Bargaining Identity & Difference

The Construction of Local Identity at the Historical Marketplace of Ballarò, Palermo

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Da tempo, sono stata terra di conquista

Vinci, greci, arabi, normanni

e tanti sono figli che nel tempo ho visto arrivare, restare,

e ripartire

Vi guiderì nel profondo del mio cuore pulsante

Uno dei mercati storici più grandi

La parte più antica e suggestive

I suoi fondatori

Li chiamano

Bahlara

Sole di fiera

Oggi, il suo nome è Ballarò

Ed è conosciuto in tutto il mondo

Ed è qui che i miei nuovi figli

Venuti dal mare

Trovano spesso una casa

Un amico

Un lavoro

A raccontarmi

Saranno due di loro

Per fare scoprire com'è cambiato nel corso degli anni il mercato

E come in questo luogo si continua a vendere un genere di merce

Ma non solo

É qui che usi e idee

Parole e costumi

Tradizioni e culture

Si incontrano

Si mescolano

E si amano[1]

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[1] Poem distracted from the short documentary (2014) called *I Mercati Storici di Sicilia*, made by Lucio Marcucci and Giuseppe Trenta and produced by Piazza Group srl. Find the whole video on ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/01/si-vucia-sabbannia-ballaro-e-magia.

Since forever, I have been earth of conquest

Phoenicians, Greeks, Arabs, Normans

And many are sons that through time I have seen arrive, stay

And leave.

I will lead you to the core of my beating heart

One of the biggest historic markets

The most antique and suggestive part

Its founders

Called him

Bahlara

Sun of trade

Today, its name is Ballarò

And it is famous all over the world

And it is here that my new sons

Who arrived from the sea

Often found a home

A friend

A job

To tell me

Shall be two of them

To find out how over the course of years the market has changed

And how on this place a range of products continues to be sold

But not solely

It is here that habits and ideas

Words and customs

Traditions and cultures

Meat each other

Mix with each other

And love each other[2]

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[2] Translation by author.

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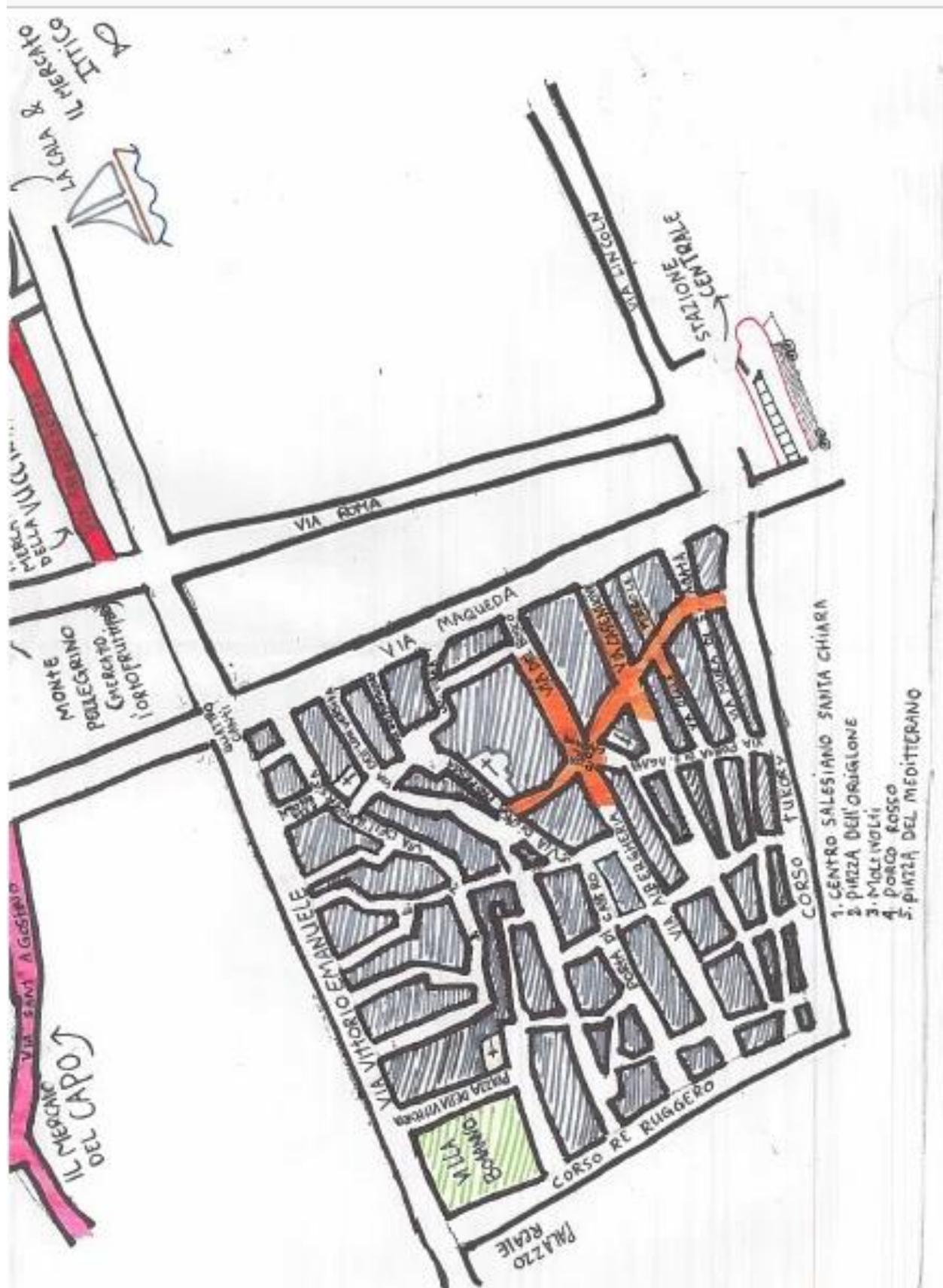
Figure 2: Map of Ballarò and the other historical neighborhoods and their markets of Palermo. Orange indicates the Ballarò, located in the neighborhood Albergheria, pink indicates the market of Capò, red indicates the market of Vucciria. The numbers refer to specific locations such as organizations within Albergheria. On ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/06/17/where-is-the-market-of-ballaro/ you can find additional information on each of these locations. Map drawn up from myself.

Acknowledgements

'But how on earth did you end up in Ballarò?' Honestly, I did not really have an answer to all those times I was asked this question. I knew Sicily only from stories; the apparent beauty from my dear Italian friends, the mafia from the mythical movies, the tragedy of thousands of refugees arriving at the shores from the newspapers, the Southern Question from Antonio Gramsci. My interest in postcolonial studies, Italy's Nord/South division, and the worrying refugee situation unfolding at the shores of Sicily miraculously led me to a market in Palermo where all these elements intersected. Nothing however could have prepared me for the passion that was immediately sparked within me once I first set foot on the slippery *ballate* of the market of Ballarò. It has been an honour to conduct my first anthropological fieldwork experience here, which has undoubtedly been the highlight of my bachelor Cultural Anthropology at the University of Utrecht. This thesis is the product of these ten weeks of fieldwork, in which I humbly present Ballarò's stories of tradition and integration.

First and foremost, I would like to thank all my informants. Without their Palermitan *accoglienza,* passion, and personal stories, this would not have been an anthropological thesis. Furthermore, I would like to thank some people in particular. My friends Giovanni, Virginia, and Francesca, who, in an incredibly short amount of time, made me feel at home in Palermo and fall in love with Sicily. My mother, who has always been involved and supporting. Bram, with whom I was able to share the magic of Palermo for a couple of days and who patiently lent an ear to all my never ending, passionate stories. And finally, Gerdien Steenbeek, who has been so much more than a supervisor; uplifting and motivating, yet critical and constructive throughout the whole research process and beyond.

Carolien Lubberhuizen

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Introduction

Si vucia, s'abbannia, Ballarò è magia![3]

Palermo is adored by many because of her colours, her scents, the food, and the people. The beating heart of Palermo are her markets: *La Vucciria,* whose stalls of fish and fruit are slowly disappearing, is reviving every night because of the *Taverna Azzura* and the many other bars filled with young Palermitans and non-Palermitans drinking *zibibo* and dancing to Sicilian music. *Il Capo,* by some considered to have become too touristic but definitely still rich in traditions. And finally the magical *Ballarò,* market of the people. Its streets are filled by a colourful assembly of stalls, lined with fresh fish, fruits, vegetables and even household items. Ballarò is the market of the *abbanniate*, an antique marketing technique promoting the products one has to sell with the only instrument available: the voice. Except for the occasional cell phone accessory, it almost seems like the daily happenings in this beating heart of the city of Palermo have been the way of life for centuries. Quite recently however, lots of refugees and immigrants have found their residency in and around the neighbourhood of Ballarò, and work and shop alongside the local Palermitans. Ballarò is perhaps now more than ever a commingling of cultures. It is easy to find stalls selling dried fish, lamb and gnam, besides an Indian shop selling their spices, or besides a Palermitan fruit vendor that sells boiled potatoes and artichokes. The baroque dome of the church of Carmine already prominently visible from the first steps in the narrow streets of the neighbourhood looks down on everything that unfolds daily, almost like a cycle of life. At the beginning of the market, at a colourful little square on via Casa Professa there is a mural painting that recaps the essence of the market: 'Si vucia, s'abbannia, Ballarò è magia'.

It is in this dynamic place that we can see global processes of movement, mixing, dis- and re-embedding ground, and hence forms the ethnographic setting of this thesis. Specifically, this thesis focuses on the construction of local identity in the context of increasing diversity, caused by the accelerated arrival of refugees and

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[3] Translation from Sicilian: One screams, one advertises, Ballarò is magic.

immigrants[4]. Consequently, this research has been conducted in order to answer the following question:

How do Palermitans construct their local identity on the Palermitan marketplace of Ballarò in the context of the increased arrival of immigrants?

Tied to this construction of identity and highly relevant for the increased diversity of Ballarò is the notion of Otherness - central within the anthropological debate of identity construction and the understanding of difference. Sometimes imagined as the 'backyard' of Europe, many Sicilian cities see themselves hit by high unemployment levels. Italy's attempt to take in all those who manage to land on its shores, does not always go in harmony with the experience of local Sicilians. It is therefore that this notion of Otherness will be questioned in order to contribute to the social, cultural, political, and often heated debates in Italy and the rest of Europe surrounding what is usually called European refugee crisis. Especially Palermo, the capital city of Sicily where many refugees arrive, dapper or desperate enough to cross the dangerous Mediterranean Sea, forms the symbolical locus of the refugee crisis. The progressive political choices by mayor Leoluca Orlando, who at the time of this research got re-elected for his last term, are both admired and scrutinized by many other European leaders and citizens[5]. Within Palermo forms the market of Ballarò the preeminent place where many immigrants and refugees establish themselves in their search to make a living in their new homes. This renders the market a very relevant ethnographic scene to explore these themes that are poignant in the contemporary world. More specifically, this research has taken place at a time that the market of Ballarò and its neighbourhood has changed, and is still changing, immensely and in so

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[4] Many different terms are used to describe refugees and immigrants, some with particular legal meanings, some with offensive associations. Using terms properly is an important way of treating people with respect and advancing an informed debate on the issues. With this awareness in the back of our minds, but without going into depth about the sociological and political meaning behind them, only the terms refugees and immigrants will be used throughout this thesis to refer to people from non-European countries looking to establish themselves in Italy.

[5] VPRO Tegenlicht made a short documentary about Leoluca Orlando and his progressive politics. He launched the *consultà delle culture,* a council in which all different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds are represented and can give advice regarding local policy. Furthermore, he introduced *la carta di Palermo* to replace the residence permit and acknowledge mobility as a human right. For a link to the whole documentary, see ballaròthesis.wordpress.com. Furthermore, proving once more the widespread relevance of this research, during the last weeks of finishing this thesis king Willem-Alexander and queen Maxima visited Palermo and more specifically Ballarò. Their visit was intended to discuss the current situation of integration and *accoglienza* in the neighborhood, comparing this interesting reality to the situation in the Netherlands.

many directions, some brighter than others. This research could therefore contribute on a very practical scale, offering insights in the social reality of Ballarò and the neighbourhood. This social relevance is hence at the same time a theoretical relevance. While there is much anthropological literature on local identity and the experience of difference in a wide range of ethnographic contexts, there is little specific attention on these themes in Palermo. This thesis therefore aims to fill this theoretical gap. Another theoretical contribution will be the engagement with postcolonial theory. Although anthropological theory and concepts form the scientific backbone of this research, postcolonial theory provides useful analytical tools to understand the context of Southern Italy but above all to understand how difference and otherness is constructed. Furthermore, an anthropological approach adds empirical value to postcolonial ideas, which often stay at the conceptual level and literary analyses. From this intersection, this thesis aims to unravel the mechanisms employed by Palermitan marketvendors to construct their local identity and understand difference, and discover how these mechanisms are imbued with economic and political power relations of (in)equality.

Methodological account

Being a qualitative, anthropological research, the research has entailed a relatively extended period of fieldwork consisting of qualitative research methods. By means of iterative data collection and analysis I have attempted to provide answers to the central question. Apparent from the previous introduction, the specific research location was the historical marketplace of Ballarò. Whereas the originally the research population was also comprised out of Palermitan marketvendors and costumers, I decided to focus primarily the marketvendors. Even though I have certainly spoken and interacted with costumers, as well as other Palermitans and non-Palermitan marketvendors, this narrowed down research population appeared to be dense and complicated enough for the scope and limits of this thesis.

Before setting out each method, an important note on fieldwork as such has to be made. For this has been my first fieldwork experience- often referred to as an important *rite the passage* every anthropologist goes through (Rabinow 2007 [1977]; Watson 1999) - it seems especially relevant to contemplate on what fieldwork means

within the anthropological enterprise. Fieldwork is, in Watson's (1999) words, *that part of the process which takes place when the anthropologist is dwelling among the people (s)he hopes to describe* (Watson 1999: 1). During ten weeks of fieldwork, conducted between the 6th of February until the 16th of April of the year 2017, I have 'dwelled among the people I hope to describe. It was by being amongst these marketvendors and costumers, by being on the market of Ballarò, that I finally experienced first-hand the message of Bradburd's (1998) famous book titled 'Being There: The Necessity of Fieldwork.' As the title suggests, the central purpose of this book was not to reveal all the cultural aspects he researched - in his case the Iranian Komachi culture - but more importantly to show the relationship between understanding and the behaviour and thoughts of people bounded within a culture, through which he reconfirms the simple, central importance of being there (Bradburd 1998, 150). Departing from this importance Bradburd stresses the validity of participant observation, which leads to the first research method that has been used in this research.

Through observing and participation of daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events anthropologist learn both the explicit as well as the tacit aspects of life routines and culture in question (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, 80). Within the study of identity - the main concern of this research - the insight in both tacit and explicit culture is particularly valuable, since the construction of identity happens often subconsciously. Therefore, I have practiced the key elements of participant observation following the tradition of Malinowski; e.g. living in the context for an extended period of time; learning and using the local language and dialect; actively participating in a wide range of activities with full participants of the context; having everyday conversations; hanging out, making fieldnotes; and using both tacit and explicit information in analysis and writing. On the participative side, the most natural role was that of the costumer. However, besides attending the market almost every day, and hence participating in the daily activities, I also participated in more special occasions such as social activities, public meetings, and the religious processions during the week of Easter. Moreover, activities like hanging out, having everyday conversations, carefully observing, participating in a wide range of activities, all being part of participant observation, have been important to get to know informants and build trust and rapport.

A third important qualitative method was that of qualitative interviewing. In the broadest sense, qualitative interviewing is 'a conversation between two people in which one person tries to direct the conversation to obtain information for some specific purpose (Gordon 1998, 2). The aim is, according to Grbich (1999), to gain information on the perspectives, understandings and meanings constructed by people regarding the events and their lives (Grbich 1999, 85).' During my fieldwork, I have conducted around thirty to forty interviews with a wide range of informants. Being my first real experience with interviewing on such a large scale and in such an extensive manner, I realized once more that interviews can be put on more than one continuum. They range from unstructured and following the direction of the informant, to more structured and led by myself, but they also range in the uniformity of the questions (Bernard 1994; DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, 139-139). The difference between unstructured and semi-structured interviews, or even long informal conversations, was not always easy to pin down on either of the continua. Even though the number of interviews held with marketvendors were more numerous and frequent, they were relatively short of duration. Their continuous work on the market did not allow them to actually sit and have an hours-long conversation. Interviews with, what I call, 'local experts' were longer of duration but less frequent. These meetings were surprisingly important to grasp the larger situation of the city and the market from an intellectual perspective.

Another more practical method has been mapping out the market. I recreated a street map of the neighbourhood of Ballarò, locating the market and other important marks, but indicated as well were the other markets are situated. This made visible how important the three historic markets are for the city of Palermo. Furthermore, at the end of the research I organised a focusgroup with informants, in which I pitched and discussed my findings. These informants were not comprised out of marketvendors, but higher educated Palermitans living in Ballarò.

Regarding data- recording and analysing, I have used different techniques throughout the research process. As is usually considered to be the most vital technique of data-recording for anthropological research, I have kept fieldnotes. These can be differentiated in different types (DeWalt&DeWalt 2011, 157-178), e.g. jot notes; descriptive notes; methodological notes; and meta-notes. Besides these

techniques of data-recording, I have also kept a research logbook and a diary, both of which have been important to ensure methodological accountability and reliability.

Most interviews have been recorded with recording equipment, however only after permission of the informant. This made it possible to go back to the interview later and transcribe what had been said in a written form.

As might have appeared from the introduction, the market of Ballarò is not only a multicultural place, but also a multi-sensorial one. Therefore, data captured solely in written form would not do justice to the ethnographic character of this setting. Visual and multi-sensory ethnographers such as Pink (2015), Stoller (1989), and MacDougall (1997) urge to broaden ethnographic research methodology by gaining knowledge through closer attention to all the human senses, exhorting the anthropologist to become some sort of 'sensory apprentice'. With limited equipment, as well being limited to written presentation in the form of this thesis, I have recorded soundscapes, which I have also translated and discussed with one of my informants. Moreover, I have made several pictures and videos of the market. Doing justice to this multisensory character of the market, without which the specific outcomes of global and local processes could not be understood, I have launched a blog that accompanies this written thesis. Throughout the chapters, referrals to specific audio's, video's, pictures, or blogpost are made in footnotes. Both this written thesis and the blog can also be consulted individually, although together they provide a more wholesome account.

Lastly, the data has been analysed by use of coding in NVivo. The first stage of coding, called open coding, already took place in the field. The second and third stages, axial and selective, have been conducted afterwards (Boeije 2010, 76-118).

Reflection on role as researcher

Not one ethnographic field is the same, neither is one fieldwork nor one fieldworker. The researchers knowledge, of which this thesis is the outcome, is always based on his or her positionality. As the following chapters will present the specifics of the ethnographic field and the previous sections have elaborated on the quirks of the research itself, it remains important to reflect on my role as researcher. This paragraph will therefore address two issues, both of which are familiar dilemmas within the

anthropological discipline and follow from what Behar calls the oxymoron that is participant observation (Behar 1996)[6].

Prior to everything it is of importance to situate myself as an undergraduate female, born and raised in the Netherlands. Since I studied in Bologna and completed different language courses both inside and outside the university, my competence in Italian was sufficient to do research and continued to become better throughout the fieldwork.[7] What prevented me from naturally blending in however, were my personal characteristics, as for example my physical being and incompetence of the strong local dialect. I was therefore soon confronted with the familiar insider-outsider dilemma and wondered where in Spradley's (1980, 58-62) stages of participation, or Adler & Adler's (1987) stages of membership I would fit in. Was my degree of participation enough to shift from both the experience-distant account of reality towards the experience-near, which is a spontaneous and unaware experience, and thus grasp the native's point of view (Geertz 1974, 28)?

In order step out of the predetermined role of costumer, tourist, and in some ways 'exotic' fieldworker, I tried to go to the market almost every day, greeting every marketvendor, familiar or unfamiliar, and build as much rapport and trust with my informants as possible. Even though I couldn't work at the market alongside the marketvendors, there were other ways of participating in the setting which made me see the 'native's point of view', e.g. how my informants make sense of the market, their identity, and the recent changes. For example, as a costumer-researcher many informants had become my own marketvendors of confidence, a recurrent element in the social relationships between marketvendors and marketcostumers. The most affirmative moment of both my degree of participation as well as the level of rapport was when Palermitan and non-Palermitan marketvendors started to include me in their jokes. It was by participating in this joking relation, as will be conceptualized in the conclusive chapter of this thesis, that I felt truly accepted and to some extend integrated in the scene.

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[6] Behar (1996) described the method of participant observation is inherently paradoxical. She states: 'Our methodology, defined by the oxymoron 'participant observation' as a split at the root: act as a participant, but don't forget to keep your eyes open (Behar 1996, 5)

[7] As part of the undergraduate honours curriculum of the Faculty of Social Sciences I have written a more in-depth and critical essay about language competence in fieldwork. As the lack of language competence and use of an interpreter is almost considered taboo, the essay interrogates implicit presumption that language competence is obligatory to conduct good anthropological fieldwork.

A second note on my role as fieldworker, which is simultaneously an ethical one, concerns the often blurred boundaries between friend and informant. As I could have already expected from the textbook of DeWalt & DeWalt (2011, 222) I had to deal with the question: When turns a friend into an informant, and an informant into a friend? With friends I had multiple informal conversations, some not at all useful for my research and others unexpectedly interesting. This blurred the boundaries not only between their role as friend and informant, but also between my role as friend and informant. Furthermore, since my informants were mostly heterosexual men and I was a woman alone showing interest in their lives, it was sometimes difficult to determine their intentions[8]. Of course I initially always trusted my informants, and it has certainly also been an advantage since my mere presence in the field served as a conversation starter. It is this vigilant openness that is according to me 'part of the job' of a fieldworker. The balance between healthy naivety and a little bit of suspicion was not always that easy, and too much of either could harm both the informant, our rapport and therefore the research, as well as my personal wellbeing.

Quality & ethics

What rests now are some important remarks about quality and ethics. Both of which require careful attention in all stages of the research. As for any scientific research, and one could argue even more for qualitative social sciences, it is of importance to ensure the quality and ethical standards. The quality of scientific research is usually measured in objectivity, reliability, and validity. Reliability - the internal consistency and reproducibility - is often considered difficult to ensure within anthropological research (DeWalt&DeWalt 2011, 111; Boeije 2010, 168). Being my own research instrument, I have undoubtedly influenced the social setting by the mere factor of being there. Being reflexive about my own role in the field, as presented in the previous paragraph, is pivotal in this process. Validity, the correspondence between the scientific description and reality of a certain social phenomenon, is often considered to be less problematic, since anthropological research provides such a thick and layered description. Moreover, the research process of participant

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[8] The issue of gender in fieldwork, that is being a woman in the field, is thoroughly addressed in the edited work *Women in the Field, Anthropological Experiences, Expanded and Updated*, by Peggy Golde et al.(1986).

observation is open and iterative; data collection and analysing interchanged, which stimulated new questions and depth (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, 111-112; Boeije 2010, 169-170). To further ensure validity I have included different strategies. One of these strategies has been method triangulation; all research questions and topics have been researched with - at least - more than one method. Another form of validation is member checking (Boeije 2011, 177). Admittedly, it was not always easy to discuss the findings with my participants and ask them whether or not they recognize the findings. More importantly has been the pitch/focusgroup in front of higher educated informants and friends, which functioned as a peer review discussion. A detailed methodical account is one other crucial technique to improve the reliability (Boeije 2011, 173). During the whole fieldwork period I have kept a research log to ensure methodical accountability

Ethically speaking, the code of conduct as formulated in the AAA (American Anthropological Association) statement of ethics has been obeyed. Nonetheless, during my period of fieldwork a central dilemma has been the question of informed consent. Even though all my informants have expressed their consent, it remains the questions to which extend they were also completely informed. Being informed is not a simple question of explaining the goal and scope of the research. Ranson critically discusses this issue, and states that the fine line between being informed and uninformed is often not clear (Ranson 2005, 109). A second important ethical concern, which is bound to the overall ethical concern to do no harm, is confidentiality. Confidentiality has to do with the handling of the data, in which the researcher and participants have to come to an agreement on how this data is handled. It was therefore important to communicate clearly that the research is conducted with the result of a bachelor thesis, and won't be published outside the university setting. Confidentiality also taps on the protection of anonymity and privacy. Regarding both of these rights, I have communicated clearly that participants will remain anonymous if they preferred. Some of the names of participants have therefore been altered in order to ensure this anonymity. An important ethical consideration for all of these matters is the launching of the online blog ballarò-thesis.wordpress.com. Besides asking permission for the online display of particular pictures and videos, the blog is not visible unless I, the author, give permission.

Outline

The first chapter of this thesis provides a theoretical elaboration on the concepts that are of main importance for this research. It will primarily deal with the anthropological approach of globalization, identity and postcolonial difference and concludes with a more concrete idea of how these ground. The second chapter then, continues with context specific information about Palermo. After providing a more detailed geographical, historical, political, and social-economic context of Italy and Palermo, the following section will then relate this to the recent context of migration and the unusual influence on the ethnographic setting of this research: the Palermitan streetmarket Ballarò. After providing the theoretical framework and context of the research, chapter three of this thesis continuous on this journey through Ballarò. It will draw a detailed image of the market, which daily happenings progress almost like a 'cycle of life'. The next chapter then will explain how these elements are interwoven with the expression of local identity. Chapter five focuses on the global forces that have caused many changes on the specific locality of Ballarò, and what these changes mean for the people who work and live here. The last chapter, where identity and difference meet, addresses power relations and uses the anthropological notion of the joking relationship as a synthesis to understand how Palermitans actually make sense of difference. The conclusion recaps the findings and reengages them with the literature in order to arrive at the final answer of the central question; *How do Palermitans construct their local identity at the marketplace of Ballarò in the context of the increased arrival of immigrants?* Finally, the conclusion will discuss how the two scholarly debates that have been of crucial importance for this research intersect. In the appendix the reader can find a glossary with commonly used Italian words and their translations, a summary in the language of the research (Italian).

Chapter 1: Globalization, identity & difference

Introduction

Two important themes come to the fore once mapping out the conceptual framework surrounding local responses to the changing diversity caused by the global refugee crisis in Palermo. First of all, the anthropological exploration of globalization with specific attention to what this means for movement, mixing and processes of dis- and re-embedding. Secondly, how these global processes relate towards the construction and experience of local identity. Both of these themes have been widely discussed, individually as well as taken together, by notorious anthropologists such as Appadurai (1996); Barth (1969), Bauman (2000); Cohen (2000), Connolly (1991); Eriksen (2009); Friedman (1994) and Hannerz (1996; 1990). Their theories on these matters will be the focus of the first two paragraphs. Paragraph three will zoom in on the relationship of identity and difference, taking also into account a slightly different approach grounded in postcolonial theory. The last paragraph uses these concepts to create a more narrowed down and concrete idea of social places where global movements ground and interact with processes of identity construction.

Globalization: An anthropological approach

How can we grasp a phenomenon that is so complex and all-encompassing as globalization? Interestingly enough, the term itself established its current meaning only in the 1970s, whereas the processes that are usually relegated to large-scale globalization are often traced back to the 19th century[9] (James & Steger 2014). There are actually a myriad of ways how not only scientists from different disciplines but also journalists and ordinary people make sense of the spatial and temporal processes of change in the modern world. It is for this reason that many scholars within

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[9] I emphasize here large-scale, since the historical origins of globalization are the subject of ongoing debate. Many scholars specifically relegate the origins of globalization to modern times, others trace them back all the way to the age of discovery and travels to the New World or even further. Some authors regard this view of a stretched-out globalization far back as counter-productive, since it renders the concept inoperative and useless for political activity (Friedman 1992; Eriksen 2009, 5).

anthropology and the social sciences insist on the relevance of large-scale global processes in anthropological research, a discipline that traditionally focused on ostensibly isolated, small-scale, and local communities[10] (Appadurai 1996, Bauman 2000, Clifford, J. 2000; Eriksen 2009; and Hannerz 1996;1990).

Even though it may seem like the locality of anthropology is fundamentally incompatible with studying global systematic processes, it is exactly this element that makes anthropology valuable. For it is anthropological fieldwork that is capable of grasping global forces at work on a local level (Appadurai 1996; Eriksen 2009, 116). In slightly different words Friedman (1994) emphasizes as well the need to maintain a perspective in which global cultural processes are understood as embedded in local life worlds and social experiences that are themselves susceptible to analysis (Friedman 1994, vii). At the core of all of the works of the above authors lies that no social scientist can nowadays deny that we live in a seemingly very large and uncontrollable world system, in which people are continuously on the move, more interconnected and less bounded to a territory (Giddens 1990; Friedman 1994; Eriksen 2009; Appadurai 1996). More importantly, as Eriksen (2009) notes whilst referring to philosopher Hegel, is not even the increased connection between formerly disparate areas and places, but moreover the consciousness about these connections (Eriksen 2009, 1). A similar definition gives Robertson when he defines globalization as 'the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole (Robertson 1992, 8). Eriksen provides perhaps the most all-compassing conceptual framework of globalization from which it is possible to further theorize the meaning of these concepts for identity construction. Within the dual character of globalization – increased interconnectedness and an increased awareness of it – he identifies a number of different features. All of these are in some way related to the themes of local identity and the experience of diversity, but especially features like increased movement, mixing and processes of dis- and re-embedding will be discussed more thoroughly.

The first important characteristic of contemporary globalization is movement.

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[10] The most decisive departure form anthropology's tendency to study ostensibly isolated, small groups is usually regarded to the anthropologist Eric Wolf and his book *Europe and the people without history* (1982). Wolf traces the emergence of Europe as a global power and describes the connection between communities, regions, peoples and nations that are usually treated as discrete (Wolf 1982).

Boundaries that in earlier centuries were established now seem to dissolve as people, money, goods, and ideas are constantly moving in every direction (Eriksen 2009, 91-92). This thought led Zygmunt Bauman to write in his book *Liquid Modernity* (2000) that everyone is on the move these days (Bauman 2000, 30). One of the ways this movement comes into expression is transnational migration – by now a central fact of transnational processes. This however does not mean that everyone is simultaneously and continuously moving. Many of the world inhabitants stay where they are, but are undoubtedly affected by globalization and all the movements it entails. How seemingly unbounded these movements are, they still reflect and reproduce global power differences. This is most clearly exemplified by the contrasting figures of the refugee and tourist. The first being forced to move and thereafter being impeded by many different political and bureaucratical restrictions, the latter free to move and very rarely experiencing hindrances (Eriksen 2009, 100-101).

Resulting from this intensified movement, Eriksen (2009) stresses, is accelerated mixing. Just like the dual character of globalization, mixing is a two-sided process. One the one hand it entails cosmopolitanism and hybridity, on the other hand withdrawal and boundary making. Just like any cultural dynamic of globalization, mixing takes place in a myriad of ways and in every place of the world (Eriksen 107-108. It therefore has to be understood as multi-directional and complex (Appadurai 1996; Hannerz 1996). An important note on this complexity makes Hannerz (1996), when he stresses that the accelerated confluence of separate and different cultural currents and traditions does not imply that they have ever been in a state of clearly boundedness or 'pureness' (Hannerz 1996, 67). Moreover, mixing has always been taking place, just not at this speed an intensity. Following from the fact that mixing takes place in many different ways are Eriksen's remarks on homogeneity. He stresses that globalization is not always a tendency towards homogeneity. It can also lead to reflexive resistance, which results in many different *glocal* forms that includes the particular and universal. Secondly one has to take into consideration that global processes never transform local cultures totally, only partially (Eriksen 2009, 108).

The next element, or rather elements, of globalization is disembedding, accompanied with its counterpart re-embedding. Disembedding on the one hand could be characterized by its ability to shrink the world through fast contact across former boundaries, homogenize human lives and cultures by creating a global grammar of comparison, connect people worldwide and stimulate a universalist cosmopolitanism.

On the other hand however stand more re-embedding tendencies, in dialectical negotiation with disembedment. The globalized world sometimes seems bigger because of the increased awareness of difference; is in some ways more heterogeneous since new forms of diversity have emerged from intensified contact and mixing; often leads to an increased awareness of difference and reconstruction of local uniqueness; and also encourages feelings of alienation, fundamentalism, and strong localism (Eriksen 2009, 141-144). All these counteractive tendencies are once again emphasizing that the processes disembedding and re-embedding are two sides of the same coin. In other words, while there is a local encompassment of the global in cultural terms, there is simultaneously an encompassment of the local by the global in material terms. To conclude this paragraph, there is a continuous articulation between these two processes (Friedman 1994, 12).

Globalization and identity construction

Global processes of moving, mixing, dis- and re-embedding all have their effect on the politics of identity. To understand these workings it is however first of importance to understand how identity is constructed. On this matter Frederik Barth (1969) developed social theories on the importance of boundary construction in his work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*[11]. More than forty years later his ideas, albeit with a critical note, are still central in anthropological works on identity construction.

Cohen (2012) points in his introduction of the book *Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Identities,* of which Barth himself has written the first chapter, to the centrality of cultural identities within the study of anthropology. In this introduction he basically states the most important point of Barth's earlier theoretical exploration of the theme when he says that: 'The question of what identities are and what they signify is central to the study of anthropology. Just as significant is the related concept of boundaries, the things which distinguish the identity of one group or individual from others (Cohen 2000, ii).' Barth (1969) focuses primarily on ethnic identity when he conceptualized the

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[11] Barth is the editor of this book, which contains of an introduction of Barth in which he outlines his views on ethnic identity and boundaries, and a number of essays dealing with these matters from different authors. Amongst these essays is his own research on Pathan identity (an ethnic group in Afghanistan) and its maintenance (Barth 1969).

importance of boundaries[12]. He outlines an approach in which ongoing negotiations of boundaries between groups and people are central. Important is the idea that such groups are not *a priori,* discontinuous and culturally isolated groups to which people naturally belong (Barth 1969, 11). It is to the contrary interface and interaction that give rise to identities. Groups, he emphasizes, use categories or labels to identify themselves from other groups. Even when individual members move across physical and cognitive boundaries or share identity with more than one groups, these labels usually sustain (Barth 1969, 14). This is possible because:

> '[...] categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of
> mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of
> exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained *despite*
> changing participation and membership in the course of
> individual life histories (Barth 1969, 9).'

Throughout the rest of the book the inter-dependency of ethnic groups remains a pivotal argument. To sum up this argument in one sentence; ethnic identities are the product of continuous ascription and self-ascription, they become and are maintained through relational processes of inclusion and exclusion (Barth 1969, chapter 1). Even though Barth is talking about ethnic identity, his theory could be extended further to other kinds of group identities as well. In slightly different words Friedman (1994) speaks about cultural identity as always constructed in relation to the Other, or what he calls the identification of otherness[13] (Friedman 1994, 75).

Now that the social and cognitive processes of the construction of identity have been conceptualized, it comes to the question of how these stand in relation to the earlier identified dynamics of globalization. Cohen's (2000) questions seems to be truly appropriate when he asks how decolonization, globalization, information, and

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[12] In chapter one of *Signifying identities* Barth's central argument is that anthropologists have been guilty of constructing and imputing to groups indigenous and cultural boundary theories. Even though the concept is has proved analytically powerful for many purposes in social science, he urges to keep in mind that is has been *our* concept, made to serve our own analytical purposes (Barth in Cohen (eds.) 2012.

[13] The origin of the concept of differential identity lies within the philosophical movement of phenomenology, but has not only been appropriated by the social sciences like psychology, sociology, and anthropology, but is also central to critical theory such as post colonialism, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

mobility have affected the relativities of different identities and the hierarchical relations of the groups to which they pertain. He continues with the question: 'How do these changing relations impact on the substance and the experience of identity? (Cohen 2000, 4).' At the most general level, as Eriksen (2009) explicates, globalization at the level of social identity is tantamount to a re-negotiation of social identities, their boundaries and symbolic content. He makes three points clear: Strong identities and fixed boundaries do not preclude cultural stability or continuity; fluid identities do not preclude cultural stability or continuity; the political usages of cultural symbols do not preclude the people in question from having anything in common (Eriksen 2009, 110). These statements refer to the earlier dynamics of movement, mixing, dis-embedding and re-embedding, the latter having an interesting relation to identity politics. Each of them will be discussed more thoroughly.

In the discussion of movement and identity Eriksen (2009) makes an important note on the idea of place, as fixed, stable and meaningful space, which has become a scarce and flexible resource in a world of movement and flux (Eriksen 2009, 104). This conception is based on Gupton and Ferguson's (1992) deeper understanding of this argument in their view of space and place in relation to identity construction in modern times. They argue that even though people have undoubtedly always been mobile and therefore identities less static than is suggested in traditional anthropology, the intensified mobility of people does give rise to a profound sense of a loss of territorial roots. Moreover, it allows for an erosion of the cultural distinctiveness of places and a deterritorialization of identity (Gupton & Furgeson 1992, 9). Somewhat later they focus on the difference between space and place, a well-known anthropological theory, as a relevant point of anthropological inquiry in this era of globalization. It explores the way space is imagined in order to understand how conceptual processes of place making meet the changing global economic and political tensions of lived spaces, which they argue is the relation between space and place (Gupton & Furgeson 1992, 11).

Besides movement, the impact of mixing is all the more relevant to the identity processes. On this matter Hannerz (1990) has made very strong arguments, especially regarding what some people identify, often fearfully, as cultural homogenization. He stresses that no total homogenization has been taking place, or will ever take place in the future. Global culture is not one of a replication of uniformity but rather an organization of diversity (Hannerz 1990, 237). At the level of

social identity this means that processes of cultural mixing do not equally reflect group identities and degrees of boundedness. On the same note, the disembedding characteristic of globalization does not mean that boundaries will eventually disappear, but are sometimes made more visible through negotiation and re-negotiation, transcendence, transformation, and reframing. Part of the re-embedding tendency is sometimes a yearning of cultural purity and- in the most extreme forms - a xenophobic or nationalist political attitude. Since, in Eriksen's words: *'It is only after been globalized that people may become obsessed with the uniqueness of their locality (Eriksen 2009, 140-141).'* He introduces here the concept of identity politics. This is a widely-used term in the social sciences and humanities to describe the formation of identity as a tool to establish political claims, spread political ideologies, or direct political action, mostly in a situation of inequality or injustice. Aims of these politics are in this case to assert a group's distinctiveness, belonging, power and recognition. The study of identity politics has become common to political anthropology since the second half of the 20th century. More broadly speaking, and more relevant for this research, identity politics can also refer to tensions and struggles over the right to map and define the contours and fixed 'essence' of specific groups. Central to this practice are also notions of sameness and difference, therefore the anthropological study of identity politics involves also the study of the politics of difference (Clifford, J., 2000; Eriksen 2009; Neostotiftos 2013).

The understanding of difference and otherness

So far, we have discussed how identity is always constructed in relation to the Other and how global processes of movement, mixing, dis- and re-embedding lead to a reconceptualization and re-negotiation of boundaries, its relation to space and place and sometimes to a more articulate politics of identity. What however has only been mentioned briefly, is the significance of difference within all these conceptual frameworks. A more comprehensive exploration of this topic, including also relevant philosophical and postcolonial arguments, will be the main endeavor of this paragraph.

The previous paragraph suggests that the global dynamics stimulate an awareness of difference. This of course, is visible on all different levels of societies.

Whereas the politics of identity refer to the most concrete level of collectively appropriating group differences for certain political goals, negotiations and struggles over right to define these differences happen also on less articulate levels (Neostotiftos 2013). These struggles over definition are however usually imbued with power differences. As Gupta and Ferguson emphasis as well, the production of cultural difference occurs in 'continuous, connected space, traversed by economic and political relations of inequality' (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 16). It is therefore relevant to interrogate these power relations and ask the question who holds this power of definition and, perhaps more importantly, who does not. This is exactly the project of postcolonial studies, a relatively recent emerging field of critical theory. Scholars of this intellectual enterprise address the current western cultural superiority, which is very much influenced by the context of colonialism. They state that colonialism was much more than a historical context, but that it suggests 'certain ways of seeing, specific modes of understanding the world (McLeod 2000, 18).' Moreover, as Stuart Hall (1995) stresses in his influential essay *When Was the Postcolonial? Thinking at the Limit,* it is perhaps not even possible to speak about a 'postcolonial' era, since colonial assumptions and knowledges do remain unchallenged. Even though the empire declined and former colonies gained independence, colonial ways of knowing still circulate and have a certain agency (Stuart Hall 1996, 242-260). What are then these ways of knowing, usually referred to as colonial discourses?[14] They can be defined as sets of believes coded into language, circulations of assumptions about differences between peoples and cultures. These usually differentiate between the superior Self and inferior Other, by attaching different qualities and meaning to each. It is here that colonial discourses form the intersection where language and power meet, since these representations of the colonial Other, e.g. the colonized, justify the subordination of the colonial Self, e.g. the colonizers. (McLeod 2000, 18). Edward Saïd's *Orientalism* (1978), is an attempt to interrogate such colonial discourses, and is seen as crucial for both postcolonial studies as well as for the current – anthropological, but also philosophical,

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[14] The term is used here in plural, since it is more accurate to talk about colonial discourses instead of discourse. This is due to its multifarious varieties and operation that differ in time and space. Following the example from McLeod (2000) in *Beginning Postcolonialism*, this paragraph will use the plural term to keep this fact in mind (McLeod 2000: 18).

psychological, and sociological - understanding of the construction of the Other. Influenced by Antonio Gramsci's (1926), who will be mentioned later within the context of Sicily, Said examined how the knowledge that the Western imperial powers formed about the Orient was based on the exaggeration of difference, a presumption of Western superiority, and stereotypical and prejudiced images[15]. Such hegemonic cultural representations of difference are however not only perpetuated by the colonizers, but in effect also internalized by the Othered subject. Being all too aware of this was Frantz Fanon (1986), an equally pivotal figure within postcolonial studies, who urges for a decolonization of the mind. Returning to the subject of identity and the construction of difference, he writes in *Black Skin, White Masks* that his identity and his racial difference as a black postcolonial subject in France is defined in negative terms by those in position of power (Fanon 1986, 8).

Of course, we don't live in a colonial world any more, and in the context of this thesis we don't speak of the dynamic between colonizer and colonized. It will however appear relevant to take into account the power relations behind the construction of difference and otherness, which inform many of the modes of understanding this globalized, postcolonial world.

Scapes and contact zones of the global cultural economy

In order to understand how global processes play out on a local level, it is of importance to create a more narrowed down and concrete idea of a place where identity construction and, as appeared relevant in the previous paragraph, differences come together. Appadurai (1996) provides a very useful theorization the new global cultural economy, which has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that consists of different interrelated, yet disjunctive global cultural flows (Appadurai 1996, 32). He further develops this argument with the conceptualization of five dimensions, 'scapes', of global culture: ethnoscape, mediascape, technoscape, finanscape and ideoscape. Without going into detail about the specific meaning of each, this suffix of 'scape' is used to illustrate that each of these are cultural facets that depend on the position of a given spectator and are more importantly constantly

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[15] For a more specific idea of what these stereotypes imply, see Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), or McLeod's (2010) summary.

shifting. This global movement of people, technology, funds, media, and ideas happens, as Appadurai (1996) claims, under a growing disjunction between them and in varying and colliding forms. This view of intertwining and fluid landscapes is helpful to understand the dynamic between homogenization and heterogenization and how this plays out in the disjunctures of global flows. It is between the disjuncturing dynamics homogenization and heterogenization, which feed and reinforce each other, that a specific locality is produced (Appadurai 1996).

A more concrete idea of such a locality produced by the global cultural economy is Pratt's concept of the contact zone. With this concept she means:

> 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other,
> often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as
> colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many
> parts of the world today (Pratt 1991, 34).'

Important in this notion is once again its referral to the relations of power. A same referral make Gupta and Ferguson (1992) in their conceptualization of space. They argue that it is in such a social space of a contact zone, that the identity of a group in this space emerges by the intersection of specific involvement in a system of hierarchically organized spaces with its cultural construction as community or locality (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 8). It is therefore important to look at the hierarchy behind these social spaces of differences in order to identify who have the power to define difference and how this has come to be.

Conclusively, this chapter has started from an anthropological perspective on the dual forces of globalization. It then asked how these forces had their impact on the construction of identity and concluded that it produced an increased awareness of difference. With the help of postcolonial thought on the understanding of difference and keeping in mind the power relations behind these ways of understanding, we now have arrived at an idea of a social space, or contact zone, where these differences are played out on a local level.

Chapter II: Changing diversity in Palermo, Sicily

As the previous part has argued, globalization affects everyone and everywhere in the world, albeit in very different ways. This research will therefore follow the example of Appadurai (1996), Eriksen (2009), Friedman (1994) and many other anthropologists, who urge to grasp global cultural processes as embedded in local life worlds and social experiences. More specifically, it will focus on how global processes like transnational migration are experienced on the local street markets of Palermo, the capital of the Italian region Sicily. After the previous chapter has laid out the conceptual framework relevant for the focus of this research, e.g. identity construction and the understanding of difference in the context of global movements, it is now of importance to sketch out a more in-depth geographical, historical, political and social-economic context of Italy and Palermo. The last two paragraphs of this chapter will thereafter focus on the historical and recent context of migration and its influence on the Palermitan streetmarket Ballarò.

Sicily: geography, history, and the North/South division

This ethnographic research takes place in Palermo, the biggest city of Sicily. This triangular shaped Italian island lies below the south-west tip of Calabria, the most southern and largest region of Italy. The whole peninsula of Italy is surrounded by the Tyrrhenian Sea on the west and the Adriatic on the east, both part of the Mediterranean Sea. Sicily and Tunisia are only divided by 145 kilometres of sea, which is called the Strait of Sicily (*Stretto di Sicilia*)[16]. Italy is divided into 94 provinces and 20 regions, and for each province the central government. Sicily however is one of the five regions that has a statute of special autonomy. Sicily itself is divided into nine regions which also include the smaller surrounding islands: the capital Palermo, Agrigento, Caltanisseta, Catania, Enna, Messina, Ragusa, Syracuse and Trappani. Each region is then further divided into municipalities - Palermo for example has eight municipalities (Cole 2005; Pardalis 2009).

A historically crucial point for Italy as a whole is undoubtedly its unification, or what is also called the Risorgimento, which began in 1815 and was completed in 1871. The period of the Risorgimento and its 'memory' is central to Italian politics

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[16] See figure 1

and Italian historiography. In this period, Italy had to invent a collective history that would bring together all the diverse histories of the regions and municipalities of which it consisted before the unification (Pardalis 2009, 33). This invention or re-negotiation of a common history had to prove the continuity of the Italian nation, a process that is all too familiar to what Anderson (1991) identifies as central to the rise of many nationalisms (Anderson 1991). The integration and construction of national identity however became problematic when it came to Sicily. Cavour, a central figure of the unification and Italy's first prime minister, saw the Italian South as threatening the dream of a unified Italy. This was mainly because its supposed backwardness, which is exemplified by the quote from a letter written the chief administrator of the South to Cavour: *'But, my friend, what lands are these, Molise and the south! What barbarism! Some Italy! This is Africa: compared to these peasants the Bedouins are the pinnacle of civilisation. And what misdeeds!' (*Farini 1860, 129*)*. Pardalis (2009) argues that the Risorgimento failed to construct a base for national identity, because it produced instead local interests and strong regional identities that Italians deemed more important than national integration. She further states that this gap between the North and South was never bridged, neither under the period of fascism before and World War II, nor during the democracy after the war (Pardalis 2009, 34). This gap was even more widened by the economic inequality between the rural Southern regions and the industrial urban North which, as Khrebtan-Hörhager (2014) put aptly, challenged the country with a 'difference from within' (Khrebtan-Hörhager 2014, 88). It is within this context of difference that Antonio Gramsci wrote 'Some aspects of the Southern Question' (1926), in which he addresses how the Italian Northern bourgeoisie has subjugated the South of Italy and the islands, reducing them to an exploitable colony (Pugliese 2009, 264). Even today, the differences remain in the consciousness of many Italians just as vast as in the second half of the 19th century (Pardalis 2009, 34). Anthropologist Schneider (1998) addressed these issues in her book *Italy's 'Southern Question': Orientalism in one country,* in which she argues that the North/South division is still very much existing (Schneider 1998). Pardalis' (2009) PHD thesis is very much explicatory for this internalized discourse as she interrogates the much prevailing term 'terroni', used by many northerners to describe the southerners and more specifically the Sicilians. This term derives from the Latin word terra, signifying earth, and refers to the stereotypical image of the Southern peasant who cultivates the soil. On top of this image, 'terroni' are also stigmatized as

lazy and even violent. This discriminatory term did not only exist as such, but, just like many political discourses of Othering, was used since the unification of Italy to legitimise the centralisation of power (Pardalis 2009, 3&50).

Italy's unusual case of migration

An overview of the Palermitan context would not be complete without discussing the Italian history of emigration and contemporary immigration, especially since this research deals with the current arrival of refugees. It's unusual history of national self-definition, as discussed in the previous paragraph, is according to Khrebtan-Hörhager undoubtedly intertwined with its just as unusual dynamics of migration (Khrebtan-Hörhager 2014). Throughout the latter half of the 19th and most of the 20th century, oppression and poverty generated waves of emigration from Sicily. These Southern Italian emigrants first went overseas in their search for an economically brighter looking future, whereas in the post-war period they mainly moved to the Italian North and western Europe (Cole 2005; Khrebtan-Hörhager 2015; Pardalis 2009; Mellino 2007). Cole notes how for much of the 20th century one out of every eight Italian emigrants was a Sicilian; and between 1951 and 1961 400,000 Sicilians left their homes on the island. Their destinations differed from Brooklyn to Toronto, from Milan to Frankfurt and many places more (Cole 2005, 1).

From the 1970's onwards however, these migratory patterns changed profoundly, as many Sicilian returned and newcomers arrived (Cole 2005; Khrebtan-Hörhager 2014; Mellino 2007). Amongst these first waves of immigrants, Cole (2005) describes, were many Tunisians, Cape Verdians, Mauritian and Filipinans. However, in the decade of 1980-1990 people from many other countries, mostly from Africa and Asia, followed (Cole 2005, 1). The Italian National Institute for Statistics reported in 1990 that in these first two decades, around 62,000 foreigners held residence permits in Sicily. Sicily's total foreign population, taking into account also significant numbers of unregistered immigrants, probably exceeded 100,000 (ISTAT 1990a:73-75). These mainly non-European immigrants were mostly unregulated and undocumented, and came to Italy to preform menial jobs in the informal sector. However, during the 1990s policies regarding migration became tighter and more progressive, mainly caused by the Martelli Law that was issued in 1990. This law introduced visas for North Africans and sanctions for airlines and ferry companies

who carry passengers without correct entry documents. Consequently, irregular immigration, including all its different actors, to Italy was criminalized. Until the early 2000s, the majority of these 'illegal' migrants arrived from Tunisia, originating mainly from North African countries. However, after the Italian government lobbied with the Tunisian government to readmit deported Tunisians and other African migrants in 1998 and introduced stringent controls at the South-Italian coastline, Libya became the primary transit point for irregular immigrants. (Dines et al. 2014; Marchetti 2012). Since then, an increasing number of migrants use the Libyan-Sicilian route across the Mediterranean Seas. Especially the Arab spring in Northern Africa and the Middle-East, which began in 2010, has produced an unprecedented number of refugees willing to undertake the dangerous and illegal crossing of the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe, most of them arriving on the Sicilian island Lampedusa. If they survived this crossing, they are usually brought to reception centres on the Sicilian mainland (Khrebtan-Hörhager 2014; Vieira 2016). The UN refugee agency reported in October 2016 that in the period of 2014 – 2016 a total of 454,489 persons arrived to Italy by sea (UNHCR 2016). Even though some of these refugees are relocated to other Italian regions or European countries, a substantial amount stays in Sicily and applies for asylum. It is this historical and recent context of migration and Italy's difference from within that led Ponzanesi (2012) to state that two othernesses meet in the borderland of Europe (Ponzanesi 2012, 689).

Ballarò, a Palermitan streetmarket as scene of negotiating difference

One arena where these othernesses come together are the streetmarkets of the harbour city Palermo, where every type of food, both Italian and foreign, is sold. These markets have been the way of life of Palermo for centuries, argues ethno-anthropologist Orietta Sorgi (2006; 2015), who works for the government on the preservation of Sicily's heritage and who is the editor of a book called *Mercati Storici Siciliani* (Historical Markets of Sicily, my translation). Already in the era of Islamic occupation, which lasted from 831 to 1072 AD, the city was divided into quarters according to their own markets. These markets were strategically installed in the antic city, close to the sea or near the course of the rivers. During this time Sicily was an Islamic state, or emirate. Just like now Palermo, called Bal'harm, was the capital city. During this era an Arab-Byzantine culture developed, which made the island multi-

religious and equally lingual. Even after the conquer of Christian Normans in 1072, Muslims formed the majority of the Sicilian population up until the 13th century (Consumano 2012). Some argue that the markets are perhaps the best-preserved of Sicily's Arab heritage, which is also visible in the names that find their origin in the Arabic language (LaDuca 1994). Up until the bombings in the second World War these markets have been present at the exact same place in the urban territory of Palermo. After the WW II, even though many Palermitans, the term for inhabitants or 'natives' of Palermo, had moved to the new peripheries of the cities, the old markets regained their economic and social activities (Cole 2005; Cusumano 2012; Sorgi 2006; 2015). To this day, three historic markets have, in Sorgi's words, 'survived' the big transformations of the 20th century, namely *Il Capo*, *Ballarò,* and *La Vucciria,* all three still on the exact same site as they were installed ages ago. This continuation is particularly interesting since the historical centre of Palermo was left to crumble after the second World War. This neglecting got even worse when between the 1950s and 1980s the mafia ravaged much of the city centre[17]. The centre of Palermo ended up depopulated and in a way without life, albeit for the street markets – and in particularly Ballarò. When however, as the previous paragraph showed, from the 70s onwards more and more immigrants arrived in Sicily they moved to the abandoned centre of Palermo. Especially in the last ten years many immigrants and refugees have planted roots in the streets around the market and are beginning to establish business in the Palermitan markets. This process has given a whole new dynamic to these markets. It has become a place where, influenced by global phenomena, diversity comes together on a dynamic locality. Sorgi (2015) therefore calls the Palermitan markets like Ballarò a space of multicultural contamination, where differences between Us and the Other, the local and the global, the past and the present dissolve and are in constant dialogue. It is this Palermitan arena of negotiating diversity that

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[17] Palermo is home to the infamous Sicilian mafia Cosa Nostra. Throughout the 20th century, this criminal syndicate has exerted power on Palermo's economic and commercial activity. Migrants however, are challenging Cosa Nostra's stronghold on the city centre. Merelli (2016) provides a further reading on this topic in her non-scientific article *The centre of Sicily's biggest city was emptied by the mafia. Now it's being reclaimed by migrants.*

forms the ideal context to research local identity construction and the understanding of difference.

Picture 1: A fruttivendolo at the market of Ballarò

Chapter III: The rhythm of Ballarò

The market of Ballarò, as for the other two historical markets of Palermo, has been praised and described by many writers, both in past and present days. With its togetherness of people, traditions, products, colours, sounds, smells, and languages makes Ballarò amenable for so many different poetic metaphors such as beating heart of Palermo (La Duca, 1994), or the theatre of abundance (Bonanzinga, 2006). Still, many Palermitans would argue that it is rather impossible to characterize these markets, in words that is. This chapter aims to do just this, in order to understand why the market of Ballarò functions as arena of negotiating identity and difference. Doing justice to the multi-sensory character of the setting, the words written in this chapter will be complemented with different audio-visual material, which can be found on the blog[18]. This chapter will first show how Ballarò is positioned within the city of Palermo, and how it relates to the other markets. The second paragraph will demonstrate how the market and its activities are organized, or rather find themselves in this grey area of semi-organization. These first two paragraphs will be followed with a more dynamic description of the daily activities that unfold almost like the cycle of life. The only right way to end this chapter however, is by an account of the people that truly characterize Ballarò; the protagonists of this open theatre.

Position
Palermo è Ballarò, Ballarò è Palermo[19]

'The whole of Palermo is a market', both Toni[20] (22) and Marco (30) mentioned. And this is true; scattered around the city, both in the historical centre and the outskirts, you will find marketstands selling fruits, vegetables, bread, or various kinds of streetfood. However, many Palermitans prefer to do the bulk of their groceries where these stands are concentrated; the three historical markets. Ballarò is one of these three historical markets present in Palermo, the other two being *Capò* and *Vucciria.* Even though the latter is often considered to be the oldest market of Europe, every Palermitan knows that the commercial activities in this neighbourhood are far away from what they used to be. '*La Vucciria*... is dying, if it isn't already dead' is an often-

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[18] Ballaròthesis.wordpress.com
[19] Translation: Palermo is Ballarò, Ballarò is Palermo. Quote by Leoluca Orlando in the video ParlaPalermo #2 – Onestamente. Link on blog
[20] Interview with Marco Romeo (13-2-2017)

heard exclamation. Many marketstands and shops are replaced by bars and restaurants, which makes it a popular neighbourhood among students and other people attracted to the vibrant nightlife. Ballarò and Capò, despite some inevitable changes which will be discussed in chapter five, have largely remained intact. Striking for all markets is their importance for the city, which appears from their mere position. Visualized as well in the map (figure 1)[21], the neighbourhoods of the city centre are structured around the markets. Rosario La Duca, notorious Palermitan writer on urbanistic developments and popular traditions of the city of Palermo, affirms that the markets have always functioned as the social and economic heart of the city (La Duca 1994, 13). The busy streets, buzzing squares and quite alleys of and surrounding the streetmarkets of Ballarò, Vucciria and Capò indeed form the historical centre. Together with the Borgo Vecchio they are the four most important and characteristic neighbourhoods, and not unimportantly they are *quartieri populari*: working-class neighbourhoods. Whilst conducting an interview at his olive stand, marketvendor Roberto (30 years) expressed this very clearly, pointing down at the very *ballate* (pavement) under our feet: 'You are really in the centre of Palermo, it is the heart of the city'. The market is of such characteristic importance that the whole neighbourhood, officially called *Albergheria,* is commonly known as Ballarò.

The specific position of the market of Ballarò has a crucial consequence, which delineates at the same time one of the pivotal differences between Ballarò and Capò. Whereas Capò is situated near Teatro Massimo and the tribunal, Ballarò extends from the city centre until the train station. As in other cities, this area near the train station is the cheapest zone to live. Urbanistic theories, such as laid out in Exploring the city: Inquiries Toward an Urban Anthropology by Ulf Hannerz point out that this usually functions as a pull-factor for those with limited economic recourses (Hannerz 1980). According to this familiar urban distribution, Ballarò attracts large groups of immigrants looking to settle down. Besides relatively low-cost housing, Marco Romeo, an expert on food and history of the markets, mentioned that this economic position is reflected as well in the price differences and, consequently, the type of clients between the markets. Because of its position besides the tribunal the market of Capò attracts advocates, other employees of the tribunal, inhabitants from more expensive neighbourhoods, and tourists. Ballarò on the other hand is, and

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[21] See also the interactive version on ballarothesis.wordpress.com

has always been, *il mercato del popolo* (the market of the people); lower class families, students, families from the neighbourhood, and immigrants stroll around the narrow streets of the *Piazzetta Ballarò*. Unlike the market of Capò, the streets of Ballarò are not straight and clear-cut. Its tortuous streets are centred around *Piazza del Carmine*, functioning as the *piazza di grascia,* which can be traditionally found in every market of Palermo. Whereas the literal meaning might suggest that the main square of the Ballarò is greasy, *le piazze di grascia* is an antique way of indicating the 'squares of abundance'. It is in between this abundance of products, people, languages, and colours that the same activities unfold daily.

Daily activities

Si ha la sensazione di avere sotto gli occhi il ciclio della vita.[22].

Ballarò has its own rules, repeating themselves every day from seven in the morning until seven in the evening, from Monday until Sunday, every single day of the year. It is as if the cycle of life recommences and rejuvenates every morning, when the marketvendors arrive at their stand or shop and stall out their goods. Alli Traina brought up this metaphor in an interview[23], and poetically describes this cycle of life in her book *Vicoli Vicoli* (2014), in which she intimately guides the reader through Palermo's 'human monuments.'

> '*Il mercato che è pieno alla mattina e che poi lungo la giornata inizia*
> *piano piano a diminuire, lentamente ma inesorabilmente, e alla fine*
> *rimangono solo la spazzatura per strada e i gatti che cercano cibo per*
> *sfamarsi. Tutto si rirproduce e ricomincia da capo, la sera ogni cosa sparisce*
> *e la mattina c'è un nuovo mercato.. si ricomincia. Si ha la sensazione di*
> *avere sotto gli occhi il ciclio della vita e tutto accade e ricominca in un*
> *giorno. Palermo ti mostra senza pudori e senza veli l'essenza della vita.*
> *Il cibo, il sesso, la morte. (*Traina 2014, 68-69)*'

> 'The market which is full at the morning and then during the day it slowly starts to
>
> diminish, slowly but inexorably, and at the end rest only the garbage on the street
> and the cats that search for food to feed themselves. Everything reproduces
> and recommences from the start, the evening everything disappears to have a
> new market in the morning…. It begins again. One has the sense of having under
> the eyes the cycle of life and everything happens and restarts again in one day.

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[22] Translation: One has the sensation of having under the eyes the cycle of life
[23] Interview with Alli Traina (21-2-2017)

Palermo shows you without prejudicing and without concealing the essence of life.

The food, the sex, the death.[24]'

For most marketvendors, this cycle of life initiates already before the break of dawn. At 04:00 in the morning, the marketvendors wake up to go to the *Mercato Ittico* at the port to stock their fresh fish, to the *Mercato l'ortofruttifero* on the road to Monte Pellegrino for fruits and vegetables, to local farms in the countryside for other animal products, and to the nearby village Monreale for the famous bread. The stands are always on the same spot, the voices always the same. Almost every marketvendor has a space functioning as storage or an actual shop behind their backs and on the front wooden stalls to expose their goods, sometimes various and sometimes monothematic. When everything is put in place, business starts around 07:00 am and continues until 20:00 pm, without a break. The peak hours however are during the hours between 8:30 until 11:30, when a stream of people wanders through the narrow streets, searching for their daily, and at this time of the day the freshest, groceries. Being at Ballarò in these hours is a multi-sensorial experience. All the different colours of the products, smells from the streetfood, sounds from cutting meat and fish right in front of your face come right at you whilst you are trying not to slip on the pavement that always seems to be wet. The most distinctive sound however, comes from the way the Palermitan marketvendors offer their goods. They literally sing: '*Abbanniari'*, is the art of shouting the quality and good price of the goods, usually in strict dialect and in ironic rhymes[25]. Every marketvendor sings in one's own particular cadence, pitch, and slightly dramatic lyrics. Besides shouting prices of oranges, peaches and broccoli, marketvendors try to attract potential customers by the *abbanniate* of 'prego prego prego', or by convincing them of the good quality 'beeddù veru è, beddù!' (Truly beautiful, beautiful!) 'Ch'è beddù sta ricuotta!' (how beautiful this ricotta), or by suggesting traditional Sicilian dishes featuring their products 'Pasta chi Sardi e finocheti!' (pasta with sardine and fennel!). For outsiders of the scene it can have a time-and-space displacing effect, screaming for help: 'aiutameee'. Even born and raised Palermitans who do not regularly attend the market, such as my informant Virginia (22), may find themselves lost in the screams, sometimes not even understanding what they are saying.

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[24] Own translation

[25] Listen to audio 1 & 2 at ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/30/the-rythm-of-ballaro/

Between the shouting, screaming and singing, interactions between vendors and costumers take place rapidly. People are queuing up, albeit usually in a disorderly manner, whilst marketvendors weigh the products, wrap them in a typical paper cone, calculate the price and, after the occasional bargaining, put money in the cash tray and address themselves to the following costumer. Only cash. No receipt. Even though this may seem rather provisional, marketvendors are smart businessmen. One example are the prices indicated on the signs sticking out of the trays with products: a common strategy is to write a '9' as a '0' with an almost invisible leg[26].

The life-cycle arrives towards a climax with one of the oldest traditions; around noon the winner of the *riffa*, the internal market lottery, gets announced. Mimo (55 years), one of the many riffa-sellers working at Ballarò, explained me the mechanisms of this exciting game patiently, standing in a little corner of the market. Every morning he sells his coloured numbers, until he finishes all his little papers. During this passage, the participants get a chance to give a glimpse at the price of the day. The prices are solely in products of the market: meat, fish, cheese. Mimo pointed to his little barrow, showing two types of fish floating in the water, still alive[27]. He flipped them around to show their belly, which were fluorescent. Then, after he had sold all his numbers, he installed himself in the middle of the square and called the prechosen … to extract numbers. As soon as the numbers were announced some sharp voices followed. 'Io, Io! U mé numero' (Me, me! It's my number!), until Mimo ran out of the numbers and only the muttering of those who did not win remain, and others ask: 'Cu fu? Peppino?' (Who was it? Peppino?)

As participants of the lottery slowly drip off, the decrescendo of the market activities sets in. The fishstands are almost all empty, and the other marketvendors are trying not to fall asleep, cleaning up, or selling the products to the few costumers that still stroll around the market. To keep themselves entertained, marketvendors group together for a game of foosball or *scopa,* a card game which literally means broom because taking a *scopa* means to sweep all the cards from the table after a game full of skill and chance. Scattered around, small groups gather around a table, or simply around an empty marketstand. Some of them are playing in two, others in four, but always accompanied by an enthusiastic audience.

When the afternoon transforms into the evening, marketvendors close there stands

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[26] See picture 2. At ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/30/the-rythm-of-ballaro/
[27] See picture 3 & 4 at ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/30/the-rythm-of-ballaro/

and shop, usually simultaneously. The by then empty streets and square become a market of a whole other kind of products. In the couple of months of my research, drug dealing and drug use has grown significantly, accompanied by micro-criminality of different kinds[28]. It is however exactly by closing together that reduces fear, as Signora di Maria (73 years) explained. Whilst usually avoiding walking around the market alone after the shops have closed exactly because of this reason, a particular evening in March I ended up navigating between the empty wooden stalls on my own. Due to some miscommunication I missed an interview with one of my key informants, and found myself in front of his empty and close shop. The market was without life. Or seemed without life, until I saw some lights and distant sounds. It was the market who exhaled for the last time, just to restart its cycle the following morning.

23 march 2017[29]

Deeper into the market, the darkness and silence stand out and is totally different from the day. The marketstands and shops are closed, the wooden stands are empty. Here and there you find some forgotten signs of potatoes and artichokes. Sometimes the rhythmic African music swells up. In the middle of Piazza Carmine however, a different kind of music fills the market. It comes from an open bar, which during the day sells some drinks and panino's, but where now two men on plastic chairs in front of a laptop are doing karaoke. The text is projected on a screen in the direction of the rest of the bar, where several men are sitting and enjoying the karaoke performance. They are singing Napolitano music, a very popular music genre in the quartieri populari. The owner of the bar explains me the they sing about love, or betrayed love, and prison. In the meantime, one of the serious talented singers, gets really carried away and rises from his plastic chair to sing ecstatically. As the song and singer reaches is climax, the small crowed starts clapping and yelling enthusiastically. I

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[28] This rise in drug use and dealing worried many of my informants. It happened more than once that I saw youngsters cooking up crack on my usual way to the market, or even a quick exchange of drugs and money during an interview with Signora di Maria. Several collapsed buildings on a couple of meters from the market are slowly transforming into crack houses. In a relative short period of time, the drugs have become heavier (crack and cocaine) and the users have become younger (14-22 years). On the 18th of March SOS-Ballaro issued a public document in which they officially state their concerns towards the communal administration and the citizens of Palermo, and launch a pilot intervention. The official document can be found in Italian as PDF on ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/29/hanno-mangiato-ballaro

[29] See video 1 at https://ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/30/the-rythm-of-ballaro/

leave this sporadic scene of life behind and continue my walk through the dark and silent streets of Ballarò, accelerating my footsteps towards those parts of the city that do have streetlights.

Organisation

Dove il mercato regolare si mescola col mercato irregolare...[30]

Notwithstanding its character of disorganization, the communal administration does officially register and control commercial activities of the market of Ballarò. In 2013 the municipality issued a new regulation about the markets of Palermo, called *Regolamento Unico dei Mercati.* The need for such a regulation had become bigger since many immigrants opened their own stands and shops around the city, some more official than others. Besides setting the official rules for owning and managing a stand or shop, for the first time a clear definition was formulated about what would be considered *botteghe storiche* and *mercati storici;* historical shops and historical markets. Since 2015, all three markets are part of *il percorso Arabo-Normanno,* putting them, together with all the other historical buildings in Palermo, on the World Heritage List. Within the market however, not all shops are allowed to define themselves as *Bottega Storica.* Only shops with at least fifty years of continuous activity can get the certificate of *Attività Storica,* hence call themselves *botteghe storiche.* There is however no official organ that manages the market of Ballarò, or the other markets for that matter. Moreover, shops and stands are obliged to be administered and pay taxes, but not everyone does so. Whereas in every Palermitan supermarket you will receive a receipt, at the market of Ballarò this is not the case. It is through these small acts of doing business that the mafia and other informal networks enters the scene. Even though far from active and violent as a couple of decennia ago, when the *Cosa Nostra* ruled Palermo, many small businesses are still paying a *pizzo*: protection money. Even though not at war, this grey area of semi-organization is exactly what Nordstrom (2004) calls the shadows in her book 'shadows of war'. In these shadows the formal and non-formal, the legal and non-legal, the state and extra-state networks blur (Nordstrom 2004, 112). 'You can buy anything at Ballarò. But for the most part you never know exactly where it is coming

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[30] Translation from Italian: Where the regular market intermingles with the irregular market

from', said Alessia, a thirty-five years old customer of both markets[31]. One concrete example of this shadow is the market of San Saverio. Every Friday night hundreds of marketvendors lay out their blanket and spread out their goods: second-hand clothing, DVDs, books, lamps, bicycles and what more. Provenance: donated, found, garbage, or stolen. During this Friday night, they try to stay awake, in order to reserve their spot for the rest of the weekend on the irregular market of San Saverio. On this market work the poorest of the poor; people from every origin. Originally only on Saturday and Sunday and extending only from the church from which the market derived its name towards the *Piazza Ritiro san Pietro,* in the last couple of years it has grown both in time and in space. This to discontent of the inhabitants of the surrounding streets and the marketvendors of Ballarò, who see the market slowly approaching the streets of Ballarò. According to Ilda Curti, who with her background in philosophy studied a similar phenomenon in Turin, noticed that the irregular market mixes with the regular market, as there are people who have legal merch, but sell it irregularly, and people who have illegal merch, but sell it regularly[32]. Returning to the blurring relations Nordstrom had in mind, San Saverio functions as the shadow of the market of Ballarò, where the formal and non-formal and the legal and non-legal blurs, organisation and dis-organisation meet.

Protagonists

Sociologist Erwin Goffman in The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959) uses the metaphor of the theatre to understand how people present themselves in the social wold. It is possible that Bonanzinga (2006) had this dramaturgical imagery in mind when she described Ballarò as a theatre of abundance, and the previous description of the daily activities that unfold surely give the impression of a theatrical scene. As much as Goffman's perspective of micro sociological accounts of social interactions in everyday life is commonly used by social scientists, it has also received different critiques. The understanding of people as actors assumes a very conscious and deliberate conception of the performed roles (Rawls, 1987; Hannerz 1980, 209). As

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[31] Interview with Alessia (5-3-2017)
[32] Ilda Curti was present during the *assemblea Baratto e Scambio a San Saverio*, on 13-3-2017, where the issue of the market got discussed with different involved actors, including mayor Leoluca Orlando, was held in the church of San Saverio.

will appear in the following chapter, my informants were often far from consciously playing out certain roles. These objections aside, I do believe that this dramaturgical point of view is relevant to the 'scene' of Ballarò. Marketvendors, costumers, tourists, inhabitants and other bit-players happening to be at the market for whatever reason; they all enter the scene, interact with each other, perform certain activities, and at the end of the day return to their 'back-stage', their homes, leaving the market as an empty stage. Thus, in line with this dramaturgical vocabulary, the market of Ballarò would simply not be the same without its protagonists; the people who, every day populate the slippery streets and the square of the market. Who are these protagonists who populate the slippery streets and square of the market every day? The marketvendors exist mainly out of men: grandfathers, fathers and sons, uncles, brothers, and nephews. Usually their shops have been in the family for at least three generations. Since a couple of decennia, these Palermitan marketvendors have been accompanied by a lot of immigrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and China who have opened different kinds of alimentary shops and have found their residency in the neighbourhood. More recently immigrants from different African countries have arrived, and some have opened barbershops. Nowadays, it is easy to find, next to the typical Sicilian products, also 'Indian' stalls selling dried fish, lamb, cassava, sweet potato, yum, okra, and fragrant spices. The costumers strolling around the market differs from the day and time, but consist mostly out of local elders during the weekday, younger families in the weekend, students, immigrants living in the neighbourhood, and tourists. During three different days, I conducted a small-scale census in which I counted the types of shops. Being a small-scale qualitative research, this functioned merely to roughly illustrate the ratio of what is actually sold by the marketvendors. Often it was not clear how many shops actually were present and there were many shops who sold multiple kinds of products, making the categories rather fluid. Over the course of my fieldwork, shops and stands opened, stopped their activity, or added new products adapting to the season. Taking all this into consideration, the graph below nevertheless gives an idea of the wide range of products that are sold.
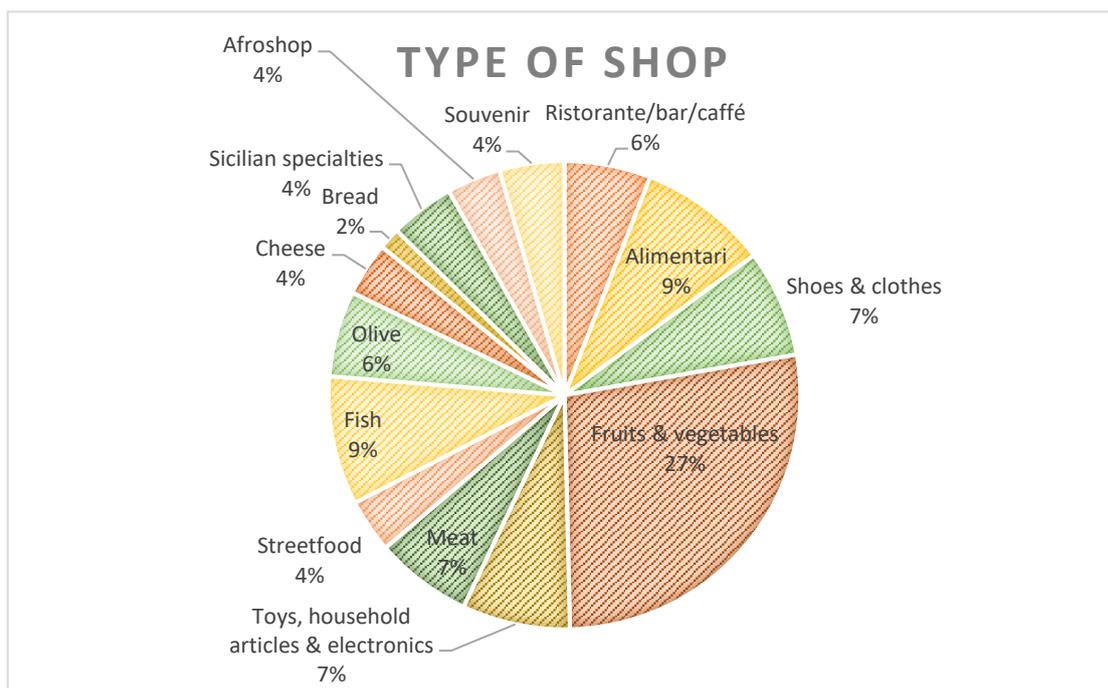
Figure 1. Circular diagram displaying the type of shops at the market of Ballarò by percentage.

The experience of walking through the market of Ballarò is difficult to encompass in a couple of phrases. The market is a theatre of abundance, of which the scenes change every ten metres and can only truly be understood by being a spectator and actor at the same time. Nevertheless, this chapter has tried to give an account of this little world within a buzzing city, with its own rules, rhythm, and articulate protagonists. The account presented in this chapter forms the scene where local identity is played out, changes unfold and difference is constructed. The following chapters use theory and empirical material to lay out each of these processes, which come together in this reality of tragicomedy.

Chapter IV: Local identity

In this thesis, the relational and dialectical approach to cultural identity is taken as pivotal to understand the construction of otherness. Within the approach, cultural identities are seen as the product of continuous ascription and self-ascription, and the negotiation of boundaries (Barth 1969, chapter 1; Friedman 1994, 75). Whereas the following chapters will elaborate these negotiations of difference, this chapter takes one step back to set out the expression of local identity from an emic perspective. After presenting Ballarò's daily 'cycle of life', this chapter explains how these elements are interwoven with the expression local identity. The first paragraph focuses on the 'boundaries' and shows that Ballarò itself functions as a very strong local boundary. However strong this boundary may seem, as a consequence of its continuous negotiation, boundaries are everything but stable and shift according to the social situation. In the next paragraphs of this chapter goes beyond the Barthian view on collective identity, for it is the cultural content within the boundaries of Ballarò 'identity' that is indeed worthy of attention. Introducing rather symbolic elements like family, religion, and football, these symbolical elements are subsequently invoked in the complex way of understanding difference.

Shifting boundaries

Palermitani ru Ballarò[33]

Giuseppe is in his late forties. Together with his brother he owns a little shop with vegetables, herbs, nuts, and seeds. He is one of the few marketvendors who still collects some of his products from a small vegetable garden instead of the enormous *ortofruttifero.* From when he was *piccolino* he worked at this exact spot, on his father's side, who on his turn took over business from his father, Giuseppe's grandfather. Three generations working at the market of Ballarò. Giuseppe points to an unspecified direction, but clearly not distant. 'I was born in that house over there, in Via del Bosco. My brother still lives there with his family and our father.'[34] Nowadays Giuseppe lives some streets further away with his family, still in Ballarò however. When I ask him if he ever goes to other parts of Palermo he tells me that

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[33] Translation from Sicilian: Palermitans from Ballarò
[34] Interview with Giuseppe (24-2-2017)

some Sundays afternoon he takes his family to a shopping mall. 'Però la mia vita faccio qua, a Ballarò (but my life I do here, in Ballarò)'. It is therefore not uncommon for inhabitants of the neighbourhood – especially for children - to ask directions in other parts of the city centre.[35] For people working and living in Ballarò the identification on the level of the neighbourhood is very strong. Ballarò even more than Capò and Vucciria, is a world within Palermo.[36] Even though Frederik Barth (1969) was talking about abstract interrelation boundaries between groups to identify - in more Friedmannian terms - the Self from the Other, the neighbourhood of Ballarò forms quite literary a boundary between Palermitani ru Ballarò, and Palermitani ru Vucciria, Capò or Borgo Vecchio (Barth 1969; Friedman, 1994). The identification on this level goes so far that symbols on this level of the neighbourhood are often more important than symbols of the city. For example, whereas the city's patron saint Santa Rosalia is certainly important for the inhabitants and marketvendors of Ballarò, the procession of their Santissima Maria del Molte Carmelo annually held in the neighbourhood, is certainly more celebrated.[37]

However, as Barth (1969), Cohen (2000), Friedman (1994), and Eriksen (2009) have made clear; these 'boundaries' and levels of identification are certainly not static. For Palermitani ru Ballarò the level of identification is under continuous negotiation, and shifts depending on the social situation and the topic. It is possible to identify different cognitive maps, which circle concentrically their neighbourhood, as I have shown above, but also the city of Palermo and Sicily, Italy, Europe, and any other part of the world. The first boundary would be the one shared with other Palermitans, as expressed in the local dialect shared by all Palermitans but also in the support of the city's football team. This boundary is particularly strong when put against the 'Other': Catania, Sicily's second largest city. Marco Romeo explained me with an uttermost serious face that the only real *arancina* (note: female), a crunchy golden rice ball stuffed with minced meat and peas, is the Palermitan one and not the *arancino* (note: male), which is shaped in the volcano Etna[38]. Whereas in this case the

[35] Interview with Giorgio (4-3-2017)
[36] Interview with Alli (21-2-2017)
[37] This importance of local saints and religious festivities will be further elaborated in the following paragraph.
[38] Streattour with Marco Romeo (13-2-2017)

boundary is expressed in a relative innocent form, Toni also explained me that this boundary is sometimes established more antagonistically.

> 'In Catania they hate us. And we hate them. One time I was with my
> father in Catania, and we asked for directions. As soon as they
> understood they were from Palermo, by our accent, they spit on the
> ground and walked away. Or they give the wrong directions. All the
> tensions between Catania and Palermo express themselves on the football
> stadium. Once *Catanesi* came to Palermo and made a coffin on which they
> painted the Palermitan flag. *Era pazzesca* (it was insane)!'[39]

Even though Toni's story certainly suggests a strong boundary between people who identify as *Catanesi* and those who consider themselves *Palermitani,* this boundary is somewhat blurred when they construct their identity as *Siciliani*. Likewise, Pardalis (2009) argues that their identity can rest upon 'common' cultural traits when Sicily is contrasted to any other Italian region or country. In this cognitive differentiation both Sicily's rich culture and its clear physical borders that are indicative for the Sicilian identity (Pardalis 2009, 209). It were however often more educated informants that made me aware of the first boundary, in contrast to the lower educated marketvendors that made me aware of the second. For example, writer Alli and Fabio (a twentysomething year old arts student from Palermo), both mentioned that for Palermitans, the sense of being an island is particularly strong. Both of them had also spend considerable time 'abroad'; in London, Rome and other parts of Italy. It was at these times that Fabio was particularly aware of his strong roots. 'I understood this from the moment I went to live abroad. All my friends called me *un cazzo isolando di merda* (a f*cking islander). This was the phrase. I asked myself, but what does it mean? Then I realized that I have this strong roots[40]'. The act itself of leaving or staying the island is according to Alli not an easy choice, 'not like many other European citizens who go, stay abroad for three years and then return. It is a very difficult choice, like choosing to betray forever this city, this island, or even this identity. I think this is because either way, you are part of an island, part of a community far away from *la terra ferma* (mainland).'[41] As mentioned before, these informants weren't *Palermitani ru Ballarò*. Even though many marketvendors do

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[39] Interview with Toni (14-3-2017)
[40] Focusgroup with Fabio, Giorgio, Toni and Marta (13-4-2017)
[41] Interview with Alli (21-2-2017)

have relatives living 'abroad' in Milan, Turin, Germany or other foreign countries, they themselves have never left the island for a longer period of time. Their cognitive boundary towards the mainland was specifically invoked when they spoke about the richness and diversity of Sicilian culture[42]. Marketvendors are proudly presenting their beautiful Sicilian specialities to tourists from Italy and abroad, singing about their best pistachios from *la bella Sicilia*. Very often marketvendors would ask what I already had seen whilst doing fieldwork on the island, after which they would point out all the beautiful places I definitely had to visit before I left Sicily. In one of these conversations Vittorio, a 65-year-old Palermitan bar owner at the market of Ballarò, went so far as to claim the superiority of Sicily, whilst at the same time differentiating within Sicily.

> 'Everything from is Sicily is beautiful. I don't understand why Sicilians leave
> Sicily to go to Rome, Milan, Turin. Yes, okay, to work. But here we have
> everything; the sea, the mountains, the sun, food, history. It is a superior culture.
> And Palermo is the best of Sicily. It is the capital. Rome might be the capital of Sicily,
> but Palermo is the capital of Sicily so much more beautiful than Catania[43].'

Similarly, marketvendors were often eager to explain me exactly how to prepare the Palermitan version of a Sicilian dish with their typical Sicilian products. This exemplifies the Barthian conception that the boundary between Palermitan marketvendors and 'the Other', in this case being the Italian mainland, allows for a sense of simultaneity, namely at the local and/or regional level (Barth 1969, 14). There is one exception from Palermitans sense of having a different identity than other Italian regions, which is particularly present amongst Palermitans from the popular neighbourhoods such as Ballarò. Whereas Sicily is often considered to be culturally and historically similar to the second most Southern region Calabria, many marketvendors expressed their love for the city of Napoli. They listen to Neapolitan neomelodic music, understand their dialect, and according to some, have the same 'mentality'. 'They understand us, we understand them. We are like *nipoti* (nephews)', Toni said. Contrastingly, informants who did not identify on the level of a popular

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[42] Schneider & Schneider (2004) draw upon their anthropological preceptor Erik Wolf to critique the tendency of novelist, scholars, and public intellectuals to present "Sicilian culture" as homogeneous and reproducing itself consistently through time, often with negative and stigmatic connotations. On the contrary to this Italian Southern Question discourse, they represent Sicily as cultural plural (Schneider & Schneider 2004)

[43] Interview with Vittorio (21-3-2017)

neighbourhood would often laugh away this closeness and even ridicule the Neapolitan music, as if it is something of the 'lower class'.

Palermitan identity, being a product of continuous ascription and self-ascription (Barth 1969, chapter 1), is not only imagined by Palermitans themselves but also set in place from the outside. Pardalis recalls different conversations about Sicily and her fieldwork with non-Sicilian friends (Pardalis 2006, 218-220). Even though not filled with negative tropes such as hers, I have had similar conversations with friends when I was in Brescia and Bologna right after my fieldwork period. Many of my Italian friends had never been to Sicily, and listened with wonder to all the stories I had to tell about what for them was often imagined as *l'altro paese* (the other country). Whereas they would not invoke immediately the stigma of the mafia, which was usually done by non-Italian friends, they did express this sense of Sicilians being a distinguishable group within Italy.

The 'cultural stuff inside'

A general critique on Barth's outlook of social and cultural identity is that he puts too much focus on boundaries and urges not pay attention to 'the cultural stuff inside' (Verdery 1994; Eriksen 1991; Hummel 2014; Pardalis 2009). Eriksen (1991) himself states in an article that

> 'the cultural context of an act of communicating distinctiveness may make a systematic difference in inter-ethnic encounters. At a certain point in the analysis of ethnicity, where recognized cultural differences shape or prevent meaningful interaction […] it becomes impossible to neglect substantial features of social, cultural, historical contexts.'
> (Eriksen 1991, 130)

Even though this thesis focuses on cultural rather than ethnic identities, Eriksen's note is certainly applicable to the case of Ballarò. Whereas the constructionist approach is undoubtedly useful to understand the fluidness and interactional nature of identity, the social reality of Ballarò would not be complete without elaborating on the 'cultural stuff inside'. As Eriksen notes, it is namely this cultural stuff that are enclosed within the boundaries that is often used, conscious or unconscious, to construct and

deconstruct boundaries between the Self and the Other. He underlines this argument by imaginatively comparing the relationship between the Canadian state and Mohawk Amerindians and that between the Botswana state and Basarwa people. Whereas the respective relationship may be the same, 'the social and cultural significance differ because of important differences in the cultural contexts referred to in the ongoing invocation of differences (Eriksen 1991, 130)'.

Now rests the question: what is this cultural stuff inside the arguably flexible boundary of Palermitani ru Ballarò? A few recurrent elements stand out, which each will be discussed in the following section. An important note is however, that each of these elements are an sich of such complexity and cultural density that they would require another research focusing solely on the meaning behind them. Notwithstanding this awareness the 'cultural stuff inside' will be discussed in the humblest way possible, by means of returning to the protagonists already introduced in the previous paragraphs: marketvendor Giuseppe, and many other marketvendors from Ballarò.

Family

Siamo tutti parenti[44]

Behind the colourful stand, Giuseppe and his brother have a small storage place. During the day this dark space is almost empty, as all the products are exposed on the wooden stands outside. If you pay good attention to the walls however, you will find two important 'tokens'. These decorative objects on Giuseppe's wall, each of which as will appear bearing a lot of symbolic significance – hence the word token - are not exceptional. On almost every wall, or even attached to the wooden stands, no matter if there are exposing fish, meat or fruits and vegetables, I have spotted at least two of these tokens. As there is not one single 'Palermitani ru Ballarò', the size and magnitude and magnitude may vary, according to the importance each individual connects to the significance behind the objects.

One of these 'tokens' is an old picture from a family member, sometimes already passed away[45]. Simply attached with some tape to Giuseppe's wall there was

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[44] Translation from Italian: We are all relatives
[45] See picture 1 on ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/29/palermitani-ru-ballaro/

a picture of himself, his brother and his father standing before his shop. 'You are always with your family. Even though I work every day, even on days like Christmas, I am still with my family'[46]. Whereas in Giuseppe's case he is not quite literary 'with' his family, except for his brother, it is common to see whole families working at different stands and shops at the market. In this sense, almost all marketvendors are in some way or another connected with each other. 'Siamo tutti parenti (we are all relatives)', said Signora di Maria once, when I asked her about the relationship between them and the other nearby marketvendors[47]. This centrality of family however does not limit itself to the nuclear family, but what is known within genealogical anthropology as the extended family. This large and flexible category of what is considered close family for Palermitans is also expressed in the way people address each other. It is common to address someone to whom you have affection with *zio* (uncle) or *zia* (aunt), especially when that person is older than yourself. One of my informants had a written sign, '*Dallo zio Vittorio* (At uncle Vittorio)', which indicates his rather improvised bar where Vittorio himself serves coffee, cornetti, cannoli, pizzette, sorbet, or even a plate of spaghetti if you have time to come inside and sit on one of the plastic chairs. During many conversations I had whilst enjoying a freshly made pizzette, we were interrupted by the usual: '*Ciao zio!*'.

In the 1950's and 60's this centrality of family has led many anthropologists and sociologists to do research on this so-called familialism – an ideology that puts priority to the family - in Sicily and Southern Italy. Many of these studies are received with controversy, as Sicily was represented as a place burned by these cultural values and practices that resist modernity. Indeed, the title of Banfield's book *The Moral Basis of a Backwards Society* (1958), in which he introduces the concept of amoral familialism to describe a Southern Italian town, fits perfectly within the discourse of the Southern Question (Schneider & Schneider 2004; Fazio 2004). Nevertheless this controversy, informants did address the presence of familialism, in both positive and negative sense. Toni for example blamed the difficulty of finding a job in Palermo to the fact that family ties are of big influence on the job market. 'If you don't know any uncle or nephew who works already in, say, a supermarket, chances are you will not even get invited to show your resume'[48].

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[46] Interview with Giuseppe on 24-2-2017
[47] Interview with Signora di Maria (31-3-2017)
[48] Interview with Toni on (14-3-2017)

This 'clientelism[49]', expresses itself particularly in the relationship between marketvendors and marketcostumers. The marketvendors at Ballarò are usually friends, as their families have been for years. The same goes for marketvendors and their customers, some of which go to the same stand for years. These relationships are marked by *fiducia*, which is best translated by trust and confidence. Customers trust their marketvendors to sell them the best quality products, for the best prices. Marketvendors on their turn trust their customers to be loyal, and know what they can sell to whom. If you show this loyalty, they will keep certain products for you aside or let you pay later in case you forgot your money. This element of *fiducia* will also appear relevant when compared to the impersonal supermarkets, but also when compared to the supposed relationship with non-Palermitan marketvendors and costumers. Discussing the difference between supermarkets and the market, I asked Salvatore, a sixty-five year old marketvendor making his living of selling eggs and only eggs, I asked him:

C: But here there is more *fiducia,* right*?* There is a relationship between persons?

S: This is super important. If there would not be *fiducia*, you would not see anything. If there would not be this, nothing here would make sense.[50]

With Salvatore's words in the back of my mind it was therefore a similar experience, e.g. me forgetting my wallet, that made me experience the importance and meaning of *fiducia* for interpersonal relationships. It made me moreover realize that I had achieved inclusion in this exchange of trust and therefore, to a certain extent, had become accepted in the field.

Religion

Right beside this picture in honour of Giuseppe's family, you can find three pictures with religious themes. The first one is a picture of *Padre Pio,* also known as Saint Pio of Pietrelcina, a popular saint of the Catholic Church. The second image portrays a crucified Jesus Christ. The third one is perhaps the most meaningful, namely that of a

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[49] The word clientelism is deliberately put between quotation marks, since the term officially refers to patron-client relationships not uncommon in Sicily. The term is applied here not to in the strict sense of the word, which involves the exchange of goods for political support, but more to indicate a set of actions based on the principle of a relationship and a set of action where both clients and patrons gain advantage from each other's support.
[50] Interview with Salvatore (30-3-2017)

Maria figure saint of the neighbourhood, of which there are many, but in this case Santissima Maria del Molte Carmelo. In this image she is portrayed in a blue veil, with a golden grown, and in her arms the baby figure equally crowned. Every Saturday, Giuseppe and all the other marketvendors collect money for the festivity of the Madonna, five euros per marketstand. With this money they are able to decorate the neighbourhood with lights, they can buy fireworks, and 'let out' the Madonna on the 29th of July. With great proud Giuseppe presents me a sign, on which the same figure is portrayed. These signs, the one I was holding in my own hand apparently being from last year, are held in the air when the Madonna gets out of the church of Carmine[51] on this festive day. Leaving Giuseppe's walls for a moment, and walking between all the collapsed buildings, garbage and chaotic marketstands the importance of such local religious patrons is even more visible. On almost every street corner there are tiny altars build within the walls, always clean, taken care of, and seemingly untouchable; little shrines exposing the *maddona* of the neighbourhood, protected by glass and decorated by fresh flowers and always lit candles[52].

The last day of the fieldwork period conducted for this thesis happed to be *la settimana santa* (the holy week); the week following up to Easter. It was in this week when I truly realized, or experienced to put it more aptly, the importance of religion. Already in the weeks running up to this week, posters with the services and processions in honour of the passion of Christ were spread across the neighbourhood[53]. For Palermitans, the Holy Week represents the pinnacle of the true Catholic religion, when everything is centred around the commemoration of the passion of the Crucified Jesus. Every congregation holds its own, which means that only in the neighbourhood of Albergheria there are already two. I attended the start of the procession of the *Congregazione ai Fornai*. Even though I do not consider myself religious, the combination of music[54], carefully preformed rituals and visible devotion of participants made it a moving religious experience for myself as well[55]. Young fathers, mothers and even grandparents were willing to get into precarious positions to get their new-borns to touch the statue of *Madonna.* Nevertheless, just like the

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[51] See figure 1 or on ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/06/17/where-is-the-market-of-ballaro/
[52] See picture 2 on ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/29/palermitani-ru-ballaro/
[53] See picture 3 on https://ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/29/palermitani-ru-ballaro/
[54] The meaning of music for the religious experience at eastern processions is more elaborately described by my colleague Jip Lensink, who wrote her bacherlorthesis called *The Sound of Semana Santa* (2017) about this topic based on her fieldwork in Guatemala.
[55] See video on https://ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/29/palermitani-ru-ballaro/

pictures of Maria on Giuseppe's wall and the shrines in the middle of the confusion of the market, on Ballarò the spiritual exists right beside the mundane reality.

14-4-2017

The procession leads me through the neighbourhood in the direction of the market. After every ten meters, indicated by a rattling sound, the procession stops: the men carrying Jesus and Maria carefully lower their immensely heavy statues. The rattling sounds again and the whole procession recontinues, the fanfares playing the marce funebri, the children representing different historical figures, the carriers with their faces intensely focused. At times, the magic of the spectacle takes you back two thousand years in time. Then some trumpetist lights a cigarette, one of the crucified checks his phone or a tattoo in honour of Sicily peeks through the armour of a Roman soldier. Scooters navigate through the procession. From an open window swells up some rhythmic African music. 'Ssssh, mom, they are passing by!', says the girl inside. Then the procession arrives at the market, where many stands have attempted to make space. From behind the tomatoes, onions and potatoes, Palermitan marketvendors watch the procession passing by and make the segno della croce. I take my place close to an olive stand. For a moment the whole family gathered at the shop holds their breath: the two different processions of the market almost seem to cross, but the statue of Maria from the one congregation goes left where the glass coffin bearing Jesus carried by the other congregation, continuous in the same direction. Slowly, they leave the narrow streets of the neighbourhood behind. A short moment of stillness, the atmosphere is filled with devotion. Then, the olive business continues. 'Can I take this with me on the plane?', an Italian tourist asks. 'Of course, these are vacuum and cost only €3,-.'

Pink and black

La Rosanera al cuore[56]

A third recurrent object, featured as well on the wall of Giuseppe, is that of the soccer calendar. This calendar shows all the important matches of the Palermitan soccer team *La Rosanera.* Besides the huge popularity of the game and the team amongst my

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[56] Translation from Italian: La rosanera at heart

informants, these objects refer as well to a more symbolic element of Palermo. *La Rosanera – rosa* being pink an *nera* black - has by multiple informants been referred to as the ultimate symbol for the many contradictions of Palermo[57]. The beautiful bourgeoisie buildings and churches next to the never reconstructed ruins of the Second World War bombings. Wealthy neighbourhoods and shopping areas next to poor, dirty and often problematic neighbourhoods. A beautiful historic monument covered with trash and graffiti. In Palermo you can find both *la dolce vita* of sun, good food and friendly Palermitans, as well as the crude life of micro-criminality, trash, drug trafficking and poverty. The market and neighbourhood of Ballarò form the epitome of these dualities, of which the inhabitants are very aware. One could say that it are these dual conditions that form much of the local identity of Palermitans from Ballarò. Alessia, who has been working and living in Ballarò for eight years, was talking about these dualities when she said: 'We are in the historic centre, which is beautiful. Poor, but beautiful. There are buildings that are almost completely collapsed, but they still show their beauty. The poverty and misery of this place is an integral part of Ballarò, but this brings also solidarity, a certain lightness of handling problems, a general happiness.[58]' Put in slightly different words, it is the particular beauty of the neighbourhood, functioning almost as a little village, which makes the boundary of the neighbourhood even stronger; Palermitans from Ballarò take honour and pride in of the hard work in order to provide and take care for their family; it is also this harsh reality that asks for close human relations, *fiducia* and an escape to the supernatural.

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[57] Interview with Nicola (9-2-2017)
Interview with Riccardo on (16-2-2017)
Interview with Alessia (5-3-2017)
[58] Interview with Alessandra (30-3-2017)

Picture 2 and 3: Watching the holy procession of the Settimana Santa from behind the marketstands

Departing from anthropological theory on the construction of local identity, this chapter has shown that Palermitan marketvendors have a strong sense of identification on the level of the neighbourhood. For this identity is strongly embedded in the market itself, it appeared relevant to look also at the 'cultural stuff inside'. The dualities, close human relations and supernatural are all intricately related to the local identity of *Palermitani*. The following chapters depart from the idea that identity is never static, and both the strong boundaries and its symbolic content shift and are strategically used to make sense of the Other.

Chapter V: Changes

Whereas the previous chapters have presented an image of the market and the herein embedded local identity, this chapter focuses on the changes that have been unfolding and what these changes mean for the people working and living here. Many of these changes are the consequence of global forces. Initially, this research was designed to focus on the increasing arrival of refugees and immigrants. During the research however, it appeared that this change is intricately intertwined with other recent and not so recent developments in Ballarò, or at least perceived as such. The first paragraph focuses on global processes of disembedding which have had an effect on the market. Subsequently, the second paragraph elaborates specifically on the processes of increased movement and how this is visible on the market of Ballarò. These paragraphs can however only be followed by an account of re-embedding tendencies, e.g. the local encompassment of the global. Lastly, departing from this movement the last paragraph arrives at an understanding of the dynamics of mixing at Ballarò. Using theories of social attitudes towards minorities, this paragraph functions as a bridge to the last chapter on the politics of difference.

Disembedding

'Preferiscono tutto pre-cotto, tutto preparato, tutto uguale[59]'

It is not difficult to find a marketvendor to give an elegy about the changes that have 'struck' the market and the neighbourhood. The first time I asked about the way the market has changed, every informant mentioned the same things. There are not as many costumers, there are less *botteghe storiche* (historic Palermitan shops), there is less work and the market is not as beautiful as before. No matter which generation or which product is sold, the usual exclamation is: 'There used to be a stream of people, the whole day long. You couldn't walk nor see anything, that is how many people were here.' Marketvendors blame these changes on a couple of factors, all being consequences of global disembedding processes. Supermarkets, the global financial crisis, signs in English and French to attract more tourists; all of these modernizations have included Ballarò in what Eriksen (2009) would call the global grammar of comparison (Eriksen 2009, 142).

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[59] Translation from Italian: they prefer everything precooked, everything prepared, everything the same.

It will however be one particular in to tell us the changes that Ballarò has gone through: Signora di Maria. Signora di Maria is a seventy-three years old and together with her husband she owns a bar, where her daughter Gina works as well. Within the fifty years of working here, Signora di Maria has seen the market change significantly. She shows me an edition of the magazine *Baballuci*[60], in which she points to a black and white picture of a meatvendor. 'Look at all the meat. Ballarò used to be full of *macellerie* such as this one.' It is first of all the global financial crisis that, according to her, has forced many butchers but also many other Palermitan shops to close down. 'People have less spending money, so they think twice about buying this or buying that.' Secondly, the municipality is starting to expand the *zona traffico limitato* (ZTL), which means the market is less accessible for cars and they are forced to park further away. Besides extra parking costs, this is even a bigger hindrance for elderly costumers since they now have to carry their heavy grocery bags further. A third factor is the opening and growth of supermarkets and big commercial centres. Whereas ten to twenty years ago there were only a few supermarkets in Palermo and almost everyone did their groceries at one of the markets, many locals nowadays prefer the comfort of air-conditioned supermarkets. Even though the market is her life, Signora di Maria understands this: 'at the supermarket you can find everything, it is very convenient. Why would you carry your heavy bags around the market to your far-away car when you could also go to the supermarket, buy everything at once and load the groceries in the car in front the shop?' Besides, as many marketvendors have expressed, the younger generation is not even interested any more in the market. They prefer the already prepared, pre-cooked, pre-packaged products you can find at the supermarket, at any time of the year. To a certain extent, social life has become abstracted from its local, spatially and timely fixed context (Eriksen 2009:8)

As argued in chapter two, the global dynamics unfolding at Palermo do not only have homogenizing and disembedding consequences for Ballarò. Intertwining and fluid scapes, as in Appadurai's understanding of global flows, also cause disjuncturing heterogenization and re-embedding dynamics, which render Ballarò the specific locality that it is (Appadurai 1996).

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[60] *Babbaluci,* literary meaning snail, is a popular Palermitan magazine read by many Palermitan marketvendors, see picture of the magazine on ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/29/hanno-mangiato-ballaro/

Movement

Hanno mangiato Ballarò[61]

Historically speaking, Palermo has always been a crossroad of cultures and different peoples, and most informants are truly aware of this. However, the historically unprecedented increased movement, characteristic for the age of globalization, has made Palermo at the same time a popular tourist destination as well as the symbolical locus of the refugee crisis. This means that besides the marketstand exposing Sicilian souvenirs, a Bengalese marketvendor is selling household articles and what more. Faded signs saying *Macelleria da Umberto* are no longer indicating the butcher Umberto. Many Palermitan marketvendors that could no longer continue their commercial activity are replaced by Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Chinese, and more recently also immigrants coming from different African. Keeping in mind the disclaimers already made in chapter three, the following graph shows roughly the ratio between Palermitan and non-Palermitan shopowners by different shop types. The numbers are based on the same census as figure 1.
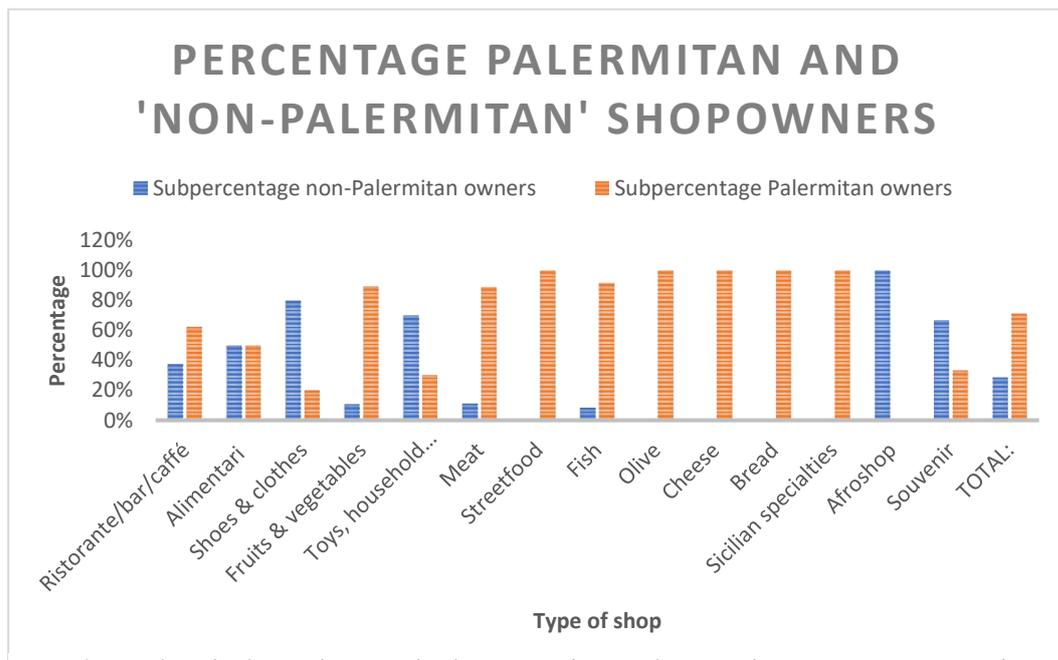

Figure 2. Bar chart displaying the ratio of Palermitan and non-Palermitan shopowners in percentage by shop type.

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[61] Translation from Italian: They have eaten Ballarò.

The opinions and viewpoints on this increased diversity vary significantly. Some marketvendors and inhabitants of Ballarò have mentioned and referred to the arrival of immigrants rather negative. In line with the negative changes mentioned in the previous paragraph, some informants see the establishment of immigrants, or *extracommunitari* as they were called often by informants, as one and the same problem. Taking a theoretical side-step to social psychology this attitude makes sense. Departing from the Marxist social conflict theory, Sherif, Harvey, White and Hood (1961) argue that interests and conflict over scarce resources leads to negative and even antagonistic attitudes towards the out-group, in this case the immigrants and refugees that the global force of movement has brought to Palermo[62]. One of the most articulate incident of xenophobia in Ballarò that I have witnessed happened in the beginning of April. Since a couple of years, the municipality has placed street indications in Italian, Arabic, and Hebrew in the neighbourhoods of Ballarò and Vucciria. These names refer to the different people that have once inhabited Palermo. One night, the indications of *piazza Santissima 40 Martiri* in Arabic and Hebrew got cancelled out by graffiti. The sign was a couple of metres from *Centro Astalli*, a centre were historically migrants have been sheltered[63].

'They have eaten Ballarò', Pasquale sighs. We have just had a conversation about how the market has changed and he brings up the subject of, what he calls, *extracommunitari.* Pasquale articulates the view of a couple of other Palermitan marketvendors that have expressed themselves rather negatively towards immigrants. This has much to do with the earlier mentioned *fiducia,* trust. Many informants have expressed that a Palermitan would never buy anything at a Pakistani or Bangladeshi marketvendor because there is no *fiducia* between the marketvendor and the costumer, nor among themselves.

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[62] Tajfel and Turner (1979) further developed this theory to understand intergroup relations in a more integrative model, called an integrative theory of intergroup conflict.
[63] See picture 2 on ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/29/hanno-mangiato-ballaro/

Re-embedding

Tutto il mondo è paese[64]

A phenomenon that does not make this negative view any better, is the involvement of certain groups of immigrants in the criminal circuit. Seeing the rise in small criminal acts and drugdealing, with detrimental consequences for the already little taken care of neighbourhood, the immigrant community is often associated with these criminal activities. Where we have seen a global encompassment of the local in material terms, one could point here to the local encompassment of the global in cultural terms. The dark side of the global and the local, that is. The structures of illegality that were already present in Ballarò, enriched by new developments and opportunities brought by global flows, are easily taken over by those who are drawn to it. Of course, this direct association of Pasquale, Vittorio and Giuseppe are based upon false generalization and fear. There are certainly signs of engagement of African migrants in criminal circuits and the mafia, and the relationship between the Cosa Nostra, the Nigerian mafia and other networks of organised crime in Palermo is a complicated one. On the other hand of the spectrum are however also stories of immigrants who refuse to pay a *pizzo,* and form a stronghold against the organized crime in Palermo.

Showing once more the contradictions of Palermo *la rosanera*, there are also many positive outcomes of the local encompassment of global dynamics of movement and disembedding. The market of Ballarò might be losing its flourishing traditional and sometimes chaotic commercial activity of thirty years ago, but the mix of cultures and social initiatives trying to fight degradation and stimulate integration certainly render Albergheria into a unique neighbourhood and revive the historical market[65].

The oldest one, and at the same time the most established one, is the *Centro Salesiano Santa Chiara.* Born in 1919, two Salesian priests of this catholic church were asked to take care of the orphans of the first World War[66]. From this moment on,

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[64] Translation from Italian: the whole world is a village, interview with Pasquale (4-4-2017). In Italian this expression is commonly used to say: all humans are eventually the same.

[65] See figure 1. On ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/06/17/where-is-the-market-of-ballaro/.com it is also possible to read more about each of these organizations.

[66] The Salesians of Don Bosco (or the Salesian Society, officially named the Society of St. Francis de Sales) is a Roman Catholic religious institute founded in the late nineteenth century by Italian priest Saint John Bosco to help poor children during the Industrial Revolution.

albeit with different focus, the priests and others of the community of this Catholic centre have occupied themselves with children and youngsters of the neighbourhood. From the seventies onwards, the centre also opened itself for the poverty; families in need, homeless families, abandoned youngsters. When at the end of the eighties the presence of immigrants became more numerous, *Santa Chiara* was the first centre in Palermo who hosted immigrants on a regular basis, during night and day, offering services of different kinds. Nowadays, around a hundred children of different backgrounds and different ages come to the centre to play and learn with each other. The presence of Santa Chiara has become an integral part of the neighbourhood, known and valued by all its inhabitants.

Illustrating a more recent local outcome of the intersection of global processes, are the mural paintings scattered around the neighbourhood. One of them is located right in the middle of the market. In collaboration with SOS-Ballarò, an assembly of social organisations and citizens, Ballarò Tales launched a project in which they included the whole community of Ballarò. They collected the stories from inhabitants and marketvendors, transformed them into a tale and let the children from the neighbourhood paint them on different walls in Albergheria. These walls, once grey and often deteriorated, now illustrate the stories of tradition and globalization, history and modernization[67].

Irrespective of the positive or negative outcomes of these changes, the above examples show that the local encompassment of the global are often just as contradictory as the global forces themselves. It is therefore not unexpected that the comprehending of these changes by local actors is ambiguous. However harsh and xenophobic the expressions from Giuseppe, Pasquale and Vittorio might be, they often would nuance their statements. In this spirit Pasquale, standing in front of one the colourful, painted walls, said to me: 'Of course there are also mean and bad Palermitans, and good *extracommunitari.* The whole world is a village'.

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[67] See picture 3 on ballarothesis.wordpress.com/2017/05/29/hanno-mangiato-ballaro/

Mixing

Quando un Pakistano parla nel dialetto Palermitano, è fighissima[68]

The social initiatives discussed in the previous paragraph actively stimulate integration, tolerance, and mixing. They provide different kinds of platforms where all different actors of the neighbourhood can meet. On the market of Ballarò itself however, this contact and mixing already happens by the mere presence of different subject thrown together on this locality by global movements. Correlated to the increased movement, stands the two-sided process of accelerated mixing (Eriksen 2009, 107). As the previous paragraphs have shown directions of withdrawal and boundary making, there are also ethnographic examples of integration and hybridity.

Whereas Fabio, Giorgio and Don Enzo would argue that the degree of mixing is better described by minding one's owns business in *convivenza* (living together) rather than real integration, I've also heard stories of friendships and collaboration. Irene, who arrived on Lampedusa in 2001 from Ghana, opened her own hair salon in the heart of Ballarò and has many different clients.

> 'I have many clients that come from outside of Palermo. My clients are Italians, Sicilians. They like me, I like them. Many of them have become my friends. Sometimes they call me, we talk, we make jokes. They invite me to their weddings and their parties. I go with pleasure. They come to me to do their hair and make braids. They love braids[69]. '

Ciro and Vincenzo are close friends with Mizar, a marketvendor who came from Bangladesh to Italy almost thirty years ago and opened his small shop twenty-five years ago across the street from Ciro and Vincenzo. With time, sandwiches and jokes, they became friends. Rather than words, it is the jovial interruption of Ciro during the interview with Mizar that embody the promising words.

M: 'We (Ciro, Vincenzo and I) know each other for almost 25 years.'

CL: 'Almost 25 years? And how?'

M: 'They are good people. Ciro is like a friend, like a brother.'

CL: 'Do you have more friends here on the market?'

M: 'We are all friends here!'

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[68] Translation from Italian: When a Pakistan speaks in the Palermitan dialect, it's super cool.
[69] Interview with Irene (5-4-3027)

From across the street, Ciro noticed that Mizar and I were talking and walked towards us. Since he knew what the interview was about and overheard the last words from Mizar, he jovially grabbed him by the arms and interrupted our conversation:

C: 'We appreciate everyone here, even his singing.'

CL: 'You would say that there is integration...?'

C: 'It is really good here.'

M: 'Yes, really good. We are all friends, there are no problems[70].'

This view on diversity and integration is shared by more marketvendors, especially those who work in direct proximity of each other. Returning once more to social psychology, Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory offers theoretical explanation for such a tendency[71]. His premise states that interpersonal contact leads to more positive attitudes between majority and minority group members[72]. If one has the opportunity to communicate with each other, such as Irene with her clients and Ciro with his neighbour, they are able to understand and appreciate different points of views. This appreciation and understanding diminishes antagonistic attitudes, such as those expressed by Vittorio and Giuseppe, who both did not have this daily contact with immigrants.

Obviously, the ethnographic examples above only explicate the extremes. Many situations of mixing are not so easy to pin down, but rather a hybrid form. As Hannerz (1996) and Appadurai (1996) point out; mixing has to be understood as multi-directional and complex. A concrete example of this hybridity is the story of the *Quarumanu*, the marketvendor who cooks and sells intestines such as *stigghiola*, a typical Palermitan specialty. These parts however are not appealing to everyone, it are mostly the more 'traditional' Palermitans who appreciate his streetfood. Thus, over the years, he has lost many clients. Complaining that the market has changed negatively, it are immigrants who buy his *stigghiola.* Even though he sees every recent change negatively, the Quarumanu has found a new clientele amongst immigrants. In the same line of this hybrid mixing, Fabio shared a story of two

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[70] Interview with Mazir (12-3-2017)

[71] After conducting a meta-analysis of 500 studies testing Allports contact theory, Pettigrew & Tropp (2008) tested the process itself. They identified three mediators: contact reduces prejudice by enhancing knowledge about the outgroup, (2) reducing anxiety about intergroup contact, and (3) increasing empathy and perspective taking. For the specific outcomes of the research see their article *How Does Intergroup Contact Reduce Prejudice? Meta-analytic Tests of Three Mediators.*

[72]Important to note is that Allport identifies four key conditions of contact for beneficial effect: equal group status within the situation; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and the support of authorities, law, or custom (Allport 1954).

marketvendors, one Palermitan and one from Pakistan, who were having an argument. What raised his interest however, was that the argument was held totally in the Palermitan dialect. Talking about the use of the Palermitan dialect he continues: 'It is really cool to hear children from second and third generation immigrants talk in this Palermitan dialect.' Furthermore, if there is one outcome of successful mixing it is in schools and youth centres like Santa Chiara. Irrespective of their parents' land of origin or skin-color, children learn and play together whit whoever they make friends with. Beyond the Italian citizenship they do or do not share, they are all 'Palermitans'.

Picture 4 (left): Marketvendor preparing the famous 'Pani ca meusa', bread with the spleen and lungs of a veal. This Palermitan street food is popular amongst Palermitans and immigrants. Picture 5 (right): A father and son buying olives at two generations of Palermitan marketvendors.

Conclusively, this chapter has discussed the changes that have rendered Ballarò the particular contact zone that it is. These changes are the consequence of global forces like disembedding, re-embedding, movement, and mixing. The disjuncturing dynamics of homogenization and heterogenization and intertwining of the scapes of global culture position Ballarò in a specific reality. Being complex forces with often complicated outcomes, Palermitan marketvendors and costumers understand these changes differently. Many see the arrival of migrants and refugees, decrease in clients, deprivation of the market and the neighbourhood, and the rise in micro-criminality as the same problem. However, because the market functions as a contact zone, many marketvendors and costumers have daily contact with immigrants which often decreases negative attitudes. The following and last chapter will discuss how, throughout all these changes, Palermitan marketvendors understand difference and Otherness.

Chapter VI: The Politics of Difference

Following from the literature and the previous chapters on local identity and changes causing more diversity in the setting of the streetmarket of Ballarò, this chapter presents how Palermitans make sense of difference. It will moreover show that the production of cultural difference, also called the politics of difference, is not an a-historic process but imbued with economic and political power relations of (in)equality. Paragraph one will discuss how Palermitans awareness of their historical and cultural heritage plays an integral part in understanding the Other. This understanding however is also influenced by different power relations inherent to the Southern postcolonial situation, which will be discussed in the subsequent paragraph. Introducing the anthropological notion of the joking relationship, the last paragraph addresses the strategic expression of these politics of difference.

Understanding the Other

Palermo conca d'oro divora i suoi e nutre gli stranieri[73]

In the construction of the Self and the Other, Palermitani ru Ballarò often refer to their cultural and historical heritage. Being an island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, they have known people from all over the world passing *la loro isola[74]*. Because of this history of receiving they consider themselves to be a very hospital people. *Accoglienza,* which means so much as welcoming and hosting at the same time, appears to be an integral part of Sicilian and therefore of Palermitan identity. The ultimate symbol for this *accoglienza* is figure of *il genio di Palermo*, the genius of Palermo. Together with *Santa Rosalia* he forms the symbolic protector, but is furthermore the personification of the city and the symbol of its inhabitants from every ethical, cultural, religious and social origin or appearance. Scattered around the city are eight representations of this historical figure, depicted as an adult male with a long beard, crowned and with a snake that feeds itself at his breast. The man is the representation of Palermo, the snake figures Scipio the African. The myth tells that the Palermitans helped him in the war against the Carthagans of Hannibal. In return Scipio gave the city a golden bowl, with in the middle a statue of a soldier that feeds

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[73] Original in Latin: Panormus conca aurea suos devorat alienos nutrit. Latin inscription on the edge of the basin of the Genius statue at City Hall of Palermo. Translation: Palermo the golden dell, devours hers and feeds the foreigners.

[74] Translation from Italian: their island.

the snake. The golden bowl refers to the valley on which Palermo is build. On the front is written in Latin: Panormos suos devorat alienos nutrit (Palermo the golden dell, devours hers and feeds the foreigners). Being the symbol of Palermo, it shares the message of *accoglienza*; welcoming the strangers that Palermo has historically known during their passages and conquests through Sicily, feeding them with her beauty and wealth. When I asked Ciro what this symbol meant for them and the city, he said: 'It is the sensibility of the whole city. We are used to people from all over the world coming to the beautiful Sicily. It is our heritage.[75]

A second historical awareness centres around the specific history of Ballarò, closely related to the Arabic domination of Sicily. 'This is an Arabic market', was one of the first things marketvendor Vincenzo said when I told him about my interest in Ballarò. The awareness of their Arabic roots is also mentioned in the context of doing business; their heavy accent and *abbanniari* is really similar to the Arabic language. However, this dialect is also strategically used in doing business with 'the Other.' A tourist, not speaking even Italian, would pay the highest price. Someone from other parts of Italy, starting a conversation in perfectly Italian, would pay some price in the middle. Other Palermitans, understanding and speaking the local dialect but perhaps from different neighbourhoods or at least not customers of *fiducia*, would pay even less. Lastly, Palermitans from Ballarò but most importantly loyal customers, get the lowest prices. Then, of course, there are people who do speak (more or less) Italian but aren't actually from Italy. In this category fall both me and the immigrant community.

The third historical consciousness that repeatedly turned up when talking about how Palermitans relate to non-Palermitans, is the Sicilian history of emigration. Almost every marketvendor have family members who emigrated 'abroad': a brother in Milan, nieces and nephews in Germany, or a sister in the United States. Signora di Maria however, has a personal history of emigration. Before she returned to Palermo forty-five years ago, she had lived and worked in Belgium for twenty years. This first-hand experience is very important in the way she and her family treat immigrants seeking a new life in Ballarò.

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[75] Interview with Ciro (3-3-2017)

SM: 'When I went to Belgium, I was really young, four years old. My father had lost his job here, after the war. So he went to Belgium to work in the mines. And every day they called him dirty, macaroni, and they called me dirty Italian.'

CL: 'Was there a lot of discrimination?'

SM: 'Yes, dirty Italian. You go away because you are Italian. Go away! Here however, there is no such thing. My granddaughter goes to school with children with parents from Nigeria, China, Tunisia, so the whole class is mixed. My granddaughter talks with you, with someone else, with anyone.'

CL: 'She makes no difference.'

SM: 'No, because we taught here that the colour of your skin might be different, but they are people like you and me.[76]'

She consciously and continuously teaches her children and grandchildren that you should not treat someone different because of the colour of their skin, or the country they came from. Even though not every Palermitano ru Ballarò has this first-hand experience of emigration like Signora di Maria, this awareness of their ancestors being immigrants does create a general understanding of the Other.

Postcolonial equality

At this point, we have come to an understanding of how the marketplace of Ballarò functions as a social space or, following Pratts concept, a contact zone where as a consequence of global movements, cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other (Pratt 1991). Whereas the past chapters have discussed how Palermitans construct and express their identity in relation to the Other and base this construction often upon their historical and cultural heritage, this paragraph deals with the hierarchy behind the construction of difference. Following Gupta & Fergusson, Pratt and many other postcolonial thinkers, this paragraph addresses the question: who has the power to define?

The first power relation that establishes itself on this contact zone is a very material one. Striking for me personally, compared to my experience living in Northern Italian cities, was Palermo's undeniable poverty. The economic inequality between the rural Southern regions like Sicily and the industrial North displays itself especially in neighbourhoods such as Ballarò. It is here where different subjects come for different reasons together because of this poverty, finding themselves at the

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[76] Interview with Signora di Maria (31-3-2017)

margins of society. Nicola described this common denominator as an integration of poverty; Palermitans and non-Palermitan marketvendors find common ground in the fact that eventually, they all have to work hard to be able to take care of their families. Despite the tragedy of this reality, Palermitans also take very much pride in their work. This recognition of the Other's hard work to survive is crucial in how Palermitan marketvendors make sense of difference. This is perhaps best illustrated by means of a short anecdote. During an interview with Vittorio, who had expressed multiple times why 'people of colour' are simply not the same as Palermitans and are the cause of all the problems in the neighbourhood, a Nigerian man passed by his bar and greeted him: 'Ciao Zio!' (Hello uncle!). Apparently my eyes already expressed my question because after he was gone Vittorio said to me: 'Well, he is a good boy, because he works'.

There is however a more tacit power relation that determines much of the dynamics of Othering, which has moreover a political element. As Schneider (1998) and more recently also Pardalis (2009) point out, Italy's Southern Question is still existent as an internalized discourse. Giorgio explained this to me clearly with the example of the political party of Lega Nord. As its whole name, *Lega Nord for the independence of Padania,* already reflects, this is a regionalist political party striving for federalist autonomy for Northern regions such as Lombardia and Piemonte. In their rhetoric they used much of the Southern Question discourse, opposing large-scale southern Italian emigration to northern Italian cities and stereotyping Southern Italians as lazy, uneducated, welfare abusers, criminals and detrimental to northern society. Certain members of Lega Nord have even publicly deployed the offensive term *terrone*: Othering in its ultimate and Saïdan from. The locus of this Othering has changed however since the regionalist party strived to expand its political participation to the national level. Whereas previously defending primarily the Northern Italian regions, current leader Salvini wants to transform the party into *Lega Nazionale,* focused on protecting Italy as a whole. The party takes a tough stance against illegal immigration and has been labelled as xenophobic and anti-immigrant. The enemy Other now became the illegal immigrant, arriving in Sicily. Lega Nord even tried to make propaganda in Sicily, convincing the Sicilians that, instead of the *terroni* themselves, it were now illegal and especially Islamic immigrants that formed a treat to the Italian identity. Signora di Maria does not want to know anything from the Lega Nord. 'No no, don't tell me about Lega Nord. Lega Nord and the South

don't go together. For years and years they have blamed us and discriminated us and now they want our support.[77]' Even though Signora di Maria is certainly not an agentless and passive subject of economic, political and discursive forces, her experience of emigration and discrimination have undoubtedly influenced her construction of identity and understanding of difference. Finding herself at a place where, in Ponzanesi's words (2012, 689), two Othered subjects meet, there is no other way than to develop strategies to deal with this with power inflicted and fast changing reality.

Joking relationships

Lavoriamo e scherziamo[78]

In this harsh reality where two Othernesses come together there is one particular way of making work and life bearable. It is by making jokes that Palermitan marketvendors deal with difference and equality, and thus establish a relationship with non-Palermitan marketvendors and costumers. This 'joking relationship' was originally analysed and described by Radcliff Brown (1940) based upon his fieldwork in (West) African societies, but was already in 1940 recognized to be a widespread phenomenon in Asia, Oceania and North America. What Radcliff Brown originally meant by this term is a relationship between two people that involves a ritualized banter or mocking. The joking relationship, being a 'peculiar combination of friendliness and antagonism', is furthermore understood to be an interaction that mediates and stabilizes social relationships where there is tension, competition, or potential conflict (Radcliff-Brown, 1940). Some decades later, Sykes (1966) found and described the same system of joking relationships in the industrial setting of the male and female staff of a large Glasgow printing factory (Sykes 1966). The relevant question rises however how we can understand and apply this relatively old concept in the peculiar setting of Ballarò? Albeit still taking place in West-Africa, e.g. Djenne, Mali, Marchand (2004) provides a useful and relatively modern understanding. In his fieldwork on the building sites in Djenne he focused on the bantering between two ethnic groups. Relevant in his expansion of this social institution is that it includes issues of power, authority, and resistance. Similarly to the case of Ballarò, he notices

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[77] Interview with Signora di Maria (31-3-2017)
[78] Translation from Italian: We work and we joke.

that whereas Radcliff-Brown's disjunctive attributes such as cultural, racial, linguistic, and economic differences certainly are salient, the shared work situation forces a conjunction that demands cooperation, tolerance and avoidance of conflict and antagonism (Marchand 2004, 48). In an Othered context of economic disadvantage and an internalized discourse, it makes sense that a special relationship based on jokes is publicly preformed as a means of dealing with the situation. 'We work and we make jokes', said Vincenzo. And indeed, every time I met him he seemed to be fooling around with Mizar (who loved his sandwiches), their Nigerian neighbour Atha (who always paid her rent to late), the Palermitan marketvendor on his right side (who still did not have a family and lived with his parents) and myself (who was always that weird stranger interested in Ballarò). What Marchand mentioned as well is that the content of insults was variable and likewise the style of exchange (Marchand 2004, 59). What equals all these jokes however, is the underlying respect and recognition the joking relationship is based upon, or what is by Radcliffe-Brown paradoxically called permitted disrespect (Radcliffe-Brown 1940, 1940).

8th of March 2017

A small group of Palermitan marketvendors try to declutter the improvised gutter with a stick, so that the rainwater can disappear into a hole in the street again. After some broccoli leaves and other undefined rests have been removed and the water seems to flow again, one of the marketvendors sticks the provisional tool where it came from: right in the middle of the artichokes, where it functions as a price tag. Immediately after this gesture he yells – or rather sings: 'Belli Carciofi un euro, dai!' (beautiful artichokes one euro, come on!). The Palermitan marketvendors return to their work as if nothing happened, not hindered by the occasional rain and excessive water from yesterday's storm. Whereas at this hour, 10:30 in the morning, there is usually a stream of people shuffling between the marketstands, the always wet ballate (pavement) of the market are now almost empty. A Bangladesh marketvendor is trying to sell lighters to the few people brave enough to do groceries. In the same, but less convincing manner he says: Prego, prego, accendino, prego[79]. His soft voice almost disappears in the loud, high-pitched abbanniate of the Palermitan marketvendors. All of the sudden, perhaps out of desperation, boredom or to make fun of the situation,

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[79] Translation from Italian: You're welcome, you're welcome, lighter, you're welcome.

some Palermitan marketvendor turns his abbanniate into a ululation, to which other marketvendors react with a similar sound. For a short moment, the Palermitan market could be truly a Nord-African souk, back to its historic roots. People laugh, after which everyone, Palermitan marketvendors, costumers, Bangladesh alimentary owners, African costumers, and French tourists, return to their usual business.

Picture 6: Vincenzo's costumer, who just bought a sandwich, jokingly interrupted the picture.

To sum up, this chapter has shown that the construction of Palermitan identity at the market of Ballarò is partially determined by the historical and cultural heritage, economic inequality, and political stigmatization. Instead of an understanding of difference, one could therefore speak of a postcolonial understanding of (in-)equality. As an outcome of this Othered context, Palermitans employ specific strategies in the form of joking relationships to deal with the fast changing postcolonial reality. Besides the shared work situation also noticed by Marchant (2003), the joking relations as established at the market of Ballarò include issues of power and is furthermore marked by respect and recognition (Radcliff-Brown 1940).

Chapter VII: Concluding remarks

Global cultural processes such as movement, disembedding and re-embedding are embedded in local life worlds and social experiences, which are themselves susceptible to analysis (Friedman 1994, vii). In these local life worlds, they affect the relativities of different and hierarchical relations and stimulate a re-negotiation of social identities, their boundaries and symbolic content (Eriksen 2009; Cohen 2000,4). Anthropology par excellence is possible to grasp these global forces at work on a local level (Appadurai 1996). During my ten weeks of anthropological fieldwork I was able to unravel how global forces ground on the specific locality of the Palermitan streetmarket of Ballarò, and what this means for the construction of identity and the understanding of difference. These often complicated and at times even contradictory realities have been presented in the empirical chapters, linked to concepts from both anthropological theory of globalization and identity, and postcolonial theory of difference. In these concluding remarks I will therefore discuss how these scholarly debates intersect and could feed into each other. Conclusively, the task remains to provide an answer to the central question: *How do Palermitans construct their local identity on the Palermitan marketplace of Ballarò in the context of the increased arrival of immigrants?*

First and foremost, this thesis has depicted a scene where local identity is negotiated, changes unfold and difference is constructed. Even though each of these processes have been discussed separately, they appeared to be inevitably interrelated. What concerns the construction of identity, the market of Ballarò itself functions as a strong boundary between Palermitans from Ballarò and the Other. Who this Other exactly is however, is profoundly contextual and fluid. For example, informants would repeatedly invoke the boundary between *Palermitani* and *Catanesi*, whilst simultaneously comparing their Sicilianness to Italians from the mainland, and emphasizing the similarities with *Napoletani*. Throughout the negotiation of all of these boundaries, certain cultural elements embedded in the market itself come to the fore. One of the most preeminent is the importance of *fiducia*, trust, which marks close personal relations and is especially characteristic for the vendor-costumer relationship. This *fiducia* was often emphasized when discussing the difference

between Palermitan and non-Palermitan marketvendors and costumers. Furthermore, the lack of personal contact is also considered to be the decisive difference between streetmarkets such as Ballarò and the supermarkets, which only recently arrived in Palermo. Interestingly, both the presence of migrants and supermarkets are consequences of globalizing processes. As anthropological theory on globalization already suggests, the negotiation of identity and their symbolic content is even more stimulated by the disjuncturing dynamics of homogenization and heterogenization, and intertwining scapes of globalization. Other changes forthcoming from and interrelated with these dynamics, include the decreasing clients, new forms of micro-criminality and booming tourist industry. Having complicated and at times even contradictory outcomes, Palermitan marketvendors and costumers consequently understand these changes differently. On the one hand there is a tendency to explicitly express negative attitudes towards the migrant community, mainly because they are competing for the already scarce resources at the market. Simultaneously it is undeniable that many Palermitan marketvendors are in contact with refugees and migrants on a daily basis. In many cases, this daily contact decreases negative attitudes and opinions.

Notwithstanding these specific attitudes, it is eminent that the market of Ballarò functions as a contact zone; a social space where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other. In such a contact zone, the identity of a group emerges above all from the intersection of the specific involvement in a system of hierarchically organized spaces with its cultural construction as community or locality (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 8). This thesis showed that the cultural construction of the Palermitan identity at the locality of Ballarò intersects with its historical and cultural heritage, economic inequality, and political stigmatization. Asking the question who has the power to define, it appeared that the identity of Palermitans from Ballarò is already partially defined as the (Italian) Other. Because the market functions as a contactzone where two 'postcolonial subjects' meet, the politics of difference manifest itself through these economic, political and discursive power inequalities. Instead of an understanding of difference, one could therefore speak of a postcolonial understanding of (in-)equality. One of the specific strategies that Palermitans employ to deal with the fast-changing postcolonial reality imbued with power relations, is by making jokes. Through these jokes, which make the shared work bearable, they include, recognize, and respect the Other.

Conclusively, this thesis has shown that the configurations of local Palermitan identity is the complex outcome of the renegotiation of boundaries in a contact zone marked by a particular historical and cultural heritage, economic inequality and political stigmatization. What is more, the construction of Palermitan identity at the market of Ballarò can only be understood by including the postcolonial context in which two Othered subjects meet. The epistemic focus of postcolonial studies on subjectivity, power, knowledge, and identity is of crucial importance to analyse the anthropological reality of Ballarò. Even though Sicily is not post-colonial in the literal, temporal and geographical sense, it did or, as could be argued, still does suffer from what Gramsci calls the cultural hegemony of the Italian Northern bourgeoisie. Similar to actual post-colonial nations and people, this hegemony in the form of inequalities and ways of knowing, e.g. discursive practices, has its cultural legacy. Interrogating these power structures and ways of knowing is the project of postcolonialism and could therefore enrich ethnographic studies. On the other hand, anthropological studies such as these could augment the intellectual project of postcolonialism by adding ethnographic knowledge to the cultural legacy of colonialism and hegemony at a specific locality. This intersection is fruitful yet slippery. Its possibilities as well as controversies will be discussed in the following and final section of this conclusion.

A first possibly worthwhile intersection concerns a very practical one, applicable to the context of Ballarò. Since this research was limited in time and scope, it was not possible to analyse ethnographic findings such as joking relations to their full potential. Further anthropological research focusing especially on this strategic social institution could be valuable to get a deeper understanding of how these joking relations work on the market of Ballarò. Engagement with postcolonial studies would be of great value, since it enables to understand which and how certain power relations are included and addressed throughout making jokes.

From the viewpoint of postcolonial studies, it would furthermore be interesting to address Derrida's philosophical issue of difference and différance. This idea departs from language, which consists of differentials and depends on combinations of differences to give meaning to words. From this, Derrida defines the term différance as 'the non-full, non-simple, structured, and differentiating origin of differences' (Derrida 1968: 11). In the context of Ballarò, the construction of the Self

and Other in terms of difference is not simply fixed in dichotomies and dualities. Giving notion to the ways différance plays out in a contact zone such as Ballarò would enrich an ethnographic account of the construction of identity and the understanding of difference.

An anthropological engagement with postcolonial studies, or vice versa, is however not as straightforward as may seem. There is namely no denial that the historical origins of anthropology are deeply rooted in the colonial enterprise. Since it was colonialism that structured the relationship between anthropologists and the people they studied, the colonial legacy is also present in our methodological and conceptual formulations. More than often, anthropological studies and our 'ways of knowing' have been target of criticism from postcolonial scholars. The anthropological discipline has of course distanced itself from these colonial roots. It has gone beyond being primarily a Western pursuit of the exotic Other, expanding also to industrial settings, and becoming reflexive on the authority of anthropological knowledge and on their own cultural, gender, and racial positionality. It remains however the question if this has produced postcolonial, rather than decolonized yet postmodern anthropologists. Clifford therefore asks:

> 'Can anthropology be reinvented as a forum for variously routed fieldworks – a site where different contextual knowledges engage in critical dialogue and respectful polemic? Can anthropology foster a critique of cultural dominance which extends to its own protocols of research?'(Clifford, 1997: 91)

Even though there is no straightforward answer to these questions, the only way to come near a postcolonial anthropology is by critically examining the ways of knowing within the anthropological discipline itself.

This thesis does not claim fulfil this epistemic suggestion, but is rather a humble attempt of a renegotiation of disciplinary boundaries. It has shown the at times tragic reality of those working and living in a postcolonial context such as Ballarò. At the same time, it showed that their identity is constructed and employed with great pride and jokes. Somewhere between tradition and integration, , antagonism and *accoglienza,* hard work and humour, Palermitan marketvendors and their new companions are both the directors and performers of their own tragicomedy.

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Appendix

Glossary

Abbanniari: Verb in Sicilian, meaning (the art of) shouting the quality and good price of the goods, usually in strict dialect and in ironic rhymes. Noun: L'abbanniate.

Accoglienza: Even though this word is difficult to translate, it means as much as 'welcoming' and 'hosting'.

Aiutame: Help me. Often heard in the abbanniate of marketvendors.

Attività storica: Historical activity.

Ballate: Pavement of the markets.

Beddù: Sicilian for *bello,* beautiful.

Botteghe Storiche: Historical shop.

Convivenza: cohabitation, coexistence.

Extracommunitari: Non-European illegal immigrant.

Fiducia: Trust, confidence and/or faith.

Isolando: An islander, someone from the Italian islands such as Sicily.

La terraferma: The mainland, usually indicating the rest of the Italian peninsula.

L'altro paese: The other country, usually referring to Sicily

La dolce vita: Meaning the sweet life, full of pleasure and indulgence, this phrase became popular in international dictionaries after Fellini's legendary film (1960).

Macelleria: A butcher/meat shop.

Mercato del popolo: Market of the people.

Mercati storici: Historical market.

Nipote: Grandchild (son/daughter of son/daughter) or nephew/niece (son/daughter of brother/sister).

Piazze di grascia: Literary meaning greasy square, this is an antique way of indicating the central square in every market of Palermo. These squares are the central square of abundance, where everything can be found.

Pizzo: Protection money asked by the mafia to small businesses in order to hold control over a certain area.

Prego: You're welcome

Quartiere populare: Working-class neighbourhood.

Riffa: Internal market lottery, widespread amongst historical markets in Sicily and Napels.

Rosanera: Name of the Palermitan soccer team. Literary meaning pinkblack, it also symbolically refers to the many contradictions of the city.

Scopa: Popular Italian card game, which literally means broom because taking a *scopa* means to sweep all the cards from the table after a game full of skill and chance.

Segno della croce: The sign of the cross**, a** blessing made by the tracing of an upright cross y with the right hand, often accompanied by spoken or mental recitation: 'In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit/Holy Ghost. Amen.'

Settimana Santa: The Holy Week of Easter.

Stigghiola: A Palermitan streetfood, consisting of <u>guts</u> (usually of lamb, but also of goat or chicken) washed in water and salt, seasoned with <u>parsley</u> and often with onion and other pot herbs, then stuck on a skewer or rolled around a leek, and finally cooked directly on the grill.

Terrone: Stigmatizing word used by many northerners to describe the southerners and more specifically the Sicilians. This term derives from the Latin word terra, signifying earth, and refers to the stereotypical image of the Southern peasant who cultivates the soil. On top of this image, 'terroni' are also stigmatized as lazy and even violent.

ZTL: Zona Traffico Limitato, special zones with limited traffic.

Zibbibo (Italian) /Zibibbu (Sicilian): Sweet Sicilian white wine made from the Muscat grape, high in alcohol.

Zio: Uncle, also used to address someone to whom you have affection with, especially when that person is older than yourself.

Zia: Aunt, see above.

Summary in Italian – Sommario in Italiano

Il cuore di Palermo sono i suoi mercati Vucciria, Capò e Ballarò. Mentre si dice che Vucciria sia morto e Capò sia diventato troppo turistico, Ballarò si manifesta ancora come il mercato del popolo. In questo luogo tradizionale, si può trovare ogni genere di merce. Recentemente però, tanti rifugiati e immigrati hanno trovato residenza nel quartiere, vivendo e lavorando accanto ai commercianti palermitani. Questa tesi, prodotto finale del progetto trienale all'Universtà di Urecht, presenta i risultati di tre mesi di ricerca sul campo a Palermo. Emersa dalla scena etnografica del mercato storico di Ballarò, questa ricerca si concentra sulla costruzione dell' identità locale, nel contesto della diversità aumentata, causata dall'arrivo di rifugiati e migranti . Di consequenza, la domanda principale è: *Come costruiscono i Palermitani la loro identità locale sul mercato di Ballarò, nel contesto dell'aumentato arrivo d'immigrati?*

Legato alla costruzione dell'identità è il concetto dell'Altro, che basa il discorso antropologico sull'identità e sull'esperienza della differenza. Questo concetto di alterità sarà chiamato in causa nel per contribuire al dibattito sociale, culturale e politco, in Italia e nel resto dell'Europa, sulla cosidetta 'crisi dei profughi'. Palermo, capoluogo della Sicilia, dove tanti rifugiati arrivano, si puo considerare come il "locus simbolico" della crisi. Un altro contributo teorico è il coinvolgimento degli studi postcoloniali. Mentre la teoria antropologica è alla base della ricerca, gli studi postcoloniali contribuiscono a comprendere il contesto del Sud d'Italia, e soprattutto a capire come è definito il concetto di differenza e dell'Altro. Partendo da questa intersezione, questa tesi apira di scoprire i meccanismi usati dai commercianti palermitani per costruire la loro identità locale e rapportarsi con la differenza e sopratutto come questi meccanismi sono permeati da rapporti di potere e (in)egualianza.

La scena etnografica, il mercato di Ballarò, è quasi come un teatro , per usare le parole di Sorgi (2006) "… uno scenario scompaginato, a frammenti, ancora vitale malgrado tutto, che si ripete ogni giorno con una peculiare liturgia e in una sorta di miracoloso equilibrio fra vecchio e nuovo" (Sorgi 2015). Continuando con la metafora del teatro, i protagonisti della scena sono i commercianti palermitani, in maggioranza maschi, che da generazioni riempiono la piazza. Da qualche decennio, essi sono accompagnati da immigrati dal Bangladesh, Pakistan, Cina e, più

recentemente, da diversi paesi Africani. In questa scena brulicante di diversità, i commercianti palermitani manifestano una forte identificazione a livello del quartiere. Sono soprattutto *Palermitani ru Ballarò*, invece che Palermitani ru Capò o Vucciria. Come sostengono anche Barth (1969) e Friedman (ANNO), questa identità è tuttavia il prodotto della intersoggettività: non è per niente statica ma dipende dalla situazione e dal contesto. Per esempio, i commercianti di Ballarò si sentono diversi dai Catanesi, fieri della bella Sicilia, e più simili ai Napoletani. Andando oltre il pensiero di Barth, che ha sempre sottolineato l'importanza dei confini, si è rivelato significativo studiare anche gli elementi dentro il confine dei *Palermitani ru Ballarò*. Fortemente visibili e legate alle caratteristiche del mercato stesso sono la dualità tipica di Palemo, le strette relazioni umane, e la devozione, che sono diventate ancora più importanti in questo tempo di cambiamenti e di modernizzazione.

Diversi processi della globalizzazione cambiano il mercato velocemente, e lo rendono una particolare 'zona di contatto'. Siccome questi processi sono complessi e hanno conseguenze complicate, commercianti e clienti Palermitani percepiscono diversamente questi cambiamenti. Tanti vedono l'arrivo di migranti, la diminuzione di clienti, la deprivazione del mercato e del quartiere e la microcriminalità, come un unico problema. Nonostante tutto però, il mercato funziona come 'zona di contatto'; commercianti e clienti, quasi necessariamente, hanno rapporti quotidiani con immigrati e ciò, spesso, diminuisce atteggiamenti negativi e xenofobi.

Essendo un prodotto dell'intersoggettività, l'identità palermitana del mercato è in parte determinata dall'eredità storica e culturale. I commercianti sono fieri delle radici arabe del mercato e dalla storia di tante dominazioni della Sicilia. Questa consapevolezza si manifesta attraverso una grande accoglienza. Alla fine però, essere Palermitano a Ballarò significa anche vivere una realtà di povertà e lavoro duro; l'inegualianza economica e il discorso negativo che stigmatizza ancora il mezzogiorno, rende la realtà di Ballarò, l'Altro dell'Italia e dell'Europa. Per orientarsi in questa realtà che cambia velocemente, si intraprendono rapporti basati su scherzi. Questo rapporto scherzosofra gruppi multi-etnici, analizzato sopratutto da Radcliff-Brown (1940), rendono il lavoro duro sopportabile e includono questioni di potere. Inoltre, i rapporti inscenati al mercato di Ballarò sono basati su un certo senso di rispetto e riconoscimento. In conclusione, questa tesi ha mostratro che l'identità Palermitana è il risultato complesso del rinegoziare di confini in una zona di contatto postcoloniale, permeati da rapporti di potere e (in)egualianza.