New Arrivals, Old Places: Demographic Changes and New Planning Challenges in Palermo and Naples

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ABSTRACT   *If we look at the demographic changes in the largest cities in Southern Italy, the most significant trend is a balance between population growth and decline, affecting in particular inner urban areas, which is due to the predominance of new ethnic inhabitants. After having described these demographic changes in Naples and Palermo, the paper will include some considerations on the 'institutional' landscape of planning and the related policies. How do planning policies and practices face this quick change in such peripheral contexts, which are new to the phenomenon? Can the plural composition of the local society be viewed as an opportunity, and not just as a threat? The paper will use some analyses of the immigrants' distribution and characteristics of housing problems as elements of discussions of the changes in the urban social structure, which can be considered as positive potential for a more equal and culturally mixed context.*

Introduction

Barthes (1981) has described cities as 'the place of our meeting with the other'. In this regard the theme of the identity of the city acquires new, further significance, both in terms of the variation in the identity expressed by the city with its new ('different') inhabitants and from the point of view (opposing and complementary) of the recognition of the urban spaces by ethnic immigrant groups. This recognition does not have individuals as its exclusive object but also the spaces and forms of the city, negotiating, in the city spaces, different forms of interaction and cohabitation. On the other hand, the emotional and identity-laden landscape changes as well: fear and insecurity are — in some cases — the most evident signs, at the individual as well as at the political level.

These phenomena do not just occur in global cities, and they start to change the urban structure and scenario of even more peripheral areas. If we look at the demographic changes in the largest cities in Southern Italy (Naples and Palermo), the most significant trend is a balance between population growth and decline, affecting in particular inner urban areas (historic centres and other inner areas that were developed in the last century). The principal population movements and changes are: (1) an increasingly

ageing population; (2) changes in family structure (the rising of mono-nuclear family groups or, on the other side, 'extended' families) and (3) immigration. The presence of migrants in our cities represents a recent as well as very significant change.

Within the European panorama, these two cases present both shared and distinctive characteristics. Although simplifying a phenomenon that is certainly more complex, it could be said that what distinguishes our cities from a number of other 'tales' of immigration in Europe is their recent character. More important, these phenomena point out a real role reversal. In the last 30 years, the South of Italy has changed from being a region of emigration to one of immigration. We will not linger on the causes of these phenomena, which have been the object of several, at times contradictory, studies (Cusumano, 1976; Giacomarra, 1994; Famoso, 1999; Guarrasi, 2003, 2006). We are simply emphasizing the specific characteristics of these cases, which are in many ways anomalous in the panorama of European immigration, and we also have to highlight the speed of this process. To this we can add the extremely heterogeneous ethnic composition of the new arrivals, with the consequent presence of differing demands and expectations, and related policies. Moreover, the statistics regarding clandestine conditions, which are — since the first migration flow — much more widespread in Italy than in the rest of Europe (Melotti, 1993), are significant and can be attributed to the absence of the appropriate regulations until the end of the second half of the 1980s, and to a mixture of tolerant negligence and 'slowness to react' (Macioti, 1993).

Another peculiar element in Southern Italian cities is the predominance of new minority ethnic inhabitants in inner urban areas. In cities like Milan, Florence, and Rome, the number of people living transitorily and informally is quite modest with respect to this new ethnic geography. Multiple factors ranging from a high level of tolerance, light-handed controls and law enforcement, widespread conditions of decay and depopulation favoured a rapid and extended settlement, yet with strong forms of social marginality and exclusion. However, the settlement of new inhabitants has not yet given birth to real ethnic districts, as in cases of concentration and ghettoization. These 'new geographies' appear to have a more complex and fragmented articulation, which, similarly to other Italian cities, creates a thick network of 'urban micro-colorations' which, in its turn, slowly forms new physical and social spaces.

In terms of population movements and distribution all cities develop different spatial models: a comparison between two big cities in the South of Italy reveals two different distributions of new inhabitants. Naples and Palermo share, in a certain way, similar attitudes in their reception of immigrants, although distributed in different ways throughout the territory. In order to analyse two cities such as Naples and Palermo, there are some difficulties in directly comparing the immigrants' data of the two cases. This is due to the lack of uniformity in the data available, which comes substantially from four sources: two from national-based organizations, which enable a clear comparison of the cases and two from local-based organizations, which have greater scientific interest but involve difficulties of comparison and interpretation.[1]

After having described these new demographic changes in Naples and Palermo, the paper includes some considerations on the 'institutional' landscape of planning and the related policies. Fincher and Jacobs (1998) appropriately highlight in their studies that coping with the theme of difference does not mean indulging in dealing with urban diversity (as it happens under rather generic forms in some descriptions of the latest urban phenomena), but rather dealing with networks of power relations, repression and

control within the contemporary city. Recent literature illustrates the new scenarios of difference stemming from such phenomena as international migrations, post-colonialism or the rise of new forms of articulation of society (Loomba, 1998; Sandercock, 2000). Thus, the theme of difference is more and more frequently dealt with in disciplinary debates, starting from the acknowledgement of the fragmentation of contemporary society into an archipelago of minority and plural groups (Soja, 1989; Sibley, 1995; Scandurra, 1999, 2001). These groups express specific needs and claim specific rights and benefits affecting the dimension of the city and urban space. How do planning policies and practices face this rapid change in these contexts, which are new to the phenomenon? Can the new composition of the local society be viewed as an opportunity, and not just as a threat?

In both Naples and Palermo, the new planning policies and the related initiatives are moving towards a sort of sustainable approach: growth is no more a significant issue and more attention and interests are focused towards 'inner' transformations (historical centres, regeneration of inner declining areas or of decayed social housing). Nevertheless, recent planning policies do not consider fully some implications of the demographic (and social) changes. In our view, those planning policies that can be described as 'sustainable' underestimate, or do not consider, social sustainability (i.e. social inclusion). Nevertheless, the distribution of newcomers in the less attractive housing stock of inner urban areas — if supported by adequate planning policies — can slow the negative impact of gentrification (Beauregard, 1990) and the consequent social polarization.

There is an argument that the process of urban change in cities at different levels in national and international urban hierarchies is very different (Van Criekingen & Decroly, 2003). Analysing the recent changes in the demographic structure of two peripheral cities of Southern Italy, the paper illustrates that small-scale variations in gentrification are not simply due to city hierarchies (Shaw, 2005:171), but also to the complex interaction of newcomers' spatial distribution, local history, old-rooted physical characteristics of places and planning responses. The paper uses some analyses of the immigrants' distribution and characteristics of housing problems as elements of discussions of the changes in the urban social structure, which can be considered as positive potential for a more equal and culturally mixed context.

Distribution of New Ethnic Inhabitants in the City of Palermo

Palermo is one of the biggest cities of the South and shares the problems and characteristics of this part of Italy: social exclusion and poverty,[2] a high unemployment rate, a political regime of patronage, a strong organized crime influence on social life and culture. The city growth stems from a process of stratification of different cultures and this 'contamination' can still be seen today. Palermo is the principal urban settlement of the region. About 714,000 people live in the city,[3] in an area of 161.10km^2, while the historic centre has a dimension of about $2.5 \text{km}^2 - 2.5\%$ of the entire city territory. The population of the historic centre is 26,871, just 3.9% of the entire population. The historic centre, like various other centres in Southern Italy, faces major problems, with buildings in disrepair and an aging population. Set within the rich historic heritage are many socio-economic issues, which dramatically affect the urban condition. Among these, the most important are the loss of a productive and economic role, the ineffective governance of the administration, physical decay and social segregation. Administrative indecision, submission to

the local lobbies, ineffectiveness of the urban policies and private interests overriding community interest created uncontrolled urban growth, interrupting the historic, environmental and cultural heritage, causing the depopulation of the historic centre and the ruin of its buildings (Cannarozzo, 2000).

It is quite difficult to calculate and assess the number of immigrants in the city by means of traditional statistical surveys; and yet through approximate estimates, this number may be considered as significant and noticeably affects the composition of the population, particularly in the historic centre, due to the tendency of new arrivals to concentrate in a given place (Agustoni, 2007). Many studies and surveys report that, even now, no simple and certain outline may be given of the foreign presence in Palermo due to the lack of conclusive data. Just as in the rest of Italy, so in Palermo official estimates of this phenomenon are partial and only describe some aspects of the complex reality of immigrants who have valid residence permits.[4] In fact, the significant number of illegal immigrants makes it impossible to objectively estimate the phenomenon as a whole and contributes to a high degree of inaccuracy in data recording and evaluation of processes and needs. Furthermore, another element of complexity is the extremely differentiated character of the foreign population in Palermo, the great number of ethnic groups,[5] diversity of manner and timescale of immigration and settlement and high mobility of many of the immigrants (Gruttadauria, 1994).

Some research carried out in 1994 took as a starting point the data issued by the immigration bureau of the Questura (police department) which had recorded, in the whole province of Palermo, 19,758 immigrants, of which 13,211 were men and 6547 women. Considering that not all of the immigrants were living in the city, the total was estimated at 12,000 people, to which an additional 20,000 should be added. The countries of origin of those 12,000 people living in Palermo were as follows: 43% came mainly from six African countries, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Ethiopia; 27% were from the Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka; 12% from Mauritius Islands; 18% were Iraqi, Algerians, Egyptians and other nationalities in marginal percentages (Lo Piccolo, 2000, 2003).

The foreign population in Palermo, according to the data from the register of aliens (Attanasio & Giambalvo, 2001), increased by 74% from 1992 to 1999. While in 1992, there were 9162 foreign people (5740 males and 3422 females) out of a total of 750,121 residents, in 1999 there were 15,931 registered foreigners (9229 males and 6702 females) out of a total of 735,975 residents. Therefore, even though, on the one hand, the number of foreign residents, most of whom are non-EC immigrants, is lower than in other Italian cities, as it totalled only 1.2% in 1992 and 2.2% in 1999, on the other, the increase in number in the last 10 years is rather significant as well as quite differentiated by gender, with 61% men and 49% women.

At present in Palermo there are 20,755 foreign people, whereas in the year 2001 there were 17,731. These numbers give an idea of the dimension of the phenomena especially given the falling population in the city. In 2001, the total population in the city was 723,170,[6] while the total in 2005 was 713,958. Due to the demographic trends of the autochthonous population (a very low index of natality and an increasing ageing process), this obviously means that the number of foreigners is increasing. Early data for 2006 confirms this situation, but comparing the data for the long term shows an evolution of the situation of new inhabitants. In fact, considering the progression of the immigrants from the year 2001, the numbers rise consistently until 2006. The progression in total numbers is:

2002, 18,075 immigrants; 2003, 20,358 immigrants; 2004, 20,678 immigrants; 2005, 20,886 and 2006, 20,755 immigrants (Di Liberto & Mulè, 2006). Only in 2006, after a period of consolidation, was there a fall in the number of immigrants. This evidence is also due to other social phenomena that influence the local scale. Changes in Italian legislation concerning immigration at first inclined towards 'sanatorie',[7] that correspond to the years of rising immigration, and then the legislation attempted to limit the number of permits to the effective number of legal jobs filled. It is obvious that the more restrictive the legislation, the more informal immigration will increase, and although the demographic data cannot show this, it is more than probable that the principal reason for the official decrease in immigration is not a reflection of the true situation, only of the difficulties in obtaining permits due to the restrictive laws.

If we consider the Palermo situation in the regional context, this comparison shows that, although Southern Italy has a different dynamic to the Centre and North of Italy, Palermo attracts the greater proportion of immigrants who stay in the region. As a significant sector of the economy in Southern Italy is still based on agriculture, especially manual and temporary work that are reserved for immigrants, consequently the newcomers are generally less concentrated in the cities than in agricultural areas and small urban settlements: regions such as Campania and Puglia or areas as the province of Naples and the South-East side of Sicily testify to this phenomenon (Caritas Migrantes, 2005, 2006). Despite that, Palermo is still really attractive for migration flows (Table 1): in 2001, with 17,731 immigrants,[8] out of a total for Sicily of 67,515, shows that 26.3% preferred the city. Numbers are even more dramatic in the case of the province of Palermo: in fact, in this case Palermo city accounts for about 85% of the total of immigrants. Such a polarization is not so wide and significant in any other big city in Southern Italy, Naples included. Reasons for Palermo's distinctiveness in the Southern Italy scenario have to be found — apart from an initial availability of even poor housing in the historic centre and other inner urban areas — in the articulation of 'urban' job opportunities: not just housekeeping and elderly care, but small entrepreneurship and commerce.

In the Palermo area, however, the distribution and, above all, the incidence of the immigrants are far from uniform: analysis of the differences between the various district of Palermo shows that the greatest concentration of new inhabitants is in the historic centre, the number 1 district. In fact, to better understand the demographic reality of Palermo it is necessary to consider the main differences between the different parts of the city in relation to the presence of immigrants.

Palermo is divided into eight districts. The first is the historic centre; the other seven districts surround it. The other district, which has a significant presence of immigrants, is the eight, with 5,044 immigrants, but as a percentage of the total much less: the foreigners in that district represent only 3.89% of the population. This trend is absolutely in line with the other districts, even though on a larger scale than the others. The massive presence of newcomers in the eight district, which is the richest of the city and close to the

Table 1. Total number of immigrants in Palermo by years

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of immigrants	17,731	18,075	20,358	20,678	20,886	20,755

Source: See footnote 6.

historic centre, is due to job opportunities in the sector of housekeeping and assistance to invalids and the elderly.

If we look at the data for the first district (the historic centre), we can note that immigrants represent 26.9% of the entire foreign population of the city in 2006. So the most characteristic place of the city, in which there are the signs of the stratification of different cultures, has become the preferred place for people who now come from other cultures and countries of origin. This cultural, and perhaps romantic way of considering the phenomenon, misreads the real reason for the immigrants preference for this location, which is only marginally influenced by the cultural inheritance. The real reason is to be found in the availability of inexpensive housing and in the opportunity to find informal work, or to establish small entrepreneurship and commercial activities.

Considering the demographic structure of the native population, the historic centre has today various elements of singularity with respect to all the other areas of the city, as a consequence of diverse and in a way contradictory processes, some of which have started quite recently while some others have been going over much a longer period of time. Such phenomena may be briefly explained by a process of depopulation and social polarization towards lower strata which started in the early post-war years and continued with alternate rhythms and phases through the early 1980s; by a process of settlement of migrant populations starting from the very first waves of migration (creating a strengthening of social polarization towards lower strata, and sprawling social marginality); and by a process of return to the centre by the affluent classes (starting from the late 1980s) with quite specific and typical family compositions, similarly to forms of gentrification which took place in other Italian and foreign urban contexts (Petsimeris, 2005). In this regard, an analysis of the demographic structure may turn out to be quite useful, provided that co-present and contradictory phenomena are taken into consideration.

So one of the main elements to be considered in order to understand the demographic situation in Palermo is the analysis of a lot of immigrants, analysing the data for the total population of the first Palermo district and then comparing the data for the first district with data for the rest of the city. It is also necessary to take into account the evolution of the phenomena over time, relating them to the recent policies of the City Council. In relation to the first district of Palermo a huge amount of data are available, starting from 1997 and ending in 2006; so it is possible to retrace a significant series of the phenomena (Table 2). The elements considered are the year, the total population of the first district, the foreign population in the same district and the percentage of foreigners and total population in the first district. In 1997, Palermo historic centre had a population of 28,011 people, although this number was in decline: this will become clear from a comparison with the following years. The number of immigrants in the first district was 3816, representing13.62% of the total. In the following years until 2001 the total population of the historic centre fell consistently.

Table 2. Population, immigrants and incidence in the first district

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Immigrants	3,816	3,871	4,307	4,453	4,611	4,821	5,505	5,565	5,616	5,507
Population	28,011	27,514	27,502	27,279	26,871	27,014	27,341	27,213	27,295	27,075
Incidence (%)	13.62	14.07	15.66	16.32	17.16	17.85	20.13	20.45	20.58	20.34

Source: See footnote 6.

Analysis of the data shows that in this period there was a radical transformation in the social structure: in fact, in five years the percentage of immigrants in the historic centre rose from 13.62% to 17.85% (only considering the official data for regular immigrants). Between 2001 and 2002 there was a major change in the series. For the first time the total population of the historic centre increase from 26,871 (2001) to 27,014 (2002). The reasons for this turnaround are found in the effectiveness of policies like the EU funded URBAN Program, which focused on interventions of renewal in some parts of the historic centre (Laino, 2000; Palermo & Savoldi, 2002). These, together with the economic aid for reconstruction in the historic centre, caused the slight rise in population shown by the data. The year 2002 showed also an important change in the City Council administration, as a new Mayor was appointed: after Leoluca Orlando, who had the restoration and renewal of the historic centre at the top of his political agenda, Diego Cammarata was elected with a different political coalition (right wing). With Cammarata at the helm, policies regarding the historic centre were limited to economic support for restructuring private buildings. So it has been the case, in recent years, that while private properties were renovated, increasing the beginning of a gentrification process, the public spaces remained as they were.

The change of direction is also noticeable comparing population data for the first district after 2002. In 2003 the total population continues to increase slightly, up to 27,341 people, but the number of immigrants, however, increases much faster. This can be explained, as mentioned earlier, by changes in national legislation which imposed an acceleration in the process of regularization. After 2003, in fact, the number of immigrants in the historic centre remains constant, while the total population fell slightly. In 2006 there were two other demographic changes; these changes are, in a way, a mirror of the gentrification process and possible sources of conflict. In 2006, in the Palermo historic centre, for the first time, there was a slight fall in the number of foreign newcomers and also a fall in the percentage of immigrants to the total inhabitants. So the last data available (2006) shows that in the historic centre there were 27,075 people in total and 5507 immigrants. This puts the percentage of foreign newcomers at 20.34%. Obviously what we can notice is a little decrease that shows a situation that continues the old rules of settlements but, however, in the series considered, this is the first decrease in 10 years. It is noticeable that this is also a significant turnaround in the demographic trend of the immigrant population: in fact, new arrivals in a place always develop a complex network of relationships that tend to promote proximity.

Unlike what happened in other Italian and European cities (Manconi, 1990, 1992; Paba, 1998; Khakee *et al.*, 1999; Thomas, 2000), the arrival and settlement of immigrants in the historic centre of Palermo — as in other areas — has not caused any evident increase in social tensions or outbreaks of protest. The experience of Palermo is quite different, considering local reactions both at the level of public opinion and of the City Council administration. The fact is that in Palermo immigrants had settled in a district that was already in a state of decline. We cannot identify in Palermo signs of what has affected other Italian and European cities, namely, processes of physical and economic decline, prompted by factors which are extrinsic to local society, tending to be followed by a mobilization of public opinion, which then focuses on a contingent situation in which the immigrant population functions as a catalyst (Somma, 1999:94). The analysis of the series shows that something is starting to break the balance between immigrants and autochthonous. It seems that the situation is on a knife edge and the process of gentrification that is becoming visible could cause future conflict.

The first district also has other peculiar characteristics. The first consideration concerns young people. The total for young people (0–17) is 5,825, representing 21.3% of the population in the district. This proportion is a little higher than in other districts. But the real difference regards the distribution of households. In the historic centre, especially in recent years, there has been a rise in the number of households comprising just one person, now accounting for 48.7% of the total. This is another symptom of the start of a gentrification process. The historic centre is an exception also as regards the composition of households. Some research (Attanasio & Giambalvo, 2001) shows that the historic centre is the farthest from average values. Most interesting are the data concerning single-member households, which can be explained by aging of the population due to emigration in the 1950s and 1960s, and also by the return of new 'affluent' inhabitants: Italian single males younger than 40 make up 23% in the historic centre, compared with 9% in the rest of the city. By comparing these data with the citizenship status, particular emphasis can be put on the strong concentration of foreign, male, not elderly citizens in the historic centre, which is also clearly inferable from an intuitive point of view. As a matter of fact, if we consider that in Palermo 73% of foreign single-member households are made up of males (compared with 31% of Italian households), cross-analysis of such variables as type of family, citizens and districts shows that a large number of foreign single-member households live in the historic centre (48% compared with 7% elsewhere in the city) and are mainly males. In this regard, it is important to mention the country of origin. The biggest group of foreigners comes from Asia (46.6%) and in particular from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, the other main continent of origin is Africa (42.5%), and particularly Tunisia and Mauritius (Lo Piccolo, 2003). Another important factor is the age and the gender of the immigrants, as it is obvious there is a massive presence of people in work aged between 25 and 49 years, while there is no significant presence of older people. However, and this is very significant, there is also a sizeable number of people under the age of 17, comprising 20.7% of the total immigrant population: this means that for some there is a reasonable hope of remaining in the city in the future. It is also obvious that there is a prevalence of males, 64.65% of the total.

The comparison of household types and their distribution over the various districts of the city highlights once again the singularity of the historic centre as regards both single-member households and single-parent households (21.5%) and the high number of enlarged households (9.5%) as well. Two main factors are at the root of this scenario: the presence of immigrants' extended households (there are 10 foreign households out of 100 in the historic centre, whereas the rate is 1 out of 100 in the rest of the city) and the forms of cohabitation of enlarged households belonging to (Italian) low-income classes subject to manifest social marginality and poverty (we should not overlook the fact that some areas of the historic centre are still among the most marginal and socially depressed of the whole city).

Policies for Ethnic Communities and Planning Challenges in Palermo

The historic centre of Palermo is presently going through a highly controversial period characterized, on the one hand, by a number of forms of local regeneration through private initiatives and local development partnership programmes and, on the other hand, by old and new forms of physical and social decay caused by both neglect on the part of public authorities and by the emergence of new problems and marginal social

and economic realities. As is generally recognized (Lo Piccolo, 1996; Cannarozzo, 2000), the process of decay of the historic centre has old roots, though it has speeded up during the post-war period: the negligence of public administration, the lack of conservation programmes or any kind of control, along with the progressive departure of inhabitants (relocated into new neighbourhoods of low-cost housing) contributed to the degradation of the area and of its buildings. During the 1950s and 1960s the population of the historic centre continued its post-war downward slide, dwindling from 125,000 in 1951 to 53,000 in 1971. Declining population and rising poverty led to considerable housing abandonment, deterioration and decay: consequently, in the 1980s a significant amount of the housing stock was vacant.

Over the years, the decay of the area has brought about a decrease in the market value of property and in rents, despite its central location. History has it that immigrant communities have always chosen to settle in areas such as this exactly for reasons of low-cost housing and location, moving into long-abandoned buildings that were generally unfit for habitation, where they are still leading a precarious existence (Lo Piccolo, 1996, 2000). The exploitation of the vulnerabilities of this new marginal population has inevitably led to further privation. So far, the historic centre has not been affected by any general process of gentrification, the consequence of the condition of its properties and general decay, as well as the lack of any public investment. Recently some indicators seem to show significant changes in that respect, and a gentrification process is taking place, especially in those areas that are close to the waterfront. Nevertheless, recent planning policies do not entirely consider some implications of the demographic (and social) changes described earlier.

Notwithstanding the city's sensitivity to immigrants (no blatant episode of racism has been recorded to date) and the past City Council's attention and initiatives that were undertaken under Mayor Orlando's administration (Lo Piccolo, 2000), immigrants still have to face serious difficulties when trying to satisfy such primary needs as housing, working and health care, quite apart from those predictable immigration-related emotional problems and those cultural difficulties deriving from linguistic, cultural, behavioural and religious diversities (Cammarata *et al.*, 1996). In the 1990s, the Municipality, supported by a team of experts, tried to act as a reference point for immigrants: by promoting exploratory meetings with the ethnic minority communities with a view to establishing a mutual trust-based relationship; by setting up a network of contacts involving other associations and institutions operating in the field; and by promoting various initiatives in the social, political, cultural and sports fields (Lo Piccolo, 2000). This involvement has resulted in the acknowledgement of the immigrants' needs, giving indications of the necessity and feasibility of particular services. During the last 10 years, political changes in the City Council's administration (a right wing coalition led by Mayor Cammarata) led to a lack of attention and a slowdown in policies for immigrants, within a more general decay of social public policies.

Moreover, the complex framework of different cultures and the deep and rapid change in social composition in the last 15 years have created a demand for new and specific services. The City Council's administration has answered these demands by the new inhabitants inconsistently and in different terms, depending on the country of origin, and the related cultural and religious characteristics of the communities. In fact we have to consider that some ethnic groups, especially the Tunisian one, have a long story of relations with the city, due also to the fact that they did not arrive in Palermo as a marginal group.[9] Consequently some services, that appear to be generically geared to immigrants as a

whole, are in reality strongly identified and used by some specific ethnic groups. This is the case with the official mosque of the city, which is located in the historic centre, after the conversion of an ancient catholic church which had fallen into decay and disuse.[10] Besides considering this as one of the most successful example of the City Council policy towards local ethnic minorities, it is highly interesting to consider that mainly the Tunisian community manages this mosque: for this reason other ethnic groups generally prefer to pray in other informal or open-air spaces, like the gardens along the waterfront during Ramadan.

From this simple example, it is possible to understand how not all the services for immigrants are useful in the same way for all ethnic groups. As with the mosque, also the schools managed by immigrants are often divided on ethnic lines. Focusing our attention on the services of assistance to immigrants, it is important to consider that they are concentrated mainly within the historic centre. The story of these services evolved with trends of immigration. In 2006 there were 26 different services in the historic centre while the total amount in the city was 87, with another 6 services which are immaterial; so the centre accounts for about 30% of services for immigrants, following the dynamics generated by the demographic pressure. Among them, the biggest and most settled service is, without doubt, the Santa Chiara centre. It was officially founded in 1995 but its work started even before. The first years of the centre were characterized by the figure of Don Baldassarre Meli, who was removed from management in 2003. The Santa Chiara centre is run by a volunteer association and is placed in the Albergheria district, one of the most deprived areas of the historic centre. Santa Chiara offers a wide range of social, healthcare and support services, along with the opportunity to attend religious and cultural events, mainly by communities from the Ivory Coast Republic, Ghana and Burkina-Faso. Nevertheless, after Don Meli's departure, a less innovative and open-mind approach took place (Leone, 2005), with a substantial reduction of the 'undeclared' services offered.[11] However, the rest of the services provided by the centre continue until now.

The Santa Chiara centre works alongside another important institution that also has a long history in dealing with immigrants. The centre, called Agape, adjoins Santa Chiara centre and is managed directly by the Caritas association. The role of Agape is focused on the social and health sectors: every day from 30 to 40 people attend the general day hospital (internal medicine, children's medicine, specialized medicine). The centre was founded in 1989 by the Caritas association and has always been directly run by the Palermo diocese through the confraternity of Santa Maria del Soccorso and is located in the court of the Gancia monastery. The two centres thus work synergistically: the Santa Chiara centre specializes in dealing with immigrant work problems, also providing a nursery for the workers' children, the Agape centre concentrates more on the immigrants' particular health needs, trying to respect all the difference that the melting pot of different cultures entails.

The role of the Santa Chiara centre in the field of workers' rights is also attested by its presence in the 'Multiethnic Agency' project that is lead by Confindustria (Entrepreneurs Association) of Palermo. The 'Multiethnic Agency' is one of the most recent and innovative policies for immigrants, as it was launched in October 2007 and developed within the EQUAL programme: its tasks mainly regards support for immigrants who want to start an enterprise. The project also has other objectives regarding general assistance to immigrants, with the support of cultural mediators who are directly trained by Confindustria. The 'Multiethnic Agency', therefore, represents a change of view regarding the role of

immigrants in the wider society: foreigners are no longer considered as a 'problem' or just the most marginal fringe of society, but they are starting to become a resource. Certainly, the aim of the project is quite ambitious and a long-term goal, but Palermo in many cases appears as a landfall for immigrants who have decided to reinvest the profit of their own work in a European city with an affordable cost of living as well as economic conditions for small entrepreneurial activities.[12]

As can be noticed from the earlier description, given the demographic changes that have taken place in Palermo in recent decades, there has been on the one hand a weakening of public policies on immigration by the city administration and on the other, fertile activity of service and assistance, in particular by sector associations (Confindustria) and the Catholic Church. Probably, and this is really noticeable in the comparison with Naples (as will be discussed in the following paragraphs), Palermo is more attentive to immigrants just because of their geographic distribution and of the spatial coincidence between the place of settlement and general planning policies. The fact that, differently to other cities, in Palermo the biggest presence of immigrants is still in the historic centre gives more visibility to the phenomenon and thus also creates a different awareness of it.

The preference for living in the historic centre expressed by the foreigners in Palermo is shown by the demographical statistics, but the many of reasons behind this preference can only be revealed by qualitative research (Leone, 2005; Leone *et al.*, 2006). However, it is a fact that in the historic centre of Palermo immigrants accepted very bad housing conditions (Lo Piccolo, 2003), paying rents which were absolutely outside the market range; consequently, a large demand for housing represents one of the principal issues to be faced by planning policies in order to give an appropriate response to the demographic and social changes described.

The historical dynamics of housing markets and urban policy have contributed to the physical and social isolation of the (new and old) inhabitants of the historic centre. The ways in which housing opportunities and urban spatial and social structures have changed in the last decades have caused the modern 'underclass' living in the historic centre of Palermo to be marginalized and socially excluded. This is an area of widespread urban decay and, at the same time, of great potential, owing to its location within the heart of the city and the historical (and potential) value of its buildings. The restoration of the historic centre, connected with wider policies of urban revitalization, is still an essential component of a strategy for the redevelopment of the city.

In the last 15 years, several initiatives for the revitalization of the historic centre have been undertaken. An increase in renewal interventions managed by the private sector, public interventions of restoration and renewal managed by the City Council, new commercial activities, an increase in cultural and tourist-oriented events, and a new 'nightlife' can be considered as the main elements of these changes, following the approval and the implementation of the Detailed Executive Plan (PPE) of the Historic Centre (Lo Piccolo, 1996). Doubts are raised about the survival of the ethnic communities as well as of the local 'underclass', which risk being swept aside by redevelopment which was started in order to substantially change the appearance, structure and function of the whole area. As previously highlighted (Lo Piccolo, 2003), redevelopment work is raising property prices with a consequent rapid loss of low-cost housing. The historic centre is presently becoming the contested terrain of the next round of urban redevelopment in Palermo, the last frontier. Even though, to date, it is quite inaccurate to consider any redevelopment

activity as 'ethnic cleansing', such an increase in prices will inevitably trigger off a process of expulsion of lower income groups.

Regarding the demand for social housing, it is opportune to evaluate the extent of the phenomenon, analysing the differences between autochthonous demand and that of foreigners. In this way it is possible to assess the need for housing, also considering that immigrants are generally less involved in the institutional process. The total amount of requests for social housing is 9850: a number that represents 1.36% of the total population. If we consider the request of immigrants, we have a value of 355: so 3.60% of the applications were made by them.[13] But a more interesting consideration arises if we examine the relation between the applications and the amount of total population and immigrants in the city: it is possible to appreciate how, also with all the difficulties that immigrants have in dealings with institutions, they nevertheless have a bigger incidence in the request for social housing. In fact, comparing the data concerning applications by immigrants to the total of the foreign population, we have a value of 1.74% that is substantially greater than the incidence of applications referred to the total population (1.36%). It is important to remember how the City Council already funded, in 1993, a survey to identify the characteristics and size of the special demand for housing (Gruttadauria, 1994). This survey was implemented in compliance with the guidelines and goals of the national housing law no. 179/92; in particular art. 4 of the law assigns a part of housing financial resources and initiatives to 'particular social categories', that is to special needs groups such as the elderly, disabled people, former drug addicts, non-resident students, immigrants. The law also recognizes that these special housing needs can be satisfied by standard housing units as well as by specific housing typologies, such as mini-units, communal housing, dormitories, hostels, accessible and sheltered housing (Gruttadauria, 1994:6). But the situation since then has radically changed, as we have highlighted, most of all regarding the increasing presence of immigrants and — at the same time — the change in the local political regime.

It is accepted that if the historic centre should regain its previous residential use, the repopulation will inevitably involve either the return of the upper and middle classes living on the outskirts or the maintenance of the present ethnic and 'underclass' communities, trying to avoid social, racial and functional polarization (Lo Piccolo, 1996, 2000; Cannarozzo, 2000). If the City Council is not able to organize effective housing, implement social policies and launch co-ordinated programmes for preserving and reusing its property so as to encourage private investment and support the most disadvantaged groups, such a process is quite unlikely to start. To attain this goal, significant public intervention is needed, connected to stringent controls and safeguarding policy on speculative plots, while avoiding discriminatory policies. Recent policies of the City Council administration have been oriented in the very opposite direction, being extremely supportive of private investors and neglecting social and housing public policies.

Distribution of New Ethnic Inhabitants in the City of Naples

Naples is the biggest city of Southern Italy and is, after Milan and Rome, the third largest in Italy. The area of the city territory is 11,727 hectares; from the point of view of the territorial dimension, Naples is the ninth city of Italy. Moreover, Naples has the highest territorial density in the country, with a value of 9102 persons/km^2. Traditionally, also because of the enlargement of the city administrative border in 1925 and 1926, the city

had a population that moved from the historic centre to its fringes; despite this, the city centre was never affected by a substantial process of depopulation, due to its historical and consolidated density, which led to overcrowding of its residences since the nineteenth century. As described in Vicari (2001:108), 'the upper class remains in the city centre, reflecting the traditional attachment of the bourgeoisie to the sites it originally built for itself. It must be emphasized, however, that pockets of poverty still exist in central areas: in the inner city there are still low-cost dwellings, often in severe physical decay, where the lower social groups can afford to live. The main axis of spatial and social segregation, however, remains the great divide between the historical centre of the city and its surrounding areas on the one hand, and the peripheral areas of the Neapolitan and adjacent provincial communes on the other'.

Several plans — before and after the Second World War — provided for the continuous development of the city outwards into the countryside, as it has in fact happened, or finding new homes for the population outside the city limits.[14] However the recent demographic trend in Naples shows a situation that, after some fluctuation, is becoming more stable: the total population of the city was 1,067,365 in 1991, 1,004,500 in 2001 and 984,232 in 2005.[15] The demographic situation in Naples, similarly to other cities, shows a negative trend that is balanced by an increase of people living in the metropolitan area, which shows, in fact, a rise in population: the villages adjoining the city register a growth of about 10% in the period between 1991 and 2001. Looking at the data concerning immigrants, the number has generally increased. The number of foreign newcomers rose from 8,825 in 2001 to 19,188 in 2006: a considerable increase which is typical of the early stages of the immigration phenomenon.

The difference in the demographic situation between Naples and Palermo is also shown by the different places of settlement of the foreign newcomers: in Palermo the immigrants settled mainly and largely in the historic centre, a district that was already in a state of decline; while in Naples, even though there is a significant presence of immigrants in the historic centre, a large part of them settled in the marginal areas of the inner city and also in the small urban centres and villages bordering the city. So it is necessary, in order to understand the Neapolitan context, to analyse also the data for the entire province.

The more diverse spatial distribution of foreign newcomers in Naples is also due to the nature and availability of job opportunities, which are mainly in the agricultural sector and in housekeeping and elderly care. Consequently, in Naples, unlike Palermo, the presence of immigrants in the inner city is strongly connected with the provision of personal services to the middle and upper class of the autochthonous population. This fact is very clear if we consider the difference of gender of the foreign population and the distribution in the Naples administrative city limits. Before analysing the data, it is important also to highlight the fact that, especially in the Naples context, only the immigrants who have a real bureaucratic need for becoming 'regular' are visible in the statistics. This aspect partially explains the anomalous data that we shall describe.[16]

For administrative purposes, Naples is divided into 30 quarters, grouped in 10 different districts. In the city there are officially 19,188 foreigners; given the total population, this is a percentage of 1.97% of foreigners to natives. So the incidence of immigrants is very little in the general framework of the demographic composition, but the analysis of the data series also shows a rise in the number of foreign newcomers and a fall in the native population. In Naples, as is often the case with phenomena of recent immigration, there has not

been so evidence of polarization or ethnic colonization of parts of the city (Amendola, 2007). The countries of origin most represented are: Sri Lanka (21.16%), Ukraine (13.95%), Poland (7.25%), The Philippines (4.99%) and Brazil (3.75%). The data refer to the year 2003 and come from the registration archives of the National Health Service (Vanzanella, 2007).

Naples consists of districts composed of quarters with very different histories and social conditions. Moreover, Naples shows quite a peculiar inconsistency between the administrative boundaries and the historical, social and physical composition of its districts and quarters. The most peculiar example is the historic centre, which is compound of different quarters, which do not belong to a unique district: S. Ferdinando, S. Giuseppe, Montecalvario, Avvocata, Stella, Vicaria, S. Lorenzo, Mercato, Pendino, Porto and — partially — Chiaia, Posillipo and Vomero. The above mentioned quarters are variously distributed in five districts; as a consequence of that, the analysis of demographic data — those concerning immigrants included — is particularly complex and, in some cases, even controversial. For example, the first district contains: San Ferdinando quarter, part of the historic centre and characterized by poor social conditions; Chiaia, which is another part of the historic centre but has been subject to gentrification and Posillipo, mostly built in the twentieth century, which is home to the richest people in the city. So, in this case, it is indispensable not only to analyse the data about the districts but also about the quarters.

The first and the second districts present the biggest concentration of immigrants: in 2004 they were 4316 in the first district and 3863 in the second; the percentage of foreign newcomers to the total population in the district is also relevant. In 2004 immigrants represented 5.14% of the total district population in the first district and 4.05% in the second. But, as already mentioned, the differences in the distribution become more interesting if we consider the different quarters that make up the districts. In fact, in the S. Ferdinando quarter, which is part of the first district, in 2004 there were 1961 immigrants, 10.2% of the total population in the quarter; whereas in the other two quarters of the district, the percentage of foreign newcomers was only about 3.5%.

A very similar situation is found in the second district, composed of six very different quarters. In the S. Giuseppe quarter the percentage of immigrants to total population is the highest in the entire city, 18.03% in 2004. But S. Giuseppe is one of the smallest quarters in Naples, as it has only 7016 residents in total; so, as an absolute value, the presence of immigrants is not so significant. The other quarter that has a big concentration of foreign newcomers is Mercato, in which there are 1192 foreigners, 11.21% of the population. In the other four quarters of the district, there is not a significant presence of immigrants and the phenomenon seems to be not appreciable; so we have a percentage of about 3% or even less. The Montecalvario quarter — which is a very peculiar part of the historic centre — shows a 3.3% percentage of immigrants in 2004, which rises to 3.8% in 2005. Within the Montecalvario quarter, an even more significant presence of immigrants (in numbers and housing distribution) is in one of the most deprived area of the entire historic centre: the so-called Spanish Quarters,[17] where the housing distribution of immigrants is very diverse from any other area (Laino, 2003; Sepe, 2008), as a consequence of the type and structure of the housing stock.

These elements partially show the difficulties involved in finding complete demographic data about the phenomenon. However, although it is statistically a non-significant series, it is helpful to examine those data concerning the trends in the phenomenon in 2004

and 2005. In the variation between these two years there is a general increment of the foreign newcomers in the city. All of the different quarters showed an increase of about 10%, especially in those quarters that we have already considered: in S. Ferdinando there was an increase of 8.06%, reaching 2119 foreigners, the biggest figure for Naples. Because in the city the population as a whole is generally declining, the ratio between immigrants and autochthonous population obviously increases. In the S. Giuseppe quarter there was a rise of 10.36% foreign newcomers between 2004 and 2005, reaching a number of 1396 individuals and in the Mercato quarter there was a rise of 6.18% foreign newcomers for a total of 1272 people.

In the first and second district the structure of families is such that many comprise just one person: 28.79% in the first district and 25.8% in the second, as stated by the Municipality of Naples statistics office in 2005. These two figures are both well above the average for the city (20.53%) and indicate a developing trend in the historical centre which is similar to that in Palermo. These figures reveal a situation that, in the near future, is likely to evolve very similarly to the case in Palermo but which is still in an early stage. The context both cities share in terms of immigration is the fact that the availability of cheap housing, although in different proportions, caused and continues to cause a preference for the historic centre as a place of shelter in the city.

But Naples presents other differences and particularities too. The first regards the gender of immigrants, which is prevalently female, in a percentage of about 60% (Caritas Migrantes, 2005, 2006). This datum, highly unusual for the first generation of immigration, is partially due to the main job opportunities that immigrants can find in the city (housekeeping, support and services to elderly or disabled people) and also shows how the phenomenon is underestimated. This happens particularly because in the city male immigrants have less likelihood of finding regular work or, at any rate, work requiring official regularization. Another important difference between Naples and Palermo regards the subordinate role that the foreigners assume in the work context in Naples, while in Palermo they are starting to become active actors in the economic context of the city, as showed by the 'Agenzia Multietnica' commitments.

Finally, to entirely understand the Naples context, we must also compare the city with its neighbouring towns; in order to do this, we will consider a series of data from 2001 to 2006 for Naples and its bordering towns: let us consider first the evolution of the phenomenon in Naples, in 2001 there were 8825 immigrants, rising to 9136 in 2002 and 10,879 in the 2003. Over this period we have a linear progression, while between 2003 and 2004 there is a spike in the series due to the changes in the immigration law (Bossi-Fini), which was already considered in the case of Palermo.[18] The situation assumes more significance if we consider that in the same years the total population of the city decreased: in fact, it fell from 1,008,419 people in 2001 to 975,139 in 2006; so the percentage of immigrants rose sharply, from 0.88% in 2001 to 1.97% in 2006 (Table 3).

Considering the rest of the entire province, Naples hosts about 40% of the total of immigrants in the province in all the period considered, except in 2003 and 2004 in which the percentage goes down to about 33% and 36%; the figures for those years are the consequence of the local delay in Naples in application of the more restrictive immigration law (Bossi-Fini). But the most important element to be considered about the hinterland towns is that not only is the number of immigrants increasing, but also the total amount of population; so the ratio of immigrants to total population is growing less fast than in the city centre (Table 4).

Table 3. Naples: incidence of immigrants in the City

		Immigrants			Immigrants		Total	% Immigrants Population
		Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female	Population	
Naples	2001	3,643	5,182	8,825	41.28	58.72	1,008,419	0.88
	2002	3,731	5,405	9,136	40.84	59.16	1,004,577	0.91
	2003	4,237	6,642	10,879	38.95	61.05	1,000,449	1.09
	2004	5,381	9,360	14,741	36.50	63.50	995,171	1.48
	2005	6,227	10,745	16,972	36.69	63.31	984,242	1.72
	2006	7,162	12,026	19,188	37.33	62.67	975,139	1.97

Source: Istat (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica).

Table 4. Naples: incidence of immigrants in the Province

		Immigrants			Immigrants		Total	% Immigrants/ Population
		Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female	Population	
Province	2001	10,019	12,461	22,480	44.57	55.43	3,075,660	0.73
	2002	10,636	13,103	23,739	44.80	55.20	3,060,124	0.78
	2003	13,960	18,515	32,475	42.99	57.01	3,085,447	1.05
	2004	16,493	23,920	40,413	40.81	59.19	3,092,859	1.31
	2005	17,237	26,313	43,550	39.58	60.42	3,086,622	1.41
	2006	18,711	28,866	47,577	39.33	60.67	3,082,756	1.54

Source: Istat (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica).

Considering the other towns in the metropolitan area we note that, in 2006, in particular cases there were high concentrations of immigrants. This is due to the particular availability of work in agricultural activities found in the Naples hinterland and also to the particular conditions of the accessibility to the housing stock (Colussi, 2005). Leaving aside the small islands that are in the hinterland area,[19] the other little towns that have a consistent incidence of immigrants are: San Gennaro Vesuviano (3.69%), San Giuseppe Vesuviano (4.54%) and Terzigno (6.59%). All of these three little towns are in the South East of the Neapolitan area and their economies are strongly connected with the cultivation and processing of tomatoes. On the other side of the metropolitan area (North East), the highest concentration of foreign newcomers is in Castelvolturno,[20] with 2083 foreign people — about 10% of the total population. The situation just described shows that in Naples, more than elsewhere, provincial planning — currently 'in-progress' — should take into account the significant demographic changes taking place in the composition of population and its multicultural social structure.

As a result of the above described complex and fragmented picture, Naples has to be considered a big city which is just starting to have substantial immigration. The situation in Naples has a lot in common with that of Palermo, but still to a much lesser extent: this causes big differences in terms of policies regarding the newcomers in the two cities. In Naples, the trend has been to deal with emergencies, caused by the presence of immigrants one at a time, and consequently developing fragmented and sectorial policies relating to gender or particular ethnic groups: so there are special policies for the foreign women

or for the Rom people. This is a very typical attitude in dealing with the first waves of immigration. So in Naples there seems to be a lack of global vision (Belli, 1992) considering the threats and opportunities that new inhabitants can bring to a city which itself is suffering a general fall in population. But it is also possible to identify some policies in which particular problems are tackled with a very original and even innovative approach.

One of the objectives of this study is to individuate trends and challenges in the impact of new inhabitants, in the framework of social differences which characterize the demographic situation. As described earlier, in Naples the presence of immigrants is not so significant in total numbers; most of all, and due to their spatial distribution, the immigrants' presence is less 'socially visible' than in other urban contexts, than for example in the Palermo case. Consequently, in Naples the questions regarding the new ethnic composition of the local society have been dealt with on a day-by-day basis by the City Council, under the Mayor Rosa Russo Jervolino as well as under her predecessor Antonio Bassolino.

Planning Policies on Immigration in Naples: The Housing Issue

The above described trends and further recent researches (Laino, 2007; Sepe, 2008) show a complex and fragmented social composition of residents in many inner urban areas (included the historic centre) of the city. Consequently, the immigrants' presence — although significant in (total) numbers — is less 'visible'. Despite that, the large increase in foreign newcomers described (from about 8000 in 2001 to about 20,000 in 2006), typical of first generation immigration, points to a situation in which the newcomer's first concerns are for housing. Naples has a very difficult situation regarding the housing question: as usual, the housing question is closely connected to changes in the demographic structure and in particular with the presence of new inhabitants. The trend in Naples is a decrease in population; the main reason for this depopulation process, connected to the corresponding rise in people in the province at large, is due to the very high prices for rental and house purchase (Forte, 2006), which are not comparable with any other Southern Italy city, Palermo included.

There are many factors that influence this situation: some of them concern the new planning vision for the city which, after a period of wild speculation, considers the city as a zero growth place; others concern the bigger picture of the national context and, finally, others again concern the specific and local situation. The principal reason for the situation is the particular nature of housing property in Naples: in fact, the city presents a very different situation to the general Italian context. Italy is a country in which most people own a house, and the residential buildings are categorized as: 71.4% occupied by owner, 20% rented and the remaining 8.6% buildings that are not used or second houses;[21] in this complex framework only 3% can be considered, in different ways, social housing. In Naples the situation is quite different: only 50.06% of the houses are owned by the occupants, 44.09% rented and about 6% remain as second houses or unused. Another important datum, to take into consideration concerning the dynamics of the Neapolitan context, is the price of rents — about 1000€ for a 75 mq apartment, while in the suburbs the same apartment costs about 600€.

The specific situation, concerning the housing ownership and the contingent situation of economic decline in the city, makes Naples particularly sensitive to the housing question. It is relevant to remember that in recent years social housing has once again become an important question in the national political agenda: after years in which, because of the

percentage of owner–occupants described, the national government decided that there was no reason to continue public efforts to build new social housing, Italian construction of social housing fell from 35,000 units in 1984 to 1500 in 2004 (Caudo, 2007b); the situation now is such that it is necessary to launch a new housing policy. Another important factor, which could help understand the housing questions in Italy, is the trend in reasons for evictions: in the last 25 years evictions for non-payment of rents rose from 16% to 70%. This is another signal of the new need of social housing in Italy: so it is obvious that housing costs are becoming a greater burden, above all for lower middle class people.[22]

One of the most significant signals of a renewal of the housing policy is the recent national law, no. 9, issued on the eighth of February 2007, called: 'Intervention to reduce housing problems for particular social categories'. In particular, art. 4 is interesting, suggesting partnerships between various stakeholders in order to develop new houses for lower middle class people, building new apartments as well as reusing existing buildings.[23] As already mentioned, the situation in Naples is also more difficult than in the rest of country, and the most innovative aspects of the new national housing law are almost ignored.

The Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari (IACP), that is the Social Housing Institute, is the organization which mainly deals with the housing question. The latest Naples IACP policy seeks to transform the agency into a service company, with the aim of helping other public offices in building, managing and renewing social and public housing: within this framework, the IACP attempts to promote dialogue between different town councils of the provincial area, the main city (Naples council administration), the Chamber of Commerce and the national and regional planning departments: in this capacity as mediator, it would be possible to find a new role for the IACP, from construction and management to a facilitating role. The latest programmes from the Naples IACP concern seven projects in Naples and eight in the rest of the provincial area. These 15 projects, which started in 2005, developed a partnership between the Chamber of Commerce and the Province of Naples branch of IACP: most of them concern maintenance of the existing buildings, developing services linked to the houses. The programme foresees construction of only about 1000 new apartments, but about the same number will be renovated and restructured, also using innovative — although contested (Lo Piccolo & Schilleci, 2005) — forms of participation, like the so-called Quarter contracts, a Local Development Partnership Programme.

The actions initiated by the Naples IACP do not directly concern immigrants: this is partially due to the low public profile of the phenomenon (the 'social visibility' of immigrants' presence in the city) and also by a colour-blind approach, following a formal principle of non-discrimination. In the city the interventions are in the locations shown in Table 5.

If we look at the location of the IACP housing interventions in the table, as far as the relationship between housing policies and the extent of immigration is concerned, there does not seem to be any relationship, as there are other quarters where the percentages of new citizens are much higher. In this complex framework the most significant programme is in the Northern area of Naples. In this area social housing accounts for 20% of the total: there are about 8500 apartments owned by IACP, while the total population is about 182,000 people. This area is on the Northern administrative limits of Naples city and includes the quarters of Miano, S.Pietro a Patierno, Secondigliano, Chiaiano, Piscinola and Scampia. This part of the city has very special characteristics due to its role of boundary line between the central and historic part of the city and the provincial

Table 5. Housing policies in Naples quarters and incidence of immigrants

Name of intervention	Quarter	Population	Immigrants	% immigrants/ Population
IACP Area	Soccavo	46,347	1,104	2.38
North Naples Area	Miano	25,946	113	0.44
North Naples Area	Scampia	39,125	297	0.76
North Naples Area	Piscinola	28,002	433	1.55
North Naples Area	Secondigliano	44,180	276	0.62
Rione San Francesco	San Carlo Arena	70,257	1,597	2.27
Largo Caterina Volpicelli	Avvocata	32,778	338	1.03
Rione S. Gaetano	Miano	25,946	113	0.44

Source: See footnote 21.

area. The huge presence of social houses in this area is due to the long-term policy (started in the 1950s) of building social houses in the marginal and peripheral areas of the city.[24]

The long-term established housing policy in this area maintains — due also to the crime and social problems of the resident population — a predominance in the City Council planning agenda, and it helps explain why the new social challenges rising from the immigrants' presence and the consequent new social and cultural composition of the local society is partially ignored. Despite that, in the complex framework of policies provided to improve social condition in the Northern Naples area, one of the most interesting regards the attempt to integrate the Rom people into the community; this policy developed particular solutions, especially concerning housing questions.

In Naples the situation of the Rom settlement is very complex. There are various settlements in the urban area; only one of these is legal and managed by the Rom Office, the others are unofficial with no institutional relations with local authorities. The settlements are in very different situations but all are in very marginal parts of the city. The legal settlement is in the Secondigliano quarter, near the jail and in a very inaccessible place. The other settlements are in the Scampia quarter near the well-known 'Vele' social housing buildings and the major road called 'Asse Mediano', symbols of physical and social marginality (Magatti, 2007); these settlements constitute a polarization of the Rom presence in the North area of Naples.

It is clear that not all the Rom people are to be considered as foreigners. It is also noticeable that there are not official data concerning the nationality of Roms in Italy and that for the gipsy people nationality is not a significant fact. However, in the particular case of the two quarters considered, there are some studies (Fumo, 2007) that quantify the origin of Rom people: in Scampia there are 77 Serbians, while in Secondigliano there are 553 Serbians and Bosnians. The interest regarding the policies for the Rom people is to be found not only in the immigration question but mostly in the self-ghettoization question and in the capability of urban policies to manage this. In the context of a global lack of specific policies for immigrants, the study of this very particular question helps to understand in what way these extreme housing questions can be useful for those policies related to immigrants, especially if we look at the participatory approach that was established.

The story of this process shows a way to manage a highly conflictual situation, which has been experienced up to the present time and which unfortunately provoked recent violent and discriminatory reactions, for example the arson attacks on Rom camps in

May 2008. Even though it is a very particular case regarding only a small group within the foreign population, the constitution of the '*Ufficio Rom e patti per la cittadinanza*' (Rom office and citizenship agreements) has an important role in the awareness and knowledge of the Rom presence in the city.[25] In 2000 a new initiative started promoting cooperation between the local authorities and the Rom community. The first action promoted by the new office[26] was the institution of an agreement — the so-called Citizenship agreement with the Rom community — that could be freely entered into by Rom living in regular settlements. This agreement concerned the mutual commitments between the Rom people and the local authorities: the commitments by the Rom were linked to the need to enrol Rom children into the Italian school system, while the official commitments regarded assistance in housing and the acknowledgement of civil rights. The other important action, due to this policy, was the institution in 2000 of a regular Rom settlement: in this area a very innovative management strategy was developed in relation to housing. In fact the Rom settlement, consisting of 92 trailers for about 800 people, not only answered the Rom housing problem but also assure an observation point on the phenomenon. So an office was set up in the settlement that not only deals with services to gipsies but also updates the demographic and social data. The services provided by the office regard: health, legal assistance, social problems and mediation with the local community; so the office became a focal point and an interface for the Rom community.

Moreover, the Naples City Council has found a way to improve living conditions in the unofficial settlement by trying to establish a regularization process: the strategy chosen to reach this target was a participation process that involved Rom people in a guided self-construction programme. The programme was entrusted to 'Ingegneri Senza Frontiere' (an Engineering non-profit organization) and to the School of Engineering of the Naples University (Fumo, 2007); the process encountered many difficulties because of the cultural differences between the project management and the Rom, and the results of this attempt were quite ambiguous with very different evaluations.[27] This happened because the programme only envisaged projects that did not become fixed buildings; so, from one point of view, the lack of any real result in building and in providing primary infrastructure is considered a big failure of the programme. From another perspective, the method expressed by the programme can be considered quite innovative, because it tried to start a process that involved the Rom people in the construction of their own houses, a concept close to their own culture.

The housing question of the Rom is only a little part of the more complex framework that involves other immigrants and the local population who live in marginal condition. The Rom case also reveals very particular characteristics in terms of the effort involved in finding a solution; but the process of active listening can be considered as a good starting point from which to analyse other realities.

In this light, and in addition to the work of the IACP, other policies in Naples concern the issue of the rising number of immigrants. As already noticed, the immigrants' presence is more 'socially visible' in some quarters of the historic centre. In the peculiar housing typology of the 'Bassi',[28] in the 'Spanish Quarters' area of the Montecalvario quarter, research undertaken in 2004 (Sepe, 2008; Laino, 2008) found more than 200 ground floor small housing units that were inhabited in overcrowded conditions by more than 800 immigrants of about 18 different countries of origin, with an average rate of 3.13 individuals for unit.

In this regard, a mention must be made of the S.I.ReNa project, in the 'Spanish Quarters'. The S.I.ReNa consortium is a NGO partnership primarily composed of the Naples City Council and the local provincial Builders' Association; the consortium promotes a

programme to restore and restructure communal parts of buildings and has already issued — from 2002 to the present day — three notices of competitions for contributions to private investments. It should be noted that these policies — although not officially devoted to immigrants' housing demands — directly concern immigration issues, as they investigate the phenomenon by direct surveys, thus evaluating the situation in depth and considering aspects not included in official accounts. The outcome of the survey is noticeable in terms of numbers, with a survey on the use of ground floors showing, within the 33 blocks studied, a considerable number of immigrants. In particular, in the 132 ground floor flats ('Bassi') surveyed, there were 31 immigrant families and 67 Neapolitan ones (Laino, 2003, 2008). Therefore, for all such ground floor apartments of the area studied, immigrants account for 31.6% of the total, which is a considerable percentage. The study reveals a significant presence of immigrants in a central area of the city, already highly dependent on policies for social assistance. Although the presence of immigrants is deeply evaluated and analysed in the S.I.Re.Na. surveys, where it is also considered as an opportunity in order to maintain the social *mixité* of the place and to avoid future process of gentrification, an analysis of the notices of competitions for contributions issued by the S.I.Re.Na. consortium reveals no direct reference to the increase of immigrants in the area in question.

Conclusions

In the scenarios described in this paper, the analysis of the changes considered is restricted to the increasing population of ethnic minorities in the contemporary city, due to recent international migrations. According to the above described changes and to more general data on population movements, in the two considered cities the new planning approaches and the related initiatives move towards a sort of 'sustainable' approach: growth is no more a significant issue and more attention and interest are towards 'inner' transformations (historical centres, regeneration of inner declining areas). Nevertheless, recent planning policies in Naples and Palermo do not entirely consider some implications of the above described demographic (and social) changes, as in many other European contexts which are characterized by more mature and stable migration flows (Friedmann, 1995; Ratcliffe, 1998; Thomas, 2000). In this particular context, the processes of transformation and initiatives which Palermo and Naples have witnessed in the last 15 years are interestingly characterized by similarity and difference. The observation of what takes place in those local contexts — which are characterized, at the same time, by elements of marginality and innovation — may be useful in the way they highlight unconventional considerations about tasks, potential and perspectives on planning and significant urban policies.

 Despite the social and economic disadvantages of the considered large cities in Southern Italy, which, however, did not stop migration flows, the ethnic composition of the new sector of the population and their spatial distribution primarily depends on:

- History of migration
- Job opportunities of the local market
- Structure and spatial distribution of the autochthonous population
- Availability and characteristics of the housing stock
- General (and consolidated) planning policies
- Time-gap between general planning policies (housing included) and (eventual) immigrant-oriented policies.

The combination of the above mentioned causes deeply influences and explains the above described phenomena and puts more emphasis on the degree of 'visibility' of the newcomers in the urban scene. Their 'visibility' is also a primary element for influencing (or not) planning policies. The comparison between the two cases of Naples and Palermo helps to understand and analyse the intersection of the above mentioned factors.

Despite differences in the spatial distribution, experiences of immigration in Naples and Palermo have been broadly similar. Both cities exemplify, in different ways, the urban problems found right across Southern Italy. The demographic trends investigated in this study show in both cases a decrease in the population of the inner areas and the cities as a whole, with an increase in the overall population of the metropolitan area and surrounding municipalities.

In this regard, a first lesson learned concerns the necessity of a reformulation of administrative boundaries (districts and quarters) at the City Council scale, in order to analyse and assess the contemporary demographic trends and the new ethnic and social composition. This reformulation has to primarily consider the increasing complexity of a fragmented urban population, in order to help researcher in the field and allow the promotion of related policies. The comparison between Naples and Palermo indicates that where this reformulation does not occur (in the case of Naples), social and planning policies devoted to the challenges of the new demographic structure of the city are less and less efficient, and even inconsistent.

Within this general common framework, the many different situations of the immigrants in the two cities have been analysed in detail. An assessment of the new role immigrants are playing in Palermo shows to some degree a more mature stage of the phenomenon and a long-term intent which is still not evident in Naples. Undoubtedly housing and housing policies, given the particular situations of the two regional capitals, are the most valid fields for comparison. These policies allow us to evaluate the tentative immigration policies in Naples just as much as the more mature and structured situation in Palermo. In addition, especially in Palermo, it is important to evaluate the immigrants' role in the different work sectors and, more specifically, in the trade sector. The policies that specifically affect the immigrant communities reflect the different degrees of immigrant consolidation in the two cities and also the levels of public perception of the phenomenon. In the case of Palermo, while there is still a serious shortage of specific services to cater for the requirements of the newcomers, the policies implemented show an attempt to improve the quality of management in relation to policies on immigration. A case in point is the 'Agenzia multietnica' (multi-ethnic agency) which assists businesses run by foreign citizens, a particular kind of business development agency.

The comparison of the two cities highlights the role of immigrants' social visibility on one hand, and — on the other — the influence of the time and space gap (or coincidence) between general and immigrant-oriented policies. In the case of Palermo, the coincidence of a long-time established (although slow) policy for the renewal of the historic centre (Lo Piccolo, 1996) and the spatial concentration of immigrants in the same area were to a certain extent in favour of a policy of recognition.

In the case of Naples, the predominance in the planning and political debate of a broad policy for the peripheral areas — following the earthquake of 1980 and the consequent housing development — did not correspond to immigrants' needs and locations, and hence their spatial distribution has not been in favour of their 'social visibility'. When and where this occurs, a higher degree of sensitivity is registered, although it is also provoked by the emergency condition of a highly conflictual situation. In Naples, the

analysed policies highlight the management of a particular aspect of the immigration phenomenon, the case of the Rom, where the actions — proposed in particular by the Rom Office and the 'citizenship agreements' co-ordinated by 'Opera Nomadi' — attempted to operate organically in bringing together the newly settled Rom and the local community, despite a recent regressive national trend in the political and social debate where the 'fear of the other' progressively rises.[29]

All these elements — the social visibility, the spatial conditions allowing the rising of groups and communities, the pre-existence of established planning policies — are even more evident if we look at the case of the historic centre, where also the availability of housing and job opportunities play a vital role. Despite different levels of spatial concentration and physical decay, in both Naples and Palermo immigrants share a similar approach in their preference for the historic centre: in both cases this can be seen as settlement in the only marginal areas available. Immigrants, by force of circumstances, 'choose' to settle in those parts of the city in which the natives no longer find it acceptable to live. To simplify greatly the dynamics of immigrant settlement choices, they reflect the way employment is found: just as immigrants find work doing jobs that natives no longer consider, so too they find housing, similarly unacceptable to locals.

The decay of some inner urban areas has, in the past, brought about a decrease in the value of property and rents, despite their central location. According to this, immigrant communities and other 'minority' groups (e.g. students or unemployed people) have chosen to settle in those areas for precisely these reasons of low-cost housing and location. In recent years, initiatives for the revitalization of the historic centres and other inner areas have been taken, in the overall historic centre in Palermo and just in some parts of it in Naples. Doubts are raised about the survival of these communities, which risk being swept aside by redevelopment which will substantially change the appearance, structure and function of those areas. In the near future, the historic centres and the other inner urban areas will be the contested terrain of the next round of urban redevelopment, the remaining frontier.

Palermo, in a series of policies begun at the end of the 1990s and the start of the new millennium, put in place the conditions that would transform a potential risk (introduction of new ethnic groupings to the social fabric) into a real opportunity which has contributed greatly to a regeneration of the economic life in the historic centre. In recent years new policies have accelerated a process of gentrification, with a series of interventions which, if not redressed, will inevitably result in expulsion of the immigrant communities. Naples does not have a concentration of immigrants such as would have a regenerating effect to be assessed, nor has its historic centre seen a decrease in population comparable to that of Palermo. Nevertheless, the presence of immigrants in central areas does highlight depopulation in some marginal areas and especially — within what could be termed a vertical hierarchy (Laino, 2001) — perpetuates the use of the typically Neapolitan ground floor apartments, the so-called Bassi.

Shaw (2005) individuates four factors that can be considered local limits to gentrification in order to allow a more equitable approach and to ensure the protection of low-income residents:

- The type and quality of housing stock
- The rate of owner-occupation
- The presence of embedded local communities
- The progressive agenda of local governments

In Naples and Palermo, despite the differences in the spatial presence of ethnic communities and in the distribution of owner-occupation — not to talk about progressive political agendas at the local level — some common elements can be found, starting from the nature of the historical housing stock. In this regard, the well-established Italian planning debate on historical centres and their preservation can become a crucial element for the survival of ethnic groups in inner urban areas and a potential strong argument in order to ensure a more equitable (and culturally mixed) composition of the urban population.

In more general terms, a crucial aspect which was considered in relation to the housing question is the guiding principle behind the urban planning involved: in both cases the planning policies implemented a strategy of zero growth, which undoubtedly led to increased speculation in the housing market. In this sense, the particular ownership structure found in Naples only accentuated the weakness seen in Italy at a national level. The scarcity of new construction in social housing can be traced to both local planning and national policies. According to this, those planning policies, which can be described as 'sustainable' (zero growth), do not consider social sustainability (i.e. social inclusion); but they could in the near future, with a double mission: preservation of historical values and of social (and cultural) *mixité*.

The paper used some analyses of the immigrants' distribution and characteristics of housing problems as elements of discussions of the changes in urban social structure. Increased attention to the role of social public housing is consequently fundamental, especially if we consider that in Italy the housing system and the effective living requirements of the population have branched off on quite separate paths. This split involves both the 'traditional' components of housing needs and the new strata of requirements arising from the above described demographic and social changes.

Despite the regressive national trends on housing policies, immigrants' inclusion and equal opportunities, a reversal at the local level is even possible: nevertheless, if the City Council administrations are not able to organize effective housing, implement social policies and launch co-ordinated programmes for preserving and reusing their estate so as to encourage partnership programmes in order to support the most disadvantaged groups, such a process is quite unlikely to start. To attain this goal, significant public intervention is needed, connected to a stringent control and safeguarding policy on speculative plots, while avoiding discriminatory policies. As Shaw (2005:183) highlights, the timing of these interventions is critical: 'the time for progressive interventions is in these early stages, as it is at this point that they are most effective and realistic; secure and affordable housing for low- to middle-income groups creates conditions for a community politics that can resist the inequitable distributive effects of urban social restructuring'. Such considerations are not simply a matter of updating or revising conventional approaches but rather a radical rethinking of public planning policies.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. The national-based data is supplied by Istat (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica) and the Caritas Migrantes reports on immigration in Italy. Data concerning local structures comes from the Registry Office and the AUSL (Azienda Unità Sanitaria Locale) reports.

2. As highlighted by Vicari (2001:105), 'southern poverty has a specific profile. (. . .) Poverty is not produced as a consequence of the break-up of family ties; to the contrary, it is within the family and through the exchange and sharing of a rich variety of goods and services that survival is achieved. Second, they are poor because the lack of regular jobs forces them to rely on the informal economy as a source of income, an income which is by and large irregular and low. (. . .) Third, the Italian welfare system does not provide adequate support to families. (. . .) These differences, however, do not make southern Italian poverty less exclusionary or less permanent'.

3. This data refers to 2005. All of the data relates to that year and comes from Di Liberto and Mulè (2006). Unless otherwise specified, all data are from the above mentioned source.

4. Analysis of quantity is problematic for several reasons. The ISTAT, Questura and the Registry Office issue the most reliable data. The ISTAT data only cover those immigrants who obtained a lawful residence permit in compliance with law 943/1986 but do not indicate the place of residence.

5. From a general point of view, Palermo behaves like other big Italian cities having a high number of ethnic groups, as opposed to smaller cities which tend to 'specialize' in drawing some nationalities rather than others. As a consequence, if on a regional level about 80% of non-EC immigrants come from Central and Northern Africa, in Palermo the figure is lower than 60%.

6. The data is supplied by the Registry Office, for a necessity of coherence between different system of counting people and also because of a different amount of data that are considered each year.

7. Occasional regularization of the residence permits of illegal immigrants. In fact, most of the debate and political action — especially during the 1980s and the first half of 1990s — was around the issue of accepting the newcomers and regulating this process, without any long-term view and policies regarding the social exclusion of immigrants.

8. In this case we refer to the ISTAT data because of the comparison of the urban and regional scales; this is also why we refer to the year 2001, which was the year of the last general census of the population.

9. An interview with a Tunisian restaurateur resident in Palermo for 25 years illustrates this aspect. In fact, the story that he recounts regards the fact that 25 years ago the Tunisian community was relatively small, with a main business in buying goods in Italy and resell them in Tunisia; with the changing value of money, this work become unprofitable, so the immigrants changed their approach, becoming workers (Leone *et al.*, 2006).

10. The church of S. Paolino dei Giardinieri in the Capo district, which was in a state of decay and not used for devotional purposes — like many others in the historic centre — was restored with public funds and given to the Muslim community for its religious and cultural activities (Lo Piccolo, 2000).

11. Under Don Meli's guidance, in fact, ethnic communities were allowed to attend other confessional rites (Lo Piccolo, 2000, 2003). The priest who replaced Meli forsook this very 'civic' practice. So the informal co-presence of a little mosque and of a Hindu temple, which were arranged in some spaces adjoining the Catholic Church, was forbidden.

12. These elements were highlighted in many interviews with immigrants running shops or restaurants in Palermo, such as a Bangladesh restaurateur who recounted his life story. The restaurateur told us that, after his work in Germany and his wanderings around Europe looking for other job opportunities, he found Palermo a good place to reinvest what he had earned in his life (Leone *et al.*, 2006).

13. The data we are considering are for the year 2003 and were provided by the research group led by Ignazia Pinzello, Dipartimento Città e Territorio, University of Palermo.

14. We refer to the Luigi Piccinato Master Plan of Naples (1939) and to the Piccinato 'Piano comprensoriale' (Sub-Regional plan) of the early 1960s.

15. These data are for 2005; all other data also refer to that year and comes from Milone (2006). Unless otherwise specified, all the data refer to that document and come from the '*Registry Office*' system.

16. For example, in the Scampia and Secondigliano quarters there are only 500 immigrants officially registered; as the above mentioned official data consider all the foreign population, these data really underestimate the true number of immigrants: in fact, if we consider the unofficial data provided by the 'Opera Nomadi' (Rom) organization, there are in fact 1600 Rom living in the two quarters. This data comes out from the work of a particular office that works with and is located in the Rom settlement (which mainly consists of Eastern Europe migrants) and that includes in its statistics — in accordance with its mission — those who do not have legal status as citizens, or who do not hold a resident's permit. The difference between 1600 real, but unofficial, Rom people and 500 official Rom people shows how much the phenomenon of immigration is underestimated.

17. The name comes from the historical development of the place. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the Spanish viceroy Vincenzo da Toledo developed in the area a high-density residential settlement in order to quarter the Spanish troops. Given the nature of this massive military residential area, the housing stock and the urban pattern were characterized by high density, residential use of ground floors, simple typologies, small and overcrowded housing units, regular and narrow streets (De Seta, 2004). Due to their historical origin, the 'Spanish Quarters' represent up to now one of the most fascinating as well as deprived place in Naples.

18. The difference in the timing of the registration of the phenomena between Palermo and Naples is due to different times of local application of the law, and in particular by a local delay in Naples; this appears clearly in a comparison with rest of the Neapolitan hinterland, which had a corresponding peak in the same year as Palermo.

19. The islands in question are Capri, Ischia and Procida, and they all have an incidence of immigrants of about 4.5%. Due to the overwhelming tourist activities and economy, they developed quite particular conditions.

20. Castelvolturno is in the provincial administrative area of Caserta, but it is well connected with Naples, by the main urban motorway, built in the 1970s.

21. Data supplied by the 'Social Report 2007' of the Naples' provincial branch of the IACP (Social Housing Institute).

22. These facts make clear the failure of the law no. 431/1998 which cut off the so-called equocanone (fixed rents), shifting all responsibility for housing prices to the law of market (Caudo, 2007a). Nowadays it is clear that it is important to restore some policies regarding the cost of housing.

23. A recent (2007) law proposal regarding the housing question (titled: *Una nuova politica per la casa*, that is 'For a new housing policy'), which was presented by the previous centre-left national government, mentioned immigrants as marginal social category. In this proposal, signed by eminent Italian planners like Bernardo Rossi-Doria, Vezio De Lucia, Alessandro Dal Piaz, Federico Oliva and many others, attention is focused on the description of the phenomenon and on the main strategies to augment the stock of social housing. These strategies concern most of all the reuse and renewal of buildings that already exist.

24. The building of the Northern area started in the 1960s in a lot of different locations in the Northern part of Naples. But for different reasons most of the building and, more particularly, allocation of the units, did not take place until the 1980s, when a major earthquake transformed a difficult situation into a dramatic one. The rebuilding process after the earthquake in 1980 was characterized by an organic plan called 'Plan for suburban areas', drawn up in 1979, now considered from many points of view as a best practice (Ciccone, 1984; Petrella, 1989), for the first time preferring a strategy of reuse to new construction. The emergency due to the earthquake also created a rapid social change in the Northern area of Naples causing a marginalization process in this area. Thus, after the earthquake, there was the biggest concentration of ready-to-use social houses. While the 'Plan for Suburban Areas' aimed to reuse and restructure the old 'Casali' (rural villages) that were around the historic centre, new parts of the city were built, such as the quarter of Scampia. These areas are now considered as some of the more marginal in the Neapolitan context, the Scampia quarter in particular is considered a symbol of this.

25. Although it was set up in 2000, the story of the Rom office started some years previously, in 1998, with a tragic event that involved the local and the Rom communities and brought the Rom to the public attention. The story started with a murder of a young girl by a Rom from Bergamo and with the violent reaction of the autochthonous community. At the same time the construction of new infrastructure required the removal of an unauthorized Rom settlement.

26. The office works in close collaboration with the non-profit organization (Opera Nomadi) directed by Marco Nieli. This organization had been working in the territory since 1994 but after the integration with the office in 2000, its interventions became much more effective.

27. Considering the very important needs of the Rom population in the unofficial settlements, the buildings are in very poor condition, but there is also a lack of primary infrastructure like potable water and sanitation.

28. These ground floor flats are typical of Naples; they generally have just one entrance, which is the only source of daylight and cannot be entered from other parts of the building.

29. The right-wing National Government — which won the last elections also exploiting a diffuse sense of fear and insecurity in the population — introduced, in order to prevent crime, some racial discriminatory measures against Rom people and immigrants.

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