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## **Co-creation of a shelter city**

**The case of civil society organizations in Granada, Spain**

A Research Paper presented by:

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## List of Acronyms

ASPA	Asociación Andaluza por la Solidaridad y la Paz
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística
IOM	International Organization for Migration
RedGra	Red Granadina por el Refugio y la Acogida
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency

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## Abstract

In 2015 when Europe was experiencing the so-called “refugee crisis” solidarity actions were emerging from civil society organizations to address the gaps left by the national government, and the creation of shelter cities is a prime example this. Shelter cities aimed to become a safe place for people with a migration background. The city of Granada was one of the few small cities in Spain to join this commitment, which is particularly interesting given the rich migration history of the city.

In light of Granada being a shelter city, this research explores the sheltering actions of civil society migrant organizations with particular attention towards the different tensions that exist in the city and the solidarity actions to overcome them. This research leverages the concept of conviviality to look at the actions taken by civil society migrant organizations which goes beyond mere coexistence and promotes relationships among individuals while also focusing on the well-being of people with a migration background.

The research findings are underpinned by fieldwork based in Granada and the use qualitative research methods including interviews and observation.

## Relevance to Development Studies

This topic is relevant to development studies because it addresses the nexus between migration and social development. Migration has always been a part of human history, and along with it, tensions have always arisen. However, this paper highlights the important role of civil society in overcoming those tensions with actions of solidarity towards migrants. This research demonstrates the significance of the initiatives from civil society that support migrants' autonomy and well-being and promotes convivial relationships with their host society. Additionally, looking at civil society migrant organizations provides insight into what are the gaps in migrants' needs left by the local and national governments.

## Keywords

Shelter city; conviviality; *convivencia*; tensions; solidarity; civil society organizations; migration; Granada; tools for conviviality.



# Chapter 1 Introduction

*“It is crucial that Granada reinforces its status as a shelter city, takes steps in its favor, and does not only maintain this title in name only”<sup>1</sup>.*

From a historical and contemporary perspective, Granada is imagined in public discourse as a place where different cultures and religions lived “peacefully” together, especially during Al-Ándalus (711 – 1492). The concept of *convivencia* refers to the peaceful coexistence during this period (Calderwood, 2014; Padilla et al., 2015; Rogozen-Soltar, 2017; Finlay, 2019; Martin-Godoy, 2021).

During 2015 and the so-called “refugee crisis,” Granada was one of the few small Spanish cities to become a shelter city. Shelter cities were created with the objective to become a safe place for people with a migration background and aimed to address the gaps in migrants’ needs left by the national government. As part of its actions as a shelter city, the government of Granada created a public campaign (as shown in figure 1.1 which shows the municipality advertising) under the slogan “*Granada ciudad solidaria y de abrazos abiertos*” (Granada a city of solidarity with open hugs).

However, the commitment to become a shelter city occurred only due social mobilization promoted by the Red Granadina por el Refugio y la Acogida (RedGra), a network of civil society organizations (CSOs) advocating for migrant rights. CSOs emerged as key actors during the establishment of a shelter city, and their sheltering actions towards migrants are a key focus of this research.

**Figure 1.1**  
Municipality of Granada advertising about being a shelter city



Source: <https://www.granada.org/inet/bso-cial12.nsf/0e778f53de0a8ff3c12581b10036efec/9cc52dd4e60d4c1fc12580f30034788b!OpenDocument>

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<sup>1</sup> Member from Provienda, (Granada, July 2022)

Whilst the city has a public branding of being a welcoming place where people of different origins cohabit peacefully, tensions are occurring in society towards migrants. As part of this research, interviews were conducted with CSOs where findings show that the organizations encourage spaces of dialogue, and knowledge exchange, provide tools for people with a migration background autonomy, and overcome alienation in the society and that those actions address the tensions that exist in the city.

Then this research focuses on the experiences of CSOs working with people with a migration background. Moreover, this research will address the following research question

Considering that Granada is a shelter city according to its local government due initiatives from civil society organizations (CSOs). What is the role of CSOs in sheltering migrants?

The rest of this research paper is organized as follows: chapter 1 recounts Granada's history and the changes at a national, regional, and local level, setting the scene for this research and demonstrating the city's relevance to this study; chapter 2 outlines the conceptual framework; chapter 3 proposes the methodology and research questions; chapters 4 and 5 discuss the findings which are divided into tensions found in the shelter city and the role of civil migrant organizations in sheltering; lastly a conclusion with policy recommendations is provided.

## 1.1 Knowing the past to understand the present

The city of Granada has a total population of 231.775 registered inhabitants as shown by the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE) in its 2021 report. From that amount, the number of people of foreign nationality (*extranjeros*) registered at the municipality equals almost 10% of the population. However, the official number of people of different nationalities living in Granada is hard to calculate since there is a good amount of people with a migration background living in an irregular situation in the city.

According to Finlay's research "Granada's landscape has diversified in the last 30 years, with the arrival of diverse nationalities, ethnicities, and religions, the city has transformed into a contemporary multicultural space, where a variety of ethnicities live and come into contact" (2019, p.790). The rest of this section outlines the necessary background for this research to understand the present migration realities in Granada.

### 1.1.1 Granada and Al-Ándalus

Al-Ándalus (711–1492) was the name given to the territory that covered the majority of the Iberian Peninsula from the eighth to the end of the fifteenth centuries under Muslim rule (Jimenez, 2006; Rojo, 2007; Heldt, 2019). Al-Ándalus not only covered one quarter of what Spain is today (see figure 1.2 that shows the territory that was under the Muslim rule during Al-Ándalus), but it was one of the most powerful territories in Western Europe of that time ruled by Muslim people, who had economic abundance, urbanization where in other places of Europe there was a lack of it, an advanced political and social organization which had nothing to do with the Christian kingdoms of the north, and an economy of primarily livestock and agriculture (Rojo, 2007). In addition, the region was also rich with different cultures, ethnicities, and religions (Finlay 2019).

The "Emirate of Granada" or "The Nasrid Kingdom of Granada" (Finlay, 2021) as it was named back in the days, played an important role in the history of Al-Ándalus.

**Figure 1.2**  
Territory that was under the Muslim rule during Al-Ándalus



Source: <https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-%C3%81ndalus#/media/Archivo:Al-Andalus732.svg>

Moreover, Granada was the last stronghold of Al-Ándalus (1238–1492) (see Figure 1.3), and with it, the last remnants of Spain's Islamic past (Jimenez 2006; Finlay, 2019). While other territories of Al-Ándalus started to fall under the power of the Spanish Catholic Monarchs, Granada blossomed under the rule of the Nasrid Muslim dynasty into a rich city and the world-famous Alhambra Palace was built (Fletcher, 2001). As described by Heldt (2019), the border between the Catholic Monarch territories and Granada was covered with mountains, giving the city a natural advantage in preventing any army invasion. Consequently, Granada became “the last refuge of Muslims in Spain” (Zaimeche, 2004, p.2) since it served as a shelter for the thousands of Muslims fleeing the territories taken during the Catholic Monarchs' expanding reconquest. It is estimated that Granada was a shelter for over half million of Muslim people during this period (Zaimeche, 2004).

However, when internal political problems started within the Nasrid Dynasty, the Catholic monarchs (Castilla and Aragon) were quick to take advantage of the instability, and in 1492 the reconquest of the territory occurred. The Spaniards took control of the entire territory of Granada, and expelled not only Muslims, but also Jews, and anyone who refused to convert to Christianity. This event marked the completion of the Christian reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula (Coleman, 2003, Flesler & Perez, 2011).

Nevertheless, the fall of Granada did not signal the end of Muslims in Spain. They survived as “moors”, who were fighting to preserve their culture (Rojo, 2007). Moreover, as Kamen states “after the fall of Granada, 100,000 had died or been enslaved, 200,000 emigrated, and 200,000 remained as the residual population” (Kamen, 2006, p.2). For the people that stayed, the Spanish inquisition took place, and with that, the start of the torture against the those who did not convert to Christianity which included slavery and public execution (Ruiz, 2021).

**Figure 1.3**  
Granada the last stronghold of Al-Andalus (1238–1492)



Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emirate\\_of\\_Granada.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emirate_of_Granada.svg)

Lastly, due to agreements between the later rulers in 1609, Muslims and Jews were completely expelled from Spain and pushed into the Mediterranean Sea (Rogozen-Soltar, 2007). As a result, many of displaced people fled to northern Morocco (Flesler & Perez, 2011; Perry, 2008). As Finlay states (2019), this period marked the end of the multiplicity of cultures and religions in Spain for hundreds of years.

### 1.1.2 Convivencia in Al-Ándalus

Historically, the city is referenced as an example of “peaceful conviviality” as a result of the created imaginary of harmonious coexistence between Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities during Al-Ándalus (Menocal 2009; Padilla, 2014; Padilla et al., 2015; Finlay, 2017; Nowicka, 2020). This is described as *convivencia* (often translated to English as conviviality) (Akasoy, 2010; Heil, 2014; Held, 2019). In her book, Akasoy (2010) points out how European historians declare Spain as special country, due to its Islamic past and *convivencia* reflected in interreligious and intercultural history. As described by the journalist Rojo (2007), “Al-Ándalus was a sophisticated world, with profound miscegenation and, despite conflicts, Muslims, Christians, and Jews managed to coexist” (Rojo, 2007, p.2).

In an earlier study, the historian Americo Castro (1948) pointed out the uniqueness of the three different religions living together in the same place. Rogozen-Soltar (2017) elaborates more on this by describing that the importance of Granada in *convivencia* involved not solely a matter of coexistence but the idea of peaceful, harmonious interaction between the three cultures living there before the reconquest (Rogozen-Soltar, 2017).

However, the concept of *convivencia* has been subject to several critiques and the academic discussions have mainly focused on the veracity of the claim to peacefulness and the actual interrelatedness of the social interrelations (Glick and Pi-Sunyer 1992; Soifer 2009; Akasoy, 2010). Calderwood (2014) points out that the definition of *convivencia* is oversimplified and idealized because it extends beyond a harmonious way of living together and should include the tensions that were present back in Al-Ándalus. Finally, Rogozen-Soltar (2007) states that with the reconquest and as a result of the Monarchs' breaking their promises of religious tolerance by punishing people for their beliefs, any sort of *convivencia* was completely gone.

## 1.2 From emigration to immigration

In addition to its rich historical past, the city of Granada also had experienced drastic societal transformations over the years, specifically linked to emigration to immigration. These changes were the result of national and regional developments outlined in this section.

### 1.2.1 National level

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2018), Spain has shifted from being an emigration country to one of the top 10 receiving nations of international migration.

During the dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1939 - 1975), people from Spain emigrated to other European countries, while there were also high numbers of internal migration with people moving to larger cities such as Madrid and Barcelona (Calavita, 2005). As years past, the most important change was the shift of Spain from a “labor-exporting” to a “labor-importing” country (Rogozen-Soltar, 2017, p.41), with the first migrants arriving primarily from Morocco in the 1980s. Thanks to the subsequent economic development, Spain became a democracy shortly after the dictatorship ended in 1975 (Rogozen-Soltar, 2017).

These rapid changes in Spain led to their first immigration related law (*ley de extranjería*) in 1985. This was soon after the country joined the European Economic Community, which pushed Spain to regulate migration due its strategic location for migrants from African continent to enter Europe along the southern borders (Calavita, 2005; Rogozen-Soltar, 2017).

Numbers of regular and irregular migrants grew quickly in Spain during the period between 1990 and 2005 with people originally coming from predominantly Muslim majority countries in Asia and Africa (Rogozen-Soltar, 2017). During this period, “there was the idea that the arrival of people from less developed countries was a kind of *tercermundalización* (‘third worldization’) of immigration” (Calavita, 2005, p.27) in comparison to the people that started to arrive to Spain a decade before in the 1980s who were expats from mainly Western Europe and North America.

Presently, as the research conducted by Economic and Social Council of Spain (2019) shows, Spain is as a popular host country with one in ten households (around two million) composed of at least one person of a nationality other than Spanish.

However, these rapid demographic changes in Spain have led to xenophobia, islamophobia, and the creation of far-right political and conservative anti-immigration parties like Vox in 2013 (Ribera Payá & Díaz Martínez, 2021). With the implementation of new restrictive migration policies in 2015, such as the *devoluciones en caliente* (hot returns) to avoid the influx of entries from Africa to the country, particularly from Morocco (Alcalde & Portos, 2018). Consequently, migrants’ rights are now even more vulnerable because people cannot exercise their right to seek asylum in Spain.

### 1.2.2 Regional level

Granada is part of the Autonomous Spanish community of Andalucía. Right after Franco’s dictatorship ended, the region suffered an economic crisis, experiencing the highest rates of unemployment (25%) which motivated people to migrate to other regions abroad or within Spain (Suárez-Navaz, 2005; Calavita, 2005). As explained by Suárez-Navaz, Andalucía was considered “a ‘forgotten land’, occupying the lowest position in the Spanish regional hierarchy” (2007, p. 218).

As the Spanish economy began to recover in the 2000s, and since many Ándalusians emigrated, people mostly from Morocco started immigrating to the region due to their proximity and filling available positions in the labor market (Calavita 2005; Rogozen-Soltar, 2012). Then, Ándalusia became the second region in Spain after Catalonia with the highest Muslim population (Rogozen-Soltar, 2017).

In her seminal work, *Rebordering the Mediterranean*, Suárez-Navaz (2005) shows that since the 1990s, the number of pateras (small boats without covers) have increased from Africa to Ándalusia and enter Europe and becoming popular for smugglers. This have resulted in thousands of people deaths as a result of the dangerous conditions of the sea route (Suárez-Navaz, 2005). However, as Suárez-Navaz states, since only 12.5 km divide between Spain and Morocco via the Strait of Gibraltar, most of those people who managed to reach Ándalusia settle in Granada due to its proximity to the coast (Calavita, 2005).

### 1.2.3 Changes at the local level

In the late 1980s, Granada began to have an increase of immigration (Jimenez, 2006). As a result, policy attention was made by the local and national governments. In 1995 the city became part of the European Commission Project: Cities against Racism with the title of “Granada: city of integration” forming part of a network that aimed to welcome immigrants (Jimenez, 2006). However, as Jimenez (2006) states, around the late 1990s due to rising tensions between the migrant and non-migrant population, the European Commission designated the city as one of the thirty “social laboratories within the European Union to “learn, study and diagnose racism and xenophobia” (Jimenez, 2006, p.550).

#### 1.2.3.1 *The awakening of Al-Ándalus*

Granada reflects Arab history, which is evident from the city’s monuments like the Alhambra palace (see Figure 1.4) and neighborhoods like the Albayzín that highlight the previous presence of Muslim communities during Al-Ándalus (Jimenez, 2006; Howe, 2012; Rogozen-Soltar, 2017; Finlay 2019).

**Figure 1.4**  
The Alhambra Palace view from the streets of Granada



Source: fieldwork 2022

The return of Muslim people to the territories they occupied centuries ago, especially in Granada, was characterized by politicians a new phenomenon portraying them as a minority (Rogozen-Soltar, 2017). As Cabaleiro (2021) states 30,000 habitants of Granada are Muslim. The increasing presence of Muslim people in the city is reflected in different ways. One was the building of the Grand Mosque of Granada (Mezquita Mayor de Granada) in 2003, which was the first Mosque built in the city since the end of Al-Ándalus in 1492 (Calderwood, 2014). The Mosque was built in Albayzín, which had a rising Moroccan population during the 1990s (Calderwood, 2014)

Nowadays, the history of Granada and its shift to an immigration city is used by the government to promote tourism, which is the city's principal economic activity (Finlay, 2019), and a city branding of a narrative of being a place where people in the past and now in the present live peacefully regardless of their migration background (Calderwood, 2014; Padilla et al., 2015; Finlay, 2019).

### ***1.2.3.2 A celebration of tragedy***

Granada's official tourism website describes a "celebration" that occurs in Granada every 2<sup>nd</sup> of January:

"On January 2 is celebrated the feast of the *Día de la Toma* (taking of Granada). The event commemorates the moment when the monarch of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, handed over the city to the Catholic Monarchs in 1492". (Diputacion de Granada, n.d.).

This is a very controversial "celebration" that embraces the reconquest of Spain because many people were tortured, killed and forcedly displaced from a place that was a shelter for them (Kamen, 2006; Flesler & Perez, 2011; Perry, 2008; Rogozen-Soltar, 2017).

Rogozen-Soltar (2007) explains at length the mixed feelings that this "celebration" entails. As a matter of fact, not just Muslim residents but many Christians, and non-religious residents of Granada have been against it because it represents a tragedy. Instead, they try to turn this event into one that promotes tolerance. However, to this day there are still many residents that defend this controversial tradition as an important part of Granada's history and even part of Ándalusian "pride" (Rogozen-Soltar, 2007, p.864). This recalls the case of selective remembering the nonmuslim past of Edirne by Kaşlı, (2018, p.108) could be a case of "selective forgetting", where they only "recalled the peaceful instances of coexistence" which brings to some Granada's habitants a nostalgia of an idealized past where only positive feelings of joy and celebration remain.

The historical events that the "celebration" represent have a strong link with the present. This link is demonstrated by the dramatic re-enactment of how the Muslim people were expelled and forced to leave to the Mediterranean Sea (Rogozen-Soltar, 2007) along the same shores where thousands of immigrants are currently entering to the city.

## **1.3 Reflection on the history**

The city of Granada is an essential setting for this study. Regarding migration, the time that has passed from Al-Ándalus to the present has reestablished the connection between religion and race. Current migration trends in Granada are characterized primarily by Migrants that are Muslim, which is connected to Al-Ándalus. Additionally, as a result of the rising number of immigrants in the city, there is an emergence of right-wing political groups that recall the time when catholic rulers expelled Muslims and Jews from Granada in opposition to the promise of tolerance.

## Chapter 2 Conceptual framework

This research paper will use the interrelated concepts of shelter, shelter city, CSOs, solidarity, tensions, intersectionality and conviviality.

There is a significant link between shelter and migration. A shelter is a safe space for people who decided to migrate due to experiencing hardships in their home countries. (Betts & Collier, 2017; Meyer & van der Veer, 2021). Therefore, a shelter should be a place where everyone is welcomed and respect. In 2015, in response to the so-called “refugee crisis” in Europe and contrasting national restrictive policies (Alcalde & Portos, 2018; Agustín & Jørgensen, 2018; Garcés Mascareñas, 2019; Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019), one of the local solutions to overcome the “crisis” was the creation of shelter cities.

Due to the influx of migration, tensions began to arise, as evidenced by actions such as political discourses promoting racism, xenophobia, and discrimination in the host societies (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019; Koulaxi, 2021). However, in reaction to these tensions, expressions of solidarity began to emerge. Furthermore, CSOs played a crucial role in providing shelter to people with a migration background through actions targeted at addressing gaps left by governments (Alcalde & Portos, 2018; Pries, 2019).

This section explores both tensions and solidarity in Granada, along with different actions of sheltering from the CSOs, which are linked with the notion of conviviality and convivial tools described by Ivan Illich (1973).

### 2.1 Shelter and shelter city

In their book, Betts and Collier stress that, historically, a shelter assisted people fleeing their home countries due to various factors such as “religious persecution, revolution, state formation, and conflict to survive” (2017, p.4). Thus, a shelter is considered a temporary safe place for people facing difficulties in their home countries. Moreover, in a migration context, the meaning of shelter does not substitute an ideal home, instead shelters are “spaces of movement and fixity, dignity and indignity, of care, concern and welcome; but also of tiredness, restlessness, and anxiety” (Rainey cited in Meyer & van der Veer, 2021, p.294). What matters is that shelters are expected to be welcoming spaces, which foster community regardless of people’s beliefs or origins (Meyer & van der Veer, 2021).

In the EU context, during the so-called European “refugee crisis” in 2015, migrants sought shelter in welcoming cities, in order to get a better life (United Nations Office for Project Services, 2016). In that process, the important role of cities has begun to emerge as different local level initiatives such as reception programs or spaces for refugees were developed (Schiller, 2015).

One of the local initiatives resulting from the lack of implementation of policies at the national and supranational (European Union) level to address the “crisis” was the creation of shelter cities (Alcalde & Portos, 2018; Agustín & Jørgensen, 2018; Garcés Mascareñas, 2019; Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). Garcés Mascareñas (2019) describes the role of the shelter cities as cities that implemented different measures to improve the governance of migration by addressing the gaps from the national level. These measures include acting, protecting, and speaking out for any kind of migrants, making cities into more inclusive and welcoming spaces towards newcomers (Garcés Mascareñas, 2019). The shelter city initiative transcended to the European Union (EU) level through the creation of city networks and alliances which amplified their voices in the decision-making processes (Garcés Mascareñas, 2019). Thus,



shelter cities across Europe turned out into places where people can do meaningful, dignified, and rewarding work, contributing to the social development of their hosts and countries of origin (Refugee Cities, n.d.). Additionally, as Agustín & Jørgensen (2019) shelter cities aim to counter the nation-restrictive state's policies regarding migrants and refugees, promote community building between migrant and non-migrant communities, and reduce xenophobic attitudes (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019, p.199).

The creation of shelter cities in Spain started in the summer of 2015. Following the media coverage with shocking images of people on the move trying to get to Europe, many society groups took immediate action with protests demanding the government the creation of effective responses. Garcés-Mascareñas (2019) describes the case of Barcelona, which became the first city declared *ciudad refugio* (shelter city) in Spain and issued an open call to other European cities to play a more active role in migration policies (Garcés-Mascareñas, 2019).

For the purpose of this research paper, even though Agustín & Jørgensen (2019) use the English translation of “refuge cities” to talk about *ciudades refugio*, I have chosen to use the word shelter instead of refuge. This is because the translation of *refugio* is more appropriate to describe general shelter to people with a migration background, whereas the term refuge is mainly associated with refugees in research.

The above discussions on shelter and shelter cities included the involvement of the civil society, which will be explored in further detail below, particularly the role of CSOs.

## 2.2 Civil society organizations (CSOs)

As explained by Woodley & Gilsonan (2019) the definition of CSOs “comprise independent, non-governmental and non-profit-making organizations, and include charities, voluntary and community groups, and social enterprises that work to achieve a broad range of social aims, including (but not limited to): extending social justice and promoting equality; poverty reduction; and dismantling barriers to societal cohesion, health, economic and environmental well-being” (Woodley & Gilsonan, 2019, p.186 ).

CSOs are commonly referred to as a “third sector” after the public and private sector which purpose is the promotion of rights to individuals and groups suffering from conditions of vulnerability or at risk of social exclusion” (Ley 43/2015, 2015). Then, CSOs help to fill the gaps or address failed interventions that exist at the local level with services that the community needs as a result of the knowledge gained due to their proximity with those communities (Woodley & Gilsonan, 2019). So, their work involves a holistic approach that meets a wide range of needs.

Alcalde & Portos (2018) describe the role CSOs supporting migrants, which have different focus such as providing material assistance to people with a migration background (as food, housing), raising social awareness, among others. Overall, they try to empower migrants, speak out for their rights, and create networks to have a bigger impact (Pries, 2019). Thus, CSOs supporting migrants emerged as an important actor in the so-called “crisis” assisting not only people seeking asylum or refugees but with people with a migration background that were already in the cities. (Alcalde & Portos, 2018; Pries, 2019).

Following the example of Barcelona in 2015 during the European “refugee crisis”, Granada was one of the few small Spanish cities that joined the commitment to become a shelter city. The decision to become a shelter city only took place after the efforts and pressure from the different members of the RedGra that wanted to overcome the challenges that migrants were facing on a local level (Europapress, 2015).

As Woodley & Gilsean (2019) explain, the effective actions that CSOs do, should be captured as a body of knowledge to understand what is effective to address the problems that certain communities are facing (p.187). Then, building on the existing studies that emphasizes the role of CSOs as welcoming places for migrants (Alcalde & Portos, 2018; Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019; Pries, 2019; Garcés-Mascareñas, 2019) this research paper focuses specifically on CSOs supporting migrants in Granada.

In the case of Granada, the assistance and collaboration of CSOs was critical for sheltering persons with migrant backgrounds. However, in the setting of the shelter city, both tensions and solidarity efforts have been evident.

## 2.3 Tensions and solidarity

The consequences of the so-called “refugee crisis”, and the increased number of migrants’ arrivals in European cities (more than one and a half million only in 2015), were not only in acts of solidarity. In reality, acts of racism, xenophobia, division, and tighter migration restrictions demonstrated the “injustice, inequality, and divisions between human beings” (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019, p. 199) and tensions in the host societies. Some tensions were promoted by far-right political groups in order to safeguard the idea of a national-state via the establishment of tighter physical and social borders (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019).

Nowadays, for example religious tensions are more visible. On one hand, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, religious tensions became more evident, particularly in the media where Islamophobia is portrayed as the “nemesis” of Christianity, implying a negative connotation and a threat to other religions in Europe (Koulaxi, 2021). However, as explained by van Dijk, especially in the context of Spain these tensions are rooted in a long history of anti-Arab, anti-Jewish, and anti-Gitano prejudices and exclusion, as well as colonialism of the Americas (2005).

On the other hand, the media plays a role in the creation of tensions, as mentioned by scholars as well as UNHCR, in Spain, where the media discourse often portrays people on the move as a “threat” to the welfare system and cultural values and most likely try to link the image of migration with crime (Berry et al. 2015; UNHCR 2015).

However, the use of solidarity as a response to the “refugee crisis” and tensions brought as a result of migration, caught the attention of many scholars (Grasso & Lahusen, 2018). The national government’s response (or lack of it) to the “crisis” inspired and consolidated a solidarity movement (Alcalde & Portos, 2018). Even the former Secretary General of the United Nations in 2016 Ban Ki-moon during an event of Event on Global Displacement stated when talking about the increasing levels of migration in the world that “is not just a crisis of numbers; it is also a crisis of solidarity.... We must respond to a monumental crisis with monumental solidarity” (UN, 2016).

Stjernø (2005) defines the concept of solidarity as “the preparedness to share one’s resources with others, be that directly by donating money or time in support of others or indirectly by supporting the state to reallocate and redistribute some of the funds gathered through taxes or contributions” (Stjernø, 2005, p.2 as cited in Lahusen & Grasso, 2018, p.4).

According to Agustín and Jørgensen (2018), solidarity initiatives such as shelter cities contrasted the tensions caused by the “refugee crisis” by creating alternatives and solutions that evoke all the opposite of xenophobic and nationalist postures. Both authors describe how the impact of a large Spanish city like Barcelona inspired a determination to scale up solidarity and connect different cities, leading to smaller cities following its example and creating a “network of solidarity” (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2021).

The solidarities that emerged from the “refugee crisis” are called by Agustín (2020) as some sort of “a re-municipalisation of public services, quite often associated with the idea of the commons” (p.58) which focuses on the similarities and humanity that people have instead of the “differences” (Glick Schiller, 2016). With this idea, it is shown that cities have an important role to make things happen by the way they use solidarity to solve the emerging problems (Agustín, 2020). Agustín & Jørgensen (2021) established that “solidarity is, without any doubt, a major force in transforming society and challenging migration and asylum policies from below” (p.859) and that these sorts of actions call out for more ways of citizen initiatives to help to solve problems as a “convivial society” (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2021, 859). In this setting, the solidarity initiatives of CSOs alleviate the tensions that occur inside shelter cities.

### 2.3.1 Intersectionality

In this research, I will take into consideration intersectionality. As Bastia (2014) explains, it is crucial to use intersectionality in migration studies. People’s experiences are not homogeneous, and necessities varies from one of another. Through an intersectional approach, distinctions can be addressed in order to comprehend why each process is unique and to overcome the associated disadvantages. Different identities, including gender, nationality, and religion, have an impact on migrants’ experiences. This is also supported by migration researchers such as Agustín, & Jørgensen (2018), which highlight the importance of taking into consideration multiple overlapping identities since each person has distinct requirements. This concept will be taken into account in the analysis of my findings.

## 2.4 Conviviality

Given that both tensions and solidarity occur in shelter cities, and the actions taken by CSOs, this research leverages the Ivan Illich’s early proposal for conviviality in his book “Tools for Conviviality” (1973).

His definition on conviviality refers to the idea of people collaborating with each other and proposed that a society with convivial tools would bring satisfaction and well-being to all its members by achieving personal freedom and independence (Illich, 1973; Berg & Nowicka, 2020). With “tools” Illich meant not only material things but skills such as language and knowledge (Illich, 1973; Berg & Nowicka, 2019).

Illich’s definition on conviviality refers to the Spanish word *convivencialidad* (Gonzalez & Tornel, 2022) which is often referred to as “joyful gathering” in English rather than the intended definition of moral living together (Nowicka, 2019). In an interview, Gustavo Esteva (2015), a close friend of Illich, mentioned that Illich was aware of the common use of conviviality to mean a simple casual social gathering (*convivencia*), however Illich wanted to give the word a different meaning. His vision regarding *convivencialidad*, is deeper than just a description of expected “peaceful” cohabitation, it has moral implications as well because it emphasizes a communal existence in the world that is linked to respectful and caring coexistence (Illich, 1973).

Conviviality has been contemporary used within migration studies. Migration scholars refer to conviviality when talking about cohabitation and the multiplicity of different cultures, languages and religions in the same place (Wessendorf, 2013; Nowicka, 2020)

The settings where people from different cultures, religions and places live and interact with each other is often referred to as ‘living with a difference’ in contemporary migration studies (Gilroy, 2004). Currently, in contemporary migration studies, there is a Western

modern social imaginary on the relationship between migrants and non-migrants which highlights only the positive aspects of the encounters between the people living with a difference (Gilroy, 2004; Wessendorf, 2013; Nowicka, 2020). On the other hand, the notion of conviviality refers to a situation beyond mere coexistence among people 'living with a difference' and is characterized by peace, mutual tolerance, and an apparent lack of conflict.

In the Spanish context, Historically, the subset of conviviality that describes the peaceful coexistence is one that can be related to the notion of *convivencia* which is used to describe the cohabitation of medieval Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the Medieval Spain (790–1495) (Heil 2014). The *convivencia* idea is used by Arizpe (2015) supports Illich idea's by describing how inter-generational and inter-ethnic solidarity leads to a more compatible way of living together for people living with a difference. Although the concept of *convivencia* has been subject to several critiques since then, and the academic discussions have mainly focused on the veracity of the claim to peacefulness and the actual interrelatedness of the social interrelations in medieval Spain (Glick and Pi-Sunyer, 1992; Soifer, 2009; Akasoy, 2010).

On the other hand, conviviality also entails the lack of peaceful coexistence and considers the daily interactions among the people from different background and includes the irritation, tensions, conflict and frustration as equally important modes of human togetherness (Heil, 2014; Berg & Nowicka, 2019).

For example, Nowicka (2020) states that migration research using conviviality focuses on the thing that migrants and non-migrants have in common instead of any kind of tension that destroys the imaginary of a harmonious way of living together in equality; Wessendorf (2013) discusses using the notion of conviviality to forget the prejudiced attitudes towards people on the move, such as stereotyping and racism; and, Koulaxi (2022) mentions that conviviality cannot be taken for granted or be expected to reduce tensions and promote solidarity between groups. Therefore, creating a convivial community perhaps implies the individual's commitment to respecting others and engaging for peace and sustainability (Nowicka, 2020).

Additionally, Duru (2020) talks about the fusion of conviviality and solidarity. The migration scholar created the concept of "convivial solidarity" that in a migration context is defined as "a collective work to fight for a common aim and to find solutions for a common concern in a non-communitarian way without separating/classifying people by ethnicity, religion, citizenship, or nationality" (Duru, 2020, p.133) that does not create a differentiation between the different kind of people on the move that can coexist in the same place (refugees, asylum seekers) and civil society. Convivial solidarity tries to motivate people to have a convivial way of living, which includes people helping each other in a holistic way, with actions such as helping people on the move to learn the language of the host country, assisting with administrative procedures, engaging in creative activities, help them psychologically, spiritually, and also provide material assistance when is needed such as with basic needs like food or accommodation (Duru, 2020) resulting in the creation of relationships between civil society and people with a migration background.

Despite the current additions to the concept on conviviality in migration studies, for this research paper, I am using Illich (1973) notion of conviviality and his idea on convivial tools.

## 2.5 Summary

In the light of the previous discussions and considering that Granada is a shelter city, this research aims to look at the concepts of solidarity and tensions to the findings described in the subsequent chapters. In addition, the concept of conviviality will be used to analyze the

actions implemented by CSOs working with migrants. Therefore, this research will contribute to debates of the above concepts by demonstrating the link between them and their applicability in the context of shelter cities.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology applied for this research paper. As suggested by O’Leary, I opted to take a qualitative approach for my data collection in order to obtain “immersion in the research reality through interaction with people, places, cultures, and circumstances” project (O’Leary, 2017, pp.130) relevant to my research. This chapter introduces the research questions and methods used to gather in depth knowledge about the role of CSOs in sheltering migrants in Granada. Finally, this chapter acknowledges the limitations, ethical considerations and my positionality regarding this research.

### 3.1 Research Questions

The main research question for this thesis is:

Considering that Granada is a shelter city according to its local government due initiatives from civil society organizations (CSOs). What is the role of CSOs in sheltering migrants?

The subsequent research sub-questions are:

1. What are the challenges that people with a migration background can encounter in Granada from according to CSOs?
2. What actions are taken by CSOs to overcome the challenges that people with a migration background can encounter in Granada?

This research is concerned with understanding the sheltering actions of CSO and if these actions address the tensions in the city. Moreover, if the actions of CSO address both tensions that stem from the historical context of the city and from the direct actions of the local government. Additionally, this thesis will unpack the solidarity actions through the concept of conviviality, to look beyond the mere coexistence of migrants and non-migrants and understand the migration context in Granada as a shelter city.

### 3.2 Research Methods

All findings in this paper are based on qualitative fieldwork conducted in the city of Granada, Spain for three weeks between July and August 2022. This fieldwork targeted CSOs supporting migrants to gather in depth knowledge about the role of CSO on sheltering migrants in Granada. Recalling chapter 2, CSOs were key actors in the formation of Granada as a shelter city. For this reason, and to answer my research question and sub questions, I have decided to reach out to these organizations to understand how they provide shelter to migrants in Granada and collaborate in thea shelter city.

I selected to use interviews as my primary research method because it was important for me to listen to the experiences of CSOs working with migrants and capture “in-depth qualitative data” (O’Leary, 2017, pp.218). I conducted seven one-to-one informal semi-structured interviews (O’Leary, 2017) that included representatives, members and volunteers from the organizations. I developed an interview guide (see appendix 1) as the starting point for the interviews. To create the interview guide, I followed the order of my conceptual framework,

and themed the questions around the concepts used in this research. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to follow the natural flow of the conversation which enabled me to discover interesting data from topics that came up in the conversations (O’Leary, 2017).

I chose the CSOs through purposive (non-random) sampling as explained in O’Leary (2017, p.209). This means I started my search with preliminary research on the organizations supporting migrants in Granada by looking at a keyword search online of *Granada ciudad refugio* (Granada shelter city). I found that most of the documentation regarding the shelter city was from news sources and there were only a few academic results.

So, through the news sources, I identified the RedGra which is an active migration network including CSOs in Granada. I contacted organizations that belong to the RedGra network via email or Facebook (depending on the available contact information online) to explain the purpose of my research.

In some cases, after an exchange of messages I was able to establish a date and time for an interview. In other cases, the participant from the organization would provide me a phone number and I called them to have a preliminary conversation before agreeing to an interview.

In addition to the use of purposive sampling, I was able to connect to other organizations using the snowball sampling technique (O’Leary, 2017). The snowball sampling occurred when participants referred me to another CSOs of their network and share the appropriate contact information.

The interviews were recorded, after obtaining oral consent, on my mobile phone which allowed me to relisten to the interviews during the data analysis. To extract the information from my interviews, I first uploaded the recordings to my computer and used the audio transcription option in Microsoft Word to transcribe the interviews. After the transcription made by Word, I proceeded to listen each of my interviews to corroborate that the transcription was accurate. Then, I coded manually the interviews to extract the relevant themes as suggested by O’Leary (2017). I did my coding process by using the comment option in Word, after that I downloaded the paragraphs with the different codes and shifted them to Microsoft Excel where I was able to organize my data in a clearer way. Following that, I translated the information (from Spanish to English) that I consider relevant in my research for further analysis.

The details of the organizations I interviewed can be found in Table 1. For confidentiality reasons I anonymized all my participants by using the categories of the roles in the OCS which are board member, member and volunteer. Further details of these organizations can be found in Section 5.

**Table 1** Details of the organizations I interviewed

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>Year of creation</b>	<b>Role</b>
Interview 1	Dar Al Anwar دار أنوار	2015	Board member
Interview 2	Organization of Senegalese migrants	2018	Member
Interview 3	AMANI	2018	Board member
Interview 4	15onvivienci Andalucía por la Solidaridad y la Paz (ASPA)	1987	Member
Interview 5	Provienda (pro housing)	1989	Board member

Interview 6	Accion en red (Network in action)	2008	Volunteer
Interview 7	Norte en positivo (Positive in North)	2010	Board member

Additionally, during the last week of my fieldwork, I applied the observation method (O’Leary, 2017) when I attended the social event *Verano Abierto Cartuja* (Cartuja’s Open Summer). The event occurred in the Cartuja neighborhood, where there is a large concentration of residents with a migration background (Lorca, 2012). During the event, I was able to have casual conversations with the residents, organizers and volunteers. Through observation, I was able to use my senses to understand the social interactions that took place during the event as proposed by O’Leary (2017). This experience gave me greater insight to address my second research sub question since I was able to participate in one of the activities created by the organizations and immerse myself in the event.

Also, I used the information obtained from casual conversations that took place during my fieldwork with the knowledge of the persons involved in those conversations that I could use what we discussed in my research. Among the people I had conversations with, were a researcher from the Migration Institute of the University of Granada, and business owners with a migration background. In this case, I also anonymized their testimonies.

In addition, I used documentary research as secondary data to triangulate the findings from my interviews. For this I looked at different sources such as online resources like news, websites, and videos about shelter cities and CSOs that work with migrants.

During my fieldwork, I kept a research journal in which I have wrote my thoughts of this research and following the recommendation from O’Leary (2017) on using post interview data dump. After each interview or observation, I recorded the thoughts that came into my mind with my phone, and I reviewed the recordings while analyzing my data.

### 3.3 Limitations

One of my main limitations was that my principal contact in Granada, with whom I had been in contact throughout the process of selecting my research topic, moved abroad and was no longer available to help me in connecting with organizations. Due to this, contacting the groups was more challenging. I sent 20 messages through email and Facebook in the months preceding my fieldwork without receiving a response.

Although the snowball sampling was an effective method to reach out to more organizations, some of the suggested organizations did not get back to me. Some stated that they were on their holiday period, or did not have enough staff in the summer to grant me an interview. In addition, due to COVID-19 regulations in the city, some members of organizations were working from home, so when I tried to approach their offices, they were closed.

Additionally, I acknowledge that the data gathered for this research paper is limited since the organizations I interviewed emphasized they primarily work with male migrants originally from Africa or the Middle East.

My fieldwork was limited by time. If I had stayed longer or done my research outside of the summer holidays, I could have done more interviews, gathered more data and participated in more events.

Finally, even though my interviews were in Spanish, which is my native language, certain expressions or words have no direct English translation, so the meaning is partially lost in translation.



### 3.4 Ethical considerations

The research participants' confidentiality has been carefully considered. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and gave me their oral consent to participate in my research and to be recorded. The interview recordings and transcripts were saved in my computer cloud storage to which only I have access. After transferring the information to the cloud storage, the recordings were deleted from my phone.

For the photos used in this research I always asked for permission or used official photos of the organizations where consent had been previously requested and are published on their social media or websites.

Additionally, for me, it was important to give back something to the people that shared their knowledge and experience with me. As part of my interview introduction, I always mention the option to present my findings after finalizing the research paper and offered my support to collaborate with the organizations by translating documents anytime they needed.

### 3.5 Positionality

During this research, I was expecting to feel more like an outsider than an insider because I am not from Spain, so it was surprising for me to experience both feelings at the same time.

I was aware that I come with a privileged position of being a Mexican mestiza woman from the global south studying higher education in the Netherlands. I was especially aware while having casual conversations, as people will often tell me how they considered the Netherlands as a great place to live and advised me to stay there. Whilst, in the Netherlands, I always feel as an outsider, during the conversations I had in Granada, there were often moments where I felt as an insider, and I acknowledge this is because I speak the same language, I am familiar with the city and their jargon because I had the privilege of being an exchange student there for six months. I chose Granada instead of other larger cities to study, because I heard comments about the idyllic idea of being the best place to live with different people from all over the world for students and the story of the city.

My identities as a Mexican, young, woman, student, Spanish speaker that lived in Granada, helped me to establish the connection with the CSOs. It also allowed me to easily have casual talks in the streets and generate trust. Specially in the neighborhood event, it allowed me to approach different people, to generate interest from them when told them where I was from and but also it helped me to be somehow included in the event.

However, outside of my home county, I consider myself a migrant which is an identity I carried with me throughout my fieldwork and made me acknowledge my position as an outsider while conducting my research.

Also, the fact that I'm doing research on migration has a lot to do with my family's history, which is where my interest in this topic began. In the 1900s, my great-grandfather moved from Italy to my hometown in Mexico. He didn't speak Spanish, but he was "adapted" to the city quickly, according to my grandmother's stories. He quickly learned the language because it was similar to his own. He also started a family and a business. On the other hand, his daughter, who is my great-aunt, emigrated to the United States motivated by the economic crisis in Mexico in the 1970s. But her "incorporation" into the host country was hard because the languages were different, it took her a while to get a job, and she went through a lot of hardships. During the time she was facing these difficulties, she always mentions how CSOs supported her and helped her to overcome the challenges. Because of that,

hearing the stories of the CSOs made me reflect about my own migration history and the one of my family.

On a different note, some of the tensions I found during my fieldwork were similar to what I experienced when I was working in the migration field in Mexico. Another point to bring into consideration is the link between the city I did the research at and my country of origin. The Granada played an important role in the conquest of Abya Yala (America). In the same year of the reconquest by Spain in 1492, the catholic monarchs were supporting Columbus on his expedition to America. I have strong feelings about the historical context of my research because of my roots from a country which was colonized by the same perpetrators following the reconquest of Granada.

Because of the reasons mentioned above there were some emotions involved in this research Nevertheless, I was able to find coping mechanisms such as writing in my research diary or speaking with my family and friends about my feelings.

All the information mentioned above will be transmitted in my results in the subsequent chapters, which will summarize my findings and reflect on them using the conceptual framework of the preceding chapter.

## Chapter 4 A tale of convivial utopia: tensions in the shelter city

*“Granada as an example of peaceful coexistence is an utopia, it really is not. There is a lot of racism here”.*  
Member from Dar Al Anwar Association (Granada, July 2022).

The effects of being a shelter city benefits not only asylum seekers and refugees, but all people with a migration background who move to or already live in the city. The history of the city, which has somehow been brought to life by the increasing arrival of immigrants from Arab countries, is used by the government to promote tourism (the primary economic activity) and to present a narrative of *19onviviencia*, where people coexist together peacefully regardless of their migration background as supposedly occurred during Al-Ándalus (Calderwood, 2014; Padilla et al., 2015; Finlay, 2019).

Granada’s contemporary city branding welcomes migrants with “open arms”. The convivial branding of the city is demonstrated in Figure 4.1 that shows official advertising on the promotion of conviviality in the city “*ser barrio, saber convivir*” (to be part of the neighbourhood, is to know how to be convivial). This poster portrays two hands holding, symbolizing unity between people, where the hands have different skin colors which might imply people of different origins. The initiative is part of Granada’s local inclusion strategy in disadvantaged communities, which is backed by the Municipality of Granada, *Junta de Andalucía* (regional level of government), and the European Union (supranational level). There were similar posters in several parts of the city, but this one was in one of the main touristic areas.

While some organizations have been created in the city to promote the rights of migrants, on the other hand there are “right-wing movements and organizations, xenophobic collective actions and violent and aggressive tactics” (Pries, 2019, p.4). During my interview with the member from Dar Al Anwar, they stated that although there is a romantic idea that

**Figure 4.1**  
Official advertising on the promotion of conviviality in the city



Source: fieldwork Granada, July 2022

everyone respects each other in Granada, is not really the case and “*there is a lot of friction within the community*”<sup>2</sup>.

However, in contrast to the tale of convivial utopia promoted by the government, that exists in the public narrative around Granada, the reality in the city entails some tensions towards the migrant population. The rest of this chapter explains the tensions discovered in this research, some of which have a strong link to the city’s historical past, while others describe the realities that migrants face on a daily basis in the shelter city.

## 4.1 Fearing the return of Al-Ándalus

Increased numbers of migrants from Muslim-majority countries have resulted in unwelcoming attitudes among Granadans over the years which are still present. As Finlay describes in his research, “despite the ‘cleansing’ of non-Christian identities, the Muslim imprint on the architectural and discursive nature of the city remains today and this history is used as a core part of the contemporary city’s tourism branding” (Finlay, 2019 p.11).

Nowadays, restaurants and tourist shops in the city center are owned by people originally from Muslim-majority countries such as Iraq, Morocco Syria, and Senegal, among others. However, this was not always the case as Finlay (2017) points out, immigrants who began arriving in Granada in the 1980s brought life to historically significant areas that had been abandoned in the city. That is the case of the lower Albayzn neighborhood (Finlay, 2017), which back in Al-Ándalus served as a shelter for displaced Muslims during the reconquest. Finlay emphasizes that initially, Moroccan immigrants began to inhabit these territories, but as time passed, many Muslim migrants began to open businesses there (Finlay, 2017).

It is impossible not to think about the city’s history while one is there; the sensation is like being in two different countries and times at the same time. In the main streets of Granada there is a predominance of restaurants offering typical dishes from Syria, Morocco, among others offering Halal food. This section reflects on the identified tensions that are present towards Muslim people in the city.

### 4.1.1 Tensions with religious expression

At first sight, it may seem that Muslim people are welcomed by Granadan society due to their presence in the city’s central areas, but in fact, the tensions that exist towards them, breaks the tale of “peaceful conviviality” promoted by the government.

This argument has been brought up in recent studies, such as in Mora Franco (2021), in which the author claims that “the city is not a friendly environment for everyone, especially Muslims” (Mora Franco, 2021, p.29). This is exemplified by the annual celebration of Dia de la Toma (see Chapter 1), which annually recalls the tragedy of the expelled Muslim people caused by the reconquest and fall of Al-Ándalus.

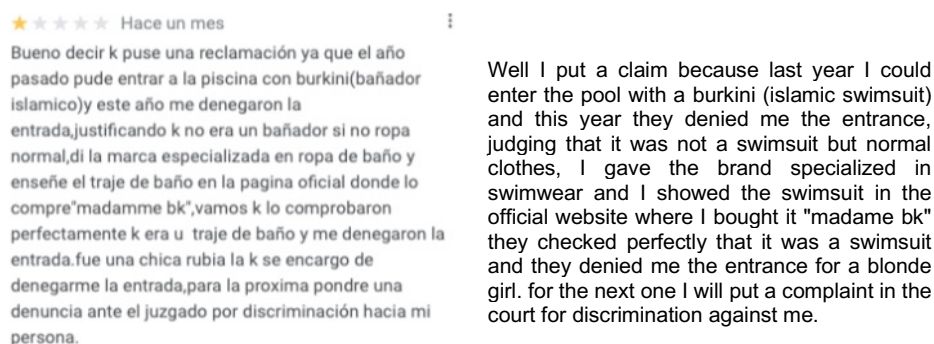
Other tension towards the Muslim community were mentioned in the interviews with members of key migrant organizations. For example, a board member from Dar al Anwar mentioned that discrimination against the Muslim community is still happening in Granada and her organization currently deals with many cases related to it. The discontent of some inhabitants of Granada was publicly expressed in previous occasions over the years.

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<sup>2</sup> Member of Dar Al Anwar (Granada, July 2022)

A recent case is the one of women being kicked out from public swimming pools for wearing a full bathing suit (burkini). This is not a new situation; it is also documented in several newspaper reports and even in public complaints made by affected users in the official pages of these sites. As demonstrated in Figure 4.2 below (2022), which shows a review made by a woman who was denied her right to access a public space for having a burkini. In her comment, she states that she showed the label and explained it was a swimming suit, however, she was not allowed to enter with the excuse that it was not appropriate clothing.

**Figure 4.2**  
A review of the municipality swimming pool



*Source: Google Maps reviews*

Back in 2017, this kind of action was denounced when a similar incident occurred also in other municipal swimming pools. As mentioned in the note of the online newspaper Europapress (2017) two women were expelled for the same reasons and the same excuse that it was not appropriate clothing for a swimming pool. In the 2017 case, due to public complaints over the “discriminatory and Islamophobic act” (Europapress, 2017, p.1) Granada’s City Council responded by launching a preliminary investigation to see if the incident could be catalogued as a hate crime. The city council also mentioned that similar events had already been reported at the place of the incident, and that “they would not allow this kind of attitudes that may have racist or discriminatory overtones”.

In 2016, the municipality of Granada declared itself in favor of the use of the burkini after some users of public gyms wearing burkinis were also expelled of the facilities (Granada hoy, 2016). These cases make up a common occurrence for the Muslim people in Granada which is in line with a report from the Spanish Ministry of the Interior in 2021, which details the most repeated causes related to hate crimes in Granada are racism and xenophobia.

Unfortunately, the problem with the burkinis is not the only tension over religious freedom that had occurred in the city towards the Muslim community. The discontent of some inhabitants of Granada was publicly expressed through protests against the construction of a Mosque throughout the 1980s to early 2000s. Recalling the changes at a local level mentioned in section 1.2.3, the city was transitioning from an emigration to an immigration one and the population of Granada was becoming more heterogenous. However, besides the years of protests, the Great Mosque was built in the Albayzin neighborhood in 2003. Although, public discontent was still expressed by graffiti on several walls in the neighborhood with racist comments like “moors out” (Rogozen-Soltar, 2007, p. 872).

In the research of Calderwood (2014), it is purported that some people “justify” these racist actions with the idea that the return of Muslims may constitute a plot to “reconquer” the regions of Andalucía (Calderwood, 2014; p.24).

#### 4.1.1.1 *Tensions with religious celebrations*

In addition, in interviews with members from Dar Al Anwar, Amani, and ASPA, the tensions linked to religion expressions came out naturally in the conversations. The member from Amani reflected, “*there is racism in our society and in recent years it has become much more visible than it was ten or twenty years ago*”<sup>3</sup>. In our interview, they expressed that in the past the society used to integrate migrants better, and people were more concerned for the wellbeing of newcomers. However, it was mentioned that due to changes in the political climate and the growth of ultra-right political movements, racism has become more widespread within the city. Formerly, when harassment and violence occurred against migrants, the society took it seriously; however today, “*they justify those actions thinking that they might have done something to deserve it*”<sup>4</sup>.

Both the members of Amani and Dar al Anwar agreed that in the past, when the Socialist Party was in power, their requests involving the needs of the Muslim community were better addressed, but things have changed significantly now that the right-wing government in power. Both also brought up the lack of public spaces to celebrate Ramadan or Eid Al Adha<sup>5</sup> in the last years as an example of the local government making it difficult for them to celebrate their religion.

The member of Dar Al Anwar stated that the organization aspired to make their celebrations open to the public and share the different religions and cultures in Granada<sup>6</sup>. Additionally, they explained that during the previous governments, people was given a public space to celebrate Ramadan with all the people of Granada, but in recent years (even after the COVID-19 restrictions) it “*has been nothing but excuses, that it is not possible, that it is occupied, et cetera, which is a way of telling us that they are not going to allow it*”<sup>7</sup>. Their testimony emphasized that, even though this year they put pressure on the municipality to give them a space to celebrate Ramadan, it did not work.

Similarly, the member from Amani emphasized the difficulties of finding a public space to celebrate Ramadan because the municipality would not provide a suitable one. In fact, her recollection was that there was only one-time, years ago, when this was possible and only occurred when there was a councilwoman who “*took this topic very seriously*”<sup>8</sup> and embraced that Muslim people also had the right to occupy public space for their religious celebrations. Additionally, the member concluded that the lack openness by the current government of providing public spaces to celebrate religious holidays is one manifestation of discrimination in the city. The discrimination is explained by the catholic Easter celebration, there are public events which include closing the streets, stopping public transport, and halting traffic. However, the testimony of Dar al Anwar and Amani members shows that for Muslims any celebrations for Ramadan in public spaces were met with resistance.

This is further backed-up by a case in 2017, when Ramadan was celebrated in one of Granada's public parks and the event was met with discontent from Granadans (Europress, 2017; Granada Hoy, 2017; La Gaceta, 2017). The justification for the discontent reported in the news was the fact that the celebration took place in a park that has the image of a Virgin among its gardens (*parque jardines del triunfo*). The newspaper La Gaceta states in its publication

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<sup>3</sup> Member of Amani, (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>4</sup> Member of Amani, (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>5</sup> Ramadan is the month of religious fasting and the main religious period in the Muslim calendar, it culminates in the celebration of Eid.

<sup>6</sup> Member of Dar Al Anwar (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>7</sup> Member of Dar Al Anwar (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>8</sup> Member of Amani (Granada, July 2022)

“polemic, the City Council has supported a day of prayers and diffusion of Islam in front of the Virgin of Triumph” (La Gaceta, 2017). This supports the argument made by Koulaxi (2021), who in an earlier study demonstrates how Islamophobia is propagated in the media and how Islam is portrayed as the religion that allegedly suppresses other religions in Europe (Koulaxi, 2021).

This situation escalated in a way that the mayor was accused of offending the people from Granada, since the park is very important for Catholics which are the majority in the city (Onda Cero, 2017). The Imam of the Mosque of Granada made a statement after the polemic generated mentioning that their only objective was to share the celebration of Ramadan with Granadans and demonstrate that Islam is “conviviality and generosity” (Ramos, 2017, p.6).

Reflecting on this situation, religious expression is only restricted when the majority Catholic population are offended by the celebrations. At the same time, the Dia de la Toma celebration (recall chapter 1) is still a yearly tradition where the Spanish recreate scenes of expelling Muslims in the Mediterranean Sea without any concerns for offending the high number of Muslim people living in Granada.

A shelter should be the place where people feel safe to profess their religion and not to be suppressed. A member from ASPA stated during my interview the necessity of the elimination of prejudices, they mentioned that *“historically, the city has always been a melting pot of cultures, but Granada is a very conservative city, after all... the city that may seem open for migrants but is a very conservative city in practice”*<sup>9</sup>. There is a link with the idealistic period of Al-Ándalus in the moment where religious tolerance was supposedly established but not respected (chapter 1), and the fact Granada is now a shelter city since religion is not completely respected or tolerated. This supports the idea of the marketing of the concept of *convivencia* in the present due to the clear tensions within the society (Calderwood, 2014).

As a final note, it caught my attention that in both interviews with Dar Al Anwar and Amani, they used the term racism to describe the tensions directed towards Muslims. What stands out with this is the Muslim religion is racialized.

## 4.2 Tensions in retaliation to migration

The tensions in the shelter city are also seen on a civil society level where the reception of newcomers it has not had a solemnly positive response. The retaliation to migration is the manifestation of discrimination in Granada which was an important part of my discussions with the participants from Dar Al Anwar, Amani and ASPA. This section looks at the broader tensions in retaliation to migration.

One of the first points was introduced by the member from ASPA, who explained that in the neighborhood where they are based, every time there is any sort of crime people automatically blame young unaccompanied immigrants. They added that in these instances, society already is linking migration with crime<sup>10</sup>. In addition to this point, in a casual conversation I had with a researcher from the Institute of Migration Studies of the University of Granada<sup>11</sup>, they expressed that currently there are tensions in Granadan society due to the media link between crime and migration. An example the researcher gave me, was the case

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<sup>9</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>10</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>11</sup> Instituto de Migraciones de la Universidad de Granada

of the *bulos* (fake news) which occurs often in Granada. In our discussion he mentioned that if a person with migration background is the coach of a famous soccer team or does something positive for the society, it has no media coverage, but if for some reason a person with migration background is a presumed guilty of a crime, the person is branded in the news as a criminal from the beginning exaggerating the crime and highlighting their origin even before their name. For migrants in Granada, it difficult to participate in society without dealing with tensions as a result of how some Granadans perceive them.

In a different case, the member from Amani brought up the example of Senegalese migrants in Granada since persons of that origin are often undocumented and approach their organization for assistance. Related to this, on one of the last days of my fieldwork I went to *Plaza Nueva* (one of the main touristic places in the city) to say goodbye to the member of the Senegalese organization I spoke with and has the occupation of street vendor (commonly known as “*mantero*”). We had arranged to meet around 6 p.m. but to my surprise, they were not there, despite the fact they were always at the same place and very punctual. When I looked around, I noticed they were hiding behind an electricity pole with a companion. As I looked closer, I realized that this was because there was a nearby police patrol. The situation was not pleasant to see, but since it was one of the last days I had to say goodbye to him and thank him for his help, I stayed waiting. Half an hour passed before the police left and, they were able to leave and set up their sale on the floor of the square.

What is relevant about that incident is there were other people who were earning money in the square that day without any issues. One group was interpreting flamenco dances in the street, but unlike the member of the organization and his companions (mostly Senegalese) who wanted to sell souvenirs there, the flamenco dancers did not get into any trouble with the police. A key observation I made about this incident was that the flamenco dancers were white whereas the street vendors are predominantly of African descent. In our discussion, the member of the organization explained to me that the only thing to do as a person of color is to always be alert, that you never know when the police will surprise you.

A week before that incident I met them by on my way back from a different interview. They greeted me cheerfully, and when I asked how their sale was, they told me that the police had confiscated their merchandise a day before. They mentioned this was not for the first time, but they smiled at me and told me that it was a new day and he hoped to sell his new merchandise.

This situation described above, with the street vendors, also happens in other parts of Spain as is described in Alcalde and Portos (2018). They explain there is repression against them as the result of actions against migrants influenced by far-right governments (Alcalde and Portos, 2018). It is also mentioned by Alcalde and Portos (2018), that on many occasions most people who dedicate themselves to this work are in an irregular way in the country and it is one of the few ways they can do in order to secure their livelihoods.

#### **4.2.1 The contrasting experiences of migrants from Ukraine**

The city should be a shelter for all migrants, regardless of their origin but according to my interviewees, the benefits do not apply evenly to everyone. The interview with the member of Amani brought the situation on how migrants are treated differently depending on where they are from. The member is a former public servant who considers there is a problem with how the government treats migrants. It was mentioned that “*the public administration has a bureaucratic system that is a little bit racist that makes it difficult for foreigners...well not to all, only for poor*”



*foreigners*”<sup>12</sup>. This makes the story of a shelter city more complex and shows the racist and Islamophobic undertones of rhetoric against migration.

Additionally, both members from Dar Al Anwar and Amani coincided that Granada's governmental policies for immigration are insufficient. As part of the government's actions, people are provided with place to live but only for a short period of time, after that the benefit is over, and many are forced to live on the street. The member from Dar al Anwar mentioned that those left out have to eat and live in poor conditions, and because of the low temperatures the city experiences in the winter, they are even in risk of freezing to death which has happened before.

On the other hand, the migration policies could be very efficient if the government desires. That is the case of the accelerated activation of shelter city protocols for the reception of the increasing arrivals of people from Ukraine, a topic that came out in most of my interviews. The member of ASPA noted, for instance, that the organization's beneficiaries coming from other countries are aware of how the policies apply for Ukrainians. They stated that *“there is also war in other countries where many of the beneficiaries of the organization come from”*<sup>13</sup> which they perceived as an injustice. They recalled a time when a young guy from the organization questioned them, *“how can they not grant me a refugee status, is it because I am black?”*<sup>14</sup>.

The participant from Dar Al Anwar remarked that, as a result of the war in Ukraine, every procedure for Ukrainians has advanced extremely quickly. They told me that even the Municipal Council of Migration, which had been inactive for a lengthy period of time, is now highly active and even arranges meetings with CSOs to see how they can provide coverage for the Ukrainian community.

With this situation, they pointed out the contrast on how procedures for other migrant groups had operated differently. The member stated, *“I personally know families that have been here for six years as asylum seekers and are still waiting for resident permit, do you get what I mean?”*<sup>15</sup>.

In addition, the member from ASPA added that Granada *“indeed is acting as a shelter city but be mindful... this is only for the Ukrainian population”*<sup>16</sup> and according to their testimony these thoughts have been shared with other migrant organizations in the city. Furthermore, they added that *“all the actions from the government regarding Ukrainians were very well done and efficient... but what about the rest of the people? How can it be possible that for other immigrants who need a document from the city council to continue their procedures takes so long... everything related the shelter city has to be seen carefully”*<sup>17</sup>.

The experiences discussed in this section outline the contrasting experiences of migrants from Ukraine and African countries. The differences are not subtle and demonstrate there is a clear distinction in the treatment people coming from Europe and the rest of the world.

### 4.3 An intersectional view on the tensions in the shelter city

Recalling the concept of intersectionality introduced in section 2.3.1 there are multiple overlapping identities that contribute to the tensions described in this chapter. As a first point, as described in section 4.1 religion plays an important role with regards to the tensions. This is the

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<sup>12</sup> Member of Amani (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>13</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>14</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>15</sup> Member of Dar Al Anwar (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>16</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>17</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

case for Muslims in Granada, and in my interviews and casual conversations the Muslim people were often linked to Arab countries. However, in my experience I found that many people from Senegal were majority Muslim but the tensions they experienced were primarily due to the color of their skin and the religious tensions were either secondary or redundant in comparison.

Another point was the experiences of women migrants. It came out in the interviews that Muslim African woman find it harder to access to the job market than men. In a similar point, it was mentioned that women from Latin American women were able to enter the labor market in a slightly easier way since they already have the required language skills, and in my fieldwork, they were more visible in the city. With regards to woman migrants, it was emphasized by the organizations that female participation rates are much lower than male ones.

In addition, based on the experience of organizations, it is usual that the trajectory for African migrants is a lengthy process, with many migrants traveling by pateras on dangerous routes that take years to reach Spain. However, in the case of Asian and Latin American migrants, most arrive by aircraft.

Thus, from an intersectional point of view, above being considered a migrant in Granada each person with a migration background faces their own difficulties with regards to their identities.

#### **4.4 Reflections on the tensions**

The actions explained above demonstrate that the remaining tensions infringe on what the shelter city promises to be. The shelter city should be more than a branding and should be a safe space for people with a migration background and overall, for everyone. The experiences outlined in this section so far demonstrate that without concrete actions from the Government to address the needs of migrants, the shelter city does not transcend being a branding.

## Chapter 5 The role of civil migrant organizations on sheltering

As its mentioned in chapter 1, Granada was established by its government as a shelter city in 2015 following the example of bigger cities such as Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid. However, the formation of Granada as a shelter city only occurred because of civil society dissatisfaction with the Spanish government response to the “refugee crisis”, only 18 persons were sheltered in the whole country, which accounted for only 5% of the refugees to which the government had committed to help (Alcalde & Portos, 2018).

According to Agustín & Jørgensen (2018), the creation of shelter cities in Spain had various goals, including “contrasting nation-state restrictive policies on migrants and refugees, contributing to the union and creation of a community of migrant and non-migrant population on a city level, decreasing xenophobic attitudes toward people with a migration background, and creating inclusive and fair communities for the migrant population” (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2018, p.199). Thus, CSOs reflect the movements of solidarity from below that emerged in effort to boost local reactions to the crisis, evolving into a new type of “municipalism” in Spain (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2018, p.14).

As a shelter city, part of what the government of Granada has done is helping the migrant population with legal, linguistic, educational, or work-related issues. However, CSOs have been doing most of this work (Martin-Godoy, 2021 p.103). This chapter outlines sheltering actions taken by CSOs I discovered during my fieldwork.

### 5.1 Union is strength

The decision of Granada to become a shelter city only took place after the efforts and pressure from the different members of the RedGra Network. The RedGra organizations make up an important part of sheltering in Granada which is a pivotal part of this research because of the work and scope they have to provide solidarity for migrants. This section introduces the organizations I interviewed.

#### 5.1.1 Red Granadina por el refugio y la acogida (RedGra).

The RedGra advocates for just immigration policies and raises awareness of injustices both within the city of Granada and in alliance with other cities in Andalucía and Spain. During the so-called refugee crisis of 2015, Granada residents came together to form RedGra. Around 40 organizations are currently a part of the network. Some of them are religious, while others work to help people move and provide material goods, but overall, the network's role is to support those who have experienced migration and serve as a voice for calls for justice and solidarity rather than directly addressing issues. As stated in their manifesto (RedGra, 2015), the goals of RedGra include defending the rights of people on the move without distinction or regard to their status, to inform the citizens of Granada about the issues facing refugees and migrants while they reside or pass through the city, to raise awareness for the development of public policies, to report racist or xenophobic actions, to encourage social mobilization, and to promote the creation of meeting and welcoming spaces (RedGra, 2015).

### 5.1.2 Civil society migrant organizations in Granada

According to Agustín & Jørgensen (2018), ordinary people in cities nowadays have the capacity to oppose restrictive national migration policies and create positive change towards migrants from below. Pries (2019) elaborates more on this idea, when mentions that during the “refugee crisis” Spanish society perceived CSOs “as the ‘heroes’ that ‘filled the gap’ between inactive or reluctant states and willing individuals” (Pries, 2019, p.13)

Table 2 outlines the objectives and activities of the organizations I interviewed and provides a detailed account of how they are filling the existing gaps and somehow counteracting the tensions living in the city. Many of the organizations were founded by citizen efforts in response to demands that arose as a result of societal migration changes throughout time.

**Table 2** Objectives and activities of the organizations I interviewed

Organization name	Active since	Objective	Main activities	Main target group
Dar Al Anwar آل دار أنوار	2015	Promote a more tolerable community Fight against exclusion, stereotypes and prejudices against Muslim community Promote interreligious dialogue Help everyone in need	Create sociocultural activities that promote the inclusion of Muslim, people in the society Offer temporary shelter for young migrants who were no longer eligible for government’s minor shelters and for refugees whose status has not been renewed. Support people in the shelter to continue their education or assisting them to find employment	Muslim people, Muslim migrants, Children, youth, and women
Organization of Senegalese migrants	2018	Support the necessities of the Senegalese community in Granada Promote unity for Senegalese migrants Support each other through hard times, like illness or the death of a loved one.	Creating a year fund through collaboration among them, for emergencies Organize cultural and religious events to share with the Granadans and other migrant groups	People originally from Senegal
AMANI	2018	Give people with a migration background a safe place to help them become part of society Give migrants the time and shelter they need to feel heard and welcome Assist migrants to become part of Granadan society	Provide Spanish classes Organize recreative activities, sports, cultural events, etc. Support with administrative paperwork Provide tools so migrants become independent and included in the academic, working	All people with a migration background

		Promote migrants freedom and autonomy	and social sphere in Granada.	
Asociacion Andaluza por la Solidaridad y la Paz (ASPA)	1987	Encourage cooperation and solidarity among individuals Switch the prejudices and negative views of migration experiences Promote social inclusion and the participation of young migrants in Granada	Creation of projects such as "Building Community," which aims to create shared spaces based on intercultural exchange in neighborhoods Create spaces where young migrants share their experiences with non-migrants Support young migrants to deal with migration grief.	Young migrants
Provivienda (pro housing)	1989	Mobilize society in the shared task of ensuring that everyone has access to housing	Support migrants to find housing in Granada Create campaigns of awareness, reports, and publications	Asylum seekers Undocumented migrants who are in situations of exclusion
Accion en red (Network in action)	2008	Advance towards greater equality and social justice Generate friendlier and more inclusive environments Care about migrants needs Promote the development of solidarity in all its dimensions, that extend democracy and individual freedom	Organize events with migrants and non-migrants Plan activities for young migrants Activities on intercultural education	Young migrants
Norte en positivo (Positive in North)	2010	Improve social cohesion for the people living in the North District of Granada Promote a holistic and interconnected vision of development to organize and improve community response. Encourage the housing market to not discriminate against immigrant	Create events that promotes the unity of the residents such as <i>Verano abierto</i> Create different workshops according to the necessities of the residents	All people with a migration background

As shown in the table above, some organizations were founded during the 1980s and 1990s when Granada shifted towards an immigration city, other organizations were founded after the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 as citizen initiatives that wanted to assist with the gap and necessities between policies and practice, and others more recently in response to ongoing needs of the migrant population (RedGra, 2015)

Overall, the organizations that were interviewed had the same opinion about the Municipality when it came to the shelter city and sheltering the migrant population. They all agreed that, that actions taken from the Municipal Council of Migrations seemed like an

“administrative obligation that they have to tickle off their agendas”<sup>18</sup> as expressed by the board member of AMANI which also stated that “in the end you see is a bit of a waste of time, they say they will make changes, but they never do”<sup>19</sup>. As stated by the member of Provivienda, because of this, and the current tensions in the city, the role of CSOs in Granada “is very important in the sheltering of migrants”<sup>20</sup>.

## 5.2 The convivial tools

There are clear parallels between the work of the organizations I interviewed, and the convivial tools outlined in chapter two. Recalling the work of Illich on conviviality, “convivial tools contribute to the well-being of all its members by fostering personal autonomy and independence” (Illich, 1973, p.17). Therefore, the following sections describe the parallels between the work of Illich and the of CSOs that emerged during this work.

### 5.2.1 Tools to cope with grief

Migration grief refers to the experience of migrant’s several losses in a short amount of time, including their family unit, support system, residence, language, and culture (Romero, 2020). As the member of ASPA explained, when newcomers arrive, the whole part of the migratory grief is not addressed “It is as if they arrive here and have no life behind them, there is no knowledge of all they have endured, experienced, or lived to reach this moment and everything that is ahead in their trajectories”<sup>21</sup>. The member mentioned that when a person with a migrant approach the government or organizations for any kind of assistance, “people in the position of assist, often forget that they are people with families, a history, a trajectory, people who care about them in their home countries, a life”<sup>22</sup>. As part of this, some strategies were found that have taken place on the part of the organizations to support on this which are outlined further in this section.

#### 5.2.1.1 Migratory grief

Regarding migratory grief, the member of ASPA shared with me a project they had created. The name of the project is “building community”<sup>23</sup> and involves mostly unaccompanied young migrants. For this project, youngsters assume the role of “intercultural agents” which allows them to share their migration experience with the non-migrants.

However, to be able to do that, the member explained to me that it is necessary to create a safe space for them, “a place of care where respect and love are the foundation, to provide them with the means to manage their migratory grief, and to encourage their active participation in the development of multicultural communities”<sup>24</sup>.

The year-long initiative included over 100 hours of training and despite having 20 participants in the beginning; there was only 12 people, mostly from African countries and just one woman, who completed the training. The activity involved mixed groups: migrant and non-migrants, civic society and children in schools where each group was allocated its own

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<sup>18</sup> Member of Amani (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>19</sup> Member of Amani (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>20</sup> Member of Provivienda (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>21</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>22</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>23</sup> Original name in Spanish: *Construyendo comunidad*

<sup>24</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

process. According to the testimony of the member from ASPA, these initiatives try to support with the migratory grief by creating safe spaces where the migrants can express themselves and use the platform to promote awareness of their host countries.

The project has different lines, such as the Formative Line of care, where they create a space to construct community and bonds among the participants. The ASPA member pointed out that if the migrants feel part of a community, they feel they have the right to express themselves and make suggestions. Additionally, there is the Social Mobilization Line where they engage in events such as public protests or demonstrations organized by RedGra and other groups of the network, and the Political Incidence Line which encourages social manifestation and promoting migrants' rights. The member from ASPA also said that in the latest line, they aimed to create awareness on the migrant trajectories in those kinds of events, since from their experience it often occurs that they are asked by the society sensitive questions like *"how was your migrant trajectory? tell me about it and how awful was it..."*<sup>25</sup>. So instead, they try to shift the focus towards how the host culture perceives migrants and the meaning of being a migrant with the idea of deconstructing existing narratives and building new ideas regarding the people with a migration background.

For the member (non-migrant) and colleague (a migrant woman) who oversee this project, the creation of these safe spaces seems to be crucial, particularly for young migrants to dignify their migratory grieving.

#### ***5.2.1.2 Support in the moments of lost***

In addition to developing strategies for coping with migration grief, one of the organizations interviewed have developed means of helping in times of loss in their home country.

The member from the Senegalese organization told me that the origin of their organization was inspired by the fact that when a family member died or became ill in the country of origin, they used to collect funds by going from house to house in the Senegalese community in order to assist the members in affording travel expenses so they could be reunited with their loved ones in those hard times.

Currently, after the Senegalese migrant community formed the organization, they agreed a yearly contribution of 30 euros per member that goes to a general fund that can be used to any member that requires it. Because of this, in the event of a death or illness, they can even cover the travel fees for a companion. This was very important for them since, as the participant expressed, a lot of people that belong to that organization does not have the income to afford their travel expenses. This is a way they created to where the members of the organization support each other.

### **5.2.2 Tools for breaking barriers**

From the interviews with the organizations, I identified that there is a great need to create spaces or occasions where people can get to know each other better, exchange ideas and share moments. As the member of the Senegalese organization stated, *"in order to foment relationships among migrants and non-migrants, you must get to know the person that is next to you, it is important to take the time to get to know other people with whom we are living"*<sup>26</sup>. However, there are some barriers that impede interactions between people of diverse backgrounds, namely the lack of spaces and activities, and the language barrier as mentioned in the previous chapter.

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<sup>25</sup> Member from ASPA, (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>26</sup> Member from ASPA, (Granada, July 2022)

To overcome this, there is the example of the activities that the AMANI offer. They often organize social, sports or recreational activities where people with a migration background can interact with each other. Additionally, they offer Spanish classes given by volunteers and members of the organization and teach about the Spanish culture. Besides that, the member mentioned to me that they attempt to accompany migrants that go to their organization as much as possible, including providing support to them for doctor appointments, legal, or academic proceedings. For AMANI, the most essential part is providing the migrants with socialization tools, the members of the organization are all volunteers that share the same mission, to make people one more in their society and break down the barriers they face.

During my interview with AMANI, a Moroccan woman approached my participant and asked if they had found her a job. My interviewee turned to her nicely and explained that the only jobs hiring (in the care sector) need someone that speak Spanish. They embraced, and the member of AMANI told her to go back to the Spanish lessons that were given in the organization on that day. Later, the AMANI member explained to me that she asks her every day hoping one day she will find something, however the organization has been supporting her with language classes to open her possibilities to find a job. The members of the organization are all volunteers that share the same mission, to make people one more in their society.

The member of ASPA, told me it's crucial to find new ways to foster intercultural dialogue because of language barriers. To overcome them, they employ art therapy and body language to communicate. They also mentioned about the dynamic of “the circle” that they use to begin all their sessions. In this dynamic, people hold hands and perform movements in unison to and look at each other recognizing and welcoming each other. They chose a circle because in many cultures it symbolizes a meeting point. The member stated that this was one of their favorite activities *“They enjoyed it because they realize the meaning of the circle, which for them signifies family and community. The participant described some of the ways they implemented that in the Building community project activities. Since the migrant members of the project speak different languages, they asked the participants to make a play dough animal with which they identify, thinking about the animal's characteristics and relating them to their own. Then they put all the animals in the center of the circle and we compared them. “we asked them, how would they get along, what tensions can emerge? what do they need to get along with each other?”*<sup>27</sup>. Reflecting on this, they can define what a community is, acknowledging that “it inhabits different personalities that interact with each other, that has different ways of being, but meets and relates and through that, we work for the Community”.

In the case of Provivienda, their priority is to provide access to housing because it is an essential component of society inclusion. Thus, as part of their activities, they assist undocumented migrants and asylum seekers in finding a house under the principles of autonomy and non-discrimination. For Provivienda, this type of initiatives is very important, as expressed by its member *“it is essential that there is a representation of migrants in all areas of the city... and that this does not happen many times in the end because the circumstances of the migrant population occupy a less visible space in certain neighbourhoods”*<sup>28</sup>. With these actions Provivienda is helping to combat segregation as they are focused on locating people with a migration background in the city and aspire for them to be included in the city. This type of assistance is especially beneficial in the case of undocumented migrants, who end up living in vulnerable conditions

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<sup>27</sup> Member from ASPA, (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>28</sup> Member of Provivienda (Granada, July 2022)



in many cases due to their migration status, and with this assistance are able to access to housing.

The Accion en Red volunteer reflects that the migrant population encounters many difficulties in interacting with the non-migrant population. To counteract this, they organized events for them to share moments. They arranged the Day of Interculturalism in Granada's neighborhoods to encourage a convivial environment. Also, this organization have developed other recreative activities. For example, they arranged activities for four young people based on the assumption that they are all young and have something in common, rather than highlighting their varied nations or origins, to build relationships among them.

Thus, these activities are aimed to eliminate the alienation of migrants and promoting their inclusion into society. The point of this action is to create the spaces where migrants are able to interact with the host society.

### 5.2.3 A neighbourhood summer event

In a neighborhood considered by Granadans as one of the “most dangerous” in the city and where there is a highest concentration of people with a migration background, I was able to participate in a summer event called Verano Abierto Cartuja<sup>29</sup>. My participation in this event was a highlight of my fieldwork since everyone was welcoming and friendly and allowed me to take part in the different activities. Figure 5.1 shows me (back left) taking part in an activity in the event.

In Verano Abierto, there were people from different origins such as Morocco, Romania, Senegal, Bolivia, Spain of different religions and ages. This event involved the youth population, adults, elderly and children, and is made for all the residents of the neighborhood.

This event, which has been taking place in the neighborhood for more than 10 years now also takes place in public spaces in different neighborhoods of the north of the city during July and August. This activity is part an intercultural strategy implemented by various actors included the organization Zona Norte, which tries to promote conviviality among neighbors in the north zone of Granada. The Municipality provides some funds for this event, but members of other groups arrange it. The member of the organization also commented that each change of government has been a challenge as they needed to see if the funds would again be used to support these activities.

In the event, people from the neighborhood can opt to have a stand where they share any kind of knowledge with the other neighbors. Some of the activities taking place taught people to create healthy drinks, dance, sports, or workshops to learn English and other languages.

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<sup>29</sup> In English: Open Summer

**Figure 5.1**  
Me (back left) taking part in an activity in the event



Source: Facebook

The highlight of this event for me was to observe how everyone was actively participating, delegating roles, collaborating with each other, seeing the residents were sharing skills and knowledge among each other regardless of their identities, and proposing ideas for the next year event.

#### 5.2.4 “Give them voice”

As agreed by the members of all the organizations interviewed, in their activities, they give migrants a role in deciding what their needs are and what activities will bring them the most benefit. For example, the member of Zona Norte said that they try to find out what the people in the neighborhood want and need and that it is very important to listen to them. The member said that sometimes people who work for organizations that assist migrants make assumptions about what they need. *“Sometimes you see an unemployed person and think that person needs a job, so you rush to help find one, but when you ask the person, she/he is actually fine, and their needs are different”*<sup>30</sup>. In addition, a member of ASPA said that *“It is important not to force people to do things, but to help and be a kind of bridge for migrants' needs”*<sup>31</sup>.

The member from ASPA also highlighted that in their work with young migrants, they “give them a voice” to decide and that resulted in writing a manifesto for the Ombudsman of Granada and creating a rap song to make a claim for their rights. *“With those kinds of things, you also allow them to put in practice their creativity, experiences, and knowledge”*<sup>32</sup>.

In addition to this, the member of Provivienda mentioned that if the suggestions from the people they support are ignored, and they do not promote practices where they are giving them a voice, their efforts will fall short of the organization's goals. Therefore, there is an increase in participation on the designed activities if they are making decisions.

Likewise, the member from AMANI noted that given that their organization do not enforce behaviors but accept everyone's perspectives, they avoid future conflicts. *“It is about*

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<sup>30</sup> Member of Zona Norte (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>31</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>32</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

*bringing them into our places, not only to bring them into our territory, but also to listen and for them to bring us into their territories*"<sup>33</sup>. She continued by explaining that they would never impose their religious ideas or worldview, as stipulated in the Code of Conduct that they develop for the organization.

#### **5.2.4.1 Sharing identities**

When I asked the CSOs what they think people with a migration background bring into the Granadan society, all highlighted among other things, that with their knowledge, experiences and different points of views they enrich the city. The member of ASPA mentioned that when people with a migration background share elements of their identity "*they can bring are visions, culture of culture, visions of the world, moral visions, so different from ours*"<sup>34</sup>. Furthermore, she stated that the "differences" that could exist, should not be taken as a threat but as an opportunity to expand their vision of the world.

Adding to that point, the member of Provienda brought up the fact that Spain is an aging nation and that the society need to recognize the potential of migrants and their preparation. This is especially important, because it has a link with the ideas of Illich about a convivial society which entailed the idea of people collaborating with each other.

### **5.2.5 The essence of Al-Ándalus: interreligious dialogue**

In conversation with organizations and people living in Granada, there is something in that always brings back the idea of Al-Ándalus and the essence of the imaginary of *convivencia* of that time. A Muslim business owner from Tangier who has lived in Granada for 12 years, told me, "*from my parent's home in Tangier, I could see parts of Spain... it felt so close, and because of the other Moroccans living here, the Alhambra, the history of Al-Ándalus, and the shops... it just feels like home*". They explained that they had attempted to reside in other European cities but returned to Granada due to the presence of a Muslim population there. This might be connected to Rogozen's (2007) ideas, in which she discusses that the concentration of Muslim immigrant businesses in some central areas of Granada creates somehow a community building among "documented and undocumented immigrants who work in the area" (Rogozen, 2007, p.871) from Arab countries.

Moreover, as a result of the growth in persons from countries with a mainly Muslim population (recalling chapter 1 and 4), Muslim organizations such as Dar Al Anwar try to address their needs and participating in what was being done at the social level with migrants in Granada. According to the member I talked to, the majority of individuals who seek assistance from the group are Muslim since they teach about Islam, but they also support people of other faiths.

The member of the Senegalese organization explained to me that the Senegalese community gathers in a small location to celebrate Ramadan. He emphasized the significance of such events taking place in larger venues, so that everyone, even non-believers, could learn more about it and better comprehend them.

In addition, the AMANI member interviewed said that everyone, regardless of faith, wants to celebrate and enjoy moments with one another. She related to me a story in which a Moroccan Muslim lady who was a member of the organization took part in a variety of

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<sup>33</sup> Member of Amani (Granada, July 2022)

<sup>34</sup> Member of ASPA (Granada, July 2022)

activities. *“You may also see her at the front of a Catholic procession, and some people would joke with her by saying, -hey, but you're not Catholic-, to which she would respond, -I want to participate, these are my friends. I want to get closer-”*<sup>35</sup>.

Testimonies such as those above describe the need of efforts to open the community to interreligious dialogue as part of building relationships among community members.

## **5.4 A holistic view towards sheltering**

Since the activities described in this chapter go beyond the existence of tensions or mere coexistence, they can be seen as part of Illich's ideas on conviviality. This is because the solidarity actions made by the organizations serve to set the scene and promote intercultural relationships among individuals.

As was described in this chapter, the actions consist in support grief, encouraging inter-religious and intergenerational dialogue, promoting interculturality, and creating spaces to share experiences and exchange knowledge. Then the actions taken by the organization also could be used to address the tensions identified in chapter 4 in contrast to the government, which focuses only on basic needs, the organization takes a more holistic approach to people with a migration background by creating spaces for joy and grief.

In this context, organizations are not only providing shelter to migrants, but alongside they are giving convivial tools available to people with a migration background. Then with these tools, they aim to promote autonomy, overcome inequities, prevent social alienation and facilitate their inclusion into the host society.

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<sup>35</sup> Member of Amani (Granada, July 2022)

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

The establishment of Granada as a shelter city by the local government was a great achievement which can be traced to the efforts of CSOs. However, this study discovered that despite Granada being a shelter city, there are a number of historical tensions such as prejudices and repression of religious expression towards Muslim people that are still prevalent. At the same time, it was demonstrated in this research that the sheltering actions of CSOs were directed to counteract these tensions that were clearly identified by the CSOs interviewed.

In contrast to the local government, which aims only to facilitate the migrants' basic needs, CSOs provide a holistic approach to persons with a migration background. Through the interviews I found that organizations do not impose people's behaviors. Instead, the CSOs take a more democratic approach, with migrants speaking out and discussing their needs, which are taken into account when developing activities for them. Additionally, migrants are active members and, in some circumstances, board members of CSOs. In the experience of the CSOs, when individuals do not feel included in the host community, they tend to alienate. Hence, it can be concluded that this helps to avoid alienation by transcending ordinary coexisting relations which relates to Illich's (1973) concept on conviviality. I found that the actions promoted by the CSOs were analogous to "tools for conviviality", that not only promote moments of joy but also assist in times of grief. In addition, to strengthen the relationship between migrants and the host society, the CSOs encourage persons with a migration background to share information, express themselves, and participate in the community. Therefore, by addressing the existing tensions, these activities prevent future conflicts by establishing a foundation for strengthening intercultural connections between migrants and their host communities in the context of migration. From the interviews it was found that organizations do not impose people's behaviors; rather, they use a more democratic approach, with migrants speaking out and discussing their needs, which are taken into account when developing activities for them. Additionally, migrants are active members and, in some circumstances, board members in some organizations.

### 6.1 Policy recommendations

As indicated throughout this research, the changes at a local level in Granada show an increasing migratory flow. Therefore, if the city is to adopt actions and policies in line with being a shelter city it will be a positive change for the future. Co-creating a shelter city is a two-way path. As was demonstrated in this research, CSOs play a key role in the city and addressing the migrants' needs that are not addressed by government. Hence, CSOs and local government must collaborate to expand their reach and generate successful results. Based on the findings in this research paper, I have formulated the following policy recommendations, based on establishing solidarity actions involving migrants and non-migrant, for the local government in Granada:

- Develop clean shelter city policies that are applicable to any person with a migration background looking for shelter in Granada without distinction
- Promote and support the initiatives made by CSOs
- Establish consistent meetings with CSOs to monitor the needs and the outcomes of the activities
- Include a holistic line of care when addressing migrants needs
- Create strategies to overcome the tensions existing in the city, for example by

allowing non-Christian religions to be celebrated in public spaces

- Use an intersectional approach when assisting migrants
- Set spaces to exchange ideas and hear people with a migration background

# Appendices

## Appendix A Interview Guide

### A) Initial preparations:

- Introduce myself
- Explain the purpose of the interview
- Explain the expected outcomes of the interview
- Mention confidentiality and that the interview will be only for academic purposes
- Ask if the person agrees on continue participating
- Ask if is okay to record the interview
- Ask if there are any questions
- Get the participant's consent
- Inform that the person can have access to the final report if they desire

### B) Questions:

- What is your position within the organization? (How long have you been there?)
- When was the organization created? (year)
- What motivated the creation of the organization?
- What are the main objectives of the organization?
- What are the main activities of the organization?
- In your experience of working with the migrant population, what are the advantages of living in a society with people from different parts of the world?
- In your experience of working with the migrant population, what are the challenges of living in a society with people from different parts of the world?
- In your experience, what are actions that can be done to overcome the challenges? (Ask for an example)
- In your experience, which actions can be taken to foment relationships among migrant and non-migrant population?
- From your experience as a member of an organization, do you have any anecdote of any event/ activity of your organization where migrant and non-migrant population where interacting with each other?
- Do you have any additional comments?

## **Appendix B Descriptions of organizations interviewed**

### **Dar Al Anwar** دار آل أنوار

Dar Al Anwar (house of light) was founded in 2015 under the motto “Towards a more tolerable community” by 12 Muslim residents of Granada in response to the city's expanding Muslim population and refugee population.

The main goals are to provide sociocultural activities that promote Muslim society's inclusion in Spain, fight against exclusion, smash stereotypes and prejudices, and spread it among other groups of various ideologies with a focus on assisting children, youth, and women (Dar Al Anwar, 2015).

Today, the association helps everyone in need, not just the Muslim community. For instance, the Casa Aljibe a temporary shelter helps young immigrants who were previously housed in government-run minor shelters but are dumped on the streets when they turn 18 and refugees whose status has not been renewed. According to the organization's website, guests at Casa Aljibe receive not only lodging but also assistance with carrying on with their education or locating employment to enhance their social and professional integration. People who are a part of this project have successfully exited the shelter after being able to secure employment.

### **AMANI**

AMANI, which stands for “path of peace” in Swahili, is run by volunteers who create everything this organization has to offer. Their goal is to give people with a migration background a safe place to help them become part of society. To do this, they offer services like Spanish classes, sports and recreation events, help with administrative paperwork, and more. One of the board members mentioned that the most important thing they do is give migrants the time they need to feel heard and welcome. Their aim is that migrants become independent, by becoming part of Granadan society and being accepted into the academic world, the working world, and the social world. They aspire that migrant can rent an apartment, make a purchase, or deal with bureaucracy on their own, and to be able to move around with the same freedom and autonomy as any non-migrant

### **Provivienda**

Provivienda focuses on mobilize society in the shared task of ensuring that everyone has access to housing. Some of their activities involves creating campaigns, reports, and publications, especially for undocumented migrants who are in situations of exclusion and asylum seekers. They encourage the housing market to not discriminate against immigrants. They only operate in a select few Spanish cities, and Granada is one of them.

### **Norte en positivo**

Norte en positivo supports the Intercultural Community Intervention project, which seeks to enhance the standard of living for families residing in the North District of Granada which is an area where mostly people with a migration background lives, an area using a sustainable human development approach. This organization uses a holistic and interconnected vision of development to organize and improve community response.



## **Accion en red**

The main objective of Accion en red is to advance towards greater equality and social justice. Social transformations that promote the development of solidarity in all its dimensions, that extend democracy and individual freedom, that guarantee human rights and that generate friendlier and more inclusive environments, putting care at the center.

## **Organization of Senegalese migrants**

The organization of Senegalese migrants was created by Senegalese immigrants living in Granada as their community started to grow and necessities increased. The aim of this organization is that with the contribution of all their members, they can support the community's needs and to plan cultural and religious activities. One of its main goals and the motivation of its creation was to support each other through hard times, like illness or the death of a loved one.

## **Asociacion Andaluza por la Solidaridad y la Paz (ASPA)**

ASPA encourages cooperation and solidarity among individuals. Among different other activities related to education such as share the values of popular education, they are currently working on a project called "Building Community", which aims to create shared spaces based on intercultural exchange in neighborhoods. With that project, they promote social inclusion and the active participation of young migrants in their host communities.

As part of their activities, they help unaccompanied minors share their experiences in schools to change prejudices and negative attitudes towards migrants. Additionally, they support young migrants to deal with migration grief.

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