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SOME CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT SPATIAL
CONCENTRATION AND SEGREGATION OF
IMMIGRANTS IN NAPLES

Over these last twenty years, foreign immigration in Campania has not only been growing quantitatively, but has also been changing from the point of view of the social, economic and relational characteristics of the different groups. This phenomenon is now a structural component not only of the labour market – where the increase in regular employment of foreign workers has been fast, even under conditions of a persistent demand shortage and of a wide spreading of illegal, underpaid, temporary jobs – but of the whole society. More regular foreigners in the labour world, a higher number of family reunifications, a growing amount of children with foreign parents and of foreign minors in Italian schools confirm it: this region, once mostly land of passage for migrants moving elsewhere, is today an area of real settlement for so many immigrants with their families (Orientale Caputo, 2007; Caritas, 2011).

Catalyst of the foreigners that decide to settle in Campania, Naples was for a long period the main (practically the only real) attractive pole for migrants; they could find here significant (and more or less stable) job opportunities in the sector of family services. Gradually, however, new scopes in itinerant peddling opened and new possibilities in building, services, agriculture (in rural areas of this province) emerged.

In time, foreign immigration has been diversifying considerably as for places of origin, structural features of the different groups, conditions and sectors of insertion, migratory plans, settlement typologies. Today – even if in the most dynamic areas of the country there is a larger number of possibilities for a stabilization of immigrants and though the less stable part (irregular and illegal immigrants that find a lot of job opportunities in the activities of the underground sector) is here more considerable than somewhere else – Naples has become for several foreigners a permanent place of settlement. That's why in this area the problems of the first welcome can coexist with those of a more mature immigration (the

integration in a new context). These questions refer to the risk of social exclusion that many immigrants run; they spring from an unhomogeneous and multiform growth, in the highest urbanized areas, of social peripheries. Here, like in other contexts, there isn't a clear-cut distinction between centre and periphery anymore, but a fragmented string of spaces, with new forms of social segregation. And it is certain that spatial inequality can have even more serious consequences than income inequality, influencing biographies, limiting opportunities and frustrating ambitions.

At the end of 2010, foreign citizens residing in the Municipality of Naples were 35.408, almost 60% of which women. The different communities¹ appeared in some cases highly concentrated, in other more scattered upon the urban area; different factors have effect on the process of territorial settlement of immigrants, some of them related to specific characters of each group, others connected to the particular insertion in the labour market, others more linked to the different migratory plans.

The analysis of the distribution of the foreign citizens residing in the different quarters of Naples shows that the highest concentrations happen, on the one hand, in the ones of San Lorenzo, Stella, Avvocata (with 5.182, 2.977 and 2.227 resident foreigners respectively at the end of 2010) – that is the historic centre together with the areas of Sanità and Materdei – and, on the other, in Chiaia (2.769 resident foreigners), affected by the presence of immigrants employed in domestic service. So central areas are the ones with the highest concentration of foreigners: Sanità, the so called Spanish Quarters, but above all the area of Garibaldi Square, from the central train station to Forcella and Porta Nolana. Significant, however, are the differences among the various groups: if the 64% of the residents from Sri Lanka is distributed, at the end of 2010, in the quarters of Stella, Avvocata, Chiaia, Montecalvario and San Carlo all' Arena – with a maximum of 1.752 and 1.193 residents, respectively, in Stella and Avvocata – showing a settlement pattern rather diffuse over the municipal territory, more than the half of the Filipinos is resident in

¹ There were thirty-six nationalities with at least 100 residents each and, among these, six had more than 1.000 units, representing on the whole the 63% of the foreign residents in Naples.

Chiaia, Montecalvario and Posillipo. Besides, while the immigrants (mainly women) from Ukraine and Poland are rather fairly distributed among the different areas of Naples (where they often live together with the families they work for), the Chinese show a higher concentration in San Lorenzo: 1.171 out of 2.770 Chinese residents in the Municipality are located in this area.

In order to analyse the phenomena of segregation within the different urban areas², sociologists and geographers have frequently used some indexes linked to ethnic belonging or socio-economic conditions of individuals. These indexes are useful in the study of the residential behaviour of the different ethnic groups³, each one with its specific requirements and settlement strategies. From this perspective, the word “segregation” refers to the existence, within the cities being studied, of patterns of residential distribution implying a greater degree of “mixture” or separation of social or ethnic groups. So, in this case, segregation is measured along a continuum: it can range, ideally, from a minimum (when a group is uniformly distributed into the different areas of a city) to a maximum (when it is residentially isolated in one place).

Here – starting from statistical data of foreign residents in the Municipality of Naples at the end of 2010, separated by quarters (29) and nationality – the isolation (or segregation) index, the location quotient and the dissimilarity index have been calculated with reference to the spatial distribution of the first six national groups within the Neapolitan urban context, so as to verify the possible existence of segregation experienced by foreign populations⁴.

² Segregation can be related to different factors: sometimes it is openly pursued, other times it can come from a voluntary aggregation (resulting from the need of self-defence for the weakest groups); in other situations it is the outcome of the combined action of market forces and institutions. But it isn't easy to identify plans of territorial transformation having segregation among their express targets; on the other hand, the adopted instruments are not always easily identifiable or univocally defined and there are many indirect forms of segregation (Somma, 1991).

³ These data can be useful in the elaboration of efficacious policies and actions specifically addressed to immigrants (for instance, the action of cultural mediators); at the same time, they can allow us to throw light upon changes in property market: the presence of immigrants and the existence of ethnic economic activities, for example, could influence the preferences of the Italian citizens negatively (Cristaldi, 2002).

⁴ For the formulas used to calculate segregation indexes, see Russo Krauss, 2005.

The first index allows us to assess the global segregation of each group and gives us the opportunity to compare different groups; it can range from 0 to 100, that is, respectively, from the higher dispersion to the stronger concentration, from a minimum to a maximum of segregation of a certain community with respect to the other groups within the same urban context. It provides, of course, only an initial look at concentration, whereas the complexity and the multidimensional nature of the concept of segregation requires the use of diverse indicators, each one corresponding to a different aspect of spatial variation (Massey and Denton, 1988).

In the case of Naples (tab. 1), the data processing allows us to observe that the group with the highest segregation index are the Chinese⁵; in Naples they are concentrated in San Lorenzo – where there is more than the 42% of the Chinese residents in the Municipality – and especially in the area around Garibaldi Square: a specifically connoted area, both residentially and productively, where ethnic signs are evident in urban landscape. On the other end of the continuum, the Ukrainians and Poles, quite uniformly distributed on city territory, are the least segregated. With regard to the other main communities, the relative indexes range from 30,5 (Romanians) to 56 (Filipinos).

Tab. 1 – *Naples (2010): segregation index of the main foreign groups with resident status*

Home countries	Number of residents	Segregation index
Sri Lanka	7.710	53,5
Ukraine	6.678	22,5
China	2.770	77,5
Romania	1.865	30,5
Philippines	1.693	56
Poland	1.575	23
<i>Tot. n. of foreign residents</i>	<i>35.408</i>	<i>33</i>

Source: Municipality of Naples data processing

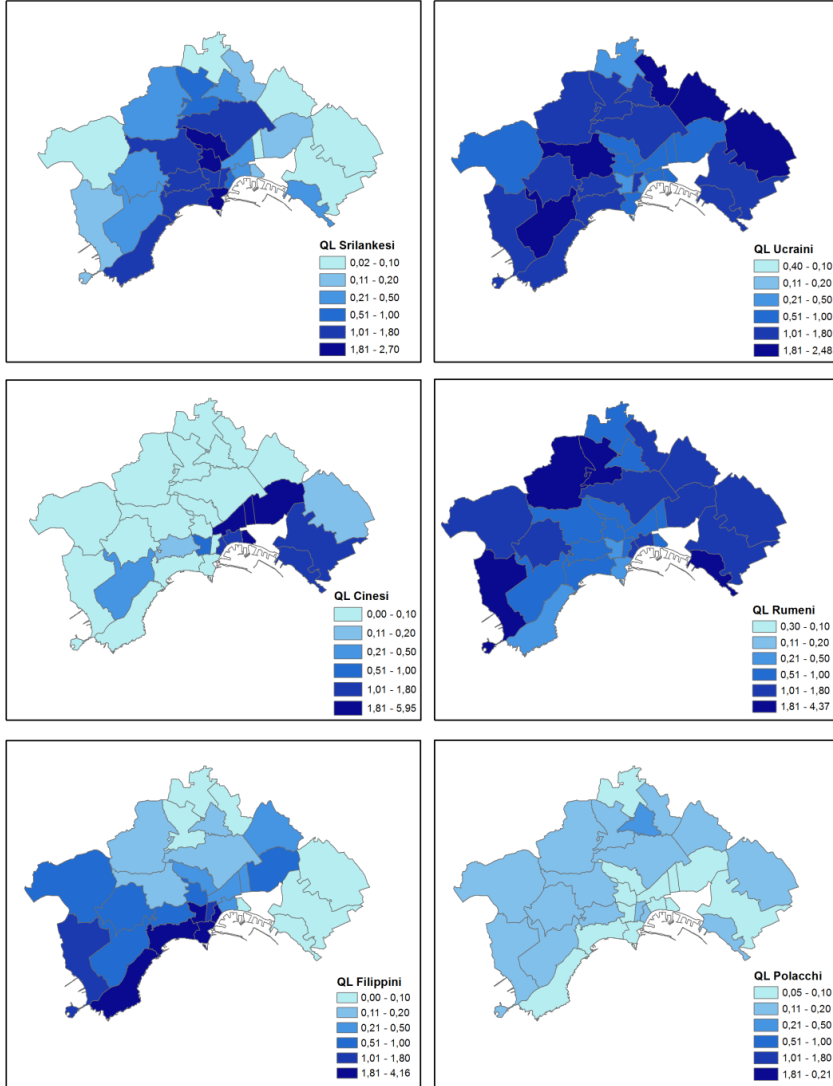
⁵ The concentration of the Chinese seems to be comparatively stable in the middle-term; their segregation seems to be due more to a desire to preserve their identity than to the rejection from the other groups.

The location quotient allows us to observe the various groups' residential segregation within the different city quarters, measuring the relative concentration of each group within urban space⁶. So, if it equals 1, the distribution of a group within a certain part of the city will correspond to its distribution within the whole city; if L.Q. is, on the contrary, less than 1, this group will be less present here than in the rest of the city; if, eventually, L.Q. is greater than 1, there will be a relative overrepresentation of the national group within that particular area. Therefore, high values of L.Q. demonstrate a considerable presence of a group within an area that is thinly populated by other national communities, while a low index reflects the coexistence of several groups, none of which is more concentrated (Cristaldi, 2002).

In this regard (fig. 1), we can note, for example, that even though people from Sri Lanka and Philippines have almost the same isolation index, they have a different localization within Neapolitan urban space: while the former are more represented within the quarters Stella and Avvocata (L.Q. of 2,70 and 2,46 respectively), the latter are mainly localized in the areas of Posillipo, Chiaia, Montecalvario and Porto (L.Q. between 2,69 and 4,16). Ukrainians and Romanians, for their part, even if well distributed over the municipal territory, show a higher relative concentration some in the north-eastern zone – and exactly in Secondigliano (L.Q. = 2,4) and San Pietro a Patierno (2,48) – and the others in the north-western one (Piscinola and Chiaiano, with L.Q. respectively equals 4,37 and 2,6), as well as in Bagnoli (2,88) and San Giovanni a Teduccio (2,03). Rather different is the distribution within the urban space of Chinese and Polish, and this bears out what we can observe through the calculation of the segregation index: if for the Chinese we have high values of L.Q. within a more circumscribed and well definite area, corresponding to the quarters Poggioreale, Vicaria, Mercato and San Lorenzo (where the location quotient takes on values included between 5,95 and 2,89), more scattered upon the municipal territory is the localization of Polish, with a L.Q. ranging, in the different quarters, from 0,05 to 0,21.

⁶ Generally based on the ratio between a national group and the total population, this index is here calculated by comparing foreign people of a certain group in a certain urban quarter to the whole of foreign residents in the same area.

Fig. 1 – Location quotients of the main foreign resident communities in the different quarters of Naples



Source: Russo Krauss, 2012

Finally, the dissimilarity index allows us to highlight similarities and differences of residential behaviour among the various national groups (that is compatibility or incompatibility of residential localization be-

tween two groups), showing how cultural differences and similar values (but not exclusively) can exert an influence on location choices within an urban area. It can range from 0 to 100, that is – respectively – from the very similar to very dissimilar. In Naples, Ukrainians and Poles have the most similar distributive behaviour (both groups reside in great numbers in the quarters of San Lorenzo, Chiaia, San Carlo all’Arena and Arenella), while the Chinese prove themselves to be rather different from all the other groups (tab. 2).

Tab. 2 – *Naples (2010): dissimilarity index among the main foreign groups with resident status*

Home countries	Sri L.	Ukr.	China	Rom.	Phil.	Poland
Sri Lanka	-					
Ukraine	42,5	-				
China	83	69,5	-			
Romania	51,5	22,5	64	-		
Philippines	44,5	50	81	57,5	-	
Poland	39	9,5	73	21,5	48	-

Source: Municipality of Naples data processing

All things considered, we can observe also in Naples, as well as in the other main Italian towns, a considerable concentration of immigrants near those bodies, associations and services they usually refer to (the railway station, some religious associations and voluntary organizations, some municipal offices); immigrants, on the other hand, tend also in this case to prefer those areas where they can find cheap lodgings, in spatially central but socially marginal areas⁷ or, on the contrary, in peripheral spaces, where it is also easier to find a shakedown or escape controls⁸.

⁷ These are pockets of urban decay within the historic centre, areas whose features seem to be suited to the needs of these new inhabitants (and for this reason segregating).

⁸ This is the example of the so called “*bass?*” – house typology widely common among immigrants in the town centre, often expression of a real urban and social decay – but also the one of the “*bipiani?*” in Ponticelli (prefabricated houses insulated in amiantus with their roofing in asbestos cement that were built in order to face the emergency after the earthquake of 1980) where a few hundred people (Italians and immi-

And, even if in these latest years their choices have been changing owing to new settlement conditions (a greater tendency to stabilization has produced behaviours more similar to those of the local population), the insertion usually keeps on taking place in areas with low residential standards and problems of decay, both physical and social.

Particularly, the settlement of foreign immigrants (with the exception of house servants who live with their employers) within Neapolitan urban space has basically followed the patterns of the housing market, involving those areas where prices are lower⁹. The town centre – whose gentrification (and the related intensifying of the residential characteristics for upper middle classes) has been only partial and not uniform – is still the more attractive area for the newcomers, both for the availability of services and a greater opportunity for interpersonal relationships, as well as for the increased access to relatively cheaper private homes¹⁰. So, according to a filtering down process (Petsiméris, 1995), lower socio-economic classes have been settling in geographically central but socially marginal areas.

As we have just said, in Naples, despite the promotion of the service industry in some central districts (and the subsequent relocation of the population to suburbs and to other towns of the same province), the gentrification of the city centre has been only partial and not uniform, because there hasn't been that refunctionalization which is typical of gentrification. That is why, contiguous to upper-class areas and commercial streets, there are still run-down areas, whose socio-economic level is low. In these areas, workers unable to “filter” toward residential suburbs live alongside immigrants, and it is easy to find right in these cases a

grants, above all from Albania and Ivory Coast) have been living for more than twenty years in very critical conditions.

⁹ «Because of the high costs, most migrants are cut off from the regular housing market, and current public policies fail to bring about structural changes as to facilitate the integration of the poorer classes. Hence, many migrants, although employed, cannot find decent housing and must settle on precarious solutions» (Cristaldi, 2002, p. 87).

¹⁰ Anyway, these are frequently housing solutions characterized by an intense social marginality, both because of improper hygienic-sanitary conditions and the existence of antiquated homes, usually due to an inadequate maintenance and to the lack of renovation efforts. The centre of Naples, traditionally and historically inhabited by the under-proletariat, is still widely typified by dilapidated buildings.

good level of integration between immigrants and local population: a communal condition of poverty and marginality tends in fact to create mutual acceptance and help.

For all these reasons, although we can agree with those who say that the concept of “ghetto” is not appropriate to explain the Neapolitan situation and underline the importance of those conditions that create social integration opportunities (for example the possibility to mobilize informal networks and resources), nonetheless we have to add that the idea of Naples as a city that is open to and tolerant of immigrants sometimes hides the existence of a subordinate social and economic position¹¹. Specifically, we can note – even if spatial forms of segregation are diverse – the persistence of a socio-spatial discrimination of weak groups, that is influenced by various factors: cultural differences, proximity of places of worship and gathering points, availability of certain services, job typologies, the housing market. But the “ghetto” – a place of segregation and control and, at the same time, a place of defence and identification for a minority – seems to “spread” and, even if pathologies look more localized in certain areas, these areas are not ethnically homogeneous¹².

On the other hand, it is true that at a general level there seems to be a considerable degree of integration between Neapolitans and immigrants. But the different levels of integration in the urban “mixture” often refer to a common condition of precariousness and marginality: in other words, immigrants are usually integrated because they are marginal like natives¹³.

Overall, Naples has shown, in a way, the successful integration of immigrants with local population, especially with the socially and economically marginal part, quickly and without great difficulties, as if the

¹¹ As a matter of fact, studies related to social exclusion have highlighted the different ways in which symbolic and material boundaries, constructed and renegotiated by dominant groups, can generate outsiders within “our” space (Sibley, 1995).

¹² With a particular exception: that of Romanies; between their camps (either authorized or illegal) and the city there is often a complicated relationship, and housing policies have often stirred up attitudes of suspicion and fear in the local community.

¹³ As Pasquale Coppola highlighted some years ago (1999), the so called *mixité* (mix of people from all over) refers to precariousness (he talked about sharing or hierarchization in spaces and roles of precariousness) and not to prosperity.

precarious conditions and the habit of getting by (*arrangiarsi*) have made the creation of a relationship easier, alleviating the differences, and therefore the distrust, between Italians and foreigners (Ammaturo *et al.*, 2010).

But the problems to tackle are still a lot. That's why the elaboration of local programs of integration is still necessary. These programs can avoid the outbreak of social frictions caused by marginalization, segregation, contrasts among cultures, and predispose both the host society and immigrants to a civil cohabitation, respectful of differences.

The necessary interventions have to consider the ongoing transformations and remember that each multi-ethnic city should become an inter-ethnic city: a place where everyone can interact freely with the others; a functional city, able to recover and highlight semantic, human, social and urban values of the different cultural groups placed on its territory (Beguino, 2004). A city, therefore, that is ready to welcome immigrants, that fosters intercultural exchanges and that not only allows the immigrants to become part of a new society without giving up their values – provided that these values are consistent with the system of the host country – but intends also to establish a good cohabitation and sympathy among individuals with different requests for places, functions, values.

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Qualche considerazione su concentrazione spaziale e segregazione degli immigrati a Napoli. – Il contributo si propone di evidenziare – con riferimento alla distribuzione spaziale delle principali comunità straniere residenti e attraverso l’elaborazione di taluni indicatori di segregazione – la complessità di forme della polarizzazione sociale e della segregazione residenziale, e, più specificamente, la loro struttura ed organizzazione spaziale in un contesto urbano particolare quale quello napoletano. Importante polo di attrazione per gli immigrati, catalizzatore degli stranieri che decidono di stabilirsi in Campania, Napoli offre ampie possibilità di lavoro sommerso, assicura una rete di rapporti all’interno delle varie comunità, garantisce la presenza di centri di accoglienza e servizi. Qui, d’altra parte, proprio l’esistenza di un tessuto socioeconomico fortemente segnato dall’irregolarità e dall’informalità e, insieme, il richiamo delle reti comunitarie sembrano caratterizzare particolarmente le dinamiche di territorializzazione del fenomeno migratorio.

Parole chiave. – Immigrazione, Napoli, segregazione urbana.

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