

“LOCAL CULTURE” AS A MEANS TO EXPLORE THE PROCESSES OF SOCIAL COEXISTENCE: A CASE STUDY ON A NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE CITY OF ROME

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Community-based interventions for urban sustainability need to develop a consistent theoretical framework dealing with the individual-context relationship by exploring community affective processes of sense-making, in order to overcome a nomothetic and individualistic perspective. A case study on a neighborhood in the city of Rome is proposed with the aim of detecting the community representations of the neighborhood, as well as the problems and potential development demands. Text analysis was performed across interviews to 60 participants. Cluster analysis identified five different representations of the neighborhood referring to: the multicultural fragmentation and the need for a territorial identity (1), the business influence of the Chinese community and the loss of Italian typicality (2), the threat evoked by marginalized social groups and abandonment by local authorities (3), the cultural knowledge about different ethnic groups to favor social integration (4), the deterioration of the neighborhood perceived as a crossing point for tourists and commercial traffic (5). These representations are conceived along four latent dimensions (factors) organizing the social coexistence within the neighborhood. They respectively refer to: territorial identity, power systems, social integration and cultural development. Some development paths are proposed for improving neighborhood quality of life and livability.

Keywords: local culture, social coexistence, urban development, neighborhood quality of life, Esquilino.

1. Introduction

Solutions to the social, economical and cultural problems, and responses to the needs of those living in the cities or small residential areas constitute the most important and basic topics of urban planning and requalification, as well as of community-based interventions. The concepts of livability and urban quality of life, which are the basic units of urban sustainability, have priority in the planning and political agenda of today, and appear among the most important factors in local development. These factors are generally based on objective or subjective

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indicators, respectively derived from institutional reports on urban characteristics and opinion surveys on community life. However, current research studies show some limitations in developing a consistent theoretical framework for psychosocial interventions, mostly due to the prevalence of short-term and individual physical design solutions for improving people's quality of life (Greed & Roberts, 1998), and to the lack of clarity about the target audience for the intervention (Fleckenstein, 2006). A first limitation concerns the nature of trans-cultural indicators, which are exclusively focused on objective conditions and physical settings (such as the organization of accessibility and roads or the presence of welfare, commercial, recreational services) according to a nomothetic perspective. Indeed, these indicators do not succeed in properly accounting for the relationship between individuals and environment: for instance, utilization and satisfaction with services is not only influenced by their easy accessibility but by people's expectations towards them, as well as by the social function a community attributes to them within a specific context. A second limitation refers to the operational definitions of subjective dimensions, which do not adequately provide a cultural and systemic view (in terms of individual-context relationship) but mostly rely on an individualistic perspective. Indeed, despite urban quality of life has recently been described as "the relation between the individual perceptions and the feelings of people, and their experiences within the space they live in" (Senlier, Yildiz, & Aktas, 2009, p. 215), most of subjective indicators are based on the attainment of various *a-priori* needs or on individual and introspective measures. For instance, let's think of the construct of *place attachment* which relates to emotional patterns which connect people to their socio-physical environment (Brown & Perkins, 1992); this construct does not succeed in grasping motivations underlying place attachment, as well as its regulative function on social coexistence within a community. Indeed, place attachment might be potentially related to very different human needs (such as, need for affiliation, safety, possession, etc.) and we still do not know what place aspects or dimensions are more likely to awaken it (Hidalgo, & Hernández, 2001).

In this regard, the ecological approach has provided a systemic view focused on the interaction between social systems and individuals and communities' life, in order to improve people's well-being (Hirsch, Levine, & Miller, 2007). Therefore, socio-cultural processes have gained increasing attention for developing and implementing community-based interventions dealing with "the dynamics of the context or system, not the psyche or attributes of the individuals within it" (Hawe, Shiell, & Riley, 2009, p. 269). These interventions aim at exploring the sense-making processes that mediate the relationship between the individuals and their context (either physical, social, and symbolic), as well as the local dynamics of meaning construction (Mannarini, Ciavolino, Nitti, & Salvatore, 2012). According to this perspective, livability and urban quality of life are necessarily interrelated to local dynamics, regarded as the outcome and the process of sense-making by which people express their shared history and define the community issues to be solved in local settings (Trickett, 2009).

In the current paper, local culture is specifically proposed as a means to explore the processes of social coexistence in terms of symbolic dynamics people emotionally experience within a shared context (Carli & Paniccchia, 2003). Then, a case study concerning the local culture of a neighborhood in the city of Rome, Esquilino, is presented in order to show the potential usefulness of this construct in exploring the representation of the neighborhood, of its changes and its evolution by people living or working there. This could provide policy makers with important information about the variability of meaning in the collective life so as to plan local development actions and thus to sustain urban quality of life.

2. The Theoretical Framework: Local Culture

As stated by Mannarini et al. (2012), “culture-based interventions have paid much more attention to the cognitive, rather than the affective, processes of sense-making” (p. 570). Instead, a psychodynamic perspective can allow researchers and practitioners to explore the affective nature of our experience as a core component of sense-making, which is intrinsically dialogical and contributes to the intersubjective construction of the environment. According to this perspective, emotions can be considered as primary determiners of human behavior that generate the elaboration of events symbolization. Therefore, emotion is not an effect, nor a reaction to stimuli, but it refers to a field of experience, which guides the process of interpretation and meaning-making in the relationship with the environment (Cabell & Valsiner, 2011; Salvatore & Freda, 2011).

In particular, the Italian psychologist Renzo Carli and his colleagues developed a hierarchical model of the symbolizations able to organize the relationship with the context. With regard to this, three different areas of affective symbolizations can be proposed (Carli & Paniccia, 2002, 2003) which refer to primitive emotions people use to transform reality into something familiar. They deal with symbolic dichotomies that have a clear reference to the body: *inside/outside*, *high/low*, *in front/behind*. The first dichotomy refers to a dynamic of inclusion/exclusion because what is “inside” is represented as something good and friendly, while what is out “outside” is felt as dangerous and rejected. We could continue with the high/low dichotomy which implies symbols of power or with the in front/behind dichotomy which refers to the emotional dynamic of true and false. These symbolizations are described as a direct expression of the unconscious mode of thought (Matte Blanco, 1975), are shared in peculiar activity/practice systems, and are intersubjectively constructed in situated communication processes. Carli tried to detail this phenomenon through the notion of collusion, which, as a psychological term, refers to the common way the members of a social group emotionally experience the context to which they belong (Carli, 1993). Indeed, such a word comes from Latin *cum-ludere*, to play with, together, and *colludere*, conspire, and thus it suggests the idea of sharing something among other people. In this sense, collusive processes – being social displays of emotions – keep social cohesiveness within those who belong to that group, serving as a sort of common view with reference to that specific context. Moreover, they specify the way the members react to cogent aspects of the environment, especially other human beings. This is the reason why emotions, while are usually defined in a-contextual terms (such as joy, sadness, anger and so on), *de facto* always refer to a relational system or context or, in other words, to a relationship of some kind (Carli & Paniccia, 2002). Hence, pragmatic assumptions are embedded within the affective context, which works as the intersubjective situated scenario, according to which the exchange can be performed and interpreted (Salvatore & Zittoun, 2011).

These emotional dynamics can be defined as Local Culture (from now on LC), a scientific construct based on its observable and measurable nature (Carli & Paniccia, 1999). LC refers to the co-existent processes of emotion and thought, where the first process somehow defines and restricts the second process. In other words, LC is set up in cooperation with the unconscious (emotionality), which governs the processes of emotional categorization, and the conscious, which controls the operational categorization (thought) (Fornari, 1979; Matte Blanco, 1975). The

adjective “Local” underlines the situated nature of culture in order to its dependence on the object and target population. LC, as an expression of a particular symbolic order, does not imply a single thought or action of all the actors within a context. In other terms, it is conceived as a semiotic field embodying the repertoire of different symbolic codes by which a social group enables the process of sense-making of the environment/context/organization of which it is part. Indeed, “opinions, assessments of objects, and their emotional symbolization are aspects which never refer merely to one side of reality, and they are never the characteristics of one single person” (Carli & Giovagnoli, 2011, p. 132). Thus, with specific regard to the studies on the livability of neighborhoods or urban areas, LC allows researchers to understand different attitudes towards them in connection with the multiple cultures which give rise to them.

3. The Local Culture of the Esquilino Neighborhood: A Case-Study

In the current paper, a case study on the LC of the Esquilino neighborhood is presented. Esquilino (as well as Pigneto-Torpignattara) is one of the most studied district areas of Rome as it represents a metaphor for the Italian multi-ethnic society (Kaplan & Li, 2006). It can be considered as an arena where linguistic and cultural diversity takes place; in this sense, it offers an observatory of potential interest for exploring the affective processes regulating social coexistence and for planning a consistent urban and community development.

The aim of the study is twofold: a) to understand how cultural models shared by people participating in the research may affect both their representation of the neighborhood and processes of social coexistence within it; b) to detect the problems of the neighborhood and potential demands for its development in order to favor urban sustainability from a psychological perspective.

3.1 Background of Esquilino

Esquilino, the fifteenth sub-district of Rome (within the 1st municipal district of the modern day Rome), was established in 1874 together with the Monti district, outside the official historical centre, near the area chosen for the building of Termini train station. In Latin, the term *ex-quilinus* meant the inhabitants living outside the city walls, the strangers or “newcomers” (as opposed to the *inquilini*, or in-towners). Indeed, since 1870, Esquilino has been one of the traditional arrival places for immigrants and a commercial area, originally built for newly arrived Government employees in the United Italian State (particularly from northern Italy). The area then became a destination for immigrants from poor regions of central and southern Italy (from end of the 19th century until World War I); later, among the neighborhoods in Rome, this was one of the destinations where Jews expelled from Libya after 1970 (*ebrei tripolini* in Italian) came to live and to open clothing shops in the area. Starting in second half of the ‘70s and continuing to the present day, non-European immigrants have come to settle in the neighborhood, due to its central position and its proximity to the main railway station (Termini) and to the main public bus transport point. In 1991 foreign immigrants were 6%, concentrated in two areas (one near a religious college, the other in small hotels near to the station). The area appeared to be the first, transitional, place of arrival. In 2004 foreign immigrants of 120

nationalities made up the 20% of the total neighborhood population. They came from China (20% of total foreigners), Bangladesh (13%) and the Philippines (10%). In recent years, many intellectuals and artists (foreign and Italian) have decided to buy houses in Esquilino. Important renovation interventions have been carried out during the last years (Urban Requalification Program) - the most important and visible is the relocation of the historical market from the piazza Vittorio to two old barracks in disuse nearby the original location - while the gardens in piazza Vittorio have become the “multicultural showcase” of Rome.

The structural characteristics of the urban landscape have made Esquilino a central point of arrival for commuters, tourists and immigrants (Montuori, 2007). Indeed, different migrant groups started to populate the neighborhood, as customers before and as employees or managers of commercial businesses later, to the point of almost eclipsing the Italian component. The neighborhood underwent a deep transformation, which brought about a growing perception of insecurity and illegibility. Romans increasingly started to perceive Esquilino as “central outskirts” and progressively isolated the neighborhood (Cossetta & Cappelletti, 2013). The attraction exerted to migrants from external outskirts - who came here to purchase goods coming from the world - made Esquilino a new center for the capital’s peripheries. In a few years, the neighborhood has assumed the form of a laboratory for the city of the future, although cohabitation of different ethnic groups is not easy. Nothing is shared but urban space, and the general context seems to be characterized by growing insecurity and hidden tensions.

4. Method

4.1 *Participants*

The research was conducted by interviewing 60 people who worked or lived in the neighborhood (28 men and 32 women) across different age classes (16 aged 18-35 years, 30 aged 36-55 years and 14 aged older than 55 years). Nine participants were foreigners. It was a convenience sample including both the residents of the area (n=19) and heads of associations (e.g., socio-cultural, political, religious, voluntary organizations) (n=14), businesses (e.g., shops, hotels, restaurants, market) (n=13) and institutions (e.g., school, university, police department, church, local administration) (n=14) operating in the neighborhood. A non-structured interview was used, asking a single question (trigger question)¹ to stimulate a spontaneous thinking over how participants perceived the neighborhood.

4.2 *Emotional Text Analysis*

Consistently with the theoretical framework, Emotional Text Analysis (AET) (Carli & Panaccia, 2002) was used to detect the LC of Esquilino. AET is a psychological tool for the analysis of written texts or discourses, which allows the exploration of specific cultural models structuring the text itself, thus outlining the “emotional construction of knowledge” of a certain research object, in our case the Esquilino neighborhood. According to this methodology - used in both psychosocial and health-related research (Caputo, 2013, 2014) - emotions are not

¹ The trigger question was “What do you think about the Esquilino neighborhood?”

considered as individual responses but as shared categorization processes, expressed through language, by which people symbolize the reality.

By cultural model we mean a motivational framework for representations intersubjectively shared by a social group within a specific context. Differently from Moscovici's perspective, according to which representations exclusively deal with the relationship between individual and context, Carli's perspective also assumes that this relationship is mediated by social coexistence processes, thus offering a genetic and motivational interpretation of social representations. Indeed, according to AET, language does not only refer to individuals' cognitive meanings, but it also expresses the emotional experience which mediates social interactions, as well as practices which are culturally accepted. For instance, the cultural models of immigration do not exclusively account for the public image of the phenomenon; rather they deal with the collusive dynamics, such as affiliation, power or fear, regulating a wide range of aspects within a social system (i.e., school inclusion, labor market access, anti-racism policy, etc.).

The basic hypothesis of AET relies on the "double reference" principle - both lexical and symbolic - implicitly connected to the language text (Fornari, 1979). This principle allows us to capture the emotional and symbolic dimensions running through the text, apart from its intentional structure or cognitive sense. In this sense, by the word *polysemy*, we refer to the infinitive association of emotional meanings attributable to a word, when it is taken out of language context. Thus, the words organizing the language sample can be divided into two large categories: *dense words*, characterized by the maximum of polysemy, if taken alone, and the minimum of ambiguity, meant as a contradictory, indefinite emotional configuration (i.e., words like "bomb" or "good"); *non-dense words*, characterized by the maximum ambiguity and thus the minimum of polysemy (i.e., words like "to guess" or "anyway"). If dense words, which maintain a strong emotional meaning even when taken in isolation, are identified in a text, they can be grouped according to their co-occurrence in the same text segments (elementary context units or UCEs, i.e. sentences ending with punctuation marks whose word length is comparable), creating different symbolic repertoires.

The interviews collected have been analyzed by *Alceste* software (Analyse lexicale par Contexte d'un Ensemble de Segments de Texte), by Max Reinert. This program is able to operate on the text and to perform both cluster and factor analysis, which permit to observe how dense words organize and create clusters, depending on their statistical connections. According to the assumptions above specified, this kind of connections shows those collusive processes which differentiate clusters (also called *cultural repertoires*).

The procedure we followed envisaged the following steps. We created a corpus, i.e., the complete text on which the analysis was carried out. At this step, it was fundamental to disambiguate the text, for example differentiating between words with different meaning, but written in the same way (for example, the Italian word "*legge*" can be either "law" or "he/she reads"). Then, the software produced a list of words (or, better, lexemes) to be analyzed. This step required the choice of the dense words to include in the analysis, based on their emotional polysemy (as specified above), etymology (which can help the researcher to detect multiple meanings) and specific relevance to the research object (in our case, the representations of a neighborhood). Afterward, cluster analysis was executed to group dense words recurring together in the same UCEs. The method is a descending hierarchical classification analysis, which is suitable for large-scale indicator matrices with few entries. The software follows an iterative process (by a recursive algorithm) where the descending hierarchical classification method decomposes the classes (UCEs) until a predetermined number of iterations fail to result

in further divisions². In addition, some attributes of respondents (in our case, gender, age, nationality, local representative) can be used as illustrative variables for class description³. The results can then be represented graphically in a factorial space. For this purpose, a matrix cross-tabulating classes and words in their reduced (root-) form is subjected to a correspondence analysis. This provides a spatial representation of the relations between the classes, where their positions reflect their relationship in terms of proximity. In particular, every sequence of dense words is composed of words that recur within a specific UCE; at the same time, every sequence significantly differs from other sequences that recur in other UCEs (Carli & Paniccchia, 2002). The assumption is that the recurring words in the same text units illustrate features of a LC. Within each cluster, dense words are hierarchically organized, from the more to the less statistically significant. Such an arrangement permits to decrease the infinite polysemy that characterizes each word (if considered individually). Indeed, words are arranged in lists where their chi-square values (χ^2) progressively decrease, so each word has the function of reducing the polysemous value of the words by which it is preceded in terms of statistical importance. In this way, the encounter of dense words determines the meaning of the cultural repertoire (cluster) at stake, unveiled by AET. Indeed, with AET the aim is to implement a process of deconstruction of the typical linguistic links of the dividing and asymmetrical mode of the mind (operational function of language). This is in order to achieve the reconstruction of the most common chains of associations between dense words, based on a psychoanalytic method which hypothesizes an isomorphism between the co-occurrences statistical calculation and the associative processes characterizing the unconscious mode of thought (Carli & Paniccchia, 2002).

The interpretative process of each repertoire (that is labeled by the researcher) is based on the models of affective symbolization (Carli & Paniccchia, 2002), such as inclusion/exclusion, power/dependence, trust/mistrust. These models give sense to the words co-occurring in each cluster⁴. The cluster interpretation is conducted through a clinical psychology method based on the analysis of the emotional polysemy of words, which is the capacity for a word to have multiple, potentially infinite related meanings and cross-references to symbolic universes. Within a psychological-psychoanalytical perspective, the study of etymology is an important tool for a

² The default chi-square (χ^2) threshold for selection of characteristic statements (UCEs) is 0, and for tags it is 2. UCEs with χ^2 values below 0 are unclassified; hence, the percent of classified ECUs constitutes a goodness of fit measure.

³ By illustrative variables we mean non-textual variables which do not actively contribute to the construction of clusters but are just used to detect the possible associations between clusters and respondents' attributes, based on the chi-square value (χ^2) of a cross-tabulation of illustrative variables and UCEs grouped in different clusters.

⁴ As an example of co-occurrence interpretation, think about two different clusters of words regarding the cultural models of immigration:

- 1) stranger - threat - terrorism
- 2) poverty - inclusion - solidarity

We can note that, in the first cluster, immigrant is emotionally regarded as "stranger" and thus as distant from one's own social system. The following words (threat, terrorism) suggest a feeling of danger and deep mistrust that is evoked by this distance: immigrant represents a powerful enemy from whom to defend oneself, within a conflicting relationship. On the other side, the second cluster relates immigration to "poverty", which deals with the lack of resources and social disadvantage. The following words (inclusion, solidarity) seem to better define the symbolization of immigrant as a weak and powerlessness person, who needs for help and social belonging, mainly within an affiliation dynamic.

deeper understanding of the emotional polysemous meaning of the word clusters and can help to better take into account the associative process emerging from word co-occurrences.

5. Results

5.1 Clusters

The analysis detected five clusters (or Cultural Repertoires, CR) shaping the social representation of the Esquilino neighborhood. Table 1 shows a list of the most characteristic words of which each cluster is composed of, while Table 2 shows the statistically significant relationships between clusters and illustrative variables.

Table 1. Clusters of Dense Words

Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4		Cluster 5	
<i>Word</i>	χ^2	<i>Word</i>	χ^2	<i>Word</i>	χ^2	<i>Word</i>	χ^2	<i>Word</i>	χ^2
Association	160.79	Shop	210.44	Fear	28.42	Language	158.88	Termini	120.18
Initiative	75.34	Sell	140.23	Tranquility	26.11	Study	116.1	Prostitution	108.68
Mediation	75.22	Chinese	113.37	Police	25.03	Orient	101.62	Station	82.28
Participation	74.51	Trade	71.13	Elderly	23.84	Faculty	83.56	Metropolis	65.64
Development	66.18	Buy	41.44	Sleep	15.85	Culture	80.89	Traffic	63.52
Occupy	65.15	Product	41.36	Drunk	15.85	Coexistence	74.36	Travel	54.39
Project	51.88	Wholesale	41.36	Young	15.45	Japanese	64.38	Reach	45.28
Intercultural	46.87	Italian	36.21	Homeless	15.23	Arabian	55.6	Gravitate	43.4
Architect	46.6	Pay	35.04	Delinquency	15.23	Enrichment	55.65	Resident	42.56
Social	40.5	Typicality	34.75	Annoyance	13.35	Integration	47.78	Ground	37.91
Immigration	40.33	Money	34.75	Hope	11.68	Confrontation	46.33	Root	37.91
Territory	36.27	Rent	34	Carabiniere*	11.68	Class	41.49	Degrade	32.45

*The Italian word “carabiniere” stands for a member of the Italian national police force.

Note. The threshold value of Chi-square test (χ^2) for each lemma is 3.84 ($df = 1$; $p = 0.05$). Textual data were translated into English only for the purposes of the paper.

The detected clusters are presented as follows, including some extracts from interviews. The extracts represent the most typical elementary context units (UCEs) of each cluster, ordered by Chi-square value.

Table 2. Relationships between Clusters and Illustrative Variables (χ^2)

Illustrative variables	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
<i>Gender</i>					
Male		6.55			
Female					18.36
<i>Age</i>					
Young-adults (ages 18-35 years)				9.27	41.81
Middle-aged adult (ages 36-55 years)	4.30	21.34			
Older adults (aged older than 55 years)			52.69		
<i>Nationality</i>					
Italian		3.95			
Foreign	52.31				
<i>Local representatives</i>					
Residents			23.46		
Businesses			17.54		
Associations	111.12				71.43
Institutions				115.17	

Note. The threshold value of Chi-square test (χ^2) for each word is 3.84 ($df = 1$; $p = 0.05$).

Cluster 1

It is quite urgent to propose multicultural initiatives. They would be useful for the good of everyone ($\chi^2=32.8$) (Head of socio-cultural association, Foreign male).

If different ethnic groups succeed in peacefully living together in this territory, this would be good for both residents and people visiting the neighborhood ($\chi^2=28.6$) (Priest, Foreign male).

There are lots of initiatives, especially in summer time, such as the Oriental Cinema Week which is an event addressed to a very varying public and is an important occasion for meeting different people ($\chi^2=24.3$) (Resident, Italian female).

CR 1 is composed of 9.60% of the overall elementary context units. It is mainly associated with middle-aged adults, foreign participants and representatives of local associations. The first co-occurring words are *association*, namely a connection or cooperative link between people or organizations, and *initiative*, which refers to an act or strategy intended to resolve a difficulty or improve a given situation. The tendency to promote belonging relationships is highlighted as a potential solution to conflicting dynamics, as also remarked by the next word *mediation*, which deals with the need for intervening in a dispute in order to reach an agreement, compromise or reconciliation. The neighborhood seems thus to be represented as a place where social adjustment is pursued by *participation* in shared activities in order to guarantee growth or advancement (*development*). The word *occupy* seems to suggest a power dynamic and symbolically introduces the danger to be avoided: take control as an alternative to take part. In

this sense, the effort to create a community sense of cooperation and affiliation works as reassuring and beneficial for processes of social coexistence, which are perceived as potentially at risk. Indeed, the next words (*project, intercultural, architect, social, immigration, territory*) seem to suggest the multicultural and social fragmentation of the neighborhood and the need for creating a territorial identity, which can safeguard its cohesion in the future.

Cluster 2

A radical change has happened over the last ten years [...]. There are no one-time workshops or typical handicraft characterizing Rome anymore. Nowadays one comes across another kind of culture, Chinese dress shops or supermarkets, a completely different reality ($\chi^2=33.2$) (Dealer, Italian male).

Italian people who lived in this neighborhood started to go away after having rent or sold their houses to several ethnic groups [...] Chinese people were identified as those having available cash for easy house purchase ($\chi^2=32$) (Resident, Italian male).

About the coexistence with the Chinese people, I can say that they exclusively mind their own business, I mean that if you don't give them a hard time, they don't do it too ($\chi^2=30.6$) (Resident, Italian female).

CR 2 is composed of 24.26% of the overall elementary context units and mainly characterizes male, Italian and middle-aged participants. The first co-occurring words are *shop* and *sell* which together symbolically deal with giving or handing over goods or services in exchange for *money*. The neighborhood seems to be represented as a place for trade and business exchange, which is mainly associated to the *Chinese* community working there. The reference to *wholesale products* (sold to retailers in large quantities and at low prices) evokes the increasing influence of the Chinese market in terms of efficiency and competitiveness. In this perspective, the entire system of social coexistence is grounded on convenience relationships, mostly limited to well-defined, regular and balanced roles of *buyers* and *sellers* within a cultural model which is exclusively based on a material and profit-oriented exchange: the acquisition of property is obtained by paying for it. No room is allowed to close social and personal relationships. However, the action of *paying* for something emotionally evokes effort and suffering, as well as the transfer of power to someone: the price to pay is the *Italian typicality* and identity. The image of a *rented* neighborhood emerges; the neighborhood is slowly transforming into a Chinatown, where no social and cultural integration between Italian and Chinese people is really pursued.

Cluster 3

I remember that many years ago people came here tranquilly, now they are afraid to go to the park even at 6.30 pm, there are all these young men [...] they even rape old people ($\chi^2=26.9$) (Dealer, Italian male).

I am afraid of being annoyed and harassed, especially when I am alone [...] It is preferable being out of the neighborhood at certain times of the day. After 8 pm there are more drunk people who may annoy you ($\chi^2=22.2$) (Student, Italian female).

Nightly, this is a dreadful place [...] Here there is no control. Even policemen and carabinieri are afraid of these people ($\chi^2=21$) (Dealer, Foreign male).

CR 3 is composed of 46.8% of the overall elementary context units. It is significantly associated with older adults and representatives of both residents and local businesses. The first co-occurring words are *fear* and *tranquility*, which immediately suggest a strong symbolical ambivalence dealing with the effort to eliminate an unpleasant emotion caused by the threat of danger or harm. The next word *police*, namely the civil force of a state responsible for the maintenance of public order, seems to better define this feeling of anxiety as concerning public safety, thus indicating the demand for a function of social control within the neighborhood. In this sense, the elderly are mentioned as the weakest part of the society, generally depicted as frail, powerless and dependent and thus needing for safe and helpful surroundings. The words *sleep* (i.e. condition of complete inactivity and suspension of consciousness) and *drunk* (i.e. affected by alcohol to the extent of losing control of one's faculties or behavior) suggest the presence of an irrational, indomitable and chaotic part of the society: *young* and *homeless* people represent a common danger as marginal social groups which emotionally evoke *delinquency* and *annoyance*, as they are characterized by disorderly life, lack of precise destination and low observance of social norms. However, the words *hope* and *carabiniere* (namely, a member of the Italian national police force) highlight the feeling of being abandoned by local authorities and the expectation for powerful institutional interventions aimed at restoring law and order in the future.

Cluster 4

School population has become multi-ethnic, lots of students succeed in being integrated because they have lived here for many years and thus are able to speak Italian very well ($\chi^2=35.1$) (School principal, Italian female).

Although the multi-ethnic dimension of the neighborhood may seem something negative which tends to create a distance, I think that this diversity could represent something positive, be an enrichment ($\chi^2=35$) (Priest, Italian male).

The knowledge of different cultures is important for own personal enrichment, if one remains ignorant he/she has not the opportunity to socialize and dialogue ($\chi^2=33.5$) (Student, Italian female).

CR 4 is composed of 9.79% of the overall elementary context units and characterizes young adults and representatives of local institutions. The first co-occurring words are *language* (i.e. a system of communication used by a particular country or community) and *study* (i.e. the devotion of time and attention to gaining knowledge), which suggest the effort to learn conventional ways to communicate and exchange with different ethnic groups. There is a

specific reference to the *Orient* and foreign communities, such as *Japanese* and *Arabian* people, which evoke very far and different cultures characterized by unfamiliar languages, customs and traditions. The next word *faculty* refers to the Faculty of Oriental Languages and Studies, which is located within the neighborhood and symbolically represents university knowledge in terms of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. In this sense, the neighborhood is mainly depicted as a *cultural* center characterized by the *coexistence* of different ethnic groups where mutual *enrichment* and *confrontation* can be possible. Cultural knowledge is thus regarded as the main means to promote social *integration*: the encounter with different groups is mediated by intellectual acquaintance with them, rather than by close personal interactions, which represents the initial step to make them more familiar by focusing on their common attributes and differences from others (*class*).

Cluster 5

Despite me being Italian, I feel excluded from this place [...] Dustmen clean out the square every day, but the square is always dirty. People don't have respect for our things ($\chi^2=48$) (Resident, Italian female).

Most of Italian families have gone away because they did not want that their children grew up here [...] All sorts of scum pass through this neighborhood; only few good people like us have remained here ($\chi^2=47.1$) (Head of socio-cultural association, Italian female).

This neighborhood is a stopping place, where lots of foreigners transit [...] most of them are clients of male prostitution ($\chi^2=45.4$) (Dealer, Foreign female).

CR 5 is composed of 9.99% of the overall elementary context units. It is associated with female and young adults, as well as representatives of local associations. The first co-occurring words are *Termini* (i.e. the main central railway station in Rome, which is located within the neighborhood) and *prostitution* (i.e. the unworthy or corrupt use of one's talents for personal or financial gain), which symbolically evoke what is exhibited and visible to the public and is prone to transient and fleeting exploitation. Indeed, the neighborhood is generally represented as a *station*, that is a stopping place for the transfer of freight or passengers. The reference to *metropolis*, i.e. a very large and busy city, which works as a pole of attraction for people around the world, further defines the function of the neighborhood, which just serves as a crossing point for commercial *traffic* and tourist *travel* (as also suggested by *reach* and *gravitate*). Instead, the next words *resident*, *ground* and *root* seem to relate to the old and solid part of the neighborhood and to residents who permanently live there, in opposition to the chaotic transfer of outside people who contribute only to the deterioration of the neighborhood by misusing its resources and ignoring its history (*degrade*).

5.2 Factors

Correspondence Analysis has detected four latent dimensions, which organize the main oppositions between clusters in the space, as indicated by the coordinates of clusters' centroids (Table 3). Below, Figure 1 shows the distribution of clusters within the factorial space.

Table 3. Relationships between Clusters and Factors (Coordinates of Clusters' Centroids)

	Factor 1 (40.3%)	Factor 2 (29.2%)	Factor 3 (18.4%)	Factor 4 (12.1%)
Cluster 1	1.168	-.327	.678	-.671
Cluster 2	-.536	-.661	-.220	-.259
Cluster 3	-.230	.602	.121	-.050
Cluster 4	.162	-.442	.518	1.295
Cluster 5	.958	.151	-1.353	.275

Note. The percentage of inertia explained by each factor is reported in brackets.

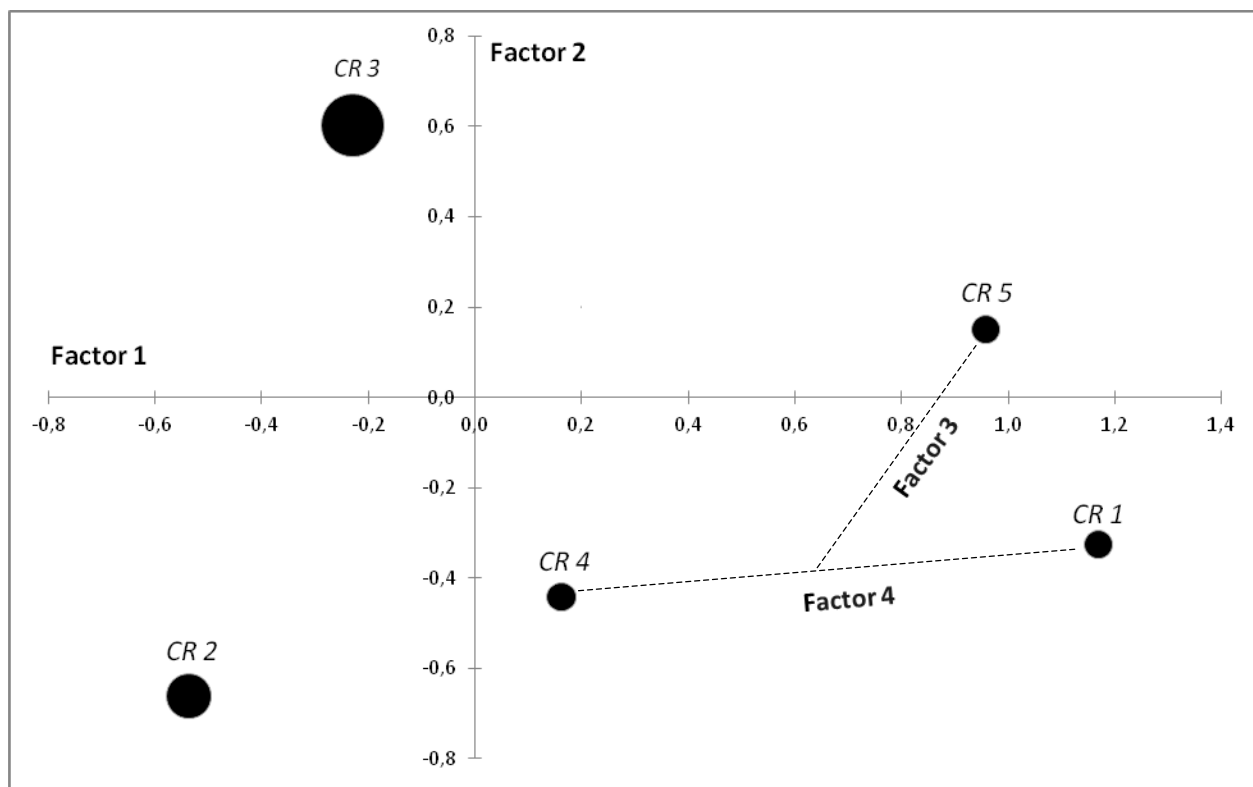


Figure 1. The Factorial Space

The first factor mainly opposes CRs 1 and 5 on the positive pole to CR 2 on the negative one. It seems to deal with the *territorial identity* of the neighborhood as perceived by the study participants. On the one hand, the neighborhood is perceived as fragmented because of its multiethnic population (CR 1) or as just a degraded crossing place for commercial traffic and tourist travel (CR 5), thus revealing the need for creating and safeguard a territorial identity. On the other hand, instead, the neighborhood is seen as a sort of Chinatown due to the strong settlement of the Chinese community, thus indicating the loss of its past identity. In this sense, a collusive dynamics can be detected with regards to the feeling of being expropriated from one's territory, which in turn contributes to a low sense of community belonging.

The second factor mainly opposes CR 3 to CR 2, respectively on the positive and negative pole. It seems to deal with the *power systems*, not intended as social structures or real objects, but as emotional processes regulating social coexistence within the neighborhood. On the one hand, social relationships are perceived as conflicting and anomic because of the low power of local authorities, which are not able to guarantee public security and control criminal deviance (CR 3). On the other hand, instead, the increasing financial influence of the Chinese community seems to represent a risk for Italian typicality and competitiveness (CR 2). In this sense, a power dynamics can be highlighted pertaining to the progressive loss of control triggered by social insecurity and financial powerlessness.

The third factor mainly opposes CRs 1 and 4 on the positive pole to CR 5 on the negative one. It seems to deal with the issue of *social integration* in terms of arrangements adopted by the community to facilitate the acceptance of new members. On the one hand, there is the problem of social integration of different ethnic groups living within the neighborhood, because of the excessive cultural fragmentation (CR 1) or the lack of a shared communication system (CR 4). On the other hand, instead, there is a social dynamics of rejection of outside people who visit the neighborhood for trade or tourism, because they are not perceived as a resource, but as a source of annoyance and degradation for the neighborhood. In this sense, a problematic social integration can be detected concerning the lack of cohesion and cooperation within the community, as well as the substantial closure toward the outside surrounding.

The fourth factor mainly opposes CR 1 to CR 4, respectively on the positive and negative pole. It seems to deal with the potential *cultural development* of the neighborhood, in terms of collusive processes favoring social coexistence and adjustment. On the one hand, the development of the neighborhood is pursued by the cultural knowledge of the languages, customs and traditions characterizing different ethnic groups (CR 4). On the other hand, growth and advancement are achieved by the promotion of projects facilitating the encounter among different social groups and the creation of a shared community identity (CR 1). In this sense, some development lines can be traced concerning the multiethnic distinctive of the neighborhood, in terms of investment on knowledge/education system and multicultural initiatives for the entire community.

6. Discussion

As highlighted by the study results, the *need for creating a community identity* and the *feeling of being expropriated from one's territory* represent the main problematic issues perceived by the people living or working in Esquilino. The neighborhood is perceived as a transit area rather than as a place where it is possible to establish close social relationships, as also revealed by previous studies (Montuori, 2007; Scarpelli, 2009). In this regard, Mudu (2003) stated that mass media tend to propose an image of the neighborhood as a place characterized by social and political conflicts among different ethnic groups. Indeed, the several definitions of Esquilino provided by the press, as “quadrilateral of marginalization”, “suburb of Rabat”, “Bronx”, “huge bazar”, “dark hearth of Rome”, “Chinatown”, are often based on the strong association between immigrants-degradation-criminality. Because of the high incidence of foreign residents, Romans increasingly started to perceive Esquilino as “central outskirts” and progressively isolated the neighborhood (Cossetta & Cappelletti, 2013). According to Mudu (2003), the old racism based

on biological differences was replaced by newer and more elaborated prejudices dealing with the impossibility of social integration, the criminalization of minority groups and the control of the territory.

These factors, in turn, trigger a *feeling of social insecurity and powerlessness*, which is mainly associated to dirt, traffic, crime (Benedetti, Mebane, Tomai, & Francescato, 2011), as well as to abusive urban speculation and scarce maintenance service (Mudu, 2003). In this regard, Scarpelli (2009) found that some urgent problems characterizing Esquilino refer to both physical and social incivility. In particular, the Termini train station has become a symbol of the degradation of the neighborhood as a pole of attraction for the marginalized population (especially homeless people and offenders) and as a central point for prostitution and illegal activities (Mudu, 2003). In addition, powerlessness seems to derive also from the increasing economical power of the Chinese community, which, as affirmed by Montuori (2007), represents a source of concern and contention for the Italian residents, who still complain about this group's aggressive business practices and the excess of wholesale activities. Esquilino (as well as Pigneto-Torpignattara) can be considered as one of the two sites where there are houses and business enclaves (Kaplan & Li, 2006). Indeed, about 80% of the firms owned or run by immigrants were set up before 2000: the large majority of all Chinese businesses in the Esquilino are either private limited companies or partnerships that trade in articles of clothing either as wholesalers or retailers; the rest are restaurants, foodstuffs shops, and a few tertiary businesses such as firms providing legal services or drug stores.

Another key issue emerging from the study results refers to *problems of social coexistence among different ethnic groups* within the neighborhood, where traces of 24 languages were found (Barni & Extra, 2008). With respect to this, Cristaldi (2002) noted that the multiethnic distinctive of Esquilino seems to have led to a potential residential segregation. A previous research (Benedetti et al., 2011), demonstrated that minority ethnic groups had a strong desire to maintain their own culture and worries that their children could develop sentimental and sexual relations with members of other ethnic groups. The long history of immigration in Esquilino has probably contributed to the creation of several close and isolated little communities characterized by strong cultural identities and specific territorial settlements (Casacchia & Natale, 2002). Indeed, as stated by Fisher and Sonn (2002), where the immigrants are of very different cultural, language, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, they may provide an impetus for strong resistance to change.

Although this fragmentation has favored the image of Esquilino as an arena where the fight against linguistic and cultural diversity takes place, the presence of a multicultural context is also perceived as a resource, thus revealing a contradictory attitude towards diversity by local people (Barni, 2012). As stated by Cossetta and Cappelletti (2013), in recent years the neighborhood assumed the form of a laboratory for the city of the future. In detail, some *development pathways can be traced concerning the multiethnic distinctiveness of the neighborhood*: on the one hand, the promotion of a local community can be achieved by intercultural meetings involving people of different ethnic backgrounds in common activities to create a balanced sense of community (Benedetti et al., 2011); on the other hand, the investment on knowledge/education system can help young people to value linguistic diversity in order to favor social integration. Indeed, it was demonstrated that young people who spent time with people of different nationality in Esquilino had higher social capital, both bridging and bonding (Benedetti et al., 2011). However, it is important to take into account some cultural differences as revealed by the study results. Foreign participants show a higher demand for creating a territorial identity and for promoting a sense of

belonging to overcome potential conflicts; instead, Italian residents seem to hold negative stereotypes about the multiethnic distinctiveness of the neighborhood and perceive a sense of exclusion from Esquilino, mainly due to the influence of the Chinese community. Another relevant difference refers to age class: while older adults are mostly focused on a negative image of Esquilino, perceived as chaotic and abandoned by local authorities; younger adults look at institutions (especially the educational ones) as a potential trigger for the development of the neighborhood because its multicultural context is perceived as an interesting opportunity to meet different people and know other cultures, rather than as just a source of annoyance. In this sense, the presence of the Faculty of Oriental Languages and Studies (which is located in the Ex-Caserma Sani) could represent an important resource to the requalification of Esquilino, as well as the role of local associations in favoring frequent interactions and cultural exchange.

In conclusion, LC – seen as a product of collusive emotional symbolizations of specific “objects” of investigation (in our case the representations of the neighborhood) by the people who share a specific context – can help to detect specific community issues which practitioners have to take into account for local sustainable development. With regards to urban areas, by using such a method it is possible to provide culture-based interventions for improving the livability of the context from the analysis of community’s needs and processes of social coexistence. This, in turn, may favor citizens’ higher involvement in planning and redeveloping their territory and thus increase their acceptance and satisfaction with policy makers’ decisions.

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