



Sustainable Development in a Diverse World (SUS.DIV)

STRATEGIC PAPER OF RESEARCH TASK 4.1

“Cultural dialogue through governance: diversità in the political arena”

Future Research Activities and JPA for the next 18 months

Participants

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Governance of Diversity in Rome

Local governance, which potentially shares common features across cities, is best studied and understood in contextual terms. Thus, it is important to look in-depth at various aspects of governance in different cities. This paper concerns itself with a series of studies in Rome, Italy, that seek to understand and address the issues that are arising as immigration and diversity increase in an unprecedented manner, creating new challenges and new opportunities.

Italy as a whole was largely a country of emigration up until the early 1970s when the migration balance switched and more individuals entered the country than left. This influx of immigrants was not evenly distributed throughout country and Rome, despite being the biggest city in Italy, has only experienced heavy immigration in recent years. In 2004 there were 230,000 registered foreigners in Rome (7% of the population), which excludes the numerous “irregular” residents who are not included in city records. Although the presence of immigrants is lower in Rome, than in other major European cities such as Paris, the 2004 figure nonetheless represents an increase of more than 50% since 1997.¹ This is indicative of the quickly growing immigrant population throughout Italy. While Rome is arguably accustomed to the presence of foreigners coming for brief periods as tourists and for longer periods of students or lovers of art and architecture or for service in the Catholic Church, the current foreign population places new and heavier burdens on the city. The change in migration patterns means that the people knocking on Rome’s gates are no longer just from other parts of Italy, but bring with them foreign cultures, religions, languages², and physical features. This forces the population to adjust and become a more heterogeneous community while asking the city to find means of addressing issues that crop up in housing, schools, employment, and every other sphere of political, economic, cultural, and social life.

¹ Comune di Roma. 2005. *I Cittadini della Città*.

² It should be noted that the variety and differences between Italian dialects has historically presented certain language differences as migrants from the south (e.g., Sardinia or Naples) are not necessarily understood by Italians in northern cities.

The Research

The planned research in Rome consists of three phases. Phase I (the first six months) involves fieldwork in the form of five separate studies (see descriptions below), involving different disciplines and aspects of diversity, which were initiated in the past year. Upon completion, each study will have been presented at a seminar involving political figures, researchers, journalists, members of local organizations that work with immigration and diversity issues, and other interested individuals. In addition, an hour-long video is being/will be prepared to accompany each paper. The final papers will be published in a book on diversity issues in Rome. Papers will be available in English, the original language, as well as Italian.

Most of the coming 18 months will be devoted to the development of a governance model based on the practices in Rome. During Phase II we will compile the information gathered during the Phase II to make inferences about governance and collect additional data as necessary. The specifics of the research will depend on the amount and type of data gathered through the five studies. We envision using a combination of interviews (with public officials and residents) as well as document and media (i.e., newspapers, television, web) review for additional information. We consider it important to understand the official model of governance as well as the reality in terms of implementation and perceptions amongst the public, which requires information from official and non-official sources. Thus, it may be possible to determine how transparent city governance is, the extent to which existing models describe the local situation, and help in the creation of a model specifically suiting to urban governance. It should be noted that this is in relation to urban governance and immigration and diversity. This limits the scope of the model, but is also likely to say something in regards to governance in general.

Phase III will focus on the actual creation of the governance model and discussions regarding its appropriateness and implications. These discussions will take place through seminars (2-3) that bring together different members of the community, academia and the city administration. Including different perspectives (i.e., governed and governor) should provide a more comprehensive critique of the model and potential for further refinement.

A Series of Studies

The studies undertaken for this endeavour seek to provide a multi-faceted image of diversity in Rome by utilizing different academic disciplines and perspectives. These include: architecture, anthropology, linguistics, and history. These disciplines are used independently and conjunctively with some degree of overlap in an attempt to understand changes in the visual and physical reality of the city (i.e., visibility of different languages and architectural changes) as well as the economic, social and cultural. Through these studies one can get a picture of the role that different individuals, institutions and policies play in assisting or inhibiting integration, economic stability, social acceptance, horizontal and upward mobility, and other concerns. The extent of control that a city government can have over these different areas varies, but recognizing the potential overlap between different sectors (e.g., the social and cultural significance of an apparently economic structure such as a market) can enable the city and its partners to influence areas through multiple avenues.

A Roman Market: Today and Yesterday (Studies 1 and 2)

While each of the studies is unique, there is a certain degree of continuity between the different projects. The first set of studies (see Abstracts 1 and 2 below) are complimentary in that they both look at a Roman street market—Porta Portese. This market has a long history in the city and has become a city tradition, becoming part of the city's history, culture and everyday life. As such it provides an opportunity to study aspects of economic and social life in Rome as they manifest themselves today and potentially contrast with the past, a past stretching back to the market's beginnings following the end of World War II.

A study of today allows one to paint a picture of current reality, the interactions that exist between people and the inclusion of immigrants in the market, both formally and informally. Questions arise as to the nature of this participation as well as the result. Can (should) this participation be considered a net social good? Who benefits? Past research (Working on the Fringes) demonstrates the value of informal economic activity—arguably, immigrants, especially in the absence of other opportunities, need to be given the chance to work “on the fringes.” The question is whether this is really beneficial.

The past provides a look into the changes that have taken place and why. How did the

changes in Porta Portese take place? What effect did this have on the various participants? Did the increase in immigrants in the city, and the market, result in a loss for Italians (either economic or cultural)? There is also a question of governance on the part of the city, or, by stakeholders who wish the market to maintain or change certain characteristics.

Indicators and Change in Immigrant Neighbourhoods (Studies 3 and 4)

Taking a slightly different angle, two of the studies concern themselves with another market, which operates on a daily basis in the heart of an immigrant neighbourhood (see Abstracts 3 and 4 below). Here the market is a focus of research in terms of its physical presence and architectural significance as well as the role that it plays in the larger community when other economic, social and cultural factors are considered. In the latter case it becomes one of many aspects within a culturally diverse environment. Study 3 takes a look at the political, economic and social factors related to the transferral of a daily market within a neighbourhood. Such a study considers the role of people, but in terms of how they relate to their physical space—how a space becomes a place and the meaning of these places for the individuals who frequent them.

In a related study (Study 4), the focus is not solely on the market, but on the whole neighbourhood in comparison to another immigrant neighbourhood. This study incorporates the social, economic, and to some extent political, focusing on various indicators that can be used as benchmarks for the extent of success (and integration) of a given area. The previously discussed notions of networks and embeddedness become central in understanding how the physical (types of buildings, presence of shops) relates to the personal (social networks and relationships) and ultimately the impact that these have on the neighbourhood. Such an understanding has numerous political implications not only in terms of the extent to which community members are political active, but also in terms of the steps that a city government can take to promote “success.”³

This study addresses issues regarding social networks raised by Magatti and Quassoli write in ‘The Italian case, Employment, under employment, self-employment: patterns of integration of immigrant workers in Italy in which they state:

³ How this is measured depends on the goals of the city government.

“[m]igrant networks fundamentally shape migrant’s economic strategies. Besides playing a fundamental role in the decision to emigrate, social networks mediate migrants’ interaction with public institutions, the local labour market and local traditions of informal arrangements”.⁴

The presence of social networks, often based on ethnic, religious or cultural origin, is on the one hand, fundamental for immigrants’ and minorities’ development and socio-economic inclusion; on the other hand, it is a potential obstacle for carrying out public policy objectives since social networks constitute important channels of information that may replace or overlap with official ones, not always accurately relaying information on public policy.

Linguistic Landscape

Language is all around us taking numerous forms, displaying itself in written form, verbal expression and gestures, some of which in and of themselves comprise words (i.e., sign language). In major cities with diverse populations and thousands of tourists the number of languages and forms of expression that one comes into contact with everyday can be quite high. This variation in language and means of expression adds to the diversity of a place; it can heighten communication and miscommunication. Tourists may have difficulty navigating the city. Immigrant residents may not be able to get access to the services that they need, finding themselves unable to communicate with the city administration, (potential) employers, and countless others in their new environment. This makes language not only extremely important for those who do not speak the native tongue, but also for a city government trying to manage a diverse population and engage in some kind of dialogue. One could argue that it is in the immigrants' best interest to learn the local language and that it is their “obligation” to do so, placing the burden on their shoulders. This, however, does not necessarily assist in a transition phase as illustrated in the previously mentioned ENGIME study in Rome. In this case foreigners were given a voice, but language was one of the main critiques of the initiative—namely all announcements by the city regarding the elections were in

⁴ Mauro Magatti and Fabio Quassoli. “The Italian case, Employment, under employment, self-employment: patterns of integration of immigrant workers in Italy”, paper presented for the first Conference of the Thematic Network ‘Working on the Fringes: Immigrant Businesses, Economic Integration and Informal Practices’.

Italian, making it difficult for many immigrants to fully participate.

The above is just one example, but it is a clear case of a lack of linguistic sensitivity (and arguably cultural dialogue) in an example of city governance that sought to *improve* communication. It highlights the importance of language, especially in light of an immigrant population with mixed knowledge of Italian. For the sake of integration one can argue that the city would further disadvantage its immigrant population by making everything available in other languages; however, one also needs to consider the need to support integration when new residents do not speak the language.

The study outlined below (see Abstract 5) does not look at the use of language in the administration, schools, and so on, but on the street—the visible languages that everyone can see and that enter the daily experiences of those who pass by on the street, whether it is an advertisement, store announcement, street sign, private announcements, propaganda, graffiti, or any number of other linguistic expressions. Many of these may be private (i.e., store signs); however, a vast number of governmental, either created by the city, the state, or, with many street signs, the EU. These signs are often of interest to residents and non-residents alike, which means that the issuing body has to determine whether language is important, whether it is worthwhile to create a bi- or multi-lingual sign, or perhaps a sign that replaces words with pictures.

Project Abstracts

1) Anthropological (1)

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Few earlier anthropological studies have focused on what keeps a market active and what happens when it is disintegrating. The present study attempts to do precisely that, to search out the structural aspects of a market place, the level of diversity that it sustains and the potential problems that may occur.

Porta Portese, a major Roman street market, is the site chosen for the exploration of the city's ethnic diversity: entry barriers may be expected to be fairly low, allowing even individuals often disadvantaged by language and/or legal status to participate; few formal qualifications of training or education are required, while self-employment as a vendor allows to avoid the usual job recruitment processes which may discriminate against certain ethnic backgrounds. These qualifications already imply certain theoretical understandings of "diversity" – namely that diversity – the mixing of members different cultural and ethnic communities within a larger host community – is not without its problems and not necessarily a good thing in itself. Instead it may carry the potential for social conflict, for example through, actual or perceived, economic competition. This competition may result in migrants being marginalised and forced into subordinate economic position – like that of an unlicensed trader in a street market. Competition and marginalisation may also be expressed within the structures of the street market through a hierarchy of goods, from high-price/high-margin (e.g. furniture, antiques) down to low-price/low-margin merchandise (e.g. second hand clothing).

Within the particular framework of Porta Portese street market we may also ask, for example, whether and how diversity can make the market more attractive, either to the local population or to tourists. Whether diversity can reduce rather than increase competition, either by generating higher customer numbers and thus higher turnover for everybody; or by differentiation of goods, allowing vendors to create specialised segments – a vendor of second hand books, for example, is unlikely to take business from a vendor in plants or children's clothing.

Key findings from the study demonstrate a great deal of diversity in the market with a high presence of immigrants amongst vendors (about 50%). Analysis demonstrates that neither people, nor goods are evenly distributed with clusters of vendors based on ethnicity/nationality and also goods on sale. There are indications of complex social and economic networks that allow people to enter what is effectively a closed market. As such, the market provides a snapshot of social relations as well as providing a place for Italians to mix with their new neighbours who enter the market as vendors and buyers, changing and being changed by the market in turn.

Field research/data collection: Completed

Completion of paper: Completed

Seminar in Rome: held in May, 2006

Video: September, 2006

2) Historical

Project lead: **Raffaele Bracalenti, MD, IPRS, Rome, Italy**
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Public spaces such as streets, squares (piazzas) and markets represent places where diverse cultures interact, mix and undergo transformations. Markets are perhaps especially important as places for cultural exchange due to the interactions that take place not only between people who pass each other on the street, but in commercial transactions between buyers and vendors. Markets also provide a unique economic space for immigrants given its flexibility and the relative ease of entry into this largely informal space. This means that the market can be an initial point of entry for immigrants seeking to gain an economic foothold in a new environment. This study seeks to understand these two factors as they have unfolded in one particular market, Porta Portese, which is the largest open market in Rome, since its beginnings following World War II with particular focus on the past 30 years. The study uses interviews with buyers and vendors, social observation, official city records, and other sources such as film and literature to explore how the market has changed physically, economically, socially, and culturally. Of particular interest is the role that immigrants have played in these changes, as buyers and vendors.

Preliminary analysis of the data demonstrates notable changes in the market that effectively show a return to the beginning. While current memory of the market focuses on Porta Portese as a place for antiques and rare finds, its origins were as a place for used goods, notably clothing, in the years following World War II. What many Italians, and Romans, now perceive as a decline in the market can, in actuality, be seen as a revival in terms of the sale of bargain items to a population in need. What has changed the most perhaps are the actors who are now made up of a large number of immigrants both as vendors and sellers. Immigrants, however, are not entirely new to the market as there are some who have been there as sellers for over 20 years. The market appears as a place where immigrants can and have entered in different ways, finding a means to

enter the economic and social life of Rome while Italians cling to a nostalgia of the market as it reportedly “once was”. As a nexus for the convergence of immigrant and Italian, past and present, Porta Portese can be seen as a vehicle for helping raised awareness of immigrants in the Italian consciousness while providing an avenue for immigrants to establish their own roots in the city.

Field research/data collection: Completed

Completion of paper: September, 2006

Seminar in Rome: late November, 2006

Video: October, 2006

3) Architectural

Project lead: **Prof. Hisham Elkadi, PhD**, School of Art and Design, University of Ulster, Belfast, UK

Research team: **Katherine Marquand Forsyth**, Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research (IPRS), Rome, Italy

Urban spaces represent laboratories where social, economic, and political fields are not separated from the cultural one. Unlike art, public places are collective expressions that produce collective identity rather than self-expressions with multiple identities. Clearly, it should be one of the ambitions of the politically inspired interventions on culture in Italy to develop meaningful public places that can become, *and be perceived as*, models for new patterns of economic, social and cultural integration between the peoples of Europe. Meaningful place-making is defined in this project as the sphere where conscious reflection occurs. Such a sphere can enhance local experience and make local visual information represented by the surrounding built environment explicit to inhabitants and other users. This should be distinguished from space, which is an area configured by nature that accommodates the evocation of feelings while place is an area in space designed to accommodate certain human activities. There are continuous changes in the architectural experience of *place* where practices are situated and of *space* where local experience occurs.

This project studies the use of urban space in a small section of Rome, Piazza Vittorio, which is located in the neighbourhood of culturally mixed area of Esquilino near Termini, Rome's main train station. Both Esquilino and the piazza have undergone a series of transformations, the most recent being the transfer of the once open market that was held daily in Piazza Vittorio to an enclosed space adjacent to the piazza. This study focuses on this transformation in the use of space, seeking to understand the nature of place and space and subsequent impact of the changes in the piazza. The project investigates the spatial and a-spatial (re)arrangements of Piazza Vittorio rather than the role structural surfaces had on defining place.

Thus, the primary questions addressed in the research are:

- 1) How "public" do we really want the cultural space to be?
- 2) How do *all* participants and stakeholders perceive this culture space?
- 3) How do appropriate or erroneous interventions impact the 'social capital' rather than the economic gains in Rome?

The history of the relocation of the market from the piazza to the buildings in via Principe Amedeo is being studied with particular focus on the impact on the surrounding blocks and the way peoples' perceptions and use of the area have changed as a result. Data sources include interviews with individuals who frequent the piazza and market as well as city records and library research. The information collected will be represented in maps of the area illustrating changes in the use of space over time and changing views.

Project time line:

Field research/data collection: completed

Completion of paper: November, 2006

Seminar in Rome: late October/early November, 2006

Video: November, 2006

4) Anthropological (2)

Project lead: **Prof. Sandra Wallman, PhD**, University College London, London, UK

Research team: **Alessia Montuori**, IPRS, Rome, Italy
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The immigrant population in Rome appears to be fairly well distributed throughout the city without excessive concentrations in any one area. There are however some neighbourhoods with higher concentration and visibility of certain cultural groups. The present research seeks to understand differences between areas of Rome where immigrants live in terms of the ability of these areas to absorb and integrate immigrants within social, economic, and educational spheres. It does so by taking a slightly different approach from past research, comparing two areas (Esquilino and Pigneto) that both have a high presence of immigrants. The goal of this research is not to compare differences between immigrant and non-immigrant areas, but to understand the differences that emerge between immigrant neighbourhoods in terms of social, economic, cultural, and political progress and integration. To achieve this, the project is divided into two phases. The first looks at physical indicators within the two neighbourhoods. These indicators include (amongst others): housing, schools, shops, transportation, employment, population, cultural establishments, recreational establishments, restaurants, and religious associations and groups. The second phase assesses the impact of these physical indicators on networks and integration. The primary goal is to determine how one can measure, using physical indicators, the ability of an area to promote integration. (See Position Paper 4.2 and Strategic Paper 4.2 for additional information.)

Project time line:

Field research/data collection: to be completed in July, 2006

Completion of paper: October, 2006

Seminar in Rome: late September/early October, 2006

Video: October, 2006

5) Linguistic

Project lead: **Prof. Durk Gorter, PhD**, Fryske Academy, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Research team: **Antje Van Oosten**, Fryske Academy, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The language of signs in city streets represents a growing diversity and a growth in the use of multiple languages in many metropolitan areas culminating in what has been termed the linguistic landscape. This landscape reflects the relative power and status of the different languages in a specific sociolinguistic context. In this sense, it is the product of a specific situation and can be considered as an additional source of information about the sociolinguistic context along with censuses, surveys or interviews. In most cases the dominant language of a community is more likely to be used in place names or commercial signs while other languages will not be as common (see for example Ramamoorthy, 2002, Xiao, 1998). The linguistic landscape also contributes to the construction of the sociolinguistic context because people process the visual information that comes to them; the language in which signs are written can influence their perception of the status of the different languages and even affect their own linguistic behaviour, influencing perceptions of language and even language use.

This research project focused on the use of language in certain areas in the City of Rome based on ethno-cultural divisions within the city where differences in language usage are most evident either on the basis of residents (areas with varying levels of immigrant residents), areas with a lot of commercial activity where the use of different languages takes on a symbolic as well as informative value, and transportation centres where languages other than Italian, principally English, are important for not only for immigrants, but also for the many tourists who visit Rome. Photos of all signs in a set area allow for a statistical analysis of the languages used and how the languages are used. This allows for a better understanding of the linguistic diversity in Rome as it seen through official signs (i.e., city signs), advertisements, shop signs, and posters and announcements placed by individuals. The result is a visual use of language that reflects transformations in the use of language in the community and society.

Project time line:

Field research/data collection: Completed

Completion of paper: September, 2006

Seminar in Rome: July 13, 2006

Video: September, 2006