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Migration, Hospitality, Justice: Looking at Refugee Hosting Initiatives to Question the Migration / Hospitality Nexus

*Migration, hospitalité, justice : étude du lien entre migration et hospitalité à la
lumière des initiatives d'accueil de réfugiés*

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Migration, Hospitality, Justice: Looking at Refugee Hosting Initiatives to Question the Migration / Hospitality Nexus

Migration, hospitalité, justice : étude du lien entre migration et hospitalité à la lumière des initiatives d'accueil de réfugiés

Clément Luccioni

- 1 Hospitality is a broad notion, which at the same time refers to a very concrete domestic practice—a host opens his or her home to a guest—and is used as a political concept to envision the regulation of the openness of a community (Boudou, 2017). In the context of contemporary migrations towards Europe, the metaphor of hospitality¹ has often been used, either negatively (“we can’t welcome everybody”) or positively with the multiplication of public denunciations of “inhospitality” and calls for “more hospitality” from activists, politicians, artists and academics (Derrida, 2000). The popular slogan “Refugees Welcome” epitomises a symbolic validation of hospitality that has grown over the last decades. The metaphoric use of hospitality has had a long history but was largely renewed in France in the 1990s, especially through Derrida’s work, and has been questioned and developed again since 2015 (Agier, 2018; Bessone, 2015; Boudou, 2016; 2017; Stavo-Debaugé, 2018). A scientific debate has then emerged to discuss the political relevance of the concept of hospitality, in particular to question the articulation between hospitality and justice: does the metaphor of hospitality produce a harmful moralisation of the question of migration, and should it be abandoned in favour of an approach valuing justice (Bessone 2015)? Or is hospitality, rather, a useful political concept to point out injustices in the regulation of borders (Boudou, 2016; 2017)?
- 2 Interestingly, parallel to the recent re-emergence of the metaphor, the concrete practice of hospitality has developed as well. From 2015, as a reaction to the increasing number of refugees² ending up homeless or unable to leave collective accommodation

facilities, hosting practices have developed dramatically across Europe. Recent literature connecting hosting practices to migration regimes depicts private hospitality as a subversive action. Merikoski considers “hospitality towards asylum seekers as a political and contentious act” (2020: 1). Gunaratnam (2020: 14) states that “hosting is diversifying the public realm and the UK’s hostile environment, illuminating the diverse relationships to migrants and refugees that are possible”. However, she points out that for hosts, the practice of hospitality is ambivalent, complex and conditional, as “hosting brings home the extensive structural force and violence of borders” (2020: 14). In a similar way, Monforte, Maestri and d’Halluin (2021: 13) also stress the ambivalences of hospitality. On the one hand, they show that hosting is considered by hosts as a way “to oppose governments’ exclusionary border politics” and that narratives emphasizing family-like relations can “challenge negative representations of refugees”. On the other hand, those representations of hosting “produce new boundaries of inclusion and exclusion” through an “injunction to reciprocate” affection and love.

- 3 In France, refugee hosting took a particular importance and dimension, as the government decided in 2016 to support local initiatives by elaborating a national Citizen Accommodation programme (*hébergement citoyen*), implemented on the field by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Controlled by the state, this form of private hospitality has been open only to recognised refugees (excluding asylum seekers, illegalised refugees and holders of other types of residence permits). ROOM³, an NGO that had been operating a hosting programme in the Paris Region since 2015 and that inspired the “Hébergement Citoyen” (“citizen hosting”) programme, progressively developed a discourse stressing the positive social impact of hospitality but also the reduced costs for the state. It has gained a great visibility and received support not only from the national government but also from mainstream media and international companies, such as Airbnb and Facebook.
- 4 I aim to contribute to the current debate on the political dimension of refugee hosting by bringing a case that reveals a more submissive version of private hospitality. Considering migration laws and policies as “public hospitality”, Monforte, Maestri and d’Halluin (2021: 4) write that “there is a difference between how individuals and communities make sense of—and practise—hospitality, and how governments establish and implement its norms. In fact, although private and public hospitality are closely interrelated, they also respond critically to each other.” Drawing on an empirical study of ROOM within the “Hébergement Citoyen” programme, I want to show that the distinction between public and private hospitality is increasingly blurred. I argue that the existence of an increasingly large coalition supporting hosting arrangements for recognised refugees in France reveals that the public validation of hospitality has reached a further step. Not only is the nation commonly considered as a home, the openness of which must be regulated, but the best way to “integrate” foreigners would be to place them in local citizens’ homes.
- 5 This article aims to jointly explore the “metaphor” and a particular “practice” of hospitality, by crossing theoretical debates that concern the former and empirical analyses of the latter. I hypothesise that empirical considerations about refugee hosting initiatives may inform theoretical debates about the relevance of hospitality as a political concept to improve the treatment of migration in Europe. Following Boudou’s and Bessone’s proposals to analyse hospitality together with the notion of

justice, I will rely on Young's work (2011), which explores and criticises the classical approach of justice as a fair distribution of goods and resources (distributive justice) and theorises a new approach focusing on decision-making power and procedures (procedural justice). In the first section I will historicise the conceptual connection between hospitality and migration. Then, I will develop the example of the Citizen Accommodation programme—mostly based on my fieldwork within ROOM—and will show its ambivalent effects in terms of justice, between distribution of resources and production of domination. I will end with concluding connections between theory and practice, by arguing that in time of increasingly closed borders, hospitality may remain a useful concept and practice provided that it is combined with justice to have a radical political effect.

1. Field work and method

- 6 The article is based on field work carried out from September 2017 to February 2021, as part of a doctoral research project. The investigation mainly focused on the Paris-based NGO ROOM, explored through: participant observation (reception activities, information sessions, matching process, social events, etc.); interviews with fourteen volunteers and employees and two social workers of ROOM's partner CHANCE, fourteen hosts and eleven hosted refugees; analyses of internal databases; and the study of communication materials, activity and evaluation reports and press coverage. I completed the investigation in France with: a media review; an internet survey of hosting initiatives; the analysis of institutional publications; and interviews of nine representatives or employees of the French state and six staff members of five other NGOs. In addition, I contrasted the French case study with a one-year-long investigation in Germany, where I made an inventory of hosting initiatives, analysed the media coverage of the phenomenon, volunteered for a Berlin-based NGO and conducted interviews with five of its staff members. The analyses that I will develop here are mainly based on observations, interviews with the staff from ROOM and CHANCE, and with hosts and guests, as well as ROOM's databases.
- 7 Most of the staff members I interviewed were met through my volunteer work. Most of the interviewees worked at ROOM as trainees, paid volunteers ("service civique") or temporary employees; as much as possible, the interviews took place by the end or after their working period at ROOM. That gave them the liberty to develop a more reflexive and critical narrative. I questioned them about their personal and professional trajectories, their professional practice and their representations (of their work, the people they work with or for, especially refugees). In addition, I requested interviews with ROOM's co-founders and former employees and volunteers, to collect narratives about the origin and development of the NGO.
- 8 To have access to hosts and guests I used three different methods: purposive sampling based on my volunteer work; gatekeepers (ROOM's former employees); and snowballing. By the time of the interview five people were currently experiencing hospitality. The other twenty had completed their experience for weeks, months or years. I asked hosting households: to tell me about their family, their home and their motivations; to narrate the way they got involved in ROOM, met their guest and lived with them; and to reflect on their experience and the way they perceive hosting initiatives. Hosted refugees were questioned about; their residential trajectory in

France; their situation by the time they enrolled in ROOM; the way they joined the hosting programme, met their guests and lived with them; their situation and aspirations concerning education and employment. I did not question them about their past life and the reason of their migration in order to limit the level of intrusion of the exchange but most of them spontaneously told me about their past, especially to insist on the social downgrading they have experienced through migration.

- 9 Based on a large collection of anonymised data about ROOM's hosting activity on a national scale—given to me by the NGO as part of a formal agreement—I put together two databases focusing on the Paris Region. A first table contains standardized information about 400 hosted refugees (age, gender, citizenship, language skills, project, housing situation before and after the programme, etc.) and their stays with hosts (date, duration, hosts). A second table focuses on 404 hosting households by gathering answers to the online enrolment form (gender, age, family, occupation, home, motivations, etc.) and data about hosting (date, duration, guests) recorded by HOME.

2. Migration: a matter of hospitality?

Hospitality as a political concept to frame migrations: a brief genealogy and critical perspectives

- 10 Hospitality, in its first sense, refers to a practical and material situation: a person (or a group of people) offers shelter and food to another person (or another group of people), by sharing their home. In various societies and at different ages, hospitality has been conceptualised to combine domestic practices with larger religious, moral, (geo)political or economic implications, in the aim to regulate the level of openness/closure of a community (Boudou, 2017). However, this political conceptualisation of hospitality has greatly evolved over time. In previous historical contexts (ancient Rome, medieval Europe) hospitality referred to an actual domestic practice on which social order was based. A kind of hospitality practiced by the richest households in Europe progressively disappeared by the end of the Middle Ages and through the Modern Times (Heal, 1990). However, hospitality has remained an important concept across centuries to envision the regulation of transnational mobility, as in Immanuel Kant's philosophy (2006 [1795]). Hence, whereas the political reference to hospitality was at first literal, it progressively became metaphoric. The modern reference to hospitality is not based on an actual domestic practice but rather on a rhetorical analogy between home and a community, notably the nation (Bessone, 2015; Boudou, 2016): the national territory is thought of as a house, the borders as a doorstep, and foreigners as guests.
- 11 In France, two recent periods have been crucial for the political problematisation of hospitality. In the 1990s, political tensions rose, as right-wing governments passed increasingly restrictive regulations on migration. The conviction in 1996 of Jacqueline Deltombe, a woman who hosted an illegalised friend, and the occupation in 1997 of two Parisian churches by undocumented people ("sans-papiers") triggered oppositions to the idea of a "crime of solidarity" and defences of the principle of hospitality. In this context, Derrida gave a speech (1997a) that "inaugurated a semantics—of hospitality—that had hardly been used before for politicising similar situations" (Stavo-Debaugue,

2018). On the one hand, Derrida invited to perform civil disobedience by “helping our undocumented friends, in an individual, local and daily way, with all necessary support, be it material or symbolic, financial, judicial or legal”⁵. On the other hand, he underlined the necessary “fight to change the law one day”. He then produced a series of texts (see for example: Derrida, 1997b) that developed this duality of hospitality by describing what an individual ethics of hospitality and its political and legal translation could be, stressing the tensions between the ideal unconditionality of the former and the unavoidable conditionality of the latter. Beyond Derrida’s influential work, the particular political context of the 1990s regarding migration opened a series of scientific publications that valued hospitality by adopting a large and open understanding of the notion (Gotman, 1997, 2001; Montandon, 2004) or more precisely denounced the “inhospitality” of the French state (Fassin *et al.*, 1997) and defended hospitality (Schérer, 2005).

- 12 Since 2015, the political crisis resulting from increasing numbers of refugees arriving in Europe has inspired a new wave of academic works about hospitality (see for example: Agier, 2018; Blanc & Brugère, 2017; Carlier *et al.*, 2018). Among all those works, Bessone’s (2015) and Boudou’s (2016, 2017) reflections are particularly significant for their common (but contrasting) way to connect hospitality to justice, in order to criticise the political use of the notion of hospitality.
- 13 Bessone harshly criticises negative and positive uses of the metaphor of hospitality by politicians and academics. According to her, the popularity of the metaphor of hospitality reveals that migration is treated as an ethical issue when it should be a political one, and that citizenship is territory-based when it should be participation-based. The analogy between “home” and the national territory (the “naturalised form of the state”) translates and radicalises at the scale of an entire society the asymmetric host-guest relationship. It naturalises inequalities between natives, who automatically are citizens, governed by political principles of justice, and newcomers, who are given the inferior political status of foreigners, and are thus governed by ethical principles of hospitality. As a conclusion, Bessone invites to drop the metaphor of hospitality in order to de-ethicise migration and de-territorialise citizenship. She argues that this move is a necessity in order to reintroduce justice in the way we deal with migration.
- 14 Boudou focuses on the rhetorical “return of hospitality”, in academia (“theoretical return”) and in activism (“strategic return”) [2016: 35, 37] and proposes a critical view of this phenomenon, but in a much less radical way than Bessone does. He acknowledges that hospitality bears the promise of an unequal relationship, in which the foreigners are dominated: they are welcome only if they respect their obligations as guests. However, he argues that the reference to hospitality in public debates does not necessarily de-politicise the treatment of migration, as hospitality is used to point out injustices. The “rhetoric of hospitality” refers to ethics and moral virtues but only to criticise policies and laws. Consequently, hospitality is a paradoxical concept, that practically produces injustice but is used to symbolically call for more justice. Boudou defends hospitality, not as a practice or a set of moral principles, but as an efficient “critical rhetorical resource” (2016: 40) to “identify places and actions where domination crystallises”⁶ (2016: 48).
- 15 References to Derrida are central for both authors. Bessone considers that Derrida’s views have had a negative influence by popularising a problematisation of migration in terms of hospitality that tends to de-politicise the issue. On the contrary, Boudou

defends Derrida against accusations of moralising migration issues and proves that he thought about the political translation of his philosophy (Boudou, 2017: 207). Nevertheless, Boudou criticises the lack of concrete examples of what this political translation could be.

Hospitality and justice

- 16 Boudou and Bessone introduce the idea of (in)justice in their analyses of hospitality but do not offer a clear definition or a conceptual framework of the notion. This absence of definition makes it difficult to connect their theoretical work to an empirical approach of hospitality practices. In order to fill this gap, I would like to call upon Iris Marion Young's theorisation of justice, developed in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (2011). Young extends the definition of justice to go beyond the classical distributive paradigm and to theorise a new approach focusing on decision-making and procedures. She defines justice not as the elimination of the unfair distribution of resources, but rather as the "elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression" (2011: 15) that create the unfair distribution. She identifies five faces of oppression that produce injustice: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. Diverse records and analyses have shown that refugees in Europe may be subject to all those forms of oppression (see for example: Blanc, 2010; Kobelinsky *et al.*, 2009), but powerlessness seems to be particularly relevant when it comes to the institutionalised practice of private hospitality. Young offers the following definition:

Most people in these societies do not regularly participate in making decisions that affect the conditions of their lives and actions, and in this sense most people lack significant power. ... domination in modern society is enacted through the widely dispersed powers of many agents mediating the decisions of others. To that extent many people have some power in relation to others, even though they lack the power to decide policies or results. The powerless are those who lack authority or power even in this mediated sense, those over whom power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them. (2011: 56)

- 17 In the following sections, I will show that even if the French example of the "Hébergement Citoyen" programme leads to some distribution of resources through hospitality, the hosted refugees are invited to fit in a normative framework they have little power on. The staff at NGOs as well as the hosts often find themselves in the position of "mediating the decisions of others", that in this context would refer to the set of political decisions that have led to discriminatory migration policies and unfair housing and labour markets.

3. The Citizen Accommodation programme: ambivalences and limits of institutionalised private hospitality

The Citizen Accommodation programme

- 18 In 2016, the French Ministry for housing launched a call for projects—named Citizen Accommodation—to find local organisations willing to run hospitality-based housing programmes for refugees. Eleven projects were selected across France, for an objective

of 1,361 accommodated people over two years⁷. Based on its previous success, ROOM was given the most ambitious objective of accommodating 400 people in the Paris Region (it eventually managed to find hosts for 145). The NGOs received subsidies, calculated on the basis of 1,500 euro per accommodated person per year. The Ministry elaborated precise guidelines that imposed: a framework to hospitality with material and temporal conditions (independent room, free hosting, three to twelve months); a professional management, with the obligation to offer “general support” (“accompagnement global”) to the hosted refugees, in order to help them in their search for a job, accommodation, etc.; and evaluation criteria that enable the state to closely monitor the NGOs. For ROOM, one of the main consequences of this institutionalisation was the obligation to partner with CHANCE, a large social economy company that took over the “general support”, as ROOM did not have the expertise nor the will to offer a professional social work service.

Categorisation and selection of refugees

- 19 A first form of injustice is to be found in the way ROOM categorises and selects the refugee participants to its accommodation programme. First of all, ROOM incorporated legal categories and reserved the opportunity to be hosted only for recognised refugees (excluding thus illegalised people and asylum seekers). The main argument is that benefiting from hospitality would be easier for the people whose legal situation is the most stable⁸. As a consequence, many people coming to ROOM’s offices to get enrolled in the hosting programme are turned away because they have not (yet) obtained refugee status. This refusal can be violent, especially for people who are in a precarious material situation and/or a fragile psychological condition. Not being able to support people in need can also be psychologically disturbing for employees and volunteers⁹.
- 20 In addition to the legal status, ROOM progressively incorporated further selection criteria. First, an “admission interview” was introduced, during which ROOM’s staff checks if the applicants are able to express a “project” (learning French, starting an education, finding a job, etc.). Second, the staff also evaluate their “motivation to live within a family”, in order to avoid enrolling people who would not be at ease living as guests or who would make no effort to share the hosts’ daily life. Third, a domiciliation in the Paris Region is a prerequisite, to prevent people from other regions from using ROOM as an opportunity to move to the capital. It mirrors a general effort from the state—mediated by an increasing number of NGOs—to discourage the concentration of refugees within the Paris Region, where the shortages of affordable housing are the greatest in France. Fourth, CHANCE asked ROOM to control if the applicants do not already benefit from a stable accommodation, in order to prioritise officially homeless people rather than the ones who are the most willing to experience cohabitation.
- 21 All those criteria confirm that hospitality is a complex operation, which confronts ideals and pragmatism and balances openness and exclusion (Boudou, 2017). This selection process reveals that a mix of constraints, incorporations of norms and ideological choices shapes an exclusionary approach to social justice for refugees through hospitality: only recognised refugees who are in addition able to articulate a coherent self-narrative and/or well informed and/or merely lucky are entitled to benefit from hospitality.

The relation of hospitality: between solidarity and domination

- 22 ROOM has developed practices in order to facilitate and mediate cohabitation between local hosts and refugees, such as compulsory “intercultural cohabitation training sessions”. In the sessions for future hosted refugees, the participants receive information about their hosts’ potential expectations, that they may meet by being punctual, tidy, explicitly grateful (the importance of saying thank you in western cultures), attending long meals and respecting women. During their reserved sessions, future hosts receive pieces of advice, as for instance not asking questions about their guest’s journey or being tolerant of (but progressively stricter with) their hosts’ unpunctuality. They do not receive information about sexual consent and harassment. The differences between the sessions for hosts and the ones for guests reveal not only a pragmatic concern with preventing some problems but also a biased view that tends to consider refugees as socially deficient individuals and that may invite hosts to feel legitimate in occupying a superior position in the guest/host relationship.
- 23 Any situation of hospitality is based on asymmetry, between the host, who is at home, and the guest, who is given a precarious right to stay (Gotman, 2001). In the context of ROOM’s hospitality-based cohabitation programme for refugees, the highly contrasting social positions of hosts and guests reinforce this asymmetry. The hosts are mostly French-born, white, middle-aged (48 years old in average), in a heterosexual couple (58%) and from the established middle-class and the upper-class. 75% own their homes, which are often large and comfortable flats (52%) or houses (48%) and mostly located at the centre of the capital region (42% in the city of Paris, 35% in the three pericentral “départements” and only 16% in the four peripheral ones). The involvement as host is a complex process but two kinds of motivation are particularly present in the hosts’ discourses: the moral shock felt by being faced in the media or the public space with refugees’ dangerous and precarious situation; and the will to share one’s privileges. As for the refugees accommodated by ROOM, they are almost all non-white, mostly male (62%), single (82%) and young (30 years old in average). Forced migration have made them experience social downgrading (loss of economic capital, inability to transfer professional skills because of the language barrier and discriminations, etc.). As poverty and discriminations have excluded them from the standard housing market, they are forced to seek hospitality. The encounter between people occupying such unequal social positions has ambivalent effects. On the one hand, inequality is the basis for solidarity and a redistribution of capital. First, by being hosted, refugees may temporarily enjoy more material comfort and a more central position within urban space. Second, sharing daily life with French people enables them to enhance their linguistic and intercultural skills. Third, cohabitation may also bring a needed affective support, especially for the youngest guests. Fourth, living alongside people whose economic, social and cultural capitals are more significant may help refugees get job or education opportunities, understand better the norms and expectations on the labour market, and benefit from money gifts or loans. Yet, although hospitality seems to compensate to some extent the social injustice that affects refugees, it is only at the price of a power relation that assigns refugees an inferior position¹⁰.
- 24 The first dimension of domination is the tendency for some hosts to appropriate their guest’s life narrative. In many situations such as events organised by ROOM, research or media interviews, hosts feel entitled to divulgate personal information that their

guests shared with them or to relate their guest's difficulties with the administration or in their search for a job or a flat, often in a judgemental way. For instance, in the interviews that I conducted, although the questions were all focused on the hosts' own experiences, most of the interviewees spontaneously delivered a narrative centred on their guest. Mary—hosted by a couple for one year in the eastern periphery of the Parisian metropolis in 2018-2019—explained how she felt shocked when she heard hosts speak about their guests at a dinner organised by ROOM:

I met several families and I was surprised, [...] I heard so many people who said “he can't find a job because he doesn't try hard enough”. And in front of the person too, without respecting the person's intimacy. To a complete stranger at the next table, you can't say that, you don't give this kind of information.¹¹ (Mary, 22 December 2020)

- 25 This quotation displays another way hosts tend to dominate their guest: the power to define the right way of integrating into French society. In interviews, most of the hosts articulated an evaluation of their experience according to their standards of a successful integration. Some of them also explained that they tried to interfere in their guest's decisions. For instance, Isabelle and Philippe related that they pushed Ahmed to stop trying to find an education and a job in insurance—a way for him to continue the career he started in his country—, as his command of French was too limited:

- Isabelle: When he left, he was still into his insurance thing. We tried to tell him “look, try an odd job, you can try odd jobs, it will help you develop your French, etc.”.

- Philippe: Paid the minimum wage, but at least it's money.

- Isabelle: At 33, he could receive RSA minimum social benefit in France—565 euros, so in a way—I am going to sound a bit prejudiced—it didn't make him want to drop his project in insurance¹². (Isabelle and Philippe, 20 January 2021)

- 26 Finally, as improving language skills is consensually considered as an objective of “Hébergement Citoyen”, domination may occur in the way hosts feel in charge of teaching French to their guest. Jean-Claude set learning French as the condition his guest Laurent should respect to be able to stay:

The deal was: “Laurent, you work on your French, I don't care about the rest, but you work on your French. And if you don't, I won't respect my part of the contract and that's it”¹³. (Jean-Claude, 7 August 2018)

- 27 Jean-Claude refused to sign the agreement that ROOM wants all hosts and guests to sign and preferred to set his own rules, and thus to exercise a direct power upon Laurent. Philippe narrated the following anecdote about Ali—the second person they hosted—to illustrate that “living in a family” is the opportunity for refugees to experience “what ROOM calls cultural immersion”:

One day he says I don't know what, something like “me be back at 8” and I tell him “you don't say ‘me be back at 8’, you say I will be back at 8” and then I take Tintin in the Congo, and we sit on the sofa and I read the comic to him. I say “see, racist people caricature black people by saying ‘me be back at 8’, so when you say ‘I will be back at 8’, you turn your back to racist people who caricature this way of speaking”¹⁴. (Philippe, 20 January 2021)

- 28 Philippe's words show that he clearly disapproves of racism and racist caricatures and wants to protect Ali. However, in an attempt to convince Ali to make an effort to improve his French, Philippe dominates his guest by pointing out that the way he speaks makes him sound like a racist caricature, and assigns him the responsibility to avoid experiencing racism.

Access to standard housing after hospitality

- 29 The question of access to housing is poorly addressed by the literature analysing the effects of hosting for refugees (BABELS, 2019; Ran & Join-Lambert, 2019). Yet, observations and interviews reveal that the improvement of their housing situation is the first and main motivation for refugees to enter the “Hébergement Citoyen” programme. At the time of their enrolment, they are (about to be) homeless, uncomfortably hosted by kin or acquaintances, housed in substandard and/or remote collective accommodation facilities and looking for a better place to stay. Citizen Accommodation was thought of as a “springboard that enables refugees to access stable and autonomous housing” (*Ministère du Logement et de l’Habitat durable*, 2016: 10): it not only offers refugees the opportunity to be hosted for up to one year but also “guarantees an ascending residential project” (DIHAL, 2018: 20). The results of the evaluation of the programme show that out of the first 171 people that left the programme in all regions of France in 2017 or 2018, 78% accessed a “stable or adapted housing solution” (DIHAL, 2018: 10). For ROOM in the Paris Region only, the rate is lower: out of 165 hosted people between 2017 and mid-2020, 58% experienced a “positive exit”¹⁵. Leaving the programme with no stable accommodation option is considered a “negative exit” but that label covers diverse situations: being excluded; voluntarily leaving prior to the end of the one-year period; leaving the programme when it ends; and staying at their hosts’ outside the framework of the organisation. Among the “positive exits”, only a small part has access to standard flats or to student dormitories. The others (re-)enter the field of “social housing” (“hébergement social”) where comfort and rights are limited. According to the type of housing and the local rules, they may be denied the right to visit the flat or room before moving in; have to move out after a specific time period (from a few months to a few years); have to share their room or facilities (kitchen, bathroom) with other residents; be unauthorised to sleep elsewhere without notice and to receive visitors; and have to respect a curfew.
- 30 Those results do not reveal a particular failure of ROOM. They rather mirror a general situation in France, in which distribution on the housing market is far from being fair. Indeed, an important portion of the foreign population is kept out of the common law housing market (Bernardot, 2005, 2008; Faucheux-Leroy *et al.*, 2014). The residential career is parallel to the legal one: housing has been increasingly used as a regulator of migration (Carrère & Lévy-Vroelant, 2019), and gaining a residence permit does not automatically entail getting a flat. For instance, conditions to access social housing are stricter for foreigners, due to legal constraints and abusive discriminatory practices (Clauzier, 2019). Moreover, being perceived as “non-white” multiplies by five the probability to declare having experienced discrimination when looking for housing (*Défenseur des droits*, 2017: 25–26). As shown by observations and interviews, the staff members of both ROOM and CHANCE feel in charge of informing the participants about the difficulties they may encounter when looking for housing and push them to accept accommodation offers even if they do not meet their expectations, since these may be the only proposals they will get. For the staff of ROOM, intercultural cohousing training sessions are the opportunity to insist that the Parisian housing market is very tight and that refugees should accept long commuting and housing opportunities that may seem unideal. Similarly, social workers at CHANCE set a framework as part of “individual

support”, in order to make the refugees understand the (constraints of the) housing system and to ensure that they accept the offered opportunities:

During the first appointment, we explain clearly that they are not guaranteed to find accommodation after the hosting period, but that refusing accommodation can lead to the end of support. That is, in fact, if people get a reasonable and acceptable rehousing proposal but they refuse it even though we did the application with them and they agreed to apply for this kind of structures, and they opted for them, in that case we don't have the possibility to carry on So we try to stick to that, because in fact we get a lot of refusals.¹⁶ (social worker at CHANCE, 18 September 2018)

- 31 It may seem to be a pragmatic attitude, adapted to a highly constrained context but it also reveals that the NGOs support the refugees in their search for housing by trying to limit their agency. Although the process is designed to give the illusion that refugees have some initial power, they are given very few options and are excluded from the definition of what is “reasonable and acceptable”. To ensure that the hosted people do not become homeless or end up forced to stay with their hosts after the one-year official programme, workers at CHANCE and ROOM have the (sometimes unwanted) responsibility to exercise power upon refugees. In doing so, they mediate the distant decisions that have made the housing market unequal and discriminatory.

Conclusion

- 32 The study of the state-led Citizen Accommodation programme sheds a new light on private hospitality. While scientific literature has depicted refugee hosting as an act of contestation for civil society, the example developed in the article shows that a state itself may instrumentalise private hospitality to promote interindividual solidarity, all the while securing its power on the regulation of migration. Looking at concrete hosting practices through the lens of justice as defined by Young highlights that this form of hospitality stimulates a (partial and temporary) redistribution of resources but not of power. Such practical ambivalence and ideological malleability of hospitality could inspire suspicion when it comes to using the notion as a metaphor to call for better policies regarding migration. Why keep on referring to a practice that is so embedded in inequalities and likely to produce domination?
- 33 Nevertheless, the recent popularity of both the practice and the metaphor of hospitality shows that, in times of border and reception crisis, hospitality acts as a powerful catalyst of contestation. Abandoning hospitality and *substituting it for justice*—as Bessone suggests (2015)—would then be hard to achieve and probably counter-productive. An alternative critical perspective would be to radicalise hospitality by *associating it with justice*. In the public debate, some social movements and individuals already do so. They call not only for the reception of refugees but also for their access to resources and citizenship. In the field of refugee hosting, a solution would be to imagine initiatives that not only accommodate refugees at locals' but also give them more power in this process.

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NOTES

1. Rosello argues that “To use the word ‘hospitality’ to reflect on my encounter with the stranger is either a deliberate or sometimes unconscious choice of issues: focusing on the figures of the guest and of the host in neither the only nor the most obvious way of theorizing the relationship between a country and its immigrants. ... I would argue that the vision of the immigrant as guest is as metaphor that has forgotten that it is a metaphor” (2001: 2–3).
2. I use the term *refugees* to generally refer to people migrating to Europe looking for safety and/or better living conditions. The phrases *asylum seekers*, *recognised refugees* and *illegalised refugees* are introduced when it is necessary to specify the legal status.
3. The names of all NGOs and interviewees were changed to respect confidentiality.
4. My translation. Original quotation: “Jacques Derrida a inauguré l’envoi d’une sémantique — celle de l’hospitalité — qui n’était guère utilisée dans la politisation de semblables situations.” (Stavo-Debauge, 2018)
5. My translation. Original quotation: “aider nos amis sans-papiers de façon individuelle, locale, jour après jour, avec tous les soutiens matériels ou symboliques, financiers, juridiques ou légaux dont ils ont besoin.”
6. My translation. Original quotation: “identifier les injustices, à savoir les lieux et actions où la domination se cristallise” (Boudou, 2016 : 48).
7. In 2019, the Citizen Accommodation programme was renewed for two more years under the name “Cohabitations Solidaires” (“supportive co-housing”).
8. Interviews with ROOM’s co-founder (10 September 2018) and the head of ROOM’s accommodation programme (10 September 2018).
9. Interviews with the former regional head of WELCOME’s hosting programme (12 September 2018) and a former volunteer (25 July 2018).
10. Other authors point out power relations in hosting arrangements (Keskinikliç, 2018; Meyer, 2018; Komter & van Leer, 2012; Ollitrault, 2018; Vietti, 2018).
11. My translation. Original quotation: “j’ai rencontré plusieurs familles et j’ai été étonnée, [...] j’ai écouté tellement de personnes qui ont dit ‘non mais il ne trouve pas de travail parce qu’il ne cherche pas assez’. Et c’était devant la personne, sans respecter l’intimité de la personne. C’est la table à côté, une personne totalement inconnue, tu ne dis pas, tu ne sors pas cette information.”
12. My translation: Original quotation: “Isabelle: Quand il est parti il était toujours sur son truc d’assurance. Nous on essayait de lui dire ‘tiens un petit boulot, tu peux essayer des petits boulots, ça te permettra aussi de développer ton français, etc’./ Philippe: Payé au SMIC mais au moins ça gagne./ Isabelle: Et lui aussi, 33 ans, il pouvait toucher le RSA, donc d’une certaine manière, je vais être un peu cliché, mais ça le poussait pas non plus de sortir de son projet d’assurance.”
13. My translation. Original quotation: “Et le deal c’était ‘Atcho, tu bosses le français, tout le reste je m’en fous mais tu bosses le français. Et si tu bosses pas le français, moi je ne respecte pas mon contrat et voilà’.”

14. My translation. Original quotation: “Un jour il dit je sais plus quoi ‘moi revenir à 20h’, je dis ‘tu dis pas moi revenir à 20h, tu dis je vais revenir à 20h’ et là je lui prends *Tintin au Congo*, on se met sur le canapé et je lui lis. Je dis ‘tu vois c’est les racistes qui caricaturent les Noirs en disant ‘moi revenir à 20h’ et quand tu diras ‘je vais revenir à 20h’ et ben tu échappes à ces racistes qui caricaturent cette façon de parler’.”

15. Source: aggregation of data from annual reports produced by ROOM and CHANCE for the Inter-ministerial delegation for social accommodation and the access to housing (DIHAL).

16. My translation. Original quotation: “Donc au premier entretien, on explique bien que ce n’est pas sûr qu’il y aura un logement mais qu’un refus de logement ça peut entraîner un arrêt d’accompagnement. C’est-à-dire qu’en fait s’il y a des personnes qui ont une proposition raisonnable et acceptable de relogement et qu’ils refusent malgré le fait qu’on ait fait les demandes ensemble et qu’ils étaient d’accord pour postuler à ce genre de structures et c’est eux qui les avaient choisies, en fait nous on n’a pas de possibilité de continuer cette démarche Donc en fait on essaye de se tenir là-dessus parce qu’en fait on a pas mal de refus.”

ABSTRACTS

This article is a proposal to cross theoretical debates and empirical analyses to question the conceptual problematisation of migration as a matter of hospitality, based on the case of France. Following the 2015 “Long summer of migration” in Western Europe, a metaphoric use of the concept of hospitality to denounce restrictive migration policies has been revived. However, some researchers—such as Bessone and Boudou—question the political relevance of the metaphor of hospitality that tends to moralise migration issues and naturalise inequalities. In parallel, as a reaction to the increasing number of refugees ending up homeless or unable to leave segregated housing facilities, hosting practices have dramatically developed. With this chapter I aim to fuel the theoretical debate with an empirical analysis of the French “Citizen hosting” program. Mobilising Young’s work on justice I point out that an on-going institutionalisation of private hospitality is embedded in inequalities and produces domination. This kind of practical development could be an additional argument for criticising and eventually abandoning the metaphor of hospitality. Nevertheless, I argue that, as hospitality acts as a powerful catalyst of contestation in times of border and reception crisis, a solution would be to imagine ways to radicalise it by combining it with justice.

Cet article propose de croiser débats théoriques et analyses de terrain pour remettre en question la façon commune de considérer les migrations comme une affaire d’hospitalité. Suite au « long été de migrations » de 2015 dans l’ouest de l’Europe, le concept d’hospitalité a été utilisé de manière métaphorique pour dénoncer les politiques restrictives en matière de migrations. Cependant, des chercheurs comme Bessone ou Boudou ont remis en question la pertinence politique de cette métaphore qui tend selon eux à moraliser les débats autour des questions de migrations et ainsi à naturaliser les inégalités. Dans le même temps, en réaction au nombre croissant de personnes exilées sans-abri ou dans l’incapacité de quitter des dispositifs contraignants d’hébergement collectif, des initiatives d’hébergement solidaire ont vu le jour. Dans cet article je souhaite contribuer au débat théorique à partir d’une étude du programme « hébergement citoyen » mis en œuvre par l’État français. À partir du travail effectué par Young sur la justice, je montrerai comment l’institutionnalisation actuelle de l’hospitalité privée est

imbriquée dans des rapports d'inégalité et engendre des relations de domination. Ce type de mise en pratique de l'hospitalité pourrait nourrir les arguments de ceux qui critiquent et souhaitent abandonner la métaphore de l'hospitalité. Cependant, précisément parce que l'hospitalité fonctionne comme un puissant catalyseur des multiples forces contestataires qui s'exercent en cas de crise aux frontières et dans l'accueil, il semble plus judicieux d'imaginer des manières de radicaliser l'hospitalité en l'articulant à des principes de justice.

INDEX

Keywords: hospitality, hostility, migration, refugee, justice

Mots-clés: hospitalité, hostilité, migration, réfugié, justice

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