

Obstacles and Opportunities for Migrants and Refugees' Artistic Development

Evidence from the Project

La Langue des Oiseaux

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Abstract

This research study explores the evidence from the case study of the project *La Langue des Oiseaux* within a framework that examines the integration of migrants into the European art scene. The research objectives include investigating factors influencing migrants' artistic development, exploring their participation in *La Langue des Oiseaux*'s international activities, and examining the project's effects on their artistic trajectories and lives. To analyze the sociocultural dynamics at play, the study adopts a theoretical framework informed by Becker's Art Worlds and Bourdieu's field theory. In addition to these theoretical perspectives, the research incorporates key concepts from migration studies, such as transnationalism and superdiversity, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of migrants in the artistic field. We employ a qualitative approach and mixed methods: including participant observation, interviews, focus groups, and text analysis. By bridging migration studies and the sociology of art, this study contributes to the intersection of migration and art within sociological discourse. It sheds light on migrants' artistic development and offers fresh insights into intercultural exchange and collaboration among migrants in Europe.

Introduction

Migration is a constant phenomenon in the history of humanity, but it has never been such a central issue as it is today, both on the political agenda and in sociological research. Despite the abundance of studies on the subject, there are some topics that have not been sufficiently explored, namely the relationship between migration and art, and that between migration and linguistic diversity. Connecting the three themes of migration, art and linguistic diversity, therefore, is a decidedly new undertaking, on which few have worked so far. Our research seeks to contribute to fill this gap.

Migrants bring with them a cultural and linguistic backpack forged in their country of origin, and the countries they have lived in before, which makes the host society more diverse. Migrant artists also carry themes, styles, methods, and aesthetics that could enrich the artistic sector of the host cities. But in fact, in most contemporary European cities, the languages and cultures of the migrants are not valued; indeed, more often than not, they are unknown or interpreted through stereotypes and prejudices that facilitate a racist and anti-migration discourse. Besides, the European art scene rarely includes migrant artists, and when this happens, it considers them more as *migrants* than as *artists*.

We consider the incorporation of immigrants into the European cultural and artistic scene a relevant topic in contemporary sociological research. As globalisation and migration continue to shape the social and cultural landscape of Europe, there is a pressing need to understand how migrants navigate the complex structures of the art world, and how they negotiate their artistic

identities and careers in relation to their migration status and cultural and linguistic background. Specifically, studying the incorporation of migrants in the artistic sector is important for understanding how their presence shapes the cultural, linguistic and social dynamics of their host communities. It also provides insights into the challenges that migrants face in accessing opportunities and resources, and on how to promote their integration and success in the arts. Furthermore, it challenges stereotypes and promotes more inclusive attitudes towards migration and cultural and linguistic diversity in public discourse. In this research, we explore the multiple dimensions of young adult migrants' incorporation into the European art field, drawing on recent empirical research and theoretical debates.

What happens when migrant artists approach the artistic world of the host cities? Which opportunities open up to them when they embark on an artistic project? What obstacles do they encounter when trying to enter such an elitist sector?

On the other hand, how can they enrich the art of the host country? How may their contribution make a difference in European art, in terms of contents, languages, styles, and the aesthetics of the artistic creations? These are complex questions to which we try to modestly contribute through the analysis of a European project that involves a group of migrants with artistic vocations coming from different parts of the world and residing in three European cities: *La Langue des Oiseaux*.

The project has consisted of an exchange between three European theatre associations that realised training courses in performing arts for young migrant adults with an artistic vocation. Another partner from Senegal participated as well, contributing to the project from an extra-European perspective. The project's main goal was to foster migrants' integration in the host countries and, at the same time, build counter-narratives about migration and linguistic diversity through art.

Each association realised these courses in its country (France, Italy, and Germany) for several months, and after each round (three in total), a couple of trainees from each association (the «ambassadors») met in international workshops, shared and compared their learning, and experienced new methods with experts in different disciplines (theatre, radio, dance, circus, etc.).

We, as researchers coming from a fifth partner, Linguapax, joined all the international activities and participated in the workshops and meetings with the «ambassador» trainees, the trainers, and the managers of the artistic associations. Our research is based on participant observation and interviews and discussion groups with the project's participants. Through these methods, we have analysed the project's impact on the «ambassadors» and their involvement in the process of creating

a final play: a text and its performance. Also, we have analysed the play's content to understand to what extent participants' migration experiences and cultural and linguistic diversity have shaped it. Finally, through a discussion with the audience after a performance, we have inferred some insights on its potential in the sense of spreading a counter-narrative about migration and linguistic diversity.

This paper is divided into two parts. In the first, we begin by describing the project *La Langue des Oiseaux* (Chapter 1) and the environment in which it is developed, i.e., the migratory context and cultural diversity in theatre in the three countries where the European artistic association is based (Chapter 2). In the third chapter, we explore the state of the literature on art and migration and draw the theoretical framework of our work. And in the fourth, we illustrate the research questions and methods.

The second part is entirely dedicated to empirical analysis. After a brief description of the dynamics of the project's activities with special emphasis on language management (Chapter 5), we examine the personal, social, and artistic skills and other achievements obtained by trainees during the project (Chapter 6). Then we analyse the play performed by *ambassadors* in Lyon and the creative process behind the play's text (Chapter 7). The paper finishes with a brief general conclusion and some suggestions for future projects of this kind and further research.

PART 1

1. La Langue des Oiseaux project's description

Given the deep-rooted marginalization faced by youths from a migrant background in terms of their language and culture, a group of five associations that are active in the cultural and creative sectors across Europe and Africa have formed a partnership to kickstart the *La Langue des Oiseaux* project. The project aims to promote the democratisation of culture by engaging refugees, migrants and youths from a migrant background in the arts, thus enhancing the arts by incorporating the life experiences and linguistic and cultural diversity contributed by such individuals.

Four of these organisations are specialists in the realm of theatre. Those from Europe are MALTE (Musica Arte Letteratura Teatreo Etc.) from Ancona in Italy; boat people projekt from Gottingen in Germany; and Association Sens Interdits from Lyon in France. These organisations share a wealth of experience in the field of social theatre, with the first two focussing on production and distribution and the latter on programming. Djarama is a Senegalese cultural centre whose

mission is to promote various theatrical forms throughout the country, from storytelling to puppetry, with a strong emphasis on education. The fifth association is Linguapax, an organisation dedicated to the preservation of linguistic diversity using academic, literary and political approaches but is now also using a range of artistic methods to achieve these goals. The president of MALTE, Sonia Antinori (also an actress, playwright and translator) is the leader of the partnership, which has successfully applied to the European Commission for an ERASMUS+ grant. It was this grant that kickstarted the ambitious *La Langue des Oiseaux* project that brings together expert and apprentice artists alike, as well as researchers, managers, and cultural mediators. Also involved are those who participate in artistic workshops and theoretical discussions, not to mention the project managers and researchers.

The project consists of three modules of ‘Learning, Training and Teaching Activities’ (LTTAs); several Transnational Project Meetings (TPM); Multiplier Events (ME); and other complementary activities, all designed to facilitate interaction among participants. These components aim to achieve goals that are collectively known as the ‘Seven Tools Box’ which is made up of:

- the multilingual theatre play, *Mille e Uno, Tausend und Eine, Thousand and One*.
- the *Tapestry of Voices* podcast,
- the *Parole d'Éxile* web series,
- the documentary film *La Langue des Oiseaux – The film*,
- a research study on the *Obstacles and Opportunities for Migrants and Refugees’ Artistic Development*
- the *Building a Creative Intercultural Europe* policy brief.

At the project’s outset, each of the three European theatre associations invited young adults from a migrant background and with artistic vocation to participate in performing arts training workshops, thereby establishing local groups of trainees. From these groups, participants from each country were selected as ambassadors to represent their peers. In addition to receiving artistic training in their respective countries, participants were also able to travel alongside expert artists and managers to participate in LTTAs and TPMs.

The ‘transnational’ workshops are organised into three modules that each focus on a different topic, i.e., Physical-Verbal Training, Theatrical Proxemics, and the Final Project, which involves the preparation of the international performance of the play *Mille e Uno, Tausend und Eine, Thousand and One*. Before each module, local groups in Ancona, Gottingen, and Lyon work on a topic over the course of several months. After this, ambassadors, trainers and expert artists from Linguapax and Djarama among others join those from ‘transnational’ workshops or LTTAs. At least one researcher attends these activities to carry out scientific observations and record data on

the nature and dynamics of any interactions. This provides the opportunity to compare artistic methods, strategies to manage linguistic diversity and to translate speeches into different languages. There is also the chance to compare migratory experiences, any cultural baggage, artistic skills, personalities, moods, perspectives and opinions. As these activities take place at the main base of each association on a rotating basis, encounters can be framed in either a 'transnational' or 'domestic' dimension. The 'transnational' dimension is represented by travelling participants such as artistic experts, ambassadors, researchers and occasionally managers, whilst the 'domestic' dimension is represented by trainees, managers and any other stakeholders working at a local level, normally at the main base of each association.

Upon their return, the goal of the ambassadors is to share their 'transnational' experiences with groups in their home country and provide an ongoing link between the 'transnational' and 'domestic' aspects of the project.

The project's 'transnational' dimension is enhanced through Transnational Project Meetings (TPMs) which involve the attendance of expert artists, ambassadors, researchers, and occasionally managers from each of the partnering associations. Within these meetings, the 'Experts and Ambassadors' think tank works to develop theoretical and practical training programs aimed at enhancing migrants' and refugees' access to cultural opportunities. They are largely involved with organising any local and international workshops, coordinating efforts to meet artistic goals and engaging in discussions to address any issues that arise during the project. In certain cases, manager meetings are arranged where representatives from each association can deal with more technical issues such as agreements, travel logistics and budgeting.

During 'transnational' encounters, scenes are recorded for use in a film documenting the project's core concept, i.e., the experience of trainee and expert artists from migrant backgrounds across national and geopolitical borders. The film's Chilean director is based in Catalonia and also serves as the project's artistic advisor for Linguapax. He works alongside an Italian with a migrant background and a rotating team of technicians to record the experiences and thoughts of participants. It is during this time that participants have the opportunity to practice the work in a cinematographic set.¹

In terms of the 'local' dimension, the project is enriched not only by the aforementioned artistic training initiatives but also by Multiplier Events. During these events, at least one of the project's

¹Except for one of the persons who are interviewed in the documentary, Mamby Manwini, who is a professional actress, not a project's trainee.

finished pieces is showcased to local communities. This is only possible through each association's ability to network and arrange a venue for the event, secure logistical support, provide clear communication and participate in advertising initiatives. It is during this phase that associations can road test the impact of their 'transnational' activities at home and assess the reaction, participation levels and feedback of the general public. Such feedback provides valuable insight as to whether or not they are moving in the right direction, the effort that needs to be invested and what needs to be fixed or improved. Researchers must observe such criteria whenever possible, as they serve as an indicator not only of the challenges faced by migrant artists when delivering intercultural and multilingual performances but also of the potential to interact with an engaged public.

Each participant remains fully involved in the project from home. This involves ambassadors and trainees refining their skills and generating new ideas as well as experts preparing workshops and outlining artistic goals. Film crews are also involved in reviewing and editing footage and researchers in analysing and reviewing their notes, engaging in discussions, and producing a variety of written materials. Participants are able to stay connected through digital means, updating each other by sharing photographs, and interesting insights, and collaborating in different ways.

Following this overview of the *La Langue des Oiseaux* project, the report now focuses on its core theme, starting with the theoretical approaches and concepts that shape our research.

2. Exploring Migratory Context and Cultural Diversity in Theatre

This section takes a closer look at the context of migration and theatre in each of the three European countries where the project is holding artistic workshops. It will then explore the way in which migration has been managed in these countries and highlight several individuals and projects that have made contributions to the field of multicultural and migrant theatre.

Germany

For a long time, Germany pursued policies that were strongly against welcoming migrants into the country (Bade, 1992: 52). Even though migrants had been coming to Germany since as early as the 1950s, they were only initially accepted as temporary workers (Sharifi, 2017: 335). Due to an economic recession in the 1960s, the number of jobs decreased dramatically but the trend was not followed by a decline in immigration. On the contrary, the population increased to 4 million due to a rise in the number of asylum seekers and family members joining foreign workers already living

in Germany (Bloomfield, 2003: 12). In the 1990s, acts of violence were perpetrated against migrants by right-wing extremists in parts of the country such as Hoyeswerds and Rostock-Lichtenhagen, where migrant communities were targeted with firebombs (Pont Vidal, 1994: 150).

In light of these events, small steps were taken to regulate migration. In 1993, naturalisation became a legal right for those who had been a resident for at least 15 years and in 2001, the *jus soli* law was adopted meaning from that point on, anyone born in Germany would be a German citizen (Bloomfield, 2003: 12). Since that time, various initiatives have been adopted to improve the integration process, such as the National Integration Plan which was published by the German government in 2007. The policy's main goal was to contribute to the integration of migrant communities at every level of society, including the cultural level (Bundersregierung, 2007).

Although migrant artists began performing in the 1960s, they did not have access to municipal and state theatres and during this time artistic activities were 'left to the personal initiative and self-organisation of the foreigners' (Brauneck, 1983: 6). The German theatre scene was too "exclusive and nationally oriented" (Sharifi, 2017: 337). As a result, migrant theatre remained relatively unknown until the end of the 1990s (Sappelt, 2000: 276).

Once of the first intercultural theatres, *Theater an der Ruhr*, was founded in 1980 by Roberto Ciulli and Helmut Schäfer. Its plays were known for their international casts and multilingual scripts. Furthermore, it established connections and fostered collaboration with theatres from all over the world including countries such as Austria, Iran, Iraq, Italy and Turkey among others (Bloomfield, 2003: 61-63). Another vital intercultural venue is the *Meta Theater*, founded in Munich in 1980 by Axel Tangerding, who is known for works such as *Gilgamesh* (1993) and *Babylon* (1998). During production, he worked with asylum seekers from the minority Christian Assyrian community in Kurdistan (Bloomfield, 2003: 64). The *Arkadas Theatre* was also founded in the 1980s by the Turkish teacher, Necati Sahin, who 'wanted to give the children of Turkish immigrants the opportunity to learn the Turkish language through theatre' (Sharifi, 2017: 337). A few years later in 1984, the Turkish-language theatre company *Tiyatrom* was also established. Elsewhere during the 1980s, the *Theaterhaus* in Stuttgart came into being, one of whose last productions was *Twelve Angry Men* (2011), employing a cast comprised exclusively of people of colour (Sharifi, 2017: 338).

According to the *Report on the Performing Arts*, by 2010 opportunities in the independent scene available to those from a migrant background mirrored their representation in the population as a

whole, with Russian and Turkish still underrepresented (Künste, 2010). The *Ballhaus Naunynstraße* was founded by Shermin Langhoff as a creative, institutional space for migrants and was established as the main venue for postmigrant art. In 2013, Langhoff became the first person of colour to be director at the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin (Maxim Gorki official website).

France

The first large-scale migration to France began after the Second World War, when workers mainly from Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Algeria moved to the country. At the time, migration was seen as a positive phenomenon from an economic perspective as it provided the country with the workforce it needed to achieve economic growth. However, after the economic crisis of the early 1970s, France stopped recruiting foreigners but, as in the case of Germany, the number of immigrants continued to rise as a result of family reunions (Sharifi, 2017: 348).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the conservative Interior Minister, Charles Pasqua, introduced the so-called ‘Pasqua Laws’, which aimed to tackle illegal migration. The controversial laws triggered several protests, such as the one in 1996 in Paris, where a church was occupied by migrant activists known as ‘*sans-papiers*’ (those without a legal residence permit) (Nicholls, 2013). In 1997, a legalisation program was rolled out to improve the status of those illegal migrants. However, after the election of a conservative government in 2002, there was a return to more restrictive immigration policies, which were supported by the following Nicolas Sarkozy government (Sharifi, 2017, 348).

For a long time, cultural policies have tended to protect French traditions and culture as opposed to supporting migrant art, making it very difficult for migrants artists to find their place within the artistic field (ERJCart, 2002). Despite this, migrant artists did eventually find their place through the formation of a groups of independent artists called ‘*friches*’. In 2002, there was a shift away from the promotion of high French culture towards other countries and communities. To achieve this, the Secretary of State for Heritage and Cultural Decentralisation, Michel Duffour, launched a financial support package totalling €2.8 million. In France, there are now 40 international drama festivals, such as the Avignon theatre festival, where 70% of theatre companies are from other countries (Bloomfield, 2002: 50).

One of the main French intercultural theatres is *Collectif 12*, founded in 1997 in Mantes la Jolie, a region of Paris that is home to 98 different ethnic groups. According to the theatre and artistic director Catherine Boskowitz, it is crucial to feel the “emotion of the city” and to reflect that in their productions (personal interview in: Bloomfield, 2002: 54). Another important venue is *Maison d’Ouvre*, an artistic laboratory for performing arts companies such as *Du Zieu dans les Bleues*, set up by Nathalie Garaud who has worked in Lebanon with Palestinian refugees and the NGO *Asiles* (Mains d’Ouvre official website).

There are many artists from a migratory background that have had a significant impact on the history of French theatre. For example, the theatre director Moïse Touré founded the company *Cie Les Inachevé*. He works with both amateur and professional artists, whom he calls ‘*acteurs témoins*’ or ‘active witnesses’ as even before rehearsals they are part of the overall creative process (Radiofrance, 2012). Another important figure is Mohamed Rouabhi, who founded the company *Les Acharnés* with Claire Lasne. Since the company’s foundation in 1991, they have created several plays such as *Les Acharnés* (1993), *Les fragments de Kaposi* (1994), *Ma petite vie de rien du tout* (1996) and *Jeremy Fisher* (1997), all of which have been staged by other French and international directors (Shapiro, 2013).

Another noteworthy artist is the writer, actor and improviser, Lazare, known for his *Passé* trilogy, which takes its inspiration from the works of Pessoa. His work is set in France and Algeria and is connected to his own family’s history. It centres on his alter ego, Libellule, and is a combination of both documentary and utopian fiction (Sharifi, 2017: 351). Another individual of note is Leyal Claire Rabih who focusses mainly on texts written by young and contemporary authors. In January 2008, she established the company *Grenier/Neuf* with the goal of making contemporary theatre more accessible to the general public (Leyla Claire Rabih official website).

Italy

At the beginning of the 20th century, many Italians emigrated to the USA and many others to other parts of Europe after the Second World War. Immigration to Italy began in the 1970s just as the country was suffering from an economic crisis. For many years, migration was not regulated and so it remained until 1990, when the Martelli Act established a set of migration policies. The law instituted border controls, stipulated the need for visas and allowed for the deportation of illegal immigrants (Pankiewicz, 1999). However, immigration increased during the following years and in 1998 the Turco-Napolitano Act granted legal migrants rights equivalent to those of Italian citizens.

It also allowed family reunions and granted permanent residency to foreigners who had lived in Italy for at least 5 years. When Silvio Berlusconi became Prime Minister in 2002, immigration policies became more restrictive, and immigration was only allowed for those with an existing work contract. In the following years, global conflicts in Africa and the Middle East have led to an increase in migration and Italy is now one of the countries with the largest migrant population. The vast majority of these migrants are refugees fleeing from the Mediterranean Sea (Sharifi, 2017: 358).

Many artistic projects involving refugees and asylum seekers have been rolled out in Italy in recent years. One example of this is the project HOST (Hospitality, Otherness, Society, Theatre). HOST is a project which combines research and artistic praxis between artists from the *Eufonia-Astràgali Teatro* in Lecce and academics from the University of Salento. The main goal is to give a voice to migrants and thereby transform their experiences into theatrical narratives (Vignola, 2016). Another project is *Acting Diversity* which is a collaboration of cultural institutions in Italy, Palestine and the UK with the aim of creating intercultural dialogues through theatre workshops. Their plays are about racism, stereotypes, citizenship and civil rights (Sharifi, 2017: 359). Some other initiatives in Italy are *Teatro di Nascosto*; *Teatro Aperto*; *Laboratorio di Bresica* (which works with migrant children) (Bloomfield, 2002); *Cantieri Meticci* (Oliveto, 2020); *Teatro in Fuga* (official website); *Asinitas* (official website); *Teatro Due Mondi* (official website) and *Teatro Magro* (Ghebreigziabiher, 2020).

Italy also boasts several intercultural theatres including *Teatro di Vita*, a contemporary theatre which combines languages and various artistic forms, such as video or music. Others include *Teatro delle Albe*, a political theatre that combines ethics and aesthetics and *Teatro dell'Angolo*, which became one of the 18 nationally recognised 'Innovative Repertory Theatres for Children and Young People' (Bloomfield, 2022), the *Suq Festival* in Genova (www.suqgenova.it), a very important centre for intercultural activities, and the *Piccoli Idilli* company (www.piccoliidilli.it) in Casatenovo (Lombardia).

There are several points in common between the three countries discussed in this section. Firstly, for a long time these European countries blocked the integration of migrants through the implementation of restrictive policies. Nevertheless, it must also be recognised that these policies, although subject to change depending on the government of the day, have become less restrictive over recent decades. Initiatives that saw the emergence of multicultural theatres and companies, firstly in Germany in the 1980s and in France and Italy in the 1990s, have allowed some migrants to become notable figures in their countries' respective national theatre scenes, especially in France

and Germany. Despite this good progress, most migrants still face difficulties when working as artists and they often have to fund their own projects.

3. State of the art and theoretical framework

3.1 The state of the arts: sociological attempts to connect art and migration

From a sociological perspective, research focussing on the strategic connection between art and migration has been rather neglected (Martiniello, 2005). We consider the integration of migrants into the European cultural and artistic scene to be a highly relevant topic in the field of contemporary sociological research. Therefore, this section will outline some of the most relevant studies on art and migration which can be analysed from various perspectives, such as the artistic development of individuals from a migrant background and the aesthetics and language that migrant art can contribute to the local context.

Di Maggio and Keller argue that the current literature on art and migration is lacking and fails to consider the institutional boundaries and inducements faced by migrants when engaging in artistic expression (Di Maggio: Keller, 2010). They also claim that there is a dearth of knowledge concerning the relationship between migrant art and economic change (ibid., 2010). Di Maggio and Keller have both contributed to the analysis of the global art market and the role of governments and civil organisations in shaping the financial independence and social prominence of migrant artists. Their analysis considers various factors, such as the generation of migrants, the specific traits of ethnic groups and the experienced faced by migrants in general. The enquiry also explores the relationship between artistic authenticity and commercial success by examining the contrasting circumstances of isolated groups of artists often found in migrant enclaves and who operate in distinct, unclassified categories. This is contrasted with second-generation and skilled migrants who have been able to successfully enter mainstream markets by tailoring their work to align with the expectations of audiences in a particular host country. These divergent positions are linked to Bourdieu's 'field theory', which posits a tension between the commercial and autonomous poles of art (Bourdieu, 1993). In this context, both cultural and ethnic authenticity contribute greatly to this tension.

Martiniello's approach is another significant attempt to examine the relationship between art and migration in a theoretical context (Martiniello, 2015). Martiniello believes that the neglect of art in migration studies is a result of the long-held perception of migrants as merely workers. Nevertheless, recent studies have emphasised the essential role of art in contemporary migration. Martiniello's multidisciplinary approach focusses on the cultural, social, policy, political and

economic aspects of art and migration. The table below summarises Martiniello’s approach to analysing the connection between art and migration (Martiniello, 2015):

The Levels of Research about Art and Migration

Level	Description
Cultural level	Examines how the artistic production of migrants impacts the mainstream artistic landscape on a local, national, or even transnational level.
Social level	Examines how migrant artistic expression can build bridges between groups from different cultural and migratory backgrounds.
Policy level	Examines how cultural institutions and policies respond to the diversification of migrant art and culture.
Political level	Examines the potential of art as a tool for political mobilization when addressing power imbalances.
Economic level	Evaluates the impact of the creative output of migrant artists on the local economy.

Martiniello explores this phenomenon in Belgian super-diverse cities by highlighting the emergence of a post-racial generation in the art world (Martiniello, 2018). The research discusses the emergence of a post-racial urban generation in Brussels and Liege, especially in the urban arts and cultural worlds. The author argues that certain youths and adults living in urban areas transcend ethnic, racial, gender, class and religious boundaries in their daily lives, challenging mainstream racism and ethnicity through collaboration in artistic projects. Martiniello concludes that the emergence of a post-racial generation in super-diverse cities through cultural practices and projects

does not stem from white privilege or white supremacist ideologies, but is rather the result of careful, empirical observation of social and cultural life (Martiniello, 2018).

Different research was carried out by Ferro and Abrantes which focuses on education (Ferro: Abrantes, 2018). The research focuses on migrants artists in Portugal and highlights the importance of long-term artistic training both in a migrant's country of origin and the host society. Their study analyses the life trajectories of migrant artists in Lisbon, focussing on their social integration through formal and informal learning. The methodology is based on biographical interviews conducted with twenty migrant artists. The results show that migration, combined with formal and informal learning, strongly affects the artistic work, personal experience and life trajectory of migrants based on their style of art. Migrant artists often undergo extensive training but remain very vulnerable and lack support when trying to enter the labour market.

Lopez and Delhaye provide a different perspective and shed light on the segregation and stereotypes faced by migrant artists, leading them to be seen as amateurs and thereby limiting their opportunities (Lopez, 2002; Delhaye, 2008). This approach emphasises the significance of studying the segregation and stereotyping of migrant artists in the art sphere. Delhaye points out that the official label of migrant artists a 'allochtoon' in Amsterdam relegates them to 'alternative' or 'marginal' art circles and stigmatises these artists as a result (Delhaye, 2008). This research highlights the serious consequences of segregation and of the stereotyping of migrant artists as merely 'amateurs'.

Another relevant contribution to this new area of research is provided by Parzer, who focusses on a specific subset of refugee artists (Parzer, 2021). His goal is to examine how the labels surrounding ethnicity and refugee status affect the artistic activity of Syrian migrants living in Austria. Parzer adopted an ethnographic approach to explore how Syrian artists who settled in Austria between 2011 and 2016 were able to resume their artistic careers and gain recognition in artistic fields such as music, theatre, literature and the visual arts. The study involved twenty in-depth interviews, participant observations and interviews with event organisers and audience members. The data was analysed using Kathy Charmaz's theoretical coding paradigm, all the while taking into account ethical considerations. The study revealed that these artists are skilled at adapting to various situations by switching between using ethnic and refugee labels. The paper emphasises the significance of nationhood in how Syrian migrants are labelled and the way in which factors such as religion and race affect their access to opportunities in the artistic sphere. They propose two types of self-presentation, masking and switching, which involve downplaying or highlighting certain aspects of one's identity. Overall, the study contributes to our understanding of the complex issues of representation and labelling that migrants face in the artistic field.

The issue of art and migration cannot simply be limited to one particular genre. For example, we can consider the importance of participatory cinema as a form of political solidarity with refugees in Italy, explored in a study carried out by Frisina and Murescu (Frisina: Murescu, 2018). They emphasise the significance of involving asylum seekers in filmmaking and adopting a self-narrative approach in order to challenge dominant migration narratives and combat racism. Their study highlights the moral and political commitment of documentary workers to represent refugees in a dignified and respectful manner.

Following on from these valuable contributions, we aim to explore a new avenue in the field of art and migration. We will continue to analyse the obstacles and opportunities in the context of artistic development of migrants and refugees, but will introduce a new perspective by analysing the potential benefits of creating a shared artistic space for migrants living in different host societies in Europe. Our project brings together migrants from various countries living in France, Germany and Italy to collaborate in a specific artistic project, thereby providing a platform for cross-cultural exchange and collaboration. Our research aims to shed light on the potential advantages of establishing such a space, as well the advantages of better intercultural understanding, the promotion of different artistic expressions and the formation of new artistic networks. We also acknowledge that challenges and limitations may arise when migrants from different backgrounds come together, such as language barriers, power imbalances and cultural misunderstandings. Overall, we believe that our contribution has the potential to advance the field of art and migration by exploring a new approach that fosters intercultural exchange and artistic collaboration among migrants in Europe.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

We aim to explore the various dimensions of migrants' integration into the world of European art, drawing on recent empirical research and theoretical debates, as well as the practices, motivations and reflections of *La Langue des Oiseaux* participants. To achieve this, we need to bridge the gap between two different branches of sociology that have rarely intersected, i.e., the sociology of migration and the sociology of art. The following section outlines the main approaches and concepts that are relevant to our study. We will draw on Becker's 'Art Worlds' and Bourdieu's 'Field Theory' to explore the sociology of art (Becker 1982: Bourdieu, 2003). For the sociology of migration, we will draw on the concepts of transnationalism, super-diversity and cosmopolitanism. Following this, we will discuss the most relevant attempts to establish connections between contemporary art and migration.

The sociology of art has tended to focus on the following research objects (Heinich, 2001):

- 1- The consumer (taste and preferences)
- 2- The artist (artistic trajectory, the social origins and backgrounds of artists and their impact on artistic practices)
- 3- The context of productions (the role of institutions such as museums and galleries in shaping the art world and the social and economic aspects of art production and distribution)
- 4- The art itself (meanings, social implications, discourse and representation)

Some stakeholders, such as art curators or painters can be analysed individually or collectively, but recent contributions have shed light on art as a product of collective actions, arising from cooperation between multiple stakeholders. Becker argues that the world art system is a social construct that involves a network of people and institutions, including galleries, museums, critics, collectors and artists (Becker, 1982). Becker's 1982 book *Art Worlds* has become a seminal reference in the sociology of art, exploring the networks of interactions and collective activities that give rise to art itself (Bugnone and Capass, 2020). According to Becker, world art is not just a product of individual creativity or talent, but something that is influenced by social, economic and political forces within the global art system. Thus, world art is not only a reflection of cultural diversity but also a site of power struggles, negotiations and disputes between stakeholders. This cooperative activity can be temporary or stable, guided by established norms and patterns and enables the very existence of artwork (Bugnone and Capass, 2020). In order for our project to comprehensively analyse the artistic trajectory of migrants artists in theatre, it is essential to consider the roles of the various individuals involved in the production process, including directors and producers, as well as the social, political and power relations between them. This perspective aligns with Durkheim's theories on the division of labour, which places emphasis on specialised task allocation (Durkheim, 1984). In the art world, numerous individuals collaborate to create and promote art and Becker argues that this collaborative process is characterised by collective action and cooperation.

'Field Theory' is the other essential approach in the field of the sociology of art, which is outlined below. We will begin with the methodological and theoretical benefits brought about by 'Field Theory' as well as its limitations. It is important to understand that although the art field

resides in the broader power framework, it does enjoy relative autonomy in terms of political and economic power:

“What do I mean by field? As I use the term, a field is a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy” (Bourdieu, 1993: 163).

Bourdieu characterises the artistic field as distinct social realm that has its own set of rules and yet remains intrinsically linked to power, politics and economics (Bourdieu, 1993). Bourdieu’s use of concepts such as autonomous and heteronomous poles enables us to understand the specific power relations at play. Artists who adhere to external influences, norms or standards are classified as ‘heteronomous’ (Bourdieu, 1995: Speller, 2011: Sapiro, 2012). Bourdieu suggest that to resist external pressures, artists require particular forms of cultural and economic capital. However, these issues can present migrant artists with a unique set of challenges. The first challenge relates to the laws of economics that prioritise criteria such as art product sales, leading to the perception that success is defined purely by commercial viability (Bourdieu, 1995). The market for the exotic perpetuates cultural voyeurism and literary tourism, resulting in marginalisation (Huggan, 2006).

Bourdieu’s theory can help us to understand the position of migrant artists within the artistic field and their struggles to gain recognition and access cultural resources. Migrant artists may face difficulties in accessing this symbolic capital due to their position as newcomers and may need access to a field that is already structured and dominated by powerful actors. Becker's ‘Art World’ approach on the other hand, highlights the collaborative and collective nature of art production and takes into consideration the importance of networks and collaborations between artists, producers, critics, and others involved in the production of art. In terms of migrants’ integration into the European artistic landscape, this approach can help to understand how migrants build networks and collaborate within the art field, as well as how they negotiate their position as outsiders within the field itself.

The Sociology of Migration and Cultural Studies

As previously mentioned, research into migration as a sociological field has received disproportionate focus over the last forty years. This is why it is important to adopt the most appropriate methodology when analysing the integration of migrants into the art world, and reflect on the importance of researching diversity. Vertovec distinguishes between various representations of diversity (Vertovec, 2007). Firstly, he identifies super-diversity, i.e., the diversification of migration patterns and the emergence of new group configurations and their distinctive

characteristics. Secondly, he discusses the transnational mediation of models, i.e., how migrants use pre-existing, pre-migration or translationally shaped models of diversity to navigate various urban contexts. The theories of transnationalism and super-diversity are outlined below. In addition, we will discuss the ideas of cosmopolitanism and aesthetic cosmopolitanism when addressing the issues of diversity and cultural exchange in art (Papastergiadis, 2012).

Transnationalism

Transnationalism provides an analytical framework for understanding modern migration beyond the confines of methodological nationalism and allows for the observation of migration across diverse social realms in different locations (Levitt and Schiller, 2004: 196). The approach challenges three limitations of methodological nationalism, i.e., the underestimation of nationalism's significance in society, the assumption that borders define the unit of analysis and confining migration studies within national-state boundaries. In migration sociology, 'transnational' not only characterizes a method of study but also a social reality, i.e., transnational migration. This form of migration involves individuals maintaining connections between their origin and host countries, leading fluid lives across borders and forming multiple identities as "transmigrants" (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc, 1995).

Super-diversity

Given that the project includes migrants from different backgrounds, we should employ a theory that doesn't simply label migrants as a homogenous social group in order to gain a clearer understanding of diversity. We will therefore employ Vertovec's theory of super-diversity, which goes beyond the classical ethno-focal understanding (Vertovec, 2007). Vertovec argues that traditional approaches to migration studies, such as assimilation and multiculturalism, are no longer adequate to capture the diversity and dynamism of contemporary migration. Super-diversity is a concept that emerged to describe the increasing complexity and diversity of migration flows and populations and has shifted the focus towards the study of a complex articulation of variables in order to understand contemporary migration (Vertovec, 2015). These variables are connected to the large mix of ethnic groups in certain cities and countries, as well as the range of migration statuses and respective rights. As a result, Vertovec refers to a situation where migration flows and populations are characterized by high levels of diversity in terms of their countries of origin, languages, religions, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is not only about the quantity but also the quality of diversity, as it implies a complex and dynamic interplay of multiple factors that shape the experiences and identities of migrants. Super-diversity implies that migrants may have

multiple identities and affiliations that cut across national, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural boundaries. It also implies that migrants may have different migration trajectories and experiences depending on their individual characteristics, family backgrounds, and social networks.

Cosmopolitanism and Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism

According to Appiah, cosmopolitanism has been linked to two social phenomena: the obligation to others and the interest in others (Appiah, 2006). In recent years, this key concept has been used from a more critical perspective. Gerald Delanty introduced cosmopolitanism as a tool to develop critical dialogues between cultures that can learn from each other.

These changes have been slowly introduced in the art field. However, this neglected area has not been historically relevant in the cosmopolitanism debate. According to him, aesthetic cosmopolitanism is a new line of thinking that allows for a more rigorous account of diasporic interface in art practice (idem). Aesthetic cosmopolitanism is a term used to describe a kind of interaction and the involvement of diverse cultures in artistic expression. Thus, aesthetic cosmopolitanism is not only about the celebration of difference, but also about the creative possibilities that arise when different cultures come into contact with and influence each other. Nevertheless, there are many challenges to achieving aesthetic cosmopolitanism. One of the biggest challenges is the lack of representation of different perspectives in the media and cultural institutions. Many museums, galleries, and media outlets continue to prioritize Eurocentric perspectives, which can limit opportunities for individuals to engage with and appreciate the art and cultural expressions of other communities. Finally, there is a lack of access to cultural resources and opportunities in many communities, particularly those that are marginalized or under-resourced. This can limit opportunities for individuals to engage with and appreciate the art and cultural expressions of other communities.

4. Research strategy

As stated at the beginning of this document, this research is framed in the context of the project *La Langue des Oiseaux*. It is part of the project itself, and it aims at examining and drawing conclusions based on evidence created and collected during the transnational activities: we have collected data during the LTTAs and the TPMs and focused on the ambassadors' experiences and motivations, for it has not been possible for us to participate to local workshops and to deepen the dialogue with the whole local groups.

Combining Becker's ethnographic approach, which emphasizes the empirical study of artistic practices and networks, with Bourdieu's approach to analysing the structure and dynamics of the cultural field, we propose a mixed strategy integrating different research methods.

Given the relatively small number of people involved (the project's ambassadors) and of activities realised (the translational activities), and their short duration, we use a qualitative approach to deepen on some specific aspects of people's characteristics, motivations and experiences and of the project's social, artistic and linguistic dynamics. The overarching research objective of this study is to investigate the experiences and impacts of the project *La Langue des Oiseaux* on the lives, artistic trajectories, and integration of immigrant participants in the host societies of Italy, Germany, and France. We aim to achieve a deep understanding of the various factors influencing migrants' and refugees' access to formal artistic projects, their participation in the international activities of *La Langue des Oiseaux*, the development of the project, its impact on their lives and artistic trajectories, and its potential influence on the artistic scene of the host society.

The most suitable design to analyse in depth all these different elements is a case study, being the project *La Langue des Oiseaux* the case itself: an attempt of inclusion of migrants and refugees in the artistic world of their host cities. The data for our study have been collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, discussion groups, and text analysis/content analysis.

4.1 Research questions

Our study is structured around a fundamental question:

Which obstacles and opportunities do migrant trainees in performative arts ("participants") encounter in their artistic development throughout the project *La Langue des Oiseaux*?

This question implies examining different aspects related to the participation of a group of migrants and refugees living in Ancona, Lyon and Gottingen in the artistic project *La Langue des Oiseaux*, and can be split up in three shorter questions:

1. Which opportunities does the project offer to participants, and how does it contribute to their personal, social, and artistic development?
2. Which is the role of participants in the creative process, and what factors influence their level of involvement and engagement?
3. To what extent and how do participants - and their cultural and linguistic diversity - contribute artistically to the representation of the theatrical result of the project?

4.2 Research hypothesis

We use descriptive hypotheses to guide our analysis.

1. Immigrants who participate in the *La Langue des Oiseaux* project may develop more personal and social soft skills, such as intercultural communication, translation and other linguistic abilities, than artistic skills, due to their limited access to formal training and opportunities for professional artistic development in the host society's scene. Furthermore, as suggested by Bourdieu's notion of autonomous art and Becker's idea of collaborative art, participants who heavily rely on the guidance, knowledge, decisions, and resources provided by local organizations may encounter difficulties in establishing an independent artistic trajectory. Their dependence on external entities for artistic direction, opportunities, and

- support can restrict their ability to assert their own creative vision and develop a unique artistic identity.
2. The formation of new artistic networks through shared spaces can lead to the emergence of new forms of artistic expression that challenge traditional notions of national or cultural identity. This hypothesis proposes that when immigrants come together in shared spaces, they can create innovative and boundary-pushing artworks that challenge established ideas of identity. These shared spaces provide opportunities for collaboration, exchange of ideas, and the blending of diverse cultural influences, resulting in the emergence of cosmopolitan artistic expressions. Nevertheless, the complexities surrounding the use of migrant languages require careful consideration and the creation of supportive environments to fully realize the impact of linguistic and cultural diversity.
 3. Despite potential disparities in cultural capital, education, and social class between local experts and migrant participants, the *La Langue des Oiseaux* project offers a platform rich in opportunities for personal, social, and artistic development for everybody involved. However, varying levels of engagement and involvement may arise due to factors such as cultural background, previous experiences, and perceptions of inclusivity within the creative process. Additionally, the quality and nature of artistic contributions by migrants and refugees may be influenced by their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, but they hold potential to enrich the representative aspect of the project through diverse perspectives and experiences.

4.3 Research techniques

As we have anticipated above, we are going to combine different research techniques, consistently with the diversity of data we need to collect and examine. This allows for an in-depth exploration of the participant's' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of the project, as well as the impact it has on their understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity, intercultural communication, and the acquisition of soft skill. Additionally, it helps identify the challenges faced by the participants, professional playwrights, and the production team in developing scenes in different mother tongues and creating a cohesive and impactful production.

- In-depth semi-structured interviews with experts and ambassadors (in person or online) to explore their experiences in the project and in the international workshops. These interviews have been conducted using a sociological approach to delve into broader social and cultural issues, with a special attention to language themes.
- Participant observation (PO) during LTTA and project meetings: Ethnographic methods such as PO have been employed to observe the ambassadors' behaviours and interactions in an international workshop setting. We have taken detailed field notes on the participants' actions and analysed this data to gain insights into their experiences and perspectives.
- Discussion groups: Sociological methods have been used to organize discussion groups with the ambassadors and with the experts during the international encounters. The discussions have been guided by a set of open-ended questions or a guide that focuses on specific topics

of interest such as: experiences and perceptions on participation, collaborative artistic process and interactions.

- Text/Show analysis: Content analysis has been used to analyse the theatrical play created in the *La Langue des Oiseaux* project. This analysis has helped identify themes and patterns related to cultural and linguistic diversity, intercultural communication, and other social and cultural issues.

PART 2. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

This section explores the multifaceted impact of artistic engagement on the lives of migrants and refugees involved in the *La Langue des Oiseaux* and BIRD (*Blending Identity by Rehearsing Diversity*) projects. This will be done through an analysis of the soft skills, learnings and other achievements gained throughout the project. The first section describes the main objectives of the workshops and explores the unfolding dynamics that have guided their development. Then, the main skills and achievements realised by participants will be outlined before an examination of evidence that shows to what extent they have developed these skills and become more adept at applying them both in artistic projects and in their daily life.

5. Language diversity and its management in La Langue des Oiseaux

During the learning, training and teaching activities, expert artists trained participants in reading and verbal skills for public speaking, managing their body language, and familiarising them with creative writing. For trainees, the workshops have been not only an environment to apply various methodologies, but also a safe space to challenge themselves both as people and as amateur artists. They also allowed trainees to engage and communicate with their peers, thereby improving their self-confidence and fostering mutual trust.

Local workshops were conducted in the official language of host countries, i.e., Italian, German and French. Participants did not have sufficient skills in the language of their host country were assisted by way of translations or explanations in their native language or one they understand better, provided by experts or their peers. For example, a German theatre expert might translate to French and English for participants coming from Africa to countries where these languages are used. They may, however, need to rely on translations by an Iranian trainee in order to communicate with Persian speaking participants. In Italy, multilingual skills of instructors have been useful when interacting with Spanish and English speakers coming from Latin America and Africa, whilst trusted trainees helped with translations into Arabic.

In international activities such as workshops and meetings, English has been the dominant language of communication, with most of the experts, managers, researchers and some trainees able to understand it. However, as not everybody could speak English, translations were usually made to bridge languages —those which were spoken by the biggest number of attendants, i.e., Spanish and French, and in some cases Italian or German. As most of the experts, researchers and managers could speak at least two of these languages, they could often translate themselves, i.e., explain something in English and Spanish, for instance. They were also able to translate the speeches of other participants. When this was not possible or convenient, other persons were invited to translate, a task reserved for experts, researchers or managers at the beginning, but later entrusted to others. In addition, for communication between the “international group” (people who were traveling) and local groups, trainees maintained their role of translators to other languages (Arab, Persian etc.), which were acquired in local workshops. In any event, there was no professional translation, but each person tried their best to transfer the meaning of a speech from one language to another, a task that tends to be far more difficult than it appears.

It is worth noticing that translation has had a rather ambivalent effect. On the one hand, it produced longer and more tiring sessions, with some having to put in a great deal of effort in translating, whilst others had to make a major effort to maintain their concentration both when listening to a speech in an unfamiliar language and when they had to wait for what had been said through translators. Occasionally, speakers whose speeches were translated by others to a language they understood were not very satisfied with the translation’s quality or precision. Such problems were also voiced by attendants who were familiar with both the original language of the speaker and the language of the translation. This sometimes leads to interventions in order to specify the meaning of a sentence or add information, but also lead to some simply resigning themselves in a frustrated fashion. However, translations endured that everybody was able to understand others, to a reasonable level of precision, and navigate their way through a mixture of languages that would otherwise have been chaotic. It also helped most of the participants develop their skills in other languages, as will be discussed later.

In both local and international workshops, experts promoted the use of the learners' native languages with the aim of “eliminating from the beginning any idea of linguistic hierarchy in favour of a horizontal, multilingual expressive fabric” (languageofbirds.eu, 2022). This was easy to manage when participants chose a language that was understood by others, especially by experts, i.e., French, Spanish or English which are global languages with a very large number of native speakers globally. It was also easy to manage when the emphasis of the activity was not in the meaning of the speech, but in the body expression or the control of the voice. In those cases, listening to Wolof, Persian or Romanian was a pleasant for the audience. The real challenge comes

when working on texts where it is important to understand not only the general meaning but also other characteristics of the words and sentences, such as register, the use of idioms, specialised vocabulary etc. In this case, an expert’s poor or non-existent command of certain languages limited the possibility to work on texts in such languages, although this was the choice of the participants. Despite the encouragement of experts to use the mother tongue of trainees, some preferred not to do so for reasons that will be explored in the following chapter.

6. Participants’ New Skills and Other Achievements

Through interviews, discussion groups and participant observations, we discovered how involvement in the project has profoundly influenced participants. Additionally, we explored the transformative effects of dance, theatre and radio-based teaching on participants' lives, reflecting a broader influence that goes beyond immediate artistic contexts. We have identified and emphasized particular soft skills and other key achievements that hold significant relevance concerning the project's characteristics and impact. These include body, voice and acting skills, creativity enrichment, improvement of language skills, greater self-confidence, a broader networking map and greater awareness of cultural diversity. The table below explores these in more detail.

Skills and other key achievements	Details
Body skills	Body awareness, scenic presence and non-verbal communication.
Voice skills	Projection of the voice without hurting the vocal cords, improvement of pronunciation and diction, learning the importance of volume, rhythm and tone.
Acting skills	Character’s embodiment, the capacity to empathise with and transmit a character’s emotions to an audience, reacting on stage in an authentic way.

Creativity	Train the mind to create new ideas, listen to other people's ideas and learn how to build a story collaboratively, learn how to create a play from scratch.
Self-confidence	Enhanced self-confidence, sense of control over one's own life, positive attitude about oneself and better understanding of one's own strengths and weaknesses.
Language Skills	Improvement in both passive and active skills in other languages (bridge languages); discovering the existence of different heritage languages, learning to distinguish between them, learning some new vocabulary; participating in translation efforts to facilitate peer's understanding and intervention in meetings, LTTAs and presentation, appreciating the aesthetic possibilities of one's mother tongue and of other languages.
Networking	Contacts with professional (artists, researchers and managers) and non-professional artists, both in their country of residence and in other countries. The chance to keep in touch, to collaborate in common projects, to help each other according to each one's field of expertise, to design common projects, either artistic or other.
Coping with Cultural Diversity	Awareness of cultural diversity and its implications, understanding of and empathy with different cultures and/or the peers' different cultural characteristics and attitudes; interaction with culturally and linguistically diverse groups, ability and habit to engage with peers who speak different languages and explore different cultures (within local groups, international groups and even beyond). Awareness of possible cultural issues and the acquisition of constructive attitudes and strategies to cope with them.

Table 1: Soft skills and other achievements potentially accomplished by participants.

The project *La Langue des Oiseaux* has undeniably had a significant impact on participants and the analysis of interviews and participant observations reflect a real transformation in them.

Through dance, theatre and radio local and international workshops, participants have developed new skills which they are able to apply in other contexts, including private life and work. By the end of the project, participants have been able to explore different modes of communication and methodologies, such as body language, monologues, dialogues, interviews and podcasts, with some trainees willing to develop one or more of these skills.

Firstly, they learned how to use their body on stage, i.e., how to adapt their body to the character they are interpreting. For example, participants they were asked to observe a particular bird and transform it into a theatrical character and to express emotions and thoughts using body language. Some even claim to have gained greater stage presence as they feel more comfortable on stage and know how to move around it, all the while being aware of their position with respect to their partner and the audience. In this way, they have gained more body awareness not only on stage, but also in their daily life with most feeling more connected to their body and paying more attention to the way they walk, sit and stand. Participants have also learned how to interpret the body language of others through several exercises where they were asked to interpret their partner's body language and to react appropriately.

Secondly, participants have learned to use their voice in order to be heard and understood by the audience without hurting their vocal cords. Some claim to have learned to use clear pronunciation both in their mother tongue and in other languages. Furthermore, they experimented with varying volume levels, rhythm and tone. They learned how changing such variables can affect that they are trying to say, either in stage or in real life.

In terms of acting techniques, it is easier for some to enter into the psychology of a character and to perform on stage in a fictional context. Some felt as though they had improved their ability to feel and appreciate the feelings of a character, as well as to communicate this to an audience.

Finally, most participants consider themselves to be more creative after being trained to generate new ideas and to be part of a creative collaborative process where such ideas have to be considered to produce a play. Many have shown a desire to continue their development of this skill outside the project. They have not only learned skills related to theatre but have also received training in radio podcasts where participants learned how to conduct interview and became familiar with the process of planning and producing a radio program.

These new skills have been a big factor in improvement of the self-confidence and self-esteem of the project's participants, with one saying, 'I feel more present in the country I live in'. Indeed,

being on stage may have instilled in them a heightened awareness of their presence in life. Having regular contact with a teacher and colleagues trained them to be prepared when dealing with a range of contexts in their daily lives. The word 'trust' was used by some participants when describing one of the main skills they have acquired, not only trust in themselves but also on others. Theatre requires this bidirectional trust and is vital in so many other aspects of life. For some, the experience was a reminder that they are capable of achieving anything that they set their mind to.

Throughout the project, participants improved their language skills and improved their ability to adapt and communicate effectively, even across language barriers. All claim to have improved their passive and active skills in English, the main bridge language that was used in the project's activities, usually alongside one or two more languages. Some participants have found the courage to start speaking English during activities and by the end most of them no longer needed simple messages to be translated from English. However, this improvement has been overestimated by experts and managers with a higher level of English, and sometimes translation was skipped without ensuring that all participants had fully understood.

Trainees have become more familiar also with the other bridge languages of the project, i.e., French, Italian and Spanish, but there is no clear proof of an improvement in their skills in these languages. This is the case for some experts who have been able to recover language skills that were acquired many years previously and began to speak in basic French and Spanish.

The languages of the project's participants were introduced and used only in relation to the project's bridge languages, i.e., English, French and Spanish (including variants spoken by African and Latin American participants). The use and visibility of other languages was asymmetric and during the workshops trainees were encouraged to say things in their heritage language(s) or in the language they felt more comfortable using. This meant languages such as Arabic, Pidgin English, Romanian and Wolof were used throughout the project. However, the expressive and aesthetic potential of these languages were not fully appreciated, and the final artistic products include only a few words in just some of these languages.

There is no doubt that participants were able to engage with languages of which they had no previous knowledge throughout the project. They have learned both to distinguish between them and some basic vocabulary in these languages.

Beyond improving knowledge of specific languages, many trainees also learned or improved their translation skills. Translation has been essential during all activities and participants have

progressively been encouraged to take an active role in it. During local workshops, experts had to occasionally rely on the translation of participants to communicate with migrants who did not speak the official language of the host country. During international workshops, translations were usually entrusted to experts and managers, but after the first year of the project, some multilingual trainees were invited to act as translators. This kind of participation produced two effects. On the one hand, the centre of attention moved from the experts to the trainees, and the latter have felt a bigger involvement and responsibility in the project's development. On the other hand, some have been rather dissatisfied with the 'quality' of these translations and volunteers have received unpleasant comments regarding their pronunciation. This has made trainees less willing, especially when taking into account the fact that translations from experts and managers were often not as complete or as precise as they could have been.

The last achievement related to language which could potentially be enhanced in the BIRD project is the ability to appreciate the aesthetic possibilities of one's own language and of others and little time has been devoted to this. Contact with different languages and practicing translation of texts from a writer's Language to their own and vice versa has caused some participants to reflect on the aesthetics of different languages. For example, how expressive a word or impressive a sound is in a particular language, as well as how this influences their choice of language in order to exploit that language's strength or musicality when saying certain sentences.

In terms of networking, we observed that several artistic connections were established between experts and participants. In fact, networking within this artistic community not only fosters creative partnerships but also opens doors to opportunities, contributing significantly to personal growth. Thanks to the BIRD project, participants have met expert artists and managers living in their country of residence and overseas and keep in touch with many of them. In some cases, they have begun fairly formal collaborations outside the scope of this project, working on artistic projects and creating podcasts to promote economic activities. Furthermore, some expert artists and managers from different organizations have started considering other projects, such as a continuation of *La Langue des Oiseaux*, or something completely different.

During the project, participants also improved their understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as different experiences and perspectives on migration. In workshops, trainees were in regular contact with different cultures and languages and faced up to challenges related to cultural diversity. For example, several exercises entailed working in pairs and it was observed that some people could work with peers of different genders, whilst others preferred to only work with people of their own gender. This may be an individual preference, of course, but it is often

determined by cultural or religious beliefs and customs. Something similar was observed with regard to physical contact, where some participants were open to touching and being touched by others whilst others were less so, considering such contact to be too intimate and something that should be reserved for their partner or family members. When such issues were encountered during activities, various solutions were adopted in order to respect everybody's views. The experience also highlighted that it is important not to generalise, as this and the resulting stereotypes can lead to misguided expectations and even prejudices. The clearest example came from a stay in Senegal, when some experts and participants asked if it would be possible to do a certain type of activity that required physical contact where local participants, most of them Muslim, were taking part in the workshops. This led to a debate, with one side arguing for cultural traits to be respected, which implied avoiding such exercises with Muslim trainees, or at least asking them beforehand if they are comfortable with them. The other side took it for granted that when people decide to join a theatre course, they are up for doing unusual things that may be stray outside of cultural constraints, this being a pre-condition of producing theatre. It turned out to be a futile debate as the Senegalese trainees had no problem whatsoever in approaching and touching others, regardless of their gender, culture or age. What is important, however, is that participants have learned that people from different places and cultures *may* see the same thing in different ways, and that this must be taken into account when interacting with others both in and outside of theatre settings. It also shows that people of different origins and cultures can easily share similar values and attitudes, hence individual divergence may count much more than cultural dissimilarities.

Generally speaking, through shared stories and activities, a sense of connection was established, fostering mutual support and developing a humanitarian perspective. The interviewees are proof of the ability of theatre to promote solidarity and camaraderie, transcending both individualism and cultural differences.

6.1 Migrants' opportunities for artistic development

Overall, the interviewee's testimonies point to the holistic impact of theatre on their lives. This shows the broader influence of the performing arts beyond an immediate performance context and in developing personal growth. However, from a sociological perspective, this experience should also contribute positively to the art field, as the project provides an opportunity to see migration from a new perspective, thereby enriching theatre itself.

Nevertheless, it is vital to tie artistic careers to real-world, practical job prospects. Menger suggests that artistic careers involve uncertainty and attractiveness but require risk management

(Menger, 2003). To manage risks, artists often have multiple jobs, reflecting the competitive dynamics of the arts market. The challenging circumstances of this instability for artists, especially actors, are amplified for migrants with limited social and economic capital, particularly newcomers struggling with language barriers. Menger goes on to state that a high percentage of those in the artistic professions have second jobs, prompts us to consider whether migrant workers have the time and necessary cultural and economic capital to pursue art as their primary career (Menger, idem.).

As for the ability of participants to become professional artists, some experts from the BIRD project suggest the chances are minimal unless a change is made to the overall context, taking into consideration factors such as age and economic situation. According to other experts, some ambassadors have the potential to pursue a professional career in theatre, but problems arise due to the challenges within the theatrical landscape itself.

Through interviews and debates with ambassadors and experts, it becomes apparent that there is uncertainty surrounding the financial sustainability of the group once this project concludes. These difficulties also depend on the national and local political context and discourse, public policies, and the subsidies each group manages to secure. In addition to financial instability, there are several factors that make migrants' lives more precarious, especially in countries governed by the extreme right as in the case of Italy. These include the restrictive immigration policies currently being adopted in several European countries and a political discourse that describes migrants, including those from the Global South, as a problem and even a danger for the country. Additionally, the significant cuts in policies related to the art field further jeopardize the possibility for these kinds of groups to find resources. These challenges underscore the pressing need for innovative solutions and support mechanisms to ensure the continued vibrancy and resilience of artistic endeavours in the face of such adversities. Interviews with ambassadors indicate that they don't see a genuine prospect of art being their main job but are strongly motivated to maintain artistic pursuits as a hobby. This inclination towards theatre or art in general as a hobby is not just a choice, but a structural social condition significantly impacting their artistic development.

On the other hand, some experts point out that the primary goal of the project is transferring skills to aid integration into societies, rather than nurturing potential future artists. To that end, an expert expressed scepticism about placing too much importance on the artistic outcome, as it is ultimately part of a process within a project that has broader goals for the Integration of migrant communities. This scepticism certainly raises a complex and controversial point related to the diverse perspectives of trainees and experts. On the one hand, there is the potential risk of adopting a paternalistic attitude that limits art to a function that is not directly artistic (such as the integration

of migrant participants), that uses art solely for therapeutic reasons rather than focusing on the potential opportunities in the artist world itself. On the other hand, encouraging baseless hopes among aspiring artists by pushing them into a precarious professional field like the arts can be dangerous. Expecting moves by such individuals towards professionalisation, not something desired by many participants, could be considered as rather excessive.

There is a need for nuanced reflection and consideration concerning the different expectations and aspirations within the project, especially regarding two main issues. The first is elitism in art, which refers to the structural difficulties encountered by migrants, and most locals, including the economic risks of working in the art world, potentially leading to an unstable economic situation for those who follow this path. The cultural barriers that racialized people often encounter in being accepted and recognized within the local artistic community must also be considered as part of this first point. The second issue concerns the presence of a subversive fringe within art that challenges its elitist and essentialist structures. Despite starting from a rather marginalized position, migrant artists could go on to develop their own space for expression and representation that can challenge or change the rules of the elitist European art scene.

To conclude, participants in the *La langue des oiseaux* project have been confronted with both obstacles and opportunities. The project has had a profound and positive impact on participants' lives, contributing to their personal growth and has offered the chance to redefine migration within a theatrical context. Migration is not only the theme of a great many literary and theatrical works, but with the entry of individuals from the migrant community into the artistic field it is becoming possible to change the way theatre is done, redefining the cultural boundaries of a universal genre. Nevertheless, there are challenges when it comes to viable job opportunities within the field, especially for migrants with limited resources and who face language barriers. Interviews reveal that many see little chance to make art their main job but are motivated to pursue it as a hobby.

The analysis encourages reflection on elitism in art, the economic and cultural barriers faced by migrants, and highlights a subversive fringe within art that challenges these established structures. In this sense, this project sheds light on how the migrant community can contribute fresh ideas and new artistic forms to the European art scene, even those who are very marginalised. This aspect will be discussed in the next section, analysing not only the artistic product but also the creative process.

7. Creating a Multilingual Theatrical Text and Performance

This section examines the creative process that resulted in the production of the play *Mille e Uno, Tausend und Eine, Thousand and One*, as well as the play itself and the performance. It will begin with a description of the creative process and results, with a separate analysis of each.

After a module consisting of workshops in physical and verbal training, groups of experts and beginners worked together on theatrical proxemics and creative writing, initially in local workshops and then during international activities. During the second module, participants were trained on how to carry themselves onstage, how to express themselves with their body and voice within a physical space and how to improvise and act simultaneously. The final module focused on playwriting, with the aim of creating a performance that would encompass the trainees' learning during the whole project.

During these workshops, participants were asked to tell stories about their lives in their home countries, their migratory journey and their experience in the host country. This was a chance to sharing perspectives, show emotions and reveal desires, with experts recording these contributions.

Through in-person and online meetings, playwrights leading this part of the project compared their observations and decided to develop the play using the metaphor of birds. A metaphor which easily evokes migration and diversity, but also coexistence and mutual understanding. The possible idea of birds understanding each other though 'speaking different languages', also helped to inspire the project's name *La Langue des Oiseaux*. Trainees then had to find a bird they identified with, get information about its characteristics, movements and voice, find some specific gestures which could allow a human to represent it, and learn how to perform like it. These birds would be the protagonists of the play.

The play was to be performed in different countries and by different people (by trainees of the local groups and by ambassadors) and had to be replicable according to one of the requirements of the Erasmus+ project. Therefore, the playwrights devised a flexible formula. The play would be composed of different scenes in a modular format, with each scene having a fixed basic structure from which characters would develop their performance. After a while observing each other with certain mistrust, one of them approaches the other and they start communicating until they find an idea in common and leave the stage together. In this way, any 'bird' or couple of 'birds' can come and play, each with their own story, character, attitudes and hopes. Scenes can be removed, changed or added, according to the needs and choices of each director and group of actors.

Once this structure was agreed, each playwright wrote a proposal for their local trainees, based on content that emerged from the workshops, i.e., participants' experiences, perspectives, emotions and dreams. The proposal was submitted first to the trainees, who discussed how to adapt it to their own feelings and interpret their characters, as well as deciding which language they would use in their performance. It was suggested that players use different languages, and to do so they had to translate the text from Italian, German or English (the two original languages in which the text was written and the one which was translated by experts) to their mother tongues or a language of their choice. As a result, some scenes are spoken in one Language, that the two actors have in common, and some are bilingual. This bilingualism is carried out in different ways, either each actor speaks a different language, and they understand (or pretend to understand) each other, or there is a language switch from the participants' language of origin to the host country's official language and vice versa. This format confronted both trainees and experts with multiple challenges, as will be explained in the final section of this chapter.

After our description of the objectives and dynamics of the learning, teaching and training activities which led to the production of the final play, we will now focus on the empirical analysis of the creative process and the main artistic results of the BIRD project. The first part of the analysis will be an examination of the play, both text and performance, and how it relates to the audience. Then we will explore the creative process and the associated workshops, explaining how the play evolved. Finally, we will carry out a socio-linguistic analysis, thereby dissecting the nuances embedded within the play.

7.1 Mille e Uno, Tausend und Eine, Thousand and One: The Play

This section explores how artistic creations thought-up and performed by actors with migrant backgrounds and different cultures and languages can create imaginary ethical encounters, alongside other marginalised and invisible participants, leading to potential social and political transformations. These productions aim to make the experiences of marginalised individuals more visible and foster empathy and a sense of perspective from a more cosmopolitan viewpoint. By presenting alternative images of 'others' and challenging established national stereotypes and exclusionary definitions of citizenship, these productions contribute to a more interconnected and inclusive world. In this way, a specific function of art has been observed, i.e., the transcendent of dominant narratives concerning migrants. This notion aligns with Thomas Nail's concept of 'the migrant image'. According to Nail, these images are often marginalised under the state's image rather than that of the individual. The perspective of the state or a geographical area tends to overshadow individual stories, personal narratives, and biographical poetics, erasing the individual's story from the map.

The artistic depiction of various birds in the play *Mille e Uno, Tausend und Eine, Thousand and One*, symbolises diverse migration experiences and offers a captivating portrayal of human migration, with each bird pair serving as an allegory for different migration stories and perspectives. This can be observed in the scene of the parrot and the stork. When they meet, they observe each other for a while, then the stork tries to approach the parrot but the latter resists, maintains a distance and displays a certain level of mistrust. However, a conversation takes place where both tell their story of a quiet life abruptly turned upside down by violent events. In this dialogue, the stork's story, expressed in Italian, vividly paints the harsh realities faced by those displaced from their homes due to conflict or instability. Phrases such as '*ho visto muri altissimi e filo spinato*' ('I saw very high walls and barbed wire') and '*ho sentito sirene spaventose e visto i bambini coprirsi la faccia con maschere antigas*' ('I heard frightening sirens and saw children covering their faces with gas masks') evoke the imagery of war-torn or dangerous landscapes that force people to flee their homes. This passage encapsulates the trauma, fear, and disorientation experienced by individuals compelled to leave their native lands. The stork's observations encompass the psychological impact of conflict and upheaval on people's lives, encapsulating the essence of displacement and the subsequent struggle to adapt. The parrot's apprehension and wariness toward the stork, despite the latter's attempts at reassurance, represent the deeply ingrained fear and mistrust that people might harbour towards unknown cultures or individuals. This resistance towards trust and acceptance is reflective of the challenges faced by migrants in integrating into new societies, especially after a trauma related to violent experiences which have caused insecurity and fear.

Another issue addressed in the play is that of cultural stereotypes. There is a scene where an Andean condor and a swallow, after the initial distrust where they emphasise the differences between them and enter into competition, seem to find a common position in which they contrast themselves, as migrants, with 'European birds'. The focus thereby moves from the differences between the two birds to those between them and the 'strange' natives, who 'do not speak while having dinner' or 'need to set up an appointment long in advance to meet friends'. The two birds generalise some customs and refer to them as 'European', ignoring this continent's cultural diversity while at the same time denouncing European racism against them. The scene shows how cultural gaps are not fixed but relative, they are perceived in different ways according to the situation and perspective of individuals or groups. The tendency to create and use dangerous stereotypes is connected to the lack of dialogue and mutual knowledge between different cultural groups. It is for this reason that derived stereotypes and prejudices are not just a feature of European racism, but often exist within migrant communities and are a major obstacle to intercultural dialogue and the formation of a pluralistic society.

Through these and other scenes, the play not only presents a symbolic exchange between birds but also mirrors the complexities, fears, and struggles of migrants as they navigate the unfamiliar territories of integration. This artistic depiction aligns with the theoretical understanding of superdiversity, as introduced by Vertovec (Vertovec: 2007). The play's symbolic representation of diverse migration experiences through avian allegories effectively captures the multifaceted nature of migration, mirroring Vertovec's concept of migrants having multiple identities and diverse migration trajectories (idem: 2007). This emphasizes the importance of empathy, patience, and understanding in fostering inclusivity and harmony among diverse migrant communities.

7.2 The Impact on The Audience

The play *Mille e Uno, Tausend und Eine, Thousand and One* is capable of opening a number of issues and leading to reflection and discussion. When it was performed in Lyon by the project's ambassadors during the *Sens Interdits* festival, we had the opportunity to conduct a debate with the audience straight after the performance.

During this discussion we explored the impact of the use of birds as a metaphor within the context of sensitive themes such as diaspora, migration, climate change and conflicts. The audience engaged in a debate about the efficacy of metaphors in discussing traumatic events and conflicts and they emphasised that metaphors allow for a deeper exploration of personal projections and perceptions. Such an exploration helps to challenge preconceived notions and invites critical reflection on how people conceptualise realities they might not directly experience. One audience member expressed strong support for the use of animal and human metaphors, because animals (especially birds) exemplify migration as a natural phenomenon. They drew parallels between human migration and the migratory behaviour of birds, noting that movement is inherent to life and society. Another participant was more cautious, suggesting that while metaphors can bring difficult issues to the forefront without immediately offending people, they might not necessarily lead to problems resolution. This remark opens an interesting discussion on the social function of art, i.e., can it be used to solve problems or to help us to reflect on them? But these discussions are beyond the scope of this paper.

Another audience member pointed out that the bird characters in the play symbolise cultural and linguistic diversity, prompting a discussion about the representation of diversity through birds speaking different languages yet understanding each other. This resonated as a metaphor for both Europe and the world, showing the need for understanding and communication despite linguistic differences. It also illustrates that linguistic diversity is not an obstacle to mutual understanding, and that multilingualism is a valid and desirable alternative to the imposition of 'global' languages.

In summary, the debate revolved around the effectiveness of metaphors in addressing complex issues, exploring perceptions, understanding diverse experiences and symbolising cultural and linguistic diversity. This was all with the goal of highlighting the importance of communication and comprehension across differences.

7.3 The Creative Process: Achievements and Limits

According to Becker's theory, artists collaborate to create their artworks, considering that art is a collective action. However, in a post-colonial context, there is a significant question about the role of migrant participants. Inequalities in participation revolve around two main issues, i.e., artistic hierarchies and cultural differences. Artistic hierarchies often create disparities in leadership and responsibilities between beginners and established experts, impacting collaboration networks and the Exchange of knowledge. In projects like *La Langue des Oiseaux*, where more experts are European while all trainees are migrants from the Global South or disadvantaged European countries, artistic hierarchies combine with cultural, linguistic and racial inequalities. Lucía Salgado and Liam Patuzzi (2022) highlight significant challenges faced by migrant and minority communities in Europe's art and cultural landscape, resulting in participation disparities (Salgado & Patuzzi, 2022). These hurdles include low participation rates, scarce representation in cultural institutions, the confinement of migrant art, language barriers, financial constraints, lack of cultural relevance, geographical disparities, and funding accessibility issues for migrant artists.

During theatre workshops during the project *La Langue des Oiseaux*, participants shared migration experiences, transforming them into bird-related metaphors, but despite this powerful process of participation and inclusion of personal narratives, structural participatory inequalities were nevertheless observed. Interviews with ambassadors and experts as well as participant observations revealed diverse backgrounds and expertise among those involved, leading to structural hierarchies within the group. This hierarchy, based on accepted cultural capital in European countries, affects both participation and decision-making, while local experts and professionals tended to assume dominant roles, hindering collaboration and inclusivity. It is well known that the director of a theatrical production makes decisions but in this kind of project, where democracy and inclusion are at the core of all activities rather than the professionalism of the results, things were able to take a different course. The lack of balance between authors, directors (especially local experts) and non-professional actors was at the root of this initial point of structural inequality and was not resolved during the creation process. In the participants' view, the division between trainees and experts limited contributions and skill-sharing. This structure,

maintained in order to streamline tasks, ended up frustrating participants' desire for broader artistic involvement, as many of them felt that their roles did not encompass the right to participate in decision-making processes.

The host society tends to recognize and value only specific institutionalised forms of cultural and artistic capital, potentially limiting the acknowledgment of the many talents and experiences brought by migrants. Reverting structural dynamics to foster inclusivity could enhance the success of this kind of project and this inclusivity challenges art's hegemonic hierarchies and aims to overcome the potential hierarchies between local experts and migrant beginners. It is crucial to balance success in artistic creation, ensuring the inclusion and empowerment of migrant participants who are structurally marginalized within European society, despite their amateur theatre background.

During the project, participants expressed a desire for increased engagement in artistic pursuits beyond the structure and bureaucracy of the project. Though it is clear that they have achieved valuable skills and experiences, they do express a sense of detachment in artistic and management decisions. It is crucial to address these sentiments to improve their overall experience and empower them within the creative and management process. The project allowed migrant participants to share their stories, emotions, and memories, thus challenging the dominant narrative that historically speaks about them rather than listening to their own voices, aligning with the subaltern struggle described by Spivak (1990). However, despite this authentic representation, there has been a lack of promotion for genuine artistic and aesthetic hybridisation. Stuart Hall (1996) emphasises how hybridity transcends specific historical contexts, offering a broader application, particularly within diasporic communities, challenging the idea of cultural purity or essentialism and stressing the dynamic and transformative nature of cultures (Hall: 1996). Hybridity as a creative opportunity fits well with this project and its creative process, with artists blending their original artistic culture with the art scene of the host society. However, Gayatri Spivak criticises this, pointing out how the focus on hybridity often disregards the struggles and exploitation faced by marginalised communities, thereby highlighting the potential limitations of the hybridity discourse (idem: 1996). The project, and particularly the creative process of the production, has shown that, in order to establish an ideal environment for the blending of different cultural elements as a creative process, an inclusive environment is needed as well as the implementation of strategies to identify and address the inequalities among the members of a group. The amateur status of migrant actors could be balanced with training that enhances their knowledge and artistic proposals from their countries and cultures, guiding them towards a path not only to decide what to narrate (their migration story) but also how to do it and with what aesthetic. It is therefore necessary to differentiate between

identifying with the stories they tell in different scenes and identifying with the artistic and aesthetic proposal.

All ambassadors agree that they feel represented in the stories narrated using the metaphor of birds, but none show the same conviction regarding their involvement in the technical/artistic decisions and the management of the creation process. These issues are Connected to two different goals. One is producing art that tells a counter-narrative about contemporary migration, offering an artistic language to narrate migrant biographies in a safe context without evoking traumas. This was one of the project's main objectives and we can conclude that it has been successfully accomplished. The other goal is about exploring diverse artistic styles and theatrical expressions that migrant artists can introduce to the local art scene through their diverse experiences and backgrounds. This should enhance the understanding of theatrical forms and styles, while exploring how migrants can contribute to its evolution towards new directions. This mutual exchange between the host and the guest could balance and enhance our vision of hospitality within the context of the arts (Papastergiadis, 2007). However, the project *La Langue des Oiseaux* did not clearly pursue this second goal, which may have been too ambitious for such a short and limited exercise. It would be possible to work on it in a follow-up project, but that falls outside of the scope of this study.

In conclusion, the BIRD project showed good potential in terms of influencing the art scene of a host country by offering a counter-narrative about contemporary migration and cultural and linguistic diversity in a safe space for migrants. However, structural hierarchies and limited involvement among migrant participants highlight the need for a more inclusive environment. Balancing artistic success and fostering mutual exchange between local experts and migrants could enhance the project's impact on the art scene of a host country, promoting a broader vision of hospitality within the arts.

7. 4 Managing Language Diversity in an Artistic Project

Language diversity has been a big challenge for participants during the project. Beyond the issues related to translation described above, other factors have also been at play.

Firstly, with regards to the global hierarchy of languages, people do not feel the same speaking English or French rather than, say, Susu or Romanian in front of a European audience. This is especially the case when there is no previous reflection and discussion on the equality of all

languages as a guiding principle of the project. In such conditions, speakers of minoritized languages rarely used them during activities, saying only a few words during workshops and performances presented in Europe, and usually only when they were explicitly asked to do so. However, a noteworthy finding is that in fact participants used their mother tongue during activities and performances in Senegal. The multilingual context of Senegal may have made participants more comfortable speaking their Language and showing, or not hiding, their origins. The fact that people speak Wolof, Serer and other languages fluently and the absence of a European audience with prejudices surrounding languages and nationalities may also have played a role in this regard.

Secondly, in local workshops and performances, some trainees preferred to work in the host country's official language in order to improve their level and then proudly show to their peers and the audience how proficient and fluent they are in that language. This was considered by experts as a positive sign of integration, or desire to integrate, on the part of the migrant participants in the host society. In fact, improving language skills was one of the reasons in and of itself that encouraged participants to join the project, but despite this topic emerging several times, there was no development of the debate.

Another factor is the translation of a fragment of a theatrical text from a foreign language to one's own language or another language with which they were entrusted. Given the different and sometimes limited proficiency of participants in source languages, the endeavour could be very difficult, and the quality of results was not guaranteed. Experts who did not speak a certain target language could not help much and there was no way, for instance, to help trainees choose a word or expression rather than another to maintain the meaning of the original text while respecting or even enhancing their language's expressive potential. This could have influenced the choice of some participants to play in the original language of the text rather than another in which they are more fluent, like their mother tongue.

Finally, some amateur actors chose to perform in the official language of the country in which they live because it was the original language in which the theatrical text was written by the expert. They appreciated the style and the sound of the original version more than that of the translation in their native language. We cannot know whether, when faced with a professional translation of the text or after specific accompaniment in translation, the choice would have been the same. We therefore assert that in this project the aesthetic potential of all participants' languages was not explored and analysed. As we can see, the management of linguistic diversity in an artistic project presents several challenges, and even if all the European artistic organisations taking part in the *La Langue des Oiseaux* project had previous experiences in working with multilingual groups, some

important issues were not resolved. This was often due to other issues that concerned experts and managers and the time limits which forced them to establish priorities, including priorities that were of a strictly artistic nature.

7.5 After the Play, What Next?

Another issue that arose but was not analysed due to time and resource constraints was exploring how the artistic involvement might benefit migrant artists in acquiring symbolic recognition. According to Bourdieu, Symbolic Capital is a kind of social ‘credit’ gained from being recognised for certain cultural things, impacting how much influence and recognition someone has in society (Bourdieu, 1993). For a newcomer in the art world, the first step is to be recognised as a professional. During the BIRD project, while we could observe its immediate impact on migrant participants' lives and integration, the fact that this research work ends shortly after the creation and production of *Mille e Uno, Tausend und Eine, Thousand and One*, does not allow us to observe to what extent symbolic capital is acquired by participants upon the project’s completion. Understanding the potential of this artistic participation as a means to leverage recognition and validation within the artistic sphere remains a significant aspect yet to be explored. This project and the production of *Mille e Uno, Tausend und Eine, Thousand and One* has become a potential avenue for immigrant artists to acquire symbolic capital through their involvement. This participation could serve as a valuable asset for dissemination within their professional networks, helping to fortify their artistic portfolios. However, it is pivotal to acknowledge that, despite their participation, immigrant artists might still face challenges in garnering the recognition they deserve due to systemic barriers prevalent within the art world. Using a Bourdieusian approach, art is not just a competitive space against a political backdrop but also an internal struggle. Even among ‘migrant’ artists in Europe, there is fierce competition to find a place within the art world's elitist structures. Artists with migrant backgrounds, even if born in Europe, are labelled as ‘migrants’ and have to wrestle with this classification. For example, Pultz Moslund discusses how artists initially labelled as migrant in literature, theatre or cinema have defied this by introducing the term 'postmigrant,' coined by German director Langhoff (2019). This term holds significance for second and third generations of migrants. According to Moslund, 'post' doesn't mean the end of migration but a point where migration merges with intellectual evolution. Artists from the ‘second and third generations’ have led this evolution to heterogeneity, going beyond the mono-dimensionality of migration and its connection to art.

During the project, first generation migrant artists may not only face challenges from locals but also from later generations of migrants and they have to struggle to enter a field that's tough for foreign artists. They must also compete for a space in this field with second and third generation migrant artists. Second-generation artists, especially in France and Germany, bring both commercial appeal for the European market and make a contribution, showcasing a new linguistic and cultural diversity. They have the advantage of being educated in Europe while possessing a rich cultural background from origin countries to perform and present on the European stage. This provoked the question, how can newly arrived migrants with artistic aspirations but limited economic and social capital compete with local artists or second/third generation? This project has demonstrated that first generation migrants have knowledge about one of the most significant issues of our time, as described by Salman Rushdie (1996): migration as a personal and collective experience. Thus, the diaspora and displacement experience are not only traumas but knowledge that can be transformed into something artistic. However, the absence of local connections and artistic education in Europe creates hurdles for independent artistic growth. All these reflections, though they cannot be translated into analysis due to a lack of data, prompt us to ponder the significance of what follows, and we have titled the session "After the Play, What Next?" precisely to emphasize the need for some form of post-project follow-up. We consider this next step necessary to understand, from a sociological perspective, the obstacles and opportunities participants face in their journey towards becoming artists.

Conclusion

During this research process, we have identified various needs and objectives that have characterised the project. The scientific analysis was the responsibility of us, the researchers, while the artistic output was the realm of the artists and participants.

One positive aspect of our collaboration is mutual learning. As researchers, we have gained insights from the training activities and the creative process, understanding the complexity that does not always align with scientific thinking. At the same time, we have successfully conveyed to the artists that art is a social phenomenon intertwined with power dynamics.

An area for improvement or consideration is understanding the needs of different disciplinary fields. For instance, there should be greater awareness of researchers' requirements when trying to obtain data for analysis during artistic workshops or the creative process, especially the need of constant communication on what is going on, how and why? On the other hand, researchers should

not interfere with artistic methods or limit the creative process, such as using research methods that may compromise artistic vision. Given these considerations, we can proceed to the conclusion of this work.

In general, the *La Langue des Oiseaux* project has positively impacted participants, fostering personal and social growth and showing the possibility of reshaping perceptions of migration within theatrical contexts. However, challenges persist in providing real opportunities for artistic development for migrants. While the project cannot entirely solve these structural issues, it can draw attention to the need for migrants to have access to professional opportunities and to not be simply relegated to the status of amateurs.

Moreover, collaboration between local and migrant trainees and expert artists has proven to be mutually beneficial and capable of creating a more inclusive environment. Future projects can enhance this aspect by increasing migrant participation in both creative and managerial processes, redefining recognition and expertise.

Language and cultural diversity have been managed in a respectful way, even if there has been a tendency to perpetuate power relations between languages and cultures, due more to time and resource limitations rather than as a result of intent by managers and experts. In this sense, projects of this type could be improved by devoting special sessions to handle cultural and linguistic issues, how to ensure a good translation, how to recognise and enhance *all* languages while giving special attention to those which are not dominant. Other sessions could be developed on how to combine different aesthetics of various languages and cultures during the creative process and performances.

Finally, we have identified several limitations which have created frustration among participants and experts. As previously mentioned, time has emerged as one of the most significant constraints on artistic creation and development, as identified in interviews with both experts and ambassadors. Time should be examined from a sociological perspective, viewed as a constraint stemming from the bureaucratic framework of the project. Time can be quantified within power relations, for example, the autonomous artist in the Bourdieusian sense creates art based on the necessary time demanded by the art itself (Bourdieu, 1993). An independent artist follows their own rhythm, detached from external pressures, while an artist subject to external pressures adheres to market demands or political and institutional needs, such as bureaucratic requirements in the case of an Erasmus project. This implies that the structural limitations an Erasmus project may encounter, with its bureaucratic timelines, will inevitably have to adapt to the timelines of artistic creation or artistic learning and development.

In summary, the BIRD project highlights the potential of participatory theatre in reshaping migration narratives, but also underscores the need for greater inclusivity and balanced engagement among participants. While the holistic impact of theatre on individuals is evident, grounding artistic participation remains essential for sustainable