also social services come to play an important role** in certifying some of these circumstances, like a client´s sojourn within the municipality. A social worker interviewed in locality 5, gave an example of how this role can look like:

> *It's not that easy to register in this city. We have had difficulties for some time but eventually we reached an agreement with the local registration office: according to this protocol we can register a person who has been living in [name of the locality] for more than 6 months and where we can prove that they are homeless and have no financial resources, at the address of the municipal night shelter/hostel (SP-5-01).*

In addition to social services, also **NGOs and local migrant associations often act as intermediaries**, whereby their role tends to be much less formalised, and can easily be misinterpreted. For example, a local councillor (interviewed in locality 3) who passes the reception desk (where people initiate the registration process) every day on the way to his office, mentioned that he had often seen "groups of Latin American immigrants" who "seemed to be instructed by another Latin American person who guided them through this process", which led him to suspect that "probably this person has been paid by the others for this service…" (SP-3-02). What he presented in this very critical light – almost like an illicit business or exploitation – might well have been a genuine attempt to overcome language barriers and avoid misunderstandings, as the president of a local Colombian association described part of what her organisation does:

The shared language [in the case of Latin Americans] helps of course but there are many difficulties – even if people are attended in Spanish instead of Catalan, they sometimes do not understand everything, at the beginning. So, it helps a lot if we accompany them to their appointments at the local authority (SP-3-03).

In a similar vein, also the director of an NGO-run refugee reception centre in locality 6, highlighted the fact that without intermediation it is not that easy for asylum seekers in particular to navigate the various interrelated administrative procedures:

As long as they are here [living at the reception centre], they are registered at the centre, that works usually but sometimes they also give them a hard time, if they go alone, because they say they don't understand the language so they cannot do the procedure… If I go with 10 people, they say it's too many for one appointment… when it's their job to do exactly that! […] And at the same time the national police give the same person 15 days to notify any change of address, and in order to notify that, they need the registration certificate… (SP-6-07).

Apart from NGOs and other third sector organisations, interviewees also mentioned post-2014 migrants' **personal contacts and support networks as crucial and helpful intermediaries**, as the responsible street-level bureaucrat in locality 6 reported from her experience working in this area for many years:

Usually, they have some personal friend or family member here… they already know that they have to come here and ask for me… they know everything about the regularisation process… sometimes they know more than I do [laughs]. The Latin Americans in particular: they come, and two days later they are already registered, and start to work… it´s impressive (SP-6-04).

As already discussed in the chapter on housing (see chapter 3), it is mostly private citizens who own residential properties. As **property owners**, they **play an important role in terms of facilitating (or not) post-2014 migrants' access to housing and thereby determine their ability to prove a permanent address within the municipality**. In relation to this, interviewees mentioned **both inclusionary & exclusionary practices**: While a local trade union representative in locality 4 remembered that "especially during the refugee crisis there were several [long-term resident] families who were registering refugees [in their homes] in order to help them" (SP-4-14), the responsible member of the local government in locality 6 referred to less welcoming reactions on the part of (some) local property owners:

Many people come to register but they don't bring a contract, or they cannot prove that they really live there because the owner doesn't want them to register… and that is the basis for accessing many other services and right (SP-6-02).

Also a social worker interviewed in locality 3 noted that "the problem is more often the people they rent from, not the registry office… they even register people who don't have documentation, through a slightly more complex process but they do it" (SP-3-06).

Somewhat surprisingly (given the importance of the issue, and the fact that it is largely a local competence), there does not seem to be a lot of **political conflict or debate around registration practices and procedures** (beyond criticism from NGOs, which has been common). Only in one case (locality 3), did a representative of the – in this case left-wing – **local opposition** claim having pushed the government with regard to this particular issue:

> *To be registered is the basis for you being able to access any municipal service, as well as healthcare, etc. And the law says the local authority has the obligation to register everyone even if s/he lives in the middle of the square. But they put barriers, always. So, over the last years we put a lot of pressure on them [the local government], and so it has been getting better… (SP-3-04).*

The following section provides an overview of the overall very similar registration policies and the (very few) concrete initiatives taken in the six selected localities with respect to local registration of (post-2014) immigrants.

5.1.3.   Policies, initiatives, and practices that foster/hinder access

The fact that local registration is a municipal competence means that **individual local authorities have significant discretion in defining the exact practicalities** (e.g., which kinds of documents they ask for), so that local implementation practices and experiences can differ quite substantially from one locality to the other. The following statements of an NGO representative (A) and a local councillor (B) interviewed in locality 3 reflect this:

> *(A) This issue is regulated nationally but local authorities have a lot of leeway… and depending on how easy or difficult they make it… it can also act as an attraction for people to move there (SP-3-01).*

> *(B) What we do as a local government is to register these people – this is a legal requirement but not all the municipalities comply with it, but we do: we always register them, even if they don't have a regular address, then we register them in [name of the local night shelter/accommodation for the homeless]. Because this is a way to make sure they will have access to basic rights. And this is all we can do as a city; more we cannot do (SP-3-05).*

The latter statement (of the responsible local politician) also reflects the underlying interest of local authorities, who generally described local registration as a **very important tool for them to ensure local service provision, social cohesion or conviviality, as well as public safety**.

Partly for this reason, local authority representatives were generally keen to emphasize that registration is being facilitated "as much as possible", as several interviewees put it. Quite often, however, other local actors' assessments of whether or not this is really the case were rather contradictory, as the following statements of two NGO representatives interviewed in the same locality (2) illustrate:

> In general, the local registration works well and is being facilitated by the local authority, including for irregular migrants. There are very isolated cases that faced some specific problem or difficulty. Here again, the small size of the town helps because we have direct contact with the people in the administration and any difficult case can be resolved pretty easily (SP-2-08).

> The locality is not the most open and welcoming… they are rather closed as a community… and so they make it very difficult to register locally, for example, and also for people to apply for regularization, social services request evidence of at least six months of residence in the city (SP-2-10).

One way to explain these different perceptions is that a lot of the **everyday implementation depends on rather informal rules and involves a significant degree of individual discretion**, as noted by a representative of a local migrant organization in locality 3 highlighted, who alleged that "formally the local authority has an open approach but in the end, much depends on the everyday implementation and on the individual bureaucrats who attend you…" (SP-3-03). A street level bureaucrat working at the Citizen's Advice Service in locality 2 provided a concrete example (of inclusionary use of informal discretion):

> For example, sometimes people come and say they need to register, or need prove of their local registration, and they need this urgently because the immigration authority requests it… then even if they come without appointment, we will try for them to be attended that day… we call the responsible colleague and do our best. Because we know that these procedures are very long and complicated and we try to facilitate it as much as we can (SP-2-07).

At the same time, **policy makers and implementing actors also pointed at perceived limitations to local-level discretion** in this context and justified both inclusionary and exclusionary approaches or practices with reference to higher-level legislative frameworks that they described as limiting their room for maneuver. This is reflected in the following quotes from interviews with a local official in locality 3 (A) and the responsible local councilor locality 6 (B):

> (A) This municipality has always stood out as one that facilitates local registration, it´s seen as a basic right, which it is, and so ways are being found to ensure access, unlike in other municipalities around here. People without regular address can register in the local night shelter… but also this is part of what the law establishes, the local administration has to register people even if they have no stable address! (SP-3-07).

> *(B) Well, we facilitate this within our possibilities… we follow the norms established for that, the requirements are to be living at a proper address during a certain amount of time… there needs to be a contract, and electricity or water bills… so in these things the legislation also limits us… we have the competence to do the registration but we don't have the competence to decide how to do the registration, so this makes it difficult for us! (SP-6-02).*

Notably, the local politician (in the latter statement) blames the national legislation to be overly restrictive, even though the "problem" of people not being able to fulfil these documentary requirements can indeed be resolved locally, as is the case in other localities.

Particularly in bigger localities – like both of the medium-sized towns in the sample – **homelessness constitutes a significant problem** (not exclusively but also affecting many recently arrived migrants, especially unaccompanied young people leaving the youth/care system…), **which required a certain relaxation of the rules** regarding what can be accepted as (proof of) "regular residence" and/or a "proper address". In locality 5, according to representatives of two local NGOs, a workable solution had been found together with the municipality:

> *Regarding the issue of the unaccompanied foreign care leavers… we had several meetings, also with the local administration, around 2019… but very few concrete steps were taken. What they did is facilitate their local registration at the address of the municipal shelter even if they didn't fulfil all the documentary requirements (SP-5-03).*

> *In general, this works quite well. In the local homelessness shelter ('albergue municipal') people can stay for up to three nights – although they usually extend that to further three nights – and even after they have left, they can still continue to be registered there… that has been arranged with the local authority (SP-5-07).*

As the responsible local official clarified, however, there is still the **requirement of longer-term residence within the municipality**, which in the absence of official documentation (like a rental contract) has to be certified on a case-by-case basis: "…there is a social worker responsible for this: if you have been here for more than six months, she can help you to get all the necessary documentation and register you…" (SP-5-12)[17].

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[17] Note that a similar demand by a well-established NGO has not been realized yet, but both representatives of the local administration emphasized that also this is being worked on and will be made possible soon (under the same conditions, i.e., after six months in the locality, certified by a social worker), as one of them explained: "The NGOs have told us that this is a problem. So now we are trying to make sure that via a report from a social worker the people who have been staying in the NGO accommodation for some months can also register there, even without having all the documentation" (SP-CA-12).

As already noted by an interviewee quoted at the beginning of this subsection, **having an explicitly open registration policy was often seen – and sometimes criticised**, e.g., by a conservative politician in locality 3 (SP-3-02) **– as a "pull-factor"**. The six months residence requirement (that is systematically applied in locality 5 and 6) is being justified as necessary measure to avoid attracting people to come to the municipality specifically in order to register their residence.

It is for the same reason that in locality 3 – where a very similar solution has been found (already before 2014) to the problem of homelessness affecting more and more migrants – the validity of registration at the local homelessness hostel has recently been reduced to three months, as an NGO representative (A) and a municipal social worker who works at the local homelessness hostel (B) explained:

> (C) Here in [locality 3] it is really being facilitated… until recently it has been possible to register in the local night shelter… which is not the case everywhere. Here it has always been possible… and it still is being done but it's now only a temporary solution: after three months you are automatically deregistered (SP-3-01).

> (D) There was moment, some years ago [he doesn't remember exactly when, but before the validity was limited to three months], when we had almost 1000 persons [sic] registered here in the centre! This also had a certain 'magnet effect' – people came from other parts of the province to register – so the decision was taken to limit this. Because the underlying problem is that this is the only centre of this kind in the whole province, and this means that people must come here even if they don't live in the city, to get registered… (SP-3-09).

Another social worker, mostly working with unaccompanied migrant youth in the city, also mentioned this as a clear limitation of the local practice, even though it is being applied with some flexibility:

> We can register our clients at the local night shelter, although usually only for three months, but with this we can start getting them a health card or a passport from their embassy and so on. And after three months we can also extend that, to six months… and within this time frame we have to find them something more stable, which we usually do… (SP-3-06).

A similar account was provided by the other social worker (quoted just above), who in addition, however, pointed at another important limitation caused by this local practice, which particularly affects migrants with no or precarious legal status:

> In principle, this registration automatically ends after three months, but not in all cases: there are cases where we extend it, for example, where the person needs continued medical assistance and so to make sure that they don't cancel their

health card. So, we have some margin in that sense. […] But there is an important problem: for the people who need to renew their residence permits, the subdelegation of the national government does not accept the registration here because its only temporary, so that can lead to them losing their permit! They say that it´s not a proper residence… even though it does count towards the three years that people [irregular migrants] need to be registered in order to regularise their stay (SP-3-09).

Also another interviewee (also in locality 3, but referring to another municipality in the same province) provided an example of how even where registration is made possible, it is sometimes done in a way that is likely to discourage (some) migrants from making use of this right:

The local registration office generally has a very open registration practice… they even register people living in informal housing. In other places they also do that but state this fact on the registration certificate that they issue, which is also not very helpful when you want to register your kids [in school] or whatever else… here this is not the case (SP-3-01).

5.1.4.   Specific target groups

In general, it should be noted that **local registration practices do not only affect immigrants, but also any other newcomer to a municipality**, as an NGO representative remembered from her own experience registering herself when she moved to locality 6 several years ago:

My experience has been horrible, even my own experience… they asked me documentation that I have never been asked for anywhere else, like the last rent payment, not just the contract… even as a national I found this really difficult here! And I thought: as an immigrant… [it must be] almost impossible. Also, if you want or need a confirmation of your registration here, you need to pay for it! Or you have to do it using a digital certificate… and which migrant has that?! (SP-6-07).

Another – general – rule that (formally) distinguishes Spanish citizens form (non-EU) immigrants is that the latter have to regularly renew their registration (every two years) unless they have a permanent residence permit. Whereas in cities like Madrid and Barcelona the local authorities send reminders (by post) to every resident affected by this rule in order to avoid their deregistration, this does not happen in any of the six localities under study.

In fact, **none of them has taken any concrete step or implemented a specific policy or measure with regard to post-2014 migrants' access to local registration**. Only unaccompanied foreign youth were sometimes presented as a particularly vulnerable group

– particularly in locality 5 (and also in locality 3) – but also here, no specific solutions have been found nor concrete (targeted) measures taken.

CASE	WholeCOMM typology	Major obstacle(s)	Actor(s) involved	Measure(s)	Target group(s)
Locality 1	Small/ Type A	Inability to fulfil documentary requirements	Local authority (registration office); NGOs (as intermediaries); Social services (in exceptional cases, e.g. homelessness); Private landlords;	No (specific) policy/measure	
Locality 2	Small/ Type B	Inability to fulfil documentary requirements	Local authority (registration office); NGOs (as intermediaries); Social services (in exceptional cases, e.g. homelessness); Private landlords;	No (specific) policy/measure	
Locality 3	Medium/ Type A	Inability to fulfil documentary requirements; Language barrier (because of Catalan);	Local authority (registration office); NGOs (as intermediaries); Social services (in exceptional cases, e.g. homelessness); Private landlords;	Possibility for migrants without permanent/regular address to (temporarily!) register at the local night shelter	People who live in the municipality but not at a regular address (homeless, squats, etc.)
Locality 4	Rural/ Type C	Inability to fulfil documentary requirements	Local authority (registration office); NGOs (as intermediaries);	No specific policy/measure	

			Social services (in exceptional cases, e.g. homelessness); Private landlords;		73
Locality 5	Medium/ Type D	Inability to fulfil documentary requirements	Local authority (registration office); NGOs (as intermediaries); Social services (in exceptional cases, e.g. homelessness); Private landlords;	Possibility for migrants without permanent/regular address to register at the local night shelter Six months residence requirement	People who live in the municipality but not at a regular address (homeless, squats, etc.)
Locality 6	Small/ Type D	Inability to fulfil documentary requirements; Language barrier (for asylum seekers);	Local authority (registration office); NGOs (as intermediaries); Social services (in exceptional cases, e.g. homelessness); Private landlords;	Six months residence requirement	

Table 3: Case-by-case summary of results/findings regarding residential registration

6.   Conclusion

There seems to be integration… everything seems to be fine. But we would obviously need to look beyond what we see on the street; ask how many of them [post-2014 migrants] don't find work or struggle finding a place to live – that I think is the biggest issue (SP-2-06)

This statement was made by a local politician interviewed in locality 2. It summarises what many local actors across all six selected municipalities perceived as the two major challenges for newly arrived migrants and refugees; and it even suggests that effective access to housing and employment could be thought of as a measure of integration. And indeed, the aim of this report was precisely to investigate migrants' access to housing and employment as a way of investigating their integration. In doing so, however, it focusses not so much on how many of the people who arrived in these localities since 2014 have struggled or are still struggling to find housing and/or employment, but what they struggle with or against, and who is doing what (and for whom) in order to support them in this struggle.

It was striking how **many interviewees – particularly in localities 1, 3, and 5 – mentioned housing as *the* single-most important challenge that post-2014 migrants tend to face** in 'their' municipality. In all six cases, however, affordable housing was generally described as a scarce resource, very difficult to find also for the rest of the population and especially for young people and others with limited financial means. One related aspect in which the selected localities differ is the degree of **residential segregation** – both in terms of ethnicity and socioeconomic status – which does not simply depend on population size. While the two 'type A' localities (small and medium, both located in Catalonia) were described as very segregated, interviewees in locality 4 (rural), 2 and 6 (both small), as well as 5 (medium) highlighted a lack or comparatively low level of residential segregation.

For most interviewees, **the underlying problem is insufficient supply of affordable flats and houses**, which they often related to a lack of social (publicly subsidised) housing and/or the fact that for various reasons many owners are not interested in renting their property at all or prefer to rent them to either tourists or students (or both, see section 3.1). Especially in the two medium-sized towns in the sample (localities 3 and 5) but also locality 1, these developments have led to a steep increase in rental prizes, which particularly affects (newly arrived) immigrants, who often work in the lowest-paid and most unstable segments of the economy and thus face a significantly higher risk of poverty than the average population.

In the case of foreigners, **the general shortage intersects with – and is aggravated by – other barriers, particularly racism and racial discrimination**. Interestingly (and like residential segregation) this issue was mentioned particularly often in localities 1 and 3, the two Catalan municipalities (both type A) – which obviously does not mean that this problem only exists there. What does become clear, is that **tight housing markets are conducive to discriminatory**

practices among property owners: who are thereby given a lot of power to choose who they want to rent to. While there is significant evidence of openly discriminatory practices, discrimination also works indirectly, by setting very high standards regarding minimum monthly income and job stability, which are much more difficult to fulfil for immigrants. Their often only provisional or otherwise precarious legal status further contributes to this discrimination.

When asked about **the role of the various local actors** involved in facilitating post-2014 migrants' access to housing, local actors describe the part of the **local administration as rather marginal**, since it largely concerns their access to social housing, which in Spain generally accounts for a comparatively small share of the housing stock (see sub-section 2.1.1). A much more central role than the local government (housing department) is being attributed to the various **NGOs working with or for migrants and refugees**. In all selected localities, these organisations act as crucial intermediaries between their clients (or former clients) and the private housing market. Another very crucial role is being attributed to **personal, ethnic, or family networks, which migrants – especially in the most vulnerable situations – tend to fall back on** as a last resort. While only very few post-2014 migrants seem to utilize **real estate agencies** to find housing, their role nonetheless warrants consideration, since they effectively act as filters for private landlords, whose (often openly racist) preferences and stereotypes they thereby help to reproduce. Notably, and in line with previous studies on this issue, only very few real estate agencies seem to be willing to actively try and combat racism within the private housing market, and those who (claim they) do, were keen to highlight that they thereby constantly risk losing clients.

In terms of **concrete measures taken at the local level in order to facilitate post-2014 migrants' access to adequate housing**, many interviews pointed at social housing or housing subsidies, as mainstream measures that apart from solving the general housing problem also contribute to the integration of immigrants. Across all the localities, local policymakers, officials, and bureaucrats were very keen not to devise any policies or measures that could be seen as targeting immigrants in particular. **In none of the six localities has there been any formal local policy (related to housing) designed specifically for post-2014 migrants**, nor for non-citizens more generally, or other relevant groups like asylum seekers. Only in one case (locality 5) the local government was planning to slightly reform its housing regulation to facilitate particularly vulnerable immigrants' access to social housing. Apart from that, and only in localities 1 and 3, some (not yet very concrete) measures are being taken **to address the problem of racist discrimination**.

Overall, **two categories of post-2014 migrants – rejected asylum seekers and unaccompanied foreign care-leavers – were identified as particularly difficult to support** in their search for adequate housing, but only in locality 3 has a concrete project been implemented (first by an NGO, later the local administration itself) for the latter group (care leavers, see section 3.4).

As already noted, **access to housing is closely related to employment**, since it presupposes sufficient and regular income. Unfortunately, finding employment is often described as the second most challenging aspect of the whole integration process. Some of the significant barriers that migrants tend to face in this regard are related to their individual characteristics, while others can be linked to structural features of the local economy and labour market. Overall, t**he employment situation of (post-2014) migrants very much reflects the general economic and labour market situation in each locality**: In localities or areas of very high unemployment (particularly localities 5 and – to a lesser degree – 6 and 4) migrants tend to find it particularly difficult to get a job. In localities where the economy is growing and unemployment rates are low (like in localities 1 and 3), or where there is a lack of workers in general – due to population degrowth (like in locality 2) – or at least in certain sectors of the local economy, migrants' labour market integration is described as rather quick and easy.

Across all six localities, **the barrier that has been mentioned most frequently by local actors is migrant irregularity**, i.e., the lack of a work and/or residence permit. Apart from very effectively impeding migrants' access to the formal labour market, it is also perceived as a source of extreme vulnerability and risk of exploitation. A closely related barrier consists in the very **complex and frequently changing immigration regulations and the corresponding lack of awareness and understanding** on the part of local actors, particularly employers.

Interestingly, the issue of **racism and discrimination is much less commonly mentioned by local actors in relation to post-2014 migrants' access to employment (compared to housing)**, even though it obviously does exist. Also here, exclusion is not always exercised in a straightforward way but sometimes happens via formal requirements that are set 'for everyone' but more difficult to fulfil for immigrants than natives. Discrimination and rejection on the part of (some) employers thereby overlaps with **newcomers' lack of personal networks (local social capital), knowledge of the internal workings of the local labour market, as well as language skills and (formal) education, training, or work experience**. The latter is very often a matter of homologation, i.e., official recognition of previously obtained qualifications, rather than lack thereof. In some sectors (like domestic care or the meat industry) migrants' – and particularly Muslims' religious beliefs or traditions are (perceived as) a significant barrier.

Through all these mechanisms, **post-2014 migrants are not completely excluded from local labour markets but channelled into certain (low-paid) segments**. Some of these (like domestic care) are relevant across all localities, whereas others are more locality-specific – like the meat industry in locality 1, agriculture in (and around) locality 2 and locality 4, or (summer) tourism in locality 4. Depending on the dominant sector(s), there is more or less room for informal employment which can facilitate especially irregular migrants' access to the local labour market (even though under very precarious and often exploitative conditions). Overall, the segmentation follows both ethnic and gender lines and several interviewees noted that **the kind of work that post-2014 migrants tend to find significantly hampers their integration in other spheres** (beyond the labor market).

There are several **parallels between the spheres of housing and employment**. Firstly, the various actors involved have very similar roles: the **regional administration** is also responsible for the mainstream employment programmes, which are being implemented through **local employment offices**. Public and private (third sector) organizations fulfil complementary functions, with **NGOs playing a very crucial role as intermediaries (and sometimes initiators of concrete projects)**[18], especially in relation to migrants with no or a precarious/conditional legal status, including asylum seekers. **Private employers are seen as crucial – but rather reluctant – partners**, who can serve as positive examples and "pathbreakers", but whose willingness to engage with NGOs in order to help newcomers access the local labour market strongly depends on whether or not they need (foreign) workers.

Secondly, **also post-2014 migrants´ access to employment was very often described by local actors as an issue that is being (and should be) addressed through mainstream policies** and support measures[19]. Accordingly, there were **no formal policies and very few concrete initiatives that target post-2014 migrants** (or other specific categories or segments of the migrant population) to facilitate their access to employment. Like in the area of housing, interviewees explicitly justified this lack of specific "migrant services" by pointing out that **foreigners are covered by the same support systems that are in place for all local residents**. This is not the case for migrants in irregular situations, who remain categorically excluded, which many local actors perceive as a significant limitation. In practice, it means that whenever public institutions do encounter difficulties related to immigration status, there is one or several NGOs that are seen as responsible for resolving these problems.

Thirdly, the **exclusion of migrants in irregular situations is less strict when it comes to initiatives taken by NGOs**, which in all of the selected localities are involved in, or themselves run, small **social enterprises dedicated to facilitating labour market access for disadvantaged groups**, wherein they more or less explicitly include vulnerable migrants/refugees. Especially **migrants in irregular situations** depend on these complementary services and support structures provided in a more informal way, in order to make up for the limitations that public employment offices (and housing departments) face in this regard.

Another important resource (apart from housing and employment) and precondition for successful integration in any Spanish municipality is **residential registration (‘*empadronamiento*’)**. It constitutes official proof of residence in the municipality (but also the country) and a prerequisite to accessing many rights and services provided at the local level. In contrast to both housing and employment, it is **a municipal competence**: It is the local

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[18] This is the case in all localities, but arguably this role is even more necessary in localities with less/shorter experience of immigration and cultural diversity, and/or with conservative-led governments that are less willing to take initiative for migrants (only).

[19] With the exception of asylum seekers who are seen as the responsibility of the refugee reception system (national level), both in term of their housing needs and employability.

administration that is formally responsible and legally obliged to register everybody who lives in the municipality – including (even irregular) migrants.

The most common obstacle mentioned by local actors (across all six municipalities) in relation to post-2014 migrants' municipal registration was the **inability to fulfil certain documentary requirements**, either because their ID is invalid (e.g., their passport expired) or not accepted by the local authority, or because they lack (or cannot prove) a permanent/stable address, all of which particularly affects migrants in irregular or legally precarious situations.

The **principal actor** responsible for municipal registration is the **local registration office**, where registration is generally seen as an important tool of governance – necessary to ensure local service provision, social cohesion, as well as public safety – but also a fundamental right. Also in this context, **private landlords play an important role**, since it is them who in general must authorise the registration of their tenants. For people, including migrants, who do not have (or cannot prove) a regular address, it is usually on **local social services to certify** a client´s sojourn within the municipality. **NGOs and local migrant associations often act as intermediaries**, as do personal contacts and support networks.

Since **local authorities (but also the individual bureaucrats working there) have some discretion in specifying the exact practicalities** (e.g., which kinds of documents they ask for and accept), local implementation practices differ quite substantially from one locality to the other. From the sample, it seems that larger municipalities – where **homelessness (in general) constitutes a more significant problem** – tend to be more inclusive in this regard (see sub-section 5.1.3). In both medium-sized towns (localities 3 and 5) specific procedures were put in place to also allow (and process) registration of people "without a proper address", even though several of the responsible actors noted that **an explicitly open registration policy can act as a "pull-factor"**, attracting homeless people in general, and migrants (without resources) in particular. **None of the six local authorities has taken any concrete step or implemented a specific policy or measure with regard to post-2014 migrants' access to local registration**.

Overall, the **differences between the six selected localities** are rather subtle, and **mostly linked to local dynamics of supply and demand** within the housing and labour market. Of the four explanatory factors that guided the case selection – structural conditions, immigration history/experience, population size, and political leadership – it is the first that seems to explain most of the apparent variation. In other words, post-2014 migrants' access to employment and housing becomes easier only where local employers struggle to find workers (which is the case in several localities, at least in some sectors or seasons) and when there is sufficient supply of affordable housing (which is not the case in any of the six localities). In contrast, their access to housing and employment does not seem to consistently depend on the size of a locality, nor on which political party is forming/leading the government, nor whether a locality has a shorter or longer history of immigration.

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