

## **Commune hospitalière »: The Role of Associative and Militant Local Fabric in Pushing for Urban Sanctuary Policies in Liège (Belgium)**

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**Diplôme** : Master en sociologie, à finalité spécialisée en Immigration Studies

**Année académique** : 2017-2018

**URI/URL** : <http://hdl.handle.net/2268.2/5723>

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Master en sociologie, à finalité *migration studies*

## Mémoire

# « *Commune hospitalière* »: The Role of Associative and Militant Local Fabric in Pushing for Urban Sanctuary Policies in Liège (Belgium)

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## Acknowledgments

I would like to express my thanks to the persons who helped me to prepare this work.

First of all, I thank Mr Bousetta, professor at the University of Liège, who agreed to supervise my work despite my late request. I also thank him for taking the initiative to provide me with information related to my research topic.

I would also like to thank Mrs Mescoli, jury for this work, who took the initiative to contact me in order to carry out concerted work in the framework of our respective research. I also thank her for her methodological advice.

I would particularly like to thank Mr Swerts for his precious help during my participation in his course at the University of Liège. I thank him for bringing to my attention the theme of sanctuary cities, as well as for regularly replying to my questions during our various meetings.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to the many individuals I have met in the course of this work. I would like to thank them for sharing their time with me during interviews. I also wish to thank the “Collectif Liège Hospitalière” members who welcomed me among them and granted me their trust.

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## INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, 14 September 2017, activists met in front of 51 city councils in Wallonia and Brussels (Belgium) to demand more welcoming municipal policies towards migrants. During this decentralized national action, these activists provided themselves with signs calling on city councils to “make [their] town hospitable” (See pictures in Annex I). The website of this campaign (<http://www.communehospitaliere.be/>) defines the specific character of this kind of town “which, by the vote of a motion, undertakes to improve the information and the reception of the migrant persons, **whatever their status**” (emphasis in original). On November 27, 2017, the City of Liège became the first major *commune hospitalière* while 8 municipalities had already adopted the motion<sup>1</sup>. On 21 March 2018, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation adopted this motion, becoming the first *entité hospitalière* in Belgium. On March 30, the Province of Luxembourg adopted it, offering the first example of the movement’s development at the provincial level. At the same time, six months after the launch of the campaign, more than 40 municipalities claimed to be *hospitalières* and more than 90 others have been publicly called to take a stance.

The emergence of these particular municipalities, which were born and multiplied in a few months, seems to testify to a new and prolific phenomenon in Belgium. However, the existence of this type of municipality is not new if one adopts an international perspective. Indeed, in the USA, sanctuary movements began in the 1980s in order to both provide humanitarian aid to Guatemalan and Salvadorian fleeing war in their countries and to protest US foreign policy and military activity in Central America. However, from eight churches publicly declaring sanctuary in March 1982 (King, 1985 in Paik, 2017), there were at least five states and 633 counties with policies limiting the cooperation between local police and federal immigration agents in February 2017 (Lee, Omri & Preston, 2017). This number is growing week by week, particularly since Trump came to power: the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) talked about a “Trump effect” leading to the “rise of sanctuary” (Avila, Bello, Graber, & Marquez, 2018). In Canada, initiatives for urban sanctuary policies also emerged in the 1980s when Chilean refugees living in Toronto advocated sanctuary-city by-laws (Solidarity City Network, 2013 in Bauder, 2017). However, the Toronto City Council officially declared itself a “sanctuary city” only on February 22, 2013, becoming the first Canadian city to adopt a formal policy allowing undocumented immigrants to access city services (Keung, 2013). Since then, the Hamilton, Ontario city council declared itself a “sanctuary city” in February 2014 (Van Dongen, 2014). It was followed by the London, Ontario, city council in January 2017 (Maloney, 2017) and Montreal in February 2017 (Shingler, 2017). In the UK, although sanctuary activities existed before the early 1980s (Lippert & Rehaag, 2012), the “City of Sanctuary” movement emerged in 2005 in Sheffield. The city officially obtained this label two years later when its city council supported the initiative (Bauder, 2017). The latest annual report of the City of Sanctuary’s movement (2017) reports that the latter now has about 100 groups, plus the many individuals and collaborating organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> Wavre, Anderlues, Marchin, Mons, Sainte-Ode, Tintigny, Chièvres, Vielsalm.

This quick overview allows us to situate the sudden emergence and development of the sanctuary movement in Belgium in its spatial and temporal context, on an international scale. In recent years, as the phenomenon has developed, a growing literature has focused on the theme of sanctuary cities through different approaches: legal, discursive, identity-formation, or scalar (as the balance of power between local and federal governments). Bauder (2017) distinguishes these main approaches after analyzing how sanctuary policies and practices vary internationally, mainly in the USA, the UK and Canada. It shows that, far from being practiced in the same way and inducing the same policies, these various aspects of sanctuary cities take different forms according to the particular context of the country or city studied.

This introduction invites us to understand the emergence, multiplication, policies and practices of sanctuary cities as phenomena that vary in space and time. But how do these cities appear? How are municipal councils brought to vote on a motion calling them “hospitable”? From the reception of migrant people by churches to citizens’ initiatives looking for answers to the migration policy’s crisis, the citizens’ registers of actions and even resistances must be questioned. Indeed, these actions and the discourses that support them push to question the effectiveness of current migration policies while thousands of citizens seem to take charge of the Belgian state’s missions in terms of reception of migrant populations. This paper aims to find out how civil society actors contribute to the development of local sanctuary policies, in order to better understand the process through which a city council ends up labeling its city as hospitable.

To do so, I will first explore the literature on two main themes: sanctuary cities on the one hand, and local social movements on the other. I will then question the concept of hospitable municipalities by deepening both the way it is defined as well as put into practice. The data provided by the campaign participants will allow me to make a brief political geography of the phenomenon in Belgium in order to better perceive the unequal distribution of this phenomenon across the country. This step back will allow us to assess the national campaign not only under the analysis of its development in Liege but, on the contrary, to reveal its particularities compared to other localities. Without however being able to make an in-depth comparison between the various cities, my interviews will allow me to consider the contribution of Liege as an urban city in the "national" campaign development. Indeed, a brief glance in the rear-view mirror will give readers the opportunity to apprehend the local development of the present campaign within the historical continuity of previous local mobilizations in favor of immigrants; as well as the associative and political fabric that resulted from it. Finally, after describing the campaign's evolution up to its current state, almost a year after its launch, I will explore how the existing power relations between associative professionals and political activists contributed to the formation of such a motion. Interviews with several participants as well as my observant participation (Kaminski, 2004), during six months, in the campaign activity allowed me to identify three subjects of divergence between these groups. I will, therefore, explore how this balance of power is expressed through each of these three issues. The first concerns the perception of the motion's role: if the thematic areas federate, the importance given to their scope divides. The second concerns the attitude and strategy to adopt towards local political authorities: between contestation and cooperation, the type of relationship with these authorities is not just a question of form but of substance.

Finally, the last issue concerns the perception of (undocumented) immigrants' role. In Liege, an undocumented migrants' organization exists. However, the importance attached to their practical involvement varies considerably depending on whether one identifies with one social group rather than the other. If I divide these three points of divergence here conceptually, they are, however, intimately linked in reality. Indeed, the strategy to adopt vis-à-vis local political authorities stems directly from the perception that these groups have of the motion's role as well as that of (undocumented) immigrants.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

On a macro-level analysis, sanctuary city literature suggests exploring local and federal governments' relationship through migration field. Specifically, many articles use sanctuary cities as a research object to explore the growing conflictual relationship between cities and federal governments (Bauder, 2014; Czajka, 2013; Sassen, 2008; Squire & Bagelman, 2012; Varsanyi, 2008). If it is true, some observers say, that the 21st century will be the century of cities<sup>2</sup>, many articles aim to highlight their capacity, their limit as well as their potential in the reception and management of undocumented immigrants. It seems that the sanctuary cities' movement is a particularly lively expression of it. The emergence of such cities makes the issue of immigration visible in the debate related to cities' power in its relation to federal government; thus questioning the very notion of citizenship.

This is for instance why Varsanyi (2008) stresses the importance to take into account the immigrant legal status in the legal geographic literature in order to explore the way the lack of legal citizenship status can prevent claiming the right to the city and the public space, as well as lead to be targeted by city ordinances – as for undocumented day laborers the author focuses on in her paper. In an earlier work, Varsanyi (2006) interrogates the definition of the *urban citizenship* which would be the result of local policies in cities whereby the mere presence and residence determine membership, in contrast to rigid national laws. In a broader approach, this is what Ávila (2014) discusses when she emphasizes the need for local governments to redefine its role in the state, focusing on the re-emerging activism of local governments. For that matter, legal approach is widespread in sanctuary cities literature since these cities aim to define who is legal and who is not, challenging consequently national laws on illegality. Riverstone-Newell (2017) analyzes the increasing use of state preemption law which, according to the author, expresses the struggle between progressive local authorities and conservative dominance of state legislatures – particularly in the Trump era. This struggle, the author states, participates in the shaping of local policy innovations while threatening them. Villazor (2010) also analyzes sanctuary cities through a law perspective, focusing on local citizenship. His paper explores the legal issue related to the tension between federal laws and local sanctuary laws. The author underscores the importance of such approach since as long as this tension is not solved, “local

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<sup>2</sup> “The 19th century was a century of empires, the 20th century was a century of nation states. The 21st century will be a century of cities.” (former Mayor of Denver, Colorado, Wellington Webb)

citizenship for undocumented immigrants will continue to be defined, contested, and vocated for within the local sphere” (p. 598).

Sanctuary cities literature also emphasizes the discursive change brought by these cities on immigration. This change is still mainly perceived within the framework of cities and federal state’s power relationship. As, for instance, Ridgley (2008) who straddles two fields, law and politics, to explore the growing criminalization of immigrants in the US through federal policies and how local sanctuary policies explicitly brought an alternative vision regarding political membership and security. This alternative vision on immigration is also expressed in Darling’s paper (2010), in which the city is seen as a relational space through which political connections and responsibilities are expressed. The author, while mainly adopting a geographical approach, exposes the way migrants contribute to shaping the city (Sheffield, UK, in this case), as well as the way the city can play a role in national discussions on immigration. Still in the UK, Squire (2011) critically explores this narrative change. While assuming that sanctuary cities jeopardize the exclusionary UK’s narrative on immigration, her paper underscores how this movement privileges the collective action of established residents over citizens whose legal status is flawed. Yet, these analysis highlighting the beneficial impact on immigration narrative spread by the sanctuary cities’ development seem opposed to Bagelman’s conclusion (2013). Indeed, focusing on the case of Glasgow (UK), the author states that sanctuary cities eventually represent a problematic and not a solution to the immigration issue. Her main idea is that such cities render permanent a problem that should be temporary, namely, the protracted waiting faced by asylum seekers to remedy their situation, by indefinitely deferring (and even extending) this waiting; Sanctuary cities, therefore, contributing to a hostile asylum regime.

In general, the objective of sanctuary cities’ study is conducted through the prism of "the city" as a territorial and political unit; thus questioning its relation to the nation-state’s territorial and political unity. This general approach gives rise to the study of more specific approaches, such as the relationship between federal law and local law, federal and local police, perceived citizenship by federal governments and the one perceived by local governments, and so on. In the context of these approaches, some authors discuss sanctuary cities as tools that jeopardize the narrative federal governments spread against immigrant populations, while others draw completely opposite conclusions.

While some papers describe or mention the mobilization needed to establish a sanctuary city, they mainly focus on the change brought by these cities. In addition, no study on the development of this movement in Belgium has been conducted to date. Indeed, most studies focus on the situation in the USA. However, it is necessary to take these studies into account in order to put the sanctuary cities’ development in an international perspective. Focusing on sanctuary movement’s history in the US, Paik (2017) assumes the need to root such topic in its political and legal historic importance, as with the rise of neoliberalism and its multiple consequences on immigration flows and policies. He also stresses the need to critically analyze the limits of such movement, on which the author states that it is rooted in a liberal framework that could lead to reproducing global exclusion and inequalities. A revealing example lies in Lundberg and Strange’s



paper (2017) which, analyzing sanctuary movements in Sweden within a Critical Human Rights framework, explores the tension within the movement as it both contests and works with state agencies. These last articles give more insights about the process through which local actors have to struggle to make their city officially “hospitable” to the migrant population.

Finally, a review of the existing sanctuary city literature shows that while a focus is put on urban geography, legal or discursive perspectives mainly through the study of local and federal authorities’ power relationship and their contradictory vision on citizenship, there is a need to engage in a thoughtful analysis of the struggle led by local actors to push local authorities to adopt sanctuary policies, and most precisely a “*commune hospitalière*” label in Belgium – focusing on the City of Liège’s case study.

Therefore, I also engaged to explore social movements literature. More precisely, regarding the campaign’s apparent local characteristic, I focused on cities and social movements. Miller and Nicholls (2013) made a useful work by reviewing the development of the urban social movements. Building on a substantial “urban social movements” literature (Lefebvre, 1968, 1970; Castells, 1983; Fainstein and Hirst, 1995; Harvey, 2012; Katznelson, 1981), the authors found that “this literature leaves us surprisingly ill-equipped to understand how cities incubate the unfolding of social movements” (Miller & Nicholls, 2013, 453). Indeed, to summarize, the “urban” is generally perceived more as an end than as a mean (as in Brenner *et al.*, 2012; Castells, 1983; Marcuse, 2009; Purcell, 2003). In this view, changes in the city would be the purpose as well as the goal of urban social movements. Yet such place-bound notion of urban social movements fails to explore the role of the city as space and a mean from which broader political claims and social movements can emerge or be echoed. Indeed, the processes and conditions found in cities provide activists with such means (Arampatizi and Nicholls, 2012; Nicholls and Vermeulen, 2012; Uitermark *et al.*, 2012). Thinking beyond the notion of the bounded city is thus required to apprehend the whole process of urban social movements’ mobilization.

However, cities have their own scalar characteristics. On the one hand, cities represent places where discriminatory and oppressive practices are enacted through urban, regional and national policy (Armstrong, 2002; Chauncey, 1995; Massey, 2007; Maussen, 2007; Mitchell, 2003 *In* Miller & Nicholls, 2013). On the other hand, urban cities also provide environments that can ease the process of meeting, collaboration and mobilization between activists from various groups leading to the emergence of social movement networks (Miller & Nicholls, 2013; Nicholls, 2008). Therefore, apprehending the spatialities of both oppression and mobilization is as crucial for researchers as it is for social movement actors. With regard to the spatiality of mobilization, Nicholls (2008) adequately grasped the process of networking formation in cities. Interrogating the roles cities play in fostering (or hampering) general social movements, the author highlights how urban areas represent an environment which facilitate the formation of complex alliances between various groups and actors within the city, and how such alliances develop high-quality resources for mobilizations *within* and *beyond* cities. Indeed, in his work, Nicholls generally insists on the heterogeneity of social movement environments – mainly in large cities. This variety thus provide activists with specialized

resources and knowledge in different fields and policy areas (Nicholls, 2008; Miller & Nicholls, 2013; Vermeulen, 2006), in doing so responding to the potential lack of specific resources, knowledge or skills of isolated actors facing complex urban policies. Miller and Nicholls (2013) give a relevant example which help giving the tone of the case study I will develop further:

For example, when urban policies restrict the rights of certain immigrant groups, their grievances can be directed at different policy areas including housing, zoning, transit, and economic development. Aggrieved immigrants facing restrictions on their rights in one policy area, e.g., housing, will often lack the sufficient skills and resources in this area to mount a successful campaign. This will require them to establish connections with organizations in possession of specialized knowledge and skills in those domains, e.g., squatters and housing activists. (Miller and Nicholls, 2013, 459)

These various resources and their as multiple as unique origins allow to stress the heterogeneity of such networks. In other words, different politically active groups constituting a specific network in order to make broader political claims does not automatically produce a homogeneous network. Newly constituted network as well as recurrent one can develop webs of relations among the groups composing it. Granovetter (1973; 1983) and then Nicholls (2008) worked on how the quality of ties linking groups together affects mobilization capacities. They conceptually distinguish, though they work together in reality, two kind of relations within a network: *strong ties* and *weak ties*. To sum up, *strong ties* imply the sharing of high-grade resources in a relational context of dense reciprocity (emotional, mutual confiding, time). Ultimately, these ties encourage and enhance collective endeavors; While their absence engender uncertainty among networked groups. Such uncertainty reduces the willingness to fully contribute to a collective enterprise, at least over an extended period of time. One of the challenge of strong-tie groups is to stay connected to the other groups in order to avoid claustrophobic atmosphere which eventually could deprive the movement of diverse resources and information. On the contrary, *weak ties* imply less reciprocity and collective endeavor, though such ties incorporate new and diverse resources and information in the network. This is why a claustrophobic atmosphere could lead to impoverishment and disempowerment of the social movement. Yet, weak-ties dominated networks face the danger to disband more promptly when greater risks are at stake due to the lack of reciprocity linking networked groups to one another. Finally, Granovetter (1983) suggest that network should combine both kind of ties to function in an optimal way, while Nicholls (2008) adds that the proliferation of resource-rich groups as well as the possibility to develop weaker ties are made easier in complex urban centers. This is why Nicholls (2008) ends up conceiving cities as “relational incubators” as they facilitate the formation of networks as well as the collectivization of group resources.

May they have strong or weak ties, Miller and Nicholls (2013) relevantly remind that “these ties are by no means free of personal, ideological, and power conflicts” (*ibid.*: 460), although groups tend to surpass these differences whether the cooperation’s outcome is seen as generally beneficial. With such cooperation, independent place-based networks (Storper, 1997) allow resources of the urban milieu to be grasped by the collectivity, this opening thus “allowing partners to tap into and deploy the resources of the network for a variety of political purposes” (Miller & Nicholls, 2013, 459). Moreover, the quality of the collaboration can depend on the affiliation of organizations participating in local networks, as well as the potentially multiple

affiliations of activists. Indeed, some local organizations are often located within multi-scalar organizational structures, while some activists can be affiliated to various groups working on different scales (Diani, 2004; Nicholls, 2008; Routledge, 2003 *In* Miller & Nicholls, 2013). Such connections can help to spread network's political claims, nay "be responsible for the similarities of campaigns and movements mobilizing in distant locales" (Routledge *et al.*, 2007; Tarrow and McAdam, 2005 *In* Miller & Nicholls, 2013, 464).

The last assertion I borrow from Miller and Nicholls (2013) consists in the state's power to disempower, narrow and constrain activist groups in cities. Peck and Tickell (1994) already analyzed the shift of nation-state responsibilities to sub-national scale due to neoliberal policy. Ultimately, cities carry this burden. It can be qualified as a burden since the fiscal capacity to assume these responsibilities do not correspond to the required genuine budget. According to Miller and Nicholls (2013), these cities, or limited capacity urban governments (Miller, 2007), allow activists to express their claims but eventually reduce the possibility to obtain concrete change. The authors identify that a notable outcome following this situation lies in the difficulty to implement the desired policy which could, at best, result in the push for a new consensus about the aforesaid policy:

These programs not only professionalize organizations and stifle their political voice, but they also impose narrow limits on what they do and where they do it. The de-politicizing effects of such programs can restrict the development of relations among different insurgent groups. Constant monitoring and audits by the city government further reduce the possibility of organizations deviating from governmental controls (Nicholls, 2006; Uitermark, 2012; Uitermark and Nicholls, 2012). Thus, the local state can play a significant role in channeling and suppressing political activism. (Miller & Nicholls, 2013, 463)

There is indeed a fine line separating a social movement's victory and the political distortion of its claim. This is why I integrate local politicians' discourses in the analyze. I build on this analysis in the following case study. However, this review provides substantial tools to apprehend the emergence, development - and decline? - of mobilizations around the hospitable municipalities campaign. Far from bounded or limited to the sites of protest, cities should be analyzed alongside the complex geographies surrounding them. Putting cities into perspective enable the exploration of a social phenomenon which is rarely limited to cities only. The following case study provides material to build on these assertions in order to answer the following questions: Which geographies surround the struggle led by local actors to push local authorities to adopt sanctuary policies? How the process of networks' formation enhances or hampers the hospitable municipality campaign? How is the balance of power between municipalities and the social movement, as well as within the groups composing the social movement?

## METHODS

The campaign was officially launched five months ago by the time I decided to study this issue in February 2018. The Liège motion was then voted since October 2017, which was the month following the inauguration of the campaign. Therefore, the period examined extends mainly over the first ten months of the campaign, between September 2017 and June 2018.

First, I inquired about how the literature on sanctuary cities addressed this topic. This enabled me both to adopt a geographical perspective of sanctuary cities mainly across Europe and North America, but also to understand how researchers discussed them and through which concepts. This investigation was necessary in order to identify the specific characteristics of the sanctuary cities as they develop in Belgium compared to the different forms that this phenomenon can take in other countries. I then explored some of the existing literature on local social movements. Indeed, a characteristic of the campaign is its local anchoring. Although the social movement is national, its actions are not centralized and are based on groups formed at the local level and operating on that scale. However, researchers have highlighted certain resources and limitations specific to local social movements. Finally, the combination of these two fields of sociological research offers me a sufficiently broad theoretical framework to assess the reality of the sanctuary cities phenomenon in Belgium.

I then engaged in the field. During six months, I collected the data related to my field through a qualitative method of participating observation. More specifically, my level of involvement ranged from *active to fully involved* (Spradley, 1980)<sup>3</sup>. Active participation implies that the researcher becomes a member of the group being studied by fully integrating the skills and traditions of the group in order to aim for a deep understanding. Full participation implies a degree of full involvement in the previously studied population: the researcher is already a member of the group being studied. Indeed, I am a member of an organization that was active right from the start of the campaign. Although I was not personally involved in this campaign in its early days, I had regular access to reports through the accounts of some members of my organization. I then joined the campaign group in early 2018, notably with the aim of collecting data in order to build the present work. These two types of participating observation clearly have limitations. Active participation carries the risk of "going native" given the involvement required by this type of observation, while full participation induces the risk of losing any level of objectivity and, thereby, biases the analysis and presentation of the issue (Dewalt, Dewalt & Wayland, 1998; Spradley, 1980; Schwartz & Schwartz, 1955). On the other hand, these higher levels of involvement provide some advantages. For instance, I had access to informal conversations, direct observations, group discussions or private documents that I would not have been able to access without such a degree of involvement in the Collective's life. Of course, no private documents or exchanges (which must remain so) will be disclosed in this work. These data allow me to understand my subject-matter in the most exhaustive way possible. Therefore, even more than participant observation, my role assumes what Kaminski (2004) described as *observant participation*. This variant in the phraseology aims to underline the partial or complete belonging of the researcher within the group of interest, giving him a different access to the group, more immersive, as well as a different perception compared to people outside the group. In an environment literally more closed and therefore less accessible

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<sup>3</sup> Spradley (1980) established five types of participant observation: non-participatory; passive participation; moderate participation; active participation and complete participation.

than that studied in this work, Kaminski himself used this method by exploring the penitentiary subculture while he was a political prisoner in communist Poland in 1985.

I also conducted several formal interviews with key actors of the campaign. One of the hallmarks of a fast-paced campaign is that these interviews often provided a structuring moment for these actors, as if this brief hour allowed them to catch their breath and take stock of their activity within the Collective as well as of the campaign's evolution.

However, before conducting these interviews, I had already participated in several Collective's activities. Which I think facilitated confidence. The first time I included myself in one of the Collective's activities was in late April during a meeting of seven key campaign actors from various organizations (*See* picture 5 in Annex I). I was mainly presented there as a student doing his thesis on the campaign, although I also announced that I belonged to an active signatory organisation of the campaign (although this fact was already known to some of the actors present at this meeting). I took an active part in this meeting, expressing my opinion on several occasions and on various issues raised during the debate. This attitude was not improvised but was the result of a decision I had considered carefully before. Indeed, since some people knew that I belonged to an organization and others did not, I thought it would be more beneficial to set the record straight in order to create a confidence-building atmosphere. It seems that this attitude was appreciated as, after the meeting, several members thanked me for my involvement that evening and found it positive that I took part while I was attending my first meeting. At the beginning of June, the collective organized a general assembly in which I participated. This assembly gathered more than twenty people. Following my participation in the April meeting, I was already known by the main actors of the campaign and was therefore greeted like any other member of the Collective. During this meeting, after an introduction highlighting the achievements obtained as a result of the campaign, we split into four sub-groups translating four themes: Collective's communication, motion-related animations, rights' defense and mobilization. Considering the issue raised by my work, I joined the last sub-group with five other people. The purpose was to discuss for half an hour about how to revitalize the main signatories of the campaign with the aim not only of making visible and sustaining the achievements obtained, but also to maintain sufficient pressure on the city authorities to further achieve concrete results. Once again, I took an active part in the debate. At the end of the meeting, the sub-groups were invited to present their reflections to the assembly. These sub-groups were also invited to meet again later in order to put into practice the ideas that emerged from this first reflection. This was done in mid-June, less than two weeks after the general assembly. We were four members of the "mobilisation" sub-group and, during this meeting, we did indeed implement more effectively the ideas we had discussed at the general assembly. I conducted most of the interviews later on. My name and activity within the Collective were therefore known to the majority of activists.

This history does not aim to expose the simple development of events related to my activity, but rather seeks greater transparency regarding my involvement's path. Indeed, I think this involvement has given me access to data I would not otherwise have known about. In addition, this access has been facilitated by the

fact that members of the Collective strongly support the idea of carrying out studies and analyses on the campaign. However, there are pitfalls to be aware of - and I invite readers to be as aware of them. The first is that my observations do not (and cannot) constitute the complete description of the object of interest (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Schwartz & Schwartz, 1955; Peshkin, 1993). Moreover, the data recording process is inevitably influenced by my personal beliefs about what seems relevant and important to me (*Ibid.*). Finally, these beliefs - even my worldview - also influence the stage of interpretation and evaluation of these data (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Dewalt, Dewalt & al., 1998; Peshkin, 1993; Spradley, 1980). The objective therefore seems obvious: to try to reduce as much as possible the influence of these pitfalls.

To conclude, the main tool which allowed me to collect data related to sanctuary cities in Belgium in general is the hospitable municipalities campaign's website (<http://www.communehospitaliere.be>). This website and the related campaign was launched by CNCD-11.11.11, the National Center for Development Cooperation (*Centre National de Coopération au Développement*), which is a dome of Belgian French- and German-speaking NGOs and associations committed to international solidarity<sup>4</sup>. The website gathers various data as the up-to-date numbers of the city councils that have voted in favor of the motion (becoming hospitable municipalities), the municipal actions that have been undertaken, and the city councils that have officially rejected the motion. By clicking on the inventory, the website offers more detailed information about every listed city, as its current status in the campaign process, the city council's meeting date regarding the motion, the contact details of local supervisors, and the attached legal documents if the motion has been adopted. Moreover, a summary of these data (*See* doc. 1 in Annex II) is regularly uploaded on the campaign's Facebook page<sup>5</sup>. Based on these data, I further provide a political geography of the campaign in order to study both the spatially uneven outcomes of political processes and the ways in which political processes are themselves affected by spatial structures.

Yet the website does not provide much information on the way the campaign unfolds through the different municipalities in which the city council voted the motion. In order to better understand those realities, I code those cities with the data provided by the website and the table. These tools allow me to apprehend whether an active group of citizens was present in the city, who proposed the motion, if a municipal call took place and the quality of the voted motion (activists rate it between one and three stars depending on its content in comparison to the model one presented by the CNCD-11.11.11).

## What Are *Communes hospitalières*?

### Definition

Remember: the concept of a hospitable commune was not conceived spontaneously by a Belgian activist. This concept is in fact the application to Belgium of ideas and practices already observed and implemented in other countries aimed at improving the reception of immigrants at the local level. Cities officially ratifying

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cncd.be/>

<sup>5</sup> See the group's page on <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1543174735702429/>

some practices pursuing this objective are then qualified as sanctuary cities. However, the implementation of this concept is far from uniform according to the country (or even the city) studied, and the resulting policies rarely are homogeneous (Bauder, 2017). Therefore, the objective here is to identify the specific characteristics of the phenomenon as it developed in Belgium.

In Belgium, while it is unlikely that any individual will be able to explain the concept of 'sanctuary city', more may certainly discuss the concept of 'hospitable municipality' - regardless of how accurately they define it, or what their support for the principle is. Although these terms basically reflect the same fundamental idea, it is indeed the second that has been popularized on a large scale in Belgium. This term can indeed be found in the many visuals created for the campaign, as in the link to its website ([www.communehospitaliere.be](http://www.communehospitaliere.be)) and in its very name: "Let's make our municipality hospitable". The definition of a hospitable commune can be found on the home page of this website:

A hospitable municipality is a municipality which, by adopting a motion, undertakes to improve the information and reception of migrants, whatever their status. It facilitates procedures for all migrants. Asylum seekers, therefore, but also other people in sometimes even more precarious situations, such as undocumented migrants. It is committed to at least two levels: raising awareness of migration issues among its population and concretely improving the reception of migrants while respecting their rights. A hospitable municipality is committed, on its own scale, to a migration policy based on hospitality, respect for human rights and the values of solidarity.

This definition provides some of the key campaign terms. First of all, it specifies that the scale appreciated by the campaign is local; it concerns more precisely the municipality<sup>6</sup>. The campaign is consciously directed towards this level because it is considered to be the closest to the citizens. According to this logic, citizens would then feel a greater opportunity to bring about concrete changes in the situation, a feeling that would encourage them to mobilize and act. In order to take action and obtain the "hospitable" label for their municipality, citizens are encouraged to push their municipal council to adopt a "motion" to this effect. But what is a "motion"? This term can be disturbing for those who are not passionate about the political-legal system's rules. Indeed, I sometimes saw the surprise on some people's faces when I told them that a motion is not legally binding on the municipal authorities. As Pierre Verjans<sup>7</sup> points out, "a motion is the expression of a will [...] It is a symbolic act, a political declaration"<sup>8</sup>. The obvious challenge that a motion poses to those who advocate its adoption is therefore that it does not remain a wishful thinking. Although non-binding from a legal point of view, a formal procedure must be followed to introduce and adopt a motion: if citizens can make a citizen appeal's request to the municipal council, the motion falls within the

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<sup>6</sup> In Belgium, the municipality is the smallest administrative subdivision. There are 589 municipalities in 10 provinces spread over 3 regions (the Walloon region, the Brussels-Capital region and the Flemish region). The municipality is composed of three decision-making bodies: The Municipal Council (its legislative body); the College of Burgomasters and Deputies Burgomaster (its executive body); and its Burgomaster, who is himself a municipal authority in his own right (he can make "decrees" concerning the maintenance of order, health, tranquillity and public safety).

<sup>7</sup> Pierre Verjans is a professor at the University of Liège who often consulted by the regional media on political expertise issues.

<sup>8</sup> Henskens, O. (2018, March 5). Pierre Verjans: "Motion n'est pas décision !". *La Meuse*. Retrieved from <http://www.lameuse.be>

competence of the elected representatives. Once a municipal council adopts such a motion, what does its city commit itself to? Two commitments are highlighted in the above definition: to raise public awareness about migration and the reception of others, and to improve the reception and stay of migrants while respecting human rights<sup>9</sup>. In practice, the definition of a "hospitable commune" is still under construction. It develops as the movement grows (or declines), and its principles will have to be confronted with the practical application. The objective of my analysis is, therefore, not to provide an immutable definition of a Belgian sanctuary city, but to make a living analysis by taking into account its inevitable mutation through time and space.

## Strategy

Since the campaign was launched almost a year ago, nearly 70 municipalities have declared themselves "hospitable" (following the adoption by their local council of a motion to this effect) in the Walloon and Brussels regions. How could this result be made possible? In other words, how was the campaign organized? At the origin of the campaign "communes hospitalières" is the CNCD-11.11.11. The National Centre for Development Cooperation, active since 1966, is a dome of more than 80 Belgian German-speaking and French-speaking NGOs and associations committed to international solidarity. The "migratory justice" campaign is part of a series of eight major campaigns conducted on different themes by this organization, and refers directly to the American experience: "From the makeshift Maximilian Park camp in Brussels to American sanctuary cities, citizens are mobilizing for a humane welcome. At CNCD-11.11.11, we are part of this movement." This campaign was officially launched with the organization in six cities<sup>10</sup>, including Liège, of a citizens' conference on migration at the beginning of 2017. More than 2000 people took part in these meetings and workshops aimed at "making a voice heard" other than that of withdrawal and hatred towards migrants, as well as debating possible alternatives to European, Belgian and local migration policy. These meetings were organized with the help of "many partners from civil society" and allowed "citizens from all backgrounds to discuss migration and asylum"<sup>11</sup>. Finally, the debates led to regional declarations and a final declaration which were brought to the political representatives on 19 November in Namur. Today, although the meeting is over, the campaign for hospitable municipalities is the local relay of the campaign for migratory justice. Yet, CNCD-11.11.11 will relinquish responsibility for this campaign in September 2018, one year after it began.

Following this conference on migration, CNCD-11.11.11 thus had the opportunity to meet civil society partners including several associations, citizens, and local activists. While some worked with migrants or already had expertise on the migration issue, others, *a priori* less directly related to this issue, joined the dynamic. Some of these groups present at the meeting formed the basis on which the campaigns for

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<sup>9</sup> On the campaign website, a third, more symbolic commitment is proposed: "to show solidarity towards European municipalities and countries facing a large number of migrants".

<sup>10</sup> Mons, Louvain-La-Neuve, Chassepierre, Namur, Liège et Bruxelles.

<sup>11</sup> See the resulting reports of these conferences at <https://www.cncd.be/-assises->



hospitable communes were built locally. The "commune hospitalière" website was put online by proposing many resources to carry out the campaign: definition of a hospitable municipality, census of press articles, activities agenda, municipal actions map, FAQ, etc. Anyone who would like to initiate or join the movement in their municipality will surely find the "toolbox" more useful. This virtual box contains different visuals to make the campaign visible (social networks' banner, signs, stickers). Above all, the site provides a brochure presenting the campaign as well as a "citizen's guide" explaining the standard approach to use: write to the elected representatives and meet them in order to find allies (as they alone can introduce a motion to the council and vote for it), organize themselves by contacting the migrant associations in your municipality, raise awareness among other citizens and, finally, submit a request for a citizen appeal<sup>12</sup>. Models of appeal and motion, to be modified according to the reality of one's municipality, are also proposed.

What seems to emerge from this first description of the campaign's origin is its top-down organization model. Indeed, in this case, an important NGO dome organizes a thematic campaign as well as its own website in which are listed all the information, advice and tools to carry out the campaign. In addition, a CNCD-11.11.11 coordinator is seconded for each region to organize and coordinate the campaign among the municipalities composing the different regions. It is within this framework that local associations and citizens intervene. Some of them contact or are contacted by the regional coordinator to form a local group. The idea is then that this group meets and applies the mode of action described above in order to lead to the motion's vote: the space for own organizational initiatives is *a priori* limited. However, different local realities necessarily shape different organizational models, different power relations, and therefore different results. In this context, the adoption of a motion sometimes reflects a more or less strong mobilization involving dozens of actors from various associative or political organizations<sup>13</sup>, sometimes the initiative of one or more municipal councilors<sup>14</sup>, or even the initiative of the mayor himself<sup>15</sup>. Therefore, while the role of civil society in getting the motion passed by the municipal council seems crucial in some places, it seems insignificant in others.

The current work focuses on the Liège mobilization. In this city, civil society had an important role in building the balance of power for the municipal council to adopt the motion and for the latter to contain a developed, precise and concrete content. However, civil society's involvement and preponderance are not observed in all Belgian municipalities. This is why, in order to understand the Liège mobilization in a broader context, I consider it useful to make a brief analysis of the phenomenon, as it has developed in Belgium, through a few variables.

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<sup>12</sup> In Belgium, the regional codes of local democracy and decentralization (CDLD) allow citizens to submit a request to address the council of their municipality.

<sup>13</sup> Liège is a typical example.

<sup>14</sup> As in Hannut, Marchin, Saint-Nicolas, Tenneville or Viroinval.

<sup>15</sup> This happened in Tintigny.

## A Brief Political Geography of the Phenomenon in Belgium

This section proposes a succinct political geography of the cities which adopted or rejected the motion through the analysis of three main factors: the municipal political majorities, the mobilization's characteristics and the quality of the voted motion. To consider the big picture, a map of sanctuary cities in southern Belgium and Brussels is available at the end of the paper (*See* picture 6 in Annex I).

Does a pattern exist between the campaign's victory or defeat and the governing municipal majorities? This is a first question I explore. The campaign's website provides an inventory of the municipalities committed to the motion at different stages. Based on the list of the cities where the motion was voted, I mainly looked for the political majority of each one on municipalities' website. The four main political parties are the Socialist Party (PS – traditional left-wing), the Reformer Movement (MR – traditional right-wing), the Humanist democrat center (cdH – traditional center) and Ecolo (political ecology left-wing).

A first analysis shows that every main political party governing at the municipal level have ended up voting in favor of the motion in one of its municipalities. Yet the most recurrent are PS-led municipal majorities (15 hospitable municipalities) and MR (13) comparing to cdH (11) and Ecolo (1). On the other hand, these number should be compared to these political parties' weight in the governance of municipalities in southern Belgium and Brussels. Following the 2012 provincial and municipal elections, PS and MR each got municipal majorities in around 100 cities, in comparison to 50 for cdH and around 25 for Ecolo. This first insight mainly shows that campaign's victories seem to take place independently of the political party in power at the municipal level, though proportionally the motion has been more often adopted in cdH-led municipalities. Yet this analysis does not take into account whether, for instance, the campaign takes place more often in cdH-led municipalities rather than in the others. Moreover, the analysis of the four municipalities which, for now, have rejected the motion leads to a similar conclusion. While two are cdH-led (one of them sharing the governance with the PS), another is PS-led while the last one has elected an MR majority.

The campaign mostly relies on the mobilization of municipal-based "active groups". While the CNCD-11.11.11 launched the campaign and provided the campaign-related material, the organization does not establish itself in municipalities. Instead, its objective is to become visible enough in order to be contacted by local groups of people wishing to get involved in the campaign. The organization suggests those people should contact and cooperate with municipal migrant associations as well as other groups likely to get involved too. The objective of these groups is then to push their city council to adopt the motion through various actions; For instance, by raising awareness among a maximum of people in the municipality in order to gather them into the group, and then by organizing municipal solicitations of the city council. CNCD-11.11.11 also uploaded a typical letter which can be used as a reference to call out to the city council (*See* doc. 2 in Annex II).

On the 42 municipalities analyzed which voted in favor of the motion, 35 of them had an active group constituted on their territory. Among the others, five motions resulted from a “non-civic initiative” (e.g. proposed by the municipality itself or a political party) while the two last one had neither one nor the other. This means that, for now, when the initiative comes from the political field, no groups emerge<sup>16</sup>. On the other hand, the four municipalities which rejected the motion were all facing an active local group.

CNCD-11.11.11 provides many tools to carry out the campaign. Among them, the organization addresses a people’s guide<sup>17</sup> (*guide citoyen*) to people wishing to be part of the campaign by acting at the municipal level. The guide basically explains the diverse steps any groups should follow so their city could become hospitable. It also provides the definition of a hospitable municipality and its content as well as a succinct lexicon to help differentiate migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants.

The people’s guide contains an explanation about the motion’s rating system (*See* original in doc. 3, Annex II). It proposes a notation from one to three stars. One star expresses a “weak motion” meaning that “the municipality is committing to implementing just a few elements [of the motion]”. Two stars convey an “average motion” meaning that “the municipality is committing to implementing some elements”. Finally, three stars show a “strong motion” meaning that “the municipality is already a hospitable municipality with a strong commitment towards undocumented migrants”. However, this rating system neither fully explain how to concretely decide on the motion’s quality nor who is able to solve such judgment. Yet, the FAQ<sup>18</sup> available on the campaign’s website gives more details about this question (*See* doc. 4 in Annex II). Is the voted motion sufficient? The document first explains that it depends on the “municipal reality” and on “what could be done there”. Then it suggests that the decision should be taken as a group: “It’s up to you to decide!”. All in all, the assessment of the motion is thus collectively decided by the municipal active groups of citizens supporting the campaign and referring to the people’s guide rating system.

Still on 42 municipalities analyzed, 19 of them have adopted a strong motion, 8 an average one, 9 have adopted a weak one, and 6 are unrated. The table reveals that on 19 strong motions, all the municipalities but one<sup>19</sup> were facing an active group of citizens. In contrast, 3 municipalities without such group on their territory have adopted a weak motion while another one is still unrated. These municipalities are governed by every main political party but Ecolo.

In general, this analytical approach of CNCD-11.11.11’s material does not allow to draw a subtle conclusion. Though, it suggests the prevalence of groups to achieve the campaign’s goals. The analysis also shows that « *rendons notre commune hospitalière* » is a francophone campaign. Yet, in northern Belgium

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<sup>16</sup> Wareme is the only municipality which an active group of citizens whereas it is a non-civic initiative.

<sup>17</sup> Find the *guide citoyen* at [https://www.communehospitaliere.be/IMG/pdf/guide\\_a5\\_web.pdf](https://www.communehospitaliere.be/IMG/pdf/guide_a5_web.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Find the FAQ at <https://www.communehospitaliere.be/-FAQ->

<sup>19</sup> Saint-Nicolas (municipality of Liège’s district), which became *commune hospitalière* after the city of Liège, following a non-civic initiative.

(Flanders) exists a similar initiative led since many years by *Vluchtelingennetwerk*, which is called *gastvrijegemeenten*<sup>20</sup>. This initiative supports concrete projects to help refugees.

## How Urban Cities Enhance National Social Movements

Although Liège municipality represents a strategic importance from the CNCD-11.11.11 point of view, the analysis of the geographical distribution of hospitable municipalities shows another trend. Indeed, nearly a third of the municipalities that have declared themselves sanctuary are located in the Province of Luxembourg. Although this province is the largest in Belgium, it is mostly the least populated and is considered a rural province. However, it is not only the province that lists the most sanctuary municipalities but, in addition, voted motions are generally strong. Though, I have just highlighted the importance of urban cities for high-quality resources networks to emerge and to establish a balance of power with the authorities. Thus, how to explain this phenomenon?

Voting a strong motion in a small village in Luxembourg does not have the same real political and associative involvement as in Liège. Since in Luxembourg there are very rural municipalities, one can count on the fingers of the hands the migrants who will pass by there one day. There may be no services, so no associations, no reception service, the question does not even arise. So it can be easier to take the motion as it is on the website, like ‘we do not care’, it has no implication for them. While in Liège, there is a large number of migrants, full of services. So there is a real impact.

*L. Lentini, personal communication, 2018, May 7*

The motion’s quality does not depend only on the existence or extent of an associative network with many resources. Other factors come into play, such as the sociodemographic and local political reality. Local authorities in municipalities with little or no real immigration face less resistance than elsewhere, as in urban cities; whether by intimate conviction or because municipal elections are approaching. These authorities have therefore less trouble to vote a strong motion, full of commitments, that it will not fundamentally disrupt the municipality’s political life. These municipalities are all the easier to claim sanctuaries that they will not have to put concrete policies in place. However, if the municipality has finally adopted the motion, it is because a proposal or a municipal solicitation has been made. Therefore, even if each municipality does not have a network such as in Liège, have groups been systematically formed? Did their mobilization play a role in the quality of the motion adopted?

I think the strength of a motion depends on the strength of the mobilization. However, we must be nuanced when we talk about citizen dynamics. This was very different from one municipality to another. In Liège, as the dynamics emerged from citizens and associations to go to politics, as in other municipalities (eg Huy) it is really Ecolo who took the mobilization in hand. This party has put things in place, certainly with the will to be supported by citizens, but not at all with the same dynamic. However, a group mobilized and certainly tipped the scales.

*Local coordinator, personal communication, 2018, May 7*

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<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.gastvrijegemeente.be/> for more information.

In municipalities where there was no network or developed group, it seems that Ecolo played a leading role. According to my interlocutor, Ecolo councilors mobilized from the beginning of the campaign; not only in the city of Liège or in its province, but also in all the other provinces. It seems that this involvement of one of the main parties in the mobilization is an exception in the context of the campaign. Indeed, for example, never a PS councilor did participate in the collective's meetings or contacted it for more information. However, it seems that in municipalities where civic and associative mobilization is strong, like Liège, the role played by this political party remains present, constructive, but with a diminished impact. For example, in Liège, Ecolo councilors took part in the campaign very early on, invited campaigners to present it at one of their general meetings, re-read the text of the motion and served as a link between the city council and the collective. However, it is neither one of them who wrote the text, who presented it to the city council or who represent the mobilization's spokesman as it was the case in other municipalities where mobilization was less developed. This observation suggests to hypothesizing that civic and political initiatives, when they do not oppose but complement each other, maintain a relationship where one compensates for the absence of the other. However, the groups present in each municipality are not the only factor in the development of the campaign. Indeed, as previously expressed, the analysis of social movements' developments within city boundaries is often more conceptual than real. Ideas go beyond these. That said, their scope differs depending on the place of emission. Urban cities, by their already expressed quality, represent privileged actors to shape a social movement.

It's a local dynamic but I believe in the snowball effect. As it is a campaign coordinated by the CNCD-11.11.11 on all the FWB, it is even more: it is a question of enrichment. What is going on in Liège helped me for the dynamics in Huy, Waremme, Herstal, in lots of other municipalities. The dynamics and the mobilization of actors are fairly localized geographically but what it rakes as reflections and advances sometimes can be passed on to other groups that are mobilized [...] The situation in Liège sets a precedent in a way. Then there is the snowball effect when a big city like Liège engages, and that's why it was fundamental for us to have a strong motion in Liège especially when there is a component on the arrests that is there and well-argued (not just two symbolic sentences)

*Local coordinator, personal communication, 2018, May 7*

Liège has therefore represented a turning point for the campaign. More than an automatic snowball effect, the municipality of Liège has garnered multiple experiences that have changed the quality of the campaign. These lessons have enriched other local groups' approach in order to impose the balance of power in their favor. For example, Liège spokesperson's legal expertise stressed the importance of having an expert on asylum law. Therefore, the CNCD-11.11.11 coordinator has constantly advised other municipal groups to seek such an expert. Similarly, when the motion was passed in Liège, the group decided to set up a regular evaluation mechanism to meet twice a year with the municipal authorities, in order to monitor the implementation of the motion. From then on, the CNCD-11.11.11 coordinator in Liège proposed it everywhere else.

This analysis briefly explores the role of Liège, as an urban city, in the re-modeling and refinement of a social movement's campaign. It seems that CNCD-11.11.11 consciously gave importance to succeeding their campaign in Liège. It was a crucial goal for them since it was not only an important city by its history

and its number of inhabitants, but they also hoped for a snowball effect. Finally, more than a snowball effect, the results of the mobilization in this city have enriched the rest of the campaign in other cities. When the CNCD-11.11.11 coordinator arrived in Liège, there already existed a complex network of associations and activists working or struggling for migrants' rights. For more than twenty years, the city has been witnessing a history of struggle for migrants, particularly undocumented migrants, especially since the creation of Vottem's detention center. Following these struggles, many associations and groups have emerged. Some of them were already cooperating on some issues related to the migration issue, because it was in their mission or because a worker or activist was a member of different groups at the same time. The existence of these groups has allowed the development of a network with complex alliances. By launching its campaign in Liège, the CNCD-11.11.11 found a fertile ground to support the mobilization and urge the city council to adopt the motion. The different groups involved represented as many experts on the migration issue. The meeting with an immigrants' rights specialized lawyer emphasized the importance of the legal aspect in the mobilization, mainly in order to lead discussions with the municipal authorities. The activity of (undocumented) migrants' organization and its support committee gave unexpected strength to the undocumented component of the motion, which later became the basis claims for other municipalities. The association committed to the defense of public service users not only helped to develop a comprehensive and well-argued housing component, but it also helped to broaden the character of the motion to precarious populations and not to migrants only. Although the resistance is strong in the services concerned by this component, this claim makes it possible to cut short the idea according to which the immigrants would be privileged compared to the local population. In general, as soon as Liège became the ninth hospitable municipality, the motion passed there served as an example for the following communes. At least, that is the importance the CNCD-11.11.11 coordinator attributes to Liège as well as to the content of its motion. I will now provide a more in-depth analysis of this motion's scope through the campaign's evolution in Liège as well as the power relations that took place there.

## **How a City Becomes 'Hospitable': A City of Liège's Case Study**

The analysis of the material provided by CNCD-11.11.11 or built by the activists to monitor the campaign's development allows apprehending the situation through the prism of the three factors mentioned above. However, this approach lacks precision in assessing the dynamics in which groups eventually become networks and, finally, how these networks influence each other. To better understand this phenomenon, I interviewed a coordinator of CNCD-11.11.11 and took part in a meeting of the network leading the campaign in the city of Liège. However, this does not represent a case study of the city of Liège, but deepening the dynamics of this city provides a better understanding of other municipalities' developments. It is indeed important to pay particular attention to the campaign's development in the city of Liège for several reasons.

To date, Liège (Walloon region) is the largest hospitable municipality. The city is run by the PS for 45 years. This town has a population of nearly 200,000 inhabitants. It is also the fourth most populated

municipality in Belgium. In comparison, the second most populated sanctuary city is Molenbeek-Saint-Jean (Brussels region) with nearly 100,000 inhabitants. The sanctuary cities' average population amounts to nearly 30,000 inhabitants. In fact, half of them do not have more than 20,000 inhabitants. These figures give a first impression of the special character of Liège in this campaign. Moreover, as a formerly industrial urban city, Liège has a tradition of welcoming *vis-à-vis* migrant populations that are in large numbers on its territory. Indeed, nearly three in ten people living in the city of Liège (29%) are immigrants (Lafleur & Marfouk, 2017, 30). Moreover, an important network of associations is active on the issue of migrants and the city faces tens of years of social mobilization by undocumented migrants and their support (Laureys, 2013). On November 27, 2017, the municipal council of Liège adopted a "strong" motion. However, associative professionals and political activists are not surprised by such a result. Indeed, to better understand the current campaign for hospitable municipalities, taking a look at the local history of mobilizations for migrants is essential.

As early as 1990 Laureys (2013) described a changing atmosphere towards refugees, including in the politicians' discourse and decisions. To such an extent that the "Comité de Vigilance Réfugiés de Liège" (Watchdog committee Refugees of Liège, local branch of the national platform, created by the Human Rights League) was set up in 1992. This multicultural and multiphilosophical association worked for the refugees cause using various tools ranging from food distribution to demonstrations and press conferences. In 1994, this committee joined forces with the "Collectif Droit des pauvres et des étrangers" (poor people and strangers' Rights Collective), made up of lawyers and social workers dedicated to the "unregistered" cause, thus expanding its scope to various precarious populations, whether refugees or not. In 1996, the non-profit association Point d'Appui was born, whose missions consist in accompanying undocumented immigrants, informing the local public and training professionals on this issue. Later, the association's volunteer guides disappeared but the missions remained the same. The association is now composed of employees.

The same year, undocumented migrants' detention center opened its doors in Vottem (Liège) and the struggle intensified, including on a national scale. Liège saw the CRACPE's birth, "Collectif de Résistance contre les Centres pour Etrangers", in which a number of watchdog committee members got involved. CRACPE provides concrete individual assistance in cases undocumented migrants are locked up in detention centers, and also initiates annual demonstrations against those centers, the first of which was held in 1998 in Vottem. Its actions are rooted in a more global political struggle. Indeed, for this Collective, "a demand for general regularization has coherence only if it is part of a global framework of demands in terms of immigration and asylum policy" (M.-N. Beauchesne *quoted in* Laureys, 2013:263). CRACPE will be at the heart of struggles led by undocumented migrants in Liège, in particular, all the occupations initiated following Semira Adamu's death, a young refugee suffocated by the police during her attempted expulsion in 1999. The actions carried out that year will give rise to the historical wave of regularisation, favorable to more than 40,000 refugees for the whole of Belgium. On 22 April 2007, CRACPE initiated an event in Liège during which " ...a thousand people (including some from Verviers, Brussels, Ghent or Eupen...) answered

the call. This mobilization has received broad support from associations and trade unions, including the FGTB, the CSC, Attac, and the MOC, as well as the Union pour la Défense des Sans Papiers (UDEP). Between the [hospital] and the center of Vottem, several elected representatives of PS, CDH and Ecolo made the trip, as did an important delegation from the Center for Secular Action" (CRACPE Bulletin, April 2007 *In Laureys, 2013:19*). Every year, and still today, this collective organizes two events gathering several hundred people. On Christmas Eve, the Vottem detention center is lit up with hundreds of candles. On this occasion, politicians and citizens are chosen to enter the center and discover how it works while distributing phone cards to prisoners. The other event is the demonstration starting from the City of Liège center to the detention center, where speeches are delivered and calls for support are made to detainees. The biggest victory, however, was the closure of the family wing in Vottem in June 2006, considered by the CRACPE representative as "the most tangible victory of the movement" (CRACPE representative, 27 September 2013 *In Laureys, 2013:20*).

In 2007 and 2009, new occupations, supported by the City of Liège, took place in buildings made available successively by the University of Liège and by SNCB (Belgian national railroad company) with regard to the occupation of the Bressoux station. These occupations are systematically the occasion for exchanges and workshops supported by trade unions and various local artistic, educational and committed associations. The Liège people's medical houses also participated: general practitioners took turns, in particular for sustained assistance during the hunger strikes at the Bressoux station. In 2009, a new wave of regularization took place. Here is how this event took shape in Liège:

[A Deputy Burgomaster], the organization for undocumented migrants and the Liège undocumented migrants' support committee met on 4 August 2009 to assess the situation after the government's instruction in mid-July. At the end of the meeting, they hold a joint press conference. All agree that instruction unlocks the situation, even if for some it is only a first step. The "Liège political exception" is underlined since the City of Liège is involved in contradiction with the law which condemns aid to illegal immigrants. Some journalists point out that this attitude stands in contrast to the heavy-handed expulsions in Brussels and could serve as an example for Europeans. According to the Liège support committee, [the mayor] would then have these words: "Put your energy into compiling your files, look for witnesses of your presence on the territory, go find the small traders who sold you bread or cigarettes every day. Have faith!"

*Laureys, 2013:29*

Finally, I deem it fundamental to conclude this brief local history of mobilizations in favor of immigrants by mentioning an event held on 26 February 2007. Laureys (2013:23-24) explains that on that day, shortly after the local elections in October 2006, and less than four months before the federal elections in June 2007, the municipal council adopted a motion to improve the situation of undocumented immigrants. This vote followed pressure exerted by the support committee for undocumented migrants in Liège, which drew up a memorandum. This motion was also passed without any difficulty. Indeed, this vote reveals the climate relating to the issues represented by the defense of undocumented migrants in this period. This motion is finally submitted by municipal councilors from Ecolo, PS, and CDH and includes 11 points relating mainly to undocumented migrants (arrest, housing, administrative discrimination, etc.). From then on, in many ways, the campaign for a hospitable municipality follows on from a long local history of struggle



on behalf of immigrants. However, in many respects, this *top-down* campaign initiated by a major Belgian NGO has given this new mobilization a very specific character. Through the case of Liège, this work will focus on defining these characteristics.

### **The Networking Process: From “Liège, ville refuge” to “Liège, commune hospitalière”**

There is incredible pressure on migrants. The government is effectively allowing migrants to be hunted, and I believe that we must act in response to this attitude. Moreover, I have heard that American cities have declared themselves "sanctuary cities" since Trump came to power in the USA. These cities explain that they will not adopt the immigrant tracking program that Trump wants to implement. Moreover, this phenomenon seems to be spreading to Canada as well. Honestly, I think we should do that in Liège too.

*Socialist activist, personal communication, 2018, June 26*

According to my research, these words are the closest to the emergence, in Liège, of the sanctuary city concept. They were uttered in February 2017 by a former social democrat activist who was then transmitting her concerns about the government's migration policy to a socialist activist. This militant, member of a Trotskyist political organization, discussed with the members of his organization the opportunity to implement a campaign around this concept within the framework of Liège. Meanwhile, an anarchist organization was announcing the opening of a new space in which all kinds of activities could take place (meals, conferences, movie night, etc.). From then on, the two organizations got in touch and decided to schedule a conference entitled "Liège, city of refuge" on 20 April 2017. The aim of this gathering was to discuss the launch of a local campaign explicitly aimed at "making Liège, along the lines of Montreal or Barcelona, a hospitable town for undocumented migrants" (*See picture 7 in Annex I*).

When the event was made public, the organizers were contacted by several people who informed them about the existence of a much larger scale campaign. The organizers explained that they were not aware of this campaign, but that they wanted to join the dynamic "so as not to go it alone" (personal communication, 26 June 2018). Consequently, a CNCD-11.11.11 coordinator was invited to take part in the conference to present the "commune hospitalière" campaign: consisting in pushing municipalities to adopt a motion declaring themselves to be hospitable towards migrants. Other speakers included a worker from a legal and social assistance association for undocumented immigrants, a union staff member for the undocumented workers' committee and an undocumented immigrant woman. Everyone had the floor in turn. During her speech, the social worker of the association accompanying undocumented migrants already noted that "Liège is a favorable ground for this type of campaign, as the city is already putting things in place concerning migrants" (personal communication, 30 June 2018). She also provided a summary of the policies already implemented by the mayor in order to carry out an inventory of the local situation, especially regarding the agreements obtained with the police about racial profiling, the non-administrative arrest of 12h or the non-presence of an office of the Foreigners' Office in the municipal building. The trade union representative reviewed the migration situation from a political point of view. Beginning his presentation with a description of the international situation, he came to describe the situation and, more particularly, at Maximilien Park as well as with reinforced controls in Brussels. He stressed, however, the local exception

of the City of Liège since the other cities did not benefit from the same agreements: indeed, in Verviers and at the same time, migrants who had received an order to leave the territory were handcuffed at their homes. Finally, the undocumented woman testified about her experiences. She explained the daily life of the men and - more particularly - of the women with children occupying a building waiting to regularize their situation. She particularly spoke about the reasons that push people to flee their country of origin, about the asylum procedure, about the experience they had at Foreigners' Office and CGRA, until they were ordered to leave the territory. Finally, the coordinator of the CNCD-11.11.11 presented the "commune hospitalière" campaign.

The general idea of this first event was to draw a picture regarding the concerns encountered by associations dealing with migrants. The purpose was to enable the participants and the associations to get to know each other and to establish contacts. Moreover, during the debate, everyone first identified themselves before talking about their missions and the needs of their field of activity. According to the organizers, about fifty people participated in this meeting<sup>21</sup>. The debate focused on the solutions that could be found regarding the situation of the building occupation by undocumented immigrants. However, during the debate, voices were raised against the idealization of the municipal authorities. While an association's representative deplored the material living conditions of undocumented migrants in Liège, a psychologist (working on Red Cross' Migrant Project) questioned the mayor's efforts to improve reception conditions for undocumented migrants. She then called for more offensive demands to be addressed to the municipal authorities (personal communication, 1 July 2018). Finally, this campaign was launched with particular emphasis on the struggle to improve undocumented immigrants' living conditions. This, at least, was expressed in the poster and text for the event as well as in the social composition of the conference panel. Moreover, at the end of this conference, the participants were invited to concretize their commitment by taking part in a demonstration in support of undocumented migrants which took place a few days later in front of the City Hall of Liège<sup>22</sup>.

The emerging campaign for a city of refuge conceived by local radical left-wing organizations thus came into contact with the "national" campaign of the CNCD-11.11.11, just as new, for a hospitable municipality. Indeed, within the framework of the campaign for a "Migratory Justice", the CNCD-11.11.11 had organized the "Citizens' Convention on Migrations" which took place on June 10, 2017 and whose unfolding is described in a previous chapter. In Liège, this day was the occasion to present the motion drafted by some local associations. Indeed, at the end of May, a meeting of the most relevant associations concerning the migration issue took place. The hospitable municipality's campaign was presented there, as well as its *modus operandi* based on the vote of a motion. During this meeting, a jurist judged that it was "too

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<sup>21</sup> See this conference's report « Soirée 'Liège, ville refuge'. Une belle réussite ! » on <http://www.socialisme.be>

<sup>22</sup> On 24 April 2017, as part of the "call for hospitality" launched by the support committee for undocumented migrants in Liège, a rally in support of undocumented migrants took place during the municipal council. This action was decided in a context where these undocumented migrants, who had to leave the building they were occupying at the time, feared being forced to make the building available while no alternative housing solution was found.

absurd not to take advantage of the opportunity: many Liege citizens would be present [at the Convention on Migrations], so it would be necessary to get something tangible into their teeth right away" and therefore "write the motion directly to introduce it at this event" because, according to her, "it was a sine qua non condition for this day to have an effective impact" (personal communication, 20 June 2018).

At this stage, the initial group was therefore composed of radical left-wing political organizations' representatives (Trotskyist<sup>23</sup> and anarchist<sup>24</sup>), a local councilor, local representatives of Belgium's main socialist trade union<sup>25</sup>, representatives of a collective against detention centers for undocumented immigrants<sup>26</sup>, as well as representatives of grassroots associations helping migrants, whether from a legal<sup>27</sup> or cultural<sup>28</sup> point of view. A binary reading of the social composition of this collective would suggest the presence of two distinct sub-groups: professionals of the associative directly in touch with the migratory reality and political activists. However, by their simple presence within this Collective, all these professionals of the associative consider adopting a "militant" or "activist" posture and to act outside the framework of their employment. Moreover, some identities overlap. Indeed, some political activists work as professionals in the associative sector, while some professionals have been campaigning for migrant rights for years without being part of a political organization.

To conclude, I provide a concrete case example to illustrate the path a migrant can live through the different associations in Liège. The aim is to enable readers to better understand the local associative and militant network's reality.

The Province created a Platform a few years ago concerning Emotional and Sexual Relationship Education. It includes family planning clinics, the PMS, the PSE but also a number of associations in Liège. A family planning clinic brings the concrete case of a young MENA girl from Somalia who left a Red Cross Centre and was ordered to leave the territory. GAMS proposes to meet her regarding excision. Since she could go to school, the PMS and the PSE are thus made aware of the school and medical situation. The family planning clinic proposes an appointment with the Relais Santé, which depends on the CPAS, and with the CPAS Youth Branch, a representative of which is also present at the monthly meeting. Point d'Appui will be included to accompany the case. Concerning the case of this young migrant girl, there are thus 8 associations working on this single young girl's case. That's what I call real direct networking.

*Psychologist working on Red Cross' Migrant Project, personal communication, 2018, July 1st*

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<sup>23</sup> *Socialist Party of Struggle* (PSL in Wallonia and LSP in Flanders, <http://www.socialisme.be/>) is a Marxist (Trotskyist) political party. It represents the Belgian branch of the *Committee for a Workers' International* (CWI, <http://www.socialistworld.net/>), based in about 50 countries.

<sup>24</sup> *Combative and Organized Youth* (JOC, <http://www.joc.be/>) is an anarchistic organization based in southern Belgium and Brussels.

<sup>25</sup> *Labor's General Federation of Belgium* (FGTB in Wallonia, ABVV in Flanders, <http://www.fgtb.be/>) is the main socialist trade-union in southern Belgium.

<sup>26</sup> *Collective of Resistance to Centers for Foreigners* (CRACPE, <http://www.cracpe.domainepublic.net/>) was created in 1997 to struggle against the building of Vottem's detention center for migrants in Liège and then its very existence.

<sup>27</sup> *Point d'Appui* ASBL (<http://www.pointdappui.be/>) is a Liège-based advisory service for undocumented migrants. The organization provides social and legal aids.

<sup>28</sup> *Tanit* ASBL is a Liège-based non-profit organization working on the link between children and their parents with newly-arrived migrants' women, mainly by artistic means. The organization is also part of an international project with southern Tunisia to valorize a cooperative of craftswomen (wool's weaving) in Mergoum.

## The Role of Experts in Establishing Local Sanctuary Policies

Although the group had only limited time, they began to draft a motion. The participants used the basic model of the motion, drafted by CNCD-11.11.11 and the CIRé, as well as the old memoranda drafted in recent decades by the various immigrant support groups. The lawyer collected all this data and made it into a coherent document. She transferred this first draft to different field associations, each expert in their field, in order to correct or complete this version. This enabled the group from Liège to present a detailed draft of a motion at the Convention, which was endorsed by the associative "experts" in migration matters. It was as well used to formalize the existence of a group from Liège charged with the defense of this motion. A group of seven organizations was constituted and, two months later, received the support of 55 organizations that became signatories. This group, now known as the "Collectif Liège Hospitalière", then learned about the legal and political procedures to be followed to respect the *modus operandi* proposed by the CNCD-11.11.11, which led, on 27 November 2017, to the adoption of the motion "Liège: A hospitable, responsible, welcoming and open city". How can the collective successfully compose a common demand that meets the interests of the different groups as well as the migrant populations' ones targeted by the campaign?

During the drafting process of the motion, each Collective representative contacted all the people working in an organization more or less linked to migrants in order to obtain the support of the organization. This is how they reviewed all the associations in Liège. Thus, several work groups examined the constitution or rehabilitation of proposals within their respective fields so that they could be incorporated into the motion. Finally, the content of this motion was the result (or even the translation) of the various groups' involvement in the drafting of the text:

There is a section on undocumented migrants in the basic motion. But it has been more or less specified according to associations around the table, that's clear. It is true that in Liège, the CRACPE and the VSP were very involved and therefore their demands too. We observe this in each dynamic: the most involved members make the most of their voice, even if we tried to have a broad vision [...] I do not know how, but we ended up including the aDAS<sup>29</sup> which, as a result, was able to enrich the movement of its claims concerning housing, rental guarantees, etc. So, it is true that we have this strength in Liège's motion in which certain demands join broader demands, even those which are not specifically geared to migrant people. I think it was one of the strong points of the Liège collective's work.

*Campaign's local coordinator, personal communication, 2018, May 7*

CRACPE and VSP are two organizations fighting particularly for the rights and regularization of all undocumented immigrants. By participating very actively in the mobilization of the campaign and in the process of drafting the motion, the interests defended by these organizations were more represented, at least more concretely and more specifically, than what the basic motion proposed. Yet the battle of the undocumented was not won in advance in Liège. According to the coordinator of the campaign, this commitment and others were "electorally difficult to write in black and white" (*ibid.*, May 7, 2018). The

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<sup>29</sup> *Social Beneficiaries' Defense Association* (aDAS, <http://www.ladas.be/>) primarily aims at defending CPAS (Public Center of Social Action, municipal-based public organizations in Belgium) recipients.

municipal elections of October 2018 are approaching, and the municipal authorities declared that it was not easy for them to affirm support for migrants. These authorities expressed fear that the motion would be understood as a text favoring migrants in comparison to the other people, and that they did not want the latter to feel wronged. This municipal authorities' reaction can then be related to the second part of the previous extract. The coordinator explains the impact of aDAS involvement, which campaigns for all users of the CPAS - and therefore does not focus particularly on migrants. This organization has enriched the text of the motion with its expertise in housing. In addition, this organization's representative in the campaign is a former employee of the CPAS. She knows the subject from the inside. Therefore, like the undocumented, the housing component of the motion is more developed than elsewhere and is not addressed to migrants but to any precarious population living on the territory of Liège. However, it is precisely this element that could have been a hindrance, "especially from the point of view of Liège's CPAS: 'Yes, but we will not change the whole thing for everyone!' as the management said" (*Ibid.*, May 7, 2018).

If the role of individuals with expertise in migration matters was ever central, therefore, it was during the drafting phase. According to the campaign coordinator, this is the most successful and most practical motion to date. The claims are specific and diversified. Above all, each municipal service responsible for implementing these various policies is named in order to reinforce their sense of responsibility. This combination of diverse expertise and knowledge seems to echo the resource diversity specific to urban cities (Nicholls, 2008; Miller & Nicholls, 2013; Vermeulen, 2006). However, the importance of this role will not fade after the vote - on the contrary.

### **The Role of Social Mobilization in Pushing for Local Sanctuary Policies**

In Liège more than elsewhere, the gathering of local experts was a fundamental element in the strategy of the campaign's initiators. However, while the formation of such a group was strongly encouraged, the model of mobilization proposed by the CNCD-11.11.11 is largely based on "citizen" mobilization. This adjective generally completes each action envisaged by the campaign. Thus, once a "citizen" group has been formed, it begins to draft a motion in order to introduce it at a "citizen" appeal before the city council. Finally, on the day the motion is voted on, you are advised to organize a "citizen" rally to demonstrate to elected officials that the motion has a popular support and is not just the result of negotiation between experts. While in other cities the local authorities participated in the writing of the motion's text right from the start of the initiative, in Liège, "the mobilization has followed the suggested dynamic model by making its work largely rely on the citizen movement" (campaign's local coordinator, personal communication, 7 May 2018). The *modus operandi* proposed by the CNCD-11.11.11 included three "citizen gatherings".

The first was held on 14 September 2017 in front of the City Hall. This event was not isolated since it took place during a decentralized national action for which dozens of people gathered in front of 51 municipal houses in Wallonia and Brussels. The aim of these meetings was to "really launch the campaign"

for "hospitable municipality"<sup>30</sup>. The idea was to mobilize a group of at least six people per city to lie on the ground and form the letter "W" - a symbol of "Welcome" addressed to migrants. To make the action visible, these groups were encouraged to take pictures with the "hospitable municipality" posters. These posters, as well as flyers and stickers in the name of the campaign, were distributed to passers-by. At the end of the half hour that this action lasted, the group left an envelope in the municipality's mailbox in order to inform it about the citizens' wish that their city would become hospitable.

In September, a request for a citizen appeal was therefore addressed to the municipal council. The purpose of this appeal was to draw the attention of the municipal councilors, the mayor, and the citizens about the intentions of the campaign so as to obtain their support. Concretely, the text asked elected representatives to submit to a vote a motion by which the City would commit itself at least at two levels: to concretely improve the reception of migrants on its ground, whatever their status, and, on the other hand, to sensitize its population to migration issues. The intervention was therefore added to the agenda of the municipal council meeting of 2 October 2017 - two weeks after the decentralized action. To do this, a citizen was designated to read the text written collectively by the various associative and militant actors. The person designated was the lawyer who coordinated the drafting of the motion as she was perceived, and later was officially designated by a vote, as the spokesperson of the movement in Liege. Although speaking on her own behalf, she nevertheless explains that she was "the bearer of an important collective issue for Liège" and "speaking on behalf of a collective of associations supported by more than fifty organizations" (personal communication, 20 June 2018). The interest in obtaining speaking time during a session of the municipal council is that the citizen has "ten minutes to present his/her idea, all the local press is present as well as the whole college and all the councilors: as a tribune, it is not possible to do better" and, moreover, "you necessarily have a detailed answer from the mayor as well as a right to reply" (a municipal councilor, personal communication, 29 May 2018). That evening, the local council was witness to a demonstration of solidarity among local associations and activists. Indeed, several dozen people had gathered to support not one, but several appeals. In addition to the campaign that interests us here, an organization of undocumented migrants had come to express its concern about the future of its occupation, another aimed to abolish the municipal regulation on begging, while a collective of local residents expressed its opposition to a local real estate project. One participant described the solidarity that was improvised during this session: "Instead of going home after having defended their cause, each group or collective remained on the spot to assist and support the demands of the other groups present that evening" (personal communication, July 1, 2018). Concerning the campaign analyzed here, the interpellation led to a decision of the mayor to create a working group on the migratory question in Liege. The first project of the motion proposed by the Collective was, therefore, the subject of meetings with the administration representatives to produce a concerted text. After being examined by political groups, the motion was submitted to the debate and vote at the local council on Monday 27 November 2017.

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<sup>30</sup> See the details about these gatherings at <https://www.cncd.be/commune-hospitaliere-140917>

The voting day was not left solely in the hands of the local elected representatives alone. Still, in a strategy to mobilize citizens, the local group called for a rally behind City Hall to remind elected officials that this motion was supported by an active part of the population. The objectives were more specifically to "show the determination [of citizens] to make Liège a hospitable city" and to display their "intention to monitor the implementation of the commitments set out in the motion"<sup>31</sup>. The motion was presented by a local councilor and was adopted unanimously. After a thorough networking work resulting in combining numerous expertise as well as an attention paid to the organization and mobilization of citizens, Liège thus became the ninth municipality to adopt the motion, more precisely characterizing itself as a "hospitable, responsible, welcoming and open city".

These events demonstrate that, until the motion has been voted on, citizen mobilization is an integral part of the local group's strategy. It is, at least, the shape that the movement took in the City of Liège. Each major advance of the campaign was accompanied by a citizen rally. With its increasingly broad and coordinated associative and militant fabric, as well as its capacity to federate and bring together at key dates, the local group develops its position in the balance of power and, by doing so, its chances to see its demands respected and applied are increasing. Yet, following the vote on the motion, this popular base will become gradually blurred. This situation will push the Collective to question its method in order to succeed in renewing its legitimacy.

### **A Motion and Then? Looking for Equilibrium**

Within the Collective, everyone agrees that a social movement must support and back the mobilization behind the motion. This element was already included before the motion was adopted in the guidelines proposed by the CNCD-11.11.11 when it suggested the creation of an association and citizen group, an appeal to the municipal council and a rally on the day the motion was voted on. However, the importance of social mobilization became apparent following the adoption of the motion. After its vote on 27 November 2017, despite the victory of the mobilization and the development of support for this campaign, the mobilization seemed to have run out of steam. At least, the activity of the network was unequally distributed. Indeed, over time, two large groups seem to have distinguished themselves. In the words of Nicholls (2008), one can be described as a strong-tie group, and the other as a weak-tie one.

After the motion was adopted, the Collective quickly organized a "citizens' assembly" on December 4, 2017 to announce the end of the campaign's first phase on the one hand, and to collectively discuss the next steps on the other. The objective was to inform a wide public regarding the local campaign approach (assessment, progress, next activities) and to present the means and opportunities in order to act locally. The event was also the opportunity to provide participants with a space where they could meet and exchange ideas among various citizens, activists and organizations that were particularly active during the campaign. About thirty people attended this meeting and listened to the reports of seven speakers representing an

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<sup>31</sup> See « Débat et vote d'une motion 'Liège Ville Hospitalière' » at <http://www.todayinliege.be>

organization of undocumented migrants, the CNCN-11.11.11, the movement's local spokesperson, the support committee for undocumented migrants, the Liège-based coordinator of the Maximilien Park refugee accommodation platform, the organizer of the "Liège for Refugees (L4R)" party and the initiator of a major clothes harvest for migrants in 2015. This assembly therefore reflects the Collective's will to continue mobilizing its network following the vote on the motion, for its content and implementation to be debated collectively in the presence of citizens who played a role in mobilizing on behalf of migrants.

Nevertheless, a meeting that took place several months later, in April 2018, brought together only seven people - including myself. The number of participants was the main concern of the meeting as well as the main issue discussed. Within this group, the jurist representative still seemed to be the main campaign's driving wheel in Liège. Indeed, very quickly, her legal expertise *vis-à-vis* migrant populations were put forward. She has therefore proved to be the privileged person to negotiate with the municipal authorities and coordinate the campaign with the CNCN-11.11.11 coordinator. She is also the referent person to follow up the voting of the motion with these municipal authorities. Indeed, on January 25, 2018, she participated in a meeting with the CPAS and the City. According to her, this meeting was a "total chore". It seems that the CPAS representatives were not aware of the motion's content and were overwhelmed by the events; to such an extent that the meeting finally had to be postponed until June 19. Another meeting with the city was held on June 7, 2018, during which various topics were discussed. During this meeting, the main question was about the way to revitalize the mobilization and interest of the people for the campaign. The agenda item for this meeting was therefore to reflect on how to mobilize the weak-tie group again. This group is composed of various organizations who are mobilized on certain points as well as 50 signatory associations which affirm a support in principle to the campaign. Yet, the collective does not know exactly how these groups concretely appropriate the motion in their professional field. Though the collective thinks it is important for these groups to take the motion's ownership on the ground in order to bring it to life:

It is true that we have not organized anything concrete. Although, for me, the negotiations with the city are very concrete. But this is not an area on which associations can mobilize in the long term. We must go back to these associations to explain where we are, to keep them informed. And we must reflect with them on how they can appropriate this motion, how to make it live in their daily practice. It's a job we have to do to make the motion live. It is precisely a collective that is not very structured. Should it be more or not? It's a big question that's going on for which I do not have answers. The CNCN-11.11.11 will pull itself out of this campaign in a few months. Who can take over to coordinate it? How? In what form? It is difficult to manage the fact that there is a citizen and associative mobilization in connection with the motion.

*Campaign's local coordinator, personal communication, May 7, 2018)*

Granovetter (1983) suggested that a network should combine both strong-tie groups with weak-tie groups in order to function optimally. Indeed, each brings different resources in the mobilization. Although this hypothesis is not questioned here, this excerpt shows the complexity of finding the optimal balance between these groups. Moreover, the question asked by the CNCN-11.11.11 coordinator shows the difficulty of finding a structural form adapted to the very lively, and therefore moving, relationship between these two types of groups. Here, this structure is the living result of the balance of power between the different groups composing the network. However, theoretically, all interviewees stressed the importance



of social mobilization. The prevailing discourse affirms that there is a complementarity between the consultation work between experts and local authorities on the one hand, and the social movement's pressure on the other. According to Collective members, this pressure is a reminder that experts are not isolated but enjoy a popular base.

Yet, during this meeting, the Collective's thoughts seemed to focus on mobilizing the associative network and not the citizens. First, it dealt with the first steps taken following the vote on the motion or during the municipal appeal process. A social worker gave a report about the progress he achieved in his area of expertise (precarity in families and among women in particular: domestic violence, precarious pregnancy, lack of a residence permit, etc.). Discussing "new forms of precarity", he explained that, until now, migrant women who did not receive urgent medical assistance were not treated if they gave birth. Today, in Liège, this is no longer the case. Thanks to his network and his expertise in the field, he was able to encourage the workers of a public hospital to question their practice within the framework of the "hospitable municipality" campaign. In collaboration with a major regional birth and childhood agency, the hospital workers changed the access procedure to their service so that pregnant women could be admitted without administrative or financial discrimination. The second step was then discussed. Indeed, following the mobilization for a hospitable municipality, the mayor announced the recruitment of a lawyer whose work would be exclusively dedicated to the enforcement of the motion. The participants in the meeting considered this decision as a positive one: a lawyer recruited by the City would not be subject to political changes depending on the elections. Consequently, a trust-based relationship could be established in the long term and her attitude should not be modified according to electoral imperatives. These two elements, one social, the other legal, constituted the assessment of the campaign's development.

The second part of the meeting explored different proposals to make the motion a reality. A union representative and facilitator proposed to organize events for various audiences, such as neighborhood committees, migrant organizations and their supporters, but also for trade union delegations, some of which are not free from discriminatory prejudices, particularly towards immigrants. She also announced that a workshop about the campaign was planned in May in a secondary school practicing active pedagogy, and thus more open to the training of its students in citizenship. Her presentation received the approval of the participants and, based on it, the group decided to ask various Collective members to organize workshops aimed at promoting the motion - thereby joining the concern that it should not be limited to a wishful thinking. The social worker, within the framework of his job, was already led, for example, to carry out workshops on education in relational, emotional and sexual life in schools, Red Cross centers and elsewhere. He then was requested to find a way to integrate, even if only as an introduction to his workshops, information about the hospitable campaign or even to organize complete workshops on it. During our formal interview, the social worker informed me that he had conducted parenthood training in Brussels and that, to do so, he had begun the discussion by talking about the motion. Moreover, some associations in Brussels have made requests for a person to come and lead a motion workshop. This is also the case in Liège where some associations are making the same request for their teams to be trained on this issue.

It was, however, on how to re-invigorate the network that had voiced its support for the motion that most of the meeting proceeded. This discussion gave rise to a heated debate. Around the table were the local representative of the CNCD-11.11.11, the lawyer who became spokesperson, a union staff member, a family planning social worker, a worker in a training center for newly arrived immigrants<sup>32</sup> who had recently joined the campaign, and a political activist. The representative of CNCD-11.11.11 who chaired the meeting summarized the concern: since the affirmation of their support, the Collective no longer had any news from most of the 55 organizations that were signatories to the motion. This was problematic on two levels. The first reflected the risk of isolation faced by the Collective's instigating organizations, and thus the loss of clearly stated wider support. The second was expressed by the spokesperson acting as a relay and contact person with the municipal authorities: she questioned her legitimacy as spokesperson and hoped that the signatories of the motion would reaffirm their support for the project as well as her legitimacy as representative of the Collective to the City representatives.

The session chair then explained that she identified three main groups making up the campaign. The first represents the core group, made up of the leading groups and referring mainly to the organizations represented around the table that evening. The second, less concerned about the campaign's organization, is a circle of associations mobilizing on specific themes on certain occasions. The third is made up of associations that have declared their support for the campaign, without however transforming this support into practical participation through the implementation of the motion. How to renew, if not the activity, at least the support of these associations? A two-step approach was proposed. First, contact each of these associations and ask them if they still support the campaign. In the event of a favorable response, the Collective would inquire to which extent the motion represents a meaningful development in their service and to which extent the motion is useful to them. Then, according to these answers, training and workshops could be proposed to these signatories so that they can appropriate the motion's demands in their daily work. To illustrate this idea, the social worker presents during this meeting gave me the example of an evolution experienced by a service thanks to the reconsideration of its workers in the wake of the campaign. Individuals employed in a hospital participated in the Collective meetings. Many topics were presented, including precarious pregnancies experienced by women who, for example, did not have a residence permit. However, the hospital workers questioned the reason for such a situation since their department had the appropriate equipment to receive these women. They just were not aware an accessibility issue existed. They therefore questioned their practice. They talked to their department heads about it and held a meeting. The discussions led to a change in procedures within the department in order to solve the problem: "this is what good networking is all about, working with departments that are not only able to sign a document at one point, but above all that will question their own exclusionary approach and have the courage to change how they operate through their internal structure" (*personal communication, 2018, May 27*).

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<sup>32</sup> *World of Possible* ASBL (<http://www.possibles.org/>) is a Liège-based formation center for newly-arrived migrants focusing on French as Foreign Language and computer learning.

More than a citizens' mobilization, the issue was therefore more about mobilizing professionals linked to the migration issue. When a participant addressed the issue of how to mobilize citizens widely, two ideas were communicated by the CNCD-11.11.11 representative. The first relates to the participation of this organization in an annual festival taking place on September 18, 2018. Therefore, as the date was close to the local elections, the idea was to invite different political representatives to the stand so that citizens could question them about their migration political agenda and, therefore, on how they plan to enforce the hospitable motion. This activity, called the "political aperitif", indeed aims at creating an opportunity to meet and discuss in a direct way with political representatives, allowing citizens to compare the position of different political parties on the matter. The second idea still had to be implemented, but the idea was put forward to organize an event at the end of September to celebrate the first anniversary of the motion's vote. However, at this stage, ways and means remained subject to debate. Finally, under pressure from the political activist present at the meeting, it was decided that campaign materials would be made available and distributed on International Workers' Day on 1 May so that the debate on this issue could be made accessible to a wider audience.

Soon afterwards, a general assembly was held. Indeed, on June 6, 2018, six months after the vote on the motion, some twenty people met to assess the practical progress and perceived blockages. Reflecting the discussion at the previous meeting, the purpose of this meeting was twofold. First, to understand the progress of negotiations with the various actors involved in the motion. Secondly, consider how to establish a "citizen and association monitoring" system to ensure the sustainability of commitments. The assembly first took place in plenary session before splitting into four workshops, each dealing with a different theme: "Collective communication" (transmission of information on meetings, actions, to whom and how, legitimacy and remobilization of signatories); "Motion workshops" (how to inform about and encourage everyone to take up the motion, organizations, neighborhood committees, schools, non-profit organizations, citizens, etc.); "Mobilization" (demonstrating a collective force, visibility actions, etc.); "Defense of rights" (in particular regarding the negotiations with the City).

During the plenary session, two speeches were scheduled to communicate the status of the motion. The two speakers were selected following their investment in the Collective as well as the success of the campaign each obtained in his/her own area. First, the lawyer and Collective spokesperson described the general practical progress of the motion. She explained how she obtained two follow-up meetings per year with city and administrative actors to discuss the practical implementation of the motion's commitments, as well as holding specific meetings on thematic issues with different services. Through meetings, the definition of the city's interlocutors became more and more precise for each of the points in the motion. Moreover, the drafters of the motion congratulated themselves on having already specifically mentioned the various departments of the city with regard to each claim: "What is interesting in the Liège motion is that it was well compartmentalized into categories according to the municipal actor to whom the demands were addressed; concretely, instead of saying 'this concerns health' or 'that is about housing', it was specified that 'the police is committed to' or 'the CPAS is engaged in' [...] It was a force to get these actors involved in the

collaboration" (*local campaign coordinator, personal communication, 7 May 2018*). In addition to these meetings, the mayor decided to create thematic working groups (CPAS, fraudulent recognition, follow-up of precarious pregnancies and women victims of violence, relocation of undocumented immigrants, etc.). Finally, she made a report of the meetings she had attended so far with the authorities and communicated the dates of the next meetings to come. This speech was punctuated by invitations to take up the content of the motion in one's workplace and seek to go further in the demands, as well as to recall the need for a "citizen monitoring" on the commitments made, with a permanent mobilization so that the law is upheld.

The second intervention scheduled was given by a social worker employed in a family planning clinic. His work involves working on family relationships - particularly between parents and their children. He is also in regular contact with women victims of domestic violence and in situations of precarious pregnancy. A working group with the City has been set up to reflect on this last problem, and the social worker addressed this matter. He summarized what he had already explained at the last meeting in April. As a reminder, in Belgium, the right of residence is open at the child's birth but not during pregnancy. This legislation leads to dramatic situations in which, without urgent medical assistance, these women are turned away when they come to hospital. He then explained the strong involvement of hospital services, their internal mobilization, and the changes they have been able to bring about thanks to the work of associations and the mobilization of health care stakeholders. Indeed, a protocol was finally put in place. In the view of the orator, the objective of this anecdote was to illustrate the potential impact of the motion when it is seized by different actors. Therefore, a meeting with the City was requested to report on this progress and to request support for the work done. The speaker said that administrative and financial support from the public hospital was now needed to sustain commitments in case the hospital experienced financial difficulties. Moreover, following this change, the idea echoed in other maternity wards who asked to meet with the Collective's leaders. The mobilization was not limited to the sole professionals in the field: 150 women concerned by a precarious pregnancy situation were federated as a result of this action. One of them personally questioned the mayor in the street: "[...] here is my situation, and I am not alone: there are 150 of us watching you!" (*Social worker, personal communication, 27 June 2018*).

Following these two interventions during the plenary session, the chair asked the assembly to brainstorm practical proposals to "bring the motion to life". To this end, the meeting organizers had planned four thematic workshops, described above. The objective was to bring together four sub-working groups on a specific issue related to the actual application of the motion. These sub-groups then spent half an hour outlining a project related to their workshop. Just as for the previous meeting, I attended this meeting in an active/complete participant observation posture (Spradley, 1980) - or in an observant participation one (Kaminski, 2004). With five other participants, I joined the "mobilization" workshop, which seemed to me to be the topic that best met the interest of my work. The social composition of this workshop seemed significant to me: three activists from various far-left political organizations, the CNCD-11.11.11 local

coordinator, and a worker from an ILI<sup>33</sup> who was wondering how to mobilize his colleagues as well as the other ILIs in the region. In general, this workshop raised the question of how to make visible the collective strength that exists around the campaign, as well as how to find a way to energize its grassroots support. The CNCD-11.11.11 local coordinator began by proposing a date: 25 September 2018, to celebrate the first anniversary of the campaign's official start. The political activists then turned their attention to the practical organization of the event. It was decided to organize a political and convivial gathering in front of the City Hall: concert, food and speeches held in the public space. The objective was to instill a critical and demanding character into it, while promoting values of sharing and solidarity. This approach aimed to associate several types of public, from the most convinced activists to a wider and less convinced public. For workshop participants, this event was important. For political activists, it is an opportunity to restore a popular character and obtain wider support, beyond the associative milieu. The CNCD-11.11.11 coordinator, on her side, considered that "Liège must be a light" for the other cities. Following this workshop, the main lines on how to mobilize were drawn with September 25 as the key date. In return to the plenary session, each sub-group briefly presented the conclusions and practical ideas that emerged from the various discussions in the various workshops. Finally, the participants of the different workshops were asked to organize an intermediate meeting in sub-groups before meeting again in a next general assembly. The objective of these intermediate subgroup meetings was to concretize the ideas, still in an embryonic stage, outlined during their first workshop.

The "mobilization" workshop sub-group, in which I participated, met on June 18, 2018. Four participants introduced themselves: three political activists representing far-left organizations and the CNCD-11.11.11 local coordinator. The 25 September event, on the occasion of the campaign's anniversary, began to take shape there. Tasks were defined and roles distributed to ensure the proper conduct of the concert, the establishment of the infrastructure required for speakers and the campaign material availability. The only topic that really led to discussion was the "political" character of the event. First of all, everyone agreed that no political party representative should have access to the podium, so that this event could remain identified as a "citizen" movement. Moreover, even the sole municipal councilor who actively participated in the campaign approves this strategy: "Every time I go to this type of associative initiative, I try to convey the idea that the movement should not be politicized. And so that it does not appear to be behind one party or another. To put forward my party in this campaign would have led to attacks against me, through suspicions of instrumentalization of the movement for instance" (*personal communication, 29 June 2018*). However, some participants specified that the event should be open to all: if political party representatives do not have access to the podium, they could still come to the event with political material related to the hospitable municipality campaign, describing, for instance, their immigration program or their

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<sup>33</sup> Integration's Local Initiative (ILI) for foreigner people are non-profit associations, local authorities, foundations, public establishments and non-profit international associations aimed at realizing one or various actions in favor of the foreigner people integration. Their missions should be at least one the following: French-speaking training; Citizenship training; Socioprofessional training; juridical aid specialized in foreigners' rights. They are publicly funded by the Walloon region.

commitment to the motion. This point, once clarified, did not give rise to disagreement. On the other hand, the CNCD-11.11.11 coordinator questioned the practical extent to which political identity should be visible - particularly through the tolerance of political organization flags at the event. Indeed, always with the aim of promoting a "citizen" gathering, the coordinator considered it preferable to prohibit the presence of this type of flags. This suggestion provoked more debate among participants. Indeed, one of them disagreed, explaining that this debate was far from new within social movements. During our meeting, he summarized to me more precisely the position he had adopted at that meeting:

This discussion is not new. However, in all the initiatives in which we have participated, we have always defended the freedom of political expression in these broad movements as a fundamental point. It is not "just" a matter of demonstrating without our flags. Movements that do not recognize the free expression of each participant are simply not viable. Adopting a democratic approach is the only way to strengthen cooperation between the different constituent parts of a movement and to allow the development of mutual trust. It is also a necessary condition for achieving correct approaches, tactics, strategies and programs.

*Far-left political activist, personal communication, 2018, June 26*

In response, the coordinator put forward the above arguments, namely that this visibility could undermine the promotion of the "citizen" identity desired by the CNCD-11.11.11 campaign model. Therefore, more pragmatically, one participant answered that with the presence of the different political, trade union and associative groups present at the event, the various identities of the movement would in all cases be exposed to the eyes of the population during the event - and that this was even a "positive point". According to this participant, trying to artificially erase these different affiliations feeding the movement would therefore be "vain and unwelcome". Moreover, a concrete organizational reflection subsequently put this debate into perspective. In order to be able to speak at the event, it was necessary to have an infrastructure that could be used by the various speakers. Therefore, one participant proposed to request material from the trade union organization active in the campaign. This idea caused the same concern: was not the name of the trade union organization displayed on all its material likely to confuse the "citizen" identity? One participant then proposed to request the material from the City's cultural service. The idea was jointly rejected: how to refuse to use the material of a campaign's organization-member under pretext of identification, to finally use the material which would carry the City of Liege's logo against which we are supposed to fight to establish sanctuary policies? This question, *a priori* anecdotal, nevertheless reflects the development of a deeper division within the Collective.

### **Beyond an Apparent Unity: Comparing Political and Associative Approaches**

Through various perspectives, the next sub-chapters aim to explore the same process: the evolving balance of power between two distinct visions that I have identified within the Collective. Indeed, a superficial analysis of this group could lead to the conclusion that the various organizations making up this group are perfectly united with regard to the objectives set and the mode of action to be observed. How could it be otherwise, given the methodical clarity proposed by CNCD-11.11.11? Indeed, both the majority of my interviews and the atmosphere of the meetings I attended initially led me to this conclusion. The

feeling of unity, in addition to being felt, is clearly expressed by several campaign key actors: "there is a real sharing of values, which are fundamental values [...] I think we all have the same values within the Collective, they are transversal, and that is what makes it strong, as well as the reason why this movement, I think, will hold" (*social worker, personal communication, June 27, 2018*). According to him, the Collective is structured and maintained mainly through the fundamental values shared by the groups that make it up. In my research, I did not find any expressions of contradiction regarding the main values defended and expressed by the Collective - but perhaps it is necessary to look elsewhere to understand the development and definition of this group.

From then on, I put the question to myself differently: why do some associations or activists not contribute to the Collective's life or activities? Indeed, this campaign seems to echo the missions or ideals of several local organizations which I have never heard of in the course of my research. That is why I went to meet some of them. The outcome of these interviews enabled me to put forward the following hypothesis: under an apparent unity of vision and action, the Collective is in fact the vibrant expression of a contradictory balance of power; and the results obtained so far - including the motion - reflect the current state of this balance of power. Among these two forces, one seems to identify more with the *political activist* figure while the other seems to identify more with the *associative professional* figure. Yet, as I have already explained above, adopting a binary approach by classifying the Collective's participants into two distinct categories, political or associative, would only be a mental view that does not correspond in any way to reality. Indeed, some professionals of the association are also - or have been - activists, whether within a political party or a thematic movement. Similarly, some political activists work in the associative sector. The aim is therefore not to artificially split these two figures and thus to deprive them of a part of their identity. The objective is rather to identify the predominant figure in each person in order to better understand the tendency to opt for one vision or method of action rather than another.

The political activist figure defines, in the context of this work, the person who tends rather to participate in this campaign on a transitional basis, perceiving its direct objectives as a means to contribute to a general policy change now conducted by the City. This figure therefore does not refer to "politics" in an institutional sense. The figure of the associative professional, on the other hand, defines the person who tends rather to participate in this campaign by perceiving his direct objectives as an end in itself. However, some professionals claim their action as "political" and say they have "broader" objectives, as do political activists who insist on the importance of obtaining direct and concrete results. It is therefore not in the discourse that the distinction of points of view is most apparent, but in the concrete positioning in the face of real challenges.

### *What is the Motion About? Exploring Network, Visibility and Significance*

The motion is the heart of the campaign initiated by the CNCD-11.11.11. It is in aiming at its adoption by the municipal councils that the modes of organization and action to be adopted are defined. By directing the whole campaign towards this particular objective and this precise method, the CNCD-

11.11.11 draws a path to follow and, in so doing, the foundations from which several realities can develop. Looking at how the phenomenon is developing in the various municipalities in Belgium is enough to confirm it. However, these various developments snake like many paths around the main road drawn by the campaign: the adoption of the motion. These pathways may be more or less far from the main road depending on local realities. In Liege, the coordinator explained how the protocol was followed to the letter, thus characterizing the local campaign as a "model" as typically "citizen". For the record, the motion was drafted by professionals from associations in close connection with the migration reality, while supported by political activists who had incorporated long-standing demands. There was then a municipal appeal by a citizen supported by the Collective and, finally, the motion was voted while a citizens' rally was held behind the Town Hall. What is the nature of this motion according to the "Collectif Liège Hospitalière" members? When I ask the question to associative professionals, some point out advantages that go beyond the mere content of the motion.

The great advantage of the motion is that it allowed networking. This motion has the particularity of bringing together citizens, associations and services that are signatories. This gathering made it possible to move towards a consensus, and that, I think, is important because the associative dynamic is important. Before, we would get involved in protest action and get exhausted. Or maybe we were still in the same niche. With little change in fact. There were lots of commissions, there were lots of working groups, there were lots of platforms, and so on. Everyone did a good job, but it was always a job of analysis and we did not take the notion of precarity any further. You could notice it, but it didn't go beyond that. Here, with the motion, practical changes are taking place.

*Social worker, personal communication, 2018, June 27*

The first regular advantage in discussing the motion's contributions is the way in which it has brought many associations together around a common goal. Earlier, I described the extent to which Liège was a reputed city for the quality and diversity of its associative network. I have also already explained that this diversity has a downside: the intertwining of missions among different organizations can make a user's journey difficult. However, according to the associative professionals participating in the Collective, it seems that the campaign for a hospitable municipality has really changed the situation: "the Collectif Liège Hospitalière and the CNCD-11.11.11 have really brought a capital gain. This organization's local coordinator is constantly in charge of federating (meeting reminders, sending e-mails, etc.), and I am "just" the specialist on the substance since I don't have the time to coordinate, and I manage everything concerning the link with the city authorities. I could never give what CNCD-11.11.11 brings. The roles have been well distributed and it works" (*lawyer and spokesperson, personal communication, June 20, 2018*). More specifically, it seems that the CNCD-11.11.11 contributed to the development of the campaign by providing a full-time local coordinator in charge of contacting and bringing together the associations while supervising the Collective's life. This strategy then allows the various expert associations to develop the campaign's substance while a third person takes charge of its coordination. This working method is generally approved by the majority. A local councilor participating in the campaign explained me that "the general assemblies are great [and the] methodology applied there - working in sub-groups and then meeting in plenary - is very important" (*personal communication, June 29, 2018*), while the spokesperson considers that "our success is



due in particular to this sub-group working method, whether for the meetings or for drafting the motion" (*personal communication, June 20, 2018*). For these actors, this method of organization seems to be new for such a large-scale campaign. They find it advantageous to gather experts around their specific competence before sharing the fruit of their reflection with the entire Collective. Consequently, the motion targeted by the CNCD-11.11.11 campaign is perceived as being intimately linked to a new organizational model that breaks with old practices deemed ineffective.

Secondly, the motion is seen as an opportunity to highlight the precarity experienced by some migrants. Like the previous one, this argument comes up regularly during discussions. Generally speaking, the hospitable municipalities campaign aims explicitly to make visible the commitment of municipalities towards migrant populations, either by pushing them to highlight what they already do, or by pushing them to improve their reception policy - and, generally, both. It is once again the social worker who expresses this idea in the most elaborate way:

Precarity keeps changing, faster than social services do. Honestly, it is very clearly the case. So we had to ask ourselves for a moment: what do we do? The more difficult the realities are, the more there is unfavorable media coverage of immigration issues, while we are not in a favorable migration European context. Thus there is an image of the migrant person linked to the idea of invasion: "they will invade us, they will come to us, they will change our lifestyle", so people dig their heels in and some migrants (or even non-migrants but people in precarious situations) feel so stigmatized that they disappear from the radar. So they are no longer even in the services that are supposed to include them. They're underneath the radar. The motion put the spotlight back on those people who had disappeared but who exist, under the spotlight, beneath existing services and platforms.

*Social worker, personal communication, 2018, June 27*

In order to understand the scope of this analysis, it is useful to recall that this worker is confronted with extreme precarity in the context of his job. His service notes what he calls "new forms of precarity". Generally, these forms are defined by a combination of situations where there is a lack of financial and legal resources, which can also lead to a lack of security in several forms (police, administrative, institutional, physical, psychological, intra-family, conjugal violence, etc.). In his explanation, this social worker probably refers to his expertise in women's rights and, more specifically, in situations of precarious pregnancies, which he was able to observe in the context of his work: "The reality of precarious pregnancies needed to be highlighted. Here, we are in a family planning clinic, and we have had countless cases of pregnant women in great precarity. That was way too much! On a family planning clinic scale! Not to mention the three maternity hospitals in Liège, the social relay, the health relay, etc." (*Ibid., 27 June 2018*). Therefore, when he explains that this motion has been able to put this population in the spotlight, he is certainly looking at the practical results he has been able to achieve in this regard as part of the campaign. Indeed, I have already explained how, at the Collective's April meeting, he was able to link different maternity services so that they change their protocol and no longer discriminate against pregnant women on the basis of their residence permit. In this sense, the work done through this motion has made it possible to concretely adapt certain services to these new forms of precarity, even more than to "give a spotlight". This was also a clear will expressed by some participants in the Collective: "I took part in the section concerning the reception of

migrants at the CPAS. On this aspect, I proposed solutions (information on rights, material conditions of reception, etc.). This participation allowed me in particular to push me to build a link with the difficult situation lived by CPAS workers. For me, the improvement of the reception towards migrants and precarious persons at the CPAS depends on the improvement of the employees' working conditions" (*CPAS worker, personal communication, 26 June 2018*). It seems that this campaign serves as much to make visible the precarious situation experienced by a segment of the population as the services themselves. Moreover, the will to adapt a service through the vote on this motion is once again expressed.

From the municipal authorities' point of view, which adopted the motion, its interest is justified in the sense that it makes visible, not the migrant populations, but the efforts that cities are already making to welcome these populations. This is what emerged from a press conference organized in May 2018 by the CNCN-11.11.11 during which local elected officials were invited to explain the reasons why they adopted this motion<sup>34</sup>. A mayor said that "she was tired of hearing the slander and nonsense of part of the population" and that "now people know what our position is". Concerning another municipality, a former city councilor summarized more explicitly that "the motion allows an awareness of what is being done". In the same idea, a councilor from another municipality announced that the City "devotes a page on the municipality's website to existing reception initiatives". In Liège, this will to make visible what has already been put in place by the City is also expressed by the municipal authorities. This request is also reflected *verbatim* in the introduction to the motion, which contains a list of points "considering that" the City is already at the initiative of several commitments relating to the reception of migrant populations. However, this will to make visible a population generally made (or becoming) invisible, since discriminated, has not spread without any resistance. This argument created more difficulties during the negotiations between the City and the Collective.

A constant brake in the negotiation was the fear of the mayor that the campaign aims to hide the work already accomplished by the City. His concern was perhaps more that the campaign would make visible what is not done... As a result, we kept explaining that the motion would be an opportunity to highlight what the city is already doing. The other concern was that some commitments were difficult to wear in black and white, election-wise. For them, it is not so obvious to assert support for migrants. They fear that the motion will be understood as a text that favors migrants over the rest of the population. So we made concessions. The authorities have therefore really played on two tables: 'let us value what we already do', but at the same time 'let us not say too loudly what we already do so that it does not put us in difficulty' - clearly in relation to undocumented migrants.

*Local coordinator, personal communication, 2018, June 7*

This debate during the negotiations reveals a contradiction that is not immediately apparent to the general public when a municipality announces that it will adopt the hospitable motion. Far from being a "natural" and easily negotiable commitment, the adoption of such a motion is the result of a real balance of power between the city authorities and the supporters of the motion - even for an urban city known for its

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<sup>34</sup> See Le Vif (2018, May 17). "More than 50 municipalities have been declared 'commune hospitalière' in Wallonia and Brussels". *Le Vif*. Retrieved from <http://www.levif.be>

diversity and its welcoming history. In fact, far from being a contradiction, the positive correlation between the difficulty for a municipal council to adopt a so-called "strong" motion and the existence of real migration issues on its territory finds several explanations. The first is that it is easier to adopt such a motion in a commune that has little or no experience of the reality of migration issues. This is for example the case in the majority of rural municipalities where there are often neither asylum seekers nor undocumented migrants. In these communes, whether the motion passed is weak or strong depending on the balance of power established by the social mobilization, it is all the easier for the commune councilors to adopt it as they will have to put practically nothing in place to meet the needs of such a population with which they are not confronted. However, in an urban city such as Liège, in the process of becoming the most populous city in Wallonia, each of the demands set out in the motion is an extremely practical issue both for the municipal authorities and the population concerned. Consequently, the social movement, although more developed than elsewhere and in a commune reputed to be welcoming, is confronted with more resistance. Moreover, the Belgian municipal and provincial elections of October 14, 2018 are very close. The issue of immigration was highly politicized, particularly because of the disastrous consequences of European immigration policy, and is a difficult subject for political parties on the election trail to tackle head-on. In a European context of rising racism and far-right parties, many left-wing parties fear losing a layer of their electorate by positioning themselves too clearly in favor of migrant populations. This fear leads them to avoid the debate in order to try to ensure its survival during this phase of strong public opinion polarization. Therefore, in this context, it seems that the adoption of a motion by a city such as Liège reflects more the social movement's power than the city authorities' willingness to assert clear support for migrant populations - however good its reception policy may be.

Finally, the motion's relevance lies not only in the consideration of migrants but also in the consideration of the wider local population. This consideration is formulated in the above quotation in the form of electoral hassle by a municipal representative, as well as in the form of necessary demands by some participants as expressed in a previous chapter. This concern is reflected in the title of the motion's final version adopted by the municipal council: "Liège - a hospitable, responsible, welcoming and open City". Through this more complete formulation, the City expresses its will to improve the living conditions of all people on its territory, and is therefore not limited to the migrant population alone. This position is unanimously supported, albeit with more or less critical postures, by some Collective participants who gave me their opinion on this question.

Another positive element of the motion is the name change. I think it's a good idea because if you focus too much on migrants, you forget the others. What is in the motion applies to everyone because they are universal rights such as the right to social assistance, whether migrant or not. Have the police protect you, get your complaint, it's for everyone too. The same applies to domestic violence. So this motion has become a little more universal. I think that is also what is positive, and which explains why it was adopted in the municipal council. If we had only targeted migrants, which was probably one of the first objectives, we probably would not have had a consensus like that. So the idea here is to talk about 'a hospitable commune for everyone', migrant or not. And I think that is the strength of the motion.

*Social worker, personal communication, 2018, June 27*

The extension of certain points of the motion to the local population as a whole and not only to migrants is therefore a double will. The City, on the one hand, does not want to show clear support only to migrant populations for fear that the local population will feel aggrieved. The Collective, on the other hand, which sees in it an opportunity to respond to the development of wider precarious situations than those specifically linked to immigration. This is why this motion is often promoted as a model: "By joining the initiative, aDAS has been able to enrich the movement with its broader demands concerning access to housing, rental guarantees, etc. As a result, it is true that we have that strength in the motion: some demands are linked to broader demands, even those that are not specifically focused on migrants. I think this was one of Liège collective's strengths" (*local coordinator, personal communication, 7 May 2018*). It therefore seems that Collective's members, the CNCD-11.11.11 and the municipal authorities all welcome the motion's extension to the population as a whole.

And yet, in deepening this question, some Collective participants expressed several criticisms. Some have left the campaign while others, considering their criticism as "constructive", continue to get involved in the campaign. They all share one similar characteristic: whatever their profile, they have all got involved by putting forward their political activist figure. To various degrees, they have approached the campaign as a means rather than an end. The degree and form of their (dis)investment varies according to subtle differences that find their source in their political analysis grid. Indeed, their analysis of the campaign and the character of the Collective is a fundamental element to determine their participation. I first interviewed an activist present from the beginning of the campaign. In fact, his political organization was already at the origin of the first campaign "Liège, city of refuge", before the CNCD-11.11.11 came into contact with them. Although critical, he considers it "constructive". He is still actively involved in the campaign.

We tried to be as transitional as possible in this motion. I think we kind of failed. What we would have liked was for the motion to put forward, if we really want a dignified reception of migrants, the need to develop all public services for the whole population of Liège (on the question of housing, schooling, training, access to employment, health). Achieving this goal means getting out of the budgetary straitjacket in which the municipal authorities find themselves. Although this logic is somewhat reflected in the motion, it is not very concrete. When we say that we need a better welcome at the CPAS in Liège, I think it means hiring additional workers. This must also be beneficial to all CPAS users in Liège and not only to migrants. The idea is to create opportunities for solidarity between migrants and settled inhabitants.

*Political activist, personal communication, 26 June 2018*

On this point, one (former) participant is even more critical regarding the concrete scope of the motion's content. She had participated in the drafting of the motion as a CPAS expert and as the head of the "Association de Défense des Allocataires Sociaux" (aDAS). She finally decided to stop her participation in the campaign as the Collective granted concessions to the communal authorities during the negotiations. During our interview, she gave me an example of a claim that was abandoned, although essential in her eyes, by the Collective in response to the City's pressure. She refers to the motion's point about increasing the resources allocated to the "solidarity landlords" initiative. Indeed, faced with the lack of public housing, the City of Liège launched a campaign to convince landlords to rent housing to a more vulnerable public at an

affordable price. The aim is that vulnerable people should no longer be confronted with discriminatory practices based on their origin, social situation or health when seeking housing on the private market. This is why the motion expresses the City of Liège's wish to devote, among other things, means for social support within the framework of this "solidarity landlords" campaign, to reinforce support for landlords wishing to bring their housing back into conformity in terms of safety and health, and to help associations active in the search for housing for migrants. The City is also committed to accentuating all policies that reduce the number of unoccupied buildings on its territory in order to make them available to people with precarious status. However, this is something that this expert considers extremely problematic.

How dare the CPAS call on (private) landlords to adopt a "citizen" attitude (still this word!) when it pays only one month's bail (instead of two) and is two months late? How dare the City and the CPAS put forward this campaign as THE flagship proposal, without addressing the glaring shortage of social and public housing? I also see another problem. With the 130 housing searches announced over the year in this framework - which is very little for 10,000 beneficiaries, not counting the unemployed, sick and disabled who are also on the lowest income - I expect that these searches can "benefit" above all migrants because they are accompanied by different social services (and fortunately!), which is not the case for the poorest population. This would put the poor in direct competition with the support of associations...

*aDAS representative, e-mail correspondence, August 1, 2018*

As I go along, I understand that a more general problem is denounced concerning the CPAS of Liège's functioning. This public social action center would regularly be subject to dysfunction, which would have many repercussions on the path of users. An employee explains to me the situation experienced internally: "There is an understaffed service, therefore requests that accumulate and fall behind and, finally, requests processed outside the legal deadlines! The CPAS is therefore in illegality, mainly because of an obvious lack of personnel" (*CPAS worker, personal communication, 26 June 2018*). However, as a provider of public services, this center plays a leading role in the population's access to decent living conditions. In the above extract, the aDAS representative, a political activist and former Collective's participant, mentions that the CPAS "pays only one month's deposit instead of two, and two months late". This element has important implications. In fact, it is fundamental to understand this activist's disinvestment in the campaign. Indeed, what she mentions concerns rental guarantees. It is a housing aid generally consisting of a sum of money granted to persons whom the CPAS considers that they are in a situation of need (difficulties in finding housing, food, clothing, hygiene, access to health care). Earlier, I explained how the local campaign coordinator felt that the aDAS had "enriched the movement with its demands concerning housing, rental guarantees, etc." and that it was "a strength" that "some claims join broader claims or even claims that are not specifically focused on migrants" (*personal communication, 7 May 2018*). However, it seems that this integration of broad demands did not finally come to fruition.

I proposed to include a two-month rental guarantee in the claims, since we know that the CPAS of Liège has only always provided a one-month rental guarantee, and has never let go of this idea - even though this is illegal. So I insisted on it. This is at least illegal in relation to the rental law since it says that it is two months' rental guarantee in all cases and three months in some cases. [...] Initially, this claim was accepted... prior to negotiations with the City. I'm sorry, but I don't understand why it takes so many meetings to implement such basic demands. What is being claimed in this motion? Basically, law enforcement, nothing more. And then I learn - it is

incredible - that the CPAS and the City say that if we claim two months of rental guarantee, there will be no motion. And the Collective agreed. They gave up on that.

*aDAS leader, personal communication, 30 June 2018*

In fact, it was following this "capitulation" - as she calls it - by the Collective that this activist decided to withdraw from the campaign. This explanation illustrates the difference in interpretation of the degree to which this motion would be extended to a broader population, depending on whether one adopts the point of view of associative professionals or that of political activists. While the former seem to congratulate this approach, be it symbolic, the latter denounce in a more or less critical way the lack of support to concretize these broad demands, or even their mere abandonment.

At this stage, one question arises: why, according to the Collective participants, should a motion initially dealing with migrants be extended to the whole population? This expansion of the motion, initially absent, was brought about by political activists. It was symbolically approved by the association's professionals, although they abandoned certain proposals following negotiations with the authorities. Finally, the City also preferred to clearly display this expansion in the title of the motion itself rather than restrict it to migrants alone. All the main actors involved in this campaign seem to have found advantages in opting to broaden the scope of the motion's message. Indeed, although the City has effectively negotiated the withdrawal of the two-month rent guarantees for all, I have explored how it finds an electoral advantage in not targeting only migrants - if only symbolically: to mitigate a potential sense of injustice among the local population in a context of growing anti-immigrant sentiment. Similarly, I have explored the way in which associative professionals, although they were not at the origin of this will to widen the claims, were finally pushed by the weight of political activists' investment to include them in the motion's text. These professionals, however, symbolically see this expansion as beneficial, although in practice they abandon some of them in their negotiations with the City. So where did the political activists' initial motivation come from to extend this motion to the population as a whole? Is this not distracting the campaign from its original purpose?

An improvement in the fate of migrants will not be achieved without solidarity with the network. We must find the common demands that will create this solidarity: access to housing and jobs. That is fundamental. Not only could it get in gear a part of the population that is currently not mobilized, but it could also put a stop to the prevailing racism on which the precarization of migrants is organized. Again, this is not going to fall under the competence of the communal authorities (like the job permit), but these demands must be publicly put forward. A classic but crucial demand is however absent from the motion: a regularization of undocumented migrants, which would allow them to work legally, under employment contracts, and which would prevent a kind of social dumping from employers who hire undocumented migrants in undeclared jobs at the expense of legal workers.

*Political activist, personal communication, 26 June 2018*

Instead of diverting the campaign from its primary objective, this political activist defends the idea that a motion applying to the population as a whole is the means by which to effectively achieve the campaign's objectives, namely to concretely improve the living and working conditions of mainly undocumented migrants. According to him, the condition for a motion to unite a maximum of people

among the population is that it engenders solidarity through the demands this motion puts forward. These claims must be common, and therefore not only applicable to one or the other population on the basis of discriminatory criteria. This is why this activist mentions the issues of work and housing, universal rights for access to dignified living conditions for the majority of the population, whether they are migrants or not. Such universal demands would then mobilize a wider section of the population and would lead to a less closed mobilization on migrant and undocumented migrants' aid associations alone. In other words, only truly inclusive demands can lead to a more inclusive mobilization: it is difficult to mobilize the population, other than the political activists committed to these ideas and the associations working in this sector, to defend rights (relating to migrants) that do not concern them. That is why the political activists I met have been more tenacious in supporting this need to broaden the scope of the motion. In the case of the political activist interviewed above, his work with the Collective continues. Although critical, he "acknowledged that there are advances" for migrants but would like to push the Collective to adopt more offensive demands.

However, some critics consider more serious consequences if the Collective continues to disavow the importance of emphasizing common demands. While the previous commentary suggested that broader claims would contribute to fighting racism, the following commentary considers the other side of this analysis. Beyond having the opportunity to open the motion to a wider population, the Collective would have the duty to do so. Indeed, according to the following hypothesis, using a national campaign - whose aim is to be so visible and to involve so many actors - with the objective of fighting for such a targeted migrant population in a context of strong politicization of immigration could, in the last resort, contribute to feeding divisions. In other words, this campaign could contribute to feeding the racist feelings of a population that is getting more precarious.

Something shocked me. On the day the municipal appeal took place, at the back of the Town Hall, several homeless people were present. They heard that there was a demand for things for migrants that they did not have. I wondered what it could induce in their heads. Besides, sometimes I also wonder what is in the Collective people's head. Can you imagine the thoughts of people who get nothing at the CPAS of Liège and who hear all the time in the media that thousands of people are in solidarity to feed and house migrants, while at the same time they die? Because they're dying. Imagine what this way of targeting solidarity brings about in the minds of people who are struggling to make ends meet and who unfortunately do not understand that migrants are not guilty of their misfortune.

*aDAS manager, personal communication, 30 June 2018*

Through the actors' perception of the motion and its content, this chapter explored, beyond an apparent unity, the power relations taking place within the Collectif Liège Hospitalière. The analysis of this motion's role, from the point of view of all the groups within the platform as well as the municipal authorities, points to a first observation: all show their willingness and pride in extending the scope of the motion to the entire local population, migrant or not. First of all, the City sees this as a way to avoid an unenviable pitfall in the run-up to the local elections. Indeed, by asking that the motion be locally renamed "Liège - a hospitable, responsible, welcoming and open city", the municipal authorities aim to decentralize, without however denying it, the attention paid to migrants in order to bring it to consider, in a more inclusive

manner, the inhabitants of Liège in general. In doing so, the City avoids showing too marked and exclusive support to a population which, moreover, suffers the harmful effect of an extreme politicization of the migratory theme. This, in a context of unstable economic situation and thus precarization of the population, could upset the traditional electorate of the current majority. On the contrary, this visibility given to a migrant population suffering the full brunt of the new forms of precarity is perceived as beneficial by associative professionals. By directing the spotlight towards this problem, the campaign is seen by some as an opportunity to adapt associative and public services to situations not previously taken into consideration by the protocols in force. For these professionals, the CNCD-11.11.11 campaign is also celebrated for its beneficial contribution to effective coordination, which has made it possible to federate an associative network that, although already very present and diversified, has great difficulty in structuring itself in order to obtain concrete results. Finally, like the City, they are satisfied with the partial extension of the motion to the population as a whole; although, at the end of the negotiations, they both concluded that a claim affecting a broader population had to be withdrawn, despite being considered as "flagship" by an expert and political activist particularly concerned with the overall scope of these claims. Recently, this motion has also revealed both the objectives and the fears of political activists. Indeed, they too encourage the networking of many organizations, as well as the steps taken towards a more inclusive motion. However, they seem more critical of the results actually achieved. Consequently, the participation of certain activists in the Collective's activities aims at "putting things back on an even keel" to ensure more transitional demands, and therefore more common to inhabitants of Liège's and migrants' interests. For others, certain concessions granted by the Collective's spokespersons to the municipal authorities were considered too important to justify the continuity of their contribution to the campaign. So they left. Whatever their (dis)investment *vis-à-vis* the Collective, all stress the primordial need to create common demands. On the one hand, some believe that this is the only way to create solidarity between migrants and non-migrants, and thus to mobilize widely to ensure the development of a balance of power with the city. On the other hand, others complement this analysis by considering its negative consequence: by not fighting further for the expansion of the motion, this campaign could even contribute to the rise of racism by intensifying the feeling of competition between migrant and non-migrant precarious persons.

Yet this balance of power is not expressed through confrontational exchanges. Its expression is not perceptible at first glance, even after having participated in several meetings. Indeed, the political activist figure is now outnumbered within the Collective. Although it was more present at the beginning of the campaign, and mainly during the drafting process of the motion, this figure seems to diminish over time. Indeed, several of them left the campaign during its course following various disagreements. This figure is now represented by its most transitory elements, trying to push the Collective to adopt firm demands on principles, while being flexible on the method and approach - and thus, without isolating itself within the Collective by a discourse too radical from the outset.



## *Attitude and Strategy Towards City Authorities*

The divergent view of the motion's role has a direct impact on how to approach municipal authorities. This is no coincidence: the various ways of looking at the motion's role stem from the many ways of understanding the social movement's role *vis-à-vis* a political authority. In this regard, the attitude adopted by the Collective has evolved over the course of the campaign. Originally dissenter which expressed itself through various rallies, its form of expression changed into collaboration following the motion's adoption - although meetings between Collective representatives and the City had already taken place before. In the previous part of this work, I transcribed the way in which the Collective's associative representatives had "capitulated" on certain points of the motion, provoking the activists' great displeasure, following the demands of the municipal authorities. In addition to revealing the way in which these representatives perceive the motion, this act seems to be just as illustrative of the way in which they apprehend the city authorities and, by extension, the social movement. In the same idea, beyond the perceived role of the motion, the (dis)investment of political activists in this campaign is often rooted in the nature of the relationship that Collective representatives develop with the city authorities.

To illustrate this point, I recall that municipal authorities initially feared the motion would eclipse the work already done by the city in this area. However, the concern of these authorities was not only expressed in substance, but also in the form: "The other concern often put on the table by politicians during negotiations concerned their fear that this draft motion was part of a protest approach, which denied everything the city was already doing... Our relationship with the city was really part of the negotiations. So we also reformulated a whole bunch of commitments from a really semantic point of view, specifying for our demands that the City "continues..." or "pursues..." such commitments (*local coordinator, personal communication, May 7, 2018*). It seems that, from the very first meetings, the municipal authorities wished to ensure the establishment of a negotiating and working framework in which any oppositional attitude would be considered unproductive. Moreover, during the meetings I attended starting in April 2018, Collective representatives regularly mentioned the willingness to work with the City in a social partnership perspective pursuing the same objective: the population's well-being. To this end, some meeting reports conducted with the City conclude with observations such as: "In Liège, there is a collaboration between associations, citizens, the city and the CPAS and we are delighted, and we still have a lot of work to do all together!". While others, such as with the police, concluded that "we are all working together in a positive spirit"<sup>35</sup>.

With this motion, we are not in opposition. Neither with the politicians, nor with the local council, nor with the Walloon region. We are fighting the same battles against the same realities. Rather than always saying "we are in opposition", let us be in a constructive alliance with universal values such as health care. Is there a political party in Belgium that says "no health care for everyone"? None. On the right and left, everyone thinks health care is important. A basic income? It is the basis of our social security. These kinds of ideas unite. Then let's go. The fight is the same. Let's make something positive happen in our community, all together.

*Social worker, personal communication, 2018, June 27*

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<sup>35</sup> I cannot annex these reports. Indeed, the versions I have access to have not yet been validated by the Collective representatives' interlocutors. It is therefore requested not to make them circulate.

This is a point of view shared by the associative professionals interviewed: aiming for such universal objectives seems to require the adoption of an attitude of cooperation and not of opposition towards the city authorities. This social worker also provided me with a concrete example of this approach, transcribed in the motion: "That is why I am pleased to have participated in the motion and to have been able to write part of the text on the rights of women who are beyond political divisions. Domestic violence is not acceptable. This is not a political debate. It is just not acceptable, whether I am right-wing or left-wing" (*Ibid.*, 27 June 2018). According to him, obtaining universal claims is, therefore, a determining factor in the way the relationship with the City is approached. From this point of view, the establishment of a common objective across political divides for the respect of universal rights is, therefore, part of the duty to make concessions. These concessions are perceived by the associative professionals as the recognition that each party around the table considers the work done by the other and that this other, aiming at the common good, makes the maximum effort to the extent of the means at its disposal: "During the municipal appeal as well as in the motion, it was recognized and particularly emphasized that we are already privileged in Liege compared to other municipalities. This recognition really pleased the mayor and the other councilors, they were very pleased" (*lawyer and spokesperson, personal communication, June 20, 2018*). Faced with perceived challenges considered common and pursuing perceived interests that are considered common, contestation is considered counterproductive. Therefore, only a respectful collaboration of the work done by each party would allow concrete progress. Obtaining "concrete" progress is also an argument regularly used by the associative professionals to explain, on the one hand, their satisfaction with the campaign process and, on the other hand, their willingness to work in a spirit of collaboration with the City.

The campaign's expertization does not worry me because, obviously, I can see its effectiveness. I love it when it's effective by speaking directly on the basis of the texts. With the police, we have made very concrete progress. Nobody feels attacked because we base ourselves on texts - and this is the strength of lawyers, we refer to texts that we push to respect. It's very simple. So I think it can piss off some people who aren't represented in the texts, but that doesn't stop them from keeping up the pressure. That's the best I could ask for. It's just that I don't have that energy anymore in addition to what I already do. But I like the idea of working in subgroups: that's the future of everything. I prefer it to be effective, that's all I care about. And the subgroup allows that. Everyone goes in what they love, and it is in what they love that they are best.

*Lawyer and spokesperson, personal communication, 2018, June 20*

According to the associative professionals, practical progress is achieved above all by "effective" work, perceived as being at the opposite end of a disorderly and vainly vindictive citizen protest mobilization. The above statements are made by a lawyer, an expert on migrants' rights, who is also the spokesperson for the campaign. Through her dual qualities, she is at the forefront of negotiations with the City as the social movement representative for a hospitable commune. Inevitably, such a profile provides information both on the nature of the initial mobilization as it has developed, and on the direction its development could further pursue. Indeed, the "effectiveness" argument is reflected here by the establishment of well-defined juridical and legal instructions through the drafting of a precise text. Otherwise, for a lawyer, what is perceived as "effective" concerns all legally relevant achievements. In this case, a precise text of commitments to which the lawyer can return in all probity if some of these

commitments are not respected. The "legalistic" turn of the campaign can be explained in this way. If the example cited is the most advanced expression, the discourse of the professionals interviewed and observed is generally oriented in this direction. However, this search for concrete results and an effective method is also justified from another point of view. Less legalistic, it still supports the importance of dialogue with the City to implement new practices.

The difference with the old mobilizations is that we get concrete results. It's been a long time. Expert groups, discussion groups, etc. So, yes, we need to mobilize people, etc., okay. We know that. We already did that. You go to 10, 11, 12 meetings, it's always going to be the same thing, but nothing concrete comes out of it. I go 10, 15 times, but if the 20th time there's still nothing concrete, I'm gone. There have been many initiatives in the past to try to bring people together. It never really gave birth to something concrete, I think it's because the network is important. We are in Liege, probably better than elsewhere, but compared to the new forms of precarity, it is scary. I think that in some ways they will be touched with their fingertips, but they are also somewhat excluded when they are a social service.

*Social worker, personal communication, 2018, June 27*

In a previous chapter, I briefly explored the history of Liège with regard to mobilizations by and for undocumented migrants, as well as the development of its associative and activist network. The words quoted reflect the condensed expression of the ups and downs generated by such a story. Indeed, I have already mentioned the existence of activist experience among associative professionals. However, this experience has often resulted in militant activity focused on the humanitarian and charitable action: assistance to undocumented migrants to occupy housing, food distribution, material, social and administrative aid to migrants locked in detention centers, etc. This mode of action, however, was based on more detailed political demands, such as the demand for regularization of all illegal immigrants, than those in the current motion. As a result, many memoranda and other demand papers have been written - many of which later served as the basis for this hospitable motion - but often have had little tangible success. However, several associative professionals who have campaigned in this context have shared with me a tiredness that explains that the CNCD-11.11.11 campaign, focused on developing a text to be negotiated in partnership with the City, represents a breath of fresh air.

However, within the Collective, not everyone shares this interpretation about the nature of the relationship to develop with the city authorities. Indeed, political activists generally believe that this form of collaboration, in which the Collective's representatives abandon certain demands, constitutes a setback. This difference in approach makes sense when one considers the dialectical link between the content of the motion and the method to be used to enforce that content. This link then suggests that political activists, judging the motion's content more critically, also do not share the way in which this content is modified and defended through negotiations.

I readily admit that there have been important advances. Perhaps I deplore the fact that people are stopping a little quickly at what authorities accept to give us. For the sake of cooperation and immediate results, it is said that the authorities should not be offended. Sometimes I feel like we're self-censoring. And we prevent ourselves from asking for things that could have a real usefulness, not only for migrants but also for the whole population of Liège. Without even that being incredibly pushed: the question of the reception in CPAS, which is practically not treated,

or the question of creating an emulation around demands which would make the municipal council turn back on a series of decisions. All this would promote awareness among the population, including migrants and undocumented migrants: that we must demand, that we must organize, that we must self-organize. This is something that can be put forward.

*Political activist, personal communication, 2018, June 26*

According to this political activist, the reason behind this divergence regarding the approach does not seem to lie in a principle will to challenge the city's authority and, by so doing, to oppose the method favored by associative professionals. Rather, in his analysis, he viewed collaboration as a means that automatically leads to a reduction in initial claims, while he viewed the balance of power in favor of obtaining more advanced claims. Once again, he establishes a link with the motion's content: claims affecting the population as a whole would be a vehicle for emulation around these claims. This emulation would then leave the municipal council no other choice but to accept these demands. In his opinion, therefore, would the negotiations be a form of political distortion? He nuances: "For a part, municipal authorities managed to recover the movement. But they managed to get it back at the expense of a few concessions after all. When collaboration is established, particularly with our spokesperson, it is a form of political distortion. But it is a form of distortion that, to some extent, suits us if there is a benefit for migrants" (*Ibid.*, 26 June 2018). Political distortion, in this sense, seems inevitable - and even welcome. One of the campaign's goals is for the city to change or improve its policy regarding migrant populations and, to do so, its authorities must consult with the relevant experts who contributed to the campaign and to the text. However, if any concrete progress is encouraged, the methods and limits they imply to achieve this divide opinion within the Collective. One political activist who has since disengaged from the campaign provides an example of a meeting with the police that "shocked" her: "This meeting with the police is very important and very revealing. It concerns the arrest of undocumented migrants, racial profiling, etc. The police required that only one Collective representative be present. And the Collective agreed. This is unbearable! Especially for such a meeting. It takes at least two delegates to monitor each other. And the Collective gave in, for something essential because the police is municipal" (*aDAS responsable, personal communication, 31 June 2018*). In her view, this meeting should be "denounced": she considers that "on such an important issue, it is unacceptable that only one person should participate. The municipal police are part of the repressive apparatus, even if in part they are less than the federal police. I still have to think about it, but the further it goes, the more I think it looks like class collaboration..." (*Ibid.*, *electronic correspondence, 1 August 2018*). This position shows even more that, on the basis of a common observation, some political activists adopt different methods to respond. When some point to the transitional efforts made by the motion, but continue to advocate within the Collective to push the demands further; others point to the limits deemed insurmountable by the Collective and decide to deviate from them.

Two divergent visions about the attitude and strategy to adopt towards the city authorities are clearly apparent between associative professionals and political activists. At the heart of this divergence is potentially a deeper element that can explain the search for "effectiveness" and "concrete progress" on the one hand, and the constant effort to broaden the scope of the motion on the other: confidence in the

strength of a social movement and how to understand its role. Following negotiations, Collective representatives obtained semi-annual meetings with the City to follow up on the motion. At the general assembly in June, this decision was considered a real victory for the assurance of what they call a "constant citizen monitoring". Indeed, associative professionals are not insensitive to social mobilization. All interviewees, to varying degrees, noted the importance of social mobilization that supports the work done by the Collective. Often, these professionals consider mobilization to be, at most, complementary to the work that experts do during negotiations. During formal and informal discussions, I often noted that associative professionals and political activists seemed to be on the same wavelength regarding how to apprehend the importance of social mobilization. It was only after I delved deeper into the subject that I understood that if they spoke about it in the same way, it was because the term and the idea to which it refers were fundamentally different in these two groups. While the former envisage "citizen monitoring" or "social mobilization" through the involvement of associative leaders who have expressed their support for the campaign (by being signatories for example), the latter see in it rather a class mobilization, able to federate the local population, migrant or not, on the basis of common interests. My interviews particularly helped to shed light on this aspect defended by Collective participants.

What do we do now that the motion has passed? A motion can remain a pointless promise if nothing is done about it. We now need an agenda, a specific commitment that must be negotiated with the city. Also, constant citizen monitoring is needed to ensure that these commitments are practically implemented. It was therefore thought that there should be regularly updating to monitor the motion's application. This will now be the case thanks to the meeting, twice a year, of Collective members and city actors. In parallel, there would be more focused meetings. This system of regular concerted evaluation thought of in Liege, as soon as I learned about it, I proposed it everywhere else. For me it's essential. So we are not staying at a one-shot action. We have a direct and regular channel to call out, but outside the spotlight.

*Local coordinator, personal communication, 2018, May 7*

What may lead to confusion in discerning the visions of associative professionals and political activists regarding the need for social mobilization is found in the first part of this extract. Here, the campaign coordinator makes a speech that would not be denied by the most radical political activists. Indeed, everyone believes that the motion is only a note of intent, and that nothing concrete will come of it without a constant citizen watch that should be activated with the help of an action plan. Opinions differ on the nature of this citizen watch and on the method for carrying out this action plan. Here, constant citizen watch seems to be synonymous with regular negotiations, twice a year, between Collective representatives and the city authorities. In any case, this is the future that the Collective seems to have in store for itself: "The next step is that in the election campaign, this Collective will have to come back and challenge all the parties by saying 'for the next 6 years, you commit to this' to implement this motion. I believe that this is an absolutely essential step now" (*municipal councilor and Collective member, personal communication, 29 June 2018*). The expert negotiations supported by an *ad hoc* mobilization at key dates seem to be the two sides of the same future envisaged by these members. This, at least, is what the spokesperson seems to confirm: "now [after the vote on the motion], what we have decided is that each one continue his respective activities and mention each time 'hospitable municipality' as much as possible during these

activities" (*personal communication, 20 June 2018*). Sometimes, far from being a chosen phenomenon, this evolution is perceived as natural for a social movement. Of course, it depends on how you estimate whether or not your objectives have been met. The local councilor who participated in the life of the Collective believes in any case that the Collective, in view of its characteristics, has served its purpose. According to him, its evolution towards expertization is natural.

This evolution seems to me to be in the nature of things. It is a bit like the life of the political parties. The activity looks like an inverted Gauss curve. Movements are not made to be eternal. You may get worn out, tired or bored. Then you risk dying a slow death. We might as well say 'we did our thing, it was great, we won' or redefine the objective and target it on very specific points, which do not concern new expertise but new demands. For example, concerning undocumented migrants or travelers, or claims linked to the CPAS. And then, we redo a campaign based on other objectives. But indeed, the campaign for this motion is not the bible that we will worship for years.

*City councilor and Collective member, personal communication, 2018, June 29*

Despite this natural evolution, he suggests a springboard on which the campaign could bounce if it feels it has new objectives to defend. This conception of the campaign's evolution is not so far removed from those shared by political activists. Indeed, they are constantly pointing out the shortcomings of the motion and how the Collective could broaden its content to ensure more grassroots support, not limited to the associative niche and activists already convinced. Therefore, for them, the way in which associative professionals envisage citizen monitoring is not the solution to ensure support that lasts over time. These methods are far from what they think is really effective. According to these activists, the CNCD-11.11.11 campaign was a real opportunity to make strong demands and obtain broad support. Finally, despite some very targeted progress, they see that the motion would look like an empty shell. They believe that this gap in terms of content reflects the sterility of negotiation methods. To further this opinion, two political activists each gave me an anecdote.

What is happening at the CPAS homeless unit is very illustrative. Under-staffing, requests processed outside legal time limits, etc. The aDAS, in collaboration with other organizations, is taking action and calling on social action advisers: immediately, in the hierarchies, things are moving! And they put things in place. In this case, there was no motion and there was no blathering. They mobilized, they went to make a mess in the service, and they questioned the municipal councilors. So they got a change. Mobilization pays. Yet I can tell you they were very confrontational! They did not talk about collaborating hand in hand with the CPAS of Liège, etc. Instead, they said: 'No, you're illegal, you don't respect people, from now on we're going to get on your nerves until there's a change'. It bothered enough the authorities to make things change.

*CPAS worker, personal communication, 2018, June 26*

The Collective, under the pressure of authorities, abandoned the claim about the two months of rental guarantees. However, I have just recently read a declaration from the Socialist Party of Liège which now explains that they will grant these two months. Indeed, the aDAS made an action in December. Then I published my report on the homeless cell on social networks, where I have some notoriety in this area. My text was entitled: "A morning in hell". I know that important City and CPAS actors are following my publications closely - they tell me so themselves. And I can tell you that the two-month guarantee and their housing policy have been denounced at length. While a big thing like the "hospitable municipality" motion could have put pressure on the CPAS to obtain this, on the contrary they backed off on it. The further back you go, the less you get.

*aDAS responsible, personal communication, 2018, June 31*

These anecdotes are living and current illustrations of what the initial local campaign "Liège, ville refuge" might have looked like before the arrival of the CNCD-11.11.11. Initiated by far-left activists, it did not indeed mention the drafting of a text leading to the adoption of a legally non-binding motion for the city authorities. It was based in particular on the more traditional and advanced demands of this type of organization. However, the advent of the campaign for hospitable municipalities was perceived by them as an opportunity to participate in the life of a broad and visible platform, with more consequent means: "We think, as good Trotskyists, that we must integrate the campaigns which have a life, a broad visibility, and which already mobilizes a little the sector concerned. We want to stimulate a dynamic of grassroots mobilization that is already somewhat present in theory but not really in practice" (*political activist, personal communication, 26 June 2018*). The person in charge of the aDAS added that "[the achievements obtained by Collective's representatives] could have been obtained without necessarily having the existence of the platform, sorry to say"; and that, finally, "this Collective could have an important influence in improving living and working conditions for the population in Liège but, unaware of its potential strength, it gave birth to an empty shell" (*personal communication, 31 June 2018*). What political activists seem to be saddened by is the misunderstanding of associative professionals about how to establish a balance of power, and therefore trust, in favor of their social movement. In the same vein, some seem to regret not having been able to sufficiently distill this way of analyzing the situation among the participants so that this opinion obtains the support of the majority and alters the Collective's development in this sense.

Finally, if it is possible to extract demands by being more offensive, why did the Collective's representatives, from the associative sector, accept several concessions during the negotiations? Yet many of them have a history of being activists - even still militating in one or another thematic organization. Some of them have considerable experience of confrontation with the city authorities, particularly in the 1990s. Some, therefore, have a political interpretation of the situation that can lead them to understand the role that such a platform can play in the constitution of a broader and offensive balance of power. However, within this platform, it is their figure of associative professionals that was predominant. Tired of getting involved in struggles doomed to failure after sometimes decades of activism and focusing their energy on their professional activity, some participants from the associative milieu would have seen in the platform the opportunity to defend, not the common good, but the particular interest that motivates them in their respective professional sphere. That, at least, is the hypothesis that the various interviews led me to adopt. Indeed, getting an overview on the way the campaign had evolved and what it was likely moving towards, the local coordinator shared her view on the situation: "The CNCD-11.11.11 will soon disengage from this campaign. We'll see how it's taken up. The Collective is finally very multiform. Everyone comes with their interests and gets involved in some things rather than others. But our common struggle was clear: the interpellation, the text and the vote on the motion. Now, after the vote, the common struggle may be less obvious" (*personal communication, 7 May 2018*). Each person or group would join the campaign with their own interests and would, therefore, mobilize more on one theme than another. This sentence reminded me of my participation in the April 2018 meeting, which brought together only seven representatives from

different organizations that make up the "core" of the platform. As a reminder, at this meeting, the main concern was how to re-engage people in the campaign's dynamics. I have intervened several times in the debate to ask whether future dates with new objectives or targets to be achieved are on the campaign agenda. I remember not getting any answers to my question. At the end of the meeting, the spokesperson and lawyer at "Point d'Appui" turned to me and said, "Now you understand why we can't talk about common objectives? Because we all have different objectives" - and, in addition to this message that I had transcribed, I noted: "Impossibility of having common points/objectives because of particular interests?" (*personal note, April 26, 2018*). Later, while I was talking with a political activist about the reasons which pushed him to believe to have failed in his objective, he immediately questioned the vision of associative professionals:

[Associative professionals] may not have the same political vision as us. They may already be satisfied that we have not categorized it as usual and that the motion is not confined to a discourse that is rather typical of the associative sector working in this sector, consisting in focusing on migrants only. Here, the questions were asked in a slightly more general way. I think that the failure lies in the fact that we really remain within the framework of the current institutions and the way in which we represent the municipal council's room for maneuver. If we took the question the way we took it, we would start with needs and not with feasibility. We would therefore explain that the real possibilities for these demands to succeed will depend on the balance of power we manage to establish, and not on whether "no, this is an issue that is dealt with at the federal level and not at the municipal level", etc.

*Political activist, personal communication, 2018, June 26*

While the second part of this excerpt refers, in other words, to questions already dealt with previously, the first part may nevertheless contribute to the question that now concerns us. Associative professionals, especially if they have activist tendencies, are in the habit of demanding better financial and material means, of challenging a law that undermines their daily practice, of denouncing an ambient discourse that aggravates the situation of the public for which they are concerned, and of making up for the lack of public services by making a personal commitment to provide help to a family in distress - thus going beyond the scope of their work. They are often at the forefront of poverty, extreme precarity and distress. Faced with this situation, even the most politically awake people tire of feeling that they are struggling in a vacuum by campaigning in contexts that do not lead to direct improvements in their working environment. However, these associative professionals seem to have perceived the opportunity, through the drafting of the motion, its adoption, and the establishment of a proximity with political decision-makers, to finally be able to concretely improve the situation of their public through their specific field of expertise. On the day of the rally at City Hall in support of the municipal appeal, a participant told me that she had spoken to a worker from an association that had participated in drafting the motion. This worker explained his position to her directly:

He told me his purpose quite clearly: "I have an objective in this motion, which is to improve the situation in [his particular area of expertise]". I understand it's important to him, it's part of his job. "And if, in addition, we do not manage to work with the CPAS, we are screwed," he told me. Certainly, but if the CPAS must give urgent medical help, it must give it, that's all. We don't have to thank it, either! I'm sure he had a specific goal, and now that he gets it, he's ready to drop everything else. But it's not right when you're in a larger movement. I am very happy that he has achieved this victory for himself, and especially for the people he has long defended. And he



sincerely does. So it's to his credit. But his attitude is really corporatist. Finally, you use a platform to get your goals across, and you don't care about the rest.

*Committed citizen, electronic correspondence, 2018, July 20*

Of course, the position expressed here is not intended to underline the attitude of an isolated individual, but rather to reveal a logic specific to a social group that is reflected in this specific exchange. Although this logic is not immediately perceptible or publicly defended by its protagonists, it finds its origin in the campaign's design philosophy. Previously, I illustrated the support that the organization in sub-groups generated among associative professionals. From drafting the text of the motion to monitoring the progress of its various points, expertise and dedication directed towards a single cause are valued within the Collective. At the General Assembly in July 2018, the two speakers selected to address the plenary session were two experts. They were asked to report on the negotiations' progress in their own area of expertise. There was very little discussion about an analysis of the motion as a whole. His text was hardly perceived as a collection of collective and coherent demands that should be defended with the same vigor. Moreover, although this situation does not lead to any apparent conflict situation in Liège, it seems that the same does not apply in all municipalities. Indeed, while discussing informally with a political activist from another city, I learned that the debate between associative professionals and political activists could materialize in a much more vigorous way:

That's why things happen that way, too. CNCD-11.11.11 is a big institutional thing. Moreover, there was a debate in Mons about the motion's content, but also about the method. The activists were very angry. There was a big conflict between left and far left activists and those who drafted the hospitable motion. Not only were the activists not concerted, but the motion was unbelievably dull.

*Mons political activist, electronic correspondence, 2018, July 22*

Finally, it appears that the CNCD-11.11.11's role is fundamental in building a balance of power, expressed to varying degrees, between associative professionals and political activists. By imposing the rules of the game, this organization seems to have distributed the cards unequally to the various protagonists likely to integrate into this type of dynamic. The reasons are to be found in the choice to define the objects in the form of a non-binding motion for the municipal authorities as well as that to federate a network of experts to draft the motion. All in all, the essence of these choices could only lead to the meeting of municipal authorities and experts around a text on which these actors should agree. The idea of extending the motion to broader demands and therefore likely to lead to a more grassroots mobilization was excluded from the nature of the campaign from the outset. Political activists in this situation were thus highly likely to be outvoted. Some have therefore left the initiative while others continue to struggle from within. In all cases, these activists draw the same conclusion, summarized here by the aDAS representative: "In fact, all this is a gift to the City so that it can claim to be a 'hospitable city' without doing much" (*personal communication, 30 June 2018*).

## *Where Are the (Undocumented) Migrants?*

As I study within the “Collectif Liège Hospitalière”, I end up noting the absence of a leading social group in view of the campaign's theme: migrants themselves. So I tried to trace their (non-)involvement as the campaign evolved. To do this, I go back to the origins of the initial campaign embryo as it took shape locally: from "Liège, refuge city" to "Liège, hospitable city". I explained how the first campaign focused its action on the involvement of associations and political groups, but especially of migrants themselves - with particular emphasis on undocumented migrants. Initiated by two far-left organizations, this approach is the basis of their political philosophy. When this initiative was integrated into the CNCD-11.11.11 campaign for hospitable municipalities, the participation of migrants became more unclear.

In fact, one of the two far-left organizations behind the first campaign broke away from this new dynamic: "Soon, anarchist activists no longer followed the case. They explained to me that integrating into the dynamics of the campaign for hospitable municipalities was not radical enough and that we would do better to continue our own activity on this issue. But on what basis, with which approach and which justification, they did not tell me. On the contrary, we thought that this broad initiative should be integrated so as not to isolate ourselves in a sectarian way" (*political activist, personal communication, 26 June 2018*). In fact, this organization finally appeared several months later, more precisely during the night of July 9 to 10, 2018. Indeed, on the evening of 29 June, a young undocumented immigrant was arrested by police officers in plain clothes behind the night shelter in Liège where he was housed for the time of his professional training<sup>36</sup>. Judging that the local politicians did not respect their commitment and thus "flouted the hospitable municipality's citizen campaign", they formed a group called "Commune-Hospitalière-Mais-Pas-Trop" (Hospitable-Municipality-But-Not-Too-Much) to block the gates of the municipal house of Liège. They also put up a solidarity banner for this young undocumented immigrant. They explained that "this arrest is prohibited in the motion which was voted by the municipal council" and that "it shows once again the limit of their words because they have only for act the police repression"<sup>37</sup>. Following this event, I noticed effectively that the actions carried out for the defense of this young man were carried by the association in which he carried out a training course, the collective of Liege against the detention centers, as well as its trade-union organization. So I asked the Collective spokesperson about her position on such situations. She explained to me:

We see arrests every day at Point d'Appui. We go to Vottem's detention center every day. So we try not to be too visible in our mobilizations at Point d'Appui. That's why we chose to talk to the authorities, because it's less political. Mobilizing against a "legal" arrest is complicated for us. In this context, even making a public statement on behalf of the Collective is not an option because it would position all the organizations that make it up. That is why only the organizations that are used to raising their fists signed the actions for his release, and even if these organizations are part of the Collective, we could not sign on its behalf. I, as a lawyer, need to have all the details of the case, with witnesses and so on. So I can't involve Point d'Appui.

*Lawyer and Collective spokesperson, personal communication, 2018, July 20*

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<sup>36</sup> See the petition for his release, finally obtained on July 19, for more details:

<https://www.change.org/p/issiaka-est-en-centre-fermé-depuis-le-29-juin-réagissons>

<sup>37</sup> See the whole text “Free Issiaka!” at <http://www.facebook.com/jocliege>

If I highlight this case, it is because it allows me to better understand the Collective's room for maneuver, in particular concerning its involvement in the defense of immigrants (especially undocumented immigrants); and, in this sense, the little marked will to involve this social group in its activity. I would point out, however, that this matter was not, to my knowledge, discussed within the Collective. In order to know the position of members who were not from the associative sector on this matter, I communicated the opinion of the spokesperson to a political activist. He bitterly judged this position: "No, it's not okay at all. This evolution does not inaugurate anything good for the continuation of this Collective's activity, especially for the defense and the fight for the rights of undocumented migrants which should be the purpose of this platform" (*personal communication, 24 June 2018*).

Therefore, noting the absence of (undocumented) migrants in the activity of the Collective on the one hand, as well as their absence in its *de facto* stances on the other hand, I contacted a member of the Voice of Undocumented Migrants (VSP) in order to gather his opinion. After several of his friends were invited and participated as speakers at the first conference "Liège, city of refuge", he was put in contact with the CNCD-11.11.11 campaign on the occasion of the first local meeting aimed at preparing the Congress on Migration on 10 June 2017. During these conferences, his role was to play a show organized by the VSP, before welcoming people to a painting exhibition. He did not participate in the round table to discuss the campaign. Thereafter, he no longer really participated in the Collective's activities, notably due to his school diary. However, he kept abreast of developments in the motion through some VSP meetings and e-mails circulating on the subject. Subsequently, the VSP was mainly represented at the Collective meetings by VSP support committee representatives. However, this absence was underlined by others: not publicly during the meetings I attended, but during my interviews: "In the collective, where are the migrants? Where are the first concerned? Where do they have the floor? I think that's a little problematic. Afterwards, I think that the VSP was called, and the Collectif surely asked them to come, it's not about that. But if we want to be honest, the VSP in Liège is not a very autonomous group. It is strongly endorsed by the VSP support committee - in my opinion" (*political activist, June 26, 2018*). Others make the same observation: "I noticed something quite revealing on the day of the municipal appeal, behind the City Hall. The only ones who did not speak that day were the members of the VSP. The only ones directly concerned by the situation" (*committed citizen, 20 July 2018*). Examining the relative autonomy of the VSP in relation to its support committee would require a separate study. However, one hypothesis could relate the importance given to humanitarian aid and the management of daily life on the one hand, and the energy given to politically involving the public being helped on the other. The VSP member I met explained to me that there is no problem of autonomy in the following way: "All the tasks of the daily life of the occupation are shared. That's why we have meetings. It's very democratic"; however, he pointed out how difficult it is for them to impose themselves politically: "There is obviously a difference in weight *vis-à-vis* authorities between the people in the support committee and us. I have neither the number of city councilors nor the knowledge of how to address them. [...] So we can't put ourselves forward. Meetings are attended, but without any influence" (*personal communication, June 30, 2018*). This young man therefore supports his feeling of

powerlessness towards both the authorities and the campaign. Looking at the struggle through negotiations, he said he did not see how to weigh in the discussion. Yet he attends meetings, both with city authorities (but accompanied by influential support committee members) and with activists. Could they be given more prominence?

And, without wanting to make a big deal of it either, at the last Collective meeting I attended, VSP support committee's representative announced that a meeting of the VSP would be held the very evening of the next Collective meeting. And the Collective meeting was nevertheless held that day: they did not change the date. It would still be good to push the main parties concerned to the fore, especially when they exist in the form of an organization. And not only "intellectually" as CNCD-11.11.11 does, but by practically involving them in the organization of mobilization.

*aDAS representative, personal communication, 2018, June 30*

According to my interviews, opportunities to involve (undocumented) migrants were not lacking. However, I must qualify the idea put forward in the above extract: since the municipal appeal had to be carried out by a citizen of Liège, it was not legally possible to have a VSP member assume this role. Nevertheless, my interlocutor did not refer to this aspect. Indeed, her remarks concerned the speeches within the gathering located outside the building, in support of the appeal. In any case, these various events reflect the way the Collective considers the need to involve (undocumented) migrants in the campaign. Although very involved in negotiations for the betterment of their respective migrant audiences, they do not seem to perceive any interest in involving this audience. This attitude obviously does not reflect any denigration of the migrant population. Indeed, these associative professionals seem to be strongly involved in defending the rights of this population. However, this defense is considered and organized in a particular way. The objective of professionals is to target the public's interest in their sector of activity, and the preferred method is negotiations with the city authorities. Within this paradigm, it seems difficult to find any interest in directly involving the people concerned, who do not actually master the codes as much as these professionals. Moreover, the VSP member explains to me the difficulties faced by the various actors in directly integrating migrants in their mobilization:

I was told that migration responsibilities are not regulated at the municipal level, but at the federal level. The mayor may want to help us, but if the federal police come, he cannot interfere because he could be the subject of a complaint for law obstruction in the course of an investigation for example. Other activists have already been the subject of legal proceedings for trafficking in human beings. Theo Francken puts pressure on the mayor of Liège, who is afraid of reprisals if he helps us. I was at two meetings in relation to housing and the mayor told me so himself, with supporting evidence. There, he expressed his concern. Last year, in the space of two weeks, Theo Francken sent him two letters to get information about the occupation of Burenville. As a result, I understand why the Collective is a stickler for the law.

*VSP's undocumented migrant, personal communication, 2018, June 30*

What this VSP member expresses here is that he is hearing the various difficulties pushing the City not to go any further in its assistance towards undocumented migrants. He also understands how, through negotiations, these limits affect the Collective's positioning and room for maneuver. Having participated in various meetings, notably with the mayor, he explains the City's willingness to help, as well as the reasons

for the limitations of this assistance. But hearing is not embracing. Indeed, if he understands the political stakes, the direction taken by the various meetings in which he participates does not lead him to consider the future serenely. More specifically, it seems that the motion is not seen as the salutary way to lead quickly and effectively to better living conditions.

When policies refer to the motion, undocumented migrants must not be mentioned. That's what I understand. Elections are coming up. I had this feeling when the mayor complained about the population's reactions to the hospitable city campaign. He got angry because he was receiving insults in comments from a newspaper article. Because when we say "Liege, hospitable city", people understand that they are going to receive all undocumented migrants, etc., and that is what we are talking about. So I do not see that politicians really have the courage to go there. Undocumented migrants are an extremely sensitive subject. For them, when we speak of Liège as a hospitable city, we must put more emphasis on those who have permission to settle. The Collective's people are fighting for everyone, regularized and undocumented. But for me politics sorts. They don't really want to talk about undocumented migrants.

*Ibid., personal communication, 2018, June 30*

However, this VSP member does not attack the local authorities head-on, and even less the Collective's representatives. He explained that the Collective, in its speech and in the prerogatives of the campaign, aims to defend migrants regardless of their status. According to him, the Collective, therefore, acts without any discrimination to the extent of the room for maneuver granted to it by the political authorities. It would be the latter which, by sorting migrants between regularized and undocumented migrants, would slow down the evolution and implementation of claims. This categorization would aim to avoid over-publicized support for undocumented migrants in the run-up to the local elections. In his view, local political authorities are doing a lot to avoid encroaching on "that ground". In view of this observation, which seemed to me to be both realistic and fatalistic, I asked him his opinion on how their situation might possibly evolve. Finally, he gave me his point of view on how, according to him, a city becomes hospitable:

It all depends on the citizens. Politics is all about that. If politicians see that their electorate is on the VSP's side, what will they do? They will listen to it and orient their policy in our favor. On the contrary, if they feel that citizens don't care about VSP, or even say they don't want migrants, then the worst can happen to us. You have to mobilize at the grassroots level and it takes a long time. If the citizens are mobilized precisely for our cause or others such as unemployment, pensions, global warming, etc., then the politician will have to follow because it is his electorate. It's all about political interest. That is why the municipal council adopted the hospitable motion, although reluctantly because they do not want to make this subject too visible, that is why they have changed its title. That is why, in my opinion, this motion concerns especially those who already have papers.

*Ibid., 2018, June 30*

From his perspective, citizens are at the heart of the change process. If politicians are the law-making and enforcement body, they would only decide and enforce these laws based on the support they would receive among their electorate for an obvious matter of political survival. As a result, his political vision of change is part of a representative democratic logic: awaken citizens could then choose their political representatives whose program would be in line with what the population wants. These political representatives would be all the easier to set it up if the "enlightened" citizen would support his political measures. However, as he explained above, "mobilizing at the grassroots level takes a lot of time", especially

for a subject as "extremely sensitive" as that of undocumented migrants. Finally, he explains to me how disappointed he was by this campaign and how undocumented migrants are treated. He believed the Collective could have gone further given its weight. Following this interview, I asked some members of the Collective how the theme of undocumented migrants could benefit from renewed attention, both within the Collective and among citizens in general. Above all, I wondered about the possibility of going beyond making undocumented migrants visible: how to obtain real changes through this campaign? is it still possible? A political activist sent me back to a text that his organization had written for distribution at the rally in support of the municipal appeal:

An effective pressure on an authority is exerted by the number [...] the various mobilizations should [echo each other], but also try to link their causes with the interests of the population of Liège as a whole. Migrants must receive access to housing, but all Liège residents have an interest in the city investing in a massive program to build quality affordable housing or applying the law on the requisition of unoccupied housing. Similarly, asking the municipal police not to make any arrests for irregularities on the territory makes no sense if, at the same time, the homeless and beggars are criminalized. To link the demands, to unify the struggles, it is thus to weave the bonds of solidarity and to increase the mobilization which will allow us to prevail

*Leaflet of a far-left organization, distributed during the municipal appeal on October 2, 2017*

According to this organization, such a program and such a method could even contribute to generalizing the reinforcement of support for this type of initiative elsewhere in Belgium: "And it is at the same time encouraging other localities to enter into a struggle to impose a socially progressive agenda. Far from being isolated, Liège could then be a springboard to extend the mobilization to other localities" (*Ibid.*, 2 October 2017). Although some associative professionals support the importance of the weight that citizens hold, their explanation on how to mobilize them often remains highly abstract. They often conclude by pointing out the responsibility of citizens to inform and educate themselves.

## CONCLUSION

In Belgium, the campaign for hospitable municipalities towards migrants is both a reflection of the European and Belgian migration policy crisis as well as a non-governmental attempt to address it. Indeed, the EU is facing great difficulties. Despite a period of limited economic recovery, political instability continues to grow. Moreover, the announcement of a new recession could jeopardize certain already fragile balances. In this context, the governments of European countries face many complications. Migration is undoubtedly one of the most important. Although the number of refugees has fallen sharply since 2015, migration has been used as a scapegoat policy. Prime Minister Kurz announced that this would be the central theme of the Austrian EU Presidency<sup>38</sup>. In Germany, the government is under pressure from right-wing AfD populists<sup>39</sup>. The governments of the various EU member states, unable to establish a common

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<sup>38</sup> See EU's Press Release (2018, July 3). Austria's EU Presidency: Chancellor Sebastian Kurz aims to "build bridges". *Europa*. Retrieved from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>

<sup>39</sup> See Bennhold, K. & M. Eddy (2018, July 2). Merkel, to Survive, Agrees to Border Camps for Migrants. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

migration policy<sup>40</sup>, tighten their policies and do not agree on quotas and the distribution of refugees. From then on, repression intensified: Italy refused entry to refugee boats<sup>41</sup>, Hungary made it a criminal offense to help refugees<sup>42</sup> (even for lawyers), Austria announced stricter surveillance of its border with Germany<sup>43</sup>, the French President Macron criticised the Italian Home Secretary Salvini but increased surveillance at the French borders<sup>44</sup>. These policies reflect that a significant segment of the population is in favor of a stricter legislation. It is not so much on the basis of racism, even if it exists, but on the basis of fears about the social fabric's capacity to withstand this issue.

In such a European context, the policy of the Belgian Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration Theo Francken is no exception. Since taking office in October 2014, he has been the "man of a thousand and one polemics"<sup>45</sup>: sending migrants back to countries considered at risk, threatening university rectors who demonstrate hospitality, racist tweets, arresting journalists reporting on the new detention center for families and children in an irregular situation, etc. He regularly violates the Belgian Constitution, the European Convention on Human Rights and even the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Generally speaking, its policy is focused on closing borders, expelling irregular migrants and criminalizing foreigners. Recently, while the number of attempted suicides, violence and trafficking has only increased in Australian detention centers<sup>46</sup> (mainly in Nauru and Manus), while a 26-year-old Iranian refugee detained in Nauru just ended his life a few weeks ago<sup>47</sup> and the United Nations officially condemns the Australian immigration policy<sup>48</sup>, Theo Francken reiterates his admiration for the "Australian model", the "No Way" migration policy, in various Belgian media.

It is in response to this situation that the CNCD-11.11.11, a large Belgian NGO bringing together nearly 100 associations, initiated a campaign called "national" but really taking place within the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. The aim of this campaign was to act at the local level by pushing local councils to adopt a (legally non-binding) motion to declare their city "hospitable" towards migrants. This memorandum of intent, ratified by the municipal councils, morally committed these cities to improve the information and

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<sup>40</sup> See European Parliament (2018, June 18). Migration and Asylum: a challenge for Europe. *Europa*. Retrieved from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>

<sup>41</sup> See Scherer, S. (2018, July 10). Italy stops ship with migrants, turns up pressure on EU allies. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com>

<sup>42</sup> See Reuters in Budapest (2018, June 20). Hungary passes anti-immigration 'Stop Soros' laws. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com>

<sup>43</sup> See Murphy, R. (2018, July 3). Austria ready to act at borders if Germany moves on migrants. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com>

<sup>44</sup> See Hullot-Guiot, K. (2018, July 18). Migrants' Treatment on Italian Border: Prefect Questioned by Deputies. *Libération*. Retrieved from <http://www.liberation.fr>

<sup>45</sup> See a compilation on RTBF (2017, October 30). Theo Francken, l'homme aux mille et une polémiques. *RTBF*. Retrieved from <http://www.rtf.be>

<sup>46</sup> See Boochani, B., Doherty, B. & N. Evershed (2017, May 17). Self-harm, suicide and assaults: brutality on Manus revealed. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com>

<sup>47</sup> See Doherty, B. & S. Vasefi (2018, June 15). Iranian asylum seeker dies by suicide on Nauru. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com>

<sup>48</sup> See Doherty, B. (2018, July 7). UN body condemns Australia for illegal detention of asylum seekers and refugees. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com>

reception of migrants, whatever their status. To do this, the CNCD-11.11.11 encouraged citizens to adopt a specific *modus operandi*: a first "national" decentralized action in front of several municipal houses to officially launch the campaign, the constitution of a citizen group to give it a grassroots basis, and a call to organize a citizen appeal at the municipal council so that, finally, the local authorities adopt the text of the proposed motion. The CNCD-11.11.11 even proposed the standard texts of the motion and the interpellation to citizens so that they could use them as a basis.

However, while the suggested strategy is common at the regional level, the results obtained vary significantly depending on the localities considered. Indeed, a political geography of the phenomenon in Belgium has allowed me to draw several conclusions. First of all, this initial analysis leads me to formulate the hypothesis that the presence of citizen groups plays a preponderant role in the adoption of this motion by the municipal councils - and this, independently of the local political majority. However, the quality and actual application of the demands contained in this text does not seem to automatically reflect the quality of citizen mobilization. Indeed, it is local migration realities combined with the quality of this mobilization that seem best able to define these parameters. In other words, a municipality in a rural area, traditionally right-wing, but very little confronted with the reality of immigration, may be more easily led to adopt a so-called "strong" motion than an urban municipality, traditionally left-wing, but whose immigration constitutes a tangible reality inducing policies with a real impact on the daily life of its population. Moreover, if this campaign focuses its development on the isolated work of local groups fighting within the framework of their respective municipalities, the weight of large urban agglomerations - such as Liège - seems decisive in the establishment of new standards for the continuity of the campaign. Indeed, because of the richness and variety of their many resources, urban cities are the places in which the most advanced expertise is likely to emerge. This is the hypothesis my research seems to confirm. Indeed, the large number of associations and collectives providing aid to migrant populations present in Liège allowed the drafting of a motion deemed exemplary by the CNCD-11.11.11 coordinator: its demands would be the most detailed, the most thorough, and their scope would be broader than elsewhere. Indeed, I have explored the way in which the associative and activist fabric of Liège has been developing its expertise in this field for decades. However, I also discussed the possible setback caused by such a large number of associations. On the one hand, many seem to be pursuing similar missions, which could lead to the smooth running of the users' journey; and, on the other hand, the associative actors seem to regularly deplore the lack of communication between these associations. In this context, the *top-down* CNCD-11.11.11 campaign was perceived by associative professionals as a salutary assistance. Indeed, in Liège, several stressed the importance of this NGO's contributions in terms of human resources (a local coordinator), material resources (the many visuals, the website, etc.), and financial resources.

In the second part of my research, I immersed myself in the "Collective Liège Hospitalière's" life for six months in order to understand how a city becomes hospitable. I, therefore, focused in particular on identifying the power relations at work within the Collective, as well as between the Collective and local political authorities. First of all, I drew my attention to the importance of the role of experts from the



associative and activist fabric during the drafting phase of the motion; and how particularity of this local fabric led to the elaboration of a motion that tried to open up to a wider population than the migrant population initially considered by the CNCD-11.11.11 campaign. I then stressed that this opening of the motion was the balance of power's living result between associative professionals and political activists active within this Collective. To do this, I focused on three aspects that seemed fundamental to me in understanding the different ways for of these two groups to perceive the campaign: their respective vision of the motion's role, the relationship to local political authorities, and the involvement of the first concerned - (undocumented) migrants. Indeed, in the course of my research within this Collective, it seemed that these three themes constituted the main subjects on which the two groups sometimes had divergent views and, especially, promulgated opposing methods. However, although I conceptually divide these three topics of interest in order to further analyze the vision of these two social groups, they are obviously intimately linked in reality. The perception of the motion's role both influences and is conditioned by the approach to be adopted *vis-à-vis* local political authorities, as well as the importance of the (undocumented) migrants' role in the campaign's activity.

The associative professional figure tends to adopt a so-called reformist approach in the campaign. Fundamentally, this approach appears to be the most effective way of meeting the prerequisites imposed by the type of campaign imagined by the CNCD-11.11.11. Indeed, by focusing the main objective of the initiative on the adoption by the local councils of a non-binding motion, the NGO has defined the limits of a framework of action as well as the rules of the game for carrying out this action. However, a game can include or exclude a social group depending on how well it masters these rules. In the present case, the drafting of claims related to the reception of migrant populations could only propel the experts in the field to the fore: the associative professionals confronted daily with these realities, as well as some political activists with advanced experience concerning this theme. Moreover, the mobilization for the motion's adoption necessarily requires the meeting between Collective's representatives and local political authorities in order to draft a concerted text. Similarly, the selection of associative professionals as Collective representatives before authorities was inherent to the *modus operandi* of this campaign. Indeed, since the discussions on the demands were conducted behind closed doors from a politico-legal perspective, a lawyer specializing in migrants' rights was naturally elected as spokesperson in order to increase the chances of success to see the various points of the motion applied. During my discussions, associative professionals particularly underlined two interests that the motion contains in their opinion: on the one hand, it made it possible to coordinate an associative network, certainly dense, but very unstructured, and, on the other hand, it made visible the forms of precarity they face on a daily basis. Most of all, the motion thus succeeds to adapt services to these realities that were not yet either known or taken into account. As a result, each party focusing mainly on its own expertise and therefore its own demands within the motion, it seems that the motion was no longer perceived as a whole that should be defended as such, but rather as a set of more or less important demands depending on the interests of each party. Therefore, broader claims, initially imported by political activists, were eventually abandoned in negotiations with local authorities. In doing so,

fearful of not being successful in their claims, associative professionals advocate a "constructive alliance" or "positive dialogue" with these authorities, and refuse to consider themselves "in opposition". According to this paradigm, migrants are not actively involved in the campaign. Indeed, as they do not master the codes of such a mode of action and thus cannot weigh in the balance in such a way, their absence does not seem to be called into question among associative professionals.

The political activist figure tends to adopt a so-called radical approach in the campaign. Originally, two far-left organizations had launched their own campaign to make Liège a "city of refuge" following the example of Barcelona or Montreal. This launch coincided within a few days with the one of the CNCD-11.11.11 campaign. From then on, these political activists became part of this initiative which they considered broader and therefore more visible. However, for the reasons mentioned above, they quickly found themselves in a minority. Indeed, although some had sufficient expertise to contribute to certain sections of the motion, the mode of action focused on negotiations with local authorities could not allow them to develop their position within the Collective. In fact, from their point of view, the motion was not seen as a means of changing practices and protocols specific to their field of expertise, but as a means of extending specific demands to common demands for the whole population; and this in order to create solidarity between (undocumented) migrants and the local population. According to these activists, this transitional program would have avoided the main pitfall. Indeed, their fear was that this highly visible campaign, focusing solely on city's efforts to become more welcoming towards migrants, would contribute to fueling the prevailing racism. In other words, in times of austerity and impoverishment, a campaign with such a focus could increase the sense of competition between migrants and the local population. Moreover, for the same reasons, this fear was also shared by local authorities. That is why they decided to rename the motion with a more inclusive title. Indeed, in the middle of the election period and in view of the situation described at the beginning of this introduction, talking about migrants and, above all, undocumented migrants is perceived as dangerous for the political authorities. On the other hand, stuck in the straitjacket of the municipal budget, they could not support the broad scope of certain demands which, according to them, endangered the public budget. This is why, finally, the political activists active within the campaign struggled so that this motion reached the widest possible public and was not restricted to migrants alone: in order to create the solidarity and mobilization of migrants and non-migrants necessary for the establishment of a powerful balance of power able to make the municipal authorities bend on demands concerning the improvement of public services, for example. That is also why the political authorities insisted that the title of the motion should reach the widest possible public, without however its content going in this direction. In Liège, the duality between political activists and associative professionals is not expressed in a visible form of conflict. Indeed, an apparent sense of unity emerges from the meetings. After having met people who had left the campaign, I understood that a selective sorting had taken place: while some political activists in disagreement with the reformist character of the Collective disinvested from the campaign, others remained there in order to try to re-impose the initially defended demands. I, therefore, understood that the same social group considered two different methods or reactions on the basis of the same analysis.

Mirroring a study exploring "How radical activists outflanked reformists in the United States' immigrant rights movement" (Nicholls, Uitermark and Van Haperen, 2013), my study could, therefore, have been entitled "How reformists outflanked radicals in Belgium's sanctuary cities movement". Indeed, unlike this work, my research relates how a large "national" and reformist NGO overtook a local initiative initiated by radical grassroots organizations. In this respect, the British organization "City of Sanctuary" did not impose itself from above, but is the result of a decentralized network of cities having declared themselves sanctuaries following Sheffield (Darling, 2010). The legalistic nature of the Belgian campaign is reflected in the content of the proposed motions: whereas the Liège motion is considered to be the most advanced, it only requires, in the last instance, that the law be respected. Indeed, Scherr and Hofmann (2016) recall the importance of the national context and the laws in force; particularly with regard to police independence. However, in Belgium, the federal State has specific supervision over the local police, which covers, in particular, all decisions taken by the municipal council or the police council concerning the local police. Policies such as "Don't ask, don't talk" (DADT) would, therefore, be more difficult to implement by local authorities. At the very least, these authorities would be at greater risk of being reprimanded by the federal authorities. This is notably what happened in Liège, while Theo Francken personally contacted the local mayor several times to question him about undocumented migrants in Liège. Wells (2004) attributes the ability of local authorities to implement local migration policies that run counter to federal laws to the complexity of US administrative and political systems. However, Varsanyi (2010) recalls that this capacity has a double scope: it can facilitate the reception of migrants as well as repress and exclude them. Yet the highly centralized Belgian political system does not seem to allow such flexibility. Indeed, most migration policies concerning undocumented migrants, for instance, depend on the federal level. Finally, Bauder (2016) reminds us that there is not just one single set of similar policies or practices across countries, or even across cities in the same country. That is indeed what my research finds. Therefore, future studies could analyze further the emergence and development of local movements specific to certain Belgian municipalities, as in the more rural one. I did my research relatively early in the campaign. Therefore, future research could focus on the practical impact of the motions, the respect of their content and the concrete implementation of the policies decided. Finally, this campaign seems to be a fertile ground to study in greater depth the involvement of migrants' organizations in mobilizations for the defense of undocumented migrants' rights in Belgium. While they federate as an organization to make their voices heard, it seems that activists defending their cause, instead of using their campaign to make them visible, are merely speaking for them. That is why I leave the last word to the one who is first concerned and yet the least heard, who analyses with his words the impact that the campaign for hospitable municipalities will have on him and his fellow people.

In our opinion, we are still a long way from great improvements. Yes, there are, little by little, some changes... We are tolerated by the city, but it is mainly because we are supported in our struggle. Without the struggle, I couldn't have welcomed you into this beautiful house today. In the meantime, it will take a long time for the situation to turn in our favor. We are still a long way from that. Sometimes you might get discouraged, give up everything [...] With this campaign, everything moves or gives the illusion of moving, but concrete changes are still a long way off.

*VSP's undocumented migrants, personal communication, 2018, June 30*

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ANNEX I  
PICTURES



Picture 1. Jette, commune hospitalière since February 28, 2018.



Picture 2. Liège, commune hospitalière since November 27, 2017.



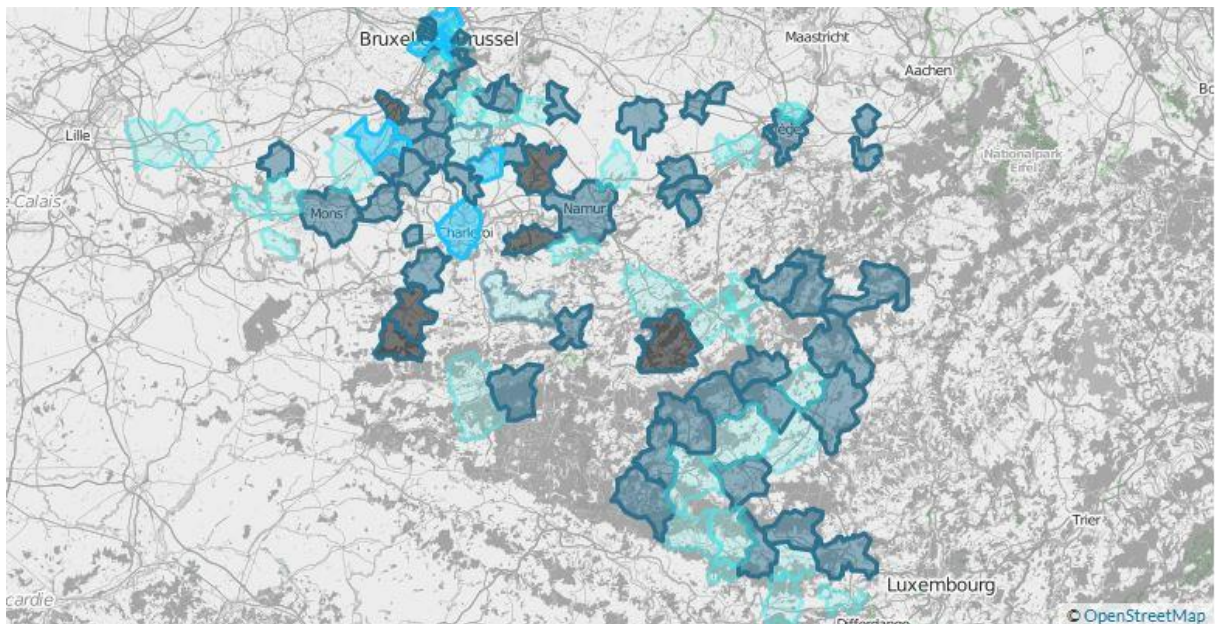
Picture 3. Verviers, commune hospitalière since January 29, 2018.



Picture 4. Wavre, commune hospitalière since October 21, 2017.



Picture 5. Liège collective's meeting. CNCD-11.11.11 coordinator present the agenda (April 26, 2018)



Picture 6. Mapping of the campaign's developments (updated on May 21, 2018).



**LIÈGE  
VILLE  
REFUGE**

Comment faire de Liège, à l'instar de Montréal ou Barcelone, une commune hospitalière pour les sans-papiers ?

Quelle stratégie pour contraindre les autorités de laisser les sans-papiers accéder aux services de base, aux soins de santé, à l'aide alimentaire ou au logement ?

**RENCONTRE & BRAINSTORMING AVEC**  
-François Grenade, chargé de la campagne «justice migratoire» au cncd  
-Amélie Faye, travailleuse de l'asbl d'aide aux sans-papiers Point d'appui  
-Pietro Tosi, permanent au MOC pour le comité des travailleurs sans-papiers

**20 AVRIL  
19H00**  
**CCKALI**  
rue St Thomas

Une initiative de EGA et JOC Liège.

## FAISONS DE LIÈGE UNE VILLE REFUGE !

**20 AVRIL - 19H00- CAFET'COLLECTIVE KALI**  
rue St Thomas n°32, 4000 Liège

### Sans-papiers, Sans droits?

Alors que dans la majeure partie du globe les migrants séjournant un territoire national sans autorisation préalable ( ceux que l'on nomme communément les sans-papiers) constituent une partie de la population privée de tout accès aux services publics, aux mécanisme de sécurité sociale, au marché du travail. Alors qu'ils sont constamment l'objet de traques policières, alors même qu'ils sont privés de tout droit, des villes se constituent en "villes refuges" et s'emploient à élargir les droits dont bénéficient les sans-papiers, à rebours de leurs législations nationales. Loin d'être tombée du ciel, cette situation est le fruit de la mobilisation des organisations de sans-papiers et du mouvement de solidarité qui les soutient.

**Comment faire de Liège, à l'instar de Montréal ou Barcelone, une commune hospitalière? Quelle stratégie pour contraindre les autorités de laisser les sans-papiers accéder aux services de base, aux soins de santé, à l'aide alimentaire ou au logement?**

### Débat avec

-François Grenade, chargé de la campagne "justice migratoire" au cncd  
-Amélie Faye, travailleuse de l'asbl d'aide aux sans-papiers Point d'appuis  
-Pietro Tosi, permanent au MOC pour le comité des travailleurs sans-papiers

*Une initiative de EGA et JOC Liège.*

Picture 7. « Liège, ville refuge » event on 2018, April 20.

## ANNEX II DOCUMENTS

| CAMPAGNE COMMUNES HOSPITALIERES.be |              |                       |            |                  |   |              |                |          |                  |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------|------------------|---|--------------|----------------|----------|------------------|
| COMMUNES                           | Groupe actif | Interpellation        | Motion     | Motion engagée ? | COMMUNES  | Groupe actif | Interpellation | Motion   | Motion engagée ? |
| BRUXELLES                          |              |                       |            |                  | LIÈGE   |              |                |          |                  |
| Anderlecht                         | X            | X                     | et après?  |                  | Hémalle   | X            |                |          |                  |
| Auderghem                          | X            | X                     | X          | ***              | Hannut <sup>1</sup>   |              | X              | X        | *                |
| Berchem Sainte Agathe              | X            | /                     | X          | *                | Herstal   | X            | en cours       |          |                  |
| Bruxelles                          | X            | X                     | et après?  |                  | Huy   | X            | X              | X        | à définir        |
| Etterbeek                          | X            | X                     | et après?  |                  | Liège   | X            | X              | X        | ***              |
| Evere                              | X            |                       |            |                  | Marchin <sup>1</sup>  |              | X              | X        | à définir        |
| Forest                             | X            | X                     | et après?  |                  | Oreye   | X            |                |          |                  |
| Ganshoren                          | X            | X                     | 26/04/2018 |                  | Saint-Georges sur Meuse   | X            |                | rejet    |                  |
| Ixelles                            | X            | X                     | X          | ***              | Saint-Nicolas <sup>1</sup>  |              | /              | X        | ***              |
| Jette                              | X            | X                     | X          | à définir        | Thismister - Clemont <sup>1</sup>                                 |              | X              | X        | *                |
| Koekelberg                         | X            | X                     | et après?  |                  | Verviers  | X            | X              | X        | ***              |
| Molenbeek-Saint-Jean               | X            | X                     | X          | *                | Waremmes <sup>1</sup>   | X            |                | X        | *                |
| Schaerbeek                         | X            | X                     | et après?  |                  | Wanze   | X            | X              | avril    |                  |
| Saint-Gilles                       | X            | 2e prévue le 29/04/18 | X          | *                | LUXEMBOURG  |              |                |          |                  |
| Saint-Josse-ten-Noode              | X            | X                     | X          | à définir        | Arlon   | X            | X              | X        | ***              |
| Uccle                              | X            |                       |            |                  | Aubange   | X            |                |          |                  |
| Watermael-Boisfort                 | X            | X                     | X          | **               | Bastogne  | X            | /              | X        | ***              |
| Woluwe-Saint-Lambert               | X            | /                     | X          | *                | Bertogne  | X            |                |          |                  |
| Woluwe-Saint-Pierre                | X            |                       |            |                  | Bertrix   | X            |                |          |                  |
| BRABANT WALLON                     |              |                       |            |                  | Bouillon  | X            | /              | X        | ***              |
| Chastre                            | X            | X                     | X          | ***              | Chiny   | X            |                |          |                  |
| Braine-l'Alleud                    | X            |                       |            |                  | Érezée  | X            |                | X        | à définir        |
| Chaumont-Gistoux                   | X            |                       |            |                  | Étalle  | X            |                |          |                  |
| Genappe                            | X            |                       |            |                  | Florentville  | X            |                |          |                  |
| Incourt                            | X            | en cours              |            |                  | Habay   | X            | X              | X        | **               |
| Ittre                              | X            | X                     | X          | ***              | Hotton  | X            |                |          |                  |
| La Hulpe                           | X            |                       |            |                  | Houffalize  | X            | X              | X        | ***              |
| Lasne                              | X            | en cours              | en cours   |                  | Libramont-Chevigny  | X            |                |          |                  |
| Nivelles                           | X            | X                     | X          | **               | Manhay  | X            | X              | X        | ***              |
| Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve         | X            |                       |            |                  | Marche-en-Famenne   | X            |                |          |                  |
| Rixensart                          | X            | X                     | X          | à définir        | Neufchâteau   | X            |                |          |                  |
| Tubize                             | X            | X                     | en cours   |                  | Paliseul  | X            | X              | X        | ***              |
| Villers-la-Ville <sup>1</sup>      |              | en cours              |            |                  | Sainte-Ode  | X            | X              | X        | ***              |
| Wavre                              | X            | X                     | X          | **               | Saint-Hubert  | X            | X              | X        | ***              |
| Waterloo                           | X            |                       | en cours   |                  | Tenneville <sup>1</sup>   |              |                | X        | **               |
| HAINAUT                            |              |                       |            |                  | Tintigny  | X            | X              | X        | **               |
| Anderlues                          | X            | X                     | X          | ***              | Vaux-sur-Sûre   | X            |                |          |                  |
| Beaumont                           | X            | en cours              |            |                  | Vielsalm  | X            | X              | X        | ***              |
| Bemissart                          | X            |                       | rejet      |                  | Virton  | X            |                |          |                  |
| Braine-le-Comte                    | X            | X                     | 27/03/2018 |                  | NAMUR   |              |                |          |                  |
| Charleroi                          | X            | en cours              |            |                  | Ciney   | X            | X              | rejet    |                  |
| Chièvres                           | X            | X                     | X          | ***              | Couvin  | X            | en cours       |          |                  |
| Dour                               | X            |                       |            |                  | Fernelmont  | X            | X              | rejet    |                  |
| Écaussinnes                        | X            | X                     | X          | ***              | Florennes   | X            |                |          |                  |
| Les Bons Villers                   |              |                       | X          | **               | Fosses-la-Ville   | X            | en cours       |          |                  |
| La Louvière                        | X            | X                     | X          | **               | Gembloux  | X            | X              | en cours |                  |
| Mons                               | X            | X                     | X          | *                | Namur   | X            | en cours       |          |                  |
| Saint-Ghislain                     | X            |                       |            |                  | Profondeville   | X            | en cours       |          |                  |
| Senefte                            | X            |                       | en cours   |                  | Rochefort <sup>1</sup>  | X            | en cours       | avril    |                  |
| Sivry-Rance                        | X            | en cours              |            |                  | Viroinval <sup>1</sup>  |              | /              | X        | *                |
| Soignies                           | X            |                       |            |                  | <b>Total 15/04 &gt; 98 communes concernées, 42 motions votées</b> |              |                |          |                  |
| Tournai                            | X            |                       |            |                  | <sup>1</sup> Initiatives non citoyennes (commune, parti...)       |              |                |          |                  |

Doc. 1. Table created by activists showing an up-to-date state of the campaign (here on April 16, 2018)

### **Demande d'interpellation type**

Les citoyens de XXX – interpellés par la situation des migrants en Belgique et dans leurs communes- souhaitent que leur commune s'engage résolument dans la défense des droits humains que l'on soit de nationalité belge ou un migrant et construise un avenir commun où les migrants ont leur place.

C'est pourquoi les citoyens de XXX désirent que leur commune se déclare 'commune hospitalière' et s'engage par cette déclaration à sensibiliser sa population et à améliorer l'accueil et le séjour des migrants. La commune s'inscrit dans un mouvement qui respecte les droits des migrants, demandeurs d'asile et des sans-papiers sur son territoire.

Précisez les enjeux communaux sur lesquels vous souhaitez soit obtenir des engagements soit reconnaître des engagements déjà pris en tenant compte des différents aspects sur lesquels une commune hospitalière peut s'engager.

*Doc. 2. Typical call out to the city councils*

### **Translation in English**

#### ***Standard request for a solicitation***

*Citizens of XXX - questioned by the situation of migrants in Belgium and in their municipalities - wish that their municipality resolutely commits itself in the defense of the human rights whether we are Belgian or migrants and builds a common future where the migrants have their place.*

*This is why the citizens of XXX want their municipality to declare itself 'hospitable commune' and commits itself by this declaration to raise awareness among its population and to improve the reception and the stay of the migrants. The municipality is part of a movement that respects the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants on its territory.*

*Specify the municipal issues on which you wish to either obtain commitments or recognize commitments already made taking into account the different aspects on which a hospital municipality can engage.*

## - ELLE VOTÉE ?



**APPROUVEE**

### CETTE MOTION EST-ELLE FORTE ?

- **Une motion forte:** la commune est une déjà une commune hospitalière avec un engagement fort pour les sans papiers.
- **Une motion moyenne:** la commune s'engage sur certains éléments.
- **Une motion faible:** la commune s'engage sur peu d'éléments.

**OUI**

**Félicitations!** Vous vivez dans une commune hospitalière.

**NON**

Passez à la page 18



## COMMENT JUGER LA MOTION VOTÉE ?

Lorsque la motion a été votée, nous vous proposons de le signaler sur la page de la commune de la carte des actions communales. Cela motivera d'autres groupes.

**La motion est-elle suffisante à vos yeux ?** Tout cela dépend de la réalité de la commune, de ce qui pourrait y être fait. On vous propose de décider en tant que groupe de la motion obtenue, vous pouvez sur la cartographie décider d'y **mettre une, deux ou trois étoiles**. A vous de décider !

Si la motion est en-deçà de ce que vous espériez, elle constitue un premier pas mais pas la fin du chemin. Vous pouvez comme le guide vous le propose, redéposer une interpellation et essayer d'obtenir en étroite collaboration avec les élu.es que votre commune s'engage de manière plus importante.

*Doc.4. How to rate the voted motion (FAQ – CNCD-11.11.11)*

### **Translation in English**

#### **HOW TO RATE THE VOTED MOTION?**

*When the motion has been voted, we suggest you to announce it on the municipality's page of the municipal actions map. This will motivate other groups.*

***Is the motion sufficient for you?*** *All this depends on the reality of the municipality, what could be done. We suggest you to take decision as a group about the motion obtained, you can decide to put **one, two or three stars** on the map. It's up to you to decide!*

*If the motion is below what you expected, it is a first step but not the end of the road. You can, as the guide proposes, redefine a solicitation and try to obtain in close collaboration with the elected officials that your municipality commits more importantly.*