

Special Issue Combining Safety
and Equity in the Post-Covid City:
New Trends between Local Policies
and Bottom-Up Practices

FUORI LUOGO

Journal of Sociology of Territory,
Tourism, Technology

Guest editors

Gabriele Manella
Madalena Corte-Real



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Editorial manager: Carmine Urcioli

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READINGS FUORI LUOGO

Emanuele Stochino *reads*
Maurizio Bergamaschi (ed.), *Migranti: la sfida dell'integrazione digitale. Innovazione e co-creation nel progetto H2020 MICADO*,
FrancoAngeli, 2023

This book, edited by Maurizio Bergamaschi and available in open access (<https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa/catalog/book/1001>), is clearly a contribution on the debate on the increasing importance of technology in our society, with potentially fruitful applications to tackle inequality in information and accessibility to social services. At the same time, this book is part of the debate on migrations. All the data show that migrants are a structural part of Italian and European population, and their stronger integration in our societies is both a difficult and an urgent topic.

The Horizon 2020 project MICADO (an acronym for *Migrant Interrogation Cockpits and Dashboard*) has been implemented through four pilot cities: Antwerp, Hamburg, Madrid, and Bologna. The project's aim is the development and implementation of a ITC to simplify the interaction among migrants, public administration and the third sector; in other words, make the access to services easier. An advanced data technology has been used, and this allowed to derive meaning even from unstructured data such as comments or images on social media. MICADO has been presented to end users through an ITC application which can be used either on a personal computer or on devices such as smartphones and tablets. This is equipped with a multilingual interface with an automatic translator to facilitate the search for information about public administration and social services rules and benefits.

In the first chapter of the book, Teresa Carlone highlights co-analysis and co-planning as core elements in the early steps of the projects. This part has been connected to the importance of co-design and co-creation, a step in which ITC requires an active presence of end users (Parsons & Hick, 2008; Clifton et al., 2020). The author points out that these tools are essential to find timely responses to be fruitfully local strategies for the social inclusion of migrants and to continue over time, although updates will be necessary. The co-analysis and co-design process have been carried out through workshops and other tools through which all the actors of the process (public administration, migrants, and the third sector) can meet, speak freely, and get to know each other. The process has been highly appreciated, and many primary needs have been identified by migrants. Due to their number and the heterogeneity of local needs, however, these inputs cannot be "translated" into a universal technological solution. By "universal needs" the authors mean the ones which are present in the four cities. The "local needs" are also present in these cities but with a predominant marking for one sector. One city, for instance, might offer more information on employment and another one on housing. Owing to their limited vocabulary, moreover, migrants were assisted by cultural mediators acting as interpreters.

In the second chapter, Carolina Mudan Marelli considers the problem of how to build a Business Planet (BI) applicable to all European contexts in order to facilitate the provision of services related to migrants. A model has been used to identify and consolidate a Minimum Viable Product (MPV), i.e. a sequence of the basic functions of the universal ITC application depending on the needs that emerged in pilot cities of the project. The MPV took into consideration four specific needs expressed by migrants: healthcare, housing, work and education. In the co-design phase, the most delicate one for the success of any new technological process, it was necessary to converge the data from this step.

In the third chapter, Carla de Tona investigates what kind of co-participation is possible in implementing the ITC. The author stresses the results which usability tests have provided in the past. One of the aims of MICADO was to have an application tested and co-designed by end users with a dedicated work package. Some technical aspects of the project are reported here

too. For example, Local Piloting has been divided into four steps: Local Piloting Organization and Planning, Content Production and Integration, Usability Testing, and Public Piloting Implementation. These phases allowed to plan and implement an interactive development process of the application. The third and fourth step are at the topic of analysis in this chapter. De Tonna highlights their importance as well as the fact that pilot cases have allowed to try out new products through a small group of project users in order to understand how it may work on a larger scale. Implementing the experimental project can help predict the project's costs, its duration, its feasibility and help foresee any unexpected changes to be made. The critical issues, however, are the digital divide and the limited linguistic skills which may frustrate end users and discourage them from using the application.

In the fourth chapter, Orkide Izci considers the Plotting Implementation, i.e. the feedback which MICADO provided and the possibilities of the tool's being improved remotely by computer scientists. The four pilot cities agreed that one of the most important aspects have been the value of co-analysis and co-creation and in the early stages of the project to render the application user-friendly for migrants so that it may be used without assistance. The project has also showed that the integration of migrants has a positive outcome if it occurs in a context where individuals act in a coordinated manner by referring to widespread reference policies. The legislative vulnerability of migrants in Europe, however, lays the foundations for the difficulty of their integration process.

In the final chapter, Manuela Maggio stresses that the results of the pilot phase have produced a lot of knowledge to create a sustainable tool whose objectives can be summarized in three terms: 1) using: the use of the technological solution in daily professional practice; 2) hosting: managing, from a technical point of view, the distribution, operation and maintenance of the technology; 3) developing: identifying and developing new use cases, new functions, new features, also responding adaptively to new needs. On 2 June 2022, moreover, MICADO was presented to the European Commission and was a finalist for the Innovation in Politics Award, promoted by the Innovation in Politics Institute. As such, it will be included in the archive of good practices, hence increasing its visibility and credibility.

In conclusion, on a theoretical and experimental level, the MICADO key outputs emerged from three points of view. First, for the local public administration which had a very high turnover of managers on the project. Second, for users who, although appreciating the effort made to grant them autonomy in their search for healthcare, housing, work, and education, often encountered difficulties due to limited knowledge of the language. Third, for the European Union, with a lack of political will to enact laws on the regulation of migrant status to give certain resources and staff dedicated to them. Nonetheless, the project has given ample proof that it is possible to use ITC tools to help, at least, some migrants. Science has been able to demonstrate the benefits of MICADO, and now are requested to provide Europe with legislative stability so that the fruits of science do not remain limited to a few municipal or regional cases.

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