

# Common Goods and Public Values in Changing Inter-Cultural Contexts in Europe. The “Piazzola” Market, Bologna, Italy.

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## Abstract

The general objective of the study is the research of the dynamics and the present underlying acting drivers of social interaction in “culturally heterogeneous contexts” as such created during the last decades in diverse societies of the world by migration movements.

The field work was done in the weekly market of “La Piazzola” in Bologna city, which for six centuries has been an important space of economic, but also social and cultural inter-exchange.

The theoretical perspective of *common and public goods* was used as analytical frame in which the main hypothesis of the work is built on: *The market is a common good<sup>2</sup> of public property<sup>3</sup> with an historical value. As a common good, the good functioning and public value of the market is based in an important level of collective action (mainly among sellers), built on trust and on the presence of well known and consensual rules. The increasing cultural heterogeneity among the sellers in the market demands more social and group investment on communication and consensus building.*

The research was made as pos degree dissertation. The field work was based on different strategies: “participatory research”<sup>4</sup>, a survey to the vendors,<sup>5</sup> deep interview to key informants and an analysis of the different legal instruments (immigration law and its changes, market regulations). Its main objective was to document the social and cultural heterogeneity present in this space, but also: the level of interaction among individuals of the same and different nationalities, the hierarchy present in their relations, the level of trust, the knowledge of the rules and laws ruling the market, and the influence of the legal status<sup>6</sup> on the rest of the mentioned variables.

The researched produced different findings, among the most relevant:

- The knowledge and clarity of the *rules in place*, their effective implementation and the participation of those directly affected by them in their adaptation to changing conditions are fundamental elements for the governability of *common*

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<sup>2</sup> Following Ostrom’s definition of *common goods* (or services) as such goods from which exclusion of potential users is difficult and/or costly, and whose use has at the same time a high level of rivalry. *Public good* on their turn are defined as those with also difficulties of exclusion, but low level of rivalry. Ostrom also points out that different the types of goods are “ideal types” and that public goods may behave as common goods (this is having increasing problems of appropriation and provision) as they get increasingly crowded.

<sup>3</sup> Goods, regardless of their “economic nature” (common, public, private or tool goods) can be subject to *private, public or collective property*.

<sup>4</sup> while I worked for more than a year in one of the “stand” of the market and in a coffee shop close to “la Piazzola”

<sup>5</sup> Applied to a sample of vendors stratified by national origin. The main nationalities in “La Piazzola” are: Italians, Pakistanis, Chinese, and Bangladeshis,

<sup>6</sup> Legal or illegal immigrant.

goods, including those that produce *public services*, as has for long been the case of La Piazzola Market.

- In contexts of rapid change, as such created by migration flux and work and commerce des-regulation, cultural but also social heterogeneity tend to rapidly increase, creating conditions of: social vulnerability, loose of social capital and deterioration of common and public goods and services.
- Interaction and participatory rule crafting are possible, and present among limited sub-groups in “La Piazzola”, but require conscious individual and group efforts as well as policy support.

**Key words:** “*social interaction*”, “*culturally heterogeneous contexts*”, “*common goods and public values*”, “*institutional weaknesses*”.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to analyze the patterns of interaction among people with different cultural backgrounds mostly recent migrants, in public urban spaces in Northern Italy. The fieldwork was carried on during 2006-2007, developed based on different methodological techniques: participant observation and in deep interviews. Theoretical and historic research was also carried on.

Conditions of “co-presence” between people of different cultural backgrounds were studied through the case study of the weekly market of “La Piazzola” located in downtown Bologna. This is a traditional market with more than five centuries of existence, with a strong cultural value, it is part of the self-image of the city and in different ways also a reflection of the history and changes of Bologna and its people.

The central research problem was the identification and understanding of the factors that influence and shape “multicultural interaction”, as well as the different tendencies leading towards cooperation or conflict among individuals belonging to different cultural groups in the space of the market. According with this orientation i analyzed: a) the type, quality and frequency of interaction of individuals belonging to different cultural contexts; b) the factors that influence interaction; c) the strategies developed by the individuals in everyday interaction; d) the rules that structure interactions and strategies, and the dynamics of their functioning.

The framework of this research was provided by the theoretical and methodological approach of the *IAD Framework* (Institutional Analysis and Development framework -IAD), based on its turn in the wider multi-disciplinary theory known as “New Institutionalism” . The IAD framework was a valuable heuristic tool that provided a systemic approach that enables the understanding of interaction among individuals, centered on the conditions that facilitate or limit cooperation; *IAD Framework* also takes into consideration the usage and governance schemes of different types of goods (public, common, private) present in social interactions. Finally the use of this

framework permitted the research to develop an assessment of the processes of change of social spaces and practices, their level of adaptability and the impacts of change; and the ways in which institutions (understood as prescriptions used by individuals to organize repetitive and structured interactions) influence their incentives and behavior.

## **THE CONTEXT AND THE PROBLEM**

Social history can be understood as the inter-section of multiple particular stories and dynamics of interaction of human groups; each single process is the result of particular circumstances that shape the action of participants. The identity of a group is always produced through diverse references, while group limits are also the result of various interacting factors. All groups present internal similarities and differences that acquire or loose relevance depending on different dynamics of interaction. Different social groups elaborated through their own historical processes, symbolic systems that shape perception, interpretation and behavior. These systems organize interactions and give them cultural meaning. Structures of meaning are historic and cumulative, they are expressions of the stories that have produced them, but in order to stay functional they are far from static: they are constantly re-interpreted and applied to the (traditional and new) circumstances of every day life of group members, to their interactions and goals, and to the limits that individuals face.

Interactions of large scale have been present in the world since centuries ago, but during a prolonged period of time and until recently, contacts among members of different cultures were limited by difficulties of movement and communication. The progressive advance of technology and knowledge the contact among different people of the world increased, mostly driven by economic and military interests. The encounters of different cultures have occurred through processes of conquest and domination that imposed hierarchical and discriminatory relations of cultural diversity.

The technological revolution of the last century, applied to transports and communication promoted new types of interactions of increasing intensity. Today's world is characterized by a permanent traffic of ideas, people and objects; contacts among different regions have exponentially multiplied, and even perceptions of space and time have changed "people circulate with their own meanings and meanings circulate, even without people" (A. Appandurai 1996: 10). Limits of cultural and group identity are overtaken by everyday realities and are subject of new interpretations. Some times they become more rigid, sometimes they weaken or disappear. In contemporary dynamics of encounter, confrontation and interexchange among a plurality of local cultures, changing meanings and symbols become or stay meaningful as they are used in social life.

Globalization process interlinks economic, political, social and cultural realities, incorporating different regions of the world in unequal manners. Globalization does not generate homologation as much as it creates interconnections. Diffuse global symbols

are re-interpreted in each particular context. Global processes are signed by strong social, economic and demographic differences and imbalances. As an economic phenomenon globalization is characterized by the prominence of financial capital over other forms of economic investment and activities, and by the global integration of commerce based on the generalization of transnational schemes of production, commerce and consumption. While these strong tendencies of unification are present, globalization creates also new forms of inequality. The old colonial powers evolved in today's a progressively "westernization" of the world extended through the diffusion of a cultural pattern based on diffuse symbols and models, managed by the global markets, and the mass media and imposed as consumption ideals.

The strongest impacts of the demands of economic and growth and global production have been suffered by the weakest classes of the world, whose living conditions have rapidly deteriorated; massive migration fluxes involving the lives of millions of people is one of the main consequences. People move in search of new income opportunities, in spite of the varied adversities they face. Now days the emergence of transnational spaces is part not only of the lives of immigrants, but of the broader experience of western societies. Globalization, marginalization and immigration are the contextual conditions of the field of research of this work.

From the XVI century until the first decades of the XX century, Europe was the main region of origin of international migratory fluxes, during the last decades of this long period Italy was one of the countries with the highest migration rates. Since the immediate years after the end of World War I, countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, France and Switzerland rapidly became lands of immigration, largely due to policies that aim to attract immigrants in order to satisfy the labor demand of their growing economies. Immigration fluxes used to come from Southern European countries, as well as their old colonies, most of which became independent countries during this period. Immigrants were mainly young men with short migration projects, while governments considered immigration as a temporary phenomenon.

During the 1970 different socio-economic changes affecting European economies reshaped migration tendencies. The increase of oil prices, and the resultant economic crisis were addressed with technological innovation and decentralization of many production processes to countries with lower labor costs. On the other hand the demographic structure of local labor offer recovered its balance during the post-war period when women also entered massively to the labor market. In many countries foreign labor were perceived as less needed, meanwhile groups of originally temporary foreign workers became an structural element or European an societies, a component of both, their labor market, but also of their demographic structure, in the context of the marked ageing of the populations of European origin.

Those countries with the highest industrial development introduced restrictive immigration policies, that proved ineffective to stop migration fluxes, but modified it substantially, criminalizing illegal immigration. Nevertheless migration has continuously increased (including more countries expelling emigrants as well as new countries of

immigration destiny) due to the sustained demand of cheap labor in the industrialized world, as well as the increasing dependence on migrant remittances of Third world societies.

The demographic and social profile of migrants have also changed: gender composition is now more mixed, permanent stay is the dominant migratory project, while labor conditions and public services have deteriorated in the European countries of destiny. These processes have led to conditions of prolonged “co-presence” of people of diverse nationalities, creating culturally heterogeneous societies, with a varied presence of identities, languages, religions and “structures of cultural interpretation”. European societies tend to remark the various types of difference in practical and symbolic ways; cultural differences are not the only, neither the most relevant type of difference in “multicultural societies”, in general terms migrants enter those societies as poor who look for and get the jobs of the lower level.

Migration transition in Italy started in the 1980, much more recently than in most of Western European countries. The particular structure of Italian economy, characterized by a large presence of the small enterprise and the informal sector and a marked territorial fragmentation, are determinant factors of the ways in which migrants enter Italian labor market and society. In spite of these conditions, immigration has become rapidly an structural socio-economic and demographic component of the country. Legal migrants in Italy were 500,000 in 1990 and more than 3 million at the beginning of 2007<sup>7</sup>, more than 6% of the total population<sup>8</sup>. Foreigners living in Italy come from a wide variety of countries, have a diverse gender composition and also diverse periods of permanence in the country. Some fluxes show a progressive tendency to become stable and institutionalized.

The response of Italian institutions has been slow and inadequate to address the real needs of the labor market. They neither have been able to effectively implement the existent norms, recurring constantly to “emergency measures” that have led to an increasing illegality of immigration and growing difficulties for both, migrants and Italian society. On the other hand the illegal status of a large group of migrants is shaping and biasing current perception of the migrants among Italians.

These phenomena lead to a wide range of questions, the research worked with a number of questions that I consider critical for contemporary social experiences: which are the most relevant criteria for identification and differentiation among individuals? How are these criteria built? How and when are they applied? How do they affect everyday life of different groups, in particular when individuals are perceived as “different”

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<sup>7</sup> Based on Istat (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica) data there were 2,938,922 resident foreigners in 01/01/2007. Caritas report for 2007 estimated this presence between 3,590,000 y 3,690,000..

<sup>8</sup> During the last years migration in Italy is characterized by: an increasing growth rate, diversification of the regions of origin (25% come from other European countries members of the European Union, 25% from European but not UE countries, 22% from Africa, 19% from Asia, 9% America: Istat 1/1/2007). Migrant population tends to concentrate in Northern Italy, where there is a persistent demand of labor, Migrations tends to become permanent and migrants increasingly seek access to participation and social services.

share social spaces? Under which circumstances do individuals of different national origins and cultural identities interact? Are there factors that can contribute to build shared perceptions/experiences among individuals perceived as different? Which type of strategies do individuals implement to interact and solve conflicts? Under which conditions can “different” individuals cooperate? Contemporary European societies are frequently defined as “multicultural” but still there are unresolved questions about: the relevance of –real or presumed- cultural differences for individuals’ everyday life; the ways in which these differences affect quotidian interactions; the different conditions under which differences acquire or loose relevant.

These questions need to be addressed and solved on through empirical work in particular contexts. The general objective of this work is to contribute to the understanding of quotidian interactions of individuals in spaces of convergence of people coming from different regions of the world. The particular chosen case is an historic public market in Bologna, where international interaction has taken place for no more than a decade. It is to be said that street commerce (legal and illegal) is one of the economic activities with a highest presence of foreigners.

Weekly markets held in “piazzas” (square) in Italy constitute somehow extraordinary, but recurrent events. They are public spaces of ancient origin and public value. Historically they had a central place in the life of cities, as places of commercial inter-exchanges but also as sources of opportunities of social encounter and information sharing. Numerous networks of interaction and communication were and still are present in traditional markets as privileged places of encounter and exchange of individuals and objects of diverse origins. Markets conformed in this sense a type of “neutral spaces”, whose functioning relied on shared rules. In spite of the fact that traditional markets have loosen economic and social importance in Europe during the last decades, they still benefit from the presence of numerous costumers and visitors.

### **“LA PIAZZOLA” AS AN “ACTION ARENA”**

New Institutionalism approach divides the analysis in three main components: action arenas, factors with influence on them, and the outcomes produced by interactions held within these arenas. “Action arenas” are conceptual unities constituted by actors, the relations they held and the spaces of interactions or action situations that occur within arenas. In each action arenas there are concurrent elements of physical, social and normative nature. “La Piazzola” constitutes in this study an action arena as defined by E. Ostrom. The research of concrete situations and the analysis of the action arena was carried on without aprioristic presumptions of the existence of defined groups, or the prevalence of cultural factors in individuals interactions, trying to find out which factors acquire prominence in the practice of specific relationships.

“La Piazzola” in Bologna was chosen as a case study because it is still a traditional space of public value, as well as a place of cosmopolitan encounter. It is held each Friday and Saturday at the “Piazza VIII Agosto”. Because one of the central themes of this research is the development of strategies that individuals applied in

repetitive and prolonged interactions, the study focused on the analysis of the relationships held by the people who work in the market and weekly meet performing similar activities with similar purposes. I call this group *community* (in E. Ostrom sense) in spite of its heterogeneity and size.

The fieldwork consisted in: participatory observation of the behaviors and interactions of the individuals who worked in the market. I also applied a survey to 40% (75) of the stands present in the market, and finally, in deep interviews were carried with people working in five of them. Based on this information I defined different *models of situations*.

### ***The market as a common good.***

Following the criteria of Economics of Natural Resources, E. Ostrom proposes two general variables to classify the different types of goods: the *level of exclusion*, understood as the difficulty (or facility) to exclude potential users from the access of a resource; and the *level of rivalry*<sup>9</sup>, which refers to the level or ways in which the current use of a resource done by an individual (or a group) impacts others users' possibilities. According to this criteria E. Ostrom distinguishes four types of goods (and or services) which she proposes to think as "ideal types"<sup>10</sup>: public goods (of low level of rivalry and low level of exclusion) common goods (of high level of rivalry and low level of exclusion), tool goods (of low level of rivalry and high level of exclusion) and private goods (of high level of rivalry and high level of exclusion). Derived from their conditions of exclusion and rivalry different types of goods and particular goods, face different problems of appropriation and provision<sup>11</sup>. They have also needs of specific rules and norms that ensure that provision and appropriation needs are met and the sustainability of the resource is granted. E. Ostrom remarks an heuristic difference between *types of goods* and *types of property* that relates to the type of owner (the State, an individual or group) and to *property rights*<sup>12</sup>.

According to this framework "La Piazzola" is a complex system. It is: (a) a public good (of public property), that during the weekends holds (b) a market that seen as a whole has characteristic of a common good; and contains (c) individual stands that behave as private goods. On the other hand the market as a system provides an important common good (or service): economic activity, this is a source of employment and income. Through the research I found that the market and the economic activity it generates are differently valued by different national groups. It is gradually loosing value for Italians, who tend to be the oldest among the different national groups, and have a diminishing generation replacement. For foreigners the market gives the possibility of

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<sup>9</sup> Called in early Ostrom's works "sustractability"

<sup>10</sup> In Weber's sense of this concept.

<sup>11</sup> Related to the possibilities in which appropriation activities may impact the perspectives of a sustained resource use, and the needs to provide or invest in the maintenance /protection of the resource.

<sup>12</sup> Rights of exclusion, use, management and alienation.

access to an employment and income, even for those with illegal status, for those foreigners with more assets the market offers the possibility of an independent employment.

Among foreigners there is a considerable appropriation pressure that is expressed through the tendency to increase the prices of the stands, often leading to speculation, and a growing presence of irregular street vendors. The rights of exclusion and access are managed, in theory by the “Comune di Bologna”<sup>13</sup>, but in fact they are also distributed by non-official practices of rents and sales of the stands. Exclusion is also difficult to implement due to the nature of open space of the market that permits the presence of street vendors, the most marginalized and vulnerable group within the market (as they do not have legal rights to take part in it).

High rivalry in the market is present, even if it is considered as a group of independent unities (private stands), as long as the criteria or orientation applied by some of the owners of stands, influence –even if indirectly- the profile and prestige of the market as a whole, and in this way, have an impact on the possibilities of success of the independent stands.

Differential access to rights and assets have a determinant impact on the possibilities of individuals to benefit from their participation in the market place. Rights and assets are unequally distributed among the participants in the market. Sellers can have rights through ownership, concessions, or rent. Assets refer to the infrastructure of the stands and the value of the merchandise sold.

The assets of each stand have a direct impact in the profit gotten by their owners. Italians and Chinese are those groups with the highest access to valuable assets, while the infrastructure of the Pakistanis’ stands is more precarious and the merchandises sold there have lower quality and value.

Access to rights do not to seemed be related directly to national origin, but with the period of stay in the market: I found that the there are no foreigners who own stands or benefit from a concession; all foreigners are renters, but also 40% of the Italian present in the market are renters of the stands they use. The large majority of street vendors with no rights, and the lower assets are Senegalese.

Different groups also have different perceptions of the appropriation and provision problems and needs of the market: Italians insist in the maintenance of the quality of merchandize, that they claim is jeopardize by the offer of cheaper and lower quality merchandise in many stands owned by foreigners. Street vendors are regarded by the other groups as the major responsible of the public perception of a decaying quality of merchandises sold at “La Piazzola”. My analysis shows that appropriation and provision problems are not as much related to the official organization of the market, but with current non-regulated practices of access to the stands and the lack of regulation of the types of merchandises and their prices. This problems coincide with main social changes external to the market place: the massive arrival of immigrants in Italy and the

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<sup>13</sup> This is equivalent to a municipal government.



general tendency to de-regulate commercial activities that abolished ancient market practices such as the need to differentiate merchandises of diverse origins and qualities and the approval of an examination needed to get an official license as a seller.

A large body of research using the New Institutionalism and IAD as a framework gives multiple examples of the numerous challenges and problems faced by the efforts to build sustained and fair uses of common goods. It also shows that sustainability requires the development of agreements and consensual rules, along with the monitoring of their compliance. The accomplishment of these conditions demand high levels of social capital. In context of increasing heterogeneity and rapid social change the needed social capital tends to be insufficient and/or inadequate to develop new agreements and rules needed to face transformations of economy and society.

### ***The “community”.***

In order to characterize the “community” of people working in “La Piazzola” I used some of the criteria proposed by the *IAD framework* to evaluate the level of heterogeneity of a group, identify those factors that may get people closer or increase their perceived differences and recognize the consequences they have for their perspectives of organization. Through the field research it became evident that the community of “La Piazzola” is highly heterogeneous, but also that the differences among their members are related to different ambits. While there is a variety of national origins in the market there is a remarkable gender balance<sup>14</sup>. In relation to age structure: the average age of the whole members of the community is 39 years, and 44 among the sub-group of owners of stands, Italians are older than the rest of the participants. Differences related to hierarchy in the stand refer to the positions: owner/employee, but there are also differences among the stands, as some owners employ members of their own family, and others external employees<sup>15</sup>. Commerce is the sole source of income for the majority of the stand owners (also for street vendors), while for employee this a more variable condition<sup>16</sup>. Ownership of basic assets is unequally distributed among stand owners, and among employees.

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<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless gender balance is not present within national groups: all the Pakistanis working in the market are males (as well as 80% of the Pakistanis living in Italy), there is neither gender balance considering the positions owner-employee among the stands owned by Italians, whose employees are 70% women.

<sup>15</sup> Stand owners have vehicles and infrastructure to transport and to show merchandises, they also have a license of the Chamber of Commerce of the city, though they do not always a license for the stand. They are the first responsible of the functioning of their business (their private good) in administrative, organizational and commercial terms. There are meaningful differences among owners regarding the level of assets they own. The position of “employee” is defined by the subordinated working relationship with an owner of a stand, in the vast majority of the cases these working relationships are not based on written agreements. Employees are those who mount and dismount stands, and are also responsible of direct sales. Owners manage money and employees participation on administrative tasks and decision making depend directly on the level of trust that their employers have on them.

<sup>16</sup> Most of the employees have other type of activities during the week, and their work in the market constitutes only an extra income. The level of dependence on the income obtained in the market, strongly influences the level of effort invested in it, specially for employees.

In spite of the diverse type of difference we have already mentioned, there seem to be common values among the diverse participants in the market place related with questions of good neighboring practices. The level of understanding of the structure of the action arena is directly related with the position that individuals occupy and with the time they have taken part in it. The stability of individuals in the positions they held, as well as their expectations to maintain them, are directly related with the economic success of the commercial activities they carry on and with the access to alternative sources of income that they have. There seemed to be an scarce amount of bridging, as well as linking social capital, while bonding social capital seems to be an important factor for Pakistanis, but has a marginal importance for members of other nationalities.

### ***The rules.***

The main aspects related to the functioning of the market are ruled by particular laws. All the stands need to have a license expended by the “Comune”, even if the titular own the license and the real owner of the stand are not the same person. Apart of being ruled by official laws, the distribution of stands responds on offer and demand, and consequently on the differentiated access to financial resources.

Law is mostly implemented at a formal-administrative level, but frequently it is not applied to the real circumstances of the market place. A critical case of the discretionary implementation of the law is the practice of labor relations, ruled mainly by the interests of the stand owners and the criteria they unilaterally impose. The criteria used to regulate commercial activity depend mainly on the assets that each stand owner dispose. Laws related to financial and fiscal aspects are rarely monitored and sanctioned, and frequently violated.

Two themes related to the rules governing the market are worded to mention: on the one hand there is a formal or apparent compliance with some of the laws, but a permanent violation of others, this contradictions creates substantial ungovernability and frequent abuses of those with more power and assets over those in more need, frequently immigrants with illegal status. On the other side during the fieldwork I found a general animosity against the 1998 Law that de-regulated different aspects of commerce, imposed vertically without any consultation with the sectors that were affected. The implementation of this law occurred almost simultaneously with the moment of major migration growth in Italy, increasing the difficulties to share the space with people of different culture contributing to the trouble felt towards the presence of foreigners, often blamed of a most of the problems lived in the market, from the low quality of the merchandise to the loose of quality of the public value of the market. This attitudes on their turn difficult relationships and potential cooperation and agreement. Italians are mostly resented towards Pakistanis that in general terms have less economic capacity and whose stands have a more different profile from theirs<sup>17</sup> -

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<sup>17</sup> In general weed basic infrastructure and merchandise of low cost and quality.

## RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships among people working in different stands are generally favored by the proximity of the stands and the time they have worked in the market. Relationships depend mostly in personal attitudes and decisions and are ruled by a shared ideal of “good neighbors”. Most of these relations are limited to the level of co-presence and small functional collaborations, but in most cases relationships do not go far beyond the market place. There is no organization that groups those working in the market, not even for owners, and there are not alternative spaces of encounter of discussion.<sup>18</sup>

The closest relations are those present within the stands. In this sense I found important difference among stands: 66% of the stands are family business, and 60% of the stands owned by Italians include external employees, who are foreigners in half of the cases. The stands owned by Pakistanis are those who almost always hire external employees, who are mostly men and Muslim (Pakistanis or Bangladeshis) their relations often extend beyond the market space. All the stands owned by Chinese are family business.

Based on the analysis of four situation models, structured in different ways I conclude that:

- In relations based on hierarchy the main factor that influence “inter-cultural” relations is related to the position (owner-employee) occupied by individuals. There are no meaningful differences in the relationships among people with different national-cultural origins and those with the same nationality. In the case of foreigners legal status is a fundamental factors, as it influences the possibilities of individual change versus the need to accept abusive working conditions. Other important factor seemed to be individual external possibilities and the roll that the work in the market has in individuals’ everyday life.
- When relationships stay limited to the space of the market, but there is no hierarchical relationship involved, they are mostly influenced by personal attitudes and attributes. Cultural differences do not seem to be a fact that shape the quality of relationships when there is a language shared by participants in the interactions.
- The third type of relationship is that established among an small group of owners to “survey” the market. It is remarkable that this group includes individuals with negative attitudes towards different cultural groups (some Italians) and members of those groups (some Pakistanis), all of those involved in this type of relationship are men and stand owners, who in spite of their difference are able to cooperate in order to reach shared objectives.
- The last case of an interaction situation was observed in a coffee bar in the proximity of the market, attended mostly by people working in the market. I observed that the tendency to interact with other in that context depended more on personal characteristics than on the position. Nevertheless interactions were

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<sup>18</sup> Until 2000 there was a consortium of the market that was dissolved and substituted by a committee responsible of the relation with local authorities, but with a limited legitimacy among the participants in the market.

more frequent among people who shared cultural identities. Even when these were repeated interactions present over relatively long periods, they mostly maintained an incidental nature.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

During the last decade the market of “La Piazzola” has experienced a constant change mainly related to the national origin of people working in it, stand owners as well as employees, with immigrants tending to occupy the spaces left by Italians. The retirement of the last is mainly due to the loss of profitability that their activity used to have and to the lack of generational replacement. It is not a direct consequence of the arrival of foreigners, even if some Italians have this perception.

There is an increasing heterogeneity in the market population, even though this is not only due to the arrival of foreigners, but with the increasing practices of rental of stands by owners and beneficiaries from concessions and hiring illegal immigrants as employees. This last practice creates on its turn a constant change of employees and increases the precarity of working conditions .

The increasing heterogeneity may have increased governance difficulties, specially in the context created by: the absence of spaces of discussion and conflict resolution; the lack of representation and legitimacy of the self appointed body who deals with local government authorities; the disappearance of previously functional rules; and the lack of implementation and compliance of some of the new rules. These conditions have led to the weakening of bonding traditional bonding social capital that used to be present in the market community. As old rules governing the space were modified without any type of participation of those affected by them, they often result inadequate to market reality and people have little incentives to compliance. On top of it they are poorly monitored and violations of rules goes mostly unsanctioned. The original community of the market has lost control of some of the main factors affecting their activity, while some tendencies previously present have become more evident. It is viable to hypothesized that traditionally appropriation and provision problems present in the market were effectively resolved by the local community that was involved in rule crafting and implementation. These capacities and success were sources of bonding and linking social capital. Latter on when the consortium created by the local community was substituted by a self-appointed body, spaces of representation and conflict resolution lost legitimacy and functionality. The new organization is more interested in the rent of stands and concessions (and on the speculation grown around it) than in the functioning and maintenance of the quality of the market. Finally, this body is only integrated by Italians with a long time of permanence in the market who do not share most of the problems of the majority of the participants in the market now days.

At the same time there is an increasing number of participants with different perceptions and valuation of the market place, scarce understanding of local rules, and limited knowledge of Italian. New comers usually have a complete lack of *bridging* and

*linking* social capital (towards local population and national State). These conditions favor “open access” and opportunistic behaviors and values in the use of the common good and the public space.

As previously mentioned, the coincidence of commerce activity deregulation and the arrival of immigrants to the market, has given them access to activities and spaces previously used exclusively by Italians, and traditional commercial practices have changed. This process has favored resentments of Italians against foreigners making their relation more problematic and adding obstacles to their possible cooperation. These conflicts could have been avoided if participants with more time and tradition in the market would have had more control over access conditions and appropriation and provision rules.

As a final conclusion I propose that social fields characterized by the presence of various classes of differences, as the market of “La Piazzola” where participants have come to privilege short term individual interests over the long term maintenance of common and public goods, social and material costs of effective rule appliance increase. In this type of contexts governance of common and public spaces demand the development of new organizational spaces, truly representative of the diversity that numerous communities have acquired today. These bodies could assume functions of rule crafting, based on consensus building, and incentives development, instead of the self appointed groups that have appear in “La Piazzola” who carry on monitoring and sanction in mostly an arbitrary manner. Even if transaction costs involved in this kind of organizational development are higher, and challenges are more complexes, experience prove that bonding, linking as well as bridging social capital are possible to built and are indispensable elements for local governance

Market is a space where quotidian exchanges take place, a place where similar and different people meet around shared objectives, a space where experiences of communication and interaction can occur. Conditions such as the real implementation of rules, and their clarity, the development of arenas of deliberation and consensus building, and the existence of representative, legitimate and participatory organizations have a critical impact on the quality of the relationships that participants develop and on the quotidian maintenance of the market as a good of public value.

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