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Paper#2

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Title:

Welcome Refugees Napoli is Your Home
On how cultural experiences can structure collective solidarity and inclusion

Abstract:

On October 2016, Italy's public opinion was hit by episodes of intolerance towards refugees. Residents in northern centers created road blocks to stop immigrants entering the structures designed by the Government to host them. On the other side, an impressive mobilization for solidarity with refugees was taking place in Naples. Neapolitan citizens advocated a welcoming attitude and pleaded for the incorporation of asylum seekers into the metropolitan social community. With the slogan 'Welcome Refugees Napoli is Your Home', they wanted to include refugees into the structures of informal solidarity rooted in the local identity.

Pivotal actors in the mobilization were the activists of the community center Laboratorio Occupato Insurgencia. The collective was born in 2004 as a squat community to organize grassroots activities for facing local problems such as unemployment and lack of spaces for socialization and cultural activity. Since 2015, Insurgencia activists turned towards the problems affecting the Mediterranean area and, more precisely, to the refugee issue. The event that marked the shift in their focus of action was a music festival named Newroz.

This paper aim at investigating the way musical experiences have affected both discourses and actions towards refugees in the city of Naples. On one hand, music conveys an attitude to openness. It reflects the historical cultural diversity of a city which is a cauldron of Southern European, Northern African and Levantine identities. On the other hand, music is a means to articulate claims for mobilization as well as a place where activists and local institutions come together to promote concrete actions of collective solidarity and inclusion.